



Kino Ken and the LVCA webmaster screened BROOKLYN this past week at the Carmike Cinemas in Westmoreland Mall, Greensburg. Here's a review of that film.

14 of a possible 20 points

1/2 of a possible **

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

(j) designates a juvenile performer

Wildgaze Films / Parallel Film Productions / Irish Film Board / Item 7 distributed by Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation Producers: Finola Dwyer, Pierre Even, Susan Mullen, Amanda Posey, and Marie-Claude Poulin

Points:

- 2 Direction: John Crowley 2nd Unit Director: Jessica Whelehan
- 1 Editing: Jake Roberts
- 1 Cinematography: Yves Bélanger Additional Photography: Emma Edwards
- 1 Lighting: Eames Gagnon, Chris Georgas, James McGuire
- 1 Screenplay: Nick Hornby, adapted from the novel by Colm Tóibin
Music Supervisor: Kle Savidge Music Editor: Yann McCullough*
Music Recording: Stefano Civetta, Toby Hulbert, Simon Rhodes
- 2 Music: Michael Brook* Orchestrator: David Russell
- 2 Art Direction: Irene O'Brien*, Robert Parle, Melanie Downes
Production Design: François Séguin*
Set Decoration: Suzanne Cloutier, Jenny Oman, Louise Tremblay
Graphics Design: Paul Brady
Props Master: Denis Hamel
Costume Design: Odile Dicks-Mireaux*
Makeup: Morna Ferguson, Diane Calfee, Ivy Ermert, Lorraine McCrann
(crowd makeup), Marlène Rouleau, Edwina Voda

- 2** **Sound Design: Glenn Freemantle* Supervising Sound Editor: Glenn Freemantle***
Sound Effects: Dillon Bennett, Mark Heslop, Jack Stew
Sound Recording: Enda Callan, William Kozy, Francis P loquin
Dialect Coach: Julia Lenardon
Dialogue Editors: Gillian Dodders, Ian Morgan
Sound Mixers: James Baker, Claude La Haye, Barry O’Sullivan, John Skehill
Sound Re-recording / Remixing: Adam Scrivener, Ian Tapp
Casting: Fiona Weir, Stephen Kirk, Alice Searby
- 1** **Acting**
1 **Creativity**
- 14 total points**

Cast: Saiorse Ronan* (Eilis Lacey), Hugh Gormley (Priest), Brid Brennan (Miss Kelly, shopkeeper), Jim Broadbent (Father Flood), Maeve McGrath (Mary), Emma Lowe (Mrs. Brady), Barbara Drennan (Shabby Woman), Gillian McCarthy (Timid Woman), Fiona Glascot (Rose Lacey, Eilis’s sister), Jane Brennan (Mary Lacey, mother of Eilis and Rose), Eileen O’Higgins (Nancy, Eilis’s best friend), Peter Campion (George Sheridan, Nancy’s boyfriend / husband), Eva Birthistle (Georgina), James Corscadden (ship waiter), Julie Walters (Mrs. Keane), Emily Bett Richards (Patty), Eve Macklin (Diana), Nora-Jane Noone* (Sheila, fellow lodger), Mary O’Driscoll (Miss McAdam), Samantha Munro (Dorothy), Jessica Par  (Miss Fortin, counter manager at Bartocci’s), Adrien Benn (Diner Waiter), Alain Goulem (Mr. Rosenblum), Max Walker (Young Man), Iarla O’Lionaird (Frankie Doran), Jenn Murray (Dolores, cranky, tattletale new lodger), Ellis Rockburn (Young Man At Dance), Emory Cohen (Tony Fiorello), Erika Rosenbaum (Bartocci Customer #2), Ellen David (Mrs. Fiorello, Tony’s mom), Christian de la Cortina (Laurenzio Fiorello, brother to Tony), Paulino Nunes (Mr. Fiorello, Tony’s dad), James DiGiacomo* (Frankie Fiorello, Tony’s youngest brother), Michael Zegen (Maurizio Fiorello, brother to Tony), Tadhg McMahon (Boy’s Father), Hudson LeBlanc (j) (Boy At City Hall), Paul Stewart (City Hall Official), Domhnall Gleeson (Jim Farrell), Niamh McCann (Maria), Denis Conway (Mr. Brown, Irish store manager), Karen Ardiffe (Mrs. Farrell, Jim’s mom), Gary Lydon (Mr. Farrell, Jim’s dad), Aine Ni Mhuiri (Mrs. Byrne), Mella Carson (Girl on Deck), Karen Belfo (Lady At The Cinema)

John Crowley’s **BROOKLYN**, set in the early 1950s, tells the story of a young Irish miss who leaves her native land in search of a less repressive, more affluent future in the United States. Her older sister, Rose, is left behind to care for their widowed mother. Each sibling eventually possesses an unshared secret which will have emotionally wrenching consequences.

The younger Lacey child, named Eilis, is as unprepared for an ocean voyage as elder sister is for simultaneous management of their mother's care and her own health. A cabin-mate comes to the rescue of Eilis, providing proper dietary restraints and hints about passing through American customs. No such guardian comes to intervene on Rose's behalf.

A benevolent Irish priest named Father Flood has obtained a job at Bartocci's Department Store for Eilis. He also funds night classes in bookkeeping and accounting for her, possibly in the hope a substantial amount of money she earns will be sent back to impoverished relatives in Ireland.

Eilis battles homesickness and a conviction of guilt about dumping all maternal care responsibility on Rose. Her integration into American social customs is bumpy, as she attempts to balance conservative prudence ingrained from Irish disciplining with the freer lifestyle of shopgirls in the United States. Fellow lodgers take pity on her loneliness, modifying hairstyle, cosmetics, and color combinations to create a more attractive, fashionable personality. Yet Eilis gets no real appreciation until an Italian pariah boy strikes up a conversation with her.

Aside from their Catholic religion, the two young people have little in common. Tony speaks Brooklynese, loves baseball, has a slew of brothers, and is a manual labor apprenticing as plumber's helper. Eilis retains an Irish brogue, has only a sister, knows and cares nothing about the All-American pastime, aspires to a white collar job, and eagerly sponges up educational improvement opportunities.

This being a fictional romance, the two fall in love and soon secretly marry.

Shortly thereafter, word arrives from the Old Country that Rose has died of an ailment she has been fighting alone, without acknowledging illness to anyone.

Eilis's dreams for a happy future crumble into dust. She returns to Ireland, hoping to console her mother, now bereft of both husband and half her children. The new Mrs. Fiorello's resolution not to acquaint Mother Lacey with her true marital status is by no means obligatory, being purely a matter of convenience. It leads to entanglements and complications direct confession would have avoided altogether.

For everyone in her native town assumes Eilis is still single. Unsurprisingly, they steer her to potential spouse, job, and country residence.

The returnee initially resists such manipulation, then falls comfortably back into old routines of compliance with social pressures. That malleability suggests real absence of true principles for living. She certainly seems too immature for marriage and nowhere near ready for parenthood's obligations.

Will Eilis Fiorello allow herself to be wheedled into adultery and bigamy? Watch the final section of the film and find out.

Saiorse Ronan makes shallow, self-centered Eilis vital and believable, no small feat considering abundant stereotypes surrounding her in this story. Transition from small town

wallflower to urban sophisticate is handled beautifully, with small hand gestures and slow alterations of facial features communicating far more than the screenplay about what is happening inside her emotionally. She makes the most of silences, too, using them to underline estrangement and belated nostalgia, as well as submerged resentment about being taken for granted.

Other cast members are drydocked by characterizations bordering on stereotypes. Emory Cohen's Tony is a Marlon Brando clone, succeeding only in recalling the earlier, greater performance of the original in *ON THE WATERFRONT*. The hidden toughness which ultimately redeems Terry Malloy, causing him to fight a losing battle against bullying Johnny Friendly, is completely absent in Tony Fiorello. Tony passively all but surrenders his bride to unforeseen circumstances and meddling chivalry. Brid Brennan's tart-tongued Miss Kelly is overbearing and pitiless, a villain without discernible human vulnerabilities. She could only exist in a comic book. Much the same situation is apparent with those actresses assigned to play Brooklyn lodgers. Only Nora-Jane Noone's Sheila works her way around script obstacles to show greater conflictedness in a confession scene about her previous marriage.

James DiGiacomo's Frankie Fiorello, while not entirely free of cuteness mannerisms, does at least utilize splendid comic timing, making his character droll and eminently watchable.

Jim Broadbent, seen too infrequently here, is sympathetic and sincere as a compassionate Brooklyn parish priest who channels Eilis's self-pity into more constructive outlets.

As already suggested, the screenplay adaptation of Nick Hornby is adequate, but flawed. Some language edits would be in order, since a female character mouths off more like a 1950s stevedore than a moneyed veteran of Atlantic crossings. At its best describing dating rituals of the period and worst reporting catty table talk, the script may or may not adhere closely to the bestseller from which it derives, a book this reviewer hasn't read.

Michael Brook's score conveys the melancholy and verve characteristic of Irish music, full both of energy and wordless grieving even when jigging or reeling in ostensible exuberance. Its mixture of upbeat fifties party music with traditional Irish slow ballads effectively adds conflicted ambience to drama.

Sound recording is of superior quality, catching soft nuances especially well in street dialogues between Eilis and Tony.

Lighting and cinematography are generally satisfactory, with no severe deficiencies appearing in either area. Indeed, the Irish beach scene is gorgeous, making one wish it had been extended or reinforced to take fuller advantage of the natural beauty of County Wexford.

Most edits are fluid and justifiable, one glaring exception being a final transition between Ireland and the United States. There's a bit too much of a leap between Eilis's return through customs with novice in tow and her reunion with Tony, leaving the protagonist's remaining internalized conflict concealed from viewers.

BROOKLYN lacks the urgency and passionate tug of ROOM. It's a lesser drama with smaller personalities, hampered by secondary characters too sketchily presented and a core plot that crumbles under close scrutiny. Still, Saoirse Ronan's wonderful performance and convincingly detailed period settings created by François Séguin's art department make the film worthwhile viewing for adults. A protracted scene of simulated sex and one outburst of exceedingly obscene language insure BROOKLYN's unsuitability for juvenile audiences.