

michael jerling bio

Born and raised in Illinois, songwriter Michael Jerling became involved with music while helping to run the campus coffeehouse at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire. Now settled in Saratoga Springs, New York, Michael has been a noted artist on the club, college and festival circuits of North America since 1975. His baritone voice is backed up with consummate skill on six & twelve string guitars, harmonica and mandolin, all buoyed by his dry sense of humor.

Michael has been among the winners of the prestigious “New Folk” competition at the **Kerrville Folk Festival** in Texas, and his involvement with the seminal **Fast Folk Musical Magazine** in New York City has led to his song “Long Black Wall” being included on a **Smithsonian Folkways** CD celebrating twenty years of Fast Folk.

December 2013 marked the release of his latest CD, **Halfway Home**, 14 new original songs on his own Fool’s Hill Music label. **Music Here Tonight**, recorded live at the legendary Caffe Lena in Saratoga Springs, NY, was released in 2009. Also on Fool’s Hill are **Crooked Path** (2007) and **Little Movies** (2001). **My Evil Twin** (1992) and **New Suit of Clothes** (1994) were released on the Shanachie label, and in 1997, **In Another Life** came out on Chicago based Waterbug Records. **Early Jerling** (1998), also on Waterbug, is a digitally remastered compilation of selected cuts from his self released LPs **On Top of Fool’s Hill** (1981), and **Blue Heartland** (1988).

Through all of these recordings and in his live performances, Michael displays his first-rate lyrical sense and impressive musicianship - borrowing from blues, rock, country and R&B. A keen student of the good and ghastly in American life, Michael weaves themes like a novelist, evoking our shortcomings and dreams without yielding to cynicism or sentimentality. Often praised as a “songwriter’s songwriter” who composes in styles influenced by the wealth of American music, he has been characterized as an artist who performs his “extraordinary songs with the uncommon ability to deliver them to an audience with power and grace”.

“Stronger than new rope... especially recommended to fans of Gorka, Greg Brown, Dave Alvin or any other real smart people who make real good music.”

-Icon, Iowa City

“He’s got the literate humor and eclectic taste of Lyle Lovett... yet a skewed vision all his own.”

- Request Magazine

“I just really enjoy your music. And your humor. And your musicianship. There are a lot of topics that you sing about that NOBODY else is willing to tackle.”

-Phil Shapiro, WVBR’s “Bound for Glory”