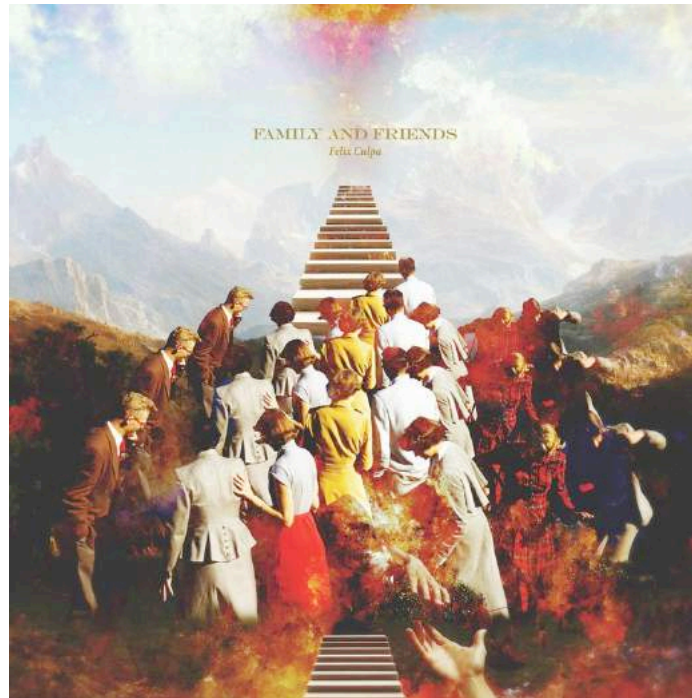


Review: Family and Friends deliver dynamic, rollicking set

By SCOTT STROUD

Jun. 08, 2018



Family and Friends, “Felix Culpa” (Family and Friends)

The first full-length album by the indie folk-rock collective Family and Friends rings a few familiar bells.

There’s a jam-band vibe that echoes the work of Lord Huron and Local Natives, rollicking along with a strong bass rhythm underpinning that gives it real forward lean.

It’s also hard to imagine that this ensemble, based out of Athens, Georgia, didn’t spend time soaking up the sound of U2, especially the finger-picked electric strumming of the Edge.

But the songs here offer more variety than Lord Huron and Local Natives, circumventing the pitfall that makes much of what those bands produce sound the same.

And while there may not be anything that alters the trajectory of rock ‘n’ roll the way U2 did in its heyday, Family and Friends lay it out there with honesty, energy and enough nuance to reward repeated listening.

There’s the soaring urgency of “Hold On to Your Love,” a pour-it-out anthem that would be at home on many a heartbreak playlist. So will “Better Days,” for that matter, another beautifully wistful anthem that also comes from the I’m-losing-you school of love songs.

That’s a theme throughout the album, though the approaches and pacing range around. Similar demons haunt one of the album’s best songs, “So Within/So Without.”

So no, this independently-produced album may not be the most original record to surface in recent years. But it’s a fine early effort, delivered with real heart, from an emerging band that deserves more attention going forward.