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## EXCLUSIVE | Ole Koretsky predicts solo performers 'will become prevalent' due to Covid-19 impact

Koretsky has already released singles 'The One' & 'Call It A Day' and plans to drop his upcoming album 'MMXX' this July if all goes according to plan

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Koretsky (courtesy of artiste)

The multifaceted NYC-based artiste and producer Olé Koretsky is best known for his work with Andy Rourke (of The Smiths fame) in their DJ outfit and band Jetlag. When the late The Cranberries' vocalist Dolores O'Riordan (who was Koretsky's girlfriend) joined, the trio changed their name to DARK and released their critically-hailed debut album 'Science Agrees' in 2016. Koretsky also toured with The Cranberries and recorded two albums with them. However, in January 2018, before DARK released their Grammy-nominated album, 'In The End' (2019), O'Riordan tragically passed away, which prompted Koretsky to take some time off. "I spent a couple years self-isolating," he explained, but ultimately, he emerged with a new outlook on life and a handful of songs. "I felt it was time for me to shift focus and rejoin society," he revealed. MEAWW recently spoke with him in an exclusive interview about his single 'The One' and his upcoming album 'MMXX' - another brand-new single off that album, 'Call It A Day' has just been released.

### Can you describe your eventful musical journey thus far and how you collaborated with Andy Rourke from The Smiths?

I was alone a lot as a kid. I skipped school often and spent my lunch money on cassette tapes. I still have a Beach Boys compilation and Ray Davies' 'Return to Waterloo' that I bought for \$2. I'd also buy blank cassettes to record radio DJs. At that time I was exposed to a lot of rock, house music, and hip hop and I fantasized about being involved in all of it. I had no social skills, so music was an easy way to find common ground with people. At 14, I discovered punk, new wave, and The Smiths, and my mother bought me a 4-track recorder. I would borrow random instruments like guitars and drum machines from friends and spend weeks at a time learning to write and record. I was in a few bands and played a lot of gigs through the '90s. I got quite burnt out, however, and it wasn't until I met Andy in the early 2000s that I got excited about being creative again.

Music and accolades aside, Andy's one of the kindest human beings I've met. I don't have siblings or many friends so Andy filled that void in my life immediately. He's always been there for me like family. We didn't do any work together until he moved to New York in 2009. We became next-door neighbors and recorded a lot of music. We were having fun and just being free and creative. We did a handful of live shows as Jetlag, a ton of DJ gigs, and we enjoyed remixing other people's music.



Dolores O'Riordan from The Cranberries performs in Melbourne, Australia in 2012 (Getty Images)

### We all dearly miss Dolores O'Riordan, who was an iconic and beloved singer. How are you coping with the loss?

I miss Dolores every moment. I don't think this process has an end or a final outcome. I'm eternally aware of her presence and her absence. I'm well aware of the magnitude of her talent as a performer and songwriter but I didn't know her as a rock star. We enjoyed a lot of the same music and we worked well together but all that was secondary. She had an amazing ability to see the beauty in the most mundane things. She had a boundless capacity for experiencing the fullness of life with all the extremes and in-betweens. She is grace and glory in every possible way and she made me laugh a lot. I just hope I was able to give her even a fraction of the love and comfort that she gave me while we were together. Bless her soul and her family and God love her fans.

### What can you tell us about the making of your new album 'MMXX'?

I'm normally hyper-productive. I spent all of 2017 recording three separate projects in between touring, but I hadn't recorded anything since January 2018. I only had a few new song ideas but I just decided to release an EP. I phoned a brilliant engineer called Mike Dextro and said "I'm gonna need a lot of your time and energy to help me deliver these five songs and we're doing this right now." As soon as I had the idea and before the songs were even finished, I started calling mix engineers and video producers and I'm amazed at how patient and understanding everyone was with me. I felt a real sense of urgency, like "if I don't do this now, I'll never do it." I flew down to Mexico to shoot a video in November. I spent December mixing and editing two other videos. I lined up all the logistics and distribution just in time to fly to the Grammys at the end of January. Just days after returning to New York, all the [Covid-19] madness began. My friend Mike, the main engineer on this EP, became infected almost immediately. He's on the mend now, but he gave us a real fright. I wasn't sure how to proceed but with the blessing of my friends and family, I decided to keep going. God willing, 'MMXX' should be available in July.



Olé Koretsky (courtesy of the artiste)

### Who are you primarily addressing on your new single 'The One'? What was the thought process behind writing this song?

Most of my ideas start with a melody or guitar progression. That initial idea might get stuck in my head and create a mood. If a distinct mood or feeling gets attached to the idea then I know it's worth developing further. At that point, I'd add lyrics or start thinking about structure and arrangement. Once there's a mood, the lyrics just flow. I'm sure that specific experiences affect the music but it's more like free association with the actual words. While I was piecing together 'The One', a lot of religious imagery would pop into my head. It's not a song about religion at all but it's just how I process things. It's a snapshot of a feeling but it doesn't necessarily refer to anything specific.

### How do you go about shaping your sound? Are there any artistes you would cite as musical inspirations?

Working alone lets me keep my own pace and hours. Plus, having instruments and a studio at my fingertips enables me to lay down ideas very quickly and allows me to get into the production and arranging process very early on. By the time I share an idea with someone, usually all the parts, vocals, and the general feel of the music is already there. I might invite other musicians and singers to come in and improve the track. Once I feel good about a song, I'll share it with another producer or mix engineer and ask for guidance. I'm grateful that someone else is willing to listen and make suggestions and help me improve. It's a perpetual learning process and I'm slowly but surely becoming a little more confident and skillful as I go.

As far as artistes that inspire me, there's too many. Bernard Sumner and Robert Smith influenced how I relate to rock music. I pay tribute to people like Will Sergeant, Nile Rodgers and Johnny Marr when I play guitar. I've always drawn ideas from electronic music and hip hop. Erik Satie, Angelo Badalamenti, Jimmy Edgar, and James Murphy inspire me. We could go on for days because inspiration is everywhere.

### Do you think people might relate to the sound and thematic elements of 'MMXX' more so now, given the current situation of the world?

I think most of what I do might sound dark on the surface. If someone is going through a difficult time, things tend to become exaggerated or amplified. In recent years I've been making an effort to keep my intentions clear and positive. While there's been no fundamental change in my style or delivery, on the metaphysical side I make sure that there's positive energy attached to everything I share with my friends, family, or potential listeners. It would be brilliant if even a few people found some comfort in something that I did. I try to create an atmosphere or an environment and just hope that it resonates. One person might hear despair and another person might hear hope. The fact that someone is listening and feeling anything at all is in itself a reward.

### Do you think the coronavirus pandemic is changing the music industry substantially?

The business around music has always been evolving. I don't miss big studios and I've been working remotely with other artistes for years now. I still have access to musicians, engineers, rooms, and gear. It's just less convenient and requires more planning than usual. What concerns me more is that many artistes make their money from tours. There is never a shortage of beauty or creativity in the world even if the delivery systems are flawed, but the effects of an artiste's ability (or lack thereof) to engage with their audience could be very serious. Music execs and business heads are scrambling on every level to adapt and offer up various business models, but we're certainly in for a bit of change.

I don't mind the Internet and I could see myself getting into creating content and interacting with people virtually. Many artistes will land on their feet and will continue to create cool things, but the idea of social distancing at a concert is a very strange one. Financials aside, playing to a venue at half capacity is a sad proposition, because the energy exchanged between a performer and a crowd is very real.

If subsequent lockdowns persist, it's easy to imagine that solo performers will become prevalent and that it would be far less convenient to exist as a collective of any kind. Recording live drums and groups of people tend to be pricier than solo acoustic performances or electronic ones, so taking ticket sales off the table might really hurt some of the smaller artists. A lot of people are scared and anxious right now. Let's do our best to be kind to each other and things might look up before we know it.

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