

Michael Fassbender at a photo call in Madrid on Monday.



Alien: Covenant asks some pretty deep questions in other words, but unlike *Prometheus* it never forgets to scare the pants off you in a film that is two parts roller coaster to one part morality play.

After a disaster on board brings the space ship to an uncharted but life sustaining planet, the ship's human captain Oram (Billy Crudup) decides to split the odds and make it their new colonial outpost.

His second in command is resistant to the idea though, sensing that the opportunity is just a little too perfect and that the distress beacon that led there might be a set up.

Scott's money is on Daniels, the second in command (played by Katherine Waterston, most famous for last year's *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*). She steps into the badass Sigourney Weaver-style role with authority from the opening scene.

No sooner have they put down a shuttle but they come under sustained and terrifying attack from a threat the likes of which they have never seen before.

Scott knows how to create an atmosphere of growing menace, and you'll be on the edge of your seat as the tension builds.

One of the missing crewmembers from the previous journeys in this series is a good script editor. Plot holes you could drive trucks through and coincidences that were too good to be true let the air out of previous go-arounds, but that problem is resolved here.

From the opening moments and for the first time in decades, *Alien: Covenant* picks up the gauntlet thrown down by the classic series and contains some significant new shocks of its own.

Fassbender literally carries the film again as the two warring sides of a debate about who has the right to decide the fate of others. David has weaponized an already fearsome alien race, and he believes that they represent the future.

But Walter doesn't think he has the right to decide who should live or die, and he stands in his way. Who will win and who will lose is the troubling question that *Alien: Covenant* asks.

Along the way you'll be riveted to your seat.

Handsome Devil Leads LGBT Fest

BY CAHIR O'DOHERTY

THE New York premiere of the buzzed about new Irish feature film *Handsome Devil* will occur at the sixth annual Craic LGBT Fest scheduled for Thursday, May 11 at the Irish Arts Center in New York.

Already dubbed the Irish *Moonlight*, it's the critically acclaimed new comedy directed by John Butler and starring gifted Irish actor Moe Dunford (best known for *Vikings*, *Patrick's Day* and *Gridlock*) in a full throated celebration of friendship, courage and being true to yourself in a society that often wants you to be anything but.

When artistic teenager Ned (Fionn O'Shea) and rugby star player Conor (Nicholas Galitzineare) are forced to share a bedroom at their boarding school, tensions quickly emerge.

To everyone's surprise though, the quiet loner and the star athlete at the rugby-mad school quickly form a deep and unlikely friendship, until it's tested by one of the school's authorities.

Dunford plays the rugby coach Pascal O'Keefe, who bitterly resents the life changing doors that Ned and his inspiring English teacher Dan Sherry (Andrew Scott) are opening for star player Conor, which he feels are distracting him from the school's first final match in a decade.

O'Keefe sets about breaking up the friendship, turning Ned back into the social pariah he was born to be and scoring some points against his own professional rival in the process. (Dunford will attend the screening and take part in a discussion about the film afterward.)

In *Handsome Devil*, director Hughes is working with some pretty potent elements -- betrayal, homophobia and violence for a start -- but he keeps things moving forward with a lightness of touch that allows the winning performances greater scope to tell the tale.

Handsome Devil has all the knowing charm of John Hughes' 1980s teen films, though undercut though with genuine feeling and with unforgettable life lessons about standing up for yourself and others that are utterly timeless.

At root though, *Handsome Devil* is

a celebration of the sheer transformative joy of a genuine friendship, whether gay or straight, and O'Shea and Galitzineare's performances convey every nuance of that discovery in a film that already seems certain to become an Irish classic.

Meanwhile, the Craic LGBT Fest special guest this year will be award winning director Ken Wardrop. He will show two of his quirky shorts, *Herd* and *Useless Dog*.

In *Useless Dog* we meet Trevor Wardrop, a dryly funny sheep famer in Ireland, who introduces us to his useless dog Guinness. Trevor lists her many faults. She's a mongrel sheep dog who's leery of actual sheep. She's 49 years old in dog years and so completely set in her ways.

She's also cowardly and narcoleptic he tells us. But she's delightful company and one of the family too, as this film outlines.

In *Herd*, Wardrop (best known for *His & Hers* and *Farewell Packets of Ten*) films Trevor again, this time after he has discovered that a young deer has befriended his herd of cattle. What will become of this unexpected friendship? Will it endure once the deer understands it's not a cow too?

Wardrop's works are famous for finding beauty in the mundane and for exploring the perennial Irish themes of family and relationships, and these two shorts underline his growing talent.

The Craic LGBT Fest is presented by Stella Artois and Clontarf Irish Whiskey. Terence Mulligan festival producer told the *Irish Voice*, "We are delighted to be working with the IAC and excited to host the New York premiere of *Handsome Devil*."

The event is support by the Cultural Immigrant Initiative and the Irish Caucus (City Council of New York) and it is already sold out. But fear not -- a wait list is being taken by the Irish Arts Center, so you can still call and see if there's an opportunity to attend.

The night kicks off with a pre-reception at 6 p.m. courtesy of Stella Artois, Clontarf Irish Whiskey and Boru Vodka. The films run from 7:30-9 p.m. There will be a question and answer session after the films. The after reception will run from 9-10:30 p.m.

RSVP to the411@thecraicfest.com to attend. For further information call 917-373-6735 or visit www.thecraicfest.com.



Fionn O'Shea and Nicholas Galitzineare in *Handsome Devil*.