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# The Cranberries prepare to farewell Dolores O'Riordan and fans with final album

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DREAM DAYS: The Cranberries in their mid '90s prime when *Zombie* topped the ARIA singles chart.

THERE are moments when The Cranberries guitarist Noel Hogan spots a woman from behind, and for a split second, believes it's Dolores O'Riordan.

Not a day has passed since January 15 last year, when the 46-year-old O'Riordan was found drowned in a London hotel bathtub, that Hogan hasn't thought of his beloved bandmate and collaborator.

The grief remains ever present.

"It's funny that over the years months could have gone by, when we took time off and did our own thing with our family and day-to-day stuff, but you always knew that someone is a phone call away or a visit away," Hogan tells *Weekender* from Dublin.

"In the last six months of Dolores' life we were working on writing this album together and I suppose we spoke to each other every other day and had grown closer than we had in a long time, and discussing all kinds of stuff.

"Not just the album, but things that were going on in each other's lives by phone call or email or text.

"It's weird when that's gone. Even to this day, you half expect her to call."

The album Hogan speaks of is The Cranberries' forthcoming epilogue, *In The End*, due for release on April 26.



The Cranberries - All Over Now

Hogan and fellow Cranberries Mike Hogan (bass) and Fergal Lawler (drums) spent most of last year working on a batch of demos O'Riordan had recorded for a future album in the months prior to her death.

Given the massive success the Irish alternative rock band enjoyed in their '90s prime with songs like *Linger*, *Dreams*, *Zombie* and *Ode To My Family* that catapulted them to sales in excess of 40 million records, the surviving members felt immense pressure to deliver a fitting tribute to O'Riordan.

Hogan admits he spent many nights awake wondering what O'Riordan would think of the finished product.

**"Even to this day, you half expect her to call."**

Noel Hogan

"We had agreed between the three of us and Stephen Street, who produced it, that if we get to the point where only two or three [songs] are good, we'll release just two or three and forget about the album," he says.

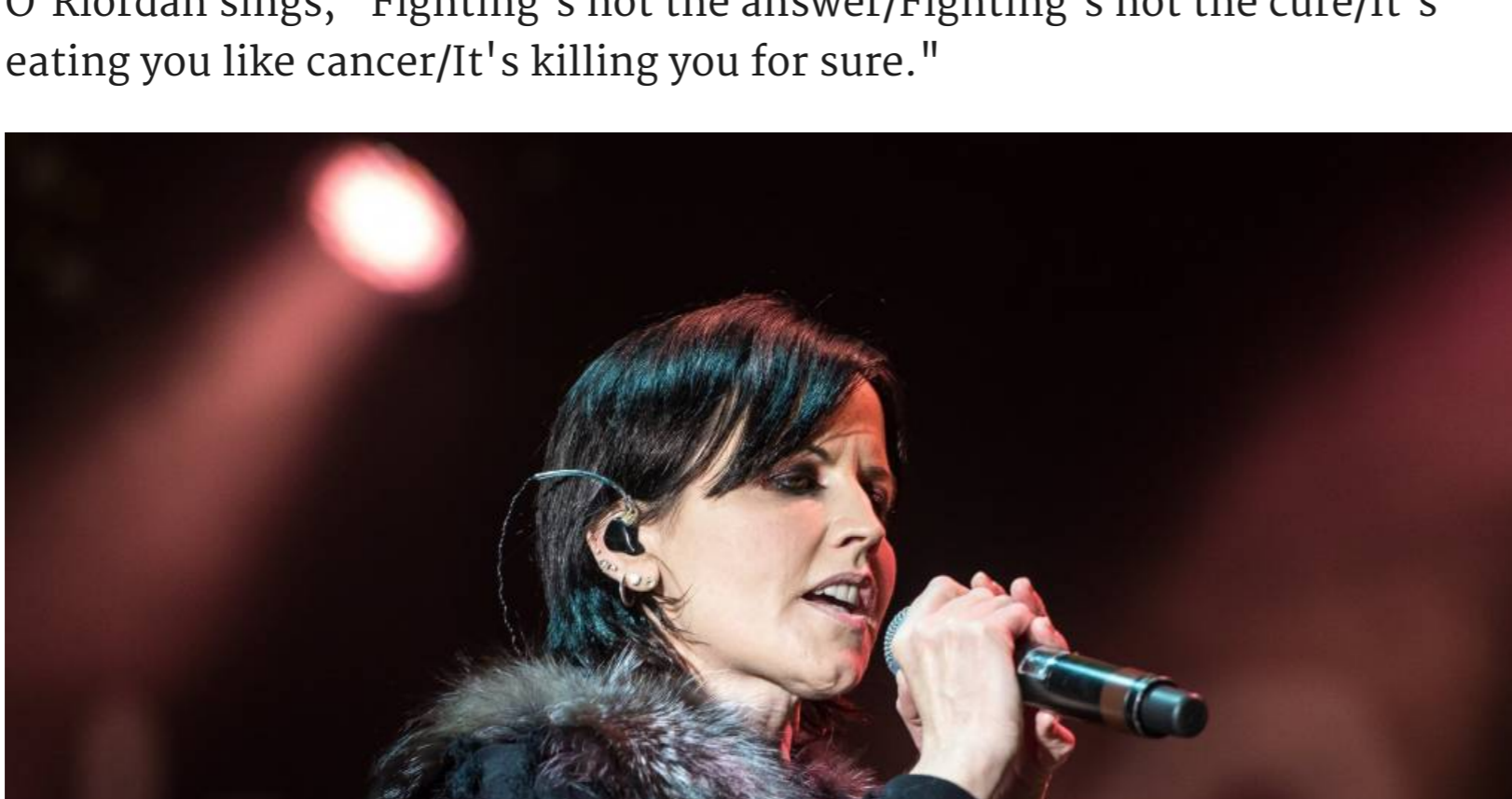
"The worry was you end up destroying the legacy of the band at the end and people go, 'they're only doing it to make more money', or whatever it might be.

"Now that's human nature. People do that and people say that. We just had to stay true to what it was we went in there to do."

Long-standing fans of The Cranberries will be pleased with *In The End*.

Unlike their mixed records over the past two decades like *Wake Up and Smell The Coffee* (2001) and *Roses* (2012), there was a concerted effort to recapture the classic jangly indie sound and pop melodies they were renowned for on their early albums *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?* (1993) and *No Need to Argue* (1994).

Lead single *Wake Me When It's Over* has a similar creeping bass line and soft verse and heavy chorus dynamic to their No.1 hit *Zombie*, while O'Riordan sings, "Fighting's not the answer/Fighting's not the cure/It's eating you like cancer/It's killing you for sure."



GONE: Cranberries singer Dolores O'Riordan died aged 46 in 2018.

Elsewhere, the brooding *Lost*, topped off with O'Riordan's trademark keening could be a companion piece to *When You're Gone*, with the lyrics, "I feel I am dwelling in the past/I know the time is moving fast and you know/I'm lost with you/I'm lost without you."

But the most amazing aspect of *In The End*, just like The Cranberries' back catalogue, is O'Riordan's inimitable vocals. It's especially impressive when considering all the vocals are taken from demos.

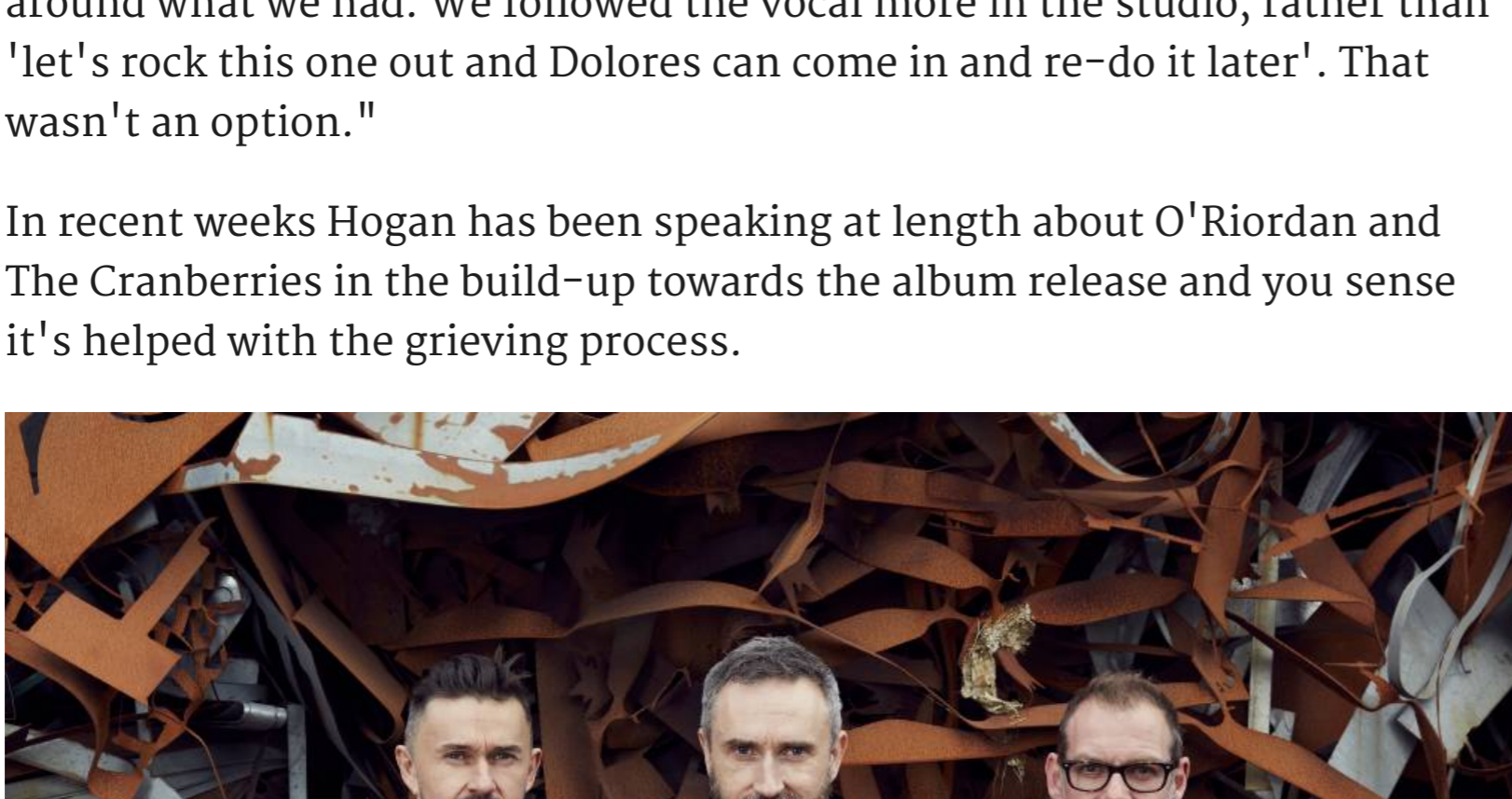
The album features 11 songs, but several others weren't considered because O'Riordan hadn't completed the lyrics.

"We had advanced it to a stage where you had a pretty good idea of the sound of each song and how the album overall would be," Hogan says of the state of the demos.

"I think vocally there were different stages of vocals on the demos. There were tons of backing vocals, to a point you didn't need everything that was on there.

"Then others there wasn't as much. I think we managed to fit the songs around what we had. We followed the vocal more in the studio, rather than 'let's rock this one out and Dolores can come in and re-do it later'. That wasn't an option."

In recent weeks Hogan has been speaking at length about O'Riordan and The Cranberries in the build-up towards the album release and you sense it's helped with the grieving process.



SALVATION: The surviving Cranberries completed Dolores O'Riordan's demos.

Hogan emphatically says there is no Cranberries without O'Riordan, so the release of *In The End* will be a bittersweet finale for a band he formed in Limerick in 1989 as a 17-year-old.

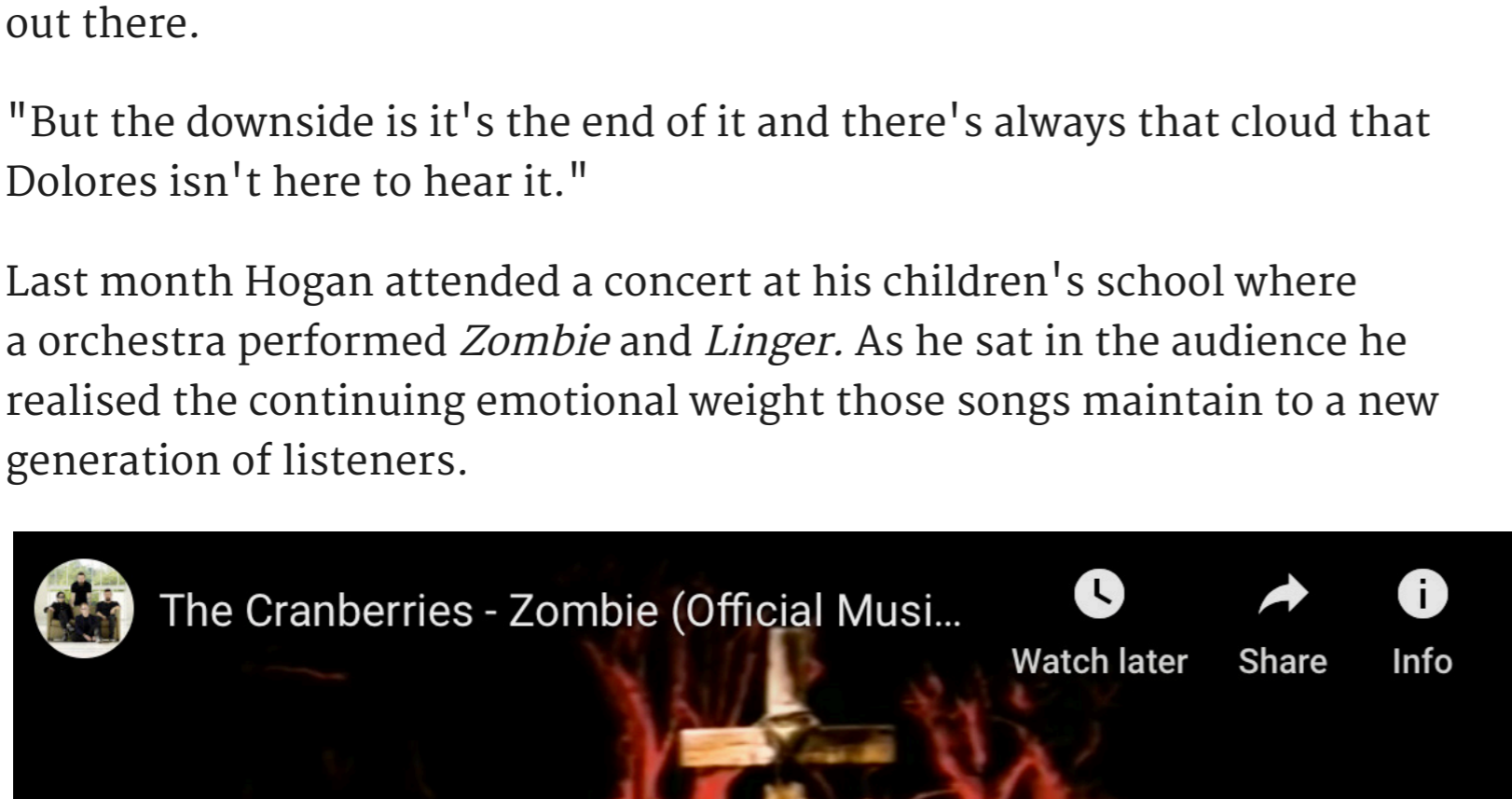
"It's a weird time," he says. "It's been insanely busy the last few months and it will be for a little while, but you realise it's the end of it as well.

"In some ways you're promoting the end of your band, that's what you're doing. It's weird and exciting.

"It was last April when we went in to record it. For most of a year we've lived with this album and we're excited to hear what people think and get it out there.

"But the downside is it's the end of it and there's always that cloud that Dolores isn't here to hear it."

Last month Hogan attended a concert at his children's school where an orchestra performed *Zombie* and *Linger*. As he sat in the audience he realised the continuing emotional weight those songs maintain to a new generation of listeners.



The Cranberries - Zombie

That, Hogan says, will be the legacy of The Cranberries.

"It's the music, it's as simple as that," he says. "People will forget the band - as they do - but when the songs come on they'll remember them and think, 'that reminds me of when I was in college or my childhood'."

"That's the kind of thing you want. When we wrote these songs we were kids. We wrote songs that we would have liked to hear people play.

"We never thought they'd last as long as they have. To this day songs like *Zombie*, *Linger* and *Dreams* are such a big part of pop culture. You know those songs in the first couple of bars."

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