

# SONGS THAT MADE 2019

In association with Dolans, the Leader brings you the Top 20 Limerick Songs of the Year and why they were rated so highly, writes **Fintan Walsh**

Leabharlann na Gráinsí  
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THE ACCOLADE of Limerick's Song of the Year has been justifiably bestowed on Pallaskerry native Patrick O'Brien for his chilling debut single *The Dead*, under the moniker of King Pallas.

O'Brien is no stranger to the local and national circuit, having led post-rock four-piece *Last Days of Death Country*, and is a current member of the acclaimed *windings*.

But despite being one of Limerick's most respected musicians for around 10 years, *The Dead* is Patrick's first serious attempt at original solo work in such a wide-spanning timeframe.

The result is nothing less than a celestial work of art, a phantasmagoria of Nick Drake-esque folk, soothing trip-hop beats, straining post-rock guitar and reverberated strings - all looping and lacing over one each other in a seamless wave.

And though the track title and funeral tone may suggest you're being dragged into a bottomless pit of eternal darkness, the actual subtext is one of positive, motivational resilience after grief and death.

"I wrote it about eight years ago out of the back of a lot of people around me passing away. Death is very hard in any kind of way, and I was looking at how to approach it and how to deal with it, if you know what I mean.

"Very much, the way I looked at it, if they were here, what would they say to you? It was very much like: 'Wake up, feel the sun on your face' and it's just kinda going: 'Wake up, come on, get out, do something'. Try and put something good into the world, try and make it positive," explains Patrick, who is in his mid-30s.

*The Dead*, released this February, is a solo project, with production and mixing carried out by fellow *windings* bandmate Steve Ryan.

"With the music, I really wanted the feel of this idea of steel bending and everything that is uncomfortable at points. But the lyrics stay very calm, but they're very gentle in a way. It's pretty much saying: 'Get out and live', pretty much," he adds.

But in 2020, King Pallas will comprise O'Brien, Ryan, Marty Ryan of *Anna's Anchor*, harpist and soprano Gene Wallace, and drummer and *windings* member Brian Meaney. And through this collective, a five-track recording is expected to be released in February.

*The Dead*'s conscious bid to counterpoint optimism with the dirge and misery of death is a testament to O'Brien's dexterous aptitude and vast experience as a musician. The new decade could see O'Brien and his bandmates leave a massive mark on the Irish music scene.

SEE NEXT PAGES FOR THE TOP 20 SONGS OF THE YEAR

# L2

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Patrick O'Brien, also known as King Pallas, is the judges' favourite for his single, *The Dead*, a positive composition that looks at living life after experiencing the death of a loved one. *The Dead* was selected top song of the year out of 43 nominations PICTURE: MICHAEL COWHEY

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**Christmas feast for the senses**

Festive fun at the Milk Market

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**Rugby's 'clash of the titans'**

Saracens invade Thomond Park

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**Green Fingers to festive rescue**

Pick the perfect Christmas tree

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Puma is on the prowl at Lyons of Limerick



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Newport strike up the fiddles for Tradfest



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Denise Chaila, Zambian-Limerick hip-hop artist, was rated as the best performing female solo act of 2019 for Copper Bullet

# Diverse delights in year of music

### Leader's top songs of 2019 in association with Dolans

#### 2. Whenyoung - The Others

This punk-pop trio, who grew up together in Limerick, left home to London, all at different times, only to be reunited and form what could be the inception of Ireland's most sensational act since U2.



Raheen frontwoman Aoife Power is not just a dominant entertainer with a brilliant vocal range, she is also a didactic storyteller with a social conscience. And the fruits of her talents blossom in The Others, an emotive powerhouse that was inspired by the Grenfell Tower disaster, and is just a single example of many from their Reason to Dream LP of the trajectory they're rocketing towards on the global circuit.

most impressive album of 2019, the world has barely looked beneath the surface of his potential. This highly-rated single is a pulsating, cosmic journey that has its soft ambient beginning, a freeform jam of low beats and mesmerising keys, and a hush Gregorian-esque conclusion.

His accomplishments are unsurprising, considering he is one of Ireland's most played on Spotify, with his top track Waltz Sketch on the verge of hitting six million hits.

#### 3. Paddy Mulcahy - How To Disappear

Twenty-six-year-old Ballinacurra Road composer Paddy Mulcahy is the personification of artistic accomplishment. And despite releasing, arguably, Limerick's pound-for-pound

album, In The End - a poignant record that celebrated Ireland's most successful female rockstar. The record now has been nominated for Best Rock Album at the Grammy's, one of the highest honours in the industry.

It could be argued that the lyrics in All Over Now have been overly-scrutinised with forensic interpretation, in the context of Dolores' tragic death. If you think it's grim, you have clearly disregarded the underlying message. Perhaps this bittersweet piece, brought to life with Dolores' soft authoritative vocals and Noel's shoegaze-esque riffs, is about locking up a dark past and looking to the future with fortitude.

All Over Now aptly wraps up a 30-year career with great applause, but also immortalises the high note on which our Dolores left us.

5. Denise Chaila - Copper Bullet  
Zambian-Limerick diva Denise Chaila requires no

#### 4. The Cranberries - All Over Now

This year, the signature voice of Dolores O'Riordan became posthumously enshrined in The Cranberries' eighth and final

introduction to most of us. But for the sandheaded few she's Ireland's current trailblazer in our fledgling rap scene. Through her involvement with the versatile Rusangano Family, she has mounted the stage with a sound of her own, creating a slick melange of her spoken word prowess and bass-heavy hip-hop production.

But what has launched her into the ozone is her ability to challenge the status quo of the Irish rap scene as a serious female artist. And she does so charismatically with Copper Bullet, musical satire that embraces identity with unapologetic assertion.

6. Fox Jaw - Let It Run  
When Fox Jaw release their single Kerosene in 2019, the five-piece band, which has been performing as a unit for almost 20 years, demonstrated mathematical





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# 2019 shows women are dominating music scene

**FINTAN WALSH**

E: fintan.walsh@limerickleader.ie

THIS year we have teamed up with Dolans to bring you Limerick Leader's Song of the Year, where a group of local judges selected their top local songs released this year.

The drawing board started with 43 songs by over 30 artists, representing a broad-ranging, versatile, diverse selection of sounds and tastes. There's rock, electronic, ambient, hip-hop, trad, folk and

more.

Based on the top 20, one major thing sings loud and clear — female artists are dominating the scene in a cross-section of genres, many of whom have been shortlisted for their debut releases.

Some of the prominent female artists include hip-hop artist Denise Chaila, electronica-soul singer Jane Fraser, Ash O'Connor's punk outfit His Father's Voice, Emma Langford, Aoife Power of Whenyoung, and the brilliant teen group

PowPig.

The top 20 also indicates that we're witnessing the birth of a hip-hop generation, thanks to the PX Music collective that is responsible for harnessing the talent of young artists.

Based on two rounds of a points system, the top 20 were selected by a panel of judges including Maria Ryan, Carl Corcoran, Diarmuid McIntyre, Jennifer McMahon, Emma Langford, Paddy Shanahan, Daniel Sykes, Brendan Miller, John Steele, Rokaia Jedir, and this reporter.

understanding of what made a good rock song with character.

This time 'round, the 14-year-old band shows maturity and progression in Let It Run, a patiently-climaxing beaut about embracing life's chaos.

"Life is what happens when you're busy worrying about what's going to happen. Whatever you decide to do with it. Own it. Make it yours. Let it run," explains band member Shane Serrano.

The group focuses a lot on its own enlightenment and how they evolve and develop over time, which in itself is enlightening. Let It Run shows an ardent transformation of Fox Jaw's ability to subtly create that volcanic confluence between powerful harmonies and whatever instruments that are at their disposal.

## 7. Emma Langford - Winding Way Down To Kells Bay

As part of her widely-anticipated sophomore album, due for release in the new decade, Emma Langford's Winding Way Down To Kells Bay is a poignant farewell to a loved one, while also a visceral tribute to the Cahersiveen

community, playing on the cerebral senses by transporting the listener to the wild Kerry peninsulas.

And while the song of the summer was her single Goodbye Hawaii, this beautiful ode to her late granduncle may well sit among the hierarchy of Irish folk over the past 10 years.

## 8. Post-Punk Podge and The Technohippies

From the outset, Heavenly Tones is mentally-dismantling. But for this cult duo, made up of

Post-Punk Podge and Dr Asparagus Montague, every sound ascribed to their music is done so with bold intent and this heavenly tune can be digested in three different ways; a joyous Underworld-esque rave, a lounge-like balearic-house trance, or both.

According to Podge, Dr Montague, inebriated on serotonin after a vitamin D-fuelled Ibiza trip (allegedly using funds that had been allocated to them by HB for an advert), inspired his Fender Rhodes loop, which spurred on the rest of this aesthetic madness.

Heavenly Tones is one of numerous reasons why this outfit should be celebrated, as the duo embodies the brilliance of unbridled creativity and freedom of expression with a social conscience.

## 9. Jayne - Undefined

Jayne's debut single Undefined is a nocturnal downtempo work of electronica that is made all the more absorbing with her serene voice, no doubt acquired after years of studying jazz and being a seasoned professional wedding singer.

Pursuing a channel to release more original work, 35-year-old Jane Fraser says

Undefined, inspired by Jamie XX's Loud Places, "is about the moment you realised you will never have the same connection with someone close to you again. That it is forever changed."

With more tracks on the horizon, so she promises, Ms

Fraser's versatility, married with her delectable, soulful voice, is a unique addition to Limerick's rainbow of talent.

## 10. Citrus Fresh - Pagan

In Pagan, this 23-year-old Thomondgate poet waxes lyrical, slicing through the raw underbelly of post-breakup depression. This production begins as it ends — with unsettling grit, layered with damp, distorted drones, all of which is evenly matched by dark lyrics of contemplating suicide after a break-up.

"It came from a very dark place, but it's probably the most cathartic song that I've written," he explains. The brave aspect of this song is not the act of creating it, but the fact that Citrus Fresh makes such dark subject matter work.

There is zero surprise here, considering we are in the embryonic stage of a spoken word and hip-hop poetry explosion, where artists like O'Donoghue are taking the first breaths and grafting a new introspective sub-culture in Limerick.

## Songs 11-20

- 11. Emma Langford - Goodbye Hawaii
- 12. PowPig - Mayday
- 13. The O'Malleys - Can You Hear Me
- 14. Martian Subculture - Hard To Remember
- 15. His Father's Voice - No Room for Romantics
- 16. Paddy Mulcahy - Sunset Connoisseur
- 17. Hazey Haze - This Is My City
- 18. The O'Malleys - Resilient Sun
- 19. PowPig - Pretty Woman
- 20. Kodu - Maya



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