

# **Boney James *Solid***

## **A Reflection On Relationships—And A Respite From a Stress-Filled World**

**Multi-Platinum Saxophonist's New Album Due June 12, 2020, from Concord Records**

Sometimes, inspiration is slow in coming, evasive and stubborn. Other times, if an artist is very fortunate, it simply flows, the music practically writing itself. That's how *Solid* (out on Concord Records, June 12, 2020) the latest release from four-time GRAMMY nominee Boney James came to be. The saxophonist/composer's seventeenth album as a leader and the follow-up to his smash 2017 release *Honestly*—his eleventh #1 *Billboard* Contemporary Jazz Album—the new collection seemed to fall right into place.

"This record really flowed at an unusually quick pace," Boney explains. "There was a lot of positive energy in making this music. *Solid* feels like a very upbeat record. As I was writing them, these songs put a smile on my face."

All of *Solid*'s eleven tracks were produced and written or co-written by Boney. Three songs—"Full Effect," "Tonic" and the title track—were built from licks played at sound-check by James' guitarist Kendall Gilder while they were on tour in support of *Honestly*. "I said, hey, what's that riff you're playing?" James recalls, "And Kendall said, 'that's just something I'm messing around with.' I got my iPhone and recorded them, then took it home and wrote the songs!"

Four other songs were initiated by longtime James collaborator, acclaimed writer/producer Jaiirus Mozee (Anderson Paak, Nicki Minaj, Anthony Hamilton). One of those, "Be Here," was ultimately transformed into *Solid*'s Adult Urban single featuring special guest Kenny Lattimore, best known for his Top 10 R&B hit "For You."

Says James, "We met at the Soul Train Awards twenty years ago and he told me, 'Some day we need to work together.' As I was working on the song, 'Be Here', I started to hear his voice in my head. I reached out to him and he wrote and recorded the lyrics. It's such a romantic song and it really plays into the theme of the record, which is positive relationships."

The title track, "Solid," also explores that theme. "Similar to *Honestly*, this music is a reaction to how stressful the world feels these days. Music is a respite, and this new music was really connecting on that level." *Solid*, James says, "is one of those cool words that means a number of different things. There's the physical solid, like a rock (or a saxophone.) A groove can feel really solid and locked in. And relationships can be solid—someone that stays by your side and never folds no matter what, someone who's got your back 100 percent. That's my relationship with music too."

Boney James' personal relationship with music has never been anything but solid. Picking up the sax at age 10 in his native New Rochelle, New York, "I immediately loved it, and it pretty quickly became my favorite hobby."

By the time he entered his teens, James was already gigging with bands, and he turned pro at 19. He apprenticed as a sideman for artists like Morris Day and the Isley Brothers, touring and doing sessions for seven years before cutting his first solo album in 1992. The independently released *Trust* led immediately to a major label deal and a string of increasingly successful recordings and nonstop touring.

Now a four-time GRAMMY nominee with four RIAA Gold records and career sales topping three million units, James continues to defy genres; A two time NAACP Award nominee, a Soul Train Award winner and named one of the Top 3 *Billboard Contemporary Jazz Artists of the Decade*.

James says he's looking forward to heading out on the road and seeing how the *Solid* material evolves from night to night. "I love playing live, maybe more than I ever did," he adds. "That has not gotten old at all. A lot of guys get tired of the traveling but it's still a joy for me every time I go out there and play."

It's still a joy to his multitude of fans too. "I try to be there for the people who are interested in listening to my music," says James, "to be solid in *that* relationship and to never let anybody down. I often get great compliments from the people that come to my shows, that I 'never disappoint' them, and that's very gratifying to me. That's what I was trying to express with this title, that sense of character. To stand for something principled."