

juliette & the licks

dolan's warehouse | wednesday, feb 23

In music there are two facts we can take as given. Fact one: rock has always had a tradition of producing iconic, fashionable and glamorous female singers. Marianne Faithfull, Nico, Debbie Harry, Wendy James, that bird out of Placebo, Karen O; often they had little influence on the music itself, but by their very existence they spiced up the musical landscape. Fact two: Hollywood movie stars should never, ever attempt musical careers. Russell Crowe, Johnny Depp, Keanu Reeves, Bruce sodding Willis; all famous movie stars, all utter cack musicwise. And so, with this in mind, whither Juliette Lewis? Iconic, fashionable, glamorous. Major. Hollywood. Star. Suffice it to say that the packed crowd in Dolan's last Wednesday night were set to witness a match that really could have gone either way.



Of course, it's not Lewis' fault that loads of people want to come and see her band. It's not her fault that such a diverse crowd of people turned up, many of whom wear the smirk that says 'go on, then, impress me'. Nobody should deny her the chance to live out a rock star fantasy, after all, who wouldn't? And indeed Lewis deserves to be taken seriously, if nothing else. She has all the ingredients of a great rock icon – a fabulous voice that sounds like Bonnie Tyler suffering in a Motown dungeon, the stage presence of a wiggling, spasm-prone Jagger, the wardrobe of Karen O – and she is committed to touring the hard way and gaining support from the ground up. It's just that, in the midst of all the glamour and the fuss, someone forgot the tunes. Amid the flurry of influences on display that crucial alchemy is lacking that makes a rock band great, and if we're going to blame someone for that, then I'm afraid it's going to have to be Juliette.

There are highlights here, for sure. "Comin' Around" spits and jerks with a Stooges lite four-chord vigour, whilst standout "So What?" is all fast rhythm section and tough-girl bile, coming on like a Suffragette Interpol. But these moments are sandwiched between a lot of stuff that is merely OK, a lot of competent but samey filler. The fleeting moments of real excitement (as on album title-track "Speaking My Language" when Juliette pointedly growls 'So you think you know me better than that' at the doubters, or on closer, "Mad, Mad World" with its passionate exhortation to 'Fight! Fight! Fight!') are frustratingly tempered by long spells of real Hootie and the Blowfish territory AOR dross ("Just a Girl"). The Licks aren't a bad band, they just don't add up to the sum of their influences and their hype. No-one will have left the gig disappointed as Lewis certainly didn't merely turn up and cash in on her name, but if the music isn't going to match the sense of occasion then long-term the band simply won't demand anything more than white elephant curiosity appeal. Natural Born? Maybe. Killers? Not by a mile. | **chris sandford**

a lot of top names on the bill for carna, bill whelan's newest work which premieres at the university concert hall this week. | leg lists em

after the riverdance

Bill Whelan, Limerick native and composer of Riverdance, has written a new work entitled Carna. Specially commissioned by the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Carna receives its world première at University Concert Hall on Wednesday March 09. A groundbreaking concerto for traditional violin, dancer and orchestra, Carna will feature the young violinist Zoë Conway, dancer Colin Dunne and the Irish Chamber Orchestra. Conducted by the Irish Chamber Orchestra's Music Director Nicholas McGegan, the UCH concert also features the world première of Triptych, composer John Kinsella's musical setting to the poems of Nobel prizewinner Seamus Heaney. In a tribute to the great Frank Patterson, acclaimed young Irish tenor P.J. Hurley joins the orchestra for a medley of songs penned by that master of melodies Thomas Moore. The concert programme is completed by T.C. Kelly's O'Carolan Suite in Baroque Style, which tips its hat at many old favourites such as O'Carolan's Concerto, Planxty Irwin and Fanny Power.

Bill Whelan's production and arranging credits include, among others, U2, Van Morrison and Kate Bush. His compositional work in film includes Lamb starring Liam Neeson, the score for the film Some Mother's Son and Dancing At Lughnasa starring Meryl Streep. Bill was honoured with a Grammy Award in 1997 when the Riverdance record was named the 'Best Musical Show Album'.

The Irish Chamber Orchestra is one of Ireland's most distinguished ensembles. Consisting of Irish and international string players, the orchestra has gained a reputation as a vibrant, refreshing and influential force on the classical and contemporary music scene.

Proceeds from the concert go to Adi Roche's Chernobyl Children's Project International; John Kelly, Chief Executive of the Irish Chamber Orchestra said: "We are delighted to work with the Chernobyl Children's Project International in their fundraising endeavours. The ICO remains committed to children and the development of music in schools and communities nurturing musical awareness, creativity and skills in an inclusive and experimental manner".

carna premieres at the university concert hall on wednesday, march 09. contact the uch on 061-331549 or log onto www.uch.ie for ticket enquiries or more details. Also call 1890-923543 for ticket enquiries