

# Michael Whalen & The Fire Brigade

By

Michael Whalen

Written by

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After *Kiss the Quiet*, Whalen's last release, I never expected to go on a voyage of Jazz and almost funky prog with his latest offering *Michael Whalen & The Fire Brigade*, but I am and I love it.

Many could remember the jazz ethic of *Keith Emerson* back in the grand days of Prog Rock, mix that with some incredibly lively Jazz and almost funk, and you have the new album and it is delicious.

From the powerhouse of the opening piece **Code 10-80** to the dance rhythms of the ultra-funky **Flabbergasted**, this album exudes one thing above all others and that's absolute class. Yet there is a textured centre to this release with tracks like **A Childish Dream**, the brass section reminding me in parts of the *Average White Band* or *Earth Wind and Fire* and the addictive melody of **Benny's Brooklyn Blues** almost at times touching the hem of *Steely Dan* in parts.

**Michael Whalen and the Fire Brigade** is one of the most vibrant, exciting and energetic albums I have heard in this genre for eons, we're even treated to a Whalen solo on piano in the track **Song at Midnight**, something a little bluesy and smoothly delightful to enjoy.

Simply put, Whalen has produced a real pastiche of styles and genre crossing here, and to be honest this is one album you really don't want to miss out on, with each and every composition we are treated to a truly splendid tapestry of musical offerings that you are never going to want to stop playing. There is something for everyone on **Michael Whalen and The Fire Brigade**, and it is one of the best albums I have had the pleasure to listen to this year with ease.