

## SWiM: AN INTERVIEW WITH KENTON TURK

With offers of one nature or another coming from around the corner and such far-flung places as Australia and Canada, the first question you want to ask SWiM, or about SWiM, is why hasn't it hit really big here yet? Prophet-in-his-own-land syndrome? No, in reality it's nothing of the kind....

SWiM is a bit like the secret you like to keep, the group you want to be yours and maybe not everyone else's, even though you know it's inevitable that you will have to share them with the rest of the world someday. Hamburg pre-mania Beatles fans probably looked the other way when *their* group turned the rest of the world into breeding grounds of mayhem. Is this the fate awaiting SWiM?

What, who is SWiM exactly? A man and a woman, a singer and a guitar player, a dynamic duo that doesn't need to wear capes to save your life. Her name is Carmen, his name is Huddle. He probably won't show you his eyes, hers you probably won't escape. They sing and play, and as simple as that seems, it's enough. Because in a world of pre-fab product, they are real, yet not folksy. Direct and elemental. The breath of fresh air and fresh remarks you've been waiting for.

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Onstage, the two multi-coloured canvasses come together as a single-motif driving force, her voice zero-in precise, whether cooing or erupting, his fingers deft and on-target (and attractively able). The two seem to provide a seamless yin and yang in their craft. Destined partners in musical assault....

Men want them (both), women want them (both)... what is the key to such magnetic appeal? Are they even aware of it?

Carmen has been described as many things, among them "slightly androgynous", "hauntingly compelling" and "sexy... extremely sexy". She only denies two of the above. With her feet planted firmly on the ground, both literally and figuratively, you're not sure if she takes a song, or if it takes her. But certain is that voice... a musical missile in search of a target. Directing it, a kind of 21<sup>st</sup> century Garbo who doesn't "want to be alone".

Huddle is surprised to hear that some people find him somewhat dangerous in appearance. True, when you catch him standing by a wall before a gig gets underway, motionless and solid, observing who-knows-who behind his trademark dark (aviator) specs... well, he could be the bouncer or another less savoury guest. Tap him on the shoulder and you're likely to see his perhaps most insurable possession: his million-dollar grin. The Brando of *Apocalypse Now*, but younger and more accessible – and infinitely more musical.

Likes? Dislikes? Where do you want to start in getting to know more about these two? A favourite colour, maybe? Carmen says "red" after thinking on it for a while, and the word is accompanied by a smile between romantic and naughty that could mean more than I'm ready to know. As if that's not enough, she continues, very slowly: "...and black...." More mystery. Huddle is more direct, he

shoots with “yellow”. No wavering. What does he dislike? Again a direct hit: “unpunctuality”. Ah, so he really IS German. I'll try not to show up late for their next show.

The lyrics (from Carmen's pen) take an everyman stance, addressing each and everyone, and bear a whipcrack affection that can make you feel safe and warm... but not really. They pull you close, but not too close, not enough that you can think there's anything resembling a foregone conclusion here.

Is it hard to write songs? “Sometimes”, says Carmen with a mischievous smile. “Probably harder not to,” adds Huddle. Any favourites? Carmen volunteers “Give Me Time And Space” or “Sorry?”, Huddle first “Who Laughs Last”, then on second thought “Count Me Out”, but they change their minds often enough to make you think they must all be worth a listen, and that your mood of the moment will decide for you which one you like best, or better put, which one you can't live without.

Live it's another kettle of fish: each number hits you with the feeling that **this** is the next surprise hit, **this** is the one that will be the anthem of a generation. After the show's over, they will probably gain from distance, and you might ask yourself what that tune is that you're humming to yourself. Their strategy, if they have one, wouldn't be “Divide and conquer” but rather “Unite and conquer”. And yet they still feel like they're **yours**, all yours....

Comparisons fall hard, but if you had to search, you might say they have something of the aggressively innocent quirkiness of early efforts of the British band James; maybe also the oddball directness of the legendary Jonathan Richman (who, after all, similarly let his Modern Lovers band go when he found there was something that came across better when stripped to its essentials). And maybe some Pretenders, and maybe not, and maybe a whole lot of SWiM, SWiM, SWiM. That voice, those fingers... who else could that be, after all?

After all, the group the way it sounds is **different**, able to take comparatively little and parlay it into **a lot**.

Do you need anything more?  
Do you **want** anything more?

*Kenton Turk*

