

# Michael Schenker Q&A



**METAL HELL:** Can you tell us a little about *IN THE MIDST OF BEAUTY*?

**MICHAEL SCHENKER:** It's a Schenker/Barden album. It reminds me of the good old days with Gary, and of course having Simon, Don & Neil on it makes it very special.

**MH:** Do you feel this album picks up where *Built To Destroy*, left off?

**MS:** I would say that this album picks up where we left off with the first MSG album (in) 1980. I heard one of his (Gary's) songs and I loved the sound, vibrato and his feel. That's when I picked him in 1980.

**MH:** How many solos on this album were improvised?

**MS:** I decided to improvise all solos. It gives it a fresh, rocking live touch, full of emotional recordings of the moment and a long life because of its many different countless expressions that happen when improvising. When I look at the big picture I do things differently every so often to keep my work interesting and less repetitive over the years. I can always come back to other interesting ways. There are many. What feels right at the moment I will choose to do.

**MH:** What guitars did you use on this album?

**MS:** I played my Dean V's. There were other guitars in the studio and I tried them but can't remember if any of them made it on to the record.

**MH:** How have you managed to keep true to yourself through changing musical climates?

**MS:** I believe in what I do. There is no need to change because of trends, that's not what I am here for.

**MH:** Was it intentional to find seasoned musicians for the new line-up?

**MS:** I am led. Things happen in cycles. It's a reminder and one more chance to experience and to enjoy.

**MH:** Do you still practice guitar much?

**MS:** I practice as I write, rehearse and play live.

**MH:** *One Night At Budokan* & *Strangers In The Night*, are classic live albums. What do you think made these albums so essential?

**MS:** Live albums are good for people who are capable to play interesting things in the moment. Of course sound is (also) important. Ron Nevison captured that on *Strangers In The Night* and we copied his technique for the *Budokan* album.



**MH:** What are you listening to lately?

**MS:** I don't focus on music when it plays around me. I personally don't put music on myself unless it is connected to my work. I don't want to wear it out and (would) rather treat music like Schokolade to enjoy it in its fullest when I create.

**MH:** "Rock Bottom" is one of your classic solos. What do you recall about creating it?

**MS:** The "Rock Bottom" solo is different every time I play it but it has guidelines that I kept over the years. It's good for jamming, to improvise and have fun. It is fresh over and over again.

**MH:** Your playing always has a sense of melody. What inspired this aspect?

**MS:** I used to explain it like making children's songs and combined with dirty rock makes it magic. I think it's just a reflection of who you are. Even when you jump start in the beginning when learning to play, you copy what you like because it's something similar to' who you are.

**MH:** Do the members of your band(s) influence your playing?

**MS:** I don't think so. It is a chemical reaction. You mix blue with red or blue with green, the outcome is different.

**MH:** Will we see a tour for this album?

**MS:** Yes. We are working on a World tour right now.

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**MH:** It was rumored that **Ozzy** once wanted you to join his band, what do you recall about this?

**MS:** He called me in the middle of the night while I was sleeping. It was like a strange dream. He was very distressed and I did not know what to say. The next day I passed it on to the other MSG members and because I was in the middle of rehearsing for recording **Assault Attack** with Graham Bonnet and Cozy Powell I had to refuse. Later I was glad that I did because I would have lost my freedom, which I created MSG for.

**MH:** What are your fondest memories of playing with Ratt?

**MS:** Warren De Martini was a friend and a fan of mine in those days. He asked me to play with them. I had spare time and did. Oh boy, what a mess they were. I thought UFO was bad. I mean 24 hours a day of arguments, so tiring. Good players though and lots of girls.

**MH:** Does there exist much, or any, unreleased material?

**MS:** There is material but I am too creative to dig in to old stuff. It's something for pension time.

**MH:** Any closing comments?

**MS:** Keep on Rocking and see us on tour.

For more info:

[www.michaelschenkerhimself.com](http://www.michaelschenkerhimself.com)

Born in Sarstedt, Germany, Schenker started playing in his teens, following in his brother Rudolf's footsteps, & appeared on the **Scorpions** first album (Lonesome Crow) at the age of 16.

Michael joined **UFO** after the band saw him at a Scorpions soundcheck & played with UFO until 1978 & re-joined the Scorpions in late 1978 & would play on 3 songs for their **Lovedrive** album in 1979, after 3 months touring with the Scorpions, Michael left & formed the **Michael Schenker Group**, (along the way being offered a gig with **Aerosmith**).

Gary Barden sang on the first 3 albums & was then replaced by (ex-Rainbow) singer Graham Bonnet for the **Assault Attack** album & tour. Barden was re-hired mid-tour & appeared on the **Built To Destroy** album in 1983.

MSG returned in 1986 under the altered moniker of the **McAuley Schenker Group** & released 3 studio albums with a more commercial hard rock direction.

Schenker re-joined UFO for their 1995 reunion LP **Walk On Water**, the 1<sup>st</sup> reunion attempt was short lived & he soon resurrected MSG with new members & cranked out 3 albums before re-joining UFO for 2 more albums (**Covenant** & **Sharks**), after falling on hard times, the guitarist returned with MSG once again in 2003 with the **Arachnophobiatic** CD, which he did a 2 year tour in support of. In 2005, Michael celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MSG with the **Tales Of Rock 'N' Roll** album, which had singers from every line-up of MSG.

Then entered the studio in 2007 with original singer Gary Barden, Don Airey (keys), Simon Phillips (drums) & Neil Murray (bass) for the **In The Midst Of Beauty** album, (released last April).

The 2008 touring line-up consists of Chris Glen (bass), Wayne Findley (guitar/keys) & Chris Slade (drums).

### MICHAEL SCHENKER DISCOGRAPHY

- SCORPIONS – Lonesome Crow - 1972
- UFO – Phenomenon - 1974
- UFO – Force It – 1975
- UFO – No Heavy Petting – 1976
- UFO – Lights Out – 1977
- UFO – Obsession – 1978
- UFO – Strangers In The Night-Live – 1979
- SCORPIONS – Lovedrive – 1979
- MSG – The Michael Schenker Group – 1980
- MSG – M.S.G.
- MSG – One Night At Budokan – 1981
- MSG – Assault Attack – 1982
- MSG – Built To Destroy – 1983
- MSG – Rock Will Never Die –live – 1984
- McAuley/Schenker Group – Perfect Timing – 1987
- McAuley Schenker Group – Save Yourself – 1989
- MsAuley Schenker Group – M.S.G. – 1992
- McAuley Schenker Group – Nightmare-The Acoustic M.S.G. – 1992
- UFO – The Best Of – 1992
- McAuley Schenker Group – M.S.G. Unplugged – 1993
- Michael Schenker – Thank You – 1993
- UFO – Walk On Water – 1995
- MSG – Written In The Sand – 1996
- Michael Schenker – Thank You 2 - 1998
- MSG – The Unforgiven – 1999
- MSG – The Unforgiven World Wour – 2000
- Michael Schenker – Adventures Of The Imagination – 2000
- Michael Schenker – The Odd Trio - 2000
- UFO – Covenant – 2000
- Michael Schenker – Thank You 3 – 2001
- Michael Schenker – Dreams And Expressions - 2001
- UFO – Sharks – 2002
- MSG – Beware Of Scorpions - 2002
- MSG – Arachnophobiatic – 2003
- Michael Schenker – Thank You 4 – 2003
- Sigi Schwarz And Michael Schenker – Live Together - 2004
- Schenker-Pettison Summit – The Endless Jam – 2004
- Schenker-Pattison Summit – The Endless Jam Continues - 2005
- MSG – Heavy Hitters – 2005
- MSG – Tales Of Rock 'N' Roll – 2006
- Michael Schenker – Doctor, Doctor; The Kulick Sessions - 2008
- MSG – In The Midst Of Beauty – 2008

### MSG Home Videos

- MSG – Rock Will Never Die – 1984
- MSG – Live In Tokyo – 1997
- MSG – World Wide Live – 2004