Wallows – Tell Me That It’s Over bio

On their sophomore album *Tell Me That It’s Over*, L.A.-based alt-rock band Wallows document the neverending chaos of finding your way in the world. Over the course of 10 wildly original tracks, Braeden Lemasters (vocals, guitar), Dylan Minnette (vocals, guitar), and Cole Preston (guitar/drums) channel their deepest anxieties and self-doubt into a chameleonic sound informed by everything from lo-fi post-punk to indie-folk to early-’90s dance-pop psychedelia. In a thrilling continuation of the sonic exploration first begun on 2019’s *Nothing Happens*—one of the most highly streamed debuts from any band that year, featuring their platinum-selling single “Are You Bored Yet?” (feat. Clairo)—Wallows ultimately collage their musical DNA into larger-than-life pop songs graced with equal parts emotional depth and dizzying imagination.

The follow-up to their critically acclaimed 2020 EP *Remote*, *Tell Me That It’s Over* finds Wallows working with producer Ariel Rechtshaid (Vampire Weekend, HAIM, Charli XCX), a multi-Grammy Award-winner the band chose based on his left-of-center sensibilities. “It would probably be pretty easy for us to go work with a pop producer and make a straight-up pop album, but it felt way more validating to make something unexpected that really encapsulates our taste and who we are as a band,” Preston notes. Mixed by Dave Fridmann (The Flaming Lips, MGMT, Tame Impala) and largely recorded at Rechtshaid’s house, the result is a prime showcase for the prismatic musicality Wallows first began honing by playing shows on Sunset Strip in their early teens and later refined by performing at major festivals like Lollapalooza, Coachella, and Austin City Limits.

The most boldly unpredictable output yet from Wallows, *Tell Me That It’s Over* marks a full-circle moment for a trio of childhood friends who first bonded over their obsessive love of music discovery. After opening on the string-laced minimalism of “Hard To Believe,” the album takes on a giddy velocity with “I Don’t Want to Talk”: an impossibly anthemic confession of insecurity, cleverly telegraphing the type of petty jealousies that often go unspoken (e.g., “Bet he didn’t think first when he did a crowd surf/Effortlessly expert/Attention grabber”). From there, Wallows launch into the loopy intensity of “Especially You,” a massively catchy track sculpted from syncopated beats, vibrato guitar tones, and lilting banjo melodies courtesy of Greg Leisz (a legendary session musician who’s worked with the likes of Beck and Bruce Springsteen). “‘Especially You’ is about when you’re in the early stages of a relationship and you get so worried that the other person’s mind will change at the flip of a switch,” says Minnette. “It’s about stressing over the smallest things for no reason, but it’s definitely self-aware about the fact that I’m doing this all to myself.”

Although a bracing self-awareness imbues all of *Tell Me That It’s Over*, songs like “At the End of the Day” embody the bittersweet frenzy of romantic confusion. “‘At the End of the Day’ is about being in a relationship where you’re perfectly content but you have a feeling it’s going to end,” says Lemasters, who names Neil Young’s *Harvest Moon* and Blur’s idiosyncratic Britpop among his touchstones for the track’s shapeshifting textures. “It’s asking, ‘Should we just end this now, instead of letting it linger?’” One of the most fantastically unhinged moments on *Tell Me That It’s Over*, “Marvelous” builds a brilliant tension between its bombastic sound and heavy-hearted lyrics (“If you go, you know I’ll be lost/Have a marvelous time/I won’t get you off of my mind”). “That’s such a fun little oddball of a song, where it’s worrying about letting someone down as a partner but sonically it feels like you’re at some crazy party,” says Minnette. “After we found that contrast we decided to make it bump even harder, and added all these funky basslines and horns to the track.” Meanwhile, on “Hurts Me,” Wallows deliver a post-breakup pop confection with all the dreamy grandeur and heightened emotionality of an ’80s teen movie. “It’s from the perspective of the person who ended the relationship, and now they’re questioning whether they did the right thing and can’t make up their mind,” says Minnette. Lemasters adds: “Our demo for ‘Hurts Me’ had this very dark, moody, psychedelic vibe—but then we flipped it on its head and turned it into a bright and sunny day, and now it’s one of the poppiest songs we’ve ever made.”

For Wallows, the feverish eclecticism of *Tell Me That It’s Over* has much to do with the unbridled spontaneity behind its creation. “The whole thing was sort of a guessing game as went along,” says Minnette. “We trusted our instincts and rolled with the process, and because of that the songs came together in ways we never could have pictured.” And as he reveals, that newfound confidence partly emerged from fully embracing the one-of-a-kind chemistry that’s now fueled their collaboration for over a decade. “When we first started working with Ariel he told us, ‘I want to really highlight the fact that you guys are a *band*,’” Minnette says. “For a long time we were so concerned with trying to create in a more conventional way, we hadn’t thought about it like that. But once we had that focus, everything fell into place. We stopped overthinking everything and decided to just share the 10 best songs that represent who we are at this moment, because that’s all that really matters.”