

Michael McDonald Biography (600 version)

Two notes. That's all it takes to recognize the voice of Michael McDonald. Distinctive and soulful, it is one of the most yearningly emotive instruments of our times. To this add formidable songwriting and keyboard skills, and you have an artist who has been a singular musical presence for four decades. From '70s-era Doobie Brothers classics such as "What A Fool Believes" and solo hits like "I Keep Forgettin'" through two highly-acclaimed *Motown* covers albums and recent genre-busting guest spots with alternative buzz bands Grizzly Bear and Holy Ghost, the five-time Grammy-winning McDonald is that rare thing in contemporary pop – an artist whose work is both timeless and ever-evolving.

Along with his musical contributions, McDonald has long been an active humanitarian. Over the years, he has lent his talents and energies to many causes and benefits, including MusiCares, the National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and the 7UP Grammy Signature Schools Program. Most recently, in April 2011, he was part of a star-studded lineup at Kokua For Japan, a concert that raised \$1.6 million for tsunami relief.

Yet for all his varied accomplishments, McDonald has kept a modestly low profile. Shunning theatrics and trend-chasing, he has trusted in the power of his voice and a deep catalog of memorable songs to point the way through his long career.

Born into a musical family in St. Louis on February 12, 1952, Michael started singing when he was four years old. After tinkering with banjo and guitar, he found his true passion at the piano. Soon he was writing his first songs and doing the time-honored apprenticeship with bands in the family garage. Determined to pursue music full-time, McDonald

moved to L.A in the early '70s, where he honed his skills as a session musician and singer.

That soon led to an invitation to join Steely Dan. Over the course of four classic albums, from *Katy Lied* to *Gaucho*, McDonald became an integral part of the group's sound, singing background vocals on FM staples like "Black Friday" and "Peg."

In the mid-'70s, McDonald joined The Doobie Brothers, helping the band redefine their funky R & B sound as a singer, keyboardist and songwriter on such Top 40 singles as "Takin' It To The Streets," "It Keeps You Runnin'," "Minute By Minute" and "What A Fool Believes."

His distinct vocal style also made him one of the world's most sought-after session singers. Beyond his hits with The Doobies, McDonald has lent his voice to records by an A-Z of artists, including Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, Elton John, Joni Mitchell and Vince Gill. During the '80s and '90s, his solo career zoomed from success to success on the wings of evergreen hits like "I Keep Forgettin'," "On My Own" (a duet with Patti LaBelle) and the Grammy-winning duet with James Ingram "Yah Mo B There."

Continuing to explore new vistas, in 2003 and 2004, McDonald released his Grammy-nominated, platinum-selling pair of *Motown* albums. Then in 2005, he partnered with Hallmark for a special Christmas album, *Through The Many Winters*, which sold 500,000 copies in its first two weeks.

On the heels of 2008's acclaimed crossover album *Soul Speak* (which hit three different charts simultaneously) and multiple appearances on PBS's *Soundstage*, McDonald continues to tour the world, from Europe to Asia to Australia, while moonlighting alongside co-horts Donald Fagen and Boz Scaggs with The Dukes Of September, an 11-piece soul supergroup. And as one more feather in his cap, in May

2011, McDonald received an honorary doctorate from Berklee School Of Music.

With a career that encompasses five Grammys, numerous chart successes, personal and professional accolades, as well as collaborations with some of the world's most prominent artists, Michael McDonald remains an enduring force in popular music.

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