



Thursday, February 8, 2018

NEWS RELEASE

A DATE FOR MAD MARY TO OPEN 8th ANNUAL TORONTO IRISH FILM FESTIVAL WITH GALA PRESENTATION

The 2017 IFTA's "Best Film" opens the TIRFF festival which will run from Friday, March 2nd – Sunday March 4th, 2018 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox

Tickets on Sale February 14th 2018 (10am) via toirishfilmfest.com

TORONTO - The "Best Film" winner at the 2017 Irish Film & Television Awards will open the 8th annual Toronto Irish Film Festival with a gala presentation. The festival, which screens from Friday, March 2nd to Sunday, March 4th at TIFF Bell Lightbox, highlights a wide range of films from award-winning features, documentaries and family-friendly animated films. The weekend is jam packed with Irish cinematic treasures, including North American and Canadian premieres, short film and documentary showcases and very special guests.

The Opening Night Gala on **Friday, March 2nd** features the Toronto premiere of ***A Date for Mad Mary*** by director Darren Thornton. Starring Bingham Ray New Talent Award winner Seána Kerlake (Can't Cope, Won't Cope), Carolyn Bracken and Charleigh Bailey, ***A Date for Mad Mary*** is a heartfelt dramedy about a woman recently released from prison seeking a date for her best friend Charlene's wedding. 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. But her attempts at dating are a disaster and she winds up feeling more alone... until she meets Jess, a lesbian wedding photographer, and everything changes.

"This year, we're delighted to showcase films that directly address the pertinent issues of today's world, including same-sex relationships, mental health and delicate political negotiation. Framed within the unique Irish perspective, we're once again reminded that Ireland is a nation rich in the art of compelling storytelling", states Michael Barry, Co-founder & Director of Marketing and Communications.

TIRFF 2018 Film Program

Opening Night Gala Presentation - A DATE FOR MAD MARY (Toronto Premiere)

Friday, March 2nd | 7:00 pm

Director: Darren Thornton

Run time: 72 mins

Winner of the Best Film at the 2017 Irish Film and Television Awards, ***A Date for Mad Mary*** is a heartfelt dramedy about a woman recently released from prison seeking a date for her best

friend Charlene's wedding. 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. But her attempts at dating are a disaster and she winds up feeling more alone... until she meets Jess, a lesbian wedding photographer, and everything changes.

THE BREADWINNER (Toronto Encore Presentation)

Saturday, March 3rd | 2:00 pm

Director: Nora Twomey

Run time: 94 mins

Nominated for Best Animated Feature at the 2018 Oscars, ***The Breadwinner*** features the beautiful animated work by Kilkenny's Cartoon Saloon (*The Secret of Kells*, *Song of the Sea*). This wonderful Ireland/Canada co-production tells the extraordinary story of an 11-year-old Afghan girl who finds strength in the love of her family and the power of storytelling. Co-presented by the Ontario Media Development Centre

TIRFF 2018 Short Film Showcase

Saturday, March 3rd | 5:00 pm

Run time: 82 mins

In keeping with tradition, the Irish Short Film Showcase features the work of Ireland's up-and-coming directors. Showcasing a mix of documentary, drama and animated short films, this year's showcase highlights the powerful visions of Irish female directors with six exceptional short films.

DEPARTURE | Directed by Aoife Doyle | 10 mins | Canadian Premiere

THE CLIMB | Directed by Lynne Davison | 10 mins | Canadian Premiere

HEMCOMING | Directed by Sinéad O'Loughlin | 14 mins | Canadian Premiere

THROWLINE | Directed by Mia Mullarkey | 14 mins | Canadian Premiere

THE DATE | Direct by Selina Cartmell | 16 mins | Canadian Premiere

THE WIDOW'S LAST | Directed by Vanessa Perdriau | 28 mins | Canadian Premiere

MAZE (Canadian Premiere)

Saturday, March 3rd | 8:00 pm

Director: Stephen Burke

Run time: 92 mins

Inspired by the true events of the historic 1983 prison breakout of 38 IRA prisoners from the infamous Maze prison in Northern Ireland. With an excellent lead performance by "Peaky Blinders" star, Tom Vaughan-Lawlor, this powerful drama captures the quiet tension behind what would become the biggest prison escape in Europe since World War II.

ZOO (Canadian Premiere)

Sunday, March 4th | 1:30 pm

Director: Colin McIver

Run time: 97 mins

Based on a true story, this heartwarming drama follows the story of 12 year old Tom and his misfit friends as they fight to save Buster the baby elephant during the air raids on Belfast during World War II. With "Game of Thrones" star, Art Parkinson. Co-presented with TIFF Kids International Film Festival.

GEORGE BEST: ALL BY HIMSELF (Theatrical Premiere)

Sunday, March 4th | 4:00 pm

Director: Daniel Gordon

Run time: 92 mins

He was the Beatles of soccer - a handsome, charismatic lad from Belfast, Northern Ireland who worked wonders with the ball and thrilled Great Britain. But George Best was also the lead in a Shakespearean tragedy fueled by drink and excess. With never-before-seen footage and interviews, this captivating documentary traces the life of a true Belfast hero.

Closing Night Film - IN THE NAME OF PEACE: JOHN HUME IN AMERICA (Canadian Premiere)

Sunday March 4th | 7:00 pm

Director: Maurice Fitzpatrick

Run time: 90 mins

Narrated by Liam Neeson, *In the Name of Peace: John Hume in America* is a compelling feature documentary about one of the most historic times in Irish politics. Dramatic, archival footage from The Troubles is paired with insightful interviews by Presidents Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, Bono and Tony Blair, to capture the brave moment when Derry politician, John Hume, united both sides of the political landscape to carve out a lasting Peace for the people of Northern Ireland. Co-presented by the Irish Embassy of Canada.

ABOUT THE TORONTO IRISH FILM FESTIVAL

Awarded Partner Festival status with Toronto International Film Festival in February 2016, The Toronto Irish Film Festival (TIRFF) was founded in April 2009 by Michael Barry and John Galway who have over 45 years' collective experience in the Canadian film and television industry.

Now in its 8th year, the Toronto Irish Film Festival celebrates the very best of Irish cinema and promotes the work of Irish filmmakers to the Greater Toronto Irish community and the Toronto film festival public. With sold-out screenings from 2010 to 2017, TIRFF has assumed the role of leading promoter of Irish film within Canada.

Reaching a potential audience of 250,000 Torontonians of Irish descent, as well as millions of Toronto-based movie lovers, TIRFF provides a unique cultural destination for Toronto and Ontario based ex-patriots, from the very old and the very new, to connect with the culture of home through the magic of cinema.

www.toirishfilmfest.com | [@toirishfilmfest](https://twitter.com/toirishfilmfest) | [#TIRFF2018](https://www.facebook.com/TIRFF2018)

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

A huge thank you to all of our incredible and generous sponsors and partners who have ensured Toronto Irish Film Festival's presence as a premier annual event since 2010. We thank you!



BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

Tickets go on sale February 14th 2018 at 10am. Please visit - www.toirishfilmfest.com or call the TIFF Bell Lightbox box office at 416-599-TIFF (8433).

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