

## Chris Standring - Ten (2016)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Ready Steady Flow* (4:26) 2. *Snake Oil* (4:21) 3. *Magic Carpet Ride* (6:53) 4. *Carousel* (4:31) 5. *Like This, Like That* (4:39) 6. *Soul Vibration* (4:24) 7. *Bossa Go Go* (3:53) 8. *Parisian Blue* (3:59) 9. *Piece Of Cake* (4:01) 10. *Never Too Late* (5:36) Chris Standring: guitars, talk box, keyboards, programming Andre Berry: bass (1, 5, 6, 7, 9) Chris Coleman: drums (1, 2, 6) Dino Soldo: saxophones, EWI, tenor sax solo (2) Dan Lutz: acoustic bass (2, 3, 4, 8, 10) David Karsony: drums (3, 4, 7, 8, 10) Jeff Babko: Fender Rhodes (3) Jim Wilson: acoustic piano (4) Rodney Lee: organ (5) Sergio Gonzales: drums (5, 9)

Eight years have passed since Chris Standring's *Love and Paragraphs* (Ultimate Vibe, 2008) when he last met expectation as a seasoned, if not splashy smooth jazz guitar slinger. Then Standring had something of a musical epiphany where he became simultaneously restless and ambitious. The result was the lavish *Blue Bolero* (Ultimate Vibe, 2010), a radical departure for the British born artist where he fused jazz combos with a string section for a distinctive classical feel.

Standring followed up with three releases from his Ultimate Vibe label. *Send Me Some Snow*, a Christmas album of original compositions with vocalist Katherin Shorr, *Electric Wonderland*, a slightly lesser follow-up to *Blue Bolero*, but still enjoyable on its own merits and 2014's *Don't Talk, Dance!* as Standring stuck a toe in the waters of electronic dance music.

Back after two years, *Ten* is the sound of Standring idling in neutral. That's not a bad thing, but even in the liner notes when Standring says, "Finally, I wanted to make an album that got my jazz rocks off but was still accessible to people who weren't musicians," it feels like he's pulling back instead of pushing forward.

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"Ready Steady Flow" opens Ten with a nice bouncy groove with Standring engaging in a call-and-response between his guitar and talk box. "Bossa Go Go" is fanciful fun and "Snake Oil" benefits from Dino Soldo's tenor sax solo, but all n' all there's a lot of nice sounding grooves that don't fully leave a lasting impression. It's all good, but never transcends into greatness.

The Standring style is to show don't tell, but even when showing doing it without showing off. "Economical" may be misconstrued as not being a compliment, but Standring is a prudent player who keeps things tight. At a time when flashy technique and piling notes upon notes are often confused with being brilliant, his "less-is-more" approach may not be dazzling, but it is in the pocket because everything fits on Ten. While it is more pleasant than astounding, it's a perfectly fine way to spend 48 minutes. ---Jeff Winbush, allaboutjazz.com

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