

M I C H A E L S C H E N K E R G R O U P

TALES OF ROCK'N'ROLL - 25 YEARS CELEBRATION



In a world of increasing mechanization and digital production methods, real craftsmanship appears to be on the way out - which is probably one of the reasons why guitar heroes are becoming a rare commodity. Thankfully, Michael Schenker from Hanover, Germany, has successfully resisted this development and continues to count among the most important guitarists on the international rock music scene. His fluent style and successful mix of fiery rock licks, awesome power riffs and classical quotations have made him an icon for a whole generation of up-and-coming musicians. Whether as a member of the Scorpions and the British act, UFO, a solo artist, or with his own band, MSG: Schenker has been involved in countless classics in the history of rock music. He signed a contract with the North German record label, Armageddon Music, in winter 2005, 25 years after the release of the legendary MSG debut and is scheduled to release his latest album, *Tales Of Rock'n'Roll - 25 Years Celebration*, on April 28, 2006. The recording thoroughly lives up to its title and shows why this band has been going from strength to strength for the last quarter of a century: MSG Mark 2006 are as enthusiastic, ambitious and direct as ever.

Tales Of Rock'n'Roll - 25 Years Celebration highlights Michael Schenker not only as a brilliant composer and instrumentalist, but also surrounded by a number of renowned colleagues. Every vocalist who has sung with MSG, namely Graham Bonnet, Gary Barden, Robin McAuley, Kelly Keeling, Leif Sundin, Chris Logan and the group's latest addition, Jari Tiura, recorded one new song each. Graham Bonnet for example, who played with Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow before joining MSG, lent his voice to the programmatic 'Rock'n'Roll', and Gary Barden is featured on the haunting 'Life Vacation'. Schenker shares an intense era of his past with Robin McAuley: during the time of their collaboration, the abbreviation, MSG, stood for McAuley Schenker Group as a symbol of their close partnership. The former Grand Prix vocalist proves on 'Tell A Story' that his voice still suits Schenker's deeply melodic songwriting perfectly. The collaborations with Kelly Keeling on 'Big Deal' and Chris Logan on 'Dreams Inside' also deserve a mention, while 'Angel Of Avalon', sung by Leif Sundin, brings back memories of their successful cooperation on the album, *Written In The Sand*.

"All original MSG vocalists have delivered fantastic performances," Schenker enthuses. "Sometimes we got the feeling that time stood still, that's how good the vocal parts have come out." The most important new discovery in the MSG camp is of course Jari Tiura from Finland, who contributed the vocal parts to 13 of the 19 tracks. "Jari worked intensively on the material, and his vocals fit in perfectly with a long tradition of by no means insignificant MSG vocalists," Schenker praises his new colleague.



Coincidentally, the Michael Schenker Group not only features brilliant vocalists on *Tales Of Rock'n'Roll - 25 Years Celebration*: UFO member Pete Way, among others, turned up at the studio to record bass parts, while none other than Racer X drummer Jeff Martin manned the drum kit. The current line-up, scheduled to kick off their *Tales Of Rock'n'Roll World Tour 2006* in Istanbul at the beginning of May, consists, alongside Schenker, of guitarist/keyboarder Wayne Findley, drummer Pete Holmes, bassist Rev Jones, and Finnish vocalist Jari Tiura. Their tour will take them to Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Austria, Turkey, Belgium, and Switzerland.

BIOGRAPHY

Michael Schenker was born on January 10, 1955, in Sarstedt near Hanover. At the tender age of fifteen he joined his brother Rudolf's band, Scorpions, with whom he produced his 1972 debut album *Lonesome Crow*. Once the British rock act UFO had discovered Schenker's amazing talent during a joint tour with the Scorpions, they invited the exceptional guitar whiz-kid to team up with them after the tour had finished. His first recording with UFO became an international masterpiece: *Phenomenon* (1974), featuring the classics 'Doctor Doctor' and 'Rock Bottom', is still considered one of the most important releases in the history of rock music.

Schenker stayed with UFO for eight years, releasing further impressive rock albums like *Force It* (1975) and *No Heavy Pettin'* (1976) – recordings that made UFO international stars and set new standards in rock music. The two subsequent studio albums *Lights Out* (1977) and *Obsession* (1978) are still among the most significant releases of the genre. A year after the arrival of *Obsession*, the band decided to record a live album, *Stranger In The Night*, which is justly considered one of the most successful live cuts ever. At the same time, the record marked the end of the legendary line-up that had caused a stir for well over a decade.

Michael Schenker left UFO and temporarily teamed up with his former band Scorpions again to record the fabulous *Lovedrive* with them. His manager Peter Mensch also arranged an audition with Aerosmith, which came to nothing in the end due to vocalist Steven Tyler's bad state of health.



Instead he returned to the public eye with the debut album by his own Michael Schenker Group, featuring musicians like Simon Phillips, Gary Barden and keyboarder Don Airey. „Peter finally found me Simon Phillips and Mo Foster who were currently recording with Jeff Beck and seemed to be the perfect choice for MSG’s first recording,” Schenker recalls. „Roger Glover heard about it and offered himself as the producer. It all turned out well and we called it the Michael Schenker Group.” On subsequent albums like *MSG II* (1981), *One Night At Budokan* (1982), *Assault Attack* (1983) and *Built To Destroy*, he continued to present talented band members, like the two former Rainbow musicians Graham Bonnett and Cozy Powell (R.I.P.), as well as Ted McKenny and Chris Glenn, two former members of the Alex Harvey Band.

In the mid-Eighties, Schenker formed the McAuley Schenker Group together with former Grand Prix vocalist Robin McAuley, its abbreviated name remaining MSG. „I wanted a singer as a partner and found Robin McAuley in 1986,” he tells. “Realizing that Robins Sir Name McAuley starts with an M while looking for a new band name I offered him the M for MSG in order to keep MSG.” The musical direction leaned increasingly towards the American main-

stream, which didn’t seem to affect the band’s great success. Albums like *Perfect Timing* (1987), *Save Yourself* (1989) and *MSG* (1992) met with unanimously positive reviews world-wide. MSG continued to tour all over the world, playing with renowned acts like Iron Maiden, Def Leppard, Bon Jovi, and Scorpions. During a creative hiatus, Schenker got involved with Contraband (featuring Bobby Blotzer of Ratt and Tracii Guns of L.A. Guns) and contributed numerous licks to their album.

1992 marked the end of the McAuley Schenker Group with *Unplugged Live*, and Schenker returned to the UFO fold. Their commercially extremely successful US comeback tour convinced the experts, as did the first joint release in fifteen years, called *Walk On Water*. The album arrived at the Japanese stores in 1995, while Europe had to wait another two years, in fact until a few weeks after the release of *Thank You*, Schenker’s first acoustic solo recording.

Following the US tour with UFO, he reactivated MSG and produced *Written In The Sand* with a new line-up. Autumn 1997 saw the start of an extensive European tour with UFO and a celebrated G3 tour alongside Uli Jon Roth and Joe Satriani, presenting his album *The Michael Schenker Story – Live* at the same time.

In summer 1998, Schenker ensconced himself in a recording studio near San Francisco with producer legend Mike Varney to work on his next offering *The Unforgiven*, an album that was the basis for the subsequent tour, during which *The Unforgiven World Tour – Live* was also recorded. With *Adventures Of The Imagination*, he allowed his band a break to realize his long-standing ambition to record an instrumental rock album, and the subsequent success encouraged him to follow with another, similar offering called *Dreams And Expressions*. *Be Aware Of Scorpions* was recorded by a new MSG line-up, which could also be seen live during the following European tour. The solo album, *Thank You 3*, and the MSG release, *Aracnophobia* (2003), followed. „I carried on with my new album which I started two years ago as a concept album for UFO,” Schenker explains. “When I got Jari’s demo tape I knew what to do. He was the perfect singer for this concept album and it happened to be 25 years since MSG recorded their first album. So I decided to make it a 25 Years Celebration album. I contacted all the original MSG singers one by one to sing a new song. It worked out and I am very happy with the result.” Now the members of the newly-formed band are on their marks with *Tales Of Rock’n’Roll - 25 Years Celebration*, ready to embark on their next tour in May 2006.

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MSG

Michael Schenker Group

Tales of Rock'n'Roll - 25 Years Celebration

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