



THE BRILLIANT MISTAKES

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THE BRILLIANT MISTAKES' "DISTANT DRUMMING" SET FOR RELEASE OCTOBER 7

The Brilliant Mistakes—the New York City based band lauded for “restlessly catchy hooks, a clever turn of phrase and frothy, piano-driven pop with heart, soul and smarts” (*The Boston Globe*) are ready to unveil *Distant Drumming*, their new album set for release on October 7 on the band’s own Aunt Mimi’s Records. The album was produced by bassist Lincoln Schleifer (Levon Helm, Buddy Miller) and recorded at Lincoln’s Log Cabin in The Bronx, features guest musicians Mike Viola (The Candy Butchers, *Walk Hard*), Larry Campbell (Bob Dylan, Paul Simon) and Marc Shulman (Suzanne Vega) and was mastered by Fred Kevorkian (Ryan Adams, The White Stripes) in Hell’s Kitchen in Manhattan.

Songwriter-bassist Erik Philbrook describes *Distant Drumming* as an album that musically and lyrically is about “finding and following the rhythms of your own life.” To that end the band sought to create a more organic album and delved deeper in the studio, experimenting with dynamics, arrangements, atmosphere, instrumentation and grooves to create music not only rich in meaning and emotion, but one that mixes blasts of majestic rock with meditative and moody acoustic pop and folk. The result is a ruthlessly thrilling album by a band that has long flown beneath the radar of the mainstream but are kindred spirits with such contemporary Americana envelope-pushers as Wilco, My Morning Jacket and Spoon.

Distant Drumming benefits from the evolution of the band’s two songwriters—Alan Walker and Erik Philbrook—into separate but equally provocative lyricists. Buoyed by the vintage sounds of 60’s and 70’s inspired rock—jubilant Byrds-style country rock guitar, rollicking upright piano, bursts of sizzling Hammond B3 organ, layers of lush, three-part harmony—are sly and subversive themes that reveal themselves gradually with repeated listening.

After receiving acclaim for 2003’s *Dumb Luck*, the band took some time off to adjust to inevitable changes in their lives: new homes, marriages and children. Says Walker, “We’ve always marched to the beat of our own drum, recording and performing our own brand of music on our own schedule and on our own terms. We really do make music for ourselves. It just so happens a lot of other people like our music too. And we’ve been blessed by those who have discovered us—in clubs, on the radio or online—and have been excited with what they’ve found.”

The Brilliant Mistakes are: Alan Walker, Erik Philbrook and Paul Mauceri. The band will play a record release show at The Canal Room on Tuesday, October 21st at 8pm. Also appearing will be Marcus Bently.

***DISTANT DRUMMING* TRACK LISTING:**

1. The Day I Found My Hands (with Mike Viola)
2. Monday Morning (Sky Above You)
3. Becoming
4. Good Year for a Change
5. The Circle’s Not Broken
6. Water Falling Down
7. The Words (with Larry Campbell)
8. Time in the Night
9. Let’s Pretend (with Mike Viola)
10. Wake Up Your Heart



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ABOUT “DISTANT DRUMMING”

It’s hard to believe, but it’s been over a decade since The Brilliant Mistakes formed, and five years since the release of our last album, *Dumb Luck*. In that time we’ve been hard at work not just making new music, but being consumed by our lives: Marriages, homes, children, jobs, pets, gardens, The Sopranos. But our music beckoned – as it always does - and led us back on the trail.

Distant Drumming is the result of a year spent in a basement studio in the Woodlawn section of the Bronx, a heavily Irish enclave thick with redheads and soda bread, pubs and ample parking. Lincoln Schleifer, a fiftysomething unrepentant Jewish hippie who has made his own career as a great bassist working with such icons as Levon Helm, Donald Fagen, Boz Scaggs, Solomon Burke, Warren Haynes and many others, produced.

We had worked with Lincoln on *Dumb Luck*, and decided to work with him again, not only because he did such an incredible job on that album, but because he convinced us he could offer us much more this time if we brought him deeper and earlier into our creative process: choosing songs, arranging them, experimenting with sounds, vibes, tempos and instrumentation. He was right. As a result, *Distant Drumming* is stranger, more beautiful, organic and, by far, the most musically accomplished album we’ve ever made.

We’ve never recorded our songs with the idea of making them radio-friendly. The fact that they are is because we are influenced by classic rock and pop craftspeople like the Beatles, the Beach Boys, the Byrds, the Band and the Kinks – and later Elvis Costello, Squeeze, Crowded House, Aimee Mann and so many others. We knew, however, that we wanted this record to sound and feel different. We wanted it to be more acoustic-based with an emphasis on grooves, dynamics and textures. We also wanted it to take us in directions we couldn’t anticipate. So we dove into making this record with wide open minds. The result is music that is “classic” sounding on the surface, but also possesses layers of weird and wonderful mojo.

Lincoln has dubbed his studio “Lincoln’s Log Cabin” and although it’s in his basement, for a bunch of musicians like us, it is a frontier. Mainly because it is filled floor to ceiling with vintage amps, keyboards, basses, guitars and recording gear. To enter the space is to imagine how much fun you could have exploring the infinite range of sounds lurking in all of those instruments. And that is exactly what we did.

We threw the sonic equivalent of buckets of paint around like in that old J. Geils Band video. Alan dug into a myriad of keyboards: upright piano, Hammond B3, Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer electric piano and a Farfisa organ. Paul attacked the drums but also banged on bongos and shook whatever was laying around. We used the drum loop from a Hammond Aurora Classic organ as the rhythmic foundation to the song “Becoming.” In addition to bass, for the first time I played acoustic guitar on almost every song. At various moments, there are handclaps, spoken word, lush and painstakingly arranged harmonies and background vocals and gorgeous layers of six and twelve-string electric guitars.

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ABOUT “DISTANT DRUMMING” (continued)

We were thrilled to have some incredible guests come in to sing and play. They included one of our favorite singer-songwriters, Mike Viola, frontman for The Candy Butchers as well as one of the writers of the songs for the hilarious musical comedy *Walk Hard*; Larry Campbell, longtime Bob Dylan multi-instrumentalist who has worked with the greats, including Levon Helm, Paul Simon and Ron Sexsmith; Marc Shulman, best known for his work on Suzanne Vega’s groundbreaking albums, and our own guitar wizard John Putnam, who has an uncanny ability to play exactly the right thing for the song. Lincoln himself was also a most valuable player, adding acoustic and electric guitar, mandolin, harmonium, percussion and various other musical flourishes. We should also commend Fred Kevorkian (Ryan Adams, The White Stripes, Phish), who did a masterful job at mastering the album.

Distant Drumming is a 10-song collection that encompasses carefully wrought ballads such as the moody and magical “Water Falling Down” and the atmospheric, CSNY-evoking “Wake Up Your Heart,” the joyous, jangly country-rock of “The Day I Found My Hands” and “Monday Morning (Sky Above You),” the high-energy bass-driven attack of “The Circle’s Not Broken,” the dark, Lennon-esque piano march of “Good Year for a Change,” the sizzling, harmony-drenched pop of “Time in the Night” and “The Words” and the swinging acoustic folk rock of “Let’s Pretend.” There are many thematic and emotional currents running through the album too, which is mostly the result of having two songwriters in the band, kindred spirits, but each with their own unique voice. As a result, the album is by turns hopeful and soulful, but also earthier, more reflective and, dare I say, ambitious.

The title for *Distant Drumming* is taken from the chorus of perhaps the album’s most provocative and innovative track, “Becoming.” It’s about listening to and following the music that’s inside you.

It is something The Brilliant Mistakes have always done as a group. We don’t know where it is leading us. But we’re enjoying the journey.

Erik Philbrook
The Brilliant Mistakes



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REVIEWS FOR THE BRILLIANT MISTAKES PREVIOUS ALBUM, *DUMB LUCK*:

HARP MAGAZINE:

“*Dumb Luck*’s title proves prophetic; the album’s a keeper. The sparkling arrangements and clever sad-sack lyrics of love-me-or-leave-me anthems ‘Stupid Love Song’ (Ben Folds meets pre-rot Steely Dan) and ‘The Girl You Left Behind’ (A Squeeze-like janglepopper) suggest Walker and Philbrook may have a side career as tunesmiths for other pop stylists beckoning.”

THE VILLAGE VOICE:

“I’m a sucker for a pretty girl or a good pop hook draped with velvet harmonies. Not sure if the boys of The Brilliant Mistakes have pretty girlfriends, but they sure have the hooks. Shove some Wilco/Jayhawks into old Squeeze and you get an idea of these guys. Producer Lincoln Schleifer has done a fine job on their new CD *Dumb Luck*. I think I’ll play it for pretty gal

THE BOSTON GLOBE:

“They took their name from an Elvis Costello song, but Brooklyn’s Brilliant Mistakes copped a few other things from the bespectacled punk-pop icon: a knack for dispensing restlessly catchy hooks, a clever turn of phrase and frothy, piano-driven pop with heart, soul, and smarts.”

MOJO:

“In an obscure corner of New York music’s cornucopious treasure cave sit Squeeze devotees Alan Walker and (living rhyme) Erik Philbrook, smithing tunes, harmonies and emotional apparatus to match their heroes.”

PERFORMING SONGWRITER:

“Pure, rich, punchy pop in the tradition of Ray Davies, Squeeze and The Raspberries, *Dumb Luck* is a rousing set of great songs played with flair and fun. Everything’s here—the melodies, the harmonies, the musicianship and the arrangements. As good as anything the majors and indies have put out anytime recently, these guys play pop the way it was done before “pop” was a dirty word. A must-have for anybody wondering where the next Alex Chiltons and Small Faces are hiding.”

DARREN DEVIVO, WFUV/FM-NY

“Clever, pure pop—New York City style. The Brilliant Mistakes make intelligent, well crafted music filled with instantly memorable hooks in the tradition of greats like Joe Jackson, Marshall Crenshaw, Richard Barone and others.”



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