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Cranberries: 'It's Not Going To Be Hard To Deliver 'Roses''

artist: cranberries date: 01/26/2012 category: interviews

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It is â€“2 degrees in Ontario, Canada, **Dolores O'Riordan**'s home now for eight years. There are six days before Christmas and it is as coldâ€”proverbially speakingâ€”as the anatomical part of a broom-flying hag. "*Snotsicles*," she jokes over the telephone, her Limerick brogue as thick as the blanket of white covering her front porch. "*Do you know what they are? Your boogers freeze during the winter. It's that cold here.*" She is in a playful and positive mood and why not? After a six-year hiatus, the singer has reunited with her fellow Irishmen to record **Roses**, the band's first album since 2001's **Wake Up And Smell The Coffee**.

Produced by **Stephen Street** â€” he oversaw their first two albums â€” Roses is tempered by the dark moodiness and delicate balance of acoustic and electric guitars that haunted the group's earlier records. She sings with the inner strength of someone who has walked through fire and lived to tell the tale. Her father passed away while recording the album and on the title track she is singing about him. The vocal is dramatic and yearning and burns with an inner intensity bright enough to warm even the coldest Canadian morning. Appropriately enough, Roses comes out on Valentine's Day.

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UG: Before we get to the new album, could we talk about some of the events leading up to the recording of Roses?

Dolores O'Riordan: Yeah, no problem.

Why did the Cranberries break up back in 2003?

That was more to do with life. My mother-in-law had cancer and she died in 2003 and so that year we moved over here to Canada so her grandchildren could be with her for her last days. I quit the band then because I could see that in life there's a lot more things than just making music and being on the stage and selling records. There's people and there's love and there's more important things you know and nothing is forever. You know that kind of thing. So we moved over here then [Canada] and when she passed away I started working on a solo record for fun and I became a fulltime mother and I loved it. Because I just wanted to not be in the Cranberries and not be famous. I wanted to experience life in a simple way. I felt like I was always tied down with things and I just felt that if I wasn't in the band, I have a freedom that I never had since I was 18, you see, because I was in the Cranberries since I was 18. I never knew life any other way so I did want to know life in another way â€” I wanted to be free.

Were you excited about making your first solo album.

I left the band and started doing solo work more like a hobby. The first album that I brought out, my solo one, was Are You Listening? And I remember there was a beautiful song on it called "The Black Widow" and that was reflecting my mother-in-law when she was sick. A lot of the music are reflections of where I am and where I'm going and what I'm feeling.

You worked with Marco Mendoza on Are You Listening?

Yeah, that one happened very organically. Marco is a friend of my husband for years and it happened organically; he's an old friend.

So you're not some closet headbanger, Dolores?

[Laughs] No, no, no, that was just very organic. He's amazing Marco though isn't he? Have you ever seen him live playing?

I may have seen him with Whitesnake.

That's right, yeah, yeah; he's a super bass player. So it was great to work with different musicians. It was a great experience because it was like having a different palette and a different set of paints and a different canvas.

Was there a sense of anticipation or nerves when you recorded Are You Listening?

I suppose I wasn't really knowing that people were listening because I called it Are You Listening? See? So I didn't really know. It was like, "Are you listening?" I was wondering who'd be listening? So that was kind of a part of my evolution and I had to have fun and not be in the Cranberries. I worked with different musicians and that was quite insightful. I did a small tour for Are You Listening? about eight months or something and I'd come back a lot as well. I'd go out for a few weeks and then I'd come home for a few weeks and I'd go out for a few weeks and I'd come home for a few weeks and that's the way I do it you know. â€˜Cause I have my children and it keeps me stable and just the mental stability that I didn't have when I was younger when the Cranberries was my whole life and it kind of ended up consuming me. It was too much too young and nothing else. So having my children now, I have four children, it's given me a great stability and a happiness and a life.

In 2009, you recorded the second solo album, No Baggage around the same time you got back together with the Cranberries?

I know wasn't it desperate? Oh, my god. I did the album, No Baggage, right? And again it was all about enlightening and finding out about life and what I was going through. The song, the single was "The Journey" wasn't it?

"I felt like I was always tied down with things and I just felt that if I wasn't in the band, I have a freedom that I never had since I was 18."

An extraordinary song.

[Recites lyrics] "When I was lost/I saw you pointing towards the sun/I know I am not the only one standing here/And in the darkness I was walking through the night/I could see your guiding light very clear." So I was getting happy in my life â€” I was going through a better place now with tranquility and serenity and love and peace. But I was also trying to share that feeling with people.

You recorded No Baggage before the Cranberries reformed?

It did, yeah. I'd written it all, right? That was winter; I remember it was January 2010. What year did we do the reunion tour? It was 2010 wasn't it?

I thought it was 2009 but certainly you'd know better than I.

2007 was Are You Listening? so I think 2008 I wrote. So 2009 then I recorded No Baggage and I did most of it here with my friend Dan Broadbeck in his studio and stuff like that. Then â€˜cause I live here and I'm a fulltime mom, I just said "Look" because it was freezing, it was -30 and I grabbed my makeup chair and I went out to the lake and put on an outfit and my husband took pictures of me on the lake. And then the album sleeve â€” did you see that sleeve? It was really freezing and in one of the shots I took my top off but I was facing a tree and I had a tube of lipstick in my pocket. And he wrote down No Baggage on my back and took pictures of it. And then for one more shot I said, "You know what? I always wanted to be up in a tree." So we got a ladder and I climbed way up the tree and it was freezing like â€“30. And when I got to the top of the tree what was worse is they had to pass me up my shoes, I think. Oh, it was so crazy but then we took the pictures of me up in a tree kind of like a bird sitting on a branch of the tree.

Did the two solo albums feed you creatively or did you want to do another Cranberries record at some point?

Well, that was No Baggage and once I done it and we recorded it all and then we did our own sleeve and we did it all very organic. And then I thought I'd go and tour a spot. My son, it was his confirmation then in 2009 so I had it all done, No Baggage and ready to release it and all that kind of thing. But in 2009 it was in the summer and he was having his confirmation, my son, and that's like a big thing in Ireland. I suppose it's like what in the Jewish equivalent is a bar mitzvah â€” it's this kind of thing, a coming of age and a rejoyceful thing. So I invited the Cranberries because it was in Limerick and they all came and they brought all their children and it was my first time seeing them in something like seven years.

It was a real Cranberries family reunion.

I hadn't seen Ferg [drummer Fergal Lawler] for seven years by then and they had their kids and they had all these children. And I was like, "Oh lord, look at this â€” we're expanding." So all of our kids were like hanging out and having fun. And then you know, I guess we were relaxing and whatnot after the meal and having a beer and whatnot and it was kinda like, "Will we get back together?" And it was like, "Yeah, I think so because we're not getting any younger â€” we're getting older." So it was like, "OK, plan B." I said, "I don't want to go on tour with No Baggage but I'd rather go back and do a Cranberries tour." So that was all kinda just very organic and not thought about; it just happened that way.

How did it feel when you reformed?

It was like new and comfortable slippers that you kind of went, "Ehh, I love these slippers" [laughs]. Just an old comfortable feeling and also a feeling of, "Oh, when we all met up like that, we all felt like teenagers again" but just the obvious reminder would be that a gray hair was there. It was like, "No, we're not 16" but there is that feeling when we're together like we're onstage that you never really grow old.

The music world has changed a lot since the Cranberries recorded Wake Up and Smell the Coffee back in 2001. Did you think about any of that?

No, I don't really pay any attention to that. It doesn't interest me and it's not significant to me. To me it's what happens in the world and it's the day-to-day occurrences. But that's not important to me because when I was doing Roses my father was sick and had cancer for six-and-a-half years. The "Roses" song was about him and he passed away three weeks ago and I was there holding his hand.

I'm so sorry.

Actually he was so sick for so long, it was good that he was out of pain. But I was actually holding his hand, which was like a long dream for me that I'd be with him. And so there's a kind of feeling of peace when you find that your loved one is at peace. And so, yes, "Roses" is reflecting on that thing in life. You know what I mean? The circle of life and how when someone goes someone new comes in the door. Little babies are being born and all that stuff.

Back in 2010 doctors found a vocal cord nodule. Was that upsetting?

Oh no, I've had them before. It's from too much singin' and just getting old. You just have to kind of get up and get on with it you know. What Iis say is me old chassis isn't what it used to beâ€”but it could be worse!

Your singing on Roses was wonderful.

Ahh, thanks very much. That's cool. I'm glad you liked it.

You've brought back Stephen Street who worked on the early records to produce the Roses album.

The important thing about Stephen is that he kind of knows us better than we know ourselves as a group â€˜cause he was the one who did the first two albums. He knows us very well since we were young and also because he's a little older than us he'd have a good way of putting us together. Trying to get the four bandmembers in a room is hard you know. â€˜Cause the last time we were together when I saw Mike [Hogan] we did Singapore Stadium and I haven't seen him since because we all have separate lives with kids and we live in different countries. So to get us all together and kind of coordinate us a bit. Because we're right artists and it's like, "Where's he gone now? He's supposed to be here at three o'clock." We're not the greatest at timing and all that stuff but when you get us together and kind of get us focused then it's grand.

After having taken that hiatus and recorded two solo albums, do you think you brought in different elements as a composer and singer?

Definitely. Oh, yeah, for sure. And even for Noel as well now in hindsight although at first they were kind of not into the whole hiatus idea. They weren't really into it but I said, "I have to do this." But in hindsight now Noel says as well that on that hiatus he learned a huge amount musically and he brought some of that to this album too. Because "Roses" was something he did an awful lot of that on ProTools. When I was away I wrote "Tomorrow Could Be Too Late," the single. I wrote that on my own and Noel wrote and we came in and kind of put it all together in Toronto with Stephen Street.

Some songs like "Astral Projections" were actually written back in 2003.

I know some of them are ancient. "Astral Projections" took my head in because it happens to me all the time. I'm asleep and I can see myself asleep and it's terrible because it's like you know you're asleep and you try to wake yourself up but you can't. You keep trying to wake yourself up and eventually when you do wake up you're all covered in sweat and you're really hot. And they're also dreams that I wake up and I dream I'm walking down the stairs and maybe I'm going into the kitchen or somewhere like that. But then I actually realize that that's just a dream and I'm still in bed. I have funny dreams like that and maybe it's the creative mind. I don't really know.

Cranberries
ROSES

"It's harder on your body really so this one is going to be a lot more gentle physically."

When you listen to "Astral Projections" and "Raining in My Heart" that were written back in 2003, do they take on a different character than the songs that were written more recently?

Yeah, that's true really because it does go back to 2003 that some of them were written and some are newborns. So, uh, there's a good mix, a good spectrum, a good radius across the board of all the different kinds of times and reflections of different types of songs really.

Is there a special way in which the Cranberries write songs?

It's all different. "Tomorrow Could Be Too Late" and the songs that I wrote on the album, I had my friend Dan Broadbeck come over here and we made demos around my ideas. Then the ones that are co-written with Noel would be ones that he was sending me ProTools sessions from Ireland of music he was playing with. It was done over seven years on and off because even when I was doing Are You Listening? and stuff, Noel was still sending me little bits of ideas although I hadn't seen him for six-and-a-half or seven years until I met him at Trinity College and we did a little bash there. You know they inaugurated me into the what's-it-called? The society? It's kind of an artistic society in Trinity.

The University Philosophical Society.

That's it, yes. So we had that inauguration there in January of 2009 and I did meet Mike and Noel and they played with me and we performed there. And then it was that summer we met at my son's confirmation and things just unfolded.

"Show Me" is the first singles from Roses and has the strings that have always been a part of the band's sound.

Is that the first single there [in the U.S.]? Oh, really? That's a beautiful song isn't it? I like it because it's just asking the Great One to show you the way in life because everybody gets lost and everybody has challenges. You know what I mean? If you believe in yourself and believe in God and things like that then you'll be fine.

As the first single, was "Show Me" meant to reintroduce the world to the Cranberries?

No, â€˜cause I wrote that here of course a few years ago. I'm not sure because to be honest with you I think changes take their own shape these days with the music industry. I think things take a life of their own because of the Internet and stuff things are different. I think the people make the choice.

"Tomorrow" was released as the second single?

I don't know if they're released or not. I haven't a clue about that. Maybe that was it [this is the song that Dolores earlier referred to as "Tomorrow Could Be Too Late"] â€˜cause I know that's number nine in Italy or something. Somebody said it was number nine in Italy but I don't think the video's out yet â€˜cause I made the video the day my dad passed so that's not released yet.

Did you play any guitars on Roses?

I do play guitar live but not in the studio. I'm cuttin' back on it a lot â€˜cause I've got a little bit of a spinal rotation from bad posture over the years and problems with my shoulder and my arm. So I can't really do that anymore. I'm damaged goods, baby.

You're better than ever.

Ah, you know I'm grand but I have to take it easy so I just try to sing. I play live alright but it's just that the less I play the less the problem you know.

Are you playing the keyboards on "Fire & Soul"?

Hold on nowâ€”what track is that? No, I played in "Show Me" the string part. Or in "Linger" the string part; those kinds of parts. These little pieces, they'd probably be Noel or Stephen playing the little accents to accentuate the beauty.

"Schizophrenic Playboy" was kind of a rocker for you.

Yeah, a little something lighthearted and a little something tongue-in-cheek to get away from the serious stuff you know.

At the end of the song you turn the lyric around so it says, "Schizophrenic playgirls/Better watch out."

Yeah, it's pretty cool isn't it? Because it is it's turning it around exactly 360 degrees.

Are you deliberate in your approach to writing lyrics?

Yeah, lyrics are very important for me to make sure that I'm portraying whatever it is I need to portray. So I sit there but the funny thing is they've come to me anywhere like when you're washing your sheets or something like that. "Oh, I have to go get a pen quick." In the middle of the night when you're trying to go to sleep and they're going around in your head, your words, and you just get up and go out and write them down. Or even I've actually dreamed songs so I've had to get up. I had a dream about a song and getting up and writing itâ€”dreaming a song while you're asleep. That's kind of mad isn't it?

Pretty amazing.

Mmm, but that's the creative brain I'd say you know.

"Roses" is the last song on the album and the final lyric you sing is "Life is a garden of roses/Roses just wither and die." Are you expressing hope in that refrain?

Oh, there's definitely hope because everybody dies but with death comes spiritual peace and peace in your heart. It's the end of any struggle that you might be having because we all get old and we all die but that's a new beginning.

Are you critical of your vocals? Do you know when it's a keeper?

Yeah, yeah, of fer sure. Like on "Roses" was actually the last song written and that's when we said we'd call it "Roses." We were in the studio and I remembered I was going into the Galaxy Cinema with my kids to see Puss â€˜N Boots or something; some kiddie show. I was sittin' there and of course I had my phone you see and I texted Noel and I said, "Send me through that track" and he goes, "What one?" He refers to his tracks as C1 or C7 or whatever and I said, "You know that one you sent me the other day." And then he sent me "Roses" by an accident. He said, "This one?" â€˜cause he's loads of ideas.

And I put in my headset and I almost started crying; it just totally got to me in the jugular. You know that kind of thing? It just really hit a point there and I wrote those lyrics in about two minutes when I was at the cinema with my kids who are waiting to go in you know. I said, "Hang on, hang on, I have to write this down." The next morning I just started singing it and we all kinda knew there was something very fresh and raw and real there. So we recorded it basically the next day.

Did you have that feeling when you did "Dreams" from the first album, Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?

I think what happened was it was released in England and it didn't catch on. We were signed to a different record company in America so then America re-released it and then it caught on in the States and then they re-released it back in the UK again and it caught on in the UK. Something like that.

Did you think you'd captured something with "Dreams"?

No, I was just a very naÃ¯ve child really and I was just singing about my first boyfriend. I didn't have a clue; I was just really naÃ¯ve you know.

In 1994 you did the second album, No Need To Argue.

That was kind of a hard time in my life you know. Yeah, obviously No Need To Argue and the lyrics and all of that. But now is the best time.

"I think I've heard shows are in March in Australia. And then I think America over the summer and Europe and stuff like that."

In 1996 when you did the third album, To the Faithful, Departed, you brought in producer Bruce Fairbairn to replace Stephen Street. Why?

It was just a different dynamic you know and he really was enjoying it because he loved the idea of working with a band like us. We were so different to what he'd worked with before. So he used to say it was like a stew and putting in all different ingredients and it all comes out a certain way in the end. Oh, I miss him [Fairbairn passed away on May 17, 1999] you know but that's life. It was great to work with him.

"Salvation" was the first single from To the Faithful, Departed and had horns and a lot of different things for the Cranberries.

Yeah, and the horns and all of that was very much Bruce's idea.

In 1994 the band recorded the fourth record, Bury the Hatchet, which was a bit heavier for the Cranberries.

Hard, hard, yeah; aggressive like. That was a hard one as well because the vocals are all very aggressive whereas this one [Roses] is very gentle and it's easy to perform.

Singing the types of songs that are on Roses is what you feel you do best?

Roses is nice because it's not going to be hard to deliver it. It's just when you do an album and you do the rock songs well then you're kind of roaring it off so it's harder. It's harder on your body really so this one is going to be a lot more gentle physically.

The Cranberries will once again go out on the road and tour?

Yeah, fer sure. I think I've heard shows are in March in Australia. And then I think America over the summer and Europe and stuff like that.

Are you looking forward to touring again?

Yeah, I am. It will be good now to get back out there for a while again and do another album. It's like going around in circles really.

Did Roses touch on everything you wanted to say musically and lyrically since it was your first album with the Cranberries in 10 years?

Yeah, but see I did No Baggage in 2009 and I did Are You Listening? in 2007 but I never really released No Baggage. I just did the reunion tour instead. So I was recording away all along. So it wasn't really as if I wasn't making records.

Everything else is good with you?

Yeah, everything is great and lovely. We're all excited because in six days the big guy [Santa Claus] is coming.

Putting up the Christmas tree?

Yeah, â€˜cause the kids are 20, 14, 10 and 6â€”two boys and two girls.

Are they Cranberries fans?

Umm, I don't think they really know the music. Ah, they know one or two songs but it's not Cranberries, it's â€˜Nannies. And they love me anyway even if I couldn't sing. I'm just mommy.

Interview by Steven Rosen

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TheResults posted on Jan 26, 2012 09:23 am # +3

IM SO FREAKING EXCITED! We need more 90's bands kickin these pansies asses!

chriscobonham posted on Jan 26, 2012 12:19 pm #

I'll definitely have to check it out

Slashiepie posted on Jan 26, 2012 12:43 pm # +12

The new album hould be called Milf

Slashiepie posted on Jan 26, 2012 12:43 pm # +1

should 😎*

bdof posted on Jan 26, 2012 01:32 pm # +4

Not one mention of "Zombie" in the whole article.....

w77yyz posted on Jan 26, 2012 01:46 pm # +1

Very grounded. Look forward to hearing the new work.
.. but really -2C... that's not cold at all.

ErnieZ posted on Jan 26, 2012 02:19 pm # +3

aaaaawwwweeeesoooommmeeeee :] love it when my old favorite bands come back, and the music isnt even bad! unlike the fray who decided to come back with total shit -______-

a drummer posted on Jan 26, 2012 06:07 pm # +1

I want to marry her

Vicryl 2.0 posted on Jan 26, 2012 07:24 pm # +1

> **a drummer** wrote:
>
> I want to marry her

your too late.... 20, 14, 10 and 6 thats a lot to handle..hehe

scrymusic posted on Jan 26, 2012 07:47 pm #

The 90s are coming back and I love it.

Andragon posted on Jan 26, 2012 11:02 pm # +4

Canada. Fuck yea.

Andragon posted on Jan 26, 2012 11:04 pm # +5

> **w77yyz** wrote:
>
> Very grounded. Look forward to hearing the new work.
> .. but really -2C... that's not cold at all.

They probably meant -2 in Fahrenheit which is around -20C.

MetalMullet posted on Jan 27, 2012 11:13 am # -1

She sounds like a 14 year old bubblegum chewing pop-star. A bit weird because I always imagined her as an intelligent woman. Well, maybe she is, but doesn't bother to sound like one. Anyway, exciting news!

centermass posted on Jan 27, 2012 06:18 pm #

when they start playing these songs on the radio. im gonna hhave to remember to not let my fingerererereraha linger linger linger on the dial....

Acoustic_Kid posted on Jan 29, 2012 12:58 am #

Got tickets to the Melbourne show! So excited!

RylanThePotato posted on Jan 29, 2012 04:51 pm # -2

the only reason I clicked on this story was because I wanted to see if she was hot or not.

swave75 posted on Jan 29, 2012 07:56 pm #

> **RylanThePotato** wrote:
>
> the only reason I clicked on this story was because I wanted to see if she was hot or not.

She is and she's talented!

RylanThePotato posted on Jan 30, 2012 12:46 am #

> **swave75** wrote:
>
> RylanThePotato wrote:
>
> the only reason I clicked on this story was because I wanted to see if she was hot or not.She is and she's talented!

Definitely agree on the talented part, she looks waaaaay to much of a relative of mine for me to consider her hot though. lol.

Comments

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