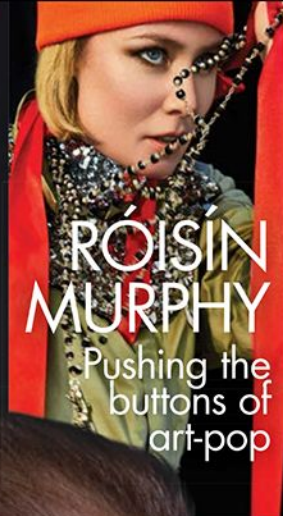
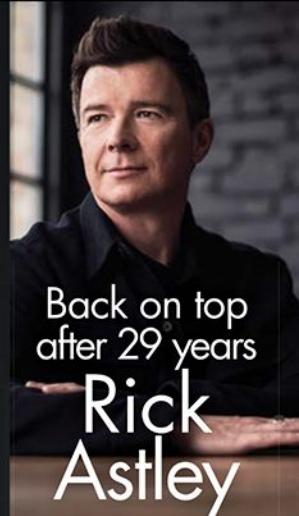


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COMBINE THE VOICE OF THE CRANBERRIES WITH THE SMITHS' BASSIST AND A NEW YORK DJ-REMIXER, AND WHAT DO YOU GET? DOLORES O'RIORDAN, ANDY ROURKE AND OLÉ KORETSKY TELL ALL...

IAN RAVENDALE

As lead singer with The Cranberries, Dolores O'Riordan is probably the most successful Irish female singer of all time. *Linger* and *Zombie* were international hits and the band have sold 40 million records worldwide, notching up four Top 20 albums in the Billboard 200 chart along the way. They took a break from 2004 until 2009, with O'Riordan releasing a couple of solo albums before The Cranberries reconvened for 2012's *Roses*. "It was kind of a 'one for the road'," admits Dolores. "We did it and at the time it felt like it was going to be the last album. But the years go by, things happen in your life and you end up back together."

A Cranberries 'greatest hits' album is due to be recorded soon with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and that project co-exists alongside the debut album by D.A.R.K., where Dolores is teamed up with former

DANCING WITH

THE D.A.R.K.

Smiths bass player Andy Rourke and New York songwriter, DJ and producer Olé Koretsky.

Recorded in New York and Ontario, mixed in California and mastered in London, *Science Agrees* is released by Cooking Vinyl this summer. The band name comes from Dolores/Andy Rourke/Koretsky, with the ex-Smith getting twice the exposure of his colleagues. "We don't have a band name, which is why it's our initials!" Koretsky grins.

Science Agrees is a pop/dance slice of 2016 electronica that marks a major departure from O'Riordan's outings with The Cranberries. There are nods to Depeche Mode, The Cure and David Bowie amongst others, reflecting Olé's background as a dance DJ. The album's cocktail of electronic bells and whistles also draws upon post-disco, hip-hop and the more esoteric works of Brian Eno.

The day after talking to *Classic Pop* shortly after arriving from New York, O'Riordan is due to start rehearsing with her long-standing band for the *Greatest Hits* album. "I'm a busy girl at the moment!" she says, with a degree of understatement.

Working simultaneously on two widely different projects would be enough to make any musician feel just a little bit artistically schizophrenic; Dolores, though, is surprisingly frank about her personal, rather than professional, state of mind. "I'm actually on medication at the moment for bipolar disorder. My psychiatrist thinks I need it, and it keeps me level. I didn't sleep for two-and-a-half months when my marriage broke down several years ago. I didn't realise how dangerous it is to go without sleep!"

An incident on a transatlantic flight in November 2014 that had her arrested and hauled briefly off to jail to worldwide headlines was a clear indication that all was far from well with Dolores O'Riordan.

"I'm fine now – it's scary having something wrong with your brain! Frightening. You're not in control of it but not aware of it. I had a good network of people watching me, like my brother and my mother. I can tell if I've forgotten to take my medication and am getting manic. I was three weeks in a psychiatric hospital and they tried loads of different medications on me. I knew something was badly wrong and I needed to be somewhere safe, surrounded by doctors and nurses. I got really bad alopecia and my hair was coming out in clumps. These are things that happen to you in life that you're not expecting."

Dolores was able to creatively reach inside herself while working on the D.A.R.K. album. Lyrically, it delves into heavyweight themes often seen as being too traumatic or unsettling for pop: album opener and initial single *Curvy*, for instance, carries vocals from Olé and Dolores with a New Order-esque dance backdrop that rocks itself up while lyrically touching on isolation, disconnection and rebirth. With the songs on *Science Agrees* being about control and dissatisfaction and light after darkness, it's perhaps no surprise that several of O'Riordan's vocals were taped under stressful circumstances...

"I was manic when I was recording *Gunfight*," she reveals. "You're very high and all of this stuff starts coming out of your mouth. You're twitching and can't

sit down and are very afraid somebody's going to hurt you. You're paranoid all the time."

The origins of D.A.R.K. date back to 2003/4 – Koretsky met Andy Rourke when the bass player was in New York making DJ based-personal appearances with fellow Smiths compadre Mike Joyce. "Andy is a rock DJ, playing all that Madchester stuff," says Olé. "He plays similar music to what he's known for, as in 'Check out what the guy from The Smiths listens to!' He's not a dance DJ!"

Rourke moved to New York full-time in 2009 and he and Koretsky began working together as Jetlag, a production team doing remixes. "We were building a catalogue of our own songs and weren't really sure what to do with it," offers Rourke.

"In 2012, Andy and I thought about releasing a record of our initial ideas as they were before Dolores became involved," continues Olé. "We did a handful of gigs around New York with Andy, a guitarist and drummer, with me programming, singing and playing guitar. High pressure!"

Dolores joined the project when her manager had lunch with Rourke's manager, and the idea was put forward that Andy, Dolores and Olé could try working together. "I knew Andy liked The Cranberries so we spoke on the phone and he said he'd been working with this DJ in New York for five years, but they'd not

released anything," says O'Riordan. "He sent me two or three tracks and I liked it straight away!"

"I got a call from Andy asking if I knew who Dolores O'Riordan was," explains Olé. "I said 'Sure!' He told me she was looking for music so I sent her some of our instrumentals. I had three on hand where I didn't have to delete our vocals. I sent them and then forgot all about it!"

"She liked it. There were a lot of email and phone conversations, but we got it all working," says Rourke. "I think Dolores brought that extra sparkle to the project that we didn't know was missing until she added it – then it made complete sense."

"All I had to do really was put my voice on," demurs Dolores. "There were lots of parts with no melodies or lyrics," she adds. "On other parts there were already melodies and lyrics, and I collaborated with what was there."

"Some of the demos had been floating around since 2009," nods Koretsky. "Dolores put her vocals on five years later. I was floored! Immediately a fan! She turned the material around quickly and passionately, and was into it. I was getting a vibe here!"

With Dolores frequently being on a different continent to Rourke and Koretsky, most of the tracks involved files winging their way backwards and forwards online, which for the singer was a new approach to songwriting. "It's a very different way of working to how The Cranberries operate. There, we tend to jam ideas and the material is written there and then. This is completely different."



O'Riordan, Koretsky and Rourke: "There's a lot of snippets taped together. It was definitely a challenge"

POP UP Rourke and Koretsky bonded over a shared love for David Bowie's dark masterpiece *Low* and Brian Eno and David Byrne's groundbreaking 1981 album *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*



"With the songwriting there's no set process," agrees Andy Rourke. "This record evolved over a few years so there's lots of snippets all glued and taped together. Olé could have an idea and then we'd elaborate on that, and vice versa. I'd not worked like that before. It was definitely a challenge and we weren't sure how it was going to turn out, but it kind of evolved and slowly became more cohesive with a sound of its own. This project is completely different than anything else I have worked on and I'd have to call it unique. It wasn't contrived in any way. It just kinda happened and became the sound that it was."

Live shows have been booked to promote *Science Agrees* in O'Riordan's hometown of Limerick plus Dublin, Paris, London, Milan, Berlin and Madrid. "It was a matter of: 'Can we play this live?'" explains Dolores. "We can, but we have backing tracks. There's loads of stuff going on there! With a click track you have to know where to come in and where to stop. If you go wrong the track keeps going and you'll be wrong the whole way!"

Koretsky puts the programming approach into perspective. "Apart from the Seventies wannabee purists, 90% of bands these days are using programs. Everybody is playing to a click track! The Cranberries are one of the bands who don't do that. Them, AC/DC, and The Rolling Stones are just rocking out! It's a very different vibe."

Science Agrees is out on Cooking Vinyl. D.A.R.K. play London's Bush Hall on September 21



Photo © Jan Malar