

**100% PURE UNCUT IRVINE WELSH**

# **The Acid House**

**a film by Paul McGuigan**



**a Zeitgeist Films release**

# The Acid House

**a film by Paul McGuigan**

based on the short stories from  
**"The Acid House" by Irvine Welsh**

Starring

**Ewen Bremner  
Kevin McKidd  
Maurice Roëves  
Martin Clunes  
Jemma Redgrave**

Introducing

**Stephen McGole  
Michelle Gomez  
Arlene Cockburn  
Gary McCormack**

**Directed by Paul McGuigan**

**Screenplay by Irvine Welsh**

**Director of Photography Alasdair Walker**

**Editor Andrew Hulme**

**Costume Designers Pam Tait & Lynn Aitken**

**Production Designers Richard Bridgland & Mike Gunn**

**Associate Producer Carolynne Sinclair Kidd**

**Produced by David Muir & Alex Osborne**

**FilmFour presents**

**a Picture Palace North / Umbrella Production**

**produced in association with  
the Scottish Arts Council National Lottery Fund,  
the Glasgow Film Fund and the Yorkshire Media Production Agency**

**UK • 1999 • 112 mins • Color • 35mm**

**In English with English subtitles**

**Dolby Surround Sound**

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# The Acid House

a film by Paul McGuigan

Paul McGuigan's THE ACID HOUSE is a surreal triptych adapted by *Trainspotting* author Irvine Welsh from his collection of short stories. Combining a vicious sense of humor with hard-talking drama, the film reaches into the hearts and minds of the chemical generation, casting a dark and unholy light into the hidden corners of the human psyche.

# Part One The Granton Star Cause

The first film of the trilogy is a black comedy of revenge, soccer and religion that come together in one explosive story.

Boab Coyle (STEPHEN McCOLE) thinks he has it all, a 'tidy' bird, a job, a cushy number living at home with his parents and a place on the kick-about soccer team the Granton Star. But in just one day, Boab finds that life can be very, very hard and that a chance meeting with God isn't necessarily a good thing.

At the weekly soccer game with the Granton Star, Boab's innate laziness and his penchant for cigarettes and lager take their toll on his performance—a fact noted by his colleagues who believe totally and utterly in the Granton Star cause. At the post-match drink Boab is sacked by manager Kev (GARRY SWEENEY), who, egged on by his teammates, thinks that Boab is holding them back from playing on a real pitch with nets. Furious at his former friends Boab heads home where he is confronted by his father (ALEX HOWDEN) who tells Boab that he wants him to leave and find a place of his own.

Angry at this new betrayal, but still optimistic, Boab storms from the flat thinking that leaving home has advantages if he can get a flat with his girlfriend Evelyn (JENNY McCRINDLE), not least the possibility of having "sex on demand." A telephone call to Evelyn soon changes his plans as she abruptly dumps him for being lousy in bed and because she's found a new man. Venting his frustration on the phone box Boab attracts the attention of the local police.

Boab is arrested for damage to the phone box, and is later subjected to a furious beating at the hands of a high minded policeman who also happens to own shares in British Telecom. When the police release him, Boab returns to work, only to be fired from his dead-end job at a furniture removal firm.

Told he is being 'downsized' by his boss, Boab accepts the news with bad grace but a grudging resignation that pervades his whole existence. He heads to the local pub to drown his sorrows, where he comes face to face with a man who claims to be God (MAURICE ROËVES). God accuses Boab of wasting his life; this is a god straight from the Old Testament, who exacts Biblical-style revenge on Boab by turning him into a fly.

In his new guise as a fly, Boab finally and belatedly finds the power to take his revenge on those who betrayed and insulted him. Freed of his human form he infects his former employer's food with rat poison, and gives his ex-girlfriend and her new lover, a former teammate on the Granton Star, severe food poisoning. But he meets his nemesis in the form of his mother: returning to his former home he interrupts his parents in the midst of a kinky sex session and a direct hit from a rolled-up newspaper puts paid to the 'pest' as Boab's life comes to a sudden end.

## Part Two A Soft Touch

The second part of the film is a story of love and betrayal with Johnny (KEVIN McKIDD) as the “soft touch” who is all too easily manipulated by those around him.

Opening on Johnny’s wedding, it is all too clear that this is a shotgun affair with the bride, Catriona (MICHELLE GOMEZ) heavily pregnant and a reception where half the male guests acknowledge their gratitude to Johnny as they too are all potential fathers. For Johnny there are revelations such as meeting his new brother-in-law, Alec (TAM DEAN BURN) a sociopathic, psychopathic, drug dealer who takes Johnny under his wing as long as Johnny does exactly as he is told.

Johnny and Catriona’s lives in a run-down tenement building take a turn for the worse when the arrogant, self-assured and grabbing Larry (GARY McCORMACK) moves in to the flat directly above. Looking after the young baby, Chantal, occupies most of Johnny’s time, as the mothering instinct doesn’t come naturally to Catriona. She is soon out alone at night, leaving Johnny at home to care for their child.

It’s not long before Larry begins to take advantage of the free beer from Johnny’s fridge, and turns his attention to Catriona, who does little to spurn his advances. For Johnny the relationship is being strained to the limit when he finds that baby Chantal is being left with increasing frequency with his mother, while Larry spends time alone with Catriona.

Larry soon begins a relationship with Catriona and takes all that he wants from Johnny and Johnny’s life, leaving him with the baby in an empty, desolate flat. Using a combination of threats and coercion, Larry forces Johnny to concede to each demand until Johnny snaps. His attempt to reclaim part of his life, including a growing relationship with a colleague from the local supermarket where he works, leads him to receive a severe beating from both Larry and Catriona.

When Catriona becomes pregnant by Larry, he abandons her for parties, booze and other women. She seeks out Johnny who is cautious at the advance but flattered by the attention. He shows that he has learnt little from his bitter experiences and is still nothing but a soft touch.

## Part Three The Acid House

The final film is a surreal comic story about marriage, babies and an excess of chemical abuse.

Coco Bryce (EWEN BREMNER) is a “Hibs casual”, a soul boy with a passion for raves and an out-of-control love of acid. Kirsty (ARLENE COCKBURN), his patient girlfriend tolerates Coco’s obsessions but is keen to move on, to pin him down to an engagement and to get married like her friends—a commitment Coco is only too keen to avoid.

In the same part of town live Rory (MARTIN CLUNES) and wife Jenny (JEMMA REDGRAVE), a middle-class couple expecting their first child and wanting everything to be just right. Rory makes all the right noises, attends all the right classes and shares his emotions with his pregnant wife.

But on one fateful night all their lives are to change.

Coco takes one tab of particularly strong acid and as he trips a violent electrical storm breaks out and the trip proves to be one too many. Amid flashback memories of his abusive father and an acid-dispensing priest (MAURICE ROËVES) Coco reverts to a pre-natal state, his adult mind transferred into the body of Rory and Jenny’s new-born baby, born in an ambulance just yards from where Coco has collapsed.

At the hospital the adult Coco lies in a helpless state, attended by doctors who speculate about the possibility of severe drug-induced psychosis. His visitors include Kirsty and his friends, but there is little recognition for any of them inside the mind of this baby trapped inside an adult body. Meanwhile his adult alter ego, Tom, an adult in the body of a baby, is being breast-fed by the unsuspecting Jenny, who intends to love, protect and nurture what she believes to be her innocent child.

For Rory the knowing look in the eyes of his new baby son proves to be too disconcerting, while Kirsty, faced with a “blank piece of paper” sees her opportunity to pin Coco down to an engagement and a wedding ring. Meanwhile Jenny is bonding with her newborn son Tom but when the baby suddenly finds his voice, Jenny all too readily believes that her son is “special.” Complete with foul-mouth Edinburgh colloquialisms Tom sets out to turn Jenny against Rory.

On a trip to the town centre, Jenny and Tom come face to face with the recovering Coco and his minder Kirsty. As the adult Coco stares into Tom’s face he finds himself struggling with a complex set of flashbacks that jolt him back to reality. Coco Bryce is transported once again into his original form as a top boy, king of the world.

# An Acid House Glossary

*Acid* — slang term for lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)

*Bairn* — baby

*Barry* — Great

*Bevvy* — drink

*Blether* — chat, talk

*Blooter* — kick

*The Casuals* — top Hibernian football club hooligan gang,  
favouring smart designer labels

*Cowp* — sex

*Gen Up* — honestly

*Gouch* — chew incessantly

*Granton* — run down housing scheme situated in North Edinburgh

*A Hibs Boy* — fan of Hibernian football club

*Hoor* — prostitute

*Hoose* — house

*Muirhouse* — run down housing scheme in North Edinburgh

*Nash* — rush off

*Puff* — life

*Pump up the knickers* — mouth

*Radge* — mad, insane

*The Real Game* — football

*A Ride* — sex

*Snowballs* — Ecstasy

*A Soft Touch* — A gullible person

*Soul-boy* — fan of black soul music

*Straight peg* — normal person

*Super Mario* — very powerful LSD or acid

*Swedge* — fight

*Tidy* — dishy

*A Top Boy* — well respected football hooligan among his peers

*Tube stake* — idiot

*Twenty Bar* — twenty pounds

# Production Story

In 1994 Irvine Welsh published his first two books. Set amid the bleak, working-class housing estates of North Edinburgh, his novels, *Trainspotting* and *The Acid House* were an authentic voice filled with passion and rage about the state of a community and a culture that had been forgotten by the rest of the country. In his books he wrote in the dialect of the estates, drawing his subject matter from those around him who lived in an environment with an out-of-control drug problem and one of the highest rates of HIV infection anywhere in the world.

Producer Alex Usborne, who had recently completed a film about the hustlers and dreamers from the underside of Sheffield, felt an affinity with the two books and immediately tried to secure the film rights. He was narrowly beaten to the rights for *Trainspotting*, but was successful in securing the rights to *The Acid House*.

The first problem was how to turn a collection of short stories into a feature film. Having secured the backing of Channel 4 to develop the feature, three stories were selected from *The Acid House* - "The Granton Star Cause", "A Soft Touch" and "The Acid House". Each would be shot as a stand-alone story but the three would come together as a feature under the working title of *The Acid House Trilogy*.

From the very start it was agreed that Welsh should write the screenplays, adapting his own words from the book onto the screen. The intention was to ensure that the film remained true to Irvine Welsh's original work, without compromise or dilution of the subject matter, the characters or the language.

Despite having never written for the screen, Welsh set to work with both Alex Usborne and associate producer Carolynne Sinclair. With the first drafts in place the process of securing additional funding began.

Production funding came from Channel 4 Television, the Yorkshire Media Production Agency, the Scottish National Lottery Fund and the Glasgow Film Fund, with production scheduled to begin in summer 1997. To ensure authenticity it was agreed to shoot as much of the film as possible on location where the stories are set — and to help with the production Scottish producer David Muir of the Glasgow-based Umbrella Productions joined forces with Usborne's Sheffield-based Picture Palace North.



Paul McGuigan was asked to direct the project on the strength of his documentaries, which included the much lauded *Football Faith and Flutes* about religion and football in Glasgow as well as the hard hitting documentaries he had directed for Channel 4's *Walk on the Wild Side*.

Originally there had been talk of using three different directors, but once *The Granton Star Cause* was shot, McGuigan was persuaded to return for the next two sections. "It was", he says, "a great opportunity as I was allowed a lot of freedom to do what I wanted and explore the ideas that I had. Initially I had no desire to start doing drama as my background lay in photography and documentaries, but since shooting THE ACID HOUSE I've been offered a lot of film work and am currently working on a story about a Dublin man who wants to be a matador."

Filming on the estates could have been problematic for the crew but they found that Welsh's name, particularly among the younger residents, was a real bonus. As Paul McGuigan sees it, "they recognise that this is something that exists, and the honesty and authenticity of Irvine's prose was a real bonus when they find out you're shooting his work."

The crew did face a problem when it came to interpreting Boab's transformation into a fly in *The Granton Star Cause*. For help the production team turned to the BBC Bristol Natural History Unit, who suggested fly wrangler Rupert Barrington and insect camera specialist Rod Hall. The insect specialists arrived on set with over 1,000 flies. "During the shooting of the sex scenes (where the fly Boab Coyle watches his ex-girlfriend having sex) it was really funny because they were far, far more interested in how the fly was doing than anything else", says Paul McGuigan.

Throughout the film the intention was to create something far removed from the traditional images associated with Muirhouse in north Edinburgh. "We're not going for that slum woe-me look because the film's not like that. It's a romp — rock 'n roll, very in your face, lots of music, montages and very stylised, lots of really high colour. We aimed to make Edinburgh look like South LA, unlike the dull way it usually is," says McGuigan. He adds, "the film is an urban fairy tale. Some fairy tales can be black, some can be funny, and some can be downright weird. We had the choice of making the film either as real and hardcore as possible or watering it down and making it more commercial. We chose to film it the way it was written and because the stories were written before anyone had heard of Irvine Welsh the author, the stories and therefore the film are very authentic."

The relationship between the film-makers and the author works because according to McGuigan, “we have never had a relationship with Irvine where we think that everything he writes is sacrosanct. It’s a thin line between farce and black humour and it’s important we don’t play it all for laughs.”

“Inevitably people want to make comparisons to *Trainspotting*” says Paul McGuigan, “but I hadn’t seen the film when I was asked to direct THE ACID HOUSE and it became a very conscious decision on my part to not watch it. It is hard to follow a film like that but the film we’ve made is very different and something we’re all immensely proud of.”

Perhaps the biggest problem facing the production was how to make a foul-mouthed baby for *The Acid House* chapter of the film. Turning to the expertise of a London-based special effects firm to create the baby, director Paul McGuigan admits that there were some initial teething problems in achieving the right effect. “It looked,” he says “like a mad Chuckie doll. I remember walking on set and everyone went very quiet waiting for my reaction. In the end we agreed that there had to be some changes and we ended up having to shoot around the baby while it went back for changes”.

Once the changes were made, the baby became an integral part of the story. “It was never meant to look like a real baby and when we started working with Ewen on getting the voice right, it started to work really well. Ewen’s very creative, very adaptable, just an amazing guy,” says McGuigan.

The first chapter of the story, *The Granton Star Cause*, was screened before completion of the other two parts, showing to great acclaim at the Edinburgh Film Festival. Shooting of the other two sections was completed in late summer 1997. *The Granton Star Cause* received two prestigious Royal Television Society awards in March 1998.

# Irvine Welsh

Irvine Welsh shot to international prominence with the huge success of the feature film version of his novel *Trainspotting*. Identified as the authentic voice of a generation, his novels and short stories contain a raw honesty, where drugs are a part of everyday life and language can be a verbal battering ram.

Welsh's work has received plaudits from diverse sources. Style magazine *The Face* called him "the poet laureate of the chemical generation" while The Guardian described him as "one of the most gifted of the younger writers working in Britain today". The UK style magazine *i-D* called him "our most vital of contemporary authors—he became the first writer to take up the challenge of defining this chemical generation," and *The Sunday Times* hailed him as writing "with a skill, wit and compassion that amounts to genius. He is the best thing that has happened to British writing for decades."

Welsh's collection of short stories *The Acid House* demonstrated that his first work *Trainspotting* was not a one-off. It comprises a collection of stories that are at once observational and fantastical, presenting surreal stories amid the bleak housing estates of Edinburgh. Since then he has also published three other novels — *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, *Ecstasy* and, most recently, *Filth*. Last year he added another string to his bow with his first play *You'll Have Had Your Hole*. In 1997 Welsh, who is known for doing occasional stints as a DJ, also released a single "I Sentence You to a Life of Dance." He is currently working with THE ACID HOUSE producer Alex Usborne on a second film project provisionally titled "Some Weird Sin," adapted from his novella *A Smart Cunt*.

Brought up in the heart of Edinburgh's working-class district of Muirhouse, Welsh left school at 16, drifting through a succession of jobs (including a job sweeping up in the parks – a role he rewrote for himself in the film version of *The Granton Star Cause* in which he appears briefly in a cameo). He migrated to London with punk, and with the move came a burgeoning dependency on drugs. Towards the end of the 1980s he returned to Scotland, taking a job with Edinburgh District Council and starting an MBA course in computer studies while writing as a sideline—a sideline that has earned him international critical acclaim.

# The Music

Producer Alex Usborne and director Paul McGuigan knew very early on that music would play an important part in helping to capture the essence of Irvine Welsh's work, and the resulting soundtrack is a remarkable collection of some of the hottest British talent.

"Persuading Noel Gallagher to contribute a specially written track for the film was easier than I thought it would be" says Usborne "It's incredible what Irvine Welsh's name can do for opening doors and the subsequent track, 'Going Nowhere' is Oasis at their best".

The soundtrack also boasts tracks from Brit winners The Verve with 'On Your Own', the anthemic 'Leaving Home' from The Chemical Brothers, Bentley Rhythm Ace's 'Car Boot Techno Disco' and a superb partnering of Nick Cave and Barry Adamson on 'Sweetest Embrace'. There are also new and exclusive tracks from Primal Scream ('Insect Royalty'); Belle & Sebastian ('Slow Graffiti'); Beth Orton ('Maybe Baby') and 'The Cantino Sessions' from Death in Vegas.

"We all saw the music as being a fundamental part of the script. We knew almost instinctively what sound we wanted to accompany the images. With so much of Irvine's words steeped in a very distinct popular culture it is possible to do things which you can't do with other writers. Mixing tracks from the likes of Glen Campbell's 'Rhinstone Cowboy' and 'By The Time I Get to Phoenix' alongside the likes of Bentley Rhythm Ace and Oasis infuses not only a great sense of atmosphere, but also drives the film along like a whirlwind from hell" says Usborne.

Alongside the sharp sounds of established acts like The Verve, Oasis and The Chemical Brothers are the sounds of a number of up and coming groups such as Arabstrap, and Belle & Sebastian. The soundtrack also features the haunting sound of Beth Orton and some classic T-Rex where 'Hot Love' is used as a sinister precursor to predatory sex in 'A Soft Touch'. This track, says director Paul McGuigan "reminded me of growing up in Scotland in the '70s when all the 'sword gangs' (gangs of youths armed with swords, machetes and knives) were around, hard men listening to glam rock".

The soundtrack album is available in the USA on Capitol Records.

# The Cast The Granton Star Cause

## **STEPHEN MCCOLE** Boab Coyle

Having graduated in 1995 McCole has already secured some impressive roles, appearing in the BBC's drama series 'The Crow Road' and the short film 'Dead Eye Dick'. Having been nominated for a Best Performance in the Bafta New Scottish Talent Awards for his work in 'The Granton Star Cause' in 1996, he has since appeared in Ken Loach's 'My Name is Joe' and Wes Anderson's 'Rushmore' (as the Scottish bully) and had the joint lead in Peter Mullan's 'Orphans' and Albert Pyun's 'Post Mortem'.

## **MAURICE ROËVES** God

A highly respected theatre, television and film actor, Maurice Roëves is a much-admired figure who was seen as natural choice for the main role of God in 'The Granton Star Cause.' As filming progressed, his role helped define the feel of the film and two small parts were written specially for him within the other two chapters - as a guest at Johnny's wedding in 'A Soft Touch' and as an acid-dispensing priest in 'The Acid House.'

His film credits include 'Oh! What A Lovely War', 'Young Winston', 'The Big Man', 'Hidden Agenda', 'The Last of the Mohicans' and 'Judge Dredd', while a long list of television credits range from major roles in such hard-hitting drama as Jimmy McGovern's "Hillsborough" and "Inside the Third Reich", to roles in "Baywatch" and "Star Trek - The Next Generation".

## **JENNY MCCRINDLE** Evelyn

When Boab Coyle is having a bad day he turns to his girlfriend Evelyn, who soon makes it worse by dumping him for one of his teammates from the football team The Granton Star. Jenny McCrindle was seen recently in the BBC drama series "Looking for Jojo" playing opposite Robert Carlyle.

## **ALEX HOWDEN** Boab Senior

Alex Howden began his performance career as a stand up comic in 1958, quickly establishing a reputation as a major entertainer. He is considered something of a Scottish icon, dubbed by one critic as "the uncrowned king of the Scottish stand-up". His cross-over into film and television may have been late in his career but he has successfully made the transition with roles in numerous productions including Scottish Television's long-established series 'The High Road'. His role as the kinky sex loving Boab Snr. may prove a shock for fans of the family soap.

## **IRVINE WELSH** Parkie

Irvine Welsh can be spotted in the opening scene - in a role he wrote for himself - as the put-upon park keeper sweeping up the rubbish in the changing rooms as the Granton Star team prepare for their match. Irvine wrote the role as he had once had a job as a park keeper in the very same park where the scene was eventually filmed.

## **PAT STANTON** Barman

Pat was the legendary Captain for the Hibs and Scotland football teams who pops up in a cameo to serve the footballers their post match pints while they discuss the possibility of achieving their dream with the Granton Star — to play on a real pitch with nets.

# The Cast A Soft Touch

## **KEVIN McKIDD** Johnny

McKidd plays the put-upon Johnny, the “soft touch”, who is impotent in the face of events, and who will always be used by others.

Since graduating in 1994, McKidd has appeared in a number of critically acclaimed films including ‘Trainspotting’, ‘The Leading Man’, ‘Regeneration’ and Gillies MacKinnon’s ‘Small Faces’, as well as the forthcoming ‘Bedrooms and Hallways’ and ‘Dad Savage’.

## **TAM DEAN BURN** Alec Doyle

Tam Dean Burn who plays the psychotic Alec is one of Scotland’s leading theatre actors and has most recently been seen in Irvine Welsh’s first play ‘You’ll Have Had Your Hole’.

His television credits include roles in a number of dramas from ‘Down Where the Buffalo Go’, ‘Tumbledown’ and ‘The Grass Arena’, to long running series such as ‘Taggart’ and ‘Hamish Macbeth’. His first film role was in Bill Forsyth’s ‘Local Hero’, and he was seen more recently in ‘The Leading Man’ and in the STV production ‘Operation Gadget Man’.

## **MICHELLE GOMEZ** Catriona

Catriona is the sister of the psychotic Alec who snares Johnny into married life. A graduate of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Theatre, this is Michelle Gomez’s first film role. She has a number of television credits and theatre roles to her name.

## **GARY McCORMACK** Larry

This is McCormack’s first film role since switching careers to become an actor, and he already has a number of theatre roles under his belt. Previously a musician, he played bass in the well-established punk group The Exploited. He agreed to act in the film THE ACID HOUSE after being approached by author and old friend Irvine Welsh. “It was” he says “an amazing opportunity to work with Paul McGuigan. I already knew the books and so the chance to act in them was incredible, particularly as ‘The Acid House’ was my favourite of Irvine’s books. In the film I didn’t want Larry to be a straightforward psycho, so I based him on people I know who are dangerous because you don’t know if what they’re saying is true”.

# The Cast The Acid House

## **EWEN BREMNER** Coco Bryce

Perhaps best known for his film role as the speeding Spud in 'Trainspotting', Bremner first appeared in the stage version of 'Trainspotting' as Renton. He stars in THE ACID HOUSE as the acid casualty Coco Bryce. He has a long list of theatre, television and film credits which include roles in Danny Cannon's 'Judge Dredd', Gillies MacKinnon's 'Conquest of the South Pole', Ed Benner's 'Bye Bye Baby' and Mike Leigh's 'Naked'.

Bremner also appeared in Jez Butterworth's highly acclaimed 'Mojo' and Vince O'Connell's controversial short film 'Skin', and will soon be seen in Simon Donald's 'Life of Stuff', Gabriel Axel's 'The Prince of Jutland', Zoran Perisic's 'The Phoenix and the Magic Carpet' and 'Riveter' directed by Michael Caton Jones. Bremner will also star in Harmony Korine's upcoming 'The Julien Chronicles.'

## **MARTIN CLUNES** Rory

Martin Clunes stars in the final chapter of the film as Rory, the willing but rather irritatingly ingratiating 'new man', keen to help and eager to please his expectant wife.

Perhaps best known in the UK for his role in the comedy series 'Men Behaving Badly', Clunes has received the best comedy actor awards at the British Comedy Awards and also a BAFTA Award in 1996. He has extensive television, theatre and film credits which include the film 'Staggered' on which he made his directorial debut, as well as roles in Fred Schepisi's 'The Russia House', Kenneth Branagh's 'Swing Kids' and Malcolm Mowbray's 'The Revengers Comedies'.

## **JEMMA REDGRAVE** Jenny

As Jenny in 'The Acid House', Redgrave plays a middle-class expectant mother whose baby delivers a surprise for her when he is born speaking with a broad Edinburgh accent.

The youngest daughter of the Redgrave clan, she has already notched up an extensive list of theatre and television credits and is now adding an increasing number of film roles. She was recently seen in Channel 4's drama series 'Mosley' and she is a familiar face to many in the UK as the eponymous heroine of the medical series 'Bramwell'. Other film roles include parts in James Ivory's 'Howard's End' and Aldo Lado's 'Power and Conflict'.

## **ARLENE COCKBURN** Kirsty

As the touchingly patient Kirsty who finds herself nursing her acid casualty boyfriend, Arlene Cockburn is a relative newcomer to the big screen. Her recent role in Alan Rickman's 'The Winter Guest' was followed by a lead role in Saul Metzstein's 'Magic Moments' and Sandra Goldbacher's 'The Governess'.

Cockburn has also appeared in the BBC's 'A Mug's Game' directed by David Blair and has played in the National Theatre production of 'The Prince's Play' directed by Richard Eyre.

# The Filmmakers

## **DIRECTOR PAUL McGUIGAN**

Paul McGuigan was a successful stills photographer before he made the move into films. He shot three of Channel 4's six-part documentary series 'Walk on the Wild Side', which featured young people living on the edge of British society. He continued to shoot a number of high profile programmes for Channel 4's youth and entertainment department including 'Passengers', 'Lonely Planet' and 'The Dani Behr Show'.

In 1995 he shot three of the promos that relaunched Radio One, as well as shooting films for commercials and MTV. He made his move into longer form documentary with his acclaimed film 'Football, Faith and Flutes' for Channel 4's 'Witness' series, which explored the volatile mix of football and religion in the west of Scotland.

THE ACID HOUSE is McGuigan's first drama. With his distinctive style he has proved adept at capturing Irvine Welsh's prose on film. He won the coveted Best Newcomer Award at the 1998 RTS Awards in London for his work on 'The Granton Star Cause', the first part of THE ACID HOUSE trilogy.

Perhaps one of the reasons McGuigan agreed to the project was because in his own words "I was turning out to be the Russ Meyer of Channel 4," having shot films which featured Russian go-go dancers in New York and transsexuals in Istanbul. Turning up on the first day of the shoot, he admits that his first reaction was to be overawed. "With 100 people on set and all these new film toys," he had to cope with a punishing schedule that included working up to 20 hours a day on 'The Granton Star Cause' to complete the filming in just 12 days.

He has most recently been in America spending six months shooting a documentary for Channel 4 for World AIDS Day called 'Playing Nintendo with God' about teenagers living with the HIV virus. He is also working on a film script about a man in Dublin who wants to be a matador.

## **PRODUCER ALEX USBORNE**

Alex Usborne has made a number of rough, tough documentary films from his production centre in Sheffield in the north of England. These include the award-winning feature film 'Tales From A Hard City' and the award-winning shorts about boxing, 'Johnny Fantastic' and 'Brendhan's Boys'.

Usborne discovered Irvine Welsh's novels when they were first published back in 1994. "I was absolutely blown away by Irvine's unique storytelling ability," he says. "His text spoke straight from the heart, tackling issues about real lives, the lives of working class people, speaking in their language with no holds barred.



“From the very start we agreed that Irvine would write the screenplay himself and it has been a pleasure to work with him; watching as he chisels away at the stories to reveal their heart and soul and watching how he brings fresh ideas and visions to the stories. I feel that we have achieved what we set out to achieve and that is 100% pure, undiluted, uncut and authentic Irvine Welsh”.

Usborne is currently working on a second film project with Irvine Welsh provisionally titled ‘Some Weird Sin’ adapted from his novella ‘A Smart Cunt’, and is developing a film project with the legendary cult graphic novelist, Alan Moore.

## **PRODUCER DAVID MUIR**

David Muir has over ten years experience of financial management of television productions for the independent sector — THE ACID HOUSE is his first feature film.

A former financial controller of Cheerleader Productions and then financial director for Viewpoint Productions working with first sports production and then current affairs, David returned to his native Scotland in 1991 to join the burgeoning independent production company Big Star in a Wee Picture, as the company’s business manager.

Overseeing a wide range of factual and light entertainment productions Muir founded his own production company, Umbrella Productions in 1994. Based in Glasgow the company sought to provide a production vehicle for Scotland’s new generation of directors, producing amongst others ‘Go Go Archipelago’ (directed by Paul McGuigan) for Channel 4 and ‘For Love and Money’ for the BBC and ARTE France, as well as the short film ‘Dead Eye Dick’ starring Kelly Macdonald and Ewen Bremner and the forthcoming ‘Clean’ for Channel 4.

# Cast

## The Granton Star Cause

Boab	Stephen McCole
God	Maurice Roëves
Kev	Garry Sweeney
Evelyn	Jenny McCrindle
Tambo	Simon Weir
Grant	Iain Andrew
Parkie	Irvine Welsh
Barman	Pat Stanton
Boab Snr	Alex Howden
Doreen	Ann Louise Ross
PC Cochrane	Dennis O'Connor
Sgt. Morrison	John Gardner
Workmates	William Blair
	Gary McCormack
	Malcolm Shields
Rafferty	Stewart Preston

## A Soft Touch

Johnny	Kevin McKidd
Catriona	Michelle Gomez
Alec	Tam Dean Burn
Larry	Gary McCormack
Pool Player	Scott Imrie
Alan	Niall Greig Fulton
Deek	William Blair
Skanko	Cas Harkins
Drunk	Maurice Roëves
Chantel (Baby)	Morgan Simpson
Chantel (Toddler)	Marnie Kidd
Mother	Alison Peebles
Diana	Joanne Riley
New Girl	Sarah Gudgeon
Wendy	Katie Echlin
Pub Singer	William 'Giggs' McGuigan

## The Acid House

Coco	Ewen Bremner
Rory	Martin Clunes
Jenny	Jemma Redgrave
Kirsty	Arlene Cockburn
Emma	Jane Stabler
Priest	Maurice Roëves
CoCo's Father	Doug Eadie
CoCo's Mother	Andrea McKenna
Felix the Paramedic	Billy McElhaney
Tam the Driver	Ricky Callan
Dr Callaghan	Barbara Rafferty
Nurse Boyd	Stephen Docherty
Andy	Ronnie McCann
Skanko	Cas Harkins