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The Wild Feathers Channel the Heartland on Debut – Album Premiere
Nashville rockers' self-titled album out August 13th



By **JOHN D. LUERSSEN**
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Nashville's Wild Feathers channel American rock spirit through-and-through on their solid, eponymous debut album, which drops August 13th on Warner Bros Records. Bringing to mind everyone from the Allman Brothers ("Hard Wind") to the Jayhawks ("Got It Wrong"), the five-piece band fuses the essentials of rock, country, folk and blues into an intriguing new approach.

With their recent array of festival appearances, an ongoing trek supporting Willie Nelson and upcoming dates with ZZ Ward and at Austin City Limits, the Wild Feathers are already making a name for themselves. The album supports it, boasting the melodic rocker "American" and the chamber-pop-tinged "If You Don't Love Me."

Then there's "The Ceiling," the album's memorable first single, which has been a fixture of "The Baker's Dozen" on SiriusXM's The Spectrum for the past month. It's something that fans of heartland artists like the Avett Brothers and My Morning Jacket will appreciate while it recalls the magic of Tom Petty and Neil Young – acts the Wild Feathers grew up on, of course.

DAILY NEWS

Aug 20, 2013



The Wild Feathers 'The Wild Feathers' (Warner Bros.) 4 stars

No single singer holds center stage in the Wild Feathers. Four of its members write, and all five of them sing — often at the same time. It takes a lot of focus to keep so much energy in line. Remarkably, the Feathers' debut disc presents a band with laser-sharp sense of purpose. It nominally zeroes in on what we term Americana music — that broad mix of country, blues and folk-rock that grounds acts from Wilco to Lucinda Williams to the Jayhawks. But this Nashville-based group provides its own spin.

They're just as taken with rousing rock 'n' roll as any dustier, sparser U.S. roots music. And the attraction gives their songs a punch and speed rarely heard — and even more rarely sustained — in the world of Americana. Songs like "Backwoods Company" and "American" fire off riffs as hard as The Stones. "I Can Have You" bolts out the gate like the most show-stopping of early Tom Petty hits, while "The Ceiling" recalls the Eagles, without the smug self-regard or insular harmonies. Instead, the layered voices of the Feathers have the vulnerability and beauty of the Jayhawks.

All four songwriters — Ricky Young, Joel King, Taylor Burns and Preston Wimberly — wood-shopped their chops in solo acts before uniting in 2010. The chemistry they found has the "eureka" effect of the great American harmony-rock bands, from Buffalo Springfield to Poco. Their rapport is uncanny.

The Feathers can downshift to softer songs, like the pedal-steel-kissed folk ballad "Left My Woman." But their great strength comes in remembering that Americana music doesn't have to be so serious and blue. It can rock, too.

American songwriter

July/August 2013



Pictured (left to right): Preston Wimberly, Joel King, Taylor Burns, Ben Dumas, Ricky Young

The Wild Feathers have spent the past 20 minutes in the lobby of their Nashville apartment building. It's noisy. Neighbors keep walking into the room, checking their mail and walking out. A bulldog huffs by, dragging its owner toward the front door. We're supposed to be talking about the band's debut album, but The Wild Feathers haven't been home in weeks, and it's difficult to focus on the important stuff – the gigs with Bob Dylan, the inspiration behind the band's heartland rock and roll, the challenge of having three lead singers in one band – with so many distractions.

Do I want to go upstairs and have another drink, where it's quieter? Sure.

We pile into the elevator and head toward the band's two-bedroom loft. Lead guitarist Preston Wimberly, who leases the place with bandmate Taylor Burns, walks into the apartment and immediately picks up an acoustic guitar. Ricky Young searches for a bottle of whiskey, and Joel King pulls a handful of PBRs from the fridge. We toast. The night officially begins.

By 10:30 p.m., we're all best friends. We're playing Hank Williams songs, trading harmonies on Tom Petty's "Listen To Her Heart" and talking about the Black Crowes' recent gigs at the Ryman Auditorium. Young whips out a harmonica, and someone yells, "Get it, Popper!" A downstairs neighbor – the same guy who recently called the cops, looking to file a noise complaint against the band – knocks on the front door and walks inside, angry. Someone hands him a drink. Within 20 minutes, he's our best friend, too.

It's hard not to warm up to The Wild Feathers.

"We've become this singular thing," Burns explains. "There are multiple songwriters in the band, and we've all led our own bands before this one. At first, it was hard for me to relinquish some of that control, because I've always been the guy who writes the songs and comes up with the setlist. But we've spent so much time together since then. We've grown into a unit. Everyone works, everyone pitches in, and the best songs float to the top."

On the band's self-titled debut, the best songs tend to be the ones that were written by all three singers. Burns, Young and King share the spotlight on "The Ceiling," each frontman crooning a few lines before handing off the mic to some-

"This is the dream we've all had since we were kids."

one else. "Left My Woman," a road anthem disguised as a drinking song, repeats the trick. The harmonies are a bit rough at points, and some singers sound better than others. Still, it's the mix of personalities – folk crooner Young, garage rocker King, bluesman Burns – that make The Wild Feathers stand out, and rough edges are part of the appeal.

"We were originally signed to Interscope, and we got halfway through a record with them before they dropped us," Young says. "It wound up being the biggest blessing. I won't name the producer, but he had us recording to a click track and sounding too slick, too precise. It was sterile."

The Wild Feathers found another producer, Jay Joyce, and hatched plans to re-record the songs in Nashville. On their first day in the studio, they also signed a major-label deal with Warner Bros, who agreed to stay out of the picture while the guys worked on the album.

"We wrote 60 songs, whittled that list down to 35, then recorded 16 of them with Jay," Young continues. "We did it live, to tape, with everyone playing at the same time. When you record a new song each day, you really see the reward at the end of that day, like a freshly cut lawn or something. The most important thing is we got to make the record that we wanted to make, which is hard to do these days. Especially on a major label. Especially when it's your first record."

Classic-sounding American rock and roll has experienced a renaissance in recent years, with groups like Dawes leading the charge. The Wild Feathers may seem like newcomers, but they're catching up fast. Earlier this spring, when Dawes cancelled two shows as the opening act for Bob Dylan, Wild Feathers got the gigs instead.

Meanwhile, back at the apartment, the party is winding down. I sit at the kitchen table with Young, who laughs and pours me one last drink when I ask where I can find his last solo album, *Learn To Steal*.

"I don't know," he admits. "My parents' house?" He pauses, then adds, "It can be tough to leave some of those old songs behind. But this is the dream we've all had since we were kids. You start to see a little bit of it unfold before your eyes, and it's so surreal. It's work, but it's the good kind of work."

Sounds like the party is just starting. ★

MAGNET

Real Music Alternatives

August 2013

MAGNIFIED

EGO STRIP

Four troubadours graciously combine talents to fuel folk upstarts **the Wild Feathers**

STANDING ON THE FRONT steps of their San Francisco hotel, huddled over a cell phone as they try to locate a popular dim sum restaurant, the members of Nashville quartet the Wild Feathers don't really resemble a band at all, let alone friends. Preston Wimberly is already out exploring the city, leaving behind Joel King (a Jack White-esque imp with long hair tumbling from beneath his foppish newsboy cap), Taylor Burns (a feather-bearded, whip-thin alterna-wraith who could be a stray Fleet Fox) and short-haired, punk-rock-er-ish Ricky Young, who frequently grabs his own phone, furrows his brow at each call and repeatedly walks away with an "I've gotta take this" apology.

But the group is in town to premiere songs from its eponymous Warner Bros. debut at Michele Clark's star-making Sunset Sessions convention (which also boasts Dido, the Staves and Fitz And The Tantrums), and in its short time discussing lunch, several other featured musicians come up to congratulate the Wild Feathers on the previous night's jaw-dropping set. "You guys were just great—you stole the fucking show!"

praises one enthusiastic admirer, and the lads stare aw-shucks awkwardly at their feet, almost in unison murmuring a humble, "Thanks. That really means a lot to us."

All humility aside, this group has got the goods: solid folk/rock anthems like the chugging "Backwoods Company," Tom Petty-perfect "American," swaying acoustic ballad "Tall Boots" and "The Ceiling," a stomping finger-picked hoedown that's the album's centerpiece. But mainly what the Wild Feathers have got is a truly unique approach. Young, King, Burns and Wimberly are all singer/guitarists who have separately fronted their own bands before deciding to form a united Wild Feathers front, in which they customarily trade off on verses before harmonizing on the choruses.

It's not an Eagles vibe they're after—more like the Band or Rumours-era Fleetwood Mac, says Young, who anchored a Houston rock outfit before moving to Nashville eight years ago.

"And I think that's more valuable, because no one wants to see a bunch of egomaniacs up onstage—no offense to Glenn Frey or Don

Henley," he says. "We're just trying to make songs that people enjoy, and that we enjoy playing, and hopefully keep ego out of it. And it just dawned on us that we could share ... not the burden, but maybe the spotlight, because I love singing, and I know everyone in the band does. But it's also fun to just sit back, play your instrument and listen to your buddy sing."

Burns and Wimberly moved to Music Row from Dallas; King hails from Oklahoma. Young hit town with high hopes, but received a rude awakening. "The reality was, everyone wrote songs, everyone was good," he says. "So, I took a big step back and just focused on writing. And it was a quality-over-quantity thing. I learned that if a song took me all week, all day, every day, it was better to have one good one than five shit ones."

Young and Co. may look like they don't have much in common, but they rarely argue. Not even over restaurants. "I mean, there are definitely discussions that might sound like they're heated," he says. "But we get along great. I swear, we really enjoy each other's company!" —Tom Lanham

The Wild Feathers are the next Kings of Leon

Bob Mehr



WHO ARE THEY: A Nashville-based combo featuring singer-songwriters Joel King, Ricky Young, Taylor Burns and Preston Wimberly; drummer Ben Dumas was recently added to the band's roster.

WHY THEY'RE THE NEXT KINGS OF LEON: Like their fellow Tennesseans, The Wild Feathers are a shaggy, stylish crew that shares singing duties. The band's built on a similar musical foundation too — a mix of big tableau rock, harmony-laden pop songs and Southern rooting. "We love the umbrella of rock," says bassist/vocalist King, "because we can play anything from 'Your Cheating Heart' to 'When the Levee Breaks.'"

The Wild Feathers originally got together as a kind of loose writing project but quickly evolved into a full-fledged band. Initially signed to major label Interscope in 2011, the band parted ways with the company before releasing anything but was quickly snapped up by Warner Brothers, which just put out the Feathers' self-titled debut.

INFLUENCES: Like KOL, the Feathers fundamentally think of themselves as the offspring of a rich tradition, or, as King puts it: "If Led Zeppelin and The Band had a baby in Joshua Tree.

"We took cues from The Byrds; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; and the Eagles," he says. "We like the way The Rolling Stones played with perfect imperfection and swagger. Or the way [The Band's] Rick Danko would squeak out a high octave of the melody. We just go with what we think sounds good."

DOWNLOAD: "The Ceiling," "Backwoods Company" and "Hard Wind."



July/August 2013

The Wild Feathers

The Wild Feathers WARNER BROS.



The self-titled debut album from Nashville, Tenn.-based rock band **The Wild Feathers** feels like a throwback,

pulling in classic rock influences alongside aged alt-country tones. The album, recorded with producer **Jay Joyce** (The Wallflowers, Emmylou Harris), is boisterous and impassioned, reverberating with a raw, live quality that feels like something yanked out of the '60s or '70s. Single "The Ceiling" melds twangy folk with that classic rock element to create a timeless Americana number, whereas "Backwoods Company" is a raucous bar song, full of thumping beats and propulsive acoustic guitar. The jangling music sounds like the musicians were excited to create it, even if every song isn't necessarily a notable standout. On "Got It Wrong," however, The Wild Feathers offer a countrified ballad that will engage fans of any genre. *Emily Zemler*

Billboard

Aug 31, 2013

AMERICANA

THE WILD FEATHERS

The Wild Feathers

PRODUCER: Jay Joyce

Warner Bros. Records

RELEASE DATE: Aug. 13

This Nashville-via-Austin quintet rocks more than it twangs on its debut, a richly melodic collection with soaring harmonies and hot guitar licks.

“The Ceiling,” “Got It Wrong” and “How” are epic, but the band really takes wing when getting rowdy on tracks like “Backwoods Company,” “American” and “Hard Wind.” —GG

ELLE

Listen Up: The Wild Feathers' New Country-Rock Song, "Got It Wrong"

July 24 9:00 AM by [Emily Zemler](#)



Nashville's The Wild Feathers arrived at their self-titled debut album in a roundabout way. "Our goal was to make the best record possible," singer and guitarist Ricky Young told us. "We had written close to 80 songs and narrowed that down to what's on the album. We want people to enjoy listening to it for years and for the music to hold up over time."

"Got It Wrong," a track from the upcoming album (stream it exclusively below), reveals The Wild Feathers' invigorated, cross-genre rock style. Young describes the group as an "American rock 'n' roll band" who combine traditional and classic country and blues sounds in their music—it's a sound you can definitely hear on "Got It Wrong."

The album (out August 13 via Warner Bros) was recorded live to tape, giving a raucous, throwback sensibility to the songs. But the production process was also the biggest obstacle. "We really had to find those moments in the studio while performing at our best," Young admitted. "That might be the most challenging [part]. Fun, but challenging. There was no shortage of songs. That's kind of the easy part."

Next up? Touring. The group will perform at Outside Lands in San Francisco next month before hitting the road with [Willie Nelson](#) and [ZZ Ward](#). "We like to do what any band wants to do," Young said. "We want to play to our fans all around the world. We love playing live, and that's the one thing that never gets old. We want to keep working hard and hopefully watch it pay off."