

News

# COMMENT: My encounter with Dolores still lingers

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Dolores O'Riordan and Bono pictured in December 1993 by Dublin People photographer Darren Kinsella.

## Darren Kinsella

IN 2013 I attended 'A Night for Christy' at the Olympia Theatre, a tribute gig to honour the seriously ill Aslan frontman.

It was an incredible, emotional night and showed how highly Christy Dignam was thought of by his fans and the wider music industry. The best thing about it was that he was there himself to see how much he was loved.

The Irish and worldwide reaction to the sad passing of Dolores O'Riordan got me wondering if she knew that she was so well loved.

The one occasion that I photographed Dolores really left a lasting impression on me. It was December 27, 1993, and she was in attendance at the National Entertainment Awards in Dublin.

I was there to photograph comedian Brendan O'Carroll who was in the running for an award. But I was also a huge U2 fan and knew that Bono was going to there as well.

As I hung around backstage, I caught a glimpse of Dolores as she went from the dressing rooms to the stage. A short time later there was a scurry as Bono's car pulled up outside. My heart raced as he came through the door and I asked him if he could stop for a photo. He obliged before continuing inside to chat with filmmaker Jim Sheridan and manager Paul McGuinness.

I kept a close eye for any potential photos and I didn't have long to wait before Bono ended up in the company of the lead singer of The Cranberries. There were no digital cameras back then so I had to keep a close eye on how many shots I had remaining on my 36 roll of film as the two stars chatted away.

Needless to say, this was a pretty big deal for me. I was 21-years-old and looking through the lens at two of the biggest celebrities in Ireland – if not the world! Hard to believe, but Dolores would only have been aged 22 at the time.

When they'd finished talking, Bono left and I found myself standing beside Dolores. My voice quivered as I thanked her. Possibly sensing my nerves, she gave me a broad smile and squeezed my arm reassuringly. I don't know why, but it meant so much to me and was something that I never forgot. It was a simple gesture, but spoke volumes to me about what a beautiful person she was. Dolores was held in the highest esteem by everyone she met, from the rich and famous to ordinary, everyday people.

In the years that followed, I think the world really got to see that beauty in Dolores too, if the warm tributes paid to her since her untimely death are anything to go by. Like Christy Dignam, though, I wish she could have been here to see it.



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