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Download: A Fanatic Heart: Bob Geldof on WB Yeats — ‘unmissable’

A triple-disc celebration of the great Irish poet with readings by an impressive roll-call of actors, writers and musicians



Jan Dalley MARCH 30, 2018



Directed by Gerry Hoban, 2016

Wienerworld (no cert)

“Yeats sang this country into being,” Bob Geldof says of the great Irish poet, subject of his triple-disc celebration, originally made for the 2016 centenary of the Easter Rising. Geldof moves around significant locations of the poet’s life, from lakes and ruins and great Irish houses to Maud Gonne’s Normandy hide-out, the London of his wife Georgie Hyde-Lees and the Riviera

where he spent the winters of his late age. In a historical *tour d’horizon* peppered with Geldofian opinions and expletives, our guide explains why he considers Yeats the great prophet of “modern, pluralist” Ireland and how “his revolution won in the end — the revolution of the Irish mind”.

Helping Geldof along are the thoughtful insights of Yeats’s biographer (and the film’s co-writer) Roy Foster and 70-plus readings of the poems by an impressive roll-call of members of the musical and literary artocracy, from Sting to Noel Gallagher, Dominic West to Lisa Dwan, Ardal O’Hanlon to Anne Enright, Bono to Stephen Fry. And, in historic recordings we hear the droning, gravelly singsong of the great man himself.

Highlights include a reading by Van Morrison (“I like the short ones”), new songs by Bono and Elvis Costello, and Geldof’s chat with Edna O’Brien about Yeats’s attractiveness. To the question “So, Edna, would you swoon and just . . . shag him?” comes the reply “Probably, yes.”

Unmissable for anyone interested in Yeats, or 20th-century Ireland.

★★★★★