



Michael On Fire, formerly Michael Colone of Livonia, is drawing raves with his live performances and his latest release "Commanche Moon."

# Michael blazes new trail

By Larry O'Connor  
Staff writer

Though based in Southern California, Michael On Fire's musical wick was lit in his native Detroit. The 1968 graduate of Livonia Stevenson mentions names from his playing days here, people like jazz master Lyman Woodward and political activist John Sinclair, as sources of inspiration.

They brought the music to the people from the streets, said Michael On Fire, formerly known as Michael Colone. "They didn't care about things like fame and fortune. They were playing because they had to play. I took that with me."

This Wednesday, Michael On Fire will bring that passion and immediacy back with him as returns to this area for a show at Alvin's. Terry Farmer, another Livonian transplanted in Southern California, and his Beat Band will open. The gig will mark Michael On Fire's first show in the Motor City since leaving for California in 1980.

NO DOUBT, things have been refined since those days when Michael On Fire played with a jazz fusion outfit, Prismatic, in the 1970s at such clubs as Cobb's Corner on Cass Avenue.

Today, Michael On Fire plays a grueling schedule of 360 shows a year and continually embarks on cross-country tours. He likens himself to a "local band performing all over the country," meaning he has no major label support.

His latest release on the independent label M.C.R. Music, "Commanche Moon," features a stirring blend of folk, blues and rock'n'roll ushered home with Michael On Fire's commanding vocals and simmering musicianship. The LP is boundless in musical scope, refraining from the standard radio ready pop fare.

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**SEEING THE SHOW**

**Who:** Michael On Fire will perform with Terry Farmer and the Beat Band.

**When:** Wednesday, July 10

**Where:** Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. 832-2355

## IN CONCERT

- **PARADISE VALLEY JAZZ JAM**  
Paradise Valley Jazz Jam will take place Monday, July 8, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **WISHING FIELD**  
Wishing Field will perform Monday, July 8, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **M.O.D.**  
M.O.D. will perform Tuesday, July 9, at Hudson Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **WARRANT**  
Warrant will perform with guests, Trister and Firehouse, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 9, at Meadow Brook Music Festival in Rochester. Tickets are \$15, \$14.50 and \$12.50. For information, call 377-2010.
- **CHISEL BROS.**  
Chisel Brothers will perform Tuesday, July 9, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **MICHAEL ON FIRE**  
Michael On Fire will perform with Terry Farmer and The Beat Band Wednesday, July 10, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **BORN NAKED**  
Born Naked will perform Wednesday, July 10, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **MARSHALL CRENSHAW**  
Marshall Crenshaw will perform Thursday, July 11, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$10.50 in advance. For information, call 961-MELT.
- **PEST**  
Pest will perform with guests, Trash Brains, will perform Thursday, July 11, at 3D, 1815 N. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344.
- **GATEMOUTH BROWN**  
Gatemouth Brown will perform Thursday, July 11, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.
- **WILD KINGDOM**  
Wild Kingdom will perform Thursday, July 11, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **BELA FLECK AND THE FLECKTONES**  
Bela Fleck and the Flecktones will perform two shows, 8 and 11 p.m., Thursday, July 11, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **MISSIONARY STEW**  
Missionary Stew will perform with guests, in Autumn, Friday, July 12, at Lil's, 21.2m m w 2 in Autumn.
- **THE DIFFERENCE**  
The Difference will perform Friday, July 12, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **NEW DELTA ROCKERS**  
New Delta Rockers will perform Friday, July 12, at Moby Dick's, 5438 Schaefer, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 581-3650.
- **HEAVEN'S WISH**  
Heaven's Wish will perform Friday, July 12, at the Bobo Moonlight Cruise. The boat departs 11 p.m. and returns 1 a.m. For information, call 843-0700 or 843-8800.
- **GEORGE BEDARD**  
George Bedard will perform Friday, July 12, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.
- **EMF**  
EMF will perform Friday, July 12, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.
- **RON BROOKS TRIO**  
Ron Brooks Trio will perform Friday and Saturday, July 12-13, at Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor. Cover is \$5. For information, call 662-8310.
- **NOTHING FANCY**  
Nothing Fancy will perform Friday, July 12, at Cross Street Station, 510 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.
- **BUSHMASTERS**  
Bushmasters will perform with guests, Freemasons, Friday, July 12, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.
- **BOB JAMES**  
Jazz composer/keyboardist Bob James and jazz flutist Alexander Zorjic will perform 8 p.m. Friday, July 12, at Meadow Brook Music Festival in Rochester. Tickets are \$22.50, \$22 and \$12.50. For information, call 377-2010.
- **JOHN D. LAMB**  
John D. Lamb will perform Friday, July 12, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **ELVIS HITLER**  
Elvis Hitler will perform with guests, Soul Station, Saturday, July 13, at Lil's, 21.2m m w 2 in Autumn. For information, call 875-6555.
- **LARADOS**  
Larados will perform 3-6 p.m. Saturday, July 13, at the "Up With Farmington" festival in the Upewen Farmington Plaza, Grand River Avenue at Mooney, one block west of Orchard Lake Road.
- **STEVE NARDELLA**  
Steve Nardella will perform Saturday, July 13, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.
- **RHYTHM KINGS**  
Rhythm Kings will perform Saturday, July 13, at Moby Dick's, 5438 Schaefer, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 581-3650.
- **FLOOR 9**  
Floor 9 will perform with guests, Weeping Rachel, Saturday, July 13, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.
- **HOWLING DIABLOS**  
Howling Diablos will perform Saturday, July 13, on the Bobo Moonlight Cruise. The boat departs 11 p.m. and returns 1 a.m. For information, call 843-0700 or 843-8800.
- **KENNY NEAL**  
Kenny Neal will perform Saturday, July 13, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **THE SISTERS OF MERCY**  
The Sisters of Mercy will perform with guests, Public Enemy, Gang of Four and Warrior Soul, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, July 13, at Chene Park Music Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$22.50 pavilion, \$20.50 lawn.
- **SPEAKER'S CORNER**  
Speaker's Corner will perform Saturday, July 13, at Cross Street Station, 510 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.
- **MISS JONES**  
Miss Jones will perform Saturday, July 13, at Exit Club, 29461 John R, Madison Heights. For information, call 544-1338.
- **FRANK ALLISON AND THE ODD SOX**  
Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform Saturday, July 13, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **INCURABLES**  
Incurables will perform Sunday, July 14, at Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75.

## Crenshaw back to old self with new LP

By Steve O'Leary  
special writer

Singer/songwriter Marshall Crenshaw has come a long way since he played in a variety of high school and college bar bands. A graduate of Berkley High School, he says he'd just as soon forget those days.

"Let's just say the names of those bands are best left obscure," Crenshaw said from his Los Angeles hotel room where he's doing publicity in preparation for his latest tour, which will promote his sixth and latest album, "Life's Too Short."

Crenshaw left the Detroit area in 1976 to join a friend's band in Alaska, of all places. "But the band leader and I didn't hit it off good at all, so I split. I was working in some small bar bands out west when I decided to screw it. I've had enough of playing second fiddle in second-rate bands. I decided to come back to Detroit and marry my girlfriend, Ione (he won't disclose her last name but says they're still happily married)."

Along the way, he answered an ad for "Beatlemania."

"They called me in Detroit, I auditioned and got the part. After nearly two years, I quit to spend more time with my family."

It was then that a 12-inch version of "Someday, Someway" was recorded and he was offered a record contract with Warner Brothers, a relationship which finally soured in 1989. He was wooed — and won — by MCA, who released "Life's Too Short."

"LIFE'S TOO SHORT" delivers what we've come to expect from Crenshaw: short, snappy power pop filled with enough hooks to get a toe-tapping response from even the most jaded rock fans. While cronies like Nick Lowe and Elvis Costello fell off along the wayside, Crenshaw has maintained his pop sensibility, as evidenced in tunes like "Everything's the Truth" and "Walkin' Around."

His tour, which will hit Saint Andrew's Hall on Thursday, July 11, will feature an all-new band for Crenshaw, including Mitch Easter, perhaps best known as a producer of bands such as the much lamented dB's and Chris Stills.

"I'm as excited about this tour as

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## REVIEWS

### WARM YOUR HEART — Aaron Neville

Most folks know Aaron Neville from his work with his sibling group, the Neville Brothers, or from his MTV balladeering on "Don't Know Much" with Linda Ronstadt. (In the video, Neville's the one in the dangerous looking cut-off jeans jacket that gives him that surly "leak" like-ly to be a singing ballad "leak."

But Neville's been around since the late 1960's when he hit it big with the classic "Tell It Like It Is." That song was given new life when it was included on the soundtrack to the movie "The Big Easy" — an excellent sampler of New Orleans sounds, by the way.

Surprisingly, "Warm Your Heart" is Neville's first solo offering in more than 20 years and, for an occasion as big as this, Neville brought out some big-gun collaborators.

For one, strangely enough, Linda Ronstadt is a co-producer on the album. She also sings a duet with Neville on the doo-wop Five Keys song "Close Your Eyes," sings back-up on a few songs and is even credited with whistling on "Everybody plays The Fool." Apparently Ronstadt is



very, very grateful to Neville for revitalizing her previously sluggish career.

Neville was careful to pick tunes for "Warm Your Heart" that complement his soaring, clear voice. His roster of songwriters is impressive. The CD kicks off with Randy Newman's lovely "Louisiana 1927." A John Hiatt tune, "Feels Like Rain," features the great Ry Cooder on slide guitar.

If an artist is going to wait 20 years between albums, the final product better be pretty darn good. In the case of "Warm Your Heart," happily, the result was worth waiting for. The record is able to address subjects like faith and healing without being sappy — quite an accomplishment.

— Jill Hamilton

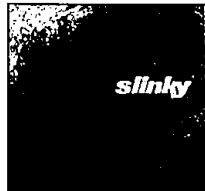
### SLINKY — Milltown Brothers

"Slinky" is a hard record to get a handle on — it's difficult to say whether it's very enjoyable or not. It's certainly not offensive. But then, I don't think I'd pay money for it.

It's sort of what would happen if a Hollywood producer who knew nothing about music was making a teen flick and needed an alternative-sounding band to play at the big dance scene at the end of the movie. Milltown Brothers would be that band. Their music is a kind of generic alternative music.

Their lyrics are more like sound bites than any attempt at communication. The song "Which Way Should I Jump?" for example, the lyrics pretty much are "Which way should I jump?" repeated at least 13 times. Sure there are other lyrics, but they seem to be there only so that the entire song isn't comprised of the words "Which Way Should I Jump?"

Speaking of "Which Way Should I Jump," it's one of the many songs on "Slinky" that is more than a bit influenced by the Byrds. Unfortunately for the Milltown Brothers, the Byrds-esque soaring harmonies, guitar sounds and sound structures



were done a lot better by the Byrds themselves. Anyway, if you're going to copy someone, you may as well be original in your selection. Everyone does the Byrds. It'd be nice to here a rising young band imitate someone different for a change like Donovan or the Village People or something.

The vocals are nothing to sing about either. I'm sure no vocal training was involved here. The guy sounds a bit like Mike Patton of Faith No More, but sounds infinitely more annoying. My friend said the lead singer sounds like a cartoon character. Good enough.

The main reason these guys probably got signed to a record label is that they are cute.

And, in the music business, unfortunately, that often counts for a lot.

— Jill Hamilton



The Incurables perform Sunday, July 14, at the Hamtramck Pub.

## LOCAL

- Here are the top-10 releases on "Detroit Music Scene," which is aired 4-5 p.m. Sunday on WDRB-FM 90.9
1. "My Bands," Imitation of Life
  2. "Radio Eutaxance," GTOY
  3. "Live at the Hamtramck Pub," various
  4. "You Better Run," Chain Reaction
  5. "Shakin' Street," Cult Heroes
  6. "Bored to Tears," Fook
  7. "Falling in Love with Someone," Buzzcocks
  8. "Dang Me," Country Bob and the Blood Farmers
  9. "Do It All Over," Dave Rave
  10. "Rockwrok," Ultravox

## TOP HITS

- Best selling records of the week:
1. "Rush Rush," Paula Abdul
  2. "I Wanna Sex You Up," Color Me Badd
  3. "Unbelievable," EMF
  4. "More Than Words," Extreme
  5. "Love Is a Wonderful Thing," Michael Ballou
  6. "Power of Love," Luther Vandross
  7. "Losing My Religion," R.E.M.
  8. "Couple Days Off," Huey Lewis & the News
  9. "I Don't Wanna Cry," Mariah Carey
  10. "Here I Am (Come and Take Me)," UB40
- (Source: Cashbox magazine)