

Local band, The Hitchers, look like they have got a successful lift

By AIDAN CORR

LIMERICK rockers, The Hitchers, were back on the steps of the Protestant Young Men's Association for a repeat of a Limerick Leader photo call that took place on the same spot just seven years ago.

The band has changed little since 1990 and despite the fact that Eric Fitzgerald has replaced Owen O'Keefe and Benny McCormack, they have lost none of the musical charisma that has labelled them as Limerick's greatest pop music survivors.

Of the many local bands that emanated from this region since 1989, The Hitchers have survived the test of time. In a sometimes vicious music industry, they have survived where most have succumbed to pressure.

Over a period of eight years Limerick has seen its share of young rock bands venture hopefully into the world of pop.

Tuesday, Blues threatened seriously to make the breakthrough. Initially signed by a major label, they toured the States and then suddenly disappeared from the scene.

Others sought eagerly to emulate them: They Do It With Mirrors, Up The Downstairs, The Charming, The Tear Collectors, Those Stilted Boys, A Touch of Oliver, The Hitchers and a band called The Cranberries all showed promise.

Of those eight bands, only three, A Touch of Oliver, The Cranberries and now The Hitchers have succeeded in having an album produced and there is now a rising belief that this week's album launch by the region's latest hopefuls will open the door to international stardom.

Hitchers lead singer, drummer and song writer, Niall Quinn, plays down his much-publicised past as original front-man with The Cranberries: "A lot of the papers got it wrong, but I suppose if we want to be famous we had better get used to that," he added with a laugh.

Son of Cllr John, Niall Quinn has just finished an art course at Crawford College in Cork, specialising in sculpture. He has a fascination with airplanes and many of his works of sculpture depict various flying models. There is nothing he wants more in life, he tells us, than to succeed

in music. Like the other three Hitchers, the band is now his life and all four are determined to make an all-out effort for success.

"This album is the culmination of over twelve months work at Xeric Recording Studios," said guitarist Andy Gallagher, "and we are thrilled with the result. We signed for the local label Murgatroyd, have already had our single and video shown on MTV and there has been a really encouraging response to our album."

Musically the album, "It's All Fun and Games 'til Someone Loses an Eye," carries enough energy, creativity and originality to make it noticeable. Past descriptions of The Hitchers as a 'fun band' have not been to their advantage but this release certainly shows a maturity that is only acquired through running the gauntlet of pop.

Some of the tracks make compelling listening such as "At the Seaside" and "Strachan", a gem from the pen of Niall Quinn, and with a name like that it has to be about soccer. A keen fan of Limerick FC, the Hitchers front man excels in this one and seldom has the little Scot played a better game for Leeds United.

Overall the album is a mixture of the mediocre and the superb but, like the Hitchers themselves, there is a noticeable frenetic sincerity about it.

After such a long time in the manufacturing room, this Limerick band has come of age. They have reached a higher musical plateau than many would have considered possible and they must be applauded for their endurance and determination to succeed in the face of adversity.

This band has been through almost every facet of youthful rock/pop. There are shades of "The Sultan of Ping" there but these Limerick musicians have been plying their trade longer than the Corkonians. The Hitchers have been in band competitions, reaching the televised finals of a national competition some years ago, they have produced their own singles and graced the stage of almost every performance arena in this immediate region.

The album has just been signed to the major UK indie distributor, Vital. John Peel has given it generous play on BBC Radio and the band begin their first ever UK tour in April.

The Hitchers will launch their album at a party in the Theatre Royal on Thursday, March 20.



Hopeful Hitchers this week: from left, Niall Quinn, Eric Fitzgerald, Muan Carney and Andy Gallagher.

Funeral
Dr Co

THE funeral of Dr Edward Limerick, a service at Church, Percy Square, throughout the hinterland, ceased by his death. He passed away fully at St J this Monday taken to Church this 7.30pm. He is son, Phil Sheelagh and grandchild Christopher Carr and his-in-law Nick law Anne. lives.

Band

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