

MICHAEL SCHENKER'S 20 MOST IMPORTANT ALBUMS... IN HIS OWN WORDS!

The legendary guitarist goes deep to give you a highly personal insight into the stories behind his greatest recordings. Interview by *Howard Johnson*



SCORPIONS – LONESOME CROW (1972)

"I was only 16 years old when I recorded 'Lonesome Crow' and it was the first music that I'd ever put on a record. It also featured my very first musical composition, 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind', a song I wrote in my mother's

kitchen. The solo on that number came to me from somewhere else – I don't know where – and it landed right there on the first recording. It was perfect! On the rest of 'Lonesome Crow' I'm an amateur in the process of developing. But for some reason that solo was just *perfect*. Like Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway To Heaven', you'd never change a note. The rest of the band were around 23 at the time, and maybe they took advantage of

me because I wrote most of the music for 'Lonesome Crow', but that's not what the writing credits showed. I'm someone who always looks forward, not back, so I never paid much attention to the credits. But when I was recording a new version of 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind' for my latest album, 'Immortal', the producer Michael Voss sent me the original credits for 'In Search Of The Peace Of Mind'. It said 'lyrics by Rudolf and Michael Schenker.' Well, how could we have written the lyrics? We had zero knowledge of English, so that was impossible. But that's how it ended up – typical wrong information, of course.

"Still, 'Lonesome Crow' was a very important album for me, because it marked the beginning of my recording career. To hear my music coming out of the radio alongside something amazing like 'Led Zep IV', which had been released just a little bit before 'Lonesome Crow'... well, it was just fantastic!"



UFO – PHENOMENON (1974)

"I joined UFO in June 1973. But I didn't join because I wanted to be in UFO, I joined because I wanted to be in *England!* Germany was useless for music at the time. Being a musician just wasn't accepted as a

profession there. So I decided really early on that if an English band asked me to join then I would do it. 'Phenomenon' was my first album with an English group and it was incredibly exciting for me to be recording it. Because I didn't speak any English it was very much a case of 'Let the music do the talking.' I couldn't understand all the jokes and sarcastic comments the other guys in the band were making, which was probably a good thing. If I'd known what they were saying, then I probably would have left the band straight away! But when they were joking and messing around I was focusing on writing and playing

guitar. And every so often [vocalist] Phil Mogg would jump up and go 'That's it!'. Most of the songs started out as me writing instrumentals. 'Doctor Doctor' was one of them. Phil would ask for the main root chords I was using for the solos and then start working on the song, and my original instrumental passages ended up as the solos in the songs. Making 'Phenomenon' was an unbelievable experience, but to be honest I didn't like the way Phil's voice worked with my guitar at the start. I never thought Phil Mogg was a great singer. I was an 18 year old focusing on lead guitar, who'd come from a band with a singer like Klaus Meine, who was much more metal than Phil, with a vibrato style that was completely different to Phil's way of singing. To me Phil didn't even sound like a singer. And I didn't focus on the lyrics, so I didn't know what he was writing about. Today of course I know that Phil's lyrics were one of his strongest suits. His contribution as a lyricist was phenomenal, actually, even though I didn't realise it at the time. But back then I honestly didn't focus on Phil. I just focused on my lead guitar playing."