

Cupid Blindfolded

By

Michael Whalen

Written by

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There is nothing quite like immersing oneself into ambient musical landscapes, especially when they are so beautifully produced and created so tenderly, this is what we have when we walk through the musical portal entitled **Cupid Blindfolded** by **Michael Whalen**.

Whalen is a master creator on the keys and can manifest anything into reality he wishes by the soothing caresses on the piano, the journey through this brand new album starts with the homely opener and proud title track **Cupid Blindfolded**. A beautiful and gentle opus can be found here, the performance is a flowing cascade of brilliance and simply the perfect start to the album.

Whalen follows up that stunning beginning with one of the most delightful tracks off the album entitled **All of My Heart, All of My Soul**. I found this a fascinating composition, at times a little *David Lanz* and at others like a film score to a movie, but whilst flowing with the melody, one was always kept hooked into the piece with that little element of suspense, which was beautifully crafted.

There is something incredibly artistic in Whalen's performance style that I adore, he paints with music so beautifully and writes with notes that literally drip off the page. **Reflection of My Affection** is one of the most heartfelt and moving offerings off the album, and one that you will find impossible to leave with a dry eye, this is Whalen at his very best, moving and fluently passionate and extremely reflective.

We now have a moment of sublime ambience to enjoy, it is called **Sunrise in the Desert**. By the time I had reached this track I had lost all awareness of time, and this really sweet opus just added to that musical dimensional loss of a linear existence. Whalen has once more manifested something so soothing and calming, one could easily imagine watching the sunrise in the desert to this one, smooth, fluent and truly geographically stunning indeed.

As we arrive at the half way juncture we come across a little mystical energy, one that perhaps lies between the keys themselves, in a musical land we call genius. This offering is called **The Muse**, something that can sometimes be hard to find, but when we do, it's a total life changer. There is a clever juxtaposition of performance here by the artist; a little energy of mystery hovers all around, leaving the muse floating in an air of expectancy.

I was left breathless at the sheer beauty of this next offering called **At the Touch of a Lover**. This must be one of the finest examples of melodic, sultry ambient piano I have heard for decades, one that literally took me to the connection that two lovers have, when two become one and the meld that is created, this is simply beyond anything you have ever experienced. For me Whalen's performance here was, and is spellbinding, and this creation will be part of my every day musical life for ages to come.

Standing in the Rain, this is something I would love to do right now in this long roasting summer of ours. However Whalen's interpretation within music of my wish is sublime, and simply does what it says on the can. Through the performance on piano, I can feel with ease the rain falling upon my head, and the energy of reality that this gives me is a wonderful thing indeed. Once more the creativity of the artist here is far reaching and almost emotional at times as well.

The inventive playing on **Serendipity** was a treat to listen to, perhaps serendipitous itself! The natural elements of liberated musical genius run strong within this piece, and Whalen's composition whether discovered by chance or not, has left us in a very happy mood indeed; I also adored the almost jazzy *Keith Emerson* style here as well, utterly masterful and wonderfully fluent indeed.

The penultimate offering is entitled **Isle of Skye**, strange but true, although I lived in the UK for most of my life I have still yet to visit Scotland, however I would really love to do so, perhaps a visit to Skye, after hearing this melody and creation, that may make my desire even stronger. This is a really focused offering and directed at the stated location, through the tones and sensitive but poignant performance, one can be there with ease thanks to this marvellous manifestation of artistic perfection.

We complete our sojourn through the realm of **Cupid Blindfolded** with the ending track, **City of Lights**. This colourful and descriptive finisher is delightful to listen to and reminded me on journeys home with my father in his car during nightfall, my gaze always fell upon the lights of the city below. Whilst that image still holds a fond beat in my heart, I am taken to another place through the performance, perhaps standing upon a hill, looking at the sparkling lights of the city below and this simply timeless opus can now be my soundtrack to that moment.

I had to sit for a while and mull over what I had just heard, to allow this journey to sink into every part of my psyche, had I really listened to one of the best solo piano albums this century, and I personally think that the answer has to be a resounding yes. I was moved emotionally, I was enthralled and intrigued by the depth and crafted genius of the compositions and **Michael Whalen** needs to give himself a huge pat on the back for manifesting an album of such outstanding quality.

Now I will excuse you, while you pop off to make your purchase of **Cupid Blindfolded**, but I need to hit the repeat button and once more get lost in this fine collection of masterful tunes and melodies, just one more time, perhaps!