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Music Review: Nazareth – Rock ‘n’ Roll Telephone

by [Joe Viglione](#) on July 15, 2014



Rock 'n' Roll Telephone is one of the more complete albums I've heard in a while. The band Nazareth strikes a good chord throughout on this beautifully produced, written and performed selection of songs. While Classic Rock in Boston is starting to add 90s music and beyond (meaning artists that are considered more alternative than classic rock) a terrific album like this that would keep the core audience, that deserves the airplay, gets replaced by sounds that don't resonate with those who tune in to classic rock radio for the sound of classic rock. Which is why the audience is turning to other mediums while driving in the car, CD player and beyond. Most of this new CD, which sounds great in the car, can be found on YouTube so we'll take you track-by-track on this very well constructed and very entertaining disc.

1) Boom Bang Bang

Opening track "Boom Bang Bang" takes things for Nazareth into an unexpected and wonderful direction, devolving into some anti-disco neo-industrial machine rock that Marilyn Manson could have a blast with. This song could revitalize Manson's career, in fact.

It's fun, a mixture of sounds you can't place but you know you've heard before, a clever riff and superb guitar work making for a nice entree into the 11 titles on the non-deluxe version of *Rock 'n' Roll Telephone*.

2) One Set of Bones

"One Set of Bones" is as "in the pocket" as any tune on the Aerosmith DVD reviewed here, *Rock for the Rising Sun*. Hard-hitting, direct and sweeping from the blues to Zeppelin sludge rock.

3) Back 2B4

Nazareth's "Back 2B4" from the *Rock 'n' Roll Telephone* CD draws an amazing line between Sutherland Brothers & Quiver meets AC/DC gone folk. It's a terrific, laid back let's have some fun melodic barroom unplugged chant. Just exquisite and it moves the group into 2014 in a very nice way with some intelligent and intriguing guitar at the 2:49 mark before the great chorus kicks back in.

4) Winter Sunlight

The group Angel had a beautiful "Winter Song" which would be superb played back to back to this sweeping pop/ballad excursion into magic lands, would make a nice song for a video of old Viking ships sailing to places unknown.

5) Rock N Roll Telephone

Title track "Rock 'n' Roll Telephone" is another instant sludge-rock classic, like track 2, "One Set of Bones." Guitar lines emphasize the vocal as the riff drives this playful declaration probably of a musician on the road, or someone emulating the Jerky Boys, to bother people 'cause there's nothing better to do.

6) Punch a Hole in the Sky

"Punch a Hole in the Sky" takes things back to the 70s rock sound the fan base knows and loves, straight ahead and less experimental than some of the more interesting numbers here, it still drives and has the magic.

7) Long Long Time

The seventh track segues into another dimension from "Punch a Whole in the Sky," not the Linda Ronstadt hit from her 1970 disc *Silk Purse* but a quasi alternative meets new

wave pop and it is an exquisite dip into another genre for the venerable hard rock group.

8) The Right

The theme on tracks 7 and 8 is time, and we go from the catchy “Long Long Time” to a blues ballad straight out of Rod Stewart’s Gasoline Alley. The pensive number gives this Rock ‘n’ Roll Telephone disc a very well-rounded set of material from conventional to unexpected, in a pleasantly surprising way. The band is stretching the boundaries on this LP and the results are most satisfying.

9) Not Today

Not Today is pure Nazareth from days gone by, triumphant expanded guitar behind and between strong backing vocals in another determined epic to roll the nightmares away, the singer out to get what he wants.

11) Speakeasy

Speakeasy again shakes things up, venturing into Kiss territory, and why not? Anthemic like Rock n’ Roll All Night (and party every day,) rousing, uplifting and fun! Again, the classic rock stations should be eating this up. A tour with Kiss might be a fun thing as well.

12) God of the Mountain

At first glance you’ll think “God of the Mountain” is for Zeus or Thor, but the music video Union Square Music issued has young athletes skiing down the icy slopes a la many a James Bond movie. All in all a terrific closing number for the non-deluxe version of the album, a very good album for Nazareth fans and one that can open the group up to a new audience.

Joe Viglione is the Chief Film Critic at TMRZoo.com. He has written thousands of reviews and biographies for AllMovie.com, Allmusic.com, Gatehouse Media, Al Aronowitz’s The Blacklisted Journal, and a variety of other media outlets. Joe also produces and hosts Visual Radio, a seventeen year old variety show on cable TV which has interviewed Jodie Foster, director/screenwriter David Koepf, Michael Moore, John Cena, comics/actors Margaret Cho, Gilbert Gottfried, Gallagher, musicians Mark Farner and Don Brewer of Grand Funk Railroad, Ian Hunter of Mott The Hoople, Ray Manzarek, John Densmore, Felix Cavaliere of The Rascals, political commentator Bill Press and hundreds of other personalities.

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