

Mike Branton Bio

After making a name for himself as a young guitar prodigy in the Southern Ontario region, Mike Branton has evolved into a triple threat. His signature fluent and exciting guitar playing is as potent as ever. Alex Erasm (View Magazine) described it as "Michael Bloomfield meets T-Bone Walker at a Buddy Guy concert style of playing", adding "continually inventive improvisational soloing" in a View Magazine feature article. Mike has now emerged as a highly talented and original singer and songwriter as well.

The Oakville-based Branton is not just borrowing from the classic blues repertoire but adding to it in the form of original compositions. His talent as a singer/songwriter was showcased on his 2001 solo debut, *Dirty Feet*. In a review of *Dirty Feet* Warren Dalling wrote. "In short, this disc defines the blues".

Since then, Mike has been honing his songwriting chops, and is currently in the studio recording a keenly-anticipated new album. Branton first picked up the guitar at age nine, primarily learning by ear. "I'd try to pick things up off the radio or from albums," he recalls. As a teenager he studied guitar under Justin Abedin (Jacksoul) who introduced Mike to numerous styles and approaches to music outside of and directly related to Blues music.

The appetite of the musically voracious younger Branton was fed with the likes of records from the early British blues boom (Peter Green, Jeff Beck, The Animals) as well as pioneers: Albert King, Muddy Waters, and John Lee Hooker. "As I got older the guys I started to gravitate towards were like Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and Luther Tucker, the disciples of the big guys. I liked the younger guys for their attitude". Like any other blues-loving kid Jimi Hendrix had a predictable impact. "After you hear him you just realize you have to keep trying and hope for the best," he says.

At 17, and still in high school, he began playing in blues-rooted bar bands, his skills having caught the ears of older players. One such musician was Stu Heydon, described by Branton as "my mentor. He was the first one to take me on the road, and through him I got to meet a lot of Chicago and Detroit area blues guys."

By the mid '90s, Mike was touring Western Canada with Stu Heydon & The Blues Persuaders, as well as backing up blues legends George "Wildchild" Butler, Chicago Pete, and Zoom at the Heydon produced Carmel Rotary Soul & Blues Review 97-99 in Carmel, California.

A real confidence boost came on a visit to the blues mecca of Chicago, as Mike reminisces. "I hit the open stage at Buddy Guy's club, and they wouldn't let me off. One of the guys there was Koko Taylor's guitar player, and he kept calling me back up!"

Fronting his own bands helped Branton, now 35 discover his own voice as both a blues singer and songwriter. "I don't think I found the beginning of my groove until I was about 22," he recalls. "That's when I thought to myself 'it's time to get serious.' You can only be a guitar player in a blues band for so long before you have to bring something else to the table. You have to be able to sing and to carry a night by yourself".

"Part of any musician's education is backing other people up" he says, Branton has been featured by, played with, shared the stage, recorded with,

and just plain jammed, with a who's who of Canadian and American blues musicians. Including: Jeff Healey, Michael Pickett, George "Wildchild" Butler, Chicago Pete, Pat Ramsey, Richard Newell "aka King Biscuit Boy", David Clayton Thomas, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, Lee Oskar, Jordan John, Steve Marriner & Matt Sobb (Monkeyjunk), Amos Garrett, Michael Fonfara (Electric Flag) and long time boss Stu Heydon. To name a few.

Selected Discography:

Mike Branton -Dirty Feet (2001)
-Stu Heydon -Trouble(1999), To My Very Soul(2006), 3rd Degree(2009)
-Live at Healey's -The Thursday night recordings w/ Jeff Healey & Michael Pickett(2003)
-Shrimp Daddy and The Sharpshooters -Messin' with my System w/ Steve Marriner and Matt Sobb of Monkeyjunk (2009)

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Mike Branton Band Technical Requirements:

-3 Vocal mics Shure SM58 or better quality 1 Stage Left, 1 Stage Right, 1 at Drums
-Guitar Amp- pre-1972 Fender Super Reverb, or Re-issue. Substitute 4X10 Fender Bassman Re-issue or Fender Hot Rod DeVille 4X10.
-Harmonica/Guitar amp- Same as Guitar Amp
-Bass Amp- Ampeg/Eden/SWR heads are acceptable, 4X10+1X15 or 8X10 cabinet
-Drums- Industry Standard Professional Quality 4 piece.
-6 Wedge monitors-2 stage right, 2 Stage Left, 1 in front of Bass, 1 left of Drums.
-3 AC Drop boxes 1 behind guitar amp, 1 behind Harmonica/guitar amp, 1 behind bass amp.