



HOME LIFESTYLE



# The Cranberries release final album with Dolores O'Riordan's voice

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A final album featuring the voice of the late Dolores O'Riordan marks the end of the road for the Limerick band, writes **Ed Power**.

Early on January 15 last year The Cranberries' Noel Hogan received a call from the family of Dolores O'Riordan. The singer had been found dead in her hotel room in London and the story would break in a few hours.

Hogan expressed his condolences, put his phone in a drawer and stayed offline for the next several days. The internet, he sensed, was about to combust with the news. He needed to process his grief privately.

"We knew about it from early in the morning," says the guitarist.

“ It was Dolores's brother who rang. It wasn't going out be out there publicly until the evening. I knew an onslaught of phone-calls was coming. I turned my phone off. Anyone who knows me has the house number

Losing O'Riordan at age 46 was terrible, it hardly needs to be pointed out. Not because she was an icon of Irish music or because of her irreplaceability as a frontwoman. It was because she was a dear friend with whom Hogan and his bandmates had gone through nearly 30 years of triumphs and reversals. And he was painfully aware of what her family was suffering.

The last thing anyone associated with The Cranberries wanted was to be dragged into the media circus.

"We stayed offline," sighs Hogan. "You've got to deal with these things yourself. Among other things, we didn't want to be reading people's theories [as to how O'Riordan died]. We knew that was going to be out there. It would just frustrate and annoy you."



O'Riordan was subsequently confirmed to have accidentally drowned in a bath, with intoxication a contributory factor.

### Music had lost one of its singular voices

But the story now receives a bittersweet coda. At the time of O'Riordan's passing, The Cranberries had been in the early stages of their eighth studio album, with all of her vocals recorded. Having received the approval of her family, that project is finally complete and will be released this Friday. It marks the full stop for the group, who say it as unthinkable that they would ever play or record together again as The Cranberries.

Yet far from a funeral elegy, In The End is a snapshot of what was best about the little Limerick quartet that conquered the world (selling more than 30 million records along the way). With their original producer Stephen Street joining them in the studio, the LP feels like the best sort of throwback. Without ever sinking into pastiche, In The End captures the breathlessness and naive charm of their first two long-players, 1992's Everybody Else is Doing It, So Why Can't We? and 1994's No Need To Argue.

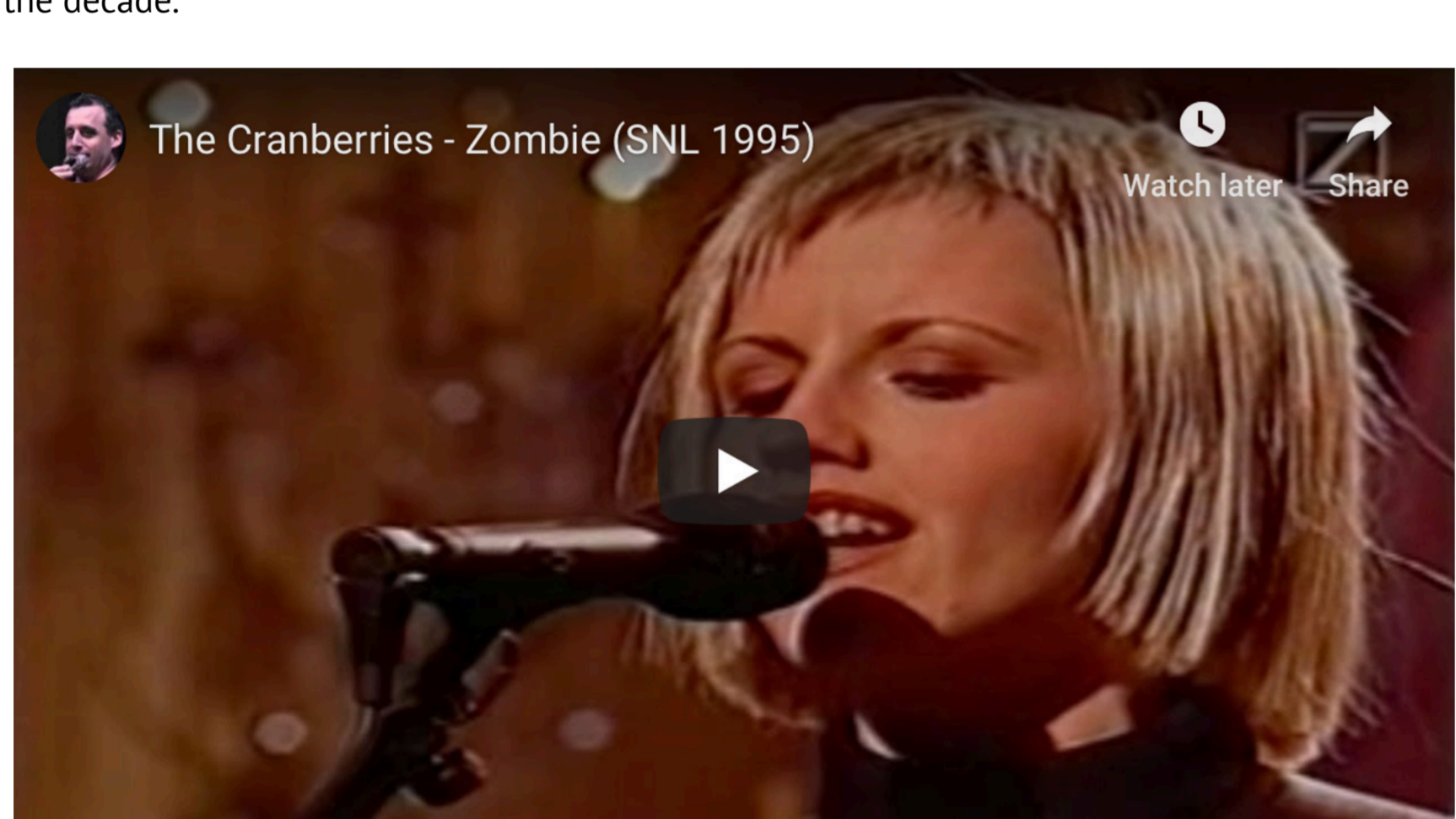


## STRANGE EXPERIENCE

But it is also obviously a haunting affair to sit through. The first time you slap it on, it is slightly discombobulating to hear O'Riordan's voice. Hogan and his bandmates initially had the same response.

"The first couple of days it was very odd and very emotional," says drummer Fergal Lawler. "We were all thinking... 'are we going to be able to do this?' We tried to knuckle down and focus on the job at hand. Dolores didn't like singing during the day because she wanted her voice to warm up. So during those times, you kind of forgot about it. But then the evening would come around and it would hit you again."

With O'Riordan's death, there was an enormous outpouring of grief – and also a reappraisal of where The Cranberries stood in the pantheon of Irish rock. The band themselves seemed to have half forgotten just how big they were in the 1990s, their performance of 'Zombie' on Saturday Night Live in February 1995 held up as one of the most powerful rock moments of the decade.



"George Clooney was hosting," recalls Lawler. "He was really nice. Mike Myers, from Wayne's World and Austin Powers, was there too. I remember standing outside my dressing room and he came up and said [affects exaggerated American accent] 'are the Cranberries in there... I'm a big fan'. I was like, 'Jesus Christ, this is mental... madness like.' You're not thinking this is going to be a performance that lives on. It's done and you go on to the next thing. We were off to tour Australia next. That is what we were thinking about"

No Need To Argue was a juggernaut even at a time when bands were shifting records by the tonne. It sold some 14 million units – more than every single Britpop artist put together during that era.

That was of course testament to the group's success in America – which came after they had been rejected as fey and featherweight in the UK (and Ireland).

"We were dead in the water," says Hogan. "When our first album came out we had press-officers in the UK playing us bands like Slowdive, saying 'this is in'. And I was like, 'you can't hear the vocals'. It had bombed and we were waiting to be dropped. And then suddenly everything changed because of America. We've always been bigger in every part of the world apart from Ireland."

## LIFE ON THE ROAD

They smile as they recall the absurdities of life in a chart-topping rock band – and in particular how O'Riordan dealt with the slog.

"You'd roll into town overnight on a bus. So you'd had barely any sleep. And then you'd be picked up at 10am to go to a radio station. And the hosts would be super-perky.

“ Dolores didn't mind the interviews but she didn't like singing in the morning – she worried it would affect her later, that her voice not getting enough rest. One time, we had to do German television at 5.30 in the morning and she was like 'who agreed to this?' And we were going, 'you did!'

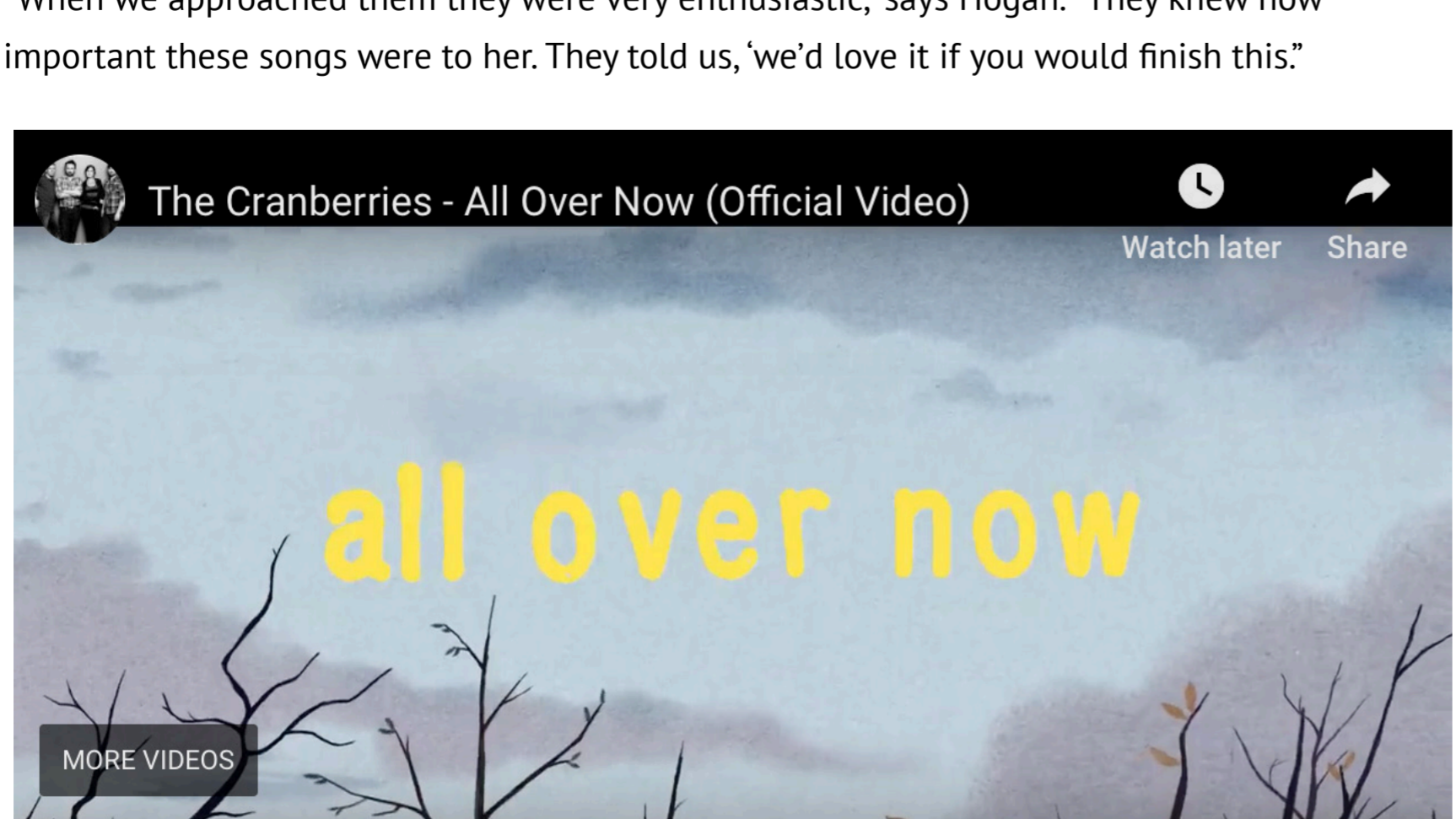
Burnout was inevitable. Hogan and his bandmates now regret not taking a break after No Need To Argue. But they felt pressured to continue.

So, against their better judgement, they did – only to cry off halfway through a world tour. It was an invaluable lesson that the music industry exists to exploit artists rather than look out for their long-term longevity.

"They'll just drop you and move on to the next thing," says Hogan. "They'd made their money from us. So their philosophy is... 'oh look there's another band over there'. And that's you done, at the ripe old age of 22."

Hogan and company will now retire The Cranberries name. But it was important to them that they honour O'Riordan by putting out the last songs they had worked on with her – and important, too, that her family approved.

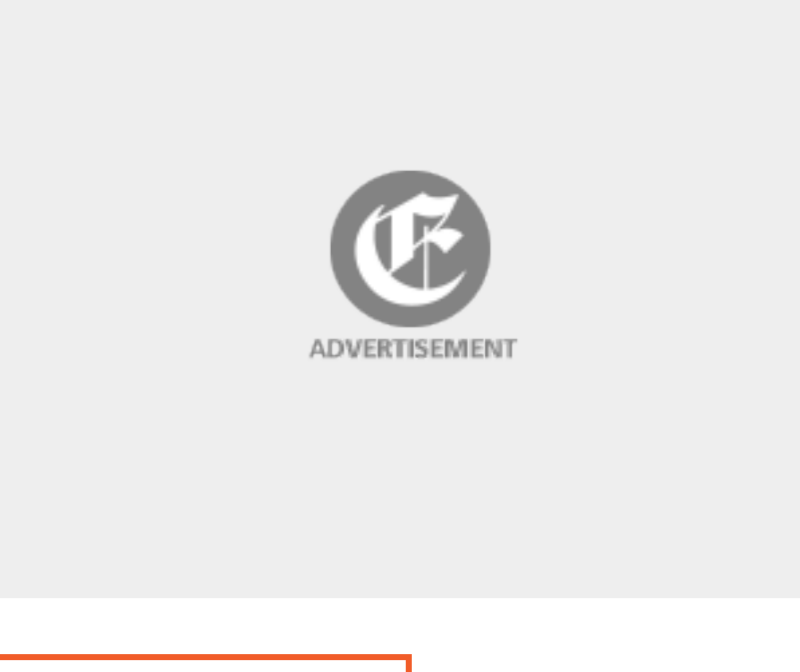
"When we approached them they were very enthusiastic," says Hogan. "They knew how important these songs were to her. They told us, 'we'd love it if you would finish this.'"



### In The End is released Friday

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