



Titanic – Hitting all Kinds of Screens Near You

The opening of the world's largest Titanic visitor attraction may be drawing thousands to Belfast, the city that built the ship of dreams, but her centennial is also proving irresistible to the world's film and TV screens.

Bursting with dramatic ingredients, themes and events – money, power, ambition, greed, pride, love, courage, disaster, loss and redemption – the Titanic story has always had global and enduring appeal.

She has been the subject of several major feature films, most notably James Cameron's 1997 epic *Titanic* and 1958's *A Night to Remember*, but now a big-budget and highly original 12-part 'prequel' to the story is to hit the TV screens.

Titanic: Blood and Steel is set in Belfast before the liner's fateful launch and probably the first drama not to centre on the story of the ship's sinking.

Supported by the Irish Film Board, and co-produced by Irish based Epos films and the Italian De Angelis Group, the series has assembled a heavy-weight cast to tell the story of the ship's genesis.

It stars Chris Noth (*The Good Wife, Sex and the City*), Neve Campbell (*The Glass Man, Scream*), Kevin Zegers (*Gossip Girl, Transamerica*) and Sir Derek Jacobi (*The King's Speech, Henry V*).

The mini-series uses the turbulent society and political intrigue of Edwardian Belfast as a backdrop, and focuses on the the designing and building of Titanic and the promise and expectations she encapsulated.

Filming for the TV blockbuster took place mainly in Ireland, with the grand salon of Dublin's Howth Castle standing in for the boardroom at Harland and Wolff (the Belfast-based builder of the liner), while scenes were also shot in locations throughout the city.

They include Henrietta Street, the earliest of Dublin's famous Georgian streets and the world renowned Guinness Factory.

The spectacular Palmerstown House Estate in County Wicklow is also used in the show, however, the Irish connection goes well beyond the setting of the story and the film location.

The series also has two Irish directors, Ciaran Donnelly and Robert Quinn who also directed the hit TV series, *The Tudors*.

Titanic: Blood and Steel is being made by RAI, Italian state television, and will be dubbed into several languages. It will screen sometime in 2012.

TV series

Meanwhile a second big-budget TV spectacular is scripted by Julian Fellowes of *Downton Abbey* and features the upstairs-downstairs angle integral to the Edwardian period.

The €13 million four-part *Titanic* also boasts an impressive cast, including Toby Jones, David Calder, Lyndsey Marshal, Linus Roache and Ireland's Maria Doyle Kennedy and Ruth Bradley.

Fellowes sets out to paint a portrait of a whole society, telling the stories of a wide range of characters, both real and imagined, from every social level.

Their narratives are developed and gradually interwoven over the first three episodes, each of which ends in a cliff-hanger as the ship begins to founder.

The fourth and final episode draws all of the different stories together and reveal to the audience who survives.

Titanic has already been sold to 86 countries worldwide and has started broadcasting in the UK.

Part four will conclude on 15 April, 100 years to the day when the ship sank.

3D Titanic

One of the most awaited big screen events in years is the release of the 3D version of James Cameron's classic *Titanic*.

Cameron's masterpiece, featuring young Leonardo Di Caprio and Kate Winslet, is now 15 years old.

The original film won 11 Academy Awards, including best director and best picture.

Now the conversion to 3D format, executed by 300 people and overseen by Cameron, is complete.

The film is in cinemas from 6 April, a date chosen to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the ship setting sail.

"There's a whole generation that's never seen *Titanic* as it was meant to be seen, on the big screen," Cameron told the Hollywood Reporter.

"And this will be *Titanic* as you've never seen it before, digitally re-mastered at 4K and painstakingly converted to 3D."

"With the emotional power intact and the images more powerful than ever, this will be an epic experience for fans and newcomers alike."

But if fiction is not your thing, then tune in to two documentaries airing in April on the National Geographic Channel, one with James Cameron and another with Dr Bob Ballard, the man who discovered the Titanic wreck.

And for music fans there is Bee Gee Robin Gibb's classical music tribute, *Titanic Requiem* which is being released this April.

www.discoverireland.com

www.titanicbelfast.com