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November 27, 2013 by [Nick DeRiso](#)

## Paul Carrack – *Rain or Shine* (2013)

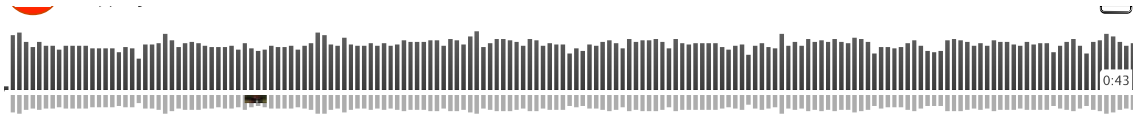
In an age when his contemporaries take three, five even seven years between studio projects, Paul Carrack is already back with another blend of blue-eyed soul originals and choice covers — a trio of which pay direct tribute to Ray Charles.

I'm not sure Carrack has ever sung better, even during his hitmaking years with Mike and the Mechanics, even if the follow up to *Good Feeling* took just a matter of months.

The opening one-two punch of “Stepping Stone” and “That’s All That Matters to Me,” a lead single fraught with a very adult parental worry, showcase his 10-track album’s signature sound: An active string accompaniment not unlike those that fired soul classics by the likes of Al Green and, yes, Charles. In fact, they were recorded in Los Angeles with arranger Richard Niles, who contributed to some late-period triumphs with Brother Ray. His charts, which also include some brassy brawn later in, give *Rain or Shine* a timeless feel — very in keeping with Carrack’s honeyed approach at the mic.

Carrack, who included an overt tribute to Charles called “I Can Hear Ray” on *Good Feeling*, then faces his hero’s towering legacy head on with his version of “You Don’t Know Me.” There’s a bravery to that, or else a recklessness, depending on your point of view — but I’m happy to report that Carrack comports himself admirably, adding his own grace notes to a song that will, nevertheless, always belong to his hero. Carrack also provides the mid-tempo cadence, playing all of the instruments himself.





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“Hard Times” then finds Carrack settling into a saloon-song demeanor, swaying with a ruminative ache, before Niles’ muscular arrangement pushes the singer into some thrilling high-pitched Charles-isms. The opulent “Come Rain or Shine,” a key moment in Carrack’s recent blockbuster tour with Eric Clapton that likewise traces back to the Charles songbook, closes the album out with a majestic mid-century sweep.

Elsewhere on *Rain or Shine* — due December 2, 2013 courtesy of his own Carrack-UK label— Carrack offers his own rendition of “If Loving You Is Wrong,” a song he first came in contact with via Bobby Blue Bland, who shared a roster spot on Anchor Records with Carrack’s 1970s-era band Ace. “Time Waits for No One” hustles and flows like a crisp combination of his knowing singing style with Squeeze and the polyester era’s best Philly soul sides. Brenda Lee’s “I’m Losing You” is also brilliantly transformed into a delicately conveyed ballad.

<b>Rain Or Shine</b> Paul Carrack	<b>Hits</b> Mike & The Mechan...	<b>Good Feeling</b> Paul Carrack	<b>Greatest Hits</b> Paul Carrack	<b>Five a Side</b> Ace
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### Nick DeRiso

Nick DeRiso has also explored jazz, blues, rock and roots music for Gannett News Service and USA Today, All About Jazz, Popdose, Living Blues, No Depression, the Louisiana Folklife Program and Blues Music Magazine, among others. Honored as newspaper columnist of the year five times by the Associated Press, Louisiana Press Association and Louisiana Sports Writers Association, he oversaw a daily section that was named Top 10 in the nation by the AP in 2006. Contact him at [nderiso@somethingelserreviews.com](mailto:nderiso@somethingelserreviews.com).

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