



## NEW RELEASES

# Kneecap

### Kneecap

Directed by: Rich Peppiatt

©: Kneecap Films Limited, Screen Market Research Limited t/a Wildcard, The British Film Institute

Produced by: Fine Point, Mother Tongues

Co-produced by: Wildcard

In association with: Naughty Step, DMC Film

Developed with the assistance of:

Northern Ireland Screen, Mother Tongues Films

Developed with the support of: Shudder Films,

Ardimages UK, Charades, Curzon, Intermission Film

Presented by: BFI, Northern Ireland Screen,

Screen Ireland, TG4, Coimisiún Na Meán

In association with: Curzon, Charades, Great Point

International Sales by: Charades

Executive Producers: Niamh Fagan, Louise Ortega,

Ursula Devine, Carole Baraton, Aine Walsh,

Proinsias Ní Ghráinne, Máire Bhreathnach, Yohann

Comte, Philip Knatchbull, Pierre Mazars, Louisa

Dent, Manon Ardisson, Chiara Ventura, Pete Boyle,

Keith Kehoe, Dias Feld, Augusta Charlton, Kamila

Serkebaeva

Producers: Trevor Birney, Jack Tarling

Co-producer: Patrick O'Neill

Archive Producer: Fran Rowlett-McCormick

Associate Producers: Lisa Service, Ali Doyle,

Luis García

Production Co-ordinator: Phillip McGonigle

Production Accountant: Liam O'Connor

Location Manager: Richard Glenholmes

Post-production Supervisor: Mark Warren

Post-production Supervisor for *Yellow Moor*:

Alan Frier

Post-production Supervisor for *Outer Limits*:

Brian Raferty

Post-production Manager: Lisa Curry

Production Consultant: Fionn Greger

2nd Unit Director: Peadar Ó Goill

1st Assistant Director: Robert Gerrard

2nd Assistant Director: Dallan Shovlin

Script Supervisor: Andrew Higgins

Casting Director: Carla Stronge

Script Editor: Danny Wigley

Written by: Rich Peppiatt

Story by: Rich Peppiatt, Naoise Ó Cairealláin,

Liam Óg Ó Hannaidh, JJ Ó Dochartaigh

Director of Photography: Ryan Kernaghan

Digital Imaging Technician: William J. Kelly

Gaffer: Kevin Heatherington

Best Boy: Lee Lovett

Key Grip: Cormac Long

Visual Effects Supervisor: Andy Clarke

Visual Effects Producer: Matthew Sullivan

Graphics: Stephen McGlue

Motion Graphics Lead: Cian Hogan

Animator: Stephen McCollum

Editors: Julian Ulrichs, Chris Gill

Additional Editing: Dara McKeagney, Peadar Ó Goill

Production Designer: Nicola Moroney

Art Director: Francis Taaffe

Costume Designer: Zjena Glamocanin

Costume Supervisor: Joanne McFeely

Hair and Make-up Designer: Liz Boston

Hair & Make-up Supervisor: Kelly White

Title Design by: Gianni Clifford

Original Score by: Michael 'Mikey J' Asante

Music Supervisors: Jeanette Rehnstrom,

Gary Welsh

Choreographer: Oona Doherty

Production Sound Mixer: Chris Woodcock

Re-recording Mixer: Aza Hand

Supervising Sound Editor: Brendan Rehill

Stunt Co-ordinators: Donal O'Farrell, David Anders

The BT Tower looms over the London neighbourhood of Fitzrovia, casting its shadow like the gnomon of a sundial, a middle finger to the spires of Hawksmoor and Wren that puncture the sky above the city, a signal that telecommunications are now the closest thing we have to God.

The streets below, north of Oxford Street, west of Bloomsbury, once home to Virginia Woolf and George Bernard Shaw, once the London of *Peeping Tom* (1960) and *Phantom Thread* (2017), now abuzz with static as the prêt-à-porter suits and dresses of adland rub against the creased plaid shirts emerging from another post-production all-nighter.

The literary history of the area lives on in the pubs. On Rathbone Street, the Marquis of Granby is an old haunt of T.S. Eliot; the Newman Arms was the model for the pub in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and one night in the Duke of York, Anthony Burgess peered nervously over his pint as the place was torn apart by a local gang. And in this most English of areas imaginable in a cosmopolitan city, where a portrait of Prince Andrew in military regalia hangs above the side entrance to the site of the alleged inspiration for the ultraviolence in Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, we meet Kneecap, a three-piece group from Belfast who rap in Irish and cause controversy and excitement wherever they go.

Comprising rappers Móglaí Bap ('I respect the commitment to still have Prince Andrew up there. They must really like him...') and Mo Chara ('It just goes to show they can do anything. There's no morality when it comes to the royal family...') alongside producer DJ Próvaí, Kneecap have become as talked about for their outspoken support for a united Ireland and free Palestine as they have for their music, a heady mix of hip hop and rave that hit the mainstream this summer with two of the most talked-about sets at Glastonbury.

The group star as semi-fictionalised versions of themselves alongside Michael Fassbender, Simone Kirby and Josie Walker in *Kneecap*, the feature debut of Rich Peppiatt, which won the NEXT audience prize at this year's Sundance, the first time an Irish-language film had screened at the festival. A cartoonified retelling of the band's origin story, *Kneecap* is fast, funny and thrillingly political. Set during the marches and protests that helped push through the Identity and Language Act 2022, which offers official recognition for and protection of the Irish language in Northern Ireland, the film positions Mo Chara and Móglaí Bap as erudite working-class hopefuls looking for an outlet for their frustrations and rage. They find their voice through rap, as natural a home for protest music as punk or folk, the clichéd depiction of unintelligent boys in tracksuits as the butt of the joke pointedly absent.

Obvious comparisons with *Trainspotting* (1996) can be drawn through the film's animated sequences, hyper-realistic Class A experiences and a pulsating soundtrack that adds urgency and jeopardy, while the liberal reimagining of the real lives of its musical subjects allows comparison with *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *8 Mile* (2002). Where the film stays true to life is in the band's advocacy of the Irish language and their fire-starting approach to making the world sit up and listen.

**Cast:**

Naoise Ó Cairealláin (*Naoise, 'Mógláí Bap'*)  
Liam Óg Ó Hannaidh (*Liam Óg, 'Mo Chara'*)  
JJ Ó Dochartaigh (*JJ, 'DJ Próvaí'*)  
Josie Walker (*Detective Ellis*)  
Fionnuala Flaherty (*Caitlín*)  
Jessica Reynolds (*Georgia*)  
Adam Best (*Doyle*)  
Simone Kirby (*Dolores*)  
Michael Fassbender (*Arlo Ó Cairealláin*)  
Matthew Sharpe (*Sean*)  
Cathal Mercer (*Fra*)  
Donagh Deeney (*Uncle Peadar*)  
Marty Maguire (*Nesbitt*)  
Saoirleaoith Brady (*Lorna*)  
Aidan McCaughey (*Wee Naoise / young Naoise*)  
Cillian Kernan (*Wee Liam Óg / young Liam Óg*)  
Lalor Roddy (*priest*)  
Gerry Adams (*Gerry Adams*)  
Karl O'Neill (*male doctor*)  
Niall Cusack (*headteacher*)  
Maria Connolly (*café worker*)  
Maire McCallion (*checkout assistant*)  
Kerri Quinn (*spin instructor*)  
Emily Lamey (*venue manager*)  
Tony Devlin (*Antoine, random mourner*)  
Noel McGee (*undercover peeler*)  
Paul Murphy (*well wisher 1*)  
Brian Devlin (*well wisher 2*)  
Clíodhna McCorley (*teacher 1*)  
Jack Watson (*teacher 2*)  
Brid Ó Galloir (*teacher 3*)  
Emer Casey (*teacher 4*)  
Donal O'Hanlon (*teacher 5*)  
Suzanne Waring (*teacher 6*)  
Norma Sheahan (*governor 1*)  
Jenny Cameron (*newsreader*)  
Michael Levers (*DUP politician*)  
Sean Sloan (*politician*)  
Shane Davis (*gig goer 1*)  
Christopher Grant (*gig goer 2*)  
Ellie Campbell Brennan (*glass collector*)  
Lauren Shannon Jones (*female punter 1*)  
Kiana Kraze (*female partner 2*)  
Dearbháile McKinney (*female partner 3*)  
Callia Peppiatt (*naughty kid 1*)  
Amelie Peppiatt (*naughty kid 2*)  
DJ Mango (*rave DJ*)  
Clare McAuley (*Raven the raver*)  
Eoin Suitor (*baton boy*)  
Rebecca Murray (*café customer*)  
UK-Ireland-France 2024©  
105 mins  
Digital

A Curzon release

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**SIGHT AND SOUND**

Kneecap first gained notoriety in 2019 after the UK press picked up on the story of a Belfast rap group leading a chant of 'Get your Brits out' (also the name of one of their tracks) at a pub Prince William and Kate Middleton had visited in the city the previous day. In August 2022, ahead of their then-biggest show at a festival in West Belfast they unveiled a mural of a burning police car, tagged 'Ní l fáilte roimh an RUC' (The RUC – Royal Ulster Constabulary – aren't welcome). A month later, when the Queen of England died, they tweeted: 'As head of the British Army she oversaw dozens of wars & the deaths of millions. Belfast to Baghdad, Libya to the Malvinas. There's a thousand crimes behind the crown.' They were awarded a publicly-funded arts grant, approved by an independent selection board, which was rescinded by the then secretary of state for business and trade, Kemi Badenoch, on the grounds that the UK should not fund 'people that oppose the United Kingdom itself'. Kneecap were granted permission to challenge the ruling by the high court in Belfast. A full hearing will take place in November. They've posed for photos with Gerry Adams, Jeremy Corbyn and, most recently, the usually reticent Cillian Murphy, a music fan and supporter of a united Ireland. In every picture, as on stage, DJ Próvaí wears a provocative Irish tricolour balaclava.

Director Rich Peppiatt is keen to make sure I understand the cultural significance of Kneecap. 'These boys have had such a massive impact,' he says. 'Particularly on young people engaging with the Irish language. Language has got this thing of not being cool, and to have three people who are speaking Irish who young people can look up to, who've made the language cool, it's really not an underestimation to say that a significant portion of young people who are engaging with the Irish language now do so because of Kneecap. And they've done that not because they're trying to do it, but because naturally that's who they are. They're doing their own thing, living their lives as Irish speakers, and I think it's very special. They've managed to have that impact in a way that really does transcend the music or the film. It's a real-world impact that is historic and that's going to last generations.'

Mike Williams, *Sight and Sound*, September 2024