

Broken

a film by Rufus Norris

Starring

Tim ROTH, Cillian MURPHY and Eloise LAURENCE

UK - 2012 - 1H30

Distribution

Curious

Sarah Noonan | sarah@curiousfilm.com | +61 405 485 450

Stephen Fitzgibbon | steve@curiousfilm.com | +61 416 758 621

Publicity

TM Publicity

Tracey Mair | traceym@tmpublicity.com | +61 419 221 493

SYNOPSIS

Skunk (Eloise Laurence) is 11, pretty cool and wise beyond her years. Her summer holidays have just begun, promising unhurried days and easy hopes. Her lawyer father (Tim Roth) adores her but is perpetually busy, her brother is a pesky older teen and their au pair Kasia is a delightful accomplice to her world – especially as Kasia has a cute boyfriend (Cillian Murphy)...who also happens to be Skunk's teacher!

But their culdesac idyll soon has a dark shadow cast over it - and them - and Skunk's innocence begins to be drained away at a speed, and in a way she cannot control. Her home, her neighbourhood, her school become treacherous environments where the happy certainties of childhood give way, and a complex, seemingly broken world may fill her future. Skunk seeks solace in the last remaining place where she knows she can find it - the unspoken friendship with her sweet but off kilter neighbour, Rick.

BROKEN is a captivating and heartbreaking exploration of love in all its many forms: idealized, unrequited, unwanted, and, ultimately, unconditional. An exceptional cast including Tim Roth (Pulp Fiction, Lie to Me) and Cillian Murphy (Inception, The Dark Knight, The Wind That Shakes The Barley) join Eloise Laurence in an extraordinary screen debut as Skunk to bring this powerful story to the screen. Directed by acclaimed British theatre director Rufus Norris.



AN INTERVIEW WITH RUFUS NORRIS

You're a celebrated theatre and opera director; what kind of artistic satisfaction do you find in cinema?

It's a completely different medium, though of course it's all story telling...

The control of detail is exciting, whether through use of close-ups, or in the edit, or with music. There is also something about the accidental or unexpected moments that make stories interesting, and one of the joys of film is that if an accident happens, you have it forever. In theatre the construction requires actors to recreate moments every night, sometimes for months; there is something very liberating about having only to catch it once.

What drew you to this story?

What drew me most to this beautiful and incredibly moving story was a two-fold challenge: to capture the essence of this open, vital child whilst having compassion for all the adults who in their separate ways manage to fail her; and to draw an unsentimental and total celebration of life from a seemingly tragic place.

Is it hard for a theatre director to think cinematically?

I imagine that depends on the theatre director. I have always thought visually and musically, so that has felt natural; I have also sought out projects that are fresh and take me to places I have not been before, to make myself scared almost, and in that way the new challenge has been very welcome.

What did you learn from this first experience?

To take time in every area of preparation, and then let it all go to respond to what is happening in the moment once the shooting starts; to trust myself and those around me in equal measure. To be decisive at all times - it seems the worst crime when shooting starts is to slow things down with prevarication.

Have you ever attended the Cannes Film Festival?

No.

It's often said that a first film is either about what you know or things that trouble you, or compel you. Why did you decide to bring Daniel Clay's novel "Broken" to the screen? How did you turn it into a very personal work?

I'm a father of children more or less the same age as Skunk, and I have always been a slightly offbeat optimist, like she is, so submerging myself in them was natural. I have a strong dislike of two-dimensional representation of anything, particularly 'bad' people, so was very drawn by the opportunity of showing a very dysfunctional neighbourhood without being simplistic about any of the characters. The themes of love, responsibility,

parenting and how to co-exist with others are very current, and very close to my life; in practice, that just meant trying to find ways of telling every aspect of the story that felt true to me.

In this compelling drama, tenderness is beautifully juxtaposed with appalling brutality. How did you preserve the empathy and sensitivity of your characters?

Firstly, by working with excellent actors. But in life, everyone's actions are justified if you stand in their shoes, and a great appeal of the story was to stand in the shoes of some very different people, who are often perpetrating very unsocial behaviour. I do not condone terrible behaviour, but neither do I have time for the easy demonization that contemporary society is very quick to hand out; compassion is not weak, it's what makes us human and is an essential tool for three-dimensional storytelling.

This ensemble drama is a stunning showcase for actors and relies heavily on their skills. A word about Tim Roth?

Tim is very experienced and extremely astute. He doesn't suffer fools, but fortunately I'm not one, and I realised very quickly that he would have a lot of wisdom beyond the character he was playing. He was absolutely fantastic with Eloise from the word go, and her ease and relaxed truth are largely down to his open arms. His performance is beautiful, and speaks for itself.

Cillian Murphy?

There isn't a single frame that we shot of Cillian that we could not use. He has no ego in the workplace beyond what is necessary to do the job well, and his sense of humour is a total delight. He is a dream to work with.

Newcomer Eloise Laurence?

We saw 850 girls for this role and El came in right at the end, thank god. Working with her was about the easiest experience I have had with an actor. No special techniques or considerations were necessary; she just came in with energy and complete enthusiasm every day. She never once complained, except that it was ending too soon. I thought the greatest challenge would be to keep her natural, to stop her 'acting', and I never gave that note once. You worry, of course, that you are in some way corrupting a child who could be spoilt by the experience, the attention. Fortunately, both for her and us, her parents are both totally grounded and I think if anyone can get through it, it is she. She is very musical, and I think it helped that she hasn't acted before, and had no great desire to do anything other than sing.

In a world governed by anger and fear... The book and your film raise the question: "Is this a good way to be living?"

Certainly our society and modern life put us under pressures that have nothing to do with contentment or happiness. Own this, be like this, compete, control your life, etc. For me there is no great answer, no brilliant philosophy, other than to be aware of your own patterns and try to be responsible with regard to others. It's nothing new, and most stories are moral in one way or another, but hopefully this story encourages understanding in some small way.

The movie probes what makes people break down and explores the kindness and love that might heal and restore. Do you see it as a meditation on innocence? Can it exist in this environment?

This environment is essentially the same environment that people have lived in for thousands of years, with a few variations. Most of us respond to love, want to be loved, so I think it is a meditation on that, in its several forms. Requited and unrequited, infatuated, romantic and platonic, and finally unconditional, which is perhaps the only trustworthy form. Certainly innocence plays a large part in it - in many ways it can be seen as a loss-of- innocence story, for many of the characters. It is also a meditation on the impossible art of responsible parenting! They all get it wrong, and they all pay the price. Sometimes love is not enough.

British social realism stretches back to the 50s, through the legendary Alan Clarke's 1982 MADE IN ENGLAND and Ken Loach, Mike Leigh... Both Peter Mullan, who stars in your short film "King Bastard", and Tim Roth who stars in BROKEN, have directed autobiographical films (NEDS and THE WAR ZONE respectively). It seems that this semi-dormant indie tradition has sprung to life with newfound vigour and confidence (Shane Meadows, John Crowley, Paddy Considine). Are you pursuing the same full-throated assault on British society? Do you feel close to this British trend?

I admire those filmmakers enormously, and certainly this story touches on some of those themes, so in that sense, yes. I didn't grow up in Britain, or even Europe, and the areas that I'm interested in would probably apply to anywhere... but inevitably those areas will be framed by where I live, which is here. There are many aspects of British life and governance that I find intensely frustrating, but at the same time I love this Island and its peculiar ways. I hope my work in whatever medium lays bare the inadequacies of our society whilst celebrating our spirit.

Is there a film you particularly admire?

FESTEN by Thomas Vinterburg. Beautiful story, beautifully told. All the effects in Hollywood could never get close.

The script is by Mark O'Rowe, also credited for his work with John Crowley on BOY A (adapted from Jonathan Trigell's novel). Since adapting is betraying, how did you work with him?

Well now... if BROKEN is an adaptation of the book, which is an adaptation of sorts of "To Kill A Mockingbird", which in itself owes much to Carson McCullers... where do you stop? Shakespeare never wrote an

original story, he just wrote old ones in a new way as best he could. We will not reach his excellence, but we can try! I worked with Mark the same way I try to work with everyone - rigorously, respectfully, bravely, and in a way I hope empowers; he knows far more than me about writing and film so I have a huge amount to learn, but I also have clear instincts and I know to follow them. We were thorough, were not afraid to disagree about the small things, and consequently ended up always agreeing about the big ones.

Your DP Rob Hardy, who also worked on BOY A and "1974" from THE RED RIDING TRILOGY, has a very distinctive signature. What were the significant visual choices of your film?

We looked at various photographers, watched a few films together and had many frames of reference, but in the end these were not so important. What was important, every day, was to consider every shot, every environment, and see what we could get from it, how we could frame this story in a way that felt deliberate, balanced in tone and tension, without losing touch with the story. Our aim, in a simple sense, was to let the content guide the form. This is a small story with a very big heart, and that required a subtlety and care that Rob is a master of.

The film has original music by Damon Albarn, with whom you worked on your 2011 creation of the opera DOCTOR DEE for the Manchester International Festival. How did you collaborate? At what point of the production did he start to compose?

Damon is part of a group, the Electric Wave Bureau, and I worked with them all on BROKEN; I've worked with Damon and Mike Smith before and that was very useful in terms of establishing a working language very quickly. All four members of EWB have children the same age as Skunk, so we were like a creatively concerned parents' collective, working out how to tell this story of our worst fears through music. Music was my way into the arts so it's a very important and vibrant area for me, and I'm hugely fortunate that EWB came on board to bring a very distinctive sound to it.

I haven't made any other films, but it seems that many composers of film music have to work round everyone else and be almost invisible. That is not possible or appropriate with EWB, and I wanted them to express themselves like everyone else - they totally got the story and responded to it immediately. The fact that Eloise sings was hugely important. She got on with the team very well and it immediately gave everyone a clear way into it. It's rare for the central character to also be at the heart of the soundtrack, and has been a key part of the whole experience, linking it all together somehow.

RUFUS NORRIS

Rufus Norris is a multi-award winning theatre director who came to prominence in 2001 with his production of *Afore Night Came* at the Young Vic, for which he won the Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Newcomer. In 2004 he won his second Evening Standard Award and the Critics Circle Award for his production of *Festen* at the Almeida Theatre, transferring to the West End and Broadway.

Since then, Rufus has directed a host of critically acclaimed shows, among them an adaptation of DBC Pierre's Booker Prize-winning novel *Vernon God Little* at the Young Vic, and a West End revival of *Cabaret*, which won 2 Oliviers. Rufus' 2008 Broadway production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, starring Laura Linney and Ben Daniels, won five Tony Award nominations, including Best Revival. His production of *London Road* in 2011 at the National Theatre, where he is an Associate Director, recently won the Critics' Circle Award for Best Musical. Upcoming productions include *Dr Dee* with Damon Albarn at the ENO as part of the Cultural Olympiad.

In 2009, Rufus made his screen debut with the short film *KING BASTARD*, written by Tanya Ronder and produced by BBC Films. *BROKEN* is his first feature film.

MARK O'ROWE

Mark O'Rowe is an Irish screenwriter and playwright born in Dublin in 1970. His second play, *HOWIE THE ROOKIE*, won an award when it was staged at the Bush Theatre in 1999. In 2007 he wrote *TERMINUS*, a set of intriguing monologues that received great critical acclaim when it was presented at Dublin's Abbey Theatre, and later won a Scotsman Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival. In 2003, Mark wrote his first feature film, *INTERMISSION*. In 2008 he adapted Jonathan Trigell's "BOY A" for Cuba Pictures and Channel 4. It was released by the Weinstein Company - Pyramid in France - and won numerous prizes. *BROKEN* is an adaptation of Daniel Clay's novel, written in 2008.

TIM ROTH

Actor and director Tim Roth's acting career began in the theatre. Regular appearances on the British stage were followed by his first role for television in Alan Clarke's controversial and much-garlanded *MADE IN BRITAIN*, followed immediately by Mike Leigh's *MEANTIME*. Roth won international renown for his roles in two Quentin Tarantino films: *RESERVOIR DOGS* (alongside Harvey Keitel, Michael Madsen, Chris Penn and Steve Buscemi), and *PULP FICTION*, with John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman and Harvey Keitel. He will soon be seen opposite Susan Sarandon and Richard Gere in *ARBITRAGE*.

In 1999 Roth made his directorial debut with *THE WAR ZONE*, adapted from Alexander Stuart's novel and starring Ray Winstone and Tilda Swinton. The film screened at the Sundance and Cannes Film Festivals, amongst numerous others, and was released worldwide to great acclaim.

Selected Filmography

2005 *DON'T COME KNOCKING* by Wim Wenders

DARK WATER by Walter Salles

2001 *INVINCIBLE* by Werner Herzog

PLANET OF THE APES by Tim Burton

2000 *LUCKY NUMBERS* by Nora Ephron

1996 *EVERYONE SAYS I LOVE YOU* by Woody Allen

1994 *PULP FICTION* by Quentin Tarantino

1992 *RESERVOIR DOGS* by Quentin Tarantino

1990 *ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD* by Tom Stoppard

1990 *VINCENT & THEO* by Robert Altman

1989 *THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND HER LOVER* by Peter Greenaway

1984 *THE HIT* by Stephen Frears

1984 *MEANTIME* by Mike Leigh

1982 *MADE IN BRITAIN* by Alan Clarke

CILLIAN MURPHY

Cillian Murphy is an Irish actor born in 1976. After studying law at Cork University he embarked on an acting career in the late 90s. His international career was launched in 2003, with 28 DAYS LATER... Murphy alternates between big studio films such as BATMAN BEGINS and TRON: LEGACY and roles for renowned directors: BREAKFAST ON PLUTO by Neil Jordan in which he plays a trans-vestite in 70s London and THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY by Ken Loach, which won the Palme d'Or in Cannes in 2006.

Selected Filmography

2012 BROKEN by Rufus Norris
THE DARK KNIGHT RISES by Christopher Nolan
2011 IN TIME by Andrew Niccol
TRON: LEGACY by Joseph Kosinski
2010 INCEPTION by Christopher Nolan
2008 THE EDGE OF LOVE by John Maybury
THE DARK KNIGHT by Christopher Nolan
2007 SUNSHINE by Danny Boyle
2006 THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY by Ken Loach
2005 BREAKFAST ON PLUTO by Neil Jordan
BATMAN BEGINS by Christopher Nolan
RED EYE by Wes Craven
2003 GIRL WITH THE PEARL EARRING by Peter Webber
COLD MOUNTAIN by Anthony Minghella
2002 28 DAYS LATER... by Danny Boyle
2001 DISCO PIGS by Kristen Sheridan

ROBERT EMMS

Robert Emms is a 25-year-old actor who studied at the BRIT School for Performing Arts and Technology, then at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. He began his career in the theatre and appeared in a number of plays, including WAR HORSE. After some television work, he made his film debut in Clio Bernard's THE ARBOR in 2010, followed by ANONYMOUS by Roland Emmerich. When WAR HORSE was adapted for the screen by Steven Spielberg, the director remembered Emms' stage performance and offered him a part. Recent credits include Tarsem Singh's MIRROR MIRROR, with Julia Roberts. In June 2011, Screen International named Robert Emms a "Star of Tomorrow".

ELOISE LAURENCE

BROKEN is Eloise Laurence's first 'film role.

CAST

Archie **Tim ROTH**
Skunk **Eloise LAURENCE**
Mike **Cillian MURPHY**
Kasia **Zana MARJANOVIC**
Rick **Robert EMMS**
Mr.Oswald **Rory KINNEAR**
Susan **Rosalie KOSKY-HENSMAN**
Saskia **Faye DAVENEY**
Sunrise **Martha BYRANT**
Jed **Bill MILNER**
Mr.Buckley **Denis LAWSON**
Mrs.Buckley **Clare BURT**

CREW

Directed by **Rufus NORRIS**
Screenplay **Mark O'ROWE**
Adapted from the novel by **Daniel CLAY**
DP **Rob HARDY- B.S.C**
Production Designer **Kave QUINN**
Editor **Victoria BOYDELL**
Original Music **ELECTRIC WAVE BUREAU**
Costume Designer **Jane PETRIE**
Hair & Makeup **Fae HAMMOND**
Line Producer **Wendy BEVAN-MOGG**
Post-production Supervisor **Gisela EVERT**
Casting **Maggie LUNN**
Producers **Dixie LINDER**
Tally GARNER
Nick MARSTON
Bill KENWRIGHT
Executive Producers **Joe OPPENHEIMER**
Norman MERRY



curious