



Crazy Dreams

Paul Brady

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Irish singer and songwriter Paul Brady's memoir *Crazy Dreams* is his mesmerizing account of "sleepwalking" toward folk greatness.

Born and raised in a gray space between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic to parents from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, Brady was never quite sure where he fit in. But he did have a natural proclivity toward music, and this buoyed him during his Dublin coming of age. He played in small clubs with other folk musicians instead of going to class; he found tentative footing in a period when traditional music was on the rise.

While he was still in college, Brady was asked to join the Johnstons; with them, he catapulted to success clad in the "regulation mohair suit." The next few years were a whirlwind of recording, touring, and sharing the stage with up-and-comers like Joni Mitchell and David Bowie. But Brady—blessed with a good ear and a sense of where music was going—was still in the process of finding his own sound. When he left the band years later, he took with him songwriting experience, less innocence, and a burgeoning family. Tours with Eric Clapton and Dire Straits followed, and Brady became Irish folk royalty.

Brady's prose is refreshing in its humility and in its ability to capture fleeting moments with wisdom and grace. He was there for the global rise of Irish and folk music and he made an indelible mark on that scene; he relates such fortunes with awe and gratitude. That same earthiness and sensitivity permeates the songs that make his catalog great—and that found them footing on the standout albums of performers like Tina Turner and Bonnie Raitt.

Thick with insider knowledge on singular moments in music history, Paul Brady's memoir is a melophile's delight.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (January / February 2023)

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