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THE RELUCTANT POP STAR

DOLORES O'RIORDAN, 37, was the lead singer of The Cranberries. Now a solo artist, she lives in County Dublin with her husband, music manager Don Burton, Don's son, Donnie, 17, and their children, Taylor, 10, Molly, seven, and Dakota, three.

The Cranberries sold over 40 million records. How did it feel, being the face of that success?

When you're 18 and your dream suddenly comes true, you get so high, you don't know how or when to come down. You work yourself into a frenzy, but then, when you want to go back to who you are, you can't. I found that pretty hard.

What was the strangest thing about fame?

In the first year, we were making demos and believing in this dream, and everyone thought we were completely daft. Then, all of a sudden, MTV in America started playing *Linger*. We were just a bunch of teenagers and, the next thing, we were on TV.

What surprised you most?

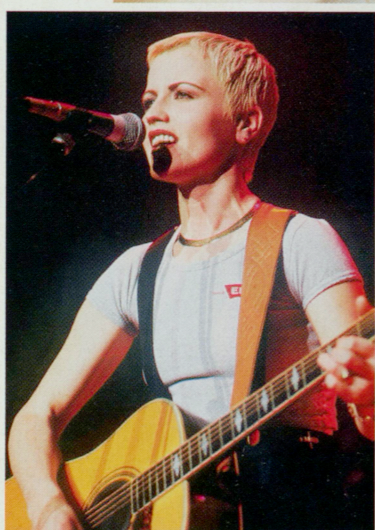
I was quite a tomboy and, when I got married, I wore these trousers my friend and I made. I couldn't believe it when, the next day, everyone was slugging me off for what I was wearing! I was only 22 and I thought I looked lovely. You had to have a thick skin, but it was upsetting.

What did you miss about being 'normal'?

Things like I'd be in a hotel room full of press and cameras – I'd be desperate to go to the loo, but couldn't escape. I also became nervous about eating in front of people, so I started just eating fruit and drinking loads of coffee, instead.

Were you under pressure to look a certain way?

The pressure to be skinny in the 1990s was immense and I definitely felt that – you could tell by looking at me. I didn't look well at certain times but, when you have so much going on in your life, you just try get through it however you can.



Now a solo artist, Dolores doesn't miss the fame being in The Cranberries (left) brought with it

'Motherhood was a turning point – I realised I needed more than fame'

Was it difficult to cope with becoming well-known so quickly?

There was certainly a time in my life when I just wanted out. But I had counselling and I got through it with the help of my mother and my husband, who's a darling. We've been married 14 years and he's still the most beautiful man I've ever met.

How did motherhood change you?

It was the total turning point in my life. Before that, I didn't deal with fame very well but, when I took time out and had

my babies, it made me realise I needed more in life. When I had my first baby, I felt that real love I was craving. When you're a celebrity, you're surrounded by a lot of love, but it's not real love.

Are your children aware of your success?

Yes – they say to their friends, 'Do you want to meet a rock star?' It makes me laugh! The thing that really made them take notice was when I did the film *Click* with Adam Sandler. That was cool to them.

Would you like to be that famous again?

I'm happy with the way things are now. I love being a solo artist, but my priority is my children. It's important for me to be there and not be selfish. I've had my fun, so now I've got to look to them and watch their dreams come true. ■

Dolores has just finished work on her new solo album, out in January 2009

PHOTOGRAPHS CEDRIC ANGELES, REX



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