

Joss Stone - The Soul Sessions Vol.2 (2012)

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01 – I Got The... 02 – (For God's Sake) Give More Power To The People 03 – While You're Out Looking For Sugar 04 – Sideways Shuffle 05 – I Don't Wanna Be With Nobody But You 06 – Teardrops 07 – Stoned Out Of My Mind 08 – The Love We Had (Stays On My Mind) 09 – The High Road 10 – Pillow Talk 11 – Then You Can Tell Me Goodbye 12 – First Taste Of Hurt 13 – One Love In My Lifetime 14 – Nothing Takes The Place Of You 15 – (1234567) Count The Days

Joss Stone was only 16 years old when she debuted with *The Soul Sessions* in 2003. Britain and the United States quickly fell for her barefoot innocence and worldly, earthy soul voice, a voice well beyond her years.

Since then, Stone's resolutely followed her own path. Mostly self-penned albums have yielded diminishing artistic and commercial returns, while her recordings with SuperHeavy failed to attract many plaudits. Film, television and videogame roles have met with comparable indifference.

With her career curveballs never engaging with the public as successfully as her debut, perhaps retreat to the comforting cocoon of what made Stone's name was inevitable. And album six is just that: a second set of soul-infused covers, released on her original label S-Curve, helmed by her original producer Steve Greenberg.

To complete the similarities, Stone is not merely rehashing some old soul fare. Where *the Soul Sessions* grappled manfully with The White Stripes' *Fell in Love With a Girl*, here she gives Broken Bells' *The High Road* a heroic, no-holds barred makeover that's as sensual as it is

spiritual. It is, you suspect, how Stone was always meant to sound.

Elsewhere she dips into more conventional soul territory, although only Womack & Womack's majestic Teardrops was a major hit (Stone's take builds imperiously and brims with rue). Her funk-fuelled crack at Stoned Out of My Mind owes more to the ever-underrated Chi-Lites original than The Jam's blunderbuss assault on it.

But while Stone can bawl with the best of them, she can do restraint too. John D. Loudermilk's corny weepie Then You Can Tell Me Goodbye has a string arrangement that avoids the saccharine trap (although it's a close call), but Stone radiates pain with a conviction and believability she's never quite summoned before. --- John Aizlewood, BBC Review

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