



THE CATENARY WIRES

TIL THE MORNING



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Tracklisting

1. Dream Town
2. Hollywood
3. Sixteen Again
4. Dark Brown Eyes
5. Back On Hastings Pier
6. Love On The Screen
7. Half-written
8. Tie Me To The Rails
9. So Quiet In This Home
10. I'll Light Your Way Back
11. Til The Morning
12. Dancing

About THE CATENARY WIRES

The Catenary Wires are Rob Pursey and Amelia Fletcher. They specialise in emotive indie duets, capturing the spirits of Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazelwood, Serge Gainsbourg and Brigitte Bardot, and releasing them into modern Britain. The resulting songs will appeal to fans of Courtney Barnett and Kurt Vile or Isobel Campbell and Mark Lanegan. On this album, they are joined by Andy Lewis (Paul Weller Group, Spearmint) on cello, mellotron and percussion, and Fay Hallam (Makin' Time, Prime Movers) on Hammond organ and backing vocals. Matthew King (a classical composer) plays piano. Nick and Claire Sermon play brass. The local Kentish countryside provides ambient noise.

About TIL THE MORNING

The album was recorded during 2018 at the Sunday School, in the middle of nowhere in Kent. It is a big step forward from their first album (Red Red Skies on Elefant Records/Matinee Recordings): more complex and more beguiling, with a multi-layered sound that reflects a range of additional instruments, including harmonium, bells and an old trailer. It was produced by Andy Lewis, who has recently produced albums for Judy Dyble and French Boutik. Track 1, Dream Town, is the first single from the album. The album launch will be on 14 June at St Pancras Old Church in London. The band will play in the UK in July, the US in August and Germany later this year.

MATT HAYNES, ex-head of Sarah Records, writes:

When a wire is hung from two fixed points, the shape it makes is a catenary. Its beauty lies in its simplicity – so natural, so effortless.

And when two people who, after starring in a quartet of legendary pop bands, have themselves become pop legends, decide to leave London's indie scene to those with fewer candles on their cakes and set up home in a distant green corner of Kent... but who then, one winter's day, pick up their daughter's small guitar, just to see what happens... the sound they make is The Catenary Wires, *aka* Amelia Fletcher and Rob Pursey, formerly of Tender Trap, Marine Research, Heavenly and proto-riot-grrrl machismo-mocking punk-pop explosion Talulah Gosh.

Away from the city, you become more aware of the seasons, the stars, your shivering smallness in the vast dark emptiness of space. No streetlamps light your way back to home and family. These things could scare you. And the rhythms you hear aren't those of a kick drum and bass, but of life around the lanes and fields.

Til The Morning isn't folk music, though, fetishising the rustic and the past with straw-headed notions of authenticity. The recordings might be home-made in an unsoundproofed room, with each sigh as clear as breath on an icy morning, and the snare an old metal trailer hit with a stick, but they're computer literate and polished to a warm sheen. And when birdsong fills the gaps, it comes with reverb.

It isn't lo-fi, either, unfocussed and meandering – why would two people who've spent their lives crafting three-minute pop gems suddenly do that? The songs are uncluttered because all that's there is what needs to be there, with most of it played by Amelia and Rob – though if something a little extra is required, there are people in the village who'll help out: neighbour Fay Hallam is on the organ, and Nick and Clare Sermon the brass. (There's also piano from Matthew King on the title track, while producer Andy Lewis provides cello and percussion.)

In those earlier bands, the unshowy precision of the lyrics could be overlooked in the musical tumult. Now, the poetry of the plainly stated shines through. And so, in *Sixteen Again* – a heartbreaking evocation of sudden, unexpected widowhood – Amelia's voice cracks in the space around a single thrummed guitar string: "It came without a warning / No more tomorrow mornings / For you".

That said, *Til The Morning* concocts a rich chamber pop from its minimal instrumentation, music and mood spiralling outwards from the introspective claustrophobia of their debut, *Red Red Skies*, towards... those big black skies and cold bright stars. Now, it's not just relationships that are dysfunctional, it's the world itself, a post-Trump, post-Brexit world in which you fear for your children's future ("I wish that I could stay their hands / As they reach for their bibles / And their rifles") and the words "wedding party" invoke not confetti but US air strikes.

Like Amelia and Rob, the songs have grown up. They are haunted by an air of unease ("Headlines when we don't come home / We had good times / Don't cry that you're all alone / Cos we're with you wherever you go"), and the outwardly euphoric rush of *I'll Light Your Way Back* masks a desperate plea: "Find me please – it's getting late." Love founders on the rocks of reality (*Half-Written*) and is replaced not by opportunity but by emptiness in that most grown-up of scenarios: divorce (*Dream Town*). But pop music is all about pulling hope from the saddest lyric by wrapping it in a gorgeous melody, and – with no fuzz and clatter to share the load – the tunes here swoop and melt and soar.

Both Amelia and Rob's vocals are extraordinary throughout: intimate, emotional, complex and conversational, blurring the roles of backing and lead. Rob seems more self-assured than on *Red Red Skies*, confidently carrying the tunes; and, as Amelia pitches in a heartbeat from shiver to sigh, from wistful to wry, it's hard to believe she was the callow twenty-year-old whose band battered their way from a flexidisc stuck inside a fanzine a third of a century ago.

And in *Dancing*, there's a reminder of what – amid all the darkness and heartbreak – pop music is for: "I don't want to talk / I just want to see you dancing / Put a record on / Let the music freeze the air".

