



Searchlight Pictures presents

In Association with Film4 and TSG Entertainment

A Blueprint Pictures Production

A Martin McDonagh Film

The
BANSHEES
Of INISHIERIN

Starring

Colin Farrell as Pádraic Súilleabháin
Brendan Gleeson as Colm Doherty
Kerry Condon as Siobhán Súilleabháin
Barry Keoghan as Dominic Kearney

Written and Directed by.....**Martin McDonagh**
Produced by.....**Graham Broadbent, Pete Czernin, Martin McDonagh**
Executive Producers...**Diarmuid McKeown, Ben Knight, Daniel Battsek, Ollie Madden**
Director of Photography.....**Ben Davis, BSC**
Production Designer.....**Mark Tildesley**
Costume Designer.....**Eimer Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh**
Music by.....**Carter Burwell**
Editor.....**Mikkel E.G. Nielsen, ACE**
Casting by.....**Louise Kiely**

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Running Time: 1 hour 54 minutes

Rating: R

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The
BANSHEES
Of INISHERIN

Set on a remote island off the west coast of Ireland, THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN follows lifelong friends Pádraic (Colin Farrell) and Colm (Brendan Gleeson), who find themselves at an impasse when Colm unexpectedly puts an end to their friendship. A stunned Pádraic, aided by his sister Siobhán (Kerry Condon) and troubled young islander Dominic (Barry Keoghan), endeavours to repair the relationship, refusing to take no for an answer. But Pádraic's repeated efforts only strengthen his former friend's resolve and when Colm delivers a desperate ultimatum, events swiftly escalate, with shocking consequences.

Searchlight Pictures presents, In Association with Film4 and TSG Entertainment, a Blueprint Pictures Production, a Martin McDonagh film, THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN. The film stars Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson, who reunite with McDonagh from *In Bruges*, Kerry Condon, and Barry Keoghan. The key crew include Director of Photography and regular McDonagh collaborator Ben Davis, BSC, costume designer Eimer Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh, production designer Mark Tildesley, and editor Mikkel E.G. Nielsen, ACE. Carter Burwell is composing the score. McDonagh's frequent collaborators Graham Broadbent and Pete Czernin are producing for Searchlight Pictures and Film4.

The film was shot on location on Inishmore and Achill Island on the west coast of Ireland.

THE BREAK-UP

In late 2019, producer Graham Broadbent was travelling in Argentina when he received an email from Martin McDonagh, the writer-director with whom he had collaborated on three motion pictures at that point - *In Bruges* (2008), *Seven Psychopaths* (2012), and *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* (2017). "Have a read of this," McDonagh wrote in his email.

On a flight from Buenos Aires to Patagonia, Broadbent was plunged into the story of *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN*. The world that McDonagh created – a fictional island off the west coast of Ireland where two friends become estranged, leading to disastrous, anarchic consequences. It had all of the writer-director's trademarks: it was funny, sad, dark, and full of humanity – distinctly McDonagh.

"*The Banshees of Inisherin* is the story of an island, the small group of people on that island, and two friends who early on in the film are forced by the decision of one friend to go their separate ways," says actor Colin Farrell (*The Lobster*, *Minority Report*), who plays Pádraic in the film. "The other friend finds that particularly hard to deal with."

The story opens with Pádraic walking happily around the island of Inisherin where he lives with his sister, Siobhán. Pádraic is a sweet, mild mannered, happy-go-lucky guy: "A lot like the real Colin Farrell," remarks McDonagh.

Every day, Pádraic and Colm meet at 2pm to go for a drink in the only pub on the island. It's a daily routine. On this particular day, however, everything changes. Colm, played by Brendan Gleeson (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *Braveheart*, *Gangs of New York*) ignores Pádraic when he calls.

"Colm starts acting very strangely and starts avoiding Pádraic," says Gleeson. "Colm doesn't answer the door, which is how we start off the journey. That's how it begins - with the shutting of a door against a good friend... for no apparent reason."

Pádraic is initially surprised, then shocked, and eventually heartbroken. He's also confused, since Colm has given no particular reason for the breakup. These two men have been friends for, we presume, their whole lives.

Why did Colm torpedo his friendship with Pádraic, was it something that Pádraic said, or did? Is Colm depressed? Should he respect Colm's wishes and back off? Or should he try to change Colm's mind or change himself? Within the first six minutes of the movie, the plot is in place.

"Pádraic can't understand why Colm doesn't want to be friends with him anymore and won't accept it. It's similar to the feelings you feel when you've been dumped in a relationship. You think, 'So did you ever like me, or was I imagining that we were in love?'" says McDonagh. "It's interesting to see who the audience identifies with. Can they understand the tough line that Colm, the breaker-upper, has taken, or do they identify with the nice person who is broken hearted?"

But Colm has his reasons. "He doesn't want to waste his time anymore," says McDonagh. "He wants to devote himself to artistic enterprises: music or thought. Pádraic is the fallout from that decision. Until this point things have been easy going. But Colm is older than Pádraic by 15 or 20 years. Colm identifies that time is precious and he sees Pádraic as a waste of time."

Kerry Condon describes the characterisation as a “smart way of playing with those feelings that everyone has in terms of a loving couple, heartbreak and rejection, but doing it with friends so there is a comedy element to it.”

“Colm decides to embrace art and creativity as the most important thing in life and it leads to hellish consequences,” says Gleeson. “Pádraic chooses to be nice and he ends up with hellish consequences as well. The Irish Civil War was a tragedy - that’s the context here. Through examining it and trying to understand how things can get dragged out of shape, maybe we can face it down and not take that path. I hope the film will remind people that making nasty or harmful decisions has a lasting effect.”

“Do you devote yourself totally to life as an artist,” McDonagh continues, “and disregard friends or lovers or family? Is work the most important thing? Does it matter who gets hurt in the process? It’s a debate that isn’t answered by me or the film. I don’t think that you have to be a self-flagellating or dark or hateful person to do any kind of art, even dark art. But I definitely think the film explores that interesting conundrum.”

Disclaimer: please note major spoilers ahead

THE ULTIMATUM

As Pádraic continues to prod Colm for a response, the situation escalates. Explains McDonagh, “Colm comes to a place where unless he does something very drastic, he is not going to be left alone. He threatens to cut his fingers off unless Pádraic leaves him alone and allows him time to create,” adds Gleeson. “It’s a bit like a nuclear deterrent. He’s figuring, ‘If I threaten to do this it won’t happen’. Symbolically, he’s threatening to destroy his own gift of musicianship. Colm sees it as a badge of commitment.”

“It’s worth pointing out,” says Broadbent (using an unfortunate turn of phrase given the matter at hand), “that Colm is a fiddle player and his hand is important in his creative endeavours.”

Then the islanders become involved. There is Peadar Kearney, played by Gary Lydon (*Brooklyn, Calvary, The Guard*), the local cop whose dislike of Pádraic and his sister intensifies after his separation from Colm. Dominic Kearney, the policeman’s son, played by Barry Keoghan (*Dunkirk, The Killing of a Sacred Deer, Eternals*) “is another person who is affected by this schism between the two men,” according to McDonagh.

After a while, even the pub and its publican Jonjo, played by Pat Shortt (*Frank of Ireland, The Guard, Garage*) no longer feels like a safe haven for Pádraic.

“It’s a multi-character piece and there are many strands that go through the story,” says Farrell. “It’s not about any place that exists in particular. It’s Martin’s imagination working off certain tropes. But that’s the story: two friends who are no longer friends and the consequences and how those consequences reach out into the community. There’s discord and madness, loss and suffering, and some laughs along the way.”

Colm’s artistic dilemma is reflected in Siobhán, Pádraic’s sister, whose life is consumed by reading, cooking dinners, and loneliness. Colm, perhaps, represents a struggle that Siobhán may find herself in within a few years.

“I think maybe Colm should have left the island a long time ago,” remarks Farrell. “I don't know if he's got too much wanderlust, or he's just bored by the seeming monotony of sameness every day or whatever it is.”

Farrell believes all the characters in the film have their own struggles, sadness, and secrets: “All the characters are bananas. They're mad in their own unique ways; archetypes brought together to create a certain amount of chaos – but not chaos for the sake of it, and not just dark moments or themes to titillate and shock.”

“I wanted the supporting characters to have their own singular lives,” says McDonagh. “Every person in life is the lead actor in their own film so you should treat all of the supporting characters that way. Because there's this little war between these two guys you needed a sense of how the community reacts and how they deal with it and which side they need to pick.”

Ultimately, life on the island of Inisherin appears hellish according to Gleeson. “There's unquestioned beauty around us. But it has become inward looking. There's something rotten in the community.”

A CIVIL WAR

THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN is set in 1923 when Civil War was raging in Ireland. The fictional island of Inisherin is not affected but there is tension across the water on the mainland. “Cannon roars and gunfire can be heard some nights and so we're very aware on the island that there's a civil war taking place,” says Farrell. “But we're also kind of shielded from it by virtue of being out of the way and a coastal outpost.”

The Irish Civil War was waged from 1922 to 1923, following the War of Independence and the establishment of the Irish Free State, which created an entity in one half of the country that was separate from the United Kingdom. Two opposing groups, the pro Anglo-Irish Treaty provisional government, and the anti-treaty Irish Republican Army (IRA), fought for dominance.

Locals on Inisherin, however, could hardly care less. “It's funny that the people on the island don't seem to want to even address what's going on in the mainland,” says Condon. “They're not bothered about the war. It's like they're a separate little country – a separate little everything.”

However, what is taking place on Inisherin – the division between Pádraic and Colm, and the growing rifts with other people on the island – mirrors what is occurring on the mainland. There are allegorical aspects to the division between these two men and the division between both sides in the Irish Civil War, remarks McDonagh. “It's a story where a tiny little war is waging between two fellows at the same time as a bigger one is happening over there.”

Gleeson describes civil war as a catastrophic fallout that can emerge from a struggle for freedom. In the case of the Irish conflict, brother would be cast against brother, and friend against friend. Historically, it ended in horrific atrocities.

“I think the divisions that are festering on the island and the savagery of what happens in the movie, are mirrored in what's going on in the mainland. Everybody is holding onto their little positions allowing divisions to fester and get worse,” says Gleeson.

McDonagh had never made a period drama before and revelled in bringing historical towns and characters to life. “When you set something in the past it opens up a lot of possibilities,” he says.

A period setting also prevents the film from dating as quickly as a story set in modern times. In the film *In Bruges*, the writer-director tried not to include modern references – in order to create a timeless milieu. *Three Billboards* also felt like its own self-contained timepiece. *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN* does not adhere to the strict boundaries of history. Instead, it is its own self-contained fantasy: a mythical place, wilder than the mainland, a streak of madness permeating its bones.

The film’s title, for example, refers to a fabled ghostly figure from Irish mythology who wailed at night to foreshadow a death in the locale. “If you’ve heard her belt out her tune,” deadpans Farrell, “it’s already too late for you.”

Although it is not explicitly presented in the film, an elderly woman on Inisherin, Mrs. McCormick played by Sheila Flitton (*The Northman*) is the physical embodiment of the banshee. “She represents a sinister grey watchdog on the island who never physically gets too involved in anything – she is always on the outside looking in,” says Farrell. “She seems to have some kind of strange ethereal knowledge as to what people’s vulnerabilities are. Where’s their soft spot? Where can they be attacked? She has a fascination with death.”

In the story, Mrs. McCormick prophesies two deaths that are coming to Inisherin. “We as an audience then need to work out if that is true,” explains Broadbent. “Is this batty old lady really telling us something that’s going to help our plot or is this just bonkers?”

The title also refers to a piece of music that Gleeson’s character composes during the course of the film. “As the story develops and unfolds, this piece of music becomes articulated through Colm’s fiddle playing,” says Farrell. “I say there are no Banshees in Inisherin. He says maybe there are, but he doesn’t think that they call men to their doom. He thinks they sit back and observe.”

FROM CONCEPTION TO SCRIPT

Colm’s fiddle is not the only device producing melodies in *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN*. McDonagh’s dialogue has its own internal rhythms.

“You want to imbue these lines with different ways of interpretation,” says Gleeson. “But the lines have a music to them that goes to the core of beautiful dialogue. Martin is very clear about his imagery. His writing has an extraordinary depth and beauty in its formation.” Lydon also describes McDonagh’s writing in terms of music: “The important thing is to jump on the rhythm of the language.”

Most of the cast of *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN* are Irish, so they were adept at McDonagh’s turns of phrase. “Martin’s writing is so good when he writes for Irish people,” notes Condon. “It’s easy for me to say the lines because they’re how I talk. Martin is from England, his parents are Irish, but he speaks in an English accent. So it’s a credit to his ear that he can write exactly the way we speak.”

Keoghan first appreciated McDonagh's work when he saw a stage production of *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. The actor was struck by the playwright's balancing act between darkness and comedy. "While many writers mix comedy and tragedy," says Keoghan, "McDonagh has the ability to interweave the styles within a scene or even a line of dialogue." The ambience can go from hilarious to painful or sad, touching or moving, within a heartbeat.

"The speed with which his scenes can change tone is astonishing to me," says Farrell. "His stuff is very funny," adds Condon. "You laugh and then all of a sudden he'll put in a line that will completely disembowel you. That feeling – 'I was laughing and now I'm completely shocked' – makes you think deeper. There's a real intelligence behind his writing. He's also very good at depicting kindness and loneliness." McDonagh's comedy may be dark but it is never mean-spirited.

"One of the things I love about Martin's writing is that it lacks malice," continues Farrell. "Some of the characters he presents to the audience can be incredibly malicious and cruel and some of the events can be beyond the pale in regards to the macabre, but I never detect any maliciousness from the writer, the voice, the creator of it."

INHABITING AN ISLAND:

THE CHARACTERS OF THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN

Martin McDonagh enjoys working with the same creative partners and cast across multiple projects. Across the four films he has made with producer Graham Broadbent, he dipped in and out of a community of actors that he enjoys working with again and again. It's a method of filmmaking inspired by his time in theatre as well as his experience in cinema.

Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson as Pádraic Súilleabháin and Colm

Doherty

McDonagh had wanted to reunite Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson ever since their amazing double act in his debut feature, *In Bruges* (2008). That film is remembered fondly and the writer-director loved the two actors as a pairing. Farrell went on to star in his second film, *Seven Psychopaths*, but McDonagh spent years thinking of a fit for him and Gleeson in another story. McDonagh was determined not to besmirch *In Bruges*, by creating something half-cocked.

"I don't know if it was the same for the boys, but that was a worry for me," he says. "I couldn't get them back together and do something lesser."

It wasn't until he landed upon the idea for *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN* that the reunion was ready to happen. The characters were written for Farrell and Gleeson - and the actors were keen to come along for the ride.

"As an actor, you're looking for someone who has a unique voice, an original way of articulating thoughts and feelings and creating characters and whole worlds. It's lovely when you come across a writer that establishes a world that has its own kind of order and sense of aesthetic. Martin's voice can be extraordinary." Gleeson describes McDonagh as fearless. "He goes into these awful places finally, armed with compassion and empathy."

Farrell and Gleeson, according to McDonagh, explore truthfulness without shying away from the darkness. They are comic actors who don't play for laughs. *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN* is sad yet humorous in places. *In Bruges* permitted Farrell and Gleeson to develop a shorthand. That same shorthand is evident in *Banshees*, albeit within very different characters.

The familiarity, and real-life friendship, between the actors makes the story more believable. "You look at them and absolutely believe their history," says Broadbent. "You believe they might have been friends for many, many years and it makes it even sadder."

From his early appearances in *Tigerland* through to *Miami Vice*, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, and *The Batman*, Farrell has always been a unique screen presence. But McDonagh's projects, he believes, are unlike any other. The common DNA between *In Bruges*, *Seven Psychopaths*, and now *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN*, is McDonagh's articulation of thoughts, ideas and emotions, and the meeting point between comedy and tragedy.

Condon, who plays his sister, says of Farrell: "Pádraic needed a boyish quality to make the comedy work. He had to have a heartbroken earnestness because he says some things that are a little silly and a little stupid. He can't be too young that you'd wonder, 'Why was Colm friendly with him?' He had to be a bit older so that you could see he and Brendan could've been friends."

"He's a nice fellow, Pádraic," explains Farrell. "A nice simple lad and he's not concerned about too much. He's happy as long as the animals are fed and he has a couple of pence in his pocket for a few pints and a chat with his friend Colm every day. As long as that's all happening, then life is just grand."

When Colm ends the relationship, Pádraic descends into sadness and loneliness and anger. "His loss of innocence is the saddest part of the film," continues Farrell. "He falls apart. He's not anywhere near as happy as he once was."

Gleeson, who hails from Farrell's native Dublin, is one of Ireland's most successful actors. Alongside *In Bruges*, he is recognised for his role as Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody in the *Harry Potter* films, *Braveheart*, *The Guard*, and *Calvary*, which were directed by McDonagh's brother, John Michael McDonagh. Gleeson was keen to get back into the saddle with Farrell.

"I have great admiration for Colin," says Gleeson. "I love him as a human being in terms of the way he carries himself. His instincts and his integrity are brilliant. I count him as a very dear friend. He has his heart on his sleeve and brings that to the process."

Farrell concurs, "I love Brendan. I have a height of admiration and respect for him – he's active, engaged, bright, decent, strong, vulnerable, all of it. The pendulum swings wide with Brendan, from the tenderness that he's capable of to the godlike wrath that he can exude if needs be. He's always digging, always asking the big questions."

In the story, Colm is a musician who is crafting his magnum opus on the fiddle. In real life, Gleeson is also an accomplished musician who played music in other movies, including *Michael Collins* and *Cold Mountain*, and in music venues across Ireland.

"Colm is curious in his mind and he's a little bit intense," explains Gleeson. "The fiddle has become more important to him because his mortality is beginning to impinge. He reckons he has 12 years left, for no particular reason. He's not ill but he knows his time is finite and he wants to leave a legacy. His art becomes his main priority."

“Brendan has a firmness but a kindness, which is similar to Colm,” remarks Condon. “He’s going to find all the nuances and play them in a way that’s not black and white.”

Continues Gleeson, “Pádraic once supplied Colm with a lifeline through having a sunny disposition and not over thinking anything. They make an odd couple. And then there’s Pádraic’s naivety. Colm’s quite sophisticated in his mindset. Like in any kind of a relationship, the things that challenge you most in the beginning are the things that drive you mad in the end.”

Kerry Condon as Siobhán Súilleabháin

Pádraic shares a home with his younger sister Siobhán. It’s coming up on eight years since their parents have died, so there is nobody else living here – apart from Pádraic’s miniature pet donkey Jenny, who Pádraic keeps sneaking into the house. They are close as siblings, so when Colm shuns Pádraic at the start of the film, Siobhán is perturbed.

Siobhán is, perhaps, the wisest voice on the island. She realises the limitations of this community. Its inward-looking and resentful attitudes will eventually drag her down. She has ambitions that extend beyond the island, but she is also acutely aware that Pádraic needs her.

“Siobhán has been through a lot and so there’s this sadness and loneliness to her. She’s stuck,” says Condon. “Pádraic drives her a little crazy, like a sibling would, yet she’s motherly to him.

“She calls things out in the way that probably only a woman can,” continues Broadbent. “Her voice, wisdom, and enormous heart take you beyond the island and in a new direction. She loves her brother, even though he might not be the smartest person.”

Just as McDonagh explicitly wrote the roles of Pádraic and Colm for Farrell and Gleeson, he wrote Siobhán for Kerry Condon. The Irish actor is known for her work in *Better Call Saul*, *Ray Donovan*, *Spider-Man: Homecoming* and *Captain America: Civil War*, *Angela’s Ashes* and *Dreamland*.

“Kerry and I worked together in the theatre so we’ve known each other for years,” says the writer-director. “She also had a small part in *Three Billboards*, that was written with her mind. There wasn’t anyone else who could have played it.”

McDonagh framed Siobhán and Colm as birds of a similar feather. Says the writer-director, “They understand each other more than anyone else on the island can understand them. Brendan and Kerry both felt that from reading the script.” Adds Condon, “They are kindred spirits, deep thinkers and they think beyond the island.”

Farrell describes Condon’s performance as brilliant. “She’s so moving and fiery and yet so emotional. She, as Siobhán, carries a pain that she doesn’t show – this need, this desire that’s inside her. Some part of her soul is not being taken care of.”

Shortt was delighted to work with Condon. Both of them hail from Thurles, a town in County Tipperary, Ireland. Says Shortt, “She’s got a beautiful way of performing, and you can see her sitting into Martin’s work.”

Barry Keoghan as Dominic Kearney

McDonagh had Keoghan in mind when he was writing the character. The actor worked with Farrell on *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, and both actors featured in *The Batman*. Keoghan's other work includes Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* and Marvel's *Eternals*.

He had wanted to work with McDonagh so much that he had a picture of the writer-director on the home page of his smartphone. When they had their first meeting in NY, he thought, "I better take this off, he'll think I'm some sort of a creep." According to Broadbent, "Barry jumps out in a way that you might never have imagined and inhabits every corner and pushes it in the most brilliant way." Farrell agrees. "Barry's brilliant, he's just amazing raw talent."

Dominic is the son of the local policeman on Inisherin. Gleeson describes the character as "a bit like the Shakespearean fool or the court jester, but his wisdom and take on the truth of the situation is the clearest of anybody. He's gauche and a bit messed up, and a tragic character in some ways. He's the kind of guy who is easily dismissed by the community, also seeing them for what they are."

Condon describes the character as "smart in his innocent, childlike sort of way. He has feelings for Siobhán, but she's the only girl for miles."

Dominic does not have a happy relationship with his father Peadar Kearney, explains McDonagh. "It's abusive. The mother has disappeared, and we don't know where she's gone. The policeman isn't the nicest person in the world by any long shot. So Dominic bears a lot of that sadness and horror, as a lot of kids did in Ireland in the last century."

Continues McDonagh, "There's an integrity to Dominic and something cinematic that I wanted to explore. He is kind of Pádraic's best friend, apart from Colm, and probably not the brightest spark on the island. Or is he? Should we judge people when you don't know their inner lives or what they are really like? Barry plays it beautifully, heartbreakingly and comedically."

Gary Lydon as Peadar Kearney

Dominic's father, a policeman called Peadar Kearney, is the law of the land on Inisherin. Between him and the priest, played by David Pearse, McDonagh is saying something about the state and the church being dominant forces – and not necessarily forces of good. Remarks producer Broadbent, "There's a lovely scene where the priest comes over to the island for the church service and is welcomed off the boat by the policeman. When the two of them walk into the church together, it's the sense that, 'Okay, these are the forces we're dealing with. This is where Ireland is, at that moment.'"

McDonagh cast Gary Lydon in the role. He had worked with Lydon in the original production of *The Cripple of Inishmaan* and the actor performed in *Six Shooter*, McDonagh's OSCAR® – winning short film from 2004, as well as *The Pillowman*, another of McDonagh's plays. So he has, by his own admission, "a history with Martin".

Says Lydon of Kearney, "He's a pretty violent kind of person and a dangerous bloke, but he maintains a veneer of respectability. His attitude to the community is probably contentious, and I suppose it's corrupt as well. He thinks that he can do what he wants. "

Lydon also worked with Gleeson on *The Guard* and *Calvary*, both of which were directed by Martin's brother, John Michael McDonagh, and in *Michael Collins*, which was set around the same time as THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN.

Supporting Cast

The fictional island of Inisherin has a single pub run by Jonjo, played by Pat Shortt, whose best friend Gerry, played by Jon Kenny, is normally in residence. The pair provide a brilliant commentary on Pádraic and Colm's declining friendship and subsequent duelling, according to Broadbent. "They provide a comedy voice. Only Martin could give these characters comedy lines in these tragic situations. They are our principal witnesses to what's going on in this relationship."

"Jonjo isn't a mediator, but he tends to be there when some of the key moments happen," explains Shortt. "There's a great scene when Pádraic comes and Jonjo says, 'Is Colm not with you? Sure, he's always with you'. And then suddenly the worry kicks in. 'Why isn't he with you?' It's just a simple thing, but suddenly, everything is out of kilter."

Shortt (*Garage, The Guard*) previously worked on McDonagh's plays, so the writer-director had him in mind for the role. "I think nearly everybody in the cast has worked with Martin before. Everybody knows everybody, it makes it really nice to gel on set," he adds.

"Pat is the barman and Jon is his sort of mate/assistant and they represent the community in the story, to a degree. We see a lot of the humour and the horror through their eyes as the story progresses," says McDonagh.

This was canny casting on the part of McDonagh and casting director Louise Kiely. Shortt and Kenny were once Ireland's best-known comedy duo, performing under the moniker of *D'Unbelievables*. "Those two were great in our scenes," says Farrell, "making their little judgments and little remarks and keeping time on the island."

Then there is something unusual and intriguing about the character of Mrs. McCormick, and the presence of this older lady. The part was given to Sheila Flitton (*The Northman*), yet another McDonagh alumni.

A few weeks before production, Flitton, who was in her late 80's at the time, fell and broke her shoulder. "I thought that's the end of that," she says. "I was heartbroken. Well, Martin kept saying, 'I want Sheila'". So, she was patched up and appeared in the film.

"Mrs. McCormick is not of this world," says Flitton. "She doesn't mix with everybody but she watches everything, hears everything, and she's a bit threatening. She portends what's happening and plants little questions for the audience. Clever as well, sort of other worldly."

PRODUCTION

Production plans for THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN were initially scuppered when the pandemic hit in 2020 – everything was pushed back. But this delay was an advantage for the filmmakers. McDonagh assembled three of his collaborators – production designer Mark Tildesley (*No Time to Die, Phantom Thread*), Director of Photography Ben Davis, BSC (*Three Billboards Outside*

Ebbing, Missouri, Seven Psychopaths), and first A.D. Peter Kohn (*The Greatest Showman, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri, La La Land*) – in a house in Galway as the pre-production period turned into a year, an unusual amount of time for any film shoot.

Tildesley was the only member of the team who had not worked with McDonagh before, but he was familiar with his work.

The team spent two weeks together, sitting around a fireplace and talking about the script. McDonagh proceeded to storyboard every frame of the film – a process he employs for each project. “When I write a script it’s all about character and dialogue and situations,” he remarks. “It’s not, at that stage, about images, so the storyboarding process is a major phase of the storytelling.”

Broadbent notes that McDonagh is the only director he has worked with who storyboards every scene long before shooting starts. “As a filmmaker, he’s evolved to the point where he knows exactly how the camera’s going to work with him and how to use the actors and his script to tell the story.”

In the house in Galway, the writer-director began envisioning a Western theme for his film. The team watched classic movies such as *The Night of the Hunter*, a 1955 film noir, and referenced the work of John Ford and Sergio Leone. They picked up on the low angle, through-the-feet shots of Leone, and the shots through doors and windows in Ford’s work. The period setting of *Banshees*, 1923, lent itself to the idea of a Western.

“Shooting through doorways and that kind of John Ford-ian trope was something we explored in the storyboarding phase,” recalls McDonagh. “The story lent itself to this idea of two almost lone gunmen falling out and getting into tiffs at the local saloon.” The team hopped in a car and drove long trips, from Galway up the west coast of Ireland to scout for locations. Eventually, they settled on the source: the Aran Islands, a group of three islands at the mouth of Galway Bay: Inishmore, the largest; Inishmaan the second largest; and Inisheer, the smallest.

The three isles have a combined population of around 1,200 people who primarily speak the Irish language. McDonagh knew this turf. Although he was born in London, his mother was from Sligo and his father was from Galway. As a child, he spent time in this region of the country.

Tildesley, a newcomer to the region, enjoyed soaking up the ambience. “To live on the islands, people built walls from the rock. So you have this patchwork quilt of tiny, small plots of land. You end up with this extraordinary, ancient pattern of rock walls, which in Martin’s script is written almost like a labyrinth - a maze in which these two characters live.”

“Inisherin is a fictional island, so I didn’t want it to be specifically one place,” says the writer-director. “I wanted it to be more mythical. So, we explored each of the Aran Islands. Inishmore ticked most of the boxes. I’d been there as a kid. My parents were living in Galway along the coast, and you can see the Aran Islands from where they were.”

Costume designer Eimer Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh (*Calvary, The Guard, The Fall*) accompanied the team on location reccies. “I am Irish, so I know these locations and I’ve been to the Aran Islands before,” she says. “The landscape is an important character in the film.”

The filmmakers tried to find pockets of Inishmore where there was no modernity, tarmac on the road or telegraph poles. “We returned to the coast that we looked at originally and it became a matter of trying to find unspoiled coastland,” said location manager Eoin Holohan.

The team built Pádraic and Siobhán's house in an area called Gort Na gCapall on Inishmore. "Martin took us to some super extreme places," says Tildesley. "We came back a few steps from the coastline and found a location on the edge of the cliff to build the house, looking down over one long end of the island towards an ancient monument called Dún Aonghasa. You see it from that kitchen window."

The house was purpose built – there was nothing there beforehand, just fields. They studied the angle of the sun, the sea, and Dún Aonghasa, before drawing a square on the ground to mark the construction site. "We had to bring in the house piece by piece on the ferry," says Tildesley. "We wanted to use local craftspeople, so a few of the walls in the building are real stone. Although the interiors are made from plaster brick, the exterior walls are real stone, courtesy of local stonemasons."

Building Pádraic's home as a set allowed McDonagh to "shoot through windows and see the ocean, the coast road, the fields and the island", according to McDonagh. Tildesley designed Pádraic's house to be "simpler than Colm's. Pádraic is a person of the soil. He's from a farming stock and has a simple life. He and Siobhán live in this inherited family farmhouse."

Recalls Condon, "We got to spend a day just being in the house, picking up stuff, opening drawers, sitting in different places in the house, and doing our lines. So we got loads of time to feel like we lived there."

When Farrell arrived on set on the first day and saw the cottage, he thought it was sparse but beautiful. "It had everything you'd need to live a decent life. Of course, off-camera, we had a gas fire. In the 1920's, it would have been quite harsh in the winter and you could feel the potential of that. But where they placed the cottage was quite beautiful."

ON LOCATION: Inishmore Island

THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN filmed on the island of Inishmore for three weeks. Farrell is from Dublin, on the other side of Ireland but, at the time of filming, had been living in Los Angeles for 16 years. "I have the place where I was born that I'll always carry with me - it shaped me through those formative years of my life until I was 20," he says. "And then I made my home in Los Angeles. I love both in very different ways."

Farrell, alongside other cast and crew, headed over to Inishmore on a ferry. "It was so exciting. The people there were so glorious and generous. Dún Aonghasa, the prehistoric hill fort, was up there on the horizon, reaching for the sky all this millennia. It was so strange and anomalous to have weather that was as consistently beautiful and almost Greek."

Condon was with Farrell on this adventure. "Shooting in Inishmore was just like heaven," she says. "It was beautiful. Spiritual. The locations and scenery are characters in themselves."

Alongside Pádraic and Siobhán's homestead, production designer Tildesley and his team found an old cottage that became the home of Kearney and his abusive father, the local policeman. The cottage was in disrepair when they arrived, but they gave it a lick of paint and tidied it up.

Keoghan had to adjust to a slower paced life during his three weeks on the island. “There wasn’t much to do,” he says with a laugh. When he wasn’t filming, he could be found “standing on the edge of the cliff, or on top of the hill, trying to find a signal to send a text message.”

During his three weeks on Inishmore, Lydon, who plays Kearney, settled into the pace. “It was idyllic. There’s something in the air there, and it’s a place of pilgrimage.”

In *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN*, Pádraic devotes his life to his miniature donkey, small pony, two cows, and a calf. These animals were assembled at the homestead on Inishmore, under the supervision of animal trainers Mary Owens, Rita Moloney, and Kenny Gracie. Moloney’s role, as head animal trainer, was to find suitable animals for the production. “I was originally asked to find a match for Jenny the donkey,” she says. “When Martin met Jenny, he fell in love with her.”

“There’s a lovely little donkey in this story called Jenny, who is Pádraic’s good friend,” says McDonagh. “We got a beautiful miniature donkey to play her. She’s called Jenny in real life and is a proper pet. That donkey comes into the house and they hang out and go for walks. There’s something gentle about Pádraic’s relationship with Jenny.”

According to Gleeson, “Pádraic loves animals and the purity of animals. He has a very special relationship with his miniature donkey. It doesn’t dawn on him that people find it a little bit odd – and he keeps bringing the donkey into the house.” Much to Siobhán’s displeasure, that is. “The only difference between me and Siobhán is that I am a big animal lover,” says Condon. “I found it so hard telling Jenny to get out.”

In the story, Colm has his own pet: a dog. While the filmmakers were on Inishmore, they also sourced a bull for a scene with Gleeson’s character. Some of the animals, including the bull, Minnie The Pony, the cow and calves, were local to the island. This made life a little easier - because filming on an island came with a raft of logistical challenges. Access was difficult and there was only room for one lane of traffic.

Condon felt bittersweet leaving Inishmore at the end of the three weeks: “I stole a memento from our house - a beautiful little vintage cup. It was hard to leave and walk away.”

ON LOCATION: Achill Island

After Inishmore, the crew faced the challenge of relocating to Achill Island, 150km away in County Mayo, for the pub location. Achill is connected to the mainland by a bridge, so that was an advantage but if they thought getting everything onto Inishmore was tough, getting everything off the island and onto another island was a true test of willpower.

The logistics were intense. The production wrapped on Inishmore on a Thursday and they needed to have everything in Achill, at the pub location, ready to go. A single ferry brought vehicles on and off Inishmore - and the boat’s crossing was dependant on the weather. Every department had to be prepared, packed, and waiting at the harbour for collection. The crew pulled off the operation with military precision. “I wouldn’t want to do it again. But we managed it – nerves frayed, exhausted, but ready to go,” says Holohan.

McDonagh describes Achill as majestic. He wanted to “capture the beauty of Ireland in the film and lean into that. The story is dark enough anyway, but we wanted the visuals and the locations to be as cinematic as possible.”

The mountainous geography of the island impacts the story. “These looming mountains have a lot of tragedy behind them,” says Gleeson. “It’s been informative, in terms of the broadness of Irish life, because the two locations are very different. Achill has massive mountains; Inishmore has no trees. Yet they have an intimacy about them that’s very real. It was a dream to be able to come to these places.”

The owners of an old fisherman’s cottage in the bay loaned their property to the design team, who converted it for Colm’s needs. “When you get into Colm’s house, the inside is almost like a Van Gogh painting,” remarks Tildesley. “It’s yellow, bright. It has a red floor, which is an old oilskin from a sailcloth, and a black ceiling. These are strong colours for a period film.”

All the props were crafted, found or sourced. Colm has a gramophone, dating from 1910, which was “practically the Internet” in the era of the film, remarks Gleeson. “His whole world opened up with this gramophone,” continues the actor. “He’s listening to Mozart. One corner of Colm’s room is full of musical instruments. He has all these weird masks and puppets with devilish overtones, which speaks to his curiosity but also the darker side of his psyche.”

The pub is a major character in the story. “We looked at all the best westerns and decided we needed a big, long bar,” continues Tildesley. “When these two characters fall out, one goes to one part of the pub. The other goes to the other and it’s a stand-off. We wanted to create a space that was simple but told the story. There’s a sense of warring and oppression and difficulty, so we built a heavy ceiling in the pub that is analogous to the impending doom.”

Other locations on Achill included a lake, Lough Acorrymore and St. Thomas’s Church, on the other side of Achill Island in Dugort. An additional location included a shop owned by Mrs. O’Riordan, played by Bríd Ní Neachtain (*Dancing at Lughnasa, Ros na Rún, Cré na Cille*).

Between Inishmore and Achill, the countryside is also a character in *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN*. When the production began filming, summer was just beginning and the days were long and sun-drenched. As the weeks progressed, the weather changed – the rains loomed, and there were signs of autumn. This sense of changing seasons reflected the story.

In showing the majesty of the landscapes, the beauty of sunsets and the rainstorms, McDonagh wanted to make one of the most beautiful Irish films on record. “Summer in Ireland is usually quite rainy and dour but when we shot it was beautiful. It was majestic. The sunsets and the skies were fantastic and lent themselves to a beautiful piece.”

THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN would not have been possible without help from the locals on Inishmore and Achill. Tildesley worked with local stonemasons. A local company laid stone on the roads to restore them to how they looked in 1923. People on Inishmore offered up their horse and carts for transport on the island. In the harbour at Achill, local fishermen pitched in on the project. Local hooker boats and their crews came up from Galway to appear on screen.

The actors on the film are also effusive in their praise for the crew. Keoghan describes Irish crews as the best in the world. “It definitely grounds you,” he says. “You can come in sometimes with a bit of a big head. You’re definitely brought back down to ground within seconds, which is

great and very healthy. The scale of this movie is massive but it's a very intimate crew, which really makes it comfortable."

STORYTELLERS

Farrell and Gleeson created a shorthand with McDonagh when they made *In Bruges*. *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN* picked up where they left off.

"Martin has clarity of purpose," remarks Gleeson. "Having tried writing and directing simultaneously myself, you have to be careful. Writing and directing are two different parts of the process. You have to separate the process of the words and how best to enact them. Martin writes with in-built latitude, so he writes the characters with room to explore in the filming process."

In a standout scene at the bar, Colm is playing folk music with a troupe when Pádraic confronts him about his strange behaviour. "The pub creates a sense of community and a place for these stories to play out," says Broadbent. "Pádraic is hurting enormously because of Colm's rejection. Colm is sitting in his corner and has asked Pádraic not to talk to him. Fuelled by a lot of alcohol, Pádraic decides that he's going to breach that and confront Colm."

McDonagh describes the scene as electric. "It's the first time in the film when Pádraic stands up to Colm. The threat of what's going to happen if Pádraic keeps talking to Colm is in the air, following his ultimatum. It's an exciting scene and it changes a lot in the story."

DESIGNS OF INISHERIN

"Everywhere you look, there is amazing craftsmanship and passion," says Farrell. "From Tildesley, the production designer, through to Davis the Director of Photography, hair, make-up... They all did amazing work in designing this world. Everyone was bringing this to life with a real passion for the story and a passion for Martin's writing. I'll miss it."

Cinematographer Davis (*Kick-Ass*, *Doctor Strange*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*) was at McDonagh's side throughout the shoot. He may be best known for his work on blockbuster Marvel movies, but *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN* allowed him to pursue a more naturalistic vision. "Ben is a brilliant collaborator," notes McDonagh. "He loves cinema."

Davis shot the west of Ireland to be beautiful, melancholic and moody. His idea of a great Saturday night, after he had been working all week and had a few hours off, was to jump into his car with a camera and find a new naturalistic nugget from the nature around him. He worked closely with Tildesley and the set decoration department to figure out how to light the sets.

Photographs of the west of Ireland, from the period, were in black and white, but the design team learned that the Aran Islanders had a rich colour palette in their surroundings and clothing: deep reds, indigo blues, ochre yellows.

Tildesley worked closely with Costume designer Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh on a colour palette. Each character's abode was designed with colour in mind. The main wall inside Pádraic's house,

for example, was painted a bright grass green – and the house has a green front door. Colm’s home is a concoction of yellow and red.

“We’d discuss the tonal palettes of each character and make sure they worked,” says Tildesley. “Knowing there was a green accent in Pádraic’s house, how would the costumes work with that? Red looks beautiful against green. We tried comparing colours.”

McDonagh did not want to make a documentary or a classic period piece. Instead, he wanted to create something uniquely visually compelling. Unshackled from history, the designers could pursue a visual aesthetic whose only allegiance was to the story. “It’s like stepping back in time in a beautiful but eerie way,” says Farrell. “The costumes and sets feel so lived in and authentic; they feel like they all hold stories and history.”

COSTUMES

Fittingly, Eimer Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh has worked on period productions set in Ireland in the 1920s, a key time in the history of the country, when brother fought against brother in the Irish civil war. She was assistant costume designer on *Michael Collins*, a biopic about an Irish revolutionary, and worked on a production for the BBC called *Rebel Heart*, which spanned the period of 1916 to 1923. She also designed the costumes for Ken Loach in the movie *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, about the Irish War of Independence.

“For me, it was really important to come to this with fresh eyes and a fresh take,” admits Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh. When she and McDonagh perused the historical photographs, they noticed that people dressed in a similar manner. “Martin said he didn’t want it to look like everybody was in a uniform,” continues the costume designer. “So that gave me some leeway to be more creative. With the film being set on a fictitious island, I felt that it would give me an opportunity to create.”

Alongside Tildesley, she wanted to bring a richness into the costume colour palette, accentuating actual colours worn at the time, such as the women’s red petticoats, but also exploring red, yellow, greens and deep blues.

“We’re playing with colour and texture,” she says. “We’re trying to create a world that you relate to. You’ve seen it before, but there’s something not quite right about it. That kind of gives a little bit of its isolationist quality.” McDonagh describes her costumes as amazing, “It immediately lifts something from scripts to the film. You can physically see your character when they walk on set.”

Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh and her team created the costumes for Pádraic, Colm and Siobhán, from scratch. Pádraic is a vulnerable character in the story and Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh wanted that vulnerability to show in his costume. When she studied historical photographs of the Aran Islands in the west of Ireland from the 1920’s, she noticed the cut of the trousers were short, finishing just above the boot. She employed this in Pádraic’s design.

Designing the clothing for Colm was more complex. Colm is pursuing artistic ambitions, but Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh did not want him to look bohemian – that might be a step too far on an Irish island in the 1920’s.

Noticeably, Colm is the only character in *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN* who wears a coat. When Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh looked at photographs from the 1920's, she noticed that nobody wore overcoats along the west coast of Ireland. They all wore jackets and trousers. So she created a coat for Gleeson that would create a strong silhouette when he walks along the beach or jumps over walls in the distance. The coat is light enough to blow in the wind and has elements of the American Western.

Alongside his autumnal, heathery brown coat, Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh gave Gleeson a sweater in a green, seaweed-y colour, and a turquoise linen shirt. "I was thinking of all those kind of colours in nature and trying to make things pop against those colours," she says.

"Eimer and the designers created a world that is of itself," notes Gleeson. "In the old days, colour was important in a person's clothing. Eimer takes that and pushes it into a place where the colours are in tune with the design, the landscape, and the characters. All of them are a little more flamboyant, more outspoken than the costumes of the time will appear."

Siobhán, and the female extras in *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN*, wear a more traditional style of clothing. Condon says, "When I went for my first fitting, I thought, 'It's going to be black and white and drab'. Then there were all these colours. The designer created a red coat with black banding for Siobhán. She has a Sunday best coat and a bright yellow travelling coat. Siobhán also wears touches of cerise pink, jewel greens and royal blues. Even at home, wearing an apron, Siobhán's design is elegant and painterly."

"We picked costumes that Siobhán could have made herself and that showed that she was thinking beyond the island," Condon continues. "Some of the costumes, we thought, might have been passed down from her mother. We carefully selected her jewelry. It was important there be a back-story behind everything."

Dominic, the policeman's downtrodden son, looks boyish yet uncared for. "You don't know when his clothes were last washed," explains Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh. "Everything is a little bit shabby and sad. He really just has the one costume. But there are a few layers - a shirt and jumper - and we see him in different states of undress at various points. He's somebody with no mother and nobody really looking after him. It's important that comes across."

Keoghan describes the fitting process as crucial in his construction of the character. "Once you put on the clothing, if something doesn't fit right or look right, it can change your whole perception on the character. But it can also open up what you didn't picture and allow room for new discoveries."

Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh also enjoyed designing the clothing for Mrs. McCormick, the old lady on the island who prophesies people's doom. "I wanted her to fit in with the women of the island, but she also needs to look a bit scary," says the costume designer. "I found a great photograph of old women wearing their petticoats on their head as a cloak. I thought that was amazing and showed it to Martin." This informed Mrs. McCormick's look. Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh incorporated a traditional belt, worn on the Aran Islands, for this head piece. Her shawl is black on one side, and blood red on the other.

"I love my costume," says Flitton, who plays McCormick and whose arm was hidden in a sling, following an accident. "I couldn't move because of my sling, but the detail is unbelievable. I was right back in 1923, the minute I put that costume on."

THE SCORE

Another frequent partner of McDonagh's is Academy Award®-nominated composer Carter Burwell, who also previously worked on three of his films, starting with *In Bruges*. He has been nominated for an Oscar for his original score work on *Carol* as well as *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, their last collaboration.

"We have similar sensibilities," explains Burwell. "Martin's writing is very particular – it involves a dark view of the world, a really vicious sense of humor, and a lot of humanity. That combination is something we have in common."

McDonagh has always involved Burwell at script stage, before the film is shot. "I approach every film as its own world. Even though Martin and I have done several films together and they're all Martin McDonagh films, they're all different," continues Burwell. "For this script, I remember saying, 'well, I don't see any reason why the music wouldn't be Irish.' And Martin just said, 'no, no, I hate Irish film scores and that deedle-dee music.' So I had to think of what it would be if it were not that."

Adds McDonagh, "Yes, one of the coolest things about Carter's work is that he always does the opposite to the obvious, so Irish music on an Irish film felt like it was going to be a non-starter for us. But something odd, something fable-like, did feel like it might be the way to go."

After months of cogitation, and after an initial edit of the film which allowed him to consider the pacing, how it was shot, the camera angles, and the performances – Burwell started writing the score. He and McDonagh only physically worked together for maybe one day before the recording. Burwell would send him what he was writing, and McDonagh would write back his feelings about the pieces. "I had a lot of ideas come up as I wrote, but until you actually throw the music against the picture, you don't know whether it's going to stick, or what it will bring out in the film."

Initially McDonagh already had, for one section of the film, a piece in mind that's performed by a Balinese gamelan ensemble – mostly metallic instruments. "I happen to be a big fan of gamelan music," continues Burwell. "It's also a bit strange for a movie taking place in Inisherin. But I kind of like the strangeness, and I found myself weaving gamelan instruments into the score as an experiment. And one day, I was inspired when reading Grimm's version of Cinderella with my daughter, a much darker version than Disney's, in which the daughters cut off pieces of their feet to fit into the slipper. I thought that if I played the score more like a fairy tale, it would distance us from the darkness and gruesomeness."

On top of the gamelan Burwell used three main instruments: the celeste – a keyboard that plays bell sounds – the harp, and the flute. He quips, "These are all very pretty, almost childlike instruments, which wouldn't be out of place in a fairy tale. They fit Pádraic, who is a little bit of a man-child. As you follow the dark road that the story goes down, the music starts to feel more ironic. Even though these were all very light sounds, the tunes are not."

When selecting the specific set of instruments for the island and the story – Burwell worked with a small but very strong orchestra at Abbey Road in London for recording. "Even in the last couple of scenes which are very dark, it's still the same instruments – the bell piano and the

harp. They play Pádraic, but also allow us to step back a bit and see what's going on more metaphorically."

"It was the same for *In Bruges*," he adds. "It's about very violent people, but the music almost ignores that and plays their inner fragility." The tunes in *Banshees* stayed sad and sometimes very chromatic, neither major nor minor key. "They're more complicated than they appear," says Burwell. "The music seems simple, but it's actually not quite so simple. Just like Pádraic's life: it seems simple at first and then, it gets much less so."

CODA

What will audiences take away from this story of two friends driven apart? Colm falls out with Pádraic, leaving Pádraic – a sweet, nice guy – vulnerable and exposed. Colm – a determined artist, creator – wants to use his time to create. Therein is the agony of McDonagh's new movie. Should an artist give everything up in pursuit of their inner heart's desire? And if they do, what are the repercussions for the people around them?

Farrell believes that "Pain begets pain. Anger begets anger. Violence begets violence. Human beings do terrible things. Pádraic is hurt so much and he acts in a way and does things that he would never have otherwise. Colm is experiencing, for whatever reasons, an agitation and a pain, a sadness, anger, or fear that leads him to commit upon himself despicable acts."

"What does great art mean if you're treating people like dirt?" wonders Gleeson. "Is it worth the sacrifice? There's a sentiment that you must be prepared to suffer for your art. I don't entirely agree with that. But I think Colm, in his black dog inhabited place, has convinced himself that this is what he needs to show he's fully committed."

Beyond these intellectual questions, raised within the story, there is an innate spirituality within *THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN*. "McDonagh's stuff is funny and has an anarchic element," remarks Farrell. "But, ultimately, I think his work stands the test of time because it's moving and it is relatable. We're not just telling a story of people on an island. The explorations of fidelity, friendship, separation, loneliness, sadness, death, grief and violence: these are very human sentiments that we can all relate to and that we have all been touched by, at least indirectly if not directly."

In his work as a playwright, McDonagh had set two plays on the Aran Islands, three Rocky isles at the mouth of Galway Bay, in western Ireland, including *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (1996) and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (2001). McDonagh was established in theatre as an extraordinary wordsmith with extraordinary tales and extraordinary characters; a writer who brings darkness, comedy and humanity, simultaneously, to his stories.

"I think he found in his films a unique voice and a place as a filmmaker, a writer and director," observes Broadbent. "Martin has a habit of writing brilliant scripts and then teasing you."

Gleeson enjoys going to a movie and having a proper conversation afterwards about the significance of it. "Martin has the ability to be able to mix and match stuff in his writing. You don't get a hero in this film. We're all heroes and villains – well there are a few villains..."

McDonagh hopes he has created characters that audiences have not seen before. "You'll identify with some and disagree with others," he says. "It's very funny, but there's also a sadness

that I really wanted to capture. Filmmakers don't usually try to send an audience away sad. But that was part of it - a sad truth about this story, about Ireland at that time and maybe about life."

FILMMAKER BIOS

MARTIN McDONAGH (Writer, Director, & Producer)

Martin McDonagh is a playwright and filmmaker born in London to Irish parents in 1970. His plays include *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Lonesome West*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *The Pillowman*, and *Hangmen*, all of which have played in both the West End and on Broadway and have now been performed in over 40 countries and translated into more than 30 languages. He has won several awards, including an Olivier Award for Best New Comedy (*The Lieutenant of Inishmore*), two Olivier Awards for Best New Play (*The Pillowman*, *Hangmen*), an Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film (*Six Shooter*), two BAFTA Awards for Best Original Screenplay (*In Bruges*, *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*), a BAFTA Award for Best Film (*Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*), and a BAFTA Award for Best British Film (*Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*). McDonagh also won Golden Globe Awards for Best Screenplay and Best Motion Picture – Drama (*Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*), and was nominated for Best Director (*Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*). He has received two Academy Award nominations for Best Original Screenplay (*In Bruges*, *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*).

GRAHAM BROADBENT & PETE CZERNIN (Producers)

Graham Broadbent and Pete Czernin have been friends since they met on their first day at university.

In 2005, after a decade of forging their own paths – Broadbent as an independent producer in London and Czernin as an executive in Los Angeles – they joined forces to found the film production company Blueprint Pictures in London.

In the last 12 months, Blueprint Pictures has put five films into production in addition to *The Banshees of Inisherin: The Beautiful Game* for Netflix, directed by Thea Sharrock, written by Frank Cottrell-Boyce, starring Micheal Ward and Bill Nighy, a film based on the Homeless World Cup football competition; *Lady Chatterley's Lover* for Sony and Netflix, directed by Laure de Clermont Tonnerre, written by David Magee, starring Emma Corrin and Jack O'Connell; *Strangers* for Film4 and Searchlight Pictures, written and directed by Andrew Haigh, starring Andrew Scott, Paul Mescal, Claire Foy, and Jamie Bell; and *Wicked Little Letters*, to be directed by Thea Sharrock, written by Jonny Sweet which will start shooting in September 2022.

Blueprint is best known for films such as Martin McDonagh's *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* – which won five BAFTA awards including Best Film, four Golden Globes, including Best Motion Picture, Drama, and two Academy Awards: Best Actress for Frances McDormand and Best Supporting Actor for Sam Rockwell – and *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, the follow up to the 2012 BAFTA and Golden Globe-nominated *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*.

Other credits as a producing partnership include: Autumn de Wilde's adaptation of the Jane Austen classic, *Emma*, starring Anya Taylor-Joy; Mike Newell's *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, starring Lily James; James Marsh's *The Mercy*, starring Colin Firth and Rachel

Weisz; Julian Jarrold's *Becoming Jane*, starring Anne Hathaway and James McAvoy; and Lone Scherfig's *The Riot Club*.

In 2016, Broadbent and Czernin established Blueprint Television and in 2018, executive produced Golden Globe and BAFTA-nominated series "A Very English Scandal", starring Hugh Grant and Ben Whishaw and directed by Stephen Frears. The next series of "A Very English Scandal", starring Claire Foy and Paul Bettany, broadcasted in December 2021.

BEN DAVIS, BSC (Director of Photography)

Ben Davis, BSC received BAFTA, Satellite, and BIFA nominations for his work on *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, directed by Martin McDonagh, with whom he also shot *Seven Psychopaths*.

JC Chandor's *Kraven the Hunter* marks a further collaboration for Davis with Marvel having worked on several other productions, including James Gunn's *Guardians of the Galaxy*, Joss Whedon's *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, Scott Derrickson's *Doctor Strange*, Anna Boden & Ryan Fleck's *Captain Marvel*, and Chloe Zhao's *The Eternals*.

He has worked with Matthew Vaughn on *Layer Cake*, *Stardust*, *Kick-Ass*, and *The King's Man*, and with Michael Grandage on *Genius* and *My Policeman*, due for release later this year.

Davis' work can also be seen in Rowan Joffe's *Before I Go To Sleep*, Jonathan Liebesman's *Wrath of the Titans*, John Madden's *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* and *The Debt*, Stephen Frears's *Tamara Drewe*, Tim Burton's *Dumbo*, and Clint Eastwood's *Cry Macho*.

MARK TILDESLEY (Production Designer)

Mark Tildesley is the award-winning British production designer behind Cary Joji Fukunaga's James Bond film, *No Time To Die*, as well as Fernando Meirelles' *The Two Popes* starring Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce. Tildesley and Meirelles previously worked together on *The Constant Gardener*, for which Tildesley earned an Art Directors Guild Nomination. Other recent credits include Paul Thomas Anderson's critically acclaimed *Phantom Thread*, Oliver Stone's biopic *Snowden* starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, and Ron Howard's *In the Heart of the Sea*. Tildesley's work encompasses notable collaborations with several other directors such as Danny Boyle, for whom he designed *T2 Trainspotting*, *Trance*, *Millions*, *28 Days Later*, and *Sunshine*, which awarded him with a British Independent Film Award (BIFA). Tildesley is also a frequent collaborator with director Michael Winterbottom, working together on *The Killer Inside Me*, *Code 46*, *24 Hour Party People*, *The Claim*, *Wonderland*, *With or Without You*, and *I Want You*. Furthermore, Tildesley co-designed the Summer Olympics Opening Ceremony in London in 2012, for which he won a Primetime Emmy Award.

EIMER NÍ MHAOLDOMHNAIGH (Costume Designer)

Eimer Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh has designed costumes for over 25 films in a career extending back to the early 1990s. Mhaoldomhnaigh has been nominated for an Emmy, numerous IFTAs, Broadcast Film Critics Association Award, Awards Circuit Community Awards, International Online Cinema Awards, Satellite Awards, and Las Vegas, San Diego, and Seattle Film Critics Awards.

Mhaoldomhnaigh was a jury member of the 2019 European Film Academy Awards and since 2020, she has been a member of AMPAS. Mhaoldomhnaigh is a graduate of the Limerick School of Art and Design and the National College of Art in Dublin. Film work includes *The Rhythm Section*, *The Professor and the Madman*, *Love and Friendship*, *Jimmy's Hall*, *Calvary*, *The Guard*, *Leap Year*, *Ondine*, *Brideshead Revisited*, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, *Becoming Jane*, *Breakfast on Pluto*, and *In America*. Mhaoldomhnaigh has worked with directors including Martin McDonagh, Colin Trevorrow, Reed Morano, Ken Loach, Neil Jordan, Jim Sheridan, Anand Tucker, John Michael McDonagh, Pete Travis, and Julian Jarrold. Mhaoldomhnaigh has also designed for theater including The Gate and The Abbey theaters in Dublin and styled numerous commercials. Television work includes "Foundation", "Little Women", "The Fall", "Omagh", and "Rebel Heart". Mhaoldomhnaigh helped to establish the costume department at IADT in Dublin and taught there for a number of years. She is currently spearheading the Irish Costume Archive Project, the driving force behind a permanent Costume and Film Museum in Ireland.

CARTER BURWELL (Composer)

Carter Burwell has composed the music for more than 90 feature films, including *Blood Simple*, *Raising Arizona*, *Miller's Crossing*, *Barton Fink*, *The Hudsucker Proxy*, *Rob Roy*, *Fargo*, *The Spanish Prisoner*, *Gods and Monsters*, *Velvet Goldmine*, *Three Kings*, *Being John Malkovich*, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (BAFTA Nominee for Film Music), *Before Night Falls*, *A Knight's Tale*, *Adaptation*, *No Country for Old Men*, *In Bruges*, *Burn After Reading*, *Twilight*, *Where the Wild Things Are* (Golden Globe Nominee for Best Original Score), *A Serious Man*, *The Blind Side*, *The Kids Are All Right*, *True Grit*, *Mr. Holmes*, *Legend*, *Anomalisa*, *Hail, Caesar!*, *Carol* (2015 Nominee for Best Original Score Oscar and Golden Globe, won LA Film Critics Choice Award for Best Music Score), *The Founder*, *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* (2019 Oscar shortlist for Best Score), and *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (2021 Oscar shortlist for Best Score).

In 2017 Burwell wrote the music for Martin McDonagh's film *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, starring Frances McDormand, Woody Harrelson, and Sam Rockwell. Burwell received an Oscar nomination and a Golden Globe Award nomination for his work for *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, and won the British Independent Film Award for Best Music on behalf of the film. In 2012 he composed the score for McDonagh's *Seven Psychopaths* starring Michael Pitt, Michael Stuhlbarg, Sam Rockwell, Colin Farrell, Abbie Cornish and Christopher Walken.

For television, Burwell wrote the music for Apple's series "The Morning Show" starring Jennifer Aniston, Reese Witherspoon, Billy Crudup, and Steve Carell, which had its first season premiere on November 1, 2019. The second season of "The Morning Show" premiered on September 17, 2021.

Burwell worked with Todd Haynes on HBO's mini-series "Mildred Pierce" starring Kate Winslet for which Burwell was nominated for two Emmy Awards, winning in the category of Outstanding Music Composition for a Miniseries, Movie or Special (Original Dramatic Score).

His theater work includes the chamber opera *The Celestial Alphabet Event* and the Mabou Mines productions *Mother* and *Lucia's Chapters of Coming Forth by Day*.

In 2005 he developed a concert work for text and music titled *Theater of the New Ear*, presented in New York, London, and Los Angeles. The text, by Joel and Ethan Coen and Charlie Kaufman, was performed by a dozen actors including Meryl Streep, Steve Buscemi, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Hope Davis, Peter Dinklage, and Jennifer Jason Leigh. The music was performed by the 8-member Parabola Ensemble, conducted by Mr. Burwell.

His writing includes the essays "Music at Six: Scoring the News Then and Now," published in the inaugural issue of *Esopus* magazine in 2003 and reprinted in *Harper's Magazine* in 2004, "No Country For Old Music" in the 2013 *Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*, and "How Nino Rota Saved Me from a Subterranean Freakout" in *Arcana IX*, 2021.

MICKKEL E.G. NIELSEN, ACE (Editor)

Mikkel E.G. Nielsen, ACE is an award-winning editor whose work spans the worlds of feature film, TV, short film, commercial, and music video. Notably, he received a Critics Choice Award, BAFTA Award, and an Academy Award in editing for his work on Darius Marder's critically acclaimed drama *Sound of Metal*. Other distinguished feature credits include Cary Joji Fukunaga's *Beasts of No Nation*; Robin Wright's feature directorial debut, *Land*; Thomas Vinterberg's *Dear Wendy*; Christoffer Boe's *Reconstruction*; and Nikolaj Arcel's *A Royal Affair*. He has been nominated seven times for the Danish Film Award for Best Editing, winning for his work on *King's Game* and *Reconstruction*.

###

CAST BIOS

COLIN FARRELL (Pádraic Súilleabháin)

Colin Farrell has had a distinguished career of nearly twenty-plus years in film and television. He can be seen in Warner Bros.' *The Batman* for director Matt Reeves; in the MGM film *Thirteen Lives* for director Ron Howard; in the BBC / AMC drama "The North Water"; and *After Yang* which premiered at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival and also made its North American debut at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival.

Farrell was most recently seen in Tim Burton's 2019 live action film *Dumbo* and Fox's 2018 ensemble feature *Widows*, directed by Steve McQueen and co-starring Viola Davis. In 2017, Farrell made his second film with Yorgos Lanthimos, *The Killing of the Sacred Deer* opposite Nicole Kidman for A24. The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival along with Sofia Coppola's *The Beguiled* in which he also starred with Nicole Kidman, Elle Fanning, and Kirsten Dunst. That same year, he appeared opposite Denzel Washington in the Sony film *Roman Israel, Esq.*, written and directed by Dan Gilroy.

Lanthimos's *The Lobster*, co-starring Rachel Weisz, was Farrell's first time working with the reputable director. The film won the Jury Prize at the 68th Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for a 2016 BAFTA. Farrell was also nominated for Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy at the Golden Globe Awards, Best Actor at the British Independent Film Awards, and Best European Actor at the European Film Awards for his role in the film.

June 2015 marked Farrell's television debut in the second season of HBO's "True Detective." In 2009, he won a Golden Globe for his role in Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges*. Past work also includes *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, *Miss Julie*, *Saving Mr. Banks*, *Winter's Tale*, *Dead Man Down*, *Total Recall*, Peter Weir's *The Way Back*, *London Boulevard*, *Fright Night*, the Warner Bros. comedy *Horrible Bosses*, and *Ondine*. Farrell also had memorable roles in Gavin O'Connor's *Pride and Glory*, *Miami Vice*, Oliver Stone's *Alexander*, Terrence Malick's *The New World*, *Ask the Dust*, *The Recruit*, *A Home at the End of the World*, based on the Michael Cunningham novel, and two of Joel Schumacher's films, *Phone Booth* and *Tigerland*. Other notable film credits include *Minority Report*, *Daredevil*, *American Outlaws*, *SWAT*, and *Intermission*.

Born and raised in Castleknock in the Republic of Ireland, Farrell attended the Gaiety School of Acting in Dublin before landing starring roles in Deirdre Purcell's miniseries "Falling for a Dancer," the BBC series "Ballykissangel," and Tim Roth's directorial debut, *The War Zone*.

BRENDAN GLEESON (Colm Doherty)

A former teacher, Dublin-born Brendan Gleeson left the profession to pursue a career in his first love – acting. He joined the Irish theater company Passion Machine and has since starred on the stage, in films, and on television, winning fans and awards worldwide.

Following small roles in such movies as Jim Sheridan's *The Field*, Mike Newell's *Into the West*, Jonathan Lewis' telefilm *The Treaty*, and Ron Howard's *Far and Away*, he landed his breakout role in Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*, which won five Academy Awards including Best Picture. His portrayal of real-life criminal Martin Cahill in John Boorman's *The General*, in tandem with his performance in Paddy Breathnach's *I Went Down*, brought Mr. Gleeson Best Actor honors from the Boston Society of Film Critics. *The General* also earned him the Irish Film & Television Award (IFTA) and the London Critics' Circle Film Award for Best Actor.

He starred for writer/director Martin McDonagh in *Six Shooter*, which won the Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film. Reteaming with the filmmaker for Focus Features' *In Bruges*, Mr. Gleeson earned Golden Globe, British Independent Film, Satellite, IFTA, and BAFTA Award nominations for his memorable performance opposite Colin Farrell.

Most recently, Mr. Gleeson earned an Emmy nomination for Season 2 of the AMC series "State of the Union" opposite Patricia Clarkson; starred in three seasons of the Direct TV / Audience Network hit series "Mr. Mercedes" based on Stephen King's book by the same name; earned a Golden Globe nomination for portraying Donald Trump in the CBS series "A Higher Loyalty" and appeared opposite Denzel Washington and Frances McDormand in Joel Coen's Apple film *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.

His distinctive voice has been heard as narrator of the Irish-language documentary series "1916 Seachtar na Cásca", as well as in roles in three Academy Award-nominated animated features: *The Secret of Kells*, directed by Tomm Moore and Nora Twomey, *The Pirates! Band of Misfits*, directed by Peter Lord and Jeff Newitt, and *Mr. Moore's Song of the Sea*.

Moviegoers also know him from three *Harry Potter* movies, directed by Mike Newell and David Yates, respectively; Mr. Boorman's *The Tailor of Panama*, *In My Country*, and *The Tiger's Tail*; Neil Jordan's *Michael Collins*, *The Butcher Boy*, and *Breakfast on Pluto*; John Woo's *Mission: Impossible II*; Steven Spielberg's *AI*; Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later...*; Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*; Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy*; Ridley Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven*; Robert Zemeckis' *Beowulf*; Paul Greengrass' *Green Zone*; Rodrigo García's *Albert Nobbs*; Daniel Espinosa's *Safe House*; Robert Redford's *The Company You Keep*; Doug Liman's *Edge of Tomorrow*; and John Michael McDonagh's *The Guard*, for which he was again a Golden Globe, IFTA, and British Independent Film Award (BIFA) nominee, and *Cavalry*, for which he was named Best Actor by both IFTA and BIFA.

Mr. Gleeson starred as Winston Churchill in Thaddeus O'Sullivan's telefilm *Into the Storm* and was nominated for Golden Globe and BAFTA Awards in addition to winning an IFTA as well as Satellite and Emmy Awards.

Other recent films include: The Coen Brothers' *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* for Netflix; *Hampstead*, opposite Diane Keaton; *Paddington 2* also starring Hugh Grant, Sally Hawkins, and Julie Walters; *Trespass Against Us* opposite Michael Fassbender; Vincent Perez's *Alone in Berlin* opposite Emma Thompson; *Assassin's Creed* once again with Michael Fassbender; the Warner Bros. Ben Affleck starrer *Live By Night*; Ron Howard's *In the Heart of the Sea*; and *Suffragette* opposite Carey Mulligan and Meryl Streep, once again winning the BIFA Award for Best Supporting Actor.

KERRY CONDON (Siobhán Súilleabháin)

First seen in the Oscar nominated film *Angela's Ashes*, Irish actress Kerry Condon has garnered high praise for her numerous roles in some of Hollywood's most talked about films.

Condon will soon be seen in the upcoming thriller *In The Land Of Saints And Sinners* alongside Liam Neeson and Ciarán Hinds. Kerry was recently seen in the Academy Award-winning *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, as well as Miles Joris-Peyrafitte's drama thriller *Dreamland*, alongside Margot Robbie, Travis Fimmel, Garrett Hedlund, and Finn Cole.

Other film roles include Dean Devlin's *Bad Samaritan*, *Dom Hemingway* opposite Jude Law, *The Last Station*, *This Must Be the Place* starring Sean Penn, the Oscar winning short film *The Shore*, *The Runaway*, *Unleashed*, *Intermission*, and as Kate Kelly in *Ned Kelly*.

Condon lends her voice to the role of Friday in *Avengers: Endgame*, *Infinity War*, and *Age of Ultron*, as well as in *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, and *Captain America: Civil War*.

On television, Condon was recently seen as Molly Sullivan in the third season of Showtime's "Ray Donovan" as well as the series' successive movie. Previously, she starred in the lead role of Sharon Horgan's comedy series "Women on the Verge". She recurred as Stacey Ehrmantraut on AMC's much lauded "Better Call Saul" and co-starred on HBO's "Luck" opposite Dustin Hoffman and Nick Nolte, directed by Michael Mann. For two seasons, Condon brought the ancient city of Rome to life in Bruno Heller's HBO series "Rome".

On stage at just 19, Condon originated the role of Mairead in *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* by Martin McDonagh at The Royal Shakespeare Company and the Atlantic Theatre Company in New York. For this production she recorded the song "The Patriot Game" with The Pogues. In that same year she played Ophelia in *Hamlet*, making her the youngest actress to ever play that role for The Royal Shakespeare Company. Kerry also starred in the first production of *After the End* by Dennis Kelly. In 2009, she appeared in *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, also by McDonagh, for which she won a Lucille Lortel and a Drama Desk award.

BARRY KEOGHAN (Dominic Kearney)

Barry Keoghan is currently in production on Academy Award-winning filmmaker Emerald Fennell's highly anticipated next feature *Salt Burn* for Amazon. He plays the lead role in a cast that includes Jacob Elordi and Alison Oliver.

Keoghan most recently joined the DC Universe as The Joker, opposite Robert Pattinson, in Matt Reeves' *The Batman* franchise. He can also be seen in Marvel's *Eternals* directed by Chloe Zhao.

Other credits include Christopher Nolan's Academy Award-nominated film *Dunkirk*, David Lowery's medieval feature *The Green Knight* for A24, Film4's *Calm with Horses* (premiered at TIFF in 2019), Bart Layton's *American Animals* (premiered at Sundance in 2018), *Trespass Against Us* (premiered at TIFF in 2016), *Mammal* (premiered at Sundance in 2016), Yann Demange's '71

(premiered at Berlin in 2014), and the Golden Globe & BAFTA award-winning HBO series "Chernobyl".

In 2018, Keoghan was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Actor for his performance in Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, in which he starred opposite Colin Farrell and Nicole Kidman. The film premiered at Cannes, where Barry was named "Cannes' Next Big Thing" by The Hollywood Reporter.

Keoghan was also nominated for a BAFTA in 2019 in the EE Rising Star category.