

# **Sacred Spaces**

**By**

**Michael Whalen**

**Written by**

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I'm on a musical voyage again, and I am now wondering if this is the most exciting sojourn through tone and sound I have taken this year, as **Michael Whalen** is back with **Scared Spaces** a breath taking new offering from the artist, and a completely new direction from all that I have heard before.

Michael known recently for his lush and moving piano work on *Cupid Blindfolded*, has delivered a truly refreshing new offering of electronic ambient and new age styles for us to enjoy.

This is powerfully illustrated by the opening piece entitled **A Metaphysical Morning**, a wonderfully upbeat and literally sparkling new composition that sets the scene musically for us, with one of the most empowering performances on keyboards that I think I have ever heard; this is true music to raise the rhythms.

The title track **Sacred Spaces** is up next, the combination of synths and keyboards here transports us to a whole new musical realm entirely; this is an extremely smooth performance by Whalen, one that has to be both admired and deeply enjoyed; the mix here is sublime, it's a track that if listened to carefully, moves you from one space to another with such a crafted sense of movement employed in the presentation.

**Ordinary Miracles** continues the theme of a brightness of performance and an uplifting narrative, something we all really need right now more than ever. This is one of those pieces that literally seems to create and manifest its own

musical dimension as it plays, and in doing so brings us such peace and calm along the way.

A mystical, yet almost airborne energy can be found in the next offering entitled **1000 Paper Cranes**. There is a lush floating element within this piece that I adored and one that manifested for me, a great deal of ambience. The slight eastern ethic to the music was much appreciated as well and created a wonderful sense of imagery within the mind's eye.

At the half way juncture of the album we come across a truly artistic endeavour called **The Pure and the Calm**, the electronic wizardry here is sublime, the Gregorian chants doubly so, to this day it makes me tingle when I hear that, the ever onward ticking of a musical clock continues in one of the most complex, yet fascinating compositions off the release.

If you have been waiting for a moment of radiant beauty, then you need to look no further than this next piece entitled, **An Ocean of Candlelight**. The floating synths and delicate keyboards take us by the hand and lead us away to this vision of absolute beauty. I can see the ocean from my balcony upstairs, and I think it would be nice to play this track whilst setting the scene with scented candles under a crystal moonlit sky. If ever a track was redolent of the subject matter it offers, it is this one.

There is somewhere, neither here or there, some call it inner space, others a new reality, here right now on this album it is referred to as **The Inbetween**. Whalen's performance on this offering is beautifully slow and mysterious, thus manifesting one of the most emotive tracks on the album, one bathed with such a level of anticipation and mood, it is breath taking.

As we drift into the deeper waters of the album we come across the lively offering we will come to know as **Devotion**. An upbeat and up-tempo offering indeed, but also one that offers some interesting percussion and a fascinating electronic vibe to its proceedings.

We now arrive at the doorway of the penultimate track off the album; it is called **In the Footsteps of the Blessed**. Once more the artistic endeavours of Whalen's performance do not go unnoticed here; there is a dramatic, yet

comforting build and progression on this offering that is quite warming to listen to and feel.

Amazingly we are about to cross the threshold and enter the last portal of the album, this final dimension is called **The After Life**. One may have expected a somewhat subdued offering, but you would be wrong to assume this, there is a repetitive nature to this composition that perhaps offers up the question musically, is this the beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning! Whatever you decide, it is a truly clever way to leave the album.

As Whalen says, it may have taken him nearly 10 years in the making of this album, but he can now add to that, that it was time well spent, and time worth waiting. **Sacred Spaces** does what sadly some albums in this genre fail to do these days, and that's uplift the musical soul, raise the rhythm's and give us something we all crave, hope.

**Sacred Spaces** by **Michael Whalen** is one of those albums that you will find incredibly addictive to listen to, it may even become a timeless addition to the electronic and new age halls of musical honour, either way, I am certainly recommending it.