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SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL'S FOCUS ON IRELAND

The 63rd Sydney Film Festival announces this year's country of focus will be Ireland. In partnership with Culture Ireland, the Festival presents **Focus on Ireland: From Rebels to New Romantics**, five new films plus a restored classic.

Gráinne Humphreys, Dublin's International Film Festival Director and programmer of Sydney Film Festival's Focus on Ireland said, "2016 marks a significant year in Irish culture. 100 years since the Easter Rising the importance of this historical moment has been marked by official commemoration projects and events. It is also the year in which Irish Cinema has reached a critical mass and has flowered with great abundance, including Oscar glory and critical acclaim."

"With this focus on Ireland, we celebrate everything that is wonderful in contemporary Irish cinema. A diverse group of films, both feature and documentary, reveals the talent of both established and emerging filmmakers whose skill and curiosity has stretched far beyond their native shores. I hope that the energy and passion of the films included in this season, *From Rebels to New Romantics*, will both delight and entertain," she said.

Focus on Ireland: From Rebels to Romantics, reflects the powerful presence of Irish filmmakers on the international stage. The six diverse and rich films, a combination of features and documentaries, will convey significant stories in a manner that's at once very Irish and truly universal.

Musical comedy ***Sing Street***, from John Carney (*Once*, SFF 2007; *Begin Again*, SFF 2014), is a film that bursts with '80s sounds and a stellar cast of Ireland's most promising young actors, as well as *Game of Thrones'* Aidan Gillen. Ferdia Walsh-Peelo and Mark McKenna, who play two of the leading roles will attend the Festival to present their film.

Viva, from award-winning Irish filmmaker Paddy Breathnach (*I Went Down*), is a heartbreaking family drama about a troubled drag queen living in Cuba's capital. Breathnach will attend the Festival to present his film.

Conor Horgan's ***The Queen of Ireland*** is an uplifting documentary about Ireland's superstar comedian drag queen Panti Bliss, one of Ireland's highest-profile LGBTIQ activists. Bliss and Horgan will attend the Festival to present their film.

Award-winning documentary ***Atlantic***, by Irish filmmaker Risteard Ó Domhnaill, is a serious investigation into corruption, big oil companies, and threats to the Atlantic Ocean, narrated by Brendan Gleeson (*Calvary* SFF 2014). O'Donnell will attend the Festival to present his film.

Mom and Me is a documentary from Irish filmmaker Ken Wardrop exploring complex and touching relationships between men and their mothers in Oklahoma, voted America's manliest state.

A restoration of Neil Jordan's Oscar-winning blockbuster ***Michael Collins***, starring Liam Neeson, will be screened to mark the centenary of the Irish Easter Rising, as well as the 20th anniversary of the

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film's release. This thrilling account of a watershed moment in Irish history will ensure the spotlight is firmly focused on Ireland.

SFF Hub Talks and Panels at Town Hall

SFF Hub @ Town Hall is a Festival party space with free entry and open to all. Curated by **Mathieu Ravier** there are three parties including: the **Cuban-themed Viva Cuba Party**, complete with live Afro-Cuban beats, following the premiere of **Viva**, an Irish made film about a troubled Cuban drag queen; and **Sing Street 1985 School Disco**, following the premiere of the Irish musical comedy set in '80s Dublin, complete with stone-washed denim, and a soundtrack to match.

SFF 2016 Focus on Ireland films:

- **ATLANTIC** Ireland | 2016 | 80 mins | In English, German and Norwegian with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director: Ristead Ó Domhnaill | Producer: Marie-Therese Garvey | Production Company: Scannáin Inbhear/Inver Films
- **MICHAEL COLLINS** UK, Ireland, USA | 1996 | 132 mins | In English
Director, Screenwriter: Neil Jordan | Producer: Stephen Woolley | Cast: Liam Neeson, Aidan Quinn, Stephen Rea | Print Source and Rights: Roadshow Films
- **MOM AND ME** Ireland, USA | 2015 | 77 mins | In English | Australian Premiere
Director: Ken Wardrop | Producer: Andrew Freedman | World Sales: Visit Films
- **THE QUEEN OF IRELAND** Ireland | 2015 | 86 mins | In English | Australian Premiere
Director: Conor Horgan | Producers: Katie Holly, Ailish Bracken | Production Company: Blinder Films
- **SING STREET** Ireland | 2016 | 105 mins | In English | Australian Premiere
Director, Screenwriter: John Carney | Producers: Anthony Bregman, Martina Niland, John Carney | Cast: Ferdia Walsh-Peelo, Jack Reynor, Lucy Banton | Distributor: Roadshow Film
- **VIVA** Ireland | 2015 | 100 mins | In Spanish with English subtitles | Australian Premiere
Director: Paddy Breathnach | Screenwriter: Mark O'Halloran | Producers: Rebecca O'Flanagan, Robert Walpole | Cast: Jorge Perugorria, Luis Alberto Garcia, Héctor Medina | Festivals: Pascale Ramonda

Sydney Film Festival runs 8 – 19 June 2016.

Tickets for Sydney Film Festival 2016 are on sale now. Please call 1300 733 733 or visit sff.org.au for more information.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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***Sydney Film Festival Press Pack and Images Available [HERE](#)

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ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

From **Wednesday 8 June** to **Sunday 19 June 2016**, the 63rd Sydney Film Festival offers Sydneysiders another exciting season of cinema amidst a whirlwind of premieres, red-carpet openings, in-depth discussions, international guests and more. Each year the Festival's programming team curates 12 days of cinema sourced from world-famous film festivals, including Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and the Berlinale; as well as Australia's finest productions.

Sydney Film Festival also presents an Official Competition of 12 films that vie for the Sydney Film Prize, a highly respected honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Prize winners are: *Arabian Nights* (2015); *Two Days, One Night* (2014); *Only God Forgives* (2013); *Alps* (2012); *A Separation* (2011); *Heartbeats* (2010); *Bronson* (2009); and *Hunger* (2008).

The Festival takes place across greater Sydney: at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, Dendy Newtown, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, Casula Powerhouse, the Festival Hub at Sydney Town Hall and SFF Outdoor Screen.

The Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit: www.sff.org.au.

The 63rd Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW and Destination NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic Partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

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