

The Robert Cray Band – 4 Nights of 40 Years Live (2015)

Written by bluesever

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CD1 1. *I Shiver* 2. *I'll Always Remember You* 3. *Poor Johnny* 4. *Won't Be Coming Home* 5. *On The Road Down* 6. *Sittin' On Top Of The World* 7. *Wrap It Up* 8. *Love Gone To Waste* 9. *Bad Influence* 10. *These Things* 11. *Right Next Door (Because Of Me)* 12. *The Forecast (Calls For Pain)* 13. *Time Makes Two* CD2 14. *The Robert Cray Band - I Guess I Showed Her* 03:43 15. *Right Next Door (Because Of Me)* 04:43 16. *Smoking Gun* 04:35 17. *Still Around* 04:28 18. *Too Many Cooks* 03:26 19. *T-Bone Shuffle* 04:35

Robert Cray - Guitar, Vocals Peter Boe - Keyboards Richard Cousins - Bass Les Falconer - Drums, Vocals Steve Jordan - Drums Trevor Lawrence - Sax (Tenor) Steve Madaio - Trumpet Dave Olson - Drums Lee Oskar - Harmonica Dover Weinberg - Keyboards Kim Wilson - Harmonica, Vocals

Decades flash by in the wink of an eye, which may explain how the perennial blues young gun is celebrating his fourth decade of performing in 2015. 4 Nights of 40 Years is a souvenir salute to his longevity, a career that started in earnest with the 1980 release of *Who's Been Talkin'*, but began earlier when he was gigging throughout the '70s. Cray scored an unexpected crossover hit in 1987 thanks to "Smoking Gun" but unlike some of his '80s blues peers, he wasn't content leaning on flash. He deepened his R&B roots, honing his solos so they stung, and settling into a nicely textured soul-blues groove that emphasized rhythms as much as songs or solos. All of this is evident on 2015's *Four Nights of 40 Years*, a dynamic 13-track live album recorded on the tour supporting his fine 2014 set *In My Soul*. That record isn't featured here, nor is "Smoking Gun" -- that hit, along with other *Strong Persuader* material, is on the bonus disc containing live performances for Dutch TV in 1987, plus two performances from the SFO Blues Festival in 1982 -- so the emphasis winds up being on Cray's overall catalog, finding space for covers like Howlin' Wolf's "Sittin' on Top of the World," and room for old friends like Kim Wilson to come out and sing the Fabulous Thunderbirds' "Wrap It Up." What's striking throughout is Cray's ease: he's never reaching too hard, never emphasizing either blues or soul. By just sounding like himself, it's apparent that he's inherited the role of old blues master when nobody was looking. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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