

TO HERE KNOWS WHEN - GREAT IRISH ALBUMS REVISITED

Chemicrazy by That Petrol Emotion

That Petrol Emotion formed when brothers, and former Undertones, John and Damian O'Neill joined forces with guitarist Raymond Gorman and drummer Ciaran McLaughlin. The four Derry lads moved to London and found Steve Mack, their Seattle-born lead singer, bussing tables in a Covent Garden pizzeria.

That Petrol Emotion were an absolutely extraordinary live band with an exceptional frontman. He was so good that the NME once wrote, "If Steve Mack ever finds himself short of cash, he could try flogging surplus charisma to the uninspired frontmen of lesser bands."

Manic Pop Thrill, their debut album topped the Indie Charts in 1986. They signed to *Polydor* and *Babble* followed in 1987. They switched labels to *Virgin* and *End of the Millennium Psychosis Blues* was released in 1988. A political band, they highlighted the reality of life in Northern Ireland by adorning their record sleeves with Civil Rights messages - leading *The Sun* to include them in a list of "Ten Bands You Should Hate". John, the band's main songwriter, left and Ciaran, Raymond and Damian wrote some of the band's strongest material yet. *Chemicrazy* was recorded in Oceanway Studios, Los Angeles with REM producer Scott Litt at the helm.

Upon its release *Sounds* declared: "That Petrol Emotion have achieved their finest ever moment with *Chemicrazy*." *Record Mirror* were no less emphatic writing, "they're back and have brought their first great album with them. It exudes a sparkling greatness that is crying out to be adored." The album included a string of unforgettable singles - 'Abandon', 'Hey Venus', 'Sensitize' and 'Tingle'.



Always in the vanguard, they were the second band (after Primal Scream) to work with Andrew Weatherall - the 'Boy's Own Mix' of 'Abandon' is one of his greatest remixes.

Chemicrazy should have been the record that broke them through, but instead it just broke them. *Virgin* dropped them and *Fireproof*, their final album, was released on their own label in 1993. They broke up the following year.

"At the end of the day we didn't work hard enough, reflects Steve. "You look at all the other bands, The Police got in a van and toured the United States for two years, we just thought eventually we'll hit the charts and then everybody profits, that's not how it works, you've got to work really hard.

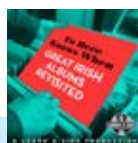
"We definitely should have worked harder, agrees Raymond. "But I would rather have done

what we did in ten years than have a Number One single around the world and be gone in 18 months. I think that would be much more devastating. So, I'm just really proud to have been a part of it."

Every Beginning Has A Future: An Anthology 1984-1994, a career-spanning boxset is available now via Edsel Records.

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Raymond Gorman and Steve Mack revisit *Chemicrazy* on *To Here Knows When - Great Irish Albums Revisited*, available on all podcast platforms. Episode notes and further information: <https://www.paulmcdermott.ie/>

