

## The history of Paddington

Much has happened since Three-Sixteen was formed in January 1997 in Turku, Finland. It was Johannes Häger (vocals and bass), Massi Björkgren (drums and backing vocals) and Leif Erikson (guitar) who formed the band to participate in the Finnish championships for Christian artists. The band ended up making it to the final. Just before the final the band changed its name to Remedy and Robert Ståhl joined in on synthesizers.

1997 was a year with a lot of changes for Remedy and the next gig saw a new lineup for the band. Remedy consisted of Johannes (vocals and bass), Massi (drums and backing vocals), Anders Eklund (guitar and backing), Maria Nyman (backing) and Isabella Häger-Björkgren (backing). At that time Remedy played mostly Jerusalem and Petra covers. In July the band got an invitation to Humle festivalen, one of the biggest Christian music festivals in the Swedish speaking parts of Finland. Before the festival the band rehearsed newly written Swedish material by Johannes and Anders. Robert Ståhl had returned to the band and Robert Lillrank joined in on bass. Johannes switched to playing acoustic guitar.

## Remedy becomes Paddington

The members of Remedy felt that the new style of Swedish pop music demanded a change of names. The guitarist Anders suggested Paddington and after a while the rest of the band accepted the new name. All the members agreed that Paddington was a better-suited name for the band's new lyrics and music. In the fall of 1997 Paddington was invited to record a few songs for a school project against drugs and alcohol. The band recorded "Kl. 7", "Liljorna på ängen" and "Se till mej som liten är". "Liljorna på ängen" was chosen for the project.

In the beginning of 1998 the members of the band felt that they wanted to release the previously recorded songs. The band reentered the studio to make the recordings more up to date. On March 28<sup>th</sup> Paddington's debut CD was released. In May 1998 the band was asked if it wanted to record a music video for FST (the Swedish division of the Finnish Broadcasting Company). Paddington recorded a video for "Se till mej som liten är". The video was shown in FST's national TV-show Möten (Meetings). At the end of the summer the band recorded a demo consisting of the songs "Torka" and "Bomull". Shortly after Robert Ståhl and Robert Lillrank lost their inspiration and left the band. The band decided to take a break. During the break Johannes and Anders wrote new material for the band. The break also meant a change of musical style and language for the band. The music got more guitar oriented with influences from the 70's and all lyrics were now in English.

## Wake up and relax

In February 1999 Paddington started rehearsing the new material and Johannes had returned to bass. In May Nicklas Storbjörk filled the empty spot at the synthesizers. In June the band got an invitation to play at Midsummerfestival, another one of the biggest Christian music festivals in the Swedish speaking parts of Finland. In December Paddington performed at Gospel Countdown, a concert with the biggest Christian artists from Swedish parts of Finland. The concert was recorded by FST and broadcasted on national television in April 2000.

In April 2000 Paddington started the recording of its first full length album, "Wake up and relax". The album was recorded at Studio Steiron in Pietarsaari, Finland, a studio owned by Johannes, Nicklas and Christian Lund. In October Paddington was chosen as the only non-Swedish band to participate in the final of the music competition at the big Christian youth event Rock the Globe in The Globe Arena in Stockholm, Sweden. The British groups Delirious and The Tribe were the headliners of the event. In November "Wake up and relax" was released at a concert called The Rock in Pietarsaari, Finland. "Wake up and relax" was acknowledged by press and radio in Finland, Sweden and Great Britain.

In May 2001 Petter Näse (guitar) and Jeanette Kecklund (backing vocals) joined Paddington. The plan was that they would replace Anders and Maria who were expecting their first child. Anders' and Maria's farewell performance was at Hope festival in Vaasa, Finland. The concert was at the same time the first for Petter and Jeanette as members of Paddington. During the summer and fall of 2001 Paddington played at the biggest Christian festivals in Finland, including Joensuu Gospel Festival in Joensuu, Nuorten Kesä in Ryttylä and Maata Näkyvissä in Turku. Maata Näkyvissä is the biggest Christian festival in the Nordic countries with an annual attendance of 10.000-15.000 persons. In the fall of 2001 Paddington also had the possibility to play at the Swedish festival Rock for Moc.

## Radiate

In the beginning of 2002 Paddington got an invitation to play at Lumen festival in April in Slovakia. Lumen festival is the biggest Christian festival in Slovakia. Paddington performed before an audience of 4.000 dancing and jumping Slovaks. During this trip the band decided to record some new material in the summer.

In June Paddington played at Joypeak, a festival in Skellefteå, Sweden and at Midsummerfestival in Pietarsaari, Finland. During the summer the new EP, "Radiate", was recorded at Studio Steiron. Anders Eklund was back as a non-touring member in the band. The new EP includes 4 new songs written by Johannes and Anders and an English translation of the old crowd-pleaser "Kl. 7". In August Paddington had the opportunity to test the new material at Humle festivalen, during the band's 5<sup>th</sup> performance at the festival. "Radiate" was released on October 25<sup>th</sup> at a concert in Music café After Eight in Pietarsaari, Finland. At the beginning of November the band played at Oulugospel in Oulu, Finland.

This is only the beginning of the story of Paddington. A story that will continue for years to come!



Pictured from left to right: Nicklas Storbjörk, Jeanette Kecklund, Massi Björkgren, Petter Näse, Anders Eklund, Isabella Häger-Björkgren and Johannes Häger