

TOMMY SANDS

Beyond *the Shadows*

Songs, stories & musicians

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To do and never to dream is worse than to dream but never to do: For to dream and never to do is to at least live in a rich state, even though it be an unnatural condition to striving humanity; but to do, and never to dream, is to humiliate that humanity into insignificance, and to dishonour the colour and form in that arrangement of things by God which man calls life.

Sean O'Casey

From The Shadow of O'Casey

01 The County Down

4:16

I used to play football for Saval. We were a good oul team until the boys started leaving to search for work in all comers of the globe. The girls would still come to cheer us on but if one young girl's lad had gone she couldn't cheer with the same heart.

THE COUNTY DOWN

When you're out walkin' and there's no one near you,
but a voice keeps calling and you hear your name
it's not the leaves or the whis-pr'ing breezes
it's me that's calling you back again

Oh can you hear me, Oh can you hear me?
As you roam through lonely London town
When evening's falling you'll hear me calling
Come on home to County Down

Do you remember the fiddlers playing
The songs and stories the whole night long?
It's little then that you thought of leaving
It seems so strange now that you are gone

The fish are dancing on Clanrye river
The teams are sporting in old Glenvale
My heart no longer can lead the cheering
When you're not playing it's a different game

I'm always dreaming that things are changing
And that they're building a factory tall
And young men needed again in Newry
But I still need you the most of all

02 Shadow of O'Casey

3:43

I always liked the work of Sean O' Casey but after meeting his 'loving' wife, Eileen and 'darling 'daughter, Shivaun, I felt I knew this great man much better. This is the title song from the show which I have been working on about O'Casey's life with Shivaun and the O'Casey Theatre Company.

SHADOW OF O'CASEY

CHORUS

There was joy there was sorrow, there were rocky roads to follow
And dreams for tomorrow when times were unkind
There were moments of glory and thousands of stories
Always before me, those were the times.

There was fear in the light of the morning
your childhood eyes did burn'
You could feel the pain inside them but the pain outside as well
For the slums of Dublin called you to rise against the tide
You took their songs of sorrow and you gave them songs of pride

When the smoke of change was rising,
you pondered with your pen
Are there new horizons or the old with a different name?
And the answers to your questions still knock upon our door
Are the strong still richer and are the weak still poor?

There were times you were lost and lonely, O'Casey all alone
Your two edged sword of truth, it cut through to the bone
But I can still hear you singing and I can still see your smile
For you opened the gate to the sweet meadows of the Summertime

03 Dresden

4:30

I was in ‘East’ Germany shortly after the wall came down. I found a great sense of celebration and jubilation but there was also a strange sense of sadness as well. True, there was a revolution going on but it was a revolution without songs. Maybe you can only write songs about dreams but in a sense a great dream had ended. Wo sind all die traume hin?

DRESDEN

Lenin Square in Dresden is lonelier today
For Hans and Ingrid’s only son has just moved away
He’s gone to the west side the land they call the free
Searching for another way to raise a family

Hans and Ingrid’s silent they can’t believe their eyes,
as memories of other times come flooding to their minds.
They gave the party everything that was their proudest boast
And the leaders of the nation were the ones they trusted most

CHORUS

Where have all the dreams gone, Wo sind all die traume hin?

Hans still can feel the bruises of Hitler’s cruel chains
And how he laughed and cried that night the Red Army came
And when the Allies bombed the town all the women and the men
They joined in with their own bare hands and they built it up again

And that’s how he met Ingrid the fairest of them all
A family’s sole survivor from that night the bombs did fall
And they swore they’d help to build a world where people could be friends
No hatred and no poverty, just one family of Man

The Berlin wall has long since gone the cheering’s died away
And Hans and Ingrid’s only son has written home today
I’m worried for my job, he said, I’m still so much in debt
With the children’s education and the paying for the flat
And last night I heard those screaming noises just outside the door
Is this the racial hatred that you feared so much before
Oh if only we could build a world where people could be friends
And Hans and Ingrid close their eyes and they see it all again

04 We Will Rise Again

3:32

One night at a party, somebody shouted “an old man has fallen down the stairs”. It was my father, he was 80 at the time. Everybody gathered round. Gabrial Scally, a doctor, lifted up my father’s eyelid. My Da looked at me with more white in his eye than blue and said “we’ll rise again, but not until I finish that song I started at the top of the stairs”. This song is about the indominatibility of the human spirit.

WE WILL RISE AGAIN

I have heard the Springtime singing
I have seen the young girls laughing
And I heard an old man sing this song
There’s a light in the eye never say die, We will rise again

I saw a child this morning he was crawling round the table
The next time that I saw him he was standing by my side
He took a step and fell again but somehow he was able
For then he started walking with the dancing in his eye

I heard the cold chains rattle and the keys of midnight turning
The body bent and lonely the spirit burning low
But I saw the sunlight beaming through the narrow cobweb window
Another day was dawning for another flower to grow

The flowers were in a circle they were resting on the table
The next of kin were standing in the doorway to the room
Some of them were saying that the good old days are over
But others they were saying that another day will come.

05 Flower of Fiddlers Green

4:12

Fiddlers Green is a mythical place, they say, where fishermen go if they don't go to hell. There's a real Fiddlers Green, however, in a clearing above the old oak forest in Rostrevor, County Down. It's here that people would gather and play music and rest for a while on their way up to Clough Mor (The big stone that Finn McCool flung across Carlingford Lough many years ago). This Fiddlers Green is a place both real and ideal.

FLOWER OF FIDDLERS GREEN

As I went a walking round by the shore
Up to the big stone they call Clough Mor,
I stopped for a while where the fiddles did play
And I spied a young maiden so charming and gay
Her gentleness moved me to her side
Her eyes were like diamonds whenever she smiled
And she was the fairest that ever you seen
I called her the flower of Fiddler's Green

CHORUS

Fiddler's Green, Fiddler's Green
It's there that I met her and loved her forever
Fiddler's Green, Fiddler's Green
By the dark rolling hills of Rostrevor

I said, would you like to come walking with me
Up to the mountain or down to the sea
Or over the meadow so green and so wide
Or pick the blue berries on Slieve Martin side
She whispered a wish at Bronagh's well
She danced with the fish in the Fairy Glen
And up on the hillside so proud and serene
I first kissed the Flower of Fiddler's Green

I've travelled the land, I've travelled the sea
But the one place of all that is dearest to me
Is that clearing of green up among the oak trees
The pride of all Ireland is Fiddler's Green
And one of these. days when my roving is o'er
I'll head for the hills by the dark Mourne shore
And there I will rest in the land of my dreams
Rolled in the arms of Fiddler's Green

06 When the Boys Come Rolling Home

2:52

I don't know how many grown men I've met, with a tear in their eye, looking into large pints, in Pubs from New York to San Francisco and saying things like "I think I'II go back home soon" They probably won't.

WHEN THE BOYS COME ROLLING HOME

I always will remember well the day we went away
Sailin' out of Belfast in the morning
Our hopes were on tomorrow as we kissed the girls farewell
But our dreams were on the day of our returning

There'll be dancin' romancin' and never more we'll roam
There'll be rolling in the hay there'll be whiskey in the tea
When the boys come rolling home

And when we reached the other side in New York city fair
In spite of wind and rain and stormy weather
We all sat down and drank a glass and wished each other well
And we said we'd all come back again together

Well Joe he went to Boston and Sam to Buffalo
And Pat went out as far as California
I used to get some letters then but that was long ago
And they always spoke of Ireland and returning

I must be over ninety now my grandson's by my bed
And here I'm in Chicago and still scheming
He says he'll take me back again to rest my weary head
And I'll leave him a legacy of dreaming

07 1999

4:08

During the course of the same week recently, I found myself in the headquarters of representatives of the two opposing fines in the Northern troubles. But when I looked out the window of each place I saw the same picture. The houses were the same the people wore the same and the problems were the same. At that moment I knew that eventually both sides would sit down and find a solution. the song asks the question . .. When?

1999

Oh I.R.A. and U.V.F. this song is just for you
As you sit down at the table now to see what you can do
At last you've come together after all the tears and time
It's sad you didn't do it back in Nineteen Sixty Nine

History calls you savages but I know that isn't true
For we grew up together and I am part of you
We all had dreams and hopes and fears and someone else to blame
It took so long to realise our dreams were all the same.

For our dreams were all the same but who would dare proclaim
in the anger and the pain our dreams were all the same

We felt the taste of hunger when the factory went away
And then they closed the hospital they said it didn't pay
And as the rich got richer and they promised us the sky
All we got were promises and coloured flags to fly

I remember well your little girl she had ribbons in her hair
When she came to play that Summer's day with the children in the square
To think they could be here today still laughing and alive
If strong men had been wise men in 1979

It was always all or nothing there was nothing in between
Compromise was treachery that's how it always seemed
Well now we're left with nothing but a future we must find
And count the cost of the chances lost in 1989

08 The Clown

3:35

The entertainer is up there on the stage trying to solve everyone's problems with a song or a smile. Sometimes it's the entertainer who needs the smile more than anyone.

THE CLOWN

CHORUS

Go and see the clown it's the funniest show in town
If you're feeling down, Go and see the clown

I walked into the surgery, the doctor urged me quietly
I've given everything to you, every pill in town
Still you're feeling sad and blue, the only thing that's left for you
Do what all the others do, go and see the clown

I walked up to the barman and he said you're looking sad again
Well I can give you whiskey, the best that's in the town
Still you're feeling sad and blue, the only thing that's left for you
Do what all the others do, go and see the clown

I wandered round from door to door, crying I can take no more
Seeking words of wisdom but the only words I found
Were, if you're feeling sad and blue, the only thing that's left for you
Do what all the others do, go and see the clown

I watched them standing in the line just like every other time
Waiting for the opening line of the funniest show in town
Underneath the funny hat, a tear dropped on the make-up
And I prayed they'd never ever learn that I was the clown

09 No Sleep Tonight

4:17

Working in the studio with Steve Cooney and Martin O'Connor at five in the morning I felt myself being carried all around the world by the rhythms of the music. I wrote this song for the 'crack' and recorded it 'live' as it were the lads in full flight and everybody in a mad sort of mood.

NO SLEEP TONIGHT

CHORUS

Do you feel alright? Oh aye. Will you dance all night? Oh aye
Till the morning light? There'll be no sleep tonight

Early to bed and early to rise makes you healthy, wealthy, wise
But now and then you need some fun, tonight's the night for everyone

Old Man Trouble, Old Man Care, We're goin to dance you out of here
Old Man Sorrow, Old Man Pain, Don't you ever come back again

Tonight we'll dance all round the world, east to west, pole to pole
From Old Ardboe:to New Orleans, from Africa to the Carribean

This song could go on all night, step it out the way you like
Sing it just the way you choose the words and tune belong to you

10 Red Wine

3:43

I was several thousand feet above the Great Lakes when the air hostess handed me a glass of red wine. It brought me back to a small town in the Italian Alps and a French girl that I met. The same girl is now looking over my shoulder as I write this so I will say no more.

RED WINE

CHORUS

Ev'rytime I drink red wine there's music in the air
I am yours and you are mine and love is ev'ry where

Remember Vipeteno in the high Italian snow
Cold the night but warm the love just you and I alone
An old man played a mandolin and a young girl poured the wine
And your eyes said all I longed to hear when you held your glass to mine

Then I went north and you went south on a sleepy midnight train
Like a moth in search of freedom fleeing from the flame
Did you find that Venice job? For long I never knew
But I often found a late night bar and I drank a health to you

Those far off times still warm the mind like a blanket the wind
And when no one's near I sometimes hear a lonely mandolin
So I'll drink to all the dreamers let the young girl pour the wine
And I'll look into your eyes again as you raise your glass to mine

11 Home Away from Home

3:59

It's always good to be back again with a song and a thank you for all the people who made me feel at home in the strangest of places and the warmest of places. "You give a meaning to my song and a reason for to carry on, you welcome me with open arms in a home away from home".

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

She said her name Mary Ann and she came from some place near Strabane
But over here in Melbourne, Ireland seemed so far away
She had a tape of Matt Molloy ten floors up in a lonely sky
I watched the tear come to her eye when she heard the music play

CHORUS

Home away from home!
Home away from home!
Home away from home!
Home away from home!

I remember Forty Second street and I couldn't find a place to sleep
Looking for a bite to eat to keep me from the cold
I saw a lonely laughing man beside a burning rubbish can
Waving whiskey in his hand sayin' "Welcome to my home"

I won't forget you Hamburg town and your sad bright lights going up and down
And the black girl that got lost and found in the Dally Dally room
God's the one I thank she said for my body and my dancing legs
Now my family can be fed in a home away from home.

It's so good to be back again and shake the hand of a friend again
I think about you often when the winter winds do blow
You give a meaning to my song and a reason for to carry on
You welcome me with open arms in a home away from home.

12 Make Me Want to Stay

3:19

A song for the parting. I'll say no more.

MAKE ME WANT TO STAY

Don't look at me that way. You know it isn't easy
To pack my bags again and wander far away
And leave you here alone with the sadness in your smiling
It wouldn't take much more to make me want to stay

CHORUS

Make we want to stay, make me want to stay
Well you know it wouldn't take much more
To make me want to stay

Don't sing that song again, the one about believing
That in the darkest hour, our love will find a way
And why must you wait til the moment I am leaving
It wouldn't take much more to make me want to stay

Don't hold me close that way I can't resist temptation
No matter where I roam I'll think of you each day
And I'll whisper very low but you won't hear what I'm saying
Please hold me one more time and make me want to stay.

The musicians

TOMMY SANDS — guitar and mandolin

STEVE COONEY — guitar, bass, keyboards on Home Away From Home, Dresden, The County Down, Make Me Want to Stay and We Will Rise Again, guitar and bass on The Clown, Red Wine and No Sleep Tonight.

MÁIRTÍN O 'CONNOR — accordion.

KIERAN GOSS — guitar on Home Away From Home, Red Wine, Shadow of O'Casey, 1999, and Flower of Fiddlers Green.

COLUM SANDS — Double Bass on Boys Come Rolling Home, concertina on Home Away From Home.

BEN SANDS — vocal harmonies everywhere except Dresden, mandolin on Flower of Fiddlers Green.

ANN SANDS — backing vocals on Home Away From Home, Flower of Fiddlers Green, The County Down and We Will Rise Again.

FIONAN AND MOYA SANDS — backing vocals on The Clown.

SHIVAUN O'CASEY — backing vocals on Shadow of O'Casey.

ILONA WILDERBRAND — backing vocals on Dresden.

TAO SEEGER — backing vocals and percussion on Boys Come Rolling Home.

ARTY McGLYNN — guitar on Boys Come Rolling Home, 1999, Shadow of O'Casey.

NEIL MARTIN — cello on 1999.

NUALA TOHILL — viola on Dresden.

JAMES BLENNERHASSET — bass on Shadow of O'Casey, 1999, Flower of Fiddlers Green.

NOLLAIG CASEY — fiddle.

BRENDAN MONAGHAN — uillean pipes and whistle.

DAVE EARLEY — drums and percussion.

Credits & acknowledgements

All songs written and composed by TOMMY SANDS Published by Elm Grove Music Produced by: TOMMY SANDS, COLUM SANDS & KIERAN GOSS Engineered by: COLUM SANDS

Recorded and mixed at: Spring Studios, Rostrevor, Co. Down, N, Ireland Cover Painting: J.B. Vallely Photography: Bobby Hanvey & Esler Crawford

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to .... Steve Cooney, magical musician and inspiring friend; Máirtín O'Connor, accordionic acrobat; Kieran Goss, the ideas and the smile: Colum, coach and confidant; Ben, master of harmonies; Ann, high notes; Shivaun O'Casey, Ilona Wilderbrand, Arty McGlynn and Nollaig Casey, Neill Martin, Nuala Tohill, James Blennemasset, Brendan Monaghan, Dave Earley, Tao Seeger, Fionan, Moya and Catherine, Bobbie Hanvey, John B. Vallely, Siegfried Maeker, Birgit Kuhn, Jorg Walter, Caroline Quandt, Niall Buggy, Robbie O'Connell, Mick Moloney, Jimmy Keane, Seamus Egan, Eileen Eivers, Marv Rowley and Jack Mitchell.

CONTACT

tommysands.com

info@tommysands.com