

GERMANY DM 5.30 / SPAIN Ptas 350 / US \$3.75



**TINDERSTICKS**  
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

WIN MEGADOG  
**TICKETS**

4 PAGES OF  
DANCE

**Orbit**

# MELODY MAKER

STREETS AHEAD

JANUARY 29, 1994 75p

## GILT TRIPPING WITH THE **MANICS**



Manic Street Preachers - Photographed by Steve Gullick



Bob Mould • Tori Amos • Nirvana • Charlatans • Voodoo Queens • Lemonheads • Cranberries

**STEREOLAB**

THE GRAND, LONDON

FOR a band who've run some pretty weighty theories up pop's flagpole in their time, Stereolab have a fabulous lightness of touch.

Like all self-respecting neo-Situationists, they're totally committed to the pleasure principle, which might explain how come they gush with life and seem to ride on such incredible, spring-heeled positivity. That they do is kind of surprising, given their wryly self-referential name (and God, it's so perfect for them), their post-modernist dabbling, love of all things lo-fi and their obsession with creaky bits of old technology.

Tonight Stereolab are a much bigger concern than I remember, but then it's been a while. It's not just that there are seven of them up there, but that their songs, once so careful and skeletal, have filled out, too. They swell out in great, fulsome waves, lapping lusciously about our ears before being reeled slowly in and then flowing back out again. They are liquid and lush and casually exuberant, so much fleshier and warmer than all those theories suggest, but with a cool self-possession.

This is due mostly to vocalist Laetitia, whose murmured vocals indicate her blissful state of self-absorption. She's très Sixties in her beige ribbed sweater and bob, very Claudine Longet (kind of

Gallic Jean Shrimpton, umm, married Andy Williams, put out a single, I think - well before your time). No offence. And yes, that mix of carefully enunciated French with indeterminate billing and cooing and endless rounds of dum-dah-dum-dah-dah-dah-dum-dum is utterly beguiling.

As you'd expect of any band that uses not only a cheesy old Farfisa but also a Moog synth, and has a song named after Werner Herzog's cinematographer, ("Popol Vuh"), there's a subtext. I'm buggered if I know what it is, though. What I do know is that, when Stereolab swoon in with "Superelectric", I'm with them all the way.

I also know that they're audacious enough to test-drive five new songs tonight, the first of which is "Wow And Flutter". It's soft and surprising as a bathful of warm birds, with a definite Lush touch. (This is something they might want to keep an eye on.) They charge through the utterly addictive "French Disco" (Stereolab love their jokey self-references) way too fast but it still shines. Pop songs this good appear less frequently than Halley's Comet. Another new one, "Staccato Susan", shifts and shimmies and heaves with the same kind of crazy, runaway impetus as the rest. "Heavy Denim" is just that - a take on Lawrence Felt's

neo-Seventies schlock with truly thuggish drums, while the final number, "Sub Pop", (hah!) buzzes and thrums like a phalanx of furry old valve amps.

By the time they've hit that point, Stereolab have gathered the kind of mad momentum that comes from running down a steep hill far too fast; the speed builds until you're drunk and giddy and couldn't stop it if you wanted to. You don't. Sadly, Stereolab are man enough to please themselves. The hum and burr drop gently away and there's no encore. *Quelle dommage.*

SHARON O'CONNELL



Pic: Alison Wonderland

# TURKEY NO MORE

**THE CRANBERRIES**

LA 2, LONDON

NO longer the bunch of innocents who pleaded for a chance with their album title, The Cranberries give the impression of being the *hardest* group around now dealing with their insecurities. Dolores O'Riordan, the quiet girl who found confidence in a haircut and pair of jackboots, projects this: she appears tonight as the self-crowned queen of no-nonsense sensitivity, a dungareed Tasmanian Devil ready to sneer at anyone

vaguely resembling her former self.

Who ordered this transformation? Clearly not the guitar and bass-playing Hogan brothers, who churn out the tunes with all the enthusiasm of a boxer who's been paid to lose the fight. They may get to paddle in the slipstream of fame, but do so in the knowledge that any passion they display will be overshadowed by their whirling, stomping, scowling, emotional black hole of a singer - She Who Must Have All The Attention.

Not that Dolores is in any way conceited; she just behaves like a bona fide rock 'n' roll star. She appears draped in an American flag, just to make the point that The Cranberries have the world's biggest rock market on its knees, then lets rip with the voice that Sinéad once claimed for Ireland. And she has the crowd cheering and wishing her well, because they can tell that's what she wants.

In short, Dolores overcompensates. But only because *that's what proper rock 'n' roll people do*. After all, who's gonna take any notice of melodies that drift like early morning mist, instrumentation that sighs with wistful, quiet honesty, and words that tremble in the face of love's majesty? The trick is to lure the crowd into a state of empathy; to convince them that a good time lies ahead if they just *join in!*

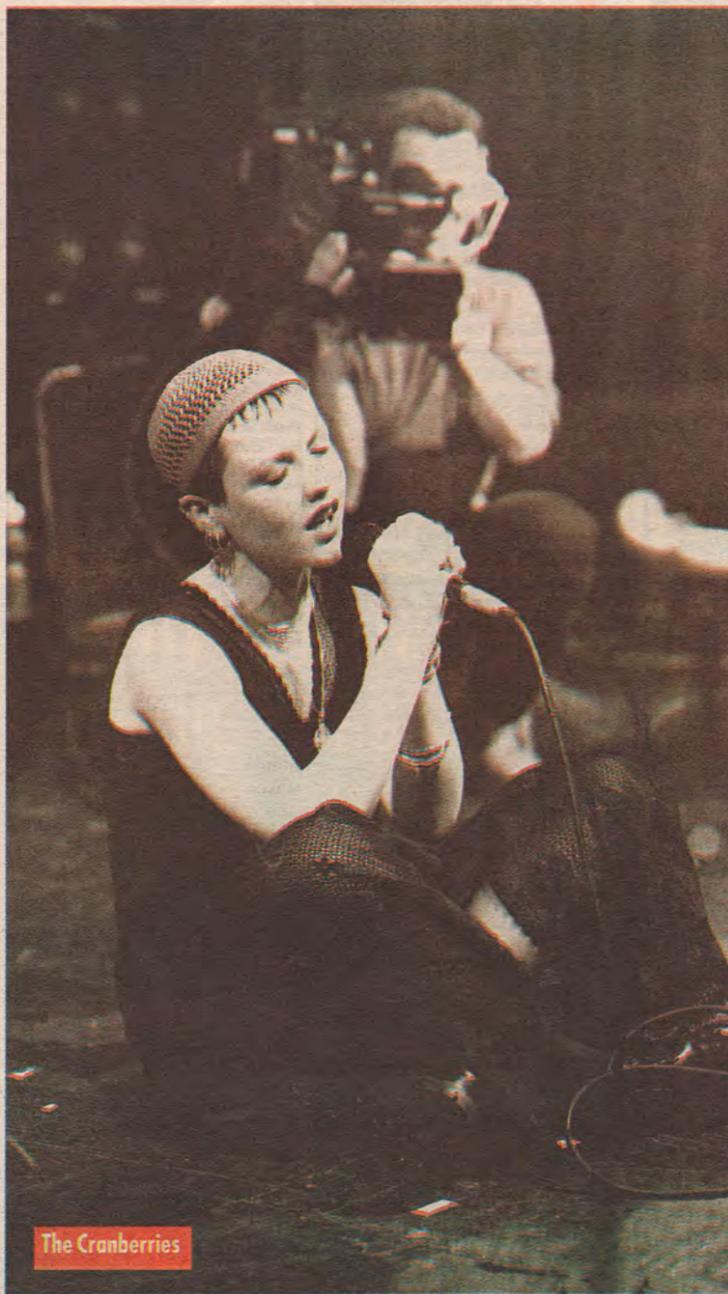
The Cranberries, then, have sold their souls to the spirit of rock 'n' roll in order to sneak their very essence past the iron gates of apathy. And, oddly enough, it seems to be worth it.

"Linger" is the effortless pay-off for the silent respect afforded the new material, tracks like "Zombie" and "So Cold In Ireland" striking an emotional chord with an integrity that's chillingly pure.

At moments like this, there's an overwhelming honesty. We're touched, spoken to.

Does this mean that The Cranberries can now go back to being themselves? We need Dolores to be Tank Girl as much as she needs us to be sappy and forgiving.

Long may the affair continue. IAN WATSON



The Cranberries

Pic: Tim Paton

## CLUBS!



COSMIC BABY: sweatno supremo

**THE FINAL FRONTIER**

CLUB UK, WANDSWORTH

THE Lunar Room at The Final Frontier

is like the set of "The Word" -

bright, multi-coloured and kitsch. There are oil wheels, Day-Glo sculptures, a Dalek and, for

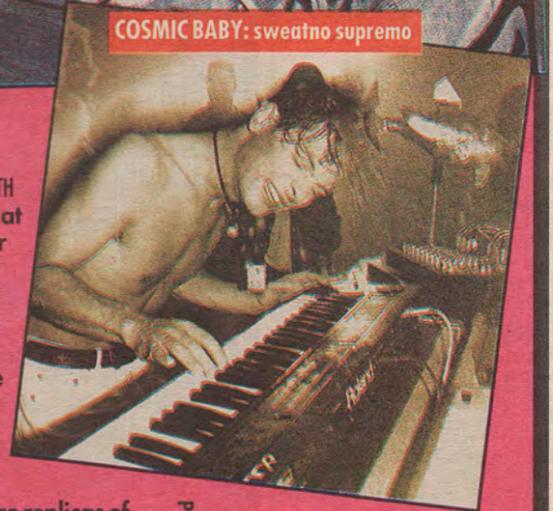
seating, giant-size replicas of Chewits and Crest packets. It's Friday night and the place is rammed with a barmy army of cheesy quavers (ravers) clutching flyers which claim to be passports "to oblivion".

Sun hats, smileys and Andy Pandy dungarees may seem just a distant memory, but the daft, childlike essence of what we once called "acid house" is alive thanks to Universe. Last spring in Wiltshire they had 30,000 dancing in the mist, riding dodgems and spinning on gyroscopes with silly painted faces. Final Frontier is a scaled-down version in a concrete bunker behind Wandsworth Arndale Centre. You can't miss it - there's a tank with a whale on top parked outside...

What sets Final Frontier apart is a music policy that excludes garage and hardcore in favour of techno, flying in the legends from Germany, Belgium and Detroit and, tonight, including a rare live set from Berlin's synthesiser guru Cosmic Baby, the king of trance. Trained in piano at the Nuremberg Conservatory from the age of seven, he is obsessed with the cosmos and Eastern religion. Stealing from Tangerine Dream, he weaves a uniquely spectral sound - hard rhythms softened by angelic string and piano melodies. "He's a genius," the person next to me rasps. "He's the new Jean Michel Jarre!"

Bathed in white light, Cosmic Baby is not your usual spotty techno geek. Stripped to the waist and glistening with sweat, the baby-faced 27 year old looks like a member of Take That - high cheekbones, pouting lips, a sun tan and muscle-bound physique. Pure sex.

The most animated dance performer since Moby, he sure



Pic: Mark Bennett

puts on a show.

The beat stops, the track breaks down into a heavenly chord sequence, he closes his eyes and lifts his arms in ecstasy. To screams and wolf-whistles he then grins and pogos on like a kid in kindergarten, playing his forthcoming hologrammatic single, "Loops Of Infinity", out soon on Logic.

"Infinity" is also the name of the so-called ambient room, decked in Day-Glo sea creatures for an aquarium vibe. Here we seek a zero-tempo zone to recharge. Except that there's nowhere to sit down and Alex Paterson and Lewis of The Orb mix yet more techno. (Surely some mistake?) It's too hot, mineral water is £1.50, and there is talk of cold taps being turned off. Sort it out, please!

Our evening finishes in Mother Earth, the central party arena haunted by blip-vert projections. Joining the London posse of Carl Cox, Dave Angel and Fabio Paras, is DJ Dag, Frankfurt's Native American descendant whose techno is excessive, the crush of sweaty limbs leaving us panting for air. Time to take the courtesy "space shuttle" back to Trafalgar Square. As the flyer says, "Open your mind... and your body will follow..."

SARAH CHAMPION

