

It's Gleeson Season!

Dublin-born Brendan Gleeson is a former teacher who left the profession to pursue a career in acting, his first love. His rise to fame began when he appeared in Jim Sheridan's *The Field*, followed by a number of small roles in such films as *Far And Away* and *Into The West*.



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

latest out as Father James Lavelle in *Calvary*, a modern morality play written and directed by John Michael McDonagh.

He landed his first starring role in *I Went Down*, which was followed by an acclaimed outing in *The General*. But it was his role as Hamish in *Braveheart* that brought him to the attention of Hollywood.

In 2009 Brendan was nominated for Golden Globe and BAFTA awards for his work in Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges* opposite Colin Farrell and Ralph Fiennes. That same year, he won an Emmy Award for his portrayal of Winston Churchill in the HBO movie *"Into the Storm."*

His screen credits also include *Perrier's Bounty*, *Green Zone*, *The Guard*, *Safe House*, *Albert Nobbs*, *The Village*, *Cold Moun-*

Kam Williams: Hi Brendan, thanks for the interview.

Brendan Gleeson: Not at all, Kam. How are you?

KW: Fine, thanks. I'll be mixing in questions from fans with my own. Editor/Legist Patricia Turner says: I have visited the South of Ireland and loved it, including the capital, Dublin. What does it mean to you to advocate for the Irish language, Gaelic?

BG: Yeah, people often ask, why are you interested in the Irish language when it's dying? If your momma's dying you wouldn't want her to die alone. So, I think the Irish language is a great gift, and it's still hanging in there, if people want it. It's a



Brendan Gleeson (left) as Father James Lavelle in *Calvary*

tain, *Kingdom Of Heaven*, *Breakfast On Pluto*, *Troy*, *Black Irish*, *The Tiger's Tail*, *Beowulf*, *Mission: Impossible 2*, *Tailor Of Panama*, *Country Of My*

connection to a long, rich, deep culture. There's 2,000 years of it. And when it's lost, it'll be gone for good. Those doors are not going to be open anymore. I value it,

One of the achievements of this film is to make clear that child abuse is a life sentence

Skull, *28 Days Later*, *Gangs Of New York* and several installments of the Harry Potter franchise. In just the last year, he's appeared in *Edge Of Tomorrow*, *The Grand Seduction*, and *The Smurfs 2*.

Here, he talks about his

and it's up to everybody to wise up about it. It's not something I necessarily want to revive as the spoken first language of the country. I just think it's fantastic, and a great cultural gift to have.

'Comedy of Errors' at Ashland

PHOTO COURTESY ASHLAND SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

The Ashland Shakespeare Festival's production of the Bard's *'Comedy of Errors'* is set during the Harlem Renaissance. The classic story of two sets of twin brothers – each of whom have no idea he is a twin – who then suddenly find themselves in the same town is considered one of Shakespeare's most hilarious comedies. The show stars Rodney Gardiner and Tobie Windham, with Omoze Idehenre and Monique Robinson. The must-see show runs through Nov. 2, at the Thomas Theatre. Find ticket information at www.osfashland.org.

KW: Patricia also asks: What message do you want people to take away from the movie?

BG: I don't know. I think everybody has their own relationship with this movie, which is the triumph of it, really. Different elements of it access different people in different ways. From my point of view, I would hope there's a sense that the struggle is being carried on to maintain some life in the world in whatever way that manifests itself, whether religiously, spiritually, or just philanthropically, and that people are worth it in the end. But I don't know. There's an awful lot of pain. One of the achievements of this film is to make clear that child abuse is a life sentence. That it's not something you can just get over and forget after receiving an apology.

KW: What was the difference in being directed by John Michael McDonagh, whom you also worked with in *The Guard*, as opposed to being directed by his brother, Martin, who directed you in *In Bruges*?

BG: Not a whole lot, to be quite honest. They're both very calm, very assured, very prepared, and very cinematic in their thinking. They're also very actor-friendly and collaborative. So, I love working with either of them, frankly. That's not to say that they're simply two sides of the same coin. While they have similarities in their working style, their worlds are very different.

KW: Patricia also asks: How would you describe your character in *Calvary*, Father James Lavelle?

BG: As somebody who believes the best, in spite of all the evidence. [Laughs heartily] I just came up with that one. He's someone who's committed to optimism, despite all evidence to the contrary. He insists on it. And I think people need to know that that kind of struggle, and that kind of beauty, and that kind of optimism is possible in the world, because we've got a lot of cynicism confronting us everyday making it easy to feel that there's nothing worth believing in.

KW: Environmental

activist Grace Sinden says: Brendan, you have courageously tackled a controversial subject in *Calvary*. Are you concerned about any political blowback you might receive from the Catholic Church as a consequence?

BG: No, not at all.

KW: Editor Lisa Loving says: This movie looks incredibly heavy. Irish people have suffered a lot throughout world history, have had front row seats to a lot of other peoples' suffering – like the Irish mariners ensnared in the Trans-

Atlantic Slave Trade – not to mention the Potato Famine, the Troubles, and the discrimination against Irish immigrants in the United States in the 19th and part of the 20th Century. There were also the horrible atrocities committed by Roman Catholic nuns who ran the "homes" for unwed mothers and the orphanages in Ireland, and the Church's sex abuse silence. Do you feel that the Irish suffering serves as a symbol of a universal aspect

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