This is Tom Jones

It's not unusual for big stars to come to town these days, but none are bigger than Tom Jones. (Ice Palace, Sep 13)

This is a story of a Welsh boy from a church choir who became a real star. No one quite knows what he was like in his childhood (now he's over sixty), but fittingly for a future pop star, he didn't want to go to school and he didn't listen to his parents either, a conductor, mother, a housewife. Even from the very beginning he felt himself an artist and was getting onto his family's nerves asking them to "announce his entrance" from behind the house screen, and then to beat his hands clapping. Even then the young songwriter Thomas Jones Woodworth knew for sure that only music and girls are worth anything under this moon.

He got married early, at the tender age of seventeen. Only his grandmother approved of his maiden action saying that lovers should be together. The future proved her right. Tom and Melinda are still together like they were in their teens. They have a son and a grandson, houses in Bel Air and South Wales.

Various sources have a common opinion about each of Tom Jones songs: they are sensuous and thrilling. At some point the words and the voice of Jones' dressing room, and his head, doctors were scared enough to sign him. He proved successful, after an initial hit with "It's Not Unusual" Tom Jones had plenty more. Pretty much a regular fairy-tale. Las Vegas style: you win a million, you get married and you get buried in the desert, all in one night.

Gold discs after international hits. Paris in musicals after invitations to host a talk show. In the late 60s, just four years after his career was kick-started, Tom Jones found himself as a TV star, inviting on Aretha Franklin and Steve Wonder, Jarvis Cocker and Elvis Presley -- all of whom were his equals. Fast forward to late eighties -- Tom

International Panorama

In Russia there are fifteen World Heritage sites as defined by the United Nations. One photographer intends to capture them all using a unique technique.

When the Taliban authorities destroyed hundreds of unique religious statues and temples in Afghanistan earlier this year, one filmmaker and photographer in Belgium was enraged.

This Dutch says he was shocked at the loss of the ancient sites which now exist only in memory -- and photographs.

As a reaction to the destruction of a part of the world's cultural heritage, this decided to work for poverty the vast riches that remains.

Using the UNESCO list of designated World Heritage sites as a guide, he has embarked on a world-wide Odyssey to photograph all 960 sites in 122 countries so far.

You can view this work at Anglia British Elaine from September 1-30 or visit his website www.uit.de for further information.

Photo: www.uit.de © 2001

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