

SEACHD™

THE INACCESSIBLE PINNACLE

“Gaelic is set to make a cinematic comeback” THE TIMES

“Excellent...meaningful and substantial” THE SCOTSMAN

“A remarkable achievement” THE HERALD

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Stills and artwork at www.seachd.com:

36 high resolution production stills
36 high resolution key talent stills
Artwork
Logos

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LÀN FHÌRINN NA SGEÒIL
THE TRUTH IS IN THE STORY

YOUNG FILMS

SEIRBHEIS
NAM MEADHANAN
GAIDHLIG

Gaelic
Media
Service

LOTTERY FUNDED

BBC Alba

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
Cùisean Ghàidhlig na h-Alba

**STUDIO
ALBA**

Skye Guides

About the production

Seachd is a film that has come from the Gaelic community

Producer Christopher Young and Writer-Director Simon Miller collaborated with Gaelic writers, Gaelic co-directors and local Gaelic amateur actors, crew, vocalists and musicians to create a film set in modern day Gaelic Scotland and it is the product of the heart and integrity of that community approach.

Seachd is about the power of storytelling

Seachd is about storytelling and its power to change and enrich us. If you live your life solely in the cold light of the 'real world', then the real truths of life will elude you. If you recognise that stories can often reveal those truths better than real life, then storytelling can help you not only to face your hidden fears, but will also help you to take control of the story of your own life. *Seachd* asks us to think about the value of storytelling within our lives.

The soundtrack features top Gaelic vocalists and musicians

Jim Sutherland's soundtrack features some of the greatest living Gaelic vocalists and musicians including Cairistiona Primrose, Màiri Nic a Ghobhainn, Caitlin NicAonghais, Allan Macdonald, Alasdair Codona, Mary MacMaster, and Hamish Moore, and also the sound of ancient and modern Gaelic instruments including the Carnyx, the Triplepipes and the Clàrsach.

Some interesting facts about the making of *Seachd*

Seachd was filmed entirely on the Isle of Skye (An t-Eilean Sgitheanach) off the West Coast of Scotland.

Full press kit, high resolution stills, artwork and logos available at www.seachd.com



The Inaccessible Pinnacle is a ridged pinnacle that sits on top of Sgurr Dearg, one of the Munro peaks of the famous Cuillin mountain range on the Isle of Skye. It is a treacherous climb and is the only peak never actually attempted by Sir Hugh Munro who gave his surname to the collection of 300 Scottish peaks over 3,000 feet (914.4 metres) tall.

Unable to afford a helicopter, the cast and crew climbed Sgurr Dearg a total of four times during the making of *Seachd*, splitting the camera and equipment into ruc-sacs to endure the four hour climb to the summit before filming.

Half the cast and crew were found locally in Sleat in South Skye where the film was made, including several trainees from the Gaelic college, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

The film takes place in modern day Gaelic Scotland but the stories Grandfather tells cover the whole swathe of Gaelic history, from medieval Scotland through the 16th Century dashing of the Spanish Armada on the rocks of Scotland and Ireland, to the 19th Century Highland clearances and the islands of the 1920s.

The film was shot on an extremely modest budget of £650,000 but was at the same time extremely ambitious with 34 named roles (including 5 children), a horse race, a croft house being set ablaze, several boat trips and several dangerous mountaineering expeditions.

The film was shot on HD which gave the director and cinematographer great flexibility to capture the beautiful scenery of Skye at weekends during the shoot – including capturing a stunning sunset behind the Cuillin mountain range just before midnight.

The story of the *Crimson Snowdrop* was original told in the 2005 Scottish Gaelic short film, *Foighidinn*, also written and directed by Simon Miller and 35mm footage from the short film has been integrated into *Seachd*.

The Scottish Gaelic language

Full press kit, high resolution stills, artwork and logos available at www.seachd.com



Scottish Gaelic (Gàidhlig) is a member of the Goidelic branch of Celtic languages. This branch includes also the Irish and Manx languages. It is distinct from the Brythonic branch, which includes Welsh, Cornish, and Breton. Scottish, Manx and Irish Gaelic are all descended from Old Irish.

At its height in the late 12th Century virtually every Scot spoke Gaelic, although today there remain only 60,000 Gaelic speakers in Scotland (1.2%). The main stronghold of the language continues to be the Western Isles (Na h-Eileanan Siar), where over 60% of the population speak Gaelic and also in the isles of Skye, Raasay, Tiree, Islay and Colonsay, and the parish of Lochalsh.

In 2005 a Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill was approved by the Scottish Parliament that will give the Scottish Gaelic language official recognition and recently the Scottish Executive has committed to delivering a Gaelic TV channel.

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SCOTTISH
SCREEN
LOTTERY FUNDED

BBC Alba



Seòbhaid Mòr Oisig
Còmhlan Ghàidhlig na h-Alba

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ALBA

Skye Guides

Synopses

Tagline

Làn fhìrinn na sgeòil. The truth is in the story.

25 words

A young man cannot stop his boyhood quest for the truth - the truth behind the death of his parents and the truth behind his Grandfather's ancient, incredible, fearful stories.

50 words

A young man cannot stop his boyhood quest for the truth - the truth behind the death of his parents and the truth behind his Grandfather's ancient, incredible, fearful stories. A quest that leads him to one of Scotland's most treacherous mountains, The Inaccessible Pinnacle. The first Scottish Gaelic feature film.

100 words

When a young man, Angus, visits his dying Grandfather in hospital he cannot hold back his boyhood quest for the truth - the truth behind the death of his parents and the truth behind his Grandfather's ancient, incredible, fearful stories. Stories from the whole swathe of Gaelic history of poisoned lovers, bloody revenge, water-horses and Spanish gold. His Grandfather hijacks Angus's life for one last time leading him to one of Scotland's most treacherous mountains, The Inaccessible Pinnacle, and an ancient truth he never expected to find. Seachd: The Inaccessible Pinnacle is the first Scottish Gaelic feature film.

Full press kit, high resolution stills, artwork and logos available at www.seachd.com



Biographies - Crew

Christopher Young *Producer*

Born in Edinburgh in 1960, Christopher Young left Scotland to study at Oxford (MA), then taught in Paris (Lycee Henri IV) before returning home as a Scottish Film Trainee.

He took a diploma in film production at NYU in the USA, before working as a film editor back in the UK. In 1986 he set up his own independent feature film development and production company, Young Films, which is now based on the Isle of Skye.

Productions have included *Venus Peter*, *Gregory's Two Girls* and *Festival* for which he won a British Comedy Award for best film and a UK BAFTA nomination for Best British Film.

Simon Miller *Director and Writer*

Film writer and director, Simon Miller, was previously a Wall Street investment banker and music industry executive before seeing the light.

In 2002 he retrained into the Film Industry at London Film School and the National Film & Television School. His first short film, *Dead Man Falls*, premiered at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in 2004 and his second, *Foighidinn – The Crimson Snowdrop*, premiered on the BBC in 2005 and went on to show at festivals around the world winning best short film at the Bermuda International Film Festival. *Seachd – The Inaccessible Pinnacle* is Simon's first feature film.

Full press kit, high resolution stills, artwork and logos available at www.seachd.com



Biographies - Crew

Joanne Cockwell *Co-Writer*

Joanne Cockwell is a writer and illustrator from Hampshire, UK. She set up the film company Dead Man's Shoes with partner Simon Miller; they write feature film scripts together.

Iain F MacLeòid *Co-Writer and Co-Director*

Iain Finlay MacLeòid is a well-known writer and director in Gaelic and English for both the theatre and television. He has had his plays performed in New York and London and the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh commissioned the recently successful *I was A Beautiful Day*. His first full-length novel, *The Klondykers*, was launched at the Edinburgh Book Festival 2005 and recent directing credits have included a contribution to the Gaelic Arts series *Ealtainn* and *Something About Harry*, a documentary on the life of Harry Lauder for BBC2.

Ishbel T MacDonald *Co-Writer*

Ishbel T MacDonald has written extensively for radio and television and in particular for the BBC in the area of children's drama. She is also well known for her songwriting and her lyric writing, including many well-known Gaelic psalms.

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Biographies - Crew

Aonghas Macneacail **Co-Writer**

Aonghas MacNeacail is an award-winning Gaelic poet and writer. He was the translator and language consultant on *Hero*, one of the first Channel 4 film commissions, and has written for the Gaelic Soap, *Machair* as well as for a number of documentaries, radio plays and librettos.

He also scripted the short film *An Iobairt (The Sacrifice)*, which received an honourable mention at the Palm Springs International Short Film festival.

Calum MacKinnon **Co-Director and The Magician**

Calum MacKinnon has had a varied career in the media, from working as a producer and presenter in radio to writing for a wide variety of television programmes. He has written for and appeared in the Gaelic TV comedy sketch-show *Air Ais Air A Ran Dan* and most recently created and edited scripts for the sitcom *PC Alasdair Stiùbhart*. Seachd is his first experience performing in, and directing, a feature film.

Christine Morrison **Co-Director**

Christine has worked in Gaelic television since 1993 as a researcher, producer and director. Recent credits have included directing a series of multi-camera religious programmes and the first observational documentary to be made in Gaelic.

Full press kit, high resolution stills, artwork and logos available at www.seachd.com



Biographies - Crew

Jim Sutherland *Composer*

Jim Sutherland is a music producer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and film composer.

In 2006 Jim received the Creative Scotland Award for artists of distinction and originality and in the past two years he has composed scores for several film and TV projects including the multi award winning feature film *Festival* (Best film at the British Comedy awards), and the award-winning Scottish Gaelic short film *Foighidinn - The Crimson Snowdrop* from which *Seachd - The Inaccessible Pinnacle* grew.

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Biographies - Cast

Angus Peter Campbell *Grandfather*

To be seen here reprising his role from the short film *Foighidinn (The Crimson Snowdrop)*, Angus Peter Campbell is a renowned poet, novelist, journalist, broadcaster and now actor.

Leaving his home in South Uist to attend High School in Oban, he developed a keen interest in literature under the expert guidance of his English teacher, Iain Crichton Smith and was then fortunate enough, when at the University of Edinburgh, to be further encouraged by Sorley MacLean who held the post of Writer in Residence there at the time.

A distinguished career in journalism and broadcasting followed and he worked for both the BBC and Grampian Television. He has released two collections of poetry and two novels.

The first of those to be released, *An Oidhche Mus Do Sheol Sinn (The Night Before We Sailed)*, was voted eighth in a poll of the 100 Greatest Scottish Books Ever conducted by The List Magazine; his second, *Là a' Deanamh Sgeil Do Là (Day Speaketh Unto Day)* was published in 2004. He released *Invisible Islands*, his first work of English fiction, in 2006.

He is now a full time writer and lives in Sleat on the Isle of Skye with his wife and their six children.

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Biographies - Cast

Padruig Morrison *Angus*

The youngest member of the cast, and yet arguably the one upon which the emotional weight of the film rests, this is Padruig's first acting role. He is a keen fan of both playing and listening to Scottish traditional music (he can be seen playing the accordion in the film), and lives at home in Grimsay in North Uist with his parents.

Coll MacDonald *Angus (grown up)*

Coll is a native of the Isle of Skye and was selected for the challenging role of portraying Padruig Morrison's Angus as a young man. He is a well-known fiddler on the local scene, plays with the ceilidh band Harris Tweed Brogues and is now studying music at college in Benbecula in the Western Isles.

Christopher MacDonald, Winnie Brook Young, Annie MacLeod & Isabel Macrae *The Children*

When casting for the children's roles in the film, the producer and director did not have far to look with 3 of the children (Christopher MacDonald, Winnie Brook Young & Isabel Macrae) coming from the local Sleat Primary School, and Sleat local Annie MacLeod from the island's Portree High School.

It was new experience for all and one that they very much relished.

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Biographies - Cast

David Walker *Archie*

David Walker is an experienced actor of both stage and screen and has worked many times with the Gaelic theatre group TOSG over the years. Most recently he has been seen in the comedy sketch show *Air Ais Air a Ran Dan* and in the eponymous role of the bumbling policeman in the sitcom *PC Alasdair Stiùbhart*, of which he is also the co-writer.

Scott Handy *Patrick Loch*

Scott Handy is a graduate of Cambridge University and received his theatrical training at the Central School of Speech and Drama. He is an accomplished stage actor, including 2 years in the Royal Shakespeare Company, and has performed in New York and London's West End. Scott has appeared in films such as *A Knight's Tale*, Richard Attenborough's *Shadowlands* and more recently in Woody Allen's *Match Point*.

Toby Robertson *The Duke of Sutherland*

A distinguished theatre director and actor for many years, Toby has ran the Prospect Theatre Company, the Birmingham Rep, and London Old Vic to name a few. Toby has appeared recently in Miramax's *Importance of Being Earnest* (as Canon Chasuble), and Pathe's *An Ideal Husband*.

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Biographies – Cast

Martin Macintyre *Akira's Father*

Brought up in Lenzie near Glasgow, but with family connections to South Uist, Martin Macintyre is a successful author and storyteller and a graduate of medicine from the University of Aberdeen. His novel *Ath-Aithne* won the Saltire Society First Book of the Year Award and the follow-up, *Gynippers Diciadain*, was nominated for the Saltire Society Book of the Year Award. He lives in Edinburgh with his wife and two children.

Iain Macrae *MacDonald*

Iain Macrae has been a long-time presence on our screens and could be seen for many years as Ruairidh on the Gaelic soap *Machair*. Other work includes the BAFTA nominated *Crowdie & Cream*, the recently released *The Rocket Post*, and the lead stage role in Iain F MacLeod's *I Was a Beautiful Day*.

Vidal Sancho *The Spaniard*

The colourful role of the Spaniard went, of course, to a Spanish native, though one that trained, and is now living in, London. An accomplished singer and dancer (Flamenco & Sevillinas) as well as an actor, Vidal's recent credits have included Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* and Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth* follow-up, *The Golden Age*.

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Biographies - Cast

Meg Bateman *Sìleas' Mother*

Meg Bateman is best known as an accomplished Gaelic poet and is now a senior lecturer at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic college on the Isle of Skye. Meg grew up in Edinburgh and though she is a learner of the language, a number of her poetry collections have been released to great acclaim.

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Credits – Key talent

SEACHDTM
THE INACCESSIBLE
PINNACLE

Scottish Screen, Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig & BBC Alba

Present

A Young Films Production

Seachd – The Inaccessible Pinnacle

Starring

Pàdruig Moireasdan	Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul
Colla Dòmhnallach	Dolina MacLennan
Winnie Brook Young	Crisdean Dòmhnallach
Annie NicLeòid	Calum MacFhionghain
Scott Handy	Toby Robertson
Iain Macrae	Vidal Sancho
Isabel NicRath	Meg Bateman
Tearlach Quinnell	Daibhidh Walker

Director of Photography Ian Dodds

Music Jim Sutherland

Executive Producers Iseabail MacLenan
Carole Sheridan

Produced by Christopher Young

Directed by Simon Miller

Written by

Jo Cockwell
Ishbel T MacDonald
Iain F MacLeod
Aonghas MacNeacail
Simon Miller

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SEIRBHEIS
nam MEADHANAN
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Credits – Full cast list

Catriona	Caitlin NicAonghais
Calum	Eòghainn MacFhionghain
Eàrdsaidh	Daibhidh Walker
Aonghas (na bu shine)	Colla Dòmhnallach
Seanair	Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul
Aonghas	Pàdruig Moireasdan
Donnchadh	Crìsdean Dòmhnallach
Màiri	Winnie Brook Young
Am Mac Bu Shine	Aonghas MacDhòmhnail
Eilis NicLeòid	Kathleen NicDhòmhnail
Seanmhair	Dolina MacLennan
Ailig	Iain "Seonachan" MacLeòid
Eòghainn	Aonghas Iain MacDhòmhnail
Athair Ciara	Màrtainn Mac an t-Saoir
Ciara Ghunnach	Annie NicLeòid
Neach-Leanmhainn	Lachlan Graham
Pàdruig Loch	Scott Handy
Draoidh	Calum MacFhionghain
An Diùc	Toby Robertson
An Dòmhnallach	Iain Macrae
An Spàinnteach	Vidal Sancho
Geàrrd/Neach ciùil	Niall Caimbeul
Saighdear	Coinneach MacEalair
Neach ciùil	Jim Sutherland
Neach ciùil	Marian Lloyd
Neach ciùil	Iseabail Strachan
Neach ciùil	Fiona NicAsgaill
Sìleas	Isabel NicRath
Each Uisge	Tearlach Quinnell
Màthair Sìleas	Meg Bateman

Full press kit, high resolution stills, artwork and logos available at www.seachd.com

Credits – Full crew list

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THE INACCESSIBLE
PINNACLE

Director	Simon Miller
Producer	Christopher Young
Executive Producers	Ishbel MacLennan Carole Sheridan
Story	Jo Cockwell Simon Miller
Script	Jo Cockwell Ishbel T MacDonald Iain F MacLeod Aonghas MacNeacail Simon Miller
Co-directors	Calum MacKinnon Iain F MacLeod Christine Morrison
Co-producer	Morag Stewart
Director of Photography	Ian Dodds
Editor	Angus Mackay
Music	Jim Sutherland
Sound Designer	John L Cobban

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Production Designer	Laurel Wear
Production Manager	Stephen Burt
Casting Director	Sasha Robertson
Costume Designer	Bobby McCulla
Make-up Designer	Deborah Ross
Production co-ordinator	Kathleen MacLeod
Production Accountant	Shawn Fleming
Post-production co-ordinator	Crisdean MacGilliosa
1st AD	Mark Ash
2nd AD	Crisdean MacGilliosa
3rd AD	David McKinnon
Location Runner	Tim Armstrong
Focus Puller	Stuart Anderson
Clapper Loader	Magnus Graham
Additional Camera Trainee	Jon Tuck
Trainee Camera (SMO)	Sonya Barrett
Sound Recordist	Alastair Mason
Sound Recordist	Phil Croal
Boom Operator	Martin Cunningham
Gaffer	Steve Arthur
Electrician	Dave Thom
Location Manager	Gordon McIntyre
Location Runner	Pavlos Kosmidis
Art Director	Ali Milligan

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Props Buyer	Elaine McLenachan
Props	Caroline Fearon
Props	Paul Lambie
Assistant Props	Colin MacInnes
Art Department Trainee (SMO)	Micheal MacNèill
Costume Supervisor	David Culbert
Costume Assistant	Hilary S MacDonald
Make-up Artist	Maxine Dallas
Addition Make-up Artist/Wigmaker	Anne-Marie O' Neill
Additional Make-up Artist	Mairi Morrison
Script Supervisor	Amy NicAmhlaidh
Assistant Editors	Catriona NicLeòid
	Pòl Diuc (SMO)
Script Editor	Gilleasbuig Fearghasdan
Assistant Casting (London)	Maddy Hinton
Chaperone	Iseabail NicGillEathain
Tutor	Konstantin Kosmidis
Driver	Cecil Probert
Magic Consultant	Paul Nardini
Horses	Mandy Lenz
Photography	Julie Brook
	Mark Ash
Marketing	Seirbheisean nam Meadhanan_Gàidhlig
Catering	ARGYLE CATERING
	Emma Campbell
	Innes Campbell

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Facilities	FILM FLOW
	Jeff Derby
Boats	Ewen MacKinnon
	Pete Fowler
	Gus MacLean
Payroll Services	SARGENT DISC
Camera Equipment	24/7 DRAMA
	VISUAL IMPACT
Legal Services	SWAN TURTON, LONDON
	Antony Gostyn
Banking Services	BANK OF SCOTLAND
	Frank Morrice
	Arthur McWilliams
Subtitles	Fearchar MacIllfhinnein
Post-production Sound	THE BASE
Dubbing Mixer	John L Cobban
Foley Artist &	
Dubbing Editor	Travis Reeves
Digital Intermediate	DRAGON DI
	Tony Ray
	Phil Green
	Paul J Wright
	Valentina Catena
	David Barnett

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Press coverage

Summary of press coverage to date (full stories appear on subsequent pages)

31-03-2007	THE SCOTSMAN: Another Inaccessible Pinnacle conquered?
24-03-2007	THE HERALD: Gaelic films aims Skye high
08-12-2006	INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE: In Scotland, a revival of Gaelic
26-08-2006	THE SCOTSMAN: Angus Peter Campbell – Text message to the world
01-07-2006	HIGHLAND ARTS: Scaling the heights
14-07-2006	SCREEN INTERNATIONAL: Island Life
02-07-2006	SCOTLAND ON SUNDAY: Reaching a new pinnacle on Skye
15-06-2006	UNIVERSITY OF ST.ANDREWS: Cinema at the periphery
07-06-2006	BBC: Highland film gets success galore
20-05-2006	DAILY MAIL: Stars in the Skye as the first Gaelic movie is launched
19-05-2006	THE TIMES: Gaelic set to make a cinematic comeback
19-05-2006	NETRIBUTION: Gaelic Film First – Seachd To Tell The Power of Story
05-02-2006	SUNDAY HERALD: Gaelic movie leads language renaissance

Please check www.seachd.com for latest updates.

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THE SCOTSMAN

THE SCOTSMAN: Another Inaccessible Pinnacle conquered?

31st March 2007

The Celtic Media Festival was on last week in Aros, Portree, Isle of Skye. Although no Gaelic television programme received an award, BBC Radio nan Gaidheal received an award for the best radio station and Mary Ann Kennedy won the award for the best radio personality.

For those who were present though, the prizes were not the most interesting part of the festival but the opportunity to see a new film. *Seachd – The Inaccessible Pinnacle* is the first Gaelic film of the 21st century.

Imagine that. A complete film in Gaelic, a hour and a half duration. Who would have expected it?

I can't say when and where the general public will see it (although it would be interesting to see a Gaelic film on the Screen Machine which travels throughout the Highlands and Islands), but I must say it is an excellent film.

The majority of the film is shot on the Isle of Skye. It is about a young boy, Angus, (played by Pàdruig Morrison), and the stories his grandfather (Aonghas Pàdraig Campbell), used to tell him. These stories are about the truth when the truth is sometimes hard to bear.

This is not a light hearted film but is meaningful and substantial, without being too dark. You could watch it three or four times and still see something new each time. It is obvious that a lot of thought and work went into it. And Pàdruig Morrison is to be praised for his performance in the leading role.

I hope everybody has an opportunity to see the film soon. There is more information available on www.seachd.com.

Who knows – we might see *Seachd* on the new digital channel when it is launched later this year, It is now definite that the channel will happen as Patricia Ferguson has said that the Scottish Executive are giving an extra £3m to Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig. The budget for Gaelic television is now over £12m. That is another Inaccessible Pinnacle that has, almost, been conquered.

By James Mac a' Bhreatannaich

<http://news.scotsman.com/gaelic.cfm?id=498942007>

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THE HERALD: Gaelic films aims Skye high

24th March 2007

For days producer Christopher Young kept his eye on the weather forecasts and the sky above his home. And then, when the weather closed in and snow began to fall, he got out of bed in the wee small hours and set off up one of Scotland's most formidable mountains.

He set off in the dark, at 3:30 in the morning to climb almost 1000 metres to the top of the Inaccessible Pinnacle on Sgurr Dearg in Skye's Cuillin mountains range, the only summit in the UK that is attainable only by rock-climbing and a peak that defeated even Sir Hugh Munro. Accompanying him were director Simon Miller, three actors and a small crew, with the intention of shooting the dramatic opening scenes for his new feature film, one of the most ambitious and challenging ever made in Scotland and one of the very, very few to be shot in Gaelic. Entitled *Seachd* – seven in Gaelic – with the alternative English title of *The Inaccessible Pinnacle*, it will be screened at the Celtic Media Festival on Skye on Wednesday.

Young, whose previous films include *Venus Peter* (1989), *Gregory's Two Girls* (1999) and *Festival* (2005), was working on a budget of less than £700,000, which would be low for any feature, let alone one that involves myth and magic and jumps back and forward between the present day and ancient times. In the opening scene, two climbers die on Sgurr Dearg, leaving three children to be brought up by their grandparents, and Young and his team had to be careful to avoid the same fate as the characters.

"It's a very precarious ridge," he says. "When you're walking along the street, if you fall off the pavement, you might twist your ankle. If you're walking along the ridge and you fall off, you'll die. It's a very basic thing.

"When we shot in the snow, there was a really, really strong wind. There's no margin for error when you're up there. You have to be very focused and you have to be very clear about what you're doing." Two of the actors were stand-ins, because it was considered too dangerous for inexperienced climbers.

In the film, the grandfather regales the children with a series of far-fetched stories involving a magic horse, a man who has lived for almost 1000 years and a couple of mismatched shipwrecked sailors: one from the Spanish Armada, the other a Scot called MacDonald, who may have had a lasting impact on fast food.

Seachd plays like a handsome-looking Gaelic variation on *Big Fish* and the family classic *The Princess Bride*, without the Hollywood production values and special effects obviously. Young had no option but to get everything he could out of Skye's natural assets.

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In a bizarre twist, *Seachd* was one of two fantasy features shot on Skye last summer. The other was *Stardust*, with Michelle Pfeiffer, Robert De Niro and an estimated budget of £35m, 50 times Young's budget. But he is in no doubt about who got the best out of the island.

"I was quite amused, because they came up and it was like an army of 150 with Winnebagos and all the usual madness and they just had terrible weather," he says, "I don't think they any idea about Skye at all, but they had planned various stuff at various specific locations and there was no flexibility, whereas I think one of our advantages was I would go out with a cameraman and a director at midnight and would get a fantastic shot of the Cuillins with the sun setting."

Seachd was shot almost entirely on the island and it was quite a change for Young to be working in his own back yard, coming home to his wife and family each night (or morning) instead of disappearing off to Edinburgh, as he did while working on *Festival* or London as he did when he made *The Final Curtain* with Peter O'Toole. "What's great from my point of view is for everybody to be in involved in production, because they see what I'm doing," he says, "It's very abstract for them when I go away for a year and then come back with a finished film."

Young was born in Edinburgh, but moved to Skye eight years ago and is firmly settled there with his wife and four children. He saw *Seachd* as a chance to take Gaelic culture and storytelling traditions to a much wider cinema audience and provide experience for a new generation of Gaelic writers and film-makers. Though Gaelic-language TV dramas have occasionally been shown in cinemas, the last Gaelic feature film to be made was *Hero*, screened in 1982. Produced out of London with actors who delivered their dialogue phonetically, it flopped in cinemas and when shown on Channel 4.

Because of the nature of *Seachd*, a team of writers and co-directors assisted Miller and Young on individual stories, including the young playwright Ian Finlay MacLeod. In addition, half the crew were local. "Part of the deal was to us local people and try to take on students from the Gaelic College," says Young. And almost all the actors were local amateurs. The grandfather is engagingly played by Gaelic poet and novelist Angus Peter Campbell, while Young's daughter Winnie plays one the of the children. Some may balk at the use of local amateur actors in major roles, but it continues in the fine tradition that includes Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1964 masterpiece *The Gospel According To St Matthew*, and the film is a remarkable achievement given its ridiculously small budget.

Young believes there is no reason why a Gaelic-language film cannot be as successful as anything else filmed in a language other than English and he is currently in discussions with several British distributors. "It was probably quite dangerous to say 'Right, well, let's make a Gaelic feature film,' because I could have fallen flat on my face. I feel we haven't fallen flat on our face, that we've actually done something which is authentic."

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INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE: In Scotland, a revival of Gaelic

8th December 2006

ISLE OF SKYE, Scotland: Scotland's first contemporary feature film in Gaelic is in post-production. The BBC has begun broadcasting live sports coverage in Gaelic. A Gaelic-only high school has opened in Glasgow. A leading Scottish politician is seeking, via Brussels, to ensure Gaelic's place as a European language.

Currently spoken by fewer than 2 percent in Scotland, Gaelic is enjoying a revival here that has blossomed since the country held elections in 1999 to create a Scottish Parliament for the first time in almost 300 years.

Last year, the Parliament passed a Gaelic Language Act that recognized Gaelic as an official language of Scotland and granted it equal respect with English. In August, the Parliament introduced a National Plan for Gaelic under which public bodies are obliged to offer provisions for Gaelic speakers.

Such efforts have not been universally applauded: many question the benefits of investing in a language that, in their eyes, is ostensibly dead. There has been a rancorous exchange in Scotland's national press, with letter writers and commentators pointing out that more Scots speak Urdu than Gaelic and asking why Gaelic was getting more attention than other indigenous languages — like Doric, a dialect of Scots spoken in the northeast.

But ask anyone from the western isles, where 70 percent of the population has some knowledge of Gaelic, and they will tell you that the language is very much alive. Scottish Gaelic differs in spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary from Irish Gaelic, but the two are mutually intelligible. In Ireland, there are more than 1.5 million speakers, and the language is widely used on the airwaves.

In Scotland, Gaelic's renaissance is perhaps most vibrant in the arts. More than 2,000 competitors — a record — gathered last month in Dunoon, western Scotland, for the Royal National Mod, a festival of Gaelic language and culture with events like poetry readings and bagpipe contests.

In Portree, Isle of Skye, the film "Seachd" — Gaelic for "Seven" — will debut in late March as Scotland's first contemporary Gaelic feature. Produced by Christopher Young, it tells the story of a young boy and his grandfather, who claims to be 800 years old and who tells the lad magical tales. The boy's parents have been killed in a climbing accident on the notorious peak known as the "Innaccessible Pinnacle," also the English name of the film.

Also on Skye, the Gaelic college, Sabhal Mor Ostaig, began work last month in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh and the BBC on a project valued at £3 million, or about \$5.9 million, to create an online archive of Gaelic and Scots recordings.

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The BBC itself recently announced plans for a "significant" increase in spending on Gaelic broadcasting and a proposal for a Gaelic digital channel. In October, the BBC's Gaelic radio station broadcast the European Championship qualifying game between Scotland and France, the first time in 20 years that soccer fans have been able to hear live commentary in Gaelic on an international match.

A Celtic language that originated in Ireland, Gaelic spread to northwestern Britain no later than the 6th century A.D. and thereafter came to be spoken throughout most of Scotland, according to scholars. But the language was gradually supplanted by English. In 1891 there were more than a quarter million Gaelic speakers in Scotland; the 2001 census put the number at 58,652, just 1.2 percent of the population. But the number of younger speakers of Gaelic has been increasing, largely due to education in the language.

Katie White, 19, is one such success. She was educated in Gaelic during primary school in Portree, took a number of high school classes in Gaelic, and is now fluent. Neither of her parents is Gaelic speaking — indeed they are not Scots. White wants to pass on the language to her future children and to use it in her work. She sees the media as "a good way to revive the language."

Schools began teaching in Gaelic in Inverness and Glasgow in 1985, and this generated demand. As of last year, there were 61 primary schools across Scotland with classes in Gaelic, and 36 high schools made provision for pupils fluent in Gaelic to continue their studies in the language. This summer, the country's first Gaelic-only high school opened in Glasgow.

Now Gaelic is spreading to more public institutions. Under the terms of the 2005 language act, the Gaelic Development Agency, or Bord na Gaidhlig, can require public bodies like regional and city councils to formulate language plans for providing more services and resources in Gaelic. Again, this has proved contentious. News that Edinburgh — a city of 450,000 with 5,000 Gaelic speakers — might have to erect bilingual road signs by 2008 prompted one columnist to suggest that, given the number of doctors and lawyers in the city, it might make as much sense to post the signs in Latin.

However, counters Allan Campbell, chief executive of the agency, the effort "is about facilitation, not coercion."

According to Arthur Cormack, director of the National Association of Gaelic Arts Youth Tuition Festivals, funded in part by the agency, attitudes toward Gaelic have changed enormously in recent years.

In research carried out by the agency and the BBC in 2003, 66 percent of 1,020 people questioned saw Gaelic as an important part of Scottish life that needs to be promoted. Although 87 percent were not Gaelic speakers, nearly 90 percent were in favor of children learning Gaelic in schools.

by Iona Macdonald

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/12/08/news/gaelic.php>

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THE SCOTSMAN

THE SCOTSMAN: Angus Peter Campbell

26th August 2006

SUPPOSE, FOR THE MOMENT, THAT instead of writing in a language like English, so linguistically wide and rich that it sweeps all ahead of it, you wrote in one that is fighting a rearguard action for survival. Would that fact change the way you write and what you write about?

That's the thought that is looping through my brain as I sit talking to Angus Peter Campbell, Gaeldom's most prolific poet and novelist, and the answer I'm coming to, the more I hear him talk, is that it would be absolutely fundamental. If the language you speak and think in, your whole oral culture, is already slipping off the map, any writer who uses it would be desperate to pin it back on.

So of course what you wrote about would change. There'd be less point, for example, veering off into the slighter sliproads of ordinary narrative fiction or dallying with social realism and simple, pared-down stories of everyday life. Why bother? Words are weapons, and your side is losing the linguistic war. So to make them count, you're going to reach for the epic, the mythic, the bardic. You're going to show the poetry that this language may one day leave behind; and, in prose, you'll reveal its intricate riches, the stories woven into its very heart. And you'll do that even in English.

Campbell's *Invisible Islands* is a case in point. His last two novels in Gaelic - their titles translate as "The Night Before We Sailed" and "The Day Will Tell Its Story" - attracted rave reviews and healthy sales (with 56,000 Gaelic speakers, a book written in the language that sells 1,000 copies is a runaway bestseller).

Invisible Islands, his first book in English, lets a wider readership see what kind of writer he is. It's heavily influenced by Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, in which Marco Polo described a series of imaginary cities to Kubla Khan. Both are hard books to summarise - essentially meditations on different kinds of realities (psychological, sensory, physical, etc) in different fictional settings - and are to be prized more for their imaginative flair than their accessibility.

"When I read Calvino's book, I was impressed by its boldness, lyricism and bravery, and I wrote my own because I thought the whole notion of islands needed exploration," says Campbell. "Looking at the proofs, I thought, 'Oh, I wish they were stories,' but then I thought, 'Well, if they are cerebral let's not be ashamed of that.'"

Campbell's fictive, fabulous islands range from holy isles to ones where no-one can remember or speak about the past, from islands drowning in a babel of communications to islands lost to the Clearances, or with only wildlife and windfarms on them. There are islands whose physicality dwarfs others, ones that split, ones where war rages, ones where ghosts

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of injustice forever stalk the land, and islands that are famed for their extraordinary ordinariness.

On the islands of Beurla and Labhraigh we come closest to the linguistic battle that overshadows Campbell's work. On Beurla, a tall stranger with his numberless brood comes to teach the islanders that their own past is just myth and does not matter. He arrives with his sons and daughters, Electricity and Television and Shame, this tall thin man who "took the cards from our hands and froze the words on our lips and took the goodness out of our music and swept the fire from the centre of our floor and set a searing bonfire in our hearts".

And if that's the damage caused by English, Gaelic itself is under unavoidable threat on islands such as Labhraigh, where its old vitality is slowly dying as those who learnt it at their mother's knee gives way to those who learnt it in the classroom. Still, the islanders convince themselves, it's better for their language to be badly spoken than buried in a coffin. But how does that linguistic dispossession mark them? Already these islanders only speak in a permanent present tense, yet "everyone knows, despite all the clamour, that the now they speak of is already past, or is yet to be".

WE MEET ON WHAT TURNS OUT TO BE the first hot day in the summer's heatwave. The sun is melting the tar on the road down to Sleat (to get to Angus Peter's, said an islander friend, "drive till you see a row of council houses with the best view in Britain and look for the one with the children's bikes outside the door": right on both counts). It's gone ten in the morning, but his six children are only starting their day's play. They were up late, he tells me, at the party to mark the finishing of a Gaelic film called *Seachd*, in which he plays an 800-year-old storyteller.

Really, the storyteller is a mere 80-year-old who has been able to live ten times longer only because he has tasted a flower that slows his heart rate down. But 80 or 800, it doesn't matter: his orphaned grandson has turned his back on him and his untrustworthy stories and gone off to become an accountant in Glasgow.

Although Campbell didn't write the screenplay, it seems to echo his own dilemmas, which are those of every writer in Gaelic. At its heart, this is meant to be a film about the magic of storytelling - and any figure who is 800 years old is as compellingly bardic and shamanic as it's possible to be - yet it seems to be showing that this magic has now been lost, even deliberately rejected, by a younger generation.

So back to those suppositions we started off with. If you are a Gaelic writer now, that's got to be your main concern. And even when you deliberately move away from the weight of Gaelic's historical tradition, it doesn't get any easier.

"How to marry modernism and folk tradition without condescension is a terrific challenge," says Campbell. "The danger is always to go to one extreme, to say let's do smart, cerebral fiction like *Invisible Islands*, which I cannot thole in my heart because I don't feel separate from my community. On the other hand, I wouldn't want to unread Eliot or Pound and the modernists and just write traditional verses. I do think it's possible to marry the two."

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Both sides came together early on in Campbell's education. Brought up in South Uist, he went to school in Oban, where he was taught by Iain Crichton Smith ("he was just awesome, introducing me to poets like Roethke and Lowell and a really advanced range of English literature").

At university he met an even more influential mentor. "In my last year at Edinburgh University, Sorley MacLean was the writer-in-residence, and I went, rather nervously, to him to show him some poems. He looked at them and closed his eyes and sat back in his chair for about 20 minutes and I was about to leave, when he summoned me back. He didn't say a single word about my poems, but we talked about history and other things."

Six months later, he was in Portree when he met MacLean's daughter Catriona. " 'Are you Angus Peter Campbell, the bard?' she asked me. It was like a blessing." Or, for a young man working out what he should do with his life, a gentle shove towards writing.

Already university had opened up other intellectual horizons - Beckett, Borges, postmodernism, Marxist textual analysis among them. Their imprint isn't only in *Invisible Islands*, it pervades his third novel, *An Taigh Sanhraidh* (The Summer House), which will be published in October. It's partly about holiday homes and was sparked off by his anger last year when, trying in vain to find a nearby place for a visiting poet to stay, he contacted a London owner to ask if he could rent her house for a week. "No," she said, after an embarrassed pause. "We only give it to friends."

In the book, Rebecca, English-Italian owner of an island home, "our little piece of heaven", is visited by the ghost of the man who built it in 1745, and then his descendant who returns from Canada. The question the book poses is to whom does the house belong - either of them or Rebecca, who has become aware of the historical injustices faced by Gaeldom, who has started learning Gaelic and is proficient enough to begin texting in it.

The novel's mix is wide and varied, from Trieste to Shoreditch, from women turning into selkies to text messages in the kind of Gaelic that hasn't yet made it into the language's literature. It is a long way from straightforward social realism. "I wish I could do that," Campbell says with engaging honesty, "but ..."

But, just once to finish a sentence for him, he doesn't need to. The language he needs to battle for has other plans for him.

- *Invisible Islands*, by Angus Peter Campbell, is published by Otago, priced £8.99. He will be at the Edinburgh International Book Festival tomorrow.

by David Robinson

<http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/critique.cfm?id=1256992006>

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HI~ARTS

HIGHLAND ARTS: Scaling the heights

July 2006

ON THE SURFACE, Scottish filmmaking appears to be flourishing. The gritty drama 'Red Road' was a major prize-winner at the Cannes Film Festival in May. 'The Flying Scotsman', dramatising the life of cyclist Graeme Obree, is tipped for a world premiere at Edinburgh in August. The next six months will also see the release of the frothy comedy 'Nina's Heavenly Delights'; 'Hallam Foe', the latest feature from David Mackenzie; and 'The Last King Of Scotland', which recounts the friendship between a Scottish doctor and Ugandan dictator Idi Amin.

This may be as rich and ambitious a selection of films as Scottish talent has ever produced. but the one area of Scottish life that continues to go unrepresented on the big screen is Gaelic culture. Scottish producer Chris Young is aiming to tackle that imbalance with the feature film 'Seachd - The Inaccessible Pinnacle'. The Gaelic-language film tells of a young boy whose parents are killed in a climbing accident. He is sent to live with his grandparents. His grandfather claims to be eight hundred years old and his tall tales and magical stories play a vital part in the boy coming to terms with his loss.

There is a wholehearted commitment to 'Seachd' that runs from the crew right through to the local community

"It was important to me that we respected Gaelic culture but that the film was contemporary, plausible and not contrived," Young explained. "There is a lot of Gaelic drama, but some of it feels like Eastenders translated into Gaelic, which is meaningless, or it feels very nostalgic and not of the moment. I thought if we set ourselves carefully in a domestic context where the main character is a boy who is being brought up by this 800-year-old grandfather, then the incredibly rich Gaelic storytelling tradition is actually just part of the fabric of the boy's world."

Young is one of Scotland's most experienced producers with a track record that stretches from 'Venus Peter' (1989, and shot in Orkney) to Bill Forsyth's 'Gregory's Two Girls' (1999) and last year's BAFTA nominated ensemble comedy, 'Festival'. He moved with his family to Skye in 1999, and has continued to pursue a high profile career whilst developing his fascination with the local culture.

"I'm interested in the language and the culture and I speak a bit of Gaelic," he explained during a break in filming. "My children are fluent. Being realistic and just wanting to put a toe in the water, the best idea was to make a short film which would be quick and cheap. It would also solve my frustration at having spent about three years developing projects which for various reasons didn't happen." Young had been approached by London Film School graduate Simon Miller asking if he might be interested in producing Miller's short film. The basic elements of the story were an eight hundred year old man and a mountain.

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"I remember getting back to him and saying okay two conditions. One, the film has to be in Gaelic, and two, we shoot everything in my back garden or within a mile of my house and he said yes, no problem."

The short film they made together was called 'Foighidinn (The Crimson Snowdrop)'. It screened at film festivals around the world and provided the seed of inspiration that has blossomed into 'Seachd'.

Miller had worked with the Scottish actress Gerda Stevenson and met her husband, the Gaelic poet Aonghas MacNeicail. MacNeicail, Iain Finlay MacLeod and Ishbel T MacDonald have all collaborated on the screenplay for 'Seachd' to ensure it has the authentic voice of Gaelic culture.

Gaelic bard and novelist Aonghas Pdraig Caimbeul plays the grandfather, and Padruig Morrison from Grimsay in North Uist plays the 9-year-old Aonghas. On a day of heavy drizzle and thick mist at Elgol pier in Skye, Caimbeul and Morrison are filming a scene in which the grandfather and the boy steal a boat and cross treacherous waters to head towards the Cuillin mountain range. The weather is miserable, but ironically might well work to the advantage of the film. Earlier scenes of the Cuillin were shot on days of clear blue skies and hot sunshine (as any hill-walker will tell you, not the norm – Ed). In the finished film it will merely appear as if they have sailed through the mist and rain to watch the sun break through the cloud and illuminate their destination.

'Seachd' has a modest budget of £655,000, and has been funded by BBC Alba, Seirbheis Nam Meadhannan Gàidhlig (GMS), Scottish Screen and the Glasgow Film office. It has also had vital support from the Highlands and Islands Film Commission and the Gaelic College in Sleat, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

On this dreich day in June, the set is also graced by a distinguished visitor in the shape of Sir Iain Noble, who has agreed to act a part. Equally vital is the presence of a Skye native who has agreed to chase after the fugitives and the stolen boat, then slip and fall into the choppy waters at the harbour. He completes the stunt and once dried off and warmed up will be asked to do it all over again.

There is a wholehearted commitment to 'Seachd' that runs from the crew right through to the local community. Once it is finished, it is expected to premiere at a European Festival in the Spring of 2007, and Young believes it has the ability to compete at an international level. "There is a great richness and depth to Gaelic culture in music, poetry and especially storytelling, so why is there no Gaelic cinema?," Young demanded. "I have great faith in 'Seachd', and I take immense inspiration from the public appetite for films like 'Bombon El Perro', the Maori tale 'Whale Rider' or the Inuit 'Atanajuarat, The Fast Runner'. Ours is an equally strong story with a big emotional heart."

by Allan Hunter

http://www.hi-arts.co.uk/july06_feature_seachd.html

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SCREEN INTERNATIONAL: Island Life

14th July 2006

Isle of Skye-based producer Christopher Young follows his comedy *Festival* with a rare Gaelic-language feature. ALLAN HUNTER reports.

When people talk of working from home they usually envisage setting up an office in a spare room. In the case of film producer Christopher Young, it means bringing a feature film to shoot in locations that are all within driving distance of his base on the scenic Scottish island of Skye.

Young and his family moved there in 1999 and since then he has produced 2001's *The Final Curtain* with Peter O'Toole and last year's BAFTA-nominated comedy *Festival* by writer-director Annie Griffin.

His latest project, *Seachd – The Inaccessible Pinnacle*, is a rare Gaelic-language feature that tells of a young boy whose parents die in a climbing accident. The Isle of Skye provides an ideal shooting location. The boy is sent to live with his grandfather who claims to be 800 years-old and his magical stories play a vital part in the boy's recovery.

"It was important to me that we respected Gaelic culture but that the film was contemporary, plausible and not contrived," Young explains at a mist-enshrouded pier on the film's Elgol location. "There is a lot of Gaelic drama but some of it feels like *Eastenders* translated into Gaelic which is meaningless or it feels very nostalgic." I thought if we set ourselves carefully in a domestic context where the main character is a boy who is being brought up by this 800 year-old grandfather, then the incredibly rich Gaelic storytelling tradition is actually just part of the boy's world."

The \$1.2m (£655,000) feature is being funded by BBC Alba, Seirbheis Nam Gaidhlig (GMS), Scottish Screen and the Glasgow Film Office. It marks the feature debut of director, Simon Miller, a London Film School graduate who collaborated with Young on the Gaelic-language short *The Crimson Snowdrop (Foighidinn)*. Young is handling sales on the film and is realistic but bullish about its commercial appeal.

"It is obviously an arthouse, subtitled film, which is very liberating because you have immediately defined your market," he asserts. "*Festival* had great critical success in Britain but it didn't do big business. We suffered from being not sufficiently in a niche to get a core audience and not being remotely mainstream to get a mainstream audience. *Seachd* is a much easier proposition and I take great inspiration from the success of films like *Bombon El Perro*, *Whale Rider* and *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*. Ours is an equally strong story with a big emotional heart."

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Seachd is now in post-production and is aiming for a festival slot in spring 2007. Young has a number of projects in development including a reunion with Annie Griffin on *The Travel Writer*, a comedy set to film in Spain and the UK next year. He is also co-producing *Face* (O Rosto), a dark thriller from Portuguese director, Vitor Goncalves that will partly shoot in Scotland. The Rosa Filmes production tells of an undercover cop who undergoes plastic surgery to change his features and facilitates his return to mainstream society. Young's most ambitious project is the \$7.4-£9.2m (£4-5m) *The Strangest Thing*, a script by John Milarky that is currently seeking a director.

"It has the flavour of the films of Frank Capra or Powell and Pressburger and is set in Scotland on Christmas Eve in the late 19th Century," Young explains. "It's about the building of a railroad and a visit from the angel of death who had arrived to claim a certain soul and who discovers what it is like to be human. The film involves the building of a village and an entire landscape covered in snow."

It may be a slightly redundant question but where would Young hope to shoot this period project, "Oh, I'd love to shoot it in Skye, of course," he replies.

By Allan Hunter

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SCOTLAND *on* SUNDAY

SCOTLAND ON SUNDAY: Reaching a new pinnacle on Skye

2nd July 2006

WHEN people talk about working from home they usually mean toiling away in a makeshift office in their bedroom. In the case of film producer Chris Young, though, it has meant taking off to the rugged mountains and dramatic seas around his home on Skye. This is where he is shooting the first-ever contemporary Gaelic feature film for general release, *Seachd* (The Inaccessible Pinnacle).

Young and his family moved to Skye in 1999. Since then he has produced the dark comedy *The Final Curtain* with Peter O'Toole and the Bafta-nominated Annie Griffin ensemble *Festival*. Young has discovered that you don't have to be based in London or Glasgow to maintain a productive, high-profile film career. Now, he is pushing the boundaries a little further with the production of *Seachd* on his own doorstep.

On a dreich day in June, it can be difficult to fully appreciate the charms of Skye. The mist is so thick I cannot see my own hand in front of my face. The temperature has dropped eight degrees since leaving Edinburgh. Inching along the narrow, winding road to Elgol becomes a mini-adventure interrupted by oncoming vehicles and unexpected sheep straying across the path.

The pier at Elgol is a small hive of activity. Suitably attired in waterproof clothing, a hardy team is preparing to shoot a scene in which a young boy and his grandfather steal a boat and take to the high seas. Umbrellas protect the cameras and sound equipment from the rain. Ironically, the past three weeks have seen Skye blessed with warm days and clear skies. When the boat sails through the mist in this scene it will emerge to stunning, sun-kissed views of the Cuillins that were shot earlier in the month. The contrast couldn't be more perfect.

Taking shelter in the production offices, Young explains the background to a film that is set to become a landmark in Gaelic culture.

"Since moving here I had wanted to do something in Gaelic," he says. "I'm interested in the language and culture and I speak a bit of Gaelic. My children are fluent. Being realistic and just wanting to put a toe in the water, the best idea was to make a short film, which would be quick and cheap. It would also solve my frustration at having spent three years developing projects which didn't happen."

By sheer coincidence, Young was approached by London Film School graduate Simon Miller asking if he might be interested in producing his short film. The basic elements of the story were an 800-year-old man and a mountain. "I remember getting back to him and saying OK, two conditions. One, the film has to be in Gaelic, and two, we shoot everything in my back garden or within a mile of my house. He said, no problem."

Full press kit, high resolution stills, artwork and logos available at www.seachd.com



The short film *Foighidinn* (The Crimson Snowdrop) was screened at international film festivals, broadcast on the BBC and provided the inspiration for *Seachd*, a £655,000 feature film which has the financial backing of BBC Alba, Seirbheis Nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig (GMS), Scottish Screen and the Glasgow Film Office. It tells the tale of a nine-year-old boy Aonghas, played by Padruig Morrison, whose parents are killed in a tragic climbing accident. When he is sent to live with his grandparents in the shadow of the Cuillin mountain range, his grandfather, who claims to be an 800-year-old man, tells him magical, tall tales that end up playing a vital part in the boy's coming to terms with what has happened.

"It was important to me that we respected Gaelic culture but that the film was contemporary, plausible and not contrived," Young says. "There is a lot of Gaelic drama, but some of it feels like *EastEnders* translated into Gaelic, which is meaningless, or it feels very nostalgic and not of the moment. I thought if we set ourselves carefully in a domestic context where the main character is a boy who is being brought up by this 800-year-old grandfather, then the incredibly rich Gaelic storytelling tradition is actually part of the fabric of the boy's world."

The importance of the film to Gaelic culture is marked by the calibre of those involved. Gaelic bard Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul plays the grandfather. Writer Iain Finlay MacLeod and poet Aonghas MacNeacail have contributed to the script. Today, Sir Iain Noble, the financier who has an estate on Skye, is also preparing to play a small role. "I'm hoping this will be the first step to Hollywood," he jokes.

Young believes that the more integrity the film has, the more chance it has of making an international impact. "It doesn't apologise for being an arthouse, subtitled film," he says. "But it is a strong story with a big emotional heart and I'm looking to the success of films like *Bombon El Perro* and *Whale Rider* as our references."

Right now, though, Young has to leave his shelter and brave the wind and rain once more. He has been called back to the set where a local resident has gamely agreed to slip from the pier and fall into the water as he pursues the boy and his grandfather. It is a mark of the community's wholehearted support of the project. He will perform the stunt twice, emerging sodden but cheerful on both occasions, happy to be playing his part in the creation of this unique film.

- *Seachd* will be released in 2007.

by Allan Hunter

<http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/review.cfm?id=961782006>

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UNIVERSITY OF ST.ANDREWS: Cinema at the periphery

15th June 2006

Scotland will be one of the many burgeoning peripheral cinemas to be discussed at an international film studies conference starting at the University of St Andrews today (Thursday 15 June 2006).

Leading international filmmakers, critics and film scholars will descend on St Andrews as the University's Centre for Film Studies celebrates its first anniversary with the 'Cinema at the Periphery' conference.

Dr David-Martin Jones said, "In the mid 1990s, all eyes suddenly focused on filmmaking in Scotland. There was the international splash made by such indigenous hits as *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*, coupled with the location shooting of Hollywood blockbusters like *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*. After years in the filmmaking wilderness, Scotland was suddenly on the map. Since then we might be forgiven for thinking that things have died down. On closer inspection, this is not the case. Since the establishing of Scottish Screen in the late 1990s filmmaking in Scotland has expanded slowly but steadily. For a tiny nation on the global periphery there is an awful lot going on with talented art cinema directors such as Peter Mullan (*Orphans*, *The Magdalene Sisters*), Lynne Ramsay (*Ratcatcher*, *Morvern Callar*) and David MacKenzie (*Young Adam*, *Asylum*).

"Also, the imminent appearance of Michael Douglas, receiving an honorary degree from the University of St Andrews next week, is not the only major Hollywood star recently attracted to Scotland. In fact, people in Scotland are gradually getting used to seeing the likes of Morgan Freeman, Jet Li, Gillian Anderson, Adrian Brody and Michelle Pfeiffer - not to mention Bollywood superstars Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol and Aishwarya Rai - popping into the local shop. The tourist boom created by the so called "Braveheart effect" was not lost on the Scottish Executive, Scottish Screen or the government in Westminster, all of whom went out of their way to encourage inward investment from filmmakers in Hollywood, India, Denmark, and so on.

"Location shooting on the Bollywood hit *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998) brought in £85 000 alone, before we even begin to consider the impact of the immense circulation of images of Scotland in such films to the tourist industry".

Scotland is also attracting substantial funding to boost training and infrastructure. In addition to lottery funding for film production, there is also some movement on the ground to help young talented filmmakers acquire the skills they need. Scottish Screen's Chief Executive Ken Hay recently stated his dedication to developing both the education of Scotland's younger generation of filmmakers, and indeed, the awareness of Scottish

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audiences to Scottish cinema. Furthermore, the establishment of the new Screen Academy in Edinburgh illustrates this commitment in concrete terms.

Dr Martin-Jones continued, "Furthermore, the imminent filming of the first ever Gaelic feature, *Seachd* (The Inaccessible Pinnacle) on the Isle of Skye is just one example of indigenous production growth, whilst the presence of award winning animation company Red Kite in Edinburgh can only help matters. In short, we should not too quickly summarise that filmmaking in Scotland has dried up since the late 1990s. Rather, the ground is gradually being prepared for continued growth."

The steady growth of the Scottish film industry over the last decade is not unique.

Although its progress has been nowhere near that of the most prominent success story, South Korea – which sprang from global mediocrity to one of the top ten film producing nations practically overnight – Scotland's steady growth could soon lead to comparisons with other smaller filmmaking nations as diverse as Denmark and Iran. Demonstrating the pulling power of Scotland in filmmaking terms, and the increasing cultural awareness of art cinema in Scotland, French art film director Claire Denis will feature at the conference, giving a public Q&A session at Dundee's Contemporary Arts Centre (DCA) on Friday June 16th.

The conference has also attracted acclaimed Arab documentary director Mohamad Soueid, a major Lebanese filmmaker, novelist and film critic from Beirut, who will introduce his controversial film, 'Civil War' (2002), which was censored in Lebanon, part of a trilogy that includes the prizewinning 'Tango of Yearning' (1998) and 'Nightfall' (2002).

Meanwhile, Duncan Petrie, the leading historian of Scottish cinema based at the University of Auckland, will discuss the challenges facing periphery cinema in the face of major, Hollywood blockbusters boasting lavish production and promotional budgets, major stars and dazzling special effects.

Famous scholars like Hamid Naficy (Rice University, Houston) and Dudley Andrew (Yale University) will talk on the cinemas of Iran and the Pacific Rim respectively. Pam Cook from the University of Southampton, editor of the major anthologies 'The Cinema Book' and 'Women and Film' and author of important works on British cinema, will survey the career of the Australian director Baz Luhrman ('Strictly Ballroom', 'Moulin Rouge') both in Australia and in Hollywood. Other international scholars will discuss aspects of Chinese, Moroccan, Quebecois, aboriginal and transcultural cinemas.

The conference will also see the launch of three books by St Andrews academics including one on actor John Mills by Professor Gill Plain of the University's School of English, Dr David Martin-Jones' book on Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity, and Professor Iordanova's new book on the Cinema of the Balkans.

http://calvin.st-andrews.ac.uk/external_relations/news_article.cfm?reference=963

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BBC: Highland film gets success galore

7th June 2006

The Highlands and Islands were promoted amid the glamour of Cannes.

A Scottish film body has claimed that promoting the Highlands and Islands at the Cannes Film Festival had its most successful year yet.

Trish Shorthouse, of the Scottish Highlands and Islands Film Commission, said 200 guests attended a reception during the movies showcase on 22 May.

Ms Shorthouse said: "We pulled off the best Highland event in 12 years."

The function was themed on the classic Whisky Galore. Guests included representatives from 60 film companies. The push was a joint effort by the film commission, Scottish Screen, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, VisitScotland and Movie Site.

Ms Shorthouse said: "We pulled off the best Highland event in 12 years in Cannes thanks to all the business support.

"Throughout the week we received around 60 top film companies at the villa and provided them with information on filming in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

"We were focusing on promoting our Highland culture and not just resting on the laurels of our magnificent scenery."

She said 12 years of pushing the area at Cannes was paying dividends with the shooting of the first Gaelic feature film *Seachd - The Inaccessible Pinnacle* on the Isle of Skye.

Also an animated feature being filmed and based on Loch Ness.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands_and_islands/5053198.stm

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DAILY MAIL: Stars in the Skye as the first Gaelic movie is launched

20th May 2006

THE first Gaelic movie is to be announced at the Cannes Film Festival next week, with shooting due to begin on Skye later this month.

The film, *Seachd - The Inaccessible Pinnacle*, is about a storyteller who helps his grandchildren face the tragic loss of their parents on the Cuillin mountains by telling them extraordinary tales.

Padraig Morrison, from Grimsay, North Uist, will play the nine-year-old boy, and the Gaelic bard and novelist Aonghas Padraig Caimbeul his grandfather.

Scottish Screen has invested £150,000 in the film, which comes a year after the Scottish Parliament gave Gaelic, which is spoken by about 70,000 people, equal status with English as an official language of Scotland.

Chris Young, a Scottish film-maker who has had two English-language films compete at Cannes in previous years and is learning Gaelic, is trying to breathe new life into the Celtic language through cinema.

He said: "Gaelic has the most fantastic tradition of music, poetry, literature and storytelling. Films are about stories. I thought it tragic that there wasn't a Gaelic cinema, so let's begin that."

Though he comes from Edinburgh, Mr Young, 45, has lived with his wife and family on Skye for seven years. "I'm passionate about Gaelic," he said. "I'm not a fluent speaker, but my children are. I live in a part of the world where people are speaking Gaelic. There's a bilingual culture."

He was "absolutely thrilled" to have the backing of Scottish Screen, adding that the film was the beginning of "a Gaelic new wave".

Asked if there would be a big potential audience for a film in a minority language, he replied: "People will go and see a film if it is good."

The feature film will be launched by the Highlands and Islands Film Commission at Cannes on Monday.

by Rhiannon Edwards

<http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=36&id=749432006>

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THE TIMES: Gaelic set to make a cinematic comeback

19th May 2006

A YEAR after the Scottish Parliament gave Gaelic equal status with English as an official language of Scotland, the first Gaelic feature film is to be announced at the Cannes Film Festival this week. Scotland's mother tongue is a Celtic language introduced from Ireland in AD500. Barely 70,000 people still speak it, but Chris Young, a Scottish film-maker who has had two English-language films competing at Cannes in previous years and who is teaching himself Gaelic, is trying to breathe new life into it through the cinema.

Speaking to The Times at the Cannes festival, he said: "Gaelic has the most fantastic tradition of music, poetry, literature and storytelling. Movies are about telling stories. I thought it was tragic that there isn't a Gaelic cinema. So let's begin that."

On May 29 he begins a five-week shoot on the Isle of Skye of *Seachd — The Inaccessible Pinnacle*, about a storyteller who helps his grandchildren to face the tragic loss of their parents on the great Cuillin mountain range of Skye by telling them extraordinary tales.

Padruig Morrison, from Grimsay, North Uist, will play the nine-year-old boy opposite the Gaelic bard and novelist Aonghas Pdraig Caimbeul, as his grandfather. Scottish Screen has invested £150,000 in the film.

Gaelic was the main language in most Scottish rural areas until the early 17th century. In 1616 the Scottish Parliament ruled that it should be "abolisheit and removeit".

by Dalya Alberge

www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,13509-2187190,00.html

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NETRIBUTION: Gaelic Film First – Seachd To Tell The Power of Story

19th May 2006

Principal Photography for Young Films' latest feature film, *Seachd - The Inaccessible Pinnacle* is starting on the Isle of Skye. *Seachd* will be the first ever contemporary Gaelic-language feature film intended for worldwide theatrical release. The film is from Scottish producer Chris Young, whose last production, *Festival*, gained two UK BAFTA nominations (including Best British Film) as well as winning Best Film at the UK Comedy Awards.

Skye-based Young Films' first two productions, the Orkney-set *À Venus Peter and Prague*, were both shown as part of the Official Selection at the Cannes Film Festival, and Chris Young will be in Cannes again this year giving distributors a foretaste of *Seachd*. Other Young Films include Bill Forsyth's *Gregory's Two Girls* and the Peter O'Toole black comedy *The Final Curtain* written by John Trainspotting Hodge.

Seachd - The Inaccessible Pinnacle, a feature, is a follow-up to the acclaimed Young Films short *Foighidinn (The Crimson Snowdrop)* and is a collaboration between four writers and four directors including writer/director Simon Miller.

The film is set in present day Skye and tells the story of three children growing up in the shadow of the *Inaccessible Pinnacle*. When their parents tragically lose their lives on *The Inaccessible Pinnacle* trying to save another climber, Aonghas and his brother and sister go to live with their grandparents. Grandfather is a storyteller, claiming to be 800 years old. Gradually he casts his spell over the children with his extraordinary stories, and Aonghas finds himself magnetically drawn into an exciting and magical world.

This will be the first feature film for director Simon Miller (graduate of the London Film School) from a story by himself and partner Jo Cockwell, written by both of them with award-winning Gaelic writer Iain Finlay MacLeod, Ishbel T MacDonald and well-known Gaelic poet Aonghas MacNeicail. Simon Miller also directed the short film that was forerunner of *Seachd*. This is how *Foighidinn* was received:

"It's marvellous to see short films of this quality...a pleasure you rarely get to enjoy." *The Scotsman*

"Big budget epics could learn a thing or two from the way *Foighidinn* was made. A potent reminder of the culture and heritage of Gaelic Scotland...far outlasting its 15-minute telling." *West Highland Free Press*

The film will shoot on a very modest budget - £655,000. Financed by BBC Alba, Seirbheis Nam Meadhannan Gàidhlig (GMS), Scottish Screen and the Glasgow Film Office with support

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from Gaelic College Sabhal Mor Ostaig and Highlands and Islands Film Commission. Young Films is handling International Sales. The film will be shooting in Skye until July and will be ready for release in UK cinemas in 2007.

by James MacGregor

<http://www.netribution.co.uk/2/content/view/568/182/>

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sundayherald

SUNDAY HERALD: Gaelic movie leads language renaissance

5th February 2006

BAFTA nominee set to make only second ever movie in Gaelic tongue.

One of Scotland's most experienced film producers is to make an ambitious feature film full of myth and magic, and shot entirely in Gaelic.

It is believed Seachd (Seven) will be only the second ever Gaelic-language cinema feature film.

The only previous Gaelic feature, Hero, was directed by a visiting Englishman called Barney Platts-Mills and starred a bunch of amateurs from Drumchapel who spoke dialogue phonetically. It flopped in cinemas and set a record audience low when it screened on Channel 4 in 1982.

Christopher Young, who produced Gregory's Two Girls and BAFTA nominee Festival, has drawn on Scotland's growing pool of Gaelic-speaking creative talent for Seachd. The word means Seven, though the film will have the alternative English title The Inaccessible Pinnacle, after the peak on Skye which figures in the storyline.

Young insists he is not aiming Seachd purely at Scotland's tiny Gaelic-speaking community which numbers around 60,000 to 100,000.

"I believe there is a potential market for the film as large as any other foreign language, subtitled feature – and that can be very large," he said. In recent years, Chinese films such as Hero (which had no connection to its Gaelic namesake) have grossed many millions worldwide.

Seachd will present a series of stories told by an old man to his skeptical grandchildren. They illustrate facets of Gaelic history and character and include one story in which a girl enters a horse race on a seahorse.

Although the budget of £600,000 is modest, the film is extremely ambitious in scope and vision and Young believes it can appeal to the same audience as the Ewan McGregor film Big Fish and the family classic Princess Bride.

"There is a place for Gaelic cinema alongside other non-English cinema in the global feature film market. It depends entirely on the quality of the product of course."

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Young has made five feature films, stretching from *Venus Peter* in 1988 to *Festival*, which was named best film at the British Comedy Awards in December and is up for two BAFTAS this month.

Although born in Edinburgh, he has lived on Skye for several years and speaks Gaelic. Two years ago, he made a 15-minute film called *Foighidinn (Patience)*, in which an old man relates a story set in the Middle Ages, and the feature film will use the same framework and characters.

BBC Scotland and the Gaelic Media Service are backing the new venture and cinema distributors have also expressed interest.

Seachd has been written by a team of five writers and will have four directors, including the young playwright Ian Finlay Macleod. It will shoot on Skye this summer. Young said he was trying to "develop new Gaelic talent."

He said: "it doesn't matter what language it's in, if it's a good film, it's a good film. Up to 100,000 Gaelic speakers in Scotland will have the pleasure of seeing a film in their own language and for the rest of us it will be like watching any other foreign language film with subtitles."

Mark Cousins, of Edinburgh-based 4-Way films, agreed the move was "good news" but added: "It shouldn't have too much of a commercial impact because it will be competing in the arthouse market, but frankly so do most UK films."

Christine MacKenzie, of Aberdeen University's Celtic department, suggested *Seachd* was part of a Gaelic cultural renaissance.

"It's part of an ongoing new confidence in Gaelic and I think it's wonderful," she said.

A new Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill, approved by MSP's last year, will give the ancient tongue official recognition and the Scottish Executive is committed to a Gaelic TV channel.

But Young slammed the Executive for failing to fund Gaelic sufficiently.

He said: "Not enough public money is spent on Gaelic in Scotland. If you compare the situation here with Wales and internationally, for example Catalonia in Spain, we have a long way to go. The depths and richness of Scottish culture owes much to Gaelic culture and we ignore this at our peril."

By Brian Pendreigh

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