

ON THE BALL

Issue 89



Hi Everyone

It's been a good first half of the year but it promises to be an even better second half with Michael's 'Glow' tour approaching fast. This is such a brilliant album and we can't wait to see it performed live. We were at the Rose Theatre in Kingston-upon-Thames on 1st June when he performed several songs from the album plus he gave us some background information on the inspiration for some of the tracks. We are looking forward to hearing more about them during the tour.

At the Rose Theatre we were also introduced to Liss Jones who will be Michael's guest singer. She is a great addition to the line-up and we are also looking forward to her contribution.

Just before the show started, we were lucky enough to spend some time chatting with Michael. Here's one of the photos:

We will only just about have time to draw breath before Michael will be appearing as Herod in Jesus Christ Superstar for one week only, between 23rd November and 5th December.



Lots coming up including Warners Weekends and the Christmas Musical Spectacular so our Michael is definitely keeping himself busy!

Lots of love
Maureen and Gill

Dear Everyone,

Well my love lies, how are you all doing? Well I hope and coping with this extraordinarily hot weather that I find myself writing this letter to you in.

I'm just back from my holidays and now find myself in a sweltering Llangollen where the concert tonight is in a tent with no aircon so I think its going to be a hot one.....hopefully in more ways than one!!!

I needed the holiday so much after the madness of the new album release.

Blimey, I was everywhere and on everything but I loved it. The response to 'Grow' has been more than I could have dreamed of and thank you for all the support, positivity and generosity you have shown it and me.

It has blown me away and now I'm getting ready to take the show on the road, perform a number of these new songs for you, revisiting a lot of the old favourites and basically seeing as many of you as I possibly can. It is

going to be just a total joy for me and I hope you are able to make it to at least one of the shows.

But that's not going to be the end of my appearances for this year. Can you believe I am going to be playing HEROD in the new J.C.S. at Drury Lane?? I can't bloody wait! It will, of course, be a subtle, nuanced and understated performance I'm sure.... not. I am going to 'eat the scenery' as they say 😊.

And, in September, we are announcing my return to the West End and the Coliseum Theatre next summer.... and I think (and hope) it's going to be very special. I'd love to tell you what it is now but I'm under strict embargo so I can't, but I do think it's going to be rather sweet. Not long till you find out.

Meanwhile, in the real world, we continue to live in such strange and unsettled times, which is why I love

doing my radio show so much. It seems to provide me and hopefully the listener with an oasis of positivity and inspiration. So many moving, uplifting and surprising stories that help us to focus on the many good things and people that still surround us in this world. Those are the things I prefer to focus on these days. The bad news will always find us but we often have to seek out the good news and I think you'll find it on Radio 2 on a Sunday at 9.00 am.

I want to wish you all the love in the world and to say thank you for everything you have given me. I especially want to thank Maureen and Gill and their families who have been there from the very start and continue to keep us all connected. They have faced their own difficult challenges with so much bravery, humor and love and are such special friends to me.

Take care and God bless

Nik
x

FAN CLUB FRIENDSHIPS



Recently I have been thinking again about what Michael always says about his fans making the greatest friendships. As someone who has had a tendency to shy away from social gatherings, I can only thank Michael for introducing me to the loveliest friends, from all areas of the country.

If we go to a non Ball or Boe gig in our home town of Harrogate, then it is common for us to not see anyone that we know. And yet, if we go to a show in Manchester or London, we often see many friends and arrange to meet up for a pre or post-show meal. We also have regular contact via social media & messenger.

The ultimate experience was when we went on the first Stages Cruise, and we found we knew over 50 people on board!

Sadly, quite a few of our friends that we have made through Michael are no longer with us, and whilst we miss them very much, we have lovely memories of times spent with them.

I have enclosed a collage of just some of the lovely friends that 'my Michael' and I have met along the way.

Here's to many more happy memories & making more MB friends!

Claire Stockil





HAVING A BALL IN BIRMINGHAM



After having lunch I began my journey, it was ridiculously hot but was trying not to let that dampen my spirits. Once in Birmingham it took three people I had to ask in order to find the HMV I was looking for!

I picked up my CD and wristband from the desk. I went in search of a loo before taking my way back and joining the queue. It was quite a small turn out but after disposing of the cellophane and writing my name on a post-it note (this was so Michael knew who he was dedicating it to!) I said hello to Lynn and Margaret.

The event was so well managed which meant it was pleasant and stress free. Nearing 5pm Michael came out of one door then through another and we wondered if it was to change. This happened again before he came out for real this time. He said that it was so hot that he'd decided to stay as he was!

This is where I thought HMV out did themselves, they let all wheelchair users and those who were disabled go first before letting the queue of able-bodied fans through.

It wasn't long until it was my turn and after putting my bags in the self-made seating area and handing my phone over to the HMV employee, I made my way over to the desk where Michael was stood. As always he was lovely. I handed him my CD and it amused me that he was singing along to his new album the whole while!

After getting my phone back I was pleasantly surprised that my meeting was captured perfectly, thank you HMV guy!

All in all such a lovely, beautiful day – despite the heat!

Emma Ioannides

BAGS OF FUN WITH MICHAEL!



I went to meet Michael in Manchester to get my copy of 'Glow' signed. I was first in the queue and I was so glad the air con was on as it was a hot one!

I showed Michael the bag my friend had given me and asked him if he liked it, his response was (and I quote) "I like half of it"!

Here's my photos from the event, including a birthday message on my CD and the bag in question!

Jen Howard

GLOWING WITH PRIDE

The latest album from Michael is a milestone achievement, marking his first studio album of all original material. While he had co-written tracks like 'Someone Else's Dream' and 'Just When', it wasn't until his 2019 release 'Coming Home To You' when it could be said he made a serious effort at writing more material. This increased with 2021's 'We Are More Than One' which had just three cover versions. That also saw songwriter extraordinaire Amy Wadge come onboard, and her experience and burgeoning friendship with Michael was key to him growing in confidence.

'Glow' is a superbly balanced album. The upbeat opener 'Best Night Of Your Life' is a statement of intent for the supporting live shows, while the title track is modern Pop perfection. Michael knows his way around a ballad and delivers in spades with 'A Million Lights' and the heart-wrenching 'Remember To Remember'. 'How Do We Get Back There', the excellent duet with Liss Jones, is another highlight and 'Vintage' is glorious fun. 'You' is magnificent and 'Little Wins' displays Michael's trademark optimism. If you got the Deluxe version, there are two additional covers, 'Some Guys Have All The Luck' which was a hit for both Robert Palmer and later, even more successfully for Rod Stewart, and Bread's 'Everything I Own'. Both are superbly executed, but whichever version you bought, 'Glow' ranks as one of Michael's strongest and well crafted records to date.

James Gaden



UK viewers were able to catch Michael on television recently when he appeared on Channel 4's Sunday Brunch show. Michael was part of an eclectic line up of guests, including Freya Ridings - Michael covered her song "Lost Without You" on the 'Coming Home To You' album. He was on the show to promote the release of 'Glow' and the upcoming tour.



ANOTHER FAN IS BORN

by Katrina Moia

This pictures shows Michael with my sister Francesca Tomlin, myself and Maeve, who is my granddaughter. Michael told our story on his radio show two years ago, when he first started his 'Love Songs' programme. He interviewed me because both my sons were getting married within a couple of months of each other. He dedicated the song 'Close To You' to both boys and their wives to be. We had been through a very rough time throughout our lives, as their dad Roberto had MS and died when they were 18 and 21. We kept strong and are all very close. Maeve is my eldest son Edward's first child. Taking her to meet Michael kind of completed the story for me. As an aside, my mum was a huge Michael fan and I would travel the length of England in the 1990's taking her to concerts. She would have loved the fact that Maeve seemed to be a bit mesmerised by Michael as the photo shows!



READY, STEADY, GLOW!

Michael Ball has just released his latest studio album, 'Glow'. With over 20 albums to his name, that's impressive enough, but this marks the first time the singer has recorded a collection of completely original material. James Gaden spoke with a justifiably proud Michael to discuss it...



You very kindly granted me an interview when ‘Coming Home To You’ came out (in *On The Ball* Issue 75). You said in that interview, because you’d written four songs on that album, that you’d love to do an album of all original music. Now here we are with ‘Glow!’

And we’ve done it! I’m so happy with the way people are responding to it and the feedback for it. It’s been joyous.

The songs are brilliant. I’m really, really pleased with this album. Just speaking generally as a fan, I love it.

Oh, thank you. Have you got any favourites?

There isn’t one I dislike. I always gravitate to the up-tempo stuff so ‘Best Night Of Your Life’ immediately grabbed me. That’s got concert opener written all over it.

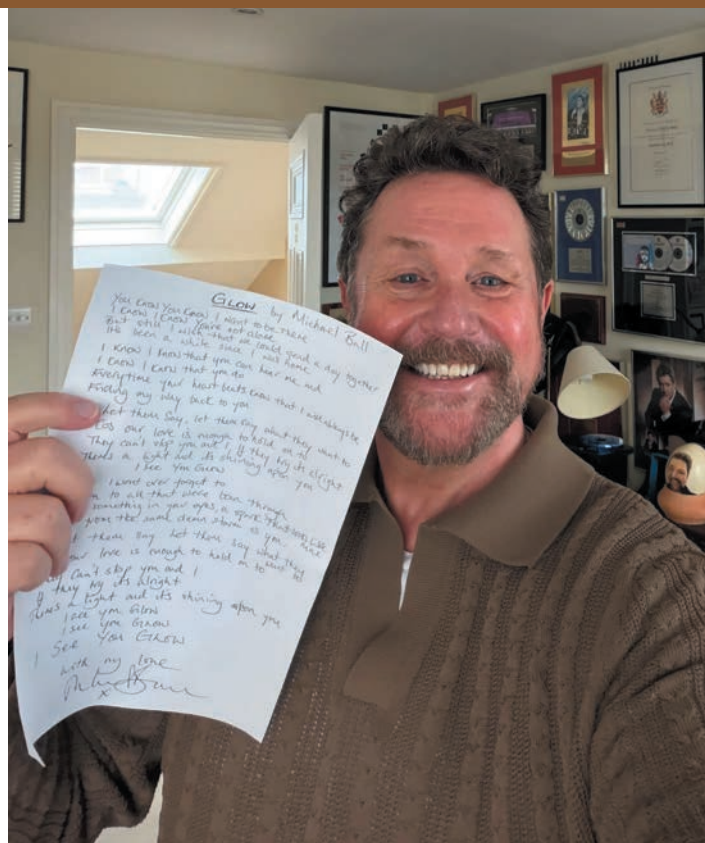
That’s exactly what it was written for. That’s how we’re going to kick off our gigs. I think ‘Vintage’ works as well. That’s going to be fun to do.

When we spoke about making a new album last time, you said it could be quite daunting where you sit there thinking, “what am I going to do now”? Knowing that you’re going to be writing the songs yourself, does that make things easier, or is that more pressure?

It’s a bit of both. It means that you’ve only got yourself to answer to, but then you’ve got to come up with it. So you start off the process thinking, “oh God, what have I done? Is this going to work? Have I made a real mistake here?” But then really quickly as the process developed, as Amy (Wadge) and Zak (Lloyd) and I sat around and we started the work, we just knew we were all on the same page. Creativity was flowing. And it was... I mean, easy is the wrong word... but it was! It just flowed. It was the right place, the right time for all of us, I think. We had such a good time doing it. Amy and I know each other so well, so there’s a real shorthand in the way that we can work and talk to each other. And we know each other’s lives. We know we have an inkling of what we want to write about. Then we work on the basis that no idea is a stupid idea, until it is. I’ve talked at length about the idea for ‘Vintage’. And both Amy and Zak said, “yeah, this is a great idea”. I said, “we’ve got to call it ‘Vintage’, pre-owned and pre-loved”, because if you start off with a phrase like that, you think, “right, so what’s that about?” That’s about me. That’s about all of us who have added years to our lives and are still doing what we do. We are still vintage, pre-owned and pre-loved.

The same went for a simple idea like, “okay, I want to write the opener for the tour”. You always worry what you’re going to open a tour with. I said, “I don’t want to worry about it. I want to have the best shows. Every show I do, I want to give an audience the best night of their life.” And there’s your launch pad. That’s how we wrote, it’s a plea to the audience to forget everything, to let yourselves go and just give in to the night of entertainment. That’s the genesis of that.

So if you’ve got the ideas and you’re surrounded by creativity, it just pours out. You can’t be frightened to say, “do you know what, that’s a rubbish idea”. Or say, “no, that isn’t quite working”. Sometimes we need to revisit something because you know something is there, but you haven’t quite got the best out of it



yet. So it’s a really exciting process. The great thing about technology is we could literally sit down, just the three of us, in this little studio, and as ideas are coming, we can sort of demo things, play with chord structures and tempos and keys and leave with a pretty decent demo to live with, to then work out, “right, how do I hear the arrangement? What does this need? Is this going to work?” So it’s a great fun process. And there wasn’t a moment of angst.

Obviously your friendship with Amy has been the key ingredient, sort of the catalyst to seriously get into writing your own material. How did you cross paths with her originally?

It was after Alfie and I had done the O2. We had a very late night on the Saturday night and on Sunday we were doing a show and I’d been championing her track ‘Faith’s Song’ from ‘Keeping Faith’ that she’d written. I loved the song and we played it and it was starting to get some traction. So I’d heard about Amy, of course. I suggested that she came in and she played for us and we did an interview – this was in the old radio show, before I started doing ‘Love Songs’. We got her to come in and by chance I’m playing this lovely Alicia Keys song on the radio as she walks in. This is the first time I met her. I went, “Hello Amy, so nice to meet you. It’s good this song, isn’t it?” She went, “oh, thank you very much”. I didn’t realize she’d written it! (laughs) And I thought, “oh, God, she’s so cool”. And then we started talking... and we didn’t stop talking and laughing and bantering. I think both of us immediately felt there was a great connection between us. As we talked, she said, “have you ever thought about writing?” And I said, “yeah, I’ve thought about getting in touch with you because people suggested that you’d be a great person to write with”. And she said, “I’d love that”. I said, “nah, you wouldn’t want to write with me”. She said, “I promise you I would”. So we swapped numbers. Then four days later, we go into the lockdown. So a





few weeks after that, I'm thinking, "I'm going to call her to see if we can make this work on Zoom". We spoke, she told me what equipment to get, to set up Zoom and a little recording thing in my back bedroom. I set it all up and we started writing. And it just like... we didn't see each other in person for, God, almost a year and a half. It was all done on Zoom. But we just knew we were getting somewhere, we were destined to be in each other's lives. We just clicked. Then when the world opened up again, my solo tour came around and she'd not performed for a long time, she had concentrated on the songwriting. I persuaded her she really should be performing and singing because she's an amazing performer. And it took a lot of persuasion, but she did it and it was the best thing she's done – she was brilliant on the tour. And it's just grown from there. We talk all the time. We advise each other and we know about each other's lives. It's one of those great things that serendipity throws at you. If COVID had happened a week earlier, I'd never have met her.

It's weird how things work out. And then you mentioned about Zak being the third piece of the puzzle. So how did he come into the picture?

Well, he lived in America with his wife, but he moved back after COVID. He's a writer and a producer, and a great singer as well. And he's a Welsh boy. He moved quite near to Amy. They started working really closely together. She said, "you have to meet Zak. He'll make a great collaborator for us." He's technically brilliant – a great musician, so we met and we got on instantly. We made him part of the triumvirate. Nick Patrick, who's produced a lot

of my other albums, and the Alfie albums, he came on board right at the end to sprinkle the magic dust on the final mixes. But it was really Zak producing with me and with Amy. He was writing some of the songs with us as well.

Then we do the demo for the duet 'How Do We Get Back Here'. I knew I wanted to write a duet and I knew what I wanted it to be about. And he got Liss, his wife, to do the guide vocal on it. I heard it and I went, "well, we don't need to look any further. She's going to do the duet". She was fabulous – and now she's going to come and support me on my tour.

That was literally my next question. I have written here "On 'How Do We Get Back Here', did you have somebody in mind when you were writing it to duet with?"

Yeah, Barbra Streisand, obviously. (laughs) I knew it needed somebody with a special voice, somebody who had some understanding of relationships and was mature enough to handle the content of it, who knew what it was about. Initially when the idea came, we were writing duets and I knew what I wanted to do with that. The other ideas were all a bit lovey-dovey and a little bit Disney. I said, "No, I want something more like 'You Don't Bring Me Flowers'" because I wanted it to be about a relationship that has lasted and has petered out, as you see happening so many times, because you take people for granted in a relationship. But you can remember the magic of it originally, and both of you will think, you know, "how did we get to this position and how do we get back to how we were? *Can* we get back to how we were?" So it's a grown up love song.

Definitely. I've noted down here that there's some really strong lyrical work on these songs. Is that mostly down to you?

I'd like to think so. But all of us worked on them, I mean, Amy is a brilliant lyricist as well. And we work well together. I know what 'sings', if you know what I mean. There's no other way of describing it, I know how it should sing and how to invest in it. With the song 'Remember To Remember', that was literally a text that I sent to Amy when her mother passed and she was going through a bad time. I wrote to her a long text, but at the end of it, I wrote "remember to remember... and smile". And she sent back "that is absolutely the title of a track" so that's how that one came about. Just from something I wrote in a text. You get these inspirations all over.

That one hits really hard, but in a good way, for any anybody who's lost anybody.

Yeah, I know. It was written because of what happened with my Mum and with my Dad sort of disappearing, now that he is living with dementia. It's a really tough but perfectly usual circle of life.

Yeah, exactly. I don't want to say... saying 'grown up' sounds a bit patronising, but some of the subjects you touch on and the way you've done it, it's such a well-crafted, mature album, yet it's also a modern Pop record. The fact that you've managed to balance the two I think is brilliant.

Oh, thank you, love. Well, you know, that's the different talents, nothing is written and produced and made entirely in solitude. That's the influences of other people. That's them understanding what I was trying to do, what I wanted to make. You know, I'm not a young Pop turn. I've got a lot of life experiences. And I think the fans, because so many of them have been with me for so long, the fans have as well. We've all been through the same kind of shit. The best music, the most powerful music I think, is that stuff that you listen to and you think, "oh, I can relate". Even if it's a fun and joyous song, which makes you go, "yes, this is what we need!" This is what we want to connect with. But with the more profound things,

you mustn't be afraid to look at those things and to find a way in three and a half minutes of condensing those feelings and those emotions so that people will understand that *you* understand, and that we're all in the same boat. We can all support each other because of it.

Absolutely. You initially dabbled a little bit with songwriting, doing the odd one here and there. Then you did a few on one album. Now you've done an entire album of original material. Is there a part of you that thinks, "I should have done this ages ago"?

There is. I don't know what it would have been like. You can't really dwell on something like that. Yes, of course I wish I'd been honing the craft of songwriting forever. But that's not the way my career path and my trajectory worked. I'm thrilled that I actually have done it. I mean, the way that I look at it, who knows when I'll do another album? If the last album I ever do is this one, that's a hell of a way to leave a calling card. And of course, I'm going to continue writing in some way, shape or form. But I've got my radio show and the projects that I've got coming up for the next year and a half will keep me very, very busy.

There is a little part of me thinking, well, if I got an inspiration, maybe a Musical could happen. And Amy's writing Musicals as well now, and doing it brilliantly.

That's all well and good, but do you know anything about Musicals?

(Laughs) A little bit! I know that it is the longest process known to man, to write a Musical, to actually get it to anywhere near even a presentation workshop stage, let alone getting it into a theatre. But you know, I've done weird things before, I've gone in different directions before. However, at the moment, I'm just loving the response to this album. There's loads of creativity and challenges and stuff to explore. I'm always looking at ideas and I've no doubt that Amy and I, or maybe myself and someone else will sit down and we'll start writing again.

So I've got the deluxe version of 'Glow' here and it's got two extra tracks on. I believe those were Cathy's suggestions. Is that right?

She made me do them.

Say no more.

(Laughs). Yeah, she loves Rod Stewart. She looked at 'Some Guys Have All The Luck' and she goes, "you've got to do that because it'll be amazing on stage". I said, "okay, great, I could do it live". Then she said, "no, I need a recording of it, please". And you know, you can't refuse her. And then with the Bread song, 'Everything I Own' is one of my favourite love songs. It's a beautiful song. We were in the car and it came on. I'm singing along with it and she says to me, "you have to record this". I said, "I know, I'd love to, but I don't think we can on this album. It's an entirely self-penned album". She goes, "oh, but you *have* to". There was no taking no for an answer. So then I hit on the idea that I could have a deluxe version. I'll call it 'The McGowan Mix'. And people can make up their own minds up about them. I've done those songs for her. It's nice to do things for the people you love.

Of course it is.

And I think they've come out quite well, too. I can definitely imagine doing 'Some Guys Have All The Luck' with everybody singing along in the concerts.

The 'Glow' tour is coming up next. I assume you'd love to play everything off the new album, but you've got to factor in other things. Do you have an idea of what your set list is going to be yet? Is that still a work in progress?

You know me, I do sing a lot of songs in a concert. So I think there will be quite a few from 'Glow' in there. When I wrote it, and when we were making it, I'm thinking, "oh, do you know, *this* will work in concert. This is made for concerts". And of course I know that it's important to do the stuff from the back catalogue, the things that people want. But I've always chopped and changed what the set lists are. Hopefully I have come up with a formula that people are really happy with and then embrace. I think you can embrace new songs if you've heard them before on a record, but if you also know something about them, and I like to give some context to songs that I sing. So if I explain, briefly what the song is about at some point – for some songs, some are perfectly obvious – then I think people will enjoy



hearing them live. But of course, I'm not going to ignore all those things that people love and I know they love. Those are songs I love singing so hopefully it'll be a really thoughtful trawl through all of the stuff I do. I couldn't not do *Les Mis*, I couldn't not do 'Love Changes Everything'. I *want* to do those songs. 'One Step Out Of Time', stuff from *Hairspray*... I want everyone to have a really good time. That means I have to try to curate a show that everyone enjoys. There's always going to be stuff missing. You know, the obscure track on the third album that I've never done live before that someone will say, "oh, I really wanted to hear that". (laughs) You can't do it all. You just can't – you know as well as anybody, I've got twenty-three solo albums to choose from and songs from countless shows as well. So I have to bear

that in mind, and I really want to share the new album. So we'll see. I'm in the process now of putting it all together, and I've got a pretty good idea where we're going with it.

Well, you know what the first song is. That's one down.

Precisely! And I know what the last song is. The last song is going to have to be 'On With The Show.'

Excellent. So it's just the other twenty-odd songs in the middle you need to sort.

Exactly. No pressure! (laughs)

So just to finish off, last time I asked you about another concert DVD and you said that nobody really buys them anymore. So I suggested, I think four or five years ago now, what about

a live album? Because you've only ever done one.

Yeah, that's true. That's... that's not a bad idea. Yeah, I should talk to my people!

Especially as you've got so many of your own songs now, it would be nice to have a document of how those songs have translated to the concerts.

Well, you know what? It's very easy to record shows these days technologically. So maybe there's something to that – even if I do a limited edition thing. Yeah, why not? I'll have a look into that. Good thinking, James. Do you think anyone would be interested in it?

I think so, yeah. I mean, you're not a bad singer. You're alright live. It would probably be decent.

(Laughs) Bless you. And everything all right in your world, mate?

Yes, very well, thank you. I've got a wife recovering from an operation, but she's going to be fit in time for the tour, so that's good.

Great. Nothing serious, I hope?

She has had a hysterectomy, which was something she'd wanted to have done for years. So she's been sat on the couch for nearly seven weeks now, and I'm getting a little bit tired of it. Honestly, the lengths she'll go to, to avoid cooking my tea.

(Laughs) You compassionate fool, you! (Mocks my Yorkshire accent) "Gerrup and make me tea!"

(Laughs) I bought her tickets for this tour, it's the least she could do.

Abso-bloody-lutely!

She did ask me to send her love when I told her I'd be speaking to you. She might retract that now, but there we go.

In that case, I'm with her, tell her. She needs foot massages every day.

I'm going right off you. I've always preferred Alfie.

(Laughs) Well, I hope I catch up with you on the tour, lovely man. I can't wait to see everyone. I want everybody to have the best night of their life!

MAKING HMV GLOW

To support the release of his new record, Michael appeared around the country at HMV stores to do album signings. Here's a selection of fans who attended to get their copies of 'Glow' autographed.



Francine Griffiths and her son Tyler who goes to all the concerts with her, meeting Michael at HMV Manchester. Francine said "It only took me 34 years to meet him but it was definitely worth the wait, he was fab!"



Photo: Julie Vidler



Photo: Julie Vidler



Margaret Samson



Angela Taylor



Liz Sarjent



Janice Jones



Nikki Gutridge



Steve Lunt...



...and his daughter Blossom



Kate Kirk Sharpe



Julie Vidler



Helen Grenville



Donna Brook



Jen Garner



Heather Turner



Sarah Harmer, who has been following Michael for 40 years this year. She said "I told him 'Little Wins' was my favourite track on the album because I love his gentle vocals on it."

THE VINYL COUNTDOWN

by Angela Lo



For the first time in forever, I did not pre-order Michael's upcoming album. What a terrible fan, I hear readers say! Instead, I thought I'd go old school, with a twist of jeopardy!

I have been a fan since 1989 and following a lovely first meeting at the stage door outside the Prince of Wales theatre, London, I have been very fortunate with the opportunities I've had to exchange little life moments with Michael. He has been so gracious to share his time when he can, listening and chatting away. I've quietly campaigned to Michael to release albums on vinyl and finally, here we have Michael's first album in many years available on vinyl to enjoy! Bravely I went with my son, without any reservation, hoping to still be able to attend the Reading record signing event – encouraged by the lovely Maureen and bunnies Julia & Kerstin!

With the traffic on the M4 being kind and managing to arrive at 3pm, I was so happy to find wristbands and LP copies still available. My son was also happy to join me, and we enjoyed the most lovely reunion with Michael. He could not believe I had a son so big! Michael and my son Jayme had technically met twice before, once when I was still carrying J and second time in Bristol, back in 2011! It was such a lovely few moments chatting and actually having a relaxed conversation... finally, after many years of rushing and muddling words! I managed to properly congratulate Michael on his fantastic achievement and he was so very proud.

Thank you to the really lovely people at HMV Reading who made this event run so smoothly and captured these lovely moments! Sharing with Michael that my last record signing was at HMV in 1994 with 'One Careful Owner' in London, Michael responded, "Wow!" To all those friends I've met and made along the way, and of course Michael, Thank you for these moments! I am one happy girl clutching her signed #GlowOnVinyl!





The day had come, 24th of May
Glow CD signing, hip hooray

I left the house so full of joy
A day that nothing could destroy

I caught my train, I was on my way
So happy for this special day

London bound to HMV
To see my idol, Michael B

The man who brings the warmth and fun
Loved and adored by everyone

I stepped off the train, ready to go,
To join Michael fans, who I know.

Outside the store on Oxford Street,
My friends and I baked in the heat

Hot in the sun we watch the door
Longing to get in the store

We're in, where we've wanted to be.
Time to collect the long awaited CD

It's then upstairs, to the first floor
Where we all waited by the door

Soon, we're moved to join the
next queue
Our excitement just grew and grew

With lots of fans from near and far
Who'd waited to see the singing star

At two o'clock, Michael appeared
The room exploded with happy cheers

With beaming smiles on every face,
Pure joy and magic filled the place

Then Michael is ready to go
Signing copies of album 'Glow'

He greets every fan with a smile
Making the long wait feel worthwhile

He posed for photos and a chat
Our dreams came true because of that

We floated away on cloud nine
Those memories etched in our mind

Thank you so much HMV
For making dreams reality

And, thank you Michael, our 'Glow' star
Your really are the best by far!

Julie Vidler

GETTING SHIRTY WITH MICHAEL!

by Samantha Mason



I was lucky enough to have the opportunity of meeting Michael again, this time at the 'Glow' album signing in Birmingham.

The event was extremely well organised. The staff and crew were helpful and friendly.

Michael arrived slightly early and made a brief appearance. He then appeared again and announced that, as it was so hot, he'd decided to keep his legs out in his shorts rather than get changed! He was on good form right from the start.

I'd arrived wearing my custom shirt, which had Michael's face all over it. He was very amused when he saw this and joked that he wanted one! He asked if I was enjoying the album. He was so excited for everyone to hear it! It was lovely to hear him singing along to it as

it was being played in the shop. He was kind enough to sign the shirt as well as the CD. He was as charming and lovely as ever. He took the time to chat to everyone and was happy to have a cuddle and pose for lots of photos.

The album itself is amazing. I think personally his best album ever. It's so lovely to hear an album of original material that Michael has written himself. He should be very proud of it. My favourite song is 'Remember To Remember' which he wrote for his Mum. I can relate to the words and sentiment as I lost my Dad recently. It's such a beautiful song and a fitting tribute to anyone who has suffered a bereavement.

I can't wait to hear him sing these new songs live when I see him on tour in August at Oxford.



A close-up portrait of Michael Ball, a man with curly brown hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile, his hands clasped in front of him. He is wearing a gold ring on his left ring finger and a gold watch on his left wrist.

MICHAEL BALL

AS KING HEROD

23 NOVEMBER
- 5 DECEMBER

JESUS CHRIST
SUPERSTAR

GLOW ALBUM LAUNCH, KINGSTON 1/6/26

words and photo by Julie Vidler

What a great night it was at The Rose Theatre for the launch of Michael's 'Glow' album. It was my first time of going to Kingston, so it was nice to visit somewhere a bit different and to go to such a unique event. It was a privilege to be there.

Before the show I managed to get a photo of Michael at the stage door and he looked so happy, it was going to be a special night for him performing his own music for the first time to a live audience. If he was nervous, he didn't show it.

Filing into the theatre the atmosphere was buzzing. Lots of Michael's fans there with some familiar faces I recognised, including Maureen and Gill.

At 8pm I took my seat for this intimate event hosted by Banquet Records. Then the moment had come – the lights went down and the show began. The show host was none other than Amy Wadge, Michael's best friend and writing partner. Amy was the perfect choice to interview Michael as they are so close, and they know each other inside out. Throughout the show they were totally relaxed in each other's company, sharing personal moments, funny moments and stories from the recording studio.

Michael and Amy spoke about the stories that inspired the songs featured on 'Glow' album, some quite poignant memories for example talking about the passing of both Amy and Michael's mums but, also some funny memories (who can forget the bit about Michael witnessing someone taking their packed lunch and flask out at a theatre show!)

Some of the highlights for me (it was hard to pick as there were so many) was Michael signing 'Best Night Of Your Life' (the show opener) and later 'Vintage' (which apparently made him and Amy go viral!).

In summary, to see Michael in such a close up, personal setting was amazing and to hear the tracks live was pure joy!



Michael was 24 when I first started seeing him at the Stage Doors everywhere! This is the birthday card I sent him this year thought it was apt after hearing his song 'Vintage'.

Shirley Mullins



THE MICHAEL BALL FAN CLUB ONLINE

www.mbfc.uk

The Michael Ball Fan Club is free to join – simply visit the website address above and register your email address and you will receive notifications every time there is some Michael Ball news to report. There is also a members area where you can download past issues of On The Ball and access Michael's past Infoline messages.

The password to access it is: **MBFC33**



PENPALS

Kathryn Horner is looking to connect with likeminded fans and would love to hear from them. Her email is:
kathryn3027@gmail.com

MICHAEL BALL

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GLOW UK TOUR 2026

AUGUST

WED	26	CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
THU	27	IPSWICH REGENT THEATRE
SAT	29	OXFORD NEW THEATRE
SUN	30	BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL

SEPTEMBER

WED	02	LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC HALL
THU	03	BRADFORD LIVE
SAT	05	SHEFFIELD CITY HALL
SUN	06	HULL CONNEXIN LIVE
TUE	08	GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL
WED	09	EDINBURGH USHER HALL
FRI	11	NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL
SAT	12	YORK BARBICAN
MON	14	MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL
WED	16	STOKE-ON-TRENT REGENT THEATRE
THU	17	LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
SAT	19	NOTTINGHAM ROYAL CONCERT HALL
SUN	20	MILTON KEYNES THEATRE
TUE	22	BRIGHTON DOME
WED	23	BRISTOL BEACON
FRI	25	SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION
SAT	26	BOURNEMOUTH PAVILION THEATRE
MON	28	TORQUAY PRINCESS THEATRE
TUE	29	CARDIFF NEW THEATRE

OCTOBER

THU	01	LONDON THE PALLADIUM
FRI	02	PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

