



Tangle Jack

Eden

self-released; 2016



by Jamie Robash, No More Division

The Swansea, Wales folk pop duo TangleJack are a busy lot. The pair of musicians, John-Paul Davies (lead vocals/rhythm guitar/harmonica/percussion) and Duncan Leigh (lead guitar/ backing vocals) released their first record, *Eden*, online back in June and have plans to release a hard copy on disc next month at The Garage Live Music Venue in Swansea. The pair have also played a plethora of other festivals in and around their home and even have some airtime lined up with local television and radio spots.

If one were to try to explain what makes TangleJack and *Eden* so popular it is that their songs are unobtrusive to say the least. They don't come at you, as so many songs can, battering you over the head with obtuse lyrics. They don't make an attempt to gain your sympathy or your empathy but rather they simply flow out like water and allow you to make of them what you will.

*Eden* opens with the bright and melodious "Sunny Day" with its rich peals of acoustic guitar and uplifting lyrics, and offers up a very welcoming feeling. It also begins to showcase how well Davies and Leigh both harmonize as well as play together. There is a naturalness to it which one hears next on the upbeat "That's What I Call Love" especially on the uplifting chorus.

But not everything on *Eden* is fanciful and uplifting. There is the impending gloom on the dark yet melodious dirge "Hey Ho," and the quiet and haunting "This Lonesome Night." But TangleJack isn't just about writing happy hopeful songs or sad songs about lost love. They also prove they can compose traditionalist political folk ballads and they do so greatly on "Fatherland" which, with its fast-paced Spanish styled guitar and storytelling lyrics reminded me of Dylan's long acoustic folk ballads which he became famous for. TangleJack also shows their cheeky side on the wonderful Kinks-like "Just Go You Bastard."

In the end I realize that what makes TangleJack's *Eden* so great is that it has depth and structure and just the right amount of experimentation. Each song, though based in the folk tradition, sounds different, and lends its own unique contribution to the whole of the record.