

Sun exclusive on pop's newest sensation

MISTER (or is it Miss?) WEIRDO



HE IS No. 1 in the charts and they call him the Gender Bender.

He is the sensational singer who looks like a girl, sounds like a fella and behaves like something strangely in between.

So when George O'Dowd fronts his group Culture Club on tonight's Top Of The Pops you can be forgiven if you are confused.

Is this prettily-painted creature with flirty long lashes pouting over the microphone actually a bloke?

"I couldn't care less if people think I'm a girl," George, 21, says with a giggle.

"I suppose I am actually bi-sexual. Or multi-sexual — because there's a lot to discover in life, y'know.

"But to clear up any doubts I call myself Boy George on my record."

Disc

And it is George's rich tuneful voice and not his freaky appearance that has carried his disc Do You Really Want to Hurt Me to the top of the charts.

"I get fans of both sexes," George says. "Actually I get more girls after me than the four straight guys in my band put together.

"I could pull them all if I wanted to, but at present I am not interested in sex at all.

"I'm working so hard at my career that I'm too exhausted by the time I fall into bed for any of that. I lost my virginity with a girl when I was 16, but sex has never been an obsession with me. It's just like eating a bag of crisps. Quite nice, but nothing marvellous. Sex



Mrs DINA O'DOWD "He's such a loving son"

I don't care if people think I'm a girl, says Boy George

By JUDY WADE

is not simply black and white. There's a lot of grey.

"You can think what you like about me. I'm not bothered."

George's close-knit Irish Catholic family, now living in South-East London, are not bothered either.

He is third of five sons, has a younger sister, and the whole family is pleased and proud of his success. But younger brother Gerald, 19, an amateur boxer who works on a building site, admits that his mates often tease him about George's strange appearance.

He says: "They see him on Top Of The Pops and say, 'Your brother's bent. He's a poof, isn't he?'"

"I just say, 'That's right. What of it?'"

Haircut

The brothers could not look more different. Gerald is well-muscled and clean-cut, with a squaddie's short-back-and-sides haircut.

George sits beside him in white Dracula make-up, slashed with blood-red lipstick.

Their mother, Dina, is 43 and, unlike her perfectly painted son, never wears make-up.

She says: "People do nudge each other and make awful comments when they see him. 'Doesn't he look like a girl?' they say to me.

"My answer is always, 'Yes. I'll bet a lot of girls would like to look as good as George does.' "But I don't think he

is homosexual. Anyway, who he chooses to sleep with is his business.

"He has always been such a loving son. He phones me every day and he visits us every weekend.

"When his dad had a heart attack he was so busy I didn't tell him until his dad was out of intensive care.

"He cried: 'You should not have done that mum.'"

George believes he may have inherited his love of dressing up from his dad, 48-year-old Gerald.

Sharp

He says: "When Dad was my age he was apparently a pretty sharp dresser.

"He had a huge quiff and liked pink shirts. But he used to moan at me about what I wore.

"Mum used to say to him: 'Do something, Dad — you can't let George leave the house like that.'"

"And dad would roll his eyes to heaven and hide behind his newspaper.

"Now I think I am really close to both my mum and dad.

"They know that underneath all this make-up and the clothes I am pretty normal. Well, I think I am.

"For instance, my favourite telly show is Coronation Street and I love Hilda Ogden.

"My music isn't strange either — just ordinary romantic stuff. In fact, I'd be thrilled if Petula Clark decided to record one of them."

And you can't get any straighter than that.

Boy George and boxer brother Gerald . . . still a closely-knit family