

MELODY·MAKER

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

PEARL JAM

'Vs' album review

STONE TEMPLE PILOTS

SUEDE

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Is this what they meant when they said
the revolution would be televised?

SPIN DOCTORS

And the rise of  rock

— 11-page Maker special —

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Spin Doctors — photographed by STEVE GULLICK

Edited by Jim Arundel

SUEDE/THE CRANBERRIES

HUNTRIDGE THEATER, LAS VEGAS
"I LOVE YOU!!! I LOVE YOU!!!"

The man behind me – shaven head, LA Raiders cap, flannel shirt, minimalist beard, biceps like loaves of bread – resembles a particularly butch member of House Of Pain. Within two songs, it's all too much for the poor soul. Tears streaking his cheeks, he fights through 800 rapturous Las Vegas (?) to the stage, reaches into his pocket and holds aloft an engagement ring. Dolores O'Riordan – marginally longer hair, kick-to-kill boots and maroon War On Want minidress – is unimpressed. She's already been handed a big bunch of red roses and a crucifix, and anyway, this happens every night.

Not for the last time, I wonder how many MM readers would believe what I'm seeing. Are these really the same Cranberries (call 'em up on your personal prejudice organiser: "mild-mannered, wispy, ethereal post-Sundays types from Limerick circa 1991 who wouldn't say Boo to a Radley")? Well, *kind of* (I'll explain later), and once again – see also Radiohead – it's taken the Americans to tell us we're onto a good thing.

Since the "breakthrough" single "Dreams", The Cranberries have been enormous here (over 300,000 albums sold, proper Top 40 hits, eternal rotation on MTV and *Maaahdern Raaahk* radio). And deservedly so. While the Irish angle has something to do with this (Sinead comparisons follow Dolores here as tenaciously as Harriet/Liz/Björk does at home, but she can hardly help her accent – "*It's neverrrr quooite as it seems*" – so why should she, as The Proclaimers put it, throw the 'r' away?), Cranberries 1993 are nothing like the timid, naive Virgin Marys every subtly racist review has led you to expect. Two years back, Dolores may have complained about "all that heavy metal stuff, satanic music", but The Cranberries have found their own way of kicking ass: a voice which can soar and swoop away like an Andean condor and come slamming back in, semitone-perfect. The way she follows the line "*You mystify me...*" with a sinfully casual "*Aow!!!*" is civilisation-shattering. She's

got Vegas wrapped around her finger. Who knows: maybe Britain will wake up next.

Backstage, the lovestruck jock has found his way to Dolores. He gulps, then speaks up. "Will you marry me?"

Suede are a popular British alternative band whose Bowie/Morrissey musical *mélange* has caused much press attention and a Number One debut album over in England. I say this for the benefit of the 80 or so Cran-fans, bewildered ???s almost visible above their heads, who bother sticking around to see the "headline" act (if Suede have any sense, they'll swallow their pride and reverse the running order).

Suede's American tour has been a reminder of the days when no one gave a f*** who they were. This afternoon, a clueless radio interviewer asked Brett and Bernard whether they play sports ("yeah, polo") or go dancing ("the tango"). To be fair, a growing posse of Europhile girls with Mary Quant hairdos (shaved into a steep Brett wedge at the back) is following Suede from city to city; this is a highly regional thing (they're huge on the San Francisco gay scene, magazine front covers, academic analysis, the lot) and things should really get going as of tomorrow, when "The Drowners" gets A-listed on MTV (America still needs to be spoon-fed). Their time will come. They'll stick like sick on the Stars And Stripes.

None of this seems to matter tonight. From the moment skinny girl/boy Bernard Butler takes his piano stool and Brett Anderson – Dirk Bogarde redesigned by Gerald Scarfe – puts his hands on his brown nylon waist to serenade us with "The Next Life", it's clear Suede aren't changing anything for the sake of Yank-friendliness. Brett orders the stage lights way down low (thus obscuring the empty seats behind us), kicks off his shoes and surges into "Animal Lover". Bernard struts, duckwalks, swings his fringe, pokes his tongue so far he's almost licking his own nipples, and lets out an appreciative, if ironic "Wooh!" whenever real applause isn't forthcoming. By now, Suede are *in excelsis*. There's nothing new (shame – last time I saw Mat Osman, he



Pics: Phil Nicholls

THE FRUITS OF THEIR LABOURS

promised Suede's next single would be an eight-minute epic incorporating a Brett Anderson rap!), but the old standards have rarely sounded better. The weird thing is, I feel shamefully privileged to get so close. It's like stumbling in on a private rehearsal. They're having a great time.

Meanwhile, down the front, The Kids Wanna Rawk. It's the only language they understand. They bodysurf, stagedive, mosh or just plain fight. Even to the slow ones. Which doesn't please Brett (when one human bison-burger in a GNR shirt leaps pitwards during the intro to "Pantomime Horse", he turns to Bernard and spits a disgusted "fack!"), but the irony of watching all this male bonding going on to a song about homosexuality is priceless. And the looks of confusion when Brett does his now-traditional "Salome" dance ("He's Dead") are hysterical.

An unforgettable performance to an indifferent city. So let me get this straight: Cranberries are Gods and Suede are a sideshow? Truly, this is Another Country. And this was one of the strangest, topsy-turviest nights of the year. Hey, I really ought to tell the readers... but they just wouldn't believe me. SIMON PRICE



Dolores

COMPULSIONS SAFETY



TRANS-GLOBAL UNDERGROUND

THE VENUE, LONDON
THINK the blinkered retro of Blur or Morrissey epitomises Englishness? Then you're a sad,

Morris-dancing, fox-hunting bastard. Trans-Global Underground are *truly* English, in that they reflect a multi-cultural society which – get used to it! – is the way we now live and which

the best music develops. Asian, Arabic, African, Australasian and European influences collide. Even Eskimos get a name check and there's definitely some Egypt in there, too. But it's foolish to train-spot the origins of TGU's rich, category-transcending magnificence. Simply, they're reclaiming much-maligned "World Music" from elitist, more-ethnic-than-thou yuppies. The tribal poundings of "Army Of Forgotten Souls" could be the soundtrack for communities coming together down Whitechapel Road for weird, karma-purifying exercises. Or a herd of elephants lolling across the plains towards a watering hole; insert your preferred cultural fantasy/reality. To date it has been mainly clubbers

and festival-goers – the underground, if you like – who've experienced TGU's exquisitely eclectic, inspir-bloody-ational ambience; 1991's classic, "Temple Head", with its nah-nah-nah Tibetan prayer sample, for example. Tonight, that trancey vibe is gradually interspersed with some thoughtful, unifying chat from Ghanaian rapper, The Unprecedented Unorthodox Preacher, Tuup, bringing it into big city perspective. For the blissful, Balearic shuffle that is "I, Voyager", belly-dancing Natacha Atlas' beatific wailing floats atop a tuneful Tarzan call, while a Sinead-y lament begins the dubby, One Dovey "La Voix Du Sang". "Slowfinger" is a housey workout for tonight's mainly white

crowd to meditate to in boom-shak-a-lak stylee, and then, perhaps the jewel in their belly button, "Shimmer", has Tuup checking more oppressed indigenous peoples than a Survival International pamphlet. TGU slink away too soon, leaving pronouncements like "Smash the BNP" to labelmates, Fun-Da-Mental, but return for "Earth Tribe", a tabla-heavy slowie with more celebratory chanting. Sue Lawley lets her guests choose just one album. TGU's new "Dream Of 100 Nations" LP would have to be the contender for that universal, Desert Island Disc. CARL LOBEN

Pic: Mark Benney