

A FILM BY AIDAN DICK & IZZI ROJAS

Starring

Izzi Rojas, Aidan Dick, Paula McGlinchey, Tim Casey,

Chloe Steele, Margarita Murphy

In

WHEN MEN WERE MEN

Composer

Victoria Romano

Editor

Aidan Dick

Director of Photography

Aidan Dick & Samantha Aspe

Costume and Set Decoration

Izzi Rojas

Production

Circumpunct Pictures

Writer/Director

Aidan Dick & Izzi Rojas

MARGARITA MURPHY PAULA McGLINCHEY TIM CASEY MARK BYRNE

AIDAN DICK IZZI ROJAS



WHEN MEN WERE MEN

FEATURING CHLOE STEEL AIDAN JOSEPH FIANA TOBIN MUSIC BY VICTORIA ROMANO
MUSIC PRODUCED BY JOEY MUSSELMAN EDITING BY AIDAN DICK
COLOR BY CONNOR BAILEY CINEMATOGRAPHY BY AIDAN DICK AND SAMANTHA ASPE
COSTUMING BY IZZI ROJAS VISUAL EFFECTS BY ERIK KALIN



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WHEN MEN WERE MEN

LOG LINE

In a heavily religious Irish society a young actor struggling with gender identity has to let go of his idea of masculinity before he loses sight of who he is and those he loves.

SYNOPSIS (short)

At the start of the film Kieran (Izzi Rojas) is juggling his two lives. One is in Dublin, where he is perceived by his peers in his acting troupe as a cis-boy. Even his group of close friends (Chloe Steele, Aidan Joseph and Wesley Bergin) don't know; Kieran is trans. The other life is at home, in a small town an hour outside of Dublin. Knowing that his family- especially his mother (Paula McGlinchy), wouldn't accept his gender identity, Kieran is forced to "play the part" of a girl, Kay, while at home. In the midst of managing his dysfunctional family after a tragic loss, his aspirations to be a successful actor and his identity - Kieran falls reluctantly in love with the new neighbor boy, Egan (Aidan Dick). Egan also doesn't know he is trans. As they get closer Kieran must learn to be more vulnerable and more honest with others, and himself, or else...

TECH SPECS

Directed by Aidan Dick & Izzi Rojas

Starring: Izzi Rojas, Aidan Dick, Paula McGlinchy, Tim Casey, Margarita Murphy and Chloe Steele

Running Time: 99 minutes

Format: 1920x1080, 16:9, Color

Country: Ireland & USA

Language: English

Genre: Coming of Age, Drama, LGBTQIA

Production Details

Written in 2018/19

Primary Photography Shot in July-August 2019 in Ireland (Arklow and Dublin)

Addition Photography September-December 2019 in California (Los Angeles, Mariposa)

Festivals

Premiered at 28th Annual Austin Film Festival and Writers Conference, 2021

<https://austinfilmfestival.com/festival-and-conference-aff/festival/2021films/>

Panelists at Austin Film Festival

Fostering Positive Change Through Story

<https://austinfilmfestival.com/festival-and-conference-aff/2021-conference-schedule/>

Social Impact Entertainment (SIE) is a developing field for writers, producers, and studios/networks, particularly in the independent production community and with streaming services. Join our discussion with filmmakers and creative leaders in this dynamic area, who are writing and producing stories that inspire and move audiences. We'll also discuss industry resources and networks that provide support for SIE work, such as the SIE Society, a newly formed organization, which is serving as an all-media platform to connect and empower professionals in entertainment in order to harness the power of story for the greater social good, and to achieve measurable-impact as a result.

CAST AND CREW

Izzi Rojas



Izzi is a non-binary actor, filmmaker. They are dedicated to telling thought-provoking and necessary stories. Izzi Rojas is an accomplished actor and director, their long list of credits include, Diet Coke campaign, director for music video production company Etiquette Haus, writer of short film *Lost at Sea*. *When Men Were Men*, Izzi's directorial debut premiering at Austin Film Festival, tackles issues of toxic masculinity in the trans community, Irish Catholic community, and society at large.

Aidan Dick



Aidan Dick is a non-binary independent filmmaker and actor. They wrote, co-directed, edited, shot, and starred in their feature debut, *When Men Were Men*, premiering at Austin Film Festival, which tackles issues of coming of age in the binary in an Irish Catholic community, and society at large. After navigating some of the film and art worlds as a queer artist, Aidan hopes to make the industry more representative and its products more queer.

Victoria Romano



Victoria R. Romano is an LA-based violinist, composer, and ethnomusicologist. Born and raised in Central New Jersey, she received a Bachelor of Music in Music Composition at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, where she also studied viola and completed a minor in Sociocultural Anthropology. She holds an MA in Ethnomusicology and is a PhD student in Digital Composition at the University of California, Riverside. Victoria pioneers an applied, engaged, and interdisciplinary approach to ethnography. As a composer-ethnomusicologist, Victoria excels at creating ethnographic compositions and, conversely, creatively-informed ethnography.

She intends for her score and companion scholarship to elevate visibility and empathy toward non-binary characters as well as facilitate important dialogues surrounding global LGBTQ+ issues.

Paula McGlinchey



Paula is an Irish, stage & screen actor based in Dublin, & is Director of Stage School Ireland, Rathgar, Dublin. She spent much of her life in Zimbabwe & has been hugely inspired by African artists. She was artistic director of the Chimanimani Arts Festival, Zimbabwe 1999-2000. Theatre credits include: SWEET SENSATIONS by Terri Fitzgerald Dublin Fringe, nominated for the Moira Bradley Spirit award; THE BED a one-woman play by Ger FitzGibbon, Cork Midsummer Festival. A GREAT ARRANGEMENT dir. Pat Talbot touring the Gaiety, The MAC in Belfast & the Everyman Cork; PROSPECT HOUSE & LIFEDEATH with Broken Crow; Cyclone Repertory Company 2009-2015 in MACBETH, Lady Macbeth; THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, Portia; ROMEO AND JULIET, Juliet & Mercutio; HAMLET, Ophelia & Gertrude. She toured KING LEAR as Goneril with Janus Theatre co. Cork Opera House, Helix; 4.48 PSYCHOSIS Bare Cheek Theatre Company; ALICE TRILOGY & THE LETTER PROJECT, Cork Midsummer; PAGLIACCI dir. Michael Barker-Cavan & John O'Brien (Irish Time Theatre award for best Opera); VOICES FROM THE CAILLEACH, written by Paula, produced by Theatre Makers for the Engage Arts Festival. Screen work includes Mary MacNamara RED ROCK, Virgin media & BBC; LINE OF DUTY BBC dir. Daniel Neitheim; WRITING HOME, Galway Film Fleadh; a central role in SAOL by award winning director Paco Tores, Cork Film festival; THE SLEEP EXPERIMENT & THE NEW MUSIC Independent films to be released in 2019.

Tim Casey



Tim has experience in performing in many media including film, TV (for RTE, BBC and National Geographic), theater (both open-air and indoor), radio and corporate role-play. He is fascinated and inspired by the shared creative process that takes place during rehearsal, on stage and in front of the camera and is excited to be involved in this project. He most recently played Prospero in Shakespeare's magical late play *The Tempest* (directed by Paul Maher) in an intimate production in the round. He is equally at home in comedy and won a best comedy actor award in *Barty Carty* (director, John McGovern), a short film about a demented school principal with a passion for chess. He has played countless roles including a matricidal Arthurian knight, an Irish revolutionary, a hen-pecked husband, several Nazis, and a visionary Kerry peasant. All in all, Tim is a pretty normal person!

Chloe Steele



Chloe Steele is an actress based in Ireland and London. She has extensive professional and amateur experience, with recent roles in 'The O' and 'Thursday's Child'. She has been trained in both classical theater and screen acting, through The Lir and Trinity College Dublin, as well as Bow Street.

Margarita Murphy



Margarita Murphy is an actress, known for *Kaia* (2019), *When Men Were Men* (2021) and *Wildfire* (2020).

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

We are Izzi Rojas and Aidan Dick and we wrote, directed and starred in *When Men Were Men*; a film about trans people by trans people- for everyone. We made this film as a way to navigate our own transness and wrestle with ideas of masculinity within our own gender journeys. The formative mission of *When Men Were Men* was to be the representation that we ourselves were seeking in film. We believe authentic trans narratives, such as ours, start in the writers room and should continue all the way through post. The nuances of representation on every level of production should permeate through the film filling it with varying perspectives and outlooks to truly and more authentically encapsulate a trans experience. While we set out to make a “trans’ film, during filming, the echoes of our film’s message rang so true in the hyper-masculine halls of Ireland, we realized our experiences as two trans folx reached so much farther than anticipated. This is a trans story by trans people- for everyone. A film anyone can find themselves in. Enjoy.

REVIEWS

Review by Producer Trevor Wallace

One of my favorite viewing experiences is sitting down to a movie, knowing nothing, expecting nothing, and to be taken by delightful surprise. Impressed by scene after scene, my smile growing wide as I realize I'm witnessing something special unfold.

When Men Were Men first told me I was in for that special kind of movie the first time we enter the shed. There is truly your life before you go into the shed, and your life afterwards. In a movie about identities that shift, that are new and raw, that need defending and also space to grow, that are the most precious secret yet also a truth we can not hide, what more perfect cinematic metaphor than the shed. A place made with their own hands, where the world can be briefly how it is in their heads. It is an extension of the bodies and souls of the characters, and for me formed the heart of my viewing experience.

From the world of the shed, I could begin to track each character, each theme and plot thread. While it was my way into the story, there are many points of entry for each viewer; the filmmaking here is generous and prioritizes emotional clarity at all times. Emotions can be hard to witness and feel, but the movie is always fair handed and gives you room to process. The threads of emotion and plot came together in such moving ways because the editing always keeps track of the emotions, the themes and symbols, so they can play off each other without ever feeling forced.

As I write I know this is one of the special movies where the more I say, the less I can capture what makes it incredible. It's one of those movies where there must have been some magic in the production, because everyone is doing such hard, moving work on the same wavelength, guided by the hands of two incredible artists and people.

Queer DIY Filmmaking Media Points

Production Notes

Farm anecdote: The farm that was our primary location was also where we stayed in Ireland. As part of a workaway program we exchanged work on the farm for room, board and use of the farm as a location in the film. Some of the work included, cooking lunch for farm hands, feeding ducks, taming feral cats to sell, monitoring fertilized goose and turkey eggs, herding cattle and general clean and care for the farm house. Lots of fun stories to tell here.

Becoming lads: We had our ear to the ground in the town of Arklow, to discover real Irish life, from slang, to pastimes, to ways of dress. We regularly would visit town and spend hours at local pubs, getting to know the people of Arklow. Our search began on the streets, observing, and then in charity shops to see what kind of second hand clothing we could integrate into the movie. To our surprise and due to our open nature these things came to us, magically and quite literally. One day early in our stay, we were on a mission to get footwear and catholic school uniforms. Walking down main street, Izzi noticed a pair of abandoned black sneakers (the exact type the male youth of Ireland were into at the time) in the middle of the road. The exact type we were looking for and in Izzi's size! After that we headed to the charity shop to find a catholic uniform. After we secured one we headed to our favorite pub and sat down at the bar. We had gotten to talking to the bartender when I realized we had forgotten to get a black tie to go along with our uniform. The bartender held a finger up to us and went behind the bar. When he reemerged he was holding the exact type of tie we needed. *He gave it to us <3*

THE shed: The shed you see in the film was built by hand by the two of us on another farm we did a workaway program on. After wrapping the shoot, the farmer asked if she could keep the shed, to which we happily obliged and now two alpacas live in it today!



