

Sinéad O'Connor - Political and Musical Tributes

Saturday 12 August 2023, by [LA COMBRE Mandy](#), [MEEHAN John](#) (Date first published: 8 August 2023).



I think this photo was taken in August 1989 at a FADA (Forum for a Democratic Alternative) march outside the RDS, Ballsbridge. It was a protest marking the 20th anniversary of British troops taking over the streets of the six counties after the 1969 Battle of the Bogside. Other speakers included Eamonn McCann. Sinéad O'Connor is singing, flanked by Joe Kelly who chaired the meeting. Thanks to Niamh Kelly, Joe's daughter, who supplied the photograph.

Sinéad O'Connor understood, better than many others, that the partition of Ireland is a 32 county problem - it is not just about the north. This letter was published in the *Irish Times* edition of Tuesday, July 30, 1996.



John Meehan August 8 2023

Sinéad O'Connor's funeral tribute in Bray Co. Wicklow - where she spent many happy years in a

house on a promenade beside the sea – was led by a beautifully decorated old van, almost vintage :



Sinéad O'Connor's Funeral Van in Bray Co. Wicklow, August 8 2023

Mandy La Combre's Tributes

Mandy la Combre is a feminist and trade union activist.

I really wanted to be in Bray today to say a final farewell to Sinéad but unfortunately I'm working in Belfast so couldn't make it. This made me sad. I also haven't really seen any of the coverage of this morning but I have it recorded at home to watch on my return.

It still feels like a gut-punch to lose this priestess, political agitator, and gifted songwriter, who had an otherworldly voice like an angel and who inspired so many of us teenage girls growing up in grim 1980's Ireland. What a terrible loss for us all.

It seems fitting that a giant installation honouring Sinéad was unveiled on Bray Head, Co. Wicklow, as she too was a giant. It reads 'ÉIRE LOVES SINÉAD' and is located where the recently rediscovered World War Two 'ÉIRE' navigational landmark is, also close to Sinéad's former seafront home at Strand Road, Bray.

I love the below images. Sinéad indelibly marked into the Irish landscape as she should be, and a wonderful happy picture of Sinéad at the MTV Video Music Awards in 1990 – long before she was battered at the hands of the press and the world.

If I was religious I'd say something like I hope she's sleeping soundly now in the arms of her boy, but unfortunately I'm not, and I've a hard time believing that to be true.

So when you don't know what to say....

"Where words fail, music speaks".

Thank you Sinéad, for everything. ☐



Written on August 8 2023

It's taken me 24 hours to post anything about Sinéad O'Connor. It was actually quite a shock to hear the news.

I've enjoyed Sinéad's music since the 80's. When she rocked out onto the scene with her doc martens, rolled up jeans, shaved head and a screeching voice like an angel – she was quite the firebrand. Relentlessly willing to stand up for her beliefs even when they were not popular, and they so often were not.

As a teenage girl I wasn't that many years younger than her and consumed her debut album 'The Lion & The Cobra' mercilessly. Playing it for years long after its release date. In fact when pregnant, the first time my son kicked inside my womb I was listening to 'Troy' on my Walkman, and so it was set in stone that would be his name. Over 30 years later the album still resonates, it's a timeless work and an astonishing debut...and Troy still has the coolest name.

I've seen Sinéad live only a few times in my life; once in the 80's in the Olympic ballroom where she looked incredible flouncing around the stage in a black tutu like a beautiful angry nymph, once in the 90's in Giant stadium in New York, where she headlined an Irish music festival and she filled the stadium with her voice singing a capella literally stopping me in my tracks. And later in the 00's singing on stage with Gavin Friday with whom her stunning performances with her iconic voice and attitude always complimented Gavin's shows.

I met her briefly on two occasions and she was always polite. One particular occasion she appeared particularly quiet, shy and unassuming gripping Gavin's arm for moral support as she navigated the nightclub trepidatiously as if worried that people would start looking at her – even though she looked just beautiful.

Last year I read her book 'Rememberings' and saw the film about her life 'Nothing Compares'. Both fantastic pieces of work, both I seriously recommend to get a real insight into Sinéad's character and talent.

The book is a brutally honest account of Sinéad's life in her own words and the film is a stunning portrayal of a celebrated rise to fame and quick exile from mainstream music as a result of her outspokenness and activism. I was delighted to see I had a two second accidental cameo in the latter, it made me giggle in the cinema. Also, my abiding memory leaving the viewing was walking

away thinking what a remarkable woman she really was.

You will see a multitude of platitudes to Sinéad in the coming days and weeks, most sincere, and some by those that used, persecuted, and mistreated her while she was alive. But if you really want to remember and celebrate Sinéad, get her back catalogue. That is where the real magic lies. The music and her unique voice speak for themselves. That is where she really shone.

Yes, she was a trailblazer, a feminist, an activist, a moral character that relied on honesty and was always true to herself – but she was also damaged and dreadfully hurt and her songs are an expression of all that she was, not faux, but genuine, and oftentimes in your face. That's why we loved her and that's what we should remember.

Right now I really feel for her children, her family and her friends that loved her so much, it must be an unbearable loss. But I also extend condolences to those fans that never wavered and always held Sinéad in their hearts through thick and thin and all the ups and downs. We've lost a true talent, and Ireland has lost the best female voice this country has ever produced.

Her work was such a gift.

Sinéad Marie Bernadette O'Connor, rest in power.

You have been loved. ☐

John Meehan

Written on July 27 2023

Video: Sinéad O'Connor reached back to a powerful Irish ballad, "The Foggy Dew", and produced a haunting new version with the Chieftains in 1995. "Twas better to die neath an Irish sky than at Suvla or Sud-el-Bar".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keWnPZOd2cw>

P.S.

• Looking at Things from the Left:

<https://tomasoflatharta.com/2023/08/12/sinead-oconnor-political-and-musical-tributes/>