Neither ostentatious nor shy, Duffy is handling the hot glare of the spotlight well.

A year of British media attention has taught

her that the attention doesn't turn off when

the song is over.
"I think that the hardest thing was letting

go of the fear," she says, "You know

understanding that there's no point in being

But there were points when Duffy did

start to feel the cracks. At a show in New

York, 20 minutes into an otherwise-

only that at one out of every 15 shows she

Is success all she dreamed it would be? "I

The best thing about it is: "The fact that

you're always challenging yourself. You're

And the worst thing? "You're always challenging yourself and you're always

trying to understand yourself," she repeats.

As for what makes her happy, the answer

always trying to understand yourself."

don't know yet," she sighs. "I need probably a little bit of time to reflect, but yes, it's

confident set, she burst into tears

tends to get emotional.

definitely good fun at times."

"It's a double-edged sword."

is a one-word reply: "Peace."

Whirlwind ride for Duffy

Soul singer Duffy entranced us all with her retro vibe on debut hit album Rockferry. Now she's honing her powerhouse sound — writing new material for a second album and taking time out to perform at next month's V Festival. Sally Browne spoke to the Welsh wonder

be about her "95th", she jokes.

Despite the hectic schedule during her brief visit to Australia, she's managing to sound bubbly and upbeat. (Her secret is Johnny Rotten of Sex Pistols, but still living loads of fizzy drink, she reckons, which is a up to his name - snarled at her like an lot better than can be said of the other soul singer she is often compared to, Amy

Last year was a big one for the Welsh pop starlet, who was born Aimee Ann Duffy and grew up in a tiny dot of a town called Nefyn. It was the year her debut album Rockferry four years in the making, was released, becoming one of the biggest-selling albums in the world; the year she was nominated for many awards, inspired countless newspaper articles, travelled the world, including touring the US with Coldplay, and turned 24.

When Rockferry was released in May, it went straight to No.1 in the UK, where it was the highest-selling record for 2008. (It reached No. 4 in the US and No. 2 in Australia.) Rockferry was the fourth-highest-selling album in the world (behind Coldplay, Amy Winehouse and AC/DC), selling more than 4.5 million copies.

But for Duffy 2008 was a year like any other on her continual learning curve. "Ever since I left home I've had this big year of

she says.

One of the low points was last year's Mojo angry dog, with some vicious words in the process. She had come up to say hello, apparently reaching to hug him from behind, which he did not take a liking to.

At the time, Lydon didn't realise who she was. But the whole thing upset Duffy very much, overshadowing her award for best song. She cried all night, and woke up miserable for a week

"I feel sad for him, when I look back at the about it now. "The things people do in life never cease to amaze."

music. When she was a child, she was kicked her. out of the choir because her voice was "too big". She got her taste for soul music from watching her dad's VHS tapes of '60s music try and catch my moment when I can."

It was record label Rough Trade that show Ready, Steady, Go! and reruns of the

Meeting Whooni Goldberg on a chat show was one of the highlights of her year

DUFFY has lost count of how many interviews she's done today. This one could one of those whirlwind experiences for me," Rihanna. Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac label's London studio. was fun - entertaining her with stories on Welsh dragons. But small-town girl Duffy wasn't impressed with some of the other star's big entourages. "I don't like how big American stars consider themselves an

> Nefvn in north Wales is on the Llyn Peninsula where Welsh is spoken. Duffy's parents ran the community centre. Her first language was Welsh, which she spoke at home with her two sisters, one her twin When her parents split up, it became community news. Her mother left to follow her heart with a former flame taking the children with her. Duffy eventually left to whole thing. It was not very nice," she says live with her dad, which caused a rift in the

She always knew she wanted to sing Duffy's speaking voice is light and relaxed
– but becomes a powerhouse when set to

"I'm never short of a pen and paper, so I

finally spotted her talent and she was introduced to Bernard Butler, former guitarist with '90s indie hand Suede. He fleshed

Butler pushed her to her limits. For example, he asked her to sing the title track Rockferry up by a fifth. "Do this or go back to Wales," he told her. "I think he'd love to take that claim to

me," says Duffy. "But no, it wasn't anything quite as drastic as that But he was scaring me with the amount of movement he was making in the chord progression.

"He's a real gentleman, you know. He's gotten himself into a little bit of trouble in interviews. He doesn't take any shit. But that's what I love about him. He knows what he wants and he goes and gets it in life. It's wonderful to be around him."

The same can be said of Duffy. In interviews she comes across as a real straight-talker — not a wide-eved innocent How amazing is this?"" she says If she hasn't wandered down the dodgy paths of fame, it's because she has already

seen the harsh realities of life close up. Duffy Killers, The Kaiser Chiefs and Snow Patrol. may not have had the biggest record collection, but music is a big part of her daily life. She falls asleep to classical music

"There's a song I like called Clair de Lune (composed by Debussy)," she says. "So I put that on, And I always have the radio on in the house. I always love to have a great moment when your favourite tune comes on and you crank it up for a moment while you're having a glass of wine or something

"I think a house has to be filled with music. It always has to have a fire. My fame that he had the audacity to say that to grandmother used to say that when there was a fire burning you'd never feel alone." A song she'll turn up is something like

Aretha Franklin's I Say a Little Prayer "That's like a total real moment on radio, you're like 'Oh hello! Thank you!" she

But Duffy hasn't become bored of her

own story. If she heard one of her tunes on the radio, the No. 1-selling Mercy, the wistful Warwick Avenue or the defiant Stepping Stone, she'd turn it un

When Duffy next returns to Australia it will be to play the V Festival, alongside The

with worries and phone calls."

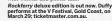
"I think every morning you wake up and you feel so peaceful and relaxed. And then the day starts and you suddenly get flurried

afraid."

I THINK A HOUSE HAS TO BE FILLED WITH MUSIC. IT ALWAYS show was one of the highlights of her year.

Last year she also performed at a charity

Last year she also perf





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