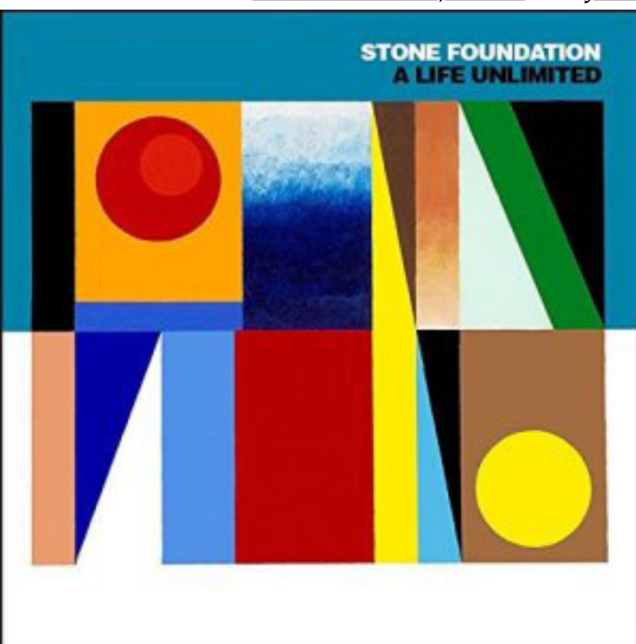


Review Corner

Music reviews in plain English.

Stone Foundation: A Life Unlimited

AUGUST 24, 2015 BY JEROBEAR



Brass, soul and Hammond organ: to people who like certain types of soul, this album's mix of these sounds is probably preferable to a cosy night in with their spouse.

Opener *Beverley* (which perhaps unavoidably has echoes of the Zutons' *Valerie* in the chorus) is sublime soul, with strings, brass, Hammond and smooth vocals. It's a cracking song, and stirs our

hearts every time we play it. The swirling sound of the organ and brass crop up again in other tracks, notably *The Night Teller*.

Elsewhere songs such as *The Turnaround*, *Something In The Light* and *Learning The Hard Way* are more funk than soul, even classic disco, though still laid back; they reminded us of The Isley Bros.

Others are slower, such as *Pushing Your Love* and closer *Old Partners. New Dances*, the latter having a brass sound that is almost jazz.

While it's all very likable — at least if you like soul — it's clear that they're a blisteringly good live band, and some songs, notably *Learning The Hard Way* are a little cheesy on record (not least because of its flute riffle lifted from Van Allen Clinton McCoy's *The Hustle*).

The interweb reports that in 2011 Stone Foundation were spotted playing in a North London venue by Specials drummer John Bradbury and opened for the ska legends on tour, playing to 8,000 people every night. (This CD features contributions from Graham Parker, US soul singer Nolan Porter, vocal harmony group The Four Perfections and Blow Monkeys' Doctor Robert, so maybe the tour gave them some clout).

Outstanding in places, it's more pedestrian in others but despite its flaws, it's a heartfelt body of work. Soulies and fans of the showy blues should certainly buy it; the rest of you could try *Beverley* then *Learning The Hard Way*.

