Robben Ford’s music with intensity but lacks emotional truth

Robben Ford & The Blue Line

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By Douglas D. Keller

Robben Ford is back with this trio The Blue Line in this follow-up to his 1988 Grammy-nominated solo album Talk to Your Daughter. Robben Ford & The Blue Line is a focused blues-rock album powered by Ford’s strong and distinctive guitar. His guitar work is reminiscent of Stevie Ray Vaughan, but with a more polished tone.

The album moves from smooth blues to pensive intensity, sometimes within a song, such as "You Cut Me to the Bone." It contains seven new tracks written by Robben Ford and two covers — John Hiatt’s "I’m a Real Man," which are singularly bluesy, Joni Mitchell. The songs on the album, however, are more focused on blues-rock of the style made popular by Stevie Ray Vaughan. The first track on the album, "The Brother," is dedicated to Jinimie and Steve. Ford proves himself adept at composing songs which are singularly bluesy, such as "Tell Me I’m Your Man," "The Blues." The movie is occasionally funny, but it is more convincing when it deals with the characters and situations that are meaningful to those who have experienced them.

Robben Ford, Tom Brechtlein, and Roscoe Beek of Robben Ford & The Blue Line combine blues and rock on their new album.

The album remains powerful thanks to the instrumental strengths of The Blue Line trio and it is a joy to listen to. It has the sense of Saatani and Vaugn shows that Ford still has a distance to go in defining his own blues voice. Still, his ability to blend rock and blues indicates a promising future in blues for Robben Ford and The Blue Line.