

▲ All the best rock 'n' roll is always just nonsense," declares Jon Fratelli. "I know critics want to analyze it, but it's pure nonsense. The Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Chuck Berry all have great songs, but they don't mean anything. All those guys wanted to do was make people dance."

Listening to The Fratellis' debut album, *Costello Music*, it's obvious that Jon, bassist Barry Fratelli, and drummer Mince Fratelli have taken this worldview to heart. With song titles like "Got Ma Nuts from a Hippie" and "Vince the Lovable Stoner," and hip-shakin' tunes that recall the brief, slapdash brilliance of The Libertines, the glam of T-Rex, and the rowdy bravado of The Faces, The Fratellis seem to be all about the nonsense.

Today the trio is just outside of Manchester and Jon is stuffing his face with pancakes and ice cream. Using a fork to stab at the air and make his point, he takes inspiration from his meal for a side-bar rant. "You Americans with your pancakes and bacon for breakfast. The very first day I was in L.A., I was desperate to have an American breakfast, so I had pancakes and sausages. An hour and a half later I was violently sick, man. And it lasted for the next two days." He takes another bite.

The Glaswegian threesome had been in Los Angeles recording with Tony Hoffer, who has recorded albums with Beck and The Kooks. Less than a year earlier, they started playing together, the result of a series of signs they had individually put up in a guitar shop in their home town. "At first, none of us realized that we each responded to each others' adverts," Jon explains. "I replied to Barry's, Barry replied to Mince's, and Mince replied to me. It was quite bizarre, really."

A month later, they played their first gig and were signed that spring like they were characters in some rock-'n'-roll fairy tale. This was even more surprising because the band never actively pitched themselves. "Partly because we were lazy," Jon admits, "and partly because I never had any money to buy blank CDs." It wasn't all lucky days though, because in June of 2005 Mince broke his back during a pile-up on the freeway. He made a full recovery, but The Fratellis breathed a collective sigh of relief. There was a silver lining to the near tragedy, according to Jon. "If you can defy those odds, you can defy anything else that comes after that."

That defiance resulted in *Costello Music*, a title that has nothing to do with the bespectacled English rocker. "I was going to lie to you and tell you that we're big fans of Elvis Costello, but I just couldn't do it," admits Jon with a chuckle. "There's a guy in Glasgow that we're friends with called Tony Costello and it's as simple as that. We always told him that if we got a deal, we'd name our album after him."

Tony Costello should consider himself one lucky son of a bitch because the LP that bears his name is a stormer, full of roughshod 'n' ramshackle anthems in the making. Sure, the Fratellis may want nothing more than to make the girls dance and the boys sing along, but that's no-nonsense rock 'n' roll. Praise God and pass the maple syrup.

Written by NEVIN MARTELL

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THE FRATELLIS

SHUT UP AND PASS THE PANCAKES.