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More Is More -- Much More, in Fact

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Around the Lake



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HARMONIZED
A trio of Furman musicians is making music that is both grounded and searching.



KEYING IN

Shelby Price (left), Calvin Armerding (center), and Jeff Hennessy (right) span class years and backgrounds, but the music they make together offers up moods of “awe and wonderment” that underscore and transcend the lines of traditional folk.

“I’ve been thinking about my old selves, wondering if they’re the men I’m supposed to be,” murmurs **Calvin Armerding ’10**, lead singer of the indie-folk band The Muchmores. In “Eulogy for the Owl,” the crystal clear tenor (who also writes the lyrics to all of the group’s songs) croons the story of a man who returns to a beloved place from the past in hopes of reclaiming that youthful feeling, only to be greeted by a “minor key—not sad, but silent fear and hate of who I used to be.”

The percussion work of **Jeff Hennessy ’10** complements Armerding’s introspective phrases with a fairly upbeat, simple melody on the xylophone while driving the song

More Is More—Much More, in Fact

From the simple rhythms of this Furman threesome emerge life’s soulful complexity.

BY LINDSAY NIEDRINGHAUS ’07

forward with the drum’s regular rhythm. One would guess that the cheerful melody would clash with the sobering sentiments. Yet the song doesn’t feel disconcerting to the ear,

instead artfully illustrating an experience with which we are all familiar—the internal struggle of looking back to the past while simultaneously attempting to push forward into the future.

Armerding’s vocals are paired with those of **Shelby Price ’15**. According to Armerding, the two met in Furman Hall one afternoon to see if their voices synced. “She has such a sweet, simple voice that perfectly fit my music,” he says. The clarity of their harmony is most evident in “Pickens County Line,” an easy-listening song reminiscent of duos like the Civil Wars.

Prior to meeting up with Price, Armerding was in Denver for graduate school where he was an instrumentalist and backup vocalist for The Stormcellars. He wrote his own songs on the side, and when he moved back to Greenville in 2013, he reunited with Hennessy, a Furman friend. They then began looking for

a female vocalist, and Price answered that call.

The group began recording an album in January 2015; it was just released this past April and is now featured on Noisetrade and Bandcamp.com.

Many of The Muchmores's songs touch on the theme of awe and wonderment about a past life, as if the speaker is struggling to resolve his younger attitudes with his current self. Yet the voices themselves remain clear and innocent, not tainted by the experiences that still seem to haunt the songs:

And I don't need your horse to stand as tall as God made me

I don't need your pulpit to preach

And I don't need to wonder whether I deserve

This place on the ground where I sleep

So please stay on the high maintenance high-horse you love

And please, please don't ever come down.

Just as the lyrics in "Cain, For Abel" proclaim, The Muchmores don't need the confirmation from popular culture to stake their claim in today's folk music genre. "With music, I find that I'm motivated enough by my bandmates and my internal need to write and play that I get plenty done without the crack of a

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whip," says Armerding. "Plus, that also gives us a lot of control over how far we want to take the band. A record company has to push to bump up their profits, which I respect. But often that can conflict with the artistic pacing of a songwriter. I'm not trying to be pretentious and over-serious about my songwriting, but...I'd at least like to do it 'my' way.

Thankfully, I think I've found two friends who are willing to get on board with that, and have been so affirming of my artistic vision and pacing."

Whether the group heads to Nashville or elsewhere, it sounds like more retrospective revelations, more refreshing melodies, more haunting vocals—more of all these—are the real destinations. **E**

From the Vault



True Grit

What you may not have known, remembered, or thought possible at Furman

BY BRENDAN TAPLEY

Fifty years ago, an event took place that some have called "Furman's greatest athletic moment." As a result of having won the Southern Conference, Furman baseball headed to the 1965 NCAA District III championships, a prelude to the College World Series. Many sportswriters at the time wondered how "rag-tail" Furman had even managed the feat, but those critics were soon silenced.

First to go down, in 12 innings, was Maryland in a tight 5-4 Furman victory. Next up was Mississippi State. During the game, shortstop **Mike Pate '65** had to wear a corset to help stabilize his back, which had given him trouble all season long. The corset was cinched so tightly Pate couldn't even sit down. **Fred Cotney '65**, the second baseman, was sent to the hospital for a quart of glucose in order to combat dehydration—and remained in the lineup. But it was pitcher **Andy Coe '67** who would earn the superlative of stoic. Teammate **Charlie Coates '68** recalls: "Mississippi State's starting pitcher was Frank Chambers, who could throw pure heat. Andy batted ninth and first time up, with two strikes, he squared to bunt. The ball struck the trademark and caromed up into Andy's throat, striking him squarely in the Adam's apple, collapsing him at home plate where he promptly swallowed his tongue. Gary 'Doc' Meredith, who later was Furman's notable golf coach, sprang from the dugout, inserted two fingers into Andy's mouth, freed his tongue, and literally saved Andy's life. After a pause in the action, Doc wiped Andy off with a wet towel and Andy took the mound and pitched a complete game."

A complete game that resulted in a come-from-behind 5-2 victory over Mississippi and an automatic trip to the finals. Alas, against Florida State, it was not to be. The Paladins came within two outs of playing the World Series in Omaha, but a heartbreaking double elimination loss of 2-1 and 7-5 ended Furman's hopes. Still, in the words of one writer at the time, the "intestinal fortitude" shown by Furman's boys of summer made it a season to remember long past it.