

features

Limerick in reel time

■ A screening at the Spirit Store this Sunday pays tribute to the city's rich cinema heritage

Carla Burns

CINEMA-LOVERS will receive a warm welcome to the new SpiritStore art café next Sunday to pay homage to Limerick's long-departed city centre cinemas.

This event is being held in the unique environment of a Limerick landmark, the Sarsfield Bar.

The bar opposite the Hunt Museum is to be reopened for two months as the SpiritStore art café, hosting a busy collection of talks, performances, discussions, readings, and meetings of various clubs and societies.

Coffee and tea will be served free of charge or with donation and all events are free.

This Sunday, August 16, at 7pm I will present my ongoing project Moving Pictures, which is a mobile cinema screening films in spaces where Limerick city cinemas once were.

In April this year I was involved with an art exhibition at Stix on Nicholas Street (formerly the Thomond cinema) and I began researching the history of cinema in Limerick.

I grew up in Limerick in the 1980s and 1990s and was amazed to discover that there have been at least twelve cinemas in the city centre in the last century, with six or seven cinemas open in the 1950s and 1960s.

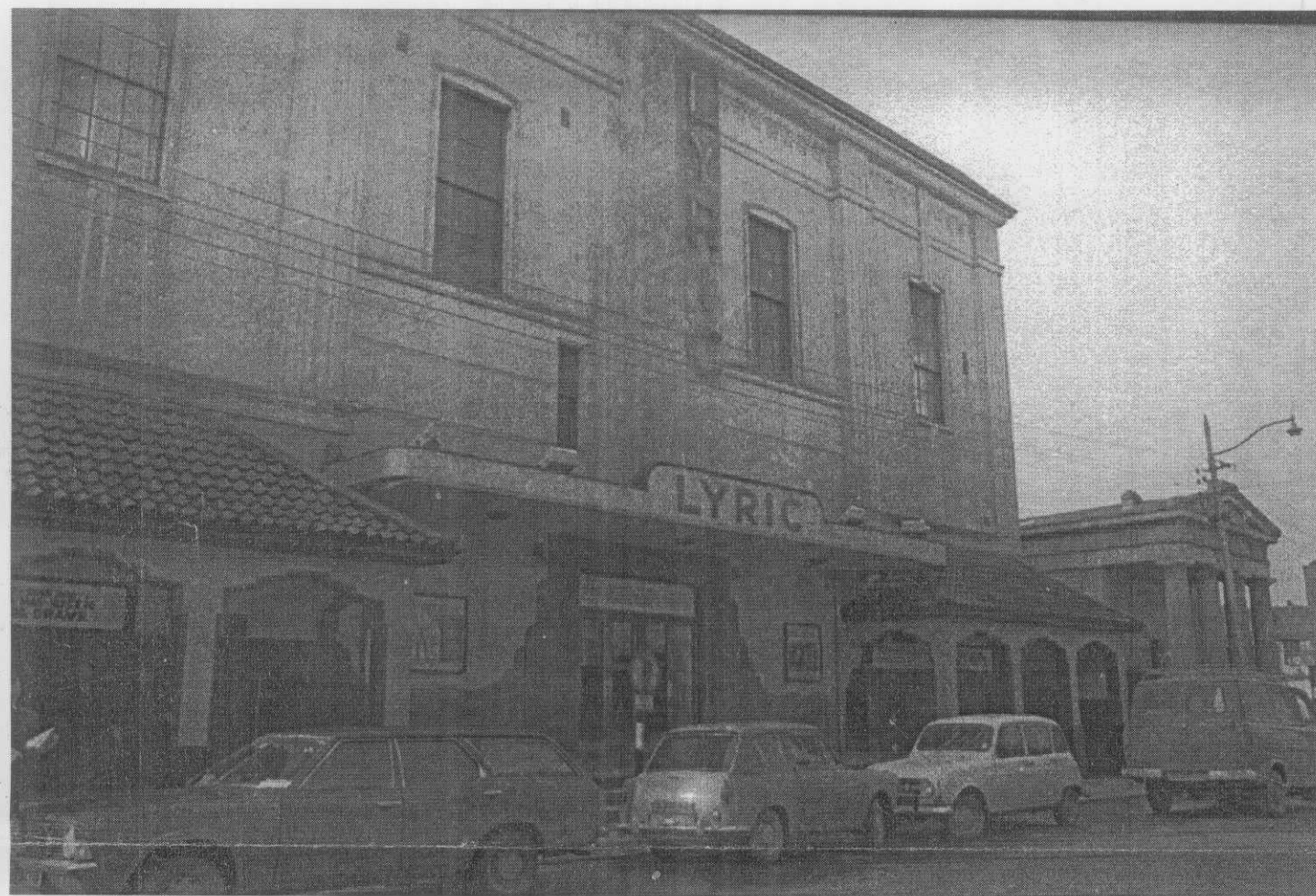
I have been walking the streets of Limerick unaware of the city's rich cinematic tradition. I did not know that the corner of Glentworth Street and Baker Place was the site of the great Lyric cinema, open for over five decades as a cinema and previously a ballroom and meeting place for a Literary and Philosophical Society.

I was delighted to discover that the former art college on Clare Street is located in the spot where the Abbey Kinema once was, a popular 'fleapit' for hardy Limerick cinema-goers in the 1920s and 30s.

I had been exploring the way we understand past personal events through memories, stories, photographs, and so on, and I wanted to revisit Limerick's cinematic history by rescreening some of the films in the very same spaces they were once viewed.

With help from friends I turned my van into a mobile projection-room and screened eight films over six nights in the city at the end of April.

I wanted to honour the cinemas, and to do this regardless of whether anyone would be there to watch, or whether the film would even be visible against the current building. I was kindly allowed access to two former cine-



The Lyric was a cinema for five decades, prior to which it had been a ballroom and a meeting place for a literary and philosophical society

PICTURE: COURTESY SEAN CURTIN COLLECTION



A projection of one of Charlie Chaplin's movies on Bedford Row this year was one of the screenings by Carla Burns in her homage to Limerick cinemas



The Carlton cinema was one of those remembered in Carla Burns' project

PICTURE: COURTESY SEAN CURTIN COLLECTION

mas (the Thomond and the Central), but all the other screenings were projected against outside walls.

It was very touching for me to watch Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' at the Theatre Royal, 82 years after it had been shown there to Lim-

erick audiences in the year of its release.

After presenting my project on Sunday, I will open the floor for discussion and story-telling, and I am looking forward to welcoming a good mix of people to learn more about



The Royal cinema, circa 1971; one of almost a dozen cinemas that existed in the city centre over the course of the 20th century

PICTURE: COURTESY SEAN CURTIN COLLECTION

Limerick's cinematic past.

I would also welcome discussion of the city's current lack of cinema. Ultimately my project felt like a protest, because people who came to watch the films inevitably ended up talking about the need for

a city-centre cinema.

SpiritStore art café at the Sarsfield Bar will open next week and will remain open every day (except Mondays) from midday to sunset until the end of October. If you are interested in holding an event

at the SpiritStore, please contact spiritstorelimerick@gmail.com.

You can preview my project and find out about future screenings online at: www.movingpictureslimerick.blogspot.com

WHAT I LOVE



Newly crowned Kamal Ibrahim Gerard Fitzgibbon

TAKING TO THE SKIES

My passion is flying. I've always wanted to be a pilot, and it's still v I'm going to do eventually. I've got flying a few times from Coonagh, I was actually in college doing electronic engineering to get my degree and go on to be a pilot. I was going to go the UK and do it through the military, but that was about the time that the war started and things changed. But just before I started modelling, about four or five years ago, I went to the States and got a pilot's licence. My other hobbies? been into music as well. I've played keyboard, guitar and a little bit of drums in the past. I used to write music as well - nothing worth boasting about though!

WINNING MR IRELAND

It has been a pretty hectic couple weeks. I was shocked to win it. Even looking back at the video, I look like I'm going to pass out! A lot of time since has been meeting with organisers the media, doing interviews and photo shoots. I managed to get a contract with Elm Motors, which will have my name and Mr Ireland branded all over it. I'm meeting with Krishna (Naidoo, Mr Ireland organiser) in Dublin tomorrow to sort out the details for Mr World, my agent John Compton. I've sort of got to get my personal trainer, Bl Shinnors. Once that's all done, then when the ball will really start roll. So far it's been a bit stressful to be honest. The first two days were great but I came back down to earth on Sunday. I realised then how much work would have to be done.

MY WEB OF FAMILY TIES

I was born here in Limerick, and shortly after that my family moved to Nigeria, where my Dad is from. I came back to Ireland when I was about eight, and I've been here ever since. I'm actually living in Shannon for past two years with my girlfriend Aneta. But I still work and go out to do everything else in Limerick. My mother is Italian, her family is De Vito, and so I'd be connected to all the chippers around town, like Li