



STRYPER FRONTMAN MICHAEL SWEET COMING TO PRESCOTT VALLEY - RON WILLIAMS

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Photo courtesy of Michael Sweet

If you were a rock fan in the 1980s you may have heard of the band Stryper. If you were a Christian rock fan, you have definitely heard of this band. Perhaps you are still following the band that has now been together over 40 years.

Saturday night in Prescott Valley is the place to be for a special acoustic **free** concert by the bands' lead singer Michael Sweet, brought to you by The Flock Church.

Ronnie James, pastor of The Flock Church, said, "This is part of our outreach program in the church that is designed to reach those that might not go to church. Stryper has been the ultimate Christian rock band since the 80s and we are excited to have Michael come to play. Everyone is welcome."

In what to expect on Saturday night, Michael said, "It's just me and my acoustic guitar, where I use a little looper, get a rhythm going on some songs, and play a solo over that. It's very bare bones, and I tell some stories and give a little history. It's like I am in your living room. It is intimate and very personal, and I am really looking forward to coming to Prescott Valley."

Living in La Mirada, California, in 1983, Michael, along with his brother Robert, formed the first Christian rock band called Roxx Regime, with Oz Fox and Tim Gaines coming on board to complete the birth of the band. The name was soon changed to Stryper to reflect their religious beliefs, with Isaiah 53.5 seen on their album covers.

Michael and Robert did not have to look far for the musical inspiration. "My dad worked for the railroad, and when he came home from work, or on his days off, he would play music from the time he got up till the time he went to bed. He would play anything from Pavarotti to Black Sabbath. He had a lot of different types of music, an eclectic mix. He would play Elvis Presley, Creedence Clearwater, Tammy Wynette, Loretta Lynn, Bad Company, Jerry Lee Lewis, Foghat, and we loved it all. So I just love good music, no matter what genre it is. If it is a good song, it's a good song."

The battle to be accepted was an issue early on for the band. "It was a struggle because we were trying to get people to take us serious. For those kids going to church, their parents wouldn't let them listen to Motley Crue, but they would allow them to listen to us. We were an alternative for those kids. So it was really cool to see the affect we had on their lives, and what a following we had. We were just kind

of exploding back in 84-85, selling out theaters, and eventually arenas. We were 21-22 years old and here we are taking off. It was very humbling, shocking, and all that stuff.”

In regards to how the band had been able to make such a positive impact through the years, Michael said, “Looking back on the history of the band it is amazing the impact that we have had, and all the people that have been affected by that. Over the years lives have been changed and altered. It has been incredible to have been a part of something that powerful. To still be doing this many years later is somewhat miraculous actually, because a lot of bands from our era are broke up. We still have three of the original four members, myself, Robert, Oz, and we have Perry from the legendary band Firehouse. We are just blessed to have what we have.”

Over the last forty years Stryper has sold more than 10 million albums worldwide and has 23 top 40 hits to their credit. Of their 15 studio albums, four reached number two and another made it all the way to number one. Their first music video was ‘Calling on You’ that came out in 1987, but their breakthrough on the charts came shortly after with the single ‘Honestly’. That was followed by another MTV favorite, ‘Always There for You’. They have made 22 music videos, which you can find easily on YouTube.

For those of you that remember American Bandstand, the band performed on the February 13, 1988 show, playing ‘Honestly’ and ‘Calling on You’.

When the band took a hiatus in 2007, Michael played for the rock band Boston. “It was wild because that was the first album I bought as a kid when I was 13. It changed my life musically. I was always learning how to be a better guitar player, writer, and producer. It was kind of my education, my college. So when I was asked to play with them years later, it was like a pinch me moment every night because it was hard to believe. Just pretty incredible.”

More recently, the band wrapped up their 40th anniversary tour at the end of last year, and played at the Celebrity Theater in Phoenix on October 29. “That was the one show where Oz was unable to perform, so we had to go on as a trio. We pulled it off and it was a great show,” said Michael, who went on to say. “The tour was a long one but great. We did the acoustic tour and two legs of the electric tour. We still love what we do. We never take it for granted in the fact that we can still do it. We enjoy playing and have a lot more life in us.”

In regards to what is going on before Stryper heads back out on the road again, Michael said, “I do these weekend warrior acoustic dates on occasion, like this Saturday, which I really enjoy, where it is just me and my acoustic guitar. It’s one or two shows on a weekend and it is a lot of fun. I really enjoy it.”

The bands most recent offering is the album ‘When We Were Kings’ that was released on September 13, 2024. The title track of the same name is a reflective piece that is very cool and reminiscent of the band and their past 40 years. Here is the link to enjoy the video.

<https://youtu.be/XBYmJ0Kwb24>

Stryper will be back on the road this summer with dates scheduled in the eastern part of the United States, Europe, and still working on some dates in South America.

The concert starts Saturday at 6pm at 6901 East Panther Path in Prescott Valley, in the theater located right behind Yavapai College Prescott Valley campus. The event will feature food trucks from 4-6pm. Doors open at 5pm, and admission is FREE!

More info at <http://theflockchurch.com>

More information about Michael, the band, and their music, go to the websites at <https://michaelsweet.com> or <https://stryper.com>