

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

As the Cranberries prepare to release their fourth album, *Bury The Hatchet*, lead singer/songwriter Dolores O'Riordan opens her heart to expose the depths of her inspiration. A few years back, when personal tragedy depressed her and fame snuck up on her, frightening her into a reclusive lifestyle, Dolores responded with an angry, disjointed record, *To The Faithful Departed*. Dolores and bandmates, guitarist/songwriter Noel Hogan, drummer Fegal Lawler and bassist Mike Hogan, felt the strain of constant touring (three successive multi-platinum records and subsequent world tours will do that) and agreed to take two years off before returning to the studio again. Revitalized and refocused, the band agreed to spend a full six months working in tandem to create a thorough and polished record. The result is an album full of vitality, anticipation and, yes, joy.

Now a mom for the first time, Dolores has regained the perspective she lacked on her last effort, the nonchalant passion she had when the Cranberries first began, and a euphoria she hasn't felt since childhood. With a brand new record, a fresh outlook and a new muse, Dolores reflects on her high school days and her own teen angst, her sudden rise to the pinnacle of success and the burden of fame, and the rewards of motherhood.

TEEN BEAT: Congratulations. We hear you're a mom now.

DOLORES O'RIORDAN: Thank you. My little boy is 15 months old. His name's Taylor Baxter Burton. He's a great boy. We have so much fun together swimming and horseback riding where I live, so it's really nice.

TEEN BEAT: The reason why I wanted to

do a story on you is because our readers love all the boy groups and they have plenty to choose from. What they don't have is a female role model and that's why I've looked to you. You're a successful musician, as well as a wife and mother. How do you feel about being viewed as a role model for teenage girls?

DOLORES: I don't think I'm a bad one. I think there are a lot worse people to look up to. I don't really think about it too much. I wouldn't really behave according to that type of thing because it's not something I'm really aware of. You know that some people look up to you, but that's fine. I mean, I think I'm quite level-

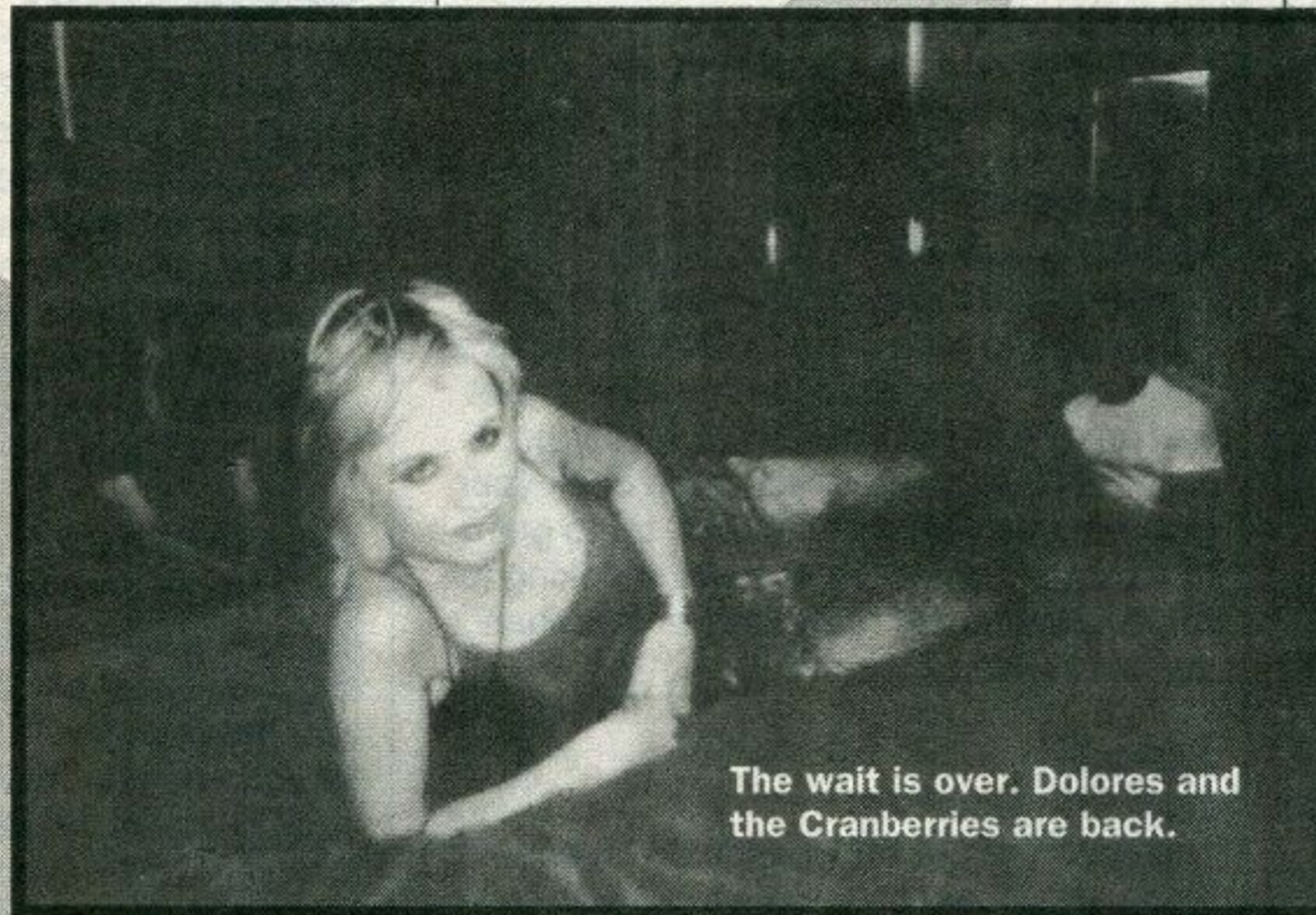
The Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan

by Matt Rossman

headed and I was raised well and stuff.

TEEN BEAT: What were you like when you were in high school?

DOLORES: I was a bit of a messer, a class clown really. It's very strange, because now I write songs and it's quite



The wait is over. Dolores and the Cranberries are back.

intense and emotional, but really, as a person, I was just the worst messer in school. I was always the big mouth. I remember when the teacher came into the classroom, I just had this way of saying, "Oh, Miss, your hair looks fantastic." I'd spend 15 minutes talking about her hair and her dress or something. The teachers always used to say to my mom, "If she put her mind to it, she'd be so good," and then my mom would give me such a hard time. I was really kind of a rebel really.

TEEN BEAT: As a teen, was there a musician who you looked up to?

DOLORES: I liked the Smiths and the Cure.

TEEN BEAT: Those are my two favorite bands.

DOLORES: Really? When you come to a certain age as a teenager whereupon the visual aspect of a human being is more important than their character, it's rotten. I remember on the school bus, bad kids in the back throwing things at the kids in the front and calling them nerds. The kids in the back were probably talking about sex and stuff and they're like only 15.

Meanwhile, the ones in the front were like, "I'm not doing that until I'm grown up." It's like you're a nerd because you've got

a brain. The teens are such a tough, challenging time. There's so much peer

pressure. I remember I always found the Cure and the Smiths, that type of music, I just linked with it. Just the way Morrissey writes, he and Robert Smith both, they're just brilliant. They've got good perspective.

TEEN BEAT: How old were you when you first joined the Cranberries?

DOLORES: I was 18 and in my last year of high school. I was about to take my college entrance exams. I took the test and was in the band at the same time. I made a promise to my mom. I said, "Mom, I'm going to give this band a year and if something doesn't happen, I promise I'll go back to school." She said, okay and three months later we were signed to Island Records for six albums.

TEEN BEAT: You're very lucky that your mother was so supportive. You don't hear that very often.

DOLORES: I mean, at first, we head-butted. She soon realized that I wanted this really badly and she had to let me be a grown up and just trust me.

TEEN BEAT: Did you grow up singing and playing instruments?

DOLORES: Yes, I did. I was really fortunate in that my dad played the accordion and my mom sings, so there was a lot of music in the family. They sent me to a really nice Irish school when I was five where I had to speak Gaelic. The Gaelic was a really good thing, because when you get into the Irish language and you're speaking it all the time, I guess the next thing is that you've got a tin whistle in your hand when you're only five and a half. When you're a kid you learn things so

quickly. I learned all the traditional music and I used to play it a lot, up until I was about 14, but then I got to the point where it wasn't challenging for me anymore. I wanted to be in a rock band and make my own sound. I loved the idea of creating your own kind of sound.

TEEN BEAT: Now, with a flourishing music career, you've turned your attention elsewhere. How has being a mother changed you?

DOLORES: Having the baby really kind of grounded me. My life revolves around him now. I needed something real in my life. I was just really unhappy. The whole thing, the last couple of years, having a child and having a house—it's the most sane thing I've ever had in my life. Really for about five years straight, since I got married, I never had a house to live in. Just working away with the band and being in the public eye, but not having a home to go to is a bit hard. I think everybody needs a home so that you can feel sane and grounded and quite happy.

TEEN BEAT: Has having a child given you new inspiration to write music?

DOLORES: You know, it has. Having a child makes you become a child yourself again. They make you see simple things and they make you really happy.

TEEN BEAT: It seems as though you really poured your heart into your latest album, *Bury The Hatchet*. How autobiographical are the lyrics?

DOLORES: Some of it is, you know. There's also a bit of light-heartedness and a couple of the songs are

not about me. Like "Promises" is about somebody else and "Sorry Son" isn't about me either. But, a lot of them are about the baby and the experiences, like "Saving Grace" and "Baby Blues."

"Animal Instinct" is about the killer instinct that you discover in yourself when you become a parent. It's almost frightening how much you love them and how protective you become of them. It's quite intense.

TEEN BEAT: Where did the title *Bury The Hatchet* come from?

DOLORES: When the Cranberries first started out, it was all exciting. We were young kids and we were rehearsing twice a week and it was a good laugh. "Yoo-hoo, I'm in a band! La, la, la." We started touring and everything and it was fine, but by the second album we were getting more famous and I think we weren't realizing what was happening. We were too busy working every single day and by the third album, it was like, life had changed so much then and all of the simple things were gone. You sud-

denly realize that you have to mind yourself and you have to alienate yourself from people, which is really quite a horrible feeling. I'd always just been sort of "one of the gang" and, eventually, I just really missed that. The third album, *To The Faithful Departed*, was really just a reflection of how I felt in my heart.

TEEN BEAT: So, your mood and your mind set generally dictate the message behind the lyrics and the theme of an album?

DOLORES: Absolutely, yeah. I think with *To The Faithful Departed*, it was really a bad time. The guy who signed the band, Ernie Cordell, died and we were doing a show and we missed the funeral. It gets to that point where you commit to do shows and people die but you can't cancel gigs to go to the funeral. It wasn't just that. I remember there was a little Irish girl who had cystic fibrosis and the Make A Wish Foundation had approached me and told us she wanted to sing. We flew her to America and she came onstage and sang

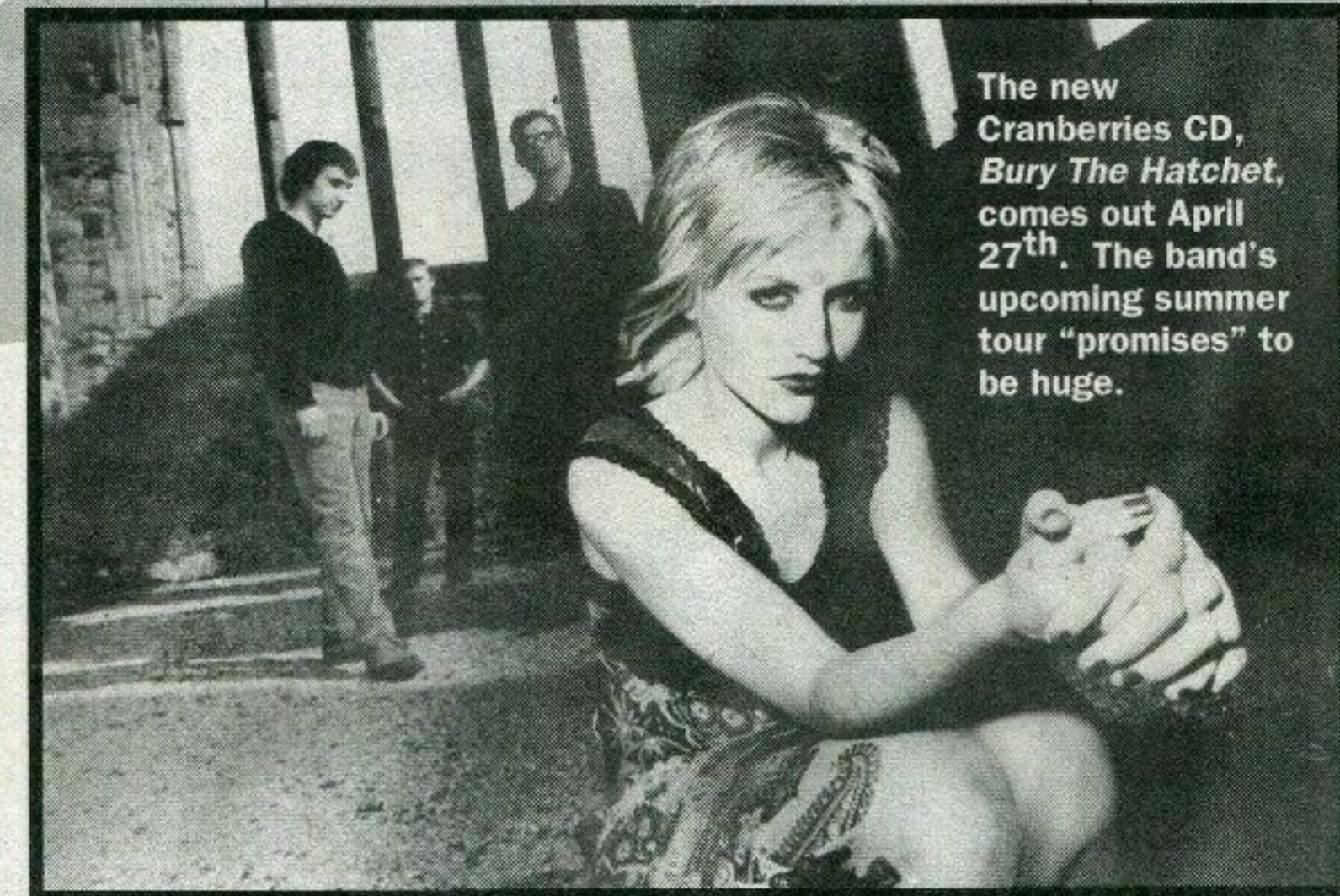
few times by different bands. I remember, once somebody approached me and said there was this boy band looking for me to write a song. There's just no way I'd do that, you know. As long as I have my voice, I might as well sing the songs myself.

TEEN BEAT: Speaking of boy bands, the music from Ireland that's been coming here has really changed. It's gone from U2, the Cranberries and Sinead O'Connor to pop groups like Boyzone and B*Witched. Has pop music taken over in Ireland the way it has in America and Great Britain?

DOLORES: Yes, that's right. Actually, one of the guys who works with us, works with some of those groups. There's a show in Ireland called *The Lottery* and Boyzone and other guys are on the show. It's good for kids, you know. It's fine for kids.

TEEN BEAT: Some of our readers have an interest in pursuing music as a career. What words of advice can you pass along?

DOLORES: You've got to stick with it. It's good to have other things to fall back on, but if you persevere with it and record your songs and send them to people, you may get a record deal then. When we were starting out and recording our demos, Noel, the guitarist, said, "Dolores, I'm going to send these tapes to a record company." I was like, "Wow! What's a record company?" I'd never even heard of it. He said, "They're these companies that sign bands



The new Cranberries CD, *Bury The Hatchet*, comes out April 27th. The band's upcoming summer tour "promises" to be huge.

"Dreams" with me. She died as well and it was really sad because I'd gotten really close to her. I used to meet her every time I went to Dublin and she was just a beautiful little spirit who was dealing with really heavy stuff. Because of what you do, sometimes you're exposed to these kinds of things, but you get attached to people and you feel like "Why can't I do something about it?" With all your power and stuff, how come you can't help these children? You just get so attached to things and people die and after a while you feel empty.

TEEN BEAT: With all of the tragedy and sadness you were experiencing, what continued to motivate you to make music?

DOLORES: Depression. I was just really bummed out, so I think all the songs reflected that. I guess music is an outlet for me.

TEEN BEAT: Since your music is so personal to you, would it be impossible for you to ever write for another artist?

DOLORES: Yes, it would. I could never write for someone else. I've been asked a

and give you loads of money to put out albums." I said, "That's lovely. Let's do that, man." I'd never even heard of a record company or a record deal when I joined the band. It's hilarious, but sometimes ignorance is a good thing.

TEEN BEAT: When you get a break from all the recording, promoting and touring, what do you do to relax?

DOLORES: I like working out—swimming, horseback riding, cycling and I'm starting scuba diving this year. Of course, hanging out with my little guy. I'm also a shopaholic. I buy him so many baby clothes—he's probably got 50 pairs of shoes. I also love nature and the countryside. Where I live, I'm surrounded by trees and there's a river just outside my house where the water's so clean and pure you can drink it. It's really nice, unpolluted and beautiful. I grew up not far from this place. I feel really normal and happy here. I feel very much at home for the first time in years.

TEEN BEAT: And your music reflects that. ★