



One's good, three's a tour de force

Trio's shows sold out in 2000, and now they're reuniting for another road trip

Bic Runga, Tim Finn and Dave Dobbyn will get a chance to "fall in love with their country all over again" when they embark on a national winery tour in February.

All three can pull a crowd on the strength of their own music but, as they learned 10 years ago, that can compound when they join forces.

The trio sold out halls and theatres from Whangarei to Invercargill in 2000 when they played 26 shows on the trot, and are well aware of how New Zealanders are likely to respond to a similar format being applied to winery settings throughout the country.

Dobbyn says that when approached for the 2000 tour, the musicians were immediately positive and things fell into place in terms of scheduling.

"And the same thing has happened with this one . . ."

He says the idea of playing with Finn and Runga again during the height of summer was an attractive proposition which was difficult to say no to.

It will be a sizeable production, with a 70-strong team supporting the trio, who will be backed on stage with drums, bass, two keyboards, guitars and plenty of vocal input.

"We're putting in as much work as we can to make it sound right," Dobbyn says. "We've got a good bunch of songs to deal with, and as it turns out, the set we did 10 years ago, a lot of those songs will remain."

Those songs will be a mixture of the three entertainers' best-known hits, some of which will be pared back to harmonies and acoustic guitars, and others which will involve the entire musical artillery.

Such gigs are family-oriented and all three admit tour spirit is always high when the spotlight is shared.

"You've got all generations and all ages and that is definitely a plus," Dobbyn says. "The audiences walk away blown away by the spectacle of it all — and so do we. I won't be able to take the smile off my face. It's the perfect environment, really."

Finn says he couldn't believe how popular the first tour was and the extent to which the three musicians playing together appeared to have struck a chord with the communities they visited. "It was an amazing tour, one of those ones where you can't quite imagine how it sold so quickly."

Even with decades of experience playing to such crowds, Finn says the nerves still come to the surface in the final minutes before taking the stage.

"There's no doubt about that . . . On your own it's pretty full-on, and that never changes as you get older."

But he agrees any weight on his shoulders is significantly lessened when playing with other singer-songwriters.

Dobbyn says his own pre-gig routine involves wandering around drinking water, with his emotional state drifting between excitement and fear.

"But being on that stage and getting that first one-two-three-four, bang, it's gone. It goes straight out into the audience."

At 23, Runga was a spring chicken during the first tour. Dobbyn says he and Finn must have seemed like the "two slightly scary uncles".

"But then she realised that we were just two crazy cranks doing the same as her."

He says there was no spoiled-brat behaviour and if there were any frustrations created by spending weeks on the road together, it certainly didn't show.

Finn agrees collaborative touring to the extent of the upcoming string of shows is refreshing and enjoyable.

"You fall in love with your country all over again."

The trio say learning one another's music is one of the biggest challenges presented by collaborative tours, and as well as having creative input in terms of the stage show, that will be the main focus of the preparation between now and February.

— NZPA

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Bic Runga, Tim Finn and Dave Dobbyn are looking forward to falling in love with the country all over again.

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