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## The Cranberries Cement Their Legacy

**The Cranberries are from Limerick in the Mid-West Region of Ireland. The band's 1993 debut, *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?*, hit number one in the UK charts and its follow up, *No Need to Argue*, landed in the US top ten.**

The Irish band's early commercial success launched them onto the global touring circuit, leading to their Australian debut in 1995. But founding guitarist and co-songwriter Noel Hogan says they never let go of their Limerick roots.

"[Limerick is] so far removed from the hustle and bustle and the craziness of everything. When you're doing the band thing and the success, I get a bit mad. So for us it was always kind of an escape to come back here."

*Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?* features the iconic singles 'Dreams' and 'Linger' while *No Need to Argue* contains the band's biggest hit, 'Zombie', and the enduring 'Ode to My Family'. The Cranberries' chart success continued with their next two releases, *To the Faithful Departed* and *Bury the Hatchet*, making it four consecutive top ten albums.

"Through the first two albums I was still living at home with my parents," Hogan says. "I'd come home from a really long tour and back in with my parents. And your parents are your parents, they're still going to tell you to clean your room and make sure you're not out too late. That grounds you."

The Cranberries' eighth studio album, *In the End*, is out this month. O'Riordan sadly passed away in early 2018, which makes its very existence somewhat precious. It's not a cash-grab posthumous release made up of excavated rarities, though. Produced by Stephen Street, *In the End* consists entirely of new material.

"We'd just done demos, Dolores and myself," Hogan says. "When the band began I would record guitar onto a cassette. That moved onto four-track and then that moved onto Pro Tools on a laptop. The last few years I was using Logic for writing."

Despite being derived from demos, O'Riordan's vocal takes lack no discernible frequencies. Given their advanced pre-production practice, Hogan says the demo vocals were often good enough to be used on the album.

"We have done it before over the years where she'd do it in a

demo and then when we went back to redo it she said, 'I was happier with the demo.' We were at that point. Everything was on a laptop and ready to roll and getting ready for the next stage, which was getting Mike [Hogan, bass] and Ferg [Lawler, drums] involved."

Stephen Street worked on the first two Cranberries albums plus 2001's *Wake Up and Smell the Coffee* and their 2012 comeback LP, *Roses*. Street worked closely with The Smiths during the 1980s, a band that had a major influence on The Cranberries' early songwriting efforts. But by now he's as closely tied to The Cranberries as anyone.

"Stephen's been such a good friend to us over the years and so the minute Mike, Ferg and myself decided we were going to do this album it was a no brainer to go back to Stephen and have that familiarity in the room."

The record covers a range of styles and moods. 'Catch Me If You Can' is a classic Cranberries rock song, 'Summer Song' is bright and easy going and 'In the End' is a reflective acoustic ballad centred around the line "Ain't it strange / When everything you wanted / Was nothing that you wanted / In the end."

"When Dolores passed away and time went by and I felt up to listening to this stuff, it was only at that point I realised how much we had actually done," Hogan says. "I was slightly amazed at how much was done and then when I listened to it all as one thing I just thought, 'This can't be put away on a shelf in a hard drive and forgotten about.'"

"As soon as I sent it to the boys they felt the same way and Stephen did as well. There was never really a point where I thought we shouldn't do this."

BY AUGUSTUS WELBY

***In The End*, the new album from The Cranberries, will be released on Friday April 26 via BMG.**



The song comes from the opening track to last year's album *The Last One*, a massive step up for Circles in terms of their creative dexterity since *Infinitas* in 2013. *The Last One* was a cohesive and developmental process for Circles, one whose effects Furuhashi says the band are still feeling today. "We put a lot of time into this one," he says, "[a] bit of a gap as you can tell – four years, almost getting to Tool and Karnivool status with that one!

"The music was written by the end of 2014, the album was ready, we just had to do vocals. We obviously had a bit of a line-up change. It was hard, because of Ben [Rechter]'s voice, and the nature of writing vocals and the structures of the songs had changed.

"We wanted it to be the best it could be and with a different voice as well. We're big believers in the vocals being the main translation of our message."

The lineup changes Furuhashi is referring to are of course the departure of Perry Kakridas, with long-time guitarist Ben Rechter assuming the role of vocalist in his place. It's his talent that contributes to the game-changing and volatile tones we hear on *The Last One*. "We wanted Ben to have as much input as he could because he was going to be the one delivering the message at all the live shows," says Furuhashi.

"We wanted him to be as comfortable as he could be when delivering it. That took a long time but everyone had some input.

"We're really stoked with the product – it's very honest and sounds the way we wanted it to."

Furuhashi's perspective on the role of a vocalist is pretty cool, and Circles's support and their patience (though the word may seem condescending) with Ben moving into this role, is admirable.

"I guess we're in this field of progressive metal, that's what people want to describe this music as, but when you get into instrumentations, time signatures and different effects, it's easy to get carried away with the music being really

important – which it is.

"But at the end of the day when you go to a show, the first person you gravitate toward is someone who opens their mouth. As humans, that's the way we communicate, through the voice. The music is a support for that.

"As much as we get a bit self-indulgent with our music, at the end of that day that's the pull, and that's where we want to grab the audience's attention first – lure them in with the vocals and go, 'actually, here, we actually write cool music and put thought into it as well.'"

The Winter Tour will be the first national tour Circles have undertaken since the release of *The Last One*. After nearly ten years of Circles' existence, Furuhashi says there isn't any worry about how existing fans will respond to the new live show with both a fresh body of songs and a new vocalist at the helm. "It sounds bad, but we're kind of playing music for us now.

"When you're starting out, yeah you want people coming to your shows and get as much reach as possible, but at the moment we've come to an agreement – we want to write music we're all proud of and makes no compromise for anyone but ourselves.

"Fans will come and go and what stays is the music that's created, your standpoint on the music world. An audience will perceive it however they want. If they're on board, then awesome, and we're not here to tell you what you can and can't like. We're just giving you what we do as the best we can do – if you like it, awesome!"

BY ANNA ROSE

**Circles will tour nationally July-August, with shows in Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Canberra, Belgrave and Ballarat. More information and ticketing is available via Eventbrite.**



## Globetrotting With Larkin Poe

**Many artists shoot to make each project bigger than the last: bigger crowds, bigger albums, bigger sales. For US blues-rock group Larkin Poe, however, that's not necessarily true. Larkin Poe's new album, *Venom & Faith*, was recorded by sisters Rebecca and Megan Lovell with an engineering crew of one. *Venom & Faith* follows 2017's *Peach* as the group's second self-produced full-length album.**

"It was such a liberating experience to be in the studio, just the two of us, with our trusty engineer," says Rebecca Lovell of engineer Roger Alan Nichols, whose previous credits include albums by The Veronicas, Paramore and Steven Tyler. The Lovells say Nichols was instrumental in keeping the production process on track and the album aesthetically unified.

"He offers extreme support that can sometimes border on tough love," says Rebecca. "When we decided we did indeed want to self-produce – you know, it's a very big job. There were times when we definitely wanted to chicken out and have somebody else make those choices. Like, 'What do you think? Is this the right move?' Most of the time [Nichols] would say, 'Nope, you're producing it. It's your record. I'm out of the way – you guys have to make this call.' Ultimately, that was the kind of support we needed."

"You can produce anything to sound great, but if the songs aren't there, it doesn't really matter," says Megan. "The songwriting is always the biggest and hardest part of putting the record together."

"One of the big pitfalls of creative endeavour is the temptation to second-guess yourself," adds Rebecca. "Normally, if you can listen to the little voice inside your head, it won't steer you wrong."

*Venom & Faith* emerged in November 2018 as a quintessentially Larkin Poe record, combining a warm nostalgia for the golden days of Nashville blues with flavours of rock, soul and contemporary percussion techniques.

"We like to bring elements of the 21st century into what we do," says Rebecca. "Artists that aspire to be a time capsule – we find that limiting. That's certainly something we want to steer clear of. We want to be authentic with people, and being authentic requires digging deep into yourself and figuring out how you're going to bring your small piece of innovation into the picture."

When travelling abroad, Larkin Poe are proud to become representatives of some of America's most unique and distinctive genres.

"We want to be ambassadors for this musical heritage that has sprung up in the southern United States, and we're very proud to have people come out, listen and hopefully enjoy," says Rebecca. "Our main goal with our live performances is to energetically display what it is that we do. We really love performing, so we really lay it all out on the table."

Larkin Poe will play 2019's Byron Bay Bluesfest, along with artists like Iggy Pop, Norah Jones and Ben Harper. The Lovells are no strangers to sharing the stage with iconic presences like Elvis Costello and Keith Urban, but they say they're equally looking forward to playing two intimate headline shows at Howler in Melbourne and Sydney's Oxford Art Factory.

"The most enjoyable shows depend a lot on the audience, and the audiences that come wanting to have a good time and wanting to participate," says Rebecca. "That back-and-forth between us and the audience is what really gets us going. There's audiences that come out, singing the lyrics back to us, and everybody's having a good time – it's energetic and joyful. Those are performances that we tend to remember, and that can come from 20 people or 2,000."

While the band look forward to touring alongside other blues artists in the future, they'll first have to survive a gruelling international tour supporting *Venom & Faith*.

"I hope listeners take away a king-sized portion of joy," Rebecca says of the record. "Megan and I had so much fun making the record, and I think you can hear how happy we were. It was difficult, of course, and there were tears shed, but we really had a great time as well. Isn't that the main goal of music: to elevate the spirit? To give you a mirror – to see a different part of your own story?"

BY ZACHARY SNOWDON SMITH

**Larkin Poe will play Oxford Art Factory and Howler on Monday April 22 and Wednesday April 24 as well as Bluesfest on Saturday April 20 and Sunday April 21.**



## Circles Stay True

**Winter is coming, and not just for the show from which this slogan is borrowed. Winter is also the name of the Circles national tour happening in the season of the same name. It's shaping up to be a pretty nice time of the year for the prog-metal Melbournites and guitarist Ted Furuhashi loves the irony. "Coincidental, I guess," he says. "We kinda thought, 'We've got a song called winter. It's winter. It's the winter tour. Kinda one of the dumb things that we all went, 'Yeah alright!'"**

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