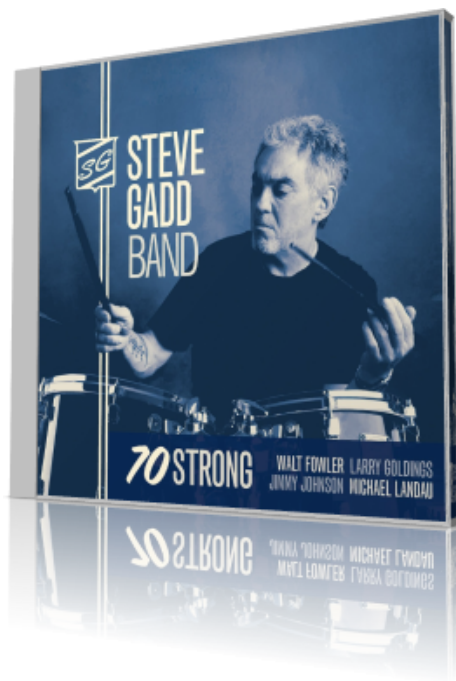


thejazzwriter

# STEVE GADD BAND 70 STRONG



He's one of the great drummers of our time, a designation he's carried for at least as far back as the 1970s, when he contributed to such recordings as "Aja" by Steely Dan, Van McCoy's "The Hustle" and Maynard Ferguson's *Primal Scream* album. Born on April 9, 1945, Steve Gadd celebrates 70 years as the Steve Gadd Band presents *70 Strong* (BFM Jazz, 2015).

For this date, Gadd is reunited with his *Gadditude* ensemble: Walt Fowler, trumpet and flugelhorn; Larry Goldings, keyboards and accordion; Jimmy Johnson, bass; and Michael Landau, guitars.

"Foam Home," co-written by all members of the group, is considered the son of "Green Foam," a track from the ensemble's *Gadditude* (BFM, 2013). This track is like a group therapy session, with all five players expressing themselves as individuals yet maintaining the cohesion of the group. Gadd and Johnson mostly handle background, but they do so effectively. Fowler carries the melody with supplements by Landau and Goldings, and each contributes a solo. It's a strutting, free-spirited piece.

Landau composed the easygoing "The Long Way Home." The guitar leads with the subtle keyboard and muted trumpet providing an ethereal backdrop. Gadd's adept stick work on the high-hat cymbals and rim shots add a little spice. Fowler ditches the mute about midway through. Landau, Fowler and Goldings stretch out in turns.

"Duke's Anthem," penned by Fowler, is a tribute to the late George Duke. Goldings also composed three tracks,

Landau two and Johnson one. Though Gadd has led other ensembles, including The Gadd Gang, he doesn't seek the spotlight. Instead, he opts for doing what he always does: work his magic in the background with clever rhythms, stunning fills and the occasional solo. His discography includes numerous guest spots with other artists, including Paul Simon's "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover," Rickie Lee Jones' "Chuck E.'s in Love," Spyro Gyra's "Conversations," the Grover Washington Jr./Bill Withers collaboration, "Just the Two of Us," and Al Jarreau's cover of Chick Corea's "Spain."

With *70 Strong*," Dr. Gadd continues to build on his legacy of excellence.

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