

PAUL BRADY

Paul Brady, singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist is one of Ireland's most enduringly popular artists.

Born and raised in Strabane, Northern Ireland, on the border with the Irish Republic, he was into a wide variety of music from an early age. A Fifties child, his first sounds the Swing, Jazz, Show tunes of his parents generation. Then 50's Rock 'n Roll, 60's pop and Motown, Blues, R'nB and Country and Western. Through all this ran the potent flavour of Irish traditional music and song.

Learning to play the piano pretty much by ear, trial and error, his early heroes were Jerry Lee Lewis, Winifred Atwell and Fats Domino. By the age of eleven he had begun to play guitar, spending hours of his school holidays learning every tune the Shadows and The Ventures recorded, every lick Chuck Berry played. Mid-teens saw him take summer jobs playing piano and guitar in Bundoran, a seaside resort in nearby County Donegal. But it was around 1965 in Dublin, at college, that he began to develop as a singer and performer joining a succession of R'n B / Soul bands including The Inmates, The Kult and Rootzgroop , covering the songs of Ray Charles, James Brown, Junior Walker and blues legends like Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Chuck Berry.

The 60's in Dublin saw the renewal of interest in Irish traditional music and gave birth to the first wave of Irish ballad groups like The Clancy Brothers, The Dubliners, Sweeney's Men and The Johnstons. Soon Paul became swept up in this current and joined the latter band with whom he recorded seven albums.

Moving with The Johnstons in Jan '69 to live in London and later in '72 to New York City, he returned to Dublin in 1974 to join Planxty, the premier Irish folk band of the early '70's. This was the band that was to launch the solo careers of Andy Irvine, Liam O' Flynn, Donal Lunny and Christy Moore. From '76 to '78 he played as a duo with Andy Irvine, a relationship which produced "Andy Irvine and Paul Brady", an album loved at the time and still sought after in CD form today. Throughout his career Paul has worked and collaborated with other artists

The next few years saw him establish his popularity and reputation as one of Ireland's best interpreters of traditional songs. His versions of great ballads like Arthur McBride and The Lakes Of Pontchartrain were definitive and are still being asked for by audiences today. By the end of the '70's however, he found himself back at the same crossroads once too often. After an acclaimed solo folk album "Welcome Here Kind Stranger" (1978) which won the Melody maker Folk Album of the year, he decided it was time to move on.

Surprising most observers at the time, he released "Hard Station" in 1981. Self-penned, the album lyrically reflected the personal changes he was undergoing and musically was a highly original reworking of his earlier influences. Irish folk music took a back seat for the time being. Those more traditional voices who would have preferred him to stay as he was were soon replaced by the voices of praise for what is now accepted as a classic of Irish rock.

The albums which followed, "True For You" (1983), "Back To The Centre" (1985), Primitive Dance (1987), "Trick Or Treat" (1991) and "Spirits Colliding" (1995) collectively established Paul as the pre-eminent Irish singer-songwriter of his generation. Gradually other artists worldwide began to record his songs. Touring extensively both as a solo performer and with his own band he has forged a reputation as a passionate and exciting performer and attracts a dedicated following worldwide.

After many years of writing on his own, in the late 90's, he began to collaborate with other songwriters and in the space of two years wrote nearly fifty songs, several already covered by

other artists. In 1998 he began a relationship with Rykodisc which led to the remastering and re-release of six of his previous albums, "Hard Station", "True For You", "Back To The Centre", "Primitive Dance", "Trick Or Treat" and "Spirits Colliding". There followed in summer of 1999 a best of collection called "Nobody Knows, The Best Of Paul Brady (1970's-1990's)" which stayed in the Irish album charts for thirty weeks and is still selling.

In May 2000 Paul released his first album of new songs since 1995's "Spirits Colliding", an album called "Oh What A World". Featuring many of the songs he wrote and co-wrote over the previous three years and including collaborations with Carole King, Will Jennings, Ronan Keating, Conner Reeves and Mark Hudson it has been critically hailed as one his best ever records.

In 2001, Paul formed his own record label, PeeBee Music. The first release was a CD "The Missing Liberty Tapes" featuring a live recording of a Paul Brady concert in Dublin in 1978, the tapes of which were lost for 23 years. This record, hailed as a classic by the Irish traditional music community, also features Andy Irvine, Donal Lunny, Liam O'Flynn, Matt Molloy, Paddy Glackin and Noel Hill.

Also in 2001, Paul undertook a record-breaking, celebrated run at Dublin's premier music venue, Vicar Street. Playing 23 sold-out shows over the month of October, he re-visited much of his by now extensive repertoire and was joined on stage by several of the many artists he has worked and collaborated with over the previous thirty years. Recording every show, fans can look forward to an eventual release on cd of these now legendary concerts.

In August 2002 RTE television, Ireland's national TV station, filmed a six programme series featuring Paul's music, called "The Paul Brady Songbook". Shown to acclaim in Ireland from October through December of that year, there followed on the PeeBee Music label, a CD of a selection of the recordings and a three hour DVD of the entire series, both also called "The Paul Brady Songbook". A later version of the CD containing an extra new studio recording of a new song "The Hawana Way" was released in UK and USA/ Canada in April/ May 2003'. Paul's CDs, videos, DVDs and songbooks are available for sale via mail order on this website

In 2004 Paul recorded in Nashville, the result of which was the 2005 released album "Say What You Feel" an organic and fresh sounding record, mostly cut live and in one or two takes at most per song, this record has further enhanced his reputation as a songwriter and performing artist of the highest calibre.

2010 saw Paul releasing his 14th solo album, 'Hooba Dooba' to widespread acclaim, with Hot Press editor Niall Stokes saying 'This is by far Paul Brady's most assured and deepest album since the seminal Hard Station. But give it time: we may yet conclude that he has finally eclipsed that extraordinary record'. As the year drew to a close, the cherry on the cake was a concert in Belfast's Waterfront Theatre with the Ulster Orchestra as part of the 2010 Belfast Festival.

Paul Brady continues to push out the boundaries not only of his own talent but of Irish contemporary music in the new millennium. For details as to how to access his work please continue on your journey through the site.

PAUL BRADY AWARDS/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1979

ICAD (Institute of Creative Advertising and Design) 'Best Original Music' award

THE STAG/ HOT PRESS AWARDS (Ireland's leading music paper, critics awards)

1981 Best Single 'Crazy Dreams'

1982 Best Song 'Nothing But The Same Old Story'

1985 Best Songwriter

1986 Best Songwriter and Best Male Singer

1986 'Opel' National Entertainment Awards 'Best Rock Artist'

1987 Melody Maker Folk Album of the Year for 'Welcome Here Kind Stranger'

THE HOT PRESS READERS POLL

1980

Best Folk/Traditional artist

2nd Best Male Singer

3rd Best Instrumentalist

4th Best Single "Crazy Dreams"

5th Best Songwriter

1983

3rd best Male Singer

4th Best Songwriter

5th Best Album 'True For You'

1984

2nd Best Male Singer

3rd Best Songwriter

1986

Best Songwriter

Best Album 'Back To The Centre'

1991

EMA awards (Belfast Telegraph Entertainment Media and Arts Awards) 'Best Solo Rock Artist'

1993

IRMA Irish Music Awards 'Best Irish Male Artist'

2002

Irish Music Awards 'Lifetime Achievement Award'

ASCAP '#1 Club Award' for the song 'The Long Goodbye' written with Ronan Keating

2006

BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards "Lifetime Achievement Award"

2009

Conferred with Honorary D. Litt at University of Ulster

Chosen as Irish 'artist of the year' by Galway University Foundation

2010

'Paul Brady Scholarship' announced at University College Limerick

'Tenco Prize' for songwriting at the Rassegna Della Canzone D'Autore, Sanremo, Italy