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New Michael Stanley album well worth 'The Ride'



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Clint O'Connor on Movies
(http://connect.cleveland.com/

Singer, songwriter. Cleveland native, Rocky River High School graduate. Founded the Michael Stanley Band. Afternoon-drive disc jockey for radio station WNCX FM98.5 in Cleveland since 1990. (Plain Dealer file)

Print (http://blog.cleveland.com/ministerofculture/print.html?entry=/2013/04/new_michael_stanley_album_well.html) (http://connect.cleveland.com/user/mheaton/index.html) By Michael Heaton, The Plain Dealer (http://connect.cleveland.com/user/mheaton/posts.html) on April 25, 2013 at 6:00 AM, updated April 26, 2013 at 12:08 PM

Michael Stanley's new album, "The Ride," comes with instructions. "Sometimes, just to try and clear your head, it helps to take a little ride," he writes in the liner notes.

I'm happy to report that "The Ride" is outstanding. Holy Crayola. The 14 songs on this album are sparklers; half of them are compositions that had me wondering if Stanley had changed his religion, diet or maybe just his underwear.

Stanley is widely known and admired for his solid Midwestern rock ballads, anthems and soul searchers. He delivers his art and craft consistently. But more often than not he has stayed safely within his own wheelhouse.

This new album is all over the map stylistically, and I think he knocks most of these numbers out of the park. This is an album where all involved were just operating at the top of their talent. The writing, the arrangements, the lyrics, the playing, the vocals. This is not your dad's Michael Stanley album.

"Shiny Things" comes roaring out of the gate as a big, funky soul-strutter. It's spare, hip and cynical. It's about how sometimes hot sex comes with a price tag. And worth it. If this song were a newspaper article, the headline would be White Boy Got Soul.

