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# Dolores Unto Herself

In the second part of our world exclusive interview, **Dolores O'Riordan** talks about the upside of leaving The Cranberries, her debut solo album and what she's been getting up to on the phone with Angelo Badalamenti **WORDS** Stuart Clark

**Living in the rock 'n' roll spotlight hasn't always been easy for Dolores O'Riordan, who, at various times during the Cranberries' conquering of the world, had to contend with stalkers, kidnap plots and the sort of tabloid intrusion that even Pete 'n' Kate would balk at.**

Add in trying to raise two kids while on the album/tour/album/tour treadmill, and it was no surprise in December 2003 when she called a temporary halt to band activities.

Fast-forward two Christmases, and it's a much more relaxed and cheery Dolores who's sitting down for an exclusive chinwag with **HOTPRESS**.

"As wonderful and great as being in the Cranberries was, we'd been together 14 years and things had gotten a bit predictable and boring," she reflects. "Having released and toured a *Greatest Hits*, it seemed a natural time in the band's life to take a break."

A few tweaks short of completing her solo record — late spring/early 2006 is the likely release date — the 34-year-old admits that she finds not being in a group liberating.

"I no longer feel the pressure of three people waiting on me," she resumes. "I'd have a baby, nurse him or her for

three months and then have to break the bond because there was an album to record or a tour to go on.

"As soon as the band was finished, I thought, 'If I have another baby, I'll be able to enjoy this one for six months', which is exactly what happened. We also moved house, so I got to live my life for a change."

Amidst all this domestic bliss, Dolores rediscovered the passion for making music that had evaporated somewhat with the Cranberries.

"I've been able to write songs in my own time and in my own way," she enthuses. "There are lyrics on this album that I'd never have sung in a boys' band that happened to have a girl singer. This time I could go anywhere and say anything without having to worry about the lads being comfortable with it. There's just so much more freedom."

While her approach to making it may be upbeat, the record deals in some decidedly dark and adult themes.

"There's a very intricate and eerie song, 'The Black Widow', which is about watching my husband's mum die of cancer," she explains. "You might think, 'Oh, that's the same singer', but otherwise it's completely different to the Cranberries."

Dolores' mother-in-law also appears to be the inspiration for 'Letting Go', another emotionally-charged song that includes such couplets as, "She'll be with your father/And they will be the one/in heaven, in heaven."

As revealed in our last issue — and archived on hotpress.com — the as-yet-untitled collection has been pieced together in Dublin, LA and Toronto with legendary hard rock bassist Marco Mendoza and hotshot Irish drummer Graham Hopkins among the supporting cast.

No mere studio project, Dolores will be giving it a live airing in the New Year.

"We'll decide on the plans after Christmas, but I imagine we'll start in America with a promotional tour and then do some theatre shows there. It won't be a marathon Cranberries-style trek, but we'll get to as many places as possible."

In addition to her own album, Dolores has been indulging in some extracurricular activities with *Twin Peaks* and *Blue Velvet* composer Angelo Badalamenti.

"I've been working with him for the last two years, although we've never actually met!" she laughs. "We started talking on the phone, and then he asked me to work on some music for a

**DOLORES O'RIORDAN** **MARTHA WAINWRIGHT**  
**EURYTHMICS** **LEE BURRIDGE** **MS DYNAMITE** **BEZ** **AME**  
**REPUBLIC OF LOOSE** **LAURA IZIBOR**

film called *Evilenco*, which interested me because it wasn't a big Hollywood glamour thing. It was a low-budget film noir about a cannibal, very dark and scary but fun to do because it was so completely different.

"He sent me these music parts on CD, and I added the vocals in the studio I have downstairs in my house. We're now working on another script with David Grieco called *Secrets Of Love*. Again it's weird and dysfunctional but dead interesting."

I'd be guilty of gross dereliction of journalistic duty if I didn't ask whether

Dolores has been in contact recently with Mike, Ferg and Noel.

"Not for a while," she admits. "We used to talk every now and again on the 'phone, but we've all had our own music and families to concentrate on."

Sadly for Cranberries fans, internet reports that the band gathered recently in a Dublin restaurant to discuss a reunion are totally false.

"Other than releasing my own record I've no plans for next year or the year after that or the year after that."

Dolores laughs again. "It really is a case of seeing what happens." ❖

## Domestic JUKEBOX

What is **MARTHA WAINWRIGHT** listening to?



**KATE AND ANNA MCGARRIGLE** — *The McGarrigle Christmas Hour*  
Well, this is a family one — so I've got to mention it (Kate McGarrigle is the mother of Martha and Rufus Wainwright). The McGarrigles recorded it last winter and it's just fantastic. Rufus and I sing and play on some of the songs. We had to ski cross country to get to the studio. My mom had baked these huge cookies in the shape of skis and ski-poles — they'd poke your eye out! We're all going to be doing a Christmas special together in Carnegie Hall soon.

**THE ROCHEs** — *We Three Kings*

We used to sing with these guys when we were kids, so this album has memories for me [Martha's father Loudon Wainwright married Suzy Roche, one of the three Roche singers, after separating from Kate McGarrigle]. What, can I say — it's a great Christmas record, with some great songs. I think their music is really on the money and more people should know about it.

**RAY CHARLES** — *The Spirit Of Christmas*

Why am I talking about this record? Ray Charles doesn't need me to promote him! I remember really, really liking this when it came out. The cover is of Ray Charles in a sleigh, surrounded by snow. I guess he's supposed to be Santa Claus or something. There are lots of traditional songs here ('Little Drummer Boy', 'Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer' etc), but the arrangements are quite jazzy.

Martha Wainwright plays Temple Bar Music Centre, Dublin on December 12