

MR BLACK & BLUES

LONG ROAD HOME



Mr. Black & Blues is
Michael Pollitt

*Vocals, Guitars, Bass,
Songwriting, and
production*

With Special Guests

Tony Forbes
Guitar and Banjo

Jason McGann
Drums, Electric bass

Ben Franz
Double bass

John Bedgegood
Violin, Viola

STOP PRESS – Support added for touring Mississippi legends OLD GREY MULE!!!!

Hot on the heels of the Australian Blues and Roots Chart #1 debut, VIC/TAS awarded best debut, and Canadian Blues Underground Network #1 smash album, **BLOW THESE TRACKS – Live on The Blues Train** with special guest Chris Wilson, comes **MR BLACK & BLUES** second full length album and third release: **LONG ROAD HOME**.

MR BLACK & BLUES (aka Michael Pollitt), a prolific solo performer and producer, and the driving force behind this group of heroically talented Melbourne musicians who came together for a fleeting moment to make this record, with an enviable line-up pedigree and a musical style that has been likened to the raw blues of Eric Bibb combined with the irreverent attitude of Tom Waits and Jon Spencer, fused with one of Australia's finest blues roots voices. This album's genesis was in the inspiration of these individuals sharing a unique moment in their own successful musical journeys as Michael explains:

"Long Road Home tells the story of my journey to find the true meaning of the word "Home".

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The songs are forged out of the transition from living in London for 10 years then suddenly moving back to Australia. The change was driven by some brutal and unfortunate circumstances, which is always cause for reflection, but life is never all good or all bad and as I found my feet back in Australia my journey gave me "silver lining" moments which culminated in the formation of the friendships that would eventually come together to make this record.

They say 'home is where the heart is'. Home is my friends and family to whom I am eternally grateful, regardless of time and distance. Home is knowing I can be myself regardless of what anyone else thinks. Home is a state of mind, it is the ball of light in my chest I have learned to go into and grow each time I play. Home is the stage on which I stand that night, the flash of light between everything else, wherever I am in the world. And the long road that leads me there is my journey.

The subject matter takes in all the relationship shifts and the emotional rollercoaster that any major life change will drive but specifically tells the story of my move back to Australia and the process of making a new Home again here."

Recorded by ARIA winner Jason McGann, and Michael himself, in a house in Colac, country Victoria and mixed at OneMusic Asia by sonic architect genius Colin Wynne, the record is a feel-good roots blues rock "band in a room" and features founding John Butler Trio drummer McGann on kit, piano, and bass, as well as session hero and former Giants guitarist Tony Forbes on banjo and guitar, and ARIA winning Waifs bassist and Stillsons producer Ben Franz on double.

The album is also the first full length release hot off the desk of production legend Mark Opitz's OneMusic Studio in Melbourne and was mastered @ 301 in Sydney by Steve Smart.

Michael has a riveting back story that started with a deep reverential love of the blues passed on by a legendary Melbourne radio presenter, the personal generosity shown by one of Australia's finest musicians, ten years spent performing & promoting music in London, including supports for Alabama 3, session work for major artists on the Warner label, production duties on the BBC Electric Proms, and live performances with major artists and the BBC Concert Orchestra, touring the US East Coast with the John Butler Trio, and of all things, day jobs that included creating robots for NASA and the European Space Agency. Then there's the near-fatal surfing accident that almost ended it all.

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“Long Road Home”, entirely recorded and produced by Michael and his Breakneck Records team, is a follow on from the artists debut EP/DVD, “The Morning Light”, and the #1 debut album “Blow These Tracks”.

The album will be followed by yet to be released albums, “Live this Moment” and “Heavy Medicine” (working title Velvet Love) which are already completed and slated for release in 2014.

“Long Road Home” is now ready to be launched in Australia, Europe, and the Americas by Michael’s own **BREAKNECK RECORDS**.

Available now on ITUNES, CD BABY, BREAKNECK RECORDS website, and AMRAP AIRIT!!!

The **Australian Launches** will be held in NOVEMBER 2013:

Monday 4th (Cup Eve) @ **The Spotted Mallard** – with Chris Russell and Old Grey Mule

Thursday 7th @ **The Tote Hotel** – with The Johnny Cass Band

Friday 8th @ **The Flying Saucer Club** – with The Johnny Cass Band

Saturday 9th @ **The Blues Train** – Duo with Chris Wilson

Sunday 10th @ **Way Out West** – with The Johnny Cass Band

Saturday 16th @ **3MDR BIG GIG** – Duo with Jason Lui Soon

Saturday 16th @ **The Blues Train** – Duo with Chris Wilson

Sunday 17th @ **Cherry Bar** – OFFICIAL LAUNCH

Further launch details and giveaways are available via the Mr Black & Blues website.

<http://www.mrblackandblues.com>

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Album Download <http://www.cdbaby.com/Artist/MrBlackBlues>

Websites: <http://www.breakneckrecords.com>
<http://www.mrblackandblues.com>

Social Sites

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/MrBlackandBlues>
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/rascalfeatures?feature=mhee>
ReverbNation: <http://www.reverbnation.com/mrblackblues>

Free Downloads (limited time only): <http://www.mrblackandblues.com>

Album Launch Tickets

Monday 4th (Cup Eve) @ **The Spotted Mallard** – \$15 from <http://www.spottedmallard.com>

Thursday 7th @ **The Tote Hotel** – \$20 from <http://www.thetotehotel.com>

Friday 8th @ **The Flying Saucer Club** – \$25 from <http://www.flyingsaucerclub.com.au>

Saturday 9th @ **The Blues Train** – SOLD OUT

Sunday 10th @ **Way Out West** – \$15 from <http://wowrootsmusic.com>

Saturday 16th @ **3MDR BIG GIG** – \$20 from

<http://www.trybooking.com/Booking/BookingEventSummary.aspx?eid=61815>

Saturday 16th @ **The Blues Train** – SOLD OUT

Sunday 17th @ **Cherry Bar** – OFFICIAL LAUNCH – \$5 on the door only

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ALBUM NOTES

Long Road Home tells the story of my journey to find the true meaning of the word “Home”.

The songs are forged out of the transition from living in London for 10 years then suddenly moving back to Australia. The change was driven by some brutal and unfortunate circumstance, which is always cause for reflection, but life is never all good or all bad and as I found my feet back in Australia my journey gave me “silver lining” moments which culminated in the formation of the band that would eventually make this record.

As the liner notes explain:

“They say ‘home is where the heart is’. Home is my friends and family to whom I am eternally grateful, regardless of time and distance. Home is knowing I can be myself regardless of what anyone else thinks. Home is a state of mind, it is the ball of light in my chest I have learned to go into and grow each time I play. Home is the stage on which I stand that night, the flash of light between everything else, wherever I am in the world. And the long road that leads me there is my journey.”

The subject matter takes in all the relationship shifts and emotional rollercoaster that any major life change will drive but specifically tells the story of my move back to Australia and the process of finding my Home again here.

1. Long Road Home

The Long Road Home is a journey through physical space and time but also to the center of myself.

The opening track which carries the album title begins with a cheeky invitation which I wanted to set a tone for the record.. “Shall we?” before laying out the structure of the album story. It sets the scene like a story-teller addressing the audience. I wanted it to speak directly to the listener drawing them in to the characters that feature on the album but there is also a parallel story about the inner journey of self discovery.

The three verses cover first leaving Australia for London, losing then finding my feet in London and the formative effect that experience had on me, and then finally the challenging exit from London. It’s quite an upbeat song but there is a minor chord undertone of the loneliness of always being alone, even in company, in a way that we all are.

There is also the story of falling in love with London with its shaky but intoxicating start, followed by a maturation which grew and deepened the relationship, and then the ultimate painful split.

I have been lucky enough to find Home in many places and with many people in my life and my friends and family are my fortune in both a literal and metaphoric sense. The refrain underscores the importance of the relationships of friends and family as the most important things in my life all along the journey to find that sense of Home wherever I am in the world.

MR BLACK & BLUES**LONG ROAD HOME****2. Dreamcatcher**

It came to me in a dream. Dreamcatcher is a dark groove song with searing guitars over-layed which has had a number of incarnations. It's a warning, a fight, and an invocation all in one.

Very occasionally I have vivid prophetic dreams which send me messages; sometimes warnings, sometimes more positive images. This dream arrived at the moment everything was about to change for me and gave me a very strong message about the circumstances which would lead to my life in London dissolving around me. I lost my job, my house, and my girlfriend in 10 days and the dream laid it out and shook me into a kind of readiness.

Even though it was essentially a pretty scary revelation the closing image of the dream gave me light and hope in the form of the Ank; an ancient Egyptian symbol of life, fertility, protection and resilience which left me with a burning will to fight through the mind-meltingly tough situation I found myself in. I knew I was in for a fight and that this was the start but I was going to be ready.

3. Killing Floor

An interpretation of Skip James' classic and another dark minor swinging groove, probably my favorite of the record in terms of the way it moves, this song finds parallels in the history of the blues, the delta, and its people, and the hard times both emotionally and financially which accompanied my exit from my job, my house, and the initial exit from the relationship which I had hoped was a life partnership.

Those circumstances rattled me to the core and this song is expressing the depth of that still very raw emotion.

4. Come Back Again

A cover of Ross Wilson's famous classic, my rockabilly reworking of this song in the context of this album speaks directly about the final and brutal end of my relationship with my partner.

It's jagged harmonic start, dark rumbling reverse shuffle swing, and unbalanced vocals are all about the headspace of losing someone who you desperately do not wish to see go and the mental challenges of dealing with that rejection.

The crashing breaks are a cathartic explosion of frustration in response to the feeling of having no control over any element of my life circumstances.

5. Heartbeat

I found refuge at my Dads house in Bendigo helping him to complete a massive renovation. In the middle of summer, with my world collapsed around me, I found myself on a rooftop in 40 degree heat painting it from rusty red to shiny silver.

I thought that was a pretty good analogy for looking at myself and trying to figure out what to

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do next. I was holding myself up to the mirror to see what was left of me after being torn apart, and trying to find the will to push through my own paralysis and “be what I got to be”.

On those hot days all I could hear on the roof was the sound of my own heartbeat which was driving me forward to finish this record. This song is the turning point of the story and the album, the bottom of the downward trajectory and the first moment of hope guided with determination.

6. Fever

A cover of the Little Willie John and Peggy Lee classic this song takes its tonal cue from the dark experiences which had preceded it.

My rework rumbles and swaggers along in a Waits'esq slightly unbalanced but darkly seductive way that is both vulnerable and primal in its sense of purpose. As a cover it forced me to craft the song with my own sonic imprint which I am really proud of.

In an emotional sense it speaks to me about three people who reentered my life almost at the same time; the first a lifelong flame who has always given me the fever, the second was a friend I had been close to in London who unexpectedly came to visit Australia, both of whom had partners at the time, and the third was a fiery red head who moved me in a more immediate and physical sense.

In the context of the album it is essentially a celebration of the process of trying to reclaim my sexuality from my ex-partner.

7. Broken Heart Blues

This slow blues is a reflective letter to my ex-partner. Having had the fire re-ignited within me caused me to reflect on what personal commitment is all about and to re-evaluate how I felt.

This song coincided with a brief return to London to sort out some loose-ends which included an ultimately doomed visit to my partner to see if the relationship could be rekindled. Revelations of betrayal scarred me deeply but also helped me to distance myself. On the train on the way back to London from Cambridge this song rolled out of me on a tear-stained page.

Whilst the lyrics are a brutally honest assessment of my feelings towards my ex-partner the song's major tone has the contextual effect of closing out the painful story of my London exit and trying to look forward to what was ahead of me both emotionally and musically in Australia.

8. Smokestacked

A creative interpretation of Howling Wolf's classic Smokestack Lightning, and in a musical sense this song marks the formation of the trio back in Australia with Tony Forbes and my brother-in-law Jason McGann which would ultimately become my Australian band, and brings with it

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the sense of lightness and fun for the first time which that partnership is bound by.

The song also references the steam train which has become my home down in Queenscliff – the Mighty Blues Train.

The lyrics talk about a lost love which I found analogous to my own emotional journey but the major tones and the layered vocals speak to the many voices within us all.

Such a classic song required that I attempt something different and so my idea was to try and bring out these many voices within us in a literal way. There are three vocal layers here; a conscious voice, a subconscious voice, and The Wolf which is the primal voice within us all. I was particularly inspired by Howling Wolf's story of determination to elevate himself from the delta, to overcome whatever obstacles were in his path, and to do all this with a sense of personal justice and empowerment that extended to those people he cared about.

Wolf saved enough money to buy a car and drive himself out of the crippling poverty of the delta by playing music, he drove to Chicago where he was offered a contract by Chess Records but he could not read it. Instead of just signing his life away, he taught himself to read and negotiated his own deal which included no upfront payments for unearned royalties, unlike all of his contemporaries who ended up property of Chess Records, and for the first time holiday pay for the musicians in his band.

Wolfs story spoke to me on so many levels about the determination to make music work for me and those close by, the healing power of music to overcome the emotional pain of loss, and of course the train which I was riding almost every weekend.

Although lyrically it's a sad song, its also a great story of the blues bringing hope to the downhearted: Like Wolf said "The blues aint nothing but a good man feeling bad". This song also marks my first recorded attempt at harmonica which is also a throw-forward to things to come.

9. I'll Never Leave Alexandra

This co-write with Tony was inspired by one of the first real touring gigs with Jason and Tony up to the McNairs pub in Alexandra.

The drive over the Black Spur, the fantastic support of the McNairs and all the Alexandra crew (all of whom are great story-tellers), and the unforgettable night of revelry that followed the show lead to a moment which I hope many people have shared while away from home; the "f*ck it all, I'm not going back, I'm staying here forever" moment at 3:45 in the morning.

With tongue firmly planted in cheek, this is a bar-room chorus rambler which gets progressively more debauched as it unfolds, just like the night itself, which ultimately led Tony to come out with "please just don't tell my wife" as he eventually staggered off to bed which became the chorus. It is pure fun and sums up what its like to play with Jase and Tony.

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The closing credits to my film. This reflective story began with my sisters struggle with her own relationship and wanting her to see all the good things happening around her to which she was blinded by her immediate circumstances. It made me think and reflect on my own vision of what life was really about.

There is a dream inside us all hoping for the courage to be set free. So often we wish to insulate ourselves and shelter from the storms in our lives we forget to embrace the opportunities around us.

Learning to dance in the rain was emotionally and literally the lesson I had to learn from all the experiences which went into these stories on this album.

I found inspiration in the great speech by Nelson Mandela marking the end of Apartheid in South Africa, particularly cathartic as that was the county of birth of my ex-partner, and the melody played itself out on my 1yr old nephews toy guitar.

And yes, it was raining.. and we danced.

Further launch details and giveaways are available via the Mr Black & Blues website.

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REVERBNATION: <http://www.reverbnation.com/mrblackblues>

SOUNDCLOUD: <https://soundcloud.com/mrblackandblues>

YOUTUBE: <http://www.youtube.com/user/rascalfeatures>

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