

# Cranberries Find New ‘Chemistry’ After 9-Year Break

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Tiziana Fabi/AFP/File

Singer Dolores O'Riordan of Irish pop band The Cranberries performs at the Ariston Theatre in San Remo in Italy last week. Tired of non-stop touring and hurting for inspiration, The Cranberries hung up their guitars in 2003, but nine years on, the Irish rockers say the chemistry came right back for their new album "Roses", to be released on Monday.

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The quartet from Limerick shot to fame in the 1990s with hits like "Linger" and the politically-charged "Zombie" about the Northern Ireland conflict, lifted by the powerful voice of singer Dolores O'Riordan.

They sold 40 million records worldwide, becoming one of the flagship bands of the decade, but by 2003, two years after releasing their album "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee", they had hit a dead end.

"In 2003, my son was five, my daughter was two.

They were very little and I brought them both on the road," O'Riordan told AFP. "There was a point when I just felt it wasn't fair on them."

"Also creatively, we were stuck in a rut. We just needed a break."

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So they went their separate ways, O'Riordan heading to a far-flung corner of Canada where she gave birth to two more children, while the rest of the band stayed put in Ireland.

And that could have been the end of the story, were it not for Trinity College, Dublin, which invited the singer to become an honorary patron of its philosophical society in 2009.

Asked by the university to perform for the occasion, she looked up her old companions -- and the question of getting back together came up.

"It felt like yesterday. It was in fact six and a half years I hadn't seen them," O'Riordan said. "We went to the pub and over a beer Mike (Hogan, the bass player) said we should do it now because we're not getting any younger."



Joel Saget/AFP/File

Members of the Irish rock band The Cranberries (right to left) -- singer Dolores O'Riordan, bassist Mike Hogan, drummer Fergal Lawler and guitarist Noel Hogan -- in Paris on January 18. Tired of non-stop touring and hurting for inspiration, The Cranberries hung up their guitars in 2003, but nine years on, the Irish rockers say the chemistry came right back for their new album "Roses".

And that was how the tour that O'Riordan -- now 40, like Hogan -- was about to embark on for her second solo album was turned into a Cranberries comeback tour, playing 107 dates around the world.

"My shock was to see young people in the audience," guitarist Noel Hogan -- Mike's brother -- told AFP. "During our break, all these kids were discovering our music on the Internet and they never thought we were going to play live ever again."

Once the tour was over, the four decided to book into a studio -- but with "no contract, no management, no record company," he said. "We were not obliged to do it, we just did it because it was what we wanted to do."

"Roses", the album born of those recording sessions, is instantly recognisable as the work of The Cranberries, with soft, airy melodies backing up O'Riordan's distinctive voice.

"I think this breathing comes from the fact we have a chemistry, which came back immediately," said drummer Fergal Lawler. "We know where it should go when we play together, it just flows."

"There's no ego, so it's not like someone was trying to take over," agreed O'Riordan. "Having experienced working with hired musicians, you can hire the top ones, but you can't hire chemistry," said the singer, who wrote all the lyrics on the album.



Tiziana Fabi/AFP/File

Singer Dolores O'Riordan of Irish pop band The Cranberries performs at the Ariston Theatre in San Remo, Italy, on February 18. Tired of non-stop touring and hurting for inspiration, The Cranberries hung up their guitars in 2003, but nine years on, the Irish rockers say the chemistry came right back for their new album "Roses", to be released on Monday.

On it she talks of her concerns as an adult and mother, of the recent loss of her father, and the need to make the most of the present.

The Cranberries kick off a world tour on March 15, starting in New Zealand.

O'Riordan -- who this time will set off without the children -- jokingly admits she is looking forward to a bit of a holiday.

"At home I'm a house-keeper and a mum. The kids are, like, 'What's for dinner? Where are my clothes?'. On tour it's, like: 'room-service!'"

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