

RAPHAEL SAADIQ || Stone Rollin'

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Raphael Saadiq *Stone Rollin'*

Label: Sony/Columbia

Release Date: May 10, 2011

Grade: 4 out of 5 meatballs

Reviewed By: Lindsey Shaw

Saadiq in Arabic translates to “man of his word” and Raphael Saadiq lives up to that definition through and through with his latest album *Stone Rollin'*, which cements the artist's ability to meld vintage rock with modern flare. His latest collection of tracks proves he's still got old school genius flowing, having never sold out to the flashing lights a la Kanye or Usher.



Listening to *Stone Rollin'* takes you through virtual time travel as Saadiq seamlessly vacillates between rock 'n' roll, R&B, and even some hip-hop, all while exhibiting influences from the 50s, 60s, 70s, and our quirky millennia. Channeling some James Brown on the vocals, Saadiq comes out of the gate with “Heart Attack” to start the multi-genre journey. The bass in this song evokes a 70s film action sequence with romantic lyrics and backup females (foiling any possible images of that decade's adult films). It's cute without a hint of dirty and this theme is carried throughout the rest of the voyage.

The tribal drumming coupled with his heartfelt croon on the next song, “Go To Hell,” give a welcomed variation and solidify how innovative Saadiq can be, even if he's traditionally playing up to classic sounds of decades past. Omnipresent harmonizing from his helpful ladies offer a whimsical balance and soften the edges just enough to let Saadiq's range shine. The next track, “Radio,” is so vibrant that it's almost as though you can see screaming girl fans ripping out their hair and crying beyond any estrogen meltdown Bieber could provoke.

“Day Dreams” gives way to yet another time and sound. Practically changing the entire scope of the album with an extremely fast pace and traces of banjo, it's reminiscent of what would be playing at a train stop in Mississippi circa 1950. Unfortunately, the momentum is lost after that and some songs like “Over You” come off as lazy and uninspired.

After traveling through multiple time periods and correlating beats, Saadiq attempts to assert a modern voice with ballads. “The Answer” reaches out to troubled youth and “Perfect Storm” sounds completely melancholic. Unfortunately, these ballads don't have the resonating quality of the previous tracks, and for this reason the trip doesn't finish strong, but it still doesn't take away from the amazing ride.