



Fèis Film nan Eileanan Beaga

Beinn na Faoghla

19-21 an t-Òg-mhios 2009

**Small
Islands
Film
Festival
Fri 19–
Sun 21
June
2009**

**Screen Machine
Dark Island Hotel
Lionacleit
Benbecula**

9th June 2009 - Press Release: for immediate use

Following its successful launch on Eriskay in 2007 and an equally successful event on Islay last year, *Feis Film nan Eileanan Beaga*, the annual Small Islands Film Festival returns to the Western Isles next week. As part of the 'Year of Homecoming' celebrations the packed programme looks at 'home and homecoming' in all its aspects in islands across the world with a particular focus on 'Homecoming – North and West'.

Barra to Venice, Edinburgh to Greenland, Shetland to the High Arctic, Skye and the Uists, Ireland and Scotland, Gaelic and Inuktituk — these are just some of the links that will be explored in a range of shorts, documentaries and features from across the Hebrides and beyond.

Amongst the highlights are the European premiere of *Exile*, the latest film from the acclaimed film-makers of *Atanarjuat, The Fast Runner*, the first Inuktituk language feature film, and the Scottish premiere of *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, also by the same indigenous Inuit film-makers from Nunavut. These will be shown along with rare archive footage from the pre-war 'closed society' of Greenland by Scottish Arctic women traveller, Isabel Wylie Hutchison, and the *Arctic Diary* of a year with the High Arctic Inuit of Ellesmere Island by 70-yr old Shetland film-maker, Jenny Gilbertson. They reveal shocking true stories of colonial exploitation and political manipulation with harrowing and traumatic consequences.

Closer to home there is a rare chance to see some masterful award-winning films from our own islands. Amongst them are Douglas MacKinnon's graduate debut, *Ashes*, featuring his native Skye, and Timothy Neat and John Berger's evocative, *Play Me Something*, a European tale set on both Barra and Venice. Starring some well-known names on the Scottish cultural scene including Tilda Swinton, the late Hamish Henderson, Margaret Bennett and Liz Lochhead, it also features a marvelous soundtrack of traditional music and song – and some Barra extras.



Press Release: page 2

The broader issues of home and homeland, nation and identity are also explored in a 50th anniversary screening of George Morrison's iconic 1959 celebration of Irish identity and freedom, *Mise Eire*. The especially composed soundtrack for this classic Irish documentary by Sean O'Riada has become a classic of Celtic music in its own right. George Robertson himself is the subject of *Waiting for the Light*, Ciarin Scott's accompanying and deeply moving documentary on this overlooked and talented Irish film-maker.

A remarkable insight into the small island life a film-maker of global stature is provided in *Bergman Island* in which Sweden's Ingmar Bergman reflects on his life and work in a rare series of interviews on his secluded small island home shortly before his death on Farö island in 2007.

This is the distinguished company in which a special showcase of award-winning *Film G* film shorts from Skye, Barra, the Uists and Lewis will be given the 'big screen' treatment with a showing on the Screen Machine of a film by Uisdean Murray and other aspiring local Gaelic talent before a home audience.

The whole ethos of the Small Islands Film Festival is to provide an opportunity for island residents, visitors, film-makers, island studies and film and media studies specialists to meet, mingle and discuss islands and film in the relaxed informal setting of a small island venue. It proved a popular mix on Eriskay and Islay in the last two years. With a packed weekend programme of screenings and discussions celebrating the local, the national and the international, the hope is that the Benbecula Homecoming 2009 event will be equally successful.

Full details of programme times, admissions, etc are available online at www.eileananbeaga.wordpress.com. Advance booking can be made online or on the day. But with previous popular sessions on Eriskay and Islay having been over-subscribed, advance online booking is strongly recommended.

END

For further details contact Ray Burnett, Small Islands Film Festival:

ray@diis.ac.uk

tel: 01870 602334