

'There's always time for a bit of INNUENDO'

Mel Giedroyc talks candidly about motherhood, sacrifices and her debut on the *Strictly* stage

From *Light Lunch* to *The Great British Bake Off*, we're more used to seeing Mel Giedroyc as part of a duo, but this year, she's stepping onto the stage solo as host of *Strictly Come Dancing Live!* Mel, 47, lives in London with TV director husband Ben and daughters Florence, 13, and Vita, 11. Her on-screen family for the past six years has been made up of Mary Berry, Paul Hollywood and old uni mate and comedy counterpart Sue Perkins, but the comedian and presenter is looking forward to joining Len, Craig and Bruno for some tongue-in-cheek 'bants' on the *Strictly* dancefloor. We caught up with the busy mum-of-two to find out how she'll keep things going at home when she's on the road, and how she feels about stepping out without her buddy Sue.

I don't believe in that saying 'You can have it all'. You can't. You have to balance, sacrifices get made - sometimes in the work camp and sometimes in the family camp and it's hard. I'm very lucky because the girls are so level headed - they're only 11 and 13, but they're very solid, great people and I'm really proud. It helps that I have such a supportive partner, too.

Ben's a brilliant dad. It annoys me really, because he's probably better than I am. You always think dads are great at the fun things, when they go off and do the crazy day at Chessington World of Adventures. Ben does all that, but he's also great at everything else: organising, multitasking and he works, too. It's really nice to share everything equally, because I did a couple of years pretty much solidly at home when Ben was away working and I found



it difficult. I much prefer it when both of us are around and we can just pass the baton. It's 50/50 all the way now.

It's a nightmare sometimes when it all goes to s*.** We don't have regular childcare - ours is made up of school, each other, long-suffering friends and my sister. We've got a good support network, but there are weeks where suddenly it all goes crazy and you look at the diary and think, 'what are we going to do?!'

My authority at home is really waning. I find it very hard to be authoritative with a 13-year-old who's taller than me and an 11-year-old who has bigger feet than I do. It's game over when they're bigger than you.

I'm not on Twitter. But we talk to the girls constantly about social media and I know the school do as well. You don't want them

Feature Anna Matheson Photography Rex; Andrew Crowley/Camera Press



Mel with Bake Off buddies Sue Perkins and Mary Berry

It's hard to find time, but I try to see my friends as much as possible. I have five close friends from school. We've known each other since we were 11. They know everything - the good and the bad bits. They're like your slippers, dressing gown and favourite pillow all rolled into one. Sue and I would love to see each other more. Back in the day, we hung out five days a week. Nowadays, we'll go for a curry to catch up and laugh about the ludicrous things we've done in the past. Doing *Bake Off* together is lovely because all four of us (Mary and Paul, too) stay in the same hotel.

It's such an honour to be asked to host the *Strictly* tour. Spectacular does not even begin to cover it. There's lights, music, action, sequins, banter and so much more... hopefully, there's some good snacks as well - for me that's always a bonus. My role is very much, get people on, get people off, but I hope within that there's always time for some innuendo!

I'd love to learn to dance properly, but so far I've said no to actually competing on *Strictly*. It would just pain me so much not to be able to watch it on the couch on a Saturday night with my girls and my husband - although he pretends he doesn't like it! I like the idea of doing a Russell Grant one day and going on for sheer entertainment value - being blown out of cannons, put on harnesses and flown in, that kind of thing!

*** Mel Giedroyc is hosting *Strictly Come Dancing Live!* touring 22 January to 14 February 2016. For info and tickets, visit strictlycomedancinglive.com**

going into this crazy world unawares. I'm a complete Luddite with technology. I've no idea even how to get on Facebook.

were rigorous about letting the baby sleep through and I thank god they were because I turn into Medusa if I don't have a good

Both girls have a good sense of humour - some cracking gags come out of their mouths. One of them is already saying, 'Absolutely not!' about going into comedy. She probably looks at me and thinks, 'I don't want to end up like that!'

'The best mum advice I was ever given was crack open the wine before 4pm. It's not a sin'

The best mum advice I was ever given was crack open the wine before 4pm. It's not a sin. Both my mum and mother-in-law

night's sleep. There's that whole idea of sleep in the same bed and wake five times a night, but sod that.

Getting dressed is one of the most stressful things. I'm so bad at it. Just leaving the house with any make-up on and my hair

washed is like a red-letter day. I'm in awe of those women on the tube going to work: high heels, tights with no ladders, amazing hair and make-up. They must get up at 5am!

MY BIG LOVES

♥ **BOOKS** If a magic wand was waved and I suddenly didn't have to ever work again, I'd spend every waking hour reading. I just love it.
♥ **THE BAKE OFF** It's such a part of my life

now. It's a joy. I look at it in my diary when filming comes round each year and go, 'YESSSS!'
♥ **MARY BERRY** She's just brilliant. She's an incredibly principled person and has that old-school sense of duty with a wonderfully fun-loving side. If I can be half

as fun as her when I'm 80, I'll be a blessed individual.
♥ **DATE NIGHTS** Ben and I love going out together to the movies or something, but we have to be discreet. The girls absolutely hate it if we say we're going on a date. They go, 'Eww, you can't kiss!' It's hilarious!