

MICHAEL P. SMITH, Songwriter, Performer

Michael Smith is a master of the story song and the charactersketch, invoking a Carver-like economy at the one end and the subtlety of Proust at the other. Each song comes from a place so vividly evoked that it makes you want to go and live, not there, but rather more completely in your own life.

— Foley Schuler, WBLV Radio



Professional background and touring history (Illinois focus)

Michael Smith has been singing, writing and touring in North America for over five decades. This self-taught musician is an award-winning composer and contributes original scores to the finest theaters in United States. He is a regular at music festivals from Kerrville, Texas to St. Augustine, Florida's Gamble Rogers Music Festival, to Illinois' own Fox Valley Folk Festival. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Woodstock Folk Festival in 2009. Recent appearances include the Old Town School of Folk Music, Irish American Heritage Center, Lake County Folk Club, Evanston First Night, and libraries throughout Illinois: Alton, Glenview, Lisle and Oak Park. His songs were featured in four Chicago Humanities Festivals at Roosevelt University's Ganz Hall, Chicago History Museum and Thorne Auditorium.

Michael's extensive catalog of compositions includes critically acclaimed theatrical scores, recordings, and award-winning productions. He wrote the music for the Tony Award-winning Steppenwolf production *The Grapes of Wrath* (1990). *Michael Margaret Pat & Kate* (1994) at Victory Gardens Theatre earned him four Joseph Jefferson Citations, including Best Original Music. Also for Victory Gardens, Michael composed the score for *Hello Dali: From the Sublime to the Surreal* (2000) with Jamie O'Reilly, a production that received an After Dark Award for Best New Work. Other scores include *The Gift of the Magi* (2003) for Judith Svalander Dance Theatre at the Woodstock Opera House and the chamber opera *Songs of the Kerry Madwoman* (2006) for the DePaul Humanities Center. *The Heart Songs of Opal Whiteley* with collaborator Anne Hills, is now a touring production. Recently, he was a featured artist/songwriter for the Poetry Foundation in *And the Poet Sang* (with Jamie O'Reilly) and *Brecht's Love Poems* (with Steppenwolf ensemble members Martha Lavey, Tim Hopper, and Jessica Anne Thebus).

Michael and puppeteer Blair Thomas collaborated on *The Snow Queen* for Victory Gardens, winner of Denmark's prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award. Their other collaborations include Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant* for Chicago Children's Theatre, Edward Gorey's *The Vinegar Works* for Loyola University Museum of Art, as well as their current project, *Moby-Dick* which will be workshopped at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago fall of 2015.

Links to work samples.

The Dutchman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLgttYMF4lM>

The video features a live performance of Michael singing his most famous song

The Selfish Giant

<https://vimeo.com/63380348>

The video features a song Michael wrote and performed for Blair Thomas & Co's adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant*.

Hey Kid

<https://vimeo.com/2047978>

The video features a song Michael wrote about Evanston, IL painter Leopold Segedin for the award-winning Victory Gardens production *Hello Dali: From the Sublime to the Surreal*.

Michael Smith is represented by Jamie O'Reilly, J. O'Reilly Productions.

PH 773-203-7661; email: mps_booking@jamieoreilly.com

Website: <http://jamieoreilly.com>, <http://michaelpetersmith.com>