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## Name change for Senekah, but the song remains the same and strong as ever

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Senekah: Brendan Gorman, Yvonne Conaty, Darragh O'Loughlin and Rob Hope (front centre), who return to Dolans Warehouse this Friday to mark the release of new single Human Relations.

By Alan Owens  
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THEY are scattered to the wind and boasting a new name, but Senekah (you may remember them as Seneca) are back, strong and melodic as ever.

They might be divided between Limerick, Dublin and London these days, but Senekah's new single, Human Relations, is causing quite a stir before it gets an official release this Friday, earning the Limerick band tons of radio airplay on national stations in the past couple of weeks.

You shouldn't be surprised to hear that the single has all of that Seneca - sorry - Senekah magic of old; a coruscating and infectious guitar line; soaring choruses and memorable melodies and an earnest, foot to the floor, upbeat tempo. The title track from their upcoming album of the same name, Human Relations, is a perfect-pop tune, bearing the fruits of the band's spell in the Limerick studios of Noel Hogan, The Cranberries' guitarist.

"Noel was massively involved in the recording of the album," says frontman Rob Hope of album number two from Senekah, the follow-up to 2008's belter Sweeter than Bourbon.

"What is great about Noel is that he has a massive amount of information when it comes to recording and getting the right sounds out of the instruments, and also the structure of the songs. We brought a lot of the songs to him and he really chopped them down and made the structure make more sense. He basically made them more sensible for recording.

"Sometimes you can have long sessions and long songs and they are not suitable for recording, so one of the great things about him was giving us a rational for the structure of the songs. We just cannot say enough about him, he was fantastic and listened to what we wanted and 99 if not 100 percent of his suggestions were correct and worked out for the best in the end," adds Rob.

Hogan and his engineer Owen Lewis, who have set up a studio in the (vacated) Bishop's Palace for the past 18 months or so, seem like the natural fit for Senekah, a band always determined to wear their nationality on their sleeve - like Hogan's own band - and not shy away from their roots like many of their contemporaries. Senekah first met Hogan when they went to him for advice ahead of their first proper American tour, one that eventually saw them play over 300 shows and festivals in over 40 states.

Older and wiser and veterans of touring at this stage, Senekah wisely took a break from the live scene over most of the past year, burrowing away to work on their sophomore effort. Hope feels it is a progression from 'Bourbon, which boasted two singles that made the Irish Top 20.

"I think we have progressed a lot since the first album, especially in that this album is a lot more along a straight line while having plenty of variety and it is a lot more upbeat," he says.

"Human Relations would be one of the more upbeat tracks on the album, it has a real poppy feel to it."

Intent to concentrate their efforts on Ireland and Europe this year, the band will return Stateside next year. They have a new booking agent and label interest in Switzerland, so are interested in expanding into that territory. However, their American connections helped them bag the services of Ben Morrison - who once starred in MTV's Punk'd - for the video to accompany the new single, which was filmed entirely in Limerick.

"Ben always said he wanted to do something with us," says Rob. "He is a hilarious guy to work with and the video is good fun. We were very lucky with it and had some fantastic people working on it - everything came together really."

Talk turns to that name change and Rob laughs.

"Basically when we were in the States we got a couple of tv things with the last album, a couple of tv shows that the songs were on, so our lawyer in the States told us we needed to file for trademark to make sure nobody else had it," he explains with the air of a man used to telling the tale at this point.

"As it turned out, the Seneca tribe - an American Indian tribe in New York - own a string of casinos and have the entertainment trademark and we didn't think it wise to go to court with a casino," he laughs.

"We had a choice of either changing the name completely or keeping it slightly the same, so we decided to keep it the same because it would be very confusing for people. It was a difficult thing to work around, but I think we have managed it."

The name might be (slightly) different, but trust us, the song remains very much the same.

Senekah play in Dolan's Warehouse this Friday night. Human Relations is also out on Friday.

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