

About Michael Shirtz

Michael Shirtz,

Jazz Singer, Pianist, Composer, Entertainer, Educator

Michael Shirtz is a jazz singer, pianist, and composer whose performances reach out to audiences of all generations. His vocal style captures the warmth and lyricism of a Mel Tormé on smooth ballads, and up tunes with energy, drive, and a hint of blues. As a pianist, Shirtz has remained deeply influenced by the innovation of Brubeck's keyboard styles, which are infused into Michael's shows. Among Shirtz's greatest attributes are his diverse, instrumental-like scat-singing and his cool ease and conversation with his audiences.

His performances are considered "educationally entertaining," as Michael is dedicated to promoting the work of great legends in the music industry and sharing stories about the music he performs. The audience always leaves feeling entertained, as well as knowing something more about the music they just experienced. Though his focus is on jazz, Shirtz is equally as comfortable in performing folk, blues, rock and other contemporary styles, and uses them regularly in his productions.

A native of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Shirtz began his musical career while in high school fronting small house bands to leading variations of big bands and jazz combos. It wasn't long before Michael was traveling, producing, and performing popular themed concerts and tribute shows. After an eight-year break to pursue other musical interests, Shirtz returned to performing in 2011 by reestablishing the Michael Shirtz Quartet and expanding his interest in composing and arranging music. Their unique instrumentation and arrangements allows the quartet to perform traditional jazz styles and move effortlessly into playing Blues, Funk, Rock, Gospel and Singer/Songwriter material.

In 2013, Shirtz returned to presenting theme shows by releasing the show, "As I've Learned It" (tribute to the music of his grandfather, big band leader Tommy Weldon) and launches and hosts the popular JAZZ @ 8 Series featuring different themes and artists. This spring Shirtz released his new show, "An American Songbook Story" that highlights the music and performers of the 20th Century. Though Shirtz has recorded for other artists and projects since the late 90s, he has no solo album to his name. Shirtz plans to record his first album this coming year.

Michael Shirtz Quartet

The Michael Shirtz Quartet features Michael Shirtz (vocals/piano), Doug Neel (guitar/trombone/bass), Dwight Bailey, (bass) and Reggie Jackson (drums/percussion). Their unique instrumentation and arrangements allows them to perform traditional jazz styles and move effortlessly into playing Blues, Funk, Rock, Gospel and Singer/Songwriter material. Their versatility and variety give the Michael Shirtz Quartet a mass appeal with jazz and non-jazz audiences alike.

Outreach: The Michael Shirtz Quartet is dedicated to educational initiatives about American Music to students of all ages. Outreach for the quartet also includes discussions/workshops about jazz and american music, vocal and instrumental performance, and even discussion on arts impact on an economy.



"It's like listening to Mel Tormé meets Brubeck" - MSQ Fan

*"Strong musicianship and spontaneous substantive musical ideas flow effortlessly from Mike's performances."
- Pete Ford, jazz pianist*

*"Michael Shirtz is one of my favorite musicians, both to work with and to watch. As a performer and bandleader, Michael clearly demonstrates a high command of the repertoire of the modern improvising musician, both as a pianist and vocalist. Additionally, Michael has a gift for engaging his audience, not only through his music, but by way of his openness and storytelling during the show. He possesses the ability to draw both his audience and band mates into a shared experience that transcends the more common "concert" event. I have known Michael for many years, and it is my privilege to call him colleague, band mate, and friend."
- Doug Neel, Benedetto Guitarist/
Edwards Trombonist*