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Shan is the man at Limerick premiere

Alan Owens

A GLITZY red carpet event marked the Irish premiere of the \$80m big screen adaptation of local novelist Darren Shan's novel, *Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant*, in Limerick Omniplex this week.

Crowds of excited children and teenagers queued from early in the evening for the invite-only event, which was attended by the Pallaskenry novelist Shan and his family, plus local actors Peter Halpin, Liam O'Brien and Mike Finn; Ms Limerick Becky Costello, and Universal Pictures general manager, Ireland, Dave Burke.

Speaking to the Limerick Leader from the red carpet as cameras flashed around him, Darren Shan told us that he had always dreamed of having the premiere in his hometown cinema.

"I am a local boy, despite the accent. I have lived here since I was six years of age and the Omniplex is my local cinema. I have seen more films here than I can remember and it was my dream to have the pre-

miere here," explained Darren, who was born in London but moved to Limerick when he was six.

Attending the premiere of the big-budget Hollywood movie, which does not go on worldwide release until October 23, were Darren's proud parents, Liam and Breda, his grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins.

"It is brilliant, absolutely brilliant. We are all very excited for Darren. It is a big night for him. I am looking forward to seeing the film," said Breda.

"I taught him how to read and write, so it is the icing on the cake for me now," laughed Breda, adding: "It is brilliant to have the premiere in Limerick, because that is what Darren wanted. He always dreamed of that so it is great, and my mum and dad can come and that is great for Darren."

The film, which is directed by Paul Weitz and stars John C Reilly, Salma Hayek and Willem Defoe, is the first of an expected series of movies in the Darren Shan saga. It was a real hit with the local audience. "It cost \$80m to make



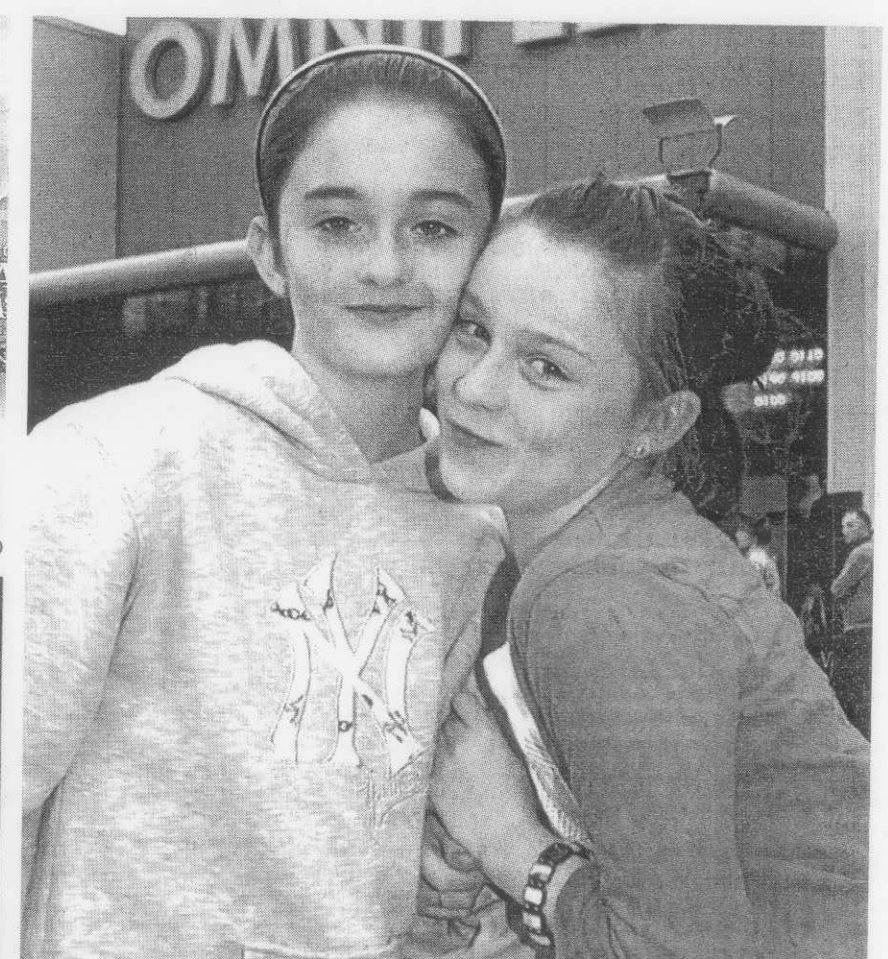
Author Darren Shan, at the premiere of *Cirque du Freak: The Vampire's Assistant*, in the Omniplex, Dooradoyle, with his proud parents, Liam and Breda O'Shaughnessy, and his girlfriend Helen Bardini (DG)

and it has to do well at the box office, but the plan is to do four films in total. All of the actors are tied in and they enjoyed making it, so hopefully there will be more," said Darren at a questions and answers session after the screening.

Dave Burke said the reaction to the Limerick screening was "fantastic", adding that the film was a major release for the film corporation and they had high hopes for it at the box office.



Stuart and Conor Clancy, Caherdavin, with their precious invites to the screening (DG)



Sabrina Roche and Rebecca Aherne, Carey's Road, at the premiere (DG)



Glen Barry and Tony Sheehan, Clare Street, at the premiere (DG)



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