

Happy St. Paddy's day and pass the Guinness and the remote control

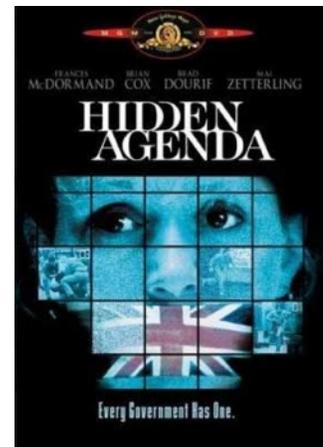
Saturday, March 17, 2007
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It's St. Patrick's Day today, and what better way to celebrate after the parade than to pour yourself a pint of stout and watch an Irish movie marathon on DVD?

You'll be in fine company – the Irish love movies. Other than Spaniards, they go to the cinema more often than any other Europeans, according to a UNESCO study. Little wonder, with home-grown successes like *The Commitments*, *Michael Collins* and *Angela's Ashes*.

So go down to your local DVD shop today and choose from the many fine films set in Ireland or Northern Ireland. The first four listed here are available for sale or rental in Quebec; you can order the last two online from Europe.

Hidden Agenda (*Britain, 1990*) An American human-rights lawyer is assassinated in Belfast, and his girlfriend (the great Frances McDormand) sets out to discover the truth. Ken Loach's conspiracy thriller doesn't pull its punches on the British and their security forces. Based on two real-life scandals.

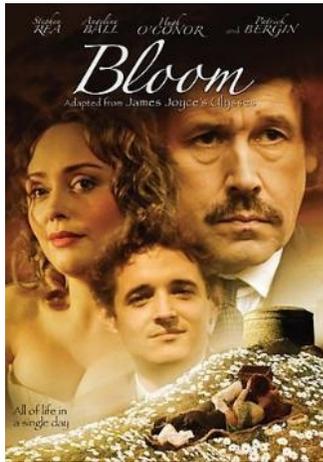


My Left Foot (*Ireland/ Britain, 1989*) The great character actor Daniel Day-Lewis does an Oscar-winning turn as Christy Brown, a working-class lad who overcomes cerebral palsy and goes on to paint, write and even pen his autobiography. For the best image, sound and extras, get the Buena Vista collector's edition (not HBO's bare-bones DVD).

The General (*Britain/Ireland, 1998*) John Boorman's portrait of the late Martin Cahill, a notorious Dublin gangster. Jon Voight (Angelina Jolie's dad) plays the inspector who tracks him down. Columbia Tristar's DVD offers two versions on a single disc: an inferior transfer of the film in deSaturday,urated colour, and a superior one in black-and-white.

Odd Man Out (*Britain, 1947*) Carol Reed's first film noir (some say it's even better than his 1949 classic, *The Third Man*) stars James Mason as Johnny McQueen, an IRA-style gunman on the run. Riveting stuff, beautifully shot. Out of

print now in North America, but the British company Network has a fine new special edition (find it at amazon.uk).



Bloom (Ireland, 2003) Based on James Joyce's *Ulysses*, this stars Stephen Rea as Leopold Bloom and is set in true-to-the-book locations in 1904 Dublin. Shorter and less rewarding than the book, but who can resist dialogue like "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" and Molly Bloom's "I said yes, I will, Yes"? Rated "R" for sex scenes and dialogue.

Also available from Europe: **Hear My Song** (Ireland/Britain, 1991) A musical comedy about a stranger who shows up in town impersonating a great Irish tenor, Josef Locke (Ned Beatty, in a note-perfect role). Adrian Dunbar plays the promoter. German DVD producer Kinowelt has the only version on the market - in the original English, of course (at amazon.de).

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