MICHAEL CLEVELAND

2019 GRAMMY
Best Bluegrass Album - *Tall Fiddler*

IBMA
12-Time Fiddle Player
& 7-Time Instrumental Group

2022 - Heritage Fellow
National Endowment for the Arts

From an early age, Michael Cleveland heard old-time and bluegrass music at local jams and festivals near his hometown of Henryville, Indiana. His grandparents hosted regular bluegrass gatherings at the American Legion, and at age four, he began playing the fiddle. He attended the Kentucky School for the Blind in Louisville, where he learned the Suzuki method of violin. While he practiced the violin at school, he played fiddle at home. Cleveland began playing professionally after he graduated from high school, first with Jeff White, later with Dale Ann Bradley and Rhonda Vincent. However, Cleveland had always dreamed of leading his own band and in 2006, he formed Flamekeeper, seven-time recipients of the IBMA's "Instrumental Group of the Year" award, including Josh Richards, Nathan Livers, Jasiah Shrode, and Chris Douglas. In addition to touring with his band, Cleveland has performed with a legendary list of bluegrass greats: Bela Fleck, Tommy Emmanuel, Billy Strings, Vince Gill, and more. Widely considered the bluegrass fiddler of his generation, Cleveland has been recognized 12 times as the IBMA's Fiddle Player of the Year and in 2018 was inducted into the National Fiddlers Hall of Fame. His recording Fiddler's Dream was nominated in 2018 for a GRAMMY for Best Bluegrass Album, and in 2019, he won a GRAMMY for his album Tall Fiddler. The same year, Cleveland's amazing life of adversity and achievement was featured in the documentary film Flamekeeper: The Michael Cleveland Story. And in 2022, he was awarded the National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Fellowship.

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