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## The Cranberries

### STRANGE FRUIT

The Improbable Rise of Dolores O'Riordan

## R.E.M.

On Tour

They're Not **PUNK...**

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**POP...**

They're Not

**PRETTY...**

They're

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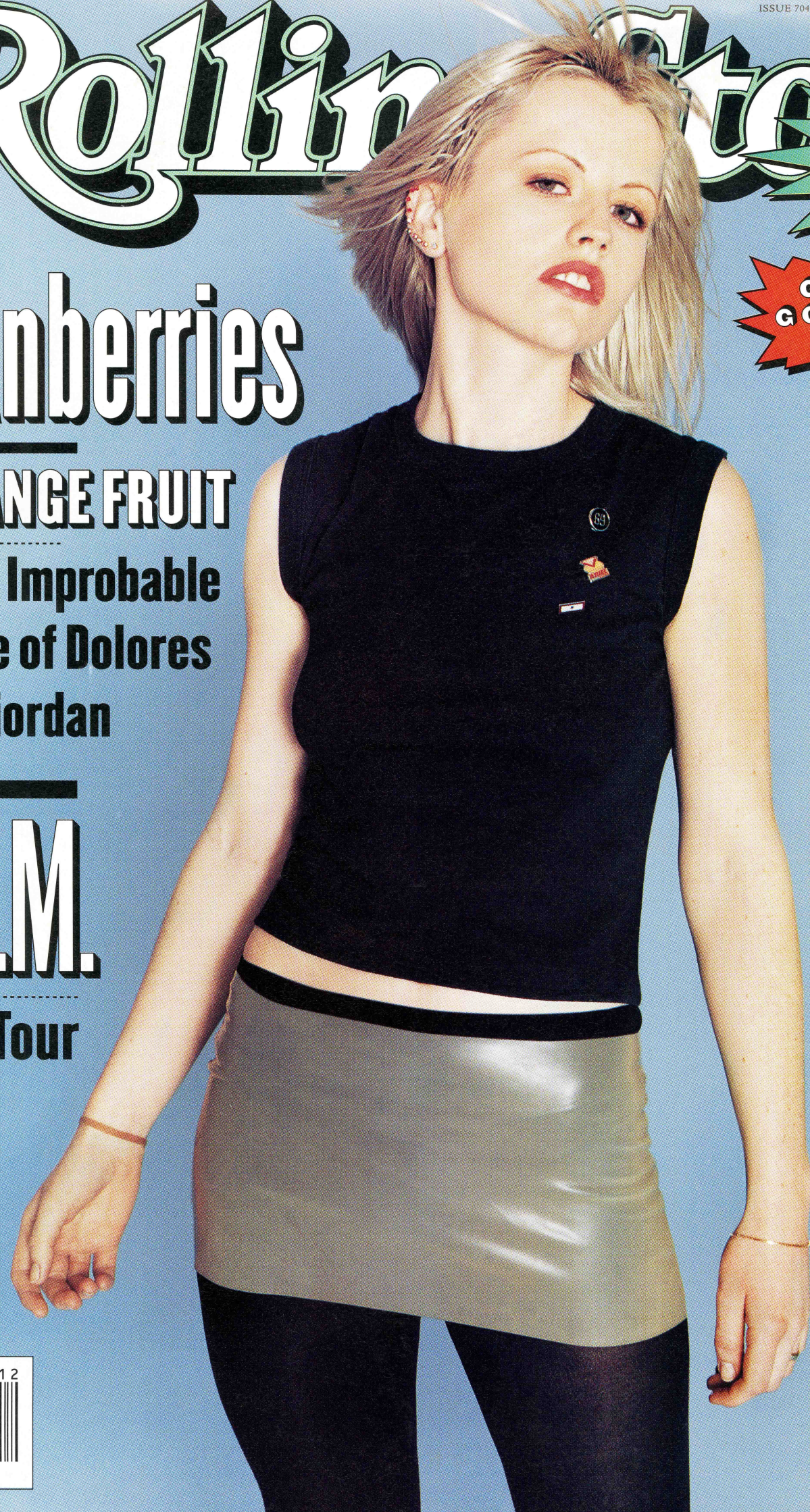
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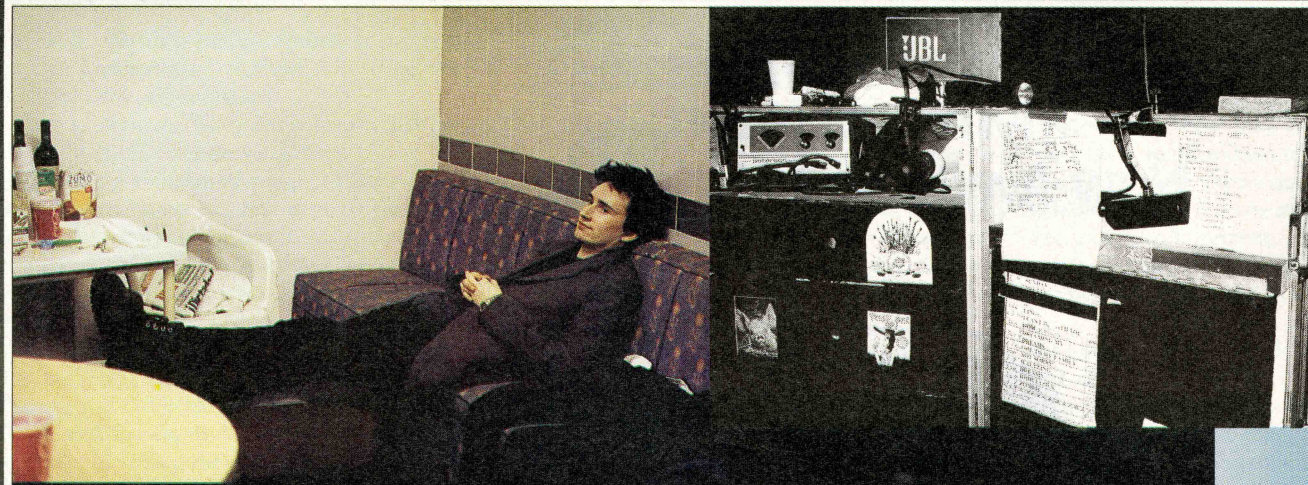
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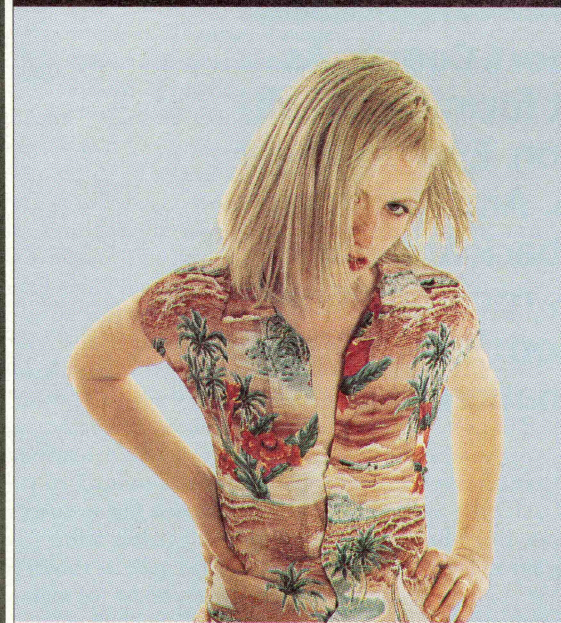
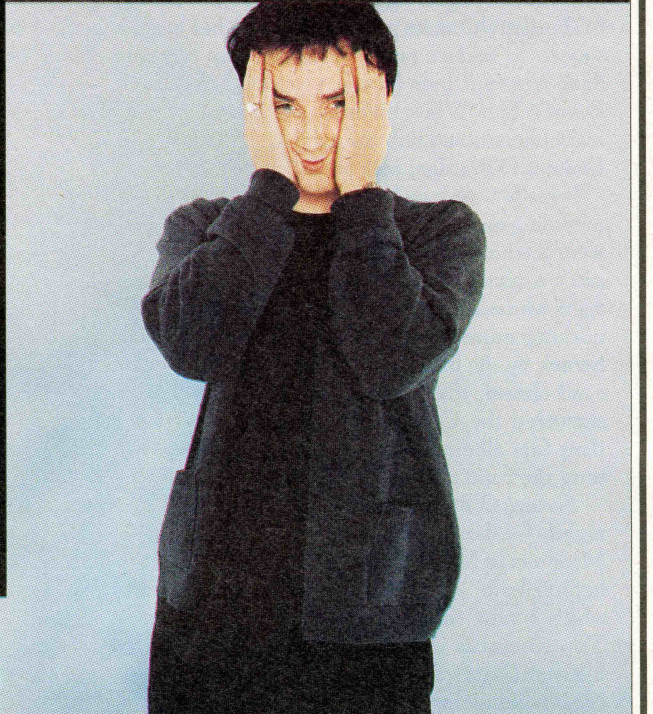


# Strange Fruit

THE IMPROBABLE RISE OF Dolores O'Riordan AND THE

# CRANBERRIES

BY Alec Foege



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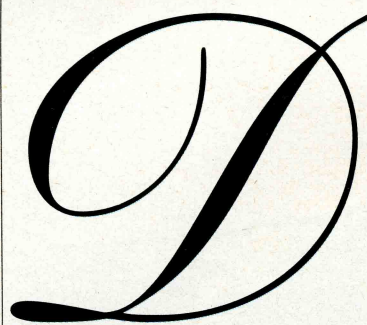
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DOLORES O'RIORDAN FACES THE CROWD, HER PALMS HIGH ABOVE her head, and beams a broad, open smile. "Thank you! I love you!" she belts from the stage of London's Royal Albert Hall. Cravenly showbiz but undeniably heartfelt, the gesture is part Audrey Hepburn, part David Bowie. Clad in a dazzling gold-and-red sleeveless gown, surrounded by overstuffed bouquets of red roses, bathed in a pink circle of light, the petite lead singer of the Cranberries is in heaven. ♣ During "Liar," the next song, Noel Hogan hunches over his guitar, giving it a graceful arm flail for emphasis; drummer Fergal

Lawler's expression widens as his cymbals shimmer and subside; bassist Mike Hogan stands dead still. But all eyes are on O'Riordan. At the song's instrumental break, she executes a lively Irish jig across the stage despite two metal plates and fiberglass ligament embedded in her knee after a skiing accident last March. ♣ The night begins with an acoustic set for which the whole band dons suits and sits downstage. O'Riordan makes a grand entrance in oversize Victorian men's formal wear, bow tie and tails included. A classical string quartet accompanies the band on retooled versions of some of its biggest hits: "Zombie," "Ode to My Family" and "Dreaming My Dreams." ♣ In front

of the roaring thousands, the Cranberries still manage to create an intimate, theatrical mood. As the strings wail and Noel Hogan lightly strums his acoustic guitar, O'Riordan shimmies around the stage, her hands raised, singing in perfect pitch. With her coat removed, in a dark vest and pale blouse, she could be Bowie's Thin White Duke as she leans her microphone stand into the audience. Meet Dolores O'Riordan, rock star.

It really wasn't so long ago that British recording executives and music journalists were jetting up to Limerick, Ireland, to catch a glimpse of four anonymous teenagers who wowed London pop circles with nothing more than a crude demo tape. Struck by the band's raw talent and wide-eyed charm, the British music weeklies showered the Cranberries with praise months before their first album was even recorded. "Linger," the first song the band ever wrote, became its first hit single.

Today, O'Riordan fronts a quartet that performs nightly for thousands of adoring fans and currently rivals Madonna in MTV air time. Having recently sold 5 million copies of their second album, *No Need to Argue* — which is now enjoying Top 10 status in the United States and a No. 1 ranking through-

out much of Europe — the Cranberries have proved that their 1993 debut, *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?*, which has sold 3.5 million copies to date, wasn't a fluke. Throw in a few showcase events, like Woodstock '94 and an upcoming *MTV Unplugged* appearance, and it's easy to divine the source of O'Riordan's unqualified mirth. The Cranberries are Ireland's biggest musical export since U2.

But for a multiplatinum rock group, the Cranberries aren't exactly what one might expect. Their reputation is that of a humble, earthy lot from Limerick — not Dublin, heart of Ireland's happening music scene — who first found success in this country's alternative market after being rejected at home. Hardly a blowout live, the Cranberries' low-key delivery is often subsumed by audience din. Then there are the wonderfully subtle musical gestures — such as playing with a string quartet — that would render any other act horribly pretentious.

The audience demands an encore by banging the Albert Hall's creaky wooden floors with its feet.

*Contributing Editor ALEC FOEGE profiled the Orange County, Calif., punk band the Offspring in RS 701.*

Previous Pages:  
THANK YOU!  
I LOVE YOU! THE  
CRANBERRIES RELAX  
BACKSTAGE AT  
AQUALUNG, A CLUB IN  
MADRID, SPAIN,  
FEBRUARY 1995.

O'Riordan obliges with a crowd-silencing rendition of "No Need to Argue," accompanied only by a violin and the mammoth Albert Hall pipe organ. O'Riordan's voice, with its round tones and nuanced yodels, bespeaks Irish tradition, but it is distinguished by a slight hoarseness that hints faintly at inner anger. For this reason, O'Riordan has been compared with Sinéad O'Connor, though O'Riordan loathes the comparison. "What I do is so different," she says. "I might have been singing before she ever sang — who knows? It's not like I'm not going to sing because somebody from up the road got there first because she was a few years older than me." But O'Riordan has made up for lost time; so much so that at the age of 23, she is

already writing road-weary lyrics like "Understand what I've become/It wasn't my design."

FOUR DAYS LATER, I WAIT FOR O'RIORDAN IN ROOM 663 of London's lavish Regent hotel (despite England's chronically inclement weather, 20-foot palm trees flourish in the hotel's six-story glass-enclosed atrium). The

night before, she interrupted our fastidiously arranged interview midway to keep a massage appointment. During the past few days, in fact, each member of the band has brazenly foiled casual plans to meet — surreptitiously ducking out to dinner, the movies, a soccer match, even other interviews. But only O'Riordan has the star trappings: the personal wardrobe assistant, the dotting husband and the gnawing tendency of referring to herself in the third person ("I put Dolores first, always," she tells me). After five days of scheduled hang time in London, two of which O'Riordan somehow manages to spend in Ireland, I opt to delay an early-morning flight home in desperate hopes of winning one final sitting after O'Riordan offers to visit my room for breakfast.

At 9 o'clock on the nose, O'Riordan arrives in a plain T-shirt, red spandex workout tights and white Reebok sneakers. She doesn't look much like a rock star. Only the wick of platinum-dyed hair on her head and the cluster of studs in her right ear hint at a rebellious side. "When the school principal called me in," she says, "I'd be on my way up to the office, trying to pull all these earrings out, because she'd take 'em off and throw 'em away."

O'Riordan picks, birdlike, at a nouvelle portion of

sliced kiwis, strawberries and citrus fruit while fulfilling her professional obligations. Then she leaves. Promptly. One can hardly blame her for being distrustful of the press. After returning from a whirlwind U.S. tour right before Christmas, the Cranberries decided to cancel a handful of dates in Ireland to give O'Riordan's leg a rest. In response the hardscrabble Irish tabloids stationed a photographer outside O'Riordan and her husband's home. The enterprising *paparazzo* scored a shot of the two shopping that when published, fed unsubstantiated rumors of a band breakup and an O'Riordan breakdown.

"I don't appreciate people invading my privacy," O'Riordan says. "If somebody was sick in my house, I would have respect for that and leave them. I mean, I didn't do anything to anybody, and I don't see why these idiots do these things to me." Then again, this is the same Dolores O'Riordan who last July married Duran Duran's former tour manager in front of 200 guests and thousands more onlookers at the Holy Cross Abbey monastery, in County Tipperary, Ireland, wearing lace leggings, a tube top and a gemstone in her exposed belly button. Alas, Dolores O'Riordan has also learned how to complain about the press like a rock star.

WHEREVER IT WAS THAT DOLORES O'RIORDAN apprenticed in attitude, it was definitely not Limerick, best known as Ireland's third-largest city and for its phenomenally high unemployment rate. Outside of Dublin, the Irish Republic is more than 90 percent Catholic and notoriously provincial, a characterization that's not wholly undeserved.

According to O'Riordan, Ireland wasn't exactly the best place for a bright, independent female child to grow up. "My mom always had a softer spot for boys, as a lot of Irish women do," she says. "If you were a girl, you'd have to sing or wear a pretty dress. But boys could just sit there and be brilliant for sitting there and being boys. It makes you that little bit more forward. Pushy. I was singing, always."

The youngest of seven children, all boys except for Dolores and her older sister, O'Riordan recalls a Spartan but happy childhood. Because of an injury, her father was unable to work, so her mother, a caterer, was left to provide for the brood. The family lived in a modest two-bedroom cottage in the countryside about five miles outside of Limerick until her sister accidentally burned

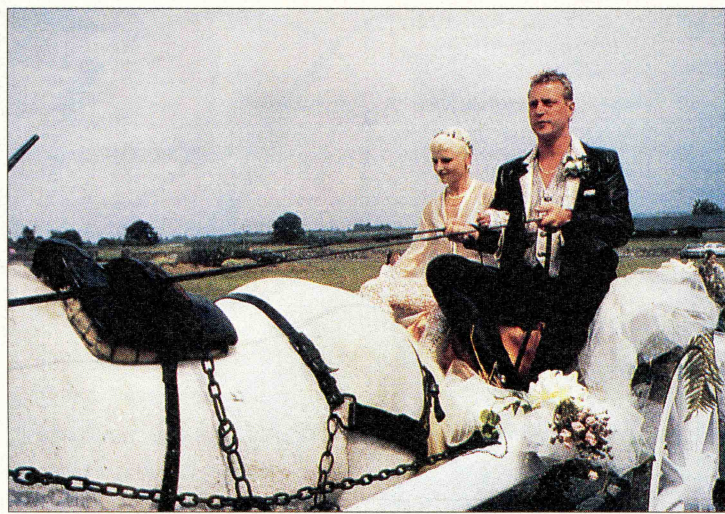
down the house when Dolores was 7. Fortunately, the close-knit rural community was able to raise funds to purchase the O'Riordans a new, bigger homestead.

Educated at an Irish national school where all subjects are taught in Gaelic, O'Riordan took Irish culture for granted from an early age. "The school I went to was so Gaelic," she says, "that you learned how to play the tin whistle and how to Irish-dance in class." Her grades in school were good, but academics didn't hold much interest for O'Riordan. Adults admired her powerful singing voice from the time she was 5 years old. "If the principal of the school canceled her class and stood me on her desk for the 12-year-olds to listen to, it must have been good," she says. "If I started to sing, then all the others in the room would stop and listen. I always had a strong Irish accent, too. People often ask me why I sing with a strong Irish accent. I suppose when I was 5 years old, I spoke with a strong Irish accent, so I sang with one, too."

Encouraged by classical-piano lessons, O'Riordan wrote her first song, titled "Calling," at age 12 ("It was about having a crush on a guy who was about 40"). At school she became known as "the girl who wrote songs." But at home she was a tomboy and hung out mostly







O'RIORDAN AND DON BURTON ON THEIR WEDDING DAY, JULY 1994

That day, O'Riordan took home a cassette filled with instrumental tracks written by Noel Hogan. "They were just chord sequences that kept repeating, and then there might be a change for two chords," she says. "But I liked the way there was loads of freedom." A week later, to the rest of the band's surprise, she returned with the melody and lyrics for "Linger." "The guitars were so loud," O'Riordan recalls of their first run-through of the song, "and Dolores had this tiny vocal monitor. I don't think they ever really heard the lyrics until we made the demo." By combining O'Riordan's succinct and

with her older brothers. "I didn't really know many girls growing up," she says, "because there weren't many other people living around where I lived." When O'Riordan heard about a group of guys who were looking for a lead vocalist for their band, she didn't think twice about auditioning. "I was pretty used to boys," she says, "although I thought my brothers were really

highly personal lyrics with the bare-bones accompaniment of three unrepentant Smiths aficionados, the band had created something fresh. "We knew we sounded different," says Noel Hogan. "But we didn't really care. We just wanted to do our own thing."

A musical relationship soon developed between Hogan and O'Riordan, one that in three weeks pro-

*"Every time a woman has an abortion, it just crushes her self-esteem."*

duced enough songs to make a demo. "Back then, I found it very hard to talk to people outside of my own circle of friends," Noel Hogan says. "So we didn't really discuss very much. We used to just play." The new group rehearsed three times a week with its sights set on recording rather than on playing live. With the assistance of Pearse Gilmore, the leader of another Limerick band and the owner of Xeric, the local recording studio, the Cranberries laid down tracks for their first demo. The group's first live gig was a Saturday-night performance at Ruby's, a club housed in the basement of a Limerick hotel. "There were maybe 60 people in a really small, dark room," recalls Lawler. "We just went up, and we had six songs. Dolores was turned to the side; Noel, Mike and I had our heads down. It was just, 'OK, let's get this over with, and that'll be it.'"

When Noel Hogan left his job fixing cash registers, he put his newfound free time to use sending copies of the demo out to record labels and radio stations. "I was on the dole," he says, "but I spent every day, from the morning till teatime, up in the studio ringing people." Cormac Neiland, then an administrator at Xeric, provided Hogan with label addresses. "Noel used to be the one coming up trying to push the band," says Neiland, today the band's road manager. "The studio was the one place they could get advice."

As game as the four teens were to play music for a living, nothing could have prepared them properly for the level of the response that followed. Mike Hogan, then 16, quit his job at a bakery the same day the first response from Rough Trade arrived; soon more letters expressing interest whizzed back from Virgin, EMI and Imago, among others. When the Cranberries played a showcase at the local university, A&R reps flew in from London to attend. "There were people driving all over Limerick looking for us," says Noel. "We weren't hiding - it's just that nobody knew where we lived."

After signing with Island, an EP, *Uncertain*, was hastily released by Island under the Xeric name. Unbeknown to the band, sources say, Gilmore had begun restricting information and struck his own separate deal with Island's U.S. branch to upgrade Xeric's recording facility. The band's career low point, the fiasco remained unresolved

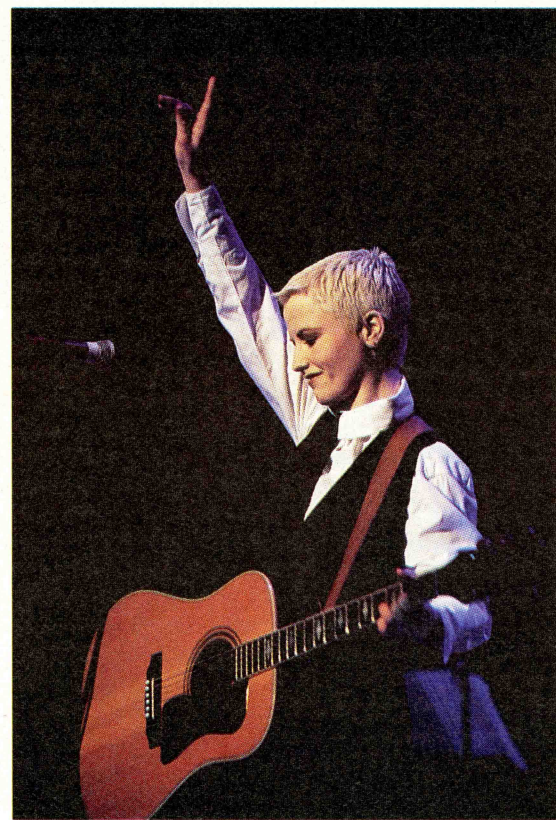
until only a few months ago. Noel Hogan says, "We've signed a contract saying we would never talk about it again in interviews." (Gilmore has also signed an agreement not to discuss the Cranberries with the media.) A series of three-week tours throughout England opening for the British band Moose revealed another problem. "We weren't very good live," says Noel Hogan. "We used to stand there very, very still, and things always went wrong. Things exploded all the time." Squalid touring conditions tested the band's mettle. "Dolores would have to sleep across our laps at night in the van." Other acts the Cranberries would later support include Hothouse Flowers, Suede, Belly and Duran Duran.

In January '92, the Cranberries entered Xeric with Gilmore to record their debut album. Unhappy with the results - Gilmore had cluttered the mixes with dance beats and industrial-style guitar - and barely on speaking terms with each other, the band scrapped the tracks and fired Gilmore. "We didn't have a problem with each other," says Noel Hogan. "We had a problem with this guy."

Six months later, with a new manager (Geoff Travis of Rough Trade) and a new producer, the band started anew. The resultant album, *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?*, became a runaway international sensation. In 12 songs the Cranberries told the story of a young woman's painful failures as an adolescent and

her subsequent rebirth as a young adult. "I know exactly what every song on that album was about," says O'Riordan. "And I know exactly what night I wrote it on and why I wrote it. And I'm kind of proud of them because they do elaborate very much how I felt at that time."

Some of the album's songs, like "Dreams" and "Sunday," try to capture the feeling of "something really new



O'RIORDAN AT LONDON'S ROYAL ALBERT HALL IN JANUARY

that makes you really happy," according to O'Riordan; still others, like "Pretty" ("about somebody on the business side of things who always made me feel less than I was") and "Put Me Down," are simmering diatribes directed at those who would presume that [Cont. on 138]

Post cards we have received from ICEHOUSE admirers.

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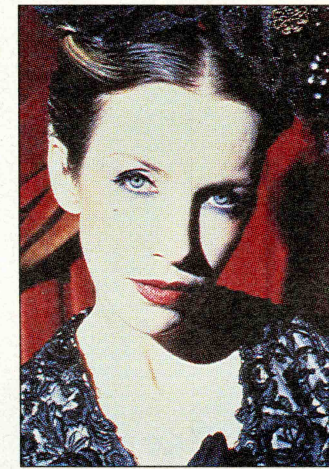
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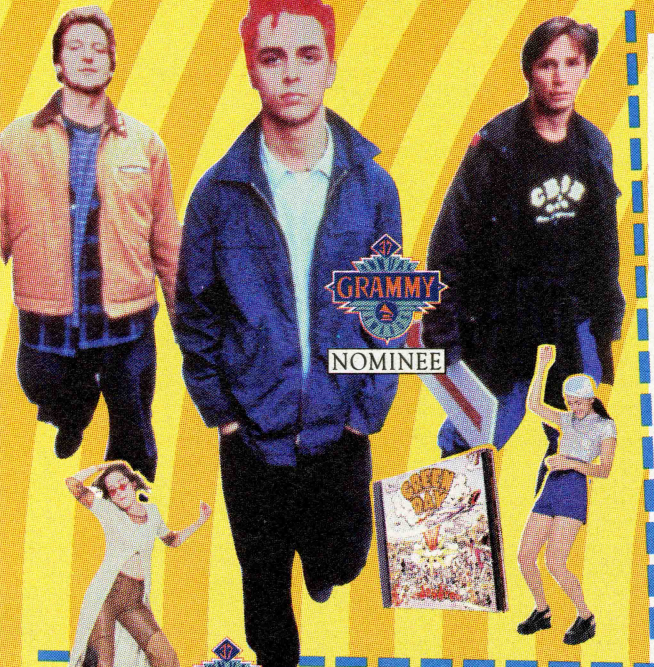
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**Green Day**—Dookie (Reprise) 476-549  
**Pete Dinklage**—Necktie Second (American) 489-302

**The Cranberries**—Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We? (Island) 465-559  
**311**—Grassroots (Capricorn) 487-868  
**Reverend Horton Heat**—Liquor In The Front (Sub Pop/Interscope) 486-431  
**G. Love And Special Sauce** (Okeh/Epic) 101-188

**Freddy Johnston**—This Perfect World (Elektra) 484-634  
**Frente**—Marvin The Album (Mammoth/Atlantic) 483-693  
**Meat Puppets**—Too High To Die (London) 474-221  
**Melrose Place—The Music**, Featuring Frente, James, A. Lennox, etc. (Giant) 110-213

**Kiss My Ass**—Classic Kiss Regrooved, Featuring Garth Brooks, Gin Blossoms, more. (Mercury) 485-763  
**Toad The Wet Sprocket**—Dulcinea (Columbia) 482-166  
**Collective Soul**—Hints, Allegations & Things Left Unsaid (Atlantic) 481-614  
**Magnapop**—Hot Boxing (Priority) 110-130  
**Sugar**—File Under: Easy Listening (Rykodisc) 107-052  
**Oasis**—Definitely Maybe (Epic) 100-958  
**L7**—Hungry For Stink (Reprise/Slash) 489-122

**Hootie & The Blowfish**—Cracked Rear View (Atlantic) 487-553  
**Blues Traveler**—Four (A&M) 102-699  
**Blur**—Park Life (SBK) 486-357  
**Dead Can Dance**—Toward The Within (4AD) 110-247  
**Prong**—Cleansing (Epic) 473-017

**"The Crow"**—Orig. Sndtrk. Featuring Pantera, Stone Temple Pilots, etc. (Atlantic/Interscope) 478-230  
**Beck**—Mellow Gold (DGC) 478-721  
**The Black Crowes**—America (American) 111-369  
**Indigo Girls**—Swamp Ophelia (Epic) 477-323  
**Sonic Youth**—Experimental Jet Set, Trash And No Star (DGC) 483-719  
**No Alternative**, Featuring Soul Asylum, Nirvana, The Breeders, more. (Arista) 470-468  
**Pantera**—Far Beyond Driven (eastwest) 468-926  
**Violent Femmes**—Come On Feel The Lemonheads (Atlantic) 466-037

**Alice In Chains**—Jar Of Flies (Columbia) 471-979  
**Pretenders**—Last Of The Independents (Sire/Warner Bros.) 480-285  
**Big Head Todd And The Monsters**—Sister Sweetly (Giant/Reprise) 457-887  
**The Butthole Surfers**—Independent Worm Saloon (Capitol) 457-796  
**Primus**—Pork Soda (Interscope) 457-192  
**Porno For Pyros** (Warner Bros.) 456-970  
**Depeche Mode**—Songs Of Faith And Devotion (Sire/Reprise) 456-780  
**Belly**—Star (Sire/Reprise) 454-199  
**Bjork**—Debut (Elektra) 461-152

**Des'ree**—I Am Movin' (550 Music) 487-264  
**Gin Blossoms**—New Miserable Experience (A&M) 463-737  
**Nirvana**—Incesticide (DGC) 453-340  
**Erasure**—Pop The First 20 Hits (Sire/Reprise) 453-084  
**Helmet**—Meantime (Interscope) 449-686  
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**Mother Love Bone** (Mercury) 447-755  
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**Rage Against The Machine** (Epic/Associated) 451-138  
**R.E.M.**—Automatic For The People (Warner Bros.) 448-522  
**Red Hot Chili Peppers**—What Hits? (EMI) 448-209  
**Blind Melon** (Capitol) 447-995  
**Temple Of The Dog** (A&M) 442-780  
**Alice In Chains**—Dirt (Columbia) 445-833  
**Nirvana**—Nevermind (DGC) 442-046  
**Toad The Wet Sprocket**—Fear (Columbia) 428-466  
**The Smiths**—Best, Vol. 1 (Sire/Reprise) 446-070  
**Soul Asylum**—Grave Dancers Union (Columbia) 445-510  
**Red Hot Chili Peppers**—Blood Sugar Sex Magik (Warner Bros.) 428-367

**Sting**—Fields Of Gold (A&M) 113-555  
**Dream Theater**—Awake (eastwest) 108-613  
**The Cult** (Sire/Reprise) 107-243  
**Stone Temple Pilots**—Purple (Atlantic) 465-963  
**Live**—Mental Jewels (Radioactive) 433-235  
**Soundgarden**—Badmotorfinger (A&M) 428-250  
**10,000 Maniacs**—Our Time In Eden (Elektra) 448-530  
**Seal** (Sire/Warner Bros.) 425-827  
**Tears For Fears**—Songs From The Big Chair (Mercury) 423-849  
**Jane's Addiction**—Ritual De Lo Habitual (Warner Bros.) 407-098  
**Depeche Mode**—Violator (Sire/Reprise) 405-423  
**Talking Heads**—Stop Making Sense (Epic) 329-938  
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**Warren G**—Regulate...G Funk Era (Violator/Rai) 482-208  
**Patra**—Queen Of The Pack (Epic) 474-809  
**Brand Nubian**—Everything Is Everything (Elektra) 110-791  
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**A Tribe Called Quest**—Midnight Marauders (Jive) 472-860  
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**Cypress Hill**—Black Sunday (Ruffhouse/Columbia) 463-596  
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**Method Man**—Tical (Capitol) 114-082  
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**U3**—Hand On The Torch (Blue Note) 471-342  
**Dinosaur Jr.**—Without A Sound (Sire/Reprise) 101-469  
**Jesus And Mary Chain**—Stoned And Dethroned (American) 101-444  
**Big Audio**—Higher Power (Columbia) 108-688  
**Best Of Berlin 1979-88** (Geffen) 376-145  
**Jane's Addiction**—Nothing's Shocking (Warner Bros.) 375-741  
**The Cure**—Standing On A Beach—The Singles (Elektra) 346-858  
**Weezer** (DGC) 101-691  
**Bob Marley & The Wailers**—Legend (Tuff Gong/Island) 337-857  
**Concrete Blonde**—Still In Hollywood (I.R.S.) 108-563  
**Indigo Girls**—Rites Of Passage (Epic) 436-394

## COLUMBIA HOUSE SALUTES THE GRAMMY® AWARDS

**Sheryl Crow**—Tuesday Night Music Club (A&M) 476-531  
Seal (1994) (Sire/Warner Bros.) 484-741  
Me'shell Ndegeocello—Plantation Lullabies (Maverick/Sire/Reprise) 486-951

**Counting Crows**—August And Everything After (DGC) 467-944  
Tori Amos—Under The Pink (Atlantic) 473-207  
Crash Test Dummies—God Shuffled His Feet (Arista) 470-476

**Bonnie Raitt**—Longing In Their Hearts (Capitol) 477-505  
Sarah McLachlan—Fumbling Towards Ecstasy (Arista) 473-389  
Pearl Jam—Vs. (Epic) 465-427

**Eric Clapton**—From The Cradle (Reprise) 101-873  
Tony Bennett—MTV Unplugged (Columbia) 486-746

**Nirvana**—In Utero (DGC) 467-159  
Nirvana—The Downward Spiral (TVT/Interscope) 476-739  
Crash Test Dummies—God Shuffled His Feet (Arista) 470-476

**"Philadelphia"** Orig. Sndtrk. Featuring B. Springsteen, N. Young, P. Gabriel, etc. (Epic Soundtrax) 472-928  
Yaz—Upstairs At Eric's (Sire) 317-305  
**Bad Religion**—Recipe For Hate (Atlantic) 469-684  
Prince—Come (Warner Bros.) 101-238  
**Megadeth**—Youthanasia (Capitol) 108-340  
If I Were A Carpenter—Featuring The Cranberries, Sonic Youth, Cracker, etc. (A&M) 101-683  
DGC Rarities Vol. 1—Various Artists (DGC) 487-835

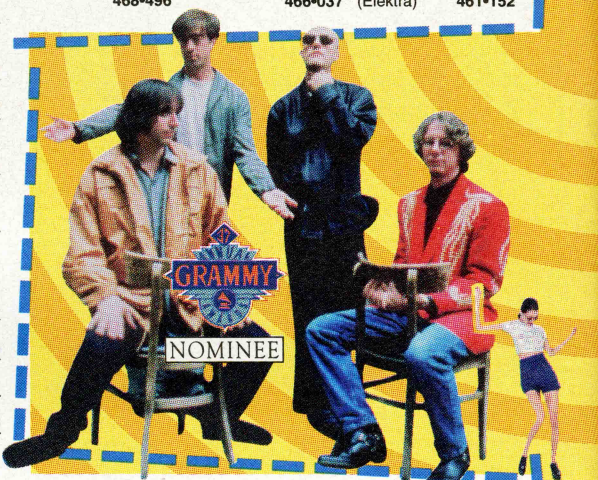
**Hole**—Live Through This (DGC) 479-329

**Frank Black**—Teenager Of The Year (Elektra) 481-747  
Violent Femmes—New Times (Elektra) 481-739  
Erasure—I Say I Say I Say (Mute/Elektra) 481-685  
Liz Phair—Exile In Guyville (Mataador/Atlantic) 479-899

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## O'RIORDAN

[Cont. from 60] women can't run their own lives. "See, back then, I would have had a certain amount of people around me in my life who I was dependent on for emotional support, love and whatever," O'Riordan says. "All those people were either involved in my career or else wanted desperately to be involved in my career — or else detested my career."

No *Need to Argue*, last year's follow-up, is an impressive departure. Harder and darker than its predecessor, it was written mostly on the road in 1993 while the band toured the United States, opening for The. Performing a lot gave the especially shy band a shot of much-needed adrenalin onstage. "Zombie," the album's monster hit single, was actually developed during the sound checks before shows. This time around, O'Riordan also began looking outward for lyrical inspiration. A newspaper account of a child killed by an Irish Republican Army bomb placed in a London garbage can inspired the passionate but nonpartisan "Zombie"; "Ode to My Family" is about "suddenly becoming successful and looking back home and wondering where my childhood went." Inner turmoil still played a role, but along with "I Can't Be With You" and "No Need to Argue," somber elegies dedicated to the end of a protracted real-life relationship that O'Riordan finally decided to sever, came "Dreaming My Dreams," dedicated, as the album's liner notes gush, "to my husband, lover, best friend, support."

Yet even as the Cranberries heap triumph upon triumph, the gossip that has plagued the band from the very start — that it is splitting up — continues. People can't be blamed for wondering what three sullen-looking young men in black sweaters and mod-style jackets (custom-tailored for them in Limerick) have in common with the striking O'Riordan, whose bell-clear voice and numerous costume changes make her the focus of attention onstage and off. The gregarious Lawler, who bears a striking resemblance to U2's bassist, Adam Clayton, appears to be the only other member with star potential; Noel and Mike Hogan's soft, pasty features and standoffish manner guarantee both will remain forever in the shadows.

Save for isolated incidents of 'Berrymania in Toronto and Mexico City, the brothers rarely get recognized on the street. "People often ask us, 'Do you get jealous over the fact that more people shout for Dolores than for the Cranberries?'" Noel Hogan says. "But we don't mind that — we enjoy just playing the music." O'Riordan, too, dismisses talk of an imminent solo career. "If I'm doing live performances, I'll always do it with the three guys," she says. "I wouldn't like to be a soloist. It's bad for people to be on their own because they get very selfish."

IT'S THE AFTERNOON BEFORE THE first night at the Royal Albert Hall, and the Cranberries are running through a sound check with the Electra string quartet, the same all-female outfit that performed with the group during its recent *MTV Unplugged* taping. The 124-year-old venue lends an air of formality to the proceedings, but the musicians are all dressed in street clothes — all, that is, except O'Riordan, who is wearing a white, satiny skirt, a pink mohair top and high-heel pumps. Between songs, she ignores everyone onstage except Noel Hogan, in whose ear she whispers directions. "Want to do it once more?" she suddenly snaps at her weary troops.

As the band runs through "Dreaming My Dreams" for the second time, O'Riordan tries to catch Lawler's eye with her hand to speed up the tempo. Sitting stage left, he's staring into space as he beats a set of tom-toms. O'Riordan is incensed; when the song is over, she scolds him outright. For the next song, she sits in a chair center stage, legs crossed, and keeps time by clicking the floor with her heel. "To me, there is no joke, no underlying psychology in being in a band," O'Riordan says later. "Maybe it's trendy to be that kind of slob rock & roll thing. But for me, you can't be a big fat pig up there, slovenly and singing croaky and whatnot. I kind of take it more seriously than that. The way I see it, there's all these young people out there buying your CD, buying tickets to see your show, and you can't give nothing in return. You have to work, too."

Backstage, O'Riordan's husband, Don Burton, holds court as the band's production manager. When the Cranberries toured with Duran Duran, Burton was tour manager for the headliners. O'Riordan, still licking her wounds from the severed relationship that inspired most of the songs on *No Need to Argue*, found in the thirtysomething Toronto native someone who knew enough about the music business to shield her from fame's harsher aspects.

"I suppose he was much, much, much better than the guy I had been seeing," O'Riordan says. "He opens doors for me, and when we're out and it's raining, he holds on to my arm extra tight in case I slip. I had never really experienced the caring thing before." Burton, after being asked two or three innocuous questions about his own life, suddenly responds, "You ask a lot of questions," and leaves the room.

"Don never really influences my decisions," says O'Riordan. "He just lays down the cards before me, the ones that he knows. He puts them upfront and then says, 'It's your decision. It's your career.'" Regardless, Burton introduced the Cranberries to their newest handlers, the Left Bank Organization, a slick Los Angeles firm that also represents Duran Duran and Meat Loaf, signaling a clear swing away from the alternative market that first won American [Cont. on 139]

## O'RIORDAN

[Cont. from 138] support for the band.

Later the newlyweds proudly display snapshots of the house that they're constructing in the heart of County Kerry, far from the city. "We're building it in what they call a *Gaeltacht* area, which means all the locals speak Gaelic still," says O'Riordan. "It's so untouched. Out there, you go into the pubs, and the locals are speaking in Irish." Among the truly seductive stack of photos depicting lush, hilly verdure and gray-streaked ocean vistas is one of O'Riordan — grinning, skirt around her waist, panties at her knees — urinating on the side of the road.

Having already been compared with virtually every woman in rock from Harriet Wheeler of the Sundays to Deborah Harry, O'Riordan comes prepared with a reason why her frankness won't do her in à la Sinéad O'Connor. "Seeing what happened to her, I think that any female would go, 'Jesus, better keep my mouth shut,'" O'Riordan says. "Then again, it's not as if I had a kind of childhood like hers. That's the root of a lot of Sinéad's anger — that she had a shitty childhood and didn't get over it in time. I have a lot of secrets about my childhood that are just for me."

O'Riordan seems reluctant to be compared with other women in general. "The only thing about being a girl and the lead singer and main writer is that you're the one who the guy tries to fool to get into your pants," she says. "And that's happened to me countless amounts of times. There is a lot of chauvinism in the music industry. I'm glad to be married — and that's one of the reasons — so that I don't feel exposed anymore that way."

As rapid as the band's ascent has been, its members remain bizarrely unchanged in fundamental ways. Despite their recent windfall and steady girlfriends, the three male Cranberries still live with their parents. The Hogan brothers recently went so far as to buy a new, bigger house — for the whole family. All three also suppose they'll always live in Limerick.

"The boys have been less affected by the whole thing," says Nigel Coxon, an Island executive who helped sign the Cranberries, "which is quite natural because a lot of emphasis does fall on Dolores and her voice and her performance. And her transformation — from the early days, when she wouldn't even face the audience, to the way she is now, the whole way she's really taken control of her image and the way she looks — has also been totally natural."

Not that the freewheeling possibilities of a rock lifestyle have totally swayed O'Riordan from her conservative Irish Catholic roots. Although she deems Madonna "clever," she marvels at the quick-to-strip pop icon for not possessing the

moral fortitude "that obviously would stop her from doing all those crazy things that she does in her videos." And don't count on O'Riordan as an ally in defending abortion: "I'm in no position to judge other women, you know? But, I mean, 'Idiot — why didn't you not get pregnant?' It's not good for women to go through the procedure and have something living sucked out of your bodies. It belittles women — even though some women say, 'Oh, I don't mind to have one.' Every time a woman has an abortion, it just crushes her self-esteem, smaller and smaller and smaller."

O'Riordan cites John Lennon, particularly the post-Beatles John Lennon, as her childhood hero. "I thought the Beatles were nice boys who wrote nice songs," O'Riordan says. "Whereas John Lennon actually got himself in a fair bit of hassle there and again. When he left the band, he didn't do anything for anybody but himself. He got totally into being a daddy, and he wrote songs about his son, like 'Beautiful Boy,' and about Yoko, like 'Woman.'" At Royal Albert Hall the Cranberries unveil "I Just Shot John Lennon," an as-yet-unrecorded ode to the fallen pop hero that addresses, says O'Riordan, "how somebody so brilliant can be terminated so quickly by somebody so irrelevant, really."

Offstage, the only time O'Riordan and the band appear together is at a backstage ceremony where they accept an intimidating 3-foot pile of framed gold and platinum discs representing mammoth sales across Europe. The evening ends, sans O'Riordan, with a serious drinking bout in the bowels of the arena. Although the room is teeming with London record-industry types, the Hogans and Lawler immediately form a tight circle of chairs restricted to old friends and girlfriends, all down from Limerick for a long weekend.

But the leader of the Cranberries views her glamorous new public life as being not that far off from her simple beginnings. "I've always been a pretty together girl," she says. "I never did anything stupid like take my clothes off. If I was really naive, you'd probably have some photography of me somewhere." She scrunches up her nose and glances at her watch. "I was always pretty together, but my knowledge of the world was nil — so sometimes I maybe just opened my heart to people I shouldn't have." ■

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