



## the frames

Bob Dylan was so taken by The Frames' recent Coachella performance that he asked them to open his Australia and New Zealand tour dates last month. And if you check out the band's Webster Hall show on Sept. 10 you'll be similarly smitten. Frontman Glen Hansard (vocals/guitar), Colm MacConlomaire (violin/keyboard/vocals), Joseph Doyle (bass/vocals), Robert Bochner (guitar), and Johnny Boyle (drums) put on one of the best live rock shows I've ever seen. Hansard talked to me about *The Cost* and his Sundance award-winning film. **What makes The Frames such a successful live band?**

The members, the history, the personalities. We're coming up on 20 years as a band soon, and our existence has been built on performing. We aren't a tricky studio band who goes into the studio and comes out with *Dark Side Of The Moon*. I mean, I wish we could. That would be great. But at the end of the day we're a folk rock or a rock folk band, depending on who's asking, and we write, rehearse, perform and repeat. We also have played an insane number of shows over the years, and the main reason we can still be together performing with such regularity is the fact that we enjoy it. We enjoy each other and more importantly we enjoy the challenge of sparring with the audience. Whether it's a show where we take the audience on a journey or they take us on one, the beauty of that journey is getting to the destination.

**The Cost was recorded completely live. What inspired that and how did you pull it off?**

It was a reaction to the last two records which were longer studio affairs. We had the material, but we got into the studio and just went 'round and 'round with ourselves. We recorded at various places and with various people and while I love those two records (*For The Birds*, *Burn The Maps*), we really

wanted to work in reverse this time. So we rehearsed the songs, went in and tried to capture the live aspect of our show along with doing it in two or three weeks as opposed to two or three months. Plus we found that we oftentimes came back to the first or second takes of a song. So logically it made sense to give it a try. For this record we also worked with Stephen Fitzmaurice, who helped us with *Dance The Devil*. He was a great foil to our instincts.

**The Cost is a dark, raw record. How did you approach songwriting?**

I went to a dark, raw place. But seriously, a lot of the songs were written over the last year where I spent a lot of time traveling. The title track refers to the idea that we have chosen to live this life as musicians, and it's come at a cost for our families, friends and ourselves. It's not a bitching and moaning thing, but ultimately it takes its toll on relationships and your personal life.

**Talk about one of the songs?**

'Sad Songs' is our Fleetwood Mac song and the one I'm least attached to. It's a nice song, and I think people like it 'cause it doesn't sound like anything else we've done up to this point. Lyrically it's about our love of sad songs and how we can listen to them over and over, relating or, in some cases, prolonging our love of the tragic. It's kind of how the bad things will almost always be remembered before the good things, which seems ridiculous, but I'm guilty of it as well.

**You recently starred with Czech musician Marketa Irglova in *Once*, which won the World Cinema Audience Award at Sundance. You played a busker, which is actually how you started as a musician. Will you talk about the role?**

The idea of the movie came from The Frames' former bass player, John Carney. He wanted

to do a movie called *Busker* and wanted me to write the songs. I was excited about this prospect, and when he needed someone in the female role I suggested Mar. The male role was supposed to be Cillian Murphy. Unfortunately he dropped out, and John was left with nothing days away from shooting. My initial reaction was, 'No way,' given that it did mirror parts of my life. Plus I didn't want it viewed as a vanity project. However John is very persuasive, and I took the leap. In taking the leap Mar and I did work with John on making the scenes as real and as authentic as possible. John had asked for a handful of stories initially, but after I became the busker in the movie we really started developing certain aspects of the story. So what you see in the film are things that have either happened to me personally or I've seen happened to fellow street musicians.

**Bob Dylan personally picked you to open his August tour dates. What does that feel like?**

It's amazing. Bob is at the top of the mountain and the reason I wanted to be a musician so it's a real honor. I heard that we got picked 'cause he saw our performance at Coachella, which equally blew my mind.

**Are you writing new material?**

Constantly, though it's tough at the moment. There's very little down time.

**What is one of your most powerful musical memories?**

In my house growing up, the Holy Trinity was Dylan, Van Morrison and Leonard Cohen. So I guess hearing any of those for the first time and figuring out that's all I really needed. Thankfully my mom imparted three of the greats on me. The three I keep coming back to.

The Frames perform at Webster Hall on Sept. 10. Visit [theframes.ie](http://theframes.ie) for more info.