DUBLIN, Ireland -- Remarkable displays of resilience were on show at the Bernard Dunne-Ricardo Cordoba event at the O2 Arena - and not just inside the ring.

Even before Dunne wrested the WBA 122-pound title from Cordoba in an exhilarating contest on Saturday, a portion of the Irishman's supporters were laying a precursor of things to come.

Inebriated patrons were not scarce in the arena, but one pair in particular was apparently unsatisfied with sitting still while taking in a preliminary bout. Eager for more action, they insisted on standing up and mimicking the fighters' punches in their own exaggerated manner. The dissatisfaction of the surrounding attendees only increased the drunks' zeal to shadow box and their enthusiasm reached its zenith as the burly security forces stepped in.

The two inebriates, who were considerably undersized relative to the security men, weren't going to give up their seats easily and clung on gallantly. They eventually lost the battle, but their determination was admirable and would later be mirrored by Dunne, who twice climbed off the floor to stop Panama's Cordoba in the eleventh round of a grueling affair that left both fighters with severe exhaustion, forcing the Panamanian to spend the night in hospital.

Dunne also missed the postfight press conference, suffering from dehydration, and the effects of the fight were plainly obvious as the normally gregarious Dubliner wearily made his way past well-wishers toward his dressing room with a distant look in his heavily bruised eyes.

Cordoba was under medical observation at Beaumont hospital for precautionary reasons, and Dunne forewent any celebrations to stay at his opponent's bedside until 5am on Sunday morning.

"I had a chat with him. He was good, they're just keeping him in for observation, a precautionary measure," said Dunne of Cordoba, who was released from hospital on Sunday afternoon. "I felt it was right to go in and see him because he put up a hell of a fight."

And while the combatants were left with the physical scars, the promoter of the event, Brian Peters, was on the verge of mental fatigue on Sunday as the realization of the previous night's proceedings sank in.

Peters, who has been involved in promoting boxing events in Ireland for the last 16 years, showed his own propensity for risk-taking by staging an extravagant show at the O2 Arena in the face of a deep economic recession and initial fears of slow ticket sales.

But deriding populous thinking is nothing new for the Co. Meath native. Having left school at the age of 14, Peters set out to "make my own way in the world". His interest in boxing saw him travel to Las Vegas for Barry McGuigan's unsuccessful featherweight title defence against underdog Steve Cruz in 1986. But McGuigan wasn't the only loser, as Peters succumbed his

life savings on a bet with a Texas businessman.

Peters' luck soon changed when he befriended a number of boxers and was subsequently asked to help out with the promotion of a 1993 Wayne McCullough fight in Dublin. Peters gradually became more involved in the fight game and began to make a name for himself when the national Irish broadcaster, RTE, showed an interest in the precocious talent of one of his young fighters, Bernard Dunne.

The contract Peters ultimately signed with RTE stated that he would be the exclusive promoter for the channel, but with the clause that Peters could stage shows on other networks. Dunne's fights brought newfound fame to Peters, with an average of 600,000 Irish viewers tuning in to watch the super-bantamweight defeat overmatched opponents upon his return in 2005 from a four-year stint with Freddie Roach in Los Angeles.

Yet just as Peters was planning a lucrative world title shot for Dunne, the fighter was sensationally blitzed inside a round by an obscure Spaniard named Kiko Martinez in 2007. The attraction upon which Peters had built his promotional success had suddenly become subject of jokes ["It's strange to see you on your feet for a change," said one observer to Dunne the day after his defeat.] and the 7,000 fans that packed the Point arena were less than satisfied with paying for 86 seconds of main event action and a dismal undercard.

Peters' subsequent show featuring middleweight prospect Andy Lee resulted in a six-figure financial loss for the promoter and it seemed the Irish public were sceptical of boxing events in the wake of the apparent exposing of Dunne.

Peters kept faith with his fallen fighter and showcased Dunne in small venues against eminently beatable opposition. Sensing that the time was right to determine the true potential of his 29-year-old charge, Peters paid Cordoba nearly €200,000 to defend his WBA belt at the new 9,000 seater O2 Arena.

Selling Dunne to a sceptical Irish public in the midst of an economic slump seemed an onerous task, but Peters believed that a quality opponent and a substantial undercard could convince fans to part with their money.

"I don't do projections, I don't do cost/benefit analysis," he recently told the Sunday Business Post. "I work on intuition, a sixth sense that it will work, that the numbers will stack up. Times are tough, money is scarce, so you have to be innovative and put on a show."

For a man who has "never sent an email in my life" and drives an unfashionable nine-year-old Volvo, Peters knows how to put on an ostentatious event.

To pique interest in the card, Peters struck a deal with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association to allow world female champion Katie Taylor and other top Irish amateur boxers appear in special attraction bouts. Moreover, he filled the rest of the card with the best available Irish talent, including Andy Lee and Andrew Murray in competitive matchups.

But Peters wasn't content to let the fisticuffs provide all the entertainment. He arranged for the construction of an elevated walkway so that the fighters on the televised portion of the card could march toward the ring in a dramatic manner with the added accompaniment of flashing lights and an array of theatrically costumed characters [the most memorable being the enormous figures draped in U2 costumes that followed Taylor to the ring].

The style may not have been to every traditionalist's liking, yet it was anything but dull. In addition, any possible lapses in action that would be brought about by television scheduling were filled with four round bouts – a cost-effective idea that kept a degree of momentum to the proceedings.

Dunne's awe-inspiring defeat of Cordoba to become the first Irish world titlist since Steve Collins relinquished his middleweight belt in 1997 provided a fitting end to a night of breathless festivities for the feverous capacity crowd.

"We wanted to put on six hours of solid entertainment," said Peters, who was wiping away tears of joy at the event's conclusion. "It's one of the happiest days of my life."

Peters' next challenge will be to maximize the drawing potential of Dunne, and options abound. Dunne's newly acquired WBA title is somewhat devalued given that Panama's Celestino Caballero is considered the organization's "Super Champion", even though Cordoba already holds a comprehensive points victory over his compatriot.

Peters mentioned the possibility of a Dunne-Cordoba rematch, or showdowns with Caballero and Cordoba's previous conqueror Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym. Peters also stated that he is appealed by a Dunne fight on "Main Street in Las Vegas" – a fitting setting for a promoter seemingly immune to risk aversion.

"Tonight was the biggest financial gamble of my life," Peters revealed of Saturday's event. "There were a lot of naysayers out there. All I can say is 'O ye of little faith'."