



Over and Over

With their second album, *Over and Over*, The 88 refute the myth that art and the three-and-a-half-minute pop song can't get along. While the new record shares the same rollicking spirit as its predecessor, *Kind of Light*, it also marks a leap forward for the Los Angeles-based quintet. The buoyant melodies and general jollity that characterized album one infuse all 12 tracks of their sophomore release, only this time with an expanded sound, a result, no doubt, of the group's artistic growth and constant gigging. Since *Light* debuted in early 2003, the band have been playing practically nonstop throughout their native L.A., with tour dates throughout the United States and Canada.

Once word of The 88's irrepressible harmonies and hopping pianos – not to mention Keith Slettedahl's warm, saturated strains – began to spread among club-goers, *Light* slowly found its way to radio DJs and rock critics. The band became a staple on KCRW's *Morning Becomes Eclectic*, a clearinghouse for rising indie rock outfits, world music composers and underground acts on the verge of crossing over into the mainstream. Ultimately, 12 of the album's 13 cuts made the spin list at NPR's flagship station, opening the floodgates to movie and television offers. Today, the group's TV resume includes segments on NBC's *Extra* and ABC's *The Jimmy Kimmel Show*, though it's arguably their appearance on Fox's hit series *The O.C.*, whose soundtrack sales have now topped 300,000 copies, that put the troupe on their younger fans' radar. Then, this year, the live track 'Coming Home,' which makes its studio debut on *Over and Over*, landed a plum spot in a nationally broadcast Target Commercial. Meantime, amid all the fanfare, The 88 quietly earned themselves a nod as *L.A. Weekly's* Best Pop/Rock outfit in the city.

With album-opener and first single 'Hide Another Mistake,' The 88 flash the same natural hook-writing chops that made *Light's* 'Elbow Blues' and 'How Good It Can Be' so addictive. Equally catchy are the breakup-survival anthem 'Battle Scar,' with its propulsive bass drumming and high-octane tambourines, and the track 'Bowls,' which showcases producer Ethan Allen's sure-handed mixing. But nowhere is The 88's ensemble spirit more evident than on 'Everybody Loves Me,' which deftly weaves together the band's angular guitar licks, pummeling drum fills and Adam Merrin's frenetic piano arpeggios with subtle backing vocals and Slettedahl's off-the-chart falsetto.

For all its up-tempo gusto, *Over and Over* has its quietly affecting moments as well. On the plaintive 'You Belong To Me,' the band scales back its usually textured arrangements to let Slettedahl's stark vocals stand alone, while 'Jesus Is Good' combines a languid accordion with sultry sevenths to invoke a dirty, swampy burlesque. But it's arguably 'All 'Cause of You' that has grabbed the most buzz among long-time 88 fans, many of whom have clamored for an album version of this concert showstopper. After playing the song live for a while, the band finally laid down the definitive recording with the help of producer Allen and the famed Village Recording Studio, which over the years has welcomed everyone from Bob Dylan and Neil Young to The Rolling Stones and Pink Floyd.

While The 88 have earned a reputation as first-rate musicians, they're also renowned for their tireless gigging, which has included performances alongside Elliott Smith, Dave Grohl and The Thrills. More importantly, they've won props for their easygoing nature and their grassroots marketing, which starts with their official site www.the88.net. There, fans can chat with the band members, meet other 88 devotees, post messages, and check concert dates. The group also posted three tracks on MySpace (www.myspace.com/the88) and recorded over 20,000 requests for the single 'Hide Another Mistake' in a matter of seven short days. With the post-recording addition of drummer Anthony Zimmitti and bassist Todd O'Keefe, The 88 are hitting the road in support of the new record, and plan to continue posting work on MySpace so that loyal followers and newcomers alike may see the band live & listen to the new material over and over.