

Top Films Set for Irish Film Fest

By [Robert Lee](#)

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The  **Moscow Times**

Catch some of the best of contemporary Irish filmmaking in the annual Irish Film Festival at the Khudozhestvenny cinema, which started Wednesday evening.

Running till March 21 as part of Russian Irish Week, the festival includes the European premiere of Oscar-winning short film "The Shore" directed by Terry George, about an Irishman returning home 25 years after his departure during the height of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

The New York Times wrote that the film had "the richness and humanity of a James Joyce short story."

"The interesting thing about Irish short films is that they always seem to be successful. There's always one or two that get nominated for an Oscar," said Johnny O'Reilly, one of the organizers of the festival and a film director himself.

"In the early years, we went through the bank of classic Irish movies, and now we're proudly

showing great, new Irish movies."

The festival was set up by O'Reilly and another Irish filmmaker Gerry McCarthy five years ago, and the number of paying customers has increased steadily every year. More than 7,500 film fans are expected to turn up to this year's event, which spans Moscow's St. Patrick's Day celebrations, O'Reilly said.

"The great thing about Moscow is the huge demand for foreign culture they have here," said O'Reilly, "About 95 percent of our audience is Russian, you would not get that in another city; it's simply the demographics and economics of a place like this."

Another highlight will be "The Savage Eye," an acclaimed satirical television show, which has been made into a film version.

Also on the bill are several documentaries and feature-length films that will be shown several times over the course of the week. The program is handpicked by the event organizers, who use their insider knowledge to focus on the cream of the Irish crop.

"The embassy is very central to the project, but it was our idea to start with," O'Reilly said. "There are lots of film festivals around, like the Finnish or the German ones, but most of them are run by art administrators or cultural attaches from within the embassies."

"This one is different in that it's run by two filmmakers instead, and I think that we are in a better position to select good movies; we're just more clued in on what's out there. ... We bring over filmmakers whose films are showing simply because they are friends of ours, and I think it is this that also gives us a different kind of atmosphere."

The Irish Film Festival runs till March 21. Khudozhestvenny cinema. 14 Arbatskaya Ploshchad, Metro Arbatskaya. Tel. 691-02-47, <http://arbat-moskino.ru>, <http://irishfilm.ru>

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