

The Irish Film Board, Radio Telefís Éireann and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland

present

A Treasure Entertainment Production

The Eclipse

A film by Conor McPherson

88 mins. • 2009 • Ireland • 35mm • 1:85 • Dolby SRD

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The Eclipse

Directed by	Conor McPherson
Screenplay by	Conor McPherson and Billy Roche Based on "Tales from Rainwater Pond" by Billy Roche
Produced by	Robert Walpole
Co-Producers	Donal Geraghty Cathleen Dore
Executive Producers	Paddy McDonald Rebecca O'Flanagan
Director of Photography	Ivan McCollough
Film Editor	Emer Reynolds
Production Designer	Mark Geraghty
Costume Designer	Consolata Boyle
Music by	Fionnuala Ní Chiosáin
Casting	Gail Stevens Oonagh Kearney

Principal Cast

Ciarán Hinds	Michael Farr
Aidan Quinn	Nicholas Holden
Iben Hjejle	Lena Morelle
Jim Norton	Malachy McNeill
Eanna Hardwicke	Thomas Farr
Hannah Lynch	Sarah Farr

Short Synopsis

Tony Award-nominated writer/director Conor McPherson (“Shining City,” “The Seafarer”) brings his dramatic powers to the screen in horror-love story hybrid. Ciarán Hinds (“Munich,” “There Will Be Blood”) plays a widower living in an Irish seaside town who is struggling to adjust to his new role as the sole caretaker of his two children. When he volunteers at a local literary festival, his life converges with an author of supernatural fiction (Iben Hjejle, “High Fidelity”) and a self-obsessed novelist (Aidan Quinn, “Legends Of The Fall”). The love triangle engenders passion and rage, and Hinds’ character finds himself increasingly haunted by apparitions too vivid to be mere nightmares.

Synopsis

The Eclipse centers on Michael Farr (Ciarán Hinds), a recently widowed teacher terrified of forgetting the memory of his wife. He adjusts to life as the sole caretaker of his two young children and his father-in-law, who is also grieving the loss of his daughter, until he dies suddenly.

Michael begins to question his sanity as he finds himself haunted by the ghosts of his wife and father-in-law. While volunteering at an annual literary festival in his seaside hometown of Cobh in County Cork, Ireland, he becomes enthralled with British fantasy novelist, Lena Morelle (Iben Hjejle).

Lena’s attention, however, is pulled elsewhere. She has come to the festival at the bidding of the world-renowned hard drinking American novelist Nicholas Holden (Aidan Quinn). Holden, a needy narcissist contemptuous of his readers and the media circus of the event, quickly reveals his motive for attending: to rekindle a romance with Lena, sparked at a previous festival.

As the festival progresses, the trajectories of these three individuals draw them into a life-altering collision.

Embellished by the supernatural, “The Eclipse” is a film about the challenges of love, fear of the unknown, and release from the burden of grief.

Director's Statement

“The Eclipse” came about through my friendship with playwright Billy Roche. Billy sent me his short story collection, “Tales from Rainwater Pond.” I had always been a big fan of his plays and books and this was no exception. I was particularly drawn to a story called “Table Manners,” which was set amid the hustle and tussle of a literary festival. The story concerns a teacher called Michael Farr who has aspirations to be a writer. He is a volunteer at the festival, driving writers to readings and interviews. He is married with two children, a boy and a girl, and the story concerns his developing obsession with a female poet who he has been assigned to take care of.

I loved the world of the story and suggested to Billy that we try writing a screenplay based on it. Billy agreed and I travelled down to Wexford where we began working. Over the following three years or so we developed a number of drafts, but we were never entirely happy. In prose Billy could take us inside Michael Farr's head so that we could understand his unravelling state of mind, but in terms of images in a film where we actually *see* him in action we felt it was going to be difficult for the audience to sympathise with a married father who's stalking a young woman. Yet something about the story wouldn't let me go.

In 2007 I was stranded in New York City waiting for a stage-hand strike to end so I could open my play “The Seafarer” on Broadway. We had three weeks of false dawns and broken hopes during which I decided to keep hammering at the screenplay. At my wife's suggestion, Michael Farr became a widower. And in that moment I could see where the whole thing could go. I started writing about a man who was literally haunted by grief. He was also now free to find love anew and I knew that Lena Morelle, the writer he falls for, should write horror books, thus becoming the only person in the world who might believe he has been seeing terrifying ghosts. I also knew we were now making a horror movie. But because of all the work we had done over twenty drafts I realised it could have an unusually rich range of character detail that good actors could really get stuck into and I felt it could cross genres – it's a ghost story and a love story.

On the basis of this new script we were able to raise the budget to make the feature. We shot it in Cobh, County Cork in September/October 2008 for five weeks. starring Ciarán Hinds as Michael Farr, Iben Hjelje as Lena Morelle, and Aidan Quinn as Nicholas Holden, a famous novelist who has inveigled Lena to come to the festival in the hopes of reigniting a fragile affair. These actors were all incredible to work with. Each of them brought a wealth of experience and genuine soul to the proceedings.

We set the movie in Cobh for its gothic atmosphere. The period buildings with their scale and elegance add so much to the feel of the story where past and present, the dead and the living, need to be palpably within reach of each other.

We had a great time making the film and it really has been a labour of love from beginning to end. And now it's a real honour for us to premiere “The Eclipse” at the Tribeca Film Festival, in a city which has been so good to me personally down the years and where the screenplay for this movie took its crucial turn.

- Conor McPherson

Conor McPherson (Director/Co-writer)

Award-winning screenwriter and Tony-nominated playwright Conor McPherson is one of the most acclaimed young dramatists working in the world today. McPherson was born in Dublin in 1971. He attended University College Dublin where he began to write and direct. Feature films include "I Went Down" (Screenwriter) Samuel Beckett's "Endgame" (Director), "Saltwater" (Writer/Director), and "The Actors" (Writer/Director). His stage plays include "Rum & Vodka," "The Good Thief," "This Lime Tree Bower," "St. Nicholas," "The Weir" (Broadway 1999), "Dublin Carol," "Port Authority," "Shining City" (Broadway 2006) and "The Seafarer" (Broadway 2007).

Awards for his films include the CICA Award for Best Film at the Berlin Film Festival for "Saltwater," and a Best Screenplay Award and Jury Prize at The San Sebastian Film Festival for "I Went Down." Awards for his plays include the Laurence Olivier Award, three Tony Award nominations (Best Play for "Shining City" and "The Seafarer," Best Director for "The Seafarer"), The Evening Standard Award, Critics' Circle Award, Meyer-Whitworth Award, and The George Devine Award.

His new play, an adaptation of Daphne Du Maurier's "The Birds," opens at the Dublin Theatre Festival in Fall '09.

Ciarán Hinds (Michael Farr)

Ciarán Hinds began his professional acting career at the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre in a 1976 production of "Cinderella." He remained a frequent performer at the Citizens' Theatre during the late 1970s and through the mid-1980s. During this same period, Hinds also performed on stage in Ireland with the Abbey Theatre, the Field Day Theatre Company, the Druid Theatre, the Lyric Players' Theatre, and at the Project Arts Centre. In 1987, he was cast by Peter Brook in "The Mahabharata," a six-hour theatre piece that toured the world, and he was also featured in its 1989 film version. In the early 1990s, he was a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company. One of his most notable RSC performances was in the title role of the 1993 production of "Richard III," directed by Sam Mendes; Mendes turned to Hinds as a last minute replacement for an injured Simon Russell Beale. Hinds gained his most popular recognition as a stage actor for his performance as Larry in the London and Broadway productions of Patrick Marber's Tony Award-nominated play "Closer." In 1999, Hinds was awarded both the Theatre World Award for Best Debut in NYC and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Special Achievement (Best Ensemble Cast Performance) for his work in "Closer." He was on stage in 2001 in "The Yalta Game" by Brian Friel at the Gate Theatre in Dublin. He appeared in the Broadway production of "The Seafarer" by Conor McPherson, which ran at the Booth Theater from December 2007 through March 2008. Hinds is currently in the cast of "Burnt By The Sun" by Peter Flannery, running at London's National Theatre from February to May 2009.

Hinds made his feature film debut in John Boorman's "Excalibur" (1981). His portfolio of film portrayals also includes Captain Frederick Wentworth in Jane Austen's "Persuasion" (1995), Jonathan Reiss in "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life" (2003), John Traynor in "Veronica Guerin" (2003), and Firmin in the film version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera" (2004). Hinds also played Carl, a cover-up professional assisting a group of assassins, in Steven Spielberg's political thriller "Munich" (2005). In 2006, he appeared in Michael Mann's film adaptation of the '80s television show "Miami Vice," and as Herod the Great in "The Nativity Story." In the 2007 film "Amazing Grace," Hinds portrays Sir Banastre Tarleton, one the chief opponents of abolition of the slave trade in parliament. He stars in "Margot at the Wedding," alongside Nicole Kidman, Jack Black and Jennifer Jason Leigh, in a drama-comedy about family secrets and relationships. He also appears in "There Will Be Blood" (2007), directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. Other films include "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (1989), "December Bride" (1990), "Circle of Friends" (1995), "Some Mother's Son" (1996), "Oscar and Lucinda" (1997), "Titanic Town" (1998), "The Weight of Water" (2000), "The Sum of All Fears" (2002), "Road to Perdition" (2002), "Calendar Girls" (2003), "Mickybo and Me" (2005), "Hallam Foe" (2007), "Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day" (2008), "Race to Witch Mountain" (2009), and "The Eclipse," directed by Conor McPherson (2009).

Aidan Quinn (Nicholas Holden)

Aidan Quinn was born in Rockford, Illinois to Irish parents and was raised in Chicago and Rockford, as well as in Dublin and Birr, County Offaly in Ireland. He has three brothers and a sister. His older brother, Declan Quinn, is a noted cinematographer. Quinn got his start in the Chicago theater at age 19 and trained at the Piven Theatre Workshop

His first significant film role was in "Reckless," followed by a breakthrough role in "Desperately Seeking Susan" as the character Dez (the love interest of the character played by Rosanna Arquette). Quinn next starred in the controversial TV movie "An Early Frost," about a young lawyer dying of AIDS (it was broadcast on NBC in 1985) and co-starred such luminaries as Gena Rowlands, Ben Gazzara and Sylvia Sidney. He received his first Emmy Award nomination for the role which allowed him to gain recognition in Hollywood.

During the 1990s Quinn's career grew immensely. He found work alongside such Hollywood stars as Brad Pitt in "Legends of the Fall," Johnny Depp in "Benny & Joon," Robert Duvall in "The Handmaid's Tale," and Sir John Gielgud in "Haunted." He continually starred in films that allowed him to return to his Irish roots, such as "Michael Collins" and "Evelyn."

Quinn was able to gain his first regular television role as the lead in the short-lived, and controversial NBC drama "The Book of Daniel" in 2006 before it was canceled after the first three weeks of its run. In 2007, Quinn received his second Emmy nomination for the television movie "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee."

Iben Hjejle (Lena Morelle)

Danish actress Iben Hjejle had a breakthrough US role in the film "High Fidelity" (2000) after acclaimed turns in the Denmark-filmed productions "Portland" (1996) and "Mifune" (1999). Hjejle, who lived in Massachusetts as a teenager, studied acting at The National Theatre School of Denmark, and teamed up with director Neals Arden-Oplev in the short film "Naked" (1991). Five years later, he cast her in "Portland," marking her feature film debut as a woman abused by her lover in this nihilistic look at the human condition. She followed up with a co-starring turn in "Mifune," Soren Kragh-Jacobsen's feature, the third to operate within the confines of "Dogme '95," a manifesto created with fellow Danish directors Thomas Vinterberg and Lars von Trier calling for naturalistic filmmaking. Here she gave a winningly feisty performance as an on-the-run prostitute who takes a job as a housekeeper for an odd family in an attempt to start a new life. The blonde actress' unadorned good looks and confident presence made her an especially effective contributor to the Dogma style of filmmaking.

Director Stephen Frears, impressed with Hjejle's work, approached the actress about making her American film debut and subsequently cast her in the Chicago-set reworking of "High Fidelity," Nick Hornsby's seminal novel about a pop music-obsessed thirtysomething man's relationship problems. John Cusack starred as the protagonist Rob and Hjejle played Laura, his live-in girlfriend and the latest in a line of women to break his heart. Since then Hjejle has starred in "The Emperor's New Clothes" in 2002, and in "Dreaming of Julia" and "Flickering Lights" in 2003.

Iben Hjejle was a part of the popular Danish television series "Anna Pihl" until its ending in April 2008. She had a part in Lars von Trier's "Direktøren for det hele" (2006, also known as "The Boss of It All") and Edward Zwick's "Defiance."

Cast (in order of appearance)

Jim Belton	Billy Roche
Thomas Farr	Eanna Hardwicke
Sarah Farr	Hannah Lynch
Michael Farr	Ciarán Hinds
Ringo the Dog	Mac
Eleanor Farr	Avian Egan
Nicholas Holden	Aidan Quinn
TV Interviewer	Hilary O'Shaughnessy
Malachy	Jim Norton
Festival Organiser	Nuala Casey De Backer
Festival Volunteer	Sarah Murphy
Lena Morrell	Iben Hjejle
Ghost Girl	Mia Quinn
Man in Hotel Bar	Declan Nash
Jenny Sewell	Valerie Spelman
Restaurant Waiter	Laurent Tavernier
Hotel Waitress	Julie Kellegher
Lantern Lady	Rosie O'Regan
Writer 1	Billy Ramsell
Writer 2	Mick Lynch
Writer 3	Donnacha Crowley
Writer 4	Grainne Gillis
Writer 5	Casper Christensen
Nun 1	Sister Pauline
Nun 2	Sister Emmanuelle
Woman Patient in nursing home	Mary Murphy
Susan Holden	Jean Van Sinderen-Law
Hand Artist	Ian Richards

Additional Credits

Production Manager	Cathleen Dore
Production Executive for Treasure Entertainment	Claire McCaughley
Production Coordinator	Georgina O'Connor
1st Assistant Director	Peter Nightingale
2nd Assistant Director	Lisa Kelly
3rd Assistant Directors	Mike Hayes
	Anna Harrison
Camera Operator	Roger Tooley
Script Supervisor	Kerensa Burton
Art Director	Johnny Byrne

Sound Mixer
Boom Operator

Ronan Hill
Michael McKnight

Make Up Designer
Hair & Make Up Artist
Wardrobe Supervisor
Special Effects by
Special Effects Supervisor
FX Team

Lizzi Lawson Zeiss
Kath Rayner
Sue Wain
Team FX
Kevin Byrne
Kevin Nolan
Gerard Farrell
Andrew Nolan
Tony Cannivan
Liam McDonald
Andy Bradford
Stuart Clark

Stunt Co-ordinator
Stunt Double

Second Camera Unit

Director
Director of Photography
Post Production Supervisor
Supervising Sound Editor
Music Composed by
Music Produced by

Paddy Breathnach
Volker Ehlers
Tim Morris
Jon Stevenson
Fionnuala Ní Chiosáin
Fionnuala Ní Chiosáin and Conor
McPherson

Musicians

Fionnuala Ní Chiosáin

Conor McPherson
Úna Ní Chiosáin
Paul Moore

Piano, Guitar, Hammond
Organ
Guitar, Bass, Drums
Violin, Viola
Double Bass

Choral pieces arranged by
Chiosáin & Conor McPherson

Orla Flanagan, Fionnuala Ní

Original Latin lyrics by

Fionnuala Ní Chiosáin

Choral Group
Conductor

The Mornington Singers
Orla Flanagan

Singers

David Larkin, Kerri O'Connell, Emma Farrell
Emer O'Connell, Jarrod Leaf, Douglas Lane
Joost Slingerland, John White, Philip Rowlands
Aine Jackson, Rupert Levene, Philip Shields, Clodagh Merry
Melissa Hardiman, Arthur Parkinson, Clíodhna Ní Fhátharta

Anna O'Herlihy, Richard Duckworth, Meike Beumers
Theresa Slingerland, Charlotte Lary, Claudia Schacke
Fionnuala Dillane, Kieran Tully, Katie Flanagan

Music Mixed and Engineered by	Philip Begley at Beechpark Studio, Dublin
Music Recorded at	Adelaide Street and Beechpark Studio, Dublin
Adelaide sessions engineered by	Fionnuala Ní Chiosáin and Conor McPherson
Editing & Post Production Facilities	Windmill Lane Ltd, Dublin
Post Production Sound Facility	Ardmore Sound, Ireland

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