



a Clouds Hill Artist Bio

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Tom Allan & The Strangest (GBR/MEX)

Single: **Over & Over**

Release: **22.11.2019**

Album: **Little Did They Know**

Release: **tbc**



If you've lost your faith in love and music
the end won't be long
- The Libertines, 2002

Music is not about analyzing it. It's about feeling it, way down in your guts. The guts, that's what the music of Tom Allan and The Strangest was meant for. A raw, bristling, uncompromising incarnation of timeless guitar music, haunted by echoes of heroes long gone. No apologies, simply two men against the world, friends more than colleagues, clad in leather, armed with guitars, great songs and something that is severely lacking in modern day rock music: honesty.

Tom Allan and The Strangest have it. By the bucket. They are the authentic and most welcome antithesis to generic singer/songwriter kitsch and fake stadium rock. "Little Did They Know", their second album, is living proof that the glory days of guitar music are far from over. In fact, they could begin anew. It's loud, it's wild, it's out of control, slightly chaotic and seemingly happening right next to you in your living room – full-on, full-blown rock with edge, heartfelt depth, attitude and this eternal moment of surprise that once was a regular on rock records. "Since the beginning of guitar music, it has always been about attitude", Tom Allan says. "Look at those old blues guys, the punk scene, grunge... there was always attitude and a message. Most guitar music today is lacking a message. It is just trying to please."

Not him. He grew up in rural Germany as the son of a German mother and a British soldier and quickly found refuge in his dad's record collection and albums of The Clash or Sex Pistols, writing his first song aged 15. A new world opened up for him, swallowing him whole. He found his vocation, if that's not too pathetic for you. "I would still be playing music even if nobody would be listening", he states matter-of-factly. "That was how it all started – I just fucking enjoy making music. It never gets boring, it still thrills me. Hopefully, that will never change. Plus", he laughs, "we can't do anything else!" The second half of this "we", of course, is Evan "The Strangest" Beltran, a songwriter from the brimming vastness of Mexico City who is the almost uncanny counterpart to Tom Allan. A soulmate, you might even say. They meet by chance at an open mic night at some bar in Cologne, bonding over their common love for The Libertines. "I

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think it's a good thing that we became friends years before we started making music together", Tom muses.

Not going anywhere with their respective bands and getting exceedingly frustrated, they one day decided to give it a shot as a duo. "Suddenly, people got interested in our music and everything began to flourish. That's what happens when the two of us play together. It's the combination", Tom says and Evan adds, "Tom is able to bring out the best in me, and vice versa. This is what makes us. We need each other in order to be at our best." At first, this yielded their debut album "Dear Boy", a lesson in hand-made guitar music as raw as it was heart-warming. All of a sudden, more and more people became aware of the twosome, leading to countless gigs far and wide and an especially memorable performance at a packed venue during prestigious Reeperbahn festival. A turning point for the hard-working duo. "At the beginning there were a lot of hopes and dreams. They are still there but slowly, those dreams became realities", Evan says, also acknowledging the "really, really bad days" they had to weather. Side by side, as always.

"Little Did They Know" is their next evolutionary leap. Written together and recorded live and on analogue tape at Cloud's Hill very own dream of a studio, the artistic haven that also Pete Doherty frequently uses, Tom and Evan don't aim for sophistry, immaculate musicianship or a clean sound. They aim for what really counts: A live sound that knocks you off your feet. That makes your ears ring and your body tingle. "This music is meant to be played live", Tom says with the air of absolute certainty. Again, Evan is on the same page: "The energy of a live show is what makes the music", he says. "It doesn't get any better than on stage." That's why they recorded the whole affair live. Chaos and a certain amount of mayhem were not forbidden, however. Quite the opposite is true, in fact: "A lot of bands we talk with seem to be so structured and seem to know exactly what they're doing all the time while with us it's more like in a rocket", Tom laughs. "Everything is loud, rattling, chaotic and unpredictable."

After all, that's what rock'n'roll always has been about. Imagine a Velvet Underground record with a clean production, imagine The Libertines in digital perfection. You can't? Bloody well you can't. It's not meant to be! "We aren't great guitarists", Evan says and Tom chimes in: "To be honest, we are pretty shitty guitarists! We aren't great singers, either. But I guess we can write songs and we can bring something across with them. That's our strength." It bloody well is. This is their "The Libertines", their "Morning Glory", their "Give 'Em Enough Rope". The rebirth of sincerity with rough edges, hearts on a sleeve and a massive wall of sound. "Little Did They Know" will definitely take them places – and opening pretty big shows for Mando Diao, happening this November, will only be the beginning...

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