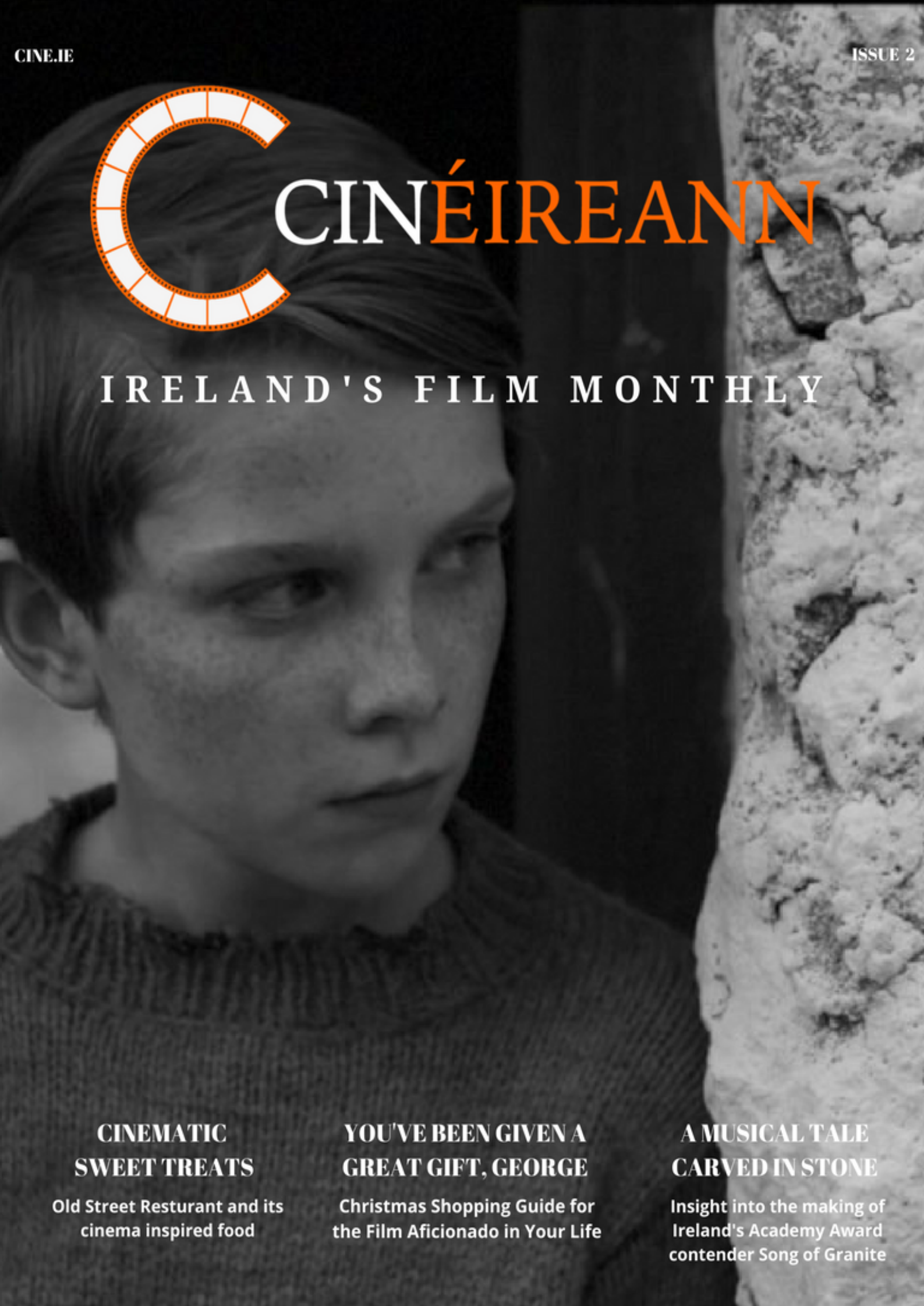
CINE.IE

ISSUE 2

CINÉIREANN

IRELAND'S FILM MONTHLY



CINEMATIC SWEET TREATS

Old Street Resturant and its cinema inspired food

YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN A GREAT GIFT, GEORGE

Christmas Shopping Guide for the Film Aficionado in Your Life

A MUSICAL TALE CARVED IN STONE

Insight into the making of Ireland's Academy Award contender Song of Granite

Contents

December 2017

12

Feature: Song of Granite

Interviews with director Pat Collins, editor Tadhg O'Sullivan, and director of photography Richard Kendrick

Regulars

Features

CINÉIREANN

Published Monthly by Scannain Media

ENQUIRIES
Advertising: advert@cine.ie
Editorial: editor@cine.ie
Submissions: submit@cine.ie

SOCIAL MEDIA
w: cine.ie
f: CinEireann
t: CinEireann

EDITORIAL

Editor
Niall Murphy

Contributors

Jason Coyle
Darren Mooney
Ronan Doyle
James Mulvey
Conor Murphy
Luke Dunne
Glenn Kaufmann

THE DIFFICULT SECOND EDITORIAL

There's a great many topics of concern within the creative arts and entertainment industry at present. But none are more concerning than the apparently never-ending series of sexual assault, harassment and bullying accusations being levelled at leading figures in the entertainment and political arena.

It is shameful that these have gone unreported and under-reported for so long, and that certain key individuals in the industry have been able to get away with predatory and illegal behaviour for so long. The last few months have hopefully served as a wake-up call for those who have either wilfully ignored complaints or turned a blind eye to them.

Just this week the Silence Breakers who spoke out against sexual assault and harassment were named TIME's Person of the Year 2017. It is crucial that the media report these things and that people who have been victimised feel that they can share their stories so that the harassers can be reprimanded and potential other victims spared.

Closer to home Amplify Women, an umbrella group of organisations who represent, or carry out research, on women working in the cultural and media industries in Ireland has issued a Harassment Toolkit, outlining what constitutes harassment and how it should be reported. The Toolkit also outlines organisations that exist to help support people who have been subjected to harassment. Amplify Women has the support and consist of some of the key industry players: Women in Film & Television, Irish Equity, Women in Animation, Members of #WakingTheFeminists, Writers Guild of Ireland, Broadly Speaking, Screen Producers Ireland, and Screen Directors Guild of Ireland. Details of the Toolkit are in the Industry news section of this edition.

While the Toolkit has been published by Amplify Women it is important to remember that harassment is not defined by gender, nor is it perpetrated exclusively by one gender. Any person could be affected by it and many may not feel that they can even mention it. That is something that must change. It is imperative that incidents like this be brought into the light so that people are not left alone, afraid, or in the darkness.
Bullying in all of its forms is wrong, plain and simple. Having a position of power or perceived power is not an invitation to behave in a manner that goes against basic human decency and common courtesy.

We have a way to go yet to get true equality in our society. There is no getting away from that. But it is on each of us to ask how can we make it fairer? How can we make it equitable? And how can we best help those around us to do their best work?

Everyone benefits when everyone feels part of the same journey. It's not about backing one gender at the expense of another, or promoting one ideal over another. It's about ensuring that everyone has the same chance.

A simple statement, but a long and complicated road. The first step on that road is acknowledging what can and must be improved.

Niall Murphy
Managing Editor

INDUSTRY NEWS

In response to the revelations of harassment in Irish theatre, the #MeToo and #IrishWeinstein hashtags, **Amplify Women**, an umbrella group that represents, works with or carries out research about women working in the cultural and media industries, has produced a toolkit for dealing with harassment and bullying in the workplace. The guide details what to do if experiencing harassment. It provides advice on making a complaint at work, or a criminal complaint, and includes useful information on who to contact and links to further information.

The toolkit, it is hoped, will offer both freelance workers and employees of any gender access to a suite of key resources, reporting mechanisms and general advice on how to deal with harassment in the workplace.

"The recent and ongoing allegations regarding harassment in a whole range of sectors points to a real issue for all types of workers - both contract and permanent. We felt that it was hugely important to get as much clear information as possible together, so people know how to respond to such issues if they arise. We hope that it makes people feel empowered to report issues, and secure to know that supports and resources are available to them."
Sarah Kieran, Co-Chair of Women in Film and Television, Ireland

While organisational culture is at the core of creating a supportive working environment for all, where bullying and harassment happens in a workplace, staff do need to know their rights, and employers need to respect them.

The Amplify Women Harassment Toolkit can be accessed here.

Amplify Women is an umbrella group of organisations who represent, or carry out research about women working in the cultural and media industries. The organisations distributing and endorsing this initiative are: Women in Film & Television, Irish Equity, Women in Animation, Broadly Speaking, Members of #WakingTheFeminists, Writers' Guild of Ireland, Screen Producers Ireland, Screen Directors Guild of Ireland, Women on Air.

Following an internal review of its Screenplay Development Scheme which supports writers, writing teams and writer and director teams, Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board (IFB) has announced revisions to the scheme which will re-open for applications in 2018.

The amended scheme will now be divided into two categories with Screenplay Development open to established writers and directors and New Writing Development open to new writers and directors. Each scheme will have a bespoke funding programme. In addition to the funding award, successful applicants of the New Writing Development initiative will have access to mentorship, workshopping and screenwriting and industry experts.

The deadline for receipt of applications for Screenplay Development is 31st January 2018 and for New Writing Development it is 28th February 2018.

Full details are available in the Guidance Note and from the IFB website.

Northern Ireland Screen's Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF) and the Celtic Media Festival have announced a new bursary fund to commemorate the late Aodán Mac Póilin.

Ciste Cuimhneacháin Aodáin Mhic Phóilin will offer Irish speakers working in the production sector in Northern Ireland the opportunity to develop a television project that would reflect some or many of the wide and varied interests of the former ILBF chair Aodán Mac Póilin. As well as £5,000 development funding, successful applicants will also travel to the Celtic Media Festival in Llanelli, Wales next May to pitch the project to broadcasters.

Applications from those who are relatively new to the sector and who have not yet attended the Celtic Media Festival are particularly encouraged. Applications will be selected by the ILBF Investment Committee and broadcaster representatives. Successful applicants can also apply for production funding through the ILBF funding rounds.
Read More

Josepha Madigan has been appointed as Minister for Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. Madigan replaces outgoing minister Heather Humphries, who moves to the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

Madigan is a first-time TD, elected at the 2016 General Election to represent Dublin-Rathdown. A family law solicitor by trade, Josepha Madigan is also an author, having self-published a novel, *Negligent Behaviour*, set amidst the Dublin legal world, back in 2011.

"Minister Madigan will build on the work of Minister Humphreys in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and will drive forward the Government's agenda for arts, culture and heritage, including the Creative Ireland programme, an ambitious ten year capital plan for the arts and multi-annual increases in funding for culture and heritage."
Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach

SHORTS IN SHORT

The 30th **Foyle Film Festival** recently announced their Light in Motion competition winners in Derry. The festival is one of only a handful of International festivals with Oscar® affiliation and BAFTA recognition.

Irish filmmaker Steve Kenny's short film ***Time Traveller***, is in contention for an Oscar®, after being selected as the winner of Best Irish Short. The film, featuring actor Barry Ward tells the heart warming story about a *Back To The Future* obsessed traveller boy who strives to build his own DeLorean replica before his family are evicted from their halting site.

The winner of the Best International Short, ***Catch of the Day***, will also qualify for consideration at the 2019 Academy Awards. ***Catch of the Day*** is a directorial debut for Welsh filmmaker Geraint Reyonds. The film tells the story of Dylan who is caring for his dying wife Gwen as he relives bitter-sweet memories of their life together.

The award for Best Animation went to Derry director Tom Collins for ***An Béal Bocht (The Poor Mouth)***, an animated adaptation of Flann O'Brien's only novel written in Irish. ***An Béal Bocht*** is a biting satire of the life of a young Gael reflecting on his life from Sligo Gaol. The film also picked up an award at the Galway Film Fleadh earlier this year for Best First Animation.

The awards, sponsored by City of Derry Crystal, were presented ahead of the sold-out Closing Gala screening of *The Man Who Invented Christmas* in Brunswick Moviebowl, brought to a close ten days of premieres, special events and industry networking. This year the Oscar®-affiliated festival welcomed a host of special guests that included Richard E Grant and Jim Sheridan to mark the milestone 30th anniversary.

LIM AWARD – BEST IRISH SHORT: ***Time Traveller*** directed by Steve Kenny
LIM AWARD – BEST INTERNATIONAL SHORT: ***Catch of the Day*** directed by Geraint Reynolds
LIM AWARD – BEST SHORT ANIMATION: ***An Beal Bocht/The Poor Mouth*** directed by Tom Collins

The **Film Devour Short Film** Festival 2018 is now accepting submissions from local filmmakers. The event is due to take place on Monday 8th January at the Blackbox in Belfast and submissions are now open.

The Film Devour Short Film Festival began in 2010 with an aim of providing a platform for local filmmakers, writers and actors to screen their films, network and co-ordinate ideas.

Film entries are free and offer an opportunity of winning the Audience Choice or Directors Choice Awards.

Submission forms and entry guidelines available here.

The **Belfast Film Festival** runs from Thursday 12th – Saturday 21st April 2018 and is open for submissions to its three competition strands (Short Film/ Short Documentary Film/ Maysles Brothers Award) as well as the Northern Ireland Independents showcase.

The NI Independents showcase presents a series of locally made feature and medium length films produced on micro-budgets and developed by their makers with their own money and in their own time.

Last year the Belfast Film Festival separated the Short Film Competition into two strands: Dramatic Fiction and Documentary. All criteria can be found on the submissions page.

PIO Media, the company behind last year's award-winning Leap of Faith will produce this year's Film Offaly bursary winner, ***Red Rag***.

More people are killed in Ireland by bulls every year than are killed by sharks in Australia. This short film is a thriller set in rural Ireland that tells the story of woman who flees an abusive relationship only to get trapped in her car by a huge bull. It explores themes of domestic violence and features a great female central hero. This is a breakneck paced suspense thriller that oozes tension till the edge of the seat climax. Think "CUJO", with beef.

For more info or to get involved click on the FundIt page.

Director Eimear Callaghan has released her short film ***Groundless*** on Vimeo so that all can watch it. The film won Best First Short Drama at the 2016 Galway Film Fleadh.

Groundless tells the story of a single mother who, despite her best efforts, keeps getting sucked back into her cruel reality.

The short stars Aoibhinn McGinnity, Dave Duffy, Glen Nee, Sam Hardy, and Evan Darcy. It was produced by Anthony McDonagh and written by Callaghan.

FÉILTE/FESTIVAL NEWS

Irish short film ***Wave*** is again in contention for an Oscar®, after being selected as the Grand Prix Irish Short winner at the **Cork Film Festival 2017** Awards Ceremony .

Benjamin Cleary and TJ O'Grady Peyton's winning short is already on the longlist for the 90th Academy Awards® in the Live Action Short Film category thanks to its win at the Galway Film Fleadh in July and reinforces that placing with this win. The award was presented by RTÉ Supporting the Arts, principal media partner of the Cork Film Festival and given by Colm Crowley, RTÉ Cork.

Wave tells the story of Gasper Rubicon, who wakes from a coma speaking a fully formed but unrecognisable language. Cleary's 2015 short, *Stutterer* won the Oscar® for Best Live Action Short at the 88th Academy Awards®.

The winner of the Grand Prix International Short Award, Mahdi Fleifel's ***A Drowning Man*** (Denmark, Greece, UK), will also automatically qualify for the Academy Awards® longlist.

Linda Curtin's ***Everything Alive is in Movement***, as the winner of the Best Cork Short, while Best Documentary Short went to Mia Mullarkey's ***Mother & Baby***, a documentary on survivors of the Tuam mother and baby home, which had its world premiere as part of the Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board World Premiere Shorts programme.

Untitled directed by Michael Glawogger and Monika Will, won the Gradam Na Féile Do Scannáin Faisnéise / Award for Cinematic Documentary. The Gradam Spiorad Na Féile / Spirit of The Festival Award went to Rima Das'Village Rockstars. An honourable mention went to Dafydd Flynn for his performance in Frank Berry's ***Michael Inside***, which won the Audience Award.

The Cork Film Festival Nomination for the 2018 European Short Film Awards was Sebastian Lang's ***Container***.

The Cork Film Festival Youth Jury Award went to ***Last Man in Aleppo***, directed by Feras Fayyad.

The Cork Film Festival will return for its 63rd edition in November 2018.

The **Audi Dublin International Film Festival** has announced the Irish premiere of Nora Twomey's animated feature film, ***The Breadwinner*** and the launch of the Silent Cinema programme for the 2018 festival, which runs February 21st to March 4th.

The Breadwinner, directed by Nora Twomey and executive-produced by Angelina Jolie, will make its Irish premiere at ADIFF 2018. Co-produced by the award-winning Irish animation studio Cartoon Saloon (*The Secret of Kells,The Song Of The Sea*) and based on Deborah Ellis' acclaimed novel, ***The Breadwinner*** tells the extraordinary story of an 11-year-old Afghan girl Parvana, born into an ever-changing world of conflict and Taliban oppression, who must disguise herself as a boy to become her family's sole breadwinner.

With a team of over 200 animators, artists and actors from around the world, Twomey has created an innovative mix of 2-D animation with acrylic and digitally painted environments, as well as digital paper cut–out segments, all blended into a captivating story about family, friendship, and imagination. The film is a co-production with Aircraft Pictures Canada, Melusine Productions Luxembourg and Irish animation studio, Cartoon Saloon.

The Irish premiere of ***The Breadwinner*** will take place on February 22nd, 2018 ,at Cineworld Dublin, on Parnell Street. The film is on general release in Ireland and the UK via Element Pictures and StudioCanal on May 25th, 2018.

In addition the full Fantastic Flix programme has been announced and is on sale at www.diff.ie. ADIFF wants to make some exciting new memories for your family with the exciting Fantastic Flix programme running from 1st – 4th March 2018, including children's films from around the world, workshops, short film selections, and special events.

Highlights of this year's Fantastic Flix programme include and the Fantastic Flix shorts programme; ***Big Bad Fox and Other Tales*** (8+), a tender animation about a Fox that thinks it's a chicken, a Rabbit that acts like a stork, and a Duck who wants to replace Father Christmas; and the heart-warming ***Cloudboy*** (10+) where cityboy Niilas, who is sent to his mother in Lapland, takes a jaunt into the nearby magical woods and embarks on a wild adventure.

There will also be special in-person appearances at the 2018 festival by ***Cloudboy*** director Meikeminne Clinckspoor and Nora Twomey, director of the Irish animated feature film, ***The Breadwinner***.

Big Bad Fox and Other Tales

Cloudboy

Room 213

The Breadwinner

PRODUCTION NEWS

Breaking Glass Pictures has acquired the U.S. rights to Rebecca Daly's third feature, ***Good Favour***, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival earlier this year.

The film follows a young man named Tom who walks out of an immense forest into the lives of a strictly devout Christian community carving out a remote existence in central Europe. As Tom is initiated into their farming life and scriptural regime, he discovers the community is suffering a crisis of faith following a devastating loss.

The film is written by Daly with her writing partner Glenn Montgomery, with whom she wrote *The Other Side of Sleep* and *Mammal*. It stars Vincent Romeo, Lars Brygmann, Clara Rugaard, Alexandre Willaume, Victoria Mayer, and Helena Coppejans.

Good Favour is produced by John Keville and Conor Barry of Savage Productions alongside Benoit Roland of Wrong Men, and Monica Hellstrom, Signe Byrge Sorensen, and Marleen Slot. It was financed by the Irish Film Board with the support of Wallonia le Centre du Cinéma et de L'audiovisuel de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, the Danish Film Institute, and Netherlands Film Fund with support by FilmFyn.

This deal was brokered by Visit Films' Ryan Kampe and Lydia Rodman with Rich Wolff on behalf of Breaking Glass Pictures.

Wildcard Distribution will release the film in Ireland next year.

Rebecca Daly

Following a BA in Drama and English and an MA in Film, Daly directed her first short, ***Joyriders***, in 2006. Daly's first feature film, ***The Other Side of Sleep,*** was selected for the Cannes Résidence du Festival. It premiered in the Directors Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival and was included in the official selection of the Toronto International Film Festival 2011. Her second feature ***Mammal***, starring Rachel Griffiths and Barry Keoghan, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2016.

IFC Films has acquired the U.S. distribution rights to Haifaa Al-Mansour's ***Mary Shelley***, a biopic of the *Frankenstein* author, co-produced by Parallel Films. The film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival this year.

The film stars Elle Fanning as Mary and Douglas Booth as Percy Shelley, alongside Maisie Williams, Bel Powley, Joanne Froggatt and Tom Sturridge, and Stephen Dillane. Al-Mansour directs from a script co-written with Emma Jensen and Conor McPherson. Alan Moloney and Ruth Coady produce for Parallel Films, with Amy Baer of Gidden Media.

Funding for ***Mary Shelley*** came from the Irish Film Board, the BFI, Hanway Films, the Luxembourg Film Fund, Ingenious Media, and Sobini Films.

Out of Orbit has completed principal photography in Northern Ireland on its debut feature thriller ***The Dig***. A murderer returns home to help the victim's father find closure...and the body.

The film stars Moe Dunford (*Patrick's Day, Vikings*), Emily Taaffe (*Beast, Paula*), Francis Magee (*Jimmy's Hall, Rogue One*) and Lorcan Cranitch (*The Legend of Longwood, Love, Rosie*).

The screenplay, written by Belfast native Stuart Drennan, was developed through Northern Ireland Screen's New Talent Focus scheme with Lottery funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Brothers Ryan and Andrew Tohill will direct while Brian J. Falconer will produce.

The Tohill Brothers have directed several short films together. Their most recent short, *Insulin*, was a prequel for the critically acclaimed The Survivalist. Their previous short, *Eyeline*, was very well received on the festival circuit winning the Up and Coming Filmmakers award at the Cornwall Film Festival and was a finalist in the Soho Rushes Shorts in 2012.

As well as directing, Ryan has worked in the art Department of several TV productions. Andrew has worked in post-production for several years. As well as editing their own shorts he has also worked on numerous television dramas and documentaries. This will be their first feature-length film as directors
Brian J. Falconer, is a 2016 BFI Vision Award recipient, a 2015 Guiding Lights participant, producer of the 2016 Royal Television Society (RTS) award-winning *We Are You* and the 2015 BAFTA award winning and Academy Award® nominated short film *Boogaloo and Graham*.

The production team also includes Angus Mitchell (*The Good Man*) as Director of Photography and Production Designer Ashleigh Jeffers (*The Frankenstein Chronicles*).

The Dig shot entirely in Northern Ireland with funding from the Northern Ireland Screen Fund supported by Invest NI and from post-production house, Yellow Moon.

Previous feature films to come through Northern Ireland Screen's New Talent Focus scheme include Chris Baugh and Brendan Mullin's *Bad Day for the Cut*, Stephen Fingleton's *The Survivalist* and Michael Lennox's *A Patch of Fog*.

THE HISTORY OF FILM AT SECOND LEVEL

Words: Conor Murphy

One of the highlights of my school life was being asked to get the video trolley from its home in the central area, and roll it to class. A heavy cart with an incongruously balanced cathode ray television on the top bunk, underneath which was a VHS player the size of a concrete block, and just as aesthetically pleasing.

As you went around the corners you were always worried that the television would fall prey to the countervailing forces and take a tumble from its precarious perch. The physics of the video trolley were of a separate nature to those that ruled the natural world, though, and the television always remained secure. Maybe the concrete block helped.

Widescreen hadn't taken hold yet so the television was 4:3 and the films played on it were always pan-and-scan, with ads. Without any budget for actual official VHS purchases the teachers of the 80s recorded everything from RTE and, if we were lucky, the British channels.

Memorably in Art class we were shown the animated version of Lord of The Rings, the sequels to which our teacher, Frankie, lamented would probably never be made. He was right. The only other film I can remember watching was one about the Holocaust, in religion. I remember many, many ads blurring past with a hyperactive whirr of the tape.

Those days Film was seen as a diversion or, at best, a simple way of getting a message across. It was never intended to be studied in its own right. Film wasn't that important.

Film education at second level has changed. Film is now an integral part of the English curriculum, from Junior Cycle all the way up to the Leaving Cert. This change started with the 2000-2001 cohort of 6th years, the revamped Leaving Cert English exam of that year included a film element. Film's place at second level was reinforced with the 2016-2017 Junior Cycle 3rd years (although it wasn't part of their purposefully unpredictable final exam that year, 2017).

This, though, is a small part of the Art course. The question is unpredictable and not based on any list of predictable possibilities. You have to be very lucky to be able to answer the film question.

Film's place within the English Leaving Cert curriculum is as part of a comparative question. Students study three texts from a list of a possible thirty-eight. The list contains novels, graphic novels, memoirs, plays, fiction films, and, lately, documentaries. From this list the teacher, often in consultation with their students, picks three texts. Only one of these can be a film. Quite often the three texts consist of a novel, play and film.

Before this Film could only be found in the Art exam or the Ordinary Level Junior Cert English exam. Whereas things have changed for the English Ordinary Level student, Art still contains a question on film. In 2016 the Art question was quite thorough: 'The exploits of characters from comics and graphic novels are brought to life by actors through the medium of film. Discuss this statement with reference to any named film based on a comic or graphic novel. In your answer refer to costume design, set design, colour, special effects and camera techniques. AND Briefly outline your visual concepts for a short film based on a historical character of your choice.'

These three texts are then compared under a number of headings, or 'modes'. At Higher Level these are: Cultural Context, Literary Genre, Theme and Issue and General Vision and Viewpoint. At Ordinary Level the modes are: Social Setting, Relationships, Theme and Hero and Villain.

The first films to be appear on the list of text were indicative of the middle-class background and tastes of those who chose the texts. Kenneth Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing*, Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves*, James Ivory's *A Room With A View*, Carol Reed's *The Third Man*, Jim Sheridan's *My Left Foot* and

Guiseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso* had the honour of leading the way for Film Studies at second level. The latest list, for those doing their exams in 2019, contains John Crowley's *Brooklyn*, Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, Asghar Farhadi's *About Elly*, Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, Alex Holmes' *Stop at Nothing: The Lance Armstrong Story*, Tom Hooper's *Les Miserables* and Jason Reitman's *Juno*. What is interesting about the list is the fact that a Shakespearean adaptation has been replaced by a musical.


Brooklyn

The list of films can be broken down into four broad categories; Irish films, 'foreign' films, classics, modern films and adaptations. The fact that for many years one of the films had to be a Shakespearean adaptation is very telling. Film was important enough to be included but, really, it wasn't real art. After all they could sacrifice one of the films for an adaptation of what they must have considered to be a far superior art form.

The films that have appeared over the years vary greatly from such fare as *Inside I'm Dancing*, *Death of a Superhero*, *Il Postino* and *Billy Elliot* to *Blade Runner*, *Rear Window*, *On the Waterfront* and *Citizen Kane*. All tastes have been catered for.


Cinema Paradiso

When we delve into the actual teaching of the texts we find that none of the modes really opens the door to Film being studied as an art form of its own. Although aspects of Film language can be referred to in all the modes, most especially Literary Genre, Film language is never a central pillar of the conversation. How can it be when it is being studied as part of English?

Although Film became part of English undergraduate courses by the end of the 1990s (as it was part of mine in UCC) it has since moved out of this restrictive categorisation. At second level this move was reversed when film was included in the new Junior Cycle. Here it became embedded within the study of English. The new Learning Outcomes (the basis of everything to be taught and learned up to 3rd year) includes statements explaining that students must be able to 'Select key moments from their texts and give thoughtful value judgements on the main character, a key scene, a favourite image Specification Junior Cycle English 20 from a film, a poem, a drama, a chapter, a media or web based event.' (Known as R7, reading outcome 7)


Inside I'm Dancing

effectiveness of key moments from their texts commenting on characters, key scenes, favourite images from a film, a poem, a drama, a chapter, a media or web based event.' (W8, or writing outcome number 8)

Here again, though, film is still stuck within the constraints of a subject it only tangentially meets. Sound and vision are not part of your usual reading and writing heavy English curriculum.

Students at this level can pick from ten films; Roberto Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful*, Niki Caro's *Whale Rider*, Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It Like Beckham*, Garth Jennings' *Son of Rambow*, Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter*, Richard Linklater's *School of Rock*, Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*, Jim Sheridan's *In America*, Stephen Spielberg's *E.T.* and Benh Zeitlin's *Beasts of the Southern Wild*. An interesting group of films varying wildly in terms of critical appreciation.

Film's place as part of English is a controversial decision and one that can be alleviated by the choice of film included. With this in mind I asked a few of the Irish film Twitterati what films they would include on the list. The films mentioned varied from the purposely popular *The Dark Knight* (Darren Mooney's choice) to classics like *Stagecoach* (Donald Clarke's choice). *Paths of Glory* (Hugh Linehan), *Pleasantville* (Liam Burke), *Bicycle Thieves* (John Maguire) and *Zodiac* (Niall Murphy) were other notable suggestions.

Video trollies are gone but so is film as a distraction. Films, whether streamed, downloaded or on DVDs, are finally being seen as an artform suitable for study. Hopefully this is only the start and Film can stretch out of the restrictive and confusing place within the English curriculum and into other subjects where the full art form can be discussed, debated and appreciated.

In America


Spirited Away


The Dark Knight

CRITICISM HAS EXISTED AS LONG AS ART ITSELF

ARTICLE BY DARREN MOONEY

Early in Mel Brooks' *History of the World: Part I*, narrator Orson Welles suggests the history of the art through paintings on cave walls. "With the birth of the artist, came the inevitable afterbirth," reflects Welles, as one member of the tribe proceeds to urinate upon the finished cave painting. "The critic."

Many academics point to Aristotle's *Poetics* as the first substantial work of literary criticism, dating back to the fourth century. The philosopher discussed and explored the impact and technique of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Criticism has taken many forms over the millennia.

It seems fair to describe criticism as an art form of itself; an art dependent upon other art to sustain itself, but one with form and function worthy of appreciation. There are any number of examples; James Baldwin's *The Devil Finds Work*, Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, Geoff Dyer's *Out of Sheer Rage*. Even Roger Ebert's film reviews might be read as a pleasure unto themselves.

The twenty-first century has revolutionised media production and consumption. The advent of the internet has changed everything, making almost anything available to everyone at every moment. The digital revolution has shaken the media industry to its core, with various strands finding themselves grappling with existential crises.

Music companies compete with digital piracy, and struggle to remain afloat in the era of streaming applications. Film studios race to figure out how best to keep audiences buy film tickets and paying for home media. Television companies are operating at peak capacity, churning out content in order to fill limitless broadcast space and to serve as a potential bulwark of a future streaming service.

With all of this change taking place, it makes sense that film criticism would face a similar challenge in adapting to the new media landscape. Indeed, it seems like the future of film criticism is debated with the same frequency (and to the same noncommittal conclusions) as any other entertainment industry.

Are critics redundant? Are critics outdated? Do critics make a difference? It seems that new waves of think pieces arrive every second month, inevitably in response to some surprise at the box office or at the award ceremonies. These articles tend to be written by film critics themselves, and can occasionally feel like laments of those trapped in turmoil.

Economic factors like the Great Recession played a part in this sense of unease. In the United

States, the National Society of Film Critics reported in 2000 that 30 of its 50 members working full-time at dailies and alternative weeklies; by 2016, that number had dropped to 10 in 54. The United States Bureau of Labour Statistics files "critics" as "journalists", and notes that the number of journalists working in print had declined by 60% between 1990 and 2016. Anecdotal evidence suggests that critics are among the first employees to be let go during an economic crunch.

At the same time that established print media criticism was in decline, the internet was providing new opportunities and possibilities. The internet served to democratise criticism, removing any editorial gatekeeper and providing a forum on which anybody could write about anything, without any barriers to entry or any restrictions on content.

During the late nineties, the internet gave rise to a new generation of film writers and commentators, often skewing more towards geekier sensibilities. Harry Knowles launched Ain't It Cool News in 1996, after spending two years

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT CRITICS ARE AMONG THE FIRST EMPLOYEES TO BE LET GO DURING AN ECONOMIC CRUNCH.

on newsgroups and forums. In 1997, Chris Gore converted Film Threat from a photocopied zine into an online website. In 1999, Nick Nunziata founded Cinematic Happenings Under Development.

In many ways, these twin factors – the decline of the print-media film critic and the ascent of the internet fan critic – contributed to a seismic shift in film discourse, in the way that people talk about and discuss films. Film criticism became less formal, and more esoteric. These shifts were not inherently good or inherently bad of themselves, instead representing a change in how criticism was framed and delivered.

Internet film critics, such as those at Red Letter Media or on That Guy with the Glasses would cultivate their own personas that they would insert into their reviews. Mike Symonds would write entire reviews in the persona of "Film Critic Hulk", in the dialect known as "Hulkspeak" patterned after the giant green rage monster. People could post elaborate and meticulous edited video criticisms advancing incredibly specific readings of particular films.

Recent years have only intensified that transition, with click-driven revenue models leading to changes in how films are discussed and debated on-line. Most successful movie sites are dependent upon high-quantities of visitors sharing and spreading content across social media, often luring readers in with attention-generating content like click-bait or listicles. It seems the release of any film by an established director will prompt a competition among various film sites to produce the most sensationalist ranking of their films.

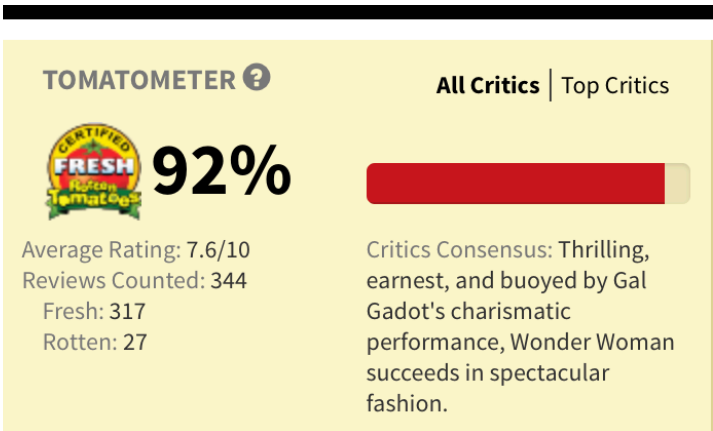
A key part of this transition has been the development of Rotten Tomatoes, the iconic and infamous review aggregation website. The company was launched in 1998 by Senh Duong, and has transitioned through a variety of owners. It was bought by Flixster in 2010, which was bought by Warner Brothers in 2011. In 2016, Warners sold Flixster to Fandango. Rotten Tomatoes was quite the hot potato.

The model of Rotten Tomatoes is fiendishly elegant in its simplicity. Reviews from around the web are collated on the website, and reduced to a binary of positive or negative. Those positive and negative reviews are then added up to create an aggregate score, which itself treated graded as "fresh" or "rotten"; another simple binary of pass or fail.

The potential issues with this scoring system are obvious. Reducing a single review to a binary of positive or negative is an inaccurate science at the best of times. More than that, the headline aggregator does not factor in proper gradation. A movie that 90% of critics think is just about above average will score higher on this metric than a movie that 75% of critics think is the best movie of all time.

To be fair, Rotten Tomatoes provides any number of counterpoints to these criticisms. All the reviews are linked on the film's homepage, with the audience invited to peruse them at their leisure. Similarly, there is a metric that records the average rating on a scale of one to ten, outside of the binary of "fresh" and "rotten." However, that metric is noticeably smaller and does not give its title to the site.

Rotten Tomatoes has become something of a dirty word in



film-making circles, with many film makers lashing out at the site as being damaging to the larger industry. Brett Ratner has contended that Rotten Tomatoes is "the destruction of our business." Martin Scorsese contended that sites like Rotten Tomatoes "have absolutely nothing to do with real film criticism."

It should be noted that the actual impact of Rotten Tomatoes on box office returns is debatable at best, much like the impact of film criticism on the financial success of a movie is the subject of much speculation. Such things are hard to measure. Independent studies by 20th Century Fox and Paramount suggest that Rotten Tomatoes has considerable influence in determining whether an audience will turn out for a film. However, a study conducted by Yves Bergquist at USC's Entertainment Technology Centre analysed data going back to 2000 and found no correlation.

Some of the industry coverage of Rotten Tomatoes has the faint scent of moral panic, anxiety about a changing dynamic within the media landscape. These anxieties about the impact of review aggregators or streaming services often provide a handy scapegoat to avoid asking tough questions about the industry's model of profitability. There are any number of factors that might contribute to diminished box office returns; the bloat of blockbuster budgets, the over-saturated market, the death of mid-tier adult-oriented cinema. It is paradoxical to finance a sequel to Blade Runner that needs to perform like a sequel to Star Wars to be deemed financially successful.

Nevertheless, Rotten Tomatoes is a fixture of the pop cultural

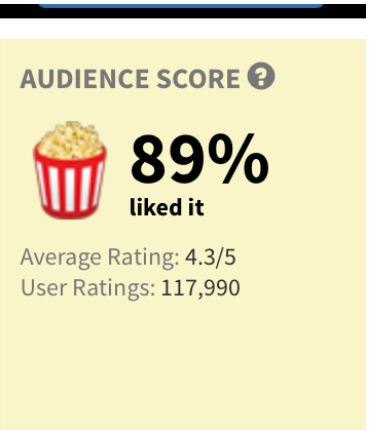
the site has toyed with withholding "tomatometer" scores for certain high-profile releases like *Bad Moms' Christmas* or *Justice League*. This disruption was enough to become a headline of itself. "A Rotten Tomatoes score is now a news story in itself," observed Simon Brew on Den of Geek, an acknowledgement of the site's cultural force.

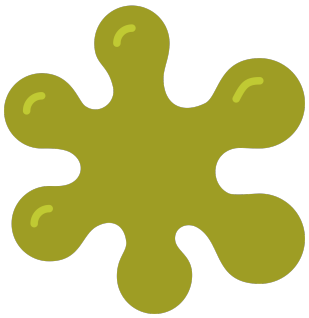
On a purely conceptual level, Rotten Tomatoes is not a game-changing innovation. Instead, it is a logical extrapolation of long-standing critical norms, taken to their logical extreme. What has changed is the way in which these critical norms have been co-opted in a heightened environment in an era of short attention spans and instant gratification.

"All ratings are silly anyway," reflected Roger Ebert when pressed on his "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" metric by The Archive of American Television.

Many reviewers would agree with this. "Star ratings are a curse," acknowledges Irish Times critic Donald Clarke. The reasons are quite apparent. Simon Brew of Den of Geek explains, "Scoring a film isn't a mathematical or scientific process."

Ebert himself grappled with this awkward reality, acknowledging that movie grades were relative and subjective; that similar ratings did not mean that the films were comparable in quality. A three-star slasher movie was different from a three-star romance, and there was always





always a question of how best to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of a given film in a fair-minded manner. Ebert had tried to convince his editors at The Chicago-Sun Times to drop star-ratings on reviews circa 1970, but he failed because Gene Siskel had just started using them.

Despite Ebert's unease with movie ratings as a concept, the critic would be responsible for one of the biggest innovations in movie ratings since The New York Daily News introduced the four-star scale in 1929. When Siskel and Ebert launched At the Movies on PBS in 1986, they found that a lot of their established critical vernacular was tied up in copyright. They had to invent a whole new system of discussing and rating movies for a television audience. They hit upon a very simple idea.

"What's the first thing people ask you?" Siskel contended. "Should I see this movie? They don't want a speech on the director's career. Thumbs up--yes. Thumbs down--no." It was a very elegant rating system. It was digital. To be fair, the fact that both Siskel and Ebert would grade a movie on that binary scale meant that there were four possible grade combinations, but the simplicity of the rating scheme endured. Siskel even copyrighted the concept of "two thumbs up."

Of course, in the context of film discourse, At the Movies was more than just a simple binary rating system. It was a forum for film discussion and debate. Ebert's collections of film criticism are compelling reads, and there is no denying Ebert's influence on film criticism as an art form unto itself. It would be reductive to claim that his contributions to the form amounted to little more than three words and a pass/fail grading scheme.

At the same time, it is possible to see Rotten Tomatoes as an extension of this core concept, where that binary rating system becomes the entire point of a review. In modern internet film culture, it frequently seems as though a film critics contribution to public discourse is reduced to a simple icon posted next to a link back to their review.

The internet age has changed the way in which people process information, in many ways. Most obviously, the internet has shortened attention spans and encouraged reductive engagement. Having access to the entire sum of human knowledge has meant that there is always more to see and consume, and that there is little time to linger on nuance or detail.

In 2015, a study conducted by Microsoft discovered that human beings tend to lose focus after eight seconds. That attention span was down one third from the findings of a similar study in 2000, when it was found that the average human attention span was twelve seconds. It seems reasonable to draw a connection and correlation between an increase in browsing and on-line media consumption.

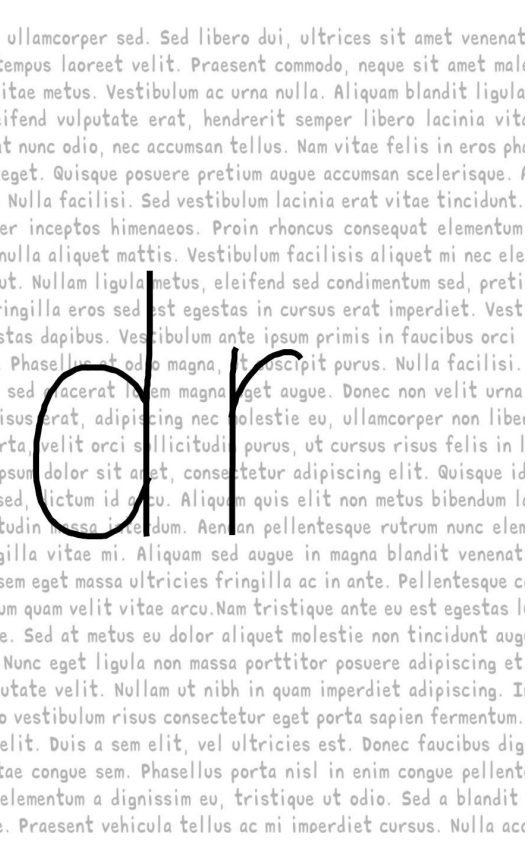
On the internet, the goal is to write and read quickly, hence to proliferation of text speak and acronyms like "lol" or "wtf" and the success of micro-blogging platforms like Twitter or Tumblr. Studies suggest that the Facebook posts most likely to garner engagement are those at forty characters, the minimum size for a Facebook post. Similarly, research reveals that more than half of visitors (55%) spend less than fifteen seconds on a given website. Any forum post running over a few hundred words is expected to include a "tl;dr" at the end; even "too long; didn't read" is too much to type or read.

In this environment, it makes sense that review aggregators like Rotten Tomatoes have become the coin of the realm. They reduce a movie's quality to a single and easy-to-understand metric, and serve as a focal point around which debate and discourse might unfold. There is no need to get tied up in debate about nuance, because there is a single score that encapsulates the general mood around a film.

Whether a film is good or bad can be reduced to a single metric. Sometimes that metric might take the form of a number, but it might also be reduced to something as simple as the "fresh" and "rotten" dichotomy. There is no room to discuss the merits of the work in question, no openness to debate or discussion. The number is a cold hard fact, calculated through simple mathematics, even if the scores underpinning it were not. It has just enough of the appearance of objectivity to count.

"Objectivity" is an important word here, given how casually the accusation of "bias" is thrown towards individual critics who disagree with the consensus. "Objectivity" imposes a sense of order upon

Legendary BBC critic Barry Norman



discourse, and also imposes rigidly-defined boundaries on discussion. It provides an agreed-upon shorthand that strips out any sense of subjectivity or any concession that opinion is not fact.

It is no surprise that movements like Gamergate, which are consciously designed to impose boundaries on discussion and participation, use the word "objective" in their critical aspirations. Gamergate is the product of a culture that was raised on the importance of a hundred-point scale, a grading curve anchored in scores of "8.8." The number is not a subjective argument, it is an objective statement. Objective is always superior to subjective, because it provides concrete validation of an opinion without any need for qualification or elaboration.

This obsession with "objective" criticism is perhaps reflected in modern internet spoiler culture. Modern critics have come to dread "spoiler-phobia", where internet commenters object to the relying of even basic plot or character information as part of a review. This fits with the internet's fixation on reducing criticism to statements perceived as verifiable fact; calling out "spoilers" in reviews is often used as a silencing tool, to limit and control debate by reference to something more concrete and grounded than opinion.

It should be noted that Rotten Tomatoes is ultimately the standard bearer for a much larger cultural emphasis on ratings and rankings. There are any number of metrics that might inform an audience member of a film's worth: the more curated critical score on Metacritic, the user-voted score out of ten on IMDb, the simplistic "thumbs-up"/"thumbs-down" grade on Netflix. Picking a movie to watch can often feel like sorting through a collection of baseball cards, an effort to reduce something wondrous and magical down to a loose assemblage of numbers and statistics.

The Rotten Tomatoes score becomes the "tl; dr" of internet film criticism.

"People in this country have had enough of experts," argued Michael Gove in the lead-up to Britain's referendum on leaving the European Union.

It turned out that Gove was correct. The "Leave" campaign narrowly won the referendum, despite countless experts advising the public of the risks to Britain should it depart the European Union. In the year since the vote, the British public have repeated been confronted with problems and crises that were clearly articulated by experts in the lead-up to the vote, but which the public chose to ignore.

Public discourse has become a lot more polarised in the twenty-first century. Surveys have demonstrated that American politics are more polarised than ever. In 1960,


Irish Times critic Donald Clarke

only 5% of Americans would object to their children marrying a member of the other political party; by 2010, 49% of Republicans and 33% of Democrats would have objections. That is a substantial increase.

A result of this polarisation is evident in controversial democratic results, like the narrow election of Donald Trump or the narrow victory of "Leave." Most politicians in those positions would accept that they had a limited mandate to rule, and would aim to construct a consensus from the political centre. However, the current political climate has seen the opposite view take hold. There is no longer an incremental scale of political consensus. There is only a binary. There is only "win" and only "lose."

There is something to be said for the contribution of the internet and internet culture to this increased polarisation. Studies in Science have determined that face-to-face interaction is more likely to moderate extreme positions, and to encourage empathy with other viewpoints. It makes sense that interacting with the world through a computer screen would have the opposite effect, exaggerating extreme positions and discouraging empathy for others.

More than that, the democratisation of media has led to unintended consequences. Without the mainstream media to serve as gatekeepers, people are encouraged to search the internet for news sources and opinions that validate and reinforce (rather than challenge or confront) their views. The internet offers people both vindication and analysis of their views, but most people when browsing choose the former over the latter.

The internet has undoubtedly contributed to the spread and mainstreaming of various conspiracy theory subcultures. For example, the anti-vaccination movement has gained considerable traction in the twenty-first century; looking at 1,789 cases of measles in the United States between 2001 and 2015, scientists determined that 70% of suffers were unvaccinated.

The internet puts the entire world at a person's finger-tips, but people are more likely to actively seek out information that conforms to their world view than to sample opinions that differ from their own. Some of this happens unconsciously, through filters on Facebook or Twitter, with feeds tailor-designed to line up with the user's world view. Warren Buffet argued that "what the human being is best at doing is interpreting all new information so that their prior conclusions remain intact." The internet has simply made this easier.

This applies as much to criticism as to any other form of media. It is not merely that online audiences tend to gravitate towards critics with whom they agree and take umbrage at those with whom they disagree, it is that those binary scores become an all-or-nothing game. Once again, Rotten Tomatoes serves as a focal point for this broad democratisation of internet film criticism. It serves as a nexus point for how the internet perceives criticism as an artform, and its relationship to broader discourse.

For its all short attention spans and constant churn, one of the more interesting aspects of the internet is that it has a memory. In *The Social Network*, the characters grapple with the implications of this new technology and this virtual world. One of the most cutting comments comes from an outsider, the character of Mark Zuckerberg's ex-girlfriend Erica Albright. Calling her ex-boyfriend out on his decision to berate her online, she advises him, "The Internet's not written in pencil, Mark, it's written in ink."

The Social Network

As transient as the internet might be, it is also engraved in stone. Anything that has ever been online is traceable, if a user is willing to look hard enough. Every past mistake or indiscretion, ever ill-advised opinion or awkward hat take, is stored for posterity. The internet might move quickly, but it remembers. In particular, it remembers its opinion about films.

Many classic films landed with a dull thud at the box office and with active hostility from film critics. *It's a Wonderful Life* was only rehabilitated as a Christmas classic through constant seasonal airings on television, becoming as much a fixture of the festive season as mulled wine and mince pies. *Blade Runner* and *The Thing* slowly developed into cult classics after being dismissed by critics and ground beneath the all-conquering heel of *E.T.*

Time has allowed perceived failures to be revaluated and reassessed, allowing younger audiences to discover films on their own terms and to assess them as part of their own cinematic canon. Critical rehabilitation has long been an essential part of the process, often allowing for belated recognition of genius and insight. However, rehabilitation is dependent upon rediscovery. On the internet, no film is ever forgotten long enough that it might be properly reassessed.

The age of instant responses and twenty-four-hour production news has created an atmosphere of rapid-fire judgment. There is little room for revision or reconfiguration once the writer has hit "publish" on their piece. After all, any critical rehabilitation would have to come with a concession, an acknowledgement that the critic's original assessment was misguided or incorrect. More than that, it is impossible for audiences to approach films blind, without their perspective being informed by aggregates and ratings and scores.

It is interesting to wonder whether it is even possible for a contemporary film to undergo the same critical rehabilitation that turned disliked movies like *The Shining* into modern classics. Once a film is classified as "fresh" or "rotten", and once the IMDb and MetaCritic grades are firmly established, these metrics become an instant frame of reference that informs every discussion and debate about the work in question. This might explain why these scores have become so contentious.

Engaging with certain modes of film fans on the internet is to explore how much an individual's self-worthy is tied into the perceived worth of a piece of pop culture, as graded on a 0-100% scale. Accepting the Rotten Tomatoes score as an objectively verifiable measure of a movie's worth means that there is emotional investment in seeing that score line up with the audience's expected results. When the final score does not line up with the perceived quality, tensions simmer to the surface.

The release of films like *The Avengers* and *The Dark Knight Rises* saw internet commentators caught up in vicious arguments and discussions. In 2012, Comic Book Resources reviewer Amy Nicholson found herself the target of misogynistic rage for

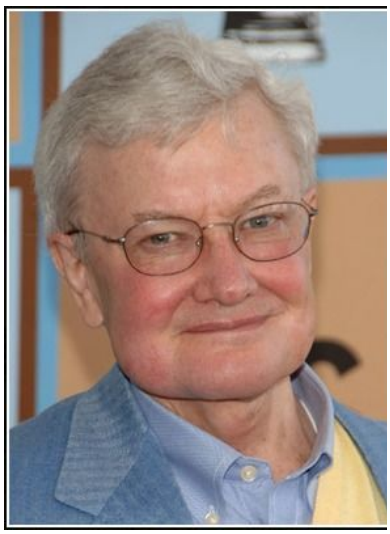
daring to give *The Avengers* three stars. Later in the year, Marshall Fine found himself faced with death threats for being the first reviewer to post a negative review of *The Dark Knight Rises*, and to ruin its "perfect" score. Rotten Tomatoes infamously had to suspend its comments section to deal with this backlash to negative reviews of *The Dark Knight Rises*.

A lot of this internet vitriol was channelled into death threats, frequently aimed at female critics. However, in keeping with the internet's obsession with "objectivity", many of these attacks were framed and structured as ad hominem attacks upon the reviewers. The more hardcore fans of the critically-maligned DC Extended Universe concocted elaborate fantasies to explain why mainstream reviewers were giving their movies low grades. The more innocuous accusations suggested a sinister and ambiguous "bias" against *Man of Steel* and *Batman vs. Superman*, while more conspiratorial-minded individuals suggested that Marvel Studios (or Disney) was operating a "payola" type scheme.

This is how much an "objective" measure of a movie's quality is worth to certain vocal segments of the internet, based on the understanding that a movie's cultural currency is set by reference to these numbers. However, rather than accepting that these numbers are themselves arbitrary and imprecise, the result of broad generalisations and imperfect calculations of subjective measures of quality, the problem can never be the system itself. The problem is the inevitably the critics themselves, who serve to distort the "objective" value of these films as measured through these metrics.

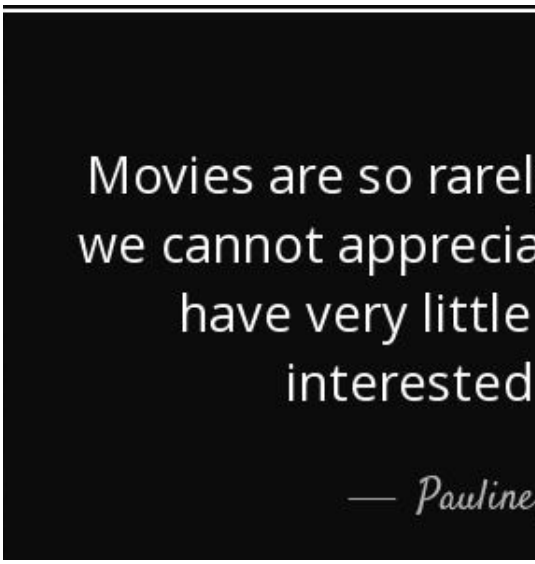
Of course, even audience members who don't agree this this solidified consensus can find articles and commentaries that agree with their position or support their opinion. This absurdity of this system is compounded by the click-driven culture of so-called "hot takes", where critics and writers seek to stand out from the crowd by positioning themselves in sharp opposition to the perceived cultural opinion. The more absurd the position, the more attention it generates, the more clicks that it drives, the more infamy it stokes, the more ad revenue that it creates.

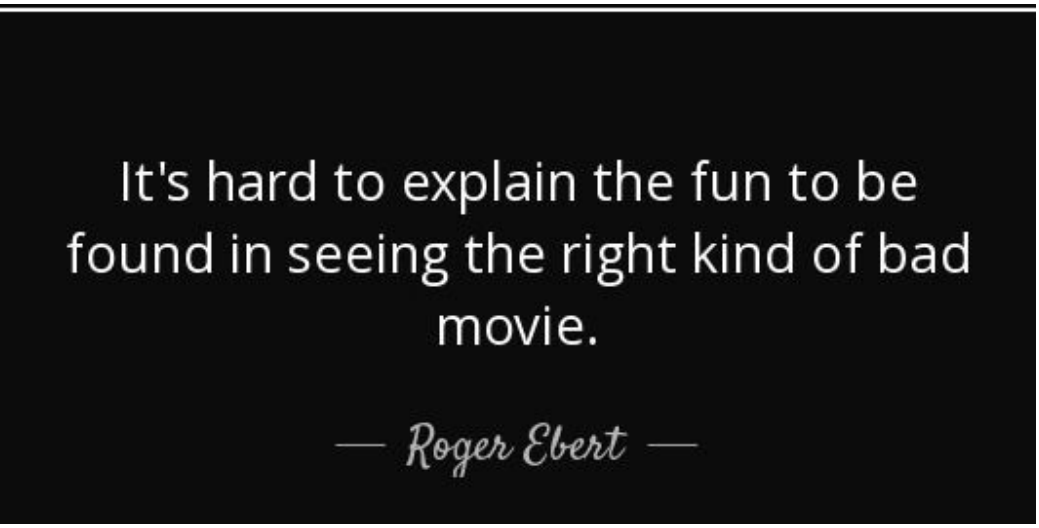
It seems that moderation is no longer possible on the internet, even in film critic circles. To look at the metrics on La La Land (92% Rotten Tomatoes, 93% MetaCritic, 8.1 on IMDb) is to see a movie that appears to be universally beloved. To step on Twitter and discuss *La La Land* is to be confronted with wave after wave of scorn about how terrible the movie is. There is no middle ground. The race for the Best Picture Oscar between *La La Land* and *Moonlight* became a heated battleground on social media, with any appeal to moderation lost in the ensuing chaos. It seemed unreasonable to suggest that perhaps both *La La Land* and *Moonlight* could be good films on their own terms. There was a battle being waged to define the objective



narrative of that cultural moment.

On the internet, there is little room for nuance or shading, no middle ground that can be safely occupied. Everything seems to be either the best thing ever, or the worst thing ever, until the next thing comes along. Movies like *Baby Driver* and *mother!* arrive to eat up the oxygen in film discourse, only to disappear into oblivion as another movie opens the following weekend. The internet seems to have trapped film criticism in a perpetual cycle of Ragnarok; action, reaction and oblivion, repeated ad infinitum.





Every week, it seems like the internet draws a line in the sand for any given piece of popular culture, asks its denizens to pick a side of that line, and records their position for posterity. Then the sand is cleared so that the process might be repeated and recorded the following week.
This represents a fundamental shift in how audiences approach criticism. Criticism has always been more of an argument than a statement, an attempt by a critic to outline their own understanding of work. Much like art itself, criticism can be seen as an exercise in empathy, inviting the audience to perceive a work of art through the eyes of another. Indeed, there is a lot to be said for modern strands of "socially conscious criticism" that aim to evaluate and assess art from the perspective of groups who had been excluded or marginalised.

Naturally, these strands of criticism are among those frequently attacked for being "biased" or not being "objective." Indeed, Gamergate arose in part as a response to the more feminist criticisms of commentators like Anita Sarkeesian. This strand of thoughtful and introspective criticism often exists at odds with the more rigid and orthodox strands of internet commentary.

Criticism does not exist to validate the audience's perspective, nor to reinforce their opinion of a work. A piece of criticism is not "wrong" because it reaches a different conclusion than the audience expects it to. Criticism is not a mathematic algorithm or a numerical formula. Criticism is a process, a discussion. A good piece of criticism does not reinforce the audience's position, but instead makes them think about the media they have consumed and perhaps even provides a sense of context through which it might be processed.

The true value in criticism lies in its ability to transcend the rigid binary and metric distinctions that the internet has codified and embraced. There is something to be said for the critical outlier, for the provocative writer with a bold interpretation of a text upon which consensus has already been reached. There is value in accepting challenges to perceived critical orthodoxy, in taking dissenting voices at face value and affording them the opportunity to defend their positions.

Art is as complicated and multifaceted as the world that it seeks to convey. The same is true of criticism and discussion of that art. It seems a shame to reduce that to a simple score or a pass/fail binary.

There is always room for a fresh take.

The Ghost of Roger Casement, Still Beating on the Door

BY:RONAN DOYLE

"Conquest, my lord, gives no title, and if it exists over the body, it fails over the mind."

So in his "Speech from the Dock" proclaimed Roger Casement, the conquest of whose body far outlasted his own life and offered a glimpse at the nature of the soon-to-be state for the formation of which he was to lay it down. Captured in a doomed effort to attend the Easter rising, condemned as traitor to a nation of which he considered himself no subject, denied clemency by the circulation of records of a

homosexual history, Casement in his last chapter at once succeeded wildly in facilitating the national liberty he sought for Ireland and forecast the selectivity with which that liberty would be meted out to its new body politic. From the undercover extradition and the invasive autopsy inflicted upon it to, five decades on, the repatriation of its bones and, five more still, the reverence in which it is now held, Casement's body has over a century come in many ways to function as an emblematic object of Irish independence and identity.

It is the audacious invention of ***I'm Roger Casement***, a centenary short directed by Dearbhla Walsh and derived from the dance choreography of Fearghus Ó Conchúir, to recognise the complex contradictions inherent in Casement's legacy and to render it in a manner intimately physical, innately cinematic, and intensely challenging to our collective conception of who he was, and what that says about who we are. This is no unremarkable feat in itself, success or failure notwithstanding: the Irish are precious about their martyrs, not lightly do we take it to have to reckon with them anew. In forcing us to do so via the mixed media of dance and film, through a lens at once violent and erotic, Walsh and Ó Conchúir have produced a work of a revolutionary character fully befitting their commemorative brief.

Those sixteen dead men, as Yeats eulogised them, have their names and sentences of death dutifully and dramatically read as Walsh's camera cranes far above the beach-bound bodies that dance their tribute. It was famously the severity of sentencing that united the nation to-be rather than the rising itself; Irish

the cultural foothold of the Celtic revival, the poet and his literary circle's effort to develop a shared heritage on which the new nation might be forged. And if that fusion of religiously-oriented revolution and artistically-inclined autonomy offered a complex idea of Irishness in 1916, the waters had only muddied a century on: in a year where the geopolitical order was shaken by a resurgence of nationalistic assertion, Ireland wrestled with its multiple legacies and a heritage forged on violence, a liberty wrested from oppression, an identity born of... of what?

Self-conception is multifarious, the personal no less than the political, the individual no less than the national, the retrospective no less than the right now. So it is with Casement no less than with Ireland, his identity a mire of lingering legacies selectively summoned to suit the needs of whomever had cause to invoke him. With its early pairing of voiceover excerpts from the British government's autopsy report, which drily recognises rectal dilation as evidence of "the alleged practice to which the prisoner was addicted", and its nude male dancers engaged in tactile congress, I'm Roger Casement from its outset emphatically embraces its subject's queerness, that unwieldy aspect of his legacy which variously doomed and defined him across the decades to come. What the extraordinarily evocative, emotive physicality of the film's performers does is to dispel the notion that Casement's queerness is a complication of his character and argue rather its essence to his stature as an emblematic figure of Irishness then and now.

To consider Casement the revolutionary in isolation, even in opposition to Casement the queer, as so many have done across the decades of debate over his detailed diaries of sexual relations in the Congo and Brazil, is to deny the very liberties his life was laid down to achieve; from the British government's use of the diaries to quash clemency pleas, to the Irish government's efforts in repatriating him a half century on to represent him a sexless martyr, to the insistence of leading scholars like Angus Mitchell that his sexuality is but a distraction, conceptions of Casement that elevate the political while ignoring the personal fail altogether in addressing the question of the man, and the country his sacrifice has been exploited to create.

I*'m Roger Casement* is nothing short of a radical reconciliation of its subject's disparate legacies; as its dancers here writhe with the convulsions of death, there tremble with the thrill of sex, we are forced to realise Casement neither as the horny homo he was painted in 1916, nor the asexual idol he was interred in 1965, but the man equally given to desires and ideals it is imperative we recognise him now. We are implored to regard neither

neither Casement the queer nor Casement the martyr, but Casement the man in whose body resided inextricably both of these identities. We are compelled, by the graceful and forceful motions of Ó Conchúir's choreography and Walsh's camera, to reckon with the reality of his body, his hanged neck and penetrated ass, and to respect that we cannot have one without the other.

The overwhelming challenge of this, what we can call Casement's true repatriation, is not in accepting an Irish revolutionary icon as queer but rather in accepting our erstwhile denial of such as an affront to the foundational ideals for which we elevated that part of him which we did not elect to deplore, in recognising that commemoration should be as much about collective reckoning as celebration, in reflecting on our national identity as a tangle of contradictions to be unwound. Denying Casement's queerness was never so much a question of Catholic Ireland excluding that which it thought immoral as of a revolutionary heritage refusing to acknowledge the failure to extend its liberties to all those whose loyalty it claimed. Perhaps only in recognising, reconfiguring, and finally relinquishing this collective conquest over Casement's century-old body can we hope to do the same for the many others held similarly captive in our state today. ***I'm Roger Casement***'s bold approach to challenging our conception of its subject and his legacy is no less than an effort to reconcile and repair the Irish self-image after an as-yet-unceasing tradition of self-deception. The chorus of voices that speaks the film's title as it opens is at once an effort to reclaim this figure's identity and an urge to relate it to that of the nation now. We are all Roger Casement, and in the watching of this daring and desperately needed film we can see to it that conquest, at last, fails over our minds.

7 – 10 DECEMBER 2017

THURSDAY 7TH DECEMBER

18.20: Opening film: Spoor (2017, 128'), dir. Agnieszka Holland

FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER

18.30: Beyond Words (2017, 85'), dir. Urszula Antoniak

20.45:The Man With The Magic Box (2017, 103'), dir. Bodo Kox

SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER

15.30: Birds Are Singing in Kigali (2017, 113'), dir. Joanna Kos-Krauze, Krzysztof Krauze

18.00: Be Prepared (2017, 106'), dir. Robert Gliński

This screening will be followed by a Q&A with director Robert Gliński

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER

12.00: ANIMATIONS:

Danny Boy (2010, 10'), dir. Marek Skrobecki

Beach (2013, 4'), dir. Paweł Prewencki

Domestication (2015, 6'), dir. Sylwia Gaweł

Strange Case (2017, 14'), dir. Zbigniew Czapla

Pussy (2016, 8'), dir. Renata Gąsiorowska

Impossible Figures and Other Stories II (2016, 15'), dir. Marta Pajek

The Incredibly Elastic Man (2013, 5'), dir. Karolina Specht

Oh Mother! (2017, 12'), dir. Paulina Ziółkowska

Fences (2015, 7'), dir. Natalia Krawczuk

18.20: The Art Of Loving. The story of Michalina Wislocka (2017, 110'), dir. Maria Sadowska

MADE OF STRONG STUFF: TALKING SONG OF GRANIT

WORDS: NIALL MURPH

Ireland's official entry for Best Foreign Language feature for the 90th Academy Awards, Pat Collins' Song of Granite, is a singular piece of filmmaking. Notionally a biopic of the life of sean nós (Irish traditional singing) singer Joe Heaney, the film is a heady cocktail of stunning black and white cinematography, scripted drama, and archival footage of the real Joe Heaney himself. The film competes with a record total of 92 entries for the Oscar shortlist, but win or ose it has established itself firmly as one of the finest piece of cinema produced on the island in recent memory.

We caught up with director Pat Collins, editor Tadhg O'Sullivam, and director of photography Richard Kendrick to talk about Joe Heaney, sean nós, and the crafting of the film.

PAT COLLINS

Cin É: First up let me start by congratulating on the response to the film, particularly from the United States.

Pat Collins: The reviews from America have mostly been very good, especially from the trade papers. The Hollywood Reporter and Variety have been fantastic reviews. And they're very important ones to get. It is very satisfying when you get positive reviews from America first, when you think about the content of the film, the fact that it is translating across. That's it's more universal. So there is something satisfying about that alright. It might make Irish people notice it more if somebody from outside Ireland has said that it has a value. I don't think that every Irish person thinks like that, but some people are swayed by what America or the UK think first. They take more notice if the praise comes from outside Ireland. There's a good few films that have been like that. Even *The Crying Game*. That didn't do that well in Ireland, then it did really well in America and was released again in Ireland. And did a lot better the second time around.

A film like this, which tells such a uniquely Irish story, could have been off-putting for foreign audiences, but that doesn't appear to have been the case.

I think it goes to show that the more that you stick to your guns. The more that you go deeper into something that could be seen as a local thing. In a way there's a difference between what is parochial and what is provisional. And I think that in a way Song of Granite is sort of more parochial, and I mean parochial in a positive sense. That it goes deeper into one locale...and I think that the deeper you go...a bit like Patrick Kavanagh and his poetry...the deeper you go the more universal it becomes. A lot of cinema in Ireland and the UK falls between two stools. It's neither fish nor fowl, it's not American not local. This is very much straight down the line. It's very much Irish content, but it does it in such a way that it real universal. It can be dangerous trying to make a film. You have to be determined. You can't make it like another film. A lot of filmmakers, and a lot of funding agencies too, are trying to make films like other films. And really that kind of peters out. It's not going to work. But filmmakers need a chance to develop, whether that's with short films or getting a chance to make a second feature, a third feature, they need the chance to develop their style. It's very difficult to get funding so there are probably a lot of great filmmakers who never got the funding to make their second film or their third film. I'm lucky in the sense that I've always been working in documentaries. I've always been making films. I've always made a film every year whether a documentary or two documentaries. I've never been where it's three years or four years between films. You have to keep working at it to find out what it is that you can do and what it is that you might be good at. I think that making documentaries is a really good means of learning your craft. Maybe a lot of filmmakers don't get that opportunity. I don't know.

You use the word craft. Is that how you see it? That it's more of a skill learned over time rather than an innate talent?

It's a craft, but it's not like sculpture. Filmmaking is a collaborative thing. You need a lot of people to be working well to make a good film. Whereas if you're a sculptor or a painter there's nothing between you and the work itself except the actual material and the tools that you are working with. With film it is a craft, but a different type of craft. You need different types of skills to make a film work. You need a fair amount of ignorance as well, not taking no for an answer. Determination, perseverance and all those types of things. I do think it takes a long time to learn it. Some people emerge fully-formed at 23 or 24. I'm definitely not one of those. The type of Orson Welles. He made some good films after *Citizen Kane*, but his whole life was trying to live up to that.

You seem to like to work with certain people time and again. Are those relationships the key to a long career?

I've always worked with some...2 or 3 camera people and 3 or 4 editors over the course of twenty years. You pick different editors for different jobs. Some editors are more suited to one job or another. I've always been very lucky with the editors that I've worked with. I've got to the stage with them that we're comfortable. The camera then is hugely important and the sound is very important to me too. When you get a sound recordist like John Brennan, who I've worked with for years and years and years, maybe 16 years, it's about developing an understanding and once you reach that level of understanding it's kind of difficult to think about working with someone else. You feel like you'd be starting off from scratch again. Even with something like Song of Granite, working with Richard Kendrick and even though we'd talked about it beforehand, when I was looking back at some of the rushes it was surprising just how lovely some of it looked. Sometimes you look at rushes and you're disappointed, but this was one of those rare occasions where I was really luckily and every frame was beautiful. Richard and I are the same age, and I've a natural gravitation towards people of a similar age or background or similar outlook. Then Tadhg O'Sullivan has done a lot of work with me over the last 6-7 years. With *What We Leave in Our Wake*, *Living in a Coded Land*, *Silence*, and now ***Song of Granite***. Each one of those is probably between 4 and 6 months. With something like *Living in a Coded Land*, it was shaped so much in the edit. I went out and shot and brought it back and the whole story was shaped in the edit. I actually gave Tadhg a writing credit when we were finished, because as well as the writing job because of how much it was shaped in the edit that the actual content of

Pat Collins has directed close on 30 films, from shorts to documentaries, to features. His first film ***Michael Hartnett, Necklace of Wrens*** won the Jury Award at the Celtic Film Festival in 2000. Since then he has directed ***Talking to the Dead*** which centred on the Irish funeral tradition. This was followed by ***Oiléan Thoraí***, which won the Best Irish Documentary Award in 2003. The French company MK2 picked up ***Abbas Kiarostami – The Art of Living*** for international distribution in 2004.

He has directed documentaries on the Irish writer Frank O' Connor, the poet Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and the Connemara-based writer and cartographer Tim Robinson. His film ***John McGahern: A Private World*** won Best Irish Documentary at the Irish Film and Television Awards in 2005. The feature documentary ***Gabriel Byrne: Stories from Home*** was completed in 2009 and the film essay ***What We Leave in Our Wake*** in 2011. He completed his first feature film ***Silence*** in 2012.

More recently he directed feature documentary ***Living in a Coded Land*** which won Best Irish Documentary at Dublin Film Festival 2014, and Coco Television's three-part series ***1916***, documenting the 1916 Rising.

the film for scene after scene was built up to the whole. Sometimes you have a film where it's much clearer from the start what you are going to do. You have a script or whatever and it's clearer what is the direction of it. With something like Living in a Coded Land you are making very abstract connections between things. Not necessarily abstract but they are loose connections, Connections that are feelings or where a fragment of something links two different subjects. It's much more crucial then when you're working in the edit that you are working with someone who can take that on. And the relationship with the editor for documentary is much more crucial. It's much harder, I think, to be a documentary editor, because something that you shot on the first day could be linked alongside something that you shot on the last. Usually with a feature film everything is contained within the one mood or the one location. Whereas in documentary everything can side alongside each other. You can make connections that you wouldn't see in the script or when you are shooting. It's a much more creative process in documentary editing, it's almost like writing. It's the most difficult stage too. You always go through different stages with the edit. You want something great and you think you have it one week.. Then the next week it's not working at all. You go through such peaks and troughs in the edit. One week it's your best work ever and the next it's the worst thing that you've ever made.

The film features a mix of fictional and archive footage, was that always the intent?

Most of the archive footage, about 70-75% of it would have been written in at the script stage. The stuff that was made by Impressions of Exile, the Irish people working on the building site in England, that was from a filmmaker called Philip Donnellan. It was made for a BBC documentary that was never broadcast. It was a documentary shot in the 1960s but the BBC banned it. I would have seen that maybe 10 years ago and I was beginning to work on the Joe Heaney story in about 2011 and I thought about that documentary footage would have to be used in the film. The same with another one called Sing the Dark Away, which was an RTÉ documentary about Joe Heaney, and there were interviews with his sister-in-law and interviews with his son Jackie. And again that was written into the script. It was a little bit different in the script, but we always knew that we were going to use those archive sources in the film. Actually I don't think that I would have begun it if I hadn't have been able to use those archives. It would have been a big loss to me in the sense of how I imagined the film. I always felt that it was kind of essential to have that real element in it, that the real Joe Heaney had to be in film. Walking up the street in New York. That was a programme that was shot in the late 60s or early 70s. I felt that it was important that you have dramatised Joe Heaney and real Joe Heaney in the streets of New York. I always felt that they could sit beside each other and that the real son of Joe Heaney talking in voiceover would work. To have that reality coming through with the archive adds a huge amount to the film. Then some of the footage of New York was just footage that Sharon Whooley (co-writer) found. She came across it and we used it there.

Song of Granite could not be described as a traditional biopic.

I've never seen a biopic that I've liked, and I've never met anyone who likes them. As a format or genre I don't think generally speaking that they work. And I think that everybody recognises the fact that they almost don't

don't work. Roger Ebert, the film critic, said that the trouble with biopics is that they make every life the same. Even if it goes from birth to grave, the peaks and troughs, the beats are all same around biopics. That was one of the motivating factors for making it the way that we did. If we were going to make a biopic then it'd have to be something different. I was interested in three things with the film, one is the story of Joe Heaney, the second is sean nós singing and singing in generally, and the third is the themes in it of life and death and of artistic expression. They're the three different slants or layers to it. And in some ways the Joe Heaney story is in the background. The theme was more important in some ways and I thought that Joe Heaney was the perfect vehicle for a film about them. But in the deeper background, or maybe even in the foreground, are the themes of life and death and our experience of living and our relationship and with the infinite. The bigger question! So I was never really in trying to convey the Joe Heaney story in all the detail of his life. I genuinely feel that you can't. Every single life is complicated and to try and sum it up in a narrative, in a three act structure, I just don't think it's possible in any meaningful or satisfying way. We were all very aware of the narrative pitfalls.

The film plays almost like a song itself. It's an immersive experience.

Different people have had different reactions to it. For some people it's too poetical, but overall for most they are aware when they are watching it that it's an experience. That you are immersed in it. Those kind of things are important. And it's very difficult, you can't consciously do it in some ways, except for maybe the singing scenes in the pub. Those are deliberately done to make it feel like you're there with the singers. And that you're with them for the duration of the song and that you get lost in the song. That was almost the starting point. Getting in to the singing up-close. In a way that was the beginning of the film. How do you make something that has that in the middle of the film? And have that feeling of being immersed in it? Everything else is shaped around that central sequence.

That central sequence consists of three songs back-to-back, moving from the raucous Rocky Road to Dublin to a haunting version of The Galway Shawl and on to a transcendent An Tiarna Randall. The first two are in English, but the latter is a traditional Irish sean nós song and is presented without subtitles. Did you ever think of adding subtitles there?

That's been probably the most contentious scene. We've had people asking us why weren't we let in on what the song about, but it wasn't really about what the song was saying. It was more the feeling that you get from watching it. If you were in a real-life pub and you in the room with him, and somebody was singing a song in Irish you're not going to have a translation underneath. We couldn't have put subtitles for that scene, given that we trying to get across that sense of closeness to the song, of being immersed in it. The meaning of the song would have distracted the audience from the experience of it. You'd be reading text and you wouldn't be looking at Seamus Begley holding his hand. You've time to look around the whole pub. You've time to look at Seamus Begley, at Michael O'Chonfhlaola singing, and you've time to think about what you're thinking yourself. You have ample time to do multiple things during that song. The whole choice of the three songs...myself and Philip King were talking about it for a long time beforehand. What would

be the right songs and who would be the right people to sing them? The Rocky Road to Dublin is a 60's ballad, a Dubliners type of folk signing. Lisa O'Neil then with The Galway Shawl was representative of the English-language traditional singing in Ireland, and then Michael O'Chonfhlaola with the sean nós. Three different types of music all in the one venue. I think that was very accurate of that time in 1967. You would have had The Dubliners in O'Donoghue's. You would have had Joe Heaney and The Dubliners, You would have had Margaret Barry, a folk-singer from Cork in O'Donoghue's too. That pub scene is set in Dublin. It's set between the Glasgow and London scenes so people often wonder if it's in Glasgow or London. But it's actually in Dublin. It's meant to be in O'Donoghue's, but it's not important. It's modelled on O'Donoghue's in 1965. Margaret Barry used to say about singing in Irish pubs in London in the 1960's that there was no difference to an pub in Ireland. That the outside world that surrounded the pub was almost completely irrelevant. You might as well be in Ireland as in an Irish pub, it was like being at home. Maybe more Irish than the pubs at home.

Towards the end of his life you can see that Heaney was anxious to return home so as not to die in a foreign land surrounded by foreigners.

He was surrounded by people, by students of the university in Seattle where he was a lecturer, but he was anxious to get home. He was actively looking for work back home. On the west coast of America, in Seattle, he was very far away from home. It's the classic Irish thing in a way. He was teaching in a university in America. He was teaching about Irish singing and he couldn't get that job in Ireland. That drove him from a young man. He was in an awkward spot. He was in a place where his art was appreciated but to make it commercial, to make a living out of it, he had to go away. Lillis Ó Laoire and Sean Williams wrote a book on Joe Heaney called The Bright Star of the West, and they say that in essence he invented sean nós as an art-form. What they say is kind of right, but it might be controversial to say it, but he did take sean nós to the Newport Folk Festival and he did record several albums for Gael-Linn and Topic Records. He did take it on to an international stage in a way that hadn't been done before.

What, do you think, made Joe Heaney stand apart from other sean nós singers?

The fact that there's been two books written about him, that there's been a documentary about him, several albums, and now I've made a feature film about him, there's obviously something that sets him apart from others of his contemporaries. I think it was that he was an artist. He was the most artist of the 20th century in the Irish language. He carried that home scene into the wider world. Sean nós is still very, very strong. The Corn Uí Riada is a huge competition for sean nós and Micheal O'Confhaola has won it twice. A 19-year-old called Conchubhar Ó Luasa won it recently and there's some great sean nós singers coming up in their early 20's and early 30's. And they are as good singers as Joe Heaney was. The tradition is very much alive, but I think that Joe Heaney had a huge influence. Those young singers coming up are not singing because of Joe Heaney, but Joe Heaney has definitely made it into something that is more appreciated in the wider world. He showed the way that somebody could make a living out of it. That scene in the film where the young Joe Heaney comes home to see his father sitting outside recording his singing is very important. It showed him that what they had there in Carna was seen as being valuable. Not in monetary terms, but that it's seen as being significant enough for somebody from outside to come into their village to record their songs. It's a line in the sand for the young Joe Heaney. He literally sees that there's a world out there that has an appreciation for what he has. That he can give what he has, his ability as a singer, to as wide an audience as possible. He did sing in the Sydney Opera House to over a thousand people unaccompanied on stage. Just him and a microphone. There's very few singers who could do that. Unaccompanied, without any musicians behind you. Even opera singers have the instruments. He would do road tours of America. Playing to audiences of hundreds and it's just be him. He didn't tell jokes like a comedian, but he had to have a certain charisma. He never sang the same songs twice. He'd tell stories between the songs so his personality was important. He was careful too that if he sang a song in Irish then the one after it would be in English. It wouldn't have been an hour and a half of Irish language songs. Even for the Irish language song he would tell people the story of the song. It was interesting in the context of how to hold an audience, particularly in America. He wouldn't have been hugely popular in the Irish community in America. He would have been a reminder of the past and of the Irish language. The Americans were a lot more comfortable with the Irish connection. He found more a connection with audiences outside of Ireland. Even in America it was with those that had an interest in folk music. That old traditional Irish music are essentially poems that are sung so they are closer to folk music.

TADHG O'SULLIVAN

Cine É: You seem to have developed a great working relationship with Pat Collins.

Tadhg O'Sullivan: We've been working together for probably 10 years now, on various projects long and short. It's not an adversarial style. We don't necessarily push for our visions. It's a thing where I do things and we agree or we don't agree. If we don't agree then we go at it again. That striving for agreement is a lot less stressful than what other people experience in the edit.

It helps that you both have that documentary sensibility. You're more used to finding a film from footage than having to strictly adhere to what was written or what you've shot.

I've only ever edited two dramas and they're both with Pat, so I don't know. I genuinely don't know how constraining that must be. I sometimes wonder. There is great freedom in the form of a script but for what I have specialised in over the years is exactly that, discovering meaning within things. It's like when I work with archive material, which is something that I do a lot. You're looking at something that was shot with one particular purpose in mind, but you have no particular interest in that purpose. What you're looking for is to derive that layer of meaning that is obscured. And you can draw it out through juxtaposition, through music, or through slowing it down, or through working the material and drawing out the moment that you see. The beautiful moment that you see within that. And that's kind of how I look at all material. Whether that's for a large-scale feature film or for a smaller documentary project of my own. I try to look at it with fresh eyes as soon as I bring it in, and try and draw out that meaning. Very often the meaning that I am trying to draw out is the meaning that Pat or the director intended, but it's always the job to bring that to the fore. I guess that's the sensibility that Pat and I will share. To use the tools at our disposal, and I suppose they are stylistically aesthetic tools, the use of music, the use of sound, the use of non-sync sound... I wouldn't use the word radical, but if there was a word on the way to radical I would maybe use that. A little bit out there, just pushing out these styles and being a little bit bold. And not being afraid to make hard and abrupt and challenging moves if that is within the service of drawing out this hidden meaning that we are looking for. I guess that that's something we share and that we have developed over the last 10 years in tandem. He has done his other projects and I have done my other projects but we are still talking!

The film features an interesting mix of archival footage and footage that was shot for the film. What was working with that mix like?

That is interesting because there are a lot of things at script level and then at the level of the rushes, the material that was shot, that does not have very explicit narrative cues within it.

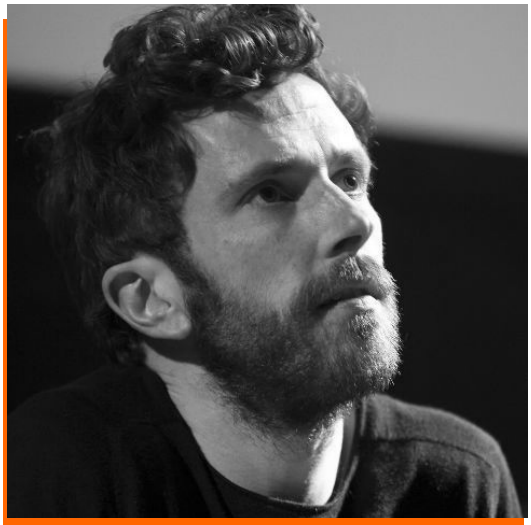
So very often we will be discussing "does he need to know?" or "does it matter where he is?" and you are just on that edge of what is the least intrusive... it's not about giving things away. It's not about wilfully withholding information. It's about not intruding on the experience or the atmosphere with something that just serves a narrative purpose.

So no title card will come up with Glasgow written on it.

That to me is death. It's not that because it's boring, it's death because it's intrusive to the viewing experience of the audience, and that's what I would have at the heart of everything that I do. You are trying to create an atmosphere within the film into which the viewer can relax and lose themselves and anything that breaks that is not in the service of the film. If you are trying to serve a narrative, to hit particular plot points, or provide a particular point of information, then I think you'll have to cross that line into serving that, rather than serving the atmosphere. Myself and Pat, we will do as little as possible, as little as we can get away with in terms of giving that, because what's more important is serving the atmosphere. Serving the key elements in the narrative, which might be a feeling, which might be a look, which might be the way he sings a song. That to us is probably more important than where the pub he is singing the song in is. Because that's not really that important at all. If people are coming away asking "oh, where is the pub?" then we have done something wrong. It's not the audiences fault if they want to know that. Then we have done something wrong in terms of not distracting them or carrying them away enough that they would be distracted by such a banal question.

The pub scene is the heart of the film, the mix of folk, trad, and sean nós showing the different styles of Irish traditional music.

The section with Damien Dempsey in that pub singing Rocky Road to Dublin is important. That's the more populist song. It's not all about 19 verse sean nós Irish songs. That whole scene is full of raucous Damien Dempsey types and I think there's a truth in that as well. That's the essence of the film. When Pat and I talked about this making this years ago I would talk about that, and I will talk about that throughout the edit. That experience of being in the moment. It is Heidegger's idea of being in time. To sing, there is almost nothing like it as far as literally being in time. I think that somebody who sings in a particular way, in a way that consumes their whole being, it's transcendental and I genuinely mean that. That is the experience that we wanted to confer upon the viewer. The film is obviously much bigger than that, but at the same time it is not. It is a type of experiential being around the songs. That is what is at the core of it and



Tadhg O'Sullivan is a film-maker, editor, sound designer and sound recordist based in Carlow, Ireland. His work has been screened at FiD Marseille, MOMA Doc Fortnight, CPH:DOX, RIDM Montreal, Dokufest Kosovo, New Horizons Wroclaw and many other festivals worldwide. His projects have been regularly supported by the Irish Film Board and the Arts Council of Ireland. In 2015 and again in 2017 he was recipient of the Art Council's film bursary.

Selected Work:

The Great Wall (Director/Editor)
Song of Granite (Editor)
Outside the Factory (Editor)
Silence (Editor)
Yximalloo (Co-director/Editor)
Living in a Coded Land (Editor)
Quarantine (Co-director/Editor)
Living Colour (Editor)
Pilgrim (Editor)
Fathom (Editor)
What We Leave in Our Wake (Editor)

things are built around that and weave in and out of that. But those three songs are the essence of the film.

And then when you marry that which Richard Kendrick's cinematography, you give an absolutely beautiful visual aesthetic to the poetic nature of the narrative.

I think that great art astonishes you and makes you feel awake. It wakes you up. In that way that's what you're trying to do and I think what Richard does, in that way...Richard and Pat together...is the see things with fresh eye. As with anything in your life, if you're to accustomed to seeing your surroundings then you just don't see them anymore. And if you can do things kind of differently, or step out of that space that you spend too much time in, and just challenge yourself to see things in a different way, that is invigorating and makes you feel alive. I think that great art makes you see the world in that way and it can be shocking. It can be astonishing. It is like you are just waking and I think what Richard is doing with the cinematography in the film is to frame things that you think should be familiar, but he frames them and lights them and composes them in such a way that they are subtly unfamiliar. He is not doing radically strange, unknown things, but he is just doing it in a certain way that makes it feel fresh. It always feels fresh. It always feels new. And that is a very hard thing to do.

I spent a couple of years deeply engaged with the writings of Kafka for a film that I made. And Kafka does a very similar kind of thing most of his stories are not that strange and most of them will be deeply banal settings, but with one odd thing. Metamorphoses is a portrait of a lower middle class Jewish family who live in a couple of rooms. A sister, brother, father, and mother. But one of them turns into an insect. And by introducing this one radically odd thing, he makes you see the totally familiar familial scene in a radically different way. That is one strategy to go for, the extraordinary. To go for the extraordinary introduction of the uncanny is one strategy, but I think that you can go the other direction which is a kind of careful treading, a careful and kind introduction of strangeness. A strange beauty if you like. It has something of the same effect. It doesn't knock you sideways, it knocks you kind of upright, and I think

that's what the aesthetic within Pat's films is all about.

With the film being shot in black and white you're automatically seeing Connemara in a way that you are not used to seeing it.

We are surrounded by realism in an awful lot of ways. There is this obsession within documentaries that is been challenging all sides now This kind of valorisation of the realistic. And that is kind of boring to me. I have to say there is plenty of realism in our lives already. I think part of the job of art is to make you see things in a way that you haven't seen them before. Just by using the tools like monochromatic photography or just non-sync sound. They're interesting tools to make it feel hyper-real, not necessarily unreal, but hyper-real. To bring you out of the sense that you are simply in that world. That you are looking at a world in a different way with these tools. And it's not like we're inventing this stuff, this is the history of cinema that were working with, and it was important to do that justice.

It's fair to say that it's a welcome change from the $300m dollar blockbuster CGI-fest.

Modern blockbuster realism just doesn't serve the imagination in any way. It gives the imagination nothing to do. The phrase "leaves nothing to the imagination" is a hackneyed one. It is usually a kind of bawdy thing to say, but I think that we need to resurrect it. Because so many films these days leave me with nothing for my imagination to do. Which I think is kind of tragic. It is a tragic end that all these great, great minds, these great, great artists are spending their time creating these massive boring worlds, when you can do so much more with so much less. That's what makes something smaller and closer and totally beautiful like ***Song of Granite*** much more important

RICHARD KENDRICK

Cine É: Richard, you always seem to be in demand.

Richard Kendrick: I've been working on a couple of different things. I've just come off a commercial and I'm working on a documentary about Eavan Boland. That has been quite interesting. It's a BAI documentary with Icebox films, who I haven't worked with before and that's been interesting. It hasn't quite been difficult, but sometimes I think that visualisation of poetry is a tricky area to get into. It's mainly been interviews and she's alive and still working, so we spent a bit of time with her over in Stanford University in the United States, where she's a lecturer. It was interesting to see her there in a real working environment. I would not know a huge amount of her poetry, but I'm getting into it lately. She's a very interesting woman, who is in her 70's now. That's a lovely thing about documentaries. You get to meet and hang out with very interesting people. My background for my whole life has been documentary filmmaking, and I suppose that's where I feel more comfortable in. It's something that I'd never give up because it's a real privilege to meet and travel with interesting people. By it's very nature you always end up in an interesting situation. It's a different dynamic and much more about the crew. It's more flexible. If you make it, and then you want to change your mind, you can do it more quicker as a cameraman or director because there's not a huge entourage of people. But ins saying all of that I am enjoying the drama side of things for the very opposite reason, because it's fully reliant on you creatively. It brings more out of you. You can't rely on an editor putting together some beautiful abstract pictures or a piece to camera. You literally have to think about everything that goes on to the screen, and I enjoy working with a bigger team and the whole dynamic of that as the DoP. It is much more about picking the team and getting them together for the work, and managing, as well as creatively working with the director, and production designer, and everybody else. I just said that a really important part of it is getting the team together, that they understand where we're trying to come from. It's amazing when you're working with a bigger team of people that communication, if it does lapse, things can go wrong quite quickly. It's effectively because people don't understand what they're being asked to do or they don't really understand why. I enjoy that side of things as well. when it works out right! On any of these Irish films that are of that budget, they tend be more ambitious than the money that they have allows. So it's very important that everyone in the team buys into that and that they all feel like they have some sort of investment in it. And I know from documentary, that if you have a good director, he always makes the best of the job. I just try to do that on the film, I try to get everybody feeling involved. At the end of the day you are out in the middle of a field, in the wet, and it helps if everyone feels like

they are on the one team. And I'm realistic about it too, there's plenty of times that doesn't work, but I think if there's a genuinely good vibes then that really helps.

For Song of Granite you shot on location in Connemara. What was that like?

Especially on a period film, but on any film location, the production design for me as a cameraman is so crucial . If it is not in front of you to shoot then you can't make it look good. Choosing the locations was critical. And for ages they were trying to find a village that felt like it was in 1930's. That's not an easy thing to do because we didn't have the money to build something. Eventually Kieran Hennessy, the location manager, says" I have this one thing. I don't really want to show you, but here it is". He had pretty much exhausted all of the other options and this was the island where we ended up shooting. The one that becomes the village that you see in his childhood. For myself and Pat, the positives outweighed the problems of getting on to it. From a production point of view, it was a hard thing because there wasn't even a pier on it. It was an abandoned island that had been abandoned sometimes in the 70's. Even to the extent that there was no power on it. We had to float out of generator to it. My gaffer, Tim Fletcher, had to go at high tide and float a generator across the island. It is probably only a couple of hundred yards from the mainland...it's not like going out to Tory or anything...but you still had to cross water. It just meant for getting across with the crew and equipment that you had to go at high tide. For Padraig O'Neill, the production designer, he had the crux of a 1930's village, he just had to add to it to bring it back to life. Which was considerably easier than trying to build it from scratch. And it helped with the whole authenticity of it. The big thing for me when I saw it first was that it was literally built on slabs of granite. In that scene where he's dancing in the foreground, that's all just big slabs of granite washed by the sea. It was too good to turn down. We had our work cut out for us getting everything out there, but it worked out for us. It meant that we could look in all 360 degrees really. That we had a full set.

And you get that iconic shot in the front door and out the back door of the house.

And that was an element of luck. That was a real house. That was one of the few houses on the island. And the shot was just there. That was not something that you could ever storyboard and Pat doesn't work like that anyway. Going back to when we first talked about it, Pat and Sharon gave me a book... same as they had on Silence, and is a treasured possession...a mood book of various pictures and poems and songs that they gave to me probably a year or two before the film started. Pat is not like a commercial director who would have everything storyboarded or shot-listed. It's a different way of

Richard Kendrick is a cinematographer with more than twenty years experience in film and television.

Most of his work has been documentary but in recent years he have worked as DOP on commercials and feature films.

He has photographed 15 IFTA nominated documentaries, 8 of which won.

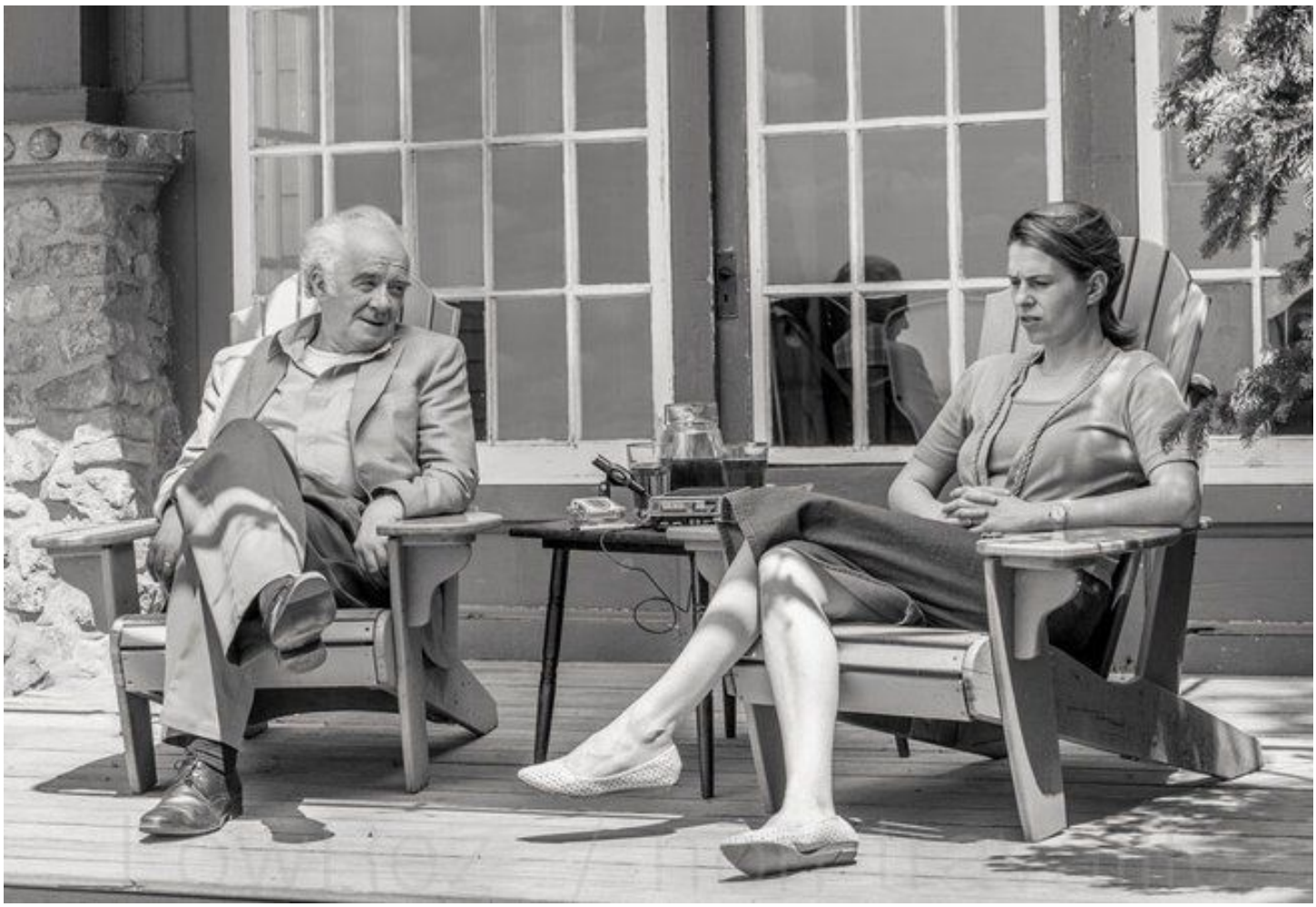
He has been nominated twice in the Cinematography category at the IFTAs for *Two for the road* and *In Good Hands*, and has won Celtic Film festival awards for Best Documentary with *Get Collins*, *The Ghost of Rodger Casement*, and *Liam O Flaithearta*, as well as a Riarch award with *The Lost Generation - AIDS in Africa.*

He most recently picked up the Best Cinematography in an Irish Feature award at the Galway Film Fleadh in 2017 for his work on *Song of Granite.*

working, but I'm used to that. I'm used to Pat. It's slightly more documentary in its way. It's an unusual mix I suppose really, in that he knows very much what he wants but it's not actually all prescriptively written down before hand. So then it does open us up for seeing things like that. That was a shot that we just literally saw on that day and went "wouldn't that be great". There was always the scene of him doing the recording outside the house like that, but on that day it was a case of "let's see if this works". In fairness to Tadhg and to Pat in the edit suite it was brave to hold on to those long shots. One of the things that we talked about beforehand was about making interesting things happen within the frame. About not moving the camera unless there was a reason to move it. If we could make a frame that we could hold for a long time and that things would change within it, like a person walking up from a wide shot into a close-up it, then that lets you just look at it. Which is so different to so much modern film or television where everything is so intensely edited that you don't have a second to look at something. We have more coverage than there is in the final film, and there were times when I was like "they're holding on to that shot for a very long time" and I knew myself...and I'd be one of the few people who would... that there was other angles there. But they felt that when they tried to do a more conventional cut/cut thing, they felt that it didn't hold up or it didn't work for the film. When there are shots like the one through the door or when he walks in at the opening.... when he's walking along the landscape...if you were lucky enough to have a frame that you can hold then it's an interesting thing from an audience perspective to just sit and just look at the frame for minutes. I never actually timed them. I remember talking to Eugene McCrystal who graded the film, and who would have worked on Room, and he said that there was about a quarter of the cuts that would have been in a normal film. So it is definitely different.

There's also some very long takes in the session scene in the middle of the film.

The session scene was quite deliberate. We knew the film was going to be solid. And we felt that the session was really important to give a bit of life and a bit of energy into it. In any story you need to have curves up and down. So we



spent a lot of time talking about it. Myself and Pat and Tadhg met beforehand a few times just to figure out how we do it . We'd all seen recreations of sessions and one thing that Pat really flagged to me from the very start was we wanted them to be authentic. We were very lucky. We had Philip King who had organised all of these brilliant musicians, the best of the best really in Ireland, and he just wanted to give us an energy that didn't feel like something that you would see on television. He wanted to make you feel like you were there at it. We very much went into documentary mode for that and there was an interesting clash of styles. The first AD Sean Griffin, he got us. Which was brilliant as sometimes the first AD comes with a crew of people and they're very much organisers as they have to try and schedule a day and get us finished on time. And they have their extras to come in and all of the rest. And we said to them we want to run this like a proper session. That these are real musicians and that we wanted them to be able to drink and just to freeform. And that we wanted our extras to just come in and act like they're in a pub. That they're actually watching it. And Sean was great. We got what we were going for. Ordinarily when you go onto a set you turn around and you go "this is the plan", "this is how were going to do it" and for the rest of the film it was like that, but for the session we deliberately kept it that nobody knew where I was going to point the camera. We had to light it with a high beam and that was the tricky thing. We had to have lights so that I could look around. I didn't really believe Tadhg when he told me that he had not cut because I had done what any documentary cameraman would have done...there were cutaways...but quite often he literally held the whole take in one shot, mistakes and all. Sometimes that can be tricky as a cameraman to watch, but I think that he and Pat felt that it gave a reality to it that it wasn't too perfect. Sometimes you can get caught up with trying to make something too perfect and that it loses the edge of realism. The performances were so strong that when I watch it again it's just lovely to listen to it. And that came from Pat. He was so strong on that fact that we needed real singers for our first two Joe Heaneys. That they were

obviously people who could stand up and sing. It was a brave piece of casting. The boy (Colm Seoighe) was one thing because he had a certain magic about him, but Michael had never acted before. He had never been in anything like that before. It was such a big step for him. It was a risky casting decision, but Pat was right in sticking to his guns and not getting an actor to try and play him. We did a little test about a year before when we were trying to decide what format we were going to shoot on and we used that as a kind of audition to see what they would be like on camera. What they would look like on screen and sound like as well.

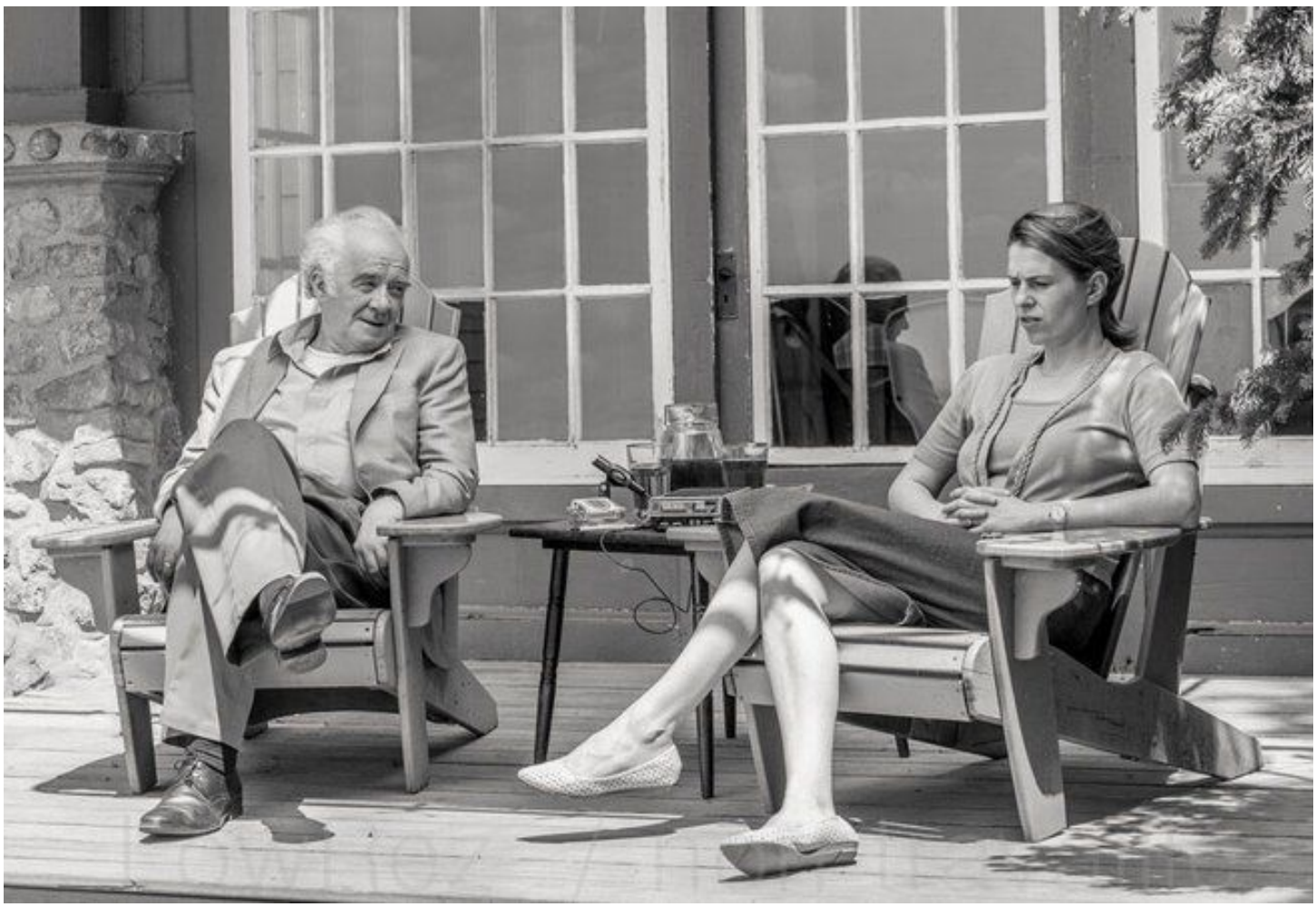
And was that when you made the decision to shoot black and white?

It was a long time in gestation. We'd been working on it for 2 years before we started shooting and Pat had given me the book. Most of the pictures in the book are in black and white so it wasn't a question from the start of whether we shoot in colour or in black and white. It was always going to be black and white. It was interesting for me because my background, my very first venture into anything visual, was black and white photographs as a kid in school. I would have shot and developed black and white photographs, never thinking in my wildest dreams that I'd ever be able to make a living of it. It was quite nice for me because I had always loved black and white. And we did look at shooting on film and Pat was been very keen, and I would have been very keen too. We did shoot on 16mm and we compare that to a digital camera, to an Arri, and when we brought it back we immediately felt that the super 16 was too grainy. We just felt that we wanted a clean look, which meant that it would have to be less grainy. That we would have to shoot on 35mm. Then it became a decision between shooting it on 35mm film or on digital and we discovered that to process in black and white from film would have been quite difficult. We would have had to end up shooting it on colour film and then just bring it back to black and white. Then it became a kind of lie to shoot it on colour film and then my practical nature kicked in as well because I knew that if we were to shoot on colour 35mm that you'd have to be realistic

Irish budget like this that's going to mean that I have to lose something somewhere else. Shooting on digital was ok. I know that camera. I own that camera. So I know it very well. But there's still a process that I had to go through with Pat. Then what that allowed me was to get some nicer quality lenses and I thought that that was more important. I used these vintage Cooke S2 lenses. They're like an 1940s or 1950s glass that have their imperfections, but I knew that for all the older photos that they had a lovely quality of them. And when you mix that with a digital camera it works, that mix of older lenses with a digital camera. It is something that we had done on Silence. We did something similar. We shot with old Russian lenses on that. It gives you all of the advantages of digital like that ability to shoot at nighttime. That scene that we did at night on the beach that was literally lit by lanterns from the boats. And that was something that just would not be achievable with film. It gave me the flexibility of digital with nice quality glass and that allowed me to rent those from Vast Valley. They have an old set that I am familiar with and luckily enough they were free at the time.

You captured some stunning images of Connemara with them.

There's always an element of chance with these things. You go out to the Inagh Valley and you recce these things and you think "Oh this is going to be great". And you can get caught out with the weather. And in Ireland that's one of the beauties and most frustrating things about it. We were lucky in the Inagh Valley that it wasn't a real crisp bright day. We wanted some clouds, but if you have too much of that then it becomes terribly flat. We were just lucky. We spent a day out in that valley and it was a typical Irish day in that we got a mixture of stuff. But the sun did come out. In that big wide shot of the valley where the two characters meet across the river the sun was going down over the mountain at that stage. It's interesting in black-and-white, it's not as obvious as in colour, because if that was in colour there would have been a lovely golden sunset there. . It still gives that type of quality to it. We were just lucky that it was nice. It's interesting when you look at things through a black and white ye or a black and white lens. You see things differently than you do in colour. Things are more structurally basic are more



important. Colour has a huge impact on composition so when you strip it away you get a very different thing. It was a huge pleasure to shoot in black and white. It was shot in colour, but what I was determined to do was that everyone on the set never saw a bit of colour during the whole shoot. With the modern Arri cameras you can apply a look, so I went with Eugene and graded a look for outdoor and indoor, and I could just apply that to all of the monitors. So the output of the camera was always black and white. I felt that it was important for everyone to get their heads into that black and white space. For the production designer to know that if the put a red book in there then it was just going to be a tone of black and white. And for wardrobe it was really important too. Wardrobe did a great job. It suddenly meant that they could use colours that they would never normally do. They could put a yellow in or something like that. Normally that would look ridiculous. It was always really important that everyone just thought in that headspace of black and white. I just felt that I should never show any colour on the set at all. The big fear on a film like this is that the producer might balk at the last minute and say it has to go back to colour. You make a decision to shoot something in black and white and you really have to stick to it, because if you're caught half-way between the two that's a dangerous game. It's interesting subsequently films like Ida and Nebraska have come out after. And I remember Pat saying to me at one stage that people are just going to think we did it because of those. But we had thought of black and white before that. It was quite interesting to see those movies and see that you could make a more mainstream movie like that and that an audience would go and watch that and enjoy it, and take it for what it was. That it wouldn't turn too many people off. That was a nice confirmation. It was nice to know that.

What was Pat like to work with as a director?

Directors are a unique brand of people. To make a film you have to be so driven and determined to keep it going, because there are so many things that can go wrong. It can be tough. You have to have that belief in yourself. I really admire them. As a cameraman bigger jobs are big commitments, but you can still get other jobs along the line or do other things, but directors are a unique type of people. Sometimes they have to be a pushy and a bit bullying or a bit tough. And in fairness I have to say that Pat is amazing. He's really strong, he has a really strong core to him about what he wants and what he doesn't want. And he won't budge on that stuff. He's brilliant like that, but his manner is so gentle and he's just so decent with people. I think that disarms a lot of people. I think that people are so used to directors being the alpha-male on the set and he is just the opposite to that. I really enjoy working with him for that reason. He's very collaborative. He doesn't speak a lot, but when he speaks you know exactly what he is thinking. And that's a nice thing about working with and knowing Pat a while. You do get to understand certain things. You don't have to speak about stuff, which is a lovely place to be. I could totally trust him. If he told me that we were going off to do something I would respond "Yep, I'm totally up for that Pat".

Fathers, sons and invisible women: when Jim Sheridan was on top of the world

Words: Jason Coyle

It is hard to imagine the modern Irish film landscape without the looming shadows of Jim Sheridan and Neil Jordan. Jordan, who had a head start on Sheridan, was making his fourth feature film (*High Spirits*) whilst Sheridan was making his debut as director with ***My Left Foot*** in 1989. And yet it was with ***My Left Foot*** that gave Irish cinema an international foothold at least in awards terms. That film was nominated for five Oscars including Best Picture and Best Director winning acting awards for Brenda Fricker and Daniel Day Lewis. ***My Left Foot*** was followed quite quickly with ***The Field*** in 1990 (one Oscar nomination for Best Actor for Richard Harris) and ***In the Name of the Father*** (seven nominations including Best Picture and Director) in 1993. Three films in four years, all receiving Oscar nominations. It was quite a run, and with Jordan himself receiving Oscar nominations for *The Crying Game* in 1992 there was a sense that Irish film had truly arrived on the world stage. But what of those three films that Sheridan made in four years? After all, 1993 is almost 25 years ago and rather surprisingly given how successful they were are not much talked or written about these days. It is with this in

My Left Foot tells the story of the Dublin artist and writer Christy Brown, played by Daniel Day Lewis, who was born with cerebral palsy and who could only completely control his left foot. Christy grew up in a large working class family (Christy's mother Bridget, played by the wonderful Brenda Fricker seems perpetually pregnant in the film). Sheridan gives us an excellent child's eye view of the goings on the house from Christy's perspective when he was a kid (played superbly by Hugh O'Conor). Back and forth the camera goes with much movement from the big family illustrating how little Christy himself can move. One of the surprises with ***My Left Foot*** was how almost totally free of the kind of manipulative sentimentality that the classic Hollywood biopic of struggles is usually full of. There is compassion for Christy Brown but not patronising sentiment. Ignored by his father Paddy (Ray McAnally) as a child who thinks the young Christy is stupid, Christy 'earns' his father's love when he writes 'mother' in chalk on the floor with his left foot and is carried on Paddy's shoulders to the pub.

The left foot of the title lends itself to various parts of the story, both dramatic and funny. Christy uses it to summon help for his collapsed mother by banging on the front door, he scores a penalty in a football match, paints, writes and tries to commit suicide all with this appendage. The moment he writes on the floor for the first time is exhilarating. Despite writing mother it is his father that steals the moment, his son now pronounced a 'real' Brown because he has proven himself as smart. His mother, who believed in and loved him from the first moment is robbed of a beautiful declaration of love. But this was a man's world. The resounding message from the father throughout is the need to be obeyed in his own home.

Despite some shortcomings, ***My Left Foot*** is still Sheridan's best film. Free of mawkish sentimentality and portraying a fascinating working class life it is the classic biopic that works for the most part. The acting is superb and those Oscars were earned. Given it was the 1980s and the Simpson/Bruckheimer world was in vogue it even with a Top Gun like freeze frame at the end. Happiness forever

My Left Foot

The Field

Unfortunately we come to ***The Field***. Based on the play by John B. Keane Sheridan made this film directly after *My Left Foot*. Sheridan changed most of the minor characters with the exception of Bull McCabe (Richard Harris), his son Tadhg (Sean Bean, comically miscast) and Bird O'Donnell (John Hurt). The widow (Frances Tomelty), who owns the field, has been changed from elderly to a younger woman. The Galway man of the play who had lived in England and was now an outsider had now become The Yank (Tom Berenger). The Field tells the story of an auction over a piece of land that Bull McCabe and his son Tadhg work. They do not own as it belongs to the widow, but have been renting it. The Widow has decided to auction it over Bull McCabe's protests. Believing it to be his, Bull intimidates the town sufficiently to believe the auction will be fixed for him to buy the land. He does not count on civilisation and progress arriving into the town in the form of The Yank. He has plans for concrete and electricity and endlessly deep pockets. The stage is set for a grand Act III showdown.

The Field wants to be big and dramatic and about IDEAS and it is. Harris was Oscar nominated but his performance is Job via Shakespeare and it unbalances the film. Sean Bean, who does not have many lines in the film tries his best but his accent(s) in the film and discomfort in the role are painfully obvious. Hurt is fine as Hurt is always fine. Fricker has very little to do. In fact none of the women have. This is a film dripping in testosterone, women are not to be trusted. Goodness knows what the Traveller community makes of it (though I can guess) with the 'tinkers' consisting of drunks constantly fighting, with promiscuous daughters and filthy kids.

There are some fascinating ideas in here about the famine, the role of the Church and suicide. But they are drowned in heavy symbolism and just in case you didn't get it symbolically plenty of tedious exposition. There are some scenes, particular in the excruciatingly heavy handed third act that are supposed to be dramatic but are so big as to bring laughter at the absurdity of how serious it is trying to be. Animals rain down from a cliff and it calls to mind the attack on the castle in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (run away!). Sadly ***The Field*** is a real misfire, Sheridan has done much better work than this.

A big financial, critical and award success, ***In the Name of the Father*** is a fascinating film. Led by an electric and humane performance from Daniel Day Lewis as Gerry Conlon, the story of the conviction of the Guilford Four is a tragic and appalling one. Conlon was convicted alongside Paul Hill (John Lynch), Carole Richardson (Beatie Edney) and Paddy Armstrong (Mark Sheppard) of the Guilford bombing with the Maguire Seven convicted of handling explosives. The Maguire Seven also included Gerry's father Giuseppe (Pete Postlethwaite) which forms the backbone of the film.

There are moments in this film that will rightly make you boil with anger. The torture scenes that elicit the confessions are harrowing. These scenes just about make up for the maddening inaccuracies that litter the film. There is sound film reasoning for putting Gerry and Giuseppe in the same prison cell (more anon) but there really is no excuse for the legal inaccuracies in the court room scenes of the film. There is an argument that for a film about the truth there is a responsibility on the filmmaker to be as accurate as possible. This could be aimed at Sheridan but the passionate and righteous anger about the injustice that radiates from the film just about gets him past this. The film curiously only concentrates on two of the Guilford Four with Carole Richardson and Paddy Armstrong relegated to the background for the most part.

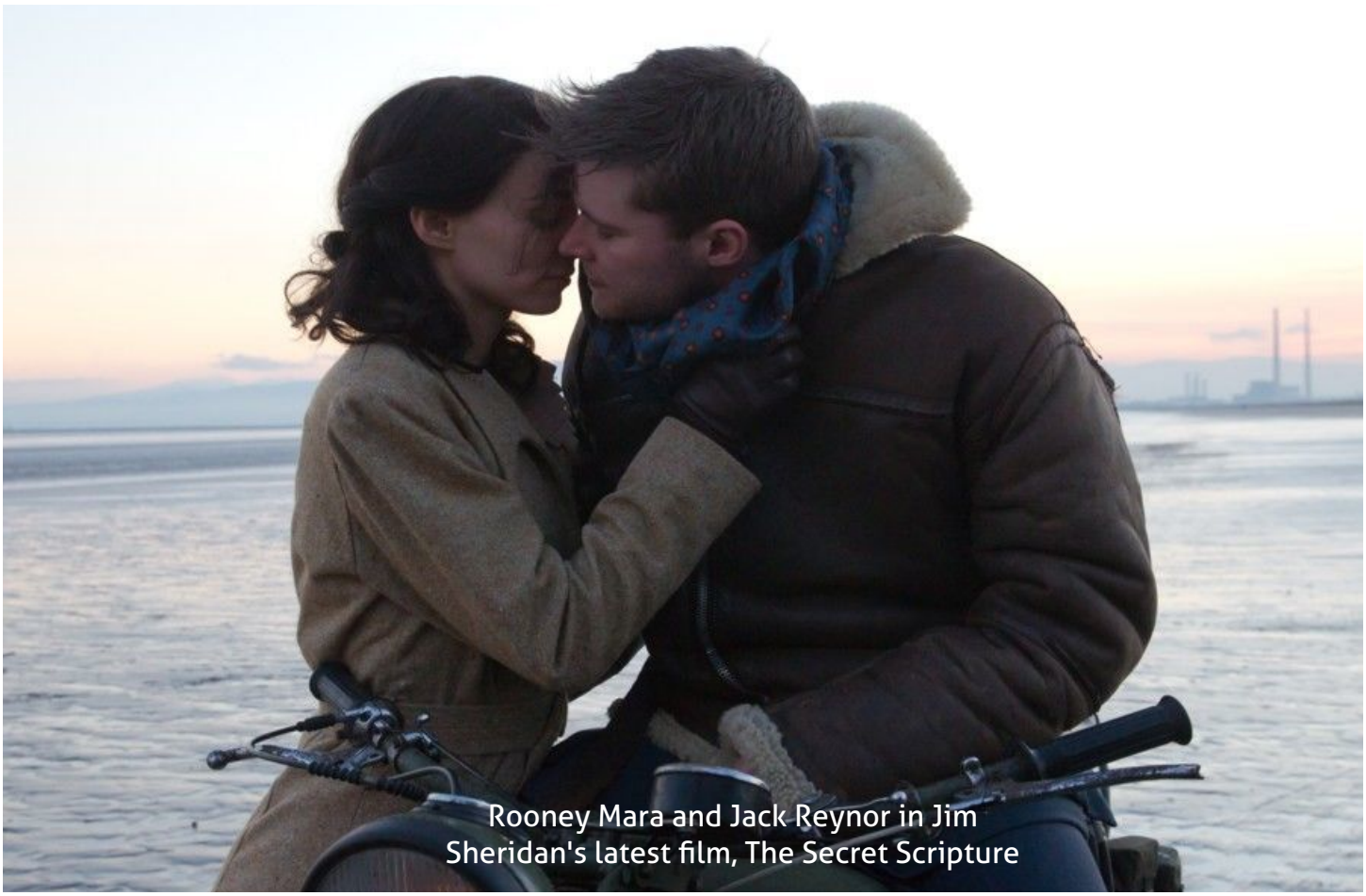
Ultimately the film is given its power by the relationship between Gerry and Giuseppe. In terms of accuracy the sharing of a cell during the film rankles, but in terms of creating intimacy and the bridging of a struggling relationship it may well be a masterstroke by Sheridan. A huge part of this is of course down to Day Lewis and Postlethwaite who are excellent actors. The latter is perhaps still under appreciated and his Giuseppe is a gentle and loving soul and a perfect foil for the inhumanity the film wades in for the most part.

In The Name of the Father

These three films represent the pinnacle in terms of success with Sheridan's career. He would make other films (including one more with Day Lewis, the less successful ***The Boxer***) with varying degrees of success but which still included another Oscar nomination for the screenplay of ***In America***. That made it six Oscar nominations in total which is pretty damned good by any measure. It is important to mention how just how significant these films are in opening the door for other Irish filmmakers to follow. Hollywood took notice of Ireland's filmmakers and continues to do so.

At the heart of these three films are stories about fathers and sons. The quiet contempt of Paddy for Christy in ***My Left Foot***, the anger, grief and disappointment of Bull McCabe when he looks at Tadhg and thinks of Seamus in ***The Field*** and the look of anguish on Giuseppe's face when he tries to communicate with a stubborn Gerry in ***In the Name of the Father***. Fathers and sons, disappointment abounds but what of the women? Fricker, a fine actress does a huge amount with being an Irish mammy in ***My Left Foot*** and tries hard with even less in T***he Field***. The women in the latter film exist only as distrustful and wild or bitter old maids. ***In the Name of the Father*** has Carole Richardson and Anne Maguire in the background but never really as part of the overall story. It does better with Emma Thompson as Gareth Peirce thankfully. They can be said to films of their time and it is a little unfair to call out modern issues in old films. But people have been looking for better roles for women for a long time. Thankfully Sheridan does a lot better in this regard in ***The Boxer***, ***In America*** and ***The Secret Scripture***.

Sheridan is these days more than a filmmaker. An activist involved with the Home Sweet Home movement to help prevent homelessness (a documentary is rumoured). He is also a permanent fixture to a lot of filmgoers at Q&A's for various films around Dublin. But he is also a vitally important filmmaker in our film history. He helped pave the way for others to follow. Honest and direct, we have certainly not heard the last of him.



Rooney Mara and Jack Reynor in Jim Sheridan's latest film, The Secret Scripture


tiff. film festival
OFFICIAL SELECTION
FROM THE CREATORS OF THE ACADEMY AWARD®-NOMINATED
THE SECRET OF KELLS & SONG OF THE SEA
AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
ANGELINA JOLIE
THE
Breadwinner
A FILM BY
NORA TWOMEY

SILENCE IS GOLDEN: A MEDITATION ON PAT COLLINS' POETIC NARRATIVE

WORDS: JAMES MULVEY

Eoghan, a sound recordist living in cosmopolitan Berlin, accepts a job where he returns to Ireland to record silence or, at least, a space devoid of manmade noise. It has been fifteen years since Eoghan left Ireland, and he discovers a different place to the one he left behind. Owing to a dogged determination in his pursuit of silence, Eoghan pushes up the west coast of Ireland where he encounters characters who inhabit the landscape, in his fruitless pursuit of the impossible. The final leg of his journey sees him return home to Tory, a small island off the coast of Donegal. This brings Eoghan full circle; he sits on the bed from his childhood and ponders a familiar view through the window of his abandoned home.

The beginning and end points of Eoghan's journey are plotted points on a map and provide the context for the encounters he experiences along the way. While in Berlin, Eoghan remains detached from his surroundings, preferring to record the ambient noises embedded in the cityscape. The rattle and clammer of passing trams and trains drown out the intimate conversations of the city's inhabitants, preventing the formation of audio portraits as the basis of narrative. Even when Eoghan tells his girlfriend of his planned trip home, a passing train denies the audience the clarity of a narrative between lovers. Eoghan closes himself off from people, preferring to record, collect and capture the vibrating sounds of his adopted environment. He is continuously plugged into the soundscape: he wears ear phones, and yet somewhat ironically, holds a microphone an instrument which usually presents people with an invitation to communicate. He is more interested in capturing urban noises than engaging in conversations with passers-by, closing himself off from human interaction making transformation in the cosmopolitan sense impossible - he lives in a self-imposed exile of silence.

In the broadest sense, Silence is a film about migrancy, but it focuses on the happenings and becomings of the encounter as an intermezzo plotted between home and abroad. The film traces Eoghan's original migrant journey in reverse, and as a man of the world he is weighed down by his experiences. On his return to Ireland he remains aloof, hiding behind the accepted reclusiveness of big-city urban living.

Refreshingly, Eoghan finds an Ireland disinterested in nationalism and, as an audience, we are invited to consider a landscape unabated by state-centric conceptions of Irishness. A voice emerges from the landscape resonating with those open to hearing it, and as a nomadic character or a contemporary seanchai, Eoghan moves through the landscape collecting the stories and soundbites of the thoughts and ideas of the people he meets.

Traditionally, Irish cinema has treated the landscape as a space for national regeneration, whereby identity in the present is directly linked to a nostalgic and idealised past. Central characters from films like The Quiet Man, The Field and Into the West romanticise the landscape as a restorative space, where the ills of present predicaments can be cured. Francie Brady from The Butcher Boy takes a more radical approach by nuking the landscape in the hope of a fresh start, or at least in an attempt to erase the past. While my sympathies lie with young Francie, Eoghan encounters a landscape filled with characters who have little need to marry the present with the past. They are neither establishment nor anti-establishment figures, but rather simply offer an alternative view or understanding of what it is to be Irish or, dare I say, Gaelic. The people Eoghan meets are real people, or versions of themselves with stories of interest. They are not homogenised representations of Irish nationhood, for or by the state. The archival footage interspersed in the film is not a nostalgic harkening back to the past but rather an acknowledgment of its existence; a snapshot in time, much like the film itself, acting as a document of the present.

"You have to have noise to have the silence": "tost" is the Gaelic for silence and, as Eoghan explains, it literally means the space in between the noise. This in-between, as a theme, is evident throughout, and as the film is neither plot-based nor narrative driven, it becomes about what happens between the points on Eoghan's journey. In his search for silence, he tells a barman in a local fishing village, desperate for conversation after a long lonely winter, that he is not interested in stories per se, it's more quiet he's after; but within this interaction alone Eoghan has begun the process of collecting. He wanders out into the landscape with a microphone acting as an open invitation to talk – the very device that separated him from people in Berlin has now been inverted. Eoghan gathers both the sounds that surround him and the stories of the people he meets, reiterating the point that the landscape goes beyond mere nationhood.

For director Pat Collins, Eoghan plays the seanchai, echoing the figures traversing the landscape in the thirties and forties as they moved from house to house collecting stories. Eoghan is a preserver and transmitter of folk wisdom, a nomadic character selecting stories that exist in between people and places. He moves beyond the homogenised representations of Irishness or nationhood, but also the mystical and nostalgic narratives associated with landscape. As a nomadic Seanchai Eoghan collects contemporary stories of Gaelicness, of who we are, who we were, but more importantly, who we can become borne out of our interactions with the landscape. Eoghan does not represent an Irishness rooted in the past as a nostalgic figure meandering the landscape in the hope of collecting sounds from the past. Eoghan punctures the grand narratives of nationhood by including the multiplicity of narratives he meets along the way. As a seanchai, he literally forces us to become aware of an alternative Ireland, one that moves at another pace, which is beyond the control of the state.

A SWEET TREAT OF A CINEMATIC BITE TO EAT

WORDS: LUKE DUNNE

Normally, residents of Malahide have to travel for the cinema; a car trip to Swords or up the Malahide Road to the Odeon a requirement to catch the latest releases. But with enough imagination and appetite, they can still get a taste of the cinema in their home town, in an unconventional place: on the dessert menu of the Old Street Restaurant.

Old Street first opened its doors in April of this year, after a long development process. Six years ago Mark and Adriana Fitzpatrick bought two adjoining cottages, some of the oldest buildings in the posh dock town. After two years of restoration with local architect Gareth Maguire, the restaurant opened, a modern and rustic addition to the area's packed list of restaurants, lots of leather and exposed brick, a place that promises classy cocktails as soon as you walk past the [AWARDS] and through the front door. You might be wondering what any of this has to do with cinema, but even before we get to that dessert menu, there's an eager auteur in the eyes of Chris Fullam, the restaurant's resident sous chef.

Still in his mid-20s, Fullam has progressed rapidly from the kitchens of the Cliff House in Waterford, to acclaimed restaurants like Chapter One, Amuse and The Greenhouse, with a spell in Holland and a nomination for Euro-Toques Young Chef competition along the way. In Amuse, Chris met Old Street's Head Chef Fergus Caffrey for the first time, and started to develop his own culinary ideas.

"Probably one of my main influences was in Amuse, before Amuse I didn't read much. I went there and Fergus explained how important it was and I got hooked. I spent €400 in 4 or 5 months on books, so I was reading constantly and developing my own ideas from the books. If you read my books at home it's everything from French basics, to crazy stuff from places in America, so that's where my influence came from. That gave me an idea of how to be your own chef, having your own ideas. That's why I say to the girls downstairs in pastry and the lads in the kitchen it's very important to be your own chef, because you burn out fast going in everyday and doing somebody else's food. If you're going to be a robot in the kitchen, you get tired very fast. Whereas if you get the passion doing your own thing, going in every day and working with people, I think that's where happiness comes from for a lot of chefs."

It's interestingly comparable to the way, ideally at least, a director manages people on set, looking to collaborate, bring out the strengths of the crew around them and encourage everyone's creativity. Just as artists in the film world want their creativity to be acknowledged, Chris believes chefs deserve the same too.

"I think it's a really important side of it. When people leave here I want them to go onto better jobs, I want people to leave here and be happy. I want people to come in here and be happy, and I think that's a big part of it. Putting your own dish on the menu is an unbelievable feeling. Every single day you're in a restaurant and you're doing your dessert, when it's your dessert your ideas, you had a part in that, it's a very satisfying feeling. That's what makes the job worth it."

The Old Street Cinema is one of the dishes Chris has put on the menu himself, a sweet and savoury combo inspired by his memories of going to the cinema. The flavours and textures of cinema snacks are bumped up considerably on the dish, which combines a caramel cremeux, candied popcorn, cola Jelly, mixed nut crumble and vanilla ice cream. For Chris, the dessert had to spend a bit of time in 'development hell' before it found its way to the Old Street plates.

The Cinema dish was something I've been working on for a very long time, possibly two and a half years. I always had the idea. I want to induce memories in my food. Obviously taste is very important, but I want that other element, of surprise and shock. I want people leaving going "that was really, really good, that was really cool." I think that's what we got with the Cinema, I think people are very shocked by what they get, because it's just 'Old Street Cinema' on the menu. When I was in Amuse two and a half years ago, I pitched the idea to the Head Chef and he said "there's no way I'm putting Coca Cola on the menu". I went to The Greenhouse, which was Michelin Star, they had a very different style to me, very clean, 1-2-3 get this on the plate and everything perfect. Which is a perfect style, just not my style.

But then when I started writing out pastry for here the Cinema came back up. I asked people and thought back about my memories of going to the cinema. Going to the cinema was very important to me as a child, me and my mam used to go every Saturday and probably one of my earliest memories is going to the cinema. I wanted to bring back memories of being a child in the cinema, so that's where the dish started. The cola I thought was a very important thing, I think that's cool that people enjoy that, the caramel, the nuts, the sweet element, then the popcorn element.

Much like a trip to the movies these days, going to a fancy restaurant means loosening the purse strings a little. You want it to be worth it, and Chris feels the same way about his food.

"For me the cinema-going experience is more of an event. You watch a film at home more to relax, if you go to the cinema now with your girlfriend or whatever it's the part of a night out, you might have dinner beforehand, go to the cinema, you might go out for a few drinks afterwards, so it ties into an event experience. I think when people go to the cinema, confectionary is crazily over-priced but you have no problem paying for it just because you want that experience. It is an experience going into the cinema, big dark room, lot of people there together, and you experience the film with all the people there. I think of it as an experience and that's what Old Street Cinema is."

The visuals are the main attraction of going to the cinema but it's the little details, the smells, the dark lights, the sticky floors, popcorn all over the floor, that make going to the cinema stick out in people's minds. Inversely, in dining taste is the most important thing but

the visuals are vital as well. The plating of the Old Street Cinema really helps it pop, the perfectly quenelle of the ice cream, the way the colours pair together. It's a feast for the eyes even before you taste it.

"The visuals are a very important thing for me I'm not gonna lie. Obviously the taste is first, but I have a very particular style, I think my brain works a little differently to other people and I can see this as I'm making them in the sense that on paper, I can see how to work things. Coming out for dinner at a restaurant is an expensive thing, and I think to nbe thinking "I had a great time, the food was amazing but secondly I had a great time and the whole experience was great." I think that shock factor that wows people and makes people laugh in a sense is a very big influence in terms of how I plate things, it is very important to me. The girls downstairs working in the pastry section know everything has to be perfect, down to the small things. People are paying good money, working hard and spending their money on our experience, so it's our job to give that to them. For me everything has to be perfect ; look perfect, taste perfect. There's no too small of a mistake, if there's a hole in the ice cream, it's not right, and the customer deserves better, that's my point of view."

Actual food critics can describe the taste of the Cinema better than I can, with TheTaste.ie praising how "nostalgia, superb presentation and luscious flavours made this the best dessert of 2017 for us so far" and the Irish Independent lamenting that "The snacks must have been a lot better where (Chris) grew up than they ever were at the Forum in Dún Laoghaire.." It's delicious and different, and a great example of cinema inspiring art in a very different media. Nostalgia may be a key element of the Old Street Cinema, but Chris is still looking ahead, and it isn't just in his dessert that he's bringing that experience into the future.

"It is still that event. My nephews love going to the cinema...I find joy going to the cinema with them, it's a fun experience for me, brings me back to my childhood. I don't think it's changed, I think we've changed, we've grown older and our perceptions may have changed, because it's our money we're spending I suppose!"

The CinÉireann Christmas Gift Guide

Modern Irish Icons

Cardboard Gangsters follows a group of wannabe gangsters as they attempt to gain control of the drug trade in Darndale, chasing the glorified lifestyle of money, power and sex.

Features a brilliant lead performance from Hohn Connors.
Directed by Mark O'Connor.

A Date for Mad Mary sees Mad Mary McArdle (Seána Kerslake) return to her hometown after a brief stint in prison and is immediately labeled as undatable, but she is determined to find a date to accompany her to her best friend's wedding.

Directed by Darren Thornton

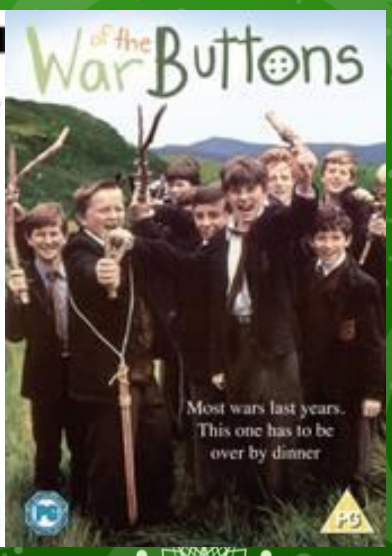
The Drummer and the Keeper sees a drummer of a rock band, who was recently diagnosed with bipolar disorder, strike up an unusual friendship with an institutionalized teen who is suffering from Asperger's syndrome.

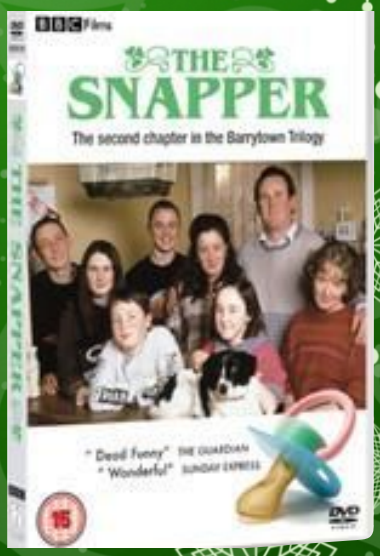
A heartwarming debut from writer/director Nick Kelly

Tomato Red sees a small town drifter drive into a small Ozarks town on the search for his next cold beer and the bunch that will have him. He end up getting a lot more than he bargained for.

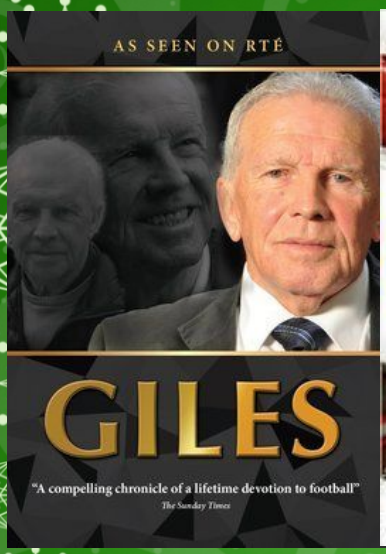
Directed by Juanita Wilson with glorious cinematography from Piers McGrail

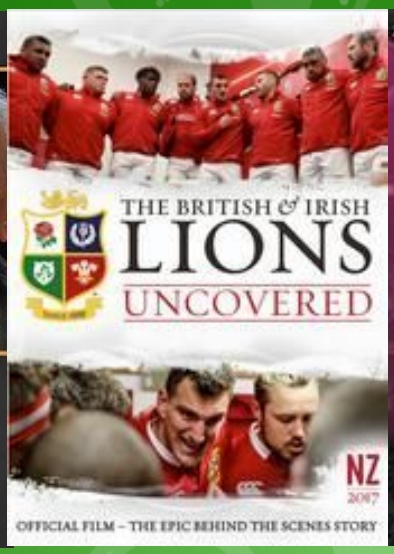
The Classics

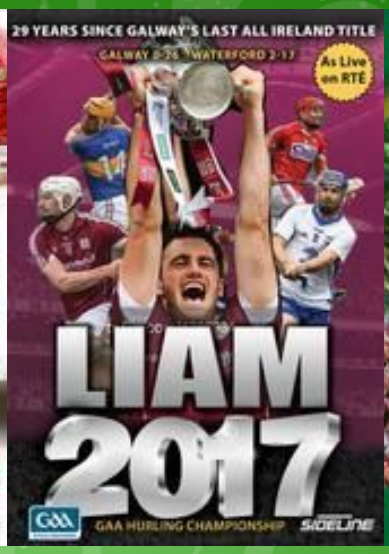


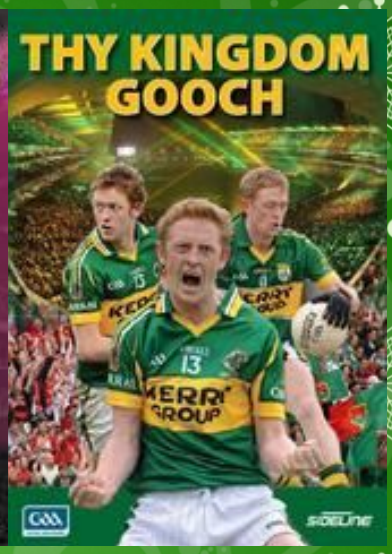


Sporting Legends on DVD

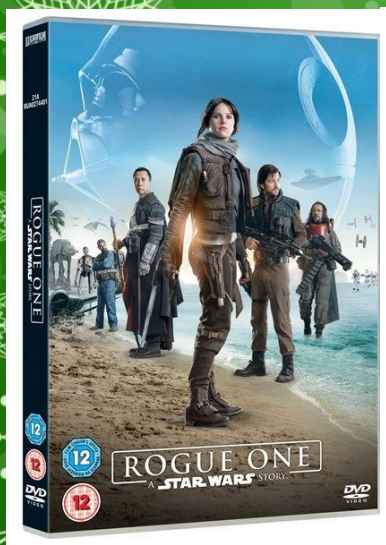


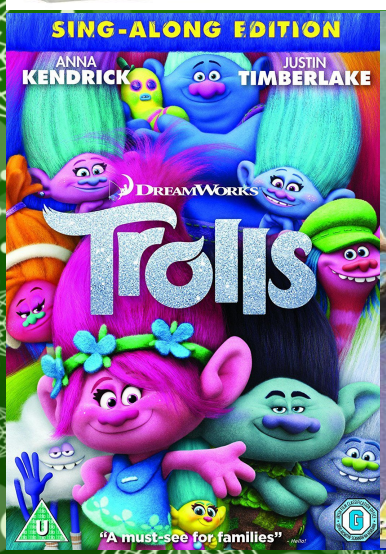






International Selections





For Streaming

Amazon Fire Stick
Best for Amazon Prime Video

Apple TV HD
Best for iTunes

Google Chromecast Ultra
Best for Google Video and YouTube

Roku 3
Best All-Rounder

IFI 25
Irish Film Institute
1992–2017

PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR CINEMA FANS IN THE IFI FILM SHOP!

If you're looking for fantastic presents and great stocking fillers for the film fans in your life, then look no further than the IFI Film Shop.

Specialising in Irish and world cinema, from dramas to documentaries, and including the top DVDs of 2017, the IFI Film Shop has it all under one roof!

If you have any queries, please ask our staff who will be happy to help you with all your shopping needs and specialist searches.

GIVE THE GIFT OF AN IFI ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

EXTENDED OPENING HOURS + WE'RE OPEN CHRISTMAS EVE!

DISCOVER OUR EXPANDED 3 FOR €30 RANGE

Don't forget, if you're an IFI Member, you'll automatically get 10% off!*

*Excludes gift cards/vouchers

arts council an chomhairle ealaíon

the art of film

IFI Film Shop 6 Eustace Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2
www.ifi.ie filmshop@irishfilm.ie 01 679 5727
@IFI_Dub @IrishFilmInstitute @IrishFilmInstitute

There is something for everyone at the IFI Film Shop. Pick up the perfect festive present this Christmas!

IRISH DVD:

Meetings with Ivor

Bobby Sands: 66 Days

The Drummer and the Keeper

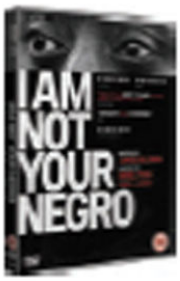
A Date For Mad Mary

DOCUMENTARIES:

The Farthest

OJ Made in America

Vietnam



I Am Not Your Negro

BEST OF 2017:

Moonlight

My Life as a Courgette

Twin Peaks

The Red Turtle

SPORT:

IFI GAA Gold Box Set

George Best: All By Himself

FILM BUFFS:

David Lynch - The Art Life

Stanley Kubrick Blu-ray set

3 FOR €30

The Salesman

Paterson

GIFT CARDS

IFI Gift Cards

BOOK LOVERS:

Hitchcock/ Truffaut

The Grip of Film – Richard Ayoade

I, Daniel Blake

Hunt For The Wilderpeople

Follow Us! @IFI_FilmShop

Visit us at the IFI Film Shop, 6 Eustace Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2 or call 01 679 5727 with any queries.
Opening Hours: Mon-Tue 11am-7pm; Wed-Sat 12pm-8.30pm; Sun 1pm-7pm
(Extended opening hours in December – we're open Christmas Eve!)

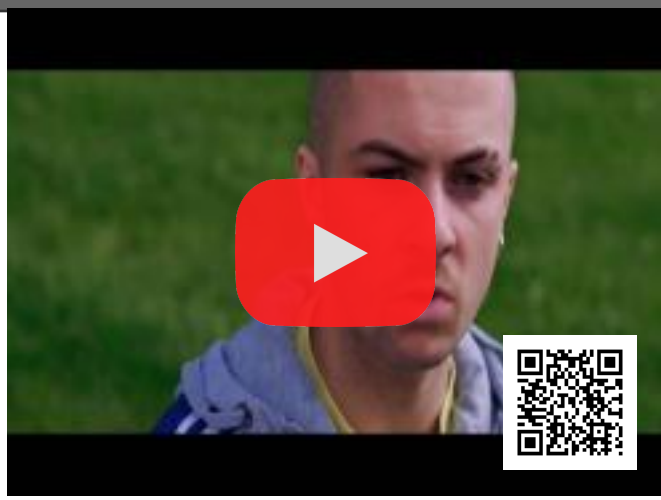
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME WITH AN IRISH FILM

Words: Jason Coyle

Picture the scene: it is Christmas night. The idea of flicking through TV channels to find something to watch does not appeal. You consider DVD's and box sets but they are packed away neatly in a box somewhere. Chances are you really don't want to spend hours searching through VOD services trying to find that one film you want to watch. Search for too long and you will end up watching nothing. The fact that you read this fine publication means that an Irish film may well figure high on your list of interests. This is where your humble (mini) reviewer comes in. Not only is there a recommended list for you but crucially where you can find them. I have rated them out of 5 stars for information purposes but you really can't go wrong whatever you choose. So get yourself a turkey sandwich, a glass of nice whiskey and enjoy!

The Young Offenders (2016)

Peter Foott's brilliantly funny film made an absolute fortune at the Irish box office. With a follow up TV series coming soon to BBC-3 now is the time to catch the film. Starring Alex Murphy and Chris Walley as Conor and Jock, two dopey but sweet natured lads who devise a plan to find a missing bale of drugs off the Cork coast. The film easily surpasses expectations with the laughs coming at a very fast rate. There is a poignancy to the film as well. A misjudged character introduced in the third act mars slightly but this is a great comedy film and one worth watching immediately. And then watching again. (Netflix)



Handsome Devil (2017)

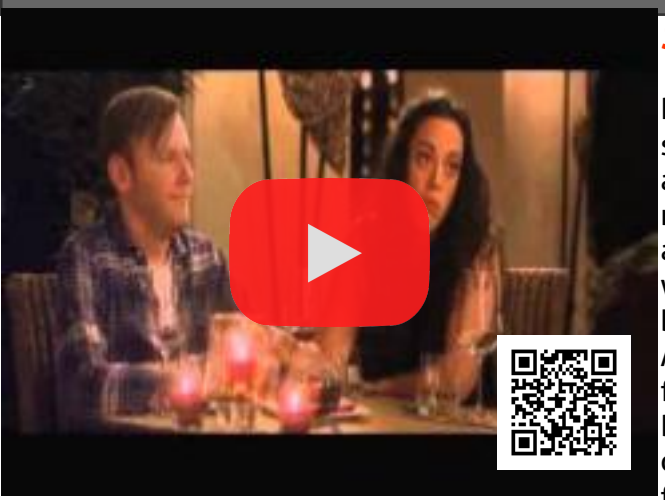
John Butler's follow up to the enjoyable The Stag is a warm and sensitively told tale. A terrific young cast led by Fionn O'Shea as Ned with fine support by 'old hands' such as Moe Dunford, Andrew Scott and Michael McElhatton. The soundtrack is also great and music is weaved into films superbly. If the story and structure is a familiar one (Scott's teacher veers into Dead Poets Society a little too much for this reviewer) the film is big hearted enough to overcome those issues. Handsome Devil also has a lovely message about acceptance to boot. Even someone with an aversion to rugby (ahem) will enjoy it! (Netflix)

Bloody Sunday (2002)

A restrained Paul Greengrass was the perfect choice of director to take on this harrowing story of brutal injustice. An excellent James Nesbitt leads the cast as the SDLP politician Ivan Cooper who was one of the main organisers of the civil rights march in Derry on 30 January 1972. The march ended when British Army paratroopers fired on the demonstrators, killing thirteen and wounding another who later died. There is an authentic feeling to proceedings and the film looks like it came directly from the seventies, all cigarette smoke stained brown walls and destroyed streets. An essential and harrowing watch. (Netflix)

Love and Friendship (2016)

Whit Stillman took a short novel by Jane Austin (Lady Susan) and fashioned a dazzling part romance, part caper film that entertains throughout. Beckinsale is fantastic as Lady Susan Vernon, ably supported by Chloë Sevigny and Xavier Samuel. But the film is gently stolen by Tom Bennett whose Sir James walks away with every scene in which he appears with gormless brilliance. Stillman's film has a light touch, a great script and charm in abundance. This is one of those films that most definitely earns the praise of one that the whole family will enjoy. (Netflix)



Standby (2014)

Rob and Ronan Burke fashion a warm and funny film from a smart script by Peirce Ryan. 20-something Alan (Brian Gleeson) is forlorn and unlucky in love and not doing so well in life, either. He has recently been jilted at the altar and the only vestiges of romance are the barely disguised secret-admirer notes left for him by his co-worker at an information desk in the airport. She also happens to be his mother. A chance encounter at the airport with old flame Alice (Jessica Paré) may mean a second chance. She is on standby for a flight home to New York. They decide to spend the night in Dublin together. Can they rekindle their love for each other? Watch out for a truly superb turn from Francesca Cherruault as Alan's friend Beatrice. A predictable but very enjoyable film. (Netflix)

The Lobster (2015)

Yorgos Lanthimos first foray in Ireland is a scalpel sharp look at coupling and loneliness. A never better Farrell stars as David, a single man, who according to the law, is taken to a hotel, where he is obliged to find a romantic partner in forty-five days or be transformed into the animal of his choice and sent off into the woods. The Lobster is a jet black comedy set in a dystopian near future. The supporting cast (John C. Reilly, Ben Wishaw, Rachel Weisz, Léa Seydoux) are excellent. There is also a fantastic turn by Olivia Colman as a sort of benign Nurse Ratchet. This is wonderful nightmare fuel. (Netflix and Volta)

Cardboard Gangsters (2017)

Mark O'Connor's film was that rare thing: an 18 certificate Irish film that was a stellar success at the box office. Cardboard Gangsters tells the story of Jay (John Connors, superb as always) who must negotiate the drugs and gangsters scene in Darndale. The relationships he becomes involved in and the childhood friendships add plenty of stakes to the pot. Whilst Cardboard Gangsters has a familiar story this is elevated by great direction, plenty of energy, a terrific lead performance and an unusual location. The soundtrack is a belter as well with some superb and unfamiliar local music adding much. (Volta)

A Date for Mad Mary (2016)

"Mad" Mary McArdle (Seana Kerslake) returns to Drogheda after a short spell in prison. Back home, everything and everyone has changed. Her best friend, Charlene (Charleigh Bailey), is about to get married and Mary is maid of honour. When Charlene refuses Mary a 'plus one' on the grounds that she probably couldn't find a date, Mary becomes determined to prove her wrong. This is an intense and superb film with superbwork from Kerslake and Bailey. The tonal shifts are fluid and the script is very good indeed. (Volta)

Mattress Men (2016)

Colm Quinn's superb documentary is about Paul, a serially unemployed father of three who works one day a week in a mattress showroom. To stimulate sales, proactive Paul invents the goofy persona of Mattress Mick for his employer, Michael, to play, and creates ridiculous videos involving rap songs and a DeLorean. This is a funny and moving film, which foregrounds the struggle for dignity. The editing of the film is excellent and elegant which lends the film a graceful and humane feel. The videos made by the team have to be seen to be believed. Watch out for the guy in the mattress suit trying to get customers in. He walks away with the film. (Volta)

Barbaric Genius (2012)

Paul Duane's remarkable documentary about the rise, fall and rise again of John Healy, who in turn was a drunk, a thief, a chess master and a brilliant writer (his book The Grass Arena is now considered a classic). His tale is a fascinating one that takes in mental illness, violence, pain and redemption. Through Duane we get a little bit of insight into a fascinating and troubled who is difficult to get to know. To watch Healy play chess simultaneously with a number of people (an aggressive style is apparent) is thrilling and the stories of threatened violence against his publishers are intense. A must watch. (Volta)

In a House that Ceased to be (2015)

Ciarín Scott's astonishing documentary purports to be a biography or hagiography, to warm our heart to see the wonderful Christina Noble helping children everywhere. What we get instead is a headlong plunge into the hellish nature of Ireland's collective past. It is the disturbing, disgusting and shameful past that threatens to overtake us. This is not just a story of one woman. It is the story about Ireland, of the shameful practices carried out by the Catholic Church with the blind blessing and consent of the Government. There is humour here as Noble is an extremely funny woman but this is devastating film. (Volta)

Pyjama Girls (2010)

Maya Derrington's terrific and underseen documentary tells the story of that early 21st century phenomenon of young girls in Dublin wandering around shops wearing pyjamas. Or does it? It is certainly a jumping off point to take a more nuanced look at the pressures on young girls, particularly in working class areas where supports can be inconsistent to say the least. It also obliquely looks at the decimation of the inner city of Dublin through heroin. But this is no misery porn. There are laughs to be had, and the two girls, Lauren and Tara are delights. Derrington is an empathetic director with a light touch. I would like to see her make more films. Essential. (Volta)

Out of Here (2014)

Out Of Here tells the story of Ciaran (a superb Fionn Walton), who has arrived home to Dublin after spending quite a bit of time travelling abroad. He meets up with old friends, meets a girl in a bar named Melissa (Aoife Duffin) and generally gads about. There is also an old girlfriend Jess (Anabell Rickerby) in his orbit. It is clear things are not quite right. Plot wise wo don't get much else but with these bare essentials Donal Foreman has crafted one of the best debut films to come out of this country in recent years. The end of the Celtic Tiger and the hopelessness that came with it hang heavily in the background. See it and be wowed. Foreman is a director to watch. (Volta)

Pigs (1984)

Cathal Black's ***Pigs*** takes place in a derelict Georgian house in Henrietta Street Dublin where Jimmy (Jimmy Brennan) a gay man, has decided to take up residence, soon joined by an odd bunch of other squatters. They are the mentally damaged Tom (Maurice O'Donoghue) and one-time businessman George (George Shane) along with various drug dealers and prostitutes that turn up from time to time. This is a decaying house representing a squalid and decaying Ireland, and specifically Dublin as a 1980s apocalyptic shithole. A fine score is used economically and it is beautifully shot amidst the decay. An excellent and criminally underseen film. (Volta)

There are other films that I have yet to catch up with but come highly recommended by others. Frankie Fenton's ***It's Not Yet Dark***, Alan Gilsenan's ***Meetings with Ivor***, Juanita Wilson's ***Tomato Red*** and Tom Ryan's ***Twice Shy***. These are the ones just from 2017 and this reviewer will hopefully be watching them over Christmas. All are available to watch on Volta. The sheer quantity and quality of Irish film on offer at the moment is truly fantastic. Go forth and investigate further. You will not be disappointed.

Sound on Film

An Introduction

Whether it's the ominous ticking of a click, the cheering crowd at Caesar's feet, raised voices in a lovers' spat, or the tender words of a mother to her child, sound has always been an equal co-conspirator with the visuals of cinema. Bu I've always loved the sizzle more than the steak. I believe sound is the thing that makes cinema something far more than just moving pictures. Dialogue, sound effects, and ambiance bring film to life, and life to film.

I've always loved the sound of film. And, as a location sound recordist, a sound editor, a longtime film journalist, and now, as a newly minted Irish citizen (after six years in Dublin), I'm thrilled to be exploring the audio side of Irish film, and presenting my findings here in CinÉireann.

As an American, I'll admit that Irish filmmaking is still a bit new to me. But, in the months and years to come, I hope my shallow grasp of Irish cinema will prove an asset, allowing me to see (and hear) Irish film with fresh eyes and ears, as I document the ways that Irish filmmakers are using sound to tell their stories.

I'm eager to talk to industry insiders like sound recordist Peter Nicell and re-recording mixer and sound supervisor Killian Fitzgerald (*Michael Inside*), and re-recording mixer Ken Galvin (*The Delinquent Season*), in the hopes that they'll pass on advice for on-set recording techniques and tips for post production sound. In addition to the technical challenges of (recording/editing/mixing sound for horror and drama versus comedy, in studio and on location), we'll look at the practicalities of shooting in Ireland. How do weather and persistent climate affect gear choice and handling? What advice do they have for early career sound professionals? What do they listen for at the theatre? Who are the Irish filmmakers they listen for at the theatre?

I'll also be talking to festival programmers. What are their technical requirements for submitting sound, and why do they exist? What do the programmers listen for, and why? From a sound perspective, what can producers do to increase their chances of getting programmed into Ireland's top festivals?

But these monthly columns will be more than just gearhead advice, and technique workshops, the focus will always be on storytelling with sound. From the early drafts of the script, to the final mix, and the red carpet premiere, how are Irish filmmakers thinking about and using sound to build tension, create drama, and bring visuals to life?

And, as I hope to never stop learning, I implore you, the reader, to get in touch with me (at sound@cine.ie) and share your thoughts on sound in Irish film. What films and filmmakers stand out in your mind?

What do you listen for, and what are you hearing?

Glenn Kaufmann
Dublin, Dec. 2017

THIS MONTH

Song of Granite

Watch trailer

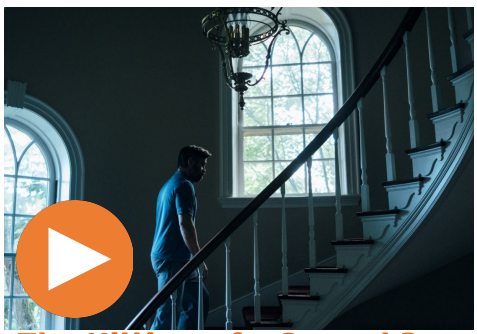
Enigmatic and complex, Joe Heaney was one of the greats of traditional Irish singing. Shaped by the myths, fables and songs of his upbringing in the west of Ireland, his emergence as a gifted artist came at a personal cost. Featuring performances from Lisa O'Neill, Damien Dempsey, Seamus Begley and sean nós singers Micheál O'Confhaola and Pól Ó Ceannabháin, the film is an intense exploration of music and song.

The Man Who Invented Christmas

Using real-life inspiration and a vivid imagination, author Charles Dickens brings Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim and other classic characters to life in "A Christmas Carol," forever changing the holiday season into the celebration known today.

Jaha's Promise

A documentary about the life and activism of Jaha Dukureh, a Gambian anti-female genital mutilation campaigner who returns to her country of birth to confront the harmful tradition that she and 200 million women and girls have undergone globally.



The Killing of a Sacred Deer

A renowned cardiovascular surgeon who presides over a spotless household with his wife and two children. Lurking at the margins of his idyllic suburban existence is Martin, a fatherless teen who insinuates himself into the doctor's life in gradually unsettling ways.

COMING SOON

TBA

Michael Inside

Frank Berry's prison-drama ***Michael Inside***, which stars Dafhyd Flynn, Lalor Roddy, and Moe Dunford, tells the story of Michael McCrea, an impressionable 18-year-old living with his grandfather Francis in a Dublin housing estate, who gets caught holding a bag of drugs for his friend's older brother and is sentenced to three months in prison.

Michael Inside sees Berry once again working with Dafhyd Flynn, who gives a moving performance as Michael, after previously worked together on the critically acclaimed *I Used To Live Here*. The film was shot in the recently decommissioned Cork Prison and in Dublin. Berry and Donna Eperon produced for Write Direction Films, with Tristan Orpen Lynch and Aoife O'Sullivan executive producers for Subotica. The film was made with the support of the Irish Film Board.

TBA

The Lodgers

Brian O'Malley's ***The Lodgers***, which is written by David Turpin, is a ghost story of orphaned twins Rachel and Edward who share their crumbling stately home with unseen sinister forces – known as "The Lodgers".

Bill Milner (*X-Men: First Class*) and Charlotte Vega (*REC3*) play the lead roles, supported by a strong cast that includes *Patrick's Day* lead Moe Dunford, *Game of Thrones* actors David Bradley and Eugene Simon, *Noble* star Deirdre O'Kane, and Roísín Murphy (*What Richard Did*).

The Lodgers is being produced by Julianne Forde and Ruth Treacy for Tailored Films, with Patrick Ewald and Shaked Berenson of Epic Pictures Group as executive producers. The film received backing from Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board.

"STRIKINGLY BEAUTIFUL"
SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

"BREATHTAKING"
INDIEWIRE

"A SUBTLE TRIUMPH"
THE IRISH TIMES

OSCILLOSCOPE LABORATORIES
PRESENTS

SONG *of* GRANITE

A FILM BY PAT COLLINS

A MARCIE FILMS AMERIQUE FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH HARVEST FILMS SOUTH WIND BLOWS ROADS ENTERTAINMENT
IN ASSOCIATION WITH BORD SCANNÁN NA HÉIREANN/IRISH FILM BOARD BROADCASTING AUTHORITY OF IRELAND AND TG4
WITH THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION OF SOCIÉTÉ DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES ENTREPRISES CULTURELLES - QUÉBEC TELEFILM CANADA A FILM BY PAT COLLINS SONG OF GRANITE
STARRING MÍCHEÁL Ó CHONFHAOLA MACDARA Ó FÁTHARTA AND JAREN CERF AND INTRODUCING COLM SEOIGHE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PHILIP KING TINA MORAN KEITH POTTER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD KENDRICK EDITOR TADHG O'SULLIVAN COMPOSER DELPHINE MEASROCH FUIDO DEL FABBRO
WRITTEN BY PAT COLLINS EOGHAN MAC GIOLLA BHRÍDE SHARON WHOOLEY PRODUCED BY MARTIN PAUL-HUS PRODUCED BY ALAN MAHER & JESSIE FISK
DIRECTED BY PAT COLLINS