

= Augie March =

Augie March are an Australian indie / pop rock band . Formed in 1996 in Shepparton , Victoria , the band currently consists of vocalist and rhythm guitarist Glenn Richards , lead guitarist Adam Donovan , bassist Edmondo Ammendola , drummer David Williams , and keyboardist Kiernan Box . Box replaced Rob Dawson , the band 's initial piano player , who died in 2001 .

Augie March 's rise to fame was slow ; their first two EPs failed to make an impact on the market , despite Waltz being nominated for two ARIA Awards . Their first album , Sunset Studies , was released in 2000 . Despite poor sales , it was critically acclaimed and received an ARIA Award nomination . Critics in both Australia and the United States also lauded its 2002 successor , Strange Bird , but it sold and charted poorly in both countries . Augie March 's third album , Moo , You Bloody Choir ( 2006 ) , received a much better reception in terms of sales ; its lead single " One Crowded Hour " attained critical acclaim and appeared on the ARIA Charts at number 29 , while the album was nominated for numerous ARIA Awards and won an Australian Music Prize . Having achieved mainstream success , the band toured Australia and the United States regularly through 2006 and 2007 . In 2008 they released their fourth album , Watch Me Disappear . It became their most commercially successful album , but received the least favourable critical reception .

Augie March 's distinctive musical style is directed by songwriter and vocalist Richards . His lyrics often draw critical acclaim for their poetic style . The band 's music is generally described as intricate , lush , and dense , acting as a backdrop for Richards ' complex and poetic vocals .

= = History = =

= = = Formation and early EPs ( 1996 ? 1999 ) = = =

Glenn Richards , Adam Donovan and David Williams grew up and attended school in Shepparton , Victoria . Richards began writing songs while studying English at university in 1996 . He invited Donovan and Williams , who had been studying music at the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE , to join him ; they in turn asked classmate Edmondo Ammendola to join in . The band took their name from the 1954 novel The Adventures of Augie March by Saul Bellow , citing its poetic , complex prose as a reflection of Richards ' vocals .

Augie March 's first performance was in Brunswick at a friend 's nudist exhibition . After playing several other gigs , the band were signed by record label Rag Records ( a RooArt subsidiary distributed by BMG ) , at the time considered to be prestigious . Augie March 's first EP , Thanks for the Memes , was produced by Victor Van Vugt and released in early 1998 . Despite very positive reviews it received very little airplay . Williams later remarked that he was surprised the band had been able to find a producer considering the obscure music on the EP , which at the time the band had considered " hip and cool , and intellectual " .

Augie March followed up with their second EP , Waltz , in October 1999 . Produced by Richard Pleasance , the EP included " Asleep in Perfection " , which became the most requested song on ABC 's rage program . The song was nominated for " Breakthrough Artist - Single " , and Pleasance for " Producer of the Year " , at the 2000 ARIA Music Awards . The band began touring around Australia , getting as far as Perth , and their popularity increased through word of mouth . BMG offered Augie March a recording contract , which they accepted .

= = = Early albums ( 2000 ? 2003 ) = = =

Augie March went into the studio in March 2000 to begin work on their first full @-@ length album . Rob Dawson , a long @-@ time friend of Richards , joined the band on keyboard and piano . The band worked in nine studios with six different engineers over the course of six months . In July 2000 , prior to the album 's completion , they released their first single , " Hole in Your Roof " . In October 2000 , Augie March released Sunset Studies . Album launches in Sydney and Melbourne were

attempted , but were unsuccessful as both cities were very crowded with musicians at the time ; Donovan said " it seemed like every band in the country was doing a tour then and we couldn 't get any venues " . Thus , they played a small tour along Australia 's east coast . The album did not chart well ; it spent one week on the ARIA Albums Chart at number 35 .

Sunset Studies ' critical reception , however , was very positive ; Noel Mengel of The Courier @-@ Mail said that on the album , " songs of quiet reflection , starkly beautiful melodies and intimate poetry collide on the canvas without a thought to sales graphs or what radio program directors might think " , while Allmusic 's Jack Rabid told American readers " it 's worth the effort to track down [ the album ] , particularly for those who think there are no more musical craftsmen out there " . The album 's production earned it the 2001 ARIA Award for " Engineer of the Year " , as well as nominations for " Producer of the Year " , " Breakthrough Artist - Album " and " Best Cover Art " . Of the album 's six engineers , Paul McKercher , Chris Thompson , Richard Pleasance , and Chris Dickie were credited with the ARIA Award for best engineer . McKercher and Pleasance , as well as the band , were named producers . Of the singles released from the album , " There Is No Such Place " was the most popular , charting at number 47 on the Triple J Hottest 100 , 2001 .

Preparations for a follow @-@ up to Sunset Studies were thrown into disarray on 2 January 2001 when Dawson died in a car crash . The event had a significant impact on the band and especially on Richards as he wrote their next album . However , the resulting work was not mournful ; Richards described it as optimistic and humorous . To replace Dawson , Melbourne Kiernan Box joined the band as a keyboardist . The band produced Strange Bird independently ; Donovan said this worked to their advantage as they felt more comfortable in their own studio , and that as a result Strange Bird was a better album than Sunset Studies , though the band 's debut album was " probably received better by our fans " . In response to complaints concerning Richards ' Sunset Studies wordplay , Augie March included a lyrics booklet with Strange Bird .

Strange Bird was released by BMG as the band 's second studio album in October 2002 . It was also released by spinART Records in the UK in that month . It was re @-@ released in the United States in September 2004 . Like its predecessor , Strange Bird failed to make an impact on the charts , spending one week on the ARIA Albums Chart at number 34 . Its first single , " The Vineyard " , spent one week on the ARIA Singles Chart at number 31 . Augie March began touring around Australia almost immediately following the album 's release .

The critical response to Strange Bird , unlike its brief chart history , was overwhelmingly positive . The enthusiastic response even caught the band by surprise ; Williams told Rip It Up " I could see a few holes in the album and I 'd say , ' how come no one else has picked this up ? ' " Reviewers , however , focused on the positives ; Guy Garvey of The Independent said " My favourite of the year is Augie March 's Strange Bird " , while David Fricke wrote in Rolling Stone of " luxuriant melees of chiming guitars , mountain @-@ stream voices and keyboard grandeur " . Donovan said the band found it hard to take the positive reviews too seriously ; " if we did our heads would explode or overinflate " , he told Beat .

= = = Mainstream breakthrough ( 2004 ? 2009 ) = = =

Augie March returned to the studio in 2004 to record a follow @-@ up to Strange Bird . The band worked with two producers , Paul McKercher and Eric Drew Feldman , and recorded in Melbourne , San Francisco , and their own studio in Nagambie , Victoria . Donovan said it was more suited to the band 's style ; as they co @-@ produced on all their albums , they took a great deal of interest in production . He said it also enabled them to work at their own pace , hence the four @-@ year gap between releases . They released a DVD , Drones & Vapid Ditties , containing live performances and music videos , in mid @-@ 2004 . The band 's upcoming album , according to Triple J , was inspired by the streets of Melbourne . Upon completion of the initial recording sessions of Moo , You Bloody Choir , there was a six @-@ month delay before release , as Augie March meticulously added finishing touches to it . In March 2006 , the album was finally released .

Moo , You Bloody Choir saw the band move from receiving only critical acclaim to achieving mainstream success as well . The album spent 21 weeks on the ARIA Albums Chart , peaking at

number ten , while lead single " One Crowded Hour " reached number 29 in its 20 @-@ week ARIA Singles Chart stint . The album was certified platinum in Australia . Work by Augie March was nominated for six ARIA Awards in 2006 , including " One Crowded Hour " for " Single of the Year " . Despite the hype , the band did not win any further ARIAs . Augie March were still more successful underground than in the mainstream ; " One Crowded Hour " topped Triple J Hottest 100 , 2006 . The album 's popularity also saw it nominated for the 2006 J Award . A 2008 The Australian poll ranked " One Crowded Hour " the tenth best Australian song of the past 20 years .

Augie March 's musical abilities were recognised when they became the winner of the second annual Australian Music Prize in 2006 for " the most outstanding and creative Australian album released in the past year " . Ammendola told Drum Media winning the award was more significant than an ARIA Award , as " it 's an award that 's nominated on the grounds of music , and the art of it - not necessarily record sales " . The band used the A \$ 25 @, @ 000 prize money to help fund a US tour . Richards later said that the band had no great expectations of breakthrough through in the US , and that if their second attempt was not successful , they would not try again .

In August 2007 , Moo , You Bloody Choir was released in the United States on the Jive Zomba record label . In the lead @-@ up to its release , Augie March toured regularly , playing in Los Angeles and New York in May . The shows continued following the album 's release , as Augie March were praised by US media . Pitchfork Media called it a " crime " that the band had not broken through in North America earlier , though Allmusic remarked that Strange Bird was a higher quality album than its follow @-@ up .

Despite the success of Moo , You Bloody Choir , much of Augie March 's post @-@ album touring involved supporting other bands . They played shows supporting The Aliens and Andrew Bird in the United States , before returning to Australia to open for Crowded House . Richards said the band 's status as an opening act , rather than headlining their own shows , was something they saw as a challenge ? their intention was to win over fans who came to see the main act . However , he called the tour with The Aliens depressing ; the bands played very different types of music , and the attendance at shows was small . Augie March later earned a prime slot at the 2008 Big Day Out .

The success of Moo , You Bloody Choir saw Richards expected by record label Sony BMG to produce a quality follow @-@ up . He denied being under significant pressure , though the persistence of the label ? " Richo , have you got a single ? Do you have singles ? Please , do you have singles ? " ? was noted . Much of the writing for Augie March 's fourth album took place while touring the United States , which Richards argued minimised the band 's opportunities to be creative . In 2008 , Augie March began recording Watch Me Disappear at Neil Finn 's Auckland studios ; they also recorded in Melbourne , Sydney , and Los Angeles . The band worked primarily in New Zealand to get away from the distraction of Melbourne , their hometown , thus allowing them to focus solely on recording .

Augie March worked with producer Joe Chiccarelli , who took a significant pay cut to work on the album after declaring an interest in Augie March 's music . According to Richards , the production of Watch Me Disappear was a process that contained " a fair bit of friction " . Ammendola was critical of Chiccarelli 's style of production and the short amount of time spent in the studio . The recording process also took its toll on the relationships in the band . Ammendola has said that " It tore us to bits . It was really really shit , we ? re slowly patching up now . "

After placing the album 's title track on their website for free downloading , Augie March announced their first " proper headline tour of their homeland " , in which they would play music from the new album . The album was released in October 2008 . Watch Me Disappear 's reception was more mixed than that of its predecessors . Patrick Donovan of The Age said , " [ Y ] ou get the feeling that Watch Me Disappear will please more than just their mates and old fans " , but Bernard Zuel wrote in the The Sydney Morning Herald that it was " an album that no doubt will polarise fans " . Watch Me Disappear entered the ARIA Albums Chart at number four .

Augie March played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on 14 March 2009 for Sound Relief , a multi @-@ venue rock music concert in support of relief for the Victorian Bushfire Crisis . The event was held simultaneously with a concert at the Sydney Cricket Ground . All the proceeds from the Melbourne concert went to the Red Cross Victorian Bushfire relief . Appearing with Augie March in

Melbourne were , Bliss N Eso with Paris Wells , Gabriella Cilmi , Hunters & Collectors , Kasey Chambers & Shane Nicholson with Troy Cassar Daley , Jack Johnson , Jet , Kings Of Leon , Liam Finn , Midnight Oil , Paul Kelly , Split Enz and Wolfmother .

In July 2009 , " One Crowded Hour " was voted number 59 by the Australian public in Triple J Hottest 100 of all time . That same month , the band headed out on what was dubbed the " Watch Me Set My Strange Sun You Bloody Choir " tour which saw them play every capital city and many regional areas , giving each of their four albums an equal showing .

Beginning in December 2009 , the band began a multi @-@ year hiatus . Glenn Richards released Glimjack , his first solo album , in 2010 .

= = = Reformation after hiatus ( 2014 ? present ) = = =

After five years on hiatus and their apparently permanent disbanding , on 16 June 2014 Augie March announced ? via their official Facebook page ? that they are off hiatus . A week later the band posted that they have been working on a full @-@ length album for the last two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years . The band 's new album , Havens Dumb , was released on 3 October 2014 .

= = Musical style = =

While Augie March generally fall into an indie / pop rock genre , their ability to mix other genres into their style at times makes classifying their musical style difficult . A common thread that runs through the band 's sound is Richards ' literate and often verbose lyrics , which have set the band apart from much of the rest of the Australian music scene . Even early on in their career , Richards ' unique style attracted attention and he has drawn critical acclaim for his poetic style , with one reviewer describing him as " unique " , " refreshing " , and " intellectual " . Allmusic 's Jack Rabid said Richards " exhibits a honey voice " on Sunset Studies , but Grok pointed out that the album was rendered too complex or intricate for many .

Richards ' passion for poetry and literary studies again stood out on Strange Bird . John D. Luerssen of Rolling Stone said " poetry aficionado Richards puts his own literary stamp " on the album , and James Christopher Monger of Allmusic said the album contained " pastoral beauty , labyrinthine arrangements , and breathtaking prose " . Pitchfork Media 's Joe Tangari described the album as " so stuffed with ideas and instruments that it 's wont to rupture from time to time " . This was both a positive and negative criticism ; Tangari complained that at times " there is a surplus of sound " , but also said that the combination of the first two tracks ? " The Vineyard " ( " slow beauty " ) and " This Train Will Be Taking No Passengers " ( " a wailing rockabilly psych raver " ) ? was an excellent set @-@ up . Derek Miller of Stylus Magazine called the opening trio ? the third song being the " simple acoustic guitar and arcing piano " of " Little Wonder " ? bewildering , and that the album remained consistently as such throughout . PopMatters ' Zeth Lundy described Richards ' wordplay as frenzied , and said the " refined , worldly wit " on Strange Bird was striking .

Where Strange Bird was brimming with musical content , on Moo , You Bloody Choir Augie March were more simplified , while still maintaining some of the critically acclaimed aspects of their music . Ammendola considered their third album , led by " One Crowded Hour " , to be significantly different from their previous releases . Chad Grischow of IGN wrote of " lush , mesmerizing music meld with gorgeous melodies brought to life by Richards ' rich vocals that wrap themselves around each instrument " . In The Sydney Morning Herald , Bernard Zuel argued the album was more subdued ; " the tempos and the arrangements are a little quieter and simpler " . Richards ' lyrics , however , still drew praise ; " he writes with a 19th @-@ century novelist 's ear and a Dylanesque tongue " . Miller of Stylus also touched on the fact that " Moo is as direct a shot as you 'll ever get at Augie March " , but that it was nonetheless a " refining and continuation " of the band 's work thus far . Shirley Halperin , writing for Entertainment Weekly , said the album featured " smooth , emotive vocals mingle with soaring melodies that 'd make Paul McCartney proud " . Dan Raper of PopMatters said the lyrics to " One Crowded Hour " were poetic , citing the lines " Well put me in a cage full of lions /

I 'll learn to speak lion / In fact I know the language well " , as well as the " full and glorious " chorus ;

And for one crowded hour , you were the only one in the room  
And I sailed around all those bumps in the night to your beacon in the gloom  
I thought I had found my golden September in the middle of that purple June  
But one crowded hour would lead to my wreck and ruin

Watch Me Disappear was Augie March 's most mainstream pop work to date , described as a further distillation of the band 's earlier , even more complex , music . Richards considered it to be more streamlined than their early work , despite their attempts to maintain a sense of spontaneity . Zuel also noted a removal of much of the backing instrumentation which had acted as " clutter " around Richards ' vocals on earlier work . Scott Podmore wrote in the Herald Sun that the album did not have a standout song or an instant appeal but that it was " a slow burner that takes time to get to know you , but once it does , it 's a friend for good " . Triple J reviewer Jenny Valentish argued that multiple songs from the album could take the place of " One Crowded Hour " as " likely to become wailed for and misquoted at festivals " . She noted a " commercial potential " for the album , despite its more disconcerting and confrontational content .

= = Songwriting = =

Songwriting for Augie March is primarily initiated by Richards ; he delivers demos to the rest of the band members who then collaborate with him to develop the music . Kathy McCabe of The Daily Telegraph suggests " almost every songwriter in Australia has name @-@ checked [ Richards ] as one of the finest tunesmiths of his generation " and that " Richards is a storyteller who is spoken of in reverential terms by peers " . Richards simply states that he enjoys " dabbling with words " , and that people often appreciate him doing so . Despite this , Richards rejects the " literary " reputation he believes the band have gained . At the 2006 ARIA Awards , Midnight Oil 's Rob Hirst called for more political songs ; Richards told Simon Collins of The West Australian he saw great risk in writing political music , and would rather write music that rung true , so that " I can sing the song a thousand times after it 's been written " . Richards asserts he preferred to draw on everyday experiences than on literary influences . He also says that some of the music he writes is intentionally confusing .

The band , and especially Richards , are noted for their perfectionism . In a post @-@ Sunset Studies interview with Grok magazine in 2000 , Williams criticised the song " The Good Gardener ( On How He Fell ) " , to which the interviewer noted " the Augie March perfectionism ... a slavish , romantic , almost passionate pursuit " . This meme continued throughout Augie March 's career ; following the release of Moo , You Bloody Choir , Richards said he was not truly happy with anything he had produced so far . Ammendola agreed , and added that the band considered Moo , You Bloody Choir the weakest of their first three albums , and Sunset Studies the best . Richards later stated that he considered Watch Me Disappear his best album yet . Andrew Murfett wrote in The Age that for Augie March , " creative tension , adverse circumstances and perfectionism seem to go hand in hand " . Whereas Augie March 's first two albums saw Richards maintain control over production , Moo , You Bloody Choir and Watch Me Disappear " became community projects " , and for that reason Richards declared he was not as much a fan of the latter works , though other band members have described the songs on Watch Me Disappear as the band 's best yet .

= = Live concerts = =

Augie March 's live performances have been highly criticised for supposedly failing to live up to the quality of their recorded work . Interruptions are common ; at a 2000 concert following the release of Sunset Studies , Richards rhetorically asked the audience " what 's an Augie gig without glitches ? " , and Inpress ' Jayson Argall described a 2001 performance as " absolutely captivating one moment , utterly frustrating the next " , pointing to numerous instances of Richards halting the show due to minor niggings . Richards will sometimes refuse to play songs popular with fans ; in 2007 Williams told Beat Richards no longer played " Asleep in Perfection " as " Glenn cannot fathom to sing the

words that he wrote back then ... he 's moved on from that place " . He is also reluctant to play " One Crowded Hour " , having " played that song in every possible format and so many times it 's just a ridiculous joke " . Richards once forgot the song 's lyrics during a live performance at Federation Square .

A 2002 live review quoted an overwhelmed Richards as telling his audience " I don 't have anything to say tonight , there 's too many of you " . Another 2002 live review , however , stated that " the band seemed both at ease and happy to be back " when playing one of their first post @-@ Strange Bird concerts. dB magazine 's Steven Hocking , in a review of the band 's 2004 Drones & Vapid Ditties live DVD , said the band are " either unable or unwilling to engage the large audience " , and that they were " just not very visually engaging " live , when compared to the sound of their albums . Performances post @-@ Moo , You Bloody Choir have earned more positive remarks , however , as Richards has focused on improving his stage presence . David Fricke of Rolling Stone lauded an Augie March concert he saw in New York , which assisted the band in making inroads in the United States .

= = Discography = =

= = = Studio albums = = =

Sunset Studies - BMG ( 2000 ) AUS No. 35  
Strange Bird - BMG ( 2002 ) AUS No. 34  
Moo , You Bloody Choir - Sony BMG ( 2006 ) AUS No. 10  
Watch Me Disappear - Sony BMG ( 2008 ) AUS No. 4  
Havens Dumb - Caroline ( 2014 )

= = = Singles / EPs = = =

Thanks for the Memes - Ra Records ( 1998 )  
Waltz - Ra Records ( 1999 )  
" The Mothball " ( 1999 )  
" The Hole in Your Roof " - BMG ( 2000 )  
" Heartbeat and Sails " - BMG ( 2000 )  
" There Is No Such Place " - BMG ( 2001 )  
" Here Comes the Night " - BMG ( 2001 )  
" The Vineyard " - BMG ( 2002 ) AUS No. 31  
" Thanks for the Memes " - BMG re @-@ release ( 2003 )  
" Little Wonder " - BMG ( 2003 )  
" One Crowded Hour " - Sony BMG ( 2006 ) AUS No. 29  
" The Cold Acre " - Sony BMG ( 2006 )  
" Pennywhistle " - Sony BMG ( 2008 )  
" After the Crack Up " - Caroline ( 2014 )  
" A Dog Starved " - Caroline ( 2014 )  
" Never Been Sad " - Caroline ( 2015 )

= = = DVDs = = =

Drones & Vapid Ditties - BMG ( 2004 )