



Kimmmie brings us a little bit of Christmas

TEXAN singer Kimmie Rhodes has always wanted to record a Christmas album and this year she got her wish.

Her 12-track album *Miracles on Christmas Day* features a festive selection of songs she's written over the years, plus a couple of covers. She's playing three special Christmas gigs in Northern Ireland with her musician son Gabe this weekend and next to mark the release. "I started writing the songs about 10 or 12 years ago. I would write one song every year at Christmas time for a guy David Conrad I worked for," says Kimmie. "He had a publishing company and they'd have a Christmas party, so as his present I'd turn a song into him and it was always a Christmas song. "It became instinctive for me to write one every year. Sometimes I'd write it the night before the party, but I always got it done." Among the standout tunes on the album are the title track, *Sleep Baby Sleep*, *Little Touch of Christmas*, *The Christmas Star* and the singer's take on festive classic *Carol of the Bells*.

"I like *Sleep Baby Sleep* and I love *One More White Christmas*, a song I wrote with Gary Nicholson years ago.

"I'm really looking forward to the shows. I love Christmas and the way it feels and the music and the imagery and the spirit. It's fun, because I've never done a special Christmas show before.

"And then I have a new record coming out next year called *Dreams of Flying*, so we'll do a few

of those songs live too. "I very much look forward to my Irish visits. It'll be really fun this time because of the Christmas stuff. There'll also be a charity craft fair at the two Rathfriland dates."

of those songs live too. "I very much look forward to my Irish visits. It'll be really fun this time because of the Christmas stuff. There'll also be a charity craft fair at the two Rathfriland dates."

Kimmmie has a fantastic voice and the Texan has worked with Emmylou Harris, Mark Knopfler, Gillian Welch, Peter Frampton, Trisha Yearwood and Beth Nielsen Chapman over the years. She's also good friends with Willie Nelson, who has called Kimmie "an undiscovered superstar".

He was also influential in Kimmie's decision to make a Christmas album.

"I walked into Willie's office one year and he was opening three Christmas presents. Inside each of them was a platinum record for his song *Pretty Paper*. "I just went 'I can do that - I'm going to write a Christmas song every year now until I get my platinum records'."



■ *Miracles on Christmas Day* is out now. Kimmie Rhodes plays the Flowerfield Arts Centre in Portstewart tomorrow and

The Bronte Centre in Rathfriland on Friday December 3 and Saturday December 4. Visit kimmierhodes.com for further information.

Will she do some other well-known Christmas classics in the shows? "We've got a few. I know people in Ireland love to sing along, so there'll be a few singalong songs and we'll do a couple of requests too."

Bones of the story

Bestselling crime writer and respected forensic anthropologist Kathy Reichs talks to **AP Maginness** about becoming a writer and why her heroine Temperance Brennan may soon be replaced by a younger model

BONES are her thing... And dead bodies too. Especially ones which have been dead for some time. The older the more interesting they are to this 60-year-old mother, Kathy Reichs (right). To look at her, with her blonde hair, dazzling smile that shows off her



impeccable American dentistry, and expensive clothes, you wouldn't think that she was used to dealing with the dead. As she walks towards me in a hotel in Belfast, her neat appearance and intelligent looks suggest that no matter what job she did she would do it well.

It is an easy assumption to make as she is one of the most respected forensic anthropologists in the world.

She divides her work time between the Laboratoire des Sciences Judiciaires et de Medecine Legale for the province of Quebec and her professorship at the University of Charlotte. She is one of only 82 forensic anthropologists certified by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology and is on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

Yet she also happens to be a bestselling crime fiction author.

Oh, and she executive produces on the top-rated and long running American television show *Bones*. It is quite a CV.

Yet it is still hard to imagine Kathy Reichs up to her knees in mud on a Guatemalan hillside investigating a mass murder, nor can you imagine her sifting through tonnes of dirt at ground zero after 9/11 searching for human remains, but that is exactly what her day job involves.

At night she writes gripping and gory thrillers starring the fictional forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan and since she published *Deja Dead* in 1997 she has been one of the most popular crime writers in the world.

She is in Belfast on a book tour for her latest novel *Mortal Remains* and she will deliver a reading with a difference later that day. The difference being that she will not read from her new book but explain in a power point presentation the real-life science behind her books.

"Most of my ideas come from the work I do, cases I have worked on or forensic things that I have come across in the lab," the author says. "When I went to Guatemala for example that was one book. This latest idea [for *Mortal Remains*] comes from my consultancy work with the military."

On the television show inspired by

her books, *Bones* starring Emily Deschanel, on which she executive produces, she keeps the screenwriters' science right, sifting through the scripts correcting the story's detail.

"They will ask me questions like, 'what would you do to make the skeleton look like the person had spent 10 years in Iraq?' or something and I will give them some bone feature clues."

Despite still working as a forensic anthropologist Reichs admits that writing has by now all but taken over.

"I spend less time on forensic cases but I still do all of them for Quebec in Canada and then I accept individual cases here and there depending on whether there is an issue that I find compelling or not." So how did this scientist find herself publishing her first novel in 1997? "There wasn't much transition. In 1994 I had made full professor so I was then free to do what I wanted and I didn't really want to do another textbook so I decided to write a novel.

"I had just worked on a serial murder case and I had the bones of an idea so I gave it a try," she says flashing a smile at her own pun. Since then Reichs has written 13 Temperance Brennan novels and is now contracted to write four more but she does hint that Tempe's time may come to an end. "Eventually every character needs to be retired," Reichs says.

Adding that her new novels for young adults may start taking precedence: "It has been fun working on the new Tory Brennan books. I am writing those with my son. It is similar in that it is for kids and involves kids doing science. The first book involves a skeleton that they find. It is the world of 14, 15, 16-year-olds."

The author's 30-year-old son, who is a lawyer, came up with the idea for the children's novels and although the two are working well together now they didn't always find it so easy.

"Initially we had some very interesting editorial meetings. We thrashed out a working mechanism that is going well. "He is much better at young adult dialogue. He is very good at coming up with plot twists and narrative, I am better at scene and setting. "I really hope these novels will encourage kids to get into science, especially the girls."

■ *Mortal Remains* by Kathy Reichs is published by Heinemann: London, priced £12.99.

■ Kathy and Brendan Reichs' latest Tory Brennan book for young adults *Virals: The Series* is due for publication in early 2011 by Razorbill.