

# Mike Keneally Timeline



**1961**

Dec. 20 Born in Long Island, New York.

**1966** Hijacks older sister's Beatles albums, absorbs data contained therein.

**1968**

Takes up keyboards.

**1970**

Moves to San Diego.

**1971**

Hears Frank Zappa for the first time (the song was

*Help, I'm A Rock!*); takes up guitar.

**1971-85**

Rampant musical experimentation: recording, composing, band-forming and dissolving, learning.

**1985**

Forms band Drop Control, achieves cult hero status in San Diego.

**1987**

Is auditioned and hired by Frank Zappa as guitarist/keyboardist/ vocalist in Zappa's last touring band.

**1988**

Four-month world tour with Zappa, resulting in albums *Broadway the Hard Way*,

*Make A Jazz Noise Here*, *The Best Band You Never Heard In Your Life*, and several tracks from *You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore* (FZ calls MK "the best new guy I ever had in the band") – MK sings lead on *Elvis Has Just Left The Building*.

**1988-90**

Shellshocked from sudden disbanding of Zappa group, MK

returns to Drop Control; compiles and markets the limited edition MK *Tar Tapes* series (unavailable for years, these tapes have achieved the patina of legend amongst a certain breed of fanatic; in 1997 and 1998 selected tracks were released on the *Tar Tapes Vols. 1 and 2* CDs); SD cult hero status deepens.

**1990**

An effort is made to forge a studio career of sorts: records with

Screamin' Jay Hawkins, Andy Prieboy, and Dweezil Zappa and others; MK bites the bullet and moves from SD to LA. Wide-eyed.

**1991**

Tours US and Europe with the Dweezil Zappa Band, which will eventually be

renamed Z – MK will tour and record with Z until 1996; all pretense to forging a session career is dropped but nonetheless records and performs with famed Indian violinist Shankar; leads the rock band for the Grammy-winning *Zappa's Universe* performances, from which

a CD and a home video (which the Bravo Network used to show all the time) are derived.

**1992**

A solo career is launched in earnest; records and releases kaleidoscopic debut *hat*; album receives glowing press reception; fan base increases exponentially, begins spreading around the globe.

**1993**

Pens column *The Murk for Guitar Player* magazine; MK

forms new live band and supports *hat* with gigs whenever there's time; Andy Partridge of XTC says of MK: "He's so good he makes you want to spit;" a lot of time spent with Z (including making *Shampoohorn*).

**1994**

MK records and releases moody second solo album *Boil That Dust*

*Speck*, an album influenced by the passing of both his father and Frank Zappa; MK's live band is renamed Mike Keneally & Beer For Dolphins (MK/BFD) and frequency of live performances is stepped up; MK's website <[www.keneally.com](http://www.keneally.com)> comes into being and soon becomes a means for much more intimate interaction between MK and listeners; yet more Z (the album *Music For Pets*).

**1995**

MK/BFD perform rampantly; Z activity much less rampant;

MK produces *The Mistakes*, which features a lineup consisting of MK, Henry Kaiser, Andy West, and Prairie Prince (*Guitar Player*: "Consider this all-star aggregate the new Traveling Wilburys – roaming the underground and armed with automatic weapons"); records tracks with the very great Kevin Gilbert.

**1996**

MK leaves Z; MK/BFD tour the US and release *Half Alive in Hollywood*

(a live double-CD) and *Soap Scum Remover* (a live home video); MK joins the Steve Vai band and tours the US, both with the G3 summer tour and, with MK/BFD, as the opening act on an arduous five-week Vai jaunt with virtually no days off; between the two bands MK is on stage for the better part of four hours a night; exhaustion.

**1997**

Blows minds regularly;

G3 reconvenes for a North American tour – in addition to playing in the Vai band, MK also performs with Robert Fripp, improvising over Fripp's Soundscapes (Fripp later says, "Mike Keneally was able to solo over [Soundscapes] in a way I have never been able to achieve for myself ... he gave me answers to questions I had felt for myself, but never had the courage or capacity to find an answer;" the *G3 Live In Concert* album and video are released; Vai says of MK, "Mike is by far one of the most stellar musicians I've ever had the good fortune to play with. I would have to say, besides Frank, he's probably my favorite;" acoustic guitar master Adrian Legg proclaims Keneally "one of the most spectacularly overqualified musicians ever to take the rock stage;" MK finds the time to write and record a new album, *Sluggo!*; MK fans growing rapidly in number and enthusiasm.

**1998**

Regular club appearances in LA gain devoted following, as Mike's performances become probing and purging emotional explorations; MK/BFD takes to the road in earnest, using the internet in unprecedented ways to bridge the distance between artist and audience; Full Sail Real World Education signs on as official sponsor for the tour; laudatory press notices continue to pile up – *Time Out New York*: "This band, with such a peculiar genius leading it, is a thing to savor;" recording for Vai and Mullmuzzler; *For The Love Of God* from the G3 live album is nominated for a Grammy – MK on electric sitar. He got a plaque.

**1999**

Keneally and business partner Scott Chatfield introduce their new label Exowax Recordings; their first release is *Nonkertompf*, a stream-of-consciousness instrumental album featuring Keneally on instruments, which receives the most widespread attention (including admiring reviews in *Rolling Stone* and *Down Beat*) of any MK album thus far; MK makes a yet unreleased album with Palace Of Love (MK, Henry Kaiser, Michael Manring, Alex Cline and Raoul Bjorkenheim) and records with The Loud Family; music scor-

ing for Court TV; arranges and records a solo piano album of Vai music, yet to be released; MK/BFD take up residence through the summer at The Baked Potato on Sunset Blvd., to the delight of a still-expanding following; another Vai US tour.

**2000**

The year kicks off with Vai tours in Asia, Australia and Europe; immediately after getting off the road, MK convenes his now eight-piece Beer For Dolphins to rehearse and record the new album *Dancing*; in early August a heartfelt batch of Keneally fans from all across the country (and two other countries as well) congregate in San Diego to pay tribute to MK and his music at a fan gathering dubbed *Nonkerstock 2000*, which culminates in a performance by MK/BFD; MK takes part in five days of recording sessions for the *Yo Miles!* project, a band of highly respected avant rock and jazz musicians helmed by Wadada Leo Smith and Henry Kaiser, climaxing in a joyous gig at San Francisco's Fillmore; the long awaited new BFD album *Dancing* is released.

**2001**

MK signs with Taylor Guitars to do a series of intimate acoustic performances across the country; an exciting improvisational performance series, *Mike Keneally's Circus of Values*, begins in downtown San Diego venue Dizzy's, featuring MK and a revolving cast of experimental musical visionaries; the *Dancing* album is beautifully received, charting on three separate *Billboard* charts and garnering copious attention in international publications, on the radio and the internet; plans for new tours and albums rage on. 

If you want to know more about MK, you'd do well to check out

[www.keneally.com](http://www.keneally.com)

