



Wasted Youth PR, 4th Floor, 21-22 Great Castle Street, London, W1G 0HY

MUMFORD & SONS

BIOGRAPHY 2009

Since they formed in December 2007, the members of Mumford & Sons have shared a common purpose: to make music that matters, without taking themselves too seriously. Four young men from West London in their early twenties, they have fire in their bellies, romance in their hearts, and rapture in their masterful, melancholy voices. They are staunch friends – Marcus Mumford, Country Winston, Ben Lovett, and Ted Dwane – who bring their music to us with the passion and pride of an old-fashioned, much-cherished, family business. They create a gutsy, old-time sound that marries the magic of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young with the might of Kings Of Leon, and their incredible energy draws us in quickly to their circle of songs, to the warmth of their stories, and to their magical community of misty-eyed men.

The four friends were playing various instruments in various bands in London throughout the summer of 2007. They were united to perform impromptu renditions of Marcus' earliest attempts at song-writing in front of crowds of friends in sweaty underground folk nights in the capital. They bonded over their love of country, bluegrass and folk, and decided to make music that sounded loud, proud and live – taking music that could often be pretty and delicate, and fill it with enthusiasm, courage and confidence. “It was a very exciting time, and though we loved it and were in awe of the music going on around us, we didn't consider ourselves contenders in the pretty daunting London music scene. There was never any idea of competition, just pure enjoyment”, says Marcus. They loved live music so much that they would practise their sets on pavements outside the venues, and also act as backing musicians for the peers with whom they played.

This sense of playing music for the love of it has continued as the main theme through the band's short history. They booked their first rehearsals in the late autumn of 2007: “As soon as we sat down together, just the four of us, we knew we had become a band cos what came out was unique to us four as individuals,” says Ben. Out of this session came their first band songs: *Awake My Soul* and *White Blank Page*, highlights on their debut album.

As soon as they had their first rough cluster of songs, they hit the road. Straightaway, they won the hearts of their audiences with their harmonies, the way they engaged with their instruments, their bandmates and their crowds – and chased the friendly live reception they got all over the country.

Word spread quickly. The band toured extensively throughout 2008; from a barge-tour of the Thames with eight other acts, through to an island-hopping tour of the Scottish highlands, and a triumphant set at Glastonbury in June, they sold out London's Luminaire in July, only half a year after they got together. Their first American tour followed in support of Laura Marling and Johnny Flynn and the Sussex Wit. A trilogy of beautiful 10" EPs all on Chess Club Records also followed, recorded simply at home. Their eponymous EP debuted the same month as their Luminaire show; *Love Your Ground* followed in December; while *The Cave And The Open Sea* arrived in May.

With each release, the music of Mumford & Sons got brighter, bolder and brawnier, with an increasing focus on their impassioned and intimate lyrics. "What we write about is real, and we sing and play our instruments more passionately cos we feel like we need to. We love honest music," says Winston.

Their success continued to build, too, with two glorious benchmarks being their place on the BBC Sound Of 2009 Poll shortlist, and their London ICA show selling out in 24 hours.

Then came the time to record their debut album – and then came the extraordinary producer who wanted to work with them. Markus Dravs recorded Arcade Fire's *Neon Bible*, Björk's *Homogenic* and The Maccabees' *Wall of Arms*, and he saw similar crossover potential in the Sons. He took them to the legendary Eastcote Studios where Arctic Monkeys, Brian Eno, Tindersticks and Laura Marling have honed their music on its vintage equipment; made the band buy good instruments; set them a daily routine; and encouraged them to try and work even more instinctively, to strengthen their already-powerful musical personality. "He wanted us just to sound like us", explains Ben. "He talked about us working on our music's most jubilant and melancholic moments, and make them even more evocative. And over those four weeks, everything came together."

The album begins with the extraordinary title track, *Sigh No More*, a statement of intent that references the romantic language of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, as they sing: "Love it will not betray you, dismay or enslave you / It will set you free / Be more like the man you were made to be." Amongst darkly reflective tracks such as *Thistle & Weeds* and ballads like *White Blank Page*, *Winter Winds* and *Roll Away Your Stone*, by contrast, show the band's sprightlier side, the rollicking banjo of the former conjuring up stormy weather that "litters London with lonely hearts"; the latter a fabulous hoedown about a man unsuccessfully filling the hole in his soul.

As the album moves on, this fervour never dies. *Little Lion Man* – a track that Zane Lowe named the "Hottest Record In The World Today" on a recent Radio 1 show – is a rampage about regret and unresolved heartbreak: "Tremble, little lion man / You'll never settle any of your scores / Your grace is wasted in your face / Your boldness stands alone among the wreck". And finally, after a wild lashing out in the murderous fable of *Dust Bowl Dance*, *After The Storm* arrives, the only track Mumford and Sons wrote in the studio, away from the live stage they knew so well. It stands an incredibly moving final track to an incredibly moving album – the story of a man scared of what's behind and what's before, and creates a considered conclusion to the band's epic debut album.

Mumford & Sons' live reputation goes before them, and now their incredible debut reveals the extent of their magic and majesty on record. Feel the fire in your belly and the romance in your heart as you listen, let your voice break into rapture – and you too sigh no more.

Mumford & Sons are: Marcus Mumford, Country Winston, Ben Lovett, and Ted Dwane.

www.myspace.com/mumfordandsons

Mumford & Sons release their debut album "Sigh No More on the 5th October through Gentleman Of The Road/Island Records. It will be preceded by a new single, 'Little Lion Man' on the 28th September.

Mumford & Sons tour the UK throughout September and October.

For more information on Mumford & Sons, please contact Sarah Pearson or Jon Lawrence at Wasted Youth PR on 0207 493 573 or email firstname@wastedyouthpr.com