

Michael De Jong was born in France in 1945, his father was a Dutchman who fled Holland during World War II where he married a French Basque woman. After the War, they lived in Holland until the family immigrated to America in 1950. Which is why Michael has no less than three different passports.

Michael would burn in hell. Or so said the Catholic school teacher of the then 8 year old Michael. Asked to step in front of the class and held as an example of a "bad Catholic", as the De Jong family could only donate 25 cents to the church per week. The next day Michael's name made the papers for the first time for burning down the school. The law caught him just before he made his way onto the Catholic church. "Now if I don't go to heaven.... but have to go to hell I'll be sure that I'm very welcome there." He would see the inside of many jails of many different countries and destroy every target he aimed for. Just one example, he (as local new young hero) turned up drunk for an audition at Bill Graham's office. After throwing up all over Graham's desk, Bill kicked him out while screaming "You ain't gonna play any club in the Bay area no more". A former police officer called Eddie Mahoney (who reached fame as Eddie Money) got the job Michael "auditioned" for while Michael played the Mexican whore bars until Bill said that it was enough.

As musical careers develop, his is truly stunning. Michael started playing the guitar at the age of 13. Five years later he started his first band The Nightwalkers, which backed Bobby Bare who shortly there after became successful with All American Boy, Brooklyn Bridge and the classic Detroit City.

In 1965, Michael moved to Detroit where he became a regular guest at John Sinclair's Ann Arbor Blues Festival. Between 1970 & 1974 he travelled extensively throughout the States. He ended up in New Orleans where he played the strip-clubs of Bourbon Street 7 nights a week for 13 months in a row, often sharing the stage with Professor Longhair and the Neville Brothers. Michael moved to California in 1974. During the 10 years that he lived in San Francisco, he played with or supported Jerry Garcia, Paul Butterfield, Albert Collins, John Lee Hooker, Maria Muldaur, Country Joe, Charlie Musselwhite, Albert King... the list goes on and on. Michael soon earned the respect of the San Francisco Examiners top music critic Phillip Elwood (see quotes). Michael then went on to join blueslegend Jimmy Reed's band as his guitarist. During this time Michael started writing his own songs after Jimmy told him "It ain't how you sing the song boy, it's how you live your life... and if you ain't lived the life, how can you sing the song." It was Michael who was to discover Jimmy's body after his death in Oakland on the evening of August 29, 1976.

In 1981, Michael recorded his first album All Night Long, produced by legendary Nick Gravenitis (Electric Flag, Janis Joplin) and featuring Steve Miller Band members Norton Buffalo & Greg Douglas. Three years later he returned to Europe and after "spending time" in Germany, France, Denmark and Sweden, he revisited his Dutch roots, settling in Holland where he still lives. He's a superb live performer and in recent years supported Van Morrison (six times now), Clannad, Jethro Tull, Paul Weller, Marianne Faithfull a.o. Michael's shows are full of energy and emotion and should not to be missed. Heartfelt and without pretensions, no matter whether live on stage or on CD.

His first European CD was Fugitive Love Songs for Tombstone Records. His first album for Munich Records was 1996's 'Who's Fooling Who', a studio recording of 14 of his original songs followed up with the albums "Alive", "Grown Man Moan", "The Waiting Game" and Immaculate Deception. All albums received rave reviews.

Immaculate Deception and Park Bench Serenade are Michael's fifth and sixth album release for Munich Records in just as many years. The albums-produced by Mike Stewart- were recorded in Austin Texas and includes a string of the finest local musicians such as Kevin Russel (The Gourds), Jon Dee Graham (Calvin Russel), John Hagen (Lyle Lovett), Riley Osborne (Willie Nelson) and Glen Fukanaga (Bob Dylan). The songs were recorded live in the studio in one or two takes. The magic from that two recording sessions are captured in these moving and intense albums. Hard boiled true life stories.

Michael De Jong's personal and musical life stories are the stuff of legend and nightmares. He was lucky to survive OD's, madness and violence..... the paranoia... alcohol and drugs.... the horror while hellfire was almost licking his feet. He was not so lucky as to escape the scars and scathing that come from living such a life. It's understandable that Michael's in a hurry. He's recorded and released eight

albums in the last eight years and all of his songs are autobiographical or about things that he witnessed. From eating out garbage cans and sleeping behind a San Francisco bus station and the streets of Amsterdam, to jail, insane-asylum, religion, politics. Words filled with breathing demons with a darkness so deep that there's only one way out.... and that is to sing.....

In this profile there are a handful of recent quotes from some of the most respected Dutch and French Rock-music journalists, and older quotes from his California days.

**My favourite local performer.....music with pure passion.** **Joel**  
**Selvin – San Francisco Chronicle**

**One of a kind.....a true phenomenon !** **Sylvian**  
**Siclier – Le Monde**

**Michael de Jong is the best that came out of Dutch R & R.** **Jip**  
**Golsteijn - De Telegraaf**

**He has an unforgettable voice and delivery... he's a strong composer and outstanding singer.**  
**Phillip Elwood - San Francisco Examiner**

**In the entire Dutch Rock history there's nothing that comes close to his stunning life and work.**  
**Herman van der Horst - OOR**

**De Jong has build up such a musical credibility. More then probably nobody else with a Dutch passport gets even close.**  
**Sander Donkers - Vrij Nederland**

Herman van der Horst who recently won a prestigious prize for being Holland's best Rock music journalist is now writing a book about the life of Michael de Jong. It will be published late 2003. In June 2001 another book, Midnight Confessions, with many of his song lyrics was published in Belgium.

Michael's newest cd, Last Chance Romance, has a different feel and sound. Rather than heading to Texas he went to London and recorded with English musicians, featuring: Melvin Duffy (Robbie Williams), Chris Childs, Rufus Ruffell (Eric Clapton) and producer Julian Standen. Although the recording could still be considered Americana it clearly has a more jazzy-folky feel to it. Unmistakably Michael; beautiful ballads that aren't afraid to show the darker side of life, but here more than before, we are allowed to see how the light at the end of the tunnel looks. More comforting with a sense of blossoming love in the most unexpected places and moments. With his more open and fresh sound, including the fact that his voice is clearer though not any less driven, could this perhaps be called his "Astral Weeks." A masterpiece.

After recording eight albums in as many years and an important Mojo-tour through the Benelux, Michael is taking some time off in his second house in Ballyconneely, Connamara, Ireland. He is "waiting for the cosmic dice to roll" and we will certainly be hearing from him soon.