

The colourful return of Roesy

BY KERNAN ANDREWS

HAD THINGS worked out another way, Offaly singer-songwriter Roesy might have packed up music professionally and left Ireland to live in Britain. After the release of his third album *Only Love Is Real* he felt it was time to come to a decision - something had to move on, either Roesy or his career.

However fate decided it should be both. Roesy took some time out to ponder his future, experienced a burst of inspiration, entered the studio with Autamata's Ken McHugh, and recorded a new album *Colour Me Colourful* (N4 Records). *Colour Me Colourful* will be released tomorrow and Roesy will play a show in the Róisín Dúbh on Monday March 27.

So why was he originally contemplating giving it all up? "The first three albums were done independently and received a lot of praise and I got a lot of pats on the back," Roesy tells me over a Monday morning phonecall, "but if I had a pound for every pat on the back I'd be a rich man. I'm heading towards 30 and I was weighing it all up. I was asking if I wanted to keep doing this professionally. I was browned off as the financial strain of doing this is unbelievable and a lot of the time the music wasn't getting airplay. It was difficult without support."

However two things happened that



Roesy.

changed Roesy's mind and saw him persevere. "I took some time out and worked as a FÁS tutor, teaching young people songwriting in Tullamore for three months. That got my hunger back," he says. "I was also talking to Janine Nallen from N4 Records. I was telling her I wanted to make an album with a bigger sound, a bigger band. I knew I didn't want to make another self-funded album as I was in debt over the first three. I wanted to make the album that I wanted to make, not one where I had to cut corners or cut my cloth to suit my measure. I played Janine some songs, she said she was interested and that's when it all happened."

It was worth Roesy's while to make

Colour Me Colourful. It is bigger sounding, more elaborately produced, than his previous albums, without sacrificing that gentle, intimate feel that mark his best songs. Among the stand out tracks are the cool, jazzy opener 'Shake The Devil Down', the catchy indie-rock of 'Propellor', and one of Roesy's finest ballads - 'Home It Has Flown' a duet with Autamata's Carol Keogh.

Most surprising though is the current single 'One Of The Same'. Roesy's music has always had a catchy and anthemic side but this is easily the most commercial track he has ever written and quite unlike the rest of *Colour Me Colourful*. Roesy admits the single is a way of leading people onto

the more 'pure' music on the rest of the album.

"I enjoy playing that song and it's another side to what I do," he says. "When I was writing that song I was thinking 'This is my radio track' and Ken was saying when he heard it 'That's our single'."

Roesy speaks highly of Ken McHugh, who also produced David Kitt's *The Big Romance*. "Ken added amazing dimensions to the album with these extra layers of beats and programmes," says Roesy. "We had a great relationship making the album. It was a two-way thing, if one felt the other was going too far we would have the respect to say no."

There has always been a spiritual side to Roesy's songs and *Colour Me Colourful's* upbeat 'Endless Day' continues that trend. Its chorus: "Father, Holy Mother, Golden Son" sounds like a re-interpretation of the Christian Holy Trinity. Where did the idea for the song come from? "I was travelling on a journey from Adelaide to Ayers Rock," explains Roesy, "and all I'll say is, if you can't find God there, you can't find Him anywhere."

Indeed the art of Australian Aborigines, as well as the indigenous art forms and religions of east Asia have left a deep impression, not only on Roesy's songwriting, but also on his painting. Roesy has enjoyed success as an exhibition artist with sold out shows at the 2004 Galway Arts Festival and the 2004 Wexford Opera Festival. He is currently working on the design for

Ronnie Drew's new album. As for his own *Colour Me Colourful*, its inlay booklet is adorned with details from Roesy's most recent paintings which are full of colourful, primitive, dreamlike images.

"I've been on a lot of journeys, both physical and...non-physical," he laughs. "Since I was a kid I've had an interest in Native American and indigenous art forms, symbols, and icons. That resonates with something deep in me. It puts you into a magical space. It's like faith - you have a hunch. It's something very intuitive. That's what art is for me. When I create that's where I come from."

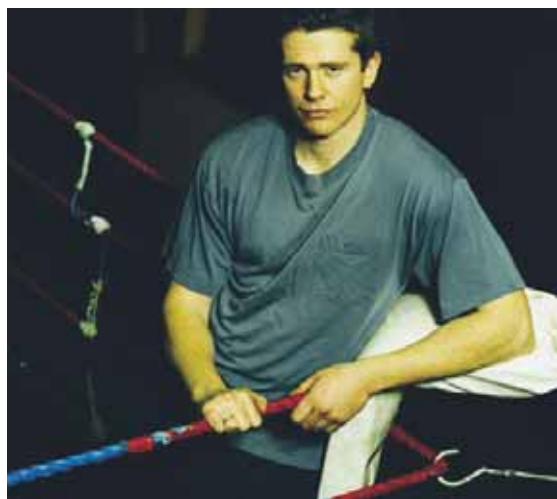
Journeys to Bolivia and Nepal have also left a deep mark on Roesy's songwriting so when he gets the chance to go travelling abroad again, where does he plan to go? "When I was 17, I saw this film called *Urga (Close To The Edge)*. It was about a Russian truck driver, stranded in Mongolia who ends up staying with a family there. I've watched it about 10 times and become fascinated with Mongolia. That's somewhere I want to go."

Tickets for Roesy's show are available from the Róisín Dúbh, Mulligans, and Redlight Records.

Roesy in Redlight

Roesy will play in Redlight Records on Tuesday March 28. In conjunction with the gig Redlight is running an exclusive competition with a prize of a piece of Roesy's own artwork for the lucky winner. See instore for details.

Damien Dempsey returns



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THE DUBLIN singer-songwriter Damien Dempsey returns to Galway to play the Róisín Dúbh on Friday June 2.

Damien has created quite a stir in the last few years with his uncompromising, socially aware, folk influenced music on his albums *Shots*, *Seize The Day*, and *They Don't Teach This*

*S**t In School*. Normally we're used to seeing Damien in large venues, but hard-core fans are in for a real treat as this will be a rare chance to see the singer in the more intimate surroundings of the Róisín Dúbh.

Tickets are now available from the Róisín Dúbh, Mulligans, and Redlight Records.

GYT's Liar

BY CHARLIE MCBRIDE

GALWAY YOUTH Theatre stage their first major production of the year next week; the world premiere of *Liar* by acclaimed Scottish writer Gregory Burke.

Burke's previous work includes *Gagarin Way* (Traverse/RNT Studio), *The Straits* (Paines Plough), and *On Tour* (Royal Court). He received the Most Promising Playwright award in February 2002, Best New Play at the TMA Barclays Awards, and shared the Meyer-Whitworth Award for *Gagarin Way*. He's undoubtedly one of the most talented playwrights to emerge from Britain in the last few years and GYT's production of *Liar* offers a welcome opportunity for Irish audiences to enjoy his work.

The play is directed by Niall Cleary and he describes it thus: "It's a teen movie for the stage. It has stock teen characters like Goths, moshers, nerds, and shams in a school setting. This new kid Ronnie comes to town; every time he opens his mouth a bunch of lies come out, he just can't help himself. He then falls for this 'goddess with a brain' Katie.

"He relies on the advice of two lads, Beefy and Eck, in his quest to win Katie's heart but she has two pals as well, Katie and Kylie, who advise her against getting involved with him. The play basically follows how it all pans out and it's a very funny, feelgood drama. It does touch on



The Buddy Holly Fan Club? Martin Hofler and Lorcan Kenny star in *Liar*.

serious points like self harm and peer pressure but first and foremost it's a light-hearted comedy."

The description of the play as a 'teen movie' is apposite. Part of the action involves sequences supposedly filmed on Beefy's mobile phone that are projected onto the back wall of the set. Cleary explains how they fit into the action: "There are only six characters onstage but we got to use nearly everyone in GYT for the filmed sequences, where Beefy films all the other kids in the school. We spent two days filming those elements. The characters on stage inter-act with those on film but the play doesn't overdo the multi-media aspect. Everyone's really been enjoying working on the show; there's a very different energy required for a play like this than

something like *The Crucible* and when we find that energy it really 'sings'."

Cleary also compliments the input of set designer Eoin MacCarthaigh. "Eoin has done a brilliant set," he says. "There are 10 different locations in the play - classrooms, playgrounds, shops - and he's come up with great ideas for incorporating all of those in the set which adds a whole new visual dimension to the play. He's a bit of a genius!"

Liar features Eddie Hefferon as Ronnie and Orla Donnelly as Katie, and also includes Jason Henry, Dara O'Connor, Aoife Dunne, and Katie Campbell.

Liar runs at Nuns Island Studio from Monday to Sunday April 2. For tickets contact the Galway Arts Centre on 091 - 565886.

