

Entertainment

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INTERVIEW

Beoga ready to make a mark

by Eric FitzGerald
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LIMERICK musician Niamh Dunne is chatting to Limerick Post on the phone as the band trek across the country to do interviews and perform on Galway Bay FM. Niamh is the one Limerick lass among the four "nordy lads" that make up Irish new wave trad/ folk group Beoga.

Their reputation as an engaging and quality live act was cemented many years ago alongside a handful of albums picking up positive reviews along the way.

Things stepped up into top gear when they collaborated with Ed Sheeran, contributing on two tracks, 'Galway Girl' and 'Nancy Mulligan'. Now the band was getting heard through a healthy 687 million streams on Spotify and a jaunt around the country playing on Sheeran's sold out Irish tour.

Beoga are now signed to Columbia Records, working with Foy Vance and Snow Patrol's Johnny McDaid on new material that aims to find the intersection between their new-wave trad and pop music.

Beoga released two strong singles in 2019, 'Let You Go' and 'Make A Mark' with singer Ryan McMullan paving the way for much more releases early in the new year.

Niamh describes these last two years of frenetic activity on the road and behind closed doors writing new music.

"We had fun. We had a great time."

Laughs.
And with the new collaborative approach that Beoga have adopted, she says, "We are settling into ourselves with all of that."

New single 'Make A Mark' is a statement of intent for the band and has proved to be a particular live favourite.



Beoga play Dolan's Warehouse on Saturday December 21.

"'Make A Mark' is one we are all excited about. It kind of anchors what we are working towards, our own sort of music, a new direction, really."

Alongside the writing and recording sessions, Beoga have been bringing their live show to new audiences, supporting Foy Vance on a recent tour and making trips to the US and UK.

A look at their online presence will reveal just how much their audience enjoys a Beoga gig - with loads of lovely compliments from fans and those who have just checked them out for the first time.

"We have done a lot of tours in the UK and in the States, opening for other artists. We have seen a shift. We are trying to broaden the audience, that is the name of the game."

"We have always been a live band. If we can get people in the room at all, that is definitely our strongest card in the deck."

This Thursday, December 19, Beoga play their biggest headliner yet, performing at The Ulster Hall in Belfast.

"It's a big gig for us and the biggest headline show that we have ever done. It is a hometown gig for the lads. It will

be an exciting gig for us."

While Ulster is where the rest of the band hail from, for Niamh Dunne, Limerick is most certainly home and playing a Christmas show in Dolan's is very much a homecoming gig for all the band.

Niamh's association with Dolan's goes all the way back to the earliest days since Dolan's first opened on the Dock Road 25 years ago.

As a kid, Niamh played in the famous trad sessions with her dad Mickey Dunne and sister Brid in Dolan's front bar. Niamh began to play fiddle at the age of

four, is also an award-winning classical violinist and along with Beoga bandmate and now husband, Sean Óg Graham, is a graduate of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance with first class honours.

"We have a historical link with Dolan's. Sean Óg and I were at University of Limerick."

"We had some wild nights in Dolan's doing Hallowe'en gigs for the college and dressing up."

"It's a homecoming gig for Beoga."
Beoga play Dolan's Warehouse on Saturday December 21.

CELEBRATION

Knocking down walls: Dolan's Pub celebrates 25 years

by Eric FitzGerald
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"MICK Dolan loves knocking down walls."

Mick's son Neil was speaking at a function last week to celebrate the achievements of Dolan's Pub and its proprietors in the 25 years since opening the bar in 1994.

"And he likes building them up too," added Neil.

And that is exactly what Mick and Valerie have done in Limerick, both symbolically and physically since the couple relocated here from Dublin.

Since 1994, they have knocked walls to turn a fruit warehouse behind the bar into one of Ireland's finest venues. They converted the bedrooms upstairs into another more intimate performance area. They knocked more walls to transform the bar next door into The Kasbah Social Club.

All this has created an internationally renowned venue on Limerick's Dock Road.

It transformed a forlorn part of Limerick into a buzzing and much loved destination and put the city on the map for touring live artists from across the globe.

From Aslan, Snow Patrol and Sharon Shannon to Kasabian, Franz Ferdinand and the legendary Joe Jackson, they have all rocked The Warehouse.

Not forgetting the wealth of unforgettable nights that Seoda Shows bookings bring to the venue, showcasing the likes of Girl Band, Fontaines DC, whenyoung, Durand Jones and the Indications before these acts blew up and became everyone's new favourite bands.

Legendary Limerick actor/ comedian Pat Shortt also spoke at the event.

He brought the house down roasting Mick Dolan, thanking him for his first

free pint.

"It is my f*ckin first time on stage in Dolan's. I had to wait 25 years for a free pint. I'm having a great night and I'm gonna get kicked out like I do most Saturdays."

Pat remembered hearing about the pub just about to be opened on Limerick's Dock Road back in 1994.

"Sure there is f*ck all down the Dock Road! He must have broke down just outside the door!" he joked.

The comedian finished up by telling the audience how Dolan's is perceived today outside Limerick.

"It's not just a venue, it's a home to musicians. I mean that in every sense of the word as a home, because you come in, you get fed, have the craic."

"Every musician around the country I have ever talked to... They have all wanted to come back because it's a special venue and a special place, and they are special people."

Mick Dolan accepted the accolades and mementos presented with a few words thanking his family, Valerie, Sarah and Neil, all the staff for their work in keeping the venue up and running, and expanding their bookings to shows at Limerick Milk Market, King John's Castle and now Live at Docklands.

We would like to make Limerick a better place for everybody

"The Council has been great and helpful in getting the Docklands going."

"We would like to develop that further and make Limerick a better place for everybody to be in."

Mick further explained that ticket sales are, and will always be, the lifeblood of getting more live entertainment into Limerick in the future.

"Everybody that comes in and buys a ticket here, that is the support you need. That's what Limerick needs. The more tickets people sell - the bands see what's happening. And they want to come to Limerick."

"Thanks for your time and energy and for coming to all the gigs. Wholeheartedly from all the Dolan family, we thank you so much for all your support."

See these pages and listings for weekly updates on what gigs are happening at their various venues.