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HOT PRESS MEETS TRADIOHEAD

As their genius name indicates, Tradiohead give the moochy stadium rock of Radiohead a folk makeover. However unlikely, the formula is winning them lots of friends...

Greg McAteer, 30 Aug 2013



What's with all the extreme punning in folk recently? We've had Red Hot Chili Pipers (see what they did there?) and the wonderfully titled Mo Hat, Mo Geansie (see what they did there?). Latest aboard the punning bandwagon is Tradiohead, who, yes, cover Radiohead in a folk style. Jimi McDonnell is on vocals, Philip Fogarty on accordion and bodhrán, Pat Hargan on guitar and Michael Chang on violin, viola and mandolin.

The moniker came to Jimi on a night out in Sheridan's, where the singer and a friend used to sing pop songs sean-nós style for a bit of fun. Chang was there and Jimi told him the name. Everybody had a laugh. Then McDonnell got to thinking. He mentioned the idea to Philip Fogarty who spotted an opportunity that was too good to pass up. He urged Jimi to get back in touch with Michael. Pat Hargan then came on board. Some serious rehearsal ensued.

The three instrumentalists all have a background in trad and while the name might be a joke the playing isn't. The Radiohead melodies are intact but woven in and out are passages of inventive trad. Above all they are determined not to slip into formula. The reaction has been uniformly positive with no accusations of sacrilege yet.

Jimi says: "There are people who would have thought what Horslips were doing was sacrilege 40-years ago. Planxty would

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have pissed some people off too.”

Thankfully the modern trad devotee is more open-minded. Diehard Radiohead fans have been similarly generous.

“We thought you might be shite but that was fantastic” was the response of one ‘head aficionado who caught a recent gig at The Cobblestone in Dublin.

They’re excited that the current mini-jaupt around the nation will take them to DeBarra’s in Clonakilty. Radiohead’s tour manager supposedly lives down the road in Schull, so news of their existence might conceivably filter back to Mr. Yorke and co.

After three Dublin gigs in the Cobblestone, September 12 sees them perform at the venerable rock venue Whelan’s for the first time. With a repertoire that takes in ‘Paranoid Android’ and ‘Airbag’ as well as the more obscure ‘Talk Show Host’ from the soundtrack of Baz Luhrmann’s Romeo And Juliet, and even a version of ‘High and Dry’ as Gaeilge, no indie kid will leave without a satisfied smile.

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