

Michael Heaton

Americana with a rock-n roll heart.

Every so often, a music fan is lucky enough to run into a guy like Michael Heaton.

Boasting a guitar case full of songs that hook you with freshness and instant familiarity, Heaton is the rare artist who takes the traditions of American rock, country and pop and finds a truly original modern voice. His melodies stick with you after one listen. His lyrics touch a chord in both your head and heart. The result is a combination that's won him a large and loyal fan base. Over the course of several albums and more than a thousand live shows, Heaton has proved himself an artist who delivers the goods as both a songwriter and performer.

His newest release, "I Know What I Know" is a yet another batch of his original songs destined to win an enduring place in your music collection. You could call his songs "catchy," but that would only minimize what he possesses—a true gift for songwriting. "A great song," he says, "makes you think—not about the singer, but about yourself."

Heaton literally faked his way into life as a musician, gaining admission to a pre-teen band by struggling his way through Ted Nugent's "Cat Scratch Fever" at a grade school party after boasting to the host he was a guitarist.

Taking up the instrument for real at age 12, he began writing songs within a month of learning his first chord. "All the bands I loved," he says, "had guitarists who wrote their material. I just thought that was what you were *supposed* to do!"

Heaton was soon forming and fronting bands, doing whatever it took to follow his passion. "I worked all kinds of jobs," he says, "from driving a diaper truck to performing singing telegrams—but it was always to keep my music going."

Heaton's music really *did* get going when he released his first album, *Learning Curve*, in 2000. A winning and eclectic collection of songs, the album gained significant attention and opened doors that led to him recording *Our Little Secret* in 2003. Produced by Pat Bergeson (Lyle Lovett, Chet Atkins, Allison Kraus), the album features a polished Heaton backed by a host of Nashville greats like drummer Eddie Bayers, mandolin virtuoso Sam Bush, and bassist Dave Pomeroy.

With *Our Little Secret*, Heaton hit his stride, discovering the right sound for his already-respected compositions. The buzz from the album led to invitations for him to open for well-known artists like Shelby Lynne, Robbie Fulks, Sleepy LaBeef, Duke Robillard. With his newfound momentum, he hit the road in earnest, playing 200 or more nights a year and gaining a reputation as a passionate musician and humorous, engaging performer.

Now several more years down his musical road, Heaton keeps mining his songwriting gift to turn out tunes that instantly ingrain themselves into your memory. On any given night, you'll find him on stage, bringing those tunes to fans both new and veteran. In the process, he's been able to do something which many aspire to, but few accomplish—make a living playing music. "I've got this really nice thing going," he says. "I have fans who truly support what I do."