

Michael Brecker Chronology

Compiled by David Demsey

- **1949/March 29 - Born, Philadelphia, PA**; raised in Cheltenham, PA; brother Randy, sister Emily is pianist. Their father was an attorney who was a pianist and jazz enthusiast/fan
- ca. 1958 – started studies on alto saxophone and clarinet
- 1963 – switched to tenor saxophone in high school
- 1966/Summer – attended Ramblerny Summer Music Camp, recorded *Ramblerny 66* [First Recording], member of big band led by Phil Woods; band also contained Richie Cole, Roger Rosenberg, Rick Chamberlain, Holly Near. In a touch football game the day before the final concert, quarterback Phil Woods broke Mike's finger with the winning touchdown pass; he played the concert with taped-up fingers.
- 1966/November 11 – attended John Coltrane concert at Temple University; mentioned in numerous sources as a life-changing experience
- 1967/June – graduated from Cheltenham High School
- 1967/Summer – attended Berklee College of Music summer program in Boston
- 1967-68 – at Indiana University for three semesters: Fall 1967, Spring 1968, Fall 1968
- 1968/March 8-9 – Indiana University Randy Sandke Jazz Septet performs at Notre Dame Jazz Festival; is favored to win after semi-finals, but is disqualified from the finals for playing rock music. Judges: Oliver Nelson, Ray Brown, Gerald Wilson, Dan Morgenstern, Art Share. Brecker wins Outstanding Soloist award.
- 1968 – Formed Mrs. Seaman's Sound Band with core membership from above group, performed around area including Eugene McCarthy rally in spring; in Chicago with Mrs. Seaman's Sound Band members, in apartment; girl's fatal fall from window in July incident (not involving Brecker directly). Band re-formed in fall 1968 with some new members (listed separately).
- n.d. – First steady gigs r&b keyboard/organist Edwin Birdsong (no known recordings exist of this period)

- Late 1968 – age 20, moved to New York City, had an apartment at corner of Broadway and 72nd St. (Sandke)
- **1969/January 21, February 3 – Recorded *Score* with Randy Brecker; Michael's first commercial release**
- **1970 – co-founder of jazz-rock band *Dreams*** with Randy, trombonist Barry Rogers, drummer Billy Cobham, bassist Doug Lubahn. Recorded *Dreams*. Miles Davis attended some gigs prior to recording *Jack Johnson*.
- 1971 – *Dreams* recorded 2nd album *Imagine My Surprise*, produced in Memphis by Steve Cropper
- 1971 – recorded *Chaplin's Back* with Darius Brubeck
- 1971 – recorded *Wild Bird* with Hal Galper
- 1972 – member of rock group *White Elephant*, led by Mike Mainieri; recorded *White Elephant*
- 1972 – appeared as soloist on James Taylor's single "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight" on album *One Man Dog*
- 1972 – appeared on Todd Rundgren's album *Something/Anything?*
- 1972/November 10 – recorded with Horace Silver, *In Pursuit of the 27th Man* [remainder of album w/Dave Friedman and no horns was recorded a month earlier]
- 1973/Spring-Summer – toured with Horace Silver
- 1973 – recorded *Guerilla Band* with Hal Galper
- 1973 – recorded *Mind Games*, John Lennon
- 1974/Summer-Fall – toured with Billy Cobham, recorded *Crosswinds, Total Eclipse, Shabazz Live* (July 4, 1974)
- 1974/August – Japan with Yoko Ono: 8/5 Kaiseizan Stadium, Karyama; 8/6 Koseinsenkin Hall, Osaka; 8/9 Nagoya City Hall, Nagoya; 8/11 Sun Plaza, Tokyo; 8/12 Koseinenkin Hall, Tokyo; 8/16 Hiroshima Prefectural Gymnasium
- **1975 – formed Brecker Brothers with brother Randy**

- 1975/January – recorded *Brecker Brothers*, their first album that was originally intended as Randy's solo album, contained Randy's compositions, but Arista insisted on Brecker Brothers band name.
- 1975 – appeared on Paul Simon's single "Still Crazy After All These Years"
- 1975 – appeared on Manhattan Transfer version of *Operator*
- 1975 – recorded *Funky Thide of Sings*, Billy Cobham
- 1976 – recorded *Back to Back*, Brecker Brothers
- 1976/June 8-9 – recorded *Mel Lewis and Friends* with Mel Lewis, Freddie Hubbard, Hank Jones, Ron Carter, Cecil Bridgewater, Gregory Herbert
- 1976/September-October – recorded *Gate of Dreams* with Claus Ogerman
- 1976/November 11 – recorded *Reach Out* with Hal Galper
- 1976 – appeared on *Smile*, Laura Nyro
- 1976/September-October – recorded *Gate of Dreams*, Claus Ogerman
- 1976/December 26-29 – appeared on *Zappa in New York* with Frank Zappa [incorrect on Wikipedia as 1978]
- 1976 – appeared on *Clones of Dr. Funkenstein, Mothership Connection* with Parliament/Funkadelic
- 1977-78 – toured with Hal Galper Quintet
- 1977 – recorded *Don't Stop the Music*, Brecker Brothers
- 1977/March – recorded *Tring-A-Ling* with Joanne Brackeen
- 1977/October 31 – recorded *You Can't Live Without It* with Jack Wilkins
- 1977 – appears on disco hit "Native New Yorker," *Odyssey*
- 1978/DATE? – recorded *Heavy Metal Bebop* Brecker Brothers
- 1978/January 18, 23 – recorded with Charles Mingus, released as *Me, Myself and Eye* and *Something Like a Bird*

- 1978/February – recorded *Speak With a Single Voice* with Hal Galper. Later, Galper's *Redux '78* contained more material from this live session
- 1978/July 7 – recorded *In, Out and Around* with Mike Nock
- 1978/July 21-22 – recorded *Blue Montreux Vols. I-II* at Montreux Jazz Festival
- 1978/July 23 – recorded *Live at Montreux*, Ben Sidran
- 1979/August-September – toured with Joni Mitchell, documented on LP/video, Forest Hills Tennis Stadium NYC 8/25/79; *Shadows and Light* video in September 1979 in Santa Barbara, CA
- 1979 – recorded with Mike Nock, *In, Out and Around*
- 1980 – recorded *Détente*, Brecker Brothers
- 1980 – appeared on single *Same Old Lang Syne*, Dan Fogelberg
- 1980 – toured Europe in July/August, Japan in September with Brecker Brothers
- 1980/Late – joined Steps, collaborative group with Mike Mainieri – started as Steps w/Japanese Columbia contract, then became Steps Ahead w/US album releases
- 1980/May 26-29 – recorded with Pat Metheny, *80-81*
- 1980/December 8, 10 – recorded *Step By Step*, Steps
- 1981 – recorded *Straphangin'*, Brecker Brothers
- 1981 – recorded *Smokin' in the Pit*, Steps
- 1981/January-February – recorded with Chick Corea, *Three Quartets* with Eddie Gomez, Steve Gadd
- 1981/September – recorded *Paradox*, Steps
- 1981/August-September – toured Europe with Chick Corea 80/81 band
- 1981/December 1 – recorded *Birthday Concert* with Jaco Pastorius
- 1982 – toured extensively with Steps: Japan, Europe, US dates

- 1982/January 4-8 – recorded *Cityscape* with Claus Ogerman – saxophone and orchestra
- 1982/December 9 – completes rehab, clean from that day onward [per 1995 *Jazz Journal* interview]
- 1983 – toured with Steps Ahead; March-April in Europe,
- 1983 – recorded *Steps Ahead*
- 1983/May – recorded *Double, Double You*, Kenny Wheeler
- 1983/October 29 – Steps Ahead in Maine? Check...
- 1984 – toured with Steps Ahead; Europe in March, July; US dates
- 1984/January-February – recorded *Modern Times*, Steps Ahead
- 1985/July – Spain, Italy, France with Steps Ahead
- 1985 – Recorded *Hearts and Numbers*, Don Grolnick
- 1986 – recorded *Magnetic*, Steps Ahead
- 1986/January 24 [per SB] – Married Susan
- 1986/July 30 – Recorded *Live in Tokyo*, Steps Ahead (released 1994)
- 1986/March, October – Europe with John Abercrombie
- 1986/July 30 – recorded *Live in Tokyo*, Steps Ahead (released in 1994)
- 1987 – Released first solo album, *Michael Brecker*, appeared at Newport Jazz Festival in July; extensive touring to promote album. First two tour dates of Michael Brecker Band: Hunt's Tavern in Montpelier, VT, 3/26, concert at U. Maine Augusta 3/27
- 1987 – intense work on EWI development, promotion with Akai
- 1987/June 8-9 – recorded live video with Carly Simon on Gay Head, Martha's Vinyard, MA

- 1988 – recorded solo album *Don't Try This At Home*
- 1988/March – 1st Grammy: Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Soloist, *Don't Try This at Home*
- 1988 – many tour dates with Michael Brecker Band
- 1988/July – Europe tour with Herbie Hancock
- 1988/December, January 1989 – recorded *Claus Ogerman, Featuring Michael Brecker*
- 1989/January 21 – Live performance of *Cityscape*, Japan
- 1989 – Daughter Jessica born (same night as Grammy Award)
- 1990 – recorded solo album *Now You See It...Now You Don't*
- 1990 – touring with Michael Brecker Quartet
- 1991/March-December – worldwide touring with Paul Simon
- 1992 – recorded *Return of the Brecker Brothers*
- 1992/June-December – two European tours, Japan with Brecker Brothers
- 1992/November 29-30 – recorded *Twin Tenors*, Bob Mintzer
- 1993 – more touring with Brecker Brothers; Europe in June-July
- 1993/August 1 [per SB] – son, Sam born
- 1994 – recorded *Out of the Loop*, Brecker Brothers
- 1994/March – Two Grammys: Best Instrumental Composition, “African Skies;” Best Contemporary Jazz Performance, Brecker Brothers *Out of the Loop*
- 1994 – more touring with Brecker Brothers; Europe in May, October-November

- 1995/January/February – UK with Don Grolnick; touring with Brecker Brothers
- 1995/March – Grammy: Best Jazz Instrumental Solo, “Impressions” on *Infinity* with McCoy Tyner
- 1995/November -July 1996 –touring with McCoy Tyner; Newport Jazz Festival in August with Tyner
- 1995/April 12-14 - recorded *Infinity*, McCoy Tyner
- 1996 – recorded solo album *Tales From the Hudson*
- 1996/February 29, March 1 – recorded *Hardbop Grandpop*, reunites with Horace Silver
- 1996/March – Two Grammys: Best Jazz Performance, Individual or Group, for *Tales from the Hudson*; Best Jazz Instrumental Solo for “Cabin Fever”
- 1996/June-July – Europe with McCoy Tyner Trio
- 1996/October-November – Israel, then Europe, US with Michael Brecker Band
- 1996 – recorded *The New Standard* with Herbie Hancock
- 1997 – Europe in Jan./Feb. with Michael Brecker Band; Montreal, then Europe with New Standard band
- 1997/May 29-30 – recorded *Prescription of the Blues*, Horace Silver
- 1998 – recorded solo album *Two Blocks From the Edge*
- 1998 – tours with Michael Brecker Group: New Jazz Festival, Europe in June, July, October-November
- 1999 – recorded solo album *Time Is of the Essence*
- 1999 – tours: Tenor Summit in Montreal, NY Blue Note in December; Elvin Jones in NY, October; US tour with Michael Brecker Quartet in spring, Europe in October-November
- 2000/June-July – Europe with Brecker-Metheny Special Quartet, US in September

- 2000/August 2 – performed John Psathas Saxophone Concerto, Bologna, Italy
- 2000/Oct-Nov – with Kenny Barron Trio in Seoul, Tokyo
- 2000/December 18-20 – recorded solo album *Nearness of You: The Ballad Book*
- 2001 – toured with collaborative group Hancock-Brecker-Hargrove, with music dedicated to Miles Davis and John Coltrane. Brecker performed solo saxophone version of “Naima” nightly.
- 2001/January 12 – Brecker Bros. with Metropole Orchestra, IAJE
- 2001/March – Grammy: Best Jazz Instrumental Solo, for “Chan’s Song”
- 2001/June – Montreal Jazz Fest, featured artist, with own band, solo, organ trio, Steps Ahead reunion, Danilo Perez
- 2001/July – Europe with Brecker Brothers Acoustic Band
- 2001/Sept-Oct – US with Directions in Music
- 2001/September – with Diana Krall, Tokyo
- 2001/October 25 – Recorded *Directions in Music: Live at Massey Hall*
- 2001/December – Chick Corea Three Quartets band, NY Blue Note
- 2001 – *Directions in Music: Live at Massey Hall* wins Grammy Award
- 2002 – Tenor Summit, Birdland, New York
- 2002/March – Grammy: Best Jazz Instrumental Album, for *Directions in Music*, co-led with Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove
- 2002/May 14-17 – recorded *American Dreams* with Charlie Haden, with orchestra
- 2002/June-July – Directions in Music, Europe
- 2002/October – Solo Concert, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2003/January 22-24 – recorded solo album *Quindecet – Wide Angles*
- 2003/March – Two Grammys: Best Instrumental Arrangement, for “Timbuktu;” Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album, for

- 2003/November 11 – Records *Some Skunk Funk* w/WDR Big Band, Germany
- 2003 – tours with own band, Brecker Brothers, Farmers Market 6/17 and Urban Connection 6/20, Molde Norway; w/Ray Brown 7/5, Salzau, Germany; Saxophone Summit Europe October; Quintet (first gig?) New York November
- 2004/January – recorded *Saxophone Summit*, with Dave Liebman, Joe Lovano
- 2004/January-February – Quintet in Japan
- 2004/August – John Coltrane Tribute, Newport Jazz Festival
- 2005/January 19 – Quintet, Zankel Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall
- 2005/January-February – US tour, Directions in Music “Our Times”
- 2006/August – recorded final solo album, *Pilgrimage*
- 2006/March – Two Grammys: Best Jazz Instrumental Solo for “Some Skunk Funk;” Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album for *Some Skunk Funk* with Randy Brecker, WDR Big Band
- 2007/January 13 – dies of complications from leukemia, New York City. Funeral on January 15 near his home in Hastings, New York.
- 2007/February 20 – memorial celebration, Michael Brecker Remembered, held at Town Hall, New York City, featuring Daryl Pitt, Randy Brecker, David Liebman, Pat Metheny, Herbie Hancock/John Patitucci/Jack DeJohnette, Paul Simon, and Sam Brecker
- 2007/March – Two Grammys: Best Jazz Instrumental Solo for “Anagram;” Best Jazz Instrumental Album, Individual or Group for *Pilgrimage*