

= Stone Rollin ' =

Stone Rollin ' is the fourth studio album by American recording artist Raphael Saadiq , released on March 25 , 2011 , by Columbia Records . Inspired by the loud , raw sound of his live performances , Saadiq worked with recording engineer and long @-@ time collaborator Chuck Brungardt to produce a grittier , more aggressive sound than on his previous records . Most of the instruments played on the album were performed by Saadiq , and with the help of arranger Paul Riser and engineer Gerry Brown , he incorporated string and orchestral arrangements to the songs .

Stone Rollin ' expands on the traditional soul music style of his 2008 album The Way I See It , with songs incorporating rhythm and blues , rock , funk , and blues styles . A widespread critical success and deemed by some reviewers as Saadiq 's best work , the record was noted for its stylistic breadth , groove @-@ based compositions , varied subject matter , and incorporation of the Mellotron keyboard . It also became Saadiq 's highest @-@ charting album in the United States , reaching number 14 on the Billboard 200 . He supported the album with a concert tour spanning from March to August 2011 .

= = Background = =

In 2008 , Saadiq released his third album The Way I See It , which featured 1960s Motown Sound @-@ inspired songs with traditional soul music influences . The album was also an exemplary release of the " classic soul revival " during its peak at the time , a music scene marked by similarly retro @-@ minded work from mainstream artists such as Amy Winehouse and Adele , independent acts such as Sharon Jones & The Dap @-@ Kings and Mayer Hawthorne , and older artists making comebacks such as Al Green and Bettye LaVette . In promoting the album , Saadiq broadened his audience demographic and expanded as a touring artist , playing various music festivals throughout Europe and the United States . Along with the musical aesthetic of the album , Saadiq himself adopted a vintage soul image , donning old @-@ fashioned attire and performing traditional R & B dance moves at shows . His touring also inspired his approach for Stone Rollin ' , as he considered the louder , raw sound and general feeling of performing live .

Saadiq has said of his creative intentions with the follow @-@ up , " I ? ve never shut my ears to anything , really . It ? s not like I ? m always looking for things , either , but I can ? t close my ears to any music . Any guitar , any drums , any rhythm section ? I ? ve always been open to those things , trying to understand what makes them work in a song " . He was influenced by early rock and roll artists such as Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley , and has cited blues musician Howlin ' Wolf as an influence on the album 's sound , which he described as " bluesy " and " harder " than that of his previous album , with more aggressive tempos . In an interview for BULLETT Magazine , Saadiq explained his idea of the album 's title , stating " Stone Rollin ' basically symbolizes the action of throwing dice and taking chances with life . That 's what I 've done my whole career ? taking chances with different styles of music and making choices that other people would be afraid to take . Stone Rollin ' means I 'm going all the way out there this time " .

= = Recording and production = =

Saadiq recorded Stone Rollin ' at Blakeslee Recording Company , his recording studio complex in Los Angeles , California . He spent approximately one year working on the album , including writing its music and lyrics . He worked on the album 's production with recording engineer and long @-@ time collaborator Chuck Brungardt . The two shared an interest in collecting vintage musical gear and studying historic recording techniques , which they had applied in recording The Way I See It . However , for Stone Rollin ' , they sought to eschew its predecessor 's Motown aesthetic for a more eclectic style , in keeping with Saadiq 's other musical projects .

According to Brungardt , the recording of the project 's earlier songs , " Heart Attack " , was critical in their decision for the album . The song was recorded during Saadiq 's break from touring for The Way I See It and had originally featured that album 's sound , with which they were not satisfied .

When they revisited the song , Saadiq reconstructed the original recording after stripping track 's individually recorded instrument parts , with the exception of the vocals and some of its drums . In an interview for EQ Magazine , Brungardt said of their approach , " We wanted to evolve the songs , and I wanted to evolve the engineering , as well . On The Way I See It , everything was pretty much tube pre 's and tube compressors . On this one , I wanted to play around with some of the more solid @-@ state gear " .

Some of the album 's songs were recorded by Saadiq with his live band , which included drummer Lemar Carter , bassist Calvin Turner , and guitarist Rob Bacon . Bacon , who had played with Saadiq since 2002 , said of their grittier approach to guitar , " I have relative pitch , as opposed to perfect pitch , so there 'd be times when I 'd spend 15 or 20 minutes tuning my instrument . Then he 'd come in and pick up his guitar and just start playing it however it was left the day before . On one of the tracks I had to play over all this stuff that was out of tune . Raphael was like , ' That 's what makes it funky ! ' " . Musical guests such as vocalist Yukimi Nagano , keyboardist Larry Dunn , bass player Larry Graham , keyboardist Amp Fiddler , and pedal steel guitarist Robert Randolph also contributed to the album 's recording sessions , with Saadiq selecting their parts for certain tracks . The song " Go to Hell " was conceived from one of Amp Fiddler 's Mellotron ideas . Saadiq recorded a duet with Graham called " The Perfect Storm " , included as a hidden track on the album : " I played bass , but I put my bass down [laughs] . The first day I tried to play bass for him , I couldn 't even play . I froze three times . He 's my all @-@ time idol ! " .

For the majority of the recordings , Saadiq played most of the instruments , including bass , keyboard , guitar , Mellotron , percussion , and drums , and he also layered each recorded instrumental part afterwards . Brungardt used a Neumann U 47 microphone to record each of Saadiq 's instrument part . Saadiq recorded his vocals on a dynamic microphone alone in the recording studio 's control room , an approach encouraged to him earlier in his career by record producer and audio engineer Gerry Brown . According to Brungardt , " [Saadiq 's] voice benefits from a dynamic mic because it tends to give him more bottom and presence . Plus dynamic mics can sound a little older when pushed " . With the songs ' guitar parts , Brungardt wanted to create additional distortion in order to produce a grittier , guitar sound for the songs , a stylistic preference Saadiq and him had acquired from listening to a great deal of indie rock at the time . He applied several techniques to achieve this sound , including increasing the gain on Saadiq 's Fender Twin guitar amplifier , using a software plug @-@ in for the recordings in post @-@ production , and re @-@ amping Saadiq 's guitar parts . In his interview for EQ Magazine , Brungardt discussed using a Massey TapeHead , one of his preferred plug @-@ ins , in the recording process , stating " I ? ll use that on a lot of things to get a little more grit . It thickens stuff up nicely if you record something that ? s a little too bright . I usually go a lot for darker tones when recording and mixing " .

For several songs , Saadiq incorporated lush orchestration and strings as predominant elements . He worked on the orchestral recording with arranger Paul Riser and Gerry Brown at Ocean Way Recording 's Studio B in Los Angeles , while the songs ' horn parts were mostly recorded at the Blakeslee studio . Brown also worked with Saadiq on the album 's tracking at Blakeslee . The album was mixed using Pro Tools in Blakeslee Recording Company 's Studio A , with the SSL 4000 used mostly for monitoring , and using the SSL 9000 in the " C " room . During mixing , Brungardt used equalization filters such as a McDSP FilterBank plug @-@ in and Waves Renaissance EQ to handle excessive high end in spots , and he utilized other equipment for additional sound effects , including a Line 6 Echo Farm , a Roland Space Echo , and an Echoplex clone .

= = Music and lyrics = =

Stone Rollin ' expands on the Motown @-@ inspired material of Saadiq 's previous album and includes various other R & B styles . Along with mid @-@ tempo soul songs , Stone Rollin ' features styles such as early R & B @-@ rooted rock and roll , rock @-@ inspired funk , Chess Records @-@ blues , and the more expansive orchestral sound of post @-@ Detroit Motown and 1970s Philadelphia soul . Disc jockey Chris Douridas described Saadiq 's sound as " a hybrid form that 's rooted in these familiar elements from classic soul but recontextualized with a modern sound " . Nick

Butler of Sputnikmusic called the album 's songs " belters " and " guitar @-@ heavy " , and wrote of its musical influences , " While Prince informs the sound of this more than anybody , it 's a very early- ' 70s sounding album on the whole [...] but there are influences that go back even further than that - Ray Charles and Little Richard in particular inform some of this record 's more energetic moments . " Los Angeles Times journalist Mikael Wood said of the album 's sound and production , " Where Saadiq 's previous efforts luxuriated in the layering and the fine @-@ tuning made possible by modern recording gear , Stone Rollin ' presents a rawer , rowdier soul @-@ rock sound modeled after his energetic stage show " .

Music writer Robert Christgau said Saadiq 's compositions are characterized by " groove rather than song " . Andy Kellman of AllMusic wrote that the songs are " tied together by the Mellotron , a vintage keyboard ? commonly associated with psychedelic and progressive rock recordings , but not foreign to soul ? that evokes diseased flutes and wheezing strings " , adding that " Saadiq tends to use the instrument for shading " . Music journalist Jim DeRogatis observed " a little less Motown gloss " than The Way I See It and " a little more rock grit in Saadiq 's grooves , heavy on the Sly Stone (witness the opening ' Heart Attack ') , late ' 50s / early ' 60s Isley Brothers (the joyful ' Radio ') , and Ray Charles (' Day Dreams ') , to say nothing of the skillful use of Mellotron orchestrations as a connecting thread throughout the disc , sort of like the Moody Blues suddenly finding the funk (' The Answer ') . " Steve Horowitz from PopMatters found the songs ' subject matter to be assorted and said that Saadiq " personalizes each song so they seem connected as just the many aspects of one man 's existence and experience " .

The opening track , " Heart Attack " , is a rock and roll / soul song that incorporates driving bass , reverberating rhythm guitar , and a four @-@ on @-@ the @-@ floor drum beat . It is an homage to one of Saadiq 's musical idols , Sly Stone , and was inspired by Sly and the Family Stone songs " M 'Lady " and " Dance to the Music " , whose burbling background vocals are referenced in " Heart Attack " . Saadiq said he wanted to open Stone Rollin ' " with that sense of urgency , that global soul and rock & roll feel " . On " Got to Hell " , he alludes to his adopted surname with the line " I'm going to be a warrior of everything I say " ; " Saadiq " means " man of his word " in Arabic . He played a rockabilly style of guitar on " Radio " , which portrays a disapproving woman as the personification of mainstream radio : " I met this girl named Radio / said her signal was low / she wasn 't getting my sound " . According to Saadiq , the line " I tried to move away / she found me the very next day " alludes to his affinity for his musical roots and those of rock and roll . The album 's title track was written as an ode to curvaceous , full @-@ figured women , backed by a sound Saadiq described as " dirty , more of like a Chicago Blues , Rolling Stones dirty record ... the bluesiest joint " on the album .

" Movin ' Down the Line " , an ode to a love unrequited , features mellow horns , jangling guitar , heavy bass lines , and a swelling string and piano conclusion . In the opinion of Lloyd Bradley , the song exemplifies the album 's combination of traditional styles and contemporary production : " It has every bit of digital snap needed to succeed among today 's sounds ; but Saadiq 's masterful use of a big brass section lurking w @-@ a @-@ a @-@ ay into the background picks the tune up and puts it down in a completely different era . The song turns out both laidback and urgent at the same time , and is utterly irrepressible for it " . Containing a psychedelic funk sound , " Just Don 't " is sung from the point of view of a dejected narrator as realizes his woman has moved on from him . The song features guest vocals by Yukimi Nagano and an extended Moog solo played by Larry Dunn . " Good Man " contains plaintive lyrics , a hook co @-@ written and sung by vocalist Taura Stinson , and lyrics about a man mourning his partner 's unfaithfulness . The album 's closing track , " The Answer " , features a wistful , jazz @-@ funk sound , and lyrics expressing a call for collective and individual responsibility . Saadiq said , " I always have a song similar to that on my albums . I was just thinking about growing up in Oakland and all the older people and mentors who helped me out at the time . So I just wanted to throw it back and say thank you , and tell all the kids out there to listen to the people trying to guide them " .

= = Release and reception = =

Stone Rollin ' was released in March 2011 by Columbia Records . In the United States , it debuted at number 14 on the Billboard 200 , selling 21 @,@ 000 copies in its first week . It was Saadiq 's highest @-@ charting album on the Billboard 200 . By May , the album had sold 32 @,@ 100 copies , according to Nielsen SoundScan . Stone Rollin ' was promoted with the release of three singles : " Radio " on December 21 , 2010 , " Good Man " on February 15 , 2011 , and the title track on March 22 . A music video for " Good Man " was filmed by Isaiah Seret , featuring fashion model Yaya DaCosta and actor Chad Coleman . Saadiq performed the title track on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno , and on Conan .

Stone Rollin ' received widespread acclaim from critics and was one of the year 's best reviewed records . At Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream publications , the album received an average score of 86 , based on 20 reviews ; Writing for AllMusic , Kellman deemed it more than a " period @-@ piece " and " the high point of Saadiq 's career , his exceptional output with Tony ! Toni ! Toné ! included " , while Kevin Ritchie from Now said he exhibited " the electrifying fervour and meticulous musicianship typical of his stage show " on the record . Steve Horowitz from PopMatters wrote that the album " shows off Saadiq 's genius as a singer , writer , instrumentalist , and producer of modern rhythm and blues that pays homage to its traditions " , adding that it does not have " a false step or even a dull note " . In MSN Music , Robert Christgau said Saadiq " plays with himself to beat the band " like Prince and " makes these 10 tracks bump and pulse . And then you notice even the less pneumatic ones connecting as songs . " However , he perceived a drop @-@ off from The Way I See It in terms of songwriting and catchiness , singling out " Got to Hell " , " Day Dreams " , and " Good Man " as the highlights . Slant Magazine 's Matthew Cole was more critical , finding the record too involved in fabricating retro sensibilities " to leave a lasting impression of its own ... even the highlights are complacent genre exercises " .

At the end of 2011 , Stone Rollin ' was named one of the year 's best albums in several critics ' top @-@ 10 lists ; it was ranked at number one by Thomas Fawcett from The Austin Chronicle , number three by James Reed of The Boston Globe , number six by Los Angeles Times critic Todd Martens , and number seven by Chicago Tribune critic Greg Kot , who also called it Saadiq 's greatest work : " He 's always written songs steeped in soul and R & B , but now he gives them a progressive edge with roaming bass lines and haunted keyboard textures . He 's no longer a retro stylist ? he 's writing new classics . " " Good Man " was nominated for the 2012 Grammy Award for Best Traditional R & B Performance .

= = Tour = =

Saadiq promoted Stone Rollin ' with a North American spring tour , performing a series of concerts during March to June 2011 . It began on March 15 at the House of Blues in Dallas and concluded on June 8 at Stubb 's in Austin , Texas . Some concert dates featured electronic music duo Quadron as an opening act . The tour included performances at music festivals such as South by Southwest and Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival , for which Saadiq played songs from The Way I See It and Stone Rollin ' , as well as unreleased material .

In reproducing the album 's recorded music onstage , he performed with his eight @-@ piece band , which included bass player Calvin Turner , drummers Lemar Carter and Charles Jones , guitarists Rob Bacon and Josh Smith , and backing singers Erika Jerry and BJ Kemp . In contrast to his touring for The Way I See It , Saadiq did not include a horn section for certain shows and played on guitar for a more rock @-@ oriented sound . While travelling between concert dates , Saadiq and his bandmates watched music documentaries for inspiration , including a documentary on Bob Marley & The Wailers and the 1973 film Wattstax . He expanded his touring in promotion of the album into August 2011 , with concerts alternating between North American headlining dates and European music festivals .

= = Track listing = =

All songs were produced by Raphael Saadiq and co @-@ produced by Chuck Brungardt .
" The Answer " contains a hidden track , known as " The Perfect Storm " .

= = Personnel = =

Credits are adapted from the album 's liner notes .

= = = Musicians = = =

= = = Production = = =

= = Charts = =

= = Release history = =