

The Faux Paws

From raging fiddle tunes, to saxophone solos and unrequited love songs, the music of The Faux Paws would be hard to pin down with standard genre descriptions. The trio's contagious groove, and feel-good melting pot folk music has been honed over ten years of playing together, and is the sound of three close friends (two of which happen to be brothers), who feel a musical kinship that transcends any stylistic limitations. Now, after nearly a decade of music making, the bi-coastal trio are releasing their self-titled debut album "The Faux Paws"

Brothers Andrew and Noah VanNorstrand grew up playing contra dance music with their musician mother in the band Great Bear. Based in upstate New York, Great Bear gained a strong reputation in the niche world of folk-dance music, touring the country for eighteen years, releasing numerous albums and starting their own dance festival called *The Groove*. The two VanNorstrand brothers met Chris Miller at a music camp in New York called Ashokan. "I had never heard of contra dance music before", says Miller, who's primary instrument is Saxophone, "But as soon as we began casually jamming together, there was this incredible musical synergy". Miller grew up in Florida, and he was enamored with bluegrass and studied jazz before going on to play with GRAMMY nominated cajun-country band The Revelers. "The most important part of my musical background is that it's all about fitting in and complementing other music. How can I uplift the melody, how can I get different sounds out of whatever instrument I'm playing?" explains Miller, who also plays banjo, dobro, and clarinet, among other instruments. For the VanNorstrand brothers, who had developed an intense musical "mind-meld" over nearly two decades of playing together, the addition of Miller brought a welcome interruption of old habits, while simultaneously tying together the big picture sounds that they were attempting to reach. "Chris is somewhat of a musical chameleon, and he can play lots of different instruments. But what he

plays is so right in a big picture sense that it's irrelevant what instrument he ends up picking", explains Andrew.

Since meeting in 2012, the trio have toured across North America several times, sometimes under the name The Faux Paws, sometimes as part of other larger ensembles. But due to their commitments to other bands and musical projects, the timing was never right to focus on making The Faux Paws a priority. Instead, they took their time learning about different styles of music from one another, and finding where their interests and skills could create unexpected and exciting new sounds. "I love super glossy pop music, and Chris is always pushing more of a jazz influence" says Noah.. "But we all have a strong background in dance music, so almost everything we do has rhythm and groove, and is based around hook and feel".

The band never had a geographic home base, so it is unsurprising that much of the music on their debut album revolves around traveling the country and experiencing new places. On "Child of The Great Lakes", Andrew digs into both his connection and his disconnect with his hometown on Lake Ontario, singing "I was never gonna stay/and you were never gonna leave". Later tunes and songs are named for Winchester, Virginia, Montauk, Long Island, and Southport, North Carolina.

The standout opening track, Fourth Decade, showcases the phenomenal and unique fiddle playing of Noah VanNorstrand, accompanied by both Andrew and Chris on two banjos. The marriage of rhythm and melody is delicious and addictive, immediately drawing the listener into the rest of the album, which does not disappoint with its variety and depth.

It may have taken The Faux Paws ten years to make their debut album, but those years have clearly not gone to waste. Now, with an

experimental but cohesive vision, the trio brings together seemingly unrelated musical elements into one joyful and distinctive collection, deeply rooted in the raw humanity of folk dance and music traditions.