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U2 and Waits among Partridge mourners

Thursday 11 December 2008, by [Corinne/Dead](#)

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By Paul Williams

U2 and Tom Waits were among the many dozens of mourners attending the funeral of Coalition founder Rob Partridge.

Partridge, who recommended the Irish band should be signed to Island Records and handled Waits' PR for more than two decades, was remembered yesterday at a service at Golders Green crematorium conducted by humanist minister Mark Hayford. Partridge died aged 60 last month after a two-year battle with cancer.

Staff past and present from Island Records, where Partridge was head of press from 1976 to 1991, were among those at the service. Others present included past and present executives from HMV, including Brian McLaughlin and Steve Knott, which is one of Coalition's longest-serving clients as well as many others who had worked with or had had an association with Partridge during his long, distinguished music industry career.

Billy Bragg, whose PR is handled by Coalition, opened the service by singing Jerusalem unaccompanied, while speakers included Coalition's Tim Vigon, former Go! Discs and Independiente executive Tony Crean whose lengthy relationship with Partridge included working together on the War Child albums.

Addressing the service, his widow Tina said she had "had just a wonderful life with Rob". "I wanted it to go on forever," she added. "I couldn't have had a better life. I've been hugely blessed."

In a surprising twist at the end, characteristic of Partridge, the service closed with a Mariachi band appearing to perform a version of My Way.

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