

Billboard

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GRAMMYS 2018

*'You don't get
to un-have
this moment'*

LORDE on a historic Grammys race,
her album of the year nod
and the #MeToo movement

PLUS
Rapsody's underground
takeover and critics' predictions for
the Big Four categories

to produce, some say that uncomfortable moments can arise.

“There have definitely been times you’ll [suggest] an idea and the artist will pass over it and the guy in the room will say the same idea and they’ll say, ‘I love it,’ and you’re like, ‘Oh, my Lord,’” says

... When I first started out I always thought, ‘Ooh, I can’t wait to be in that role.’ And the more I learned and the more I began to understand the studio dynamics and the responsibilities that come with that role, I was like, ‘Maybe I’m pretty happy where I am.’”

learned the ropes from producer **Bill Bottrell**. “He sat me down in front of the console,” she recalls. “I had asked those questions before and people were hush-hush. They didn’t want to give up their secrets.”

Whalley, now Concord Music’s chief label executive, says the omission of female producers has never been by design. “I don’t think myself or any other A&R person I know would say, ‘We don’t want to use this person because they’re female,’” he says. “I just know there’s always value to having unique, talented people making records.”

While many male and female executives have been supportive, several female producers expressed dismay that more female artists don’t seek out female producers. “It’s interesting that a lot of female artists have this feminist message and they’ll make their record with all men. It seems kind of hypocritical,” says Hope. “This [woman] will get up to accept an award and be surrounded by straight, white, middle-aged men.”

Massy thinks it is hard for women to balance the rigors of a family with

the studio’s isolating 14-hour days, so they choose a different path. “The risk in losing the ability to have a family is too great. They’ll find better things to do. I know it’s an unpopular position, but I’ve always felt that,” says Massy. “I think there will be [women] like me that have decided, ‘I can do without a family because the young musicians I work with have been a substitute for family.’”

Others posit that the general lack of encouragement for young women to enter the STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and math — bleeds into the gender gap in music production as well.

“[Fewer] females go to audio engineering schools,” says one major-label A&R executive, who claims to have never seen an artist request a female producer. Perry suggests any women interested in production should offer to produce a track for free, like she did with **Stone Fox**. “We cannot wait for people to find us,” she says. Marks agrees: “We need to promote the women who are kicking ass so the next generation feels like it’s something they could do too.”

“I wouldn’t give direction much, because they wouldn’t take it. Now they take it seriously.” —WondaGurl

Hope. “You can’t really show any signs of not knowing what you’re doing. You are at the helm.”

“Sometimes when people are confused they’re like, ‘Why is this girl in the room?’” says WondaGurl. “Earlier, I would never talk; I’d just play the beat. I wouldn’t give direction much, because they wouldn’t take it. Now they take it seriously.”

Catherine Marks, who has produced **Manchester Orchestra** and **Wolf Alice**, says the initial leap from engineer to producer was “a difficult and unexpected transition

Many female producers say they were mentored by men. Marks studied with noted British producers **Alan Moulder** and **Flood**, Hope has worked with **Bleachers’ Jack Antonoff**, and pioneering engineer-producer **Sylvia Massy**, best-known for producing **Tool’s** breakthrough album, *Undertow*, in 1993, took notes from **Rick Rubin**. Perry praises Interscope co-founder/Apple executive **Jimmy Iovine** and former Warner Bros. CEO **Tom Whalley** as being particularly supportive, and after her rock band **4 Non Blondes** ended, Perry also



Olympic skier Vonn (left) and snowboarder White (right) in Beats’ latest “Above the Noise” campaign.

Beats Bets On G-Eazy In Olympic Ads

How the headphone maker picks the music it uses to sell its gear to sports fans — even if athletes have to hide the Beats logos on the slopes

BY GIL KAUFMAN

The Winter Olympics kick off in Pyeongchang, South Korea, on Feb. 9, but there’s already one winner: **G-Eazy**, whose song “The Beautiful & Damned” will be featured in Apple’s new ad campaign for its Beats headphones during the Games.

Beats’ latest “Above the Noise” campaign commercial — which shows elite athletes such as snowboarder **Shaun White**, skier **Lindsey Vonn** and the Nigerian bobsled team plugging in their headphones to get an edge — is set to the title track from the Oakland, Calif., rapper’s latest album. The song soundtracks five spots highlighting athletic themes such as failure, redemption and the rigors of training.

“If a song makes someone feel something, that’s authentic — you can’t fake that,” says Beats president/COO **Luke Wood**, noting that G-Eazy’s track was chosen after he played the album for the Beats music team last October. At that meeting, G-Eazy stressed his own risk-taking persona, similar to that of athletes who speed down icy hills on skis at 80 mph.

Generally, Wood says the “Above the Noise” campaign looks for acts on the cusp of a breakthrough, picking 14-year-old Australian singer **Ruel’s** debut single

(“Don’t Tell Me”) for its 2017 holiday ad starring **Serena Williams** and **Neymar Jr.**, or then-little-known **X Ambassadors** (“The Jungle”) for the 2014 FIFA World Cup spot. Other ads have helped propel acts such as **Hozier** and **Imagine Dragons**. Beats also relies on its team’s A&R experience to time campaigns to the moments it expects artists to break out: G-Eazy currently has two songs in the top 20 of the Billboard Hot 100.

The exposure for G-Eazy could be massive, with Apple buying ads in 30 global markets and deploying considerable digital assets to spread the clips. NBC will also air primetime coverage live across all time zones for the first time during a Winter Games.

Wood doesn’t yet know if the South Korean International Olympic Committee will force athletes to cover up the Beats logo, as some past IOCs have, since the company doesn’t pay to be a sponsor. But White, at least, plans to don his headphones in Korea during practice anyway. “I love to have music playing at all times when I’m riding,” he says.

Dolores O’Riordan

1971-2018



O’Riordan, onstage with The Cranberries in Dublin in 1995, died Jan. 15.

Dolores O’Riordan had an unmistakable voice. The Cranberries singer, who died of undisclosed causes at age 46 on Jan. 15, was one of the most expressive vocalists of the 1990s, equally convincing on a spiderweb-soft love song like “Linger” (a top 10 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 in February 1994) or a haute-grunge rager like “Zombie” (which spent six weeks atop the Alternative Songs chart that fall). Fittingly, the Irish band’s breakthrough in the United States roughly coincided with the end of Nirvana: The Cranberries’ most durable

hits put a new spin on Kurt Cobain’s loud-quiet-loud dynamism, and rock radio responded instantly.

She was just 19 when she joined The Cranberries in 1990, famously writing the words and melody to “Linger” within a week of meeting the band’s other three members (guitarist Noel Hogan, bassist Mike Hogan and drummer Fergal Lawler). Getting that famous that young isn’t easy for everyone, and O’Riordan had spoken honestly in recent years about her experiences with bipolar disorder. But she went on to write or co-write the band’s entire catalog, along with

solo LPs in 2007 and 2009, showing a dedication to pop craft. And while the act would never again scale the heights of 1993 debut *Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can’t We?* and 1994 follow-up *No Need to Argue*, those albums were more than enough for millions of fans.

A month before she died, O’Riordan took the stage for her final public performance, a three-song set at *Billboard’s* annual holiday party. O’Riordan sang “Linger,” “Zombie” and “Ode to My Family” with grace and presence. Hearing that voice didn’t feel like mere nostalgia — it felt timeless.

—SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON