

A Presence of Three Minds

By

Holland Phillips

Written by

Steve Sheppard

Holland Phillips must be regarded as one of the best multi-instrumentalists around today, he has a breath taking ability to tie melodies and moods in an almost unique way, and as such I have an ocean of respect for this artist, so much so, that when it comes to that time when I have the honour of being able to write an album review for his latest work, it is like a child receiving sweets as a Christmas present.

A Presence of Three Minds is the latest release from the musician and what a stunning one it is, with the opening gambit called **From the Depths**, we are driven into a wonderfully textured tapestry of contemporary instrumental music; the flute and guitar here are exceptional in this offering, as Phillips delivers the best opening to an album you could possibly imagine.

On the next track we find floating in our sea of musical bliss, a little offering that exudes charm, it is called **Oceanside**. The energy within this song has a wonderful lightness to its construction; Phillips on keyboards here creates something, which for me will go down as a special moment indeed. One could also imagine this offering doing well on a TV channel like *Discovery* or *Blue Planet*, simply delightful and utterly charming.

We're off to a sublime start and that brilliance shines blissfully in this next track as well, this one is called **The Order of Things**. A clever opus, constructed almost the opposite way around; one could almost imagine it being like a looking glass composition, the keyboards are smooth and tranquil and deliver a textured energy to the proceedings, Phillips also adds a little mournfulness to the piece as well, in one of the most inventive offerings from the album.

As we drift further into this fine collection of great songs, we come across this very attractive offering called **Last One Home**. **Holland Phillips** is without doubt a creator of classy compositions, and here he manifests a deep mood, mixed with a little suspense and a good deal of emotional content too. At times the energy in this arrangement, and to an extent the performance, reminded me in part of Elton John and his ability of being able to raise the power and intensity of a track almost at a whim.

One of the most fascinating pieces can be found at the half way juncture as we arrive at the doorway of the song **Finding Pixies**. I can't remember, but don't think I have ever written about a song with Pixies being the main subject matter before, but I tell you what, it is one of the most exhilarating offerings on the release; Phillips incredible ability to be able to merge major and minor chords radiates in this composition with brilliance, one of my favourite pieces off the release.

As we take a single step into the second half of the album we come across another moment of musical genius, it is called **Seeking Sanctuary**. There is a distinct elevation of power here that is pretty compelling and the mood manifested by Phillips keyboards here is outstanding, for me this is a really fluent and beautiful played track, and you have guessed it, another favourite of mine.

Alone in the Crowd has something truly special about its creation, the piano electric and other wise are in perfect harmony, and the strings just add another dimension to an already crafted performance by Phillips. There is also a certain delicacy about this offering that makes it attractive to listen to as well, that has to be applauded too.

When I first heard **In The Queen's Court** I was instantly taken back to the title track of the album *Circles of 8* back in 2016. There is a real similarity to it, and one I really don't mind at all, as it was one of my stand-out tracks from that album. There are of course differences, and here, while we have a composition steeped in an historical vibe, it is also a most agreeable and very pleasant moment of musical bliss, which we can just enjoy the moment within.

The beginning of this next offering was incredibly cinematic and to be honest blew me completely away, the multi-instrumental nature of this offering was

beyond anything I have heard before from the musician, here is Phillips in film score mode and a stunningly impressive mode it most certainly is. **Aftermath** is a true composition of greatness, and on its own I can see it being nominated for an award with ease, it is that damn good.

So we have arrived at the penultimate portal of tone and this last but one arrangement is called **Arendell Rising**. I heard my wife playing this one earlier today and was extremely impressed. There can be no doubt indeed that with the creation of tracks like this, Phillips must surely be regarded as one of the leading exponents of emotional keyboard based offerings, within this so called New Age genre.

A sudden moment of sadness sweeps over me as I now realised I have just arrived at the very last track off the album, surely this cannot be true, but indeed it is, but I still have one more moment of happiness as we can enjoy this last offering together, it is called **To The Heavens**. Phillips has such a crafted sense of genius, that he comes up with something like this as an ending piece; a dramatic, yet uplifting opus awaits you here, one that raise your spirits at the conclusion of the song, this is one of those tracks that wouldn't be out of place at the end of a movie, splendid and beautifully crafted indeed.

Holland Phillips albums are always an absolute pleasure to have in your life; each and every track is so intelligently thought out and performed, and this new album just adds more weight to the artist's utterly sublime catalogue of greatness. **A Presence of Three Minds** may actually be the artist's best work so far, it's certainly an album that I am more than happy to recommend, and one that shines a light on all that is good and honest in the genre. **A Presence of Three Minds** simply put, is an album you MUST have in your collection and at all costs.