

TWO



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FEATURES // INTERVIEWS // OPINION // REVIEWS

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SATURDAYS

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16TH HOME

Disco / Soul

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MONGO

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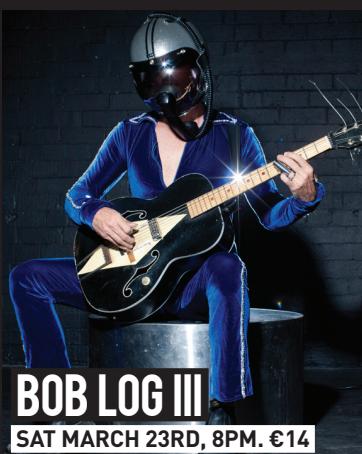
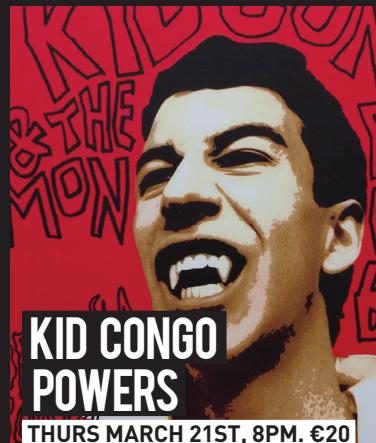
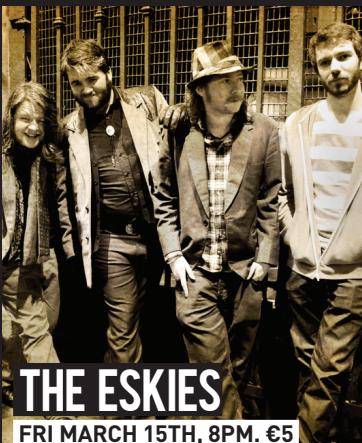
LIVE M_NUS

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INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

DESIGN If you are going to see a film at the Irish Film Institute on Eustace Street, it is worth getting there just early enough to sit down in the main court with a tea or coffee and really appreciate the architecture of the place. The medley of spaces and buildings that now constitute the IFI used to belong to the Quaker meeting house, and were converted over 1987-92 by O'Donnell and Tuomey.

Today, the plastered rusticated façade of the ground floor, donning a curiously eclectic pedimented doorway with gothic colonettes, is otherwise unexceptional, save perhaps for its banana-yellow colour. Once

rather exciting. The court is another pleasant surprise. The architects replaced the earlier top-lit roof with glazing raised above the second-floor windows of the surrounding blocks on three sides. The fourth side of the room is a gently curving buff-coloured screen wall, opened up with a gallery at the first-floor level and slightly reminiscent of a picket fence at its junction with the accordion-like roof.

From this central space, a curious screen of Doric columns leads into the passages to the lavatories and other circulation paths, while at the opposite end is the glazed entrance to a suitably dim-lit bar. This succession of



past that, though, visitors are unambiguously alerted to the fact they're entering the realm of cinema. The film strip-style floor lighting exploits the long entrance corridor, making it

atmospheric spaces is a small adventure in itself, and creates a wonderfully inviting setting for sophisticated post-screening discussions of the films.

Gabija Purlyté

ISN'T IT IRONIC?

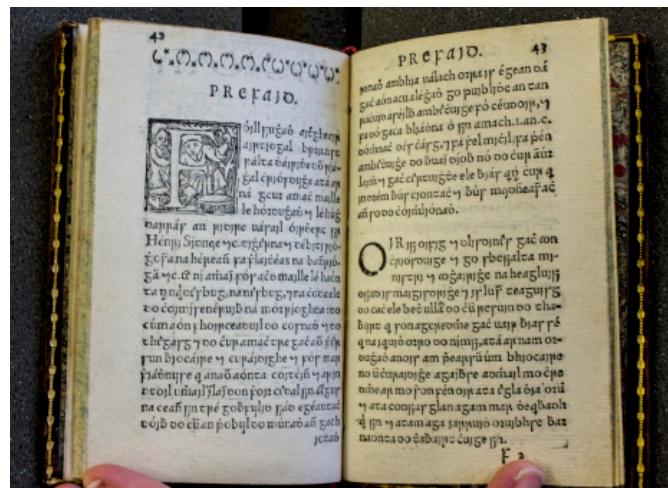
FILM If your faith in two-dimensional animated films is waning (that is, other than classic movies produced by the ever-powerful Walt Disney studios), I urge you to take a mere 90 minutes to watch *The Iron Giant*. Having worked on *The Simpsons* before going on to direct the Academy Award-winning Pixar films *The Incredibles* and *Ratatouille*, director Brad Bird produced this little gem about a boy's affectionate relationship with his alien-robot friend.

Based on a Ted Hughes novel and featuring a star-studded cast including *Friends'* Jennifer Aniston and Vin Diesel (who voices the Giant), the film was critically acclaimed but a flop at the box

office. This was blamed on a poor marketing campaign and the poster here affirms that. While it cleverly references the 1950s science fiction films (such as *The Thing from Another World* and *The War of the Worlds*) which the film pays homage to, the reference may have been lost on the younger and family-oriented audiences which the movie sought to address.

Older viewers will find the film's look at Cold War paranoia and 1950s pop culture surprisingly thoughtful. More importantly, it's emotive, full of humor, and thrilling, making it a film for all and a classic in its own right. **Deirdre Molumby**

PRAYER BEYOND THE PALE



LITERATURE Published in 1571, Aibidil Gaoidheilge agus Caiticosma was the first book to be printed entirely in the Irish language. It was written by Seaán Ó Cearnaigh (or John Kearney), a man also involved in the translation of the New Testament into Irish and the introduction of printing types suitable for the Irish language.

Part prayer book and part catechism – all as Gaelige – it was designed to promote the Protestant faith among Irish speakers. It was the first book to be printed in the Queen Elizabeth Irish type. The lettering recalls Irish manuscripts, as do the black-and-white illuminated initials. It has beautiful marbled end papers, and a bookplate with a family crest. The

book is small and simple, with borders comprised of brackets and stars, and a worn leather cover. It is a tiny volume, and one of only 200 copies printed in 1571.

Brian Ó Cúiv notes the interesting aspects of the aibidil or alphabet section. It recalls earlier bardic teaching traditions, and also preserved the Ogham system in the names for the letters: for example ailm (fir-tree) and dair (oak). This mixing of Irish oral traditions with the Protestant catechism makes for an intriguing volume, a mix of old and new, an appeal for reform in a traditional language. *This book can be found and explored in the EPB Department of TCD Library.*

Jenny Duffy



COOKING UP A STORM

FOOD

CHOCOLATE AND PEANUT BUTTER TART



FOR THE FILLING

150g dark chocolate
100g milk chocolate
200ml cream
1 tbsp golden syrup
50g butter
2 large eggs, plus 1
large egg yolk, beaten
100g white chocolate
4 tbsp peanut butter

FOR THE PASTRY

200g plain flour 80g butter 40g caster sugar
1 large egg yolk 2 tbsp cold water

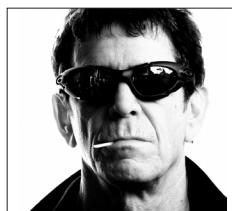
1. Rub together the butter and flour. Add the sugar and a pinch of salt. Add the egg yolk and water and combine with a knife. Chill for 30 mins.
2. Line a greased 20cm tin with pastry. Chill for 15 mins.
3. Preheat the oven to 200C. Blind bake the pastry for 10 mins. Remove and turn down to 160C.
4. Stir the Bournville, milk chocolate, cream, syrup and butter in a bain-marie. Remove from the heat and add the eggs.
5. Melt the white chocolate and peanut butter.
6. Spread the peanut mix over the pastry base, pour the chocolate mixture over. Bake for 30 mins. Allow to cool for 10 minutes and enjoy.

Alice Scott

JUKEBOX FLASHBACK

MARCH 1973

- MUSIC** Lou Reed, formerly best known for his devil-may-care rockstar attitude and being the brains behind The Velvet Underground (now more closely associated with the tragically hilarious Metallica-collaboration Lulu) has a linguistic feather in his cap you might be surprised to learn about. The common phrase "That'll come back to bite you in the ass" actually refers to an incident that occurred at a Reed concert in March 1973, when a crazed New Yorker leapt onstage screaming "Leather!" and proceeded to tuck into the singer's backside. The fan was unceremoniously thrown out, and Lou's rump went on to make a full recovery. Surely the work of an unsung Shakespeare.



Dónal Kennedy

FRONT SQUARE FASHION



STYLE Maria is a 2nd year English Studies student from Moscow. Her eclectic style is both refreshing and exciting. Mixing materials as well as Meadham Kirchoff, her contrasting layers of lace, wool, cotton and leather appear effortless. Maria has that enviable, rare ability to take what seems to be vintage clothes and make them look modern.

Alice Wilson

FRANCISAN WELL REBEL RED

DRINKS Built on the site of an old monastery in Cork City, Francisan Well is one of Ireland's more established craft breweries. With an impressive core range of five different beers, they rival big-hitters like O'Hara's for variety while maintaining a solid microbrewery ethos. Their brewpub is a key part of their operation and each year they release a very limited quantity of their exclusive seasonal brews such as the Alpha Dawg IPA. The Rebel Red, however, is one of their more readily available beers and is certainly very accessible for any craft beer novices. Subtle citrus flavours shine through and its very manageable 4.7% ABV means that one can be enjoyed after another.

Aaron Devine



GLITCH HEDBERG

GAMES A lot of the games we have covered in this space have been high-concept. From the distressing mortality of Paradis Perdus to the text-ad-

enemy locations is fruitless. Only a full appreciation of the principles of combat will allow you to progress.

The sense of explo-



venture Save Merlin the Pig!, the ideas were the thing. Tel-eglitch is capable of provoking some of those same feelings. "Billions of organisms are dying each second. You have become one of them." The peculiar text which accompanies each death is just as skewed and amusing as something more overtly arthouse.

The mechanics though are what gives Teleglitch purpose. Mastering combat and keeping track of the enemies which surround you is the first concern. Holding down the right mouse button takes aim, the left fires. Do not use a track pad. Clear a space for a keyboard and mouse. Prepare to be frustrated, before you become addicted. It is highly challenging.

This is a procedurally-generated affair, meaning that each playthrough uses a different layout and demands fresh perspective. Memorising

ration is strong. Top-down, your form is insignificant. You are enveloped in darkness, as you poke your way through tight corridors, searching for useful materials. Weapons can be upgraded through a combination of items. In combat, the monsters fall to pleasing visual flourishes, the kind which marks out the modern 2D game.

Even as a demo of the full game, Teleglitch is engrossing, and one which makes the small monetary investment for the whole package seem prudent. It has a story, and a heap of text to get through. It is best understood though when your lone adventurer is surrounded, with a shotgun in hand and neon: death all around.

The demo for Teleglitch is available for Windows and Linux. Get it here - <http://bit.ly/YNabpl>

Paul Casey

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TAKE FIVE // NUMBER 8

1 THE SITE // SNAPSHOTSERENGETI.ORG // Be a volunteer and a David Attenborough from your own computer as you help identify animals caught on camera traps sprinkled around Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. The program helps you to narrow down the species by identifying the animals' characteristics. All contributions will help specialists understand the animals' potential co-habitation, plus you get to go on safari from your own bedroom.



2 THE SHOW // MONSTER/CLOCK// SMOCK ALLEY THEATRE // Collapsing Horse Theatre return with their hit show to the Smock Alley. The piece is strung between actor and puppet, and follows the adventures of Toby, an apprentice watchmaker, as he delves into a world of fantasy and asks questions of time (18th-30th March).

3 THE EVENT // COME RHYME WITH ME // OUTHOUSE THEATRE // 6TH MARCH // This spoken-word event aims to incorporate the stories, musings and participation of all those wishing to speak. After successful outings at Dublin Fringe one would hope that they find a home here in the always-outspoken part of north Dublin.

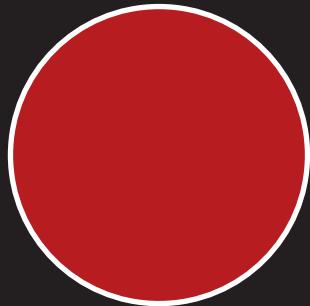
4 THE MIX // CYRIL HAHN MIXTAPE FOR HUNGER TV // Cyril Hahn has been making a name for himself remixing popular R'n'B songs such as Destiny's Child's Say My Name and Mariah's Touch My Body, but here he manages to drop some surprises among his clear attraction to contemporary house. Available from soundcloud.com



5 THE TICKET // TAME IMPALA // OLYMPIA THEATRE // 21st AUGUST // Although this date is well out of most people's foresight, the growing popularity and reputation of this Perth-based five-piece warrant this warning. If you're not seeing them at a festival during the summer, book this ticket.

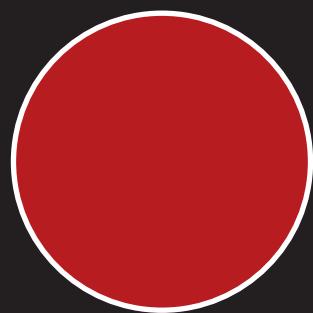
Compiled by Henry Longden

WWW



TINI 2

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D

WORDS
Katherine
Murphy

Rehearsal spaces are usually uncluttered, neutral in colour, and the walls are often covered in mirrors. There tends to be a director giving instructions to a large cast, and a frenzied atmosphere that does not abate. However, upon walking into the rehearsal room for Mirjana Rendulic's one-woman show I was met with none of these things.

There was a bed (duvet included), a sideboard and the general untidiness you would expect in a bedroom. Rendulic's greeting is equally down-to-earth, as she joyfully gestures around the room crying “[t]his is my bedroom”. This unassuming and unencumbered way of speaking seeps into Stone's Throw's premiere production, *Broken Promise Land*. The description places phrases like “war-torn country” and “Dublin lap-dancing club” along with “MTV hits and Hollywood sitcoms”.

And according to Rendulic, this is the key to the way Stone's Throw craft their vision; as one that doesn't create “a heavy experience” of subject matter that could be considered so. Rendulic dismisses the “based on her own experiences” aspect, and instead emphasizes the rehearsal process and how “in mixing it with fiction it became art.”

This wonderfully astute observation is almost naïve in its’ conception, and this is in keeping with her positioning in the Irish theatre scene. Originally from Croatia originally she has been living in Ireland for eight years, and has been keenly interested in theatre since immigrating. “I only feel like I'm part of the theatre scene now,” says Rendulic, adding that she is “almost still a beginner”.

Discussion leads naturally to shows like *Shibari* in the Dublin Theatre Festival, which foregrounded foreign-nationals on Ireland's national stage in central roles. “People tend to see you as an Eastern European person rather than an actor”, but Rendulic is quick to shed any sense of being victimized. When discussing consistently staged Irish playwrights, such as Brian Friel, she realizes that she “could complain about [not being cast], but [she's] aware that it wouldn't be realistic”. However, she's quick to laugh at the irony that in college productions of Greek tragedies the “Irish were playing Greeks, and [she] was playing the tourist”.

This exclusion of non-Irish actors from



the scene is beginning to break down, and is “on the verge of change” and they are “the experimental bunnies”. Again she laughs freely as she discusses parts she has been cast in where “the lines were in broken English” which she “found hard to learn”. And this is the newly emergent Stone's Throw comes into it's own. Rendulic hopes that this company can help foreign nationals to “create [their] own space”. Looking to future productions, the names Friel and Shakespeare are cited: “I can imagine this in any coun-



Mirjana Rendulic, writer/performer of one-woman show *Broken Promise Land* talks to *tn2* about what it's like to be an outsider and about her aims to bring theatre to new audiences

"THEATRE COMES FROM THE BODY. THERE IS SOMETHING SO DIFFERENT AND SO SPECIAL ABOUT THAT"

try". Referencing her work on a recent television show, Amber, she discusses the difference in mediums which boiled down to two comparisons: that it's "more subtle" and "the people are better looking." This quick wit and ability to laugh at herself make way for more contemplative sentiments about the "neutral look" of the show and, more importantly, its ability "to be anywhere".

And this universality of the text of *Broken Promise Land* is one that is summed up in her description of the show as "a playful show about this character that goes upon a strange journey". It sounds almost fairytale-like, as compared to the gritty reality of lap-dancing clubs and a Dublin streetscape. This innocence seems to be the defining factor of the show, especially when Rendulic discusses her childhood. "I was constantly doing drama shows around our hood, sitting around everyday creating stories" and in the rehearsal room both she and the director, Aoife Spillane-Hinks, "felt like kids again".

She credits much of her energy and exuberance to her work with youth theatres around the country and the National Association of Youth Drama, claiming that it "improved [her] acting more than any course could" as "everyone is so open and loves to be with one another, imagining together and playing games". It is this sensation of playing games that the body of the show emerged, and using the word body is no coincidence. "Theatre comes from the body. There is something so different and so special about that", and this statement is realised in the very way she uses her hands as she speaks, using gestures to great effect without becoming over animated.

So with *Broken Promise Land* opening this week what does Rendulic hope to achieve with this one-woman show? She wants to show people a young woman "who could be a victim, but instead shows them a story of you" that's "not a rant, and not giving out". In this respect she warms towards the possibility of a theatre "about immigrants, done by immigrants", thus "bringing new audiences in and involving them". This may seem like a huge goal, but Rendulic is already using her own life as source material without letting it overwhelm her: "As soon as it becomes a play... it's away from you".

She is acutely aware of the unseen boundary between life and art, between her own story and theatre, but it's her bubbling energy that leaves a lasting impression. Speaking of the future once more she ends on a question, gleefully asking, "who knows what will happen?" And after checking the lights, turning off the heater and with a heartfelt hug she springs from the makeshift bedroom into the streets of Dublin. ●

Broken Promise Land, Theatre Upstairs @ Langan's, 10 Eden Quay. Daily at 1pm until 16th March and at 7pm on 7th-9th and 14th-16th March.

HER YOUNG HEART

With their debut album If You Leave coming out on 18th March, our Music Editor Alana Ryan talks to Elena Tonra from Daughter about folk music, Vanilla Sky and the afterlife

t was, by all accounts, a pretty miserable evening. Dark and damp, the rain was drizzling down in a thoroughly Irish fashion. January was excelling at sucking all joy out of the soul, to the extent that had it not been a Daughter gig I probably would have stayed put, tea in hand, hunched as close to the open fire as is humanly possible, muttering my malcontent to all those unfortunate enough to come directly into my vicinity. In retrospect, this would have been a terrible mistake. As concerts go, it was one of the best.

The Button Factory, packed to capacity, throbbed with energy; people swayed and stomped, singing along emphatically to lyrics which they seemed to claim as their own. Such was their glee that at times the singer's soft vocals were drowned out by the crowd's raucous enthusiasm for a singalong. Given Elena Tonra's nervous giggles and shy thanks, one can hazard the guess that this isn't the typical reception the British act usually receive. Two weeks later, the young singer laughs at the memory of it. "It was absolutely great, actually we had a really good time." The crowd weren't too much then? "Well it was different than a lot of the tour, because we'd been in churches, and so everyone was quite well behaved." Variety is, as they say, the spice of life.

Daughter is the latest "folk" act to gain popular acclaim. But the threesome: Elena, Igor and Remi, are much more exciting than the genre's current poster boys. A far cry from Mumford and Sons, Noah and the Whale, or even Laura Marling, Daughter's music is suffused with emotion – the anxieties of youth dragged from a dark corner and placed centre stage. Melodies soar and retreat, accompanied by whimsical ornamentation and touches of electronica and eerie percussion. The frailty of the human condition has rarely been captured in such an achingly beautiful way. To tar them with the same brush pulled out for The Lumineers doesn't seem to do Daughter justice. "Yeah we've always had that [folk comparison], perhaps due to my earlier stuff. I think there is a folk element in terms of the writing still being poetry-based... but folk is perhaps more traditional than we are."

Their debut album *If You Leave*, due for release this month, is a definite expansion in sound from the two previous EPs. Production was predominantly done by Igor, but with a little help from The xx's producer Rodaidh McDonald, and Jolyon Vaughan, who's worked with Maps. Mixing was courtesy of Ken Thomas, known for his collaborations with Sigur Ros and M83. The advance in sound is definitely discernible. One of the standout tracks, *Still*, is a perfect exercise in merging the delicate notes of Daughter's trademark sparse vocal with atmospheric reverb and chilling ambient harmonics, while Tomorrow's sombre images are set against alluring echoes and resolute percussion strikes, which give dynamic depth. Elena is generous in her praise: "They're really great people and very open. It was a good working relationship that Igor had with them." She pauses briefly then cheerfully admits "We weren't so much clear how we really wanted it to come out but we were very clear on how we didn't want it to come out."

Despite this increased professionalism in production, the songs still retain their story-telling emphasis. As mini-narratives, Daughter's music always excels at capturing the vulnerability of youth, complete with all its frightening uncertainty and perpetual curiosity. Death and spirituality are omnipresent on the new album, with many of the tracks alluding to the afterlife. On *Smother* the singer softly states that "In the darkness I will meet my creators," while on earlier song *The Woods* attention is drawn to Saint Christopher. Does Elena identify with religion? "Well, I'd be interested in that side of things, I was brought up in a religious family but I'm not very religious in terms of organisation or in terms of the church. But that doesn't mean I won't be religious in the future – I have no idea, but I'm just really interested. I wonder all the time what happens after you die, do you see other people again or is that just it?" She trails off, lost in thought for a fleeting second before curiously stating "Sometimes I look up conspiracy theories; I'm quite interested in the supernatural." We mull over this for short while, leaving Elena to wryly quip "You can never run out of things to say about death or about after you die or about aliens."

While the singer may be intrigued by the extraterrestrial her main thematic pillar is something a lot closer to home: love in all its guises. Earlier songs such as *Landfill* and *Home* capture the rawness of rejection with alarming accuracy. It would seem that music is a cathartic exercise for the young singer. "It's definitely a kind of therapy. If I couldn't write I'd be like a nervous wreck. It's good to get all those bad feeling and thoughts out and I think it definitely helps. But in terms of content, some lyrics are from that dark place which I think everyone has... and I try and get into that place." She elaborates that she's been a keen chronicler since she was just thirteen: "Whenever I found things difficult I tried to write and it does help and I just carried on. For me [originally] it was less about making music and more about the need to write."

Bizarrely, when I ask what kind of music she was into at that time, it's revealed in a rather roundabout way that the defining album of her early adolescence was the soundtrack to the 2001 Sci Fi Tom Cruise classic *Vanilla Sky*. Yes, I was surprised too. Elena, clearly relishing this trip down memory lane, divulges that it was in fact her dad who instigated this anomalous appreciation. "He's really interested into music... he just heard on a radio show that it was a really good album and went and bought

"I'M QUITE INTERESTED
IN THE SUPERNATURAL.
YOU CAN NEVER RUN OUT OF
THINGS TO SAY ABOUT ALIENS"

“WRITING SONGS IS DEFINITELY A KIND OF THERAPY. IT'S GOOD TO GET ALL THOSE BAD FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS OUT. IF I COULDN'T WRITE I'D BE LIKE A NERVOUS WRECK”



it. None of us had seen the film; it actually took us two or three years to watch it.” However, Tom Cruise didn’t live up to the hype, Elena admits laughing heartily: “We liked the soundtrack way more than the film.” The album does sound pretty good. Featuring the likes of REM, The Chemical Brothers, Radiohead, Bob Dylan, and Sigur Ros, it’s easy to see how it could capture the imagination of an eager teenager. Elena readily confirms that “As an introduction to a few bands I’d never heard of before like Sigur Ros, it was definitely a good thing.”

As our conversation draws to a close, I remark how clean and memorable the one-word titles are. Short and to the

point, they remain etched on my memory long after the final chords gently fade away. While Elena initially jocularly notes it makes writing the set list on her hand all the more manageable, a more considered answer emerges after a short reflection. “I think what we like about [the titles] is that they leave it quite open to people to interpret the songs as they want. I don’t want to explain too much, I want people to have their own opinion . . . to decide what they like about it.” People will undoubtedly diverge in their individual interpretation, but there’s common consensus that Daughter are one of the most beguiling and beautiful bands to emerge in recent times. ● *Image courtesy of Stacey Hatfield*

DON'T THINK TWICE

WORDS Isabella Davey

Ireland's all right. For all the insatiable desires for 3-in-1's and the trivialities that differentiate a "gaff" from a "session" (judging on the drugs taken or the company kept, of course), Ireland has its blooming merits, with a budding fashion scene blossoming to the fore. Students exercise this skill to show-stopping ends, jewellers reiterate traditional Celtic symbolism, and established Irish designers frill-up the derriere of global phenomenon Lady Gaga.

These days, our designers are being glorified by the fash pack, coke clan and celebrity simpletons alike: J W Anderson, the continental bounder and Topshop's new toyboy; Simone Rocha, hitting a homerun for Irish designers at London Fashion Week; and Philip Treacey's designs adorning 36 toff heads at the royal wedding of Kate and Wills.

What the future holds for Irish design seems not only positive and enriching, but collaborative as well. Mindsets wishing to capture traditional design heritage and simultaneously incorporate modern aesthetic are certainly a growing concern, with Edmund McNulty's handmade knitwear reflecting the changing Irish landscape while embodying traditional manufacturing principles in the creation of each piece. The jeweller Muirean Walsh is of the same mind, her first collection centring on the modernisation of the Tara brooch, recreated in acidic anodized aluminum.

Investment Alison Conneely // Sorcan O'Raghallaigh

Irrelevant Pauric Sweeney

Introducing Edel Traynor // Colin Horgan

Colin Horgan



Alison Conneely



Sorcha O'Raghallaigh

Our Style Editor sheds a positive light on the Irish design scene, pointing out Dublin's burgeoning fashion enterprises and which emerging talents are the ones to watch

Certainly Ireland has left behind mottled tweed and gypsy-wedding hysteria, but with the current economic climate, are we not drawing deeper into the dichotomy of filthy rich or really fucked? (With most of us languishing in the latter).

Irish designer Sean Byrne says “[There is a] focus here in Ireland now on quality as opposed to quantity, and I have been able to establish a core clientele who appreciate my design values.” Sean does concede that the recession is a double-edged sword, “making [the designer] work harder and fo-

another, with photography and design studios side by side with art, music and dance. While it may just sound like one idyllic Grecian orgy of aesthetes, this conglomeration of ideas and thoughts allows the kind of like-minded influence usually void in a world known for biting the hand that feeds.

Project 51, whose strength lies in their jewellery sector, is similar in approach to The Chocolate Factory, housing studios for designers within their premises. Atelier 27, much like Project 51, is pioneering the promotion of Irish design by providing a welcome stage for surfacing labels.

“THE RECESSION MAKES ONE WORK HARDER AND FOCUS A LOT MORE ON DESIGN AESTHETIC”

cus a lot more on design aesthetic. While the Celtic tiger eradicated a focus on craftsmanship, now I push for perfection.”

Although Irish design appears to now be marching to the rhythm of reinvention, we see businesses creating spaces for these collectives to expand and explore, rather than fester and weaken as previous decades spelt for the Irish design scene

The Chocolate Factory considers itself a “new creative community”, located on Kings Inn Street. This hub plans to provide a breeding ground for talent to intertwine with one

For all the Gareth Pugh’s of London squeezing their models into tattered bin bags, and the Isabel Marant fillies behaving French and scowling at everyone, Ireland should not be overlooked as a presence at the cutting edge, even if it stays somewhat native for the time being.

To quote Ireland’s most debonair of rogues, Oscar Wilde, “One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art.” While most of us can resemble a Sasquatch at the best of times, the creations by our own flesh, blood and fuinneamh surely constitute wearable works of our generation. ●

HOMEGROWN

Although a little worse for wear, Rachel from Cork band Young Wonder talks to tn2 about headresses, supporting Alt-J, and their new EP, out at the end of this month ahead of their Workman's Club show on 5th April

WORDS
Tara Joshi

“I DON’T THINK YOU CAN BASE SUCCESS ON HOW MANY LIKES YOU HAVE ON FACEBOOK – IT’S A VERY PERSONAL THING”

When I ask how she is, it is with a ripple of laughter that Rachel Koeman, one-half of Cork-based duo Young Wonder, responds with the confession that she is a little bit hung over. She'd been to a gig the night before, and while she can't remember the name of the band she says that they were very good, before proceeding to tell me with enthusiasm about what other music she's been listening to lately: "Disclosure are unbelievable! Alunageorge as well – like, they're amazing. Really good producer and her voice is just really different."

Of course, Koeman herself has a singing voice that could be described as really different; on all of Young Wonder's releases her vocal range is stunning to listen to – powerful, raw, and sometimes almost feral. Combined with bandmate Ian Ring's slick production, Young Wonder's music is kind of magic – fantastical, strange, glitchy electro-pop that isn't quite like anything else out there at the moment.

"You know what, it's really hard to describe our sound," Koeman says with amusement when I ask her to do just that. "Everyone always asks us this question, but we don't actually have an answer. Put very plain and simply, it's electronic pop music but there are so many other sounds in there it's hard to pin it down. There are a lot of cultural sounds – I think we've always just liked to experiment, [to] look at other cultures."

On the subject of the influence of other cultures, we discuss the headdress that Koeman often wears in their music videos and photographs. How does she respond to YouTube comments accusing her of cultural misappropriation? "People are gonna find something, no matter what you do," she says, a tinge of exasperation in her voice. "The way I see it, I just took

a headpiece that I thought was really beautiful and I wanted to wear it and appreciate it. I'm sure if I wore a different headpiece people would find something wrong with it – that's just the internet. It doesn't bother me and, you know, I would never want to offend anyone."

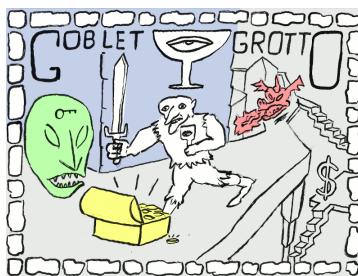
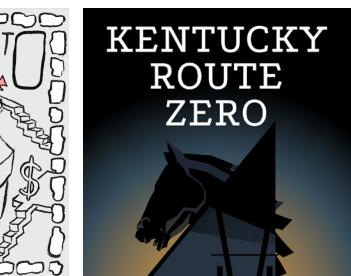
Other cultures aside, do they see themselves as being at all influenced by Ireland? "We're definitely influenced by Irish artists and our friends in Ireland – so many amazing artists are emerging from Ireland. But I think on a bigger scale Ian is influenced by, like, Jamie XX and Disclosure – those sorts of acts. And as a girl in the music scene I tend to go towards acts that have a girl in them – Grimes, Purity Ring, Cults. It's not like we're modelling ourselves on boy-girl duos, but you do have to look at other acts."

Fresh from a recent support slot in London for Alt-J ("It was amazing – like, literally, I was star-struck, it was kind of embarrassing"), March will see the release of Young Wonder's latest EP, Show Your Teeth. "I cannot wait", the singer gushes. "I guess it's a more mature sound than our last EP in that I think it's a bit more developed and thought-out. It's maybe a tiny bit more experimental in some songs but more mainstream pop on other songs."

The EP is sure to see a surge in interest for the exciting duo, but Koeman is hesitant to define popularity as success. "I don't think you can base it on how many likes you have on Facebook – it's a very personal thing. For me, if we're making music and people are enjoying it and we're enjoying it – then I think that's successful in its own right." ●



OF THE TOP PILE



With the independent Games Festival Awards coming at the end of the month, the developers in the grand prize category talk to tn2 about their individual projects

WORDS
Hugo Fitzpatrick

Self-described “Sundance for independent game developers”, the Independent Games Festival takes places at the end of March in San Francisco. The festival, which started in 1998, aims to reward and bring exposure to independent game developers every year. Key to this philosophy is the awards ceremony which takes place on the last day of the festival. What’s refreshing about the IGF awards is the diversity in the titles that are shortlisted. Grand prize winners from years past include hits like Phil Fish’s Fez or Markus Perrson’s Minecraft, which has seen widespread commercial success since it won the Seamus McNally Grand Prize in 2011.

This year’s five finalists are coming in at a time when independent game development has never been bigger, and this is shown in the variety of design each of these five games represent. There’s Kentucky Route Zero, a somewhat traditional point-and-click adventure game with a beautiful art style. Compare that to Hotline Miami which is a pulsing, beating top-down action game with enough ultra-violence to turn Anthony Burgess’ stomach. The other three

finalists: Little Inferno, Faster Than Light and Cart Life are just as distinctive, being a puzzle game that teaches philosophical life lessons, a small-scale space roguelike, and a real-life simulator respectively. What ties all these games together is a small development team that knows exactly what they want to produce and strives to perfect it, all out of their own pocket.

Working on your own for no income can be a difficult proposition for many developers. “The competition provides a goal and deadline. Finding concrete motivation like that can be difficult when working alone,” says Matthew Davis, one half of the development team behind space strategy game Faster Than Light. FTL has certainly benefited from the improvised structure the IGF can provide to independent developers. This isn’t the first time FTL has had a presence at the awards, but this year marks the game’s first grand final nomination. “We were chosen as an ‘honorable mention’ in 2012,” explains Davis. “It’s encouraging to know that the time spent on development and polishing over the last year successfully

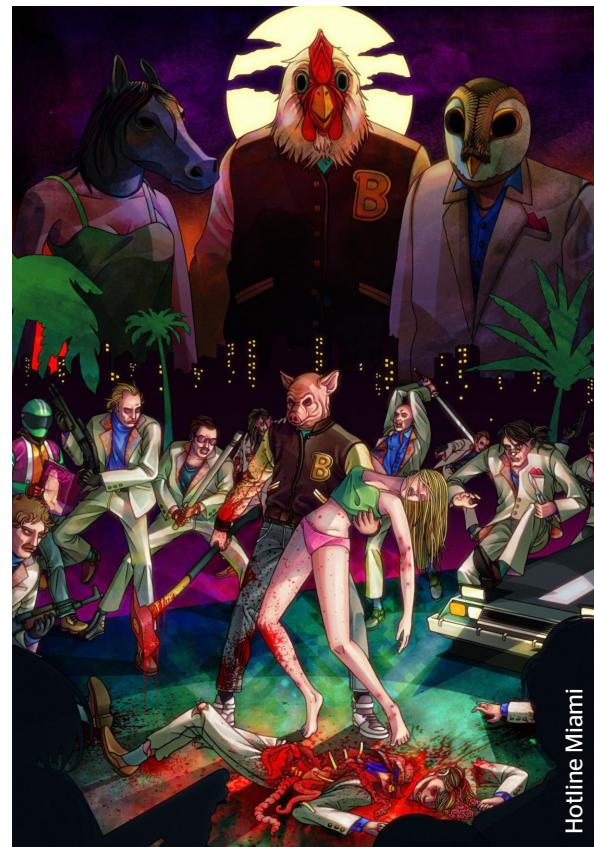
“THE COMPETITION PROVIDES A GOAL AND A DEADLINE. FINDING CONCRETE MOTIVATION CAN BE DIFFICULT WHEN WORKING ALONE”

improved on our initial prototype." FTL seems to be the prototypical independently developed game – crowdfunded, made by two people, and now a finalist in the IGF.

Not that its success isn't deserved. The game is a joy to play, the clean, pixel aesthetic perfectly communicates the myriad of different tasks you have to keep track of. Matthew Davis and Justin Ma knew exactly what they had in mind when they began the project, as the former explains: "We noticed that video games too often put you in the pilot's chair while really we wanted to be sitting in Captain Kirk's chair and commanding the crew." They have certainly achieved this aim. Managing power distribution and crew allocation is simple at first, and satisfying too. It is only after a few runs that the complexity of the game becomes clear, and the depth it reveals is what makes repeat plays of the game enjoyable. A wonderful soundtrack that successfully balances a feeling of serenity when flying through space with that of panic when scrambling to stay alive in a battle brings the whole game together.

It's that feeling of serenity and relaxation that next grand finalist certainly doesn't have. Hotline Miami (which *tn2* reviewed in Issue 4) is the reverse of FTL in almost every way. The action is non-stop, the soundtrack is aggressive and relentless, and the mechanics are entirely surface level. Like FTL however, the game was made by only two people: Jonatan "Cactus" Söderström and Dennis Wedin. Cactus is a bit of an indie cult hero. He is renowned for churning out games in quick succession, with over 40 titles to his name currently. Not all of them are as fleshed out or as polished as Hotline Miami, which could be considered his first major release. "Cactus" himself realises that most of his games tend to be "experimental games with arcadish gameplay", a category Hotline Miami easily fits into but which by no means is a negative. It's refreshing to see such a traditional game as a finalist. It reflects well on the IGF as an institution, that it hasn't lost itself to pretension, a criticism that is often levied at the independent scene for many other mediums.

"WE NOTICED THAT VIDEO GAMES TOO OFTEN PUT YOU IN THE PILOT'S CHAIR WHILE WE WANTED TO BE SITTING IN CAPTAIN KIRK'S CHAIR AND COMMANDING THE CREW"



Hotline Miami

If there were one game in the IGF shortlist that could be labelled as pretentious it would be real-life simulator Cart Life by Richard Hofmeier. At first glance that would be an understandable assessment. Cart Life deals with the dreary subject of everyday life, struggling to survive as an adult in an indifferent world. But the game is so earnest in its treatment of this subject that any feeling of pretension or indulgence instantly fades away on playing. It is every bit the videogame, but based entirely in normality. Hofmeier describes the genesis of the game: "I was broke, and while playing other people's games I often found myself imagining how their characters or systems could change to belong to the world I lived in – with rent, joking with strangers, unsolvable problems, grocery stores, homework, family drama, leftovers."

Hofmeier's reflection of our world is startlingly accurate and entirely relatable. The crux of the game is running a retail stand and everything involved in that – from setting prices to stocking shelves. But it's the detail in what you do outside your shop that distinguishes Cart Life. Arguing with your landlord, applying for permits, missing the bus home and having to shell out for a taxi – it is a game made up of the least enjoyable parts of existing, but playing it is far from a depressing experience. Hofmeier himself wasn't sure what the reaction would be: "I thought it'd just be my friends playing it – I really didn't expect very many people would enjoy it." Many people have admired his game, most importantly the IGF judges, a panel made up of other game developers and authorities. "I'm inclined to feel artistically validated," says Hofmeier on the subject of his nomination. "Many of the IGF jurors are folks I admire a great deal."

As one of the more obscure games to be nominated, Hofmeier sees the benefit the IGF can provide to independent game developers: "I enjoy seeing the games which have an artistic spirit get this kind of endorsement so that players who would never have heard of [them] become intrigued." This is definitely one of the rolls the IGF awards fill; in an ever-growing stock of homebrewed inde-

WHAT IS THE SEUMAS MCNALLY GRAND PRIZE?

The IGF Grand Prize's namesake Seumas McNally was a developer himself, winning the award in 2000. Seumas died of Hodgkin's Lymphoma shortly after aged just 21, and the award was named in his honour.



Since then the Seumas McNally Grand Prize has grown in influence and importance. 2009-winner Monaco picked up a distribution deal to be released on XBox. 2010-winner Minecraft has become a huge success, with almost 10 million people having bought the game. Last year's winner Fez received a stellar response from critics, and was Eurogamer's Game of the Year.

"I WAS BROKE, AND WHILE PLAYING OTHER PEOPLE'S GAMES I FOUND MYSELF IMAGINING HOW THEIR CHARACTERS OR SYSTEMS COULD CHANGE TO BELONG TO THE WORLD I LIVED IN"

on the state of casual games, but discovering what that message is and how it is delivered is the charm of the game, and best left unspoilt. Having such a singular vision, such a definitive message is hard to come by in games. It is an area the independent scene excels at and it is to the IGF's credit that a game has reached the grand finals not just for its mechanics but for its message and effective delivery thereof.

The fifth and final nomination is Kentucky Route Zero by Jake Elliott and Tamas Kemenczy. Kentucky Route Zero is definitely the most visually striking game of the lot, picking up a nomination for Excellence in Visual Art on top of its Grand Final shortlist. The muted and clean aesthetic is a key element in the air of mystery the game creates. At its core Kentucky Route Zero is a very simple game. "We wanted to make an exploratory game set in Kentucky, about meeting strange characters," outlines Jake Elliott, the game's designer.

What is most impressive about Kentucky Route Zero is how much it leaves to be found through that exploration. It is a game where narrative is the focal point, but much of the narrative can be left undiscovered by the player. You can finish the first act of the game (all that is currently available – the game will be released in episodic acts) having only gone through four of a possible eight acts. Straying from the main course will net you little narrative vignettes: breaking into an old museum, or an encounter with a busker on the interstate. It has an almost theatrical feel to it, from the game being divided into acts and scenes to the physical transitions between settings, with lighting changes and animation rather than just straight cuts. "Definitely unexpected," exclaims Elliott about their nomination, "but along with the overall positive response we've gotten to the game since it's released, it's extremely encouraging."

That is a sentiment that seems to be shared by all the nominees. "To be counted among these people feels great," remarks Cart Life's Richard Hofmeier. If nothing else, the IGF provides a sense of community to the lonely, sometimes bleak and unrewarding world of independent game development. It provides a much-needed platform to build that community, and also brings forth leaders in the form of its award ceremony to direct it. This year's finalists show that independent development continues to head in an increasingly diverse and creative direction. Any of the five nominations for grand prize could win, and would be worthy of doing so. ●

The winners of the IGF awards will be announced on 29th March.

FULL OF BEANS



The stagnant economy is bad news for most, but there is one corner of the food market that is coming into its own. Paige Crosbie, co-Editor for Food & Drink, visits one such business to find out more

To artificially synthesise the taste of chocolate is impossible. Try as you might, you will never get anywhere close to the genuine taste of the mixture of cocoa bean and butter. It also contains phenyl-phyamine, the hormone which floods our brain when we fall in love, anandamide, which is what causes the feeling of wellbeing when marihuana is smoked, alongside caffeine, sugar and fat, all addictive substances. It's no wonder, then, that we as a nation are completely obsessed with chocolate. Eating it, drinking it, crying into it under a duvet, chocolate permeates much further into our culture than most of us would like to admit. Just look at the starved look on the faces of all those who gave it up for Lent.

There's no denying that chocolate is of huge importance to the Irish people. Cadbury Dairy Milk is Ireland's most successful confectionary brand, and we each consume about the weight of a car tyre of it a year, mostly at seasonal intervals like Christmas,

"WITH CHOCOLATE, WE ARE NOW IN THE SITUATION THAT WE WERE IN 40 YEARS AGO WITH WINE. BACK THEN PEOPLE WERE DRINKING BLUE NUN AND THINKING IT WAS THE HEIGHT OF SOPHISTICATION"

Valentine's Day, and Easter Sunday, which in many respects has become more about chocolate than the resurrection of the Messiah. The chocolate market in Ireland was worth €583 million in 2012, a hulking sum if ever there was one. Most of this market is controlled by Cadburys, Mars and Nestle, meaning that our taste in chocolate is controlled by Cadburys, Mars and Nestle. Stunted by years of milk chocolate (with the odd box of Black Magic thrown in), it seems our taste buds are unlikely to have evolved past needing chocolate for the sugar hit alone. It's this chocolate wasteland that small boutique producers like Francis Keane are attempting

to fix.

"I think we are now in the situation with chocolate that we were in 40 years ago with wine," explains Francis, chocolatier and owner of KoKo Artisan Chocolate Shop in Kinsale. "Back then, people were drinking horrible plonk like Blue Nun and thinking it was the height of sophistication, whereas now people know what's good and bad, where they like their wine to come from, even what temperature it should be at. Hopefully, we'll reach a stage where people have the same attitude towards chocolate."

It seems an odd time for a shop with such seemingly-Celtic Tiger products to open up in a small town like Kinsale. However when you look at it, there has been a surge of chocolate shops opening in small towns across the country. From Wilde Irish Chocolates in Clare to the Skellig Chocolate Factory in the Ring of Kerry, there's a whole range of chocolate makers with a whole

range of products that stretch well beyond a Kit Kat. From Chili Caramels (a specialty at KoKo) to Skellig Chocolates' Chocolate High Heels, innovative and delicious products are cropping up all over the country. "People can't afford the larger luxury items that they used to," Francis reiterates, "so now they're more likely to spend some money on something small but high quality, which also has a luxurious feel. Chocolate fills that gap perfectly." It helps, of course, that we are the third-highest consumer of chocolate in the world. And yet, our relationship with chocolate is an odd one.

Say what you want about hormones and chemicals,



half the joy of eating a bar of chocolate is in the fact you probably shouldn't be eating it. The Irish love anything that makes them feel immoral. We as a nation are outrageously good at feeling guilty about things, and one of the main things we feel guilty about, along with drinking too much, working too little and not texting our mum's, seems to be chocolate. Chocolate in many ways is a banned substance, at least in childhood and often right into adulthood, and the more forbidden something is, the more we want it. Why else would the boy who sat next to me in fourth class have put an Aero in his ham sandwich to sneak it into a school that allowed no sweets or chocolate?

You can see the same feelings on the faces of the people who come into KoKo. Hunger, wonder, delight, and of course guilt. The amount of people who walk into that shop screaming "I'm only looking!" like a battle cry is unprecedented. The defensive attitude is understandable when you're immediately hit by the heady scent of chocolate and coffee coming from behind the counter. Perhaps this is the secret of the success of the small chocolate shops across the country. Or it could be the fact that the quality of the products in these kinds of place are, in general, so much higher than even the most sophisticated of the supermarket chocolate boxes.

There is a painstaking craft that goes into the chocolate in KoKo, with each piece being handmade by Francis himself and hand wrapped in the shop. The products range from shards of orange-flavoured dark chocolate, to huge chocolate baubles hand painted in greens, blues and reds which then hang from the ceiling. Everything is beautifully presented with a flair and sense of humour rarely seen on the supermarket shelves. Small bags of dark chocolate-draped dates are labelled "The Best Date You'll

Ever Have", and a figure of a duck, which appears to have had its head badly reattached to its body, has the title "Hieronymus Bosch Duck". The fact is, only in a small independent shop could you get both the knowledge Francis obviously has along with the sense of fun evident from the products.

So can we develop a taste for quality chocolate? When asked what their favourite chocolate is, most people will go for the old favourite Dairy Milk. Francis is mildly contemptuous at this. "There is a higher cocoa content in my white chocolate than in a Dairy Milk, and mine hasn't been sitting on a shelf for a year and a half." The taste difference between KoKo's milk bar and a bar of Dairy Milk is obvious. "The taste of the chocolate depends not just on the cocoa content but also where it's from, how it's made, how it's kept . . ."

The development of sophisticated tastes in any sphere takes time, but Ireland seems like the place for it to happen. Unlike "foodie" nations like France or Italy, our food traditions are not deeply engrained, and therefore easily changed. Francis is hopeful that we may wake up from our Cadburys-induced stupor and, if not become full converts, at least appreciate that there is a world beyond the till at the petrol station.

It worked for wine, which continues to have a growth in sales across the country every year. So can chocolate follow in its footsteps? All the signs are there with chocolate shops and tastings gaining more and more popularity. Indeed it seems like we may be heading towards a point where we can appreciate the quality and depth of chocolate that is being produced locally by highly-skilled chocolatiers across the country. ● *All photos courtesy of KoKo Artisan Chocolate Shop, Kinsale, Co. Cork.*

CAN YOU FEEL IT?



Film Editor Deirdre Molumby examines the thoughts of the filmmakers behind Good Vibrations, an upcoming film about Terri Hooley, the Belfast punk legend whose passion for new music transcended the Troubles

As many know, the Troubles is the name given to the period of political conflict in Northern Ireland characterised by riots and sporadic violence throughout the later half of the 20th Century. It is hard to believe that in all the upheaval, a Belfast record label and store that aimed to introduce punk bands from Northern Ireland to the UK (and ended up introducing them to the world) could emerge in that environment. Yet that was just Terri Hooley's intention when he set up Good Vibrations in the early 1970s. Responsible for starting off many groups' careers including The Outcasts and The Tearjerkers, Hooley's greatest discovery was probably Derry band The Undertones, whose hit single Teenage Kicks (I defy you to not sing along to "I wanna hold you, wanna hold you tight, get teenage kicks right through the night") remains an anthem for young people everywhere.

Directors Lisa Barros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn have brought the character's story to the big screen with the film Good Vibrations. It will be the couple's second feature film, their first being Cherrybomb (2009) which starred Rupert Grint and Robert Sheehan, and it has already received international acclaim and won Best Screenplay at the Dinard British Film Festival, Best Irish Feature Film at the Galway Film Fleadh last year, and received four nominations winning Best Costume at the recent IFTAs.

"[Hooley] definitely affected change on those around him," co-director Glenn Leyburn has said about the iconic figure. "He was about self-expression, he always trod his own idiosyncratic path, and that's what makes him such a great subject for a film." Leyburn explains that the movie he and Barros D'Sa (his directing partner and also his wife) have made aims to tell "A story about the irrepressible spirit of youth and the power of music even in the toughest of places and times. Belfast needed punk, the stuff that punk bands across the world were singing about, the punks in Northern Ireland

lived through . . . it changed how people thought and how they went on to live their lives. And a whole new generation of local bands and musicians cite Terri and Good Vibrations as an inspiration, so it still resonates decades later."

Hooley himself was involved in the film from an early stage of production. He once said, "If there was anywhere in the world that needed punk, it was Belfast. Punk and Belfast was a united force. It was the first time in the Troubles that Protestant and Catholic kids could come together in a venue in the city centre and mix." Glenn Leyburn and co-writer Colin Barberry based their script on conversations with Hooley, choosing key events to base the story on, such as when he opens the shop, when he signs the bands, and when Good Vibrations reaches its peak. As the film focuses on these events, it is not about the Troubles per se. Rather than engaging with politics or taking a side in the conflict, "Terri's story transcends those boundaries and that's what captivated us," says Barros D'Sa. "Terri and Good Vibrations created an alternative to the Troubles. Terri didn't plan a mission or set out to turn himself into some kind of counter-culture hero. He improvised as the world shifted around him and created some magic – as well as a certain amount of trouble and chaos for himself. That's why it's such an engaging story."

Good Vibrations promises to be about the power of music to overcome differences, looking at the world through different eyes (or eye, as Terri Hooley is known for having only one eye since childhood), and freedom of expression. Barros D'Sa hopes all will enjoy the film as it is "about the power of youth and creativity to shine through the bleakest of times, themes we believe will have resonance for audiences anywhere in the world. It's a universal story, told as it is through the particular prism of Terri's fascinating, often chaotic life." ● *Good Vibrations* is released on 29th March.

Founded in 2006 by Vanessa O'Loughlin, **The Inkwell Group** is a highly successful publishing consultancy, offering editing and critiquing services, as well as workshops and events. They are currently offering online courses in writing for TV, memoirs, romance, historical fiction, blogging and more. Instruction can also be found here on self-publishing, e-publishing and ghost writing. They provide one-to-one help, proof-reading services and pitching advice. As O'Loughlin says, the final full stop of a book does not mean the work is finished, rather it's just beginning. This is where the Inkwell Group comes in, for that all important rewriting stage.

www.inkwellwriters.ie

PEN

The **Irish Writers' Centre** offers many workshops and classes on various aspects of writing such as completing a novel, children's fiction, crime writing and writing for drama. They also offer a MFA in Creative Writing. Located beside the Irish Writers' Museum, it conducts lectures and seminars, as well as its writing workshops, and serves as a hub for writing groups. Carrie King of the Writers' Centre says, "It's a great place to meet other like-minded people who are going through the same difficulties and successes that you are." Their website offers information on events and festivals throughout the country, and also a section as Gaeilge with resources for scribhneoiri. And tips for writers? "Rejection can be difficult to deal with, but it's all part of the thorny authorial road... The more you write, the better you will be."

www.writerscentre.ie

PAPER

So you want to be a writer? Maybe. Maybe not. Either way, Jenny Duffy rounds up some of the best writing courses around. Have a look and see if you can get your creative juices flowing

Doris Lessing once said, "There are no laws for the novel. There never have been, nor can there ever be." That's undoubtedly a lovely sentiment. Yet I suspect that, given Lessing's past success, she knows a couple of laws, and is just unwilling to share them. For those of us who dream of seeing our names on Bestseller Lists, the idea that one cannot learn to write is unsettling. Luckily, it also seems to be untrue. Some of the biggest names in contemporary fiction are graduates of writing programmes. The likes of Richard Ford, Michael Chabon and Alice Sebold have seen no inherent evil in paying someone to tell them how to structure their stories. And now the budding novelists of Trinity can follow suit...

www.bigsomokewritingfactory.com

The **Big Smoke Writing Factory** is a writing school located in Dublin offering weekly courses, as well as drop-in courses and weekend or one-day workshops for both beginning and improving writers. Certain courses are also available online. Upcoming workshops include poetry, memoirs, revision, commercial fiction and flash fiction. Bringing together experience from a range of writing ventures – including the Irish Writers' Centre, the adult education centre at UCD, the Centre for Talented Youth at DCU, the Gaiety theatre, as well as various festivals and schools – the founders have created an exciting and interesting programme. Small class sizes mean that their courses are very focussed on the students. They also host open days (with tea and biscuits!), writing fests and readings. Big Smoke Writing Factory founder Claire Hennessy's top tip for writers: "Read a lot, write a lot, revise a lot."

TO

www.writing.ie

Inkwell founder Vanessa O'Loughlin created **writing.ie** in 2010, as somewhere to pool writing information in Ireland. It is a great resource for both writers and readers, with forums, blogs and information on events and festivals. For writers this website is a treasure trove of information – from creating characters and plots, to self-publishing and creating a blog, it's all here. For readers the website includes book reviews, recommended reads, competitions and advice for book clubs. And, of course, every good writer needs to read, read and then read some more. For students... well it's free. The website has been recently relaunched; it's colourful, easy to navigate and packed with useful information. An exciting new development is the National Emerging Writers' Programme, a series of DVDs covering different aspects of writing, also available to watch on the website.

PUT

FILM

M



Cillian Murphy talks to **tn2** about family, his relationship with Enda Walsh, the importance of staying close to your roots, and his stunning new film *Broken*

WORDS
Aaron Devine

MYSTERY MAN

After ten minutes of intermittently looking into the low February sun, my eyes begin to get sore as I stand outside Hogan's Bar on South Great George's Street. I am scanning the streets in all directions, with the hopeful anticipation that one Cillian Murphy is just running late and hasn't decided at the last minute to forego our interview.

But of course, I am not disappointed; there, emerging past the flower stall on the corner of Fade Street, is Murphy's slight figure, cloaked in a sensible puffa jacket and topped off with designer shades and his usual mop of brown hair.

In town to attend the premiere of his latest project, *Broken*, Murphy is accompanied by a polite yet imposing lady from the film's distribution company. She warns me as we ascend to Kelly's Hotel and maze our way round to the Bar With No Name that we have a strict 20 minutes to talk, so I duly agree and get down to business as we find ourselves a quiet corner in which to sit.

Murphy is thoughtful enough to remember me from our previous encounter in Grogan's pub, when I, foot-in-mouth, told him I was a fan of his work. Rather than the embarrassment it deserves to be, it actually acts as the perfect icebreaker as we get into discussing *Broken*, an independent film in which Murphy plays a memorable supporting role. Not so much a film as a meditation on a remarkable young girl's loss of innocence, *Broken* lingers in the memory long after the credits roll. Sympathetically shot, it features hyper-naturalistic performances from its two leads, Tim Roth and the revelation that is thirteen-year-old Eloise Laurence.

But it was the screenplay, adapted from the Daniel Clay novel of the same name by Irishman Mark O'Rowe (writer of previous Murphy projects *Intermission* and *Perrier's Bounty*) that first grabbed his attention. "You've got to take notice of anything Mark writes because he's such a fantastic writer. I found it very emotionally compelling when I read it, and if you get that off the words on the page then you know you're in good shape." Murphy continues, "I

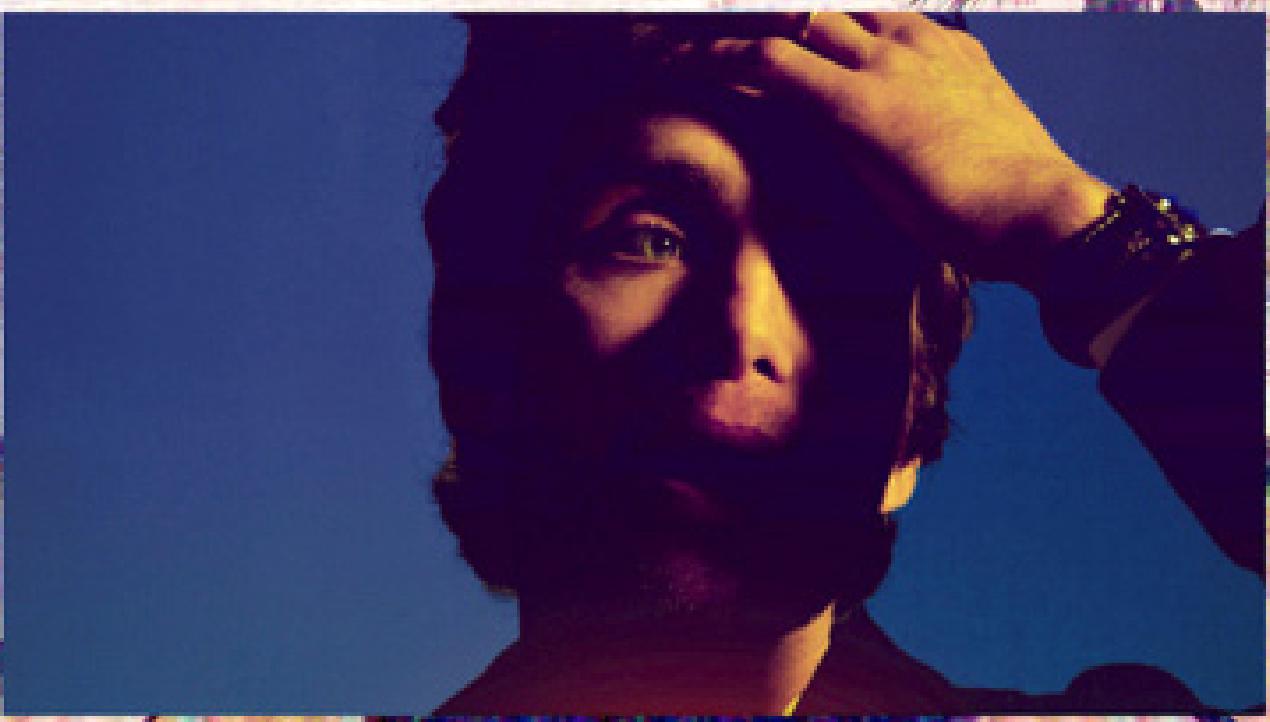
really liked the part, he was a very recognisable character to me."

That character, Mike Kiernan, is not completely dissimilar to the roles Murphy played in the other aforementioned O'Rowe scripts; always trying to do the right thing, he is a down-on-his-luck, honest and romantically naïve character. Interestingly, this seems to be in many ways the exact opposite of the real-life Murphy, a happily married and successful actor. But he quickly shrugs this off, instead suggesting he is more interested in what's "true", insisting "Mark writes Irish males like nobody else. He gets inside the head of what it is to be a mid-thirties man in Ireland."

It's watching the protagonist Skunk (Laurence) navigate the perils of growing up that provides most of the story's catharsis, so does being a father affect how Murphy sees the film? "Having kids does change your perspective, particularly when they're little. It's even hard watching fucking nature programmes because you start tearing up," he divulges, looking away with an embarrassed laugh. "You get very, very protective." He is quick to reaffirm, though, that the film has a much broader focus: "I think that [Broken] is universal in its appeal; it's not just for parents." He leans in, adjusting one of his fingerless gloves. "Listen, it's about family really, and I love that it's so non-judgemental in what family is because it's such a fluid thing nowadays."

Indeed, on the seemingly quiet suburban street where the film is set, we witness the many different shapes a family can take, with Rory Kinnear playing one of Skunk's violent neighbours, stepping out from his subservient role in *Skyfall*. His alarming portrayal as the father to a whole gaggle of Vicky Pollards anchors one of the subplots that gradually dissolve the film's initial serenity.

Broken does occasionally tumble over into the melodramatic, but overall it's a remarkably assured effort from respected theatre director (but first-time filmmaker) Rufus Norris. Working with him was an opportunity Murphy relished, having tried in the theatre before, which regrettably "didn't work out".



"HAVING KIDS CHANGES YOUR PERSPECTIVE. IT'S EVEN HARD WATCHING FUCKING NATURE PROGRAMMES"

Although falling firmly in the indie category, for Murphy this picture tops off a few years that were all about the blockbuster, with Inception, In Time and The Dark Knight Rises on the list of his recent film projects. Always demonstrating his versatility, his work on this film was in the midst of his award-winning performance on stage in Enda Walsh's exhilarating *Misterman*. The production proved to be incredibly popular in Galway, bagging Murphy an Irish Times Theatre Award for Best Actor, but it was also heralded on tour in New York and London. Will he be doing us all a favour and reprising it for the Dublin stage? My hopes are dashed. "It was a real success and one of the best things I've ever done as an actor – one of the most satisfying things – but I was fucking destroyed after it, man. I was so physically broken." There is a silver lining: "But myself and Enda are working on a new play, with Mikel Murfi as well. It's very early stages but very exciting."

"Enda gave me my first professional job as an actor," Murphy acknowledges. Back in the mid-nineties, did he see them achieving the success they now both enjoy? "I wanted to be in a band, and you could tell Enda had got something, but we were kids." It's almost as if things have come full circle then. "We stayed friends all that time from the beginning but we just never got round to working together because he was so busy and I was working and then . . . it was beautiful, it really was like the closing of a circle when it happened again. And now, when it was so good we were like 'We've got to keep it going, we can't leave it another fifteen years,'" he says enthusiastically.

Misterman is an older play of Walsh's which he performed himself, so I'm keen to know what has made Murphy such a perfect fit for the updated version. "We have the same sensibilities, we're attracted to the same sorts of stories. And we've got the same sense of humour . . ." he says with a thoughtful laugh, "... exactly the same sense of humour." He doesn't need to be questioned any further about the play, instead volunteering how much he enjoys working in theatre, and how he regrets having taken so long to get back on the stage: "The beautiful thing about making theatre is like when we were making *Misterman*: it was me and Enda in a room, just firing our imaginations. Film is by committee, you know? With theatre you can just find a space and you can do it." The latter part of his career has been heavily dominated by film, so does he have a preference for either medium? He takes a moment to consider, running his hand through his hair, as if in search of the answer there. "I've always loved both of them but I need to do theatre. Before I did *Misterman* I left it for about six years and it was too long, so if I can do it once a year I'd be very happy."

A different format Murphy is dipping his toes into is television, where he plays a criminal gang leader in the upcoming BBC series *Peaky Blinders*. Written by Oscar-nominee Steven Knight (*Dirty Pretty Things* and *Eastern Promises*) and due to be broadcast in the autumn, it's not exactly *Downton Abbey*, more of a British midlands version of Terence Winter's *Boardwalk Empire*. "It's set against the backdrop of World War I, so all these guys have come back and they're all a bit emotionally fucked, you've got the suffragette movement happening, communism, what's going on in Ireland, so it's a very tumultuous time to set a story against."

With US cable networks practically draining talent from Hollywood, can he see himself then following suit and committing to something like *Mad Men* or *Game of Thrones*? Ever pragmatic, he instead wants to leave his options open. "The thing with the BBC is that it's only three months of the year, so it gives you great freedom to go and do other things, but some of those shows [on HBO, AMC etc.] can take up nine months of the year and I wouldn't want to do that. I don't want to lock myself into anything."

That he wants to remain open to new opportunities is not surprising. In a relatively young career he has enjoyed an incredibly diverse range of roles, but if there is one thing that has remained constant it is that he is always returning to work on Irish films. He hasn't moved stateside and his agent is based in Dublin. Has this all happened consciously? "It's funny isn't it," he says, almost defensively. "It's sort of assumed in Ireland that you disappear to America, never to return." But is that not because a lot of Irish actors have? "Maybe. When I was younger I felt like I needed to prove that I could play English or play American. Now that I've done that, I feel it's very important to make work at home – we've got such fantastic filmmakers. And for me, culturally, to up sticks and move to Los Angeles would be too weird." But as we are such a small nation, does he sense there is an inferiority complex among our artists? "Not personally, no. There's certainly the need to go away and come back. I felt that draw, to show people that you are an actor that happens to be Irish as opposed to an Irish actor, but I've never felt the inferiority thing," he says, before offering a vague mumble of "cocky little shit" under his breath in reference to his younger self.

As ambitious as he might be, his career rise has been very gradual. But it's a route he claims to favour: "I started off doing theatre exclusively for like four years, then a couple of short films, small little parts . . . and I think that arc is much better for your health than the steep one which can fuck you up a little bit." I mention Irish-actor-of-the-moment Jack Reynor and wonder how Murphy would have dealt with such rapid success. His response is polite if not disappointingly anodyne ("He's a great actor, so each to their own"), but he does offer a nugget of wisdom that seems to sum up his ethos as an actor: "You've got to be authentic to yourself."

As we wrap up our conversation, I can't avoid thinking there are two big elephants in the room. Blue ones. In fact this is probably the longest any interview with Murphy has gone without them being mentioned. So I ask before he goes . . . does it bother him how people fawn over his eyes? Impressive peepers though they are, wouldn't he rather they focussed on the acting instead? Coolly, he laughs it off. "Nah, it doesn't bother me . . . never did Paul Newman any harm did it? You can only work with the face you've been given. It's never been a problem. But I did have this woman in Galway who came up to me and said, 'Your eyes aren't really that blue! Are they?!'"

At this point, I'm feeling the pressure from his minder, who no doubt wants to get him on to his next engagement, so we return down the stairs back into the crisp afternoon air. We shake hands and say goodbye, and as I cross the road I overhear Murphy ask her, "Where am I going now?"

My guess? Surely the only way is up. ●

THE EXHIBITIONISTS



Outside the professional circles of the world of art the curator is often undervalued, so our Art editor Gabija Purlytė talks to two emerging curatorial talents in the Dublin art scene to find out what the role is all about

When I first met Kate Strain and Rachael Gilbourne, they were both working on *Conjuring for Beginners*, a scheme where visual arts took over all of the spaces in Project Arts Centre during the summer of 2012. As they are now about to launch their new collaborative practice, I interviewed them on the various aspects of being a curator of visual arts.

What does a curator's job involve?

KS: "Ultimately I see the curator as playing a key role in presenting art to a public, and in shaping the mode of presentation in a way that benefits both the artist and the audience. The job itself can involve many things – curators are context-makers, researchers, producers, instigators, administrators, facilitators, fundraisers, commissioners, organisers, interpreters, managers, historians, reporters, educators, agitators, respondents and so on."

RG: "The job demands degrees of flexibility that allow you to juggle between practical and creative mindsets. Within this, I find that vision is paramount."

How does a curator go about choosing works or inviting artists for an exhibition?

KS: "Curators tend to use different methodologies. Personally, I work in a project-responsive manner. A specific artist or artwork might often be a starting point for an exhibition. I think it's important for curators to research as much as possible. Studio-visits are great ways to keep in touch with what artists are doing, and most curators would conduct these regularly."

RG: "Curators often follow definite lines of enquiry and through them find opportunities to work with artists whose work resonates with their interest. In terms of the practical

"I SEE THE CURATOR AS PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN PRESENTING ART TO A PUBLIC, AND IN SHAPING THE MODE OF PRESENTATION IN A WAY THAT BENEFITS BOTH THE ARTIST AND THE AUDIENCE"

steps involved, a curator is often the one to approach the artist and/or their gallerist, but sometimes it happens vice versa, with an artist choosing a curator they'd like to work with and getting in touch."

Where do ideas for exhibitions come from?

RG: "My ideas for exhibitions come in the same intuitive way as my ideas came as an artist, through a process of research and gestation, often crystallising just before sleep."

KS: "For me, ideas for exhibitions come from questions. I find I will have something I can't quite figure out, or something into which I feel I need to investigate further. In this way, events and exhibitions can act like responses to questions."

Can placing an artwork in an exhibition with a strong leading concept change the way it is received and interpreted?

KS: "Absolutely. Placing an artwork amongst other artworks, against different backgrounds, and within other contexts changes the associations we are ready to make with said work. No work of art is immune to the circumstances of its display, yet almost every work of art must be displayed – in order to exist. And this holds true for visual arts across the board, equally so for traditional and contemporary art. Whether it's

"NO WORK OF ART IS IMMUNE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ITS DISPLAY, YET ALMOST EVERY ARTWORK MUST BE DISPLAYED IN ORDER TO EXIST. AND THIS HOLDS TRUE FOR VISUAL ARTS ACROSS THE BOARD"

a sixteenth century Dutch genre painting or Ryan Gander's breezy contribution to Documenta 13, the context of how the work is presented and experienced still has an impact on how that work will be perceived, understood and remembered."

RG: "I believe where there is a real meeting of minds between the artist and the curator, magic can happen."

KS: "However, artworks are autonomous creatures. I don't believe curating has the power to definitively redeem or destroy a solid work of art. I also think it's necessary to maintain the distinction between curatorial and artistic practice. It is important to mark and remember particularly well-curated exhibitions, but as exhibitions, and not as artworks in and of themselves."

Is being a curator a rewarding job?

KS: "Super rewarding. Perhaps not financially (yet), but certainly I think I have a wonderful life, and that's because I'm doing what I'm passionate about."

So finally, where does the idea for your collaborative practice come from, how will it work, and are you already planning a specific project?

RG: "KSRG/RGKS is a curatorial partnership that evolved out of myself and Kate's working dynamic at Project Arts Centre throughout 2012. Since leaving Project, it felt like a natural progression to go on to work on independent collaborative projects. We share a common vision and ambition and know each other's strengths. Within this, as paradoxical as it may sound, we come from different perspectives which I think heightens our co-authored ideas and adds interest both for ourselves and hopefully the organisations, artists and viewers we work with. Crucially, we're able to be brutally honest with each other, which helps. In terms of projects, we're brewing several ideas so to be totally twee about it – WATCH THIS SPACE." ●

THE ONE ABOUT THE LACK OF AMORE

"MY FRIENDS ARRIVED FROM HOME SO WE WENT OUT FOR DINNER AND ONE OF THEM, MIDWAY THROUGH THE MEAL, SOMEHOW MANAGED TO HIT OFF WITH THE WAITER WHO WAS FAINTLY ATTRACTIVE IN A 70S PORNSTAR-CHANNELLING-A-CUBAN-ACTIVIST SORT OF WAY"

MONDAY

Can you write a sex diary that doesn't actually involve sex? Do I really want a record of my ineffectual endeavours to at least reach orgasm? Won't it remind me of being surrounded by sophisticated Europeans swilling glasses of red wine while spilling my Gin and Tonic, snogging a startled bearded man, then drunkenly assuring him, in English, "I'm not normally like this"? My lack of luck in the easiest country to get lucky is, I suppose, laughable at best.

TUESDAY

The normally lecherous barista next to my house did not compliment me this morning. It is February, so obviously standards have slipped; it's just that, previously, I was unaware of how low. My friend, radiant from a night of passion with her new Italian boyfriend, convinces me that my problem is the inability to communicate, and tells me I am going to have to make do with either the perverts or the language students. That night, after a long dinner at her house, I make do with the language students, and end up snogging her housemate, commonly known as "The Pooch", whom I realise is very much learning English, when he pins me down on his bed, places my hand on his erection, and softly tells me he wants to "make the sex".

WEDNESDAY

Thankfully I refrained from "making the sex" with The Pooch because I woke up to a series of emails from him from the night before, which, frankly, left me entirely baffled. The first was an invitation to go over to his house to "make the jam pai" with him, which is simply bizarre in itself, but for some unexplained reason, he went on to send a series of both culinary and sexual messages, which ended with the words "I want to come in a jug and pour it all over you".

THURSDAY

I have blocked The Pooch from my Facebook. He unloaded an album titled "gnammi gnammi" (yummy yummy) and it was full of pictures of jam pies. He has the least-sexy food fetish and I touched his erection. I never want to see him ever again.

FRIDAY

My friends arrived from home so we went out for dinner and one of them, midway through the meal, somehow managed to hit it off with the waiter who was faintly attractive in a 70s pornstar-channelling-a-Cuban-activist sort of way. Full of holiday spirit, she decided to take him home early. Early is perhaps the fundamental word here, for as soon as she got him back, he told her he was "going to explode", and confessed not only to his virginity but also his age. 18.

"THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ARE RICH, GUYS"

TV

Teen drama isn't where we go to think about social justice. Generally, teen drama isn't where we go to think at all. The kind I'm referring to – American primetime soap opera – tends to be categorised as mindless entertainment. The characters are pretty, the scandal is plentiful, and there's usually a lot of money involved.

It doesn't always look like money. Take Gossip Girl, a show populated by billionaires. You couldn't throw a stone on the Upper East Side without hitting a trust fund. And I'm sure cash appeared onscreen, but I honestly can't remember a specific incident where we saw so much as a dollar bill. The money appeared as penthouse apartments, cocktail dresses and expensive artwork, and it was everywhere, all the time. The Vampire Diaries is maybe a better example, because the characters' wealth is taken for granted; it's not the point, the way it was in Gossip Girl. Most of our main cast in TVD belong to the "founding families" of Mystic Falls, an exclusive – and wealthy – club.

"IT BECOMES AN ISSUE WHEN TV CHARACTERS ARE ARBITRARILY RICH AND NOBODY TALKS ABOUT IT. WE'RE BEING TOLD THIS IS NORMALITY"

This trope isn't a bad thing in itself. That's the point of fiction, isn't it? We get to experience other worlds and then return to normality, like invisible tourists. It becomes an issue when the characters are arbitrarily rich, and nobody talks about it. We're being told that this is normality: "The majority of people are rich, you guys." There's just the occasional Trusty Poor Friend, but it's okay because if they're industrious enough they'll get a scholarship and go to college and end up rich anyway. This is the mythology of capitalism: "Anyone can be rich!" If you're not, you're doing something wrong.

That's why US network ABC's *The Lying Game*, about twins who were separated at birth and put up for adoption, is unexpectedly great. Sutton was adopted by the wealthy Mercers, while Emma grew up in the foster system. Sutton could have been poor, and Emma rich. Or they could have both been poor, or both rich. Emma is poverty-stricken in Vegas; Sutton is living it up in Phoenix. It's not a case of not working hard enough, or not wanting it enough. That's not how the world works. Sometimes – spoiler alert – bad things happen to good people.

Sutton asks Emma to take her place while she searches for their birth mother. Emma becomes a Mercer, in a world where walk-in closets are the norm, and the country club is a home from home. And yes, the show becomes largely about rich people, but the crucial difference is that we're seeing them through Emma's eyes, and she takes nothing for granted. When Laurel, Sutton's adoptive sister, finds out that her boyfriend is a runaway foster kid squatting in a local house, she doesn't really get it. Cue a lovely scene with Emma, who does: "I think you need to be in Justin's shoes to understand. Not everybody is as lucky as you . . . and . . . I are." The beauty of it is that we still get to ooh and aah at the pretty dresses and the shiny cars. We're just not allowed to forget that they're a privilege.

Aoife Ní Dhochartaigh



SO MUCH MÜNCHEN

WORDS Aran Kleebaur

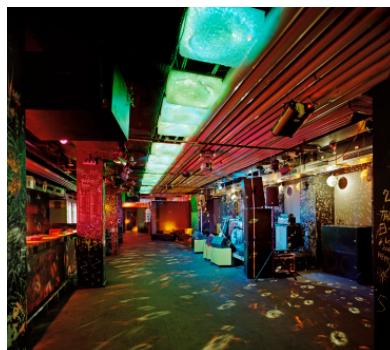
Renowned for its seamless blending of modern-city life with traditional rural values, **Munich** is the perfect spot to travel to if you're looking for some excitement in cosy, comfortable surroundings. Although one of the most expensive cities in Germany, the quality of its attractions and transportation system in part makes up for it, and extremely cheap flights with Ryanair are to be found if you fly to airport Memmingen (Munich West).

WHAT TO DO ...

- Go visit Munich's many **art museums**. If you're into classical art, the Old Pinakothek and the Haus der Kunst are always worth a visit. For modern art there's the New Pinakothek, the Pinakothek der Moderne, and the Museum Brandhorst, all situated in the Barer Street. If you have an interest in Kandinsky and the German expressionists, the Lenbachhaus is a must-see.
- One of the great things about Munich in the summer is the large amount of **public outdoor swimming pools**. Nearly all of them are very easily accessed, hassle-free, cheap, and superbly facilitated.
- If you're in Munich during the two weeks of the **Oktoberfest**, you are probably there for that sole reason. Try and get into the beer-tents early in the morning to be sure of getting a table, and then just immerse yourself in the chaotic, blissful and vulgar bingefest that will ensue.

WHERE TO EAT ...

Bavaria is famous for its many traditional Beer gardens. Have a "Maß" of fresh beer from Munich's exemplary variety, and eat either your own food, or order delicious and hefty traditional Bavarian food - be it a large "Brezen", or some Sauerkraut with "Schweinsbraten".



WHERE TO DRINK ...

Baader Café
Baader strasse 47,
80469 München

This small, run-down looking café/bar is famous in Munich's sub-cultures for its association with the alternative music and art scene of the 80s and 90s. If you do end find it too laissez-faire, or it's too packed, the area offers loads of other trendy, buzzing bars.

Rote Sonne
Rote Sonne, Maximiliansplatz
5, 80333 München
One of the better clubs in Munich, it offers an intimate experience in its dark basement setting with wide-ranging acts. Bouncers tend to be quite reasonable, although you should expect an entrance fee of €10 upward.

3 GREAT FREE ACTIVITIES IN MUNICH

- If you're visiting Munich in the summer with friends, take advantage of being able to hang out by the riverfront of the Isar river. Take a crate of Augustiner or Tegernseer beer, with the possibility of grilling in some designated areas. Particularly good spots are under the Reichenbach-bridge, at the "Flaucher" beside the zoo, or at what is called the "Praterinsel".
- If you're visiting Munich in the winter and it snows, go sledging! The Olympic Hill offers a superb public spot for this, from which you can also visit the Olympic Tower, the Olympic Stadium, and have a glorious view over the entire city.
- Take a long stroll or have a picnic in Munich's public park, the English Gardens. Whether you drink or dine in the beer garden beside the Chinese Towers, check out the unique river-surfing hot-spot called "Eisbach", play Frisbee or just get "hammered" in it, you are always bound to have a great day out here, and it stretches through almost the entire city-centre.

SAGE ADVICE

Munich is surrounded by glorious hills, mountains, forests and lakes. Take a long bike ride beyond the outskirts, or buy a Bayern-ticket (a very cheap, flexible train ticket) and witness the many beauties of the Bavarian countryside.

FACES

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TV // FILM // FOOD // STAGE
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REVIEWS



FEATURING **ELEMENTARY** BY CLAUDIA CARROLL

ELEMENTARY



CBS // SKY LIVING

TV The core difficulty in gauging the achievements of America's most recent take on Sherlock Holmes is that it is impossible to view in isolation. The world's only consulting detective has become such an all-pervasive feature of pop culture that the CBS network's insistence on the creative independence of its new series Elementary is instantly laughable. Attempting to judge the series on its own merit is not only to ignore the source material and long legacy of adaptations dating back to 1900 (Holmes currently has the distinction of being the Guinness Book of World Records' Most Portrayed Literary Human Character in Film & TV), but it is also to overlook the inevitable elephant in the room: the BBC's hugely successful Sherlock starring Benedict Cumberbatch as the titular sleuth.

The production of Elementary was from the start doomed to walk eternally chained in its UK counterpart's shadow, following a thinly veiled threat of legal action from BBC producer Sue Vertue should the project too closely resemble their own. Despite this, it has proved one of the most successful new shows to premiere in the 2012 season. Was this simply the predictable result of the soulless US suits' evil plan to cash in on the current Sherlock Holmes-mania, or does Elementary actually have something new to offer to a dangerously overused concept?

Despite the cynicism surrounding its debut, Elementary is not simply a McDonaldised version of its UK rival, but has cultivated its own personal charm to create a genuinely entertaining show. At the root of this is unquestionably Jonny Lee Miller in the central role. While it is too much to say he carries the series entirely, it seems unlikely that Elementary would have stayed afloat without an actor of his calibre at the helm.

Miller offers a softer-mannered and, indeed, more faithful interpretation of Holmes than his predecessors, while simultaneously bringing a refreshingly edgy physicality to the role. Miller's portrayal is exposed and often vulnerable, and though he of course

retains the characteristic alienating intellect, has largely abandoned its use as an icy mask. This is mainly enabled by the decision to forefront Holmes' drug problem, an integral part of Elementary's premise as it shapes the introduction of a new, and not necessarily improved, Dr Watson.

The good news is that Lucy Liu's character does not strike the viewer as gimmicky, as was feared initially. The bad news is that she doesn't strike the viewer as much of anything. The ever-imminent cliff of misogyny here ruled out the stereotypical comic-relief sidekick formulation of the Watson character. She is refreshingly authoritative and capable, but the downside is the lack of much chemistry; Liu plays her role competently, but fails to connect with her co-star. The writers have ultimately been disappointingly cautious with the gender revision, even refraining from use of the name Joan in place of the haltingly formal Watson.

The show has other minor difficulties; the episodic format regularly falls into the predictable pattern of the quirky crime procedural. The major change to the premise, the relocation to New York, is made little use of, and effective use of the modern setting is avoided, likely for fear of the BBC legal team.

All in all, though, Elementary is a strong show with a great deal of potential. As the relationship between the principal leads looks set to evolve beyond the mid-season finale, and with the introduction of the wider Sherlock Holmes mythology, it is likely that the series will prove a durable hit – provided Liu's bland Watson is further fleshed out.

To a certain extent, enjoyment of the show will always be coloured by familiarity with the source material and alternative adaptations, but Elementary does manage to offer a little something for everyone.

But no, it's not as good as Sherlock. Tuesdays at 9pm, Sky Living HD (Ch 107). **Claudia Carroll**



J2 GRILL AND SUSHI BAR

NORTH WALL QUAY, IFSC

FOOD Plonked next to the Liffey in its glass cuboid, J2 Grill and Sushi Bar is attempting to carve a niche for itself with the city boys from Citibank. An auspicious location in front of the IFSC and a trendy menu are certain to attract interest from the suited-and-booted members of the banking brigade, but will there be enough substance to entice an audience from College Green?

Unlike those purists at Yo! Sushi, J2 have – ideologically at least – sold out by adding steak to their menu. However, this shrewd move might mean the difference between success and failure in the harsh world of business-based luncheon dining. The fusion of the sushi and grill means that almost everyone will find something tasty to treat their palate with when they take a table, and tasty is the defining word.

Ordering a mixture of options from both the grill and sushi sections of the menu is highly recommended as both have distinctive flavours and textures, offsetting each other wonderfully. A crab-based California roll provides a fresh, cool companion to a fried scallop udon noodle dish for myself and my companion. Switching between the delectable udon and tangy crab created a sense of fun

which is a difficult feat to achieve, especially when you've arrived in from Ireland's attempt at the worst weather of all time. This kind of day usually inspires thoughts of warm, filling stews, but a hot miso soup can be equally as warming and twice as interesting, with a bitterness immediately after swallowing.

The culinary low point was a salmon-caviar creation known as ikura, whose texture felt mushy and unpleasant. However this was an isolated criticism of an otherwise excellent meal. This leads into the culinary high point which was a meat gyoza, a deep-fried parcel not unlike a samosa. These surprised me entirely as I had never heard of them, but their mixture of turkey, beef and spices went perfectly with the miso soup. I will certainly return to J2, if only for this little treat that would accompany most meals perfectly.

Eating sushi while snow fell on the masts of the Jeanie Johnston was not on my to-do list but I suppose that is why spontaneity is always better than what you had planned – it surprises you. Two glasses of wine and a post-lunch espresso were added to lunch, which came to a reasonable €45.

Ross Dormer

ROBOT & FRANK

JACK SCHREIER

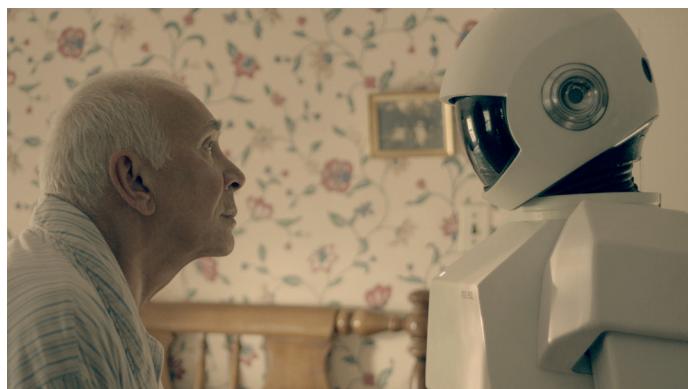
FILM Robot & Frank, we are told in a subtitle, is set in the not-so-distant future. The movie's predictions of how our world will become increasingly digitalised – from the high-tech Skype conversations, use of robot assistants, and subplot of the library turning digital – are apt, credible, and provide interesting visuals. However, the world of the film is also permeated by a dull colouring composition, cloudy weather, and ominous background music, which give an overly negative feel to the film that is hardly inviting.

Frank (Frank Langella – Frost/Nixon) is a grumpy old man who is unable to take care of himself and feels lost in the technological developments of the world around him. His children, Hunter (James Marsden – X-Men, Hairspray) and Madison (Liv Tyler – The Lord of the Rings), worry about him. Hunter decides to buy Frank a Robot helper who proceeds to assist Frank maintain his home, eat healthily, and put his life back in order, much to Frank's annoyance. "That thing is going to murder me in my sleep," he protests to his son. Frank continues to treat the Robot with hostility – when the Robot enthusiastically proposes starting a garden, Frank simply replies "Fuck this shit". The pair has a chemistry that is more akin to a nagging mother and grumpy son than the mismatched pair that evokes comedy in genres such as the cop buddy film. Rather predictably, Frank eventually warms to the little guy.

One of the more interesting aspects of the film is its treatment of old age as a theme. Frank is sympathetic because he is losing his memory, and the characters around him repeatedly remind him of things he has forgotten. With Quartet out at the start of this year and Song for Marion in cinemas now, it seems this is becoming a recurring theme in films, perhaps because there is still an audience to be found among older people while young people simply watch movies online now. Of all three films, this is the bleakest, and is not a happy-go-lucky film about a guy and his robot becoming friends and running away from society together, in spite of what the plot promises.

Nor is Robot & Frank a Sci Fi film. Rather, it attempts to be a drama that reignites the viewer's hope in humanity, even in a world that has gone digital. But the film's treatment of characters, setting and ending leaves the viewer only cold.

Deirdre Molumby



STORNOWAY TALES FROM TERRA FIRMA

MUSIC Recently Mumford and Sons proudly announced their interest in trying their hand at rapping on their next

effort (the word "effort" cannot be stressed enough), and all those who heralded them as the darlings of a British folk revival realised that they may have unleashed something truly heinous. In light of this it's high time that another folk band with self-awareness takes up Mumford's soiled mantle. After hearing Tales from Terra Firma, the world may now swivel their necks towards Stornoway. The band have, on this latest self-produced collection, blossomed from an indie folk outfit into musical voyagers, capturing the atmosphere of peripheral Britain, its seaside towns and countrysides, and the spirit of a fading heritage.

The whole album is an adventurous narrative, accompanied by restlessly shifting soundscapes carrying the eloquence of Brian Briggs' lyrical observations. Reminiscent of The Divine Comedy, there is little in the way of youthful sulkiness, just spectacular, eclectic instrumentation and the cheerful eccentricity of a quintessentially English album. Opening with bright organs and upbeat Neil Hannon-y horn arrangements, You Take Me As I Am slightly mirrors the Wallace and Gromit soundtrack. This is indicative of the many oddities embraced in the songwriting, as the band rapidly evolves with each passing moment. (A Belated) Invite is perhaps one of the earliest shining virtues. With dreamy Jeff Buckley guitars and gentle drumbeats ebbing and flowing, it unexpectedly morphs into an Arcade Fire Funeral-era romp of Owen Pallett-style strings, a triumphant bulwark of sound.

By far the most intriguing aspect of Stornoway's instrumentation is the use of a hammered dulcimer. This is something few western bands can insert effectively (besides Dead Can Dance) without simply bashing out directionless, indulgent doodles. It gives the album a slightly Buddhist ambience. Adding to the dulcimer's spice, they weave Theremin-esque whistles which sound like the X-Files theme in reverse, before Kinksy cider-drenched hooks resurface and drag you back to the British Isles. Lead single Knock

4AD RECORDS

Me on the Head is a prime example of this blend, with the schizophrenia of MGMT's It's Working as performed by Fionn Regan.

The chorus bounces with more old-fashioned organ melodies, belching Wallace and Gromit in the best way possible.

The album's highlight arrives with The Great Procrastinator. The song has an almost traditionally-arranged air of familiarity to it, mixed with a timeless blend of jazzy New Orleans woodwinds. It builds upon a single idea, adding voluminous bulk bit by bit before culminating in a passionate kitchen sink march. If this is not sung in rural pubs 20 years from now, I will be knocked for six. It could be straight out of Look Back in Anger, or off an old 78-RPM such as Put Your Worries through the Mangle. This is cheesy at times, but stunningly moving.

Closing with Simon and Garfunkel moments, and Irish



folk music sung by a young Rivers Cuomo, Terra Firma fades quietly and modestly into bliss. There is virtually nothing close to flabby filler; it is a pleasure to play both as a whole and in selection. Like another former Oxford student, Philip Larkin, Briggs and Jonathan Ouijn have tapped into the heart of Britain's mundane mysteries. Both simple and experimental, Tales from Terra Firma is a widely accessible nugget waiting to be stumbled upon. **Michael Lanigan**



DAN FRIEL // TOTAL FOLKLORE

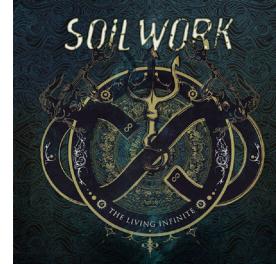
Brooklyn's Dan Friel, previously of noise-pop group Parts & Labor, released his latest solo album Total Folklore to the delight of retro tech fans everywhere. Friel's method of using old school technology, such as his desktop PC circa 2001 and a Yamaha keyboard from 1984, lends to the layering and experimentation in his work and results in the interference-heavy, noise-pop explosion that is Total Folklore. The opening track, Ulysses, is undoubtedly the album's high point. The glitchy synths and samples on top of the heavy drum beat builds up the track while managing never to lose stamina. With Scavengers, Friel comes close to matching Ulysses. The prog influences are clear but don't overpower the song, which uses distortion and bass to brilliant effect. The album demonstrates Friel's ability to do so much with technology, as he creates an amazingly varied and exciting sound.

Megan Skelly

SOILWORK // THE LIVING INFINITE

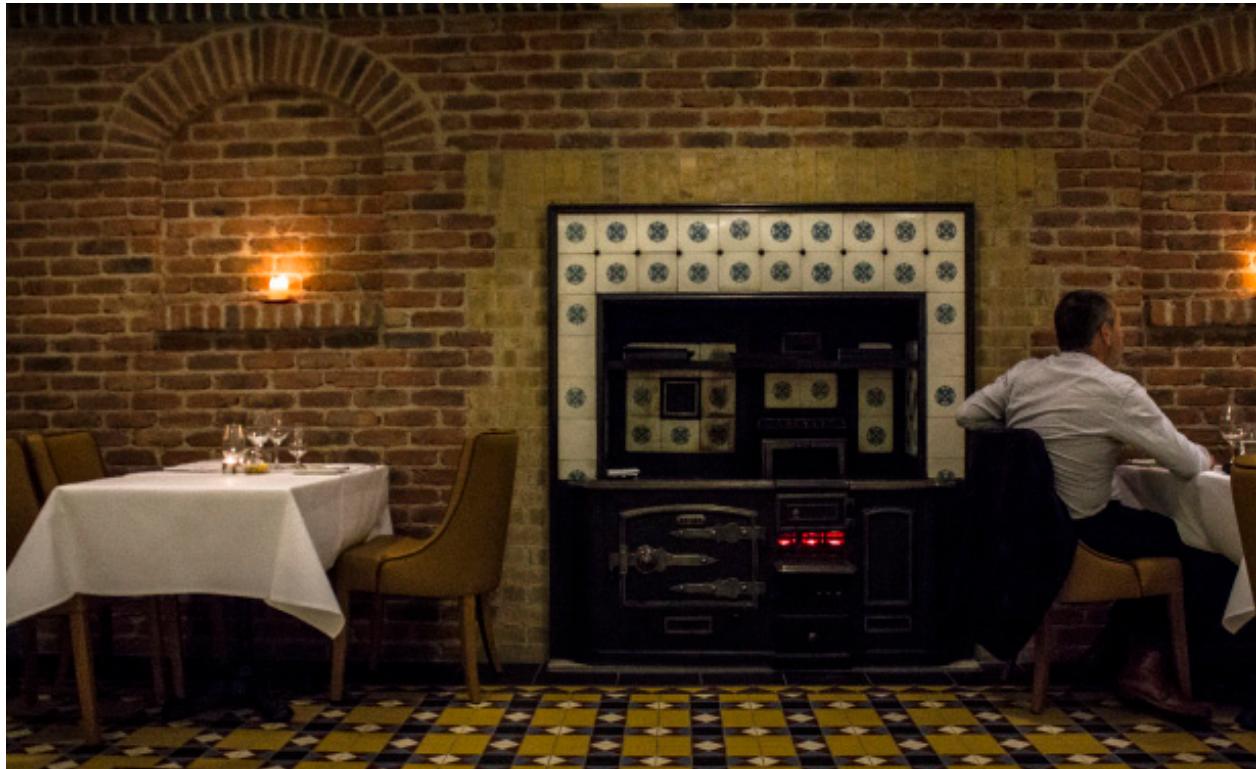
Heralded as the first double album in the 20-odd year history of melodic death metal, a predominantly Scandinavian genre Soilwork are credited with helping create, The Living Infinite is a career-defining statement from one of the world's most underappreciated metal bands. The 80-minute running time glides by as genres are blended effortlessly, with signature blastbeat-laden neo-thrash and Gothenburg grooviness sitting comfortably alongside alternative rock, blues and poppy hooks. For melodic death metal in particular, vocals are absolutely crucial and Björn "Speed" Strid outdoes himself here. Indeed, it's hard to believe one man is able to produce the variety of techniques on display, from guttural growls and throat-shredding screams to silky smooth, technically impeccable clean singing. Worth noting, aside from the sheer strength of the writing, is the production. Jens Borgen, the man behind Opeth's sublime Ghost Reveries, ensures that Soilwork sound the best they ever have. Required listening for metalheads everywhere.

Dónal Kennedy



THE HOT STOVE

PARNELL SQUARE WEST



FOOD Such is the way of things, emigration parties have become the staple of my social life. I was delighted to find that an old school friend who had resettled in the Netherlands was home for a week. Most of my education stemmed from the long and far-reaching debates and bizarre conversations we had over mystery soups, sheet metal-pressed cutlery and the array of interesting and unique odours perpetually passing from the kitchens. When you eat school lunches six times a week for six years with the same people, you end up covering pretty much everything. To rekindle the conversations of old, but to improve the setting, I suggested a luncheon at The Hot Stove, a newly-opened basement restaurant on Parnell Square West.

Sharing a street with the Garden of Remembrance's sedentary drug addicts, the Teacher's Bar's more beleaguered national educators, and the "boys" in the Sinn Fein shop drinking tea surrounded by more flags than a royal wedding, the atmosphere in the Hot Stove is decidedly more relaxed. One of the helpful waiter met us at the bottom of the stairs and ushered us through to the dining hall, which is pleasingly laid out. The large windows allow plenty of light, and the hot stove which lends its name to the restaurant is aurally silent but visually noisy, providing the room with an agreeable hub. The whitewashed walls, chequered tiles, and freshly painted wood skirting are all conducive to a welcoming atmosphere.

The lunch menu is interestingly set out so that you can either pick a soup or open sandwich for €5 and €10 respectively, or choose two courses for €19. We splashed out the €19, which taking into account the quality, is not bad value at all. For starters, I had a pork croquette while my companion tucked into a tasty mackerel rillette on crisp bread. My pork was shredded and slow cooked, and

every bite dripped with delicious juices. The mackerel rillette was refreshingly cool, soft and moist over the crispy bread. Textures were evidently at the heart of the chef's thinking.

The mains were simply to be savoured. My pan fried ray wing was slightly crispy on the outside while the inside was soft, falling away at the touch of a fork. The braised beef cheek my school friend ordered was the highlight. Served over mashed potato and slow cooked in a red wine sauce, it was so tender it was hard to distinguish between sauce, cheek and mash as they melded into one soft plate of flavour. Tucked away in this little enclave and feeling the hedonistic rush of good food, the conversation flowed in all directions.

We stayed so long that all of the other patrons drifted out leaving just us, an authoritarian maître d' and one very dissatisfied waiter. Our chatter by the window faded as an angry row erupted over shifts, pay and unfilled forms. Words – angry, hurtful ones, although they lost some points for a lack of creativity – were exchanged, and an object or two was thrown with very little conviction. It all added to a very pleasing afternoon.

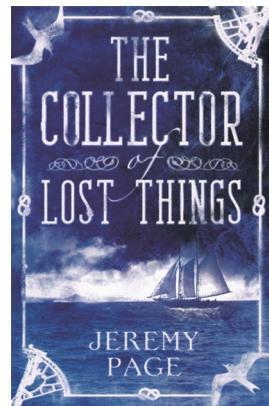
We settled up nearly three hours after arriving and emerged to wander the streets of Dublin, before parting ways until the next time he happens to return to the scene of childhood. The Hot Stove won't be a student lunch staple, but if you're looking for somewhere to do something special and treat yourself to good food while you're at it, then it is very competitively priced while still emerging strong on the food front. And who knows, they might even throw in some added entertainment for your benefit too.

Declan Johnston

THE COLLECTOR OF LOST THINGS

JEREMY PAGE

LITTLE BROWN



LITERATURE In 1845, naturalist Eliot Saxby embarks on a voyage to the Arctic to find traces of the extinct Great Auks. The crew of the Amethyst are not all that they seem, and the Arctic, "dangerous and unearthly", leaves no one unaffected. Ghosts from the past, dark secrets, madness and depravity ensue.

I found that, until the Amethyst actually neared the Arctic, the novel was quite slow. It probably would have benefited from being cut down a bit (373 pages long). However, once I got into the tale I really enjoyed the sea-faring scenes, and the adventure element. The novel was, however, much darker than I'd anticipated. There are deeper themes in the effect the Arctic has on the characters, and questions of human nature are raised.

The descriptions of the Arctic are stunning: "The worlds of ocean and ice were meeting in a frontier of rage, as if the Earth had torn in two along this line." The author Jeremy Page evokes the dazzling whiteness, the extreme weather, and the sheerness and harshness of the Arctic: "This is a place, if ever there was a place, where you could disappear." He also captures the cruelty of the hunts in some very violent scenes, and the white quartz ice is often stained

red with blood.

The characters on board are eccentric to say the least. Captain Skyes has a ruthless streak, but also a penchant for embroidery; the first mate called French is mysterious and secretive, and the other passengers on board, Edward and Clara, are just as strange. Drug-addled Edward Bletchley dresses flamboyantly in check trousers and fox-fur hats, and the beautiful Clara, hidden away on board, is a ghostly reminder of the naturalist Eliot's past. Eliot himself is perhaps the least memorable of all the characters. That is not to say that he lacks personality, and his love of the natural world and wonder at the Arctic allow the reader to see it all through new eyes. His normality also makes him a more reliable narrator than Edward would be. However, even Eliot is not without his secrets. (*The Collector of Lost Things* will be published in April this year).

*If you like this, check out Michael Smith's *An Unsung Hero* - The biography of Irishman and polar explorer Tom Crean, and his heroism on both Scott's Discovery expedition and Shackleton's Endurance expedition to the Antarctic. It is a thrilling (and true) story of adventure, strength and loyalty.*

Jenny Duffy

SIDE EFFECTS

STEVEN SODERBERGH

FILM Steven Soderbergh recently announced (not for the first time) his retirement as a director, marking the end of a long, increasingly prolific career. Since 2011, Soderbergh has released four films, Contagion, Haywire, Magic Mike, and now Side Effects, with a Liberace HBO production set to be his final project. If his claims prove to be true (he may simply be wrecked) then Soderbergh has gone out on a high, beguiling note with this head-spinning and enjoyable, if ultimately far-fetched, psychological thriller.

Emily Taylor (Rooney Mara) is a young married woman whose husband (Soderbergh-regular Channing Tatum) has just been released from prison. Finding she is slipping into depression and becoming suicidal, an episode finds Emily seeking the help of Dr Jonathan Banks (Jude Law), who prescribes her a series of medication which result in sleep-walking and other unusual, increasingly worrying behaviour. A fatal encounter, foreshadowed in the opening scene, changes everything. From here on in, things begin to get very messy for all involved.

With Mara the clear lead, it initially seems that Law's top billing on the film's promotional materials might be down to his longer-lived star status. Yet while the first half of Side Effects is rooted almost entirely in Emily's perspective, we are later led to identify completely with Banks. From here, the film mutates from being a timely cautionary tale of a highly medicated nation ("We see the ads.



We believe," a character cynically observes) into . . . well, that would be telling, really. Much of the enjoyment in watching Side Effects is achieved through going in blindfolded, and the film's deliberately ambiguous marketing push – "Contagion with drugs" – has ensured that most indeed will, though perhaps at the expense of the box-office. Sadly, the film's final act piles twist upon twist to the point where coherence begins to dwindle, with some revelations feeling particularly convoluted and overly sensational. That said, repeat viewings might be in order to fully appreciate the intricacies of Scott Z. Burns' script.

Law proves to be clever casting, our wavering sympathy for the character suited to an actor who has played almost as many villains as heroes. Tatum and Catherine Zeta-Jones provide ample support in limited roles, while Mara, in her first lead since her Oscar-nominated turn in David Fincher's Dragon Tattoo, proves once again a mesmerising presence, simultaneously fragile and enigmatic. Soderbergh's "final" cinematic release is a well-realised if occasionally convoluted potboiler.

Oliver Nolan

NEVEN LAHART THE MOST CONSERVATIVE GAME IN TOWN

KEVIN KAVANAGH GALLERY
CHANCERY LANE // D8

ART Nevan Lahart's exhibition at Kevin Kavanagh Gallery looks a lot like a cynical teenager's bedroom, complete with a rock on a filing cabinet, a magnet on it stating "I <3 ART" – a work entitled What's With All The Kryptonite (apparently, there should also be an "age potato", which I failed to locate). Many of the artworks resemble large-scale versions of notebook-corner scribbles – some just silly, others based on surprisingly witty puns. Canvases are casually propped up against walls, made to look as if cobbled together with the minimum amount of care: the wrinkled fabric is nailed to a board with drawing pins, its edges "hemmed" by a ten year old who has never before in his life seen a sewing machine.

The painting style, for the most part, is similarly naïve and childish. From a formal perspective, it all adds to the richness of detail – one is led to wonder about the skill required to create on canvas the impression of a pencil drawing, partly erased with a dirty rubber and painted over again, sullying the largest part of the paper in the process. The brushmarks, meanwhile, reveal the hand of a skilled artist, modelling forms with light and plastic strokes, subtle shades, and careful highlights.

The principal themes running through the exhibition are the commodification of art and the hypocritical business-like nature of art-making. Humorous criticism and self-irony are almost dripping off the canvases. The internal unity of the exhibition is admirable – the It-Does-What-It-Says-on-the-Canvas series act like well-timed caesuras that record the visitor's gradual progress through the gallery, and the last work on the list draws it all together, though I won't ruin the surprise for you with details.

The list with titles is an essential part of the works and the viewers' experience, so be sure to pick one up on your right as you enter, and do make a point of reading the media listed – especially for No.17, which

for me was a highlight of the show. The meanings of the works on longer contemplation reveal themselves to be very sophisticated, and rely on a thorough knowledge of various aspects of modern art. If you are an Art History student and/or well versed in your modernism, this is a show not to be missed. If you are not, however, I'm sorry to say that you might come away dissatisfied. If worst comes to worst, just remember that entry is free, don't take it too seriously, and don't lose your final grains of faith in contemporary art. Until 16th March.

Gabija Purityé



PAYBACK!

BEWLEY'S CAFE THEATRE

STAGE Upon walking into Bewley's Café Theatre, it became immediately apparent that I was not the target demographic for this afternoon's performance. The age range only stretched above 50, and the actor/writer duo (Maria McDermottroe and Marion O'Dwyer) very much catered to this audience with their new play.

As much as it hoped to be a play about the worst excesses of the Celtic Tiger, it seems to have forgotten it was a play at all. The interior monologues were well-acted, but failed to truly communicate the depths of despair caused by the economic downturn.

However, both actresses maintained the pace of the show admirably, while McDermottroe's performance as Kitty, the wife of a corrupt developer, drew the most pity. O'Dwyer's Mary was less easy to empathise with, as her thinly-drawn character seemed overwrought with clichés: a suitcase filled with Whiskas and a description of a mistress as being "skinny" jumps to mind. Easily the most unsettling aspect was when orgasmic sounds escaped the women's lips in one scene as they tried on diamond after diamond. Iseult Golden's direction was obviously veering towards the comic, but instead it seemed hypocritical that two women thor-



oughly ruined by the economy still placed so much value in their jewelry.

There was an unmistakable "talk-to-Joe" air about the conversations between the two characters, and the writers seemed to use the show as a vehicle for their personal grievances. Thus, it reduced the strongly-performed characters of Kitty and Mary to loudspeakers for social problems, rather than the characters they sought to embody.

As part of Fishamble's Show in a Bag (a new writing initiative) this time the script was lacking in character and focus; however, the ending truly did surprise me. Bewley's has, and will always be, the venue to air new writing, and it's encouraging to see it from seasoned professionals.

Colm Maher's lighting design was simple and well executed, but Catherine Condell's set design was underused. The stage was littered with the kind of storage bags that clutter your parent's attic, but most of these were left onstage, seemingly purposeless. Much like the play's themes of greed, bitterness and freedom, they were left to fester in the minds of the audience: unopened, unexplored and uninspired. Until 23rd March.

Katherine Murphy

THE FINAL SAY

Neasa Connally

"IN THE MOVIE THAT YOU WERE IN, WE SAW YOUR BOOBS"

The annual merry-go-round of backslapping and self-congratulation that is Awards Season has just come to an end, with the most prestigious, the Academy Awards, taking place recently. In a year where there were no real surprises and no particular film sweeping the board, it was the host, Seth MacFarlane, who drew most of the controversy and opprobrium in the aftermath.

Unless you are a 12-year-old boy, it is clear that MacFarlane's creative output (*Family Guy*, *American Dad*, and the execrable *Ted*) is derivative, lazy, offensive and hugely sexist. By selecting him as host, it was clear that the Oscars producers were trying to appeal to a younger audience and hoped that he would add a frisson of excitement to proceedings that are increasingly being seen as staid and boring.

However, they got more than they had bargained for when he opened with the jaunty song-and-dance number *We Saw Your Boobs*, in which he lists films where various actresses' breasts were visible. That's it, that's the entire joke. There was no satire here, no social commentary, just the shaming and reduction of women to simply their bodies, with backing vocals from the Los Angeles Gay Men's choir, a group which he insisted afterwards he was not a member of.

What made it all the more disturbing was the fact that in many of the films he listed, such as *The Accused*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Monster*, the aforementioned breast exposure occurs during violent depictions of rape and sexual assault and are clearly not just for gratuitous titillation.

Many people, mostly men, have leapt to his defence, saying, "It wasn't sexist, it was just a joke, why can't you take a joke?" to which it can be countered that the idea of MacFarlane aiming a song to shame male actors called *We Saw Your Dick* is completely unimaginable.

The night continued with cracks about Rihanna and Chris Brown, which made light of domestic violence and the return of women to abusive partners, and then the comparison of the interrogation and torture of terrorist suspects to being nagged by a woman.

Quvenzhane Wallis, a ridiculously cute nominee for Best Actress, who, importantly, is only nine years old, was also the victim of pretty gross "jokes" that night. Jokes not only from MacFarlane, who quipped she was nearly old enough to date George Clooney, but also from the satire website *The Onion*, who called her "a cunt" in a tweet, which was swiftly deleted after huge outcry.

One can see that *The Onion* was attempting – in a very clumsy way – to mock how women are casually attacked on the internet by using the crudest word possible

about the most adorable nominee. However, this fell hugely flat, mostly as that word is far more offensive and seen as being more aggressively gendered towards women in the States than here. The incident has also been criticized for having racist undertones, with the suggestion being that there would be much more anger, from women as well as men, if it had been aimed at a small, cute white girl instead.

It's exhausting to think in 2013 that this is the sort of discourse which still happens, and that it isn't just a relic of another time or place. Much was made of the fact that the Iranian state news channel photoshopped sleeves and a much more modest neckline onto Michelle Obama's dress when they reported her presenting the Oscar for best film to *Argo*. It could be argued that attitudes to women exposing their bodies are just as regressive in the west, as women who do so are then publicly mocked, regardless of their performance or talent.

Should we really be surprised that this is how actresses, in one of the few industries where women are so visible, are treated when we consider that 77% of the Academy Awards voting panel are men and only nine out of 30 awards went to women?

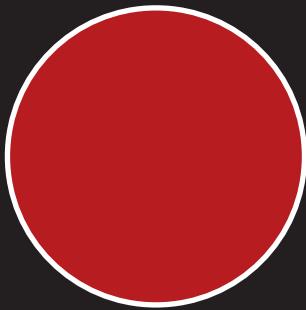
It's long been known that the red carpet walk before the awards is nearly if not as important as the ceremony itself, with the prospect of lucrative advertising campaigns and deals with fashion houses if an actress is deemed a red carpet "success". On the other hand, actresses like Anne Hathaway find themselves in the ridiculous situation of releasing public apologies for not wearing a dress that she had been given by a particular designer. Women are also known to undertake months of gruelling diet and exercise programmes and even undergo plastic surgery just so they look the part under the glare of thousands of cameras. This all seems even more unfair when their male counterparts do little more than just show up in a tux.

The overall message coming from Hollywood seems to be this: "Women, it doesn't matter how good you look, how good you are at your career, you merely exist to show us your boobs." As so many other trends and attitudes usually originate in the media, it is not absurd to worry that this message is trickling down into real life.

It is actually somewhat heartening that it has drawn so much anger across the board; maybe this is a turning point in how women are represented and viewed in the media. Or, as one could fear, with a 19% increase in viewership in younger age-brackets, does this recent Oscars ceremony merely reflect how, in certain quarters, attitudes to women are taking a turn for the worse?

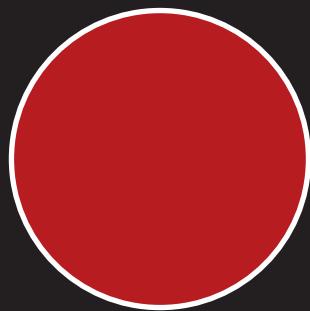


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