



# BFI FAMILIES

FAMILY FRIENDLY FILM SCREENINGS,  
ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS



## WOLFWALKERS

*+ pre-recorded Q&A with directors*

### What's it about?

It's the mid-17th century and young Robyn arrives in Ireland with her father, who is tasked with hunting down the local wolves. Yet everything changes when Robyn befriends Mebh, a wolfwalker who has the ability to transform into wolf form when she sleeps. This original and compelling tale sparkles with rich visuals and explores friendship, difference and acceptance.

# WolfWalkers: Old Ireland’s Hunters and Hunted

*WolfWalkers* follows the Irish director Tomm Moore’s hand-drawn cartoon films *The Secret of Kells* (2009) and *Song of the Sea* (2014). Each has children drawn into natural wonderlands of myth and magic, into adventures about protecting and healing rather than fighting.

*WolfWalkers*, which Moore co-directed with Ross Stewart, is set in 1650, during Ireland’s occupation by Oliver Cromwell, or a fictional equivalent – the character is called Lord Protector in the film, a title Cromwell only took in 1653. But what happens in *WolfWalkers* hardly follows history. More important, the Lord Protector is the film’s clear and cruel villain – Moore has previously eschewed such characters.

The heroes of *WolfWalkers* are two girls. Robyn Goodfellowe, despite her name’s folkloric connotations, is initially an ordinary girl from England. She’s come to Ireland with her father, voiced by Sean Bean, who hunts down wolves in the woods. Soon enough, Robyn encounters the wild girl Mebh, who lives in a magically hidden cavern behind a waterfall with the wolves she commands, frantically seeking her missing mother. Mebh can project her mind into a wolf’s body, leaping and dashing through trees and over rooftops, a power she inadvertently gives Robyn. The girls become fast friends, though Robyn’s devotion to her father places her in painful dilemmas.

Like the adult animation of Bill Plympton or the teen-skewed anime of Shinkai Makoto, Moore’s visual style is instantly identifiable. His films’ drawings can look naive and artless, but they’re wondrously composed with swirls and circles and glorious colours, flattened spaces and playful perspectives. Mebh’s wolf pack operates as a furry mass; its Hydra heads snarl scarily or grin goofily. Mebh herself is drawn as if half of her is her fiery swirling hair.

*WolfWalkers* is more of an action-adventure than Moore’s other films, especially in its breathless extended climax. Some set pieces feel inspired by Miyazaki Hayao’s *Princess Mononoke* (1997).

*WolfWalkers* is hugely successful in engaging us with the enchantingly expressive girls, and with Robyn’s love for her father.

**Andrew Osmond, *Sight & Sound*, December 2020**

## WOLFALKERS

*Directed by:* Tomm Moore, Ross Stewart  
*©:* Cartoon Saloon (WolfWalkers) Ltd, Mélusine Productions  
*A Cartoon Saloon & Mélusine production:*  
*In association with:* Value & Power Culture Communication Co.,  
Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland, Film Fund Luxembourg, The Broadcasting  
Authority of Ireland, Haut et Court Distribution, RTÉ, Canal+, OCS,  
Pôle image Magelis  
*With the support of:* Charente County Council  
*In association with:* Folivari, GKIDS  
*With the support of:* Film Fund Luxembourg  
*Produced with the participation of:* CNC, Creative Europe MEDIA  
Programme of the European Union, Crone Film International  
*Executive Producers:* Gerry Shirren, Fabien Renelli, Zhang Shuo, Yang  
Ying, Didier Brunner, Damien Brunner, Eric Beckman, David Jesteadt  
*Produced by:* Paul Young, Nora Twomey,  
Tomm Moore, Stéphan Roelants  
*Line Producer:* Katja Schumann  
*Group Financial Controller:* Paul Deegan  
*Assistant Director:* Mark Mullery  
*Casting Director:* Louise Kiely Casting  
*Child Casting:* Eva Jane Gaffney  
*Screenplay by:* Will Collins  
*Animation Supervisors:* Svend Andreas Rothman Bonde, Nicolas Debray  
*Editing:* Richie Cody, Darren Holmes, Darragh Byrne  
*Additional Editing:* Alan Slattery Cartoon Saloon

*Music by:* Bruno Coulais  
*In collaboration with:* Kíla  
*Songs Performed by:* Aurora, Maria Doyle Kennedy, Sofia Coulais  
*Keyboards & Programming:* Bruno Coulais  
*Orchestra:* The Bulgarian Symphony Orchestra – Sif 309  
*Conducted by:* Deyan Pavlov  
*Original Music Orchestrated by:* Bruno Coulais  
*Re-recording Mixer:* Fabien Devillers

## Voice Cast

Honor Kneafsey (*Robyn Goodfellowe*)  
Eva Whittaker (*Mebh Óg MacTíre*)  
Sean Bean (*Robyn’s father, Bill Goodfellowe*)  
Simon McBurney (*Lord Protector*)  
Tommy Tiernan (*Seán Óg*)  
Jon Kenny (*stringy woodcutter, Ned*)  
John Morton (*stumpy woodcutter*)  
Maria Doyle Kennedy (*Mebh’s mother, Moll MacTíre*)  
Nora Twomey (*head housekeeper, Bridget*)  
Oliver McGrath (*street children ringleader, Pádraig*)  
Paul Young (*sheep farmer*)  
Niamh Moyle (*fishmonger*)

Ireland/UK/France 2020  
103 mins