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**STEVE CROPPER (BOOKER T & THE MGs) AND FELIX CAVALIERE  
(RASCALS) UNITE ON FORTHCOMING ALBUM *NUDGE IT UP A NOTCH*,  
DUE OUT ON STAX RECORDS ON JULY 29**

***Joined on Nashville sessions with bassist Shake Anderson and  
drummer Chester Thompson, with co-producer Jon Tiven***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — What would happen if you combined Steve Cropper, the Memphis-weaned Stax guitar powerhouse who also wrote and co-wrote many soul classics, with Felix Cavaliere, the singer, songwriter and keyboardist whose soulful voice and songs helped form the Rascals? The world is about to find out when Stax Records releases Steve Cropper and Felix Cavaliere's *Nudge It Up a Notch* on July 29, 2008.

This soul summit came about as a result of conversations between Cropper and producer/songwriter Jon Tiven. When Tiven moved to Nashville several years ago, he asked Cropper what he was up to. Cropper replied that he was focusing on live dates with Booker T & the MGs and the Blues Brothers, but harbored the desire to record some new music. But who would sing? The answer, it turned out, was Cavaliere, who, like Cropper and Tiven, now lived in Nashville. In fact Cropper and Cavaliere were no strangers: they had, with a few other well-known musicians, put together a band to play special events. The two hadn't written together before, but agreed it would be fun to try.

The writing process began at Tiven's Hormone Studios, followed by the recording of two songs, "One of Those Days" (the album's lead track) and "Love Appetite." Drummer Chester Thompson, a veteran of John Fogerty, Frank Zappa, Genesis and Frank Black, signed on as drummer, and suggested a bass player, his friend Shake Anderson, who was Curtis Mayfield's protégé. The assemblage grew to include two backup singers, Mark Williams and N'nandi Bryant. And that was it. No special guest stars. As Tiven wrote in the notes, "This isn't one of those albums where you have to guess who's doing what — every guitar lick is Steve, every keyboard is Felix, and all the songs are originals."

Tiven elaborates on the legacies of Cropper and Cavaliere: "Steve Cropper is a guitar player's guitarist but also a songwriter's songwriter," he writes. "If the only thing he did in life was to play producer/co-writer/guitarist for Otis Redding, that would be enough. But he also helmed enough albums that made their mark on American pop culture by artists like Booker T & the MGs, The Blues Brothers, Jeff Beck and John Mellencamp to qualify him as a bona fide national treasure."

"And Cavaliere . . .," he adds, "If you were alive in the alive in the mid-to-late '60s, you couldn't go anywhere without hearing his voice and songs are part of his group The Young Rascals (later The Rascals). Their blue-eyed soul dominated the airwaves . . . and gave this country the kind of soul music most folks wouldn't think to associate with a bunch of Long Island Peppermint Lounge expatriates."

*Nudge It Up a Notch*, which was reverently mixed by the legendary David Z, features 12 tracks, including several instrumentals (Cropper having a bit of history in the R&B instrumental department) alongside vocal tracks. On a few tunes the team turned to friends Henry Gross and Tom Hambridge to provide their lyrical spin. One track, "Make The Time Go Faster," embellishes its chunky soul riff with rap passages.

"If all this combination of iconic songwriter/performers had to offer was simply the sum of their parts it would be extraordinary," Tiven concludes. "But you put this much flammable material in the room and you don't just get a little heat. You get a bonfire."