

# TO HERE KNOWS WHEN - GREAT IRISH ALBUMS REVISITED

## Mute by Catchers

**Catchers** came from Portstewart, the small seaside town in County Derry four miles west of Portrush. Singer-songwriter and guitarist **Dale Grundle** formed the band with **Alice Lemon** on backing vocals and keyboards and **Peter Kelly** on drums. After a move to London via Dublin, **Ger Fitzgerald** from Limerick band They Do It With Mirrors, also joined on bass.

'Cotton Dress', the band's debut single, was released on *Setanta Records* in May 1994. *Melody Maker* awarded it Single of the Week and described it as "exquisite" and "blissfully beautiful". *Catchers* were described as, "sublime, enchanting and some strange kind of wonderful". Over at the NME 'Shifting', the band's second single, was described as putting you, "in mind of a sweeter Smiths or a poppier Echo and the Bunnymen." The review continued: "The voices of singers Dale and lemon intertwine like a folky, more innocent version of Evan Dando and Juliana Hatfield."

*Catchers* recorded *Mute*, their debut album in France with Mike Hedges producing.

The songs may have been recorded in Normandy but they were inspired by the band's hometown. "The songs for *Mute* were written in Portstewart," says Dale.

"For one period of time we were living in an old house that was kind of falling apart but it was right beside the sea so we'd hear the sea every morning when we woke up and we'd work on the songs there and I think that kind of influenced the sound a bit."

When *Mute* was released in October 1994 the reviews were glowing, not least in France. Bernard Lenoir, the renowned French DJ, and *Les Inrockuptibles*, the French music magazine, were early champions kickstarting a continuing love affair between the French public and the Portstewart band. When *Mute* was reissued on vinyl a few years ago Dale and Alice were invited to play a number of shows in France.

Reflecting on his happiest memory of being in *Catchers* Dale recalls their earliest French tours: "the series of gigs that we did around France, I think they just changed our lives. We had this amazing connection with the country."



Being on stage with my friends that I'd left Portstewart with, it was an amazing thing."

"It was a juxtaposition of your life going in a really weird and crazy direction but at the same time you're sitting with those songs that came from your home that were about you," says Alice

"They were really strange times, but great times. You don't feel like that was a part of your life that happened and that was then and this is now, it's a part of the tapestry of the world that you're living in. I know that I take it with me and I'm absolutely sure that Dale does too. It's really amazing to have done it and it's still amazing that it's part of who I am. I have to say thanks very much Dale for asking me to be in the band."

"Thanks for saying yes," responds Dale.

"You're welcome," shoots back Alice laughing.

*Mute* and *Stooping to Fit*, the band's second album, are both available on Bandcamp.

*Alice Lemon and Dale Grundle revisit Mute by Catchers on To Here Knows When - Great Irish Albums Revisited, available on all podcast platforms. Episode notes and further information: [www.paulmcdermott.ie/podcast](http://www.paulmcdermott.ie/podcast)*

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