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Dionne Farris Busts a Mold

## Collective Soul

Ed Roland's  
Gift of Riff  
By Charles M. Young

Primus' Home Studio  
How the Cranberries  
Write their Hits

Charlie Sexton's  
Guitar Lesson



# How We Wrote Those Hit Songs

by Noel Hogan & Dolores O'Riordan, *The Cranberries*

**N**OEL: "LINGER" WAS THE very first one, and it started in my bedroom at home. I was messing around with my guitar one day. It's only four chords. I got that intro bit first, and I worked that into the other later chords.

Then I brought it into [bassist brother] Mike and Fearg [drummer Feargal Lawlor]; at this stage we didn't even know Dolores. I played it for them, and they added in the drum and bass bits. We gave it to Dolores because it was the one she liked the most out of the few songs we had. She came back about a week later with the lyrics, and it wasn't until we recorded it for the first time on a demo that Dolores put the string part down on keyboards.

Dolores: I started writing songs when I was about 10 or 11. This was my first time working with someone else's chords, because I used to just sit down at a piano and write everything myself. But when I heard that it was pretty simple—no solos, no melodies, just four chords—I knew the song could be anything, it was so wide open. At the start, Noel had a little plucking thing that I thought

was neat, because it wasn't really anything like the song. He had some idea up his sleeve that I could never make out, until we went into the studio and I realized that the plucking would fade out and the song would come in over it. I took it home, wrote the melody and lyrics, brought it back in and sang it.

Noel: When Dolores came in with "Zombie," she basically had it on acoustic with lyrics, but straight away she said, "This has gotta be hard." Up until that point, we hadn't done anything like that—everything was soft and up. So we dug out the old distortion pedals, hooked 'em up and just went for it, until it was a massive noise. We slowly got it so one part of the song got soft and one part would get heavy again—it took about a week to work out. But because Dolores had such a



clear picture in her head, it made it easy. Dolores: Inspiration-wise, "Zombie" was something that happened over a long period of time. There were emotions building up inside me because of the situation worsening between England and Ireland about a year and a half ago. There were a lot of bombs being planted in rubbish bins and tube stations, and you'd be in England and someone would casually say, "Oh, did you hear that another bomb went off today? Blah, blah." And after a while, I noticed that if in conversation with somebody, you said you were from Ireland, two seconds later the word "IRA" would be mentioned. Some people just think that if you're Irish, you're involved, and that bugged me. So there's a line in "Zombie" that goes, "But you see it's not me/It's not my family," which means it's out of my control.

Noel: I'd written the music for "Ode to My Family" a long time ago and forgotten about it. We were in Boston doing a soundcheck, and I started playing the chords again, but in a different structure, and Dolores remembered it, like she remembers nearly everything—I forget so easily. She walked around the stage, just singing bits and pieces to it. We just kept working on it for the next few days at soundchecks. So it was written on the road, like practically everything since the first album. Which is harder, I think, in

[cont'd on page 86]

# ROUGH MIX

## GARAGE SALE

Advocates of bootleg recordings contend that some of the best bootlegs on the market came from tapes tossed into the trash heap by major record companies [see "Behind the Bootleg Industry" *MUSICIAN* #191]. Here's a new wrinkle: five years ago, a couple in Nashville paid \$50 for a box in a local warehouse whose previous owner had defaulted on his rental payment. Inside, they discovered 2200 reels of unreleased performances by Bob Dylan, Frank Sinatra, Hank Williams, Louis Armstrong, Elvis Presley and dozens more, all

recorded at Columbia Records' Nashville studio between the '50s and '70s. The tapes had been obtained by a studio employee through a policy that invited staff to buy up "used" reels not slated for specific records. After the lucky couple sold their cache to the Clark Enslin Group, a New Jersey label, for \$6000, Sony promptly sued, claiming rightful ownership. But last month a state bankruptcy court awarded ownership of the masters to CEG, and the right to sell them—provided the company obtains copyright clearances from the labels and/or artists involved. CEG expects to eventually release what promises to be an archival treasure chest—and pay artists top royalty rates for the privilege.—M.R.



ILLUSTRATION BY MARK TODD

This month's Rough Mix was compiled by Chuck Crisafulli, Jon Young, Ken Micallef, Tom Lanham, Mark Rowland and Mac Randall.

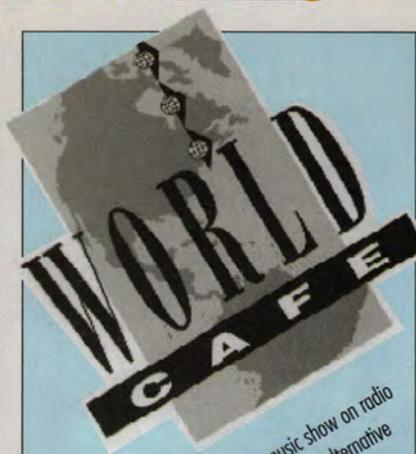
## RECENT SIGNINGS

- Fun Loving Criminals**—Alternative rock/hip-hop—"Beastie Boys meet Tom Waits." (EMI)
- Shtum**—Hard-rocking quartet from Derry, Ireland. (Work/Columbia)
- Tia**—R&B/dance diva hailing from, um, Seattle. (Ichiban)
- Supernova**—"Space Wave" trio "from Cynot 3," currently residing in Costa Mesa, CA. (Amphetamine Reptile)

## WHIPPING POST

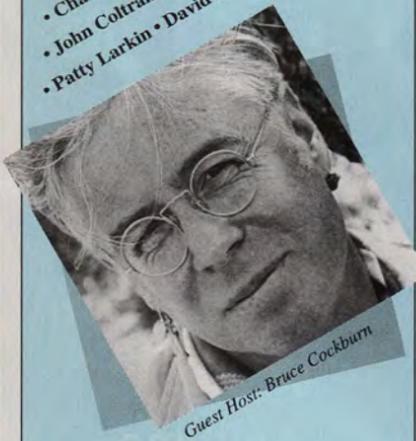
Björk's second solo album *Post* may soon become a collector's item. That's because the lead track "Possibly Maybe" features music and sound samples lifted from the work of electronic collage artist Scanner. Björk's record company has offered Scanner a standard licensing fee; his management wants royalties or withdrawal of all copies.





**World Cafe**, the only progressive music show on radio that serves up the hottest mix of acoustic and alternative rock, R&B, reggae, blues and world music, now features **Musician Day** on their musical menu. Every month, a guest artist will play their favorite tunes and talk about their own music. Our next guest DJ is **Bruce Cockburn**. Some of his picks will include:

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SHORT TAKES

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

WHALE

*We Care*  
(VIRGIN)

SPUNKY IN EVERY sense of the term, this Swedish trio revels in the cheesiest aspects of rock culture: naughty jokes, nasty sex and noisy guitars. Yet as much as that might play to cheap titillation—and given titles like “Young, Dumb & Full of Cum,” it seems safe to say they’re definitely going after the Beavis and Butt-Head in us all—it’s hard not to appreciate the wit involved. As if to remind us that no ordinary set of media-savvy deviants could generate a single as insinuatingly salacious as “Hobo Humpin’ Slobber Babe,” *We Care* fleshes out its 13 tracks with wicked wit (“Yeah, I told her/that she smells like Kurt Loder” goes one put-down in “That’s Where It’s At”), over-the-top carnality (“I’ll Do Ya”) and brilliantly black humor (the droll, verge-of-death ballad “I’m Cold”). Who says all Swedish pop is Abbaesque?

NELSON

*Because They Can*  
(Geffen)

STILL, I WISH they wouldn’t.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Stairways to Heaven*  
(Atlantic)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Spirit of ’73: Rock for Choice*  
(550 Music)

BY NOW, THE novelty of remaking camp classics from the ’70s has worn so thin that only the truly inspired—or truly insane—stand out. *Stairways to Heaven* qualifies as the latter: 12 takes on “Stairway to Heav-

en,” each more warped than the last. A true monument to Australia’s tribute band talent, it offers “Stairway” in the style of Elvis Presley’s “Viva Las Vegas” (Neil Pepper), the Beatles’ “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (The Beatnix), and John Paul Young’s “Love Is in the Air” (er, John Paul Young). Nothing on *Spirit of ’73* is as funny (though Sophie B. Hawkins’ over-dramatized “The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down” does offer an unintended laugh or two), but it doesn’t have to be; this Roe vs. Wade anniversary album is meant to celebrate the sound of ’70s sisterhood, not send it up. Granted, Babes in Toyland do camp it up through “More, More, More,” but the album’s highlights—Johnette Napolitano’s exquisite “Dancing Barefoot,” a pungent “If I Can’t Have You” from Eve’s Plum, and Sarah McLachlan’s incandescent rendering of “Blue”—are seriously brilliant.

PINK FLOYD

*Pulse*  
(Columbia)

ALTHOUGH BILLED AS a live album, it would be more accurate to describe this as a concert recording, since “live” does imply chance-taking and vitality, qualities not much in evidence in this set. Recorded in Europe during the group’s last tour, it includes a full rendition of *Dark Side of the Moon*, but apart from a soulful stroll through “The Great Gig in the Sky,” it brings nothing to the music beyond a slightly expanded sonic palette. On the plus side, the packaging does include a red light on the spine that pulses at nearly the same rate as a human heartbeat. Too bad that’s as close to live as it gets.

you play it for everyone else.

Dolores: We were on tour and I’d been in a relationship, living with someone for a few years. And you know how, when you’re a kid, you sit on your parents’ lap and you just know they’re mad about you? And then you’ve got your teenage life, where your parents are not cool and nobody understands you? Well, at least you *think* that. So you

either reach adulthood and *really* get to know your parents or else you leave home and risk never getting to know them. I’d left under the wrong terms—my parents didn’t want me to go, because they wanted me to go to college, but I was like, “I’m going, that’s it.” So I didn’t have much of a relationship with them at the time. When I went to live with this person, I realized it wasn’t the right thing. I left and went on tour, and I was alone and reflecting on the happiest time I could point out, which was childhood. It was a time when I didn’t have to make decisions, I didn’t have to go on tour, I didn’t have to do anything, because it was all there—mommy and daddy and your brothers and sisters and your dinner. When you’re a child, you’re like a little wild animal—it’s wonderful. You can do what you like.

Noel: “Ridiculous Thoughts” is one of our favorites. It seemed to have this dance-y feel to it. That was done around the time of “Ode to My Family” as well, and the intro chords were actually another song I was trying to work on.

Dolores: It’s quite funny because Noel will sometimes write seven chord sequences, and maybe out of two we’ll make two great

songs, maybe out of three—I’ll choose whichever inspires me. So listening to this tape where he had about seven sequences down, I said, “Noel, do you know that one ends in the same key that this one starts in? I think you should use this one as the intro for that one and make it all one song.” And he did. The first four chords inspired me to do a high, airy thing, and the other part was just bawdy and bold. I wrote the lyrics about the music industry. You’ve got to be careful, because people tell you, “Your next thing is going to be this.” And I say, “No, my next thing is going to be what I say it’s going to be.” If you don’t take the bull by the horns, then you’re gonna be riding a bull that’s out of control, and when the bull falls, you fall too, and nobody gives a damn.

HARRIS

[cont’d from page 48] a lot of tension in it that I liked, especially that move from E to Bb in the bassline. My version of the song was like, ‘If you’re gonna keep lifting me up only to drop me, don’t ever touch me again.’ Dionne just gave it a whole new story.”

*Wild Seed*’s re-arrangement of the Beatles’ “Blackbird” employs a drastically detuned acoustic guitar for a bluesy mood. When Harris played the song for Dionne, he’d already taken it down a step and a half, from G to E. “I played it that way partly because I was too lazy to actually learn the song, but also because I’ve heard so many people play it just like the Beatles, and I wanted to put my own spin on it. E was a comfortable key for me. Dionne said, ‘I like the arrangement, but it’s too high.’ So I told her, ‘Just sing it where you want and I’ll find it on the guitar.’ It turned out to be *way* low, Bb.” Instead of changing chords, Harris simply tuned all his strings down three whole steps. Not surprisingly, a gauge change was required. “It’s practically baritone, from .065 to .017. I’ve got a Takamine onstage now devoted to that tuning. Not every guitar can handle it; the tension may be fine but the intonation can be horrendous.”

As much as Harris has enjoyed his time with Dionne, being just the guitar player is not his bag. “At first it was cool, but now I’m itching to do my own thing.” He’s hoping to start work on his own album soon, though there’s still that lawsuit from the Follow For Now days in the way. “And,” he adds with a chuckle, “I’ve just got too many songs.” —Mac Randall

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THE CRANBERRIES

[cont’d from page 13] that you’ve got time limits, people coming around going, “Doors are in five minutes—get off the stage!” So you bring an acoustic guitar into your hotel room and get something, and the next day you start messing about with it at soundcheck. And when you’re happy with it,

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