

Dingle Film Festival

1st Dingle Film Festival
(6–9 September 2007, Dingle)

It was slightly short of surreal to see legendary director Sir Alan Parker in a dimly-lit corner of Dingle's Phoenix Cinema. 'I've not really got much to say, you know,' he said (sounding like Michael Caine), 'but I've got a soft spot for Ireland and I remember making films here with great affection.' Somewhere from the back of the musty auditorium, Sarah Miles contributed perfectly enunciated heckles.

So the first Dingle Film Festival was born; delivered by two of film's greatest names, in a part of Ireland no stranger to Hollywood.

The support for this new festival was evident with plenty of filmmakers around to introduce their films and talk about them in the pub afterwards. In the relaxed style of Dingle bohemia, venues ranged from the traditional cinema to the less traditional local church.

In addition to premiering several features (including Julie Delpy's *2 Days in Paris* and Nicholas Roeg's *Puffball*), DFF ran a short film competition. Notable entries included *Deep Breaths* (dir: PJ Dillon, Ireland) featuring Alan Leech, with dark twists from a jilted lover's perspective. The crew

and cast of *The Blaxorcist* (dir: Edward King, Ireland) enjoyed their entertaining take on the exorcism of a bedridden girl possessed by soul. It's hard not to make a good film from a Roddy Doyle story, and *New Boy* (dir: Steph Green, Ireland), about an African boy's first day at school in Ireland got Sir Alan Parker's vote for best short and praise for its child actors. The *L'ecouteur/The Listener* (dir: Kester Dyer, USA) was both memorable and creepy. *Siren* (dir: Andras Novak, Hungary) should be commended for its moving recreation of 1956 Budapest during the revolution. The tagline 'They weren't chicks, they were dudes' made compelling viewing for the highly entertaining documentary *My Day in (Fake TV) Court* (dir: Scott Calonico, USA), following the director's successful attempt to fool a US court TV show with the premise that strippers hired for a stag night came with extra attachments: 'He didn't specify the gender', was the defence.

Organisers Maurice Galway and Tom Hogan took a chance with their remote west coast location but they've shown what can be achieved through faith and vision. For a new festival, Dingle held its weight with a strong programme and exceptional special guests. To quote Sir Alan Parker: 'It's not always about the big carpet at Cannes.' His presence certainly reflected that, as well as the DFF's unique ability to create something special from scratch. Rebecca Kemp



Maurice Galway, Sarah Miles and Sir Alan Parker. Photo by Don MacMonagle