

Paul Brady – Bio

Paul Brady was born on 19th May 1947 in Strabane, County Tyrone a town located close to the Eire/Northern Ireland border. His parents were schoolteachers. His father hailed from County Sligo in Eire, while his mother was raised in Irvinestown, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. His mother taught in Sion Mills, Tyrone while his father crossed the border daily to teach in Lifford, County Donegal. Brady showed an affinity for performing music from an early age, particularly on the piano. By the mid-sixties he had moved on to study Irish and French at University College in Dublin. Concurrently, he was in a number of R&B bands including The Kult and Rockhouse. In an adjoining student flat, he heard the Emmet folk group, Mick Moloney, Donal Lunny and Johnny Morrissey, rehearsing. Through the foregoing trio, Brady developed an interest in contemporary as well as traditional Irish folk music. In the summer of 1967 Brady replaced Michael Johnston in The Johnstons, an Irish folk band that also included Moloney and the sisters, Adrienne and Lucy Johnston. During his sojourn with the band, he recorded seven albums, including the contemporary **“Give A Damn”** and the traditional **“The Barleycorn”** which were released on the same day. Lucy left the band in 1969, and the remaining trio made London their base. When their rendition of Joni Mitchell's 'Both Sides Now' became a minor hit in the States they were invited to play the 1971 Philadelphia Folk Festival, supported Bonnie Raitt on a gig at Tuft's College Boston, and played a couple of week long residencies at Gerde's Folk City. Moloney left the band toward the end of that year and was replaced by Gavin Spencer. The trio went their separate ways in 1973. Adrienne died in 1981. These days, Lucy is a successful Dublin based photographer, while Moloney went on to become Head of the Folklore Dept at Penn State University in Pennsylvania.

When Christy Moore left the band Planxty in 1974, Brady, who had been living in the States, was invited to join the band by Liam O'Flynn [uilleann pipes, tin whistle]. At that time, the other band members were Johnny Moynihan [bouzouki, fiddle, tin whistle, vocals], Donal Lunny [guitar, bouzouki] and Andy Irvine [vocals, mandolin, dulcimer] but they never made any recordings during Brady's time with Planxty. After the band split up, Brady recorded a self-titled duo album with Andy Irvine, a collection that included 'Arthur McBride', 'Lough Erne Shore' and 'The Jolly Soldier'. Musically Brady's solo debut **“Welcome Here Kind Stranger,”** co-produced by Brady and Lunny, pretty much ploughed a similarly traditional furrow, with Paul's only original contributions being “Out The Door And Over The Wall” and the music to “Jackson And Jane.” The album was voted Best Folk album by Melody Maker that year. During the late seventies and into the initial part of the following decade, Brady contributed to a considerable number of [other artist's] recordings of traditional Irish folk music.

His sophomore solo disc, **“Hard Station,”** witnessed a radical change in Paul's songwriting approach. Brady had begun penning contemporary material. **“Hard Station”** featured the track “Crazy Dreams” and the song went on to top the Irish Singles Charts. Another album cut, “Night Hunting Time” was covered by Santana on their 1982 album **“Shango,”** thereby launching a still ongoing and financially lucrative outlet for Brady's compositions. His subsequent albums, including the live set **“Full Moon”** – recorded at the Half Moon, Putney, London, contained songs that were a mix of folk, blues and rock, with an occasional nod to traditional Irish tunes. Tina Turner included his “Steel Claw” on her 1984 album **“Private Dancer”** and the same year he collaborated with Mark Knopfler [Dire Straits] on the soundtrack to the movie **“Cal.”** Turner included Paul's “Paradise Is Here” on her 1986 album **“Break Every Rule.”** The previous year, in the liner notes to **“Biograph,”** a career retrospective, Brady was named as one of Bob Dylan's five favourite performers.

Brady's ongoing series of song collections **“Back To The Centre”** on Phonogram, plus **“Primitive Dance,”** **“Trick Or Treat,”** and **“Spirits Colliding”** variously released by Mercury and Fontana further solidified his reputation as a quality songwriter. Bonnie Raitt's 1991 album **“Luck of The Draw”** featured Brady's “Not The Only One” and the title cut, and she continued to record his songs through the closing decade of the twentieth century. Her 1998 album **“Fundamental”** featured their co-writes “Blue For No Reason” and “One Belief Away.” Rykodisc issued a career retrospective **“Nobody Knows : The Best Of Paul Brady (1970's – 1990's)”** in 1999 and followed it a year later with the *all new* **“Oh What A World.”** When Brady undertook the concert debut of his album **“Welcome Here Kind Stranger”** at Liberty Hall, Dublin in the summer of 1978 he recorded the show, but the tape was lost for over two decades. The support musicians on that show included Andy Irvine, Donal Lunny, Liam O'Flynn, Matt Molloy, Paddy Glackin and Noel Hill. In 2001, the tape was recovered and issued as **“The [Missing] Liberty Tapes.”** Later that year Paul was approached by RTE to make a six part series that reflected his diverse musical career – the series was shown in Ireland during October/November 2002, and was followed by the release of a CD and DVD, both titled **“The Paul Brady Songbook,”** featuring material from this musical

documentary series. Brady's latest studio recording "**Say What You Feel**" was recorded in Nashville, co-produced with Gary West, and released by Compass Records in early February 2005.

Discography :

with The Johnstons : "**The Johnstons**" [1968] ; "**Give A Damn**" [1969] ; "**The Barleycorn**" [1969] ; "**Both Sides Now**" [1969] ; "**Bitter Green**" [1969] ; "**Colours Of The Dawn**" [1971] ; "**If I Sang My Song**" [1972]:

with Planxty : no recordings

with Andy Irvine : "**Andy Irvine / Paul Brady**" [1976] :

with Tommy Peoples : "**The High Part Of The Road**" [1977] :

with Sean O'Casey and John Kavanagh : "**The Green Crow Caws**" [1980] :

with Matt Molloy and Tommy Peoples : "**Molloy, Brady, Peoples**" [1986] :

Andy McGann and Paddy Reynolds (with Paul Brady) : "**Fiddle Duets**" [1994] :

with Andy McGann : "**It's A Hard Road To Travel**" aka "**Masters Of Irish Music**" [1995] :

Solo : "**Welcome Here Kind Stranger**" [1978] ; "**Hard Station**" [1981] ; "**True For You**" [1983] ; "**Full Moon**" [1984] ; "**Back To The Centre**" [1986] ; "**Primitive Dance**" [1987] ; "**Trick Or Treat**" [1991] ;

"**Spirits Colliding**" [1995] ; "**Nobody Knows : The Best Of Paul Brady (1970's – 1990's)**" [1999] ; "**Oh What A World**" [2000] ; "**The [Missing] Liberty Tapes**" [2001] ; "**The Paul Brady Songbook**" [2002] ; "**Say What You Feel**" [2005] :

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 06/03 & 01/05

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