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SOUL MEN STEVE CROPPER (BOOKER T. & THE MGs) AND FELIX CAVALIERE (THE RASCALS) REUNITE FOR SECOND STAX RECORDING

***Midnight Flyer*, due in stores June 15, showcases more brilliant songwriting by two titans of blue-eyed soul's golden age**

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – Steve Cropper, guitarist for Booker T. and the MGs and one of the primary architects of the unmistakable Stax sound of the 1960s, and vocalist/keyboardist Felix Cavaliere, the voice of the Rascals and the pivotal figure in the blue-eyed soul movement of that same era, have reconvened for their second collaborative recording. Sparks fly at the crossroads of Memphis soul and East Coast R&B when Stax Records releases *Midnight Flyer* on June 15, 2010.

Midnight Flyer, recorded in Nashville and mixed by the legendary David Z, is the followup to *Nudge It Up a Notch*, the 2008 maiden voyage by Cropper and Cavaliere that scored critical acclaim from the music and mainstream press. The *San Francisco Chronicle* called *Nudge It Up a Notch* “an unexpected delight,” while *Blues Wax* heralded the project as “one of the great surprises of 2008, and further evidence of Concord’s genuine commitment to the revamped Stax imprint.”

The Stax legacy — and Concord’s commitment to it — are very much alive in *Midnight Flyer*, an album that once again showcases the songwriting prowess of two towering figures from one of the most seminal periods in the history of American pop music. Assisting with the songwriting throughout most of the album’s 12 tracks is drummer/percussionist/vocalist Tom Hambridge, who also lent a hand with the crafting of the previous album.

“Felix and I come from pretty much the same musical school — but from different geographical locations,” says Cropper. “He’s a Jersey boy at heart, and I grew up in Memphis, but when soul meets soul, what can you say? There are no borders. There are no boundaries.”

But geography does play a role in the making of great songs, says Cavaliere. “Steve has that Southern vernacular, which is something I really like,” he says. “It’s almost like another language to those of us from the East Coast. It has a certain folky quality to it. Some of those idioms are part of the hit songs that Steve has written and recorded over the years, and they’re part of this record as well.”

The impact of both of these musicians and songwriters on pop music is nearly impossible to quantify. As part of Booker T. & the MGs — the house band for the Stax label in its original incarnation during the 1960s — Cropper co-wrote and

produced classics by artists like Eddie Floyd ("Knock On Wood"), Wilson Pickett ("In the Midnight Hour") and Otis Redding ("Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay"). In subsequent decades, he lent his instrumental and production skills to a range of artists including Jeff Beck, the Blues Brothers, Neil Young, John Mellencamp and many others.

Cavaliere came to prominence in the mid-'60s as vocalist/keyboardist/songwriter for the Rascals (initially known as the Young Rascals). Cavaliere wrote and/or sang several of the band's biggest hits, including "Good Lovin'" (1966), "Groovin'" (1967), "It's a Beautiful Morning" (1968) and "People Got To Be Free" (1968). The phrase "blue-eyed soul" was coined during the Rascals' heyday, due in large part to the group's highly successful forays into R&B and soul — styles that had been developed and previously dominated by African-American artists.

Co-produced by Cropper, Cavaliere and Hambridge, *Midnight Flyer* captures the synergy and brilliance that can only emerge when two powerful forces of nature come together. The result is a range of styles and shades, from heartfelt ballads like "When You're With Me" to the soul-charged "I Can't Stand It," a churning vocal duet featuring Cavaliere and his daughter Aria. "Sexy Lady" harkens back to the soul stylings of the '70s, while the funky instrumental "Do It Like This" digs into a tight groove and makes plenty of room for Cropper's tasty riff work to close out the set.

"The main thing we both take away from this record is how much fun we had making it," says Cavaliere. "We may have used a lot of new technology that didn't even exist when Steve and I were recording back in the day, but the songs themselves are still the most important part of the process, and we just had a blast writing and recording them. I think that spirit comes through on the record."

Cropper notes a timelessness about Cavaliere that serves as a metaphor for the music itself. "Felix is ageless," he says. "Sure, you can look at him and see that he's gotten older since those early days, just like we all have. But if you close your eyes, he sounds as young and energetic as he did when he was making records back in the '60s . . . Working together on records like this reminds us of the kinds of things that go into the making of a good song. We're still doing that, and we're still having fun doing it."

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