

# best BITS

## Do you get a kick out of surprising people by doing new things?

It's always great to add another string to your bow. I've done acting in *Brookside* and *The Bill*, which I never dreamt I'd do, and now there's this. It would be lovely to do a classical album. I am going to look after my voice more now than I used to. I'm not a very good advert for healthy living because I do like a drink.

## Have you always liked a challenge?

To a point, I do. When I did *The Games* and we had to compete in nine Olympic events, I thought long and hard about it – what persuaded me in the end was the money! I'm not sure I'd want to do something like *I'm A Celebrity*... though, however much they offered me. But my husband Steve reckons once I was in there I'd just go for it. He may be right.

## Has it been nice to step out and sing on your own again?

Well, I've been on my own for 15 years. I had my solo album,

*All By Myself*, in 2005 which was another big, big moment in my life. I was so proud of doing that on my own. I got to choose the songs. I even designed the album cover – all very important things to me. But doing *Operastar* has been something else again. I'm really out of my comfort zone and it has got scarier by the week.

## What's been the highlight of being in *Popstar To Operastar*?

Hitting the very high note in *Parla Piu Piano* (the love theme from *The Godfather*). Katherine Jenkins told me I had to do it, and it was a huge challenge all week trying to get that in rehearsals. I'm so glad I stuck with it. I don't really get nervous once I'm on stage, but I just went for it. There was a huge roar when I hit the note. I've had such lovely support from my sisters Coleen, Maureen and Linda, who were in the audience and they're my biggest fans. Even my brothers who are into rock have been phoning up. Of course we have a healthy family rivalry, but that's only human.

## Did you ever have singing lessons in *The Nolans*?

No. None of us did. I'm the second youngest in the family so by the time I was born it wasn't a question of whether I was going to be a boy or a girl, it was just 'Can she sing'? The only one in our family who was trained was Mum, who had a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in Dublin. Now when I'm singing in *Operastar* I can feel her watching over me and willing me on.

## You look fabulous – has the *Nolans* tour and *Operastar* kept you trim?

I think so. As a woman I'm always aware of my weight. My weight's fluctuated up and down since having kids. I was 8st 2lb when I married my husband. Now I'm about 9st 4lb. Nine stone would be my perfect weight. It's the midriff that's the hardest to get rid of, but you can. I did go to the gym before our tour. It's the only way. And I'm not a gym person. I just had to cut down

on what I was eating and eat healthily. It's no good fad dieting because it won't last.

## You were a judge on *GMTV* in the summer for its Christmas family singing competition. What do you think makes a good talent judge?

I do think what Jason Gardiner said to Sharron Davies about faecal matter was a terrible thing to say. I watch *Dancing On Ice* every week and I was utterly



## BERNIE CONFESSES:

# 'BEING AN OPERA DIVA HAS CHANGED MY LIFE'

Bernie Nolan has amazed her fans on *Popstar To Operastar*. Yet she insists she's not a fan of all TV talent shows...



Bernie's discovered her inner diva as she's developed her fantastic operatic talent



Coleen and her sisters showed their support for sister Bernie's operatic performance

you're judging ordinary people off the street. Look at poor Susan Boyle and her meltdowns. These people have had a normal life and then suddenly they're in the spotlight and being slagged off for the way they look. If you're not made of tough stuff, it could ruin your life.

**Your daughter Erin got up on stage with you on the Nolans tour. Has she got the showbiz bug?**

Oh, totally. She desperately wants to be an actress.

**Would you let her do Britain's Got Talent?**

No. Absolutely not. I don't think it gives you a real feel for what the business is all about. I wouldn't let Amanda Holden judge my daughter on her singing. Amanda Holden's not a singer. She's an actress. And as for Piers Morgan – don't be judging my daughter on her singing when you can't sing a note, love. That's ridiculous. Whether you like them or not, both Cheryl and Dannii on *X Factor* are singers. They understand the pressure and what it takes to make it.

horrified by that comment. It's too personal. You're not there to judge contestants as people – you're there to judge them on their talent. What Jason said was absolutely disgusting. I've been bumping into Jason quite a lot as we've been working in the same building and the next time I do, I'll tell him off for crossing the line! I felt really bad for Sharron. That's why I had a few run-ins on the *GMTV* show with fellow judge Jonathan Shalit, Myleene Klass' manager, because he was just being cruel. I used to slap him. But I don't think he was doing it deliberately. He was just a bit tactless.

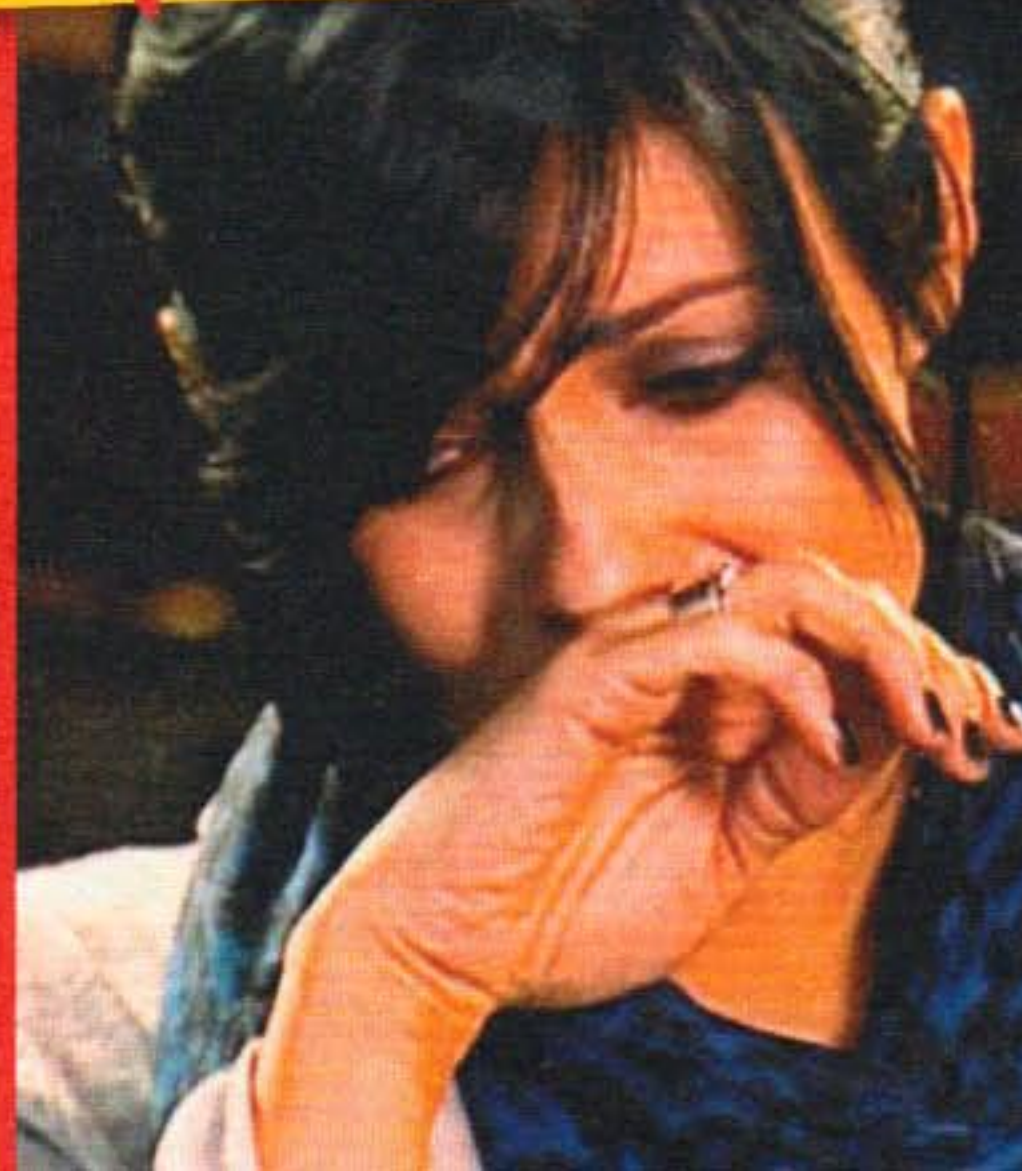
**Would you be a judge on something like Britain's Got Talent?**

I don't think I would. The people who compete on *Operastar* or *Dancing On Ice* are used to criticism and being in the press, but for *Britain's Got Talent*



Bernie and Kym share an Operastar moment

## KYM BREAKS DOWN



It's been an emotional journey for all the celebs on *Popstar To Operastar*. Host Alan Titchmarsh has had a tear in his eye after many of the performances, but it was Kym Marsh who had her whole family crying when she sang the song, *Nella Fantasia*. Kym struggled with it all week because the line about dreaming of 'souls that are always free' reminded her of "someone very special". Her boyfriend, ex-*Hollyoaks* actor Jamie Lomas, said, "She was thinking of the baby we lost last year. It was a very emotional song for her, but she got through it. I'm so proud of her."

★ The *Popstar To Operastar* final is this Friday on ITV1 at 9pm.