

TORONTO IRISH FILM FESTIVAL

10th
Anniversary

FRI FEB 28 - SUN MAR 1

TIFF Bell Lightbox, Cinema 3

OUR STORY

Awarded Partner Festival status with Toronto International Film Festival in 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 10th year, the Toronto Irish Film Festival celebrates the very best of Irish cinema. With sold-out screenings from 2010 to 2019, TIRFF has quickly assumed the role of leading promoter of Irish film within Canada.

Reaching a potential audience of **250,000** Toronto residents with Irish descent, as well as millions of Toronto-based movie lovers, TIRFF provides a unique cultural destination for Toronto and Ontario-based ex-patriots to connect with the culture of home through the magic of cinema. The Toronto Irish Film Festival (TIRFF) audience includes first generation members of the Irish Diaspora, their extended families, those with Irish heritage and lovers of quality cinema.



“ Every year at this time, TIRFF comes over to the house, moves in, and stays for a while. But what an amazing houseguest the festival has been over the last 10 years. Thank you to our Board, our sponsors, our filmmakers and our volunteers. Above all, thank you, our audience, for continually supporting Irish film. I'm incredibly proud of what we've all accomplished. This is your festival, these are your stories and I look forward to another decade of sharing Irish film, from all four corners of our homeland, with you here in Toronto. ”

- MICHAEL BARRY



“ As we look back on 10 years of the Toronto Irish Film Festival, one of the elements that I am most proud of is the link we have been able to create between our Festival goers and Irish Filmmakers (and in a few cases Irish Canadian filmmakers!). We've been able to follow their careers as they've emerged on the world stage. Often TIRFF would screen their first short or feature and we'd be able to join in and support the progression of their careers from the ground level. Now our festival audience ask what these filmmakers are bringing next! We've been able to form a special bond with our "TIRFF alumni" - the group of directors, actors, producers who have brought their films to the festival - especially those who have been able to join us in person and experience the enthusiastic and intelligent TIRFF audiences. ”

- JOHN GALWAY

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OUR FILMS

OPENING FILM

DARK LIES THE ISLAND

FRI FEB 28 • 7PM

(Premiere)



DIRECTOR

Ian Fitzgibbon
(*Moone Boy, Breakfast Wine, Perrier's Bounty*)

GENRE

Comedy, Drama

SPONSORED BY

Tourism Ireland

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

The Irish Film Institute, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland

SYNOPSIS

Based on short stories by Irish playwright, Kevin Barry. If you're going to get involved with men in the town of Dromord, they might as well be Mannions – and Sara is involved with them up to her neck. She's married to Daddy Mannion, who is more than 20 years her senior and who more or less owns and runs the town. But her first love is his estranged son, Doggy Mannion, who is by now a criminal recluse living in the woods outside the town. Then there's the younger brother, Martin Mannion, a small-town Lothario and failing chicken farmer, and yes, Sara has just got involved with him too. As a result of this tangled erotic web, jealousy is rife in Dromord, and it's flinging out its spears in all directions. The Mannion men have been set at each other, their long truce cannot hold, and serious violence is threatened – will we get through the next few days without bloodshed?

OPENING FILM FRI FEB 28 • 7PM

Dark Lies The Island (Premiere) 5

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Slieve League, Ireland (Premiere) 5
Two Cats (Premiere) 6
Permanent (Premiere) 6
Jill and Giles (Premiere) 7
Bainne (Premiere) 7
Wine Lake (Premiere) 8

SAT FEB 29 • 5PM

Sea Fever (Encore) 8

SAT FEB 29 • 8PM

A Bump Along The Way (Encore) 9

SHORTS #2 SUN MAR 1 • 2:30PM

The West Kerry Cowboy (Premiere) 9
The Vasectomy Doctor (Premiere) 10
Sweetheart (Premiere) 10
Under Growth (Premiere) 11
The Sunny Side Up (Premiere) 11
Hear My Voice (Premiere) 12

SUN MAR 1 • 5PM

Shooting the Darkness (Premiere) 12

CLOSING FILM SUN MAR 1 • 8PM

Seamus Heaney and the Music of What Happens (Premiere) 13

SHORTS #1

SLIEVE LEAGUE, IRELAND

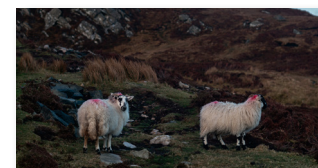
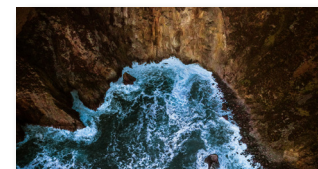
SAT FEB 29 • 2:30PM

(Premiere)



DIRECTOR

Ryan Couldrey (Toronto)



GENRE

Short Documentary

SYNOPSIS

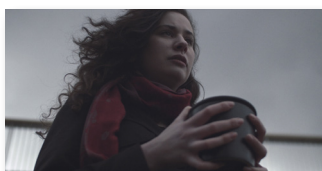
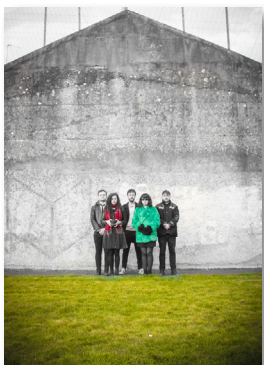
Filmed in stunning 4K with a mix of aerial and ground short photography, this stunning short doc captures the breathtaking beauty of Slieve League, County Donegal, Ireland. Not only are they the tallest cliffs in the country, Slieve League is three times the size of the Cliffs of Moher and made cinematically famous by the Harry Potter films. This spectacular short doc presents the beautifully rugged North West of Ireland, at the edge of Europe itself. It also stars sheep, lots and lots of sheep.

SHORTS #1

TWO CATS

(Premiere)

SAT FEB 29 • 2:30PM



DIRECTOR

John Morton

GENRE

Short Comedy

SYNOPSIS

This quirky short comedy is funny from the very first scene. In the aftermath of her brother's death, a young girl tries to scatter his ashes despite the intentions of some suspect mourners. A brilliant comic take on bereavement small talk and the awkward reconciliations of people who have little in common anymore.

SHORTS #1

JILL AND GILES

(Premiere)

SAT FEB 29 • 2:30PM

DIRECTOR

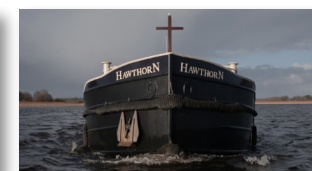
Alison Byrne (*Carlow*)

GENRE

Short Documentary

SYNOPSIS

A meditative portrait documentary based on an English couple who have spent the last 20 years living and working on the rivers of Ireland. This documentary focuses on Jill and Giles' initial decision to live on a boat, their on-going work and fascinating hobbies. A true celebration of living life on your own terms, we explore the themes of unconventionality, freedom and belonging through Jill and Giles' unique lives.

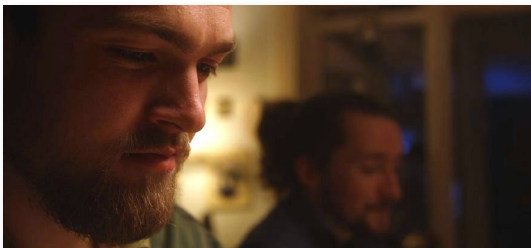


SHORTS #1

PERMANENT

(Premiere)

SAT FEB 29 • 2:30PM



DIRECTOR

Fionn Kane (*Dublin*)

GENRE

Short Drama

SYNOPSIS

This poignant drama tackles the emotions that are experienced through grief in a modern Dublin Suburb. It portrays how all of us, as individuals, experience grief differently and in some cases can even cause us to drift apart.

SHORTS #1

BAINNE

(Premiere)

SAT FEB 29 • 2:30PM



DIRECTOR

Jack Reynor (*Midsommar, Sing Street, What Richard Did*)

GENRE

Short Drama

STARRING

Will Poulter (*Black Mirror, The Revenant*)

SYNOPSIS

During the last year of The Great Famine in Ireland, a farmhand working for the local landlord has hardened his heart against his countrymen to ensure his own survival. But when he encounters a ghostly female figure stealing milk from the landlord's barn his resolve is tested and he is beguiled on a journey towards hope. Inspired by ancient Irish mythology and traditional Japanese folk tales, as recorded by Irish writer Lafcadio Hearn during his time in Japan in the late 19th and early 20th century, 'Bainne' is an extension of the history of storytelling from both cultures.

WINE LAKE

(Premiere)

SAT FEB 29 • 2:30PM

DIRECTOR

Platon Theodoris (Australia)

GENRE

Short Drama

SYNOPSIS

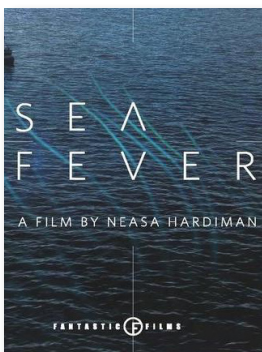
A homeless Irish alcoholic and an artistic backpacker clash on a Sydney street. The backpacker becomes the focus of her anger after she makes a wrong assumption. But the backpacker's innocence catches her off guard and they quickly develop an unlikely connection over his art. Apprehensively she shares one of her poems aloud and is emboldened by his enthusiasm. The pair discover the power of genuine self expression and creativity.



SEA FEVER

(Encore)

SAT FEB 29 • 5PM



DIRECTOR

Neasa Hardiman (Jessica Jones, Casualty, Happy Valley)

GENRE

Horror, Sci-Fi

STARRING

Jack Hickey (Game of Thrones, Vikings) and Hermione Corfield (Stars Wars, King Arthur)

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

The Irish Film Institute, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland

SYNOPSIS

A bizarre creature hitches a ride on a departing trawler, in this masterful genre film that leverages the mysteries of the sea to amplify the potential horrors of the unknown. For all our dazzling strides in understanding this vast world we inhabit, the sea remains a source of great mystery, a place where awe and fear are eternally confluent. A spine tingling marriage of science and folklore, this deftly crafted thinking-person's chiller draws upon our fascination with deep waters and the strange forms they conceal.

A BUMP ALONG THE WAY

(Encore)

SAT FEB 29 • 8PM

DIRECTOR

Shelly Love (Delia & George, The Forgotten Circus)

GENRE

Comedy, Drama

STARRING

Bronagh Gallagher (The Commitments, Grabbers, Pulp Fiction) and Lola Petticrew (Next of Kin, Come Home)



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

The Irish Film Institute, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland

SYNOPSIS

Start your Saturday night right with some Derry girl power. With a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, you can't miss this hilarious Northern Ireland comedy. After a one night stand Pamela, a divorced mother of one, is surprised to find that she is pregnant again – an event she was told could not happen. As her daughter Allegra tries to deal with the fact she has a new sibling on the way, her social life takes an interesting turn.

SHORTS #2

THE WEST KERRY COWBOY

(Premiere)

SUN MAR 1 • 2:30PM



DIRECTOR

Cian O'Connor

GENRE

Short Comedy

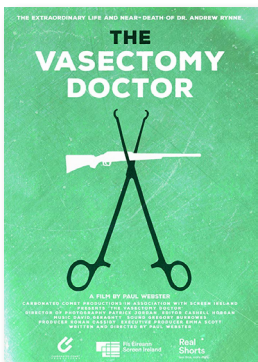
SYNOPSIS

Big Mac and his dad Frank live a lonely life in the heart of West Kerry. After his mother's death, Big Mac falls into the secretive world of cross dressing. On the day of her anniversary, Big Mac has a confession to make, as he looks for acceptance of himself, through acceptance by his father.

THE VASECTOMY DOCTOR

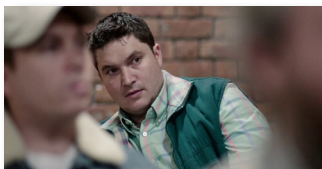
SUN MAR 1 • 2:30PM

(Premiere)



DIRECTOR

Paul Webster



GENRE

Short Documentary

SYNOPSIS

Dr. Andrew Rynne was the first doctor to perform vasectomies in Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s; he estimates that he has performed over 35,000. This distinction did not come without controversy in the strict Catholic climate surrounding him, but Dr. Rynne was determined to act against the church by selling condoms without a prescription, which forced the national government to change policy. In 1990, he survived being shot by a gunman who entered his surgery – a man who he would later meet and forgive.

UNDER GROWTH

SUN MAR 1 • 2:30PM

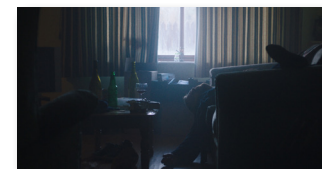
(Premiere)

DIRECTOR

Evin O'Neill

GENRE

Short Drama



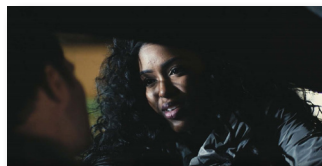
SYNOPSIS

When Hayley visits her dad for the first time since her mum dumped him, he's too hung-up and hungover to join in her games and she gets into a dangerous adventure of her own making. With its imaginative use of a horror trope, the director gives us a tender insight into the beauty and fragility of daughter/father relationships.

SWEETHEART

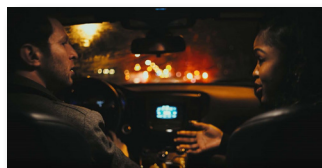
SUN MAR 1 • 2:30PM

(Premiere)



DIRECTOR

Martha McGrath (Toronto)



GENRE

Short Drama

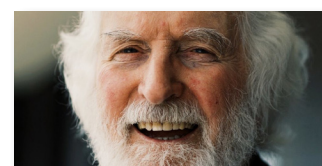
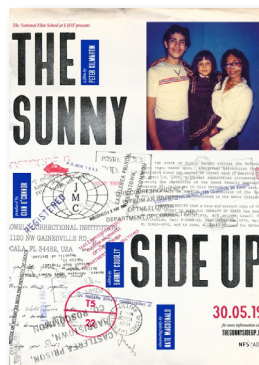
SYNOPSIS

SWEETHEART is a short film mixing reality, R&B and comedy in an urban opera for Generation Z. The film questions whether Generation Z's only guaranteed route to success is abandoning human values for corporate.

THE SUNNY SIDE UP

SUN MAR 1 • 2:30PM

(Premiere)



DIRECTOR

Peter Kilmartin



GENRE

Short Documentary

SYNOPSIS

Peter Pringle and Sunny Jacobs both served years in prison for crimes they did not commit. After being exonerated, what are the chances they both met and fell in love? This film explores how love can prevail, and hearts can keep beating when a soul is dragged through so much.

HEAR MY VOICE

(Premiere)

SUN MAR 1 • 2:30PM



DIRECTOR

Brendan J. Byrne (producer of *Gaza*, *George Best: All by Himself*, *No Stone Unturned*)



GENRE

Short Documentary

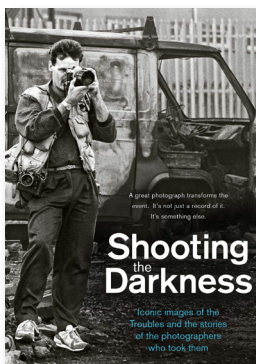
SYNOPSIS

HEAR MY VOICE is a cinematic tribute to those who suffered loss as a result of the Northern Irish conflict (1968-1998). Timed to mark the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday agreement that brought violence to an end, the film is inspired by artist Colin Davidson's elegiac exhibition of paintings, *Silent Testimony*.

SHOOTING THE DARKNESS

(Premiere)

SUN MAR 1 • 5PM



DIRECTOR

Tom Burke



GENRE

Documentary

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

The Irish Film Institute, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland

SYNOPSIS

A powerful new documentary about the men who unwittingly became war photographers on the streets of their own Northern Irish towns. They did not have to leave home in search of war and adventure: the violence erupted around them, literally, in their own backyards. Expecting a career of wedding photography and celebrity photo-calls, they instead took the photographs, during the worst years of the Troubles, that would come to visually define that conflict for a global audience.

SEAMUS HEANEY AND THE MUSIC OF WHAT HAPPENS

(Premiere)

SUN MAR 1 • 8PM



DIRECTOR

Adam Low (*Ripper Street*)

GENRE

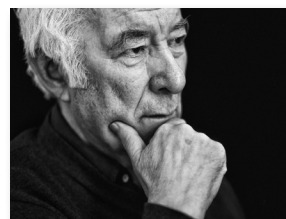
Documentary

SPONSORED BY

Invest NI, Northern Ireland Bureau and Northern Irish Connections

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

The Irish Film Institute, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council of Ireland



SYNOPSIS

Born into a farming family in rural Northern Ireland, Seamus Heaney became the finest poet of his generation and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995, but his career coincided with one of the bloodiest political upheavals of the 20th century, the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Six years after Heaney's death in 2013, his wife Marie and his children talk about their family life and read some of the poems he wrote for them, and for the first time his four brothers remember their childhood and the shared experiences that inspired many of his finest poems.

“

“Plain-spoken wit and wisdom abounded throughout Seamus Heaney and the Music of What Happens, a cleverly constructed and consistently absorbing profile of the late Nobel laureate...”

ROTTEN TOMATOES

“This is a beautiful film which celebrates the great poet’s life and extraordinary works...”

THE GUARDIAN

“...as lovingly assembled as a sonnet...”

RADIO TIMES

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At Northern Irish Connections, we're passionate about celebrating what makes Northern Ireland a great place to live, work, study, invest and do business.

By sharing inspirational insights into our people, place, pride and promise, we unite a global community of Northern Irish abroad and friends of Northern Ireland that share a special affection for the region and a desire to help it prosper.

Our growing global Northern Irish diaspora network spans continents, industries and fields of expertise. It is one of our greatest assets and Northern Irish Connections unlocks its talent and influence to advance the economic prosperity of our region.

Whether you're Northern Irish born, have ancestral ties to the region or have a strong affinity for Northern Ireland through education, travel or business, connect today to become a member of the NI Connections community and stay in touch with the latest good news from this corner of the globe.

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