

FILM

COMING UP ▶ Letters

Irish Film Festival aims to introduce UK audiences to much more than Irish Oscar winners

Irish Film & Television UK (IFTUK), formerly known as Irish Film London, has announced the line-up of its annual flagship festival.

The Irish Film Festival London programme includes the latest Irish feature films, documentaries, animation and short films.

It will run between 15-19 November at several venues including the Vue West End, Vue Piccadilly and the London Irish Centre.

The festival opens with the UK premiere of *One Night in Millstreet*, from two-time Irish Film and Television Academy Award winner, Andrew Gallimore.

It is a snapshot of a country on the edge of change, viewed through the 1995 prize fight between underdog Steve 'The Celtic Warrior' Collins and undefeated world champion Chris 'Simply the Best' Eubank.

Stories by and about women are at the heart of this year's festival. The longest industrial dispute in Ireland's history is the subject of Joe Lee's multiple award winning *406 Days - The Debenhams Picket Line*.

In April 2020, Debenhams sacked its staff by generic email and reneged on promised union-negotiated redundancy packages.

The mostly female workforce refused to accept this.

Director Patricia Kelly's debut feature *Verdigris* is about an unlikely friendship between Marian (Geraldine McAlinden), an older woman in a loveless marriage, and young sex worker, Jewel (Maya O'Shea).

It won Best Independent Film at this year's Galway Film Fleadh this year.

Ciara Hyland's Irish language documentary *Croithe Radacacha (Radical Hearts)* depicts gay women - committed to feminism, socialism and equal rights - at the heart of the fight for Irish independence from the British Empire.

Festival Director Michael Hayden said: "While films in the festival take on topics including misogyny, sport, history, human rights and language, it is refreshing that all these filmmakers are as keen to entertain as they are to educate. There's no shortage of lightness, humour, compassion and hope here, too."



"This programme is the first brick in the foundation of a platform for Irish film that IFTUK intends to build in London and across the UK. While I sincerely thank all our partners supporting us in that aim, my greatest appreciation is for the filmmakers. Their vision and voices motivate us to do this."

Director Lisa Mucahy adapts Sheridan Le Fanu's novel Uncle Silas in *Lies We Tell* - a spiky, distinctive period piece with a pointed feminist edge about an orphaned heiress (Agnes O'Casey) forced into the guardianship of her menacing Uncle Silas (David Wilmot).

The programme also includes Irish language film *Tarrac*, recently featured in *The Irish World*, which tells the story of Aoife (Kelly Gough) who reluctantly leaves Dublin to return to her home in Kerry Gaeltacht to look after her sick father. The sports drama celebrates female solidarity.

Adapted from Roddy Doyle's novel, playful animation *A Greyhound of a Girl*, directed by Enzo D'Alò (*Pinocchio*), follows 11-year-

old Mary whose passion for cooking brings generations of women in her family together.

Its voice cast includes Brendan Gleeson and Sharon Horgan.

Tomas Vengris' *Five and a Half Love Stories in an Apartment in Vilnius, Lithuania* presents various moving stories of love and tragedy from an Airbnb apartment.

It is a Screen Ireland co-production with the Lithuanian and Latvian film bodies and features music by Irish composer Stephen Rennicks (*The Quiet Girl*).

The first feature to be restored through the Irish Film Institute and Screen Ireland Digitisation Project, *Reefer and the Model* (Ireland, 1988) is a road movie, presenting Ireland at a crossroads - questioning whether it can reject the violence of its past and be reborn.

This 2023 Director's Cut celebrates the contribution made by Joe Comerford to Irish Cinema.

Face Down: The Disappearance of Thomas Niedermayer, directed by Gerry Greg, is about the Christmas 1973 kidnapping of

(FROM LEFT) *One Night in Millstreet* showing a country going through change told through the lens of the Michael Collins-Chris Eubank boxing match, the award-winning documentary *406 Days - The Debenhams Picket Line* and Irish language documentary *Croithe Radacacha*



the managing director of the Grundig Factory in Belfast, a devoted family man.

The film illustrates how acts of violence remain far beyond the moments they are committed.

Director John Carlin's *Lie of the Land* won the Best Irish First Feature Award at the Galway Film Fleadh. It is about a middle-aged couple living on a small farm crippled with debt.

A newcomer appears to come to their rescue but events take a dark turn.

Director Ciara Nic Chormaic's *O Bheál*, shot in black and white, features Irish language singer songwriters who use hip hop and electronics.

Irish Film & TV UK Festival Director Michael Hayden said: "A lot of people will talk about the Banshees of Inisherin or *An Irish Goodbye* winning the Oscar, or the success of *The Quiet Girl*, all of which deserve to be celebrated, as does all the TV production that goes on over there."

"At the same time there's a hell of a lot of work that is just not

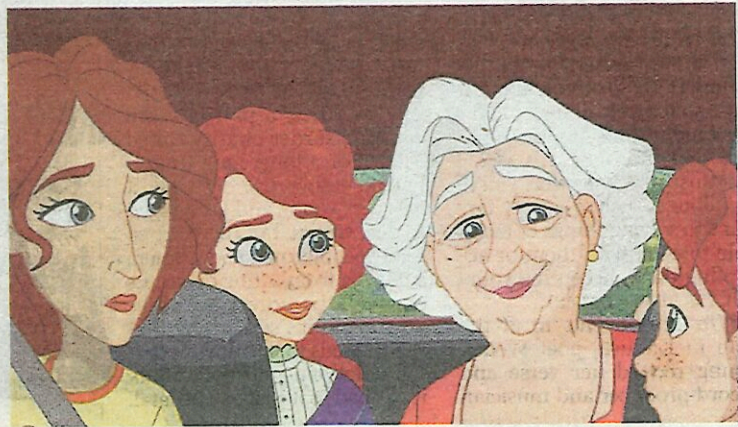
being seen in the UK - we can celebrate more."

Michael added: "In such a fascinating and productive era for Irish cinema and television, it is both a thrill and an honour to have the opportunity to offer filmmakers and their work a valuable platform in the UK."

The jury for the 2023 Irish Film Awards will include Colm Bairéad and Cleona Ni Chrualaí, director and producer of *The Quiet Girl*; Anna Rodgers and Shaun Dunne, director and producer of *How to Tell a Secret*; Kelly Campbell, director of *An Encounter* and Peter Curran, Steven Greenfield and Tara Gaule. Ros Hubbard will present the Ros Hubbard Best Newcomer Award.

This year's partners are Embassy of Ireland, Screen Ireland and Culture Ireland.

The festival will also include a Screen Ireland shorts programme showcasing the work of emerging talent on Sunday 18 November at Vue Piccadilly. The Irish Film Festival will be followed by the Irish Film & Television UK Awards on 20 November.



(FROM LEFT) Director Lisa Mucahy's feature *Lies We Tell*, animation *A Greyhound of a Girl* and director Patricia Kelly's debut feature *Verdigris*

