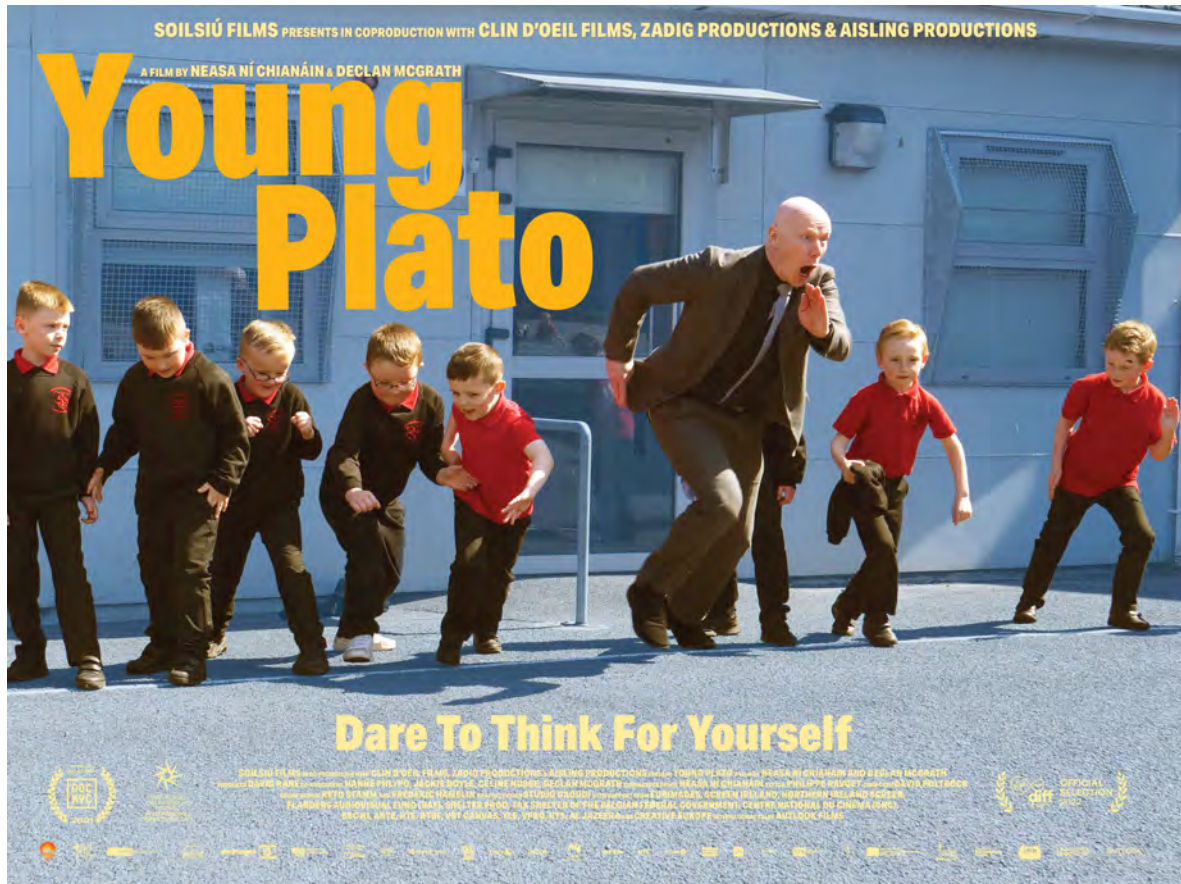




# PRESS PACK



a feature documentary film  
directed by Neasa Ní Chianáin and Declan McGrath

## FESTIVAL SCREENINGS & SELECTIONS

DOC NYC - World Premiere, November 2022  
Dublin International Film Festival - Irish Premiere, February 2022  
Thessaloniki Doc Festival - European Premiere, March 2022  
Docville - Belgian Premiere, March 2022  
CPH DOX - Danish Premiere, March 2022  
One World - Czech Premiere, March 2022  
Cleveland Film Festival, April 2022  
Seattle Film Festival, April 2022  
Crossing Europe FF, April 2022  
Millennium Docs Against Gravity - Polish premiere, May 2022  
DocAviv, May 2022  
Dokfest Munich, June 2022



[facebook.com/YoungPlatoDocumentary](https://facebook.com/YoungPlatoDocumentary)

[twitter.com/YoungPlatoFilm](https://twitter.com/YoungPlatoFilm)

[instagram.com/young\\_plato\\_doc/](https://instagram.com/young_plato_doc/)

## AWARDS

***Winner of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties Human Rights on Film Award 2022***

***Winner of the IFTA Awards for the Best Feature Documentary 2022***

***Winner of the Special Jury Award, Thessaloniki Documentary Festival 2022***

***Winner of the Best Film award from the Regional Jury of One World Human Rights Documentary Festival 2022***

***Greenwich International Film Festival Documentary Honorable Mention Award***

***Millennium Docs Against Gravity Film Festival Lower Silesia Grand Prix Award***

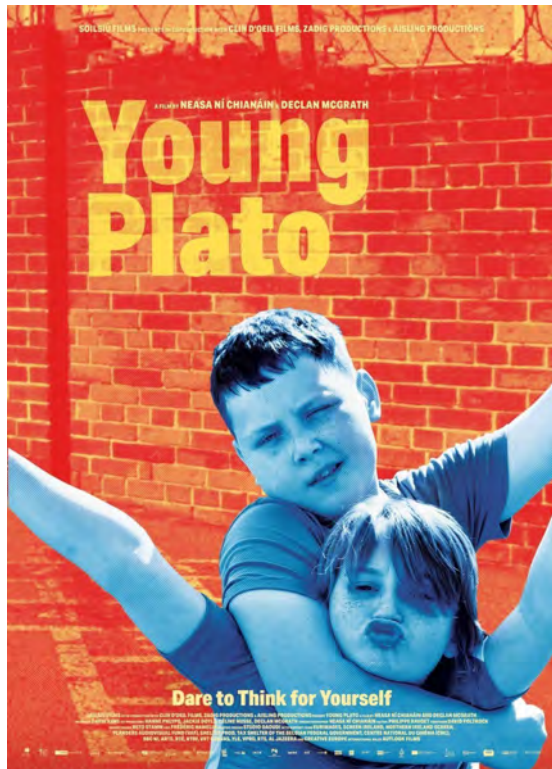
***Millennium Docs Against Gravity Film Festival "Zwierciadło" Magazine's Award for the Best Film on Psychology***

## LOGLINE

A Primary School headmaster in Belfast's Ardoyne housing estates invokes the wisdom of the ancient Greek philosophers to fight poverty, drug dealers and the IRA – restoring hope in the heart of a battered community.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

An inspiring documentary from the filmmakers of School Life, YOUNG PLATO charts the dream of Elvis-loving school headmaster Kevin McAreeve – a maverick who is determined to change the fortunes of an inner-city community plagued by urban decay, sectarian aggression, poverty and drugs. The all-boys primary school in post-conflict Belfast, Northern Ireland, becomes a hot house for questioning violence, as the headmaster sends his young wards home each day armed with the wisdom of the ancient Greek philosophers. The boys challenge their parents and neighbors to forsake the prejudice that has kept this low-level civil war on the boil for decades. YOUNG PLATO hums with the confidence of youth, a tribute to the power of the possible.



## LONG SYNOPSIS

Wedged into a cluster of working-class housing units, Holy Cross Boys Primary School bears the scars of the Northern Ireland sectarian struggle, with barbed wire still in place on the high walls surrounding the school, walls decorated with political graffiti and murals – this is the heart of Ardoyne, North Belfast.

Catering for boys from the age of 4 to 11 years, Holy Cross Boys School was caught up in world media reports in 2001 when the children at their sister school, Holy Cross Girls, were threatened on their way to school by local loyalists. Teachers at Holy Cross Boys also received death threats. The social model of the area is one of chaos and entropy; the political standoff between republicans and unionists means that meaningful community development is slow.

Crime and substance abuse have flourished, and the despair of the streets is reflected in the suicide rates for young men and boys – the highest in Europe. Against this seemingly hopeless background, one inspiring headmaster is changing the narrative, helping the children of Holy Cross School and the wider community to find hope and purpose. It seems inconceivable, but the answer lay in the wisdom of the ancients: the philosophical teachings of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Headmaster, Kevin McAreevey, is a tough-looking, bald-headed 50 year-old with a black belt in karate. His office, adorned with an incongruous mixture of pictures of Elvis Presley and Pope Francis, reflects the complexity of the character. Kevin is a big personality in Ardoyne; fearless and committed to having an impact in the community. Everybody knows him, parents and drug dealers, IRA dissidents and the PSNI, have all passed through his office. Kevin deals with everything head on – he's survived knife attacks, and terror threats, "You can't give in to bullies or else they'll keep coming back" he says.

What drives Kevin is his own past, he grew up defending himself and those close to him with the fist, being a hard man was one way to survive in working class Belfast. Years later, although he hides it well, Kevin lives everyday with the shame and remorse of his turbulent past, a past that has become the driving force behind his zeal for philosophy. His quest is to build resilience in his pupils and help them manage their emotions in order to face whatever life throws at the. Using philosophy as his tool, he guides the children through challenging discussions about the past, their lives at present and where they might find a future. He encourages them to question everything, even their parents, and tackles violence amongst young boys head on. Every scrap, fight, altercation in the school, ends up being teased out on the philosophy board outside Kevin's office. 'Violence breeds violence, it never stops,' Kevin insists.

His second in command, Deputy Head Jan Marie Reel, is a perfect foil to Kevin's expansive character. She's the heart of the school, the go-to mother figure who, together with a team of dedicated teachers gently but firmly steer the school towards a better future. It's a rollercoaster ride of triumph and despair as the staff face overwhelming odds in the form of sectarian aggression, a defeatist zeitgeist accumulated over years of neglect, and children who are burdened with serious behavioural problems. One day an 8 year-old may be threatening suicide and the next day a pipe bomb is discovered on the grounds; and even a deadly virus arrives. There's a limit to what even the most inspired teacher can cope with. But then the magic happens, as if from nowhere; a troubled child suddenly turns a corner and sees a way forward.

Kevin will proudly declare "It's all about critical thinking. The boys are learning to make the right choices." His process is transformative and he's spreading it beyond the walls of the school, in an initiative to get the pupils to teach philosophical thinking to their own parents at home. Driving past a mural in the neighbourhood that has been transformed from dissident propaganda to a picture of one of his Holy Cross pupils, posing as Rodin's Thinker, Kevin smiles to himself, and turns up the volume on the Elvis' track *If I Can Dream*.

## **BIOG / FILMOGRAPHY NEASA NÍ CHIANÁIN, DIRECTOR**



Neasa Ní Chianáin, director, is one of Ireland's most established documentary talents. Neasa trained at the National College of Art & Design in Dublin, and worked as a freelance Art Director on Irish feature film and television projects, before switching to docs in 2001. She has directed 9 single docs (4 feature length) and one tv series.

The docs include 'Frank Ned & Busy Lizzie', which won Best Feature Doc at The Celtic Film Festival 2004, and was sold around the world, including ZDF, ARTE and YLE. 'Fairytale of Kathmandu' world premiered at IDFA 2007, in the Silver Wolf Competition. It was then invited to over 30 more international Festivals including Seattle (North American Premiere) and Edinburgh (UK premiere). 'Fairytale' won

3 Best Documentary/Director awards and screened on YLE and Canvas. 'The Stranger', funded by MEDIA, RTÉ and The Irish Film Board, had its world premiere at the 67th Locarno Film Festival.

Her last film, 'In Loco Parentis' (aka 'School Life'), has been a world-wide success, premiering in competition at both IDFA 2016 and Sundance 2017. 'School Life' won the Special Jury Prize in the Golden Gate Awards at the San Francisco Film Festival, and an Audience Award (Prix du Public) at Visions du Réel in Nyon. Neasa was also chosen to take part in the Sydney Film Festival's 'Europe! Voices of Women in Film', which selected 10 of Europe's most promising women directors. Neasa is currently in post-production on a new feature documentary, 'The Alexander Complex', funded by Screen Ireland, Blue Ice and Irish Sec 481 tax credit, and has just completed production on 'Young Plato', a feature documentary funded by Screen Ireland, BBC, ARTE, Eurimages, Northern Ireland Screen and many other funds.

### **Director's Note (Neasa Ní Chianáin)**

Ever since my children started attending school, I really began to appreciate how education can influence the development of a child and shape their path into adulthood. While making the documentary *In Loco Parentis* (*School Life*), I witnessed first-hand the transformative effect inspirational teachers could have on their young wards' lives. The headmaster of Headfort was an avid proponent of critical thinking and the Socratic method of teaching. Watching him give children the space to discuss and argue different points of view, on a variety of subjects, was riveting. But if there was a fly in the ointment, it was that this was a private school with children from wealthy backgrounds, and there was the danger that this approach to education was a privilege for a selected few.

When Declan introduced me to Holy Cross Boys school, and told me that philosophy was being taught there, I was hooked. Holy Cross Boys School was everything Headfort wasn't: a state school, in one of Belfast's toughest neighbourhoods, an area still scarred by sectarian struggle. Everywhere was walled, fenced and gated, amplifying the notion of 'turf, dividing and containing people with opposing political loyalties and perceptions.

Nationalist Ardoyne did not benefit from any significant 'peace money' that poured into Belfast after the Good Friday agreement in 1998. As a community they were largely left to fend for themselves. Poverty, drugs, suicide and dissident paramilitarism continued to gnaw at the families in Ardoyne, posing a serious threat to the future of their young children.

But inside Holy Cross Boys school, there was hope. Kevin McAreevy, the maverick headmaster, fearless and steadfast in his belief in philosophy and critical thinking, was a philosopher and a clown all at the same time. His passion was infectious and his charisma persuasive. Kevin didn't like waiting around for Educational Boards to sanction his ideas. He went full steam ahead and showed what making philosophy a core subject in his school could do. Around him the school staff had created an oasis, where the children, and often their parents, were supported by an incredibly dedicated team who were also determined

to make a difference. From the caretaker to the kitchen staff, the classroom assistants to the teachers, all were genuinely doing everything possible to improve the lives of their students and ultimately their community.

This film is a testimony to that journey.

As an observational filmmaker, my process is always to try and join the circle, become part of the community, live in the world I'm trying to understand and not position myself as a voyeur but as one of the group. Luckily Kevin and his team afforded Declan and I that privilege and allowed us to completely immerse ourselves in the world of the school. We were really touched by how welcome the staff made us feel, regardless of how difficult life became, there was always a strong spirit of generosity served up with big dollops of humour. This openness to let a film crew in, even in the most challenging of times, (post Brexit and during the Covid pandemic), came, I believe from the team's great sense of pride in what Holy Cross Boys School had achieved, both with and for its students.

Academically the school enjoys phenomenal success, but my interest lay with the children who were not so academically gifted. The head of Special Needs, Jan Marie Reel explained to me that often the kids who struggled with academia were the very kids who were targeted by the dissidents, the drug dealers and organised crime. In a community where unemployment is high and opportunities scarce, kids who can't use education as a route to a better future are often targeted by the unscrupulous. Making the right choices can easily become a matter of life and death in a community like Ardoyne. Learning to think for oneself, to reflect, analyse and plan, quickly becomes an essential life skill.

Watching Kevin taking the lofty ideas of philosophy and distilling them down into accessible lessons for 4 to 11 year olds was so inspiring. Giving children, especially young boys, the tools to recognise and cope with anxiety, anger, aggression, despair now seems incredibly obvious.

In western society indiscriminate violence amongst boys has become disturbingly prevalent, so by creating empathy for different points of view, maybe there could be less polarization amongst communities and more tolerance of 'the other'.

The importance of critical thinking in the age of fake news has become essential. We've seen first-hand how huge numbers of people can easily be manipulated to act against their own interests, how they can be persuaded to put the wrong people in power.

If teaching philosophy and critical thinking to children from a young age became the norm and not the exception, then maybe the next generations would be well equipped to navigate through life and make better choices.

With all the challenges the human race is now faced with, if we are to have any chance of survival, Kevin's mantra 'Think, think, Respond!' seems like a pretty good first lesson to me.  
Neasa Ní Chianáin

## **BIOG / FILMOGRAPHY DECLAN MCGRATH, DIRECTOR**



Produced and directed *Lomax in Éirinn* (2018, TG4) It premiered at the Galway Film Fleadh in July 2018 and screened at the IFI as part of its Ireland on Screen series. To date, it has also had public and festival screenings in New York, Washington, Alberta, Montreal, Clones, Liverpool, Würzburg (Germany), Huston and Seattle. Nominated for Best Arts Documentary in the 2019 Celtic Media Festival awards.

Directed *Stephen: My Fight For Life* (2019, BBC NI). Documentary pick of the month on BBC network website. Produced *The Occupation* (2018, RTE Radio One). Nominated for a New York Festival award in 2018. Directed *Tír Eoghain: The Unbreakable Bond* (2018, TG4) Nominated for Best Sports Documentary in the 2019 Celtic Media Festival awards. Directed *A Woman's Place*, (2018, Oireachtas TV/RTE). It premiered at the Irish Film Institute in June 2018 and screened on RTE in November 2018.

Produced *Léigh Linn* (2016) winner of Best App in the 2016 Celtic Media Awards. Produced *Mary McAleese & The Man Who Saved Europe* (2015, RTE & BBC). It premiered at the Galway Film Fleadh and won Best Historical Documentary in the 2016 Radharc Awards. Bought by Canal Plus in France, DR2 in Denmark and an academic distributor in the USA. In November 2017, the film was invited to be screened for the Economic and Social Committee of the European Union in Brussels.

Declan also directed the series *Seinn Liom* (2014) and *Cad É An Scéal* (2013) for BBCNI. He has worked as an editor for over twenty-five years, cutting numerous award-winning dramas and documentaries.

He has taught film in Queens University Belfast, Dundalk Institute of Technology and University College Dublin and has written two books on the craft of cinema (*Screencraft: Editing & Post-Production* and *Screencraft: Scriptwriting*) for Focal Press/Butterworth Heinman (each book was translated into five languages). Declan also regularly contributes to the American film journal *Cineaste*.

### **Director's Note (Declan McGrath)**

I was brought up in North Belfast, just over a kilometer from Ardoyne, during the Northern Ireland conflict in the 1970s and 1980s. North Belfast is a patchwork quilt of unionist districts rubbing up against nationalist areas. The resultant frictions have made the area the location of brutal sectarian division and attacks. I remember myself and schoolmates in the 1980s, matter-of-factly chatting about what we would do if we ended up in a 'bogus' taxi driven by a paramilitary from loyalist murder gang who would have picked us up in order to kill us. Because we had grown up in a war situation such concerns were accepted as normal. That is what children do. They adapt to the situation around. The normalization of conflict and division in children, the acceptance of hatred of the 'other' as a fact of life, is a problem that has preoccupied me since.

Later, in the 1990s and beyond, an unsteady peace settled on North Belfast. Sectarian attacks continued but with less frequency. However the area became blighted by another plague – high rates of suicides by young teenage males. There was a period when the local priest in Ardoyne would have only finished the funeral of one young suicide victim when he got a call to visit the family home of another teenager who had taken his own life. People felt powerless in the face of such a senseless loss of life coming in the wake of a viscous war.

Ardoyne, and Northern Ireland in general, continues to have an unusually high suicide rate. Psychologists tell us that this is probably due to having lived through a conflict. Yet one of the most startling facts is that suicide is particularly high among young people born after the official end of the Northern Ireland conflict – the ceasefire declared in 1998. Scientists now believe that not only can post-conflict trauma adversely affect a society but also that such trauma can be passed on through generations. The affects of conflict can cruelly afflict children who have had no direct experience of a war that was waged before they were born by their parents and grandparents.. It is a vicious and unjust cycle of suffering that becomes hard to break.

As a filmmaker from North Belfast, I frequently felt the obligation to highlight the suicide problem in the area through film in the hope that I could help. Believing that a film can help anyone is perhaps naïve and maybe even hubristic. In any case, I never found a satisfactory way to do so. A few years ago I heard about about the mission of a local primary school headmaster, Kevin McAreevey of Holy Cross Boys in Ardoyne, to introduce philosophical thinking to the 400+ four to eleven year-old boys in his care as well as to his staff.

Through philosophy he was giving children (and their educators) the tools to challenge their own ways-of-thinking and to become open to the thinking of others. Using the methodology of Socrates, he let the kids run their own classes and express their own opinions in an atmosphere where everyone respected and listened to each others' point-of-view. The boys are encouraged to change their own opinions after listening to, and considering, the thinking of others. In a conflicted and divided society such freethinking is revolutionary. It perhaps can even save lives.

Furthermore, the teaching method had a more practical aim. It potentially helped the boys become more confident and mentally resilient. That it did so was clear when I first heard eleven year-olds from Holy Cross Boys speak. They seemed articulate and confident beyond their years.

This was more than just supposition on my part. In Northern Ireland a test at the end of primary school, at age 11, determines whether a child will go to a more academically orientated secondary school or one that is more practically orientated. It can be a cruel and unfair system and Holy Cross Boys emphasise to the boys that they are valuable whatever school they go to. Yet while less than a third of the population pass the exam to get into the academically inclined school, in Holy Cross Boys almost two-thirds of their boys pass. That is twice the average. It is an even more impressive statistic when you consider that statistically Ardoyne is considered an area of 'social deprivation' where a much lower than average percentage of children would be expected to pass the exam.

In any case, I decided that I wanted to make a film about Kevin's mission to bring philosophy to Ardoyne. Luckily I was able to convince Ireland's pre-eminent documentary feature filmmakers, Neasa Ní Chianáin and David Rane, to collaborate on the project. Neasa and myself were privileged to be allowed by Kevin and the staff and pupils of Holy Cross Boys to spend almost two years among them observing and recording the life of the school and community. I hope that the resulting film is a heartwarming and uplifting testament to the power of education and to the hope that a post-conflict society can shake off the shackles of the past as younger generation make their own future by using the ideas of the ancients.

## **SOILSIÚ FILMS - Lead Producer**

Soilsiú is a Film and Television company with a 22 year track record producing documentary features and series, short animation and short fiction. The main focus of their work has always been human rights and social issue based documentaries, with a strong focus on the rights of children and marginalised communities. BAFTA-winning producer David Rane and IFTA-nominee, Neasa Ní Chianáin's feature documentary projects have premiered at Sundance Film Festival, IDFA, Locarno Film Festival, Dok Leipzig, Edinburgh and many other international festivals.

Soilsiú's films have been released theatrically in USA, Canada, UK, Australia, France and Ireland, and have also been sold to ARTE, ZDF, PBS, RTBF, TVE and other international broadcasters. Neasa Ní Chianáin is a recipient of two Best Director/Film awards for her film, Fairytale of Kathmandu, and Soilsiú has been awarded three Best Documentary awards for 'School Life', which premiered as 'In Loco Parentis' at Sundance 2017 and was released worldwide by Magnolia. The company is in receipt of Creative Europe Slate funding (2020) and is currently in production on 5 feature documentaries, all financed by Screen Ireland and four of which are international coproductions.

## **PRESS QUOTES YOUNG PLATO**

**"An inspirational, moving and ultimately uplifting film." "Young Plato is a breezy and powerful documentary that tackles big issues with a gentle touch as young minds learn to embrace challenging ideas." "Kevin McAreevey is clearly amaverick." "Delightfully directed by Neasa Ní Chianáin and Declan McGrath in classic fly-on-the-wall style, the film uses its access perfectly, treating both adults and children alike with respect and compassion. a story of pure educational inspiration."**

– Mark Adams, BUSINESS DOC EUROPE, November 14, 2021

<https://businessdoceurope.com/doc-nyc-review-young-plato-by-neasa-ni-chianain-declan-mcgrath/>

**"a bold and remarkable project. an unexpected rock star among this year's documentaries."**

– Chris Knipp, CHRIS KNIPP, November 16, 2021 <https://www.chrisknipp.com/writing/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=4827>

**"This is an outstanding documentary by Neasa Ní Chaináin ... she handles it with such skill and sensitivity that *Young Plato* is not put in the shade by that classic French documentary of 2002, *Être et Avoir*. ... *Young Plato* is deserving of equal popularity.**

**"The way in which the film has been directed has a freedom and invention about it which ensure that it never feels staid. Even more importantly, it is acutely sensitive to the material."**

**"It would be wonderful if everyone who went to see Kenneth Branagh's *Belfast* would then go to see *Young Plato* and if they did I am sure that they would come away feeling that they had done the right thing."**

– Mansel Stimpson, FILM REVIEW DAILY – 4 ½ stars

<https://www.filmreviewdaily.com/new-reviews/young-plato>

**"...heartening to witness. Encouraging children to avoid conflict has a particular relevance in Belfast, of course, but I'd be happy to see McAreevey's methods used in schools everywhere."**

– Edward Porter, SUNDAY TIMES, March 15, 2022 – 4 stars

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/red-rocket-is-an-engaging-tale-of-a-human-car-crash-v93hd6drv>

**"...brought back happy memories of Nicolas Philibert's classic *Etre et Avoir*."**

**"This is an open and good-natured film, with some great set-piece scenes with poignant closeups on kids' faces as they ponder why they are so angry and what can be done about it." "A very engaging film."**

– Peter Bradshaw, THE GUARDIAN, March 8, 2022 – 4 stars

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2022/mar/08/young-plato-review-belfast-headteacher-inspires-playground-thinkers>

**"A hopeful, heartening film that features plenty of observations from the children that put adults to shame."**

**"It would make a great double bill with Kenneth Branagh's recent *Belfast* - which is also a largely child's eye view, focused on the start of *The Troubles* - as it explores the legacy that continues to impact the community today."**

– Amber Wilkinson, EYE FOR FILM, March 11, 2022 – 4 ½ stars

<https://www.eyeforfilm.co.uk/review/young-plato-2021-film-review-by-amber-wilkinson>

**"Inspiring primary school principal anchors heartrending documentary set in Northern Ireland."**

**"Observant without feeling exploitative, the unassuming *Young Plato* eavesdrops on a number of situations in which individual children are challenged on their behaviour or nurtured in their better instincts. Moments of genuine remorse or growing understanding make for emotional viewing. The positivity of *Young Plato* is highly engaging, but the directors also ensure we have a sense of what is at stake here."**

**"By the time McAreevey drives home from work to the sounds of Presley's 'If I Can Dream' there is unlikely to be a dry eye in the house."**

– Allan Hunter, SCREEN DAILY, February 24, 2022

<https://www.screendaily.com/reviews/young-plato-dublin-review/5167200.article>

**"Declan McGrath and Neasa Ní Chianáin's documentary is a stark reminder of the impact of generational violence. The lasting legacy of those dark times has been imprinted on those who witnessed them and their offspring. *Young Plato* is a sobering and emotive film about someone desperate to help make a change."**

– Rob Aldam, BACKSEAT MAFIA, March 8, 2022  
<https://www.backseatmafia.com/film-review-young-plato/>

**"The style of direct cinema does not allow explanatory commentaries or interviews where context can be explained. The directors, Neasa Ní Chianáin and Declan McGrath, along with the editor, Philippe Ravoet, have tackled this challenge creatively by using several inventive ways to incorporate archives and explanatory information into the storyline without interrupting the flow of the narrative."**

– Margareta Hruza, MODERN TIMES REVIEW, March 14, 2022  
<https://www.moderntimes.review/young-plato>

**"Plato once said that the highest end a person can ever attain is to sit down and contemplate the good. This film, this school, this man, and these pupils have already started that work and the good that they contemplate will obviously live long after them." "Remarkable."**

– Cahir O'Doherty, IRISH CENTRAL, November 11, 2021  
<https://www.irishcentral.com/opinion/cahirodoherthy/young-plato-belfast>

**"A touching portrait of an inspirational headmaster."**

– Eamonn Tracy, IRISH FILM CRITIC, November 18, 2021  
<https://www.irishfilmcritic.com/2021-doc-nyc-film-festival-review-despite-some-repetition-young-plato-is-a-touching-portrait-of-an-inspirational-headmaster/>

**"uplifting, touching doc."**

– Brad Schrieber, MEDIUM- November 18, 2021  
<https://bradschrieber-29377.medium.com/best-of-the-2021-doc-nyc-festival-6d2749b6e5fe>

**"should be required viewing for every primary school educator, administrator or parent of young children."**

– Tara Fass, ON MOGUL, November 11, 2021  
<https://onmogul.com/stories/teach-your-children-well-the-new-doc-about-a-visionary-principal-in-young-plato>

**"*Young Plato* is a guide to a better world."**

– Liz Whittlemore, REEL NEWS DAILY- November 17, 2021  
<https://reelnewsdaily.com/2021/11/17/doc-nyc-2021-review-young-plato-dares-kids-and-audiences-to-use-their-words/>

**"A remarkable story of hope and healing."**

**"With compassion and love, *Young Plato* truly is an experience to behold."**

– Steve Norton, SCREEN FISH, November 16, 2021 <https://screenfish.net/young-plato-an-oasis-in-northern-ireland/>

**"*Young Plato* shows that school can't end where recess begins: what happens in the classroom affects what happens outside of it, and it's the teacher's responsibility to help make that outside world safer for everyone."**

– Alex Heeney, SEVENTH ROW, November 23, 2021  
<https://seventh-row.com/2021/11/23/young-plato/>

**"Inspiring."**

**"A philosophically inspiring tale about the power of the mind over brawns."**

– Noah Ramer, SILVER LININGS REVIEWS, November 10, 2021

<https://silverliningsreviews.net/2021/11/10/young-plato-film-capsule-review/>

**"Young Plato brings to bear the idea that ways of thinking can change the mind as long as the questions are ingrained into the young in their formative years."**

– Tim Wassberg, SIRK TV, November 30, 2021

<https://www.sirktv.com/irfests/fest-track-on-sirk-tv-film-review-young-plato-doc-nyc-2021-virtual?rq=plato>

**"Riveting." "This lovely and moving portrait will leave you feeling inspired and more hopeful about the fractured world we're living in, and the younger generations inheriting it."**

– Shani Friedman NY IRISH ARTS, December 31, 2021

<https://newyorkirisharts.com/doc-nyc-presents-the-irish-documentary-young-plato/>

**"Young Plato is a sensitive, enlightening and uplifting portrait of young kids grappling with emotions and their own personal journeys through life."**

– Michael McDermott, TOTALLY DUBLIN - March 16, 2022

<https://www.totallydublin.ie/film/cinema-reviews/cinema-review-young-plato/>

**"If, as Plato said, "the direction in which education starts a man will determine his future in life", then the compelling documentary *Young Plato* suggests that the pupils of Holy Cross Boys Primary School now have a much brighter future thanks to the inspirational work of Kevin McArevey and his staff."**

– David Roy, THE IRISH NEWS - March 9, 2022

<https://www.irishnews.com/arts/film/2022/03/09/news/directors-of-young-plato-documentary-on-how-philosophy-is-changing-young-lives-at-an-ardoyne-primary-school-2608630/>

**"...the school is no more dysfunctional than any other institution and a lot more intelligent and self-questioning than many. A very engaging film."**

– Craig Fedirighi, VERVE TIMES - March 8, 2022

<https://vervetimes.com/young-plato-review-belfast-headteacher-inspires-playground-thinkers-film/>

**"What results is an utterly compelling documentary that breaks down a problem and offers a solution much like an educational lesson, teaching its subjects and the audience with encouraging thought and discussion."**

– Calum Russell, FAR OUT MAGAZINE - March 11, 2022 – 4.2 stars

<https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/young-plato-review-a-charming-noble-documentary/>

**"...an essential and engaging documentary despite how close to home it cut."**

– Pat Fox, FILMHOUND - March 15, 2022 – 5 stars

<https://filmhounds.co.uk/2022/03/young-plato-film-review/>

**"An intriguing experiment. Without a narrator or even on-screen text this observational documentary is very intimate, its lens so close to the boys' faces that tears of shame and frustration are clearly visible"**

– Richard Maguire, THE REVIEWS HUB - March 11, 2022 – 3.7 stars

<https://www.thereviewshub.com/film-review-young-plato/>

## **KEY CREW LIST**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>JOB DESCRIPTION</b>
Neasa Ní Chianáin	Director / Cinematography
Declan McGrath	Director / Co-producer
David Rane	Producer
Hanne Phlypo	Co-Producer
Jackie Doyle	Co-Producer
Céline Nusse	Co-Producer
Philippe Ravoet	Editor
Reto Stamm	Sound Designer / Editor
Frédéric Hamelin	Sound Designer / Mixer
David Poltrock	Composer
Etienne Essery	Story Consultant
Mark Carroll	Post-production Supervisor

## **KEY CAST LIST**

Kevin McAreyve	School Principal / Headmaster
Jan-Marie Reel	School Teacher / Head of Pastoral Care