



■ The Cranberries, Dolores O'Riordan, Mike Hogan, Fergal Lawler and Noel Hogan in Limerick at the weekend. - (Pictures: Kieran Clancy)

Cranberries enthral the home town audience

By TONY PURCELL

THE talented rock group, The Cranberries, who played to sell-out concerts in Limerick and Dublin at the weekend, plan to follow their record-breaking debut album, *Everybody Else is Doing It So Why Can't We*, with a second album to be released in America in the New Year.

The band, which have emerged as the success story of the Irish music scene this year after taking the United States by storm, won the hearts of their legion of followers in their native Limerick on Friday night with a stunning performance before over 1,000 fans at the Theatre Royal.

It was an occasion to remember as lead vocalist Dolores O'Riordan, guitarists Noel and Mike Hogan and drummer Fergal Lawler clearly demonstrated by their own brand of music and songs why they are such a smash-hit in the United States following their phenomenal five-month tour during which they played with the top British group, Duran Duran, and another major group Suede.

Their debut album has created Irish musical history by selling 1.1 million copies and yielding an estimated \$15m in sales in the US to earn the band a platinum disc. The album which recently reached 18th in the US

charts is the most successful Irish debut album ever released. Neither U2, Sinéad O'Connor, Clannad or Enya have made such an impact.

"We were thrilled with the reception. It was really brilliant and amazing. I was going to give the microphone to the crowd and tell them 'ye sing the songs' because they were so good with the words", said a delighted Dolores O'Riordan, the 22-year-old lead singer from Ballybricken, eight miles from Limerick City, who captivated the audience throughout the 90-minute sell-out concert with her wide-ranging and distinctive voice.

She is a talented young lady, who writes her own songs as well as being a most gifted musician. She must be one of the great "finds" on the Irish musical scene since Sinéad O'Connor with a very bright future on the international stage.

Dolores confirmed that the band were ready to record in studio in February their second album to be released in America before the summer or the autumn.

Dolores, who appeared with the band live on the *Pat Kenny Show* on RTE television on Saturday night, said that they have written an incredible amount of songs on the road as an

escape from all the hype and fans during their American tour.

The Cranberries first single *Linger* which they sang on the show was currently No. 16 on the American charts.

Dolores said that touring with the top British group, Duran Duran and Simon Le Bon, was a great help to their band.

"Simon Le Bon liked the Cranberries. He is a very nice man and one lesson we learned from them was that it is possible to keep your head. They keep their heads together and they have helped us a lot", she said.

Linger is expected to be released in Europe soon, and *Dreams* will be released in the US early in the New Year as their second single.

The superb singing and music, combined with the wonderful lighting effects, made this a truly professional performance.

Among the many guests at the concert was the Mayor of Limerick, Sen. Jan O'Sullivan, who described The Cranberries performance as "really terrific" and she believed that they were well on the road to become superstars on the international stage.

"They are great ambassadors for Limerick and Ireland and deserve the success that has come their way", she said.

The meteoric rise to fame for the band in such a short time can be

gauged from the fact that only two years ago they played to only 35 people in their native city, last year around this time to 600 fans, and on Friday night over 1,000 fans packed the Theatre Royal.

"We could have sold 10,000 tickets such was the demand", stated Mr Seamus Flynn, owner of the Theatre Royal, who has seen The Cranber-

ries start from a very humble beginning to reach the top league in America.

"Their success is phenomenal. The band are simply fantastic, they are improving all the time and having sold over \$15m worth of records in America, I believe they will double that amount within the next six months", stated Mr Flynn.



■ Dolores O'Riordan, lead singer with The Cranberries, on stage at the Theatre Royal in Limerick.