

## The Lumineers blaze a brilliant path

Written by SHAUN SMITH

Saturday, December 15, 2012 09:17 am

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[The Lumineers](#) may be my favorite discovery of the year. The band has defined a new sound in the folk-rock genre with its self-titled debut album released April 3 on Dualtone Records.

The Denver-based trio by way of Ramsey, N.J., succeeds in utilizing its strength in simplicity. The Lumineers blend a powerful mix of catchy, upbeat melodies and meaningful lyrics. This album is the first thing that comes to mind when I want to listen to music.

Muted vocals of Wesley Keith Schultz are complemented by the percussion of Jeremiah Caleb Fraites. Neyla Pekarek plays a delicate piano and cello. All of the musicians are multi-talented as Schultz provides guitar; Fraites and Pekarek both play mandolin and provide backup vocals.

Together, they create a cozy sounding and authentic music that resonates with me.

The song, "Submarines," is among my favorite songs, with its haunting piano riff supported by the militaristic drum rhythm. The first verse is incredibly vivid and simple.

**"I believe submarines  
underneath deep blue seas  
saw the flag, Japanese  
no one will believe me.**

**Ran back to the town bar  
and I told the people how  
I had seen a submarine**

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**and everyone laughed aloud.”**

### **-"Submarines"**

"Ho Hey," with its simple call and response beat and mandolin riff has received a lot of positive attention including being licensed by Microsoft for television commercials and by the TV series "Bones." The song sounds like it was recorded in your buddy's basement after a long night of jamming. Simple structure but excellence in execution is the secret to this song's success.

"Slow it Down," does just exactly that as the sixth song of 11 tracks on the album. It completely changes direction from the rest of the record though it maintains a similar tone heard on the first five tracks. It is painfully slow with each note sung and strummed deliberately. However with that exception, the album is incredibly upbeat and hopeful.

"Stubborn Love," would nearly fit on the latest Mumford & Sons record featuring violinist Lauren Jacobson.

The bridge is brilliant:

**“When we were young oh, oh we did enough  
when it got cold ooh, ooh we bundled up  
I can't be told ah, ah it can't be done.”**

And, the optimism carries through into the chorus:

**“So keep your head up keep your love.”**

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The Lumineers are exceptionally enjoyable because there is more beneath the surface of their lyrics.

Both the clapping rhythm to open "Big Parade" and its subject is familiar in the folk tradition of cultural commentary. On the track, the singer describes parade participants as they pass by, including a political candidate, a beauty queen, a welterweight champion, a Catholic priest and a musician. All of this newfound point of view is brought along by the influence of a "saving grace."

The songs are sung from the point of view of an old soul lamenting youth that is matched by the band's sound. "Flowers in Your Hair" is fun and inspiring and directly references the singer's growth.

The band plays a great method of folk music that sounds incredibly authentic and is helped along by the use of ambient sounds in the background of certain tracks. There is also a lot of talking in the background of the album, quietly between band mates between tracks or on the cluttered track, "Classy Girls."

"Flapper Girl," is a piano-heavy ballad but it still includes the charming tambourine that can be heard throughout the album.

"Morning Song," closes out the album with an angst-filled guitar riff that breaks down around echoey and desperate vocals.

The Lumineers may just be my favorite new band of the year, and the critics agree. They have been nominated for Grammys in the Best New Artist and Best Americana Album categories.

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