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How Ireland has changed as seen on film

August 6, 2018



 Andrew Scott in conversation with The Telegraph Film Critic Tim Robey. Photo: Noel Mullen

Irish actor Andrew Scott reflects on feeling Irish, Ireland's attitude to sex education and his part in *The Delinquent Season*

The *Sherlock* actor (he played the Baker Street detective's arch-villain and rival, Moriarty) spoke with sincerity and passion to a packed house after the UK Premiere screening of *The Delinquent Season* in London's Regent Street Cinema this week.

This Mark O'Rowe directorial debut stars Scott, alongside an outstanding cast of Irish talent: Cillian Murphy, Eva Birthistle and Catherine Ryan as they unpick the locks to the human heart. The film explores the challenging landscape of love, lust, and family relationships.



Following the screening, which was presented by Irish Film London, Scott was interviewed on stage by the Telegraph and BBC 4's regular film critic Tim Robey, who didn't have to work too hard to guide the conversation to Ireland's take on these notions.



📷 Andrew Scott in conversation with The Telegraph Film Critic Tim Robey. Photo: Noel Mullen

Scott lamented the stronghold of the Catholic Church on Irish society when he was growing up in Dublin in the 80s.

"What was insidious about the Catholic Church was the shame and embarrassment with which they spoke about sex."

"I feel very strongly that one of the things that should change in Irish culture is our sex education."

He likened the approach of Irish schools to sex education, to that of a mechanic describing the engine of a car. He felt the shift now towards “the idea of discussing consent and even sensuality and desire and that people are sexual, is welcome. So the fact that *The Delinquent Season*, in some ways, explores some of that is exciting.”



Andrew Scott in conversation with The Telegraph Film Critic Tim Robey. Photo: Noel Mullen

However, reflecting on modern Ireland he said: “Ireland today, to my mind, is one of the most progressive countries in the world. I was very frightened before the most recent referendum (the repeal of the eighth amendment), that that progressive reputation would be short-lived. So the fact that it was a landslide was incredible.”

Amongst his exceptional array of work, which includes major stage productions like *Hamlet*, and Hollywood blockbusters like *Spectre*, are peppered ‘smaller’ Irish films, such as this, and previously *The Stag* and *Handsome Devil*, both directed by John Butler.



Andrew Scott in *The Stag*

Scott reflected on how he was drawn to these roles.

“What I will always look for in a script is an authentic, autographed voice. Mark has a strong, independent Irish voice. He’s economic in his writing and this is a strong chamber piece.”

"I've always felt incredibly Irish, but if I'm honest, I felt I had lost my connection to Ireland, for whatever reason. I don't really know what that was. I moved over to London when I was 22 and I worked a lot over here, but not as much in Ireland."

These films, he said, enabled him to re-connect with his roots.

A question from the audience about the challenges of separating oneself emotionally from parts which dwell in grief and loss, he responded to say that although he doesn't quite believe in the universal tenet that all Irish people have a "a well of sadness, there is a softness to Irish people that I recognise. And there's a humanity to Irish people that I can really see, and that I'm proud of."

Scott stayed after the event to meet with fans, and pose for photos. For one fan, he even fashioned, on request, a sketch rather than an autograph.



This event formed part of Irish Film London's programme of events, which champion Irish Film across the UK. Next up, on August 17th will be a collaboration with Club de Femmes (<http://www.clubdesfemmes.com/portfolio-item/cdf-x-ico-x-london-feminist-film-festival-maeve/>), the ICO and the London Feminist Film Festival: a screening of *Maeve*, the highly acclaimed Pat Murphy and John Davies activist film from 1981, with a Q&A.

That is followed by an Open City Docs (<http://www.irishfilmfestivallondon.com/events/2018/9/8/the-image-you-missed-open-city-docs>) collaboration on September 8th at the ICA: a screening of Donal Foreman's *The Image You Missed* with a Q&A.

You can find out more about Irish Film London at: www.irishfilmlondon.com
(<http://www.irishfilmfestivallondon.com/ifl-2018/>)
