

Michael Landau

Musician and composer Michael Landau was born and raised in Los Angeles. He grew up with the music of The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Cream and The Band. His grandfather arranged and played woodwinds during the swing era with the Dorsey Brothers and Benny Goodman. In his early teens, Michael quickly became very interested in jazz and electric jazz music. Weather Report, Pat Martino and Jaco Pastorius were some of his early obsessions. From this diverse blend of influence, his sound and path began to take shape. His current group focuses on the improvisation and spontaneity of live shows. "I live for those live moments when the sound and emotion becomes this monstrous force bigger than the individual musicians, it becomes a unique creation and feel, exciting and calming at the same time, difficult to describe but I'm addicted to it."

The following is a brief timeline of events over the years.

Michael starting playing guitar at age 11, at age 16 he began playing the L.A. club scene with an R&B band and shortly after he toured the west coast with Robben Ford which included band members Jimmy Haslip and Russell Ferrante.

At age 19 he joined Boz Scaggs for a world tour and by the age of 20 he started to do session work on the recommendation of long time friend Steve Lukather. Some session highlights over the coming years would include Pink Floyd, Miles Davis, Joni Mitchell, BB King, James Taylor, Ray Charles and Rod Stewart. There is a complete session discography at allmusic.com with over 700 records and soundtracks listed.

In 1984 Michael toured again and recorded with Joni Mitchell. This tour was called "The Refuge Of The Roads". The band featured Vinnie Colaiuta, Larry Klein and Russell Ferrante.

In 1989 he released his first solo album "Tales from the Bulge", an instrumental record initially released in Japan and on Creatchy records in the US. Wayne Shorter, Steve Tavaglione, Vinnie Colaiuta, Carlos Vega, Steve Lukather and Jimmy Johnson were among some of the players on this release.

In 1991 he formed the band "Burning Water" with brother Teddy Landau, David Frazee and Carlos Vega. They put out 4 discs of original material and toured in Japan and the US. It was also around this time that he started to record and tour with James Taylor.

In 1993 he won the readers poll for Best Studio Guitarist in Guitar Player Magazine.

In 1994 Michael formed "The Raging Honkies", a naughty little trio with Teddy Landau and Abe Laboriel Jr. They released 2 discs and toured Europe and the US.

2001 saw the release of "Live 2000" and a studio album "The Star Spangled Banner" on his own indie label "Unconscious Records".

His most recent album, "The Michael Landau Group Live" was released in October '06 on Tone Center Records. Here's a quote from a review by John Kelman:
"The Real Question, when a studio ace comes out of hiding and releases two hours of visceral material, is this: who is Michael Landau when he's in total control of the situation? While his stylistic breadth elsewhere would suggest that this is only one part of the answer, "Live" posits him, amongst other things, as a powerful torchbearer for Jimi Hendrix. While the late Stevie Ray Vaughan was most often saddled with that accolade, Landau's broader language more accurately represents where Hendrix might be today, since the late guitar icon was clearly moving towards his own view of jazz in the final days before his tragic passing in 1970."

Michael currently tours and performs with his own group and a new band with Robben Ford, Jimmy Haslip and Gary Novak called "Renegade Creation". He can also be seen live with: Hazy Jane, Kirk Fletcher, The Jazz Ministry, Stolen Fish, Michelle Branch and James Taylor. He has produced and or mixed some selected artists and side projects including: Scott Henderson, The Jazz Ministry, Kirk Fletcher, Hazy Jane, The Dusty Meadows Band and Stolen Fish.

Michael's current heroes and influences are Kirk Fletcher, Dustin Boyer and Derek Trucks. He likes sandwiches, old things, the earth, playing music and spanning time with his beautiful wife Karen.