

An interview with... Michael Lington



"Michael Bolton is a great musician"

What is the feeling that the word "music" brings to you and your life?

Music has been a part of my life since I was a child, so music is who I am. Music is what I love; it gives me joy.

How did you decide to start in the music world?

My grandfather (Danish jazz bandleader Otto Lington) was a musician so I knew very early on that I wanted to be a part of the music business. As early as seven years old, I felt that music was my calling.

Which were your first steps in this career?

I have had different careers in music - as a sideman, a recording artist, and as a songwriter - so I've had many different steps along the way. The biggest step was moving away from Denmark to America; the biggest break as a musician was touring with Bobby Caldwell.

What influences have you got personally and musically in your life?

My grandfather was my personal mentor and David Sanborn was my biggest musical influence.

You are the grandson of the jazz pioneer and Danish composer, Otto Lington. Was the work and love for music of your grandfather the definitive sign for choosing your destiny?

Yes.

You have created 7 albums, from 1997, with your self-titled album, until Pure in 2012... tell us about them and about the differences between them too.

They all represent different parts of my life and career. At the time I made each of these CDs, that was what I was feeling musically at the time.

We have read in Wikipedia that you "reach a younger demographic than traditional jazz listeners" ... do you agree?

I think so. Jazz has always been perceived as an 'older demographic's' music, but I feel that my music and brand is contemporary.



You have a really good fan-base... not only by yourself, but because of the artists you have worked for. How is your relation with your fans?

I love my fans. They allow me to live my dream, make CDs, tour and have a career in music.

You are from Copenhagen. Now you live in LA most of the time, and travel a lot around the world. Is that hard?

The travel is hard; long days in airports, on planes, tour busses and different time zones, but I wouldn't change it for the world. As soon as I am on stage, I forget all of that.

You have performed several times for the Danish Royal Family; for example, at the Royal Wedding of Crown Prince Frederik and Princess Mary... how was the experience?

Incredible and unique, I felt like I was on a Disney movie set, but it was real...a fairy tale. It's always fun to perform for royalty and to discover that they are just regular people like all of us.

In a few days you will be one of the musical guests at the "Dave Koz & Friends Cruise," bringing your music to the sea, a cruise completely sold out right now... what are your expectations on this?

It was a lot of fun. I think this was my seventh jazz cruise. It's always a pleasure and the audiences are having the time of their lives.

In 2008, you became a U.S. citizen. What has that meant for you?

Becoming a U.S. citizen was an important milestone for me. I love America; it's been very good to me and I try to give back where I can.

In addition to music, you have created your own cigars and you wrote a column called "Cigar Stories" for the Wine and Jazz Magazine. Why did you start doing that? Are you having success with this too?

I have loved cigars for fifteen years and it's been a lot of fun creating my own brand. It's almost like making a CD. From the content (tobacco) to the packaging (labels and boxes), it was an idea that started with me hosting a cigar party on one of the jazz cruises. I had my own cigar made. The response to the cigar was so good that I decided to continue developing the brand after we got off of the ship. It's a brand new journey for me but really exciting. Check it out at www.michaellingtoncigars.com

What can you share about your upcoming projects?

I'm currently working on a new CD and writing with a great writer and R&B/pop producer, Barry Eastmond (Anita Baker, Al Jarreau, Michael Bolton, Aretha Franklin, Dave Koz, Paul Taylor, among others).



When and where did you meet Michael Bolton? And when did you join his band?

I was introduced to MB through 'The Tonight Show's' Music Director, Rickey Minor. I started working with MB in March of 2010.

How is the experience of working for Michael Bolton? How is he as boss?

I look at it as a collaborative musical relationship. I think Michael's voice and style fits the saxophone extremely well and vice versa. I have been a fan of his music for many years and so to have the opportunity to work together has been incredible. We have also become great friends and are recording on each others' CDs. MB has exposed me to his fans all over the world and I am extremely grateful for that. He is a true gentleman.

You, as a musician, how would you describe Michael as a musician? What do you think that is Michael's most important quality?

MB is a great musician. He is one of the strongest vocalists in the biz and he is a very gifted songwriter and performer. He has a great business sense, too. How many artists can do 125+ shows a year for over thirty years? Not many...Michael is in an elite group of artists.

Which one is your favourite part during the Michael's concerts?

Three moments really stand out: performing for and meeting former US President Bill Clinton (who has now become a friend), performing at the Royal Albert Hall in London and at the Sydney Opera House in Australia.

What words would you use to describe a tour with Michael's band. What is your relation with the rest of the guys?

We have all become family. They're great people and are extremely talented.

You are in what Michael have called "the never-ending tour". What memories are you collecting from it?

Seeing and performing all over the world...memories for a lifetime.

What do you think about his previous album, Gems, and the incredible artists he has chosen to work with?

Gems is a great album with very talented performers and producers.

Michael has worked with you on your latest album with the song, Shotgun. Tell us about this project, please. Would you like to do more songs together?

We are always talking about other ideas. I just recorded three songs on his forthcoming CD being released in February 2013.

As you know, this newsletter is for MB Spanish-speaking fans around the world. What memories do you have about Spain? And about Latin audiences?

Spain and South America are so passionate about music! Love performing there and spending time there. As I kid, I spent many summers in Mallorca.

Quick answers

- One drink: BOURBON
- One food: ITALIAN
- One book: THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE by Stephen Covey
- One movie: SKYFALL
- One sound or smell or flavour: FRESH GROUND COFFEE
- One gift: MY FIRST SAXOPHONE
- One problem: MANY!!
- One memory: SPENDING TIME WITH MY GRANDFATHER
- One philosophy: BE NICE TO EVERYONE, EVERYONE COUNTS

