

Contrasting dates for Craigmunie Centre

TWO contrasting events have been confirmed for the Craigmunie Centre in Drumnadrochit later this spring.

Singer-songwriter and guitarist Sarah McQuaid will play the venue on Sunday, May 17, with a wide repertoire of songs that include traditional Irish songs and Appalachian folk, as well as her own compositions.

The music will start at 4pm (doors open at 3.30pm). Rapunzel will be presented by the Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre as part of the Puppet Animation Festival on Saturday, April 18.

The story welcome the audience to Dame Goethel's garden where the audience can let their hair down with Rapunzel.

Narrated by a frog, this adaptation of the fairy tale has all the elements of the traditional tale... the witch, the beautiful girl locked in a tall tower and, of course, the handsome prince who



Sarah McQuaid.

Picture: Phil Nicholls Photography

attempts to save Rapunzel...

The production features specially-recorded music, rod puppets, and Steve Smart's puppetry skills, in a show that has been designed to be enjoyed by adults and children alike.

The show is recommended as suitable for youngsters of four-plus up to anyone young at heart.

Rapunzel will begin at 2pm (doors open at 1.30pm). Tickets for Sarah McQuaid are £12, £10 concession, £5 under 18 and are available from www.wegotickets.com/event/497458

Rapunzel tickets are £6 for children, adults free (donations welcome). Buy online at www.wegotickets.com/event/497451

If any tickets are still available on the day, they will be at the door (cash or cheque only).

STEPHEN'S TORTURE FILM LOOKS SET TO CHANGE THE WORLD

By Margaret Chrystall

ONE night in 2007, lying in bed reading beside his wife, documentary filmmaker Stephen Bennett spotted something on the page that hit him "like a kidney punch".

He read the name 'Dr Ewen Cameron', a Scottish psychiatrist who developed torture techniques later used in the American military prison Guantanamo Bay – a man raised less than half-an-hour from where Stephen lay.

He was instantly obsessed and had to find out more.

Looking back he says: "I just had a very strong reaction when I read it.

"When I replay it in my mind, I get goosebumps. I had this real seismic moment. I got up and went on the computer and was still playing with the smoke and mirrors on the internet trying to find out what was true and what wasn't, when my wife got up for work at six!"

The seed of the film that would become Eminent Monsters was planted.

Now, with the documentary on limited release and heading round the country, Stephen says he is "very chuffed, happy and proud" to have got it made.

But it's a story of great perseverance – it took 10 years to get it off the ground in the first place with two earlier attempts failing.

Stephen said: "I've been doing my job for 25 years this year, so I guess 10 years ago I was a bit greener.

"Maybe it is quite good that though I tried to get it made in 2007, and then again in 2012, I didn't. Finally it took a year to make and another year to get to where we are now.

"It's been quite an odyssey.

"You think getting the film made is hard – but getting it seen is just as hard!"

An experienced documentary director, Stephen has won BAFTAs for Dunblane: Our Story (best



Scottish film director Stephen Bennett.

Picture: John Devlin

documentary) and best current affairs for Walking Wounded about veterans with PTSD.

For Eminent Monsters – the title based on the nickname patients called the psychiatrist Dr Ewen Cameron – Stephen interviewed people whose lives had been affected by the torture, as well as senior American psychologists, military personnel and key whistle blowers too.

In the 1950s the CIA and Canada covertly funded Cameron to conduct psychological experiments. To do it he subjected his ordinary psychiatric patients in a secret wing of a respected psychiatric hospital in Montreal to sensory deprivation, forced comas, LSD injections and extreme physical and mental torture.

Cameron's work was used in an early CIA handbook of torture and the techniques have since been used in 27 countries and Guantanamo.

They were also used in Northern Ireland on 14 Republican 'Hooded

Men', interned during the Troubles.

Ireland sued the British Government for torture of its own citizens in 1978, but the European Court of Human Rights decided the techniques were not torture, but 'inhumane and degrading treatment'. That judgment has been used to legally justify state-endorsed torture – including by the Bush Administration from 2002 in their War On Terror after 9/11.

Cameron's career ended in disgrace in 1963 when he left the Montreal hospital, taking all his files and case notes on his experiments, later destroyed by his son.

Eminent Monsters is Stephen Bennett's first feature documentary and meant extensive research and interviews, including the families of those Dr Ewen Cameron treated as patients – yet experimented on, people tortured in Ireland and Guantanamo and also fellow medics and government officials.

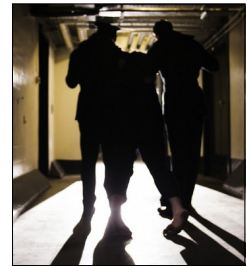
He also interviewed Mohamedou Ould Slahi, held for 14 years without charge at Guantanamo and believed to be the most tortured detainee.

How does someone survive something like that?

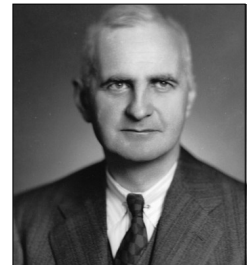
"He wrote Guantanamo Diary, the first detainee to write a diary inside Guantanamo," Stephen said.

"He's about to make a film about his life with Benedict Cumberbatch directed by Kevin MacDonald called Prisoner 760.

"When I interviewed him he



A dramatised torture scene with the 'Hooded Men'.



Scottish psychiatrist Dr Ewen Cameron developed torture techniques.

was amazing, so genteel, so lovely, a very happy guy."

Last year, Stephen's film was premiered at Glasgow Film Festival and later extracts were shown at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva at an event hosted by Professor Nils Melzer, the Special Rapporteur. This spring, the professor is drawing up new guidelines on the use of psychological torture, based on the documentary, to create new protocols for member states.

For Stephen, the chance to try to change the world is why he went into documentary-making as a career.

"It feels incredible to have an impact at United Nations level. Films like Eminent Monsters and Prisoner 760 will hopefully elevate the debate and make people realise actually what is being done in our name, often without our knowledge. I've given the film 12 years so far and I dare say I have much more to give to it," Stephen said. "I believe in the need for it. We live in a very perilous world with things happening, often right under our noses. It's our job as filmmakers to shine a light onto these things."

■ Eminent Monsters is on at Eden Court Cinema on Sunday, February 16, at 2pm.

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