

# Rolling Stone

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The  
Pentagon  
Money Pit

BY MATT TAIBBI

The  
Tragedy  
of Lil  
Peep

GROWING UP  
**GAME *of* THRONES**

Maisie Williams & Sophie Turner

SISTERHOOD, SWORD FIGHTS  
*and the* EPIC FINAL SEASON



FAREWELL

# The Cranberries' Last Act

➔ When the Cranberries gathered to make a new album in London last spring, all seemed normal. The Irish artists began their days working on arrangements – something they always did before their lead singer, Dolores O’Riordan, would arrive later in the day to add her vocals. “Dolores would [normally] have a listen to what we’d done, then we’d let her do her thing,” bassist Fergus Lawler says. “So in the evening, you’re almost looking in the corridor to see if she’s coming in. And then you realize, ‘Oh, yeah, she won’t be in.’”

A few months before, in January 2018, O’Riordan had been found dead in the bathtub of a London hotel room at age 46. An inquest later found she had drowned from excessive drinking; the alcohol in her system added up to more than four times the legal driving limit. The British coroner called it a “tragic accident.” It was a sudden end for a singer whose emotional frailty and siren-like voice captivated a generation in the Nineties and beyond as fans stuck with the band long after the hits ended.

O’Riordan had struggled with alcoholism and bipolar disorder, but seemed to be doing better. “Some days she’d be struggling, and others she’d be great and strong,” Lawler says. “I definitely didn’t expect anything like this. She was working on her mental health and getting better. I think this was just an accident.”

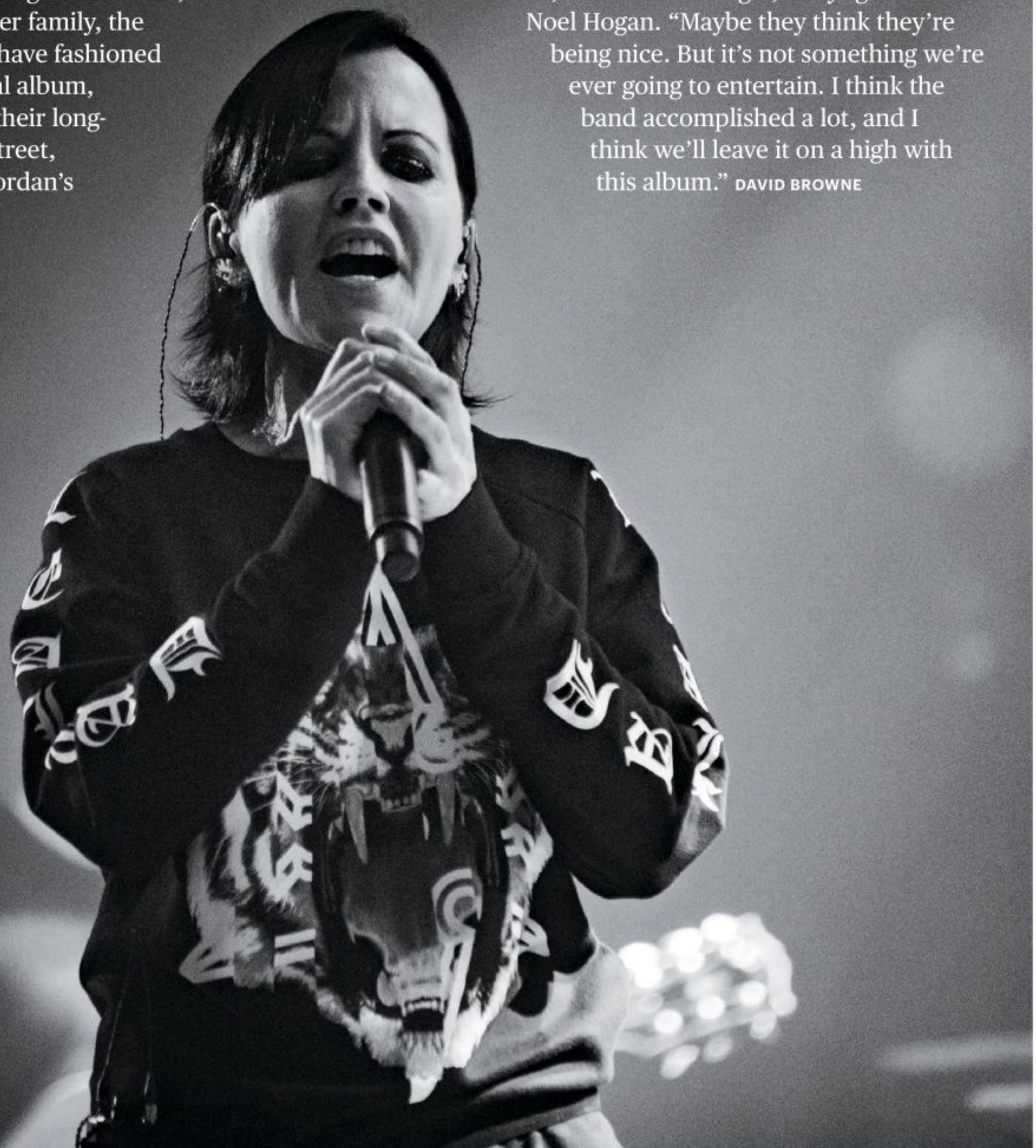
O’Riordan left behind songs and demos, and with the blessing of her family, the surviving band members have fashioned those remnants into a final album, *In the End*. Working with their long-time producer, Stephen Street, they played along to O’Riordan’s

demo-tape voice, which could be unnerving. “It was a bit strange hearing her through the headphones,” says drummer Mike Hogan. “Sometimes there might be a break and you could hear her, talking.”

Since O’Riordan hadn’t recorded finished vocals – meaning there would be an occasional missing word – the band turned to one of the Cranberries’ backup singers, Johanna Cranitch, to fill them out. It wasn’t easy. Lawler remembers listening to one particularly moving song, the moody “Lost,” and breaking down. “When we were listening back to that the last day,” he says, “I just couldn’t help myself. I lost it.”

Unlike many posthumous albums, *In the End* feels like a fully realized one, with songs that find O’Riordan addressing her children (“A Place I Know”) and escaping her inner pain (“Catch Me If You Can”). “I kind of want to say she could see into the future,” says Lawler. “There were some quite poignant ones, even more so now that she’s passed.” O’Riordan’s mother, Eileen, said she was “delighted” the album was done, but couldn’t bring herself to play it. “I don’t feel ready yet to listen to anything,” she says. “No use in getting yourself upset.”

There are no plans for the surviving members to tour with another singer or even play a tribute concert. “People have said a lot of dumb things to me, like, ‘Well, find another singer,’” says guitarist Noel Hogan. “Maybe they think they’re being nice. But it’s not something we’re ever going to entertain. I think the band accomplished a lot, and I think we’ll leave it on a high with this album.” DAVID BROWNE



O’Riordan at the London Palladium, 2017



MUSIC BUSINESS

## THE BOOK SPOTIFY TRIED TO STOP

Five researchers spent years studying the streaming service for ‘Spotify Teardown.’ Here’s what they found

### LOTS OF ITS MUSIC HASN’T BEEN HEARD

One-fifth of the 40 million tracks on Spotify have never been played by a single user. These “zombie songs” show just how much Spotify has changed distribution: It’s easier to release music than ever before, but harder to get people to listen.

### IT’S EASY TO GAME THE SYSTEM WITH BOTS

Researchers were able to upload fake albums to the service and quickly sign up 100 autonomous bots as users to stream the LPs on an endless loop, adding to claims that artists can cheat their way to the top of the charts.

### ALGORITHMS MAY NOT BE THAT SMART

Spotify claims to tailor its radio-station playlists to individual users. But in tests, the authors found radio recommendations “tended to look... the same” for different users. The radio algorithms don’t seem to “take advantage of the archival infinity” of Spotify’s 40 million songs.

### IF YOU’RE OVER 30, YOU’RE OVER NEW MUSIC

The company believes that once users hit their mid-thirties, they’re less open to new music recommendations; instead, older users get their favorite artists recommended back to them. AMY X. WANG

JAMES SHAW/SHUTTERSTOCK

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