



## **Sam Cash & The Romantic Dogs**

### **Tongue-In-Cheek Vows**

Sam Cash's new album *Tongue-In-Cheek Vows* perfectly captures that moment when a young artist and his cohorts find their collective voice and suddenly realize that there are no limits to what they can accomplish together. The explosive opening track "Cast Away" serves notice that this isn't just another singer/songwriter-fronted band. With Cash's unflinching poetry riding atop the Romantic Dogs' taut exuberance, *Tongue-In-Cheek Vows* is a gimmick-free, melodic masterpiece—tipping its hat to an era when conviction was measured by the amount of sweat and blood exuded on stage, and in the studio.

*Tongue-In-Cheek Vows* is Cash's third album and the second with the Romantic Dogs. It follows the group's acclaimed 2013 debut for Cameron House Records, *Stand Together, Fall Together*, an album that earned more attention than even Cash was hoping for, given how spontaneously it was made. While the rambunctiousness that drew fans and critics to that album is on full display, Cash chose to take more time to develop *Tongue-In-Cheek Vows*. Working in tandem with producer and bona fide Canadian alt-rock legend Ian Blurton (Change Of Heart, C'Mon, Public Animal), Cash

and the Dogs have served up 11 tracks brimming with lyrics as razor-sharp as the performances driving them. Those who have followed Cash's development to this point are sure to be stunned by the self-awareness and insight into the human condition embedded in songs like the album's first focus track "Tossing & Turning" as well as "That Was The Summer" and "Carmen," from which the album's title was drawn.

"I really wanted this record to be a statement, and I gathered all the best material I had on hand for it, including some songs I purposely didn't want to put on the last album," Cash says. "It felt good to be able to involve the band more on this one too, considering we'd made *Stand Together, Fall Together* in basically two days. Everyone worked really hard and there was a great exchange of ideas."

Having a trusted ally with an impeccable reputation such as Blurton's proved to be of great benefit to Cash's creative maturity as well. From pre-production to the final track selection, he was an important guiding hand, knowing when to let the process flow naturally, and when to give a necessary push. It all added up to Cash feeling satisfied that he'd achieved his goal of stepping up all areas of his game.

"In the end, I wanted this to be the kind of record I don't hear many other bands making these days," he says. "The songwriting is front and centre, but we made sure to leave lots of room for the band to experiment with sonics and form. We're a Rock & Roll band in a classic sense—and I think the biggest mistake a band like us can make is sounding too sterile. I think if you're conscious of that and are able to avoid it, any music fan—regardless of what genre they prefer—will appreciate what you're doing."

Those who have been around long enough will undoubtedly hear in that answer echoes of Cash's father Andrew, part of Toronto's original punk rock community and later one of Canada's most respected singer/songwriters. Yet, from the time Sam launched his own music career in his late teens, he's forged his own uncompromising path toward establishing a name within the Toronto underground rock scene, and building his band into one of the most formidable live outfits in the city. In a stellar review of one of their early 2015 shows, *NOW* Magazine's Sarah Greene perhaps best captured the band's essence by saying, "Sam Cash & the Romantic Dogs—what a perfect name for these ascending local roots rockers who are equal parts grit-and-brawn and sweetly aw-shucks harmonizing."

With those elements now captured on *Tongue-In-Cheek Vows*, Cash is able to view the album not just as a mere coming-of-age document, but a symbol of how he has embraced the craft of songwriting itself. "These songs were written during a three or four year period starting when I was 19, which is a pretty exciting time for anyone," he says. "But what I love most about songs are those moments when you hear something and it hits you in a very specific way, and you're not even thinking about what the writer's intentions are. That's the ultimate effect I would like my music to have on people, when they can make their own connection, which is just as real and meaningful as what was in my head when I wrote the song."

It's been said before how so much of what Sam Cash does is reminiscent of Bruce Springsteen and Elvis Costello at the outset of their careers. Does that create unrealistic expectations? Perhaps, but

one can't forget that both of those artists were tagged with being "new Dylans." There's no denying that Sam Cash shares a similar spirit and ambition that has likewise set him on a course toward being an influential artist. With the arrival of *Tongue-In-Cheek Vows*, there is now definitive proof.