

TORONTO IRISH FILM FESTIVAL

MAY 7-15 2021



THANK YOU GO RAIBH MAITH AGAT

We feel very lucky to have celebrated our 10th Anniversary last March in what was one of the last events before the worldwide pandemic and safety shutdown. Our loyal audiences, friends and sponsors were able to gather to help us celebrate with no health incidents.

This year, of course, will be a very different festival. After attempts at waiting things out and coming back for March 2021, we decided it was safest to deliver a completely online festival that can be enjoyed from the safety of our homes...the show must go on!

Irish filmmakers have been hard at work finishing films under extremely challenging situations and that creative energy is on display with our selection this year.

A special thank you must go out to all of our sponsors and to you our festival friends and supporters - your ongoing support will make it possible to enjoy this new festival edition and re-emerge next year with a hybrid model that combines the best of both the home and in cinema worlds!

A very special thank you also goes out to TIRFF Co-founder Michael Barry. After 10 exciting and reward years, Michael has decided to "retire" from TIRFF to pursue other passions. His stamp will forever be on our festival!



FILM RENTALS

HOW DO I ENJOY A FILM THIS YEAR?

All films will be available throughout the run of the festival - May 7 -15!

Films are available through the digital TIFF Bell Lightbox - just look for the special TIRFF section under "more" (dTBLB Website: <https://digital.tiff.net/>).

Once you have created an account and ordered film it will be placed in "Your Library" and can be watched through your desktop or the digital TIFF Bell Lightbox app (available on IOS, Android and Apple TV).

for step by step on how to rent a film and watch it on your desktop - [click here](#)

for a step by step guide on how to view a film using the app - [click here](#)

you can also test your system with a short 1 min test film before committing to any purchases: <https://digital.tiff.net/film/test-your-system/> to test your system.

OUR SPONSORS

We'd like to thank all of our generous sponsors without whose help our festival would not be possible - go raibh maith agat!



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THE 8TH

Directed by Aideen Kane, Lucy Kennedy,
Maeve O'Boyle

DOCUMENTARY

The 8th traces Ireland's campaign to remove the 8th Amendment - a constitutional ban on abortion. It shows a country's transformation from a conservative state in thrall to the Catholic church to a more liberal secular society.

The 8th includes voices from both sides of the debate, but its primary focus is on the dynamic female leaders of the pro-choice campaign. The film follows the veteran campaigner Ailbhe Smyth and self-described glitter-activist Andrea Horan as they chart a bold strategy of grassroots activism and engineer the impossible. This dramatic story is underscored by a vivid exploration of the wrenching failures that led to this defining moment in Irish history.

An urgent narrative, a cautionary tale and a roadmap for progressive reforms in a modern era where authoritarianism is on the rise, The 8th shows a country forging a new progressive path at a time when reproductive rights are threatened around the world.



ARRACHT

Directed by Tomás Ó Súilleabháin

Starring Dónall Ó Héalai, Dara Devaney, Saise Ní Chuinn and Michael McElhatton

DRAMA

Ireland, 1845 on the eve of The Great Hunger. Colmán Sharkey, a fisherman, a father, a husband, takes in a stranger at the behest of a local priest. Patsy, a former soldier in the Napoleonic wars arrives just ahead of 'the blight,' a disease that eventually wipes out the country's potato crop, contributing to the death and displacement of millions. As the crops rot in the fields, Colmán, his brother and Patsy travel to the English Landlord's house to request a stay on rent increases that Colmán predicts will destroy his community. His request falls deaf ears and Patsy's subsequent actions set Colmán on a path that will take him to the edge of survival, and sanity. It is only upon encountering an abandoned young girl that Colmán's resolve is lifted. Just in time for the darkness of his past to pay another visit.

Irish with English Subtitles



BREAKING ICE

Directed by James Branagan

DOCUMENTARY

In 1986 a London-Irishman named Larry Tracey took it upon himself to form the Irish Bobsleigh and Luge Association. He recruited a group of elite Irish rowers and set his sights on qualifying the team for the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. Having achieved qualification for the games, the stage was set for an historic Olympic debut. But one thing stood in their way; the Olympic Council of Ireland. Despite qualifying for the games, the OCI refused to allow them to compete at the games (which saw the famous Jamaican bobsleigh team become Olympic heroes). Undeterred, the team evolved and set their sights on the 1992 Winter Games in Albertville, France.



THE GRASS CEILING

Directed by Iseult Howlett

DOCUMENTARY

In this creative documentary short film, three successful female athletes explore how being physically courageous, unapologetically competitive and deeply passionate in team sport can unlock a freedom to really occupy your own skin.



THE HUNGER

Directed by Ruan Magan

DOCUMENTARY

Narrated by Liam Neeson, this is the story of great Irish famine of the 1840s.

175 years ago Europe was struck by a devastating famine. In Ireland, where half the population relied on the potato as their main source of food, the impact was the most extreme. One million people died and between 1845 and 1855, two million emigrated. Ireland today is the only country in the western world with a population lower than it had in the 1840s.

The famine had broader repercussions. It caused the fall of the British government led by Robert Peel in 1846, was a catalyst for the revolutions that rocked Europe in 1848 and is the root for the global Irish Diaspora that today numbers 70,000,000 across the world.

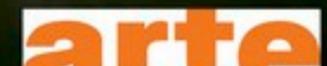
Featuring compelling interviews with some of the world's leading historians, first-hand accounts from witnesses and survivors and rare archive materials, The Hunger sets out to reveal the extraordinary and appalling story of one of the worst humanitarian disasters of the 19th century, one that continues to have relevance to us today.

Create One & Tyrone Productions

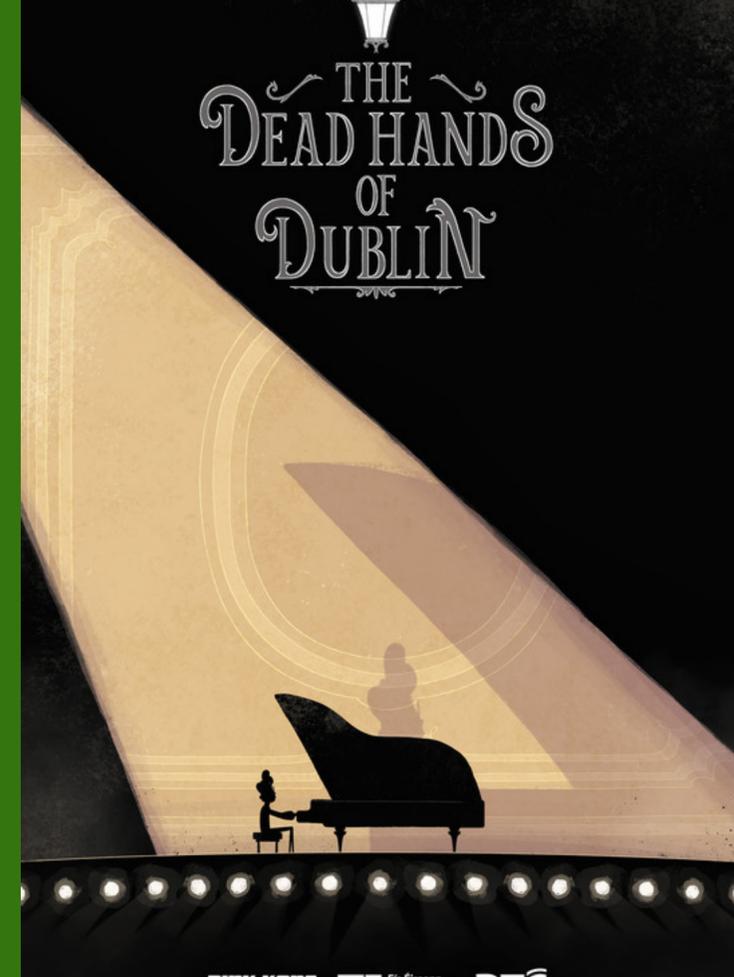
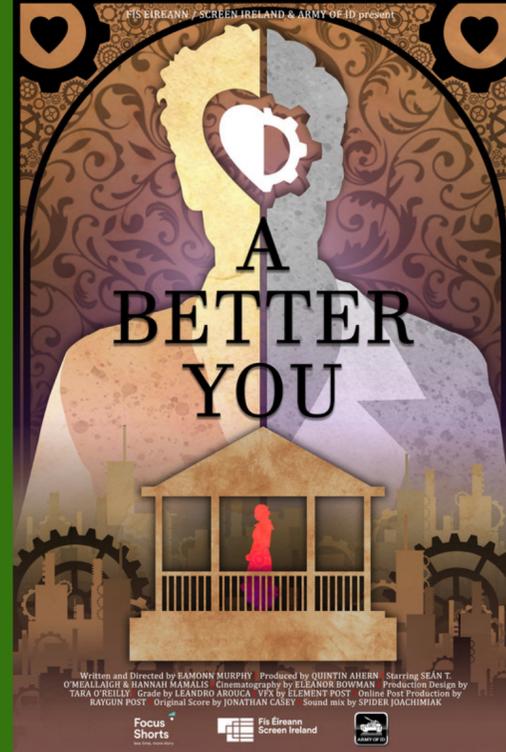
THE HUNGER

THE STORY OF THE IRISH FAMINE

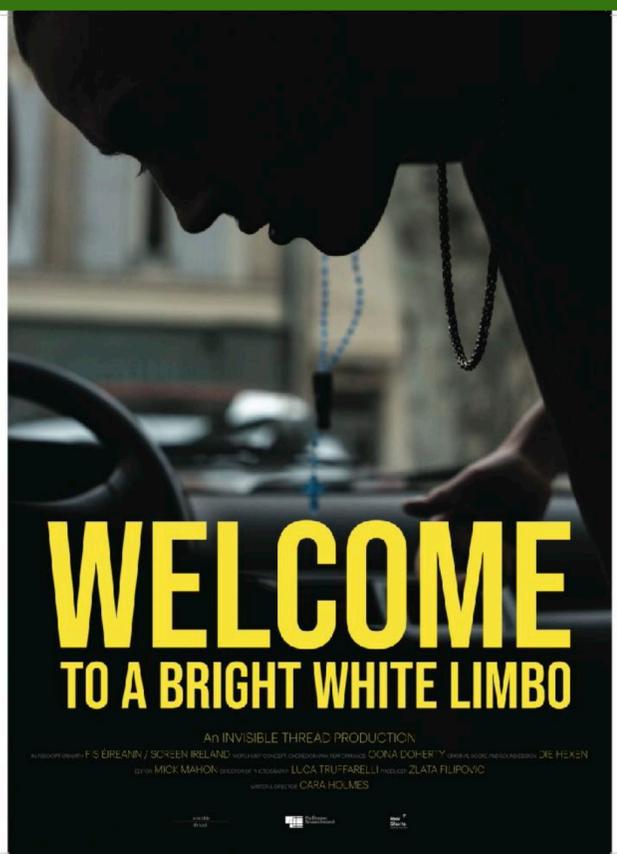
NARRATED BY LIAM NEESON



Cast: Liam Neeson, Marty Rea, Olga Wehrly, Tim Creed, Nick Dunning, Stephen Warnock, Ciara Elizabeth Smyth, Sibéal Ní Casaide Composer: Natasa Paulberg Editor: Keith Walsh Cinematographer: Brian O Leary Re-Recording Mixer: Mick Creedon Executive Producers: Patricia Carroll, Colm Crowley, John Fitzgerald, Laurent Filliung Written, Produced and Directed by Ruán Magan



SHORT PROGRAM 1



SHORT PROGRAM 1

HOW TO FALL IN LOVE IN A PANDEMIC - Directed by Michael-David McKernan

Two filmmakers match on Tinder in Chicago. Two weeks later they are forced to move in together in Ireland as the COVID-19 pandemic sweeps the globe and halts air travel. Using only smartphones, they document their unique romance and try to make sense of the situation.

DEFROST - Directed by Meghan McArdle

After the death of Anne; a loving mother to Hazel and a devoted wife to Ted, Ted and Hazel find themselves drifting apart and Hazel feels like she is drowning in her Dad's apathy. Unable to turn to Anne for help, Ted and Hazel are frozen beneath the surface of a fracturing family.

BARRIERS - Directed by Fiach Kunz

Martin lives an isolated and monotonous life on a farm. He tends to livestock, and cares -- reluctantly -- for his alcoholic father, Christie, who is confined to bed following a recent stroke.

SHORT PROGRAM 1

PARENTING - Directed by Aoife Nic Ardghail

Fred has daughter Helen at her wits' end with his moaning, until she finds an excuse to get him out of the house.

THE DEAD HANDS OF DUBLIN - Directed by Leo Crowley

The film tells the story of Sidney, a failed pianist who comes into the possession of a pair of enchanted gloves. Upon wearing them he soon finds himself playing the piano like a maestro and all his dreams are quickly realised! However just when he thinks he has everything he has ever wanted fate deals him a cruel hand...

WELCOME TO THE BRIGHT WHITE LIMBO - Directed by Cara Holmes

Oona Doherty is a Belfast-based dancer and choreographer. She is bold, complex, arresting and ambitious. This innovative, poetic and visually arresting documentary is a portrait of Oona and the creative process behind her award-winning show Hope Hunt.

SHORT PROGRAM 1

A BETTER YOU - Directed by Eamonn Murphy

Set in a dystopian Neo-Steam-punk World, Douglas a shy introvert enlists the help of "A Better You" a customisable carbon clone to help him win the girl of his dreams.

ASCENDING GRACE - Directed by Claire Byrne

First officer Maedhbh has high hopes for her first day of work, but when she fails to impress Captain Cara and with a cabin full of restless passengers waiting to take off, it's far from what she expected...



SHORT PROGRAM 2



SHORT PROGRAM 2

PAT - Directed by Emma Wall

Set in 1978, Pat tells the story of a lonely music lover who keeps in touch with her son in New York through the only phone box in the village.

CUINAS (SILENCE) - Directed by Tristan Heanue

In rural Ireland, a couple drive to the city to collect their teenage daughter from the hospital. On the way back there is a tension in the car and everyone seems happy to avoid talking about what it is that brought her there. During a stop off along the way emotions spill over and they are forced to address it and move on together.

MISS AND THE MISSUS - Directed by Katie Bridget Murphy

Childhood best friends try to bridge the distance between them on a girl's night.

SHORT PROGRAM 2

PEGGY & THE GRIM - Directed by Luke Morgan

Peggy gets a visit from the Grim Reaper.

PADDY - Directed by Roisín Kearney

It's the late 70's in London and a new generation is asking questions and finding answers, It's called PUNK, and it doesn't matter what you are or where you're from.

SISTER THIS - Directed by Claire Byrne

Sister This is a modern-day female take on an old male stereotype of the "work away father". When Caitlin is made an offer of work that she can't refuse, she must explain that she can't make it home for her son's birthday. As Caitlin explains her decisions to Denise we discover that a lot more is at stake than just a birthday party. The story explores the conflict between want and need, between home and away and between desire and responsibility.

SHORT PROGRAM 2

ROUGH - Directed by Declan Lawn and Adam Patterson

In contemporary Belfast a young man faces retribution for the transgressions of his beloved dog.

THE GRASS CEILING - Directed by Iseult Howlett

Three successful female athletes explore how being physically courageous, unapologetically competitive and deeply passionate in team sport can unlock a freedom to really occupy your own skin.

REDEMPTION OF A ROGUE

Directed by Philip Doherty

Staring Aaron Monaghan, Aisling O'Mara and Kieran Roche

DARK COMEDY

A bible, black comedy about a prodigal son returning to his hometown to seek salvation for his sins.

Jimmy, a nihilist, carries a black leather doctor's bag around containing the rope he plans to hang himself with. Filled with guilt and shame he returns to his hometown in the cold austere beauty of West Cavan. As soon as Jimmy visits, his ailing father breathes his last. Thunder rumbles and rain starts to pour. But there is a condition in the will...his father cannot be buried on a wet day. Stuck in this 'Groundhog Day-like' purgatory, days roll into weeks as Jimmy seeks redemption. Through love he finds it in the most sacrificial and outlandish manner possible.



THE WINTER LAKE

Directed by Phil Sheerin

Starring Anson Boon, Emma Mackey, Mark McKenna, Michael McElhatton and Charlie Murphy

THRILLER

Alienated and wistful, Tom (16) has relocated from the UK to Ireland, with his Irish-born mother, Elaine. While exploring the dilapidated farm where he now lives, Tom comes across an oddity that is the farm's a turlough (a seasonal lake), at the bottom of which he discovers the skeleton of an infant. Unsure of what to do, Tom conceals the remains among his belongings. Not long afterwards he and Elaine become involved with Ward and Holly, the father and daughter from the neighbouring farm. While Elaine makes tentative steps towards a relationship with Ward, Holly learns of Tom's secret discovery. Playing on Tom's attraction to her and his protective impulse, Holly draws him into a warped psychosexual mystery. Inexorably the network of lies and secrets begins to unravel, pulling Tom into a violent confrontation with the darkest parts of human nature, in Elaine, Ward, Holly - and himself.

