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Singer of the Week

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Dolores O'Riordan

AskMen.com feature on Dolores O'Riordan that includes pics, pictures, biography, video, related news, vital stats, commentary, and cool facts.

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APPROVAL RATING
FROM OUR READERS

overall rating **75**

Dolores O'Riordan was the last member to join The Cranberries lineup of Noel and Mike Hogan and Fergal Lawler at the dawn of the '90s, but proved to be the creative catalyst who helped make them the most successful Irish act of the decade -- after fellow Gaelic superstars U2, of course. With her striking looks, inarguable vocal talent and proven songwriting abilities, it was little surprise that Dolores quickly became the group's focal point, thanks in no small part to the emphasis on her image in The Cranberries' music videos.

As the commercial success of her band waned following the release of their fourth album in 1999, Dolores found more time to concentrate on raising her young children with her husband (and tour manager) Don Burton. Since The Cranberries 2004 announcement that they were taking an extended break to concentrate on solo ventures, Dolores lent her voice to a handful of collaborative recordings with a few minor acts, but had largely maintained a low profile. The release of her first solo album in 2007, written and recorded over a four-year period, signaled her first full-length project in over half a decade and it proved well worth the wait.

personality & talent **75**

Dolores was born the youngest of seven children to a strict Irish Catholic family and subsequently raised as a Roman Catholic, although she hasn't attended church on a regular basis for years. Her devout upbringing did not dissuade her from joining a band of rock musicians, although, musically and lyrically, The Cranberries hardly delved into anything remotely resembling what the Church once deemed "the Devil's music." She enjoys spending time with her kids and husband, and was happy to be able to take as much time as she needed to record her debut solo disc so she could be with them as much as possible.

Artistically speaking, Dolores is a multitasking musician and composer. In addition to her wonderful, unique singing voice, she also plays the guitar and the keyboard, and has written much of the lyrics for The Cranberries and her solo project. She wasted no time getting involved in the creative process with The Cranberries from the get go, when -- soon after winning the spot as their replacement vocalist -- she penned the lyrics to an instrumental demo the band had been working on, which later evolved into "Linger." Dolores has also written a few dozen more songs since then, proving herself to be a consistent talent with solid credentials.

sexiness **69**

Wee and waif-like Dolores became an unlikely sex symbol thanks to the strong and sensual image she projected in her music videos. Factor in her dreamy, enticing singing voice and charming Irish brogue, and you've got yourself a woman you'd like to hear speak as much as you'd enjoy looking at. As great as she looks as a blonde, we find her even more enticing as a brunette.

accomplishments & fame **77**

Being a small country with a population of about 3.5 million inhabitants, Ireland can count only a handful of recording artists that have enjoyed consistent international multi-platinum album sales. After U2, The Cranberries have been the most successful Irish musical act of the past 30 years, with worldwide sales approaching the 40 million mark. Their first three discs reached the Top 2 spot on the British album charts, (including their 1993 debut chart-topper) and Top 20 in the U.S. Their most successful release, *No Need To Argue* (1994), boasts sales of nearly 17 million and much of the credit goes to the broad appeal of Dolores' mesmerizing voice.

Despite kicking off their career with a bang, The Cranberries success began to falter following the release of their third album, *To The Faithful Departed* (1996). Although it peaked at no. 2 in the UK and no. 4 in the U.S., sales proved to be lackluster compared with those of their first two discs. To add insult to injury, it suffered the dubious distinction of being selected as one of Q magazine's "50 Worst Albums of All Time" in 2006. Perhaps its sole salvation was that it produced a Billboard No. 1 Modern Rock Track with "Salvation."

As their commercial success waned in Britain and the States, Dolores and the boys gained ground in parts of Asia, Taiwan in particular, where The Cranberries have become major stars. In 2002 they won an award in Taiwan as the best selling international band for their album *Stars - The Best of 1992-2002*. Since the band announced their hiatus in 2004, Dolores has collaborated on a number musical projects with artists ranging from Italian crooner Zucchero, soundtrack composer Angelo Badalamenti and dance act Jam & Spoon. While none of these have been very high-profile undertakings, the 2007 release of her highly anticipated solo album *Are You Listening?* has put her back in the spotlight, even if she hasn't regained the superstar status she once enjoyed during the '90s.

natural beauty **79**

Dolores can be described as cute, though hardly cute in a seemingly innocent or perky sort of way. She reminds us of that rare breed of moody, introspective-looking girls we remember from high school whose looks were accentuated by an alluring air of mystery. Her pretty, delicate features are counter-balanced by that ubiquitous stern expression on her face that actually makes her more attractive. Although we understand that guys who go for girls with a permanent smiley face won't agree with such an assessment.

personal style **74**

During The Cranberries peak years in the '90s, Dolores became known for her ever-changing hairdos which varied from a more feminine shoulder-length coil to a slightly more grown-in [Sinead O'Connor](#)/Joan of Arc-inspired 'do. In addition to the variations in length, the singer experimented with colors ranging from jet black to platinum blond, and several exotic shades in between. Fashion wise, Dolores has never really been on the cutting edge of style, however what she does wear always looks good on her. She seems to favor black and does the rocker-chick thing authentically without ever going overboard. And while she never dresses too "girly-girl," she does step into a pink dress on occasion to wow us with how truly feminine she can be.

SECRET WISH

To visit Dolores at her log cabin in Northern Ontario and be serenaded during a fireside concert under the moonlight.

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