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Album Review: Michael Stanley – The Ride

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Michael Stanley *The Ride*

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Before veteran rocker Michael Stanley released *The Ride*, his eighth album in ten years, he gave the heads-up that this would be a different sounding record. Sure enough, *The Ride* contains several pleasant surprises but all in all there is one thing that long time fans won't be surprised to discover...that Stanley has once again created a gem of an album.

"Sometimes, just to try and clear your head, it helps to take a little ride," Stanley writes in his album's liner notes. "Sometimes you just have to take that unplanned turn down a different road; and that's what

this album has been for me."

The different road Stanley alludes to is an R&B sound reminiscent of his favorite songs from the past. You can hear it on the opening track "Shiny Things." A groovy number that comes to life with the help of Jennifer Lee's sassy (in a good way) backing vocals and red-hot guitar work by Danny Powers and Marc Lee Shannon. Fans have gotten a taste of this R&B influence a time or two in Stanley's music over the years, but *The Ride* brings it

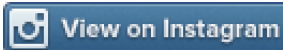
center stage in several tracks...especially on “Anything Goes,” an all out blues rocker that is a standout track on the album: “So shut up and kiss me/And let’s get the show on the road/In the morning you can miss me, until then anything goes.”

The Ride isn’t entirely immersed in the blues however. There are a few pop style tracks from more familiar Stanley territory including “Lucky Again” and “I Can’t Wait.” And then there is, in my opinion, the best song on the album and quite possibly one of the best songs that Stanley has ever recorded...“To Love Somebody.” Stanley’s cover of this Bee Gee’s classic is my hands down favorite. What begins as a stripped down version of the song with just Michael and a guitar, builds into a dramatic piece with powerful backing vocals provided by Don Dixon, resulting in an instant classic cover of...well, a classic.

At the end of the album’s liner notes Stanley writes, “...I hope you’ll just roll down the windows, turn it up, and enjoy the ride.” Well, that’s something I have done for close to thirty years with Stanley’s music and thanks to these new songs... the ride won’t be stopping any time soon.



The Ride is now available through [Line Level Music \(http://www.linelevelmusic.com\)](http://www.linelevelmusic.com).



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