

One-Hit Wonders

Chumbawamba, “Tubthumping” (1997)

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Matt Grimes

Who Invited the Anarchists to the Party?

It's May 1997 and Tony Blair's Labour government has secured a landslide victory in the UK general election. The youngest prime minister since 1812, Blair has already shown his hip credentials by soundtracking his election campaign with D:Ream's anthemic song “Things Can Only Get Better.”¹ This is the era of Britpop. Oasis and Blur are locked in a battle over who is the greatest and coolest band in the world, no doubt helped along by some great public relations strategizing, and Oasis's Noel Gallagher has symbolized the Cool Britannia brand by sporting a Union Jack guitar. Even the Spice Girls have got on board with Gerri Halliwell (aka Ginger Spice), wearing a Union Jack-style sequined dress at the 1997 Brit Awards,² and on any and every photo opportunity thereafter. It seems that “Brand Britain” is on the upturn and, reminiscent of the Swinging Sixties, is starting to find its global appeal again.

Blair, no doubt egged on by his overzealous spin doctors, decides to have a house party. Dubbed the ‘Cool Britannia’ party, it reads like a who's who of the British media, cultural and sporting establishment, including global music superstars Sting, Elton John, Bono, David Bowie, Bob Geldof, and Mick Hucknall. However, Blair's real coup de grace that night is being filmed drinking champagne with Oasis' Noel Gallagher, a moment not lost on

¹ D:Ream, “Things Can Only Get Better” (Magnet Records, 1993).

² The Brit Awards are the British Phonographic Industry's (BPI) annual popular music awards.

Chumbawamba,³ and further cementing his “cool” credentials in the eyes of the British youth, already high on seeing the back of a repressive Conservative government.

The idea of leading politicians and musicians forging mutually beneficial relationships is not new.⁴ One year later and with New Labour still desperately trying to capitalize on the now worn-out Cool Britannia brand, it is the turn of Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott to turn up at the 1998 Brit Awards to try to maintain that link between New Labour and British youth culture. However, the night doesn't quite turn out how he expected. Someone has invited some anarchists to the party, and they have a serious point to make known.

Up to that point the Brit Awards already had a reputation for unruly behavior, with the likes of the KLF's Bill Drummond firing blanks from an automatic weapon over the heads of the crowd at the end of their 1992 performance. Later that evening KLF also dumped a dead sheep at the door of one of the ceremony's after-parties, with a message tied round the sheep's waist that read “I died for ewe, bon appétit.” In 1996 Pulp's Jarvis Cocker emerged on stage during Michael Jackson's performance of his hit “Earth Song”⁵ and “mooned” at both the audience and Jackson. However, whereas these instances of unruly behavior were generally aimed at musicians or the corporate music industries, being the clever political agitators that they were, Chumbawamba saw a great opportunity to make a far more poignant political point.

To a backdrop of video footage of British protest movements, and clad in jumpsuits emblazoned with phrases like “Sold Out” and “Label Whore,” they open the ceremony with “Tubthumping,” their Number 2 single and Brit-nominated best single of the year, the band

³ Chumbawamba's Dunstan Bruce told an audience at the Lucerne Bar, Prague, in the summer of 1997, “This song is dedicated to Noel Gallagher and Prime Minister Tony Blair... They're great friends. They drink champagne together. . . . This song is called ‘I Can't Hear You 'Cause Your Mouth's Full of Shit.’” Chris Mundy “Chumbawamba: Interview,” *Rolling Stone*, February 5, 1998. Available online: <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/interview-chumbawamba-184680/>.

⁴ See for example J. Street, *Music and Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012) and J. Garratt, *Music and Politics: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

⁵ M. Jackson, “Earthsong” EPIC EAS7605, 1995, vinyl.

changing a section of the lyrics to “New Labour sold out the dockers just like they sold out the rest of us,” in reference to the Liverpool dockers who, up to that point, had been on strike for three years. Singer Dunstan Bruce recalls:

We’d just done a huge benefit gig for them (the striking dockers) down in London. And then because we had this awards ceremony, we invited a couple of them along to the ceremony with us. So, if we did win the award . . . they were going to go up, collect the award and say something about their situation with the strike. . . . Somebody spotted John Prescott had turned up at this award . . . the dockers we were with said that Prescott had deliberately shunned them. He’d been a member of the union that they were involved in . . . and he refused to help them resolve this dispute.⁶

What follows their live performance gains the band some notoriety and lots of publicity:

It was one of those occasions where . . . you know we’d all had a bit to drink, and we’d all cajoled Danbert and Alice [two members of Chumbawamba] into doing something about the fact that Prescott had turned up. And so they went and threw some iced water (from a champagne ice bucket) over John Prescott and said, “This is for the Liverpool Dockers.” [. . .] There was a massive backlash . . . we were vilified. But at the same time, we enjoyed the fact that we could again get into a position and say something about why we had soaked Prescott . . . bringing up the issue of why we’d done it was important to us.⁷

Sell Out 1?

To fully comprehend the political importance of what Chumbawamba did that night you have to go back sixteen years to 1982, when the band first formed. Emerging from the punk

⁶ Amy Goodman, “The Untold Story of Chumbawamba: Dunstan Bruce on ‘90’s Anthem Song “Tubthumping” & What Came After It,” *Democracy Now*, October 19, 2017. Available online:

https://www.democracynow.org/2017/10/19/the_untold_story_of_chumbawamba_dunstan.

⁷ Ibid.

squatting scene of Leeds and the remains of two bands, Chimp Eats Banana and The Passion Killers,⁸ their overtly political, but satirical take on politics and culture soon had them associated with the then-embryonic British anarcho-punk scene. In some ways inspired by seminal anarcho-punk band Crass, Chumbawamba also composed songs and produced multimedia texts and performances that stitched together ideologies such as anarchism, geo-politics, veganism, pacifism, animal rights and other ideologies and politics that were considered central to the anarcho-punk subcultural scene.⁹ Very much like Crass, Chumbawamba's musical attacks on politics were often subtle, using the very systems and corporate structures they were rallying against to make their point.

Indeed, their career as agit-prop pranksters began in 1982 under the guise of an Oi/skinhead band called Skin Disease. Championed by the music journalist Gary Bushell, the Oi! musical movement was very much aimed at working-class youth and seemed to attract a lot of fascists. Skin Disease submitted a self-produced and recorded song titled 'I'm Thick' (the only words in it being "I'm Thick" repeated sixty-four times) for an Oi/skinhead compilation EP called *Back On The Streets*.¹⁰ As well as a string of cassette tape releases, as was very much fitting with the aesthetic and culture of the DIY/anarcho-punk movement of that time, soon to follow was an appearance for Chumbawamba on Crass Records' 1982 compilation album *Bullshit Detector 2*.¹¹

With the disbanding of Crass and Crass Records in 1984, the British anarcho-punk scene began to lose momentum and fragmented, with many individuals and bands going off

⁸ I. Glasper, *The Day The Country Died* (London: Cherry Red Books, 2006), 375–9.

⁹ See for example M. Grimes, *Life We Make: Identity, Memory and British Anarcho-Punk* (PhD diss., Birmingham City University, 2019) and R. Cross, "The Hippies Now Wear Black: Crass and Anarcho-punk, 1977–1984," *Socialist History* 26 (2004): 25–44.

¹⁰ Whalley and Hartley, "I'm Thick," Skin Disease. *Back on the Streets*, Secret Records SHH138. 1982, vinyl.

¹¹ *Bullshit Detector* was a series of three albums released on Crass's own record label. The principle behind the *Bullshit Detector* series was for regional punk bands to submit a recording to Crass who then compiled them in three albums over a four-year period (1980, 1982 and 1984). The albums embraced the DiY spirit of punk, whilst providing an opportunity for those punk bands to be heard by wider national and international audiences. The final compilation, *Bullshit Detector 3*, was released the same year that Crass disbanded and along with them Crass Records.

in different political and sonic directions.¹² As noted by Aaron Lake Smith,¹³ Chumbawamba began within their own working-class community by building coalitions and alliances with a number of left-wing organizations, openly supporting the national miners' strike by appearing at the picket lines and producing a benefit single for the miners and their families. Continuing with their DIY principles, they also set up their own record label, Agit-Prop, to self-release their first single, "Revolution."¹⁴ With handwritten liner notes that suggested that revolution can only come by getting your message to a wider audience rather than residing in an echo-chamber, they experienced accusations, from their fans, of "selling out,"¹⁵ by releasing "Revolution" on vinyl rather than cassette (an accusation they would again face fourteen years later).

Having their own label gave them the space to hone their politics and music without any interference, and in 1986 they released their first album, *Pictures of Starving Children Sell Records: Starvation, Charity And Rock & Roll—Lies & Traditions*,¹⁶ as a direct response to and a critique of the 1985 Live Aid benefit concert and single "Do They Know Its Christmas,"¹⁷ organized by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure to raise money for the victims of the Ethiopian famine. With songs such as "How to Get Your Band on Television" (also listed in two parts as "Prelude" and "Slag Aid"), Chumbawamba's critique was aimed at many of the artists for using Live Aid as an exercise in self-promotion rather than a political commitment to end famine. More records on their Agit-Prop label followed, seeing them develop a less abrasive approach to songwriting, including a foray into folk by reviving and recording old

¹² Grimes, *Life We Make*.

¹³ Aaron Lake Smith, "Chumbawamba's Long Voyage," *Jacobin*, July 13, 2012. Available online: <https://jacobinmag.com/2012/07/chumbawambas-long-voyage/>.

¹⁴ Chumbawamba, "Revolution," Agit Prop agit-one. 1985 vinyl.

¹⁵ Within popular music the term "selling out" refers to those bands or artists who sign to a major label thus compromising their independence from corporate structures, those bands or artists who licence their music for advertising, or those bands or artists who change or adapt their sound to make their music more appealing and profitable whilst compromising their musical integrity.

¹⁶ Chumbawamba, *Pictures of Starving Children Sell Records: Starvation, Charity And Rock & Roll-Lies & Traditions*, Agit Prop Prop1, 1986, vinyl.

¹⁷ M. Ure and R. Geldof, Band Aid "Do They Know Its Christmas," Mercury FEED1, 1984, vinyl.

political folk songs for their album *English Rebel Songs 1381-1914*,¹⁸ and a move toward a more pop sound with the album *Slap!*¹⁹

Using music as a vehicle for their politics, Chumbawamba always seemed in tune with, and supportive of, protest movements of the times.²⁰ They also embraced the technology of sampling and the acid-house rave/dance party culture, demonstrated in their infectious 1992 techno-inspired album *Shhh*,²¹ their last release on their own Agit-Prop label. Their more contemporary and less punk-fueled approach to music-making brought them to wider audiences, and by placing more attention on their music and less on their label, they came full circle and signed a deal with independent record label One Little Indian.²²

Anarcho-Punk Goes Pop.

So how did a bunch of anarchists from the north of England come to write such an infectious and anthemic pop song, with a rowdy football chant of a chorus that, twenty-five years later, is instantly recognizable? For many, “Tubthumping” is a working-class anthem that rallies round the notion of the oppressed underdog, encouraging them to keep fighting on despite the setbacks life throws at them. It is a drinking song, unique and so simple in structure, with one verse and one chorus repeated over and over again, and so easy to remember, so easy to sing along to, that by its nature it was destined for chart success,²³ albeit as a single hit for a band already fourteen years and over thirty releases into their music career.

“Tubthumping” is an old English term dating back to the seventeenth century, when clergy would thump the Bible or pulpit to emphasize certain words. This practice was picked up by

¹⁸ Chumbawamba, *English Rebel Songs 1381-1914*, Agit Prop Prop 3, 1988, vinyl.

¹⁹ Chumbawamba, *Slap!* Agit Prop Prop 7, 1990, vinyl.

²⁰ Chumbawamba publicly aligned themselves with protest movements against the Poll Tax, Clause 28, The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and road building.

²¹ Chumbawamba, *Shhh*, Agit Prop Prop11, 1992, vinyl.

²² One Little Indian was an independent record label set up in 1985 by a number of 1980s anarcho-punk bands and managed by Derek Birkett, the former bass player of anarcho-punk band Flux of Pink Indians. In 2020 the label changed its name to One Little Independent after Birkett accepted that the label’s brand was “perpetuating a harmful stereotyping and exploitation of indigenous peoples’ culture.”

<https://www.musicweek.com/labels/read/one-little-indian-changes-name-to-one-little-independent/080042>.

²³ No.1 in *Billboard* magazine’s Mainstream Top 40, Adult Top 40 and Alternative songs chart, No. 2 in the UK Charts, No. 6 in *Billboard*’s Hot 100 and Top 10 in thirteen countries.

public speakers, often political, and it is now more commonly understood as meaning one who expresses their opinions in a loud or aggressive manner. Chumbawamba singer Danbert Nobacon recounted how the lyrics, mostly written by singer and guitarist Boff Whalley, came about:

The actual origin of the story was that Boff was in bed at night with his wife and they heard the next-door neighbour coming home. He was super drunk, making a lot of noise. He's singing "Danny Boy," which became a lyric in the song. He goes up to the door, he puts his key in, he falls over, and he gets back up. It happened two or three times—he was just so drunk he kept falling over. Eventually he went in and went to bed, presumably, and fell asleep. It just clicked in Boff's brain when he woke up the next morning.²⁴

The verse conjures up images of late-night drinking and nostalgia. Sometimes sandwiched between the melodic, female vocals of "pissing the night away" and a rendition of the ballad, "Danny Boy," Bruce delivers a recitative-style list of alcoholic drinks—"he drinks a whiskey drink, he drinks a vodka drink"—followed by images of alcohol-induced nostalgia: "He sings the songs that remind him of the good times," he notes, "He sings the songs that remind him of the best times." There is a familiarity of either being that drinker or at least witnessing that type of performance from a drinker, in a way that one could likely empathize with the cathartic spirit of singing away your troubles. But it's the repeated chorus that is really infectious—"I get knocked down, but I get up again, you are never gonna keep me down," and underpins the track. Here, the Victoria-style music hall refrain—a memorable "hook"—is ambiguous in its ability to relate to anybody who has ever felt downtrodden, wronged or aggrieved, which points to the collective and communal spirit of the song and the sense of

²⁴ Maria Sherman, "Chumbawamba on the Unlikely, Anarchic Legacy of "Tubthumping," 20 Years Later," August 2017. Available online: <https://music.avclub.com/chumbawamba-on-the-unlikely-anarchic-legacy-of-tubthu-1798265072>.

strength and determination of continuing against all odds. As Dunstan Bruce recounted in a 1998 interview:

When we were recording this current album, we really didn't latch on to "Tubthumping" when we did it in the studio. The chorus we selected was one of 67 other choruses that we had for the song. Originally we didn't think much of the song, we weren't even going to play it live.²⁵

As with all the songs Chumbawamba had written, they wrote "Tubthumping" as a collective, echoing their political ideologies that everyone has a place at the table. But it hadn't always been a particularly easy career, as noted by singer Alice Nutter:

We made "Tubthumping" at a point when people had written us off. We made a really terrible record before it. We felt like our backs were against a wall, and if we were going to continue to exist as a band, we were going to have to pull together and be really tight. We wanted to prove ourselves to ourselves. It has a whole feel of "if you like it, fine. If you don't, fuck you." We all wanted to be there.²⁶

After first penning the song in 1996, the band played a demo to One Little Indian manager Derek Burkitt. He wasn't interested in releasing the record and accompanying album *Tubthumper*,²⁷ unless they went back and re-recorded it to sound more punk than pop. With the possibility that the song may not get released, the band sent the album to record companies to see if anyone would release it. And, although EMI were not interested, EMI-Germany were, and offered a contract to the band, which they signed.

²⁵ "The Anarchists Are Taking over the Charts (and the World)," *Irish Times*, January 1998. Available online: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/the-anarchists-are-taking-over-the-charts-and-the-world-1.130759>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Chumbawamba, *Tubthumper*, EMI Electrola CDEMC 377, 1997, CD.

Sell Out 2?

Unsurprisingly to Chumbawamba, their decision to sign to EMI-Germany was immediately met with another round of accusations of “selling out” to the capitalist machine and thus betraying their anarchist, DIY punk ideologies. Indeed, these accusations were not unfounded or without some substance. For many years Chumbawamba had rallied and campaigned against multinational corporations, the arms trade, and apartheid in South Africa, of which EMI, previously Thorn EMI, were complicit through their electronics and defense arm. They had written and self-released a song in 1984 called “EMI/HMV” that critiqued the relationship between the two parent companies,²⁸ and they also recorded a version of Elvis’ “Heartbreak Hotel” in 1989 for a compilation EP, *Fuck EMI*.²⁹ The backlash was the most virulent within the DIY/anarcho-punk scene, with long-time supporters and touring partners Oi Polloi and various other punk bands releasing a compilation EP entitled *Bare Faced Hypocrisy Sells Records: The Anti Chumbawamba EP* (1998),³⁰ an ironic play on Chumbawamba’s 1986 album *Pictures of Starving Children Sell Records*.

Chumbawamba’s response to the criticisms and accusations was bold and, in some ways, predictable. The band came out to defend their position by claiming that EMI, as a record label, had now severed its ties with the arms trade. Nutter said, “Being signed to EMI is a massive contradiction for a band like us and there’s no avoiding that. I can understand people’s disillusionment, but back in the 1980s, it did look like the indies could challenge the majors. Now there are no real independents because the majors have bought them all.”³¹ She claimed that by signing to EMI their music, and thus their politics and ideologies, would reach a wider, larger audience and have a greater impact, a reason often cited by many

²⁸ This appeared on the cassette album, *Another Year of the Same Old Shit* (1984), released on Chumbawamba’s own independent label, Sky and Trees. The HMV trademark was acquired by the EMI record label in 1931.

²⁹ Various, *Fuck EMI Rugger Bugger Discs SEEP2 Abbey Raid 1*, 1989.

³⁰ Various, *Bare Faced Hypocrisy Sells Records-The Anti Chumbawamba EP*, Ruptured Ambitions Propa Git 5, 1998, vinyl.

³¹ “The Anarchists Are Taking over the Charts (and the World).”

independent bands and artists who have signed deals with major record labels.³² “We want to subvert popular culture, and to do that you need to be popular. We’re very polite to EMI but that disguises a ruthlessness we have.”³³

The reasons for Chumbawamba signing to EMI were many. Guitarist and singer Boff Whalley recounts how they were stuck in a musical and political echo-chamber and that signing to EMI seemed the right thing to do:

It was the culmination of several things. . . . But the biggest argument for signing was that we were in a rut, and we had this audience that expected us to do a certain thing; we played to the same people all the time and we weren’t really going anywhere fast. . . . I’ve got no regrets whatsoever; we got what we wanted out of the deal, . . . we released some great records, we travelled all over the world, appeared on all these TV programmes and we made loads of money, a lot of which we gave away or ploughed into worthwhile causes.³⁴

So, were Chumbawamba still able to remain true to their ideals after entering the belly of the corporate beast? Was their rationale just a distraction from the fiscal benefits of signing a £100,000 record deal with a major record label? Could Chumbawamba convincingly face down their critics? Closer inspection of the album *Tubthumper* begins to unravel the type of deal they perhaps managed to negotiate with EMI. Beyond the infectious music and lyrical working-class ideologies, the aesthetic of the inner booklet from the *Tubthumper* CD points towards revolution and subversion. It is littered with references to injustice, oppression, popular culture, politics, Situationism, McLibel, with quotes attributed to Malcolm McLaren, anti-road protestors, French graffiti, Plato, suffragettes, and many more.

³² Both The Clash and New Model Army signed to major record labels, claiming that they could spread their message of dissent and revolution among wider audiences. Even independent punk record labels, such as One Little Indian, Crass Records, and Mortarhate, were approached by major record labels looking to “invest” in independent and DiY punk culture.

³³ “The Anarchists Are Taking over the Charts (and the World).”

³⁴ Glasper, *The Day The Country Died*, 383.

Additionally, the sales of the single and subsequent album generated a lot of money and brought the band international media attention. When Alice Nutter appeared on US TV show *Politically Incorrect*,³⁵ she suggested that if fans couldn't afford to buy the record they should go and steal it, not from small independent record stores, but only from large chain stores. This led to Virgin Records removing *Tubthumper* from their shelves among claims that the band were being irresponsible and encouraging crime. Nutter responded, "We don't have a problem with Virgin's actions. They can feel singled out and outraged if they want. But if we are going to talk about shoplifting, let's widen the debate and talk about why people steal, as opposed to just talking about Chumbawamba."³⁶

Similarly, they were invited to perform "Tubthumping" on *The Late Show with David Letterman*,³⁷ whereupon they chanted "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal" in the middle eight of the song.³⁸ They were never invited to go back on the show. Countless advertising agencies wanted to use the song, including Martini, who offered them £40,000 for thirty seconds of the song, to accompany an advert featuring Sharon Stone. The band's initial reaction was to decline but then they accepted and gave the money to a socialist community center in Madrid.³⁹ They did draw the line at some offers, however, including \$1 million from Nike to use the song in a World Cup advert, and £500,000 from General Electric, who make engines for military aircraft, to advertise an x-ray machine. However, on the back of their success with "Tubthumping" they were later approached by General Motors and offered \$70,000 to

³⁵ *Politically Incorrect*, 1998, Season 6, episode 21. Director unknown. Aired Jan 20, 1998, ABC Network.

³⁶ Smith, "Chumbawamba's Long Voyage."

³⁷ *The Late Show with David Letterman*, 1997, Season 5, episode 58, Director Jerry Foley. Aired Dec 9, 1997 CBS Network.

³⁸ Mumia Abu-Jamal is an American political activist and journalist who was convicted of murder and sentenced to death in 1982 for the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. Jamal's death sentence was overturned in 2001 after numerous campaigns and appeals.

³⁹ "The Anarchists Are Taking over the Charts (and the World)."

use one of their other songs, “Pass It Along”,⁴⁰ in an advertisement. The band accepted and donated all the money to activist groups IndyMedia and CorpWatch.⁴¹

And the legacy of “Tubthumping” continued. When British right-wing political party Ukip used it at their 2011 annual conference, the band threatened legal action against them. Nutter stated, “we do not support either Nigel Farage or Ukip. In fact, we would go further and say that Nigel Farage is an arse, his party is made up of mainly bigots and its policies are racist”.⁴² Similarly, in 2018 they forced controversial Australian mining magnate Clive Palmer to take down a YouTube video of him and a group of men singing along to the song. The band said they refused to let the political hopeful and “Donald Trump-lite egomaniac” Palmer from ever using the song, due to his “redundant views on climate change, immigration and abortion.”⁴³

So perhaps Chumbawamba’s strategy of courting the corporate music industries and corporate media really did pay off after all, despite their being labeled by many as sell-outs to independent culture and anarchist ideologies. As Boff Whalley stated on the band’s website, “We pass the moral buck, let someone else justify the decision, and in turn know some people will vilify us for it. We’d discovered through all the years of having no money just how powerful it can be if it’s in the right hands.”⁴⁴ After thirty years of writing, recording, and performing, alongside declining commercial success and not being able to dedicate the time

⁴⁰ “Pass It Along” is a single release from Chumbawamba’s 2000 album *WYSIWYG*, the follow-on album from *Tubthumper*. Chumbawamba “Pass It Along,” EMI Electrola 7243 8 89165 2 3, 2000, CD.

⁴¹ IndyMedia is a network of activist journalist collectives that report on political and social issues. IndyMedia said they would use the money from Chumbawamba to publicise the flaws in work practices of companies such as General Motors. CorpWatch is a research group based in San Francisco who expose corporate illegal activities and wrongdoing. The money donated to them by Chumbawamba financed an internet campaign against General Motors by CorpWatch.

⁴² Alexandra Topping, “Chumbawamba Go Tubthumping Crazy over Ukip’s Use of No1 Hit,” *the Guardian*, September 9, 2011. Available online:

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/sep/09/chumbawamba-tubthumping-crazy-ukip-song>.

⁴³ Naaman Zhou, “Chumbawamba Knock-down ‘Trump-lite’ Clive Palmer over Song Use,” *the Guardian*, August 31, 2018. Available online:

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⁴⁴ David Rowan, “Chumbawamba’s Tune Turns the Tables on US Car Giant,” *the Observer*, January 27, 2002. Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/jan/27/davidrowan.theobserver>.

and enthusiasm to maintaining their relevancy, Chumbawamba had run its course and the band dissolved in 2012.

Their whole musical oeuvre is a testament to their absolute belief in bringing politics and culture to the public ear and their philosophy that music should be used to inform and educate. Despite many years of being out in the cold or being in a militant music echo chamber, unlike many of their pop contemporaries and peers they took on the responsibility of using their unplanned fame as a platform to say something meaningful, to draw attention to the injustices of the world, and to try and effect change in it, no matter how large or small. Chumbawamba might have reached millions of people, and when those people are singing “Tubthumping” at their local pub karaoke night, or in sports stadia around the world, sadly how many of those people remember Chumbawamba as anything other than a pop one-hit wonder?

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