

Mp3 Michael Buffalo Smith - Southern Lights



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A blend of influences from blues, southern rock and country rock 9 MP3 Songs ROCK: Roots Rock, BLUES: Rockin' Blues Details: Dreaming Buffalo Records has released the fourth album by South Carolina's Michael Buffalo Smith, "Southern Lights." The CD, recorded at Mill Kids Studios in Huntsville, Alabama during the summer of 2002 is jam packed with guest artists, and a core band consisting of one of Alabama's finest blues rock bands, The Crawlers and the talented Stephen Foster on keyboards. Foster also co-produced the venture, along with Billy Teichmiller and Smith. The nine-song release features seven new Michael Buffalo Smith compositions, as well as "Hooker's Boogie," a tribute to the late John Lee Hooker, penned by John Wyker of the popular seventies band Sailcat. Tony Heatherly, former bassist for The Toy Caldwell Band, who is currently a member of The Marshall Tucker Band, contributed the song "Ride On My Friend," a song he wrote in memory of his old buddy, Toy Caldwell. "Southern Lights" finds Buffalo singing a duet with Bonnie Bramlett (Delaney Bonnie), going head to head on guitar with Tommy Crain (The Charlie Daniels Band), and playing alongside Pete Carr (Hourglass, Bob Seger, Rod Stewart). Truth be known, Smith's Southern Rock fantasy may have never happened had it not been for GRITZ, the Magazine of Southern Music that he started in 1999. "Through the interviews and meeting folks because of the magazine, I was fortunate enough to make friends with Bonnie and Tommy and folks like that," says Smith. "I am truly lucky to have all of these guys on my album." The CD is being released on Smith's own Dreaming Buffalo label, the same one that released his 1996 solo debut, "Happy To Be Here." Prior to that, Smith released a duet EP called "Fairytale" in 1992. Both "Happy "and "Fairytale" are out of print today. In 2001, "Midwest Carolina Blues" was released, recorded in Lincoln, Nebraska as a tribute to rockabilly star Bobby Lowell, whom Smith befriended a little over a year before Lowell's death from cancer. REVIEWS Hittin' the Note Magazine : Summer 2004 Issue

Says: Michael Buffalo Smith is tireless in his pursuit of outstanding Southern rock music, old and new, writing about it passionately in Goldmine and (his own) Gritz magazines. With Southern Lights, the big man stands square in the company of his heroes on the strength of his articulate words as well as his music, which excels on high groove and boogie quotient. "Into the Light" is instantly memorable and features the first of the album's many exceptional guitar duels (several fine axe slingers are on hand, including Smith, Ray Brand, and Charlie Daniels Band vet Tommy Crain). Smith is an emotive, full-bodied singer. His vocal duet with Bonnie Bramlett on "I Don't Want To Say Goodbye" is touching, heated soul. Marshall Tucker Band melodies "Ride On My Friend" a great and distinctive tribute to Toy Caldwell. The captivating instrumental "Gemini Soul," meanwhile, draws a bit from Santana. There are nine terrific and varied songs and all the players play their hearts out. With this album, Michael Buffalo Smith makes a strong case for Southern rock, an American music genre way too often unjustly maligned. - Tom Clarke

Michael Buffalo Smith Southern Lights (Dreaming Buffalo Records 200301) There's something immensely refreshing about the absence of cynicism-or, more specifically, the sense of uplift-that resonates within Michael Buffalo Smith's songs. In the process of unfurling his love for Southern-rock traditions, Smith sweeps the listener back to a period when themes such as family, friendship and the pure celebration of living could be mined within the framework of simpler times. In that sense, and in its musical execution, Southern Lights brings to mind the '70's heyday of Muscle Shoals, Macon., Ga., and Capricorn Records. Zigzagging between breezy rockers, stormy blues romps and gospel-y ballads, Smith comes off as a gifted assimilator who weaves the influences of his heroes into a multi-hued fabric. To help bring the songs to life, Smith has assembled a who's who of '70s Southern rock enablers. In addition to the core lineup that includes former David Allan Coe guitarist Ray Brand and Muscle Shoals veteran Stephen Foster, Southern Lights prominently features ex-Charlie Daniels Band guitarist Tommy Crain, Bob Seger alumnus Pete Carr, and Sailcat graduate John D. Wyker (of "Motorcycle Mama" fame). Perhaps Smith's biggest coup, however, was enlisting the services of Bonnie Bramlett. In addition to providing backup vocals on several songs, the legendary singer joins Smith for a scorching duet on the torch ballad, "I Don't Want to Say Goodbye." Bottom line is, any fan of '70s-style Southern music should hope that this Buffalo continues to roam. -Russell Hall, GOLDMINE MAGAZINE JUNE 13, 2003 (INDIE LABEL SPOTLIGHT)

Southern Lights Michael Buffalo Smith This album is definitely one to chill out to, and sits alongside Kim Mitchell's "Rockland" in my late night relaxation collection. This is a breed of southern

blues rock that is laid back to the max - practically horizontal in fact. For me, it initially brought back memories of the Marshall Tucker Band. In fact, studying closer, "Ride On My Friend" is actually written about and dedicated to the late, great Marshall Tucker leader Toy Caldwell; very apt, very cool. Also, isn't that the incredible voice of Bonnie Bramlett (Delaney Bonnie) dueting with Michael on "I Don't Want To Say Goodbye"? A bit of background: MBS is not only a very fine guitarist, he's also a record company mogul, and most importantly, the man behind Gritz Magazine, currently the written backbone of the hugely resurgent Southern rock scene. To quote the "Red Dwarf" crew, "What A Guy!" Backed by a collective of musicians calling themselves The Crawlers, MBS has got himself a very tight band indeed, and I'd really love to see these guys live; I bet they really brew up a storm. It's Southern by the grace of deities, but as laid back as a big ol' joint. I'm kickin' back and letting this one just wash over me. Cool.

-Simon Gausden, Powerplay Magazine, Great Britain August 2003 "...Smith's Carolina sound comes together with a solid array of new songs and an equally impressive array of guest musicians... Smith wrote all but two of the songs on the album starting off with "Into The Light," which has a flowing Southern rock flair to it that bodes well for all lovers of the genre...a positive, flowing, Southern celebration of an album. Break some off and pass it around." - Derek Halsey; GRITZ Magazine, Spring 2003 "As I listened to this CD, it dawned on me. This isn't Southern Rock...it's SOUTHERN MUSIC. There's a difference. When I think of Southern Rock, I imagine steamy, sweat-drenched bars, wild women and lots of likker (not liquor....remember, you're down south!) Buffalo's music is different...there's the hint of gospel in his voice; not that he can't growl with the best of them. There's true dual guitar lines, twining around a solid rhythm section. It doesn't make you think of bars and the wild life...it's more like sitting back on the front porch in the summer...sometimes it's hot as hell, but, sooner or later, the sun goes down and things slow down and cool off. That's true Southern Music." -Skydog; Southbound Beat Magazine, Summer 2003

"Michael Buffalo Smith is known in the Southern music industry for his southern blues-rock. He doesn't disappoint this time around... It (the cd) has some definite high points including a duet with Bonnie Bramlett (Delaney Bonnie) "I Don't Want to Say Goodbye." Penned by Smith, it is a strong tune with great harmony by the two icons. Some of the other "high" notes of the album include the great blues number written by John D. Wyker "Hooker's Boogie" is in memory of John Lee Hooker....Of course Buffalo's tunes are strong here as well, like the hoot of a good time "Mad Dog" and the inward searching "Life Behind the Mask". ..."Buffalo" rocks and rolls the southern blues as good as anybody today! Nine

solid tracks of Southern blues-rock with a sense of humor at times, and at times soul searching, even Spiritual. -Rik Matheson Rikks Reviews ROAD TO JACKSONVILLE (French Online Magazine/Radio Show) SAYS: In this little "Southern music" world, Michael B. Smith is mostly known as the editor of Gritz online and Gritz magazine, and for his writings. Many people have read that Michael has jammed onstage with none other than The Southern Rock Allstars and Molly Hatchet. Now, he comes back with the release of his third album since 1998. And let me tell you, this album is a great surprise ! Michael's music is somewhere between The Marshall Tucker Band and Charlie Daniels. Michael's voice reminds me of Charlie Daniels sometimes (listen to "Into the Light" for example). Two songs are dedicated to two of his heroes, that is John Lee Hooker with "Hooker's Boogie" and Toy Caldwell with the great song "Ride on my Friend". Let's note the remarkable work done by all the musicians involved in the project. Among others, Tommy Crain (ex Charlie Daniels Band) on guitar, pedal steel and dobro, Ray Brand on slide guitar, and Bonnie Bramlett who performs a beautiful duet with Michael (something he's been dreaming of for such a long time). This album, for sure, is a must have and we hope to discover Michael on stage in Europe next autumn! -Dominique Turgot THE GREEN MAN REVIEWS SAYS: There's a big man on the front cover of this CD. He's wearing a navy blue melton cloth jacket, you know, with the leather sleeves... like a school jacket. He's sporting Native American jewelry on his wrist and around his neck. His hair is greying, and his chin cover has a couple of white spots. He's playing a fire engine red Ibanez guitar, but this guy looks mellow, his eyes are closed. He's standing in front of a hand painted sign that advertises "PEACHES." His name is Michael Smith, but in bigger letters between first and last names it says "Buffalo!" The back cover has a photo of an actual buffalo... a bison really... wading in the water. He looks about as mellow as his namesake on the front cover... calm... but don't bug me, man! Inside the double fold cardboard sleeve, there's a CD, which is attached to the right inner third by an octagonal bit of rubber through the centre hole. The silver disc has a logo painted on it, an eagle perched atop a delineated buffalo head, crowned by a fiery sun and surrounded by the words "Michael Buffalo Smith." All neatly airbrushed, like you might see on the fuel tank of a Harley-Davidson. And directly across from this logo, there's a poem... "Moon beams shining thru magnolia branches Drenching the screened in porch in yellow light Overhead, Grandpa points out the Big Dipper to a six year old boy Southern Lights. Sunday morning singing in the church choir Voices raised to heaven praising the Lord "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Just As I Am" Sun shining through stained glass windows Southern lights..." It's quite touching,

actually. Not what you might expect from the front cover... but didn't your Mother tell you, "Don't judge a book by its cover?" When you dislodge the CD from the rubber slug and drop it into your player, you are greeted with some chooglin' southern rock, gospel and blues, played by a solid studio band and fronted by Buffalo, whose voice is as mellow as his visage. The band includes Ray Brand (lead and slide guitar), John Huber (lead and classical guitar), Billy Teichmiller (drums and percussion), Thad Usry (harp), Owen Brown (bass) and a selection of guest artists, including the great (and late lamented) Bonnie Bramlett. They rock. Smith's original tunes are melodic, sometimes evocative of other songs, but always original enough that you can't quite pinpoint the influence. "Into the Light" starts things off, a mid-tempo gospel song... "outa the darkness into the light." It has backup vocals from Bonnie Bramlett and a sizzling slide solo by Ray Brand. "Behind the Eyes" is next, some spooky work from the rhythm section, and Smith's deep voice asking questions: "...have you ever wondered what lies beyond Pluto?" Yes, indeed I have. The big duet with Bonnie is on the ballad "I Don't Want to Say Goodbye." Ms. Bramlett's voice is in fine fettle, and she and the Buffalo blend well. The band does a credible John Lee Hooker impression on the tribute "Hooker's Boogie," in case you thought it was about a different subject. Smith really deepens his voice for this one, singing down so low. "How-how-how-how!" Nice harmonica from Thad Usry. The rest of the album is more of the same. Blues-based southern rock, with slide guitars and that chooglin' beat. Not a classic, but well worth a listen. "Heart lights. Auras. Halos. Inner glow. Moonlight. Love lights. Tea lights. Our own borealis. Southern lights." -David Kidney ROOTS MUSIC REPORT SAYS: Some CD's just have that certain sound that grabs your attention. This new album release by Michael Buffalo Smith is one of those types. Michael writes and sings with all his heart pored out on this CD for all to hear. This album is a significant contribution to Roots Rock and Southern Blues music. Southern Lights features several fantastic musical styles and is sure to make waves in the roots music scene." COMMENTS ON SOUTHERN LIGHTS "The preview of your CD sounds very good. I am looking forward to hearing the completed product. I especially enjoyed "Into the Light," and the duet with Bonnie. The instrumental is quite good as well. Great guitar players. There are parts of the album where the slide seems to possess a Duane (Allman) like quality. Very good work, Michael." -Tom Dowd; Producer and Engineer (The Allman Brothers, Derek The Dominos, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Gov't Mule, and about a zillion others. We miss you Tom!) "Great job! Great guests! Great listening!" -Jimmy Johnson, MSRS (Legendary Muscle Shoals Guitarist, Producer, Engineer) "We loved your CD! I wanted to grab my Bible, a bucket of shrimp and

head to a biker bar all at once! God bless you Buffalo, Bonnie and all the fine musicians on this session!"

-Gary and Dale Krantz Rossington (Lynyrd Skynyrd) "It was great to have the opportunity to play on Buffalo's "Southern Lights" CD. Buffalo is a very talented artist and a real go getter! He is "the man" at Gritz magazine and an artist also! The CD cover and packaging is really nice. The CD sound is good and the playing and singing are good." -Pete Carr (Guitarist; Bob Seger, Rod Stewart. Simon Garfunkel; The Hourglass with Duane and Gregg Allman) "I was so honored to sing on this CD. For a while there I didn't know if I was going to get to sing "Good Ol' Southern Rock" again. Here came Buffalo, and he is the real deal. You see, it's not a look or a sound that defines true Southern Rock- although there is a definite look and sound that surrounds us- It's truly a feeling in our souls that becomes passion, and we can recognize it in each other. I said yes to Micheal when he asked me to sing on his project, and I never even heard him play. I just knew-I knew I would fit in, and so will you,when you listen to Southern Lights. If you are a Southern Rocker or not, you'll Know." -Bonnie Bramlett (Solo Diva, Delaney Bonnie, The Allman Brothers Sister, etc) "Good pickers, rammin' and jammin' Southern style." -Charlie Daniels "Southern Lights" is like a trip down an old country road. You've driven it before, you know every turn. Good singing and good playing from Michael and friends with a positive message. It's good to know that Southern music is alive and well. Good job brother, keep standing in the light! -Greg Martin Kentucky HeadHunters "Michael Buffalo Smith is a big guy with a big Southern heart who has taken up the torch for roots music. One listen to his record and a read through his magazine Gritz gives testimony to all our art." -Richard Young Kentucky Headhunters "I'll start off by saying that Michael B. really got a chance to show his writing ability on this CD, and I'll have to say, with the likes of great pickers and singer Bonnie Bramlett, how could he miss?! I am especially proud that Michael chose to record one of my songs ("Ride On My Friend" A Tribute to Toy Caldwell). I must tell you, he took my song and made it our song. Good luck to my favorite Buffalo and God bless all who listen! -Tony Heatherly (The Marshall Tucker Band) "I must say that working on the Southern Lights CD project with Michael Buffalo Smith was one of the best week long sessions I have gone thru in years. Almost everyone involved put egos and pride aside and worked for the songs, not themselves, which made a most enjoyable week. The CD looks great. I love your logo on the CD itself and that is a cool shot of the Buffalo on the back and front. Buffalo rules. -Billy Teichmiller (Drummer/The Crawlers) "I have really been enjoying the Cd. I think that you and everyone did wonderful work on the album. There is no guessing at who played what, like Pete's guitar solos you know who's

playing that soulful guitar from the moment you hear it. I think that there is something on the CD for everyone to enjoy, each song has its own thing, unlike so many albums where all the songs sound the same. I also really like the Cd jacket. -Ray Brand (Guitarist/The Crawlers) "The cover art and pictures look great !I'm really excited about this new CD.....even after all of these years and releases it's just like the first time you ever saw your name or picture and song on a product! Getting this CD in the mail today has made my day...my weekend...maybe my year ! I'm very happy and proud and honored that The Buffalo recorded one of my songs and asked me to also perform on this great new album. Thanks a million brother Buffalo." -John D. Wyker (Sailcat) "Southern Lights is deeply imbedded with true Southern tradition! Michael Buffalo Smith goes from the roots to the modern day with sounds and vocals. Along with Michael, Bonnie Bramlet, Tommy Crain, and Pete Carr and all the musicians offer up the true grit of the South! Great songwriting with very believable images and music. It makes a soul proud to hear a true and original form of music carried into the 21st century! Damn good job Michael, "Southern Lights" will find it's place among the greats!! " -George McCorkle (founding member The Marshall Tucker Band) "Leave it to my friend, Michael Buffalo Smith to put together another outstanding Southern CD with some of my old friends and classic pickers! Who could go wrong with Pete Carr (Duane's picked protg), Bonnie Bramlett (Songbird Of The South), Johnny Wyker (The Vision), Tommy Crain (Hot Licks) and some of the best veteran players from The South? From "Into the Light" to "Buddha in a Swimming Pool" this will make you smell the magnolias and want a peach. True Southern playing from beginning to the end." "I Don't Want To Say Goodbye" says it all for me. It all leaves me wanting more! "Ride On My Friend", ride on!" -Alan Walden, Macon, Georgia (Legendary Macon Music Mogul) "Just finished listening to your album and I want you to know how refreshing it is to me! I use the word "refreshing" because it takes me back to a time when music was fun and it takes me back to the day when musicians actually "jammed" in the studio. Like Eric Duane playin' "Layla" together ya' know? Your songs on this album make a person feel like they're worth somethin' ... the lyrics are to the point and harmless at the same time. Fun and free. The listener can go as deep as they wanna' go or just "hop in the car and ride around on a Saturday night." It sounds like you have a lot to be thankful for, and it sounds like you know who to thank! Bein' an ol' "card carryin' guitar pickin' hippie" myself, it's good to hear great musicians "turned loose" in the studio. Of course it always helps to have songs that you can "free form" with. Songs are arrows ... songwriters are archers ... so ... in a word, BULL'S-EYE son! Thanks so much Michael; this album gives us somethin'

we can keep in our heart forever." -Barry Lee Harwood (Rossington Collins Band) BIOGRAPHY Michael received his very first guitar at the age of seven, a toy Roy Rogers model. Apparently, Smith was less than interested at the time, since the instrument was left outside, leaning against a tall pine tree, and exposed to rain, sleet and snow for about a month. When Michael finally remembered the guitar, it was nothing more than a pile of warped wood and plastic. At the age of ten, Michael was given a set of drums by his parents after begging for almost a year. Unfortunately, the begging lasted much longer than the drums did. After a week or two of trying to play them, Michael awoke one morning to find the drums had mysteriously disappeared. So much for pounding the skins around the Smith household! He later got a Tiesco guitar and a small plastic amp from K-Mart, thanks to his sister and parents. That instrument was the turning point for young Michael, as he fooled around with it, posing in front of the mirror, and learning a couple of barre chords. He would sit and watch TV with his dad, shows like "Hee Haw" and "Austin City Limits," trying to play along by ear. By now, he had learned how to tune a guitar, "kind of." In years to come, Michael would take some money from an insurance claim following a car wreck and buy a Yamaha acoustic guitar, and a Marshall Tucker Band Anthology songbook. Between learning the chords to several of the MTB songs from the diagrams, and being shown a couple of chords by a friend that worked with Michael at the grocery store, Smith learned to play "a little bit." As a bit more time passed, Michael began to learn lead patterns from his albums, and spent an entire weekend learning the twin-lead from "Jessica" by The Allman Brothers Band. He was sincerely proud of that one. While working as sound man and songwriter for a local band in the early 1980's, Michael began to learn more and more guitar as he co-wrote songs with Steve Harvey. Around the same time, the band employed Stuart Swanlund (now a member of The Marshall Tucker Band) as guitarist. Stuart gave Michael lots of confidence, and it helped him through the rejection. Stuart's positive attitude caused Michael to pursue his guitar playing even more. While attending college in Spartanburg, Michael ran across a guitar playing cat named Gregg Yeary, and the two started getting together to learn covers of everything from Lynyrd Skynyrd to The Outlaws, from The Stray Cats to Bruce Springsteen. The two also began to write together. Soon, Gregg met David Haddox, a legendary drummer who had been the teacher to a 15 year old red-headed wonder named Paul T. Riddle, who would go on to fame and fortune with The Marshall Tucker Band. David was also touring drummer with "The Killer," Jerry Lee Lewis. Pulling Michael's old friend Joey Parrish into the mix, the band became The Buffalo Hut Coalition. The BHC played everywhere, from clubs to festivals and

private parties, and went through a series of bass players, while Smith, Yeary and Haddox held together. In years to come, there would be several other bands in Michael B's future, including Frontline, a regrouping of The Buffalo Hut, and Michael B. The Stingers. Smith also performed as half of a duet and appeared solo in the singer-songwriter mode. After dual surgeries and an extended hospital stay to battle a life-threatening bacterial infection during the summer of '98, and into '99, Smith announced in April that he was again healthy enough to return to the stage. In 2001, "Midwest Carolina Blues" was released in on The Rockabilly Hall of Fame 2000 blues label, a blues and rockabilly tribute to the late Bobby Lowell, a friend of Smith's. Besides his career as a guitarist, singer and songwriter, Smith balances a dual-career as a freelance writer for magazines such as Goldmine, MOJO, Hittin' the Note, Relix and online at AMG (The All-Music Guide), and GRITZ.NET, a Southern Music Culture webzine of which he is the editor. (gritz.net) GRITZ became a full fledged print magazine in June of 2002. He also has a book published through MTE, Inc. of Beverly Hills, California. "Carolina Dreams: The Musical Legacy of Upstate South Carolina" tells the stories of the vast talents who have called South Carolina Home, from The Marshall Tucker Band, Joe Bennett The Sparkletones, Hank Garland, Aaron Tippin and many others. The foreword was penned by Charlie Daniels. Smith is also working on a couple of other Southern Rock biographies. Smith has appeared on stage with The Marshall Tucker Band; Molly Hatchet; Tommy Crain (Charlie Daniels Band); Jerry LaCroix (Edgar Winter's White Trash/Rare Earth); George McCorkle (Marshall Tucker Band); Paul Riddle (Marshall Tucker Band); Dave Hlubek (Molly Hatchet); Jakson Spires (Blackfoot); Jay Johnson (Rossington Band); Charles Hart (Radio Tokyo); Artimus Pyle (Lynyrd Skynyrd); Tim Neely (Humble Pie); Ace Allen (Marshall Tucker Band); Rick Moore Mr. Lucky; Stephen Nichols (Days of Our Lives/Patch); The Southern Rock Allstars, and others. He has opened for Molly Hatchet, Brian Howe of Bad Company, The Marshall Tucker Band, The Southern Rock Allstars, New Legacy Duo and many others. Currently, Smith is busy promoting his latest CD, SOUTHERN LIGHTS.

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