

## MICHAEL LANDAU - *Tales from the Bulge*

Don't let this one fool you...the somewhat cryptic title contains a secret code from the musical super-brain of Michael Landau to YOU...but ONLY if you have the esthetic capacity to appreciate that the "bulge" referred to here is analogous to how artistry can only emerge from a foundation of craftsmanship, and that genius can only be born of artistry. Most "artists" (as they are loosely referred to) are really just solid craftsmen - they know what they're doing and know how to do it pretty well, but...when all is said and done...nothing stands out. High quality sameness - extremely competent mediocrity. It's good, but not great.

**Michael Landau** has successfully deciphered the Rosetta Stone containing the *Universal Creative Intelligence* as applied to musical expression, to wit (at the risk of being redundant): before you can be an artist, you must first be a craftsman, and genius can only spring forth from artistry, NOT craftsmanship...a metaphorical "bulge" from the baseline, per se, expanding the boundaries of the chosen creative medium, transcending both craft and artistry and entering the realm of true genius. **"Tales from the Bulge"** is your personal guided musical tour of the aforementioned realm.

The sonic lattices and harmonic architecture interweaved here exhibit multiple "bulges" of sophistication, taste and technical prowess of the highest order. Every recorded moment pulls from a sonic textural palette of astonishing breadth, depth and scope. Gifted artist/geniuses like Allan Holdsworth and Shawn Lane come to mind, but they are not mentioned here as a point of comparison, but as a point of reference. Make no mistake - **Michael Landau** is his own paradigm: his music is his alone, and he accomplishes the rare, almost impossible feat of transcending comparisons. The track **"Big Bulge"** exemplifies this transcendence perfectly...a wicked groove overlaid with a wonderfully quirky melody juxtaposed by a counterpoint figure that must be heard to be appreciated - the musical equivalent of hopping down a flight of stairs backward on one leg while juggling a collection of razor-sharp sabers.

It's all here - deft whammy bar chord swells, mind-expanding arrangements, extreme psycho-acoustic spaciousness and spread (break out the headphones, kids), stinging single-line melodically whizzriff mayhem, "adult" chordal figures and progressions from the 10th dimension and genre-defying compositional diversity...all in all, an aural Zen garden of musical delights.

On a final note, the bonus track **"Americana Boy"** winds down this outing, and grants a tip of the hat to Scott Henderson in both presentational vibe and intervallic spirit...sort of like a whimsical alien bossa nova from Alpha Centauri. With all of that said, **Michael Landau** is a true genius...and **"Tales from the Bulge"** proves it. Enjoy - an artist/genius like this "bulges" out only about once every generation.

Jimmy Ryan (Truth Squad)