

SEPTEMBER 2018

### Family and Friends

**Felix Culpa** SELF-RELEASED



With their full-length debut, *Felix Culpa*, Athens, Ga.-based **Family and Friends** have branded themselves as a communal combo that stays true to their all-inclusive handle. Their music is driven by tribal tempos and a kinetic pulse that underscores an outwardly expansive sound, with duelling drummers, cello, trumpet and viola added to the usual instrumental accoutrements. "So we're back to where we started/ Slow dancing in the garden/ Underneath the stars," they sing on album opener "Ourboros," setting up the meditative mood for all that follows. Most of the material maintains that consistent drive and delivery, but when they settle into more ethereal realms, as suggested by the swirling textures of "Double Vision" and the radiant "So Within //

So Without," the cosmic cacophony evolves with a shifting series of soundscapes that keep the cohesion intact. That said, there are also plenty of atmospherics radiating from well below the surface, adding to the overall propulsive energy. Producer **Brad Wood** (Liz Phair, Smashing Pumpkins, Sunny Day Real Estate) has plenty of experience with bands that boast similar ambitions, and though Family and Friends' lyrics deal more with internal rumination than outward aggression, it makes for a powerful impression regardless. The overarching approach veers from earnest anthem-like posturing to a more psychedelic sensibility, but the intriguing arrangements create a reliable middle ground. Even the most reverent tones eventually crest with purpose and precision. *Lee Zimmerman*