



**SO EMOTIONAL**

Indie hip-hop guru turned singer-songwriter RJD2 breaks down his influences.

Expanding upon the themes of the primarily instrumental *Since We Last Spoke* (Definitive Jux), *The Third Hand* finds former sampling maestro RJD2 doing his own drum programming, instrumentation, and vocals.

"It got to the point, with sampling on the MPC, where it just got stupid," RJ says of his new direction. "I was lifting such minute samples, it was just easier to make them myself. Also, I'm a little dude making little records on little independent labels. I'm not in a Just Blaze-type situation where I have the resources to clear all those samples."

While figuring out the intricacies of placing microphones and engineering, RJ is also grappling with putting feelings into words. "[Songwriting is] the most intimidating and daunting part of making music," he says. "I'm in awe of people who can put such eloquence in their songs. I feel like words are much more concrete than chords and riffs." With that in mind, we asked RJ about some of his favorite songwriters. *Patrick Sisson* *The Third Hand* (XL Recordings) is out now. [www.xlrecordings.com](http://www.xlrecordings.com)



**1. THE TEETH**

One of my new favorite bands is Philly's The Teeth; they sound a lot like the early Kinks' records. They have really great chord progressions and vocal harmonies and are one of the few groups that have impressed me with their writing.



**2. THE ZOMBIES**

I feel like *Odessey and Oracle* is a record I'm never going to be able to live down. If I built a small list of records that shaped the way I think about music, [this album] would be on it.



**3. THE BEATLES**

Everything about them is perfect. The more I listen to Paul McCartney's singing, I realize he has such clarity—his ability to hit every single note without any melisma is unbelievable. And [their engineers], George Martin and Geoff Emmerich, were really pushing the boundaries.



**4. DONNY HATHAWAY**

He and Curtis Mayfield are both lyrically inspiring. There are a lot of people I find terribly poetic, and both these guys have written some songs that are amazingly poignant.



**5. RADIOHEAD**

They know grooves and know how to make it work. It was really exciting to me when they first made that transition to *Kid A*. It was like the second season of *The Wire*: the show just kept widening its focus without dumping the previous season. That's what Radiohead does.