

Ian Tucker's guide to would-be Dubliners

Euro-Eire



The closest most of us get to Irish culture is a pint of Guinness and the first few pages of *Ulysses*. If you want to experience more, 1991 has to be the year for a visit. For a cheap standby ticket, ring Capital Airways (034S 800777) or for travel in a more traditional style (all 3.5 hours of it) try the Holyhead to Dublin ferry.

Before you set off, get a copy of the *Rough Guide To Ireland* (Harrap-Columbus, £6.95) and pop some mood-setting Sinead O'Connor in your walkman. After you've swapped your pounds for punts, and you're looking for a bed to rest your jet-lagged body try Isaac's, a comfortable hotel in Frenchman's Lane.

This year St. Patrick's Day (March 17) marks the beginning of the 'European City of Culture' celebrations. It might not be as exotic as Rio, but a day spent bobbing and weaving between the marching bands and floats and pubs - should acquaint you with the Dublin spirit.

If all this excitement drains you and you feel the need for a caffeine boost try the marble interior of Bewley's coffee house on Grafton St. For something more wholesome, try Colony's just down the road, where you can find vegetarian food, which is notoriously hard to track down in Dublin.

For a more sombre aesthetic experience visit the Municipal Gallery's showing of the Berlinische Galerie Collection. The exhibition covers 20th-century German art, including that of the Weimar Republic and the 'degenerate art' banned by the Nazis.

Not much Irish culture

on show here, but the international flavour of events is a further reflection of the European identity of Dublin in the 1990s.

Welfare State International's street theatre production of the mythologised life of Alfred Nobel, 'Lord Dynamite', on April 13 should be worth a visit. Nobel left the world two inventions - dynamite and his eponymous peace prize. For other left-of-field theatre events check what's on at the enterprising Project Arts Centre, in East Sussex Street.

You might want to arrive early for the celebrations to allow yourself to catch the annual Dublin Film Festival (February 28 - March 8). Most of the celluloid on offer is not home-produced. French films dominate the programme, including Patrice Leconte's autobiographical *The Hairdresser's Husband*, an off-beat film about one man's infatuation with hairdressers.

There's also a rare chance to see Claude Chabrol's *Story Of Women*, a factually based tale of a wartime backstreet abortionist. The film was named best foreign film by the New York Film Critics Circle last year.

If you're still around on April 28, and you're suffering from high-culture overload, lay your hands on a ticket for the Ceiliuradh Slogadh rock/folk concert at the Olympia Theatre. Acts include Hothouse Flowers and Clannad (check the music listings magazine *Hot Press*). By this time you should be ready to get home and start saving for your annual trip to the Edinburgh Festival, or maybe the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. •