

FAME Review: Michael Stanley - The Ride

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The Ride

[Michael Stanley](#)

Line Level Music - LL208

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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There's a lot to be said for time imbuing maturity when one is open to it. Many are not, as we've seen. After all, Joe Walsh was a monster writer /guitar wrangler in James Gang, Barnstorm, and even the first couple solo LPs...and then? With The Eagles, sure, he was great, but in his later one-offs? Fuggedaboutit. I don't mean to pick on Joe, he's just one among many, but you get the idea. Stanley, on the other hand, where he was once a very good middle-of-the-roader in everyway (and I should know, I have all his ensemble's LPs) was still nothing to shout about, even though he did very well in homeground Cleveland. The guy then went solo, 'n I can't tell ya a thang about that era, Josiah, cuz I hain't a clue, but this, his latest CD? Pretty damned good. Solid and notably more imbued with sophistication than the old stuff, more in line with Mitch Ryder, Graham Parker, Springsteen, Mellencamp, that crew.

Way back when, I used to go record-hunting with a couple of music-hound buds, and when amigo Big Steve chanced upon **You Break It... You Bought It**, the Stanley Band's debut, he went apeshit. Me? Not so much, but, man, Steve fell in love with that slab. Now, with this, I'm much more on board. *Take that Ride*, for instance, has a real *10th Avenue Freeze-Out* sonority to it, and there's a LOT more throughout the disc than John Hall or Orleans ever showed. Then Stanley's take on the Bee Gees' *To Love Somebody* very nicely countrifies that old chestnut with a recessed soul resonance in its backing vocals. This music is still what you heard in the Michael Stanley Band but aged like good wine. *If Anybody Could* is a sure fire chart-er, a romantic lament buttressed by hope and desire.

A Fool in Love represents the second and last cover song, the rest of the repertoire taken up in originals, and it hits the same ground and pace as Rare Earth's old tributes. Bob Pelander makes significant contributions to Stanley's sound with a very hip organ background / piano foreground coloring in what Stanley himself terms as a CD wrought with a "certain stylistic similarity" among songs. *Justine* is smooth as silk, yet another great radio hit candidate having much in common with Boz Scagg's later sound accompanied by a neon nights sax outro by Paul Christensen. If all this, then, is the new Michael Stanley sound, then sign me up, 'cause I'm up for **The Ride**.

Track List:

- Take That Ride
- All I Want
- Shiny Things
- To Love Somebody (Gibb / Ginn / Gibb)
- Uptown
- If Anybody Could
- A Fool In Love (Miller / Frazer)
- Justine
- Lucky Again
- Making Beds (In A Burning House)
- Shining Thru
- Anything Goes
- I Can't Wait
- When The Smoke It Finally Clears

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