

Larry Carlton/Robben Ford "Live in Tokyo"

Guitarist Larry Carlton first came to my attention on an album by Steely Dan, my favourite rock band. Becker and Fagan had already established themselves as the masters of cool rock grooves and Carlton's style fitted right in! Although this album is over 30 years old I still have a treasured vinyl copy and it really hasn't dated! Since then he's been known mainly as a smooth jazz artist with bands such as Fourplay and the Crusaders, cool late night listening music!

From time to time Larry has experimented with rock and blues and more up tempo rhythms showing that he's equally competent with these styles. 'Live in Tokyo' teams him with another respected jazz/blues/rock guitarist Robben Ford. Apart from 'talk to your daughter' all compositions are original and instrumental. The two guitars bounce off each other really well as is evident from the first track 'That road', a Ford composition.

Drummer Toss Panos and Jeff Babko on organ set up a solid groove and both guitarists jam along complementing each other well. Track 2 'Burnable' builds nicely with some tasty licks from both players and use of distortion. This gets seriously funky! 'Cold gold' is a long slow blues again with great interaction from the two guitarists although at one point it fades down almost to nothing and you think it has ended. Rio Samba ups the pace with funky Latin rhythms and nice work from Babko on Fender Rhodes this time. 'By contrast the next tune 'Derrick's blues' is a slow jazzy blues written by Ford. Is this tune dedicated to the derrick, a lifting device often associated with oil fields or perhaps a person? Maybe it's just a throwaway name! 'Two bad', another Carlton instrumental recalls again those Becker/Fagan changes. and has a jazzy rock feel.

Robben Ford first recorded 'Talk to your daughter' back in the 80's and it has become one of his trademark tunes. Both guitarists show they can rock the blues on this one. Some nice organ work from Babko too. I defy anyone to keep still while listening to this!!

For a live recording the sound quality is excellent. And the musicianship is flawless. This album will appeal to guitar fans although I think the main market will be with jazz and funk fans.

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