

KATATONIA

Sky Void of Stars - Biography -



Do not go gentle into that good night...

We are all, as Oscar Wilde once so famously remarked, in the gutter. However, some of us are looking at the stars. On their latest journey *Sky Void of Stars*, Swedish grand seigneurs of gloom **Katatonia** solemnly set the stage for a nocturne both crushing and exhilarating; for it is only in the absence of stars that we can truly shine.

Carving their way from their nineties gothic-tinged doom metal to the ethereal post-metal entity they are today, the band led by founding members Jonas Renkse and Anders Nyström have always been and will forevermore be one thing—a vessel of deep emotion; shrouded in Scandinavian despair and a universal longing for salvation.

Over the course of an unbelievable thirty years and eleven studio albums, **Katatonia** have never shied away from evolution. They have embraced the concept of growing through

rejuvenation to soothe their blackened hearts and scarred souls—coming back stronger and more unified than ever after their hiatus with *City Burials* in April 2020. Yet at the very core of this entity, there still lingers the essence of their remarkable passage through time and space. Their music is pure and heartfelt from the northern wilderness; cast in mournful dirges for a world that needs renaissance.

Their long way out of the darkness and into our hearts has taken up many shapes ever since their first two genre-bending milestones: *Dance of December Souls* (1993) and the unforgettable, the immortal, the rightfully revered and oft-copied classic *Brave Murder Day* (1996). Whatever you might call their artful and soul-searching tunes ever since these records, they have always remained true to the very principles on which this band was based in the dawn of the nineties. Musicality over scene, progression over deadlock, collective over ego—**Katatonía** is their whole lives and will always be.

What's more, their ever-expanding fanbase has evolved with them. While the nineties would never have allowed such a high level of tolerance nor forgiveness towards erstwhile death/doom trailblazers, today each new **Katatonía** offering is greeted with veneration and gratitude. Here are musicians who truly speak from the soul to the soul—a dialogue seldom as intense, as emotionally challenging and as visceral as the gloomy and irresistible preciousness that is *Sky Void of Stars*. Jonas Renkse (vocals), Anders Nyström (guitar), Roger Öjersson (guitar), Niklas Sandin (bass) and Daniel Moilanen (drums) have outdone themselves yet again, which is no easy feat with a vita like theirs.

The Stockholm-based architects of existential dread have long since ceased to represent a band that merely makes music and have instead cultivated a living, breathing pilgrimage that mirrors humanity's longings and shortcomings; its dreams and horrors. Clad in their dynamic trademark range of darkest metal, soaring post-rock and elaborate prog wanderlust, **Katatonía** wear midnight on *Sky Void of Stars*, delivering their very own raven-black gospel of urban dystopia, elemental longing and the universal wish for catharsis.

With a sonic range broader than ever, the Swedes manage to wed their gloom and doom roots on 'Impermanence' with the stormcloud that is 'Austerity' which is their most urgent material yet, and also the surprisingly crushing 'Birds' with the artfully moody 'Drab Moon'. Bathing in an atmosphere that is exclusively their own and graced by a sublime yet ethereally forlorn production, **Katatonía** transcend boundaries in the blink of an eye. They deliver a vivid, energetic and, in the best sense of the word, touching piece of musical narrative, pregnant with some of the most noble poetry these Swedish masters have ever delivered. Written and composed by vocalist Jonas Renske, *Sky Void of Stars* is a stirring ode to the ones who are lost and astray; shipwrecked in the ocean, navigating the rough seas of life without a compass.

As autumnal in their melodies as ever with radiant vocal lines, woeful hooks and a broader-than-ever approach to their musical palette, **Katatonía** sink their talons deeper than ever into our hearts, forcing us to feel what we prefer to push into the very last corner of ourselves. Only through confronting the deepest demons that we hold prisoner within the fabric of our souls can we rightfully deliver ourselves from them. The power of music in its truest,

rawest and most carnal force will forever be this: a means to a new beginning and a dim light at the end of a long, long tunnel; its own dark materials shapeshifting, awe-inspiring, guiding.

Produced, mixed and mastered by Danish icon Jacob Hansen, *Sky Void of Stars* is music for the fools who still dream in the dead of night; a manifesto for the hopelessly-hoping amongst us. Here's to the hearts that ache, here's to the mess we make.

Björn Springorum