

MIKELANGELO

& THE BLACK SEA GENTLEMEN

AFTER THE FLOOD

The album and show

Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen released their 4th album, *After The Flood*, in May 2016 year via Rocket distribution and their own Black Sea Spice, Tea and Music Trading Company to rave reviews from press, long-term fans and new initiates. The album was conceived and written during an artistic residency in Cooma and the Monaro Plains. The band were inspired by first hand stories of the men who left post war Europe in the 50s and 60s to take their chances in Australia working on the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

The group has developed their new show *After The Flood* from their album of the same name. Armed with vivid imaginations and a veritable arsenal of instrumentation, they take on this wild chapter of Australian history, and in so doing, create their own unique and compelling take on the immigrant story. This is the entertaining and illuminating tale of five men fleeing persecution and colliding with the harsh beauty a new world.

Led by the mellifluous and masterful Mikelangelo, songs and stories of shattered dreams, illicit love and bittersweet hopes rise and fall; from the swagger and romance of the lilting 'Wages Song', to the haunting and tender working man's lullaby 'The Sun Will Shine In'; the ghosts of drowned towns emerge from beneath the waters of mysterious Alpine lakes in the strum and twang of 'Way Down Below'; while the sultry, strip club blues of 'Workin' & Dancin' sees Mikelangelo trying to reconcile finding love in the new world with the promises made

to the love left behind in the old one. His songs are interwoven with poetic and comedic musings on this new foreign landscape and its peoples.

Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen are a highly collaborative group, and *After The Flood* is very much an ensemble piece. The songs and stories of the five players make for a rolling, rambunctious, funny and moving show that is part-arrival, part-journey and part-farewell. *Rufino the Catalan Casanova* woos the audience, like a silver tongued Parisian Maître'd crossed with a 50's Italian nightclub singer; he sweeps everyone up in his mischievous adventures, strolling through the room insulting people with such charm that even the victims of his wit are delighted. *The Great Muldavi* sings a romantic lament about the mountains in his blood and the landscape of the new world, before flipping the coin to land in a rollicking absurdist travelogue that has everyone in stitches, culminating in the whole band howling like crazed wolves. The journey into absurdity continues with the ever dour *Guido Libido* growling his foreboding warning - "Don't look for me, don't reach for me, don't get in my way, forget everything you've known about me I'm going far away" - he evokes the peculiarity and finality of cutting off all ties with the homeland to embark on an ocean journey from the known into the unknown. In the new world, *Little Ivan* falls for a prostitute in her caravan of love, and on realizing his love is unrequited, leaves behind heartbreak and his war torn past in the fire and the fury of the hard working life.

Far from a fish out of water story, *After The Flood* exerts the timeless strength and fortitude of workers immemorial who have built empires at the behest of rulers who could not have done the job without them. This is a full-hearted tale of hope and acceptance in the face of struggle and loss; a vibrant and emotive exploration of the many facets of masculinity; reflective, playful, convivial, loving, brooding and intense; a celebration of difference, camaraderie and the dreams of a better world.

The *After The Flood* live show is directed by French émigré Renald Navilly (Splinters, Tango 160), who has worked with Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen for over ten years. Bringing his background of Bouffon, Comedia Del Arte and World

Music to bear, he has worked closely with the band to bring a dynamic animation between the performers, framing the tragicomic poignancy and energy of the performance, and developing the strong visual, choreographic style of the group.

The *After The Flood* album was recorded and mixed at Turning Studios in Sydney with Evan McHugh (Midnight Oil, Grinspoon, The Great Gatsby), who co-produced the album with the group. All of the band contribute songs to the record and together they create a vivid portrait of a world of adventure, hard work and high emotion, leaving the listener gasping with the sheer depth and breadth of Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen's power as storytellers and melody makers.

The recording of *After the Flood* was made possible with funding from The Australia Council of the Arts, and the Cooma residency was supported by arts for social change company Big hART, Arts NSW, South East Arts, Cooma-Monaro Council, the Canberra Theatre Centre and the people of Cooma and the Snowy Mountains.

Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen are:

Mikelangelo - Vocals, Guitar and Percussion

Rufino - Vocals, Violin, Percussion & Drums

T.G. Muldavio - Vocals, Clarinet, Harmonica, Trombone
& Percussion

Little Ivan - Vocals & Doublebass

Guido Libido - Vocals, Accordion, Saxophone, Tenor Ukulele

