

= Cake ( band ) =

Cake ( stylized CAKE ) is an American alternative rock band from Sacramento , California . Consisting of singer John McCrea , trumpeter Vince DiFiore , guitarist Xan McCurdy , bassist Gabe Nelson and drummer Paulo Baldi , the band has been noted for McCrea 's sarcastic lyrics and monotone vocals , DiFiore 's trumpet parts , and their wide @-@ ranging musical influences , including country music , Mariachi , rock , funk , Iranian folk music and hip hop . There is also an UK based alternative rock band existent with the same name .

Cake was formed in 1991 by McCrea , DiFiore , Greg Brown , Frank French and Shon Meckfessel , who soon left and was replaced by Nelson . Following the self @-@ release of its debut album , Motorcade of Generosity , the band was signed to Capricorn Records in 1995 and released its first single , " Rock ' n ' Roll Lifestyle " , which hit number 35 on the Modern Rock Tracks music chart and was featured on MTV 's 120 Minutes ; French and Nelson then left the band , and were replaced by Todd Roper and Victor Damiani . Cake 's second album , 1996 's Fashion Nugget , went platinum on the strength of its lead single , " The Distance " . Following a tour of Europe and the United States , both Brown and Damiani announced they were leaving Cake , which led to speculation about the band 's future ; McCrea eventually recruited Xan McCurdy to take over on guitar , and persuaded Nelson to return .

Prolonging the Magic , the band 's third album , was released in 1998 and went platinum , having shipped over one million units ; this was followed three years later by Comfort Eagle , the band 's first album on Columbia Records , featuring the single " Short Skirt / Long Jacket " which hit number 7 on the Modern Rock Tracks chart . Following a series of tours , including several versions of the Unlimited Sunshine Tour , the band released Pressure Chief in 2004 , its second and last album on Columbia . After creating its own label , Upbeat Records , the band released Showroom of Compassion in 2011 , which became its first album to debut at the top of the Billboard charts , selling 44 @, @ 000 copies in the first week after release .

= = History = =

= = = Formation and Motorcade of Generosity ( 1991 ? 1996 ) = = =

Cake was formed in 1991 when John McCrea , a Sacramento , California native who had moved to Los Angeles with a band only to see it " quickly crumble around him " , returned to Sacramento . He began looking for a new band to play with , having " grown tired of Sacramento 's coffeehouse circuit " , and quickly attracted trumpet player Vince DiFiore , guitarist Greg Brown , bassist Shon Meckfessel and drummer Frank French . All were active in the music scene at the time ; DiFiore notes that " [ McCrea ] came back and stole us from other bands " . The band soon came up with the name " Cake " ; rather than referring to the foodstuff , the name is meant to be " like when something insidiously becomes a part of your life ... [ we ] mean it more as something that cakes onto your shoe and is just sort of there until you get rid of it " . McFessel soon left to attend college , and was replaced by Gabe Nelson . After touring and becoming part of the club scene in San Francisco , the band independently recorded and released Motorcade of Generosity in 1994 , selling copies from their van as a method of paying touring expenses .

Motorcade was named one of the best indie releases of 1994 by Pulse ! , and after a concert at the Great American Music Hall Bonnie Simmons agreed to manage the band , leading to them signing a deal with Capricorn Records , who re @-@ released the album in 1995 . The first single , Rock ' n ' Roll Lifestyle , hit number 35 on the Modern Rock Tracks music chart and was featured on MTV 's 120 Minutes . Critical reactions to the album were largely positive ; Stephen Thompson in the Wisconsin State Journal described it as possessing " great lyrics , creative instrumentation and production that 's about as simple as production gets " , Thomas Conner praised it for being " soulful and smooth , witty and gritty , this record makes the ghosts of Bob Wills , Buddy Holly and Lou Reed smile " in the Tulsa World , and Matt Weitz in the Dallas Observer noted its " gimlet eye and

sardonic humor " . The album was eventually nominated for a Bammy Award in the category of " Outstanding Debut Album " .

Nevertheless , some critics were less appreciative ; John Wirt , in The Advocate , praised the album 's sense of humor and " delicious " irreverence but noted that " [ the ] musicianship in Motorcade of Generosity suggests the Cake guys are mediocre players " . Mindy LaBernz , in The Austin Chronicle , described the album as " cover @-@ free , and , since we 're on the subject , genre @-@ free . A quartet made five by a trumpet player , Cake carry themselves with the snittiness of technically proficient , lyrically aware music lovers , who are almost anachronistically untrendy and brazenly proud of it " . The signing to Capricorn and re @-@ release of Motorcade led to both French and Nelson leaving the band , citing their dislike of " the prospect of extensive national touring " ; they were replaced by Todd Roper and Victor Damiani respectively .

= = = Fashion Nugget ( 1996 ? 1998 ) = = =

Fashion Nugget , Cake 's second album , was released on September 17 , 1996 . Like Motorcade , it was produced by the band and released on Capricorn Records . Cake considered the album more professionally produced than Motorcade , despite references to its " raw " sound , and the reception was again generally positive ; critics noted the broadening of Cake 's sound , with Joshua Green noting in the Westword that " Nugget spans a broader range of topics than did Motorcade , with similarly appealing results " , and Matt Weitz in the Dallas Observer saying that " The gimlet eye and sardonic humor of 1994 's Motorcade of Generosity is intact , but Fashion Nugget is aptly named ; it updates Motorcade with beatboxy soul and hip @-@ hop rhythms " . The album 's first single , " The Distance " , written by Greg Brown , became the band 's biggest hit to date and is considered their " ubiquitous " song ; it hit number 5 on the RPM Alternative 30 , and entered the Modern Rock Tracks top 5 .

On the strength of " The Distance " , Fashion Nugget was certified gold on December 9 , 1996 and platinum on April 10 , 1997 . The second single from Fashion Nugget , a cover of the Freddie Perren and Dino Fekaris song " I Will Survive " , hit number 38 on the US Modern Rock Tracks chart . Although the band described it as a serious take on the original , one they 'd been playing live for years , original performer Gloria Gaynor considers it her least favorite version of the song due to its use of profanity . Following Fashion Nugget 's release , the band toured the United States , playing in cities including Tulsa , Chicago , Salt Lake City , Los Angeles , San Antonio , and Dallas . They later toured overseas , visiting the United Kingdom as a support act for Counting Crows , playing their own shows alongside the tour at venues including Dingwalls in London . The band also toured Japan ; a later tour of the US , starting in Minneapolis in June 1997 , was cancelled due to illness when McCrea was diagnosed with " fatigue and extreme exhaustion " . After McCrea recovered , the band continued touring , playing at the Big Stink festival in Vancouver , Washington , and the Jayhawk Music Festival in Lawrence , Kansas .

1997 also saw lineup changes ; bassist Victor Damiani and guitarist Greg Brown both left , prompting speculation about the band 's survival ; McCrea noted that " Musically , there was a really great symbiosis and I really felt that it ( their departures , especially Brown 's ) was the most stupid thing in the world " , and said that he had considered dissolving the band . Brown and Damiani formed the " new @-@ wave influenced " Deathray ; their places within Cake were taken by Xan McCurdy and Gabe Nelson , whom McCrea persuaded to rejoin the band .

= = = Prolonging the Magic ( 1998 ? 2001 ) = = =

With Brown and Damiani 's departure , McCrea felt " freer to experiment " with the next album , 1998 's Prolonging the Magic ; he wrote and produced every song . As a result of this experimentation , the album was noted as " loaded with spiced @-@ up instrumentation , including a few new ingredients like the pedal steel guitar and musical saw thrown in for extra flavour " . McCrea stated that he deliberately " approached writing this record without the guitar as the central assumption of all life in the universe " . Music Week described it as an " inspired collection of leftfield

rock " , while Thor Christensen of The Dallas Morning News said that it " brims with the same dry humor the Sacramento band displayed in past hits such as ' The Distance ' and ' Rock and Roll Lifestyle ' : The leadoff track , ' Satan Is My Motor , ' puts a devilish new spin on the rock ' n ' roll car @-@ song tradition , while ' When You Sleep ' revolves around the question of what your fingers do while the rest of the body snoozes " . Other reviewers were less complimentary , with Mike Pattenden in The Times writing that " Prolonging the Magic suggests that [ Cake ] may well be destined to go down as one @-@ hit wonders ... While a handful stand out ? the country waltz Mexico , You Turn the Screws and Hem of Your Garment ? Prolonging the Magic shows McRea and company to be little more than an above average bar @-@ room act . Cake are surviving on songwriting crumbs " . The album peaked at number 33 on the Billboard 200 , was listed in The Columbian as the second best album of 1998 , and eventually went platinum after shipping over 1 million units .

The album 's first single , " Never There " , hit number 1 on Billboard 's Modern Rock Tracks , and was followed by " Let Me Go " in 1999 , which hit number 30 . Following Prolonging the Magic 's release , the band toured the United States , playing in cities including San Diego and Los Angeles . A tour of Europe was temporarily postponed in March after McCrea broke a bone in his hand while moving furniture , which also led to the delay of the European release of Prolonging the Magic . Both the album release and the tour happened in mid @-@ April , with Cake playing at the London Astoria . Later show locations in North America included Chicago , St. Louis , Missouri , and Toronto . A third single , " Sheep Go to Heaven " , was released in 2001 .

= = = Comfort Eagle ( 2001 ? 2004 ) = = =

For their fourth album , Comfort Eagle , the band signed a deal with Columbia Records . Comfort Eagle was both produced and arranged by the band , and was recorded at Paradise Studios in Sacramento and Hyde Street Studios in San Francisco . Following the recording , drummer Todd Roper left the band , citing the demands extended touring would put on his time , and the commitments his two children , Griffin and Bella represented . He was replaced by Pete McNeal . The album 's release was preceded by the release of its first single , " Short Skirt / Long Jacket " , described as a parable about " the relationship between prosperity and the population boom ... There 's nothing more procreational than economic prosperity " . An accompanying video was directed by McCrea , and recorded using the DV system ; it featured vox populi recordings of members of the public listening to the song and giving their opinion . " Short Skirt / Long Jacket " hit number 2 on the Bear Rock Top 10 in Canada and number 7 on the Billboard Modern Rock Tracks ; the video became one of the 30 most requested tracks on MTV ; Billboard writers later listed the video as the 5th best of 2001 .

Comfort Eagle itself was released on July 24 , 2001 , to good reviews ; Michael D. Clark of The Houston Chronicle described it as " Cake at its best " , while a reviewer for The Atlanta Journal @-@ Constitution stated that the album 's songs were " among the best of the band 's career " , praising McCrea for widening his vocal repertoire . James Montgomery , writing for UWIRE , noted a stylistic change , saying that " While the core sound of the band ? honky tonk guitars , mariachi horns and salsa rhythms ? remain intact , they have been stripped down to the core , replaced instead with ill Casio beats , rubbery funk and Stax @-@ style horn bleats " . The album sold 22 @, @ 000 copies in its first week , the highest sales in the band 's history , and eventually went gold . With the exception of a slot at the Atlanta On The Bricks Festival , playing for 90 @, @ 000 people , the band chose to start the tour with small rather than large shows , such as in the Sacramento area , where they played for around 100 people . They launched their first full tour for the album in September , playing in the United States , Canada and across Europe .

A second single , " Love You Madly " , was released in 2002 , with an accompanying video again produced by McCrea . The video featured DiFiore and McNeal competing in a cooking competition , judged by Rick James , Phyllis Diller and Jeff Smith , and was noted by Billboard as " continuing the fresh , witty , and downright fun style seen in the " Short Skirt " video " . Cake had planned a second tour of Europe , followed by a series of shows around the United States , but in view of the

September 11 attacks chose not to travel overseas . Instead , the band streamed a performance internationally from the Yahoo ! headquarters in California , playing emailed requests . The United States tour went ahead as planned , with Cake playing concerts in Birmingham , Alabama , St. Petersburg , Florida , Salt Lake City , and Las Vegas . This was followed by the Unlimited Sunshine Tour , a traveling festival headlined and planned by the band and featuring Modest Mouse , De La Soul and The Flaming Lips . A second Unlimited Sunshine Tour was undertaken in 2003 , featuring Cake , Cheap Trick and The Hackensaw Boys .

== Pressure Chief / B @-@ Sides and Rarities ( 2004 ? 2011 ) ==

Cake 's fifth album , Pressure Chief , was recorded in June 2004 in a converted house in Sacramento ; the album was again released on Columbia Records . Before its official release date on October 5 , the band played at the Austin City Limits Music Festival and KBCO 's World Class Rockfest . The album was also preceded by its first single , " No Phone " , which hit number 13 on Billboard 's Modern Rock Tracks chart ; the song covered the ubiquitous and privacy @-@ invading use of cell phones , and was described by Jeremy Mahadevan of the New Straits Times as " a traditionally minimalist Cake anthem , with a killer melody and , unique to this album , fairly extensive use of synths " . A second single , " Wheels " , was also released but failed to chart . Pressure Chief itself hit number 17 on the Billboard top 200 , spending 7 weeks in the charts , and received mixed reviews from critics . Although it was acknowledged as a continuation of their old work , albeit with an increased use of synthesisers , Sam Spies of the Richmond Times @-@ Dispatch noted that " the experiments in style that made Cake fun to listen to have all but disappeared from ' Pressure Chief ' ... What 's left is mostly uninspired , so @-@ called alternative rock " , and Graeme Hammond of the Sunday Herald Sun wrote that " the melodies are listless , the album bereft of anything with the verve of Short Skirt / Long Jacket or Comfort Eagle " .

Other critics were more generous ; Doug Elfman of the Las Vegas Review @-@ Journal called it " another great and bizarre , twangy album of alternative @-@ singer @-@ songwriting stories about cars and horrible relationships " , while a reviewer in the New Straits Times noted its " smart , subtly dissident , and always catchy pop " . Following Pressure Chief 's release , the band toured North America , playing in cities including Albany , New York , and Montreal . A second tour , in 2005 , saw the band headline the 20 @-@ city Virgin College Mega Tour , playing alongside Gomez ; while the Tour was in California , the band announced that it had been dropped from Columbia Records . This was followed by a tour of Europe , as well as concerts in Australia and Jakarta , along with a 2006 repeat of the Unlimited Sunshine Tour , featuring Cake , Tegan and Sara and Gogol Bordello .

Cake later formed their own label , Upbeat Records , which allowed them to release the compilation album B @-@ Sides and Rarities on August 14 , 2007 . This was followed by a series of concerts , including at the IndigO2 in London , and a performance in Anchorage , Alaska . Reviews of B @-@ Sides and Rarities were generally good ; Devin Grant of The Post and Courier wrote that " For an album full of odds and ends , this Cake release is every bit as good , and every bit as fun , as the band 's previous studio releases " , while Catherine P. Lewis of The Washington Post noted that , although several live tracks reduced the album 's strength , " there are still enough charming nuggets to make this album less disposable than the typical rarities compilation " .

== Showroom of Compassion and upcoming seventh studio album ( 2011 ? present ) ==

After six years without a new studio album , Cake recorded Showroom of Compassion in 2010 and released it on January 11 , 2011 . Rather than having it professionally recorded , the band built their own solar @-@ powered studio in Sacramento over five years and chose to produce the album themselves there . The album was preceded by its first single , " Sick of You " , which was released in September 2010 , hitting number 4 on the Billboard Alternative Songs chart . The album itself opened at number 1 on the Billboard Top 200 Albums , selling 44 @,@ 000 copies ; this marked not only the first time a Cake album had hit the number 1 spot in an opening week , but also the lowest sales numbers for an album at the top of that chart .

The album received fairly good reviews ; Scott Bergen of The Record described it as " one of their best albums " , while Jim Farber of the Daily News wrote that " Fifteen years after they batted out their first left @-@ field hit with ' The Distance , ' the band 's sound and words still have bite " . George Lang of The Oklahoman , however , wrote that it was " frustratingly lacking in many more songs worthy of the band 's late- ' 90s boom period " . To promote the album , Cake performed on Late Night with Jimmy Fallon and The Tonight Show with Jay Leno before releasing Showroom of Compassion 's second single , " Long Time " . This was followed by a spring tour of both Europe and North America , concluding with a show in Toronto on May 21 .

On February 26 , 2011 , Cake performed a live set for " Guitar Center Sessions " on DirecTV . The episode included an interview with program host Nic Harcourt . In September 2011 , Cake released a 24 @-@ page , hand @-@ made visual book for their song , Bound Away . They will release a vinyl box set consisting of their six studio albums , their rarities album and the previously unreleased , Live at the Crystal Palace for Record Store Day 2014 . A new studio album was announced for an early 2014 release , although in September 2014 McCrea admitted they hadn 't yet begun to record a new album .

### = = Influences and musical style = =

Cake incorporates a wide range of genres into its music , including country music , Mariachi , new wave , college rock , jazz , funk , Iranian folk music , Brazilian music and hip hop . McCrea himself cites Hank Williams , Tom Zé , the Golden Gate Quartet and Sly and the Family Stone as particular influences . The band is most often noted for three things : the prominence of DiFiore 's trumpet lines , McCrea 's ironic , sarcastic lyrics , and his " droll , deadpan ... monotone " vocals . DiFiore 's trumpet work originated with McCrea 's desire for a second melodic instrument to go with a song he had written ; " A lead guitar playing those lines would have been really hokey . I like it when it 's a contrapuntal thing , where the guitar is doing one melody , the vocal is doing another melody , and the trumpet plays this third melody . If the music can be transparent enough , you can hear all three at the same time " .

### = = Discography = =

#### Studio albums

Motorcade of Generosity ( 1994 )

Fashion Nugget ( 1996 )

Prolonging the Magic ( 1998 )

Comfort Eagle ( 2001 )

Pressure Chief ( 2004 )

Showroom of Compassion ( 2011 )

### = = Awards = =

Cake have been nominated for five awards : four California Music Awards and one MTV Video Music Award .

### = = Band members = =

#### Current members

John McCrea ? lead vocals , acoustic guitar , piano , organ , vibraslap ( 1991 ? present )

Vince DiFiore ? trumpet , keyboards , melodica , auxiliary percussion , background vocals ( 1991 ? present )

Gabe Nelson ? bass , background vocals ( 1992 ? 1994 , 1997 ? present )

Xan McCurdy ? electric guitar , background vocals ( 1997 ? present )

Paulo Baldi ? drums , percussion , background vocals ( 2004 ? present )

## Former members

Shon Meckfessel ? bass , background vocals ( 1991 )

Frank French ? drums , background vocals ( 1991 ? 1994 )

Greg Brown ? electric guitar , organ , background vocals ( 1991 ? 1997 )

Victor Damiani ? bass , background vocals ( 1994 ? 1997 )

Todd Roper ? drums , background vocals ( 1994 ? 2001 )

Pete McNeal ? drums , background vocals ( 2001 ? 2004 )

Timeline