

**Michael Fracasso to Release Vaulted Charlie Sexton Collaboration  
*Big Top* on June 14 ([Lucky Hound Music](#)), Recorded in Austin, 1999**

**Hear First Single [“My Blue Heaven”](#) (out April 12)**

On June 14, songwriter Michael Fracasso will release *Big Top* (Lucky Hound Music), the new-old album produced by fellow Austinite Charlie Sexton, who is probably picking guitar alongside Bob Dylan as you read this. Recorded in 1999 by Fracasso, Sexton and the late bassist George Reiff, *Big Top* begs the question: how could such an album be left to collect dust for all these years?

*Big Top* was revived in 2017, when it was played at the memorial of Michael's dear friend, George Reiff, which Sexton directed. Lucky Hound A&R rep Michael Ramos was stunned by the music. Fracasso's songs have never sounded so vibrant.

*Big Top* was captured following the sessions that yielded the 1998 album, *World in a Drop of Water*, Fracasso and Sexton's first collaboration. Sexton, like most of the Austin scene, had followed Fracasso's thoughtful output since the early 90s. “I called Charlie, and he showed up at [the storied Austin club] the Hole in the Wall, and that was the beginning of our relationship,” Fracasso remembers. “He's been such a great supporter of my music. I sometimes feel overwhelmed by his generosity and spirit.”

Early on in the studio, their chemistry just clicked. On *World in a Drop of Water*, wrote *Texas Monthly*, Fracasso “reinvents his seductive melodies in a panoramic setting, aided by the lush pop approach of producer Charlie Sexton”; the magazine also remarked on how the “complex arrangements decorate the rich character of Fracasso's voice, and it all works beautifully.”

Fracasso's songwriting takes crucial cues from what he terms the “brutal simplicity” of bluesmen like Howlin' Wolf. The first single “My Blue Heaven,” which Fracasso wrote in response to his mother's passing, showcases his signature melancholy: Even at his most wistful, he offers a sense of uplift through the honeyed quality of his high tenor and his innate feel for melody. A cover of Mark Johnson's “Crazy Little Cricket” serves as a reminder of how potent Fracasso can be in his natural habitat, helming a hot band in a packed-out Austin joint.

Following years on the New York City folk scene, Fracasoo moved to Austin in 1990 and made an auspicious debut with *Love & Trust*, featuring a duet with Lucinda Williams, and has released five critically-adored albums including *Saint Monday*—one of the two Fracasso records boasting a duet with Patty Griffin—and *Here Come the Savages*. “His songwriting remains impressive,” the *Austin Chronicle* wrote of *Savages*, “but with the addition of some well-chosen and often unexpected covers, he delves into his feelings of love, loss, and mixed emotions deeper than before.”

Despite its artistic success, however, *World in a Drop of Water* was more bust than breakout. “I didn't feel like releasing another record and going through that again,” Fracasso explains. So *Big Top* went straight into the vaults, and Fracasso - the first member of his Italian family born in the United States - began to focus on his rising career as a chef.

Fracasso's life today is transformed. He's a proud father with a thriving cooking career that dovetails comfortably with his music—including innovative combined cooking/singing performances. In 2013 he released a book, *Artist in the Kitchen: A Brief Autobiography in Food*, detailing this lifelong passion, and his late-night, after-gig feasts have entered Austin's lore.

Fracasso is excited, and relieved, that the work is finally getting out there. “It was a collaboration that just kind of existed in a time,” he says. “I think it speaks for itself.”



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Watch Fracasso's Cooking Series *Tuning Fork* [here](#)

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