



# fresh cranberries

They had the world at their feet and then disappeared. But now, Dolores and co are back. By Nick Griffiths

**F**or a while, The Cranberries were one of the biggest bands in the world. Then it all went wrong. Singer Dolores O'Riordan (left) suffered a breakdown, drank too much, forgot to eat, needed to escape the stardom thing. The band's music suffered. *Rolling Stone* magazine suggested that their third album, 1996's *To the Faithful Departed*, was 'ultimately as insubstantial as a bowl of dry Crunch Berries.'

But now the band is back, rejuvenated, with a new record label and a new record, *Wake Up and Smell the Coffee*, which looks set to put Cranberryland back on the pop map.

What caused the miracle turnaround? Nothing terribly rock 'n' roll, to tell the truth: more marriage and children. Says O'Riordan, 'I always feel being pregnant gives you a kind of purity and clarity, not just because I wasn't drinking or smoking [any longer]. It's such a lovely experience for a woman because you have to let go of all your vanity. Before I started having children, I was ever so concerned with things like the bikini line. When I was pregnant, I remember there were hairs on my legs and I just didn't care, because it felt very good and earthy to have this child moving around inside of you.'

The original success - sales of almost 30 million worldwide for the first three albums - and all those limousines to awards ceremonies became too much; these days, The Cranberries' waif singer is grounded again.

The band had formed in Limerick, Eire, in 1991. Dolores recalls those days: 'The performance of The Cranberries consisted of four timid little teenagers, with the front person standing sideways like a statue, afraid to budge in case she tripped and fell.

We weren't performers at that stage, but I think it was the potential they saw.'

Come the debut album, *Everybody Else is Doing it, So Why Can't We?*, the quartet was touring the States supporting Brit heroes Suede and shifting albums just for fun. 'The strange thing about that [tour],' she says, 'is that we were acting like tourists and having a great time, but in the background the album was selling and selling. People would be telling us, "You've sold another 70,000 records this week," and we'd be going, "Is that good?"'

The Cranberries songs are earnest affairs, delivered in O'Riordan's powerful Celtic tones. Their most celebrated, *Zombie*, concerned the IRA bombing of Warrington that killed two children, while its album, *No Need to Argue*, went triple-platinum in America alone.

That's the sort of success The Cranberries achieved. It can affect people, all that living in the public eye. At her lowest ebb, Dolores went into therapy: 'I was six stone and I couldn't sit on chairs. It was too painful. I guess my stomach shrank from worry and too much smoking. In the evenings, I would go out to restaurants and roll back the wine like there was no tomorrow.'

Near the end of the 90s, the band took a couple of years off, went travelling, found partners, settled down, had babies. Dolores married one-time Duran Duran tour manager Don Burton. Her son, Taylor, was born in 1997, and daughter Molly emerged in January.

The 30-year-old is happy again, and that is why the Cranberries new album suggests a return to former glories. 'It's so ironic,' she sighs. 'When *Zombie* was number one, it was the hardest time of my life, when I was supposed to be most successful. When it all went out the window and I was nobody again, I was at my happiest. It's not about having money, it's having the love of simple things we take for granted.'

## Inside info

- Michael Jackson has written a song entitled *Privacy*, about the death of Princess Diana, which will appear on his new album *Invincible*.

- Destiny's Child are to release a Christmas album entitled *Eight Days of Christmas*. It will include the classics *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town* and *Jingle Bells*.

## What's on

- French electronica duo Air start their UK tour at Southampton Guildhall on 18 October. They then head to London, Sheffield, Cambridge, Nottingham and Birmingham.

- South African choir Ladysmith Black Mambazo perform at The Royal Festival Hall, London on 23 October.