



breakneck records



PRESS BIO

"This Mr Black & Blues sure
is an interesting fellow."
- Matt Fredrick, PBS

Highlights:

2013/14 AUSTRALIAN ARTIST OF THE YEAR
Rhythms Magazine Reader's Poll
(beat Paul Kelly and Russell Morris)

2014 CHERRY AWARDS - Best Live Performance

"BLOW THESE TRACKS - Live on The Blues Train with special guest CHRIS WILSON"
- debut album released May 2013

2013/14 BEST AUSTRALIAN BLUES ALBUM
Rhythms Magazine Reader's Poll

- 2013/4 BEST LIVE ALBUM (WORLDWIDE)
Canadian/USA Blues Underground Network's Year End Review 2013
- 2013/14 BEST AUSTRALIAN BLUES ALBUM
Canadian/USA Blues Underground Network's Year End Review 2013
- 2013 BEST DEBUT ALBUM
VIC/TAS Blues Awards presented by Melbourne Blues Appreciation Society
- #1 Australian Blues Roots Airplay Chart - Debut May 2013
- #1 Canadian/USA Blues Underground Network Chart - Sept-Nov 2013

"brilliant player.. a remarkable album. And it heralds the arrival of a new blues star"
- Jeff Jenkins (Inpress, ABC)

"An absolute cracker" - Maxwell Von Crowdaddy (RRR)

"truly righteous blues" -Tony Jagers (2EAR FM)

"Its fantastic.. believe me" - Geoff Pegler (Bluesbeat Radio)

"Born from a simply brilliant concept.. a simply brilliant album... shooting to the top of my favorite Albums list.. for 2013... 5***** - - John Vermilyea, Blues Underground Network (Canada)

"an absolute corker, really fabulous live sound & beautifully produced" - Basement Discs

"stops you in your tracks.. get yourself a copy of this ASAP" - Barry Maxwell (3NRG)

"LONG ROAD HOME" - second album and released November 2013

**2013/14 AUSTRALIAN ALBUM OF THE YEAR
Rhythms Magazine Reader's Poll**

- #1 Australian Blues Roots Airplay Chart November 2013

- 2014/15 BEST AUSTRALIAN BLUES ALBUM

Canadian/USA Blues Underground Network's Year End Review 2014

"So hot it melted my car stereo!" - Lloyd Spiegel

"One hot album! Usually the follow up album to a number 1 charting album is a hard act to follow, but with 'Long Road Home' Mr Black & Blues hits top gear with this very fine album of blues. World class, every track!" - Geoff Pegler (BluesBeat Radio)

"The new album is fabulous. Great feel, sparse rootsy Banjo and smokin blues delivery. This one is up two more notches. Love it!" - Salty Dog (Blues N Roots Radio)

"Matt Taylor invented Oz Blues & Michael Pollitt is cut from the same cloth. Long Road Home is a gritty, heartfelt work of wonder." - Duncan Smith (TOP SHELF MUSIC 89.7FM)

Festival Appearances:

Spitz Festival London 2008, 2009, 2010

Reading Festival 2010, Kings Place Festival 2010

Hackney BeRecreative 2010, Shoreditch Festival 2010

Motor City Music Festival 2014, Adelaide Fringe 2014

Southern Blues 2014 (festival headliner)

Sydney Blues and Roots 2014 (festival opening night headliner), 2015

Blues at The Briars 2015

Forth Valley Blues Festival 2015 (Tony Joe White Support)

Marysville Jazz and Blues Festival 2015 (festival headliner)

Airlie Beach Music Festival 2015

Blues Before Sunrise 2014, 2015 (festival headliner)
West Oz Blues Fest 2015 (festival headliner)
Mojo Burning 2016, "Wye and Sep Bands Together" Bushfire Benefit 2016
Blues For Lost Souls 2016, 2017
Bulleit Bourbon Launch @ Vibe London 2017
Blues Zeppelin 30th Anniversary, Bern Switzerland 2019
Echuca Winter Blues 2011-2013, 2015-2019, 2022-2024
St Kilda Blues Festival 2018, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024. 2025

MR BLACK & BLUES - Short Description/Musical Style (50 words):

Electrifying, wild and unpredictable original multi-winning blues, MR BLACK & BLUES is a MUST SEE. Stripped Back delta style or amped up and rocking out on bars and tables with his signature Gretsch White Falcon; grinning, grooving and good times are guaranteed. DO NOT MISS THIS SHOW.

Rhythms Magazine Australian Artist of The Year with Blues Album of The Year AND Australian Album of The Year (beat Russell Morris and Paul Kelly).

HEAVY MEDICINE - Short Description/Musical Style (50 words):

Fronted by Rhythms Magazine Australian Artist of the Year in 2013/14, Michael Pollitt aka (Mr Black & Blues / Heavy Medicine), this original Blues Rock trio is an allstar band featuring a killer trio rhythm section, who packs a mean punch of voodoo blues and rock'n'roll soul.

MR BLACK & BLUES - Press Bio (300 words)

As Mr Black & Blues, Michael beat out Russell Morris and Paul Kelly to be Rhythms Magazine Australian Artist of the Year in 2013/14 with a swag of local and international awards and festival appearances, and two independently produced #1 Australian Blues Roots Airplay Chart albums.

No other artist has had two #1 records in the same year or two albums in the top #15 at the same time in Australian chart history which led Jeff Jenkins (Inpress, ABC) to describe him as a "brilliant player.. a remarkable album. And it heralds the arrival of a new blues star".

Michael's new project, Heavy Medicine, is a psychedelic voodoo blues rock affair. The critically acclaimed 6 track EP "Live This Moment" is now backed up by new Mr Black & Blues single "DANGER MAN" ready for release in September 2025, to be followed by the full 10 track album, the self titled "Heavy Medicine" awaiting release.

On the strength of its debut performance at the legendary Cherry Bar the band was nominated for a Cherry Award for best live performance. On its debut festival performance at Blues At The Briars the band was lauded as the "set of the day" by festival organisers.

Michael has also returned to his London session playing roots, have previously recorded for Warner (Barry White and Magnetik North), and BBC (Marc Almond), he currently plays bass for Northside Pleasure Club currently releasing their second record "Shadows" also on BREAKNECK RECORDS, and has previously been an occasional touring band member (acoustic) for OAM and Australian Songwriting Hall Of Fame'r, Kate Ceberano.

Michael has also led and co-ordinated the Breakneck Records Songwriters Studio sponsored by APRA, 3-day intensive music writing workshop part of the Echuca Winter Blues festival since 2015.

Interview with Michael Pollitt (aka Mr Black & Blues / Heavy Medicine)

From:

Born Melbourne, Australia... and over 10 years in London, England

Band members:

Michael Pollitt... and some heroically talented accomplices..
Tim Burnham on drums, Andy Fry on upright bass, Shane "Steel" O'Neil on percussion, Dahna McGann and Keira Murugasu on vocals.. and Colin Wynne blowing wind in our sails and making everything sound amazing..

Sounds like:

Ourselves hopefully. We're not trying to sound like anyone else.
Influences include Dr John, Bonnie Raitt, John Cleary, Nick Drake, Burt Jansch, Tedeschi Trucks, Gillian Welsh and David Rawlings, Hound Dog Taylor, Howlin' Wolf, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion..

We have five live configurations now:

- 1.**MR BLACK & BLUES SOLO** - one-man-trio with guitar, bass, and foot drums
- 2.**ACOUSTIC DUO** - with award winning upright bass player Andy Fry (perfect acoustic showcase setup)
- 3.**PYRO DUO** - with award winning drummer Tim Burnham (think Black Keys)
- 4.**HEAVY MEDICINE** – Guitar, bass, drums, and Hammond, as heard on debut “Live For This Moment” and upcoming self-titled release
- 5.**MR BLACK & BLUES COMBO** - Full band with guitar, drums, and upright bass (as heard on #1 album "Long Road Home")

How did you first get started?

I was a late starter I guess. I started playing guitar when I was 19 and fell

in love instantly. I always loved rock'n'roll from Elvis through to Jon Spencer and when you start following the roots of Rock you're headed straight for the heart of the blues. I was completely self-taught by ear listening to Max Crowdaddy on RRR on Thursday nights got me deep into the blues masters and I was hooked.

I took off to London and played a bunch of sessions and started experimenting with my own bands and stayed 10 years.

In 2006 broke I broke my neck in a surfing accident which meant twelve months recovery in a full neck brace and the loss of the use of my left hand for almost a year. My doctors told me the best thing I could do to get the use of my hand back was to play my guitar and they didn't have to ask me twice.

Slowly music gifted me the use of my hand again.

During that process I found the inspiration for the Mr Black & Blues project and began writing the material that would form the debut album, The Morning Light. The name Mr Black & Blues was delivered to me during a night in the studio with some friends who worked at the BBC who heard about my accident and said I was not Mr Blues, but Mr Black & Blues.

In early 2007 I set up Breakneck Records and began to organize and promote shows at venues around London. The regular Sunday Breakneck Records sessions at the Old Blue Last became home turf for me as house band and I featured my friends including David Ross Macdonald from the Waifs, and French adopted son Charlie Winston. I also set up a new "burlesque and blues joint" to be known as the Virginia Creepers Rockin' Blues Club and featured the new full band lineup with Lorne Stockman on harmonica, Miles Danso on upright bass, and Zeke Manyika (Orange Juice / Faze Action) on drums as house band.

By late 2007 the material was really starting to come to life and the house band spots were augmented by regular live shows. I then took the decision to lay the tracks down and approached Liam of Toerag Studio in London. Toerag boasts the original EMI REDD desk from Abbey Road used to record Sergeant Pepper. The White Stripes debut, Elephant, which won a Grammy for best production in 2005 recorded at Toerag,

was the benchmark and we got cracking over three weekends.

From not knowing if I would be able to play again just 12 months earlier to having a record from Toerag was a dream.

I came home to Australia in late 2009 and set off on an Australian and UK tour in 2010 with brother inlaw and John Butler Trio drummer, Jason McGann, and got some support from the Melbourne Blues Society and airplay on PBS and RRR.

I ended up with a residency at the Blues Train down in Queenscliff on the coast of Victoria, Australia. Literally an old working steam train and that gave me the inspiration to want to record my album there as a celebration of that time and because no one had ever done it.. I love that old train and so I invited my hero Chris Wilson, one of Australia's best musicians and harmonica player to join me and the rest of that story is history.

Ed: Since launching the internationally acclaimed and multi award-winning "Blow These Tracks" Michael released his follow up album "Long Road Home" which also garnered worldwide recognition and landed him the Rhythms Magazine Australian Album and Artist of the year awards. Since then, Michael has been a regular feature on Festival bills touring nationally and internationally and writing the material for his upcoming releases.

In 2015 I set to recording the forthcoming "[Heavy Medicine](#)" records with an amazing band featuring Andy Fry on bass and Shane "Steel" O'Neill on drums and some heroically talented special guests including Paul Williamson on Sax, Tim Neal and Liam Kealy on Hammond and with a choral performance from Judd Field of Melbourne Gospel Choir. We launched the Debut EP "Live For This Moment" in 2017 but I was struck down with various health issues (a broken right hand, and two serious concussions) which conspired to stop us in our tracks. As a result the EP never really got a proper launch until the Cherry Bar showcase in 2022. We just kept on gigging the festivals and clubs circuit whenever I was physically able.

I also kept up my work with the Songwriters Studio music camp for kids as part of the Echuca Winter Blues Festival which I have led since 2015.

Around that same time I recorded the demos for what would become the next Mr Black & Blues records "Danger Man", and forthcoming records "Down By The Riverside" and "Sagittarius A*" in Tim Burham's garage. I continued to build on these raw recordings during a relocation to Scotland and various national and international tours until the Covid dark times sent everyone into lockdown and I slid back under the boarder gate like Indiana Jones before it slammed shut. When we were finally allowed out again I got straight to work in the new Thirty Mill Studio with collaborator Colin Wynne and we have been chipping away at these releases ever since.

Life conspired to get in the way of various launches over the past five years so after ten years of writing, recording, gigging and soul searching if I still wanted to walk this path I'm now ready to put all this music out into the world.

What made you want to become a musician?

It's my purpose. I have a deep reverential pathological love of the healing power of music...

I've spent a lot of time contemplating consciousness and the things that connect humanity, and music is one of the most powerful forces known to mankind. It is a universal language.

I was humbled to watch people like Chris Wilson light a fire onstage a draw people to it, uplift them and transform them in ways they couldn't even perceive, except or the fact of it. I've watched people like Bonnie Raitt, Tedeschi Trucks, Esperanza Spalding, and Gillian Welsh and David Rawlings "tune" an entire auditorium and send them into the night with nothing but a song in their heart.. and that's what I aim to do..

What are some of your influences?

Early on it was Jon Spencer, Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, Led Zepplin then Max Crowdaddy introduced me to Chris Wilson, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Chuck Berry, John Lee Hooker, RL Burnside, and Howlin Wolf.. and down the rabbit hole I went..

More recently its bands like Little Barry, Ariel Posen, Brothers Landreth (no relation to Sonny but he's great too), Rival Sons, Derek Trucks, Dr Johns "Locked Down" collab with Dan Auerbach from The Black Keys, and "Welcome" by Doyle Bramhall II, with that voodoo blues infused material that crosses boundaries that really grabs my ears.

I love everything by Bonnie Raitt, John Cleary, Nick Drake, James Taylor, Crosby Stills Nash and Young, Tedeschi Trucks, Gillian Welsh and David Rawlings and Eileen Jewell.. and I've recently got into Burt Jansch as an inspiration for many of his contemporaries..

[Favorite artist and song?](#)

An impossible question... But put a gun to my head and I'll say the Donny Hathaway classic ["Someday We'll All Be Free"](#) performed by Jon Batiste and Corinne Bailey Rae.

[Who do you look up to as artists?](#)

Anyone who is true to themselves. Bonnie Raitt, Jon Cleary, Tedeschi Trucks, Jon Batiste, and Buddy Guy are authentic standouts.

My local hero's Chris Wilson, Sarah Carroll, Jeff Lang and Alison Ferrier, Kelly Auty, Kerri Simpson, Sweet Felecia, Andre Warhurst, Geoff Achison, and Andrea Marr. I really respect those guys as real artists and great people.

I have to call out Chester Arthur Burnett.. Howlin Wolf ..The first man to drive himself out of the delta who taught himself to read and write at the age of 50. He reminds me that whatever problem you have, and we all have plenty, there is no problem too great and its never too late.

[Who would be your dream collaboration?](#)

Bonnie Raitt, Jon Cleary, Jon Batiste, or Tedeschi Trucks.. at The

Grammys, Red Rocks, or Glastonbury.

Describe your best gig(s)

Festivals are always a thrill but really just getting to play to an appreciative audience anywhere and move people is what it is all about for me.

Cherry Bar Heavy Medicine Launch.. don't ask..

Getting to play with Chris Wilson and record our set on the Blues Train. Chris is a mighty man and we damn near tore the carriage apart for that recording.

Climbing the speaker-stack at Forth Blues Festival was fun.. an EPIC 4 hour face-melting blowout to a packed house at the Longly in Tasmania.. That night where I got onto the roof at the Rails in Byron ..so many good times.

Closing the outdoor stage at the 2025 St Kilda Blues Festival against setting sun was a magic moment.

Guesting with headliners Monkey Junk (Canada) at Mark Stenzler's Blues Zeppelin's 30th Anniversary in Bern Switzerland was pretty great too.

Describe your worst gig

That time a Bobs Country Bunker when I was booked as Mr Black & Bluegrass.. no seriously I love Bluegrass (tips hat to Mr Strings). Playing live is pretty much on the same level as breathing for me.. Its the flashes of light between everything else.

I don't care if its two people or twenty-thousand I play every show like its Glastonbury main stage and just tune into myself and try to put good energy into the space. If it feels good on the inside chances are it's pretty good on the outside too.

[Tell us about your latest release](#)

Having returned from the UK at the start of Covid, I got to work with "audio bonsai" magician Colin Wynne, with my niece Dahna McGann and her friend Kiera Murugasu (both ex Australian Girls Choir), to turn the demos from Tim Burnham's garage into new single "DANGER MAN". It has taken longer than "Chinese Democracy" to get done but we're really proud of the results as we hope you dig it too!

"DANGER MAN", 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 multi award winning releases "Blow These Tracks - live on the Blues Train featuring special guest Chris Wilson", and "Long Road Home".

For more information visit <http://www.mrblackandblues.com> or <http://www.breakneckrecords.com> and see what happens next.