



# Dolores O'Riordan

Once demure, now dynamic, A pirouetting pout of primal energy...

By Enda Sheppard

**T**ricky blighter fame: the only people who truly know what it's like to be rich and/or famous are those who are, well, rich and/or famous. The rest of us can but flick through the latest celebrity profile with that curious mixture of envy and disdain which fame inspires among those of us who will only ever see our names in print in the phone book.

Okay, it's a relative thing and there are those social-column types well known merely for being well known. But real, in-your-face, can't-escape-them-anymore, worldwide TV and magazine cover fame is indeed a curious thing. How would you cope?

Maybe the reserved tables and limousines wouldn't hurt too much, but what about those tabloid hounds snuffling around for saleable salacity, or being a prime target for the slings and arrows of outrageous begrudger?



Dolores in her mum's house

schoolfriends in small-town Ireland to multi-million record sales and sold-out world tours.

Well, notoriety would indeed appear to be a double-edged thing as Dolores O'Riordan of The Cranberries has discovered since she, along with co-songwriter Noel Hogan, his brother Mike, and Fergal Lawler were catapulted headlong into the fame game.

## Outsize knickers

Being famous brings plaudits aplenty, but also shock, horror, lead-news-story opprobrium when you get married in little more than outsize knickers and bover boots and, tut,

tut, you walk out half-way through a scheduled half-hour interview with a British rock glossy magazine when you get fed up with in-depth investigations into the real reasons for changing your hair colour from bombshell blonde to raving red.

And then there is the dubious distinction of being set up as a real target for envy with the *Sunday Times* naming you as the fifth richest woman in Britain. And you're still only 24!

## The story in brief

Dolores joins the other members of The Cranberry Saw Us as lead-singer in 1990, and after demos sent to various record companies and now named just The Cranberries, they sign with Island Records in Britain.

Debut album, *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We*, is released to little acclaim in Britain and band hit the road in spring of 1993 with Hot House Flowers. Then, three consecutive rounds of the States with The The, Suede and Duran Duran later, song *Linger* becomes a surprise hit in the States and sales of debut album rapidly hit million mark. Britain and Ireland belatedly catch on.

Oh yes, along the way, Dolores meets and falls in love with Duran Duran tour manager, Canadian Don Burton, and pair are married in afore-mentioned media spotlight in Holycross Abbey in July 1994. Demure Dolores, who used to stand sideways on stage when singing is transformed into Dervish Dolores, a tiny, pirouetting pout of primal energy and verve on stage and

follow-up album, *No Need To Argue*, released in the same year, goes on to outsell their debut effort. And little Dolores with the big voice is everybody's belated darling.

But media love is fickle and fleeting as the band soon discover when Dolores breaks her leg in a skiing accident in January 1994 and postpones triumphant home-coming gigs in Ireland. But she gets better and show goes on.

*No Need To Argue* has now sold 10 million worldwide, to add to the six million scored by the predecessor and the band have just completed a triumphant

Nothing is sacred, not her hair colour, not her admittedly rather disingenuous claims of the "I never wanted to be famous, I just wanted to be a singer and a songwriter" variety, nor even her distinctive keening voice, described by one-time collaborator Jah Wobble as having a "rare, ancient, almost Shamanistic element."

## Stomped out

Here is what the latest edition of a new British glossy magazine 'Icon' has to say about the band's gig at the National



Dolores, with her gran, Katie Greensmyth and her mum, Eileen.

year-long tour across America, Europe and a three-week stint in Australia, where all their gigs sold out before they even got there.

## Never wanted fame!

The band had over twenty songs ready when they went into the studios in November to begin work on their next album, with spring tour slated in to follow, and during the few months between finishing their world travels and the return to recording, Dolores finally has time to settle into married life and perhaps reflect on her fame. That is if she can avoid the type of chase-the-celebrity spat endured while trying to shop in Tralee last year.

If the negative publicity was bad here in the wake of those cancelled gigs, it was nothing compared to the backlash that now appears to be in full swing in the British rock press.



## A dream come true!

Dolores O'Riordan made a dream come true for Irish teenager Sylvie Redmond. 17-year-old Sylvie who suffers from Cystic Fibrosis and is awaiting a heart and lung transplant, had always wanted to sing with her idol Dolores. Thanks to the work of Make A Wish Foundation she did just that. And not in a pub or anywhere low-key like that but at a sell-out concert in Phoenix, Arizona! Dolores chose the last song of the set Dreams to duet with Sylvie and they brought the house down! "She was lovely, really down to earth," says a thrilled Sylvie. "We hope to meet again soon."

"It's natural that she gets most of the attention, since she is the lead singer and especially since she is a woman, but it can be very trying to do all that and cope with constant interviews and journalists asking the same questions time after time, on top of touring, recording and all that. She is not exactly the most robust person, physically, and it can be tough. She is only human, after all!"

"Anyway, the others try to take the pressure off her by handling as many of the interviews as they can, but everybody wants to talk to Dolores. The *Vox* interview wasn't balanced and she got fed up with being asked about trivial things like her hair colour."

It looks as if Dolores is well able to look after herself and is not making too bad a fist of handling this tricky fame thing. And besides, when all is said and sung, there is no need to argue that sales of 16 million albums and sell-out tours all over the world speak louder than any snide reviews. ■