

Mp3 The Brilliant Mistakes - Dumb Luck

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Bittersweet pop melodies that draw upon American pop, folk and soul sounds of the '60s and '70s, and merge classic American guitar jangle, with Ben Folds piano-poundage 12 MP3 Songs POP: Piano, ROCK: Americana Details: With songs filled with heart, soul, craft and intelligence, The Brilliant Mistakes have risen to become one of the brightest lights on New York City's crowded music scene. Now with Dumb Luck, the band's second full-length release, the band has created a love letter to fans of classic pop songwriting. "As a songwriter, you can't spend most of your life ingesting every word and note of your musical idols, and not want to aspire to that same level of craftsmanship and mainstream acceptance," says the band's Erik Philbrook. "Like most people, I can connect the best periods of my life with favorite songs that I was listening to at the time. We want to write, play and record songs that do the same thing; they get in the blood and stay there." Led by singer/keyboardist Alan Walker and bassist Philbrook, The Brilliant Mistakes' unique sound has led some listeners to make unlikely comparisons, such as "Squeeze meets Wilco" or "Ben Folds meets The Band." The truth is that The Brilliant Mistakes, while fans of such overseas songwriters as Elvis Costello, Nick Lowe and Neil Finn, remain true to their American rock influences, drawing upon pop, folk and soul sounds of the 60's and 70's to create their own unique musical identity. But much like their musical heroes, Squeeze's Glenn Tilbrook and Chris Difford, The Brilliant Mistakes' Erik Philbrook and Alan Walker are songwriting partners who create bittersweet and timeless pop songs that are more than what meets the ear. Says Walker, "There are a lot of great rock bands out there and a lot of great singer/songwriters but it seems there aren't as many rock bands now that are striving to mix musicianship, emotion, melody and intelligence in equal measure. Some seem to go after one or two of those elements but not all at once. I think we've been able to carve a niche for ourselves because we feel that we don't need to sacrifice one of those things for another." Philbrook agrees. "All of the timeless rock songs have a few things going on at once. A great beat. A memorable line. An intriguing theme. I also think today's audiences are much more sophisticated as listeners because they hear so many different types of music now, and I think they like it when a song can simultaneously appeal to their head, heart and hips." "One of the reasons Alan and I get along so well

musically is that we are both attracted to the same elements in songs," says Philbrook. "We love strong melodic hooks that you can hang onto. But we also love to subvert the lyrics, so that you might have a pretty melody with words that mean something darker and more ambiguous." Mixing indelible melodies and solid grooves with clever wordplay and thought-provoking themes into their 12 songs on *Dumb Luck*, Philbrook and Walker have achieved a near perfect fusion of their talents. "Crawl Back" is a driving, soul song about yearning and escape. "Feed the Elephant" is a dark Wurlitzer-driven folk tale about suburban angst, the title track is a Byrds-y, ale-soaked sing-along; "Line of Battle" is a majestic piano ballad about a lover's subtle cruelty that features a string quartet to powerful, cinematic effect; and "What Will They Write On Your Stone?" is a tough, staccato rocker that explores a universal question with an irrefutable hook and spot-on harmonies. Produced by producer/bassist Lincoln Schleifer, who has worked with Gov't Mule's Warren Haynes, Steely Dan's Donald Fagen and Buddy and Julie Miller, the album was recorded over several months in Lincoln's basement studio, affectionally dubbed "Lincoln's Log Cabin," in the Irish Woodlawn section of the Bronx. The band was joined by some incredible guest musicians, including multi-instrumentalist Larry Campbell (longtime Bob Dylan guitarist who has also worked with Paul Simon, Ron Sexsmith, Shawn Colvin and countless others) as well as percussionist extraordinaire Marc Quinones (Allman Brothers Band, David Byrne, Tito Puente) and guitarist John Putnam (Richard Shindell, Lucy Kaplansky). In addition to bringing out the best of the band's distinctive harmonies, piano rock approach and the dynamic work of drummer Paul Mauceri, Schleifer expanded their musical palette to include everything from Hammond B3 organ, Wurlitzer and a Fender Rhodes to pedal steel guitar, banjo, timbales, horns, and a string quartet. The result is a rich tapestry of moods, both light and dark. The Mistakes were made in the mid-Nineties in New York City when keyboardist Alan Walker met bassist Erik Philbrook while they were both working in book publishing. It was no surprise that the two book lovers also shared a yen for classic pop songwriting. After finding a kindred soul in drummer Paul Mauceri and utilizing the chops of some of New York's top guitarists, the band donned vintage suits, pulled together a small horn section to add a bit of brass to their smart pop sound, and hit the Northeastern circuit, playing to capacity crowds in New York City venues such as The Bottom Line, Fez and The Mercury Lounge, Boston's T.T. the Bears and Bill's Bar and in clubs and colleges throughout New England and beyond. The Brilliant Mistakes' independently-released 1999 album, *All Hands The Cook*, received critical acclaim and considerable airplay on non-commercial and college radio stations around the country. The album

brought them to the attention of some of New York City's most discernible music lovers. As a result, they were featured on DJ Vin Scelsa's cult radio show "Idiot's Delight" on WFUV-FM/NY and were also featured as part of the legendary New York club The Bottom Line's "Required Listening" series, hosted by WFUV's Rita Houston. In 2000, ASCAP selected the band to be a featured showcase artist at the NEMO Music Conference in Boston. With Dumb Luck, the Brilliant Mistakes will certainly gain many new fans of smart, soulful music who are looking for diamonds in the rough of today's music.

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