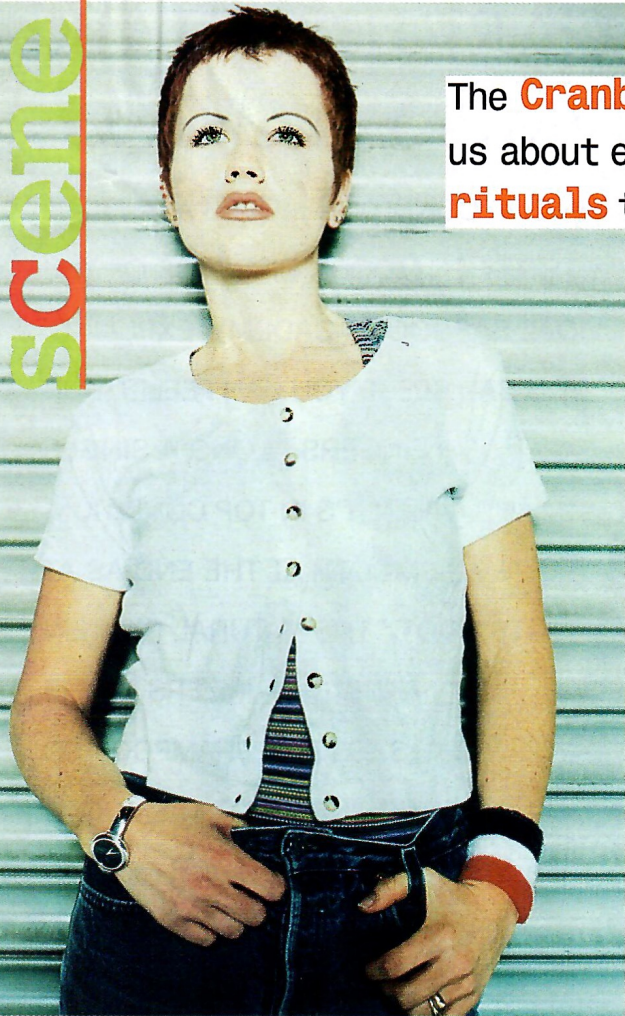


The **Cranberries'** fab **front woman** dishes with us about everything from her **songwriting rituals** to getting **famous** fast. by Amy Talkington



high school. I wasn't quite finished when I met the guys in the band, but I joined anyway. What were you like in high school?

I always had a torn uniform and 10 earrings, but I wasn't a rebel in a self-abusive way. I wasn't into drugs, but I did get in trouble for cutting class. You write a lot of the music and all the lyrics for The Cranberries. Do you have any special rituals that help your songwriting?

It's a very unpredictable thing. Sometimes I pick up a guitar and it just sort of happens, and other times it doesn't happen, and I put the kettle on and have a cup of tea instead.

that the right to vote is restricted in many countries.

What do you like to do when you're not working and traveling all the time?

It sounds boring, but the things you don't get to do on tour are the things you long for when you get off. Normal things—like cooking—are the best.

You've been married for three years, and you're only 25. Do you ever think you got married too young?

No. It was the perfect time for me. I was 22, but I already felt like I was 42. [Laughs.] Obviously, when you go through so much so young, your life is not "normal." It's nice to be with a guy who you *want* to be with for a change.

What made you go back to your

## Dolores O'Riordan

**W**e caught up with Dolores O'Riordan at her cottage in Ontario, Canada, just as she was about to pack up and join the other Cranberries for their U.S. tour. In between resting her knee (she pulled a ligament onstage in Australia last spring) and making dinner for her stepson, Donny, our favorite Cranberry gave us the juice on her lyrics, love and life.

You were only 18 when The Cranberries first got together in your native Ireland. How old were you when you started singing and making music?

I began singing when I was 5 years old, I started playing the piano when I was about 10, and then I took up the guitar when I was 17.

Have you ever played in any other bands?

No. My mother didn't want me to be in a rock 'n' roll band until I finished

*To the Faithful Departed* is an album about loss. Who or what have you lost?

Over the last couple of years, a lot of people who were important to me have died. The album is for them, but it's also about departure and the loss of innocence—about growing up and leaving people behind who you thought you loved.

Both "Warchild" and "Bosnia" on *Faithful* are about the dire situation in Bosnia. Are you as into politics as people think you are?

I'm more into the humanitarian aspect. I don't care who wins or who rules, but if I see children suffering, it bums me out.

"Free to Decide" is the theme song for the Rock the Vote campaign. What made you want to get involved?

We wanted to make people aware

natural brown hair color?

Bleached-blond was fun, but I'll tell you: It's a lot of maintenance, and it may look great, but it feels like straw. Is your stage style completely different from what you wear when you're not working?

I hate makeup, but unfortunately when you're a celeb, you have to wear it because you look lazy if you don't make an effort. Onstage, I wear a bit of foundation, concealer around the eyes (and on a zit if I have one), some blusher, and sometimes I go mad and put a lot of black liner and shadow on my eyes.

Do you think your success happened too fast?

It's hard for me to judge because this is the only way I've seen life. I don't know what it would have been like if it hadn't happened. But sometimes I look at other bands and think, Whoa, I'm lucky. ■