

LULU STRIKES GOLD

Incredibly, it's 50 years since Lulu shot to fame as a talented 15-year-old. Not many performers get to celebrate their golden anniversary of success, but Lulu is a very special star indeed, as **Sarah Drew Jones** discovers

From *Shout!* to *Absolutely Fabulous*, *Eurovision* to James Bond, Saturday night television to live tours with Take That, the career of pocket rocket Lulu Kennedy-Cairns OBE is as eclectic as it is stellar.

Lulu's longevity and achievements defy belief in today's world of famous-for-15-minutes *X Factor* wannabes. Discovered in her native Glasgow as a teen, Lulu's hall of fame includes monster hits *To Sir With Love* and *The Man With The Golden Gun*, her own TV show, starring in film, drama and comedy acting roles and musical collaborations with Elton John, Paul McCartney, Neil Diamond, David Bowie, The Bee Gees and The Monkees. Her soulful voice, as strong today as it's ever been, is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest in the history of British popular music.

Over six decades, Lulu's recorded albums, toured all over the globe, written songs for other artists, appeared in musical theatre in the West End, hosted her own radio show, launched a bestselling beauty collection and squeezed in a series of *Strictly Come Dancing*. She's even popped up on CBeebies, reading children's bedtime stories.

Now in her sixties, Lulu's entered a new phase in her life. Last year, she enjoyed enormous success touring a new, intimate show full of her own favourite songs: just Lulu and her seven-piece band. She's also a doting grandmother to Isabella, three, and one-year-old Edward (named after Lulu's father), the children of her only son, Jordan and his wife Alana. Happy days indeed...

I've been famous for my entire adult life and it's defined me. I believe that whatever age you become famous, you

remain there on some level forever. I always said that I wanted my career to have longevity but you should be careful what you wish for! I have a lot to be very grateful for and have worked with many amazing people. These days I have a lot of love in my life and when people recognise me, there's a sweetness about it that I find touching. I appreciate all that more as I get older.

I'm at home much more than I ever used to be. I turned 65 recently and there was no partying: my idea of celebrating is to stay at home with a shepherd's pie! I'm still very active and can be hectically busy but I enjoy being at home.

I'm the one in charge of my career these days. I made a different kind of return to music last year. A couple of years ago I did a big tour with Anastacia and Chaka Khan but this time it was about going back to acknowledge the songs that I always liked. I recorded a few songs over the years that I never liked: it's something that happens in most music careers when you're young and record producers and labels make the decisions. That was then but this is now and my shows now don't have all the hits necessarily but instead my own favourite songs from my back catalogue mixed with songs that influenced me.

What I love about being on stage now is that there's no fuss. There's no dressing up, stress or fanfare: it's all about the music, the band and my singing. It's intimate and we have a lot of fun. I'm able to talk about the experiences I've had in my incredible life. I've had ups and downs but I don't linger on the

“The Dalai Lama says that you should be grateful because not everyone gets to grow old”

disappointments because everyone has them. I acknowledge them and that's something new for me because I've always been a very 'up' performer.

It's been a long, long road but finally I feel I have control. I've been around a long time and I used to feel that I had to do what people asked of me. I've always been called 'bubbly' but of course, I'm not like that all the time. Who would be? I became what they were saying about me, I guess. I do have a certain energy and I love pop, rock 'n roll and the blues and I love to dance

Fame for young stars now is all-encompassing. I got my big break into music at just 15 years old. It's kind of

ridiculous actually and I wouldn't want my granddaughter to do that. But it was different times then and it was my destiny. I see young stars now and it's fame on a different scale: it's world domination and frightening. Being famous now is all about commerciality and everything's corporate and I fear for the kids dealing with that.

There have been so many highlights in my career. I'm not one to dwell on the past but you do become more introspective as you get older, especially when people remind me that I've been around for such a long time!

The Sixties were a decade of fun. I have a lot of amazing memories. Recording *Shout!*, working with The

Beatles, bumping into The Rolling Stones and The Animals and hanging out with The Bee Gees: all of that was a whirlwind. Filming *To Sir With Love* with Sidney Poitier is a fond memory, and it was wonderful having a number one hit in America.

I thought I was so uncool in the '70s, so when I got to work with David Bowie on my own Saturday night television show it was incredible. I thought he was just the coolest dude ever and cool dudes don't usually do that kind of TV! To team up with him was just amazing. I couldn't quite believe it: I kept thinking 'this is ridiculous!' But it was a chance to show another side of me and do something people didn't expect.



I enjoy doing comedy, such as my roles in *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* and *Absolutely Fabulous*. A great director makes all the difference. When I watch a film, I'm always analysing it to see if the director got the best performance out of the actors. It's fascinating. A great actress rises further with the right director, but even the slightly gifted can shine in the best role. I'd be frightened to act again but I'd love to work with a brilliant British director such as Stephen Daldry or Mike Leigh.

I still enjoy singing *To Sir With Love*. I performed it on *American Idol* a few years ago when I was a guest judge and it was great to introduce the song to a different audience. Barry Manilow did a new arrangement of it especially for the night and he really gave it a kick up the backside! Artistically, it's rewarding to try things like that. I sing it now when I'm on stage and do it with a nod to Al Green, who also recorded his own version: the band plays it a different way which allows me to sit in a different pocket, so to speak. There's a new vibe to what will always be a special song for me.

I'm a businesswoman now. I've learned so much about the beauty industry since I launched my own range. It grew out of my not being able to find the products I wanted, so it's a case of necessity being the mother of invention! The message of *Time Bomb* is 'don't get obsessed with ageing, but if you want to do something, these are the things that will help'.

Beauty is about confidence. For me, you're doing ok if you can look in the mirror and think 'I look fine. I can bring it on today!' It would be wonderful if we could feel at peace with the world without having to think about the way we look but it's part of the world we live in.

I hope I've proved that there's life after 40, 50, 60 and beyond. When women hit their forties, and perhaps

the kids have grown up, they think 'what am I going to do now?' Women are doing incredible things these days and making their mark at every age. I love the story of Malala Yousafzai, the teenage education activist: she has a voice and fights to be heard.

I studied for many years with a spiritual guru. It was almost like going to university to study eastern philosophy and it's been a big part of my life. One of the main challenges was to understand that we are part of the world but need, in some ways, to be detached from it. It helps you accept the ups and downs of everyday life.

I've come to terms with the ageing process. This is a really happy time in my life. There are so many things changing and Bette Davis had it right when she said "Getting old is not for sissies". Inside I still feel 15, but in reality I can't do the things I used to do. I forget things

sometimes, sure, but I'm still agile, and I'm curious and interested and those are really important things and I'm grateful for them. The Dalai Lama says that you should be grateful because not everyone gets to grow old. So I'm fortunate.

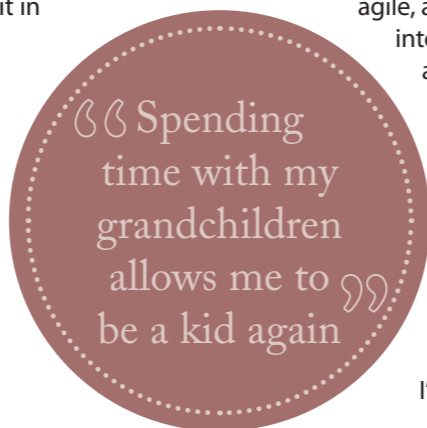
I'll never retire. It's not something that interests me – I'm working on two new businesses right now – but I have slowed down. I think I'm much more aware now than I used to be of how I spend my time. These days, I can actually notice myself rushing around and getting caught up in things, running on empty and when that happens, I'm just not at my best.

When I need to recharge, I rush off to see my grandchildren. They're my biggest focus now. There are a few other things I do when I feel the need for balance in my life, too. I try to meditate and I make a date to see friends for lunch. I was never a 'lady who lunches'. I used

to look at women who did that and think 'I just don't have time for lunch! Sitting around in a restaurant? They must be mad!' But now I like to take a little time out, maybe visit an art gallery or museum: all things I didn't have the time to do when I was younger.

Spending time with my grandchildren allows me to be a kid again. I love to take them to things like *Winter Wonderland*: it's like being a little girl again myself. Fame and work started early for me so in a lot of ways I missed out on normal

adolescent things: I always felt grown-up. It's so much fun just watching the kids. They tire me out but it's a wonderful kind of tiredness and it's that old thing of being able to hand them back when you need a rest! They're a joy. ■



Find out more about Lulu's concert dates at luluofficial.com.
Time Bomb is sold on QVC (qvcuk.com)

Touring with Take That in the '90s was a laugh. And I loved it when the song I wrote, *I Don't Want to Fight*, became a huge hit for Tina Turner. Somewhere amongst all this, I also got signed to Atlantic Records and got to work with the world's best producers, who'd made music with the likes of The Drifters and Aretha Franklin. I've had a great time.

I still like to challenge myself. Acting terrifies me, but I would like to go back and do more. I'd need to brush up on my skills though: acting is a muscle that you have to keep working. The more you practise, the better your technique and the more comfortable you feel doing it. You have to really let go, and I haven't acted for a long time. I would love to revisit it.

If the worst happens, I know that Dogs Trust will care for him.

When I'm not here to love him, I know Dogs Trust will be.

Now I've got my free Canine Care Card, I have complete peace of mind. It guarantees that Dogs Trust will love and look after my dog if I pass away first. Dogs Trust is the UK's largest dog welfare charity with 18 rehoming centres nationwide and they never put down a healthy dog.

Apply now for your FREE Canine Care Card.

For more information call:
020 7837 0006
or email: ccc@dogstrust.org.uk

Please quote "WWORLD14" or complete the coupon below.
Service only available for residents of the UK, Ireland, Channel Islands & the Isle of Man.

Yes I'd like to apply for my free Canine Care Card

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

We would like to send you more information about the work of Dogs Trust. If you do not wish to be updated, please tick this box 112080. We will not share your details with any other organisations and all information will be treated as strictly confidential.

give with confidence

Please send this coupon to:
Dogs Trust, Canine Care Card, FREEPOST WD360,
17 Wakley Street, London EC1B 1NA
No stamp required

www.dogstrust.org.uk
Reg. Charity Nos: 227523 & SC037843