

Email:  Password:

[register](#) | [lost password?](#)

# review of two gallants's cd "what the toll tells"

Search

## Two Gallants

### What the Toll Tells

February 2006

Words by Scott Dixon

In the world of the commercial mainstream Arctic Monkeys are being proclaimed as the Messiah himself, uniting the indie elite, the council estate hobbits, and even your mum and dad in the dawn of a new musical explosion. But in a different reality the second album from San Francisco duo **Two Gallants** looks set to be, at very least, the underground smash of 2006.

Since their breathtaking set at last summer's Carling Festival endeared any lucky spectators to the the twisted folk twang of the pin-up duo, the hype from fans and fellow artists surrounding the drop of this second album has been relentless. Not surprisingly there's not even a sniff of disappointment, as "What The Toll Tells" doesn't just ramble through the murky ideals of the deep south, it belts out an hour long masterpiece of epic proportions.

Maybe I'm rolling with the bandwagon and eventually the hype will curl up and die, but what will remain is an utterly compelling narrative of bleeding hearts, desperation and jovial delight. The trepidation which meets a Saddle Creek record aside, the album's gentle breakdowns of subtle guitar pick will throw the bait to the middle classes then blow up suburbia with the deafening hardcore which lurks just below the surface.

Opening track "Las Cruces Jail", which first enlightened the tiny island we dwell on to the talents of **Two Gallants'** sun-kissed genius, by far steals the show proving the perfect showcase for singer, songwriter and guitarist Adam Stephens' voice, which appears to have been doused in a bottle of bourbon and set alight. Although the duo actually herald from California this is most certainly folk from folks, fighting the mainstream with every ounce of strength in the darkly seductive unique world of music they have created.

Stephens conscribes to the White Stripes mould of extravagant warbling and rollercoaster harmonies, whilst bludgeoning our souls with a transfixing croak reminiscent of Johnny Cash himself. But there's more to offer as Tyson Vogel's drum threatens to deafen us creating the glittering atmosphere of the metal anthem and placing it aside the simple comedic lyrical exploits of the multi-talented lead.

The album itself never veers from the sound the pair have created sticking to the country punk that pours out of them, but this one sound is so sufficiently different to the art pop movement of the moment you'll continue the love story anyway. Subtle and dry lyrics such as "Pigeons adore me pick at my feet, someday they might use my head as a seat", paint Stephens' charisma all over the canvas that is this album, meaning that even the four 8-minute long tales on display such as "Some Slender Rest", never fail to lose the interest. When songs of such proportions maintain the gaze for so long you know you're doing something right,

something special, and something so uncategorisably odd, it's so undeniably right. **Two Gallants** never impacted upon our shores with their opening effort "Throes", but if the White Stripes can leave their mark, this effort is perfectly set to soundtrack your summer even if no-one else knows it.

So sit tight until release day then raid the shops, because it isn't only the Arctic Monkeys album that's going to define your record collection in a decade's time, save a little space for some honest folk.

- [www.twogallants.com](http://www.twogallants.com)

#### **The Fray - Official Site**

Learn About The Fray's Music Sample Their Songs Here!

[Ads by Goooooogle](#)

Save this page...

## **Buy This CD**

Buy "What the Toll Tells" now for just £7.69

## **Release Information**

**Released:** 13 February 2006

**Label:** Saddle Creek

## **Tracklisting**

1. Las Cruces Jail
2. Steady Rollin'
3. Some Slender Rest
4. Long Summer Day
5. Prodigal Son
6. Threnody
7. 16th Street Dozens
8. Age Of Assassins
9. Waves Of Grain

## **CD Reviews**

- Mogwai  
Mr Beast
- The Television Personalities  
My Dark Places
- Buzzcocks  
Wish I Never Loved You
- Last Riot  
Shoot For The Sky EP
- Indigo Skins  
Untitled
- Roe Sham Bo

Serotonin

- The Somatics

Elemental

- Various Artists

That Fucking Tank / Monster Killed By Laser - split single

- this cd is recommended

### **Latest Comments On This Article - [view all / post]**

Ooh I enjoyed reading that Scott...think I'm gonna catch these two gentlemen at the Night N Day soon, they sounds pretty special in a lovely old whiskey-stained way

*Columbia, 9th February*