



Festival breakthrough for film-maker Zoe



Film-maker Zoe Macinnes, from Great Bernera, is interviewed by internationally-acclaimed blogger Katie Macleod, from Eagleton, as her film about the Isle of Lewis gets worldwide exposure.

“A Lewis man would be homesick in heaven.”

The phrase stands out in the trailer for *Cianalas*, the short film showing at this year’s Hebridean International Film Festival on 19th-22nd September. (<http://lanntair.com/events/event/hiff-leave-no-trace/>) (<http://lanntair.com/events/event/hiff-leave-no-trace/>)

It’s a phrase that sums up director and filmmaker Zoe Macinnes’ motivation for making the film in the first place, and one that the local musicians featured all identify with as inspiration for their work.

“I was missing home a lot,” remembers Zoe, who was a film student at Edinburgh Napier when she pitched the film.

“I kept hearing about all these musicians who were getting so popular, and I thought, how can people say the Western Isles is so behind, when there are these people travelling all over the world with something they’ve created that’s been inspired by this place?”

Her frustration at the misconceptions about her home – she grew up in Great Bernera – led Zoe to create *Cianalas*, a film that shows a different side to the Isle of Lewis, one where a young generation of musicians are seeing success across a range of genres by embracing their island culture.

“There were so many angles to go down, and using the word ‘Cianalas,’ kept a focus. It was about who was inspired by where they live, and that ended up being the main theme of the film,” explains Zoe.

Directed and filmed by Zoe, and edited by her friend and fellow student Molly Neil, Cianalas will be on the big screen across the islands this week as part of the Hebridean International Film Festival, playing at An Lanntair, Stornoway Town Hall, Stoneybridge Hall in South Uist, Taigh Dhonnachaidh in Ness, and Bernera Community Centre.

It’s also been selected for screening at film festivals worldwide, including the Culture and Diversity Film Festival and Desert Rocks Festival, both in California, and the Sunrise Film Festival in Nova Scotia. “It’s been so exciting, I never thought it would actually happen,” says Zoe of her inclusion in the festivals.

“When people ask: ‘What do you do?’ I’ve forced myself to start saying ‘I’m a filmmaker.’ It’s been nice to be able to say that.”

Although she’s been based in Edinburgh, Zoe is returning home for the film festival this week, as well as for a range of other projects she’s been working on since graduating with a BA in Film this summer. With An Lanntair, she’s creating a series of mini films to advertise commemorative events for the centenary of the Iolair disaster, and she’s also been involved in filming for the Las! / Ignite! festival, which will see young people take over at An Lanntair this October.

“There’s a lot to be at home for; it’s the opposite of what people think,” says Zoe, adding that’s she’s thankful for all the help that went into creating Cianalas. “It really was a community-built project. It was my idea, but it was also about people from home who were donating, who were sharing it, who’ve been talking to each other about it, and the musicians who took the time out of their day just to chat to me. It couldn’t have been more ‘island,’ the way it worked out.”

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 CREATED: 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

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