

# Welcome Home



# Michael & Nell

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Release date: July 31, 2020

Roseheart Records 101

Michael & Nell (Michael J. August and Nell Levin), on their **WELCOME HOME** album, take us from East Nashville to Los Angeles, to Indianapolis, to Vera Cruz, to Concord, to Washington DC, to Jerusalem, by telling some of the important stories of our time along with entertaining flights of whimsy, all in the tradition of Joe Hill, Woody Guthrie, and Phil Ochs.

Michael & Nell live in Nashville, the home of 10,000 songwriters. The corporate Nashville music industry does not encourage the writing of “issue” songs but the craft of songwriting can certainly be learned here. On this collection Michael & Nell meld crafty songwriting to social commentary and sprinkle in some lighthearted songs “to take the edge off” as labor icon/songwriter Joe Hill put it.

On **WELCOME HOME**, Michael & Nell touch on critical issues such as peace in the Middle East (*Jerusalem*), environmental destruction and war (*Day's Gonna Come*), non-violent resistance (*Light in the Forest- Henry David Thoreau*), the outsourcing of American jobs (*Boss Called A Meeting*), gentrification (*Displacement Blues* and *Welcome Home*), the plight of the immigrants called the Dreamers who were brought to the USA as children (*No Man's Land*), and the life of a woman in the Los Angeles barrio (*Queen For A Day*).

They use humor to describe one guy's frustration with the dating scene (*Make A Date*), Nashville's obsession with a strange culinary invention (*Hot Chicken*) and include Steve Goodman's light hearted take on elections (*Election Year Rag*). *Talkin' With Their Hands* looks at ways we can do better in the world beyond just verbalizing. Michael can be heard on this collection playing acoustic guitar, singing lead and harmony and Nell plays fiddle, piano, sings backup harmony and lead on two songs.

This collection would not have been possible without the help of **producer/engineer/multi-instrumentalist Brad Benge**. Brad played guitar for 4 years with legendary fiddler Byron Berline, provided sound for 4 years with another legend, guitarist Tommy Emmanuel and helped engineer Tommy's *Accomplice* album which spent 17 weeks as #1 on the national bluegrass charts. Brad helped us arrange these songs and played drums, electric guitar, keyboard, upright bass and sang background vocals. The album was largely recorded at Tunesmith Studios in Goodlettsville, TN.

Michael & Nell formed the “formidable” Shelby Bottom String Band in 2008. This six-piece unit broke up in 2015 and Nell and Michael continued performing as the Shelby Bottom Duo. In 2016 they created their acclaimed multimedia **Joe Hill Road Show** and released a companion CD. They have performed the Show live 27 times for colleges, unions and community groups. Thanks to funding from the Tennessee Arts Commission and Metro Nashville Arts Commission, they have made the Show available on YouTube. Michael & Nell have performed at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium and at other prominent venues, house concerts and benefits for environmental, community and social justice organizations.

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

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