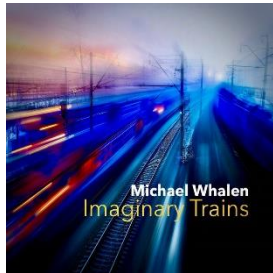


Michael Whalen
Imaginary Trains



The marvelous thing about imaginary trains is that they take you to imaginary places. And fortunately, our conductor (pun intended) is the two-time Emmy® Award winning composer and producer **Michael Whalen**. For more than three decades Whalen has been a creator that has honed and adapted his craft on more than 38 recordings as well as uncountable collaborations that transform with the times and the music environment. From film scores, to romantic songs, to bold forays into the world of electronic music, Mr. Whalen has done it all. And he continues to offer another finely crafted album in **Imaginary Trains**, which is fifteen tracks of instrumental, electronic and ambient music that knows no boundaries. Get ready to travel the world ... and beyond.

Through the clever use of driving percussion simulating the clackety-clack of a railroad car, we can envision the beginning of our journey with the title tune **Imaginary Trains**. Whalen uses audacious electronic horns and a sparkling synthesized theme mixed with itinerant sounds to get the machinery going. Hang on!

Across the World to Be With You (featuring **Ricky Kej**) is one of the more outstanding tracks on the album. Thumping percussion and an extremely complex musical scenario takes us around the world to the beautiful land of Jambudvipa. This is a land of deep rivers, tall mountains, and miles of landscape filled with smiling faces. And now one of them is yours.

The Wayward Sun, even though filled with a lot of energy, is sort of a relaxing instrumental that is like traveling through space within a transparent spaceship. We witness everything there is to see. Individual stars is every color, planets with stormy surfaces, and spiraling galaxies are only the beginning. I can only imagine what we will hear when we travel faster than sound.

Vox Humana comes right out of a movie scene fraught with high speed chases, flashing backgrounds, and a myriad of voices that tends to change the narrative with every other note. It's right out of a Cirque du Soleil performance. **Journey to Lights Edge** is a throbbing trip through space where stars are mere flashes of light and planets are colors on an artist's sound palette. The tune has reverse layering and serious bass lines that change into a rock anthem. Whalen softens up the vibes on the tune **Until the Night is Over**. A medium tempo, a faint hint of morning light, and a lingering sense that morning may ruin everything. This is a dance that should never end.

The dreamlike voice of **Donna Lewis** is featured in the tune **Distance**. It is an electronic ballad that goes beyond the proverb, "distance makes the heart grow fonder". According to the music distance makes the heart yearn with an unexplainable ache. The lyric says:

"Distance - Roller coaster, blindfold on

2 times zones, and the lights go on... across the world".

Additional tracks include **Against the Sky, My Immortal Beloved, The Ribbon of Time, and Dream Together**. The last four tracks on Imaginary Trains are remixes that are thrilling variations (especially the **Bombay Dub Orchestra** mix) that are just great listening.

Lovers of electronic artists such as Kraftwerk, Klaus Shultz, and Jean Michel Jarre may find they love this album. I did. However, there is something for everyone here. All the sense of discovery, the jolting electronics, and the fun of the 80's genre are on the itinerary for this incredible album that will transport you to the places you usually only dream about. On Imaginary Trains, Michael Whalen, like some kind of electronic wizard, takes you back through time, returns you to the present, and transports you all over the globe without you ever leaving your armchair. If that's not musical alchemy, what is? Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews