

THE DUNWELLS – BLIND SIGHTED FAITH

Utterly natural. There's no more fitting description for both the music of The Dunwells as well as the story of their magical rise from the pubs of Leeds, England to an American record deal and a stunning debut album in just two short years.

The group is two brothers, two cousins and totalling five best mates who simply love to sing and play music, and do so together. "We are genuinely best mates," explains singer, songwriter and guitarist Joseph Dunwell. "We sometimes bicker and fight, but then we hug and make up and go out for a drink."

When they make music, the results exemplify the equation that the sum of the parts can be even greater than the whole. Striking an organic blend between acoustic and electric roots music laced by luscious vocal harmonies by all five members, their songs and sound feel both bracingly fresh while at the same time as warm and familiar as a dear long-time friend.

Blind Sighted Faith, the debut album on Playing In Traffic Records, is a timeless yet contemporary collection of 11 captivating and indelible numbers that transcend genres to offer a fresh, richly rooted harvest of listening pleasure. From its opening track, "I Could Be A King," a regal rocker with splashes of modernist Britpop shine, the set is a sumptuous banquet of musical modes. One moves from moments of graceful reflective repose like "Only Me" to the swirling mesmerism of "Follow The Road." The band offers a panoramic collection that seamlessly melds elements of Celtic and American folk, rock, blues, pop and soul into a trademark sound all their own. Whether it's the majestic prayerful plaint of "Oh Lord" or the haunting bristle of "Perfect Timing," the disc displays a dead aim for profound and affecting feeling matched by abundant musicality. *Blind Sighted Faith* is a stunning first bow that invites all that hear it to join The Dunwells "In The Moment," as one song title declares.

The album plays like music that was meant to be, and in an all but destined alignment, it was produced by John Porter, who also hails from Leeds. A schoolmate and bandmate of Bryan Ferry, he played bass with Roxy Music before stepping behind the recording console to produce that group, solo Ferry projects, and a spectrum of other artists like The Smiths, B.B. King, Ryan Adams and Los Lonely Boys. With nine Grammy winning albums to his credit and 10 nominees, Porter proves to be the ideal collaborator to help bring the artistic richness within The Dunwells to brimming fruition.

From the first time The Dunwells hit American shores at the 2011 International Folk Alliance conference, their impact has been nothing short of astounding. "Anyone that's seen them has just been 'Oh My God!' They're mind boggling!" raved Folk Alliance Executive Director Louis Jay Meyers to Voice of America radio. "The quality of the songs, the quality of the playing, the quality of the vocals, the harmonies. Man, they're like Mumford and Sons times 10."

No Depression was equally impressed: "People were buzzing about them and the music business folks in attendance were all clamouring for a chance to work with them." Playing In Traffic Records won out, and four months later The Dunwells were recording with Porter at Willie Nelson's famed Pedernales Studio in the Texas Hill Country just outside Austin.

All five members hail from the same part of Leeds and earned their stripes as musical entertainers in local pubs and clubs before uniting as a band. Brothers David and Joseph Dunwell grew up in a home plentiful with music thanks to their father's extensive record collection. Weaned on such artists as The Beatles and Fleetwood Mac as well as countless other classic musical acts from the 1960s onward, both began playing guitar at an early age, inspired by their father, a talented classical acoustic player. David and then Joseph both started writing songs, and individually made their initial marks at open mike nights, playing in and around Leeds. When a booking agent suggested that they unite as an act it made perfect sense.

Bassist Rob Clayton and David Dunwell are long-time friends who spent many hours in their youth listening to music together. Drummer Jonny Lamb is Clayton's cousin. Guitarist Dave Hanson heard Joseph Dunwell singing in a pub and, duly impressed, befriended and started playing with him. "We all made music for a living before we became a group," notes Hanson. "It's not just a band that formed. It's organic and it comes from sharing the same roots, and everybody growing up, listening to and learning music together." Once they united as The Dunwells, they all knew that something special was brewing.

The *Leeds Telegraph & Argus* agreed. "With their easy-going nature, their sheer enjoyment of playing and supreme musicianship this band looks set to burst onto a much wider scene. You can almost taste the expectancy."

The buzz spread to London when the band booked a gig at The Bedford, a noted showcase venue where acts like Paolo Nutini and KT Tunstall began their rise. The Dunwells nearly missed it when their van broke down on the outskirts of London. But they piled into a taxi with their gear and hit the stage just in time to be seen by Tony Moore, the influential music promoter, BBC radio air personality and singer-songwriter who immediately became a key supporter.

The band spent 2010 touring Britain and Europe, playing such top festivals as Hop Farm (with Bob Dylan and Van Morrison), Edinburgh's cutting-edge Fringe fest, Triumph Live (with Mumford and Sons) and the Fete De La Musique in Paris. Following the release of their debut EP in October 2010, The Dunwells were named Artist of the Month by Caffe Nero coffee chain — the British equivalent of Starbucks — and played a 20 day/40 show tour of its shops in England and Scotland to win over a growing U.K. fan base. To help spread their music further, The Dunwells frequently busk on the streets of the city's they visit.

Now with their first album under their belts, The Dunwells are primed to take their music as far and wide as they can. And one can hear that solidarity in the music they create together. "We're all in it for the same reason," concludes David Dunwell. "We just love making music."

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