

STUDENTS' UNION



# an Focal

University of Limerick Students' Union

## Special Supplement

**limerick's** <sup>2</sup> IRISH FILM



# Limerick's 2nd Irish Film Festival

This weekend sees Limerick's 2nd Irish Film Festival take place in the Savoy Cinema Complex and the Belltable Arts Centre. The festival runs from 8pm on Friday night, with an opening reception followed by only the second ever screening of a brand new Irish feature 'The Boy From Mercury', to approximately 11pm on Sunday when the closing film 'Frankie Starlight' concludes the festival. Over the course of a packed weekend audiences will be treated to over twenty feature films, over fifty short films and documentaries, archive screenings, seminars and an audience participation forum.

year in UL. Last year the 1st Limerick Irish Film Festival was organised by students of UL and Mary I and took place in the University Concert Hall. As a result the festival is something that we in the university are very proud of.

This year has seen the organisation expand to include individuals from all the Limerick colleges and graduates of these institutions. Also the location for the festival has moved into the city centre; a move that was always envisaged to make the festival more accessible to the broader cinema going public in Limerick, and indeed the country as a whole. This year's organisers have done a tremendous job and brought the festival a quantum step closer to

Liam Doherty & Sarah MacCurtin.

In addition now that the festival has moved into the city centre, the response from the local business community has been excellent. We are particularly indebted to Chesser Auctioneers for providing the festival office in Park House, Arthurs Quay and Hibernian Business Equipment, Fitzpatrick Business Systems and Irish Progressive for providing the necessary means to make it function as well as it has. Add to this the assistance we have received from our sponsors and patrons, such as Heineken, Eurofilm, Shannon Development and the Lauretta Leader and all our film sponsors and advertisers and one is left with great faith in the civic

within the Irish Film Industry and the cinema audience. With this in mind, we would like to draw your particular attention to the Audience Participation Forum on Sunday afternoon in the Belltable. The purpose of the forum is to give you the viewer the opportunity to speak directly to filmmakers, producers, distributors, etc. and let them know what you think of the quality (or lack thereof!) of contemporary Irish films. The forum is free and open to all festival members. You are strongly encouraged to attend.

Over the course of the weekend we expect the festival to be attended by some of the most prominent figures in the Irish Film Industry. Already confirmed to be present are Rod Stoneman (Irish Film Board), Cathal Black, Joe Commerford, Gerry Stenbridge, Martin Duffy, Eugene O'Connor, Donal Dineen, Louis Marcus, Louis Lentin, Trish Long, Siobhain O'Donoghue and many more. We hope to see you there too.



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You may well ask why you are receiving such a comprehensive supplement on the festival in *An Focal*. The reason for this is that the festival originated last

year. This year's organisers have done a tremendous job and brought the festival a quantum step closer to realising its undoubted potential. Special credit must go to the festival manager Flora Fennell and the rest of the team, particularly Brian Carr, Linda O'Sullivan, Brendan Maher,

our film sponsors and advertisers and one is left with great faith in the civic spirit of local companies in responding so positively to a venture of this type.

With all these welcome developments the festival remains true to its original aims. Firstly to give Irish audiences (particularly a provincial audience like Limerick) the opportunity to view the best in contemporary Irish filmmaking. Presently many Irish films do not receive national releases for any appreciable amount of time (if at all), we see ourselves as addressing this shortfall. Secondly the festival provides a platform for communication between those



A scene from "The Boy From Mercury" the opening film of Limerick's 2nd Irish Film Festival.

## The 1st Limerick Irish Film Festival

Before one can hope to understand what Limerick's 2nd Irish Film Festival is about, it is necessary to look back a year to its predecessor, the 1st Limerick Irish Film Festival. The origins of this venture are typically Irish; three guys standing at a bar in Cork drinking pints of Murphys and talking big plans. What sets this story apart is that they actually followed up on their talk and brought into being an event that promises to be not only one of the major events in Limerick's entertainment calendar, but also perhaps the most important national festival to the Irish Film Industry.

If the concept of the Limerick Irish Film Festival can be attributed to Brian Carr, the festival's programme director, then the realisation of this concept is equally, if not more, attributable to the late Mike Sadlier. It was Mike's passion and enthusiasm that made people believe in and work towards an audacious goal. Much has already

been said and written about Mike in the pages of this paper and elsewhere. His untimely death last summer was a great loss to all of us on both a professional and more especially a personal level.

While Mike's inspiration was the principle driving force behind the festival, there are many more deserving of a share of the credit for helping to get the festival off the ground. Aside from the many talented and committed individuals who have been directly involved in the organisation over the last two years, particular thanks is due to those within UL who got behind the project in the early days when the level of success at which we now stand was but an aspiration. Without the support of the Students Union, the Film Society, the Arts Office, Murphys, the Filmmakers Society and the Station Club last year's festival would never have happened. To all these organisations and the individuals within them: Matthew Hamilton, Gerry

Barry, Noel Coughlan, Don Moylan, John Hargaden, Kevin Berr, Eirill, Donal Fagan and many more we are forever grateful. Add to this the tremendous facilities available in the University Concert Hall (big thanks to Fran O'Donnell & co.) and its clear to see that here in UL we have the potential to achieve great things. Once you have the necessary inspiration and hard work mentioned earlier the possibilities are enormous.

At the end of the day last year's festival was an artistic success, but not unfortunately a popular one. With the improved organisation and promotion of this year's festival and the logical evolutionary move into the city centre, this will be rectified. That a group of students from here can initiate an event of such benefit to the city is a welcome and admirable development, and one of which everybody in UL should be very proud. Long may it continue.



Mike Sadlier, founder of Limerick's Irish Film Festival



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