

"If you're happy then you're happier with your kids"

She's one quarter of The Corrs, but Sharon spills the beans on family life and returning to music

By Angharad Williams

vulnerable little beings. It kind of peels the onion layers of the world and makes it a little frightening, but then you can't dwell on that because there's so much beauty, and beauty in you and in your children and people."

Looking as beautiful as ever, Sharon is certainly a 'glammy mammy' and has managed to raise her two children Cathal and Flori and have a career as a musician. Retaining a "sense of self" is something that Sharon thinks is important for mothers and their children: "Motherhood should not mean eliminating your own sense of yourself and just becoming this other entity overnight. I think it's important for the children to realise that you've a strong sense of you and I think it'll encourage them

"Motherhood should not mean eliminating your own sense of yourself"

to have a strong sense of themselves, but they do need to feel 100 per cent secure that you'll always be there for them. Almost all of my mum friends have something on the side

that they do, although mine's not necessarily on the side, it's at the forefront at the moment. I think it's healthy, I think if you're happy then you're happier with your children."

So how does she do it? Working mothers will know that balancing your role as a mother and your career sometimes seems impossible, and a career in music ultimately means doing promotions, tours and interviews like this one.

"It's a little tricky," she admits smiling. "The good thing is that I've basically been home for the past three years because I've been writing and recording the album which means that I can work with the children around me, and if you listen to most of the demos all you'll hear is screaming and shouting and crazy stuff going on. Recently I've been doing more travelling so I'm just sort of negotiating the balance on that right now, so it is a little hectic, but I do really enjoy it. After three years of being home it's really lovely to be in a hotel room and get a bath to myself the odd time, y'know, but I do miss them terribly."

Bringing it back

Fans of The Corrs will be delighted to hear that the band is actually still in existence: "We never broke up so I imagine we'll do something in the next two years when the time feels right. What I did in The Corrs has given me the chance to do what I'm doing now so I don't see the point in trying to separate the two. I do miss performing with them."

"Before the work was divided between four, so now it's more full on and I bear the full responsibility, which is very challenging, very empowering and sometimes a little scary. There was great comfort in the four of us getting on stage together; you all shared the experience and if the performance was crap it was four people's fault and not one. I love having the chance to do it on my own and very much loved my time with The Corrs and I will love doing it again. We had a magic music together and certainly the way we sang you can't manufacture it, it just happened."

However, the world is a very different place to what it was during the band's heyday, and Sharon has seen huge changes in the music industry.

"The industry has been turned on its head," Sharon says, "which is no difference from the rest of the world. The music industry has taken an incredible hit with the illegal file sharing which is awful because there's no guarantee of income and people may look at it like 'you established artists have made money' but the problem is that if the industry is not making money then it cannot make records. It's very important that people pay for music, that would be one of my causes."

"You cannot invest in new bands without money and people should have a right to sell what they create themselves and at the moment that right is not available. You know, the dentist can charge for your root canal and the baker can charge for his bread, but the musician can't charge for his music and that's odd."

No place like home

During her career there have been so many highlights it's hard to list them all. "Playing Lansdowne Road was a pretty immense one for us as a band," Sharon reminisces. "It was such a success and a validation of everything we'd tried to achieve. Playing for Nelson

Mandela, spending time and talking with him was just absolutely incredibly. We played support to The Rolling Stones and that was a blast, just seeing those guys hanging out backstage, and thinking 'There's a legend' was insane stuff. We played for the Pope in the Vatican, and one of the best things was singing with Pavarotti, that was incredible – the actual stage rumbled with his voice. I remember myself and Andrea saying, 'My legs are shaking' and it was because of his voice! Singing with him and working with him was incredible, he was some personality and what a voice. My career has been an incredible experience."

Having gained international success as The Corrs, Sharon admits that having their native country support them was important to the band, so playing in their homeland meant extra pressure on the band to do well.

"Playing for a home crowd is a little harder. They're a great audience but you feel more vulnerable because they know you and the ones you want to impress the most are your home crowd. Every band says that when they play where they're from is hardest. I remember for us that Lansdowne Road was immensely daunting because we really wanted to be loved and respected in our own country. It's beautiful to play in Ireland but you do feel that people can see right through you and into your soul."

Sharon has seen many changes in Ireland since she left the band, and although times have been hard she doesn't think that it's been all bad. "I think the recession has re-engaged the Irish with their true personality and brought them back to the solid sense of who the Irish are, without all the money because I don't think it was great for us. It was too much of a heady cocktail

but our patterns lie in music, in literature, in the craic and that's who we are. We're very optimistic people, we get on with it no matter what. I know people have been in awful difficulty, that it's been truly awful, but in another way it has brought us together and I think the Celtic tiger separated us. Some of the greatest writers and musicians have come from this very small country so we've made a great impression on the world and that's what we should remember."

"Home is very special," Sharon says, "you'll feel most comfortable at home. I do love travelling and I do have that travel instinct, sometimes it feels at home to me to be on the road. I love living here in Dublin. In the past couple of years I haven't been out much but now I'm like, 'Yay, let's go out now' and we can go to the theatre or restaurant. I love the fact that there's so much culture and art going on, it's very varied and so I'm really enjoying it." *www*

Sharon's album *Dream of You* is available now in record shops or can be bought online at www.sharoncorr.com



Sharon with her husband, Belfast man Gavin Bonnar



“ After three years of being at home it's really lovely to be in a hotel room and get a bath to myself the odd time, but I do miss them all terribly



If you mention Irish music abroad you'll more than likely hear The Corrs mentioned as one of our best and most successful musical exports. They sold 30 million albums, sold out worldwide stadium tours and there are numerous number one single and albums under the band's belts. But after 15 years on the road, the family band from Dundalk decided it was time to take a break.

Five years since the The Corrs announced that they were taking time out from music to concentrate on their families, Sharon Corr has released her debut solo album. "I'm happy," Sharon says as she sits back in her chair. "I've two children now, still have a career in music, which is terrific and so I'm very content."

The mother of two relished motherhood and the break from the hectic world of music, but Sharon is the first to admit that motherhood isn't all a bed of roses.

"When you have children you experience a massive depth of emotion that perhaps you don't experience before then. It's a hard time, it's a massive adjustment and it's also an incredibly beautiful time, but you become very aware of just how vulnerable you are in this world and how you've to protect these incredibly