

# THE HOUSE MARTINS THE PEOPLE WHO GRINNED THEMSELVES TO DEATH

THE NEW ALBUM



FESTIVAL RECORDS

'POGUES' FROM PAGE 16

"Yeah, to some extent, but actually it was on that EP that things came to a head. 'Cause we had to argue for a lot of things that we felt were right, and he didn't. So our working relationship with him soured a little bit during that. In the end we more or less got what we wanted, but we felt, it's really stupid to have to argue with your producer about what you should sound like. There are one or two things on that EP that, quite frankly, he had a lot less to do with than his credit would suggest. Because we went away and re-did certain things after he'd finished.

"But Elvis is a nice man, he's a nice man to work with, but our working relationship with him came to an end there 'cause we were thinking differently about our sound. We had ambitions about our sound that Elvis felt weren't really in keeping with what the Pogues should be doing. Our feeling was, well fuck that, 'cause we're the Pogues, and we know what we should be doing! I think he was a bit nervous about experimentation. But around the time we made *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash*, he was in tune with our ideas.

"You see, people don't always give the Pogues credit for invention or imagination or musical know-how really, and Elvis was slightly guilty of that in the end, I think. But we've never been as we're popularly imagined. We've always been as ambitious musically as the circumstances would allow, and now they allow us to be as adventurous as we want. At the time of *Poguetry in Motion* it was in a state of transition. So it wasn't entirely Elvis's fault. I don't want to blame him for it. It was a natural period of transition."

The Pogues' music has the ability to cross over to any audience, from fans of a garage sound, country or folk, to Gaelic grandmothers.

"Maybe it's a lot to do with the eclecticism of the band," says Chevron. "Irish music is very strong, but that's only a part. There's country, but on the new album it'll be obvious there're bits of jazz, Spanish music, Eastern



Philip Chevron

folk music, 60s rock — there's a lot going on there.

"So it's gratifying that people who just love music love what we do. Because we obviously love music, and I think that comes across in what we play. There's so much music that you hear now on the radio that seems so loveless, it sounds as if the people who made

**"Elvis Costello was a bit nervous about experimentation. We thought, f... that! We're the Pogues, we know what we should be doing."**

it don't really care about it, maybe they care more about their haircut or their bank balance."

The Pogues supported U2 on many of *The Joshua Tree* dates, including Madison Square Garden. "There are people who would have us playing small pubs in London forever," says Chevron. "But the nice thing about what we do is it seems to translate to huge audiences. We still manage to make it seem intimate. We really enjoy stadiums, but also enjoy playing small places, like recently we did a short tour of Ireland, playing in dance halls and large clubs. It was great fun."

#### Green Parade

The band have made a tradition, though, of returning to London each year to play St Pat-

rick's Day in a small venue. But now it's a problem: "As we get bigger, St Patrick's Day has tended to become extended because not everyone can see us. We could go and do Wembley Arena and cover most people, but what we're doing, which is nicer, is we're gonna have St Patrick's Week — playing six shows at the Town and Country, holding 2000 people. St Patrick's Week with the Pogues."

Perhaps you could stain the river green, like they do in Chicago.

"I think we'll leave that to the Americans, actually — we're a bit more subtle about our Irishness over here."

"The further you get away from a country, the more you celebrate your nationality, if you're an immigrant. Sometimes it's embarrassing, but I can understand it, 'cause if you take this country where the Irish, alongside the Scottish, are still ... curiosities as citizens. Irish people over here are regarded by English people as one step above Asians and blacks and so on, which is all of course inherent racism. But in those circumstances where a national identity is sublimated, well then I think a slightly ... kitsch element comes out. You have to show your national identity a bit louder than you would in your own country. So I don't really knock that sort of thing."

"You have a lot of us over there, and a lot of us in America. There's a song about it on the new album: 'Thousands are Sailing.' The economy isn't there to sustain the population, unfortunately. The song links the new immigration with the mass immigration of the 19th Century potato famine. People are leaving at the rate of 30,000 a year, I believe, which is a lot in a population of three million."

But despite the dispersion forced by economics, music from the likes of the Pogues and Los Lobos means cultural identities are not forgotten, but celebrated. A last word from Philip Chevron: "... Thanks very much for not asking us about drinking."

Chris Bourke

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