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Dolores O'Riordan: 'I was famous but I just felt so isolated'

Dolores O'Riordan remembers a downhill slide with the Cranberries, 1994



Dolores O'Riordan remembers a downhill slide with the Cranberries, 1994 Photo: Alamy

By Jessica Salter
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This was a crazy year. I was 22 and I had been singing with the Cranberries since I was 18. Our first album had done really well – we sold four million copies – and in 1994 we were promoting our second album, No Need to Argue. But the beginning of that year had started badly. In January I went skiing in Val d'Isère with the guys from the band – Noel and Mike Hogan and Fergal Lawler – and even though I couldn't ski I just decided to start on an advanced slope. As it was getting steeper and steeper, and I was going faster and faster, I realised that I would have to throw myself over to try and stop. I crashed, and the next thing I remember is being carried down the slope on a stretcher and taken to hospital where I had to have surgery on my leg – they put a metal rod in.

I had to do lots of physiotherapy to learn to walk again; my aim was to walk down the aisle when I married my husband, Don, who was Duran Duran's tour manager, by July, which I did. Despite the injury I still had to do all the gigs we had promised, because if you sign up to do them, then you are contractually obliged to keep going. I was in a wheelchair for some of them. I don't know why I was wearing those high-heeled boots in this photo taken in October – they can't have been good for me. I was very image-conscious back then; now I'm all about comfort.

By the third Cranberries album I started to lose the plot. We'd signed up to tour for two years straight, and I can't remember much of that time because it was all about getting up early, working, working, working, and then trying to catch some sleep before getting up again. I was so famous that I couldn't leave the hotel room. I remember looking out of the window at all these fans but just feeling so isolated.

Soon enough I hit rock bottom. I thought the best thing to do to bring me back to reality would be to have a child, and by the time I had my first, Taylor, when I was 25, we'd sold 35 million records as a band and I'd had enough; I knew my sanity was more important than success.

I breast-fed and stayed at home and eventually, when I felt like going back, I worked for a few weeks and then came home for a few weeks. I promised myself that never again would I go off for a year at a time and lose touch with everything that was important to me. I had my second child, Molly, at 28 and my third, Dakota, at 31. My kids mean more to me than anything I thought was important when I was younger.

I did a couple of solo records just for myself, for therapeutic purposes, but now, 11 years on, we've come back together as a band to record this new album, and it's as if we had never been apart – except now I live in Ontario instead of Ireland and between us in the band we have had 12 children.

The Cranberries' new album, 'Roses', is out on February 13

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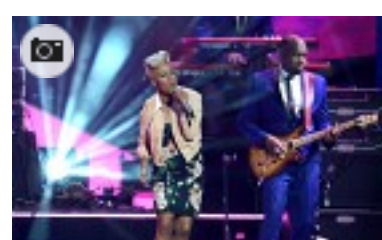
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