

Tone Stith Bio

"There's good and bad parts about love, and it's my job to shine light on that." And Tone Stith does his job quite well: in the course of a few short years, the singer/songwriter/producer/multi-faceted musician has proven his triple-threat status with ace songwriting credits and two projects of his very own—including the just-released *Good Company* EP. With his light touch and impactful style, Stith already shines amidst the current crop of R&B's leading lights, and there's plenty more to come.

Currently residing in Los Angeles, the 23-year-old artist was raised in Southern New Jersey by a musical set of parents: "I was paying attention to everything they were doing." His father introduced him to the drums at the age of 3, and he also took early cues from his mother as she performed in their church choir. "I'd hear her singing around the house and I'd try to mimic everything she was doing," he remembers.

The sonic diet in his house included healthy helpings of James Taylor, Marvin Gaye, Michael Jackson, Prince, the Beatles, and the Bee Gees—a mix of classic pop and R&B that stuck with Stith for years to come: "My mom and dad put me on to all the music they listened to and grew up on," he explains. "That's where I get my musical taste from."

At eight years old, he picked up the keyboard; three years later, he was already flexing his production talents, experimenting with the popular Fruity Loops software at home. "I've been pretty much doing music my entire life," he enthuses, citing basketball and visual art as competing interests as he got older. "There's definitely things I wanted to do, but I knew I was better in music."

Along with childhood friends K.T. and Dezz, Stith formed R&B trio SJ3, who released their debut LP *The School Years* in 2011; two years later, the trio posted a cover of Justin Bieber's "Heartbreaker" online—and, as luck would have it, it caught the attention of the man himself, along with music industry mogul Jas Prince, who was also responsible for discovering Drake on MySpace and launching his career. "Justin had showed him the video, like, 'Man, you gotta check this out,'" Stith explains. Eventually, Jas got in contact with Tone and brought him out to L.A. for the first time.

At the age of 20, he picked up guitar and bass, and while he was expanding his musical horizons his career continued to take off, as Stith nabbed production and songwriting credits on two songs from Chris Brown's 2015 album *Loyalty*, "Liquor" and "Make Love." "I love songwriting and producing," he gushes. "It gives me the freedom to say what I want in a creative way." Stith cites soft-rock icons Fleetwood Mac as a primary songwriting influence: "They're one of the bands I love listening to because I love the way the songs are written. I model a lot of my songs after them."

As Stith continues to work with Brown on forthcoming projects, most recently penning his latest single, "Undecided," he's also been developing an impressive solo career that kicked off with 2017's *Can We Talk*—an indelible debut that found him embracing *au courant* R&B stylings while applying his own classic melodic touch to the proceedings. "It was my first actual project, so I had to show off all aspects—each category of music that represents me," he ruminates about the project. "Putting it together was interesting because there were different styles of music in there. There were songs that were more urban, more straight R&B, more soul. It was a mixture."

And Stith furthers his musical horizons on *Good Company*, his first record since signing with BPG/RCA. The EP finds Stith working in a style reminiscent of classic-era The-Dream—think spacious production, lush instrumental touches, and Stith's emotive vocals front-and-center. "This is the first time I had features on my songs, which was really cool," he states while talking about the project, which includes contributions from Ty Dolla \$ign ("Take It There") and Quavo and Swae Lee on the title track. "*Good Company* fits into this time really well, but it's different—it doesn't sound like a lot of other people's music. It sounds like me, in 2018. It's a good entry to what I have coming up."

Most surprisingly, Stith delves into the squelchy sound of '90s R&B on "Doin' It For Me," a nighttime jam that at once sounds classic and futuristic. "I wouldn't say any of my songs are my favorite—I love all of them in different ways—but 'Doin' It For Me' has a real '90s feel," he explains. "It represents the sound of R&B that people are trying to get back to. I feel like if it came out in the '90s, people would enjoy it the same way. It has that nostalgic feel that I'm shooting for more."

Along with the release of *Good Company*, Stith's been slaying audiences as support on enigmatic R&B siren H.E.R.'s "I Used to Know Her" tour. "It's been the craziest experience of my life so far," he reflects. "Every night, there's been a sold-out crowd. People have been so responsive to what's going on with me and the new music. She brings me back out every show, which is crazy. She's co-signing me and my career, and I'm forever thankful for that. I didn't want it to end, and I can't wait to do more work with her and keep it going."

So what's next for this rising star? "A ton of new music," naturally—including his forthcoming self-titled album. "I want people to know more about my musical background. It's funk-based, and there's a lot to it. I love country, I love soul. All of that's gonna come out in the next few projects, and I'm really excited about it."

Most of all, Stith is excited to continue spreading his romantic R&B gospel well into 2019 and beyond. "I love to talk about love. People don't talk about it that much in today's times—everybody's putting on a front," he laughs. "Everybody needs to know that it's okay to talk about love—to go through relationships. Don't be afraid to be you and express how you really feel about somebody."