

My Brother Joe



Margaret Murphy, pictured with the Joe Dolan statue in the singer's home town of Mullingar.

There was a mood of happy nostalgia in the Theatre Royal for My Brother Joe (The Story of Joe Dolan). Put together by his older brother, Ben Dolan, who has assumed the role of paterfamilias or patriarch of the Mullingar family. The band is made up of family members, some friends from the original Joe Dolan Band, with two excellent female vocalists, Sandra and Karen.

The opening was slow with a voice "Are we right?" Then Ben Dolan launched into They're Gonna Put Me In The Movies and an odd World of Forgotten People. The audience sang along, waved, clapped, called out and cheered and were out to enjoy themselves.

Then interspersed with short remembrances of being on the showband and international circuit we got the Hits of Joe, Pretty Brown Eyes and Aching Breaking Heart. The girls shone in long sparkly dresses for Tar and Cement, Love Of The Common People and you could feel the love and memories.

With my wife Margret we visited Mullingar last year and posed at the bronze statue of Joe on a corner of the main street. It is an act of homage and a proud sharing of what Joe did for his hometown.

The hits kept coming: Make Me An Island, Teresa, I Need You, Sister Mary and The Westmeath Batchelor.

After the interval, some of the audience had an excess of chatty exuberance and Good Looking Woman lit up their night like the romance of Rainy Night in Paris, You Were Always On My Mind, Nothing But A Heartache, and you could sense Joe up there playing on the Back 9 in Heaven. Karen rocked with It's You It's You It's You, and Ben recited a touching The Treasure We Lost. Then it was a sea of waving hands, lots of happiness and memories of great nights at a Joe Show. The Answer To Everything, White Washed Gable, Saturday Night At The Movies, Sweet Little Rock and Roller and More And More And More. Karen stood on a darkened stage as Eoin Sheridan worked lighting magic for Goodbye Venice Goodbye, and into the encore the voice of Joe Dolan played into the music.

It was memorable, tasteful and sent a shiver through the audience. Goodbye Joe, Goodbye Venice, Goodbye friends taking home the glow of new memories.

Liam Murphy.