

The Echo

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Put phone away while driving

OUR phones have become part and parcel of our everyday lives in ways that we could never have imagined. While there are many positives to them — in both our personal and working worlds — there are some terrible draw-backs, too.

Every time our phone pings or beeps, many of us feel the urge to check it instantly. The stark reality is that our phones can be a terrible form of distraction that we do not always need, and at times place us and others in harm's way.

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) and An Garda Síochána have launched the Driver Attitudes and Behaviour Survey and the results are fairly shocking. 23% of drivers admitted to checking their notifications when driving, while 37% admitted they do not regularly practice safe mobile-phone use behaviours.

The gardai and the RSA are renewing their appeal to drivers to not use their mobile phones while driving.

Getting behind a wheel is a huge responsibility — one we take for granted every single day. Not only do we have a responsibility to keep ourselves and our passengers safe, but other road users, too. And so to allow our phones to distract us while we are in control of a vehicle is a terrible, selfish act. International research reveals that drivers are four times more likely to be involved in a collision if they use their mobile phone when driving.

So what are people doing with their phones in their cars? According to the RSA, they are reading messages/emails, writing messages and emails, and some are even checking social media. Surely these are things that can wait until a person reaches their destination safely. Or if they are awaiting an urgent message or call, surely they can park up safely if they need to check it or take the call.

Maybe our penalties for misuse of our phones when driving are not harsh enough? Currently, you can get three points on your licence and a €60 fine if you are caught using a mobile phone. The Government plan on reviewing this and it cannot come too soon.

Why not turn your mobile phone off when driving, or switch it on silent, or keep it out of sight. As chief executive of the RSA Sam Waide said: "That call, text, or social media post can wait until you are parked up safely. Whatever you do, don't take a chance and use your phone while driving."

To date, 86 people have died on Irish roads in 2022. Nobody wants those numbers to climb any higher, but the reality is that they will.

We each have to do all we can to keep our roads safe.

Press Council of Ireland



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Casting is underway for an upcoming short film by UCC students. NAOISE MCGUINNESS tells readers more

A n open call for auditions has been announced as eight UCC scholars begin production on a short film to be screened at the Cork International Film Festival this Fall.

Under the mentorship of renowned producer Lord David Puttnam, known for his award-winning productions Chariots of Fire, The Mission, Midnight Express, and The Killing Fields, a group of UCC students have been at work since Spring to co-produce the film. Now that the pre-production stage is over, it is time for them to begin casting.

Myself (Naoise McGuinness), Benjamin Rupprecht, Debismita Dutta, Alex Brady, Calum Casey, Aoibh Kingston, Matthew Corrigan, and Amano Miura were chosen during the Christmas period of 2021 to be part of the Puttnam Scholarship Program, which was founded by Lord Puttnam a number of years ago in collaboration with UCC's Film and Screen Media Department. This year's scholars boast a wide and versatile pool of backgrounds, ranging from Creative Writing and Screen Media to Politics, Teaching, and Engineering Science. The aim of the scholarship program is to bring together a cohort of young, innovative and creative minds, and to nurture them in a way that allows them to produce a creative piece of work that speaks holistically about the modern issues they feel passionately about.

In light of the crisis happening in Ukraine and the growing volume of displaced Ukrainian's seeking refuge within Ireland, this year's Puttnam scholars felt a passionate urge to shine a light on the realities of displacement among young, impressionable people.

In particular, the scholars want to explore the plight of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who arrive on Irish soil without their parents, and who are subsequently placed in the Irish foster care system. The cultural journey that these young refugees must embark on can be challenging and, at times, wholly disheartening for them. In a bid to appeal to both Irish people and those seeking asylum from the turmoil within their native countries who have landed in Ireland, the Puttnam scholars are producing a film that dives into this kind of cultural journey in detail. In the end, they hope to produce a short film that inspires hope, tolerance and acceptance, and a collective urge among its audience to learn more about ways in which they can help.

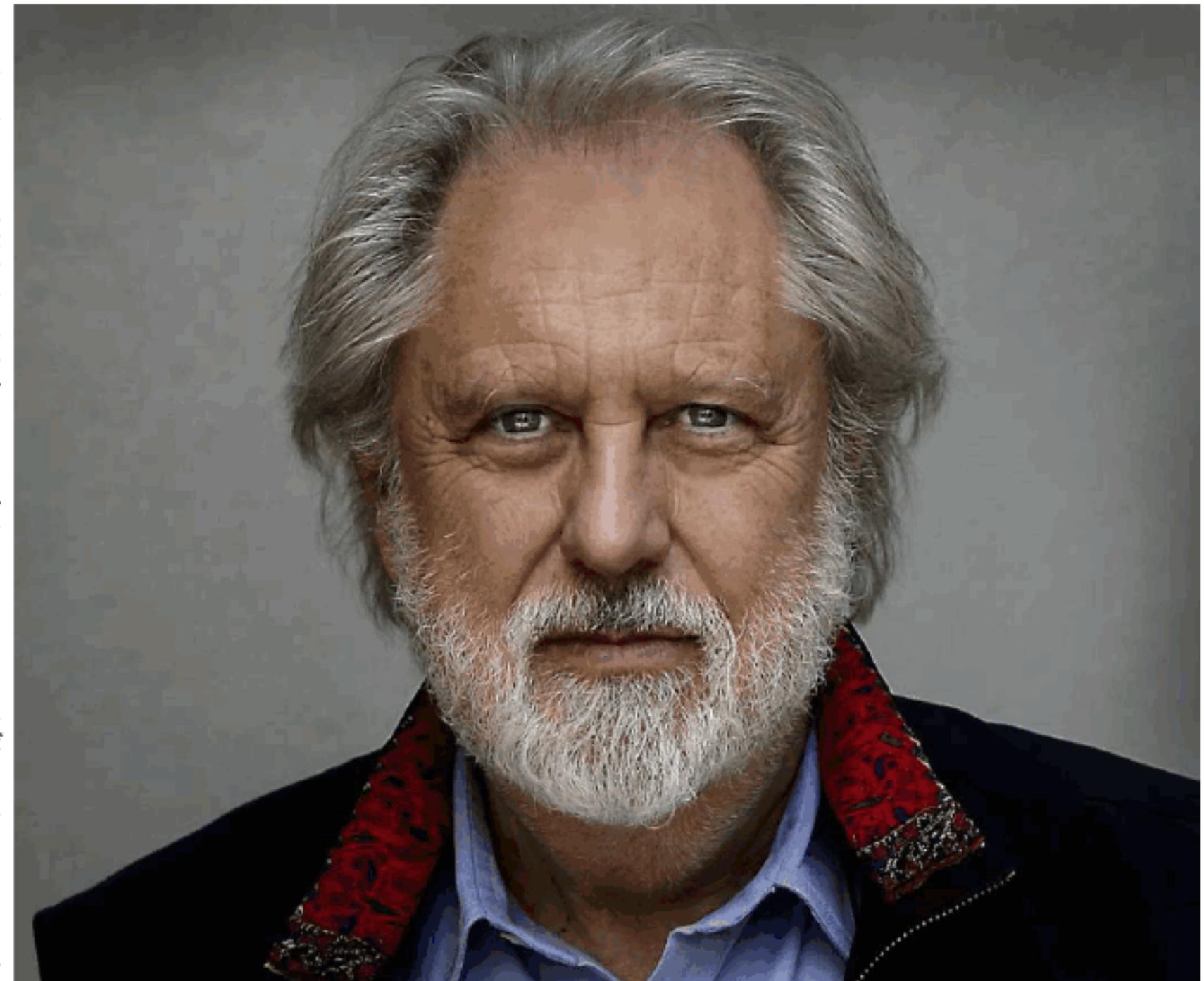
The short film will follow the life of a young boy or girl growing up in the Irish foster care system, whose cultural background is an amalgamation of both Irish and another culture. Through a theme based on 'emergence of self', our protagonist embarks on a journey to explore their cultural identity as they find themselves growing up between cultural worlds. They struggle, both with staying connected to their native selves, and with finding a way to feel at home within Irish cultural society.

Currently, there are two positions available for the protagonist roles. In order to qualify for an audition, potential auditionees must be at least twelve years of age, share another native cultural background with their Irish backgrounds (either by birth or immigration at a young age), and be able to participate well in a traditional Irish activity including sport and/or music.

Auditionees must be based in Cork, or must be able to commute to Cork City for the duration of the shooting period. As this is a student film, it should be noted that this will not be a paid role.

In addition to the two main roles, there are numerous secondary roles available to cast for the film ranging across all age groups, so

Casting call for film about life in foster care



Film producer Lord David Puttnam has been mentoring the UCC students, making the short film.

all amateur actors and actresses are encouraged to audition; no acting or performing experience is required. Other roles to be cast include adult members of authority (teachers, social workers), young adults in the sport/music scene, and young secondary school pupils.

All those who wish to apply for this upcoming short film are encouraged to send an email to the Puttnam scholars at PuttnamScholars2022@gmail.com. In their email, applicants should state why they would like to be cast in the film, and what native background they share with their Irish background.

They should also talk about what tradi-

tional Irish activity they take part in, and how they keep balance in their lives between their cultural backgrounds.

Any proof of acting/performing experience will be a bonus; however, it is not a requirement, and all applicants will be treated equally in terms of the auditioning process. Applicants who specifically come from a fostering background are also encouraged to apply, as long as appropriate consent is obtained from the authoritative bodies in place.

Details regarding the auditioning process will be released in the coming weeks to all applicants who have emailed the scholars, but don't worry! Those who have applied via email can still find information on auditioning dates and application procedures across the UCC social media platforms in the weeks to come.