



IFTN



QUALITY TUTORS LEADING CASTING DIRECTOR

Actors Crew Distribution Equipment Finance Locations Ireland Production
 Broadcast Digital Education / Training Festivals / Markets Legal Post Production Rep Bodies
 JOBS FILMOGRAPHY NEWS WHO'S WHO DIARY GALLERY IFTA

NEWS IN BRIEF

Features & Interviews
 Broadcast News
 Production News
 Festivals News
 Facilities News
 Distribution News
 Training News
 Markets News
 Finance News
 Legal News
 Digital News
 Cast News
 Crew News
 Locations News
 Commercials News
 Telecoms News
 Newsletter Archive
 Site Map
 List Your Company
 Free Newsletter
 Site Map

IFTN HOME

17 Dec 2009 | By Aileen Moon



Belonging To Laura

Monday, December 21st sees the broadcast of 'Belonging to Laura' a modern Irish interpretation of Oscar Wilde's play 'Lady Windemere's Fan'. The made for television feature is a TV3 commissioned Irish drama.

In this modern take on the classic play, Laura Wilde is about to be married to the handsome Tiernan Fitzpatrick. But on the eve of the main event, she learns that her perfect fiancé may have slept with another woman on his stag night. And when this woman turns up at the wedding rehearsal, Laura's world starts to fall apart.

'Belonging to Laura' is the screenwriting debut for writers Iseult Golden and David Horan who are already established theatre writers. It is directed by Karl Golden (The Honeymooners, Beached) and produced by Martina Niland (Once) and David Collins (Cairo Time). The 75 minute TV film was shot over 15 days in July of this year in Knockbawn, Co. Wicklow with a budget of just €400,000.

The young cast involved sees a combination of both upcoming and established Irish talent, including newcomer Christina Carty as Laura Wilde, Brendan McCormack (The Daisy Chain) as Tiernan Fitzpatrick, Michael FitzGerald (Leap Year) as Oisín, Tatiana Uliankina (Fair City) as Sascha and Domhnall O'Donoghue (Jack's Hat) as Ciarán and Aislin Bea (Fair City) as Leanne.

IFTN caught up with the film's director to talk about the film's production, fear's about taking on Wilde and the change from a fan to a bag.

IFTN: How did 'Belonging to Laura' come about and how did you yourself get involved?

Karl Golden: *I knew Martina and David, the producers, very well – I had worked with them on 'The Honeymooners' and when I was starting out we did a couple of shorts together so we are always trading ideas and scripts and they came to me about a year ago with the screenplay for 'Belonging to Laura' and I immediately liked it. I'm a big Oscar Wilde fan and have been since I was young because I thought his plays were so provocative and rebellious in their spirit. I always thought it was a shame that there was no Irish film production made of an Oscar Wilde play, any Wilde films done over here and in the UK were always quite genteel and quite formal so when I read the script I saw it as an opportunity to do something in Ireland that had an Oscar Wilde spirit to it and is still quite modern - despite being over a hundred years old.*

Obviously some small changes had to be made to the original script but you've made some significant alterations to Wilde's plot, did you do this on purpose to allow for differentiation between the film and the original play?

*There were a few challenges in that. I think you could definitely look at the film and not know it was based on an Oscar Wilde play and my attitude is that if Oscar Wilde was looking down on us he'd be encouraging us to f*ck with his drama. Having too much reverence for it isn't going to work and the last thing I wanted to do with this was to have a theatrical style film – people constantly declaring things for example.*

Also, I wanted real characters and Wilde's Lady Windemere, for example, is far too naïve and in awe of her husband. It seemed more true to life in the way that Tiernan (played by Brendan McCormack) doesn't know if he has done something wrong – without that ambiguity there isn't enough cinematic tension. The biggest thing we took from Wilde was the structure of his story – he was incredibly modern in his approach to plot structure. Purely from a craft point of view he was an incredible dramatist.

One of the characters, Ciarán (played by Domhnall O'Donoghue), is the only character that really stays true to the Oscar Wilde style of speech and flamboyance – was this done on purpose as a kind of Wildean tribute?

The inclusion of the Ciarán character was a big decision early on. When I came on board one draft of the film's script had already been done and a choice had been made to feature a lot of the Wilde language and I think that would have meant us going completely Wilde with the language – it'd be very much an all or nothing thing. I didn't feel like I could have actors sitting

around talking in half-Victorian and half-contemporary speech, it wouldn't have worked. But we did decide to have one character who would have something of the spirit of Wilde in there, without it being too self-conscious. It's a melodrama already so we needed to keep other aspects of it as real as possible but with Ciarán we decided to make him quite a flamboyant character.

Gay characters in Irish drama are quite under-represented and, while not looking to make a big statement - and I'm not some gay rights campaigner - but I just think this is modern Ireland so we have one of the group of friends who is openly gay and whose friends celebrate this. He's secretly in love with one of the other characters which added to the texture of what we were trying to do with the film and introduced an idea of global Ireland - the various colours and textures of the film represent the people of modern Ireland.

On that note, there is a mix of ethnicities at the wedding of Laura and Tiernan – a polish band, Korean food for example. Was this done to further reflect a 'Global Ireland'?

I've been living in London for eight years now and so I didn't approach 'Belonging to Laura' thinking "Well this is an Irish film where everything has to look like the Ireland that people often see on screen. Ireland on screen is either an incredibly contrived, American version of Ireland or caricatured somehow. You don't often see the other version of Ireland – this group of slightly bohemian, slightly 'Old Money' crowd living in Wicklow some of whom I grew up with. I'm someone who's coming from London and my wife is Korean so I obviously had to get some Korean characters in there.

I like the new Ireland, the international Ireland – it's a fun atmosphere. I happened to see the polish wedding band playing outside Arnott's on Mary Street and just thought they were great, they're a dream wedding band.

The big event in 'Lady Windemere's Fan' is the coming of age ball thrown for Lady Windemere but in the film it is obviously the wedding of Laura and Tiernan – were any other events considered?

In the first draft of the script the film centred around a 21st birthday but I just felt that there wasn't enough at stake at a birthday party. We needed the extra pressure that comes with a wedding to really get the drama of the story.



CREW
 IRELAND
 ON IFTN

Speaking of 'extra pressure' the film had a tiny budget of just €400,000 – how did you find working with such restricted finances?

Painful. Absolutely painful. I explained to the cast and the crew at the start that they should see it as a creative challenge as opposed to an obstacle. But in terms of what we were doing – making an ensemble film and shooting it on Red is complete madness. It just gets swallowed up. We had a fantastic crew but you just cannot do too many of these low budget films. You need to look and say "Ok, we only have this much money so what can we do with it?" I think it was ok because we were based in the one spot, if we had to move around I think we would have really felt it.

That one location is a magnificent labyrinth-esque house with half concealed staircases and large party friendly landings. Was this the sort of house you had in mind when you read the script?

It's very interesting; the house is like a character. We had a great location manager – Pat Nangle (Kisses) - who had been sending me photos of many places and I wanted a house that could, as I said, be in itself a character in the piece – and I also wanted that audiences could enjoy the house on its own into which drama and mystery could be easily absorbed.

There are so many opportunities for a sort of voyeurism in the house – characters can keep an eye on each other without being seen by anyone. The house has a stately, period feel to it but also has very modern aspects because I didn't want anyone or anything to get near to the zone of period drama. And it's huge, so it was just like a set, so we had all the space we needed for cameras and lights which was fantastic.

To get down to somewhat more mundane issues, why was the key object changed from a fan to a bag?

It could have been anything! There is something about a lady's bag. I suppose Wilde's point is that a fan is quite a banal thing, an object of beauty certainly but still quite archaic, for me. In Wilde's time they worked with a fan but I wanted something equally intimate in today's world – and bags fascinate me. How do women carry them around all day?! They contain someone's life and they really are so intimate and that got me thinking about this little red bag that's being passed around, like a little heart. It's a little part of Laura's heart really. A bag just seemed to me like the symbol of a certain kind of feminine beauty. The other side of it is people might start saying "What the hell is he on about, it's just a bag!" and so, at the same time, it is still just a dramatic device too. It plays that little dramatic element in the film, that "Shit, the bag!" moment in the film which is so important.

Wilde wrote 'Lady Windemere's Fan', as he did many of his plays, as a comment on society. Is the goal the same when it comes to 'Belonging to Laura'?

Well, far be it from me to comment on society! I think there is a satire in there if you wanted it to be like that. His plays obviously have that strong satirical element. And again I'm in no position to talk about Oscar Wilde in any critical way but what I think is missing in some of his plays, how they're performed nowadays in modern versions is heart . . . emotional intimacy. I think it's because the language is so seductive in the plays, wit can often overshadow the intimacy so the ultimate goal, for me, was to make something that had the spirit of Oscar Wilde and real emotional intimacy with depth and feeling.

It's a film about the fact that love can throw you a curveball but if you wait long enough you can catch it and it's worth the wait. And you possibly don't get that from the original play – you miss the feeling of love slightly because Lord Windemere is more of a father figure to Lady Windemere.

Can you tell us a little bit about your new project, 'Pelican Blood'?

The way it happened was that we were in post with 'Pelican Blood' when I started prepping 'Belonging to Laura' so it was great because I finished 'Pelican Blood' last June and then came straight over to start shooting 'Laura' - and they couldn't be two more different films. 'Pelican Blood' also deals with a troubled relationship, it was very hard to finance because it is the sort of script that everyone loved but no-one actually wanted to make. (I seem to be drawn to those sort of projects!). It's a dark love story about two people who meet on a suicide chatroom and they plan to kill themselves together but then they start to fall in love and then we have a conflict where they have to decide if they're going to go ahead and kill themselves regardless or give this newfound love a chance.

There's two fantastic performances at the heart of the film from Harry Treadaway and an Australian actress called Emma Booth. We're very excited about it and it's coming out in the UK in April and I suppose much the same time in Ireland. It's a very raw film, very beautiful. My director of photography, Darren Tiernan and composer Niall Byrne and my editor Martin Brinkler and Camille Benda, my costume designer were all involved in both 'Belonging to Laura' and 'Pelican Blood' so we got to work together essentially back-to-back on the two projects which was great.

'Belonging to Laura' is an Accomplice Television production for TV3, funded by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's Sound & Vision scheme, TV3 and the Section 481 tax incentive provided by the Government of Ireland.

It will broadcast on Monday, December 21st at 9.00 p.m. on TV3

RELATED NEWS

Eurimage Backs Steph Green's 'Run and Jump'

21 Dec 2011

Accomplice Television Prep 'The Importance of Being Whatever'

05 Jul 2011

Ripple World's 'Parked' Wins in Paris, New Projects in Pipeline

16 Jun 2011

Industry Focus: The New Frontiers of TV Drama

21 Jan 2011

[« Go back](#)

search

the Website Directory List Festivals Who's Who Locations Filmography News Crew Actors

[Contact Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Security & Privacy](#) | [RSS Feed](#) | [Twitter](#)