



NEW RELEASES

The Quiet Girl **(An Cailín Ciúin)**

This sensitive adaptation of Claire Keegan's acclaimed short story 'Foster' follows a quiet, neglected girl as she's sent away from her dysfunctional family to live with foster parents for the summer in rural Ireland. She blossoms in their care, but in this house where there are meant to be no secrets, she discovers one. Centred on a remarkable performance by its young star Catherine Clinch, this poignant Irish-language film is both a moving coming of age story and a beautiful portrait of rural life.

Simon Duffy, BFI Programme & Research Manager

Nothing puts the fear of god into a classroom full of raucous Irish children like the sound of an exasperated, nerve-shot teacher shouting '*Ciúnas!*' (the Irish word for silence). It's a command that has the power to turn rosy cheeks porcelain, and transform small smiling faces into contorted masks of worry.

The terror that follows a call for *ciúnas!* is one that Cáit, the young girl at the centre of Colm Bairéad's Irish-language film, appears to carry at all times. It's as though she's been told to be quiet so often (or worse, ignored), she's learned there is little point in making any noise at all. Instead she wanders off into the long grass, stashes herself under her bed away from the clamour of her many siblings, and waits silently in the pub as her father sinks another 'liquid lunch'.

But what Cáit lacks in loquaciousness she makes up for in curiosity – a trait Bairéad underscores by keeping the camera on her almost constantly. When Cáit's parents argue over plans to send her away for the summer and leave the family with one less mouth to feed, she is right there on the landing, absorbing every unguarded word: 'How long should they keep her, until after the baby?' the mother asks the father, who swats the thought away like a nuisance fly: 'They can keep her as long as they like.' These words are spoken in English, making the growing schism between Cáit and her family feel even greater.

An Cailín Ciúin – which made history this year as the first Irish-language feature to show at Berlinale – was adapted from the 2010 story 'Foster' by Claire Keegan, and the film takes much of the dialogue from Keegan's sparse but melodic prose verbatim. It's a book that runs on feelings – making it a perfect fit for Gaeilge, a language that can put the heavy physicality of emotions into words ('I'm sad' in Irish – *tá brón orm* – translates literally as 'I have sadness upon me').

Without the help of the first-person internal monologue that Keegan used, Bairéad has managed to transmit Cáit's every mood through the crystallising performance of 12-year-old Catherine Clinch, who had never acted in front of a camera before. When Cáit's father drops her off at the home of Eibhlín and Seán Cinnsealach, an older farming couple she has not seen since she was in a pram, we feel her unease through every eyebrow twitch and forced, slanted smile. Shooting in full-frame Academy ratio, director of photography Kate McCullough captures Cáit moving between pale yellow doorways, squaring

the difference between this place, her home, and the discomfort that lies in between.

Here food is brought to the table without anxiety; a nurturing love is shown through cut tomatoes and ridged slices of beetroot – all of which her father treats with mild disdain as he gibes about how Cáit will eat them ‘out of house and home’. It’s what Keegan called ‘the way men have of not talking’, men who instead ‘kick a divot out of the grass with a boot heel’. To have brought the child here at all is an admission of struggle, and so he amps up the cruelty to give the illusion of choice. ‘Try not to fall into the fire, you,’ he tells Cáit as he drives off with her suitcase still in the car.

And so they dress her up in a plaid shirt and too-long jeans, with Eibhlín (Carrie Crowley) orienting her in her new home through instant maternal affection. This is a house without secrets, she tells her, though Seán’s initial standoffishness – and the child’s wallpaper in Cáit’s new room – suggest they’re living with more than one.

Through a shimmering near-montage of moments – onion-chopping, hair-brushing, trips to a spring well, slow-mo runs through an arch of trees – we watch Cáit move organically from awkward interloper to daughter figure. At times, the crisp shots and liquidy use of light can feel close to a Kerrygold ad, but the film’s sharp emotional intelligence stops it tipping into the realm of commercial sentimentality. This is seen in Cáit’s wretched encounter with a busybody neighbour, who dishes out more questions about the Cinnsealachs than nettles have stings. Her nosy, venomous chatter lets out that household secret. But instead of shattering the foundation they’ve built, honesty gives way to a greater connection between Seán and Cáit. ‘You don’t have to say anything,’ he tells her in the light of a pearly moon. ‘Many’s the person that missed the opportunity to say nothing, and lost much because of it.’ By the end, Cáit chooses *ciúnas* not out of fear, but because she has found a new sense of self – someone who understands all that can be gained in the simplicity of silence.

Katie McCabe, bfi.org.uk, 13 May 2022

THE QUIET GIRL (AN CAILÍN CIÚIN)

Directed by: Colm Bairéad
©: Inscéal
Production Company: Inscéal
Logo: Cine4
Presented by: Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland, TG4, Údarás Craolacháin na hÉireann
Executive Producer for Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland: Dearbhla Regan
Executive Producer for TG4: Máire Ní Chonláin
Produced by: Cleona Ní Chruaíaoi
Line Producer: Des Martin
Production Co-ordinator: Helen Barry Duke
Location Manager: Grant Bobbett
1st Assistant Director: Scott McCutcheon
Script Supervisor: Sarah Jayne Ní Cheallaigh
Script Editor: Mark O’Halloran
Written by: Colm Bairéad
Based on the story ‘Foster’ by: Claire Keegan
Director of Photography: Kate McCullough
Editor: John Murphy
Production Designer: Emma Lowney
Costume Designer: Louise Stanton
Wardrobe Supervisor: Arlene Riley
Hair and Make-up Designers: Linda Mooney, Avelina Mooney
Music: Stephen Rennicks
Sound Mixer: Brendan Rehill

Cast

Carrie Crowley (*Eibhlín Cinnsealach*)
Andrew Bennett (*Seán Cinnsealach*)
Catherine Clinch (*Cáit*)
Michael Patric (*Da*)
Kate Nic Chonaonaigh (*Mam*)
Joan Sheehy (*Úna*)
Tara Faughnan (*Sorcha*)
Neans Nic Dhonncha (*Gráinne*)
Éabha Ní Chonaola (*Aoife*)
Carolyn Bracken (*woman*)
Pádraig Ó Sé (*Mac Gearailt*)
Breandán Ó Duinnshléibhe (*Ó Cathasaigh*)
Seán Ó Súilleabháin (*Ó Floinn*)
Áine Hayden (*shop lady*)
Elaine O’Hara (*Áine*)
Marion O’Dwyer (*Bríd*)

Ireland 2022
95 mins

A Curzon release

NEW RELEASES

Firebird
From 22 April
We're All Going to the World's Fair
From 29 April
The Velvet Queen: Snow Leopard
From 6 May
Vortex
Tue 10 May 18:00 Preview + intro by Gaspar No  
From Fri 13 May
The Quiet Girl
From Sat 21 May
Benediction
From Fri 3 Jun
All My Friends Hate Me
From Fri 10 Jun

RE-RELEASES

Croupier
From Wed 4 May
Vampyr
From Fri 20 May; Mon 23 May 14:00 Seniors' Matinee + discussion
Cabaret
From Fri 6 May
Get Carter + The Frighteners: The Manipulators
From Fri 27 May; Mon 30 May 18:00 + intro by Douglas Weir, BFI
Technical Delivery Manager
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Wings of Desire
From Fri 24 Jun

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