

# **AUGIE MARCH**

## **MOO, YOU BLOODY CHOIR**

Is the third album by Augie March. It is now platinum in Australia and released in the US through Jive Zomba on August 7, 2007.

[www.augie-march.com](http://www.augie-march.com)

[www.myspace.com/augiemarch](http://www.myspace.com/augiemarch)

## **BRIEF INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Augie March, the biography. We are a ten year old band, born and still living in Melbourne, Australia where music is alive every night of the week. Three of us were born and raised in the country outside of Melbourne and migrated to the city for schooling in various arts and humanities.

At the moment we number five; a few years ago we added a pianist/piano-accordionist to an already accomplished, organic and adventurous group of people. He also teaches music copyright law part time, so nobody can put anything over us when it comes to publishing contracts. His name is Kiernan Box.

Adam Donovan is, among other things, our lead guitarist. His style is adventurous and unorthodox. He treats his instrument like a formula one car driver treats his vehicle, and yet, to watch Adam on stage you might think otherwise. His favorite saying is – “There are many ways to skin a cat.”

We all admire truth and beauty at Augie March, but one of us surpasses the others in his pursuit of these objectives. His name is David Williams. He is the drummer and percussionist. His heroes are predominantly in the jazz field, but he takes as much inspiration from the stories of Charles Dickens, and to a lesser degree Rudyard Kipling's forays into verse. He has a small son called Ziggy.

Singer/songwriter Glenn Richards is perhaps the most difficult member of Augie March to describe. This is largely because he is enigmatic and whether artistic people cultivate their own enigma or whether it comes naturally, it makes for a difficult task to profile them. Briefly, he has a hermit's disposition, but drink makes him wild and sociable. He has been described more than once as being 'conventionally handsome'.

Edmondo Ammendola provides bass guitar and is a Melbourne native. It was initially very difficult to convince Edmond of the need to leave Melbourne and take our music to people in other places around Australia. This was due in part to his fear of aeroplanes, and his unwillingness to travel great distances in any vehicle not powered by sunshine.

The people who hear and come to believe in Augie March tend to be passionate about us and the things we do. We think that this is because there are always true songs to write and that we are not scared of writing them.

We hope you have a good experience with our music.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY**

Adam, Dave and Glenn grew up in and around Shepparton in country Victoria, Australia, and met up again in Melbourne in 1996. They quickly recruited bassist Edmond, who they were studying music with, and Augie March was born. The bands first live performance was at a gallery to celebrate a friend's exhibition. There may have been a dubious cover version or two along with some early Glenn originals. From there they progressed to playing several of Melbourne's excellent live venues for unsigned original bands, and attracted the ear of discerning music lovers in the public and music industry alike. After just a handful of gigs they were signed to Ra Records. They recorded their debut EP, "Thanks for the Memes" with Victor Van Vugt (Beth Orton, Nick Cave) and released it in January 1998. After some nice reviews and a bit of airplay, they set about recording the mini-album, "Waltz", in October 1998, which rapidly built the band a solid fan base in Australia and other parts of the world. This was partially due to the song Asleep in Perfection, which got a lot of radio play, but also due to the strength and diversity of the mini-album as a whole. Songs like Rich Girl and The Moth Ball were live favourites over the next several years; Waltz still sells regularly to this day as copies get worn out, recommended, passed on or 'borrowed' from loungerooms all over the world. Collectors of trivia will note that the video clip made for Asleep in Perfection features a singer-less band as the gentleman in question prepared himself for an all-day shoot by drinking till dawn, rendering him incapable of speech or dramatic movement.

## **SUNSET STUDIES**

In late 2000 Augie March released their first full-length album, "Sunset Studies". This album wasn't released outside of Australia. It stayed in the Australian National Albums (ARIA) chart for half the year. Listeners of

national #1 youth radio station Triple J voted "Sunset Studies" into their Top 5 Albums of the Year. Again, the album is still finding new homes many years after release; it crept its way through various musical communities of the world like a creeping vine. It ranked in Jack Rabid's influential U.S mag The Big Takeover's Top 40 Albums of 2001 – without being released there. Similarly, in Q Magazine's (UK) Readers Poll for the Best 50 Albums of The Last 15 Years; "Sunset Studies" got a mention (by virtue of enthused fans), without a UK release. It has found willing ears across Europe, in Japan, South America, Canada and many other parts of the galaxy. Video clips were made for The Hole in Your Roof, Heartbeat and Sails and There Is No Such Place. There Is No Such Place featured the piano and backing vocal talents of the late great Awesome Bobby Dawson, a longtime friend of the band who joined in early 2000, and tragically departed from this world about a year later. He is not only very, very, very fondly remembered by friends and fans as an incredible man but he is present in Augie March and what they do.

Remarkably, this album is now nearing Gold status in Australia as it just keeps on ticking over, powered by word of mouth.

## **STRANGE BIRD**

Producers Paul McKercher and Chris Thompson, who individually worked with the band so successfully on Sunset Studies, were invited back into the studio in 2002 to cook up the second album. The band had set up camp in a disused telephone company building in Preston, outer Melbourne to write the album some months earlier, so hit the studio with a swag of new tunes that were fresh out of the place where music comes from. The results were very satisfactory; the band members on the whole were far happier with the recordings than they had been with parts of Sunset Studies.

Strange Bird is more concise than the epic Sunset Studies, yet covers more sonic terrain. It veers from the sweet, building harmony of The Vineyard, through the Wild West gallop of This Train, the heavy Song In The Key of Chance and muted melancholy of O Mi Sol Mi Lon to the plaintive balladry of The Night is A Blackbird, and that's all in the first half hour. Like its predecessor, Strange Bird includes two tracks recorded by the band themselves (O Mi Sol Li Lon and Sunstroke House), originally meant as demo's but which ended up making the grade.

It was released in Australia in late 2002, and got praise such as

"I'm yet to see a convincing counter-argument to my assertion that we haven't produced a genuinely great act in Australia for a decade or

more, but I'm not alone in thinking that Augie March may well be the band we'll look back on in five or 10 years and say, yep, they were the ones. And in songwriter Glenn Richards they have a lyricist without parallel in Australia" SYDNEY MORNING HERALD 9-10.11.02 - Bernard Zuel

It was then released in the US by Spinart, and got an 8.2 review from Pitchfork, feature album on All Music Guide, great reviews from David Fricke at Rolling Stone and a whole bunch more. The band toured the US twice in this period, playing variously with Gomez and Wilco.

## **MOO, YOU BLOODY CHOIR**

In early 2006 the band's third album "Moo, You Bloody Choir" was released. The dam walls burst.

This album hit platinum within a year, got nominated for six ARIA Awards (the Australian Grammys) including Album of the Year, Single of the Year and Best Group, it won the prestigious Australian Music Prize for album of the year (like the UK's Mercury Prize), the single One Crowded Hour was voted #1 in the massive Triple J radio's Hottest 100 poll of 2006, beating all comers in a poll voted by over 650,000 listeners, that song also earned Glenn Richards an APRA Award for Song of the Year voted by 47,000 Australian songwriters.

From there, a release in the US via the powerful Jive Zomba group followed in August 2007, and later that year in the UK via Columbia.

Moo, You Bloody Choir was recorded in Melbourne, San Francisco, and the band's own studio in Nagambie (in country Victoria). It was produced by longtime collaborator (and renowned Australian producer) Paul McKercher (You Am I, the Cruel Sea), illustrious Captain Beefheart alumnus Eric Drew Feldman (PJ Harvey, Polyphonic Spree), and Augie March. The album was mixed by the esteemed Mark Howard (Bob Dylan's Time Out of Mind, Tom Waits, U2). While covering some similar terrain as their previous efforts, the band's sound and production value reaches new heights on Moo, resulting in an album rich with mesmerizing melodies, classic rock 'n' roll harmonies, innovative arrangements, and Richards' soaring vocals.

The album's opener and breakout single, "One Crowded Hour," begins with its gentle guitars and quiet piano opening, then builds and builds and builds, anchored by its enthralling chorus:

"But for one crowded hour you were the only one in the room/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.”

Often misperceived as a love song, the track stems from a rather unlikely inspiration.

“I was house sitting for a friend, another Australian songwriter,” he recalls, “and she has this wonderful house full of books and vinyl. At the same time, I was reading a book called *One Crowded Hour*, which is a biography of a wartime correspondent, a cameraman named Neil Davis. He lived an extraordinary life and was unfortunately killed in a relatively harmless infraction, where he quite famously filmed his own death when his camera dropped in front of him and was still rolling. It’s an amazing book. The song itself, that’s the best way I can describe where it came from. It’s a song with three very distinct verses and each verse seems to tell its own story.”

Even after repeated listening, *Moo, You Bloody Choir* keeps revealing more and more. There’s the chilling, piano-driven “The Cold Acre” (“There’s a place I’ve been told/and when I grow old I may go there/I’ve been told that my family’s bones may lie under the snow there”), the rousing rocker “Just Passing Through,” the stark, Dylan-esque “Bottle Baby,” and the subtle re-working of the enduring “There Is No Such Place” (originally released on the band’s debut album). And that’s just touching the surface. Thirteen songs deep and there’s not an ounce of filler.

The most compelling attribute to Augie March’s music is Richards’ evocative lyrical imagery. Poetic, heartfelt, wry, and sometimes cryptic, Richards’ lyrics read remarkably well even without music, quite a rare feat for any contemporary rock writing. Perhaps such literate prose should be expected from a band that lifted their name from Saul Bellow’s picaresque novel, *The Adventures of Augie March*.

“My conception of the singer/songwriter is very much a 70’s conception,” he explains about his lyrical aspirations, “which was generally somebody who wrote strong words, with the words no less a part of the song than the melody and the music. They’re all intertwined. That’s what I’ve always tried to do. For me that means having words that will read on their own quite strongly, not necessarily making a terrible amount of sense, but certainly something that every time I sing a line there’s substance to that line. It’s the only way I can sing so many words.”

Over a decade together and new adventures continue to unfold for Augie March. With the stateside release of *Moo, You Bloody Choir*,

another new chapter begins. "It's very much about starting again," he says, "and I think we're ready for that."

And for those discovering Augie March for the first time, what does Richards hope to convey?

"Probably the most important thing is that we're not a band that will let people down if they become attached to us. We deliver interesting records that are designed to stand a certain amount of time, hopefully a long time. Those are the kinds of records that I've always loved, the records that reveal themselves very, very slowly. That's what we always try to do. It means that there's always something to look forward to."

## **AUGIE MARCH**

Adam Donovan - guitars

Dave Williams – drums and percussion

Edmond Ammendola - bass

Glenn Richards – vocals and guitar

Kiernan Box – keys, piano