RAINDANCE 2025 SPECIAL ICON AWARD HONOURING THE LATE, GREAT **DAME JOAN PLOWRIGHT** + RELAUNCH OF THE **DAN IRELAND AWARD**

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This year's Raindance Film Festival will present an additional **Icon Award posthumously honouring the late, great Dame Joan Plowright** in the year of her passing – presented for her final major screen role in ***Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont*** **(dir: Dan Ireland, UK/USA)**.

Raindance's 33rd edition (18-27 June) includes a special 20th Anniversary tribute screening of *Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont* on Friday 20 June. The **award will be accepted by Tamsin Olivier (daughter of Lawrence Olivier and Dame Joan Plowright)** following this special screening.

"We are so thrilled that Raindance has chosen to honour our mother, Dame Joan Plowright, with the Icon Award in this the year of her passing. We are especially pleased that *Mrs Palfrey*, one of her most treasured performances, working with great friends, and a firm family favourite, is being remembered on its 20th anniversary. Our mother would want to share this award with all those hundreds of film crew members whose hard work often goes unrecognised. She loved her work and we are so glad to see her honoured and her work live on. Thank you!" – **Tamsin Olivier (daughter of Lawrence Olivier and Dame Joan Plowright)**

Co-starring Rupert Friend, *Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont* tells of an elderly woman, all but abandoned by her family in a London retirement hotel, who strikes up a curious friendship with a young writer. Twenty years after the film's release, and almost a decade since its director Dan Ireland passed away, **Raindance celebrates this heartfelt film**. As a tireless champion of independent films, both as a director and as co-founder of the Seattle International Film Festival, Dan Ireland epitomized the spirit of indie cinema. The film is both a love letter to London and a testament to his storytelling. *Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont,* a Claremont Film in association with Picture Entertainment, Cineville and B7 Media.

“Raindance is honoured to present an Icon Award to Dame Joan Plowright,” **says Elliot Grove, Founder of the Raindance Film Festival**.

“*Mrs Palfrey* was originally estimated to cost £10 million to film in London, or £5 million in Canada. It was Raindance collaborator and filmmaker **Matthew Devlen** who first came to London and spent two months developing the concept of building a custom film backlot in and around Hyde Park to make the production viable. By joining forces with UK producer **Andrew Mark Sewell,** they brought the film to life for under £1 million — achieving what many thought wasn’t possible.”

“As Raindance celebrates its 33rd year,” Grove adds, “we’re proud to honour Dan’s unwavering indie spirit. He believed in the soul of cinema and the power of connection — and *Mrs Palfrey* is a radiant testament to that, as is Dame Joan’s unforgettable final major performance.”

The evening also marks the **relaunch of the Dan Ireland Award**—established in memory of director Dan Ireland, whose lifelong commitment to championing emerging talent left an indelible legacy. First introduced in 2017 by **Chesley Heymsfield** at the Louisiana International Film Festival, where Dan served as Artistic Director, the cash prize honours exceptional work by first-time directors. Now returning with renewed energy and a global spotlight, the Dan Ireland Award has evolved into a traveling honour, partnering with independent film festivals around the world to recognize bold new voices in cinema. Each year’s recipient will be unveiled at a different festival, turning the award into a global celebration of debut filmmakers. **In 2026, the Raindance Film Festival will welcome the award home**—not only to celebrate that year’s winners from across the globe, but also to honour one standout filmmaker from Raindance’s own lineup.

“As I got to know Danny over the years it became clear to me that one of his missions in life was to support young talent through independent film. I myself was a beneficiary of his generosity as he somehow trusted me to score his directorial debut, *The Whole Wide World*—my credits to that point you could write on a postage stamp. I’m thrilled that through this Award his visionary spirit can live on.”—**Harry Gregson-Williams, composer** (*The Whole Wide World, Gladiator* II, and a supporter of the Dan Ireland Award)

ABOUT THE RAINDANCE ICON AWARD

The Raindance Icon Award is the Raindance film festival’s signature award, honouring and celebrating the icons of independent cinema in the UK and internationally: those who make an authentic and iconic impression via the medium of film. This year’s other recipients are **Celia Imrie** and **Jason Isaacs**, both receiving their Icon Award at the festival’s opening gala on 18 June. Previous Raindance Icon Award recipients**: Chiwetel Ejiofor, Michael Winterbottom, David Yates, Vanessa Redgrave, Jonathan Pryce, Gemma Arterton, Sir Michael Caine, Sally Hawkins, Jude Law, Olivia Colman, Terry Gilliam, Guy Richie, Ken Loach**.

For more information on Raindance and the Icon Award:
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