

Dungarvan honours award-winning movie



Mayor of Dungarvan and Lismore District Damien Geoghegan presents a commemorative scroll to actor Moe Dunford at a Civic Reception held prior to the SGC screening of 'Patrick's Day' on Wednesday last. | Photos: Dan McGrath/Editorial Images

On Wednesday evening last, over 550 patrons in three different theatres within Dungarvan's SGC Cinema, turned out in force for a premiere screening of Terry McMahon's award-winning movie, 'Patrick's Day'.

The occasion was also marked by a Civic Reception, in the novel setting of the SGC lobby, where the film's star, Moe Dunford, along with director Terry McMahon, received commemorative scrolls to mark the occasion.

Moe, who was in Berlin last weekend to pick up his 'Rising Star' award at the prestigious film festival, cut his acting teeth in his native Dungarvan, where friends, family and well-wishers turned out in their hundreds to support Moe, the movie and Pieta House.

The biggest social event of the week in the county (and city for that matter) commenced with a Civic Reception for Moe and Terry, which was MC'd by Tom Keith, with Mayor of Dungarvan and Lismore District Damien Geoghegan on hand to perform the presentation honours.

During a Question & Answer session masterfully chaired by Today FM film critic Ed Smith, both men spoke with great passion for their film and for the discourse about mental illness which 'Patrick's Day' has catalysed in recent weeks and months.

"The embrace here has been extraordinary," Terry McMahon told the SGC audience, "and the context of the embrace is even more extraordinary.

“Sometimes we pay lip service to the things we talk about in movies, sometimes it becomes promo horsesh*t, but occasionally, lives matter, and things that this organisation (Pieta House) are doing, how they’re doing and why they’re doing it, they deserve to be highlighted and the people running these services warrant our gratitude.”

He added: “The things we are ashamed of, we keep them secret because we think that nobody else understands them. In actuality, there are an infinite number of people, families and societies who understand much more than we think. We are not alone. And sometimes, organisations made up of real people, life and death real people, sometimes they matter and to be here tonight, in this company, and to be among such people, is a remarkable thing.”

Moe Dunford, who recently completed work on the third season of ‘Vikings’, was visibly moved and humbled at the reception which ‘Patrick’s Day’ received on the banks of the Colligan.

“It was like a minor miracle that this script came to me,” Moe told Ed Smith.

“I was looking for an opportunity; I was at a place in my life when I wasn’t the happiest, and then this script about mental health came out of the blue, about this character called Patrick and he spoke to me; he reminded me of a couple of people that I’ve met, and you don’t have to look very far to find a Patrick; there’s a Patrick in me, and there’s a Patrick in you, there’s a Maura (Patrick’s mother, played by Kerry Fox) in me and there’s a Maura in you.

“This film spoke to me because of the struggles people deal with in everyday life...I just had to play this part. It came off the page, and this man alongside me, Terry, he fought for me. I was an unknown; I certainly wasn’t in a position to say I was going to have this part, I had to fight for it. He fought for me, he showed a lot of courage and it was a pleasure to jump into this part because when I read the script, I knew that it was very real and it was very current.

“I thought a lot of people would understand the part of Patrick. They may feel overwhelmed by it, they may not like it, for some people it might feel like they’re looking in the mirror when looking at certain characters, but for the people that matter, they may feel more understood by it. Patrick spoke to me, and that’s as good an answer as I can give about the part.”

Terry McMahon passionately added: “We’re facilitators of fiction, with hopefully a view to making someone who feels terrified and alone in a dark room, that, actually, they can reach out; that’s the function of this film...”

“The film that we have made is only the beginning of a conversation that is about people who nobody talks about, about people who have no voice, and one of the fundamental things we need to make clear tonight is that films like this will never be made again unless people talk about it, unless this film is spoken to such a degree that cinemas feel, on a corporate level, that audiences will come and see it.

“So to all of you who’ve seen this film tonight, go home and talk about it, even if you only like one second of it, well then go talk about the one second you liked. Talk about it, Tweet it, Facebook it, talk about it at a community level, whether it engaged you or you felt it was an aberration – talk about it. Because unless we talk about these kind of people and these kinds of films, then both of them will vanish, so f*cking speak up.”

Last Wednesday night’s premiere was proudly hosted by the SGC in association with Dungarvan Soroptimists and the Dungarvan No Name Club.