

The Maccabees – Given To The Wild (2012)

Written by bluesever

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01 – *Given To The Wild (Intro)* 02 – *Child* 03 – *Feel To Follow* [play](#) 04 – *Ayla* 05 – *Glimmer* 06 – *Forever I've Known* 07 – *Heave* 08 – *Pelican* 09 – *Went Away*

[play](#)

10 – *Go* 11 – *Unknown* 12 – *Slowly One* 13 – *Grew Up At Midnight*

Band members: Orlando Weeks – Vocals and Guitar Hugo White – Guitar Felix White – Backing Vocals and Guitar Will White - Keyboard Rupert Jarvis – Bass Sam Doyle – Drums

Once upon a time in prelapsarian 2003 – just before high-speed internet services made one-click clever-clogs out of today's generation of musicians – The Maccabees started life as all good schoolboy bands should. Cutting their teeth with songs titled after picnics and wave machines, the youngsters rattled off plucky, heartfelt pastiches of big brother-type peers like The Libertines and Bloc Party, amassing a small army of fans and eventually striking a record deal with Fiction.

Following 2007 debut *Colour It In* with the ambitious *Wall of Arms* two years after that, the band displayed an emergent focus that – while still at times still in thrall to their idols – justified the early acclaim, and pulled them clear of the wreckage as the noughties guitar boom collapsed around their ears. Now they're back with a third record trailed by the kind of hype usually reserved for zeitgeisty Channel 4 dramas, and even the band themselves – never exactly the gobbiest of guitar-slingers – have been keen to talk up its importance, admitting it's the first time they've sounded completely themselves on record.

It's a fair point, as well, since one listen to *Given to the Wild* will tell you this is not a wind worth relieving yourself into. Easing themselves back into the fray with *Child* (via a two-minute instrumental intro), this once most jittery of propositions succeeds in scaling electric peaks by

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almost imperceptible degrees, like an eagle soaring on thermals. Feel to Follow is an even more striking departure from the band's post punk-ish roots – and maybe the best thing on here – with frontman Orlando Weeks airing his newly laidback vocal style, the track meandering in stream-like fashion before tilting into a gorgeous, waterfall chorus.

It sets a useful template for much of what follows: a slew of potentially overbearing indie-kid epics offset beautifully by discreet vocals, percussion and lilting arrangements at every turn (Given to the Wild is co-produced by ex-DFA man Tim Goldsworthy and Bruno Ellingham, though the band takes some of the credit for its measured feel). That quality is evident pretty much throughout, but picks of the bunch are Forever I've Known – all moody bass figures segueing into a hurricane-force crescendo – and closer Grew Up At Midnight, whose similarly huge finale seems to have the smell of main-stage fireworks in its nostrils.

Whether Given to the Wild provides the hoped-for kick up the festival billings this summer remains to be seen – at times the obsessive shading masks a lack of melodic punch – but its makers are right to be proud of it. If only all bands had the guts and honesty of The Maccabees, maybe they'd get round to making third records as good as this. ---Alex Denney, BBC Review

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