

Album: *Rodney Rice*

Artist: Rodney Rice

On his self-titled third album the native West Virginian extends his songwriting landscape into more autobiographical territories by covering a full spectrum of life's peaks and valleys — most importantly, his own. The results make *Rodney Rice* a more analog listen than his previous releases as he explores new sound concepts which aptly accentuate the broad lyrical range of joy, grief, and disappointment.

The blazing opener “How You Told Me So” dances in the jazzy delight of the French Quarter which practically tricks the listener because behind the blaring trumpets is a layer of unexpected sadness as Rice addresses dealing with the external doubt of others. “Get to Where I’m Going” exudes the confidence of early Springsteen just as “Roll River Roll” dabbles in the realm of Country music patron saint Willie Nelson with production that feels as if it was born in another space and time. “Little Pieces” is a rollicking heartbreaker with an inventive, wink-inducing chorus that heightens the further existential questioning of “Set Em Up.” Both of which are perfect leads into the salty wisdom of “Wonder Where I Came From” and the acceptance of life’s finality on “Every Passing Day.”

Rodney Rice is a beautiful collection of observational lessons from a storyteller that deeply appreciates the subtle balance of an ever changing life. Through production and lyrical commitment, Rice deftly succeeds in finding joy in pain by honoring journeys that lead to more questions than answers. It’s a remarkable moment that increases anticipation of where the road of self discovery will lead him in the future.