

PRINCE TOUR DATES

CLUB FOR ZEROES:
80 reasons to forget
the '80s



Germany Dm 5.30 Spain Psa 300

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

Paunch queen

NEW ORDER ★ DODGY
THE CRANBERRIES
HUMAN LEAGUE
BAD RELIGION
MENSWEAR
NEIL JORDAN
SPIRITUALIZED
THE BLUETONES



BLOOM! SHAKE
THE WOMB!
BELLY flower again

Belly's Tanya Donnelly photographed by Steve Double



THE JIGS ARE ALRIGHT



THE CRANBERRIES LONDON ROYAL ALBERT HALL

IMAGINE HOW many indie rock frontpersons' noses Dolores O'Riordan has put out of joint. Never mind the dyed hair, here she is, the *au naturel* naif with no flaunted behavioural quirks, no punk rock grand plan, no tribal affirmations and no Adidas inclinations, on stage at the hulking great Royal Albert Hall, twirling diaphanously in the Queen Mother's bedspread and Stevie Nicks' bare feet, in front of half a pair of sold out houses, singing sweet simple songs about lurve gone wrong. Ah, populism.

By dint of completely ignoring the set rules for mid-'90s guitar four-piece ascension, The Cranberries have reached out to an audience that's as broad and teeming as the Atlantic if not quite as wild. No-one in the Albert Hall tonight is here to stagedive. The front rows are up for a bit of swaying. The couples at the back are in for a night of hand squeezing and coasting on the melancholy aphrodisiac of the voice. And in the upstairs boxes there are full families, granny, mom and all, making like it's a night at the ballet.

So how do The Cranberries cope with being unleashed in the staid grandeur of a Last Night Of The Moms environment? Well they go with the flow, play to the mums, of course. And the couples and the kids.

"I hope this isn't all getting a bit too moody for you," says Dolores, three songs into the opening string quartet section. Impossible.

With the lads seated and dressed as The Beatles in suits and ties, four LSO types behind them and Dolores strumming away all poised and dignified, tailored and professional they wrap up acoustic versions of 'Dreaming My Dream', 'Linger', 'Empty' and (even) 'Zombie' in cat-gut curlicues. The pastoral suite to precede the rock minuets, it's a pretentious start that they pull off comfortably. But then, led by Dolores' sensual keening, The Cranberries could play kazoo versions of their heartwrenchers and still have the fourth tier all misty eyed.

The interval over, the gig proper begins and for all that Fergal, Noel and Mike provide a moderately animated triangle around her - placing the emerald vocal jewel centre-piece in their considerably plangent Everything But The Cocteau's frame - there is only really Dolores on stage. Bathed in pink lights, bunches of roses at her feet, skipping and twirling (no knee trouble tonight) she's the Madonna Of Soppo.

There is no preening and no tactical sexuality in the live Dolores experience. As the highlights from 'Everybody Else Is Doing It So Why Can't We' and 'No Need To Argue' ooze past lugubriously, she confines herself to a bit of crackpot dancing in the raunchier moments and the odd pally aside to the crowd.

For tonight's new song, the fast and demented 'John Lennon', she prods at a briefly wheeled-on keyboard. The awesome full grunge rock version of 'troubles' song 'Zombie' is prefaced with a swift prayer for continued peace in Ireland. And she elicits a huge cheer for her mad but proud display of Irish country dancing during the encore.

But whatever gestures she makes and whatever stereotypes she skips round, it's all a side show. What your mum, your dad, you and the Albert Hall were seduced by was something that excuses even the ludicrously overblown climax version of 'No Need To Argue' accompanied by violin and thundering organ. The Cranberries are no more and no less than the unquantifiable, magical, upsurge of emotion caused by a simple chord change and the mellifluous folds of Dolores' voice crooning a sucker love punch phrase. "I'm such a foool for yooooou." Simple but deadly.

So let's hear it for the International Language Of Unrequited Love and the minor chord and Celtic lilt alliance. If you're a hard judge or a snorting, scheming Adidas-clad indie rock child, it still might get to you.

Roger Morton

PICTURE: ED SIRRS



Watch with mothers: Dolores makes it a family affair

WOLFGANG PRESS LONDON CAMDEN JAZZ CAFE

SMART MOVE. What at first seems a bizarre venue for 4AD's longest-serving band makes perfect sense; the claustrophobic cafe soon fills to bursting point as The Dust Brothers amp up the vibe from the decks. Because while we were busy elsewhere, the Wolfgang Press - down to a nucleus of Michael Allen and Andrew Gray since the recent departure of Mark Cox - have reinvented themselves as a mature and sensible adult pop group. Slick suits, sampled horns and muso-funk rhythms are the new order of the day. And just in time for the '80s revival! Hurrah!

And all very convincing it is... at first. Singer Allen is every inch the thinking woman's crumpet: greased Byronic hair, sullen pout, lugubrious cheekbones. Some of the new songs from new album 'Funky Little Demons' fit his Bowie-esque demeanour perfectly, particularly the sly '11 Years', which passes wry comment on the band's role as nearly-men over an audacious blend of 'Wrote For Luck', Otis Redding's 'Mr Pitiful' and, curiously still, Wall Of Voodoo's 'Mexican Radio'. As Allen begins to growl, squirm and generally *get concerned*, it's all ultra-tight and pretty persuasive.

But then little things begin to irritate. Like Allen confronting an admittedly sad front-row punter who keeps flashing him the V-sign in an embarrassing fit of pique. Or the way 'People Say' rips off 'Sweet Jane' and crams in a throwaway line about Charlie Manson for superfluous shock value.

But most distressing of all are Allen's self-conscious impersonations of every deep-voiced male rock singer. Ever. Matt Johnson, Lou Reed, Beefheart - the list is virtually endless and on 'A Girl Like You', Allen manages the twin feat of being Lloyd Cole on the verses and Nick Cave on the chorus.

Inevitably, the clinical, arched-eyebrow stuff becomes Wolfgang Press' downfall. It's just pop made by technicians who feel that emotion just isn't cool. Clever and ironic it might be; involving and lovable it ain't.

At one point, Allen addresses the Jazz Cafe balcony and sneers, "Are we disturbing you?". Not in the slightest, mate.

Garry Mulholland

PICTURE: ANDY WILLISHER



Wolfgang Press: 'Do you wanna be in my Wolfgang?'... No, frankly

SCARFO PEEPSHOW LONDON CAMDEN CLUB SPANGLE!

LEOPARDSKIN BOXER shorts. Oh yes. Certain bands should wrap their loins in such sultry items of clothing and then strut around town like panthers on Quaaludes. Especially when their singer has cheekbones you could chisel breezeblocks with.

Sadly, Peepshow - facial sharpness aside - resemble a rather *passé* Marquee support act. Sad, because the foursome have their fantastical glam/punk moments, whereby hysterically over-the-top harmonies collide with rampant Ramones strops. Sadder still, Peepshow actually used to go for theatrical absurdities way back when, before ditching the delights of drama and stripey tights.

So now the Peeps (as they have never been called around these parts) are a stomping, table-thumping throb of a RAWK beast, stout and basic and very very bloody LOUD. For them, no chord is too dramatic, no bassline too bombastic, no hookline too fragile to escape a damn

good kicking. By the close of their set, with several eardrums ruptured, you almost find yourself admiring Peepshow's blatant show of strength. Because - hey! - no pain, no migraine, right?

Ditto, in several ways, for Scarfo. Three rebels with *some* kind of cause, their singer is called Simon and looks for all the world like Robin 'Doctor In The House' Nedwell trying to exorcise the ghost of Paul Weller. Really!

The body lurches back and forth. The words are barked out impatiently, sharp and snappy but still bulging with provocative ideals (eg, "England's not breathing!"). The guitar is constantly jagged and scratchy, scraping away at Simon's nervy tendencies whilst avoiding the trap of traditional axe wankery. And sometimes in their non-shouty moments Scarfo give the impression that they haven't got a bloody clue what they're doing. Smart.

For the most part, however, Scarfo are tight, gripping company, chewing on the arty end of the new wave bone and spitting out minor miracles. "If you want our T-shirts they're £3.99 at Millies," growls Simon, cheerily.

You cravat bastards...

Simon Williams

THEE HYPNOTICS LONDON KINGS CROSS SPLASH! CLUB

SO BACK they come, these spindle-legged spiders from bars, still hungover from a year supporting The Black Crowes around the good ol' US of A, and crashland in London like Primal Scream never happened.

Sure, not all of them made it through the ride (what with bassist Craig having checked out last year, to be replaced tonight by original mesmerist Will Pepper, and original drummer Mark being traded in for new recruit Phil because he, uh, couldn't keep it together) but the Hypnotics machine is still ticking over nicely, rewinding up for another midnight rendezvous with the Reaper at the Kings Crossroads.

And they're better than ever, to tell the truth, what with teenage Slash David Danza on second guitar (so stoned he spends the entire gig leaning up against a convenient onstage pillar) and Jim Jones at his leather lunged best, hanging onto the rafters like he's just seen his day go flashing by on Gray's Inn Road.

Fact is, the combined effect is pretty much enough to make Bobby G cry himself blind, bury his black satin shirt in the desert just left of Gram Parsons' grave and go back to his *Live The Keef Way* textbooks. If you see my point.

'Cos it's the booze we're dealing with here, where authenticity is all and where the longer you keep surviving, the better you get. It's all there on their fab new album 'The Very Crystal Speed Machine' (produced by Chris Robinson and out worldwide except, um, here), but until that comes our way there's nothing to do but take our places as they sign up on Satan's merry-go-round one more time en route to conquering the States.

Don't rule out Madison Square Garden in 1997 just yet.

Paul Moody

ORANGE DELUXE TUNBRIDGE WELLS FORUM

ORANGE DELUXE'S sound is completely at odds with their image. They're sporting the distressed duds and sneery, cropped coiffures of post-punk artful dodgers, but soaring guitars and lashings of heavy-lidded camp suggest nocturnal over-indulgence and glam-rock hedonism.

On certain levels, they're little more than a dime-store Primal Scream - a slavish regurgitation of the glam-lad traditionalism of The Faces and The Rolling Stones - yet unlike them, their

reverence never takes precedence over their art. They're willing to experiment and take risks. Consequently, 'The Stripper' is an insolent amalgamation of Bolan boogie, Black Crowe woogie and just a hint of Cockney Rebel *ennui*, while 'Love 45' is razor-sharp mod Motown and 'Anti-Gravity Blues' an epic exploration of schizophrenic moods and guitar atmospherics.

Cope's slide guitar is exemplary, blond bombshell Paul Basset's star-in-waiting cockiness irresistible, and tonight's performance is a revelation. They're a veritable tangerine dream.

Ian Fortnam