

AN EVERLASTING PIECE
Synopsis

An Everlasting Piece is a very unlikely comedy of two hairpiece salesmen, one Catholic and the other Protestant, who live in Northern Ireland. Colm is a new barber at a mental institution who bonds with his fellow barber George. A new patient arrives at the hospital who turns out to have been the owner of the only wig company in all of Northern Ireland. Thinking that having a monopoly means easy money, Colm and George convince the new patient to give them his client list and they're off on a series of rambling comic adventures, aided by Colm's girlfriend. But when a wig is found at the site of an act of IRA sabotage, the salesmen's lives are suddenly complicated. Rather than ignore the Irish conflict, the film pays close attention to it. In fact, the tension of civil strife is a crucial element of the movie's humor, allowing it to dip into a more serious mood without becoming preachy or pretentious. The film is charming, thoughtful and richly human.

Directed by: Barry Levinson

Starring: Barry McEvoy and Brian F. O'Byrne

Rated: R, Not for children

Run time: 103 minutes

INTO THE WEST Synopsis

Into the West is an underrated jewel of Irish filmmaking that follows a rather unconventional Storyline: a down-and-out father, Papa Reilly, leads a miserable existence in a Dublin slum along with his two young sons. The poverty and bleakness is overwhelming and not what one would expect from a Disney film. Papa Reilly, played by Gabriel Byrne is a “traveller”, or gypsy, although he has given up his old ways since the death of his wife. His father-in-law tries to convince him in vain to return to the roads, but he refuses all help, trying to make it in the gritty, violent projects of Dublin. His two sons, Tito and Ossie, fall in love with a mysterious white horse that had followed their grandfather’s caravan and the two claim Tir na Nog as their own. They escape the projects on the apparently magical white horse which leads them back to the “West”. After being forced to steal the horse back from a wealthy and ruthless horse dealer, they are pursued across the increasingly beautiful landscape by virtually all the policemen in Ireland. The film is a hybrid of mythology and magic which tells the stories of the boys coming to terms with their mother’s death, their father’s alcoholism and the forging of stronger bonds between the brothers. The grieving father and widower coming to terms with his loss and resolving to start a new life with his sons makes this a touching and unforgettable film.

Directed by: Mike Newel

Starring: Gabriel Byrne and Ellen Barkin

Rated: PG, recommended for older children

Run time: 97 minutes

Voted: Best Family Video for 1994 by *Entertainment Weekly*

THE BOYS AND GIRL OF COUNTY CLARE
Synopsis

The Boys and Girl of County Clare tells the story of two estranged brothers who compete in the Irish Music Festival in County Clare. John-Joe McMahon and his little band have won the ceili (Irish dance music) band competition for years. Members of his hometown orchestra include young Anne and her unmarried, grumpy mother Maisie. John-Joe learns that his brother, Jimmy, has a band based in Liverpool that will also be competing in the festival. In fine Irish tradition, the two mutually angry brothers try to sabotage each other's appearance during the competition, but they both come face to face in the competition. With the arrival of Jimmy, we find that Maisie's negative out-look on life is based on the fact that Jimmy is the father of her daughter Anne. Maisie is forced to admit to Anne the secret of her ancestry causing an unbearable strain in the mother/daughter relationship. To make matters worse Anne falls in love with a member of Jimmy's band and together they return to Liverpool after neither brother wins the band competition. Maisie finally confronts Jimmy with her anger, resentment and disappointment. How the young ones cope with their situation and emotions and resolve the problem of distance is the finale of this sweet story. This is a sparkling, jaunty little Irish tale with fine comedy and drama and superb Irish music.

Directed by: John Irvin
Starring: Colm Meaney and Bernard Hill
Rated: R, Not for children
Run time: 90 minutes

THE FIGHTING 69TH Synopsis

The Fighting 69th is an American war film made in 1940 with a story based upon the actual exploits of New York City's Infantry Regiment during the 1st World War. The plot centers on misfit Jerry Plunkett, played by James Cagney, and his inability to fit into the unit due to a mixture of bravado and cowardice. Pat O'Brien plays Father Francis P. Duffy, a military chaplain, who attempts to reform Plunkett. It is "Wild Bill" Donovan, the first battalion commander, who ultimately orders Plunkett to be court-martialed. One of the characters portrayed in this film is Sgt. Joyce Kilmer, the poet. Alan Hale, Sr. plays Sgt. Wynn, who loses both his brothers due to Plunkett's blunders. While Jerry Plunkett was a fictional character, Father Duffy, Major Donovan and Sgt. Joyce Kilmer, among others, were all real people who served in the regiment. Many of the activities depicted (Camp Mills, the Mud March, dugout collapse at Rouge Bouquet, crossing the Ourcq River and Victory Parade) actually happened. John T. Prout, an Irish American and former Captain in the regiment and Irish Army general, was the movie's technical advisor.

Directed: William Keighley
Starring: James Cagney and Pat O'Brien
Rated: Not rated
Run time: 90 minutes