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STONE FOUNDATION — A LIFE UNLIMITED

ROSS MCGIBBON AUGUST 6, 2015 1



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THE TURNING POINT RECORDING ORGANISATION / REPUBLIC OF MUSIC

This is the fourth album from an eight-strong Midlands outfit. Channelling the Brummie love of soul that found voice with Dexy's into a completely different direction, Stone Foundation go in for an Isley Brothers, Harvest For The World sort of a vibe. Or, at times, there is a bit of a Style Council groove, though Stone Foundation swing more naturally.

Opening with the single, Beverley, the groove is sweet, heartfelt and catchy. The chorus, "the rules of the skin are wearing thin", will stick with you. Other tracks, like Pushing Your Love, are slow and soulful – last dance stuff. Rippling Hammond organ sounds, ala Percy Sledge and hanging drum beats give great feel to the moves. The band have a Van Morrison moment or two, hanging onto a phrase, repeating and sticking on it. The next moment they will be all silky and smooth, even the horns, on something like The Turnaround. The album's centrepiece is a 7 minutes-plus song- Speak Your Piece, which is a rollercoaster of pace, bluesy and strong. The other highpoint is the potential single, Learning The Hard Way, punctuated by stabbing horns, which combines Philly smooth with Motown floor filler.

The size of the band shows in the depth and warmth of the set, while the groove and feel of the collection moved me momentarily into a smart and cool world, where just being at a club where these songs are played makes the punters into wiser and cooler people.

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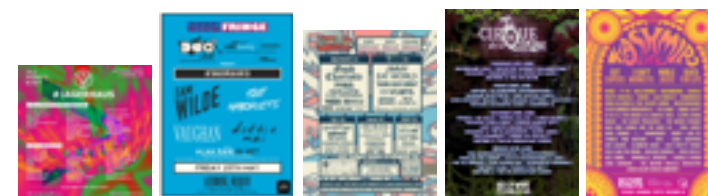
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