Bill Wyman - Back To Basics (2015)

01. What & How & If & When & Why [3:38] 02. I Lost My Ring [3:37] 03. Love, Love, Love [3:41] 04. Stuff (Can't Get Enough) [4:05] 05. Running Back To You [4:01] 06. She's Wonderful [3:56] 07. Seventeen [3:50] 08. I'll Pull You Through [3:07] 09. November [3:45] 10. Just A Friend Of Mine [3:42] 11. It's A Lovely Day [2:05] 12. I Got Time [3:54]

It’s clear now, more than two decades later, that Bill Wyman didn’t leave the Rolling Stones because he felt boxed out by the Jagger-Richards songwriting juggernaut. The Stones have put out three full-length albums and a smattering of stand-alone things since, while Wyman has put out exactly none.

Well, until June 22, 2015, when their erstwhile bassist will issue Back to Basics via Proper Records — Bill Wyman’s first new solo project in 33 years. He’s joined by Robbie McIntosh (The Pretenders, Paul McCartney), Guy Fletcher (Mark Knopfler) and long-time collaborator Terry Taylor on an album produced by Andy Wright (Jeff Beck, the Eurythmics).

To be fair, however, he has been active with Bill Wyman’s Rhythm Kings, and that loose amalgam’s low-key, country-blues approach to music making permeates Back to Basics. This is more JJ Cale than it is “Jumpin’ Jack Flash,” and therein probably lies the creative divide between Wyman and his old bandmates.

And so, we have Bill Wyman employing an oaken vocal on “November,” to the accompaniment of a delicate Spanish guitar, and the aw-shucks shuffle of “I Got Time” — an ambling harp-flecked song that makes good on that promise. Those amiable asides are goosed along on Back to Basics with Wyman’s flinty scamper through the Blockheads-ish “What & How & If &

When & Why” and a rousing, Ray Charlies-inspired update of “I’ll Pull You Through.”

Still, the overarching theme here — as it has been, really, since his similarly amiable 1974 solo debut Monkey Grip — is one of relaxed craftsmanship, as unpretentious and small-scale as his long-lost friends in the Rolling Stones are outsized and cocksure. ---Nick Deriso, somethingelsereviews.com

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