

TO HERE KNOWS WHEN - GREAT IRISH ALBUMS REVISITED

Nurse by Therapy?

In 1992 when Therapy? moved from the small London-based indie label Wiiiija to A&M Records some fans were horrified and accused the Belfast trio of selling out. “It was a bizarre time and it’s amazing how two things filter into this record: Irishness and also that sell out accusation,” recalls Andy Cairns, Therapy?’s singer-guitarist about *Nurse*, the band’s major label debut. “There are people that still don’t speak to me,” continues Cairns. “It was a lot bigger then than it is now. I think it’s different now. You can see punk festivals sponsored by corporate energy drinks and no-one bats an eyelid, but back then it was, it was a really, really big deal.”

Like their American heroes Hüsker Dü before them, Therapy? made the transition to a major on their own terms. Turning down A&M’s offer to hire Nirvana producer Butch Vig, Therapy? opted to record with their live sound engineer Harvey Birrell. The songs for *Nurse* were written over a fortnight in a farmhouse in Carlow, demoed in Wicklow and recorded quickly at Loco Studios in Wales. Therapy?’s two mini-albums had suffered from a muddy-production, but *Nurse* suffered from no such problems.

Nurse was preceded by ‘*Teethgrinder*’ - a big, loud, driving banger - that reached No. 19 in the Irish Charts and No. 30 in the UK Charts. Therapy? may have hit the mainstream but the trio’s backgrounds in the North ensured they always felt like outsiders. “We had a Protestant, a Catholic and somebody from mixed parentage. None of us cared about religion or cared about politics, but it was hard to avoid and this band was our way of avoiding it,”



says Cairns. “We felt like mongrels. We felt as if we didn’t belong anywhere. We always said in the band we didn’t have a flag. If we were completely British, we could have said, well, we’re British Protestants from Northern Ireland, I didn’t and I was the Prod in the band. Mike was Catholic. Michael went to a Protestant grammar school where he sat out like a sore thumb because he was a Catholic. Fyfe had mixed parents and he came from a single family and he never fitted in anywhere. So the three of us found this sanctuary within the band.”

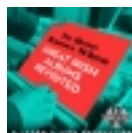
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1992 was a transitional year for Therapy? They started the year with *Pleasure Death* topping the Indie Charts and by year’s end *Nurse* had sold over 120,000 copies. In 1993 they had three Top 20 UK hits and 1994’s *Troublegum* took them global, selling over a million copies.

Nurse, the band’s brilliant debut full-length album, is the record that bridged that early Indie career and their later Chart success. It remains an essential listen.

Therapy? play the Olympia Theatre on Thursday 06 October and their 16 th studio album will be released in 2023.



Andy Cairns revisits *Nurse* on *To Here Knows When - Great Irish Albums Revisited*, available on all podcast platforms. Episode notes and further information: www.paulmcdermott.ie/podcast

