

**múm** (pronounced [mum], “moom”)\*\* is an experimental Icelandic pop group whose music is characterized by soft vocals, eccentric beats and colorful effects, and a variety of traditional and unconventional instruments

múm have never walked the well trodden path. Since the the beginning of múm, they have always gone their own way, the way their creativeness and their music has been excessively difficult to pin down and anticipate. Originally a duo, the band has expanded and contracted like a beating mammalian heart in the 12 years of being and has counted 15 - 20 people along the way.

The band was formed in 1997 by original members Gunnar Örn Tynes and Örvar Póreyjarson Smárason. Their first release was a split 10" with the girl-band Spúnk and saw light in the summer of '98. They were joined a year later by twin sisters Gyða and Kristín Anna Valtýsdóttir and released two albums as quartet. Following a number of collaborative projects, the group's celebrated debut album *Yesterday Was Dramatic, Today Is OK* (reissued by Morr Music in October 2005) gained a wealth of glowing press and widespread praise. A remix project, *Please Smile My Noise Bleed*, was also released on the Morr Music label in November 2001.

In 2002, after the FatCat Records release of *Finally We Are No One* and the extensive first world tour, Gyða left the band to return to her studies in Reykjavík. Shortly after, third sister Ásthildur Valtýsdóttir joined for singing duties temporarily and Serena Tideman replaced Gyda on cello, for a single European tour. The band's third album, *Summer Make Good*, a darker and foggier nautically-themed work, was released in May 2004, flanked by two singles, “Nightly Cares” and “Dusk Log”. By then the ensemble had evolved to include Eiríkur Ólafsson, Hildur Guðnadóttir (who had made guest appearances on múm recordings from the beginning) and Ólöf Arnalds. In early 2006, Kristín also left the band after heavy touring for *Summer Make Good*.

The start of 2006 saw the band's creativity start to blossom once again, starting with two remixes for Goldfrapp of the tracks “Number One” and “Never Know.” They followed this with two legendary DJ sets at the FatCat Festival in Belgium in February and SXSW in Austin, TX. The revamped live show combined decks, effects, laptops, toy microphones, old cassette player recordings and vocals, coupled with their own recorded material, strange electronic covers by friends, gypsy folk music and general craziness on stage. They were also subsequently invited to DJ at Summer Sonic Festival in Japan as well as be headline act as DJs in Radio 1's Rob Da Bank tent at Bestival on the Isle of Wight. In september 2007 múm released *Go Go Smear The Poison Ivy*, which would be to be the band's last release for the FatCat label.

múm has always worked on projects which could be classed as unusual for a pop band or a pop collective. Among this extracurricular activity is their own soundtrack for the classic Sergei Eisenstein film *Battleship Potemkin*, live performances of which have taken place in Hafnafjordur in Iceland, the Brooklyn Lyceum in New York, and at Spain's distinguished Gijon Film Festival. múm have also composed for theater, most notably two radio theater plays, “Svefnhjólíð” (Sleeping Wheel) by Gyrdir Eliasson

which won the Nordic Radio-theater prize and in 2008 “Augu þín sáu mig” (Your eyes saw me) by poet Sjón, with whom múm also worked with in 1999 on the operetta *Kisa* (cat). In 2005 they were invited to Amsterdam by the Holland Festival to collaborate with the National Dutch Chamber Orchestra in creating a performance piece based around various compositions of the late avant-garde composer Iannis Xenakis for one of the centerpiece shows at the festival.

múm have recently finished their fifth studio album, entitled *Sing Along To Songs You Don't Know*, due for European release in August and North American release in September 2009, supported by an extensive world tour. The collective now consists of founding members Gunnar Örn Tynes and Örvar Þóreyjarson Smáráson and for touring and recording, this lineup is expanded to include their friends Eiríkur Orri Ólafsson (trumpet / piano/ keyboards), Hildur Guðnadóttir (cello / vocals), Sigurlaug Gísladóttir (Vocals / ukulele/ various), Róbert Reynisson (guitars/ukulele's) and Finlander, Samuli Kosminen (drums / percussion). The musical group sometimes extends to Ólöf Arnalds, Högni Egilsson, Ólafur Björn Ólafsson and Guðbjörg Hlín Guðmundsdóttir as well as a neverending family of friends and musicians who may join at the drop of a hat.

\*\*Pronunciation note: the ú in “múm” sounds like the oo in “moon”. Examples: “the dark side of the múm,” “when the múm hits your eye like a big pizza pie, that's amore.” Exact rhyme-words to pair with múm would be for example, doom and gloom.