

## Review

Old showman goes back to his roots

## MUSIC

TOM JONES

OLYMPIA, DUBLIN

INCREDIBLY Tom Jones is now 75. Septuagenarian-hood agrees with the big-lunged Welshman, who, returning to Dublin, sported a tasteful grey beard and crooned and bawled in the fashion of a bluesman who had seen it all and somehow was still around to tell the tale.

He was also a surprisingly emotive raconteur, sharing an anecdote about a lost afternoon pub-crawling with Irish singer Jim Hand and repeating 'Slainte' so often it started to feel as if the word meant more to him than to the audience.

In acknowledgment of his status as elder statesman, the *Voice UK* judge has stepped away from the gauche, glittery sensibilities of his 90s comeback period, when he occupied an ambivalent territory between heritage act and novelty performer.

Rather, he came to Ireland in the guise of rafter-raising Methusalem, his delivery husky, ragged, radiating autumnal wisdom (in later years he has worked



extensively with folk producer Ethan Johns, who has emphasised the gruff wisdom of Jones's vocals).

That he was able to re-purpose his naff staple *Sex Bomb* as the sort of Mississippi Delta dirge Lead Belly might have knocked out 70 years was testament to the reach of his voice, while blues staples such as Randy Newman's *Mama Told Me Not To Come* and John Lee Hooker's *Burning Hell* were steeped in passion and mournfulness.

If the concert was about anything it was Jones reconnecting with his roots — the spiritual music he grew up on in rural Wales through 40s and 50s.

Enough of a trouper to tickle the room with the occasional crowd-pleaser, the performance nonetheless felt like a rebranding exercise with half a glance towards posterity.

Throughout Jones was keen to demonstrate that, alongside his formidable abilities as an entertainer, he's a channeler of powerful feelings — more artist than showman. On that count, the evening was a triumph.

Ed Power

# Trading places

Just like Bill and Hillary and David and Victoria, growing numbers of couples are swapping roles with one another at work and at home, writes **Gabrielle Monaghan**

Ian Jermyn is busy keeping 13-month-old son Oscar away from the oven while he puts a homemade pizza under the grill for their lunch. Within a few minutes, Oscar has disappeared into a kitchen cupboard and his 37-year-old father is enticing him out by telling him there "are dinosaurs in there who will eat you".

Until last September, Ian was working in a marine research laboratory at NUI Galway, devising ways to clean up oil spills. After his wife Muireann got a job teaching at a primary school in Bray, the couple upped sticks to Dublin, where Ian has swapped the lab for being a full-time dad.

After Oscar was born, the prohibitive cost of childcare in the capital meant one of them would have to take a back seat in their careers to take care of him. Ian jumped at the chance — he could have an "adventure" with his son and planned to work from home as a freelance illustrator, print maker and web editor. He assumed it would be a breeze.

"I put my hand up because I was thinking of all that free time I could have," he says. "Blokes think they can handle quite a lot and think 'how hard can it be?'"

"I thought I'd just be hanging out at home with Oscar, feeding and changing him. I thought I'd have a lot more time to focus on developing my artwork but it didn't happen. I found myself stressed out in the first couple of months. Things became a lot easier once I threw plans out the window."

The couple is currently staying at Muireann's parents' house near Killiney but, with her parents due to return from a stint overseas, they intend to move to Sligo, where living costs are cheaper.

"Some blokes might feel staying at home would be a

big compromise," Ian says. "They need to go to work and bring home the bacon. There are a lot of men — and women — driven by their work. But blokes need to be open-minded and flexible in what they can do."

Ian's attitude epitomises the zeitgeist for role reversals in the home. Rather than feel emasculated, these alpha house husbands are happy to hand over the financial reins to their wives so they can spend a few years supporting their careers. In return, they

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get to leave the rat race for a spell and embrace a more relaxed pace of life.

The poster-boy for these career supporters is David Beckham, the former football star who is now content to swap the pitch for the school run: he and wife Victoria have reportedly agreed that 2015 will be her year.

Now that that David has retired from football, he's keen to take on more duties at home to allow Victoria expand her fashion empire.

Hillary Clinton spent years proving that old cliché that behind every great man is a great woman, going further than most by standing by Bill Clinton during revelations of his affair. Now it's the former president's turn to return the favour, playing a low-key role as a back-stage adviser while Hillary runs for president. Bill Clinton said last year that their relationship was, in a way, a 52-year pact.

"We were married a very long time when she was always, in effect, deferring

to my political career," he said. "I told her when she got elected to the Senate from New York that she'd given me 26 years, and so I intended to give her 26 years."

High-flying women have long had 'plus ones' — husbands content to quietly pick up the domestic slack or become the primary caregiver so their celeb wives can bring home the bacon.

For instance, Oscar-winner Meryl Streep and mother-of-four has described sculptor husband Don as "the linchpin of my life".

In Ireland, Cork woman Margaret Burgraff, one of Intel's newest vice-presidents, has an American husband who is a stay-at-home dad to their two children.

The role of the woman as one that belongs in the home is enshrined in the Irish Constitution and men still get the message of the State, through the lack of statutory paternity leave, that once a child is born, it is their duty to be the main provider.

But these conventions are gradually shifting dramatically. The government is considering introducing two weeks of paid paternity leave and one year of parental leave after a baby's birth, to be shared between the parents at their discretion.

And the Irish father is no longer the emotionally distant, authoritative figure demanding respect on the one hour he sees his kids before they have to go to bed.

Or the kind of bumbling oaf depicted by advertisers as so inept in the domestic sphere that he can't manage a load of laundry.

The type of man being celebrated this Fathers' Day is more likely to take turns cooking dinner for his toddler and reading bedtime stories or even staying home during the day altogether.

Many men found themselves in the latter position by default during the recession, which hit male-



**Daddy daycare:** Clockwise from above: David Beckham has agreed to take a back seat this year so wife Victoria can focus on her fashion career; Bill Clinton has vowed to give presidential hopeful wife Hillary the 26 years she gave him during his political career; and Nolan O'Brien currently stays at home with daughter Hannah (2) while studying for a PhD and wife Karen goes out to work. PHOTO: ARTHUR CARRON



dominated industries, such as construction, manufacturing, and financial services, the hardest. Now that the economy is recovering, more men are eschewing well-paid jobs and choosing full-time parenthood as a lifestyle choice — one that makes sense when one in 10 women are the main breadwinners.

In the first quarter of 2015, there were 10,600 men classed by the Central Statistics Office as being on "home duties", up from 8,100 men in the first three months of 2013 and just 5,100 men in 2005.

Though the numbers are still small, these role reversals mirror a similar phenomenon happening throughout America, where men are even holding their

own brand of baby shower, and the UK, where the numbers of stay-at-home fathers have doubled in the last 10 years.

But what's it really like for a man to spend his days changing nappies or being the only father in the playground?

While it can be an isolating experience for some men, Nolan O'Brien found he garnered plenty of social kudos just for looking after his own child — far more than his wife Karen gets.

The 30-year-old spends four days a week with Hannah, his two-year-old daughter. When Karen, a 29-year-old account manager for a large electricity company, returns home



# Sunny side up

Sunny Jacobs spent 17 years in jail for a double murder she didn't commit. Now she's opened up her Connemara home to other victims of miscarriages of justice. **Deirdre Reynolds** talks to the woman who wouldn't let the past win



Surveying the rugged green expanse that swaddles her Connemara sanctuary, Sunny Jacobs can scarcely believe she once existed in a suffocating 6ft by 9ft cell.

With 15 unfettered acres of Connacht countryside to call home, freedom is not something that is in short supply for the 67-year-old death row survivor or her husband Peter Pringle, who once also faced death by hanging.

"Ireland is home," says Sunny, who settled about as close to her native Queens as you can get this side of the Atlantic. "The west of Ireland is a really special place, not just in Ireland, but the world, it really is."

More than two decades after walking free from Broward Correctional Institution in Florida an innocent woman, today Sunny is busy preparing to receive her first guest at the newly opened Sunny Center — spelt the American way, she jokes — at the couple's home in Galway.

Perched on a hillside overlooking a lake, the voluntary centre, as her neighbours are sure to spell it, welcomes other wrongfully convicted people from around the world as they try to readjust to life on the outside.

"It's really for respite and recovery from, not only the ordeal of being wrongfully convicted and locked up, and losing your whole life and everything, but trying to get it back," explains Sunny, who spent 17 years incarcerated for a double murder she didn't commit.

"Most, but not all of the guests, will come from America, although we're open to anyone who's suffered that sort of injustice from anywhere in the world.

"They let you out and you don't get anything," she continues. "It's very, very difficult.

"For the large majority, there's no compensation whatsoever, so they come out, they've lost contact with family, there's no where to go, no way to make a living so often they end up homeless or taking drugs and alcohol for solace.

"If we can get them away from their original environment and let them adjust and heal a bit, and figure out who they want to be, they have a better chance at success [when] they go back, and for a happy, new life."

Starting over, needless to say, is something that grandmum Sunny and her husband of four years know



Sunny Jacobs: "When we first get out of jail, we pretend everything's OK."

all about. Back in 1976, when she was a 28-year-old mum-of-two, Sunny and her boyfriend Jesse Tafero were condemned to death for the murder of two policemen following a roadside shooting, while the real killer, Walter Rhodes — who later confessed to pulling the trigger after Tafero was executed — struck a plea bargain with the state.

Four years later, back in Dublin, 41-year-old fisherman and father-of-four Peter Pringle was also wrongfully convicted of the murder of

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two gardai, Henry Byrne and John Morley, killed during a bank robbery, becoming one of the last people in Ireland to be sentenced to death in 1980.

Both were exonerated in 1992, before finding each other in another incredible twist of fate six years later.

"It's not something you want to talk about all the time," tells Sunny, who previously welcomed exonerees to their two-bedroom cottage in Galway before founding The Sunny Center.

"With the people that come here for healing, it's healing for us too because it allows us to use what happened to us for good purpose.

"When [exonerees] first get out, we pretend everything's ok. The men do this bravado thing; they dress up as fancy as they can, and they act like everything's ok, but it's not ok. Many of the women were wrongly convicted of something to do with a child and, as a result, when they go back home, which isn't home anymore, they're reviled.

"At first, I kind of got scooped up by the anti-death penalty movement," recalls the yoga teacher and human rights activist, "and I was happy to do that work. But I realised after a while that it really wasn't helping me. "I'd always thought of myself as a survivor; they would always kind of wheel me out as this poor victim of injustice, and I started seeing myself as a victim.

"It was very depressing. All I was was my story — I wasn't a human being trying to start a new life.

"So I left the movement for a while to concentrate on making a life for myself, not as somebody's victim, but as an independent human being in this new modern world, and then I went back to it on my own terms."

After almost two decades in prison, much of it in solitary confinement, mobile phones and "magic money" were just two of the mod cons Sunny remembers having to get used to when she was finally freed on appeal aged 45.

"The best thing was the ATM machine," she laughs. "That was the most amazing thing I ever saw. You just put a card in the wall and it spits money out at you — I couldn't get over it!"

It was at a rally in Tennessee that country star

and fellow philanthropist Steve Earle told Sunny that she should look up a guy called Peter Pringle if she ever made it to the Emerald Isle.

She did eventually get to Ireland in 1998, but didn't look up the "potato chips" guy. Yet when she saw a hulking figure hunched over, sobbing in the front row of a talk she was giving in a pub in Galway, Sunny knew it was fate.

On Sunday, Sunny will take to Wonderlust stage at Body and Soul arts and music festival at Ballinlough Castle in County Westmeath to speak about her experience.

Two-and-a-half decades since capital punishment was abolished in Ireland, and just weeks since Nebraska became the 19th state to abolish the death penalty, now she's hoping to see an end to death row altogether in her lifetime — just as Robert Dunham of the Death Penalty Information Center predicted recently.

"I do think that he's correct," she agrees, "that in the next 20 years we will see the abolition of the death penalty in America. In twenty years, I'll be 87, so I might just make it - I hope so.

"Body and Soul is a great venue for it because we would reach a lot of young people who wouldn't maybe normally be interested in such a serious subject that seems so remote from their experience," continues Sunny. "It's a very interesting time [in the anti-death penalty movement] right now.

"There's more movement than there has been in the last few decades, so I think it's a subject whose time has come."



from work, Nolan leaves for University College Dublin to work on his PhD in psychology.

"I'm not the primary caregiver — I'm just here nine to five," he says. "In fact, my wife probably does more. She's managing to put in a 40-hour week in four days and does bath-time and bedtime every night.

"We even split the shopping 50-50. But when I go out and do the shopping with Hannah, the checkout person will say 'oh, let me give you a hand' and 'oh, you're out on your own with the baby'.

"People go out of their way to bag my groceries. I'll tell my wife that and she'll say 'that's so unfair'. If she goes

out alone with Hannah, it's just expected she has her act together."

Nolan, currently on the hunt for more lecturing work, hopes that once he has his qualification under his belt he'll be in a position to be the main breadwinner so that Karen can have a chance to stay at home with Hannah.

"Doing a PhD is not the most lucrative thing in the world and she has been the breadwinner and primary caregiver," he says.

"But I feel super lucky to be able to spend this amount of time with my kid. The reason I'm doing this PhD is because I want my wife to have what I have now with all our future kids and for the rest of Hannah's childhood."