

SPOTLIGHT



Dan Montick

Dennis Casey, Bridget Regan, George Schwindt, Dave King, Nathen Maxwell, Matt Hensley, Bob Schmidt

FLOGGING MOLLY

Finding humor in desperate times, making use of the rowdiest means possible

THE DIFFICULTY OF TRYING ECONOMIC times is a theme that fuels Celtic-punk band Flogging Molly's latest album, *Speed of Darkness*. It's also a social condition the punk-meets-pub-rock band's founder, Dave King, knows firsthand. He and fiddler-guitarist wife Bridget Regan divide their time between his native Ireland and Regan's hometown of Detroit, two areas that have been especially hard hit in recent years. "We Irish have always experienced hardships," King explains. "When I was writing these lyrics I was exploring some pretty nasty things, but I retained a certain sense of humor. That's hugely important. Humor and music are like the only things that people have to get them through these situations."

In a way, Flogging Molly was formed because of hard times. Formerly the lead singer for '80s British heavy-metal band Fastway, King relocated to Los Angeles in the early '90s in hopes of expanding his musical opportunities. An attempt to regroup with a new band fell apart, and he took odd jobs as a house painter and a truck driver to make ends meet. "I was really in the doldrums, but there was no way I was going to go back and start another band in

Ireland," King recalls. "So I stayed in L.A. and began writing songs for myself." Frequent jam sessions at local pub Molly Malone's led to a chance meeting with Regan and the other musicians who would eventually fill out Flogging Molly's ranks.

King's difficult early experiences in the music world gave him a pointed aversion to major labels. *Darkness* finds the band venturing out on its own entirely after departing its longtime indie home, SideOneDummy. "It's a risk, absolutely," King admits. "But lots of people have had things happen to them the last few years that they didn't ask for, and we're very fortunate to do what we do. We've always had to take risks to make the music we want. We've sunk everything we've had into this. There's no retirement plan here, no nest egg."

That's just fine with King, as Flogging Molly's true home isn't the studio but the stage. "When we do shows, we can see our fans haven't lost their spirit," he says. "They let loose for two hours, and it's wonderful. It's very moving, and we're very lucky. There's an upside to seeing the human spirit and how it can be celebrated."

—Lee Zimmerman

MAY 2011
M MUSIC & MUSICIANS
MAGAZINE

