



COMMUNICATIONS

THE IRISH WORLD
6 AUGUST 2011

OH, WHAT A DIVINE NIGHT!

NEIL HANNON IS ON FINE FORM AT GREENWICH SESSIONS GIG

Neil 'The Divine Comedy' Hannon took audience participation to a new level on the opening night of the Greenwich Summer Sessions, when he plucked a fan from the crowd to tell a joke mid-way through a song.

The song, entitled 'Can You Stand on One Leg' from Hannon's tenth album 'Bang, There Goes the Knighthood', which was released last year, includes the line 'If you know a funny joke then tell it now...'. The audience member duly obliged.

It was simply another moment in perfect keeping with the very jovial atmosphere which surrounded the evening.

The setting for this Hannon love-in was the grounds of the Old Royal Naval College, with the River Thames providing an idyllic back drop for the intimate open-air concert.

Performing solo, Hannon took to the stage looking particularly dapper in a trademark suit, and with just a guitar and a piano to accompany him, proceeded to show that he has lost none of his razor sharp observational wit on life, and in particular, love.

He began by announcing that he would be playing the whole of his 'Bang there goes the Knighthood' album and he

duly did, all 12 songs.

Aware of his proximity to the heart of London's banking district, he dedicated 'The Complete Banker' to them. The irony was heavy as

Hannon asks in the opening line, 'Can anyone lend me ten billion quid?'

He dedicated the title track off the album to the News of the World, before belting out a tribute to his youth with the catchy 'At the Indie Disco', which included references to Morrissey, Blur, The Stone Roses and The Cure.

Hannon has magical stage presence, while all the time giving off an air that he could have been playing to a group of friends in his front room.

All the gaffs, and there were a few, were laughed off and contributed to the relaxed feel of the evening.

The pace slowed with the haunting 'When a man cries' only to be followed by the jaunty 'Can you stand on one leg' and impromptu joke telling.

Then it was into the hits. 'Alfie', 'Perfect Love Song', 'Jiggery Pokery' and the only cover of the night, The Pet Shop Boys' 'We were never being boring'.

The numbers 'Generation Sex', 'Geronimo' and 'Everybody Knows That I Love You' followed, though he resisted calls for 'My Lovely Horse' from Fr Ted, instead keeping fans of the sit-com happy with 'Songs of Love'.

'Our Mutual Friend' and 'Tonight We Fly' made up his first encore, but no one was going anywhere, despite the advancing hour, until Hannon had been hauled back on stage one more time to round off the most divine evening with "National Express".

By Shannon McGrath

