

Born from frustration that contemporary music, too often, becomes little more than background music for commercials and from a desire to contribute a fuller, more three-dimensional and experiential interaction with the songs, Ryan and Hubbard brought a new aspect to the record.

A short film accompanies each song. Note, these are not “videos,” but films. What’s the difference? A video tries to sell you something. A video is an advertisement for a song or album or record label or cell phone. These films are brothers and sisters to the songs. They enhance the songs and add dimensions to them the same way that Ryan and Hubbard’s individual approaches enhance each other’s. They create an immersive experience.

Contributed by an impressive range of filmmakers, from noted independent director Gorman Bechard (You Are Alone) to festival favorites the Barnes Brothers (Choked) to up-and-comers like Matt Boyd, Martin Glenn, Jared Johnson and a host of young guerilla independents, the films play out like daydreams – crisp and lovely and simple. Hubbard and Ryan even directed a couple with the assistance of Nashville film student Matt Riddlehoover.

The addition of the accompanying films illustrates the comprehensive vision of Ryan and Hubbard for this album. This is more than a pop record. It’s an event. It’s a statement. It’s a dangerous tightrope walk between ambition and pretension in order to look for the truth and to look for beauty untainted by irony or posing or rock and roll fakery. It’s a denial of genre and an acceptance of inclusiveness – of audience, of band-members, of new ideas.

Most importantly, the resulting record is much more than a collaboration between two songwriters and some friends. It’s two polar artists blending into a single cohesive vision. It’s a classic rock and roll move to challenge one’s expectations from music. Tireless, hopeful, ambitious and hungry...

It’s The Strays - Don’t Sleep.