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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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The Magic Numbers At Joe's Pub -- I Was There

The Magic Numbers are the greatest rock and roll band in the world.

It was 24 hours ago that the Magic Numbers began their second show at Joe's Pub. I've finally calmed down enough to write about it. I almost began blogging at two in the morning, but I was afraid I'd write hyperbolic comments like, "I've seen the future of rock and roll and its name is The Magic Numbers" or some such thing. Now that I've stopped hyperventilating, I think I can restrain my enthusiasm to saying something more modest like, "The Magic Numbers are the greatest rock and roll band in the world."

The Magic Numbers are the greatest rock and roll band in the world. Maybe that's the biggest surprise of the show for me: how rock and roll they really are. The buzz for The Magic Numbers began two years ago -- in the British music press, modest praise for a new band that has yet to even release a single would be, "They're likely to be the most important group since the Smiths, if not the Beatles."

But the press for the Numbers was intriguing; not many new bands get compared to the Mamas & the Papas. Then I heard a gentle, acoustic song on a giveaway CD from Q Magazine. Wonderful, lovely stuff and I made a note to get their album on import. But the Mamas & The Papas tag (while not crazy) was mostly a family thing. Journalists couldn't get over the fact that the band was composed of two sets of siblings, a brother and a sister and another brother and sister. They certainly had some cool vocals on the first single and there was a definite Sixties vibe to them.

When the album arrived, that gentle acoustic track proved a red herring. This was terrific pop, but not quite what was expected. I thought of Lovin' Spoonful, the Beach Boys and so on; but none of the comparisons quite fit and the songs were nicely off-kilter. They'd start

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