

RENEGADE CREATION

When an album boasts Robben Ford on lead vocals and guitar and Jimmy Haslip on electric bass, one tends to assume that there will be some type of jazz influence. Haslip, after all, was a founding member of the Yellowjackets back in 1981 and was still with the group 29 years later in early 2010, while the eclectic Ford has a long history of excelling as both a blues-rocker and a jazzman. It turns out that jazz is, in fact, an influence on parts of Renegade Creation, which unites Haslip and Ford with Michael Landau (lead vocals, guitar) and Gary Novak (drums). Jazz isn't a huge influence on this 2010 release, but it is an influence. More than anything, however, Renegade Creation is an album of blues-rock and decidedly bluesy hard rock. The most overtly jazz-minded tracks on Renegade Creation are "Peace" (a Ford composition that shouldn't be confused with the Horace Silver standard) and Novak's "Brothers," both of which are instrumentals that fall into the jazz fusion category. But instrumentals are the exception rather than the rule on this 51-minute CD, which finds Landau singing lead on four tracks ("What's Up," "Destiny Over Me," "Where the Wind Blows," and the title song) and Ford singing lead on four tracks ("Soft in Black Jeans," "Darkness," "God and Rock 'n Roll," and "Who Do You Think You Are"). And even though the blues-rock and hard rock vocal offerings that dominate Renegade Creation don't necessarily adhere to a traditional 12-bar blues format, the feeling of the blues is always present throughout the album. Although not created with blues purists in mind, Renegade Creation is a solid outing that will appeal to blues-rock and hard rock enthusiasts -- especially if they like having a little fusion on the side.

Alex Henderson (for Allmusic Guide)