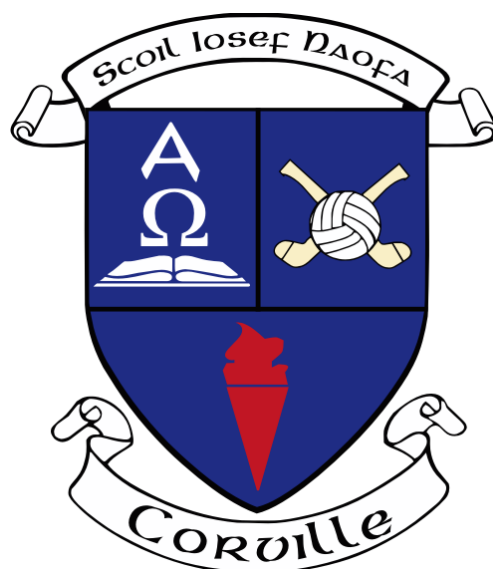




# Top 10 Irish Films

Our Recommendations



## 10. Brooklyn



A Great Film will tell a great story and ideally bring about a strong emotional response.

Based on Colm Tobin's novel of the same named and starring Saoirse Ronan, tells a great love-story; that of a young small-town Irish Girl, now living in New York and torn not only between two lovers but also between two countries.

Premiering at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, Brooklyn was nominated for three Academy Awards including Best Actress for Ronan. Filmed in Wexford, Dublin and Coney Island New York, it is one of the best period dramas to have come out of Ireland in recent years.

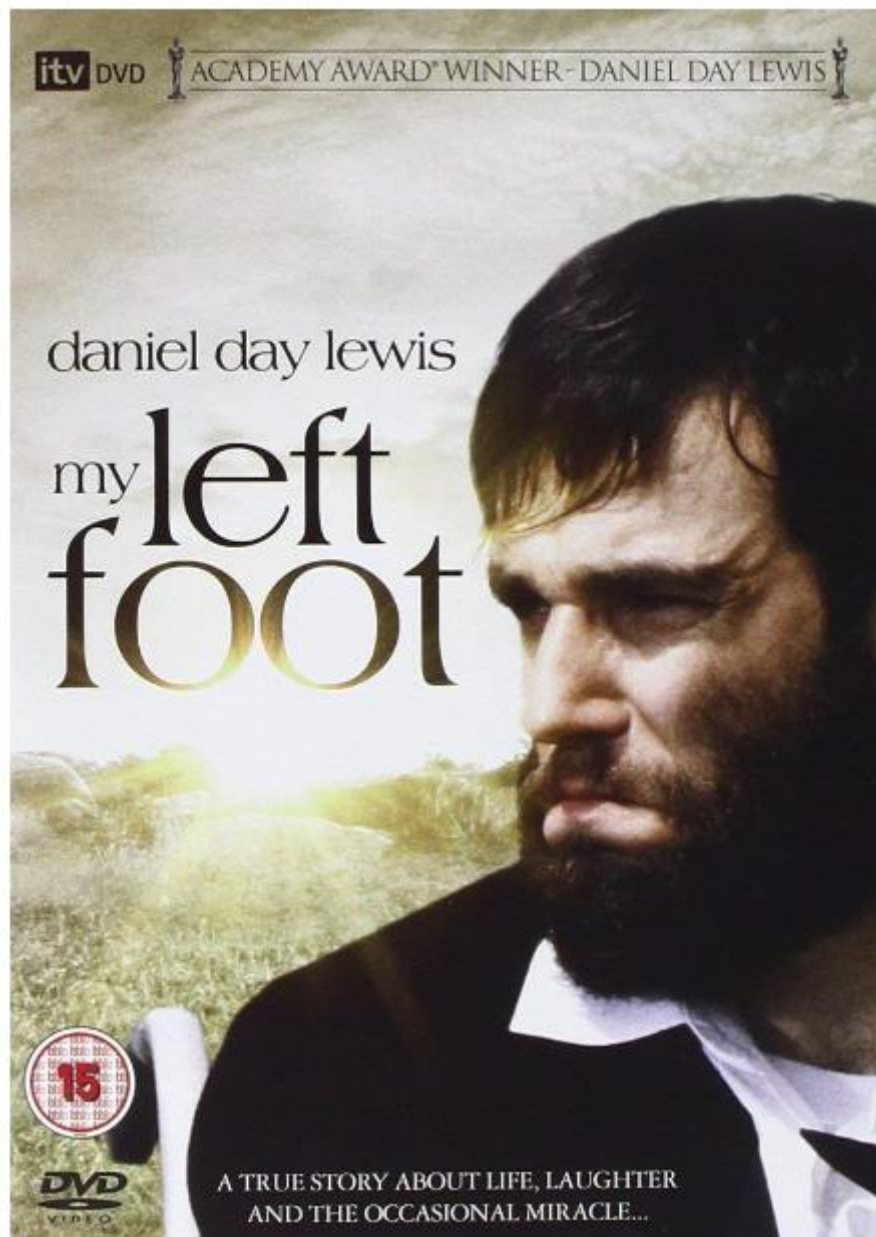
## 9. Once



A great film is often helped by a great soundtrack. “Take this sinking boat and point it home, we still have time.” Is probably the most the most remembered lyrical line from the romantic drama that is the film Once. Starring Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová, Once is a typical Boy meets Girl story but with a twist. What makes this a great film is an Oscar-winning Soundtrack. Listen to it.



## 8. My Left Foot



Great actors bring a story to life; the actors must convince the audience they are the characters they're portraying. The above is particularly true of this film depicting the biographical story of — born with cerebral palsy — Dublin writer and painter Christy Brown, for its stars Daniel Day-Lewis and Brenda Fricker, most definitely brought Brown's story to life in Jim Sheridan's 1989 production. Day-Lewis and Fricker both won Academy awards for best actors in both the male and female categories.

## 7. The Crying Game



A Great film will showcase new or previously unexplored ideas or themes. “One day soon you’re going to tell the moon about the crying game.” The Crying Game certainly achieved the above, and I need to be careful here in order not to give the game away, if you’ve seen the film well, then I guess you know about the sting in the tail.

The film plot revolves around the story of an IRA hitman played superbly by Steven Rea who after killing a British soldier goes on the run to England meets and falls in love with the girlfriend of the soldier and gets involved with his former IRA comrades.

The film initially was not particularly commercially successful deals with the complex issues of, race, political violence and gender, eventually after its American release, went on to great commercial success on both sides of the Atlantic helped in no small way by the popularity of its soundtrack. The film’s writer and director Neil Jordan took home an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay and the film was nominated for a total of six Oscars.

## 6. Hunger



A Great Film should both dazzle and challenge the viewer. *Hunger* was Steve McQueen's first foray into directing, McQueen also co-wrote the story along with Irish playwright Enda Walsh. Premiering at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival it was awarded the Caméra d'Or award for first-time filmmakers.

The plot centres on IRA volunteer and MP Bobby Sands who led the second IRA hunger strike at the Northern Ireland Maze Prison in an attempt to regain political status for republican prisoners. Sands is portrayed by Irish/German actor Michael Fassbender, interestingly and in light of the film's subject matter, Fassbender's mother is the great-grand-niece of Irish revolutionary and politician Michael Collins.

The film is shocking, violent and disturbing; not for the fainthearted. Fassbender gives a tremendously insightful and physical performance in a film that uses dialogue sparingly — with one significant exception when Fassbender discusses the planned hunger strike at length with a visiting.



## 5. The Commitments



The setting is one of the paramount elements which go to lift a film from mediocre to greatness. The setting should emphasize the theme and mood of the film but never be allowed to distract from the story.

In his film *The Commitments*, Director Alan Parker gets the balance between the gritty North Dublin backdrops and the comic musical plot exactly right. Based on the 1998 Roddy Doyle novel of the same name, Doyle was also heavily involved with the script, the plot centres around the trials, tribulations and relationships of a hopefully up and coming Dublin Soul Band.

The film is genuinely funny, the soundtrack, though not specifically written for the film, is exceptionally performed and the roles acted superbly including the Elvis obsessed father of Jimmy Rabbit Colm Meaney.

## 4. The Guard



A Great film has great dialogue. The dialogue between good cop FBI Agent Wendell Everett played by American actor Don Cheadle and bad cop Irish Garda Sergeant Gerry Boyle played by Brendan Gleeson is to put it simply comic sarcasm at its best.

Gleeson plays the slightly corrupt policeman to a tee, crooked, prostitute using, and totally disrespecting of his superior officers but with the saving grace of loving his mother — a likeable rogue.

Yes, the film has the usual drug-crime plot and a well-executed shoot-out as a climax and uses the striking Connemara landscape unobtrusively but effectively but what lifts the Guard above other similar movies is the flowing well-crafted relationship between Gleeson and Cheadle.



### 3. The Wind That Shakes the Barley



Until surpassed by *The Guard*, Ken Loaches war/drama *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* was the highest-grossing independently Irish-made film. Shot mainly in County Cork the execution scene was shot on location in Kilmainham Jail Dublin, where many of the leaders of the 1916 Irish rebellion were executed.

A young Cillian Murphy plays the film's main protagonist Damien who is about to leave Ireland for London but becomes reluctantly involved through his brother in the fight for independence.

The film received mixed reviews with many sections of the English press critiquing the storyline as showing the English as sadistic and the Irish rebels as romantic heroes.

However many critics have hailed the film as one of the best and openly honest war-dramas ever produced.

## 2. The Magdalene Sisters



A really great film will have elements of controversy. When *The Magdalene Sisters* was first released it was condemned by the Vatican as being anti-religious. However, the storyline, a fictional composite of the too real stories of those who suffered at the hands of religious orders in Ireland during the sixties is more about abuse of power than anti-religion.

The story revolves around four “fallen women” sent to work in the Magdalene laundries and who suffered horrific mental, physical and sexual abuse. The actors give compelling performances; in particular, Eileen Walsh who played Crispina an intellectually challenged unmarried mother.

Written and directed by actor/director Peter Mullan, this harsh and gritty film does contain sufficient comic moments to somewhat lighten and lessen its horrific theme and has achieved its deserved global recognition.

# 1. Michael Collins



An epic film directed by Neil Jordan, Michael Collins tells the story of the Irish patriot, revolutionary, politician and statesman that was Collins. The cast was lead by Irish actor Liam Neeson and with stars such as Alan Rickman, Julia Roberts, Brendan Gleeson, Stephen Rae adding their combined talent to this biopic all the ingredients for a great film were present. However the film was not a huge commercial success; a budget of twenty-five million only returned a marginal box office return of twenty-eight million, it did receive exceptional critical and audience approval.

While there is some debate over minor historical discrepancies, in general, the film shows the grittiness and violence of the War for Independence and the subsequent Civil War in an honest and realistic fashion.

Since 2013 there has been a twenty-five per cent increase in every year on funding raised from Irish tax relief eligible projects; in 2014 alone €237m was committed to the country's economy from film production. Gone are the days of the Irish being depicted as drunken fighting leprechauns, now with Irish films achieving tremendous success across the globe; taking in one-hundred and fifty million and achieving ten Academy Award nomination in 2016 alone, we have an Industry capable of doing what we do best, telling a good story well.