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With all that he's put out into the universe over the years, how much of himself he's had on display and all that's been said about the man, **Colton Ford** continues to hold up remarkably well under the scrutiny of a career that has been completely self-made and is all of his own machination. Shedding a past that was cloaked under a provocatively high-profile image and (his own) objectification Ford is changing things up, switching up the dialogue once again, and returning to his first love — making music.

For someone that has been too often stripped and unfairly limited by a public only interested in his rippling physique and non-too-excessive charm, his aggressively potent masculinity and well-rounded assets, have often masked the depths of his talent as a pop-singer and performer. The exploration of Colton Ford from adult film star to pop-music sensation was well chronicled and explored in the 2005 documentary *Naked Fame*.

On the soundtrack Ford indulged his fandom with a respectable mix of dance singles, the most popular of which was the duet with diva Pepper MaShay a remake of the pop favorite "Signed, Sealed, Delivered". This single was for much of the public the artist's formal introduction into the club music spectrum. Unbeknownst to some Ford had already recorded music before with masterful producers including the legendary Frankie Knuckles and had even been contractually signed to a major label.

That's a story now whispered in the annals of music mythology — but yes Colton Ford, before the beefcake iconography had always been dedicated to making music. He has since explored several different directions including producer, performer, and always responds to his audience, especially now reconnecting with his authentic self.

The (Re) Introduction of COLTON FORD

**FROM MUSIC MAN TO PROVOCATEUR
AND BACK AGAIN — BARING MORE
THAN EVER BEFORE, AND GOING BACK
TO BASICS ON HIS NEW ALBUM, WITH
NEW MUSIC, AND MORE.**

**Words by JC Alvarez
Photographs by Kevin D. Hoover**

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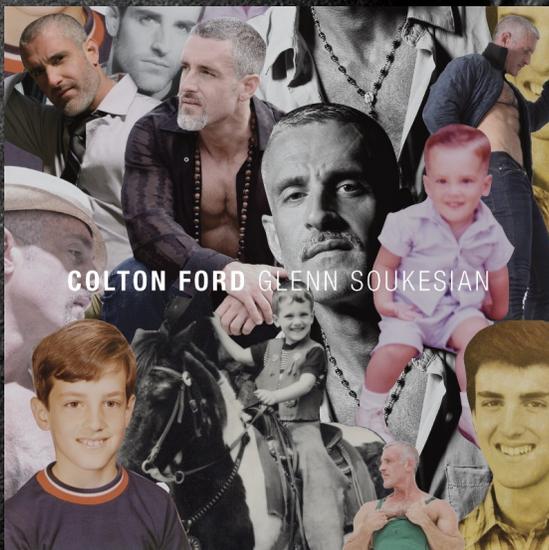
On his 2014 release *Next Chapter* Ford took a significantly different turn musically. The album's seven tracks were crafted to allow the artist to showcase his voice, put it front and center, leaving behind most of the contemporary dance and electronic contraptions that he had become dependent on. The album also severed ties with his longtime label mate Peace Bisquit, although a remix package for the single "Look My Way" from the 2013 dance album *The Way I Am* was simultaneously released to keep the dance floor dedicated engaged. With his connectivity to the club set, Ford felt it was time to switch up the beats per minute.

Released independently *Next Chapter* synched Ford's efforts to return to his R&B roots, get back to his true passion and more diversely explore his musicality. The risk paid off, and on his new album, the newly released *Glenn Soukesian* is further proof that Colton Ford is committed to reconnecting with the musician, the performer he was always meant to be. The *Next Chapter* took the temperature of the water, and now comfortable to wade into the deep end Ford drops all pretense on a self-titled effort — "Glenn Soukesian" is after all Ford's given birth name, and his reintroduction onto the spectrum.

Though he hasn't abandoned the rhythmic beats that made him a player on the charts. Colton Ford's *Glenn Soukesian* features plenty of the edgy production that harks back to his 2007 opus *Tug Of War* which ideally positioned Colton Ford as a pop act. The spark that was ignited with that album's soulfully melodic "The Way You Love Me" produced by one of the dance floor's most imaginative workhorses Quentin Harris, is irreverently present on the opening single "Free Yourself" — an anthemic declaration of the artist's very clear and present tense.

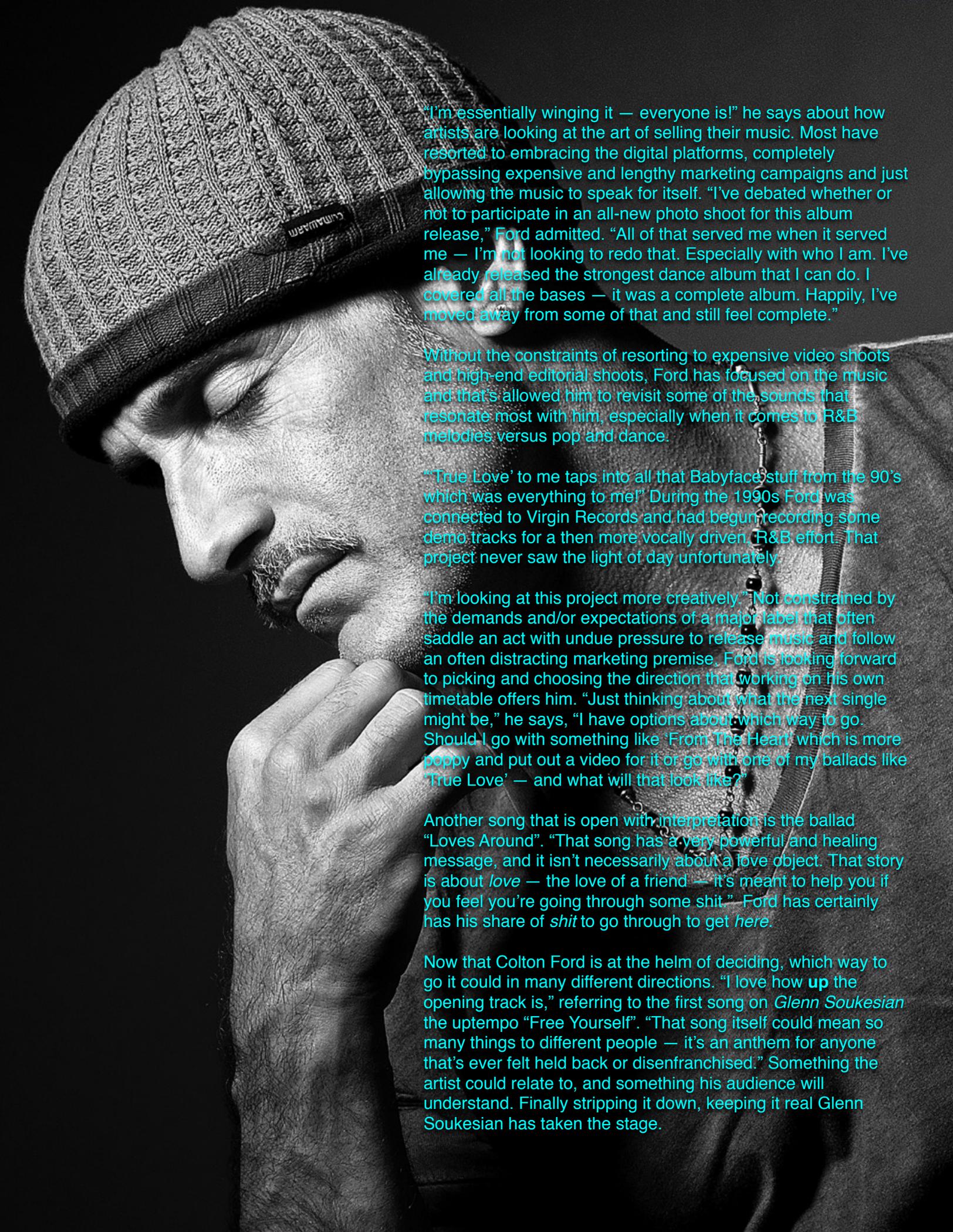
It wasn't necessarily on the forefront when it came time to put the tracks together for this project to so dramatically take a left turn and veer away from the club music that Ford had become so identified with while working with Peace Bisquit. "It hasn't anything to do with not having any attachment to my past as 'Colton Ford'," the singer confirmed. "This is me *just* putting the music out there. It wasn't a conscious thing — there are just these little glimpses of 'Colton.'" Collaborating on *Glenn Soukesian* with Larry Peace, Ron Schrader, Eddy J Free, Chris Castagno and Erik Griggs, the songwriter was able to imprint himself onto a kaleidoscope of styles, entrusting his producers to deliver on a dynamic and contemporary tapestry.

"I think that this record is very cohesive. It flows very nicely and takes you onto this road," he added. A clear objective of his was to evoke a naturally flowing narrative, sometimes romantic, emotive, aggressive and most importantly expressively genuine. His performance on *Glenn Soukesian* is among the best that he's ever given as a vocalist. The tracks are more symphonically dependent on his vocals, and less driven by the bass-lines and treble necessary for club music and the dance genre.



There's still plenty to keep the dance floor dedicated enthusiastically charged, and Ford promises that perhaps another project in the works will deliver a new set of sounds. "Maybe later we'll do a special release — in a few months or so — essentially a 'Chapter 2' with remixes, some house remixes. Some will be new songs," tracks from *Glenn Soukesian* revisited, "and some from the past that Quentin Harris never released from *Tug Of War*. So I think these house remixes will help reign it all in."

Now that he's in charge of how his music gets distributed and with the diversifying marketing that's opened up the music industry and presented artists with unique approaches to selling their music, Colton Ford is willing to take additional risks to get his album into the hands of his fans.



"I'm essentially winging it — everyone is!" he says about how artists are looking at the art of selling their music. Most have resorted to embracing the digital platforms, completely bypassing expensive and lengthy marketing campaigns and just allowing the music to speak for itself. "I've debated whether or not to participate in an all-new photo shoot for this album release," Ford admitted. "All of that served me when it served me — I'm not looking to redo that. Especially with who I am. I've already released the strongest dance album that I can do. I covered all the bases — it was a complete album. Happily, I've moved away from some of that and still feel complete."

Without the constraints of resorting to expensive video shoots and high-end editorial shoots, Ford has focused on the music and that's allowed him to revisit some of the sounds that resonate most with him, especially when it comes to R&B melodies versus pop and dance.

"'True Love' to me taps into all that Babyface stuff from the 90's which was everything to me!" During the 1990s Ford was connected to Virgin Records and had begun recording some demo tracks for a then more vocally driven R&B effort. That project never saw the light of day unfortunately.

"I'm looking at this project more creatively." Not constrained by the demands and/or expectations of a major label that often saddle an act with undue pressure to release music and follow an often distracting marketing premise, Ford is looking forward to picking and choosing the direction that working on his own timetable offers him. "Just thinking about what the next single might be," he says, "I have options about which way to go. Should I go with something like 'From The Heart' which is more poppy and put out a video for it or go with one of my ballads like 'True Love' — and what will that look like?"

Another song that is open with interpretation is the ballad "Loves Around". "That song has a very powerful and healing message, and it isn't necessarily about a love object. That story is about *love* — the love of a friend — it's meant to help you if you feel you're going through some shit." Ford has certainly has his share of *shit* to go through to get *here*.

Now that Colton Ford is at the helm of deciding, which way to go it could in many different directions. "I love how **up** the opening track is," referring to the first song on *Glenn Soukesian* the uptempo "Free Yourself". "That song itself could mean so many things to different people — it's an anthem for anyone that's ever felt held back or disenfranchised." Something the artist could relate to, and something his audience will understand. Finally stripping it down, keeping it real Glenn Soukesian has taken the stage.



Impressively Colton Ford has covered a decade recording music, releasing tracks. The 2007 premiere album ***Tug Of War*** revealed a considerably formidable musician. The album was produced by Quentin Harris and capitalized on the remixer's sizable dance pedigree. Among the album's most memorable tracks fans will recognize "The Way You Love Me" which gave the mainstream audience their first look at the beefcake in all his glory. The highly controversial video for the follow-up "That's Me" would help Ford solidify his credibility and demonstrate how versatile an act he is.

In 2009 Ford delivered a unique musical experience with ***Under The Covers*** a selection of cover tracks that ranged from R&B hits like Babyface's "It's No Crime" to the club thumper "Music Sounds Better With You" originally performed by Stardust. Among the album's most ambitious endeavors was the remake of the R.E.M. classic "Losing My Religion" which drew the attention of the band's frontman Michael Stipe who celebrated Ford's version of the song. Colton Ford even dared to take Britney Spears to task with a version of the obscure "Trouble" which he easily made all his own.

Choosing to take a denser look at his club roots and dance audience, Ford released ***The Way I Am*** in 2013, delivering one of the most well constructed dance albums of the year. The album featured collaborations with longtime friend and dance diva Ultra Naté, the legendary Frankie Knuckles, Razor 'n' Guido and NERVO. The project also gave Ford the opportunity to work with Chris Willis who is featured on the album as well. This would also be the last project with his producing label Peace Bisquit and Bill Coleman, who continues to cultivate some of the best new dance artists in music.

The following year with ***Next Chapter*** Ford took a more traditional approach to his music and bared more heart and soul, leaving behind a lot of the contraptions and convoluted electronic productions to give his voice time to flourish. The seven track EP paved the way for his latest full-length endeavor ***Glenn Soukesian*** a more authentic musical expression, more closely aligned with the artist that Ford has grown into.