



Other voices: local and international bands and singers descend on Dingle



Singer Lisa Hannigan in Dún Chaoin, west of Dingle, for the *Other Voices* festival, during which she sang with BellX1's Paul Noonan in a session filmed in a cottage owned by the artist Marie Simmons Gooding. Photograph: Siobhán Dempsey

Snow Patrol back for novel gathering

TONY CLAYTON-LEA

THE NARROW roads leading into Dingle didn't know what to make of the Snow Patrol trucks. The last time the Northern Irish/Scottish band were in this area, they stayed at a windswept circular house looking out towards the Blasket Islands, writing material for their breakthrough 2006 album, *Eyes Open*.

Now they're back in the area that inspired such melancholy songs as *Chasing Cars* and *You Could Be Happy*, and the residents of Dingle and surrounding areas couldn't be more pleased, even if the unfeasibly large trucks caused several minor traffic jams in and out of the Co Kerry town.

Snow Patrol were in Dingle for

the *Other Voices* event, a gathering now in its eighth year, and one that continues to stretch the parameters of good taste to accommodate up-and-coming Irish and international acts, as well as being something of an interesting diversion for rather more successful music acts.

In tandem with Snow Patrol, for example, one of 2009's breakthrough artists, Florence and the Machine, played a blink-and-you'll-miss-it gig a short distance away from the town.

As well as the evening concerts in the 200-year-old St James's church, which has a capacity (approximately 80) that is far less than the frantic demand for tickets, one of the add-ons of the series is the filming of "sessions"

in unusual locations. So far, these have included BellX1's Paul Noonan dueting with rising Irish singer, Lisa Hannigan, in Dún Chaoin (in a cottage owned by artist Marie Simmons Gooding), American band The Antlers performing in the locality's Celtic prehistoric museum, and Irish band Villagers in Dingle's cosy Goat Street Café.

The musicians, says programme overseer Philip King, revel in the notion of performing in an environment that is as uncharacteristic as it is inspiring.

Dingle, it is safe to say, would not be the same in the first week of December if it weren't for *Other Voices*.

The local restaurants, bars and hotels thrum to the rhythm of the

event as well as the rock'n'roll business and sensibilities it generates.

Over the past eight years, the event has showcased a plethora of Irish and international talent, including Ryan Adams, Sinead O'Connor, Amy Winehouse, Josh Ritter, Joan As Policewoman, Steve Earle, David Gray, Julie Feeney, Elbow, Damian Rice and Rufus Wainwright.

The event continues tonight with performances by Irish success story Imelda May and hotly tipped US act Megafaun.

It concludes on Wednesday with performances by three acclaimed British acts: Richard Hawley, The xx, and this year's Mercury prize winner, Speech Debelle.