Boney James - Contact (2011)

1. Contact 3:51 2. Close To You (Ft Donell Jones) 4:15 3. Spin 4:20 4. When I Had The Chance (Ft Letoya Luckett) 4:06 5. Cry 4:09 6. That Look On Your Face (Ft Mario) 4:48 7. Deep Time 4:57 8. I'm Waiting (Ft Heather Headley) 4:13 9. There And Back 5:10 10. Everything Matters 5:00 Personnel: Boney James - Composer, Key Bass, Keyboards, Producer, Programming, Saxophones Tareq Akoni - Guitar Alex Al - Bass Rob Bacon - Guitard Leon Bisquera - Composer, Keyboards Johnny Britt - Composer, Keyboards Teddy Campbell - Drums Tim Carmon - Composer, Guitar (Acoustic), Keyboards Sue Ann Carwell - Vocals (Background) Lenny Castro - Percussion Gary Grant - Trumpet Heather Headley - Vocals Jerry Hey - Horn Arrangements Dan Higgins - Saxophone Jimmy Johnson - Bass Donell Jones - Vocals Kleber Jorge - Guitar (Rhythm) LeToya Luckett - Vocals Mario - Vocals Jason Morales - Vocals (Background) Dean Parks - Guitar, Guitar (Acoustic) William Frank "Bill" Reichenbach Jr. - Trombone Mark Stephens - Composer, Keyboards Michael Thompson - Guitar Freddie Washington - Bass, Composer

It's an interesting question: would Boney James have recorded Contact if he'd never had a car accident that damaged his teeth and fractured his jaw? In May, 2010, he was rear-ended while stopped by a driver traveling at high speed. Though he was back on-stage in three weeks, the accident caused James to think back on where he'd been in his career. He reflected on the period he spent backing the Isley Brothers, Morris Day, Randy Crawford, and Teena Marie before his solo offering, 1992's Trust, catapulted him onto the contemporary jazz scene. Contact -- his debut for Verve Forecast -- indulges those influences. James produced and co-wrote every cut here, including the four vocal numbers. The first of these, "Close to You," features a stellar performance by Donell Jones; it is one of the album's true highlights. James plays plays his soprano, interweaving those silky vocal lines with gorgeous fills. Former Destiny's Child member LeToya Luckett sings on the lilting ballad "When I Had the Chance," Heather Headley appears on the slippery-grooved Latin-tinged "I'm Waiting," and Mario does a magnificent job on the dancefloor stepper "That Look on Your Face." James' own chops are fine as ever On the instrumental title track, he lets a slightly angular, syncopated, B-3-led rhythm section groove assert itself before smoothly entering and laying down the melody amid Rob Bacon's guitar fills and a bright-sounding, tightly arranged horn section. On "Cry," Dean Parks

plays a nylon-string guitar, giving the cut an exotic flamenco feel before James breathily lets the melody flow from his tenor. With percussion work by drummer Teddy Campbell and Lenny Castro on congas and timbales, it streams forth in a rich, sensually arrayed meld of colors and textures. "There and Back" is a soul ballad where the saxophonist is the singer. It's lithe, silky groove is colored by hand percussion as James, with his canny sense of timing, tells a story on his horn. On "Everything Matters," the laid-back album closer, he plays tenor and alto, aided by Parks on electric guitar, Jimmy Johnson's keys, Campbell, and Castro. It's sweet and slow, but not sentimental, one almost hear Ron Isley singing to its melody. Contact is a bright spot in James' catalog, and underscores his welcome return to recording. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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