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Cranberries starting fresh

Over their '90s burnout, group out with new CD and touring with a stripped-down approach

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BY ALAN SCULLEY CORRESPONDENT | 0 comments

Ask Dolores O'Riordan, lead singer



of the Cranberries, about her expectations for her recently reunited band's new CD, "Roses," and you won't hear any grand predictions.

"I'd say we don't have huge, great expectations, so that way we can never really be let down," she said in a recent phone interview. "And I think we're just hoping that people, our true fans, really like this album because our fans have stayed with us for so many years."

Beyond that, O'Riordan is just pleased that the Cranberries can now operate on the group's own terms.

Now recording independently, the band no longer has the expectations and pressures that came with being a chart-topping act.

"You know, when you're young and you get too much too young, and they keep you going and you would be burned out," O'Riordan said. "At least I know myself (now). I know how to stay in control, and that's very important."

O'Riordan speaks from experience when it comes to that subject. Early in the Irish group's career, they got about as big as a band can get.

The Cranberries' 1993 debut, "Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We" - recorded when the four band members were still in their teens - sold some 6 million copies behind the hits "Linger" and "Dreams."

The second CD, 1994's "No Need To Argue," was even more popular, selling some 12 million copies, as the single "Zombie" gave the Cranberries another smash hit.

O'Riordan discovered firsthand the toll that sort of fast and massive success can take.

As the group was hitting the heights of its popularity, O'Riordan began 1994 with a major mishap. While skiing with her three Cranberries bandmates (guitarist Noel Hogan, his brother, bassist Mike Hogan, and drummer Fergal Lawler), she crashed and needed several surgeries to repair the damage to her right knee.

Despite the injury - and not wanting to lose their momentum - the band returned to touring later in 1994 and kept working virtually without a break right through spring 1996, when during a May concert in Australia, O'Riordan landed awkwardly on her right leg, re-injuring it. Tour dates had to be canceled, and as if the physical injury wasn't enough, the mental strain O'Riordan was experiencing was so severe that doctors advised her to see a psychiatrist.

"He (the psychiatrist) said 'You're just under too much pressure,'" O'Riordan recalled. "He just had to tell them (people involved in the Cranberries' business) I was not fit to go out and tour because I was quite a danger to myself at that point because I was too stressed."

The band returned to the road later in 1996, but with O'Riordan suffering from exhaustion, they cut short the tour and then went on hiatus until 1999, when they released their fourth CD, "Bury The Hatchet." That was followed in 2001 by "Wake Up And Smell The Coffee," but after the tour cycle for that CD, the group went on hiatus once again.

O'Riordan resurfaced in 2007 with her first solo CD, "Are You Listening?" and followed that with a second solo release, "No Baggage," in 2009. It was enough to make one assume the Cranberries were done once and for all.

But in early 2009, O'Riordan and the Hogan brothers bumped into each other, and that summer she invited all three of her Cranberries bandmates to her son's confirmation.

That's when the idea of reuniting took hold.

"I was kind of realizing that we weren't getting any younger and just feeling like a family feeling and realizing that maybe we should go for it," O'Riordan said.

O'Riordan said the Cranberries' live shows in support of "Roses" will be long on music and short on the kind of visual flash of the arena shows of old.

"We're going to try to keep it very simple and keep it raw," O'Riordan said. "(We'll) keep it (the focus) on the actual songs, keep like the authentic rawness that we had when we started out that we kind of lost over the years and go back to that."

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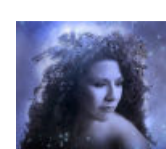
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