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MUTE

PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Kathleen A. Rodgers

ADVERTISING CONSULTANT

Christa Chiacos

ART DIRECTOR & DESIGNER

Lisa Bever
Cameron Leggett

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kathleen A. Rodgers
D.C. Van Alstyne

CONTRIBUTORS

Elsa Staneff, Robbie Robinson, Brian Gross, Cameron Leggett, Hazen Monroe, Perry Bathous.

ADVERTISING

If you are interested in advertising, please contact Christa Chiacos (415) 775-1705 or other inquiries (805) 983-4849. Please write to: Mute, 2398 Pacific Ave. Suite 506, San Francisco, CA 94115. We will promptly send you a pricing guide and specifications.

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ON THE FLOOR

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Honeychain

Since this is basically "my" issue (ho ho), this will be kind of a foreshortened Honeychain. That's right—no psychological ramblings, no pop philosophy. Well, not much, anyway! I'll just inform you, as efficiently as possible, of what's been going on out there in the mysterious world of pop music.

Everyone's been gushing about Kristin Hersh's solo album, "Hips and Makers" lately (including me—check "Set the Record Straight"). But we mustn't discount Kristin's band, either. Throwing Muses are still in the running and should be releasing their seventh album on 4A.D. early in 1995. I'm definitely looking forward to that.

It seems that everyone's going solo these days, including Brendan Perry, who is one half of Dead Can Dance. Perry's solo debut album should be reaching these shores some time in June, and by fall of this year we should see a live video of DCD's performance at the Mayfair Theatre in Santa Monica from last November.

Other things going on in the 4A.D. label stable include several new signings. The Glee Club are my newest favorites, with their lovely debut album, "Mine." (See "Set the Record Straight" again.) Also, solo artiste Lisa Germano has signed on to the label, and plans of

a re-mixed and re-issued debut album version of her "Happiness" are in the works. We should see that album in April. Kendra Smith, former vocalist in Dave Roback's band Opal, has gone solo, and will have new material out on 4A.D. by fall of this year.

"Why don't you do to my insight what you do to my insides?"
—Throwing Muses, "Call Me"

The Pale Saints have continued on, despite the fact that their former vocalist Ian Masters left the band to pursue his new creation, Spoonfed Hybrid (signed to 4A.D.'s subsidiary label, Guernica). We should see new pale and saintly material from Ian's former band in June. Other 4A.D. artists to watch for this year include the Wolfgang Press, Frank Black, and Lush, who will be releasing albums in May and June.

Moonshake are in the studio

working on new material for 4A.D. Records. Since their split with vocalist Margaret Fiedler and John Frennet, Moonshake's guitarist/vocalist David Callahan and former Mig have moved on with back. Rumors are circulating that other than P.J. Harvey will provide vocals on future Moonshake releases. Also, Margaret Fiedler has teamed up with a name for her new band, call themselves Laika, after the satellite sent into orbit by the Russians. They've already started recording new material.

And finally, for all you fatal Coil fans who were disappointed that "Blood" was their last release, there is hope. No, Ivo has not regrouped This Mortal Coil, but is working on a new project with Theator John Fryer. The name of the serious project has not been revealed yet, but it is a smaller yet sensitive of people to TMC. I guess I can't keep his ideas from spreading of him. He's always got a lot to say. (And no bathetic rip-offs about that, Mr. Bathous, thank you very much!)

Up-and-coming bands to watch for include your eyes and ears peeled for member you saw it here first: Sharkboy, Tiny Monroe, and



the cranberries

an interview with guitarist noel hogan

in January, 1994, the Cranberries' debut album, "Everybody Else is Doing It, So Why Can't We?" went gold in America. On the strength of two recent tours—one playing smaller clubs, the other as an opening act for Suede—and one dreamily lovelorn single, "Linger," the Cranberries quietly took America by storm. Not bad for four kids from Limerick, Ireland, whose ages range between 20 and 24. Not bad for a band who doesn't pander to the mass appeal of loud, harsh rawk'n'roll that seems to be so successful on the "alternative" charts.

everybody else is doing

By now, everybody knows who the Cranberries are: quiet, sincere brothers Mike and Noel Hogan on bass and guitar; intense, bespectacled drummer Feargal Lawlor; and vocalist Dolores O'Riordan, whose warm, fiercely passionate voice and stunning, octave-shifting jumps lift the Cranberries out of the steadily declining genre of pop music and into another realm. While still at a young age, the Cranberries have attained that timeless appeal which bands like the Smiths and New Order used to have.

Even so, the Cranberries are a little bemused by all the attention they have received on these shores. They've taken it gracefully in stride, but, as Noel Hogan says in his gentle Irish brogue, "It surprised us." Talking with the soft spoken guitarist over the telephone, one begins to understand just how the Cranberries made it with their brand of lilting, heartfelt music that has never been quite like anyone else's.

How about a little history on the Cranberries? How did you get started?

We're together nearly three and a half years now. Myself and Mike [Hogan, bassist] and Ferg [Lawlor, drummer], we've known each other a long time. We were just playing around with a different guy singing with us at first. It was a totally different band then.

It didn't have anything to do with the Cranberries?

No, this guy used to write everything, so the music was completely different. That guy left after a while and we started doing instrumental versions of the songs that we have now—"Linger." A while later, we met Dolores through a friend. She came over and we played some stuff for her and she sang for us. That's really how it started. We did some demos soon after that. We sent them away, and we just started touring around Britain. We got a lot of interest early on from record companies. It really took us by surprise because we weren't even going to send those demos away. People that we knew told us we should; they thought it was okay. Soon after that, we got signed [to Island Records, U.K.] and we started doing bigger tours, supporting bigger bands. This year ['93], we went to Europe for the first time, and then we came over here. This year's been really busy. We spent most of it touring.

While interviewing Belly's bass player, Gail Greenwood, she said they had a great time touring

England with you last year. In fact, she said you as "hellraisers on the road?"

Um...no. Sometimes, maybe. We generally keep it as a good laugh to tour with. We usually keep it as a good laugh to tour with. We usually keep it as a good laugh to tour with. We usually keep it as a good laugh to tour with.

The first thing the Cranberries released was "Uncertain" EP. That was on Xeric Records, that the first label you'd recorded anything on.

Yeah. It was a studio in Limerick, that was the studio. We brought that out before we got signed. They wanted to try and get it into the indie charts to get the name of the band known. If it was released on Island, you're obviously going straight for the charts. So they wanted to take it easy at and get it known.

Do you ever plan to release that EP here in America?

No. It's not something we're very fond of. It's probably don't play any of the songs any more.

Now, before you were the Cranberries, you were yourself "The Cranberry Saw Us"?

Yeah.

What incited you to change the name?

Everybody used to call us "the Cranberries" anyway. We used to shorten it. The Cranberry Saw Us was a band—with that other guy and everything. So we started anew, with Dolores. We just decided we'd stick with Cranberries.

Did you know Dolores had such a great voice when you started playing together?

We kind of knew from the beginning, when she came and started singing.

Were you auditioning people at the time?

She was the only one that came up. We told everybody we knew, and said, "If you know of anybody that's into singing—". Dolores came up, and there was no one else that. She sang two songs—I can't remember what, except played songs like "Linger," but they had no vocal at all. We just put stuff down on a tape for her and she took it home. She came back a few days later with the melody. That was the first song we did. We were really, really happy with what she'd done. That's the way we've done it ever since.

Have you ever had instances where you felt you couldn't record something she'd written, or she wouldn't sing on a track you'd composed?

We've had a few. When we have a song that's a bit dodgy, we'll know at the same time. We all go, "This really isn't very good, is it?" We just get rid of it then. We've done it a lot of times. In another song, we might use a bit of one of those songs that we got rid of.

When did you start playing guitar? Had it always been your goal to play in a pop band?

No. I started four and a half years ago, maybe. It was just a hobby at first. It wasn't really what I wanted to do for a living. Mike and Ferg were already playing. We used to just mess about. It wasn't taken very seriously. It was just something we enjoyed doing.

Do you have an easy time working together in the studio?

It's good. With Steve [Street, producer] in there it makes it really easy for us. We did the album in about six weeks. We mixed it in about two weeks. It was really quick. It just clicked really well. I think we're all looking forward to getting back because it's been a long time since we were in there. We've got a lot of songs for the next album. It's just trying to get the time to get in. Hopefully around January or February ['94], we'll get back in. We did some demos for it a few months ago with Steve.

So you like working with Stephen Street, and you're going to do the next album with him?

Yeah. It just works with him. He doesn't take over everything.

What about the title of the album? What inspired you to call it "Everybody Else is Doing It, So Why Can't We?"

It was just something Dolores said one night. She was watching another band, and she said that.

Have you ever considered doing something completely on your own, producing an album yourself?

I think it's something we'll try some day, but not yet. We've still got a bit to learn about how things work in the studio.

What about your influences? What inspired you to start making music? What were you listening to as kids?

We all kind of listened to different stuff. We used to listen to

the Cure, the Smiths, bands like that. We still do. The fact that everybody listens to different stuff means that we've got different influences. Maybe that's why it sounds the way it does. You know the way, some bands, everybody's all into one band, then it isn't very original.

What about your position in the world of pop music? Do you consider yourself still on the outside, or is your level of acceptance growing?

Probably at this stage, they've accepted us better than they used to. We don't really want to be part of that kind of scene. We'd rather just be here to do what we have to do and then go home, and forget about it when we're at home. Then just come back and do the tours or whatever we have to do. It's really about writing good songs more than anything else.

Did you ever think your album would do as well as it has in America?

No, not at all. It really took us by surprise. We thought we'd play small clubs—twenty people kind of thing. We thought it would be like starting all over again, but then it turned out to be completely opposite. They accepted us here a lot quicker than they did at home.

What is the most strange or ridiculous thing that's ever happened to the Cranberries on the road?

Um... the strangest... I remember when we were in England and we went to play a gig somewhere. Can't remember where it was. The P.A. was ridiculous. It wasn't actually a P.A. It was a small little box in the middle of the room. The whole thing didn't work, but this guy was trying to convince us that it was okay. He was naming off all these bands that had used it. There was no way that they had. We had set up everything and were ready to go. It just wasn't happening. So we just left, and the guy was really losing it. I think that's the only gig where we ever went in and pulled that. Other than that, it's usually pretty normal.

No ridiculous fan action or anything?

Um...no, not really. Fairly quiet. We haven't had any mentallers yet.

SO

why can't we?

