



Robben Ford

Soul on 10

Released on Concord
24th August 2009

LIVE

The Jazz Café

17th & 18th July 2009



Throughout his three decade-long career, guitarist **Robben Ford** has effortlessly traversed genres without compromising his exquisite, blues-based playing and singing. **Soul on Ten** is his fourth recording for Concord Records, and sees him playing with the kind of skill and experience that had *US Musician* magazine dubbing him one of the “100 Greatest Guitarists of the 20th Century.”

With eight of the ten tracks recorded last April, live over two nights in San Francisco, *Soul on Ten* captures Ford’s unique style, one that combines, yet transcends, his roots in jazz, fusion, blues, soul and rock, distilling the past into the moment, with an eye on the future.

“I wanted to capture that experience of playing live,” says Ford of the album. “I find it has a lot more impact than a studio recording. Music is a living, breathing thing. Real art is timeless. It doesn’t have a beginning and an end. It’s all about the present moment.”

The album features Robben’s road-tested band of the last few years. Athens-born drummer **Toss Panos** is a musicologist, a student of African percussion and Greek music, who brings a world music perspective to the mix, while L.A.-born bassist **Travis Carlton** is the 26-year-old son of jazz great Larry Carlton, with whom Ford also played. Organist **Neal Evans** provides the distinctive B3 on five of the tracks. Ford is also joined by keyboardist **Larry Goldings**, Sheryl Crow bassist **Jon Button** and sax player **Karl Denson** on two studio recordings.

The material is a mix of tracks old and new. From his 1999 album, *Supernatural* is the title track and *Nothin’ to Nobody*, his collaboration with Michael McDonald. From , 2002’s *Blue Moon*, comes *Indianola*, his B.B. King tribute, and from his last UK release 2007’s *Truth* comes *There’ll Never Be Another You*, and *How Deep in the Blues (Do You Want to Go)*. There are also three brand-new Robben Ford compositions; *Earthquake*, *Don’t Worry About Me* and *Thoughtless* (the last two being studio recordings). Also included on **Soul on Ten** are covers of classic Chicago blues numbers in Willie Dixon’s *Spoonful* and Elmore James’ *Please Set a Date*.

Supernatural starts with a wah-wah psychedelic guitar interlude before slipping into an evocative jazz-like riff, all of which contributes to the difficulty of pigeonholding Ford’s music into a single category.



“What we do isn’t constrained by the past, it’s informed by the past,” insists Robben. “When we play, it’s not about what happened before. It’s about what’s going to happen next.” It’s no wonder Ford doesn’t want to be pigeonholed. His background is similarly eclectic, having started out touring with blues legends Charlie Musselwhite and singer Jimmy Witherspoon, then going on to play with Joni Mitchell, George Harrison, jazz icon Miles Davis and fusionists the Yellowjackets, as well as rockers Greg Allman and Phil Lesh.

His version of “There’ll Never Be Another You” includes an elongated improvisation that touches on Miles Davis at his most spacious. “Nothin’ to Nobody” mutates from R&B to jazz, with a featured bass solo by Carlton and Evans’ gurgling B3 organ part. In tackling Elmore James’ “Please Set a Date,” Ford combined the song with Jimmy Reed’s “You Don’t Have to Go” to come up with a hybrid mutation. “I rarely play a straight-ahead 12-bar blues like I did here,” he reveals. “I didn’t want to cover something everyone’s heard. I found the James on a three-volume set from Chess, *Chicago: The Blues Today*. I just really like this song, but it’s half-written. He’s faking the lyrics on most of it, so to make it a whole song, I combined it with the Reed song.”

About his love for the Chicago blues, Ford says: “There’s a lot of creativity, a great variety within that context, a lot of different kinds of songwriting—great drum, bass, rhythm section stuff. For me, these things can’t quite be pinned down. There are surprises within the format, if you look for them, which I do.”

“Earthquake” is a new song which Ford describes as “a black comedy about the difficulties in maintaining relationships with the demands of a touring musician forced to be away from home much of the time. “Being a musician’s really hard work, debilitating, and pretty awful sometimes.” It’s a subject he returns to in “Thoughtless,” one of two studio recordings that mark his continued emergence as a singer/songwriter alongside his recognized ability as a guitarist.

“Don’t Worry About Me” continues the socio-political bent of his last album, *Truth*, as it points out society’s ills, while also acknowledging the urge to disengage.

The title to the new album perfectly describes Robben Ford’s commitment to his muse. He’s at maximum capacity and there’s no holding him back. “I’m still inspired,” he says. One listen to *Soul on Ten* makes you realize Robben Ford means it.

Robben Ford performs at the Jazz Café on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th July
The Jazz Café, 5 Parkway, Camden, NW1
Tickets: 0870 060 3777 or online via Ticketmaster

He is available for interview on Thursday 16th July.

Soul on Ten is released on Concord Records on August 24th 2009, Catalogue Number 7231528

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