



GROOVE ARMADA – THE DJ SETS

“Go in BIG, grab the balls, settle into some chunky groovers, build up into a mixture of big tunes and old time underground classics, drop ‘*Superstylin*’... Adjust to taste.” Groove Armada’s **Tom Findlay** and **Andy Cato** are, of course, describing their DJ sets with a twinkle in their eyes, for just as no two Groove Armada singles are the same, neither are two Groove Armada DJ sessions. Their big room sound of house-big beat-Balearic-disco-funk flips everyone into party mode with its raucously rhythmic and infectious hooks.

Ever since they met in 1995, this dynamic duo has had a ball working together. As have their fans, who’ve jumped around copious bars, clubs and beaches alongside them. Their own Lovebox club nights, launched around the turn of the century, were so popular that they inspired the Lovebox Weekender festival, which, barely six years old, has swiftly become London’s hot ticket event. With 2008 bringing Lovebox a new bi-monthly residency at The End nightclub and one-off boat parties or soirees continuing to take root in unusual city spaces, partygoers are literally queuing up for the glamorous, boisterous sessions that Lovebox is famous for, all over town. Tom and Andy will be dropping by The End for guest DJ slots and they’ll be carting their boxes all over the globe to fulfill many international bookings, too.

A history of spinning at small house parties initiated Groove Armada’s passion for playing at venues where they’re ‘on a level with the crowd’. It’s how their charm works best. That’s not to say that they don’t do large crowds; on New Year’s Day 2008, for example, they had 25,000 dancers going nuts in Melbourne (following another spellbinding live set that took place on New Year’s Eve at Bondi Beach, Sydney).

The secret to their deck wizardry is down to knowing each other so well. Ten years of working side by side on the phenomenal anthems they’ve then toured around international stadiums comes with the prize of being able to read each other’s moods to work a crowd together. Usually they’ll play three records on, three off, “or two on, two off when we’re feeling racy,” laughs Tom. Complementing each other’s style, they propel clubbers to ecstatic heights – often assisted by M.A.D., the MC on Groove Armada’s huge ‘*Superstylin*’ hit.

Tom and Andy enjoyed (and survived) a 2005 summer residency at Space, Ibiza, considered by many to be the mecca of all European clubs. They’ve DJ’d together and apart all over the world and are particularly enamoured with the birthplace of disco, New York. Playing at the highly paid celeb bashes has been interesting – and they’ve played for a few superstars – because as Andy reasons, “a bit of people watching is always good, and now and again you end up in a hot tub with someone you never thought you would.”

Now that the 80’s music scene has been mined, Andy thinks we might see a return to 70’s disco, “in which case, Tom will be in heaven.” What do you love dancing to, Tom? “D.I.S.C.O”, he replies. With so many fans out there, do you need security at any gigs? “Only to keep Andy from hitting me when I play disco!” They’ll play everything. “Music can be a bit one dimensional,” affirms Andy. “Now that everything’s so fragmented, I reckon that bringing a bit of everything to the turntables makes for a better occasion.”

As for the strangest DJ requests they’ve had: “in the middle of a banging set we’re often asked for [the Groove Armada chilled classic] ‘At The River’.” Requests they do like? “Signing body parts!” Fans of both arms-in-the-air raving and heads-down grooving, Tom and Andy, who can party with the best of them, basically like to “go wid da flo.” To recuperate, Andy reckons, “the sea, if it’s there, sorts everything out. If not, try and get back to the first beer of the day as soon as you can get away with it. No point fighting it.”