

PUNC

The Irish Punk Christmas Annual

December 2022



Festive Greetings!

I hope you're doing well this December. This is the PUNC Christmas annual. Photos, writing and art from Irish punks - as well as a couple of people who could pass for punks on a dark night. If you love Christmas, or even if hearing the words "Nollaig Shona Daoibh" make you want to heave, this is the zine for you.

Read it, write on bits of it, pass it on to your friends. It's your zine now.

PUNC will return next year barring foreseen circumstances.

- DJM

CREDITS:

This zine saw a number of setbacks, mostly of my own making but some were just acts of God, like me getting gastroenteritis. Thank you to all the contributors who offered their work, whether it ended up in the zine or not. Thanks in particular to Gavin, Sam, Fianna, Aeryn, Emmy, August, DC, Gabriel and Colm Brennan, as well as Ollie, Ronan and Will. Additional thanks must go to Rita from TLP, the Dublin Union of Punks and flat 7up.

Colm Brennan is the guy who did the comic on page 15, by the way. Isn't he talented?

This zine is typeset in a number of fonts, among them a number of fonts from the **Velvetyne** type foundry, including Avara, Back Out, Basteleur, Basteleur Moonlight, Sligoil & Trickster. Thanks for letting me use them ;-)

To contact PUNC, e-mail PUNC@tuta.io
or visit [@punc_fm](https://www.instagram.com/punc_fm) on instagram.
For further information,
visit <https://punc.neocities.org>.

FOCLÓIR na PUNCAÍ

New, improved and expanded, it's the Punk Gaeilge Glossary!

Ceol agus Cultúr

Punk (*Music*) / Punc, Punc-cheol, Punc-rac

Heavy Metal / Miotál Trom

Punc (*adjective*) / Puncach

Tune / Port, Amhrán

Punk, Punc rocker / Punc, Punc-racaire

Punks / na Punciaí, daoine puncach

Goths / Gotaigh

Emos / Mothúcaigh

Skinheads / Maolchinnirí

Punk band / Puncbhanna

Coirp agus hÉadaí

Mohawk (*haircut*) / Cuircín

Bleached hair / Gruaig fionnthuatha

Makeup / Smideadh

Piercing, piercings / Polladh, polta

Patch, patches / Paiste, paistí

Chain, chains / Slabhra, slabhraí

Safety pin / Biorán

I like your jacket! / Is maith liom do sheaicéad!

Phrásaí

Is cuma liom. / I don't care.

Is fuath liom an grúpa ceol sin. / I hate that band.

Bhí an cheolchoirm ar fheabhas/uafásach! / The gig was great/rotten!

Tabhair dom buidéal Buckfast sin... / Gimme that bottle of Buckfast.

Tá tú ar meisce. / You're drunk.

Tá tinneas chinn orm. / I'm hungover.

Tá póit ar bháis orm! / I'm REALLY hungover.

As meisce a thit sé sin amach. / That accident was due to drink.

Sláinte an bhradáin chugat! / Health of a salmon to you!

Is uaisle onóir na ór. / Honour before riches.

Déan féin é! / Do it yourself!

Port amháin eile! / One more tune!

D'ith an fear sin mo mhac. / This man ate my son.

GIGS with GAVIN

On three separate road trips down to the isolated wilderness of Tipperary, my dad has bored me with the story of how he saw **Aslan** play in a Lidl car park back in the '80s. You might know **Aslan** as the band who have the "how can I protect you in this crazzy world!" song. Anyway, he saw them before they 'got big' & it's a fact that he appears to be proud of. Going to small gigs & shows has this allure - you may be seeing the next big thing play for you before they get famous. Just like how my dad was a true fan of **Aslan** who enjoyed their early stuff before them bandwagoners jumped on board.

"But Gav, no big bands would play in small venues; and Aslan aren't even big (or a punk band)..." is what I presume you're thinking. On the contrary! Here are just a few of the iconic bands that played in Dublin before they got famous.

NIRVANA

Nirvana are a punk band. Grunge isn't a real word, it's a capitalist conspiracy to sell flannel shirts in Hot Topic. Fight me, this is a hill I'll die on. Their genre allegiances aside, it's well known among older punks that **Nirvana** played in Dublin just before they broke through to the mainstream.

Just one month before their groundbreaking record *Nevermind* was released, **Nirvana** supported **Sonic Youth** on a Wednesday night in a venue in Dún Laoghaire called the Top Hat. It's said that **Nirvana** played their set to a half-empty room before **Sonic Youth** took the stage. **Nirvana** finished playing: Kurt, armoured in a woman's cardigan (this seemed to have been a big deal for the native Irish in attendance) stood among the spectators to watch **Sonic Youth**'s set without any fuss.

A year later, **Nirvana** would be headlining a show at The Point (now the 3Arena) with **Teenage Fan Club** & the **Breeders** on support. The Point was only chosen to host the gig after a seismic increase in demand led to the first venue (McGonagles) being abandoned. I find the disinterest in **Nirvana** in Dún Laoghaire that night to be humorous. Just one year later, the attendees of that '91 show would probably have trampled over **Sonic Youth** just to get a glimpse of Kurto & the boys.



*I visited Dún Laoghaire to find the Top Hat, only to disappointingly find an apartment block in its place. Outside, I met a lovely couple who used to go to raves in the Top Hat back in their younger days. They were more than happy to take a photo of me on the road where **Nirvana** once gloomed.*

THE RAMONES

Like it or not, like *them* or not, it's undeniable that the **Ramones** were one of if not the most influential punk bands of all time. Just two years after they released their first record, the leather-jacket-donning New Yorkers played in Dublin in 1978. The venue then was the State Cinema in Phibsboro, with the **Ramones** playing the venue's first ever gigs. The organisers probably regretted the decision of booking a punk band, as it's claimed 75% of the cinema's chairs were destroyed by the end of the first set. 2 years later, another **Ramones** gig took place in Dublin, this time in the Grand Cinema in Cabra. This venue is only a 10 minute walk from where my nan was born & still stands to this day. The north side of the city was deemed a no-go area for punks in the '80s, due to premeditated attacks outside of the venues. 4 people were reportedly stabbed after this show: my dad frequently told me horror stories like these as a warning when I planned to dye my hair red for the first time.



I went to Cabra on a rainy Sunday morning to look for the Cabra Grand. It was closed down & decrepit, still showing evidence of the bingo nights my nan used to go to decades ago. I asked two different passers-by if they would take a photo of me, & they both silently declined, leaving you with a lonely photograph of a once lively venue.

THE CLASH

In 1977, just a few months after the release of their first album, the **Clash** headlined a show in Trinity College. This was a time when big live acts rarely played in Ireland, due to the ongoing Troubles in Northern Ireland: the **Clash**'s gig in Belfast the night before was cancelled by the RUC, leading to a riot.

This was the first gig ever booked by the Trinity Students Union, who appear to have been a truly rebellious group back in the '70s. They would later book the **Buzzcocks**, the **Stranglers** & even the **Sex Pistols**, although that last gig fell through due to the band dissolving. The **Clash** played 2 sets over 2 nights in a packed exam hall in the centre of the campus. I find it funny that the place where the obnoxious intelligentsia of Ireland write pure bollocks for their English exams was chosen for a night of raucous punk antics.

Paul Tipping was the Entertainments Officer of the Students Union in 1977 & there is a fantastic contrast outlined in his memories of the gig: scruffy punks queuing for the gig on one side of the square, & smartly dressed scholars queuing for their dinner on the other side. Other highlights include the band being covered in spit (an old form of endearment for '70s punks which has thankfully passed out of use) & the use of sheep's eyeballs as projectiles by one concerning member of the audience.

This would have been an incredible show, as the **Clash** were in their prime. However, the show also has a dark legacy. Bono was in the audience that night & seeing the Clash inspired him to start taking music seriously.

Left: I frequently visit the Trinity College campus with my bestie, however this time I ventured in alone. Too scared to talk to a tourist - or worse, a Trinity student - I had to take a selfie in front of the exam hall where punks would've stood forty five years ago. The gates to the building were locked, the oppressive forces of Irish education denying the freedom of the press.



GREEN DAY

I like **Green Day**. Many people probably don't, but for many fans like myself they were a gateway band into punk rock. Years before they released **Dookie** and played at Woodstock '94, **Green Day** played in The White Horse Inn on George's Quay. They played an all-ages show to approximately 25 people, a far cry from the stadiums of fans they would play to a decade later. I was initially told about this show by an attendee, who recalled that moshing was not advisable at that venue due to the creaky nature of the floorboards upstairs. The other comment he made was that "they were tight as fuck for a bunch of kids". Tickets were only IR£4, also a far cry from the €90 I had to pay to see them in Marlay Park this year.

In pursuit of an investigative journalism fantasy, I went to the location where The White Horse Inn once stood. The building is now occupied by a Starbucks because of course it is. I asked both cashiers if they knew who **Green Day** were, & they said "no comment". I wanted to ask their manager how they felt about Starbucks' role in destroying the culture of our city, but the staff informed me they were on their break. They also made me pay for a coffee before I could use their Wi-Fi or their toilet; capitalism is at it again.

IN CONCLUSION, the point of this piece is: go to small punk shows.

You never know: the band your student union books might be the most influential band of their generation. The show your mate is trying to drag you to will have the biggest stars of our generation open for an overrated noise rock band. The all-ages show in the attic of a pub which your creepy older friend is trying to get you excited about might feature the most famous boy band to come from Oakland, California. And of course you can't forget the potential experience of getting stabbed when you go to a punk show in North Dublin.

Go to your local indie shows, you never know who might show up next...

When he isn't reporting for PUNC, Gavin is a musician & a member of the Dublin Union of Punks (Blanch Branch). He cannot be reached on social media, but if you see him at a gig say hi. You shall know him by his "Fontaines DC Are Shit" t-shirt.



STARBUCKS COFFEE



LOADING



CINEMA CORNER

with SAM ^{AND} FIANNA!



Hello-ho-ho! It's Sam from the UnÉirethed podcast, with a festive film guide!

Are you sick of all the strange Hollywood films that for whatever reason have been cemented into the Irish cultural zeitgeist? Do you too possess the specific form of brain rot that makes you think you have to watch the Jim Carrey **Grinch** movie every year until you die?

If so, I may have the cure. For all those seeking alternative Christmas programming with an Irish twist, consider this your one stop shop for some Christmas crackers.

This time of year, it's pretty standard to sit down & watch a few of the year's blockbusters you might have missed. So what'll it be? The 50th Marvel movie? The 80-movie re-quel? Ooo, maybe a big monster movie?

I recommend leaving Godzilla, Thor, & Tom 'Dead-behind-the-eyes' Cruise behind - instead, check out **Gorgo**. **Gorgo** is great. It's Ireland's answer to the massive monster movies of the 50s & 60s. Set on the fictional Irish speaking Nara islands (Like Aran - get it?), it tells the story of a big rubber suit monster who gets King Kong'd all the way to London, before tearing shit up.



Left: GORGO! *Right:* Ronnie hitting the booze, like you will after 3 days back home

While you're on YouTube, why not check out **O'Donoghue's Opera**? It's a more or less forgotten & almost-but-not-quite-fully-finished project from the **Dubliners**. It's a folk opera, which I know sounds as much fun as a kick to balls. But it has **Ronnie Drew** as a burglar, literally dressed in a stripy jumper with a raccoon mask & a big bag that says 'swag' on the side, so it's hard not to have fun with. It's also arguably Ireland's first musical. It's basically the '**Help!**' with the **Dubliners**, but with a bit more of a dour atmosphere at parts. As well as being a bit of a cautionary tale (think a depressed singing Scrooge). It'll give you that Christmas mix of a bit of a laugh with a pretty decent emotional core. The YouTube version isn't the highest quality but it is less than 40 min. long.

Sticking with older films, the last one I'll suggest hits quite close to home - **Odd Man Out**. It's a film from 1943 by the legendary noir director Carol Reed, set & shot in Belfast. It follows a wounded IRA man as he wanders around the city in the dead of winter & tries to hide from the police. Tons of very fun side characters, an incredibly tense plot & beautiful snowy scenes of some iconic areas of Belfast. Do yourself a favour, and while you're partially immobilised by stuffing & half the family are comatose, stick this on the TV. This one's also free on YouTube.

That's all from me - Thanks Mal for letting me nerd out, and Happy holidays folks.

HO-HO-HORROR!

Pining for festive flix with fearsome fatality rates? Look no further, PUNC film correspondent **Fianna** has you covered...

While it's true that nothing is scarier than rampant consumerism, Christmas carolers and the realization that having completed another rotation around the sun, we're one year closer to total environmental catastrophe... I've decided to compile a little list of spooky Christmas films regardless. Just for the craic, like.

The catalogue of good Christmas horror movies, like good Christmas songs, is scarce but I've done my best to provide a list of movies I actually like, that even have nice little anti-capitalist, feminist, anti-industrialist or otherwise punk messages.

The Nightmare Before Christmas will not be on this list. You've all seen it.

My first recommendation to snuggle up and watch (you'll have to snuggle due to the freezing temperatures as a result of climate change and the energy companies actively bleeding you dry) is **Rare Exports**.

Rare Exports is a Finnish horror film and thus bonkers. The plot: a group of greedy industrialists accidentally release St Nick upon the world, but instead of the jolly Coca-Cola St Nick we all know and love, he's the terrifying, murderous Coca-Cola St Nick that trade union leaders in South America fear and loathe. A group of Reindeer farmers then have to fight some old naked elves to save their town. Not to give away too much.... But the ending is wild and must be watched to be appreciated.

The next movie (or movies rather) I'd recommend are the **Black Christmas** movies, namely the 1974 original and the 2019 remake (the 2006 **Black Christmas** is bad. Transphobic, somehow anti-feminist, ableist... Just don't watch it. Not a fun movie).

They're both basically the same movie, but vastly different from each other where it matters.

The original version was far ahead of its time and follows a group of women in a sorority house as they try to escape the clutches of a festive killer. The movie even delves into abortion rights and bodily autonomy, with a very progressive and feminist stance on those issues.

Black Christmas (2019) is also very good and even more staunchly feminist than its inspiration. If you do decide to watch this one, here's a trigger warning: the plot follows a survivor of sexual assault and it does get heavy at times. The characters are really well written and likeable and you'll feel upset every time one of them gets picked off.

Better Watch Out, our last movie, is so hard to watch. Oh boy. It's uncomfortable.

Seems pretty run of the mill on paper... Babysitter has to babysit brat kid, brat kid is really fucking annoying, house is put under siege by masked killers... But then after the first act the twist comes into play and everything turns on its head.

First off: the babysitter, Ashley, is a badass. She's a great horror protagonist. Secondly, the baby... Sat? Sittie? Whatever... Luke. We'll he's a little shit. Great performance, hate the child.

The movie critiques toxic masculinity, macho stereotypes and gender roles, porn culture, Internet culture, rabbit holes and giving kids iPads. It's a very fun film and you should watch it.

Well, that's everything from me.... Unless you consider any movie with snow a Christmas movie. In which case...watch **The Thing** I guess?

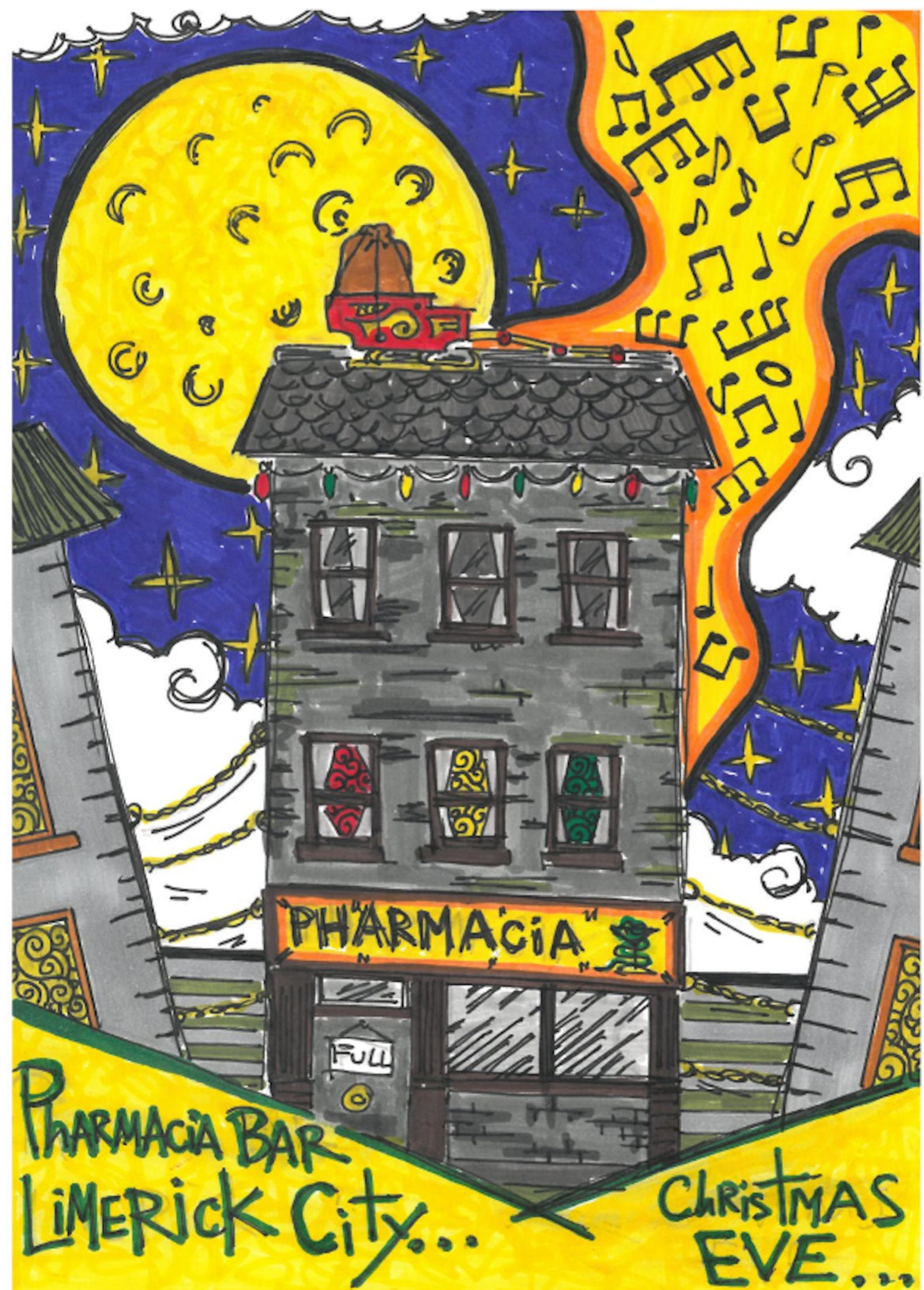
I don't know.

Nollaig Shona daoibh go léir.

Sam's podcast **UnÉirethed** is on Spotify, & more info can be found on the instagram, **@uneirethed**.

Fianna is on instagram **@mischief.brewed**.

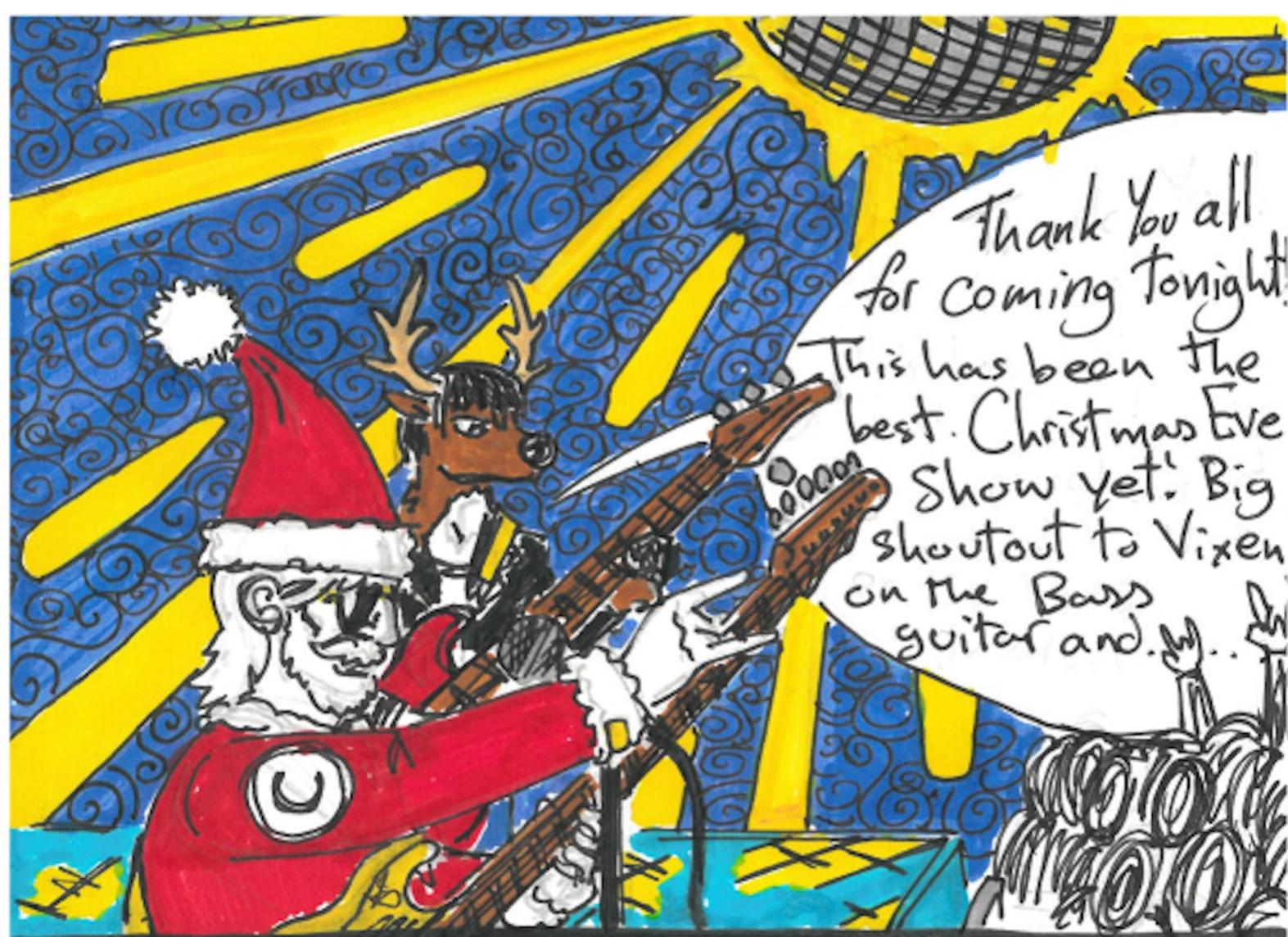




PHARMACIA BAR
LIMERICK City...

CHRISTMAS
EVE...





FEAR AND LUSHING IN STAB CITY

Gabriel Felon

They come crawling from the cracks in O'Connell Street. Planting themselves in the plush seats of the 304 bus. Ascending the clock tower of Penney's, they scream across the shining carcass of Limerick city, desperate for a night of debauchery. A great horn sounds. Ger stands outside **Pharmacia**, bronze trumpet in hand. He huffs & puffs calling out to the wretched, stained regulars of his beautiful establishment. They know why he is calling. There is music tonight. It does not matter who is playing, they just need to lush.

They are the liars, the thieves, the Spar workers, the bored unwashed decrepit people who stop outside Supermac's to pee against the wall. They are the pit troopers of Limerick, contorting & twisting their bodies in the strongholds that are **Pharmacia** & the **Commercial**. A scene has formed here, powered by a collective passion for music & substances. Bands such as **Vacuity**, **Theatre** & **50 Foot Woman** provide them with what they need. They facilitate our own self-destruction & for that I am grateful.

Pharmacia is a bar that has taken up the responsibility of housing the strange vagabonds of Limerick city. The gays, musicians, art students & those who terrify the elderly frequent that wonderful hole. These are the people who have small children on electric scooters hurl slurs & empty cans at their heads in Arthurs Quay Park.

I have entered Pharma in some of the most revealing & decrepit states I have ever been in. Sulking down the 'zombie' cocktail that simulates the feeling of ingesting warm liquidated Vaseline feels like home. It is a safe place for all. A refuge where the bouncers feel more like elderly aunts than the black-clothed golems that they are. It is tended by a team of ageless angels who never frown & always greet you with a twinkle in their eye. They treat their regulars with respect, but also disgust, wondering why it is this dungeon that we choose to frequent.

Pharma isn't the only venue in town churning out night after night of degeneracy. The **'Record Room'** beneath the Commercial bar is a strange red basement hosting Limerick's creative population year-round. This place is a quieter bar usually frequented by a tamer crowd but walk in there during a **Vacuity** show & the place transforms into a rumbling rat nest.



Post-Covid, I left home, desperately searching for any semblance of socialization happening in Limerick. First, I observed **Post Punk Podge** play the **Commercial** and it opened my eyes to the violence that can be achieved using a mask and a microphone.

Then I heard whisperings of a gig in the shop Lucky Lane. It was to be called "Luckfest" & showcase the handful of bands that formed in the 'Music Generation' program. The program is run by local elder musicians & it has been the nurturing womb for every band that has powered the Limerick scene over the last year. **Vacuity**, **50 Foot Woman** & a few other long-dead bands made their debuts in that packed alleyway. The space was too cramped & I had a woody plant poking itself into the side of my head the entire time. That didn't stop me from witnessing something new & exciting. I could smell something forming, something foul & full of spunk. It was the start to a strange year that I still have not fully processed.

The memories I can gather from gigs are flashes of ugly sweating crowds contorting & quivering to raw homegrown music. The Record Room gig at the beginning of February is a prime example of what atrocities were committed this year.



Relapse, a Cork-based promoter, organized the gig & brought with them thrash punks **RPC** & post-hardcore gremlins **Red Sun Alert**. **Vacuity** & **50 Foot Woman** were recruited to support.

The two bands exist as siblings. Having formed at the same time they often share the stage creating wild and ferocious nights that leave me battered & covered in unknown liquids.

The pair are the youngest in the scene, with most of the members still in secondary school.

50 Foot Woman are Limerick's resident horror punks. They play at such a velocity that I usually end up spewing cider all over the bathroom halfway through. The elder punks of Ireland have essentially adopted the quartet, herding them up & down the country performing at events like **Relapse** & **GGI Fest**. Their songs "**Fashion Statement**" & "**Hermann Kelly Has a Lot to Answer For**" shock a crowd into a frenzy. They twitch & crash into each other as if trying to avoid a swarm of stinging insects that have descended upon them.

Post-hardcore band **Vacuity** commands a crowd like a crew of farmers command cattle. No band makes my bones rattle like **Vacuity** does when they play songs like "**My Right**". It felt as if we were being summoned to watch them play every week for the year & it never got old. There is something about a song telling a child to shut the fuck up that awakes something dangerous in a crowd. Their album '**Lismullane**' was released on Hallowe'en to a population of fans that devoured it, leaving no crumbs.

Eoin Ryan of **50 Foot Woman** described the February gig as being the first he's attended that was properly DIY & felt punk. Seeing myself and the other troopers die in the pit was 'bizarre and scary' to him. The majority of those I asked to recount their favorite memories of the past year listed that night in the **Record Room**. It was strange looking around and realizing that a small scene had formed around these two bands.

From there more started to appear and intertwine themselves, growing a beautiful routine of weekly savagery.

Bands like **Theatre, Misvanity, Small Church, Cascando, Floodstreet, The Hugo Lynn Experience, Static Vision, Moving Home, Codeye** & more have produced a soup of rotating genres in Limerick. Solo artists like **Eoin Ryan, Colm Brennan & Shroomie** follow along tools in hand.

Stab City is in a lull this Christmastime. With **Vacuity** on hiatus & **50 Foot Woman** preoccupied by the Junior Cert, the pit must be filled. There are whisperings of a summer return for **Vacuity**, a monumental gathering of the scene's worst all on one day.

The children of Limerick cry out for noise. They sit in the middle of the road clutching their growling stomachs. The trough is not full enough. Who will fill the bucket & nurture them? I am transmitting this call across the country. Come feed them.

Gabriel Felon is a journalist, Suckfish, and Snake. Closed Mondays.

DC DELIVERS THE DETAILS

with a further scene report from Luimneach...

Limerick has had a big footprint in Irish music & art for a long time, from the Cranberries to the Rubberbandits. Today, Limerick has so many different scenes & subcultures, it's hard to catch up with what's going on. This is my best attempt at documenting what Limerick is offering. - DC

CILL

Around October of 2022, I interviewed up & coming LGBTQ+ experimental electronic noise artist **Cian Ertre** (also known as 'Cill') & chatted about their relationship to the Limerick music scene.

'It really all started around 2021. I was really fucking nervous & really into music & at the time I wanted to start a band, but I'll get to it eventually.', they laugh.

'But my experience with (the scene) started when I met Ben Mac (guitarist of Limerick punk band **50 Foot Woman**), he introduced me to the whole scene pretty much & helped me connect with & meet other artists in the scene.'

'How did you meet him?' I asked.

'So how i interacted with him was, i saw him one day with a punk jacket on, & i complimented it & he was like 'Oh! Are you a punk too?' & i was like 'Yeah man, i guess you can say i am' they laugh.

'After that really, we just started talking & then we exchanged each other's instagrams & just started talking there, & then he introduced me to his band **SO FOOT WOMAN**. Through there i met Eoin Ryan. We became friends and would talk often about the scene...really it was around October of 2021 when i attended my first gig, 'Luckfest' in Lucky Lane. Which got me introduced to **Vacuity** & after that i got more engaged & became friends with more people in the scene.'

'i mean, it made me involved with the scene but not too involved. i tried to start a band but that didn't really work out, but i have worked on a few projects with you of course & a few other artists.'
'i've been in the scene for almost a year at this point & i am still thinking of starting a band, but i am doing my own solo stuff, i might even just start shitposting raps as a joke!', they laugh.

i also interviewed an up-~~com~~-coming punk rock band called **SCENES**.

'Would you like to introduce yourselves?' i say.

'i'm **Sophie** & i play lead guitar.'

'i'm **Orla** & i play bass.'

'i'm **Aoife** & i play drums.'

'i'm **Paula** & i sing & play rhythm guitar.'

'So, what kind of music do you make?' i ask.

'Um, the effort is kind of to go for like a punk rock sound inspired by the **Riot Grrrl** movement' **Sophie** says.

'Like the thing is, we all have different music tastes, so we all contradict each other really badly!' **Paula** says, laughing along with the other band members. 'But at the end we try to make something along the lines of punk and our influences would be like, punk rock.'

'So what kind of bands are you influenced by?' i ask.

'**DON'T SAY MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE!**' **Sophie** says.

'Um, like **Bikini Kill**, **Against Me!**, **The Cramps**, **Mommy Long Legs**.' they all say.

'**Paula** likes **My Chemical Romance** but we don't say that.' 'i like **Oasis** but i don't say that,' bassist **Orla** says. 'Also **Green Day**, but i wouldn't necessarily call them an 'influence'.' **Paula** says. 'Like we take the effortless power chords of **Green Day** & a bit of the **Ramones**' **Sophie** says.

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'With the recent Punk revival in Limerick, what do you have to offer compared to other bands in the scene?' I ask.

'We're an all girl band.' they say **U** laugh.

'We're an all girl band, and that's what makes us better.'

'I mean, we haven't seen an all girl band in Limerick.' **Sophie** says.

'**U** we're all sexy,' Manager **Nancy** adds.

'I mean like, I don't see the punk scene as a competition, it isn't like 'Oh what she can provide **U** what can that band provide', it's just a community,' **Sophie** says.

'You're a relatively new band, do you have any material or anything coming out soon?' I ask.

'Yeah, we're working on a few songs, we're taking it slowly, oh shit I'm supposed to let the bassist talk.' **Sophie** says and all laugh.

'We're working on a song **U** it's turned out really good, it's gonna take a while to come out, but please wait!' **Orla** says.

'When you put a bunch of girls together that are heartbroken and have shit to talk about, you're gonna get something!' **Paula** says.

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'Yeah, we're working on a few songs, we're taking it slowly, oh shit I'm supposed to let the bassist talk,' **Sophie** says and all laugh.
'We're working on a song & it's turned out really good, it's gonna take a while to come out, but please wait!' **Orla** says.

'I think it's been like over a month since we started, like it's been 2 hours practice once a week. & I think the confusion of like, adding a new guitarist after a while & finding a new drummer, & the clash of influences has made it a tiny bit harder but we'll get there!' **Sophie** says.

'When you put a bunch of girls together that are heartbroken and have shit to talk about, you're gonna get something!' **Paula** says.

'Is there anything you would like to plug?' I ask.
'Go follow us on Instagram!' they all say.



SCENES are on Instagram [@_SCENES_official](#). **Cian** is on Instagram [@CianerTree](#) and on Bandcamp at <https://cianertree.bandcamp.com>. DC presents a podcast & radio show on **Wired FM** called **Play By Play**, which can be found on **Anchor** & **Spotify**. Further information can be found on his Instagram, [@playbyplaypodcastdc](#).





SCENE REPORT: BELFAST, 2022

Emmy Gribbon

If there's two things that unite the entire punk scene in Belfast, it's a love for Buckfast & a love for craic, it is one of those environments where everybody knows everybody else, every gig or event feels like some kind of family reunion, but every time you're almost guaranteed to meet someone new. In this small but mighty scene there is no form of age divide. The elder punks, some of whom are well into their fifties and sixties, will always welcome the young punks with open arms.

Gig line-ups are no exception to this. In October 2022, I had the pleasure of attending the release show for Billy 'Riot' McConnell's **Crackhead Control** EP. McConnell has been in & out of bands since the 1990s & is well known in the Belfast scene. This particular gig's line-up consisted of **Crackhead Control**, Lisburn legends **Buck Eejit**, street punks **Scundered** (who only played their first show together in August) & fellow Belfast punks **The Hoakers**. Most local shows are held between city centre bars. Voodoo, Belfast's only 'official' alternative rock bar, hosts most of these gigs, with live music at least twice a week in their small upstairs venue, which hosted the likes of **Steve Ignorant**, **Cro-mags** & **M.D.C** in 2022.

The Deer's Head is another very popular venue with one of the most mismatched clientele that I've personally ever witnessed. This bar has always been a meeting ground for punks & metalheads but the other usual suspects of this bar are a very dignified middle aged type of crowd, both groups exist here in total harmony & it is very refreshing to see. **The Deer's Head** is a personal favourite bar for me, where I can drink & watch live music in the company of both my friend group & my parents. **McHugh's** basement is another choice for local gigs, below an Irish trad bar which dates back to 1711. There's no stage which makes it brilliant for super interactive shows & the bar is beside this open space, so it is very accessible for both those who like to sit & those who like to mosh. Local nightclub **Limelight** also has hosted punk shows & intends to host a number more in its smaller bar. In September 2022, the **Exploited** played this venue with support from **Scundered** and local Oi! band **Takers and Users**, who are fronted by local tattoo artist Trad Skin Darzo, who has tattooed almost every punk in the scene at this point, including myself. Thankfully, this **Exploited** show went smoothly despite the lack of bouncers to quell fights within the audience & the invasion of the stage by many of the attendees, once again including myself. Their last Belfast show in the **Palm House** resulted in no fewer than 3 PSNI meat wagons showing up due to the fights within the audience. **Limelight** will host **Black Flag** and **Dead Kennedys** in 2023.



As with most punk scenes, small shows without the influence of career focused promoters are emphasized. BYOB gigs crop up fairly often in arts spaces such as the United Tribes, which is right in the city centre so it is perfect for gigs, not so brilliant for the smokers in the scene as the gig space is up about five flights of narrow stairs. You get to the top and think you're going to meet Jesus Christ himself.

The old 343 building in the east of the city was used earlier this month for a BYOB show with an entry fee of £2, these gigs are fantastic due to their accessibility for punks old & new to connect.

2022 was a cracker of a year for gigs, bands & releases within the scene with grindcore band Wardomized releasing their album Money

Isn't Real in February & their live demos later in the year. In December the frantic hillbilly punks The Scuntz released their highly anticipated album Fall Apart Gang, the official formations of Scundered & d-beat locals Porphyria, featuring local punk artist Darseaux Grimm, whose art has graced everything from stickers to hoodies to album covers.

We had many excellent gigs and shows and memories made this year, this scene has survived and endured through many losses and hard times & will continue to due to the resilience of the wonderful individuals involved. 2023 is already looking like it will be a great year for all of us and our wee scene.

UPCOMING GIGS IN NI:

Strummer Night: Brian Young + Crackhead Control +
Absolute Beginners - 14/01/23 - Voodoo

Black Flag + Total Chaos - 20/01/23 - Limelight

Rant + Scundered + Trad Skin Darzo - 28/01/23 - Voodoo

Grade 2 + Takers 'N' Users + Scundered - 17/3/23 - Voodoo
XSLF - 02/04/23 - Voodoo

GBH + Paranoid Visions - 7/04/23 - Voodoo

From The Jam + Buzzcocks - 22/04/23 - Limelight

Dead Kennedys - 19/05/23 - Limelight

HR from Bad Brains - 30/07/23 - Voodoo

The Undertones - 05/08/23 - Ward Park, Bangor

Aeryn is

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If you see either of 'em at a gig, say hi!

words
&
pic
by
Aeryn



LOCAL RECORD SHOPS

Although small in size, **Life's A Riot** is packed full of punk essentials, from a diverse range of records old and new, live concert VHS tapes, many CDs from local bands, a rack of band tees, handmade clothing & a board full of enamel pins of Northern Irish greats such as Stiff Little Fingers, Rudi & The Undertones as well as staple punk bands. **The Clash, Discharge, Misfits, Black Flag** - the list goes on and on.

Located upstairs on **11a Wellington St, Belfast, Life's A Riot** is a perfect example of 'great things come in small packages'. However unfortunately due to the building getting knocked down in January to be turned in to apartments, the record shop is in its final days - so rush to **Life's A Riot** for a bargain before it is too late!

Located on the 1st floor of **58 Wellington Place, Belfast, Dragon Records** has walls stacked with various genres of records to ensure you will always find something to add to your collection when you step through the door. However, if records aren't your thing, **Dragon Records** has crates full of CDs & a great range of cassette tapes as well. You can also expect to leave **Dragon Records** kitted out with a new band tee from their collection of vintage & second hand merchandise for sale.

If you find yourself walking on **Winetavern Street** in **Belfast**, the bright purple exterior of **Voodoo Soup Records** at number 17 is bound to catch your eye. Stocked full of records, CDs & cassette tapes of bands such as The Damned, Buzzcocks, Dead Kennedys & legendary local bands such as The Outcasts, there is something available for everybody in **Voodoo Soup**. Plus, they sell vinyl cleaning products so you can keep your finest punk records squeaky clean.

PUNK IS UNDEAD: The Death And Times Of Deathrock (By August Sweeney)

It's 1982. In England (& Ireland, to a much lesser extent) post-punk has already begun its evolution into gothic rock. Bela Lugosi IS dead. But on the west coast of the US, another beast is emerging. An incomplete mitosis of punk, mutating from horror punk but going down its own sonically darker avenues, gasping for air as it claws its way out from the depths: **deathrock**.

It's on March 24th of 1982 that **Only Theatre of Pain**, the first studio album by **Christian Death** is released. Macabre displays of blasphemy & themes not limited to sodomy, children peeling your eyelids off with their tongues, human immolation, & crucifixion are channelled through the campy dramatic vocal cords of the enigmatic **Rozz Williams**. This was no mere horror punk. There were tastes of the emerging British goth-rock in the reverb of the bass, but the unclean, harsh, driving guitars are clinging to the coattails of punk. **45 Grave** gave a more tongue-in-cheek approach the next year that was gothy, psychobilly influenced, & wonderful. So wonderful that **45 Grave's** modest success led to them playing with such iconic punk bands as **Black Flag, Descendents, Subhumans, Bad Religion & D.O.A** in 1982 alone.

There is something of a sliding scale when it comes to deathrock. You have bands like **Rudimentary Peni** or **T.S.O.L** that aren't considered a part of the goth scene at all, yet sometimes get the label "deathrock" thrown at them. In the case of **Rudimentary Peni**, at first I'm sure we all wonder what this schizoaffective disorder-fueled anarcho-punk band is doing alongside the rest of this goth bullshit. Until you turn it on. And it's... different. You can hear that dark, hypnotic **Christian Death**-esque tone in their guitars. **Nick Blinko's** politically charged screeching seems almost out of place.

The close affinity between punk & goth becomes clear upon inspection of the deathrock scene today. Because it exists, which is the best part. Deathrock, well, died almost as fast as it was born in the 80s, quickly becoming overshadowed by the slower, moodier, less punk-influenced gothic rock of the UK. But these days? It feels like there's a deathrock group popping up every five minutes & all over the world too, a phenomenon that's been termed the "deathrock revival" within the goth subculture. **Scarlet's Remains, Horror Vacui, Detoxi, Mystic Priestess, Tears for the Dying, Altar de Fey, Catholic Spit, Nox Novacula, Tragic Black**, & my god I found a single Northern Irish one, **Tragedy Vampires**. Where the hell are they all coming from?

I can't say anyone knows for sure, but my own theory is... a little sad, to be honest.

The goth scene is dying, & fast. Misappropriation of the term "goth", growing individualism, clubs shutting down, & just the old beast of time are killing what was once a thriving subculture. As goth dies, we retreat back into the punk scenes. & when goths re-assimilate into the punk scene, you get the reverse of what caused early deathrock bands to evolve in the first place. Goth is going out kicking and screaming.

This is where deathrock's embrace of **Rudimentary Peni** & **T.S.O.L** begins to make a lot more sense. Modern deathrock bands have abandoned the apoliticism of their ancestors, with a tendency to be staunchly anti-war, anti-capitalist & anti-oppression. "***I Like It When A Soldier Dies***" by the aforementioned "anarcho-deathrock" band **Horror Vacui** exemplifies this, even pulling some of their lyrics from **Crass**. Their Bandcamp bio sums everything up pretty well: "***Punker than dark, darker than punk***".

As the larger goth scene dies, deathrock thrives, parasitically feeding on its decaying corpse.

But, man, is the music it regurgitates good.



Sweeney's Sinister Seven!

A Septet of Spine-shaking Songs,
specially selected...

* **The Right Cure = Horror Vacui** *
horrorvacuilegion.bandcamp.com

* **Crust, Spikes & Mold = Mystic Priestess** *
mysticpriestess.bandcamp.com

* **Pray For Sleep = Nox Novacula** *
noxnovacula.bandcamp.com

* **Inevitable Death = Catholic Spit** *
catholicspit.bandcamp.com

* **Grey Lines = DETOXI** *
detoxi.bandcamp.com

* **ACAB = Tears For The Dying** *
tearsforthedying.bandcamp.com

* **Red Lights Dance = Tragic Black** *
tragicblack.bandcamp.com

...And for a Christmas bonus, check out "The Snow Miser Song"
by 45 Grave on the compilation album "Punk Rock Christmas"!