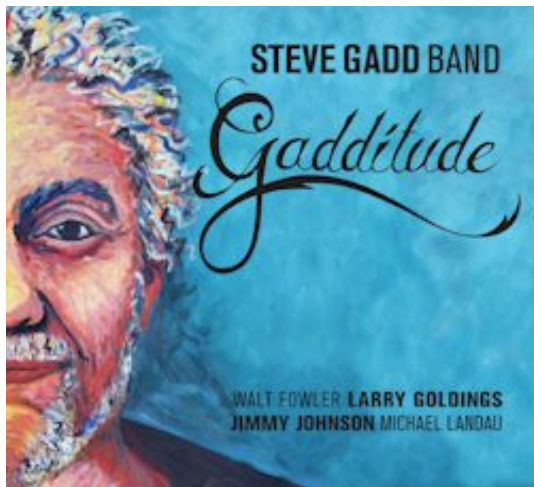




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Country
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The Mountain
Who Knows Blues
The Windup
Scatterbrain

Walt Fowler (trumpet, flugelhorn): Larry Goldings (keyboards): Michael Landau (guitar): Jimmy Johnson (bass guitar): Steve Gadd (drums): Arnold McCuller and David Lasley (background vocals)

Recorded at Unconscious Studios, February 2013 [56:52]

Milesian funk-fusion with a Steely Dan vibe. If that's the thought that hits you when listening to the opening track in Steve Gadd's new album, I wouldn't much disagree. But note, too, Michael Landau's subtle guitar solo with its rich textures and colours. This is a truly tight band and, when playing at its most gentle – as on *Ask Me* – there's an elegance that sounds almost wistful. And when they pick up Keith Jarrett's *Country* they do so with a full awareness of its folksy charms and bring affectionate and relaxing qualities to bear, not least via Walt Fowler's trumpet playing. Gadd, naturally, is the anchor. Loping self-confidence floods *Cavaliero*, with Larry Goldings bringing some nightclub keyboards to the party and Fowler some Latino brass work. Already one senses

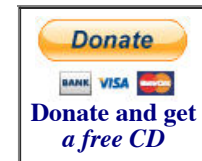
STEVE GADD BAND

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the stylistic variety to be heard from this band, a feeling reinforced by the bluesy *Green Foam*, with more than a hint of Booker T about it. This is a particularly good track to demonstrate a penchant for South Side Chicago Blues clubs – note Howlin' Wolf's *Spoonful* making a brief cameo – as well as the legato-blues guitar solo and some kooky electronica courtesy of the keyboard.

Gadd is a most unusual leader-drummer as he takes no solos. This is a tribute to his advancement of the band's ensemble sound as well as his own discretion. But he sets the direction with unerring accuracy, ensuring for example that the easy-going tempo on *The Mountain* is properly maintained and ensures the bluesy ethos of *Who Knows Blues* never slackens. *The Windup* shows Gadd at something like his finest, providing invincible rhythmic support to a funky opus with 'git-down' solos equally well driven on by bassist Jimmy Johnson.

If you want to be highfalutin you'll say Gadd is a democrat at the drum stool. If you want to be more plain-speaking you'll note that he builds a solid rhythm section that allows the sole brass man to flourish and the keyboards to explore from blues to funk to Latino to refined and all the way back again, without losing corporate identity. That's a good piece of work.

Jonathan Woolf



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