

Dolores O'Riordan - Are You Listening? (2007)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Ordinary Day* (4:05)
2. *When We Were Young* (3:24)
3. *In The Garden* (4:28)
4. *Human Spirit* (4:01)
5. *Loser* (2:58)
6. *Stay With Me* (4:02)
7. *Apple Of My Eye* (4:44)
8. *Black Widow* (4:56)
9. *October* (4:38)
10. *Accept Things* (4:11)
11. *Angel Fire* (5:02)
12. *Ecstasy* (5:13) 13 *Letting Go* 5:40 14 *Forever* 4:05 15 *Sisterly Love* 2:35

It's been a long period of quiet for Dolores O'Riordan, the lead singer of the Cranberries. Her band quietly disbanded after the 2001 release of *Wake Up and Smell the Coffee* and although she didn't disappear, O'Riordan surely wasn't overly active, popping up on music by Angelo Badalamenti and Zucchero but primarily devoting herself to family affairs before she set out to record her solo debut with producer Youth in 2006. Released the following year, *Are You Listening?* sidesteps the turgid proggy inclinations of latter-day Cranberries albums while also avoiding the awkward attempts at hard rock that plagued some of the band's mid-period albums. So, it returns O'Riordan to her strengths: melodic, atmospheric, mildly brooding pop. But *Are You Listening?* isn't exactly a dead ringer for *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?* Youth gives this album drama, grandeur, and muscle, so it sounds positively cinematic where early Cranberries was quiet and insular. Of course, this sense of scale is only appropriate for the modern-day Dolores O'Riordan, who has long been a star but where that sense of confidence could turn indulgent on latter-day Cranberries albums, she's now relatively humble and direct, singing songs about family, faith, and nostalgia that sound relatable to fans who have grown up with her and are also facing similar issues. And that's why *Are You Listening?* is a success as a solo debut: it doesn't resurrect O'Riordan's earliest work as much as reconnect

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with it, and she hasn't sounded this purposeful, or made a record this satisfying, since the days of "Linger." ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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