

May 1991

MILLTOWN BROTHERS

Amidst the efer-shifting trends of the U.K. pop scene, the **MILLTOWN BROTHERS** have stood apart as a self-confessed "songs band," emphasizing music over fashion. Building upon strong melodies and evocative lyrics, this Lancashire-based quintet serves up a luminous, celebratory sound that cuts across categories. **SLINKY** their &M debut album, introduces the Milltown Brothers to U.S. listeners with an individual style and real songwriting substance.

Since the band's formation in 1988, members Matt Nelson (vocals), Simon Nelson (guitar), James Fraser (bass), Nian Brindle (drums) and Barney James (keyboards) have earned abundant praise in the British music press for they dynamic live shows and sparkling independent singles. The Milltown Brothers' creative use of 60's rock influences (Dylan, the Byrds, the Doors among them) and straightforward stage persona separated them from their North English peers early on. With **SLINKY** they make good on their early promise to deliver an exceptional batch of brillaintly-crafted, energetically-rendered tunes.

"We're not particularly interested in our image," says Matt Nelson. "We just want to get the music across. Lyrically, our songs are observations about life and topics that interest us. People should be able to read into them whatever they want, rather than have it laid out for them."

Surrounding these intriguing lyric impressions is a swirling, muscular sound propelled by bracing guitar and bold keyboard colors. "*Which Way Should I Jump*," **SLINKY**'s first single, matches a melodically surging track with Nelson's exultant vocals. "*Apple Green*" and "*Something Cheap*" likewise combine pop/rock tunefulness with aggressive performance. "*Sally Ann*" and "*Seems To Me*" ride simmering rhythms surrounded by vivid 60's-tinged textures. Most of all, there's a joyous feel of reckless abandon that comes through on **SLINKY**. A sense of unfettered delight given focus by the band's mastery of songwriting essentials.

Produced by Dave Meegan (whose credits include engineering work on U2' *JOSHUA TREE*), **SLINKY** has a clean sonic lustre that adds to the band's impact. "Dave didn't change much, just cleared things a bit," Matt says. "He kept the guitars and organ from sounding packed together, put more space in the tracks than we'd had on our earlier records. The production has a good, crisp feel to it."

Hailing from Colne in Lancashire (the mill town), the band was first launched by Matt Nelson with

Fraser and Brindle. Matt's brother Simon joined soon after with James (Matt's next door neighbor) completing the line-up. All five had been childhood friends, so the combination proved a natural one.

While the group did have a passing involvement with the now-famous Manchester dance/rock scene, the Milltown Brothers quickly established their own identity. "We got lumped in with the Manchester thing, but we tried to avoid that," Matt says, "We're not a dance oriented band, and we don't wear flares or go in for those kind of fashions." It didn't take long for critics to notice that the band was a unique entity --- New Music Express magazine enthused over their live show a mere four weeks after the group was formed.

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