

Private Cathedral



Private Cathedral is a transatlantic art-pop band dreamed up by multi-instrumentalists Wendy Spitzer and Genevieve Dawson. From North Carolina and Scotland, respectively, Wendy and Genevieve draw on baroque pop, art-rock, and chamber music to produce a sound that's both musically disruptive and emotionally exposed.

Both women studied classical composition, but restless for something more visceral, Wendy turned to playing bass and oboe in synth and noise bands in the 00's indie scene of Chapel Hill, NC, while Genevieve sang in jazz ensembles across Europe and Egypt.



Eventually their paths converged in the supportive and creative nest of Goldsmiths College in southeast London, UK in 2015. It was there they began what would become a years-long friendship and intricate collaboration. Rather than relying on their own particular specialisms, both women co-write and co-edit all music and all lyrics, forging a creative mindmeld that's at once borderless and unbothered by convention.

When Wendy returned to the US, they continued writing across time zones, propelled by a shared imaginative momentum. What started out as a few exploratory songs for their research projects evolved into a collaboration involving intensive writing trips back and forth across the Atlantic, playing intimate shows in dive bars and churches in both countries to try out the material. In between, there were Zoom calls, long emails chronicling dreams and memories, and documentation of their process—eventually birthing a complex song-world and becoming Private Cathedral.

One grant funding cycle and a pandemic later, they hunkered down at The Fidelitorium, former REM producer Mitch Easter's legendary NC studio, home to an array of organs, vintage synths, mallet percussion, and a grand piano. The resulting self-titled debut album is an original offering of joyful, fierce, symbolically dense, and musically ambitious songs that take us through the looking glass and home again. Exploring questions of autonomy, apocalypse, death, and self-discovery, Private Cathedral creates music for brainy iconoclasts with big feelings. The album is a show of bravura, a tour de force of fearless friendship, a soundtrack to a mood film that has yet to be made.

For lovers of My Brightest Diamond, Tune-Yards, Nick Cave, Cate Le Bon, and Kate Bush

Previous Press for Private Cathedral's members:

Genevieve Dawson:

"Rich and beautifully textured" **BBC Radio 6 Music, Gideon Coe**

"I love it, I really love it" **BBC Radio 6 Music, Guy Garvey**

"Dawson's vocals are beautifully emotive and restrained at the same time" **God is in the TV Zine**

As a solo artist, Genevieve has recently supported La Force and was featured on William Doyle's new album, which was co-produced with Brian Eno. She is a member of Anna B Savage's live touring band and has performed in two seasons at Shakespeare's Globe on London's West End.

Wendy Spitzer:

"Her debut record *The Tick of the Clock, the Beat in the Chest* was filled with intricately woven pieces of art-pop excellence, drawing in listeners with both its rich complexities and simplistic pop structures." **WKNC**

Wendy has shared bills with The Rosebuds, Captured! By Robots, Mary Prankster, and Laura Barrett. She's also played in bands with Annie Clark (AKA St. Vincent) and Michael Hurley, in addition to composing film and podcast music.





Album credits:

Genevieve Dawson – lead vocals, piano, organs, synths

Wendy Spitzer – bass, piano, organs, marimba, oboe, English horn, backing vocals, drum programming

Recorded and engineered by Missy Thangs at The Fidelitorium (Kernersville, NC, USA)

Mixed by Callum Haynes at ZigZag Studios Woolwich (London, UK)

Mastered by Jeff Carroll at Bluefield Mastering (Raleigh, NC, USA)

Written and produced by Private Cathedral.

Lyrics

1 - I Am Not the Person That You Think I Am

The view below, of boats, of foam, of sea to dip into
They gazed from the estate, through glass doors they
withdrew
I opened up the blinds
My hope lay drawn in lines

The apricot jam left out in the sun too long and now
Fetid and foul, I smear the sourdough anyhow
I open up the map
My hope a handicap

I am not the person that you think I am
So I lie below and wait for reckoning (because I am an)
Acrobat swinging without a mat
Diplomatically I bell the cat
I am not the person that you think I am

I was quite nervous, did you notice how
nervous I was?

To speak to servants well you know that's not
what's done
I opened up to you
My hope lay by the pool

I am not the person that you think I am
How the silence in the house is frightening
(ever since I was)
Just a kid, I sensed our quiet sick
Lonely house, I sat transfixed in it

All risk and no reward, pouring chlorine in the
harpsichord

2 - Excavation

I heard from someone that you are doing well
Who knows what that means but I hope you've got
your health
Do you learn poems on Sundays?
Have you got money to spare?
Who do you read them to?
How are you holding yourself?

Are you in control?
Do you write it all down?

Maybe one day I'll live in the Barbican
I'll feed my cat and I'll keep the plants alive on the
balcony
Maybe one day I'll even invite you in
Show you how good I am
Show you I've got everything

I'll be in control
Won't need to write it all down

And the excavation takes all day
But it's what you have to do
All the treasure you hid underground
'Cause it was too painful to
Look at it, look at it
Look at it, look at it

3 - Rituals

They say your outlook
On life is diseased
But what about
All the days in between

That have a shimmering sheen
A shimmering sheen?

Swimming in a lake
And sleeping on the sand
Remedies to ease the aching
Slowing the ticking hand

Seething with all manner things
The knife is blunt, the eyes are dull, it's worse than
when you feel

The lows go low
And the highs get high
The palette grows
On either side

Listening to the rain and
Playing a baby grand
Remedies to ease the aching
Slowing the ticking hand

The rituals we have at our disposal
Are not enough
To hold all this trouble
The songs we taught ourselves
Ring out somewhere else
Ring out somewhere else

They say your outlook
On life is diseased
But what about
All the days in between?

4 - Night Letter

Well then
I woke up and
The moon was shining
As bright as the sun

How strange
That the setting of one
Could be confused for
The rising of the other

Well then
At five a.m.
Replaying our tape
Debating our loop

How strange
The auctioneer in my brain
Could sabotage me
He's supposed to be a friend of
mine

I lie flatlined
Heart murmurs, this is not right
A roar in quietude
My eyeballs have become
unglued

I dreamed that you were still in
my bedroom
You held me close
My head fit in the space beneath
your chin
A thrill as old as the hills

Well then
I'll make the most
Of the hour, make toast
Scour the counter down

How strange
The maladies they can take
Years to break through
Hoops of paper realigning us

A letter I write:
"No deep sleep in a fortnight
A famine, send rations
I panic for your compassion

I palpate my lesion
I need your anesthesia
Send love to her highness
For me. Yours truly, a mess."

I know that our twin beds
will converge
Anew and then
My head will fit in the space
Beneath your chin
We'll be our old selves again
We'll be our old selves again
Again
Again

5 - Tattoos

The tattoos of your youth
Inked into your skin
A twisted name or two
Faded blue and green
An anchor on your arm
That illustrated bruise
Do you feel the tug?
Tethering you to

Lives spent in other vessels on a
Cruise
Through narrow channels to the
Sea

The lines that grew like roots
The blueish whale flakes
They rub against the green
The marks you paid to make
A willow tree on fire
The smoke you have inhaled
The telegrams by wire
Are keeping you alive

Shape of your body resting next to
Mine
Seems like the only way to
Die

6 - The Ghost and the Coat

Feel the light fade
Twinkling traffic
Won't go outside
Can't bear the noise
Watch the milk is boiling over
Hear the train pass
The neck twist tighter

Look the hourglass stops
Undo the necklace in knots
Open up your beak and eat the
Egg I give you
Good, now
Let me in too
Familiar and cool
Lie back on the bed don't move
your lips anymore
Stop
Someone's at the door

I am a ghost
I am a crumpled-up note
You found under your bed
The shame between your legs
I am a coat
You put on when you're alone
Moth-eaten round your name
Why do you stay the same?

Wash the sand off
Empty the bath out
Won't unlock it
Can't feel the cold
The roof, the room, the earth
Goes under
Hear the nightjar
The breath comes faster

Feel the heaviness come
The bones that warmed you
So long
Those caresses every morning

Waking you up
So, no need for a clock
Reenact it, when it's quiet,
Circle the room
There's no one to stop you

I am a ghost
A place that you used to know
The first time you undressed
Remember what was said
I am a coat
You put on when you're alone
Ill-fitting it became
Why can't you stay the same?

Open up the note
The doors to rooms
That you had closed
You aren't as alone as you feel

7 - Braille Upon Your Face

Click, ring, hum, din, try
Slip, run, fall, don't cry that you are tired
Smoke, drink, fill, heave, sigh
Sit, no, go, squeeze, shut it off for hours
Endless numbered doors
Lock a few to make yourself secure
Would you still exist
Without all these

Things you have to do?

Dreams of other lives
Or perhaps they are a vision
Try to hold them all
In a time beyond perception

Braille upon your face
Have we met somewhere before?

Don't go home
Live in places you've never gone
Be alone
Don't believe everything you're told

Strange how time
Will make all the choices that you were too scared to
Strange how time
Will make all the choices that you were too scared to

8 - Vermilion and Tangerine

Hold my own
In the machine
Taxiing
Time is unravelling, so
Take a seat
Steady my heartbeat
Lights go up
Lights in vermilion and
Tangerine
Thirty-eight thousand feet
Above the sea
What will I dream?
The silhouette
Of winding rivers I will
Leave behind
Leave behind me

A line of horizon that
Sets the in between
It's nowhere and nothing
O'clock, so
Yes, stewardess I will
Take that cocktail in
Vermilion and tangerine

Do you remember the
Dress you wore to leave, a
Terminal end of a scene?
Under a pin all my
Summers colored in vermilion and
tangerine, tangerine

Floating seat
I feel my heartbeat
Pumping blood
Blood in vermilion and
Tangerine
Two hundred people staring
At a screen
It's all routine

Who's coming to meet you?

Hold my phone
Adjust the time-zone
No one knows, the
Currency we carry
Empty seats
Is that my heartbeat?

Rising sun
Sun in vermilion and
Tangerine
My baggage crawling round the
Carousel
I'm shaken well
What did I dream?
A boy is waving from the
Mezzanine, but not for me

A perfect stranger that
Somehow feels familiar
Nothing I could have fore-
seen, so
Yes, I confess I have
Sometimes been caught in
Rebellion and quarantine

Yes, I remember the
Dress I wore to leave, a
Terminal end of a scene
Under a pin all my
Summers colored in
Vermilion and tangerine, tangerine

9 - Never Underestimate

Never underestimate the way you can change
Even though the work makes you feel like an oiled
Machine
Feel oblivion believing
In your own thick mess
As the evening fever peaks
Put on that sparkly dress

Roll down the hill, feel the spin, make yourself see
upside down
Thundering limbs, on the lawn, bring you back to
flesh and bone

Down the mortal corridor
In your eardrums loud
Heaving then succumbing to
The sound of your wolfhound heart

Heavy breathlessness, the blood in your body
Rushing to your head
Watch the vultures glide, and count all your fingers
red against the sky

Feel oblivion and revel
In your own thick mess
As the morning fog arrives
Ride home in your ruined dress

Tune the radio, electrical static of the afterglow
Let the shower run, the hiss of the valve as
you become undone

Never underestimate the way you can change, I will
Never underestimate the way you can change

Listen to the Private Cathedral album here:

