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Review: The Cranberries in Auckland

Victoria Robinson · 08:06, Mar 16 2012



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NEW TUNES: Dolores O'Riordan, lead singer of The Cranberries.

You didn't need a time machine in Auckland last night. The moment Dolores O'Riordan belted out the opening notes of Ode To My Family it was just like being back in 1996.

That's when my love for The Cranberries began. It was my first concert – I was 11 – and my dad took me to see them in the James Hay Theatre in Christchurch. All I remember from the momentous occasion was seeing the tiny O'Riordan jump around on stage in a black leather outfit and the crowd going crazy in the moshpit in front of us. It was the 90s, after all.

Tonight, the crowd didn't quite have the same atmosphere or energy – it happens when most of your fans have slowed down, got married and had children in the intervening years – but The Cranberries still put on a flawless show.

Appropriately framed by a velvet backdrop, they played hit after hit – Dreaming My Dreams, Linger, Miss You When You're Gone, I Can't Be With You, and, of course, Zombie – with the unbridled enthusiasm you would expect from a band just starting out.

There's always that fear, when you go to see a band this well-loved and well-known, that they will torture their audience by playing the old hits just once every five songs in an attempt to make people catch onto their new material.

But The Cranberries gave their fans exactly what they came for – the chance to reminisce about a simpler time, long before the global financial crisis, September 11 and man-made climate change. As my concert companion said to me: "I wish I'd worn my Skechers".

O'Riordan's vocal chords don't seem to have aged with the rest of us. She still has that distinctive, polarising, sharp Irish twang which is a hallmark of The Cranberries' style. It's her voice that makes the new stuff blend in almost seamlessly with the old. I have to confess I haven't heard their new album, *Roses*, but I would be keen to give it a go after hearing a couple of tracks performed live.

The concert finished up with *Dreams* – one of those songs you somehow know all the words to despite not having heard it in more than a decade. It was a decent two-hour-long set, but it finished at a respectable 10.20pm – everyone was still probably home in time to pay the babysitter and put the kids to bed.

If I did have a time machine at my disposal, I'm not sure I'd even use it to go back to 1995. But there's a chance I'd take it back to the start of the night, just to have another evening basking in the familiar guitar chords of a well-loved old favourite.

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