

**As the Irish would say, *A silent mouth is sweet to hear*, but Thin Lizzy is sweetest Loud!**

*By: Lana Elsehemi*

Thin Lizzy, the iconic Irish band of the 70s, rockified timeless the Irish Folk song “Whiskey in the Jar” in 1972. Reaching the top of the charts in Ireland and eventually the UK. Now, you might wonder, “What do you mean by ‘rockified ‘?’” It’s a valid question with an equally fascinating answer.

The song’s roots are in an Irish folk song, which was originally sung by The Dubliners in 1967, making it their signature song. Whiskey in the Jar, in all versions, tells the story of a bandit in southwest Ireland who robs an English Army Officer to keep his girlfriend happy after she promises to love him forever. However, she betrays him, and he ends up in jail. The theme of betrayal is a powerful and relatable element in the song’s storyline.

How did Thin Lizzy make “Whiskey in the Jar” their own? The band was at the A.V. Club, just having fun, when their manager, Ted Carroll, walked in and was captivated by their rendition. He suggested they record it as the B-side to “Black Boys in the Corner.” However, the unexpected happened-their label decided to put it on the A-side instead, leading to its surprising success.

Now, “Whiskey in the Jar” being a cover doesn’t mean it’s time to grieve and feel betrayed by the deceit. Feel comfort in the fact that Thin Lizzy did stay true to the story, with a few minor alterations. This makes it an Altered cover song, simply shifting the song to the cover artist’s style. For example, in the original, the girlfriend was named Jenny, while in Thin Lizzy’s

version, she changed her name to Molly. The band also altered the transition between stanzas.

The Dubliner's version was set up in a very stereotypical way for an Irish tune, without taking a moment to allow their instruments to shine. Thin Lizzy didn't do that, including guitar solos and such.

The main difference to me lies in the delivery of the pieces. The central message. For example, in the second verse:

*"She swore that she'd love me, never would she leave me/But the devil take that woman, for you know she tricked me easy"*

Thin Lizzy managed to incorporate feelings more in their version. As I pointed out earlier, the Dubliners kept a very stereotypical tune, without pauses or breaks, to allow the audience to absorb the story. As in Thin Lizzy's version, it was sung in a way that really captured the essence of storytelling. Like a scene out of a musical, with the bandit sharing his drunken pain through the bars of a cell.

The Dubliners' classic folk interpretation and Thin Lizzy's rock reimagining of 'Whiskey in the Jar' showcase the tale's versatility and enduring appeal. Phil Lynott's vocals, in particular, add a unique emotional depth, blending rock swagger with the folk narrative, and leaving a lasting impression on the listener.

Ultimately, Thin Lizzy's version of 'Whiskey in the Jar' should be seen as a stand-alone piece, not just a cover. It brought popularity to both the song and the Irish folktale, in a more modern and

enjoyable tune. So, if you listen to Thin Lizzy's version first, don't feel betrayed when you listen to The Dubliner's! Instead, relish the unique interpretations and the enduring appeal of the tale.