

Michael Carlos – A Fine Musician in Need

I picked up a copy of Michael's *Yesterday's Icons* at the TMF in 2005, after hearing Michael perform. Michael grabbed me! So stopping and taking time out from my usual "button vampire" routine, I stood and listened trying catch all of the words. I played the album, listening with headphones not to miss a word, the Monday after the festival. I have enjoyed occasionally re-dipping into it, despite the large number of other CDs in my collection, whenever thoughts of Americana 2001 forced themselves into my mind after a session with NPR, Time, the Economist or Business week.



Singer/Songwriter Michael Carlos writes songs that span the genres of contemporary folk, rock, and eclectic pop, and he has been compared to Elvis Costello and Joe Jackson. Themes include the superficiality of politics and pop culture, and some more introspective topics, delivered with articulate lyrics and "striking visual images." He combines a rock and blues background, from early days in bar-room cover bands, with a contemporary folk and acoustic pop influence, resulting in a wide variety of musical styles that appear in his original material.

The Point is in the Lyrics

The targets of Carlos' critiques include reality TV shows, corporate criminals, omnipresent strip malls and chain stores, NASCAR, politicians and pop icons. Carlos can be more introspective as well with songs of love triangles and focused self-criticism. Though many of the songs on *Yesterday's Icons* criticize the sociocultural and political climate of the 21st century, Michael Carlos employs wit, humor, and irreverence to deliver the message — whether or not the listener agrees with the message, the songs are entertaining food for thought.

Michael Carlos built his songwriting skills in Chicago in an informal Songwriter's Showcase, and in various other solo performances in the Chicago area. Since arriving in the Northwest, he has quickly established himself as a noteworthy performer by showcasing at the USA Songwriting Competition, and by competing as a finalist in the Tumbleweed Music Festival songwriting competition in Richland, WA. He has appeared and performed in community coffeehouses throughout the state of Washington and in major music festivals, including the Northwest Folklife Festival in Seattle in 2004, where he appeared on two invited songwriter's panels hosted by Jon Pfaff, and at the Leavenworth Acoustic Music Festival. He made a second appearance at Tumbleweed, as well as performing for one of our coffeehouses.

Now the Bad News — Michael Carlos was in a nasty car wreck last fall. Michael suffered a broken neck, ribs, leg and shoulder blade. The good news that his spinal chord is intact and he is

not paralyzed; retains full mobility in all extremities. In fact, as reported in Victory Review, November 14, he is already up and walking a few steps. (Modern medicine so rocks!) He also suffered serious head injury, but he has regained nearly full brain function as well. Updates on his condition are posted on his website, <http://www.michaelcarlos.net/>.

And the Better News —Michael Carlos was able to return home to Wenatchee on December 6, following his 11/3/2006 auto accident. He'll continue to wear the halo brace to keep his neck vertebrae in place while they heal. A long rehabilitation process is ongoing for his physical and emotional trauma.



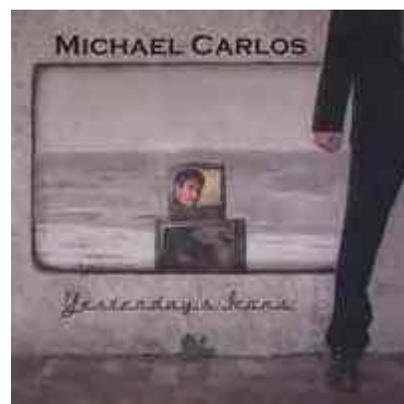
Benefit concerts, with large turnouts of musicians and friends, for Michael were staged in Seattle and Wenatchee. 3RFS will not be setting up another benefit concert due to our crowded schedule, but we will continue working as individuals to help Michael with his expenses. Friends of Michael and his music can make contributions to the account that has been opened on Michael's behalf - The Michael Carlos Benefit Fund, at the Cashmere Valley Bank. Donations to help support him during his long recovery can be made at any branch of the bank. Donations can be also mailed to: The Michael Carlos Benefit Fund, c/o Rocci Hildum, 2737 Debord Dr., Wenatchee, WA 98801. For more information contact Rocci Hildum at 665-3181 or rhildum@nwi.net.

Back to Yesterday's Icons

Since Teresa T. Liao, in **Rikks Reviews**, says it better than I can, I'm quoting from her review. http://www.rikksrevues.com/michael_carlos_yesterdays_heroes-cdreview_AMCD000011278377.htm

“Michael, in his debut album, tells stories about second rate novelists, fallen heroes and yesterday's icons. The music in Michael Carlos' debut album is deceptively soothing. It's almost like listening to a lullaby or children's song during a long road trip. But pay a little more attention and you'll find *Yesterday's Icons* is not a collection of innocent children's songs. No, the songs are about very adult issues of politics, corporate crime and America's degrading pop culture.

“This political and cultural commentary is done with smart sardonic humor. The ease with which Michael Carlos portrays Americana is refreshing. There is no biting edge or anger that



so often comes with music despondent with the world. Instead, Carlos takes the straightforward approach. He sings about life as he sees it, and his picture is clear.

“There are no indecipherable metaphors or confusing lyrics. You know exactly what Michael Carlos is singing about. We've all seen "Reality TV" and the "Morning News". And we've all had a "Really Bad Day" and heard stories of a "Preacher With A Gun". In fact, we all talk about how the world is falling apart and going to hell. With the wrong tone, talking and especially singing about the not so cheerful side of life is tiresome and downright whiny, but Michael Carlos adds such great twists and wit to his storyline that you, or at least I, really do find myself listening to the songs with the eagerness of a child waiting for the next bedtime story. As a bonus for being such a good listener, Michael throws in a bonus track about a man tired of trying to live up to the expectation of being a hero.”

And if that's not enough, Michael maintains a full-time day job as a scientist for the Forest Service in Wenatchee WA, “under a different identity.”

Michael's album is available from his web site and on the CD Baby Site <http://cdbaby.com/cd/michaelcarlos>]. And if what Michael sings grabs you please make a contribution to the [Michael Carlos Benefit Fund](#).

That's all for this month... Harry aka doc_Babad