

= Catatonia (band) =

Catatonia were an alternative rock band from Wales who gained popularity in the mid- to late 1990s . The band formed in 1992 after Mark Roberts met Cerys Matthews . The first major lineup featured Dafydd Iwan on drums , Clancy Pegg on keyboard , Owen Powell on guitar and Paul Jones on bass . They recorded two EPs , For Tinkerbell and Hooked .

Pegg was fired prior to work on their first studio album , Way Beyond Blue , while Iwan was replaced with Aled Richards shortly afterwards . This new line @-@ up remained for the rest of the lifetime of the band . The single " You 've Got a Lot to Answer For " received radio airplay and became the band 's first top 40 single in the UK Singles Chart in September 1996 . Their breakout success came at the start of 1998 with the International Velvet album and the release of the single " Mulder and Scully " some two weeks apart . The album went to number one in the album chart , and sold more than 900 @, @ 000 copies being certified triple platinum by British Phonographic Industry , while the single reached number 3 in the singles chart , the highest any Catatonia single would chart .

The follow @-@ up release , " Road Rage " , reached number 5 in May , and was nominated for best song at the Brit Awards and the Ivor Novello Awards , winning at the Q Awards . The title track of the album International Velvet received additional attention , and the band performed it at the opening of the opening ceremony of the 1999 Rugby World Cup on 1 October in the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff . While in Catatonia , Matthews collaborated with Space on " The Ballad of Tom Jones " in March 1998 and with Tom Jones on a cover of " Baby , It 's Cold Outside " in December 1999 . Their final top ten single came in April 1999 with " Dead from the Waist Down " off the following album , Equally Cursed and Blessed . Rumours began to circulate about a breakup , but a further album , Paper Scissors Stone was released in 2001 following a two @-@ year break from live performances .

Matthews ' drinking had long been reported in the tabloids and gossip columns , and she entered rehab in mid @-@ 2001 for drinking and smoking . The tour to support Paper Scissors Stone was cancelled , and a month later , the band announced that they were breaking up . Matthews has subsequently released solo albums , while Powell has become a radio presenter and joined the supergroup The Stand to release a charity single . Critics have highlighted the use of metaphors in Catatonia 's work , and songs have been compared to poetry by critics . Writing duties had been shared across the band , although had been led by Matthews and Roberts . They disagreed with being labelled an indie band , with Powell saying they had only ever sought to write pop music .

= = History = =

The story that Catatonia were formed after Mark Roberts spotted Cerys Matthews busking in Cardiff in 1992 was an invention for the media in order to give the band a newsworthy biography . While the duo did go busking , they didn 't meet this way . Matthews had been a fan of Roberts ' previous band Y Cyrff . They began dating as well as writing songs together at the end of 1991 . For four years after this they remained in the relationship , many aspects of this being played out publicly in their lyrics . They took the name of the band from Matthews ' experience working in a mental health facility as well as the novel The Doors of Perception by Aldous Huxley . They believed it to mean a sense of extreme pleasure and sleep , and wrote the song " Sweet Catatonia " , subsequently naming the band after the song . As Sweet Catatonia , Matthews and Roberts recorded a series of demos at the city centre youth project in Cardiff , nicknamed " Grassroots " .

Roberts and Matthews routinely encountered Owen Powell during this time , who had been in Robert 's Y Cyrff and now had a band called Colour 45 . Both bands entered a band competition to play at the Cardiff Bay Music Fiesta , and while Colour 45 came tenth and was given a place on the bill , Sweet Catatonia placed 45th . Roberts and Matthews hired a drummer , Stephen " Frog " Jenkins from the band U Thant , and continued to record bilingual Welsh / English tracks . The band began to play live , with Matthews and Roberts busking to support their income . They were spotted by the girlfriend of the lead singer of the band The Pooh Sticks , who thought that Matthews would

make a good female voice for the group . But after seeing Sweet Catatonia perform , the band members didn 't agree and so Matthews remained with Catatonia . Further recordings were made , with Guto Pryce joining the trio . This session included the track " Gyda Gwen " which attracted the attention of Rhys Mwyn at Crai Records .

= = = The Crai EPs , " Whale " and " Bleed " (1993 ? 95) = = =

The band line up changed as they signed to Crai , with Jenkins and Pryce departing for other projects . Mwyn arranged for Matthews and Roberts to be joined by Dafydd Ieuan on drums ; Ieuan had previously played in bands who had performed alongside Robert 's Y Cyrff . Another member of the new shortened " Catatonia " was former Y Cyrff member Paul Jones on bass guitar . The final member was Londoner Clancy Pegg on keyboards , who had befriended Roberts and Matthews after moving to Cardiff . Mwyn used his contacts to get Catatonia onto Welsh language television , and strove to move their live performances away from Cardiff so that they weren 't simply playing in front of their regulars the entire time . They had their first overseas gigs in Germany , support Mwyn in his punk band Anrehfn . Catatonia were hired by political party Plaid Cymru to headline a Welsh language concert at Builth Wells in August 1993 , but they performed in both Welsh and English .

Despite being signed to Crai , this was more as promoter than as a record label itself . It was only when Roberts suggested that Catatonia record some extended plays (EPs) after two months with the label that Mwyn made the arrangements . The first , entitled For Tinkerbelle , had a cover photo taken by Roberts and Matthews ' housemate Roland Dafis . Mwyn successfully got the record on BBC Radio 1 after sending a copy to radio presenter Mark Radcliffe . After Iestyn George heard the release , the journalist named it as the record of the week for the magazine NME . For Tinkerbelle contained some early tracks , including a version of " Sweet Catatonia " . Matthews later explained that while she had liked the songs on the EP , she felt that she wasn 't good at performing live at the time . They signed to Nursery Records to release the single " Bleed " . Catatonia 's first national interview was published following the release of " For Tinkerbelle " , a 300 word piece appearing in Melody Maker .

They held their first London gigs in support of the EP , under the advice of George and The Pooh Sticks lead singer Huw Williams . After warm up gigs in Cardiff and Birmingham , the London performance took place at the Samuel Beckett pub in Stoke Newington on 13 November 1993 alongside Anrehfn and Margi Clarke . Further Welsh radio and television appearances followed , as did an interview for NME . When George arrived for the interview , Matthews asked if he 'd be interested in becoming the band 's manager . He politely declined , saying that he didn 't have the experience . On the 19 and 20 February 1994 , the band 's follow @-@ up EP , Hooked was recorded in Llandwrog , Gwynedd , and produced by Ken Nelson who they had met on Radio Wales . A performance was set up at the Falcon the Splash Club in London where several music executives were to be present . The band drove down from Cardiff in a Ford Transit with their equipment and then spent the afternoon drinking . Just prior to going out on stage , they began taking cocaine , the result of which was a terrible performance later lamented by Roberts . The trip became a sobering experience , as they made no money from it and were only paid £ 50 for a gig at Kingston University a day later . Matthews later recalled that they 'd needed to borrow money from a fan to pay the toll on the Severn Bridge on the way back to Cardiff .

The band returned to the Falcon , where they played a still shambolic , but better gig in front of record executives . Meanwhile , George had put the band in touch with their first manager , Richard Lowe from MRM management . They made further appearances on Welsh television to support the release of Hooked in May , but another drunken performance followed , this time in Newport . MRM sent them on a short tour in France during the second week of May , and then started their first UK wide support tour to the band Salad . When due to perform at the Cnapan Music Festival in Wales on 2 July , the band ran into some difficulties . The security team refused to let Matthews in as they didn 't recognise her . It was only after the intervention of one of the fans of the band , actor Rhys Ifans , that she was allowed in .

Mwyn departed the band when the band 's time with Crai came to an end , and a few weeks later

MRM sought to remove Pegg , leaving it to Matthews to tell her . Pegg was upset , and refused to discuss it with journalists . After her departure , the single " Whale " was published on the Rough Trade Records label . The band had rushed to record it , having only been given a month 's notice by the label that they would release on their songs in September 1994 . Unlike Hooked , " Whale " was named the NME single of the week akin to For Tinkerbelle . The band appeared in the mainstream press for two incidents , the first was when they were thrown off a train at Swindon as they were travelling to London after arguing with a train guard about punk rock , and the other when they swore at the bouncers in Welsh at the Underworld club in Camden and were banned . A further single , " Bleed " was recorded the following November , and was released in February 1995 on Nursery Records . Geoff Travis , who had released " Whale " for his Rough Trade Records , offered the band £ 350 @,@ 000 to sign for Blanco y Negro Records , a subsidiary of Warner Bros. Records . They duly signed .

= = = Way Beyond Blue (1995 ? 96) = = =

The band began work on a debut album , alongside producer Paul Sampson . Ieuan introduced Sampson to Aled Richards , who later replaced him as Catatonia 's drummer when Ieuan left to join the Super Furry Animals . The label wanted to market the band , and so at some expense , had a famed photographer Gered Mankowitz conduct a photoshoot with Matthews . She , the band and their management all hated the photos , but the label wanted to use them in order not to write the cost off as a loss . In order to have some photos , a series of black and white photos of Matthews drinking a bottle of wine while wearing a Pepsi T @-@ shirt were taken by one of the press agency staff . Warner Bros liked the images and authorised their use . The band had a recording session at Sawmills Studios , Cornwall , which saw some disagreements during recording between Matthews and Roberts . Afterwards , Sampson was removed as producer following a row over the arrangement for " Sweet Catatonia " .

Music reviewers responded with surprise when the band began to perform live while sober . Meanwhile , the release of " Sweet Catatonia " as a single was pushed back to January 1996 due to the issues with finding a new producer . The first time he met the band was when they arrived to record at the Maison Rouge Studios in London . They found working with him far easier than Sampson , as Matthews later explained that he took their ideas into account . They returned to live performances after completing the recording of the album , and Ieuan left to join the Super Furry Animals , being replaced with Richards . They were actively looking for a second guitarist , and hired Powell , another member of Y Cyrff , who by this time was working as a music technician for the Super Furry Animals .

As they prepared for the album , they released a special release for the Catatonia fanclub which had formed after " Bleed " . Containing " Blow the Millenium , Blow " and " Beautiful Sailor " , the vinyl record was sent to all members . The following month , on 18 January 1996 , " Sweet Catatonia " was released . It became the first Catatonia single to reach the UK singles chart , peaking at 61st position . MRM sought to expand the profile of the band in Europe , publishing the compilation The Sublime Magic of Catatonia . The band toured the UK , supported by Liverpool @-@ based band Space , and while touring " Lost Cat " was released on 22 April . It just missed out on the top 40 , reaching 41st position . As part of the tour , they appeared at several music festivals that year including Reading , Phoenix and at Madstock ! 3 in London .

Catatonia began to get radio exposure with the single " You 've Got a Lot to Answer For " , which entered the top 40 for the first time in September 1996 . After several delays , the album Way Beyond Blue was released on 30 September . There were 12 tracks , several of which had appeared on previous EPs and as b @-@ sides to singles . On the background of the successful album , there were problems behind the scenes . Matthews and Roberts relationship broke down , with Roberts ending it and seeing someone else within days . The duo sought to keep the band together despite the problems , and they found a way to continue working together . Warner Bros. Records had intended to release " Lost Cat " from Way Beyond Blue in the United States , but due to problems at the record label this didn 't occur .

= = = International Velvet (1997 ? 98) = = =

While Roberts sought to begin work on a second album , they began to tour with fellow Welsh band The Manic Street Preachers as a support act , and the label released the compilation Tourist EP in Japan . They began recording demos for a new album in Cardiff at the start of January 1997 . The subject matter was mostly based on the stories coming out of Roberts and Matthews ' breakup . They booked in a recording session for the second album in June , at the Monnow Valley Studio in Rockfield , Monmouthshire . In the run up to the recording , they performed for the first time in the United States , supporting The Boo Radleys in New York . They went on to perform in Austin , Texas and in Los Angeles during March . The following month , they conducted a ten night tour of the UK , in which songs such as " Mulder and Scully " made their first public appearances .

As they worked on the album , Catatonia feared that they were about to be dropped by their record label , which they summed up in the song " That 's All Folks " . Further references to difficulties with Warner Bros were included in " I Am The Mob " , but they preferred working with producer TommyD on the production than they had with those on Way Beyond Blue . The first single off the album had intended to be " Mulder and Scully " , but the label insisted that " I Am the Mob " was released instead . As with previous works , this was delayed , and Catatonia performed at festivals during the summer of 1997 while they waited for the release . They were booked for the Glastonbury Festival , but upon arriving they were told their spot had been cancelled . Matthews continued to get the band mentioned in the gossip columns of newspapers due to her drunken behaviour . One example followed an incident at a party celebrating the victory of the yes vote in the Welsh devolution referendum , 1997 , as when asked how she felt about the result , she responded " What we want to know is who is going to shag Siân Lloyd ? " Lloyd subsequently launched legal action , but accepted an apology from Matthews .

The new album was further delayed as Warner Bros ordered the removal of the six @-@ minute long anti @-@ Warner track " That 's All Folks " . Meanwhile , work continued on " I Am The Mob " with a video shoot directed by Kevin Allen . The single was released on 6 October and entered the top 40 for a single week in the 40th position . Catatonia found their roles reversed shortly afterwards , performing as the support act to Space after the Liverpoolians had a series of top 20 singles . They finished off the year with a tour of their own , originally aimed to support the new album , but this was still being held back by the label . Warners replaced " That 's All Folks " with " My Selfish Gene " , and agreed to release " Mulder and Scully " in January 1998 and International Velvet some two weeks later .

" Mulder and Scully " launched them into the mainstream public consciousness when it was released on 19 January 1998 . It entered the charts at number 3 ; the highest position a single by Catatonia would ever achieve . International Velvet became the breakout album for the band , charting at number one in the UK Album Charts . The album sold more than 900 @,@ 000 copies in 22 months , being certified triple platinum by the British Phonographic Industry . International Velvet was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize 1998 , which was awarded to Gomez for Bring It On .

Of the five singles released from the album , " Road Rage " became the most critically acclaimed , being nominated for best single at both the Ivor Novello Awards and the Brit Awards , while winning at the Q Awards . Despite this , it did not chart as high as " Mulder and Scully " , reaching number 5 on the UK Singles Charts . The subsequent releases " Strange Glue " and " Game On " did not get into the top ten , reaching number 11 and number 33 respectively .

The title track of the album , " International Velvet " , featuring the line " Everyday I wake up and thank the Lord I 'm Welsh " and Welsh language verses , received additional attention from the media . Matthews explained in an interview that she wanted to turn to invert the idea of being Welsh from an apparent negative into a positive , " We 're not seen to be very good at anything . Our football team is shit . The song is saying , despite all these things , I still wake up in the morning and thank the Lord that I 'm Welsh . Hopefully by now people realise that Wales is brimmed full of talent and we 're great people with massive brains . " In front of 70 @,@ 000 spectators , Catatonia performed " International Velvet " at the opening ceremony of the 1999 Rugby World Cup in the

Millennium Stadium in Cardiff . The album became the first to be released for Catatonia in the United States , but failed to chart . The Washington Post called it " overlooked " .

= = = Equally Cursed and Blessed (1999 ? 2000) = = =

Following the success of International Velvet , and the heavy touring that followed , the band were pleased to return to the Monnow Valley Studio to record a third studio album . On the recommendation of TommyD , the band had been recording sample tracks onto a DPS12 hard disk recorder in their tour bus while on an American tour and they returned to Monnow Valley to record them properly . The band felt less pressure on them for the new album , due to the success of International Velvet and because they no longer feared being dropped by the label .

In January 1999 , the band announced their new album , Equally Cursed and Blessed . The title was taken from a line from " Storm the Palace " , a song on International Velvet . Preceded by the first single , " Dead from the Waist Down " on 22 March , Equally Cursed and Blessed was released on 12 April . The album , like International Velvet , reached the top spot in the UK charts . Catatonia were so popular at the time that in April 1999 , Way Beyond Blue , International Velvet and Equally Cursed and Blessed were all in the top 40 of the UK Albums Chart . But , the singles from Equally Cursed and Blessed didn 't repeat the success seen in the previous album . " Dead From The Waist Down " ended up becoming the final single by Catatonia to reach the top ten in the singles charts , getting to number seven in the UK singles charts . " Londinium " reached number 20 , while " Karaoke Queen " barely entered the top 40 at number 36 .

In April , they played two outdoor concerts at the Llangollen International Pavilion in front of 6 @, @ 000 people on successive days . This was a warm up to their largest concert so far , held at Margam Country Park near Port Talbot . Guitarist Powell stated the importance of the Llangollen performances , as North Wales was the first place where the crowd had sung along to their songs . Matthews added that Margam Park was chosen as no @-@ one had ever held a concert there before .

Catatonia supported R.E.M. on two European dates in June ; there was an incident at Kindl @-@ Bühne Wuhlheide , Berlin , when Matthews ran on the stage during the R.E.M. performance to kiss bassist Mike Mills . It was later attributed to her having drunk a bottle of wine . The band had wanted to release " Karaoke Queen " as the second single off the album , but the record label forced them to release " Londinium " instead . Matthews was also equally angry that the cost for the video for the single was higher than the cost to produce the entire album . A month later , Barry Cawley , who had been a roadie for the band since it originally formed was killed in a road accident in North Wales . Cawley had been cycling when he was killed by a driver in a Fiat Punto . Roberts explained prior to the funeral that the roadie had helped keep Matthews ' " feet on the ground " .

The band attempted to break into the United States once more with Equally Cursed and Blessed . The album release included two tracks from International Velvet , including " Road Rage " . They had been scheduled to make appearances on American television shows such as The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and conduct interviews with the media . But after drummer Richards was taken to hospital in the UK with appendicitis , it was abandoned and the rest of the band returned to the UK . Richards had remained in the UK and was due to join them a day and a half later . Rumours began to appear in the press that the band was about to break up , but a band spokesmen stated that the intention was to return to the States later in the year . Performances did take place in Japan , Australia and New Zealand .

= = = Paper Scissors Stone and break @-@ up (2001 ? present) = = =

The band took a break from performing live between the NetAid charity concert in October 1999 and 2001 . They returned to the stage for a further charity gig on 28 April , in support of Unison 's campaign for a living wage at the Manchester Evening News Arena . Matthews said prior to the performance that " It 's a cause I think 's really important and it just seemed to be the right time for us to come back ? it 's a long , long time since we played live . It should be really great . We 're

really looking forward to what they (the new songs) are going to sound like live . It 'll be good to get back on the old live circuit again . " They played several tracks from their upcoming album , at that point entitled It 's What 's Not There That Makes What 's There What It Is . By May , it had been renamed to Paper Scissors Stone . Matthews was looking forward to the new releasing , explaining to NME that " I think it 's stronger than the last album , a bit more avant garde ! ... It 's a bit less stupid . [Equally Cursed and Blessed] was all over the shop stylistically , I think it 's a bit more focused . And I think it 's a bit more impassioned " .

Catatonia went on to headline the NME stage at the T in the Park festival on 7 July , having conducted a warm up concert at The Lighthouse , Glasgow . The lead single from the new album , " Stone by Stone , was poorly received by the media with NME giving it a score of one out of ten , calling it " lumpen , the voice grating " and that Catatonia are " fading from the public consciousness quicker than Shane Ritchie " and " awkwardly out of date " .

The media reported that Matthews entered drug rehabilitation for drinking and smoking in mid 2001 , with the singer stating that she was also suffering from depression . As a result , the tour to support Paper Scissors Stone was cancelled at the start of August . At the time this was because Matthews had not yet finished her " ongoing treatment for anxiety and exhaustion " . It was suggested that the band might split up in August , which was dismissed as " rubbish " by Catatonia . However , on 21 September it was announced that they were breaking up with the record label releasing a statement which said " Their decision has been made entirely amicably , and there are no details at present as to their future plan " .

Tributes came in for the band from a variety of sources , with BBC Radio 1 presenter Huw Stephens describing them as " international superstars " , and adding " I always thought they were one of the best Welsh bands . They were not just a throwaway pop band ? they had real , meaningful songs . " Iestyn George , editor of the magazine Maxim at the time , praised the influence that Matthews had through Catatonia in the later 1990s , saying that " Around 1998 and 1999 , Cerys was in the papers every other day " . He also referenced that she had never intended this role as Catatonia had thought that they had already peaked prior to International Velvet .

Matthews went on to release her first solo album , Cockahoop , in May 2003 . Her second album Never Said Goodbye was released in August 2006 . In November 2007 she released a mini @-@ album of Welsh language songs Awyren = Aeroplane on the My Kung Fu label . Matthews returned in late 2009 as the first recording artist to release albums simultaneously in both Welsh and English (Paid Edrych I Lawr and Don 't Look Down , respectively) . Powell has gone on to write songs , including for Duffy , and from 2007 onwards has presented a Welsh language show on Radio Cymru . He also replaced drummer Stuart Cable from the Stereophonics , following his death , in the supergroup The Stand . They released a charity single in 2010 to fund construction of a statue of Welsh footballer Fred Keenor in Cardiff city centre .

= = Side projects and collaborations = =

While working on International Velvet , Matthews was approached by Tommy Scott of the Liverpool @-@ based band Space to perform on the single duet " The Ballad of Tom Jones " . They had met while on tour two years prior and had kept in touch . She joined them on tour for several dates to sing the duet live . Matthews said of the song , " It 's great . I feel like Nancy Sinatra because it 's a superb ballad . " She went on to duet with Tom Jones on a single for his album Reload . It was a cover of the song " Baby , It 's Cold Outside " , which was released as a Christmas single in 1999 . She was credited as " Cerys from Catatonia " .

= = Musical style and influences = =

Matthews said that they did not have any particular influences in their music . However , she said that her family had always been singing along to BBC Radio 2 . She held the ambition to have the band appear on Radio 2 , as due to poor levels of radio reception in Wales they had been unable to listen to other stations . She attributed the style of Welsh music as never attempting to be cool as

they wouldn't have been aware of what was in fashion at the time . Catatonia frequently used metaphors in their songwriting , such as " Road Rage " which references emotional anger . The line " If it turns to blue , what are we going to do ? " in the single " You 've Got A Lot To Answer For " from Way Beyond Blue references a pregnancy test . Other works from International Velvet were compared to poetry by Katharine Viner in The Guardian .

All members of the band were involved in the writing of songs , and there may have been more than one person 's set of lyrics appearing in a single release . Powell said that " It 's quite interesting to have two people 's viewpoints within the same song . I 'm not sure how many bands actually do that . In most bands , the guitarist writes the music and the singer writes the lyrics . We tend to share things out more evenly . " He also criticised the attachment of an indie pop label to the band , saying " We 're seen as one of the indie bands . But we 've always just tried to make pop music . Even if it is pop music with a hard edge and quite a twisted little view of life . We 've always seen ourselves as a little bigger than an indie band . "

The style of music played by Catatonia changed slightly over time . Adrian Thrills of the Daily Mail said that Way Beyond Blue was " guitar dominated " and showed them to be a " talented @-@ but @-@ typical alternative rock outfit " . But the songs on International Velvet showed that they had become " one of Britain 's most inventive pop bands " . An article in The People newspaper described International Velvet as the " purest pop " . By the time that Paper Scissors Stone was released , the band were using country music influences in some of their songs according to Fiona Shepherd at The Scotsman . She compared the music to that of the Scottish band Mogwai , while elements of " Nightfall " were compared to Arab Strap . Thrills compared some of the elements of the album to those of Roxy Music .

= = Band members = =

= = Discography = =

= = = Studio albums = = =

= = = Compilation albums = = =

= = = Singles and EPs = = =

= = = Promotional releases = = =

" Christmas ' 95 " (fan club vinyl record) ? 1995

" Tourist " (Japan EP) ? 1996

" A 's & B 's of Catatonia " (Promo EP) ? 1998