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Stone Foundation tackle uncertainty and division with new album *Street Rituals*

By [TeamRock](#) (Louder) 2017-03-20T11:22:00.780Z [Louder](#)

Listen to the new track *The Limit Of A Man* by Stone Foundation



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Midlands group Stone Foundation are premiering their new track *The Limit Of A Man* exclusively with TeamRock. Taken from their new album *Street Rituals*, produced by Paul Weller, the track mixes British rock with shades of American soul, the result of which they've dubbed "the sound of Memphis, via the Midlands".

While still a new name to many, Stone Foundation have been toiling under the radar for years, with *Street Rituals* their fourth album to date. Tackling issues such as the division and uncertainty that plague modern Britain, the group also hope that their music will help to spread messages of optimism and unity.

We chat with founding members Neil Jones and Neil Sheasby to find out more about the track, and see what else the band have in store.

What's the story behind the song *The Limit Of A Man*?

Neil Jones: *The Limit Of A Man* was really where our journey with Paul [Weller] started. He called me around the start of 2016 to say he'd been working on a demo and would we like to have a listen, with a view to co-writing something with him. We quickly grabbed the opportunity and set to work on the piano driven instrumental Paul had sent, with both myself

and Sheas adding lyrics to the verse and bridge sections.

I think the main breakthrough came after a conversation with Paul where he'd asked me to look for a chorus. I'd had the title for a few months, and inspired by my grandfather and his generation I set about searching for an uplifting hook for the chorus. I tried to imagine the optimism he would have felt growing up, along with the testing and changing times he'd witnessed over the years whilst trying to hold onto the social values his generation grew up with. As soon as that hook was under our belts I knew we were onto something special. We got together with the rest of the band, gave it the Stone Foundation treatment and Paul loved it.

Paul Weller produces the album. How did it feel when he got in touch to collaborate?

NJ: I think we were all truly flattered to be honest. Without Paul's influence I think quite a few of us wouldn't have ever taken up music. It was almost a validation for me personally, that after all these years the guy who inspired you to pick up a guitar in the first place was on the other end of the phone telling you he was really into the music we were making.

Were you fans of his already?

NJ: We were all massive fans. The band is made up of different generations and ages and his music touched us all. The Jam, The Style Council and his amazing solo career have inspired all of us in one way or another.

How was the process of working together?

NJ: Working with Paul was amazing. He pushed us all to make the best album we could. He definitely inspired me personally to re-write lyrics and re-do tunes to get the most out of them that I possibly could. Take a song like *Your Balloon Is Rising* – I reworked those verses a lot, especially as in my mind, I knew he should sing that one. It had to be perfect! Over the years the buck has always stopped with myself and Sheas when it comes to quality control. It was really liberating to have Paul almost take that out of our hands. He had a definite idea of how he wanted certain things to sound. His work ethic is very similar to ours, we got so much done during the *Street Rituals* sessions.

Neil Sheasby: The key thing was that we were prepared. The five of us (myself, Neil, Phil, Ian & Rob) worked on the initial sessions minus the horns first of all. We had put quite a bit of

time in at our own rehearsal space with our old friend Andy Codling recording our rough ideas. The arrangements soon came together for four solid songs that we presented to Paul on that first day at Black Barn. He basically jumped straight into them with us, and joined the band for the sessions playing guitar, piano and contributing vocals whilst constantly making suggestions too. It just clicked from day one.

What impact did he have on the finished record?

NS: Huge really. It's the first time we had ever used an outside producer so it was great to have a different perspective and a pair of ears, and opinions that came from someone else outside of our usual circle and comfort zone. Also having Paul involved naturally attracts more attention to the record, so that is also a positive.

[Paul Weller - Jawbone: Music From The Film album review](#)

[Buyer's Guide: Paul Weller](#)

[The 11 best songs by The Jam, according to Jesse Malin](#)

[Paul Weller announces 2017 UK tour](#)

What's your favourite story/anecdote from working with Paul?

NS: We have loads but most should probably stay between ourselves, it's the sort of humour that only occurs when you've been cocooned in a recording studio for days on end and have cabin fever!

We did escape to the local chip shop one early evening, and I can assure you that sitting in a chip shop where passers by are pressing their noses against the glass to get a glimpse of a British musical icon chewing on his cod and chips is a fairly surreal moment. One guy made it through the door and proclaimed, "It is you, isn't it? My wife just walked by the window and said she'd just saw the best lookalike ever, but... It *is* you isn't it?!" "Yeah mate, it's me," he replied. "...Fred Dellar."

How did you decide on the artwork?

NS: We wanted the artwork to reflect the album title, so felt that this time we should probably feature on the cover. The shoot was arranged and captured by a friend of ours, Jordan Curtis Hughes, and the location was Electric Avenue in Brixton. We were all very pleased with the results.

What's next for Stone Foundation?

NS: A tour that takes in most of the UK, European dates and Japan too. Also, lots of festival appearances throughout summer. More dates will be added for later in the year, we intend to gig this album quite extensively over the next few months and we intend to enjoy what's in front of us.

Plans are afoot for the next album already but for now, we are all looking forward to getting

out and gigging again.

Street Rituals is released on March 31st. You can catch the band on tour at the following dates:

31 Mar: London, Royal Albert Hall, UK (supporting Paul Weller)

27 Apr: Bristol, The Fleece, UK

28 Apr: Manchester, The Ruby Lounge, UK

29 Apr: Norwich, Norwich Arts Centre, UK

05 May: Coventry, The Empire, UK (with special guests Street Rituals Orchestra)

06 May: Brighton, Concorde 2, UK

12 May: Leeds, The Wardrobe, UK

13 May: London, Islington Assembly Hall, UK (with special guests Street Rituals Orchestra)

18 May: Newcastle, The Cluny Tickets, UK

19 May: Edinburgh, Voodoo Rooms, UK

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