

PAUL MCDERMOTT (@LEARNANDSING)

TO HERE KNOWS WHEN - GREAT IRISH ALBUMS REVISITED

Dublin Gone, Everybody Dead by The Jimmy Cake

Last month's column focused on **The Tycho Brahe**. Prior to forming that band with Carol Keogh and Donal O'Mahony, Diarmuid MacDiarmada had been a member of **The Jimmy Cake**.

When I published a recent episode of my podcast about The Jimmy Cake's *Dublin Gone, Everybody Dead*, Lankum reposted the link writing: "To better understand how Cormac's uncanny musical brain works, it helps to know that all of his older brothers were in this band."

Diarmuid played saxophone and percussion alongside his brothers: Vincent (guitar) and John Dermody (drums). With the three brothers in the band were: Lisa Carey (clarinet), Simon O'Connor (guitar), Dara Higgins (bass), Paul Smyth (keyboards and violin), Jurgen Simpson (accordion, trombone and keyboards), John Brown (trumpet and banjo) and Rory Carr (percussion).

The Jimmy Cake played their first gig on 26 July 2000 in Eamonn Doran's in Temple Bar and a few weeks later on a wet Monday night sold out upstairs at the Cobblestone. A year later, in July 2001 they launched *Brains*, their debut album. They followed this up in November 2002 with *Dublin Gone, Everybody Dead*.

A few weeks after the release of the *Dublin Gone, Everybody Dead* music journalist Nick Kelly (who sadly passed away last October) wrote in *Billboard* magazine: "Amid the neo-folk singers flooding the Dublin music scene, The Jimmy Cake's brand of non-linear experimental post-rock is a breath of fresh air."

The album is a nosier, louder more frenetic album than

its predecessor, a consequence of the band turning their instruments up at gigs to try and hear themselves above the din of chattering audiences.

"I can remember being on stage and not being able to hear what I was playing over the chatter from the crowd," says Dara. "It got to the point where we thought, let's just crank it up, let's just get loud. We just got so loud that the walls began to vibrate and you had no choice but to get into what was happening on the stage. That definitely informed the direction the



“

MUSCULAR INSTRUMENTAL PASSAGES THAT FEATURE BANJOS, ACCORDIONS, CLARINETS, GLOCKENSPIELS AND TRUMPETS..



The Jimmy Cake often drew comparisons to bands like Slint and Mogwai, but this had more to do with the instrumental nature of their music, rather than the sound they created. The Jimmy Cake were different: Kelly noted in *Billboard* that they specialised, "in muscular instrumental passages that feature banjos, accordions, clarinets, glockenspiels and trumpets alongside standard rock tools like guitars, bass and drums."

There is no doubt that in some of Lankum's more extreme moments you can hear parallels with the experimentation of The Jimmy Cake. John has good memories of the time: "For me it was just this joyously hectic period of creating music, people were just bursting with ideas and they were open to trying stuff." Diarmuid agrees, "There was an amazing level of activity, an awful lot came out of it, it was a such an energetic time."

The band released three more albums: *Spectre & Crown* (2008), *Master* (2015) and *Tough Love* (2017). Currently on a hiatus, the band's full discography is available on Bandcamp.



Dara Higgins, and brothers Diarmuid MacDiarmada and John Dermody revisit *Dublin Gone, Everybody Dead* by The Jimmy Cake on *To Here Knows When - Great Irish Albums Revisited*, available on all podcast platforms. Episode notes and further information: <https://www.paulmcdermott.ie/podcast>

SCAN CODE:

