

Angus and Julia Stone - Snow (2017)

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1. Snow 2. Oakwood 3. Chateau 4. Cellar Door 5. Sleep Alone 6. Make It Out Alive 7. Who Do You Think You Are 8. Nothing Else 9. My House Your House 10. Bloodhound 11. Baudelaire 12. Sylvester Stallone

Rick Rubin's hirsute shadow still looms large over the Stones, who have decided to keep rolling since splitting up on the down-low in 2012. The super producer was the catalyst for their 2014 reunion after hearing them at a party and inviting them into his Malibu studio to reconnect and record. It resulted in their self-titled third album – their finest yet – and Rubin's trick wasn't just that dry Seventies drum sound. He insisted the siblings write in the same room together, and it's a process they've stuck to for their fourth album, which was self-produced in Angus' Byron Bay studio.

It seems fitting that they open proceedings with the call-and-response of "Snow", which sees the pair swap verses like a less cloying Moldy Peaches (despite Julia's chorus of "la la las"). The Stones are at their best when they're playing off each other like this: Julia providing the strong but sympathetic counterpoint to her brother's just-rolled-out-of-a-two-day-bender version of charm.

The use of a drum machine and a more expansive guitar palette is a marked difference from Rubin's organic LA production. They even take a stab at indie-hop on "Baudelaire", which works surprisingly well for two kids that grew up in Sydney's northern beaches. (Straight outta Newport yo!)

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The album fittingly closes with the Stones finishing each others' sentences. They're stronger together – they just realise it now. ---Darren Levin, rollingstoneaus.com

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