



Ballykissangel

Series 5

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Drama

12 x 50 minutes

British Broadcasting Corporation BBC Worldwide Woodlands 80 Wood Lane London W12 0TT

Tel +44 20 8433 2000 Fax +44 20 8740 1182 Email international.distribution.worldwide@bbc.co.uk Online catalogue www.bbcworldwidetv.com

B B C Worldwide

Ballykissangel

Series 5

The popular, award-winning series about the dramas and absurdities of life in a picturesque, rural Irish town

Drama

12 x 50 minutes

B B C Worldwide

Ballykissangel

Series 5

General Synopsis

"The great thing about small rural communities is that they are full of all sorts of intrigue."

Chris Clough, producer, *Ballykissangel* Series 5

In the world of *Ballykissangel*, intrigue and romance are never far away and a new season sees new romance for Niamh Egan and Orla O'Connell, a new garda for Bally K and the return of an old rival for Brian Quigley. There is also a wild balloon race, a crazy poitin-making plan and the mysterious appearance of a talking toilet. In *Ballykissangel* things are never quite as they seem and affairs rarely run smoothly, especially those of the heart.

"I keep thinking I'll wake up tomorrow and nothing will have changed," Niamh whispers to Sean Dillon as they kiss by the dying embers of the bonfire. But things have changed and Niamh's husband, Ambrose, realises that their marriage is slowly but surely unravelling – until fate takes a hand in proceedings.

Elsewhere, life in Ballykissangel bustles with unpredictable gusto. Orla and Quigley's adventures in a balloon race drop them into the drink and the arms of their rescuer, fisherman Conor Devlin. Later, looking for a place to hang her hat, Orla finds a familiar landlord, but discovers that true love is never easy.

"Ballykissangel is about small communities that have long memories," Chris Clough explains.

In the fifth season we discover just how long, when Paul Dooley, a shady figure from Brian Quigley's shady past, returns to the village with a business arrangement that brings him into direct conflict with his old rival. Despite the best efforts of his wife, Oonagh, and his two children, Dooley is destined to cross swords with his former nemesis. But any wheeling and dealing is likely to be carefully scrutinised by the new garda in town, the very rigorous Frankie Sullivan.

So get ready for another season of ballyhoo in *Bally K* as the regulars, vet Siobhan, shopkeeper Kathleen and Sean Dillon's daughter Emma, take their place in Fitzgerald's bar.

Make way for Quigley's fumbling henchmen, Liam and Donal, as they hatch their latest get-rich-quick scheme; eavesdrop on the academic aspirations of schoolteacher Brendan and marvel at the enterprising exploits of the farming team of Eamon and great-nephew, Danny.

Their way is the Bally K way, a place where the figures of Fathers MacAnally and Aidan O'Connell watch over their flock with a kindly but careful eye.

Actor Birdy Sweeney, who played Farmer Eamon Byrne, died in 1999. Episode 2 is dedicated to his memory.

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Regular Cast List

Brian Quigley	Tony Doyle
Father MacAnally	Niall Toibin
Niamh Egan	Tina Kellegher
Sean Dillon	Lorcan Cranitch
Fr Aidan O'Connell	Don Wycherley
Orla O'Connell	Victoria Smurfit
Liam Coghlan	Joe Savino
Donal O'Docherty	Frankie McCafferty
Siobhan Mehigan	Deirdre Donnelly
Brendan Kearney	Gary Whelan
Eamon Byrne	Birdy Sweeney
Danny Byrne	Colin Farrell
Emma Dillon	Kate McEnery
Kathleen Hendley	Áine Ní Mhuirí

Newcomers Joining the Regular Cast

Oonagh Dooley	Marion O'Dwyer
Paul Dooley	Owen Roe
Grainne Dooley	Katie Cullen
Dermot Dooley	Ciarán Owens
Conor Devlin	Owen Teale
Frankie Sullivan	Catherine Cusack

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Production Credits

Series Created By **Kieran Prendiville** (*Badger, Roughnecks, Vicious Circle, Boon*)

Writers **Ted Gannon** (Episodes 1, 2, 12)
Mark Holloway (Episodes 3, 4, 5, 6)
Declan Croghan (Episodes 7, 8)
Paul Coates (Episode 9)
Terry Hodgkinson (Episode 10)
Stuart Blackburn (Episode 11)
Mick Martin (Episode 11)

Directors **Simon Massey** (*Always and Everyone*)
Mike Cocker
Peter Lydon (*Hope and Glory*)
Paul Duane

Producer **Chris Clough** (*The Bill, Target, Doctor Who*)

Executive Producers **Sophie Balhetchet** (World Productions)
Robert Cooper (BBC)



A World Production for BBC Northern Ireland

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Characterisations

Tony Doyle (Brian Quigley)

"Don't talk to me about the balloon," Tony Doyle laughs, referring to Quigley's aeronautical adventures in the opening episode of this series of *Ballykissangel*. "I'm never going to a party again. And while we never actually went up in a balloon, we were suspended at the end of a crane arm on several occasions."

But while balloon racing may have been the adventure highlight of his most recent *Ballykissangel* experience, it is the relationship between Quigley's daughter, Niamh, and the old family rival, Sean Dillon, that ensures a taut dramatic tension.

"Certainly Quigley wouldn't be madly keen on it, but blood is quite muddy and murky," Doyle explains. "So he will have to allow Niamh her own head but obviously he would have great reservations about the whole affair."

From episode six, there's a new boy in town. Paul Dooley is a face from Quigley's past and someone who is nearly his match in the wheeling-dealing stakes. Tony Doyle agrees. Dooley is another interesting character who is basically, if you like, a rival in the con stakes," he says. "The competition between the two is quite fascinating because it is quite definitely the cat watching the mouse."

But which is the cat and which the mouse? sometimes it's difficult to determine. "Certainly Dooley is shadier and he has also been caught so he probably has to be a little bit more careful where he treads."

Increasingly, despite his wealth and power, Quigley seems to be drifting towards the loneliness of the long-distance businessman. "He goes home to an empty house at night, he surrounds himself with a few trinkets, of course, but nonetheless there is a sort of loneliness about him."

But the antics of Joe Savino and Frankie McCafferty, who play Liam and Donal, the comic contrast to the brashness of Quigley, have, on more than one occasion had Doyle himself in stitches. "They're quite a brilliant creation and it's theirs too," he says with a laugh. "They're very funny and it's quite difficult to work with them sometimes and keep a straight face."

Even with a series that is shot over nine months of the year, Tony Doyle always seems to find time to do other work. In the past he has emphasised the itinerant nature of his profession and is only too well aware of the financial pitfalls of operating without the security net of full-time, pensioned employment.

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Characterisations

Tony Doyle continued

"The early years were incredibly lean, as they say. The first 30 years are the hardest, but if you are fortunate enough to have a rush of work, you are very anxious to do it because it ain't going to last forever," says Doyle, who has been in the business for over 30 years. "So it's nice to cram as much in as you can, though that takes its toll as well, but one hasn't got the luxury of sitting down in an ivory tower and saying no work today, thank you. The bills don't get paid unless the till keeps ringing."

Before *Ballykissangel*, Doyle gained considerable recognition as the corrupt Chief Superintendent John Deakin in the BBC's hit police drama, *Between The Lines*, and as George Ferguson in Granada's *Band of Gold*. In 1998, he made the feature film, *A Love Divided*, and the ITV series, *Four Fathers*. His choice of work has also been informed by a fear of typecasting but the dramatic range of Quigley has ensured that being stuck in a pigeonhole is unlikely to happen to Tony Doyle. "Quigley doesn't rest much," he says. "He doesn't mind getting his hands dirty and digging ditches, whereas he can also don a natty suit, arrive in his Range Rover at a five-star hotel and not feel out of place. So from that point of view he travels the spectrum."

In recent years Doyle continues to be surprised by the reaction from Stateside viewers of the show.

"In fact I was sitting on the footpath, enjoying a lemonade, one day in Dublin when a woman passed me by and said hello. She had just arrived that morning on one of those luxury cruise liners from Scandinavia, was in Dublin for the day and then they were going off. She was from Miami. So the Americans know exactly who you are when other people don't seem to notice. It's extraordinary."

One American website visitor to the *Bally K* page rated it the best TV series since *Upstairs Downstairs*, a fact that doesn't overly surprise Doyle. "I suppose it is quite different to anything else you see on the television," he says. "It is quite gentle but also bizarre and off-the-wall. It doesn't fall into genre either."

Between the hectic nine-month *Ballykissangel* schedule and looking after his children, Tony finds little time to squeeze in a family holiday during the year.

"Technically speaking, we try and arrange a holiday for the summer break but the children are now at an age where nobody wants to do exactly the same thing, so you end up not having a holiday as you're running around in circles trying to accommodate everybody," he says. "So I have to buy a boat and shove them out to sea next year. Or even get a balloon. I think I might know where there's one going cheap."

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Characterisations

Niall Toibin (Father MacAnally)

Father MacAnally is a bit of a mystery, Niall Toibin reckons. "It has never really been explained how a man of his intelligence and sharpness finishes up as a parish priest in a small community," he says. "There have been hints of various kinds of radicalism in his past or even romance in his past. I always had the feeling that there's an unexplained reason why he is still there. I imagine that at his age and with the scarcity of priests he would by now have become a bishop or at least that he would be teaching in a college or something."

Toibin, an accomplished actor on stage and screen, has been identified with various roles he has played down the years.

"For a long time in Ireland I was Brendan Behan," he says, referring to his role in *Borstal Boy*.

"Then I was a comic stand-up. Funnily enough, outside of Ireland, the character people recognise me most for is Slipper in *The Irish RM*, and this is nearly 20 years after the first episode. Also I'm remembered for *Stay Lucky*, rather than anything else. I think the interesting thing for some people is that Niall Toibin is playing Father Mac rather than the other way round."

For five years he has been Father Mac. "He is basically a highly civilised man with an academic bent. He has great affection for his parishioners but a slight disdain for them as well, in that he basically probably feels that he should be somewhere else. He's an intellectual snob which is not necessarily a mortal sin, but it wouldn't cloud his judgement or obstruct his charity."

Occasionally Father Mac gets to indulge in his, and Toibin's, favourite hobby. "I appear on the golf course once," the actor says of the new series. "But I feel that they have not used my golfing skills to the extent that they could have, comic or otherwise." He plays regularly. "At the moment my handicap is 19, but I'm going further out as the years go on."

Some years back he was described by a colleague as the greatest chipper of the ball in all of Ireland. "The reason was that, in the RTE series *Bracken*, there was a scene I had with Gabriel Byrne who comes to interview my character, Ned Bailey, the baddie. So Bailey's out on his lawn, chipping a series of golf-balls. Throughout the whole interview he never looks up and just continuously chips away. By sheer luck every single ball I hit went bop, like clockwork. And everyone of them took the same trajectory. Looking at it, I was playing like a pro. We got it in one take, which was quite an achievement."

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Characterisations

Niall Toibin continued

After finishing on last season's show, Toibin knuckled down to a tough four-month tour of Jim Nolan's well-received play, *The Salvage Shop*. "We toured the whole of Ireland with it," he says. "It was very successful and got standing ovations wherever it went and then it disappeared. But by Jesus, I worked on that. It nearly killed me."

Consequently Niall is taking it easy this winter. "I'll still do my own one-night shows around the country, but from about the first of December to the end of February I intend to do nothing." In any case Niall Toibin has been there, done that and proved himself again and again.

The stage holds few secrets for him now. "I lost my romance with the theatre a long time ago. I really get a bit fed up after a while. Six or seven weeks is enough at this stage. I find it too tough to keep going on stage every night in a play. I don't mind it in my own show where I can dictate the pace to a certain extent and the number of dates. It's not that I dislike the theatre or like it any less. It's just that I'm getting old, baby. That's all. I'm getting creaky."

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Characterisations

Tina Kellegher (Niamh Egan)

Sometimes you just can't win, as Tina Kellegher discovered at the end of the fourth series of *Ballykissangel*.

"A lot of people were very annoyed with Niamh after the bonfire scene," she says, referring to her character's illicit tryst with Sean Dillon.

"The funny thing is that all along people were writing to me asking, 'How do you put up with that sap'. Now they were writing to me saying, 'How could you cheat on that poor fellow! And I'm stuck in the middle. I remember when we were shooting that bonfire scene and afterwards, as we looked at the action on the lens box, the cast and crew members were stepping away from me. It was the sad look in Ambrose's eyes. And myself and Lorcan were thinking, 'Ah for Pete's sake, it's only a show.'"

It may be only a show, but for the past five years it has been for a large part, Tina Kellegher's professional life. In that time Niamh, the spoilt daughter of businessman Brian Quigley, has become Niamh Egan, the hard-headed business-woman and pub owner. It was a change that inevitably put a strain on her marriage to Garda Ambrose Egan.

"I think Niamh and Ambrose should never have got married, even though she loved him," she says. "Niamh was a very immature girl, very ambitious about getting married and having a role in life and that's her role. Careerwise she wasn't very ambitious but she wanted to have kids. But they got married, had a bambino and then Assumpta died and it threw her whole world upside down."

In series four, Niamh realised she had a new role in life and was no longer defined in terms of her father or even her husband.

"She was dissatisfied with being a housewife and was looking for more of a challenge in her life," Tina says.

"So the more that happened, the more uncertain Ambrose got about the relationship and the more he was suffocating her, not allowing Niamh to become her own person. So she didn't have anybody to communicate with until Sean Dillon came along. Here was someone that had been through a hard time himself, an interesting man with an open mind. She was the only ally he had in Bally K when he first arrived. They became friends and then she fell in love with him."

In this respect Series 5 was the most challenging one yet for Tina Kellegher, as her character moves centre stage. It is a role she relishes.

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Characterisations

Tina Kellegher continued

"People asked me when Assumpta (Dervla Kirwan) left whether I felt the pressure of being in the leading role," she says. "That's what being in the business is about, we want to do challenging work."

'With this new series I think *Bally K* has gone back to what it was before, that is, a drama about a village," she says. 'It is now more honestly what it was when it started out.'

Earlier in 1999, Tina was involved in a workshop with one of Dublin's most inventive theatre companies, Barabbas, for a millennium project to be staged in the Abbey Theatre in Spring 2000 and to be written by playwright Donal O'Kelly.

She has also made a number of short films and radio work, but still tries to hold fast to a rule that comes from the time she got married to Ballykissangel's location manager, Gordon Wycherley (a brother of Don) in November 1997.

"After I got married I chose not to work immediately," she says. "I said I'm taking my honeymoon. Because of that I lost one film and possibly another, but for the first time in my life I said my personal life comes first."

Curiously in her local video shop in Dublin, Tina is still remembered for a role she played six years ago – that of the very pregnant Sharon Curley in Stephen Frears' comedy *The Snapper*. "The kids say, 'look it's Sharon', when I go into the shop, so I try and keep my head down," she says with a laugh.

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Characterisations

Lorcan Cranitch (Sean Dillon)

Lorcan Cranitch is sitting out in the garden of his County Wicklow cottage, soaking up the sunshine of an Indian summer. Like his *Ballykissangel* character, Sean Dillon, he too is taking some time out in his native patch before heading back to London when shooting on the Series 5 wraps.

In the new season, the relationship between the returned native and the garda's wife develops into something that both of them seem unable to control.

"I think Sean Dillon doesn't really realise what is happening, that he is falling in love with Niamh," he says. "At the end of Series 4 he tries to deny it, but it's happening to him rather than him being in control of it. Now he has realised that and that's when it starts to get complicated because he falls for her, hook, line and sinker."

Sean Dillon and Niamh were fated to be together, Cranitch reckons. "Initially there was an element of a victim about Sean Dillon; the community went against him and I think that's why they became friends," he says. "There's a soul-mate thing between the two of them and that's how it developed. In many ways the person you really should stay with for the rest of your life is your best friend." There is also a softening on Brian Quigley's part towards Sean Dillon. "That's is a curious thing," Cranitch says.

"When Dillon first arrived back there was a really icy meeting between the two of them. But Quigley, while he might be a scoundrel, loves his daughter more than anything in the world and her happiness is paramount to him. If it means biting bullets and leaving the past behind, I think that's what he is prepared to do."

Unlike Tina Kellegher, Lorcan has had little feedback from the public on his role as marriage breaker. "I haven't had any of those letters yet," he says with a mischievous smile. "However I'm looking forward to them. People generally criticise women in these situations far more than they do the men. You can be a complete philanderer but that's not as bad as being a brazen hussy."

After his role in BBC's adaptation of Deborah Moggach's steamy page-turner, *Close Relations*, Cranitch was hailed as TV's new sex symbol, a status he wryly dismisses. "It's a funny old business, isn't it? I never saw it as a sex symbol thing at all."

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Characterisations

Lorcan Cranitch continued

After the last *Bally K*, it was business as usual however for the Dublin actor. "I didn't get a lot of the sex symbol thing," he says. "So I think Brad Pitt's position is pretty safe for a while yet." And while Lorcan has a steady girlfriend for the past four years, they have no definite plans to marry just yet. "I'm sure it will happen one of these days."

Until his role in *Ballykissangel*, Cranitch was best known as the malevolent cop, Jimmy Beck, in *Cracker*. It was a role that was to temporarily cast him as an actor to be filed under brooding and angst-ridden. Sean Dillon and *Ballykissangel*, a series that seems truer to his favourite type of television, has changed all that.

"I thought *Bally K* was great for me because for once I didn't have to deal with murder, robbery, rape, drugs," he says. "You get so drowned in all of that stuff and I had been for a while. It's very hard because the canvas we are given as TV actors is a very influential one and I sometimes find that to fling these tragedies around as if they are the most commonplace thing in the world is a very dangerous thing to do. There's something else in life beside that, which is where *Bally K* comes in."

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Lorcan is based in London but lives in his cottage ("my holiday retreat") when he is working on *Bally K*. He would like to move home to Ireland eventually but knows that work determines his brief. At the beginning of 1999, the RADA graduate worked on *The Glory of Living* at the Royal Court. "The fear of the theatre is just great and I need to be reminded of it every so often," he says.

However he is not a man with a blueprint of his career mapped out. "People sometimes ask me what I want do next," he says. "If only you could choose a lot of the time. Okay, I have a greater choice after *Ballykissangel* than I had before, but I haven't got to the stage yet where I can be creating my own opportunities rather than waiting for somebody else to create them for me. But at the moment I'll go wherever the job takes me."

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Characterisations

Don Wycherley (Father Aidan O'Connell)

After the last series of *Ballykissangel*, Don Wycherley (who plays saintly curate Father Aidan) was seen as a miracle worker because of his onscreen deeds. "I got letters from people about that," the actor from Cork laughs, referring to the time he 'healed' the sick. "I had a few people in pubs asking me to touch their sore knee. The character was very different from the previous priest and that helped in a way. It was just a matter of finding the character."

To help him 'find' Father Aidan, he visited a Benedictine monastery in Roscrea, County Tipperary.

"The lifestyle down there was just so easy-going, having driven out of the city in rush-hour traffic," he says. Wycherley spent most of his time with Father Gabriel, the monastery's burser. "I asked him what made him choose this kind of life and he asked me, what made you choose your kind of life?"

At the beginning of the decade Don Wycherley was a teacher in Finglas on Dublin's Northside, with two-and-a-half years at the chalk-face under his belt. He had worked in amateur drama, and dabbled with some weekend drama classes.

When he secured a full-time course at the Gaiety School of Acting in 1990 he had to make a decision. He did; he gave up teaching. Within a year he secured a part in *Away Alone* in Dublin's Peacock Theatre, which led to a year-long contract with the National Theatre. Shortly afterwards there were roles in *The Honey Spike*, *The Last Apache Reunion* and *Tarry Flynn*.

"It gave me a false sense of what the business was like," he says. "I was rolling from one show to the next thinking, this is it, that I had made it. But at the end of the year there was a change of artistic directors and I was unemployed. It was a big step to move from theatre into film and television. Even though you had conquered one area, the other area is completely different with different rules attached."

On the day he went for the part of Father Aidan, he was also auditioning for a gangster part. "The gangster came first so I was unshaven and wore a leather jacket and jeans," he says.

"The *Bally K* audition was in a hotel on the outskirts of Dublin. Since I couldn't change in the hotel, I went into McDonalds with my shaving gear and clothes. There were a load of kids in the toilets having a smoke and watching me transform from a gangster type into Father Aidan."

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Characterisations

Don Wycherley continued

There were a number of cameo parts in various movies: *Widow's Peak*, *Last of the High Kings*, *Michael Collins*, *The General* and *I Went Down*. More recently, he starred with Tom Berenger in *One Man's Hero*, the little-known story of the Saint Patrick's Brigade's involvement in the Mexico-American war.

He is also writing a short film for Frankie McCafferty's film production company which is scheduled to be shot next year. "Hopefully *Bally K* will get me noticed so that they'll say get me the guy who plays the priest, but hopefully not to play a priest part," says Don.

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Characterisations

Victoria Smurfit (Orla O'Connell)

Victoria Smurfit certainly keeps busy. After completing her debut season on *Ballykissangel* in 1998, she immediately went to work on a couple of movies. In one her co-star was a rat; in the other it was Leonardo di Caprio.

"I made a movie called *The Wedding Tackle* with Adrian Dunbar and Tony Slattery where I was a head-butting, rat-keeping, man-eating type," she laughs.

"Yeah, she had a rat and I had to learn to bond with it. It was called Sox and while everybody else was squeamish with it, I didn't really know how I felt about rats. But it was actually okay. It would crawl around inside my shirt and during a take it would pee on me and everybody would say that's gross and I'd say, that's okay, he's just marking me out as territory. So nobody really talked to me much on set as I smelt rather bad."

Then, after last Christmas, Victoria jetted off to Thailand to shoot *The Beach* with di Caprio. In the film, directed by *Trainspotting's* Danny Boyle, most of the action is set on a legendary island paradise and Victoria's part is listed as Weather Girl.

In the Series 5 of *Ballykissangel*, she also has a new co-star, and romantic interest, in fisherman Conor Devlin. From the moment he fishes her out of the sea, Conor and Orla are at loggerheads.

"It is a constant battle of wits, as the two of them pit their personalities against each other," Victoria says. "The whole time what kept going through my mind was when you're a little kid and you fancy little Johnny at the back of the classroom, so the first thing you want to do when you get out onto the playground is kick him. Orla and Conor are like little children constantly fighting with words."

One of their most competitive duels is a quad bike race (Episode 6). "We had stunt doubles for that sequence," she says. "But up to that scene, we had been rehearsing for a couple of days and we had been doing all our own biking, so it was really gutting that when it came to shooting we weren't allowed to do the whole caboodle. But I assure you I can do it."

She doesn't believe that Orla is the type of person who is suited to a long-term relationship - "she's far too selfish" - and sees elements of her character in her own personality. "Oh definitely. But fortunately I'm having a bit more luck with men than Orla does, however I'm not half as confident as she is. Orla is so blindly confident in her own ability but gets knocked at every turn which doesn't keep her down. Orla has a much thicker skin than I have."

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Characterisations

Victoria Smurfit continued

Impromptu childhood performances earned Victoria the nickname Sarah Bernhardt from her mother and grandmother, and an early desire to become a fire-engine driver was bypassed by her passion for acting. When she was accepted for the Bristol Old Vic, her father gave her one year to prove herself, but that was all she needed. -Since making her film debut in *The Run Of The Country*, she has notched up a number of high-profile television credits, including *Ivanhoe* and *Berkeley Square*.

Victoria lists the scenes where Orla gets her hands dirty as among her favourite of the new series.

"I love the quad bike race where we spent all the day in the mud," she says. "There is another scene where I'm trying to pull out a cooker and I get covered in dust. Then there is a whole sequence in Episode 5 where we were on a boat all day. I really enjoyed trying to get the bait on the hook and Don goes in to delay the man and his life-jacket blows up. That just cracks me up every time. I loved Episode 5 because Orla failed at every turn."

On that occasion Victoria discovered just how good her sea legs were. "We were grand when we were outside and could see the horizon, but we spent a day below decks and we were all not feeling well," she says. "Trying to handle the props, say the lines and look like you're awake while you're really thinking where have I left my stomach? It was pitching like a good one."

In Series 5, Victoria reckons that Orla has more rope to hang herself, but has also achieved a certain level of maturity. "She has gone from thinking Sean Dillon and herself were perfect together to a to-hell-with-it, if-I-keep-trucking-I'll-be-just-fine attitude. She's obviously made a decision to stay in Bally K at the beginning of this series."

But the relationship is very competitive, as if Orla is afraid of losing her independence in one way. "There's 40% of Orla that loves the traditional, settled-down, be with one person. Be a rounded human being. But 60% is in denial of all that normality. That's what keeps her constantly fighting so she doesn't make it easy for anybody. Certainly not herself."

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Characterisations

Joe Savino (Liam Coghlan)

As *Bally K*'s comic odd couple, Liam and Donal seem perfectly matched: a lock-and-key relationship that Joe Savino thinks owes something to the characters' family background. "I thought something unusual the other day. I said to Frankie's character that my mother suffered from nerves and he said that his father did. So obviously Liam's got a mother but no father and I have a father but no mother. We were meant to be together."

As Quigley's henchmen, the duo are prepared to do most anything. "As long as it isn't tantamount to murder," Joe says. "If he told us to go up a mountain and build a plutonium plant we'd say okay. The boys don't think about it. They work for Quigley and there's a pair of them in it."

Liam is the man with the get-rich-quick scheme that is doomed to ignominious failure. "He would like to be like Quigley but he never will be," he says. "He will always be an also-ran, but he's happy in his unluckiness. I don't think he has really changed that much since we first saw him," Joe says of Liam. "He's still one half of these two guys that go around working for Quigley and if there's something going, he might try and pull a fast one but it won't work out for them. They'll never be rich."

Occasionally the popularity of his comic turn in *Ballykissangel* has attracted a lot of attention from his public, but he has discovered a very effective way of rendering himself anonymous: simply remove Liam's hat. "They don't recognise me as Liam even when we're filming down in Avoca where you get the busloads of fans," he says. "If I walk across that bridge with that yellow hat on then I'm targeted. But if I just take the hat off and put it in my pocket they don't recognise me at all. The hat was there from day one and Liam has never had it off his head, except for a few church scenes. But when I saw the yellow hat with Gun Clear written on it, I knew that he would never take it off."

At one time Joe's claim to fame was that he dropped U2's bassist, Adam Clayton, from his rock band, Maxquad. "Adam could play all the notes but he either played them too soon or too late."

After deciding that a career in Customs and Excise – "I was protecting the revenue" – was not for him, Joe joined the Brendan Smith Academy of Acting. Later there were acclaimed stage roles as John the Baptist in Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, as Thenardier in *Les Miserables* and a Broadway production of *Juno and the Paycock*.

He was in RTE's soap opera, *Fair City*, played an unscrupulous inmate in *The Governor* (ITV) and more recently played a lucky Lottery winner in the RTE sitcom, *Upwardly Mobile*. "It was a Top Ten show but it wasn't recommissioned," he says ruefully. But it seems that Liam is the role he will be recognised for. As long as he wears that cap.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Frankie McCafferty (Donal O'Docherty)

"Donal has a curious way of looking at life", Frankie McCafferty says of his *Ballykissangel* comic act. "He is more inclined to think about things but he doesn't brood. It's Beckettian-like, the relationship between himself and Liam. They're joined at the hip almost; they're like the *Godot* characters."

In Series 5, this dynamic duo peddle stolen caviar, brew up a storm of illegal whiskey, bury a telephone box in a most unusual location and, in a comic twist, get buried up to their necks in sand by a pair of hoodlums.

As *Bally K*'s inept, comic double-act they are a hoot, and McCafferty, an established stage actor before *Bally K* came along, relishes his role.

"Part of the beauty of my role in *Bally K* is that I don't really know what Donal is like. Sometimes the audience go, 'Ah, you're the stupid guy,' but that's not really what he's like. I don't think stupidity in itself is funny and these guys are very funny."

His favourite sequence from Series 5 involves the distilling of *poitin* (poteen), an illegal and very powerful Irish whiskey (Episode 8).

"I think *poitin*-making is absolutely perfect for Donal and Liam," Frankie says. "They used to have a darker edge at the beginning, a bit of a mean streak, but that has been taken out. And in this episode, they put in five tons of spuds (potatoes) and heaps of sugar and end up with a half bottle of poitin. But it is rocket fuel. That was really good *craic* (joke)."

"There is a great pathos about Donal and Liam. They have an eternal optimism. Their moods are extreme and when they give up it's total despair, but then they snap out of it just as quickly. They're prepared to give everything a lash."

Which sums up the multi-faceted McCafferty. To date, the Donegal man has made two short films, *Brood* and *Flush* and is planning on more.

"I'm very interested in pursuing the film production company line," he says (he set up Flush Films in 1998). "In fact Don Wycherley is writing something for us which we hope to make later this year or next. We're trying to develop a feature film, but there's two more shorts before that."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Frankie McCafferty continued

Before moving to Belfast, Frankie lived for a while in Galway where he worked for the city's well-known theatre company, Druid, and toured with *At The Black Pig's Dyke* and *The Song of the Yellow Bittern*. Even though he has been playing Donal for the past five years, there is no danger of being typecast.

"Not at all. I was offered the role of Skinner in Brian Friel's *The Freedom of the City*, which was about Derry and Bloody Sunday," he said. "I also played a small-time crook in Stephen Bradley's film, *Sweetie Barrett*, and had to turn down two other stage roles due to work commitments. So the roles I have been offered are not similar to my *Bally K* character.

But the public perception of you is that you become celebrities of a sort and that makes me very uncomfortable. And if you're an actor, it also takes away one of your biggest weapons, which is your power to observe people without them knowing that you're doing it."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Deirdre Donnelly (Siobhan Mehigan)

Last season Siobhan Mehigan was called upon to deal with an escaped bear. This season one of her most challenging tasks is looking after Danny's piglets. "Danny has the farm now and he's into breeding pigs, so there was quite a few scenes with the little piglets," Deirdre Donnelly laughs. "There was a ram as well, but there was not as much work as last year."

After five years as Bally K's resident vet, the Dublin actress has become quite adept in her profession. "If I have to do something that's technical, like injecting animals or whatever, we do get a vet along to show me how exactly I should be holding the syringe or the animal," she says. "But that's one of the things I enjoy the most. I'm very fond of animals anyway. I have two dogs of my own and have had cats and terrapins in the past. My daughter, Lucie, has had a series of animals and I like being around farmyards."

In the last series Siobhan's big scene was the delivery of baby Aisling, the result of a one-night stand with schoolteacher Brendan Kearney. "Most people viewed that relationship favourably. They saw it as an interesting relationship that was developing between Brendan and Siobhan because up to then it had been only mentioned slightly – although their relationship seems to be built on rows and being grumpy to each other most of the time."

"But there were a lot of interesting things about that affair," Deirdre continues. "Like the fact that she was an older woman having her first child for instance, that she had a career and that she wasn't pushed at all about getting married. In fact it was quite the opposite. She really didn't want to even if Brendan did. But they seem to have mellowed a little bit and there are moments this year when they aren't so grumpy with each other. Then Brendan goes for a promotion at work and Siobhan is quite supportive of his decision."

At the moment Siobhan's relationship with Brendan is likely to develop in any number of ways. "I think it is open to a lot of possibilities," she says. "They're not settled down, they're not married and they're not even living together. I think the potential is there for the relationship to go in any direction. I can foresee other relationships coming in and making things less cosy and settled. Both Gary Whelan and I have been saying wouldn't it be interesting if someone else came on the scene, to see how either of them would react."

However, over her five years at Ballykissangel, Deirdre has noticed gradual changes in her character. "When I was cast in the part, the description was that Siobhan was a wild woman who drank a lot and was one of the lads," she says. "In a way she was a kind of 'mountain' woman and was very rough and ready. But she has developed over the last two series into being more gentle, more involved with the community and more feminine."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Deirdre Donnelly continued

Dressing up is something that Deirdre rarely gets to do in her *Ballykissangel* guise. "Friends and family keep saying to me why do you wear those clothes all the time, would you not wear something more glamorous," she says with a laugh. "My mother would say to me why don't you wear something nice sometimes?"

"But that's the character, that's the way we decided to have her look initially when we started the series. It's not very glamorous but that's the way a country vet would dress. However, I do get to dress up now and again when there's an occasion or something, when I get to wear a frock."

Deirdre worked in the theatre for 30 years before *Bally K* but rarely gets an opportunity to tread the boards these days. Instead she keeps busy with doing voice-overs for radio and TV commercials. Deirdre has two dogs, a Yorkshire terrier called Tuffy and a new dog from an animal sanctuary in Wicklow called Jessie.

"She was a stray that had been badly treated so we are gradually bringing her out of her shell," she says. "She was very submissive and fearful when we got her first."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Gary Whelan (Brendan Kearney)

"Brendan is a very popular character and on the *Ballykissangel* Internet sites he's right at the top of the lists," Gary Whelan says of his screen alter ego.

"The reason I think he's popular is because he's every man's man. He shows his feelings, he shows his vulnerabilities and he shows his likes and dislikes. He's also free with his thoughts and when he's upset he can cry, yet he's six foot three and 16 stone. He's able and capable of playing the masculine role and yet he doesn't because it's not in him."

Gary Whelan was born in Dublin but moved to London when he was 10 years old. Prior to *Ballykissangel*, he was best known as Detective Inspector Haines in *The Bill*.

It's a far cry from Brendan Kearney, tweedy school-teacher and crossword puzzle aficionado.

"Brendan's a passionate teacher. He's passionate about his work, and his literature and his poetry. He tries to be a writer. He has soul, he has a good heart and he's very bright.

"But he drinks far too much and that adds to his confusions. He is highly strung and that's why he fishes so much and rides his bicycle and reads his newspaper and does his crossword every day, because that's his routine that keeps the lid on him. Because he's explosive when he loses it; he has no fear of authority."

In Episode 7 of this series, Brendan has an opportunity for promotion but dithers initially, fearing that the other candidate is more likely to succeed. But urged on by Siobhan, he decides to plot and plan his campaign and get the post of school headmaster by any means.

"The kids and the village are his entire life," Gary says. "I think that Brendan would look rather foolish out of *Ballykissangel*. I don't think he'd look right walking down Dublin's Grafton Street with his bike."

Siobhan Mehigan, *Ballykissangel*'s veterinary surgeon, continues to be the only woman in Brendan's life, but she still values her independence.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Gary Whelan continued

"Siobhan has remained a single woman even though she and Brendan almost got to the gate of marriage," he says. "But that wasn't going to happen because the relationship they have is friendship rather than anything else."

"Then this baby arrived and it has thrown Brendan into complete confusion. He wants to play the role of father, but it is very difficult to play a real father if you're not living in the same house as the mother of your child. So Brendan has changed because of the complexities of his life and mainly in that he has a child now."

Despite having very strong opinions on his character, Gary says that there are no parallels between his character and his real life situation. "I'm totally different from Brendan. I have five children, I have a wife, a stable relationship, a career spanning 30 years. Brendan's reactions to situations are verbalised, but I would never show verbally how I feel. If I was upset I'd leave or I would smile and then make an exit. Later, when I'm out of sight, I'd kick the door down the road."

But the actor likes to keep busy. "I do everything that I'm offered and I like," he says.

"Between Series 4 and 5 of *Bally K*, I got to play the manager of a rock band in the TV series, *S Club 7*. I play the band's manager who's completely deranged – totally different to Brendan again. I also made some documentaries in Germany on antiques and architecture, which are hobbies of mine."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Birdy Sweeney (Farmer Eamon Byrne)

Birdy Sweeney died during filming of Series 5 of *Ballykissangel*. His final performances can be seen in Episode 2, which is dedicated to his memory.

For a man who only took up acting 10 years before at the tender age of 57, Birdy Sweeney did well for himself. His performances as eccentric farmer Eamon Byrne made him one of the most popular members of *Ballykissangel*'s supporting cast.

Birdy Sweeney spent most of his life as a comic and bird-impersonator. He picked up his distinctive nickname as a schoolboy and made his debut mimicking blackbirds as an 11-year-old on BBC radio in Belfast.

"I was christened Edmund, but it doesn't mean a thing. If someone whistled it at me I wouldn't even turn around for them," he once said of his nickname.

Birdy was a local celebrity in Ulster, despite suffering a heart attack at the age of 40 and fighting a lifelong battle with diabetes.

Given this, the transformation that followed when the oldest of his eight children suggested he try for a stage role he was auditioning for himself is even more remarkable. "My only regret now is that I didn't get involved in drama sooner," recalled Birdy.

He couldn't believe the recognition *Ballykissangel* brought him. Letters came from all over the world. "It's incredible, I had a letter from a sheep farmer in Texas. He wanted to know about sheep farming," he said.

Such was Eamon's popularity, his character was given greater prominence in the new series.

In Series 4, he had to deal with the arrival of an old blood enemy in Sean Dillon and then the sudden appearance of his nephew Danny from Dublin. His elevation in the cast meant more time spent on the train to Dublin from Dungannon, where he spent his entire life – but he wouldn't have changed it for the world.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Colin Farrell (Danny Byrne)

The first day I ever worked on *Ballykissangel* was with Birdy and most of my scenes were with him," says Colin Farrell of his friend and co-star, the late Birdy Sweeney. "I never, ever either lost a friend or a member of my family before, so Birdy was the closest person to me that I lost. I'm glad I got to work with him. He was a brilliant man with a heart of gold."

At one stage Colin considered a career as a professional footballer, as both his father Eamon and uncle Tommy played for one of Dublin's premier football sides, Shamrock Rovers. "I played in goal, that was the position I wanted to play," he says. "But I was too short and I really wasn't hungry enough. Every Saturday I'd get up, clean the boots and get ready for the game. I had big ambitions of where I was going, but my dad always said to me that I didn't have the hunger."

But he was hungry to be involved in acting. "My dad used to say to me 'You'll be a night-watchman when you grow up,' because I was always staying up late and watching films. I got such a huge buzz out of watching the movies and out of celebrity. I used to love watching the Oscars when I was eight or nine and I decided to be an actor. When I was about 14, my brother sent me to audition for a TV commercial. After that I decided that I do a few classes and see how it went."

He auditioned for the Gaiety School of Acting and was accepted, but decided to go to Australia for a year. When he came back, he worked in a restaurant, then decided to give it a go and find out if he could make it as an actor. After a year in acting school he got a part in the BBC drama, *Falling For A Dancer*, and he hasn't looked back since. He was performing in *A Little World Of Our Own*, Gary Mitchell's award-winning play, when the call came through from *Ballykissangel*. "I have been lucky and long may it last," he says. Straight after the last series of *Ballykissangel*, he got a part in the film, *Ordinary Decent Criminal*, playing the getaway driver in Kevin Spacey's gang, and he was also in Tim Roth's Edinburgh award-winning directorial debut, *The War Zone*.

Most Sundays last season he would watch *Ballykissangel* at home with his family. As the drama unfolded between Danny and Emma, "My dad would be whistling, 'Go on, kiss her!' at the TV screen in the living-room," he laughs. "My mum has every video of the series in chronological order." When he first appeared as rough-and-ready Danny Byrne, the 23-year-old actor was touted as *Ballykissangel's* new hunk and Colin has had his fair share of fan mail. "I got about 45 letters at home and my Mum has kept them all."

"Last year Danny was a little bit unsure of himself and undecided about whether he would stay in Bally K," he says. "There was the relationship with Emma and the relationship with uncle Eamon, which were two good reasons to stay. Plus he got a bit of a buzz out of the farming thing and this year Danny gets to take over the farm. I think he'd like to have had a choice about whether he was going to run the farm or not, but because of the circumstances he has no choice. So the farm gets to be a bit of a burden."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Kate McEnery (Emma Dillon)

Kate's parents, Peter McEnery and Julie Peasgood are both actors, and she herself has been dabbling in the business since childhood. "I was doing bits and bobs since I was about five years-old," she says.

"I did a film back then called *Bellman and True* which started it all. After that I did the obligatory MacDonald's commercials. I also did *Drop the Dead Donkey* and some *French and Saunders*, which was great fun. They were just little character parts and when I went to school I had to put that aside really. Then when I was 16, I made a film called *Get Real*, which was a small British film but it got really good reviews. After that I did *A Touch of Frost*, *The Bill* and *Vanishing Man*. And then I got *Ballykissangel*."

After finishing last season on *Ballykissangel*, Kate went back to college to do exams in English, French and Art at her school in Kingston-upon-Thames, England.

"But I found it difficult, because it was such a big college where you have to be really motivated as you have to do it all yourself," she says. At Christmas, she decided to drop out for some time and travelled to Botswana, where she spent some time living out in the bush, with her godmother. After that there was time for an art trip to Venice before it was back to business in *Ballykissangel*.

"The thought of having to juggle *Bally K* and college, I thought I'd go for this because I knew that I could go back to education later when I'm in my 20s. In fact I'd love to go to Art School, and Emma, my *Bally K* character, actually got that idea from me."

"It's like there's a different aspect to Emma with each episode, which is nice," she says of Series 5. "There is a lot of different sides to her. At first, she came across as very bolshie, because she came over by herself and was the sort of girl who, when she puts her mind to something, she goes out and does it. Also this year, she really grows up through the relationship with her dad and his relationship with Niamh. Emma has to grow up rather quickly."

"Last year Danny and Emma were on the brink of sorting it out and going out big-time but then there was a U-turn," she says of the on-off-on-again relationship.

"I think they have a sort of love-hate relationship. By the end of last series they were sort of girlfriend/boyfriend, but she's going to college now and there's no serious commitment. They're always bickering but there's a lot of love there too, they care for each other. And in this series they get together again."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Kate McEnery continued

"I really enjoyed the episode with the birth of the pig," she says of the time she has to do an emergency delivery at Danny's new piggery (Episode 7).

"Normally, in terms of the relationship between Danny and Emma, he's very serious and almost telling Emma what to do. But in this scene he was so sensitive and mushy about it and she was the one in control, saying calm down and taking control. Sort of having a laugh at him."

During the *Ballykissangel* season, Kate commutes between Dublin and London, where she lives with her boyfriend in a flat in Kingston-upon-Thames. She has been amazed by the reaction to the series and in particular to her own character, Emma.

"I got a letter from a nine-year-old boy, saying you're the best actress on TV and my mum thinks so too," she says.

"That was great. Some of the letters are really touching. I seem to get the little kids and the old ladies, and Col seems to get the young girls."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Áine Ní Mhuirí (Kathleen)

"A lot of people quiz me about the hat Kathleen wears," Áine Ní Mhuirí says. "I met some Americans recently, and they loved *Ballykissangel*, but the first thing they said was, 'Where did you get the hat?' It has taken on a life of its own."

Busybody shopkeeper, Kathleen, knows everything that is going on in Ballykissangel, but up to the last season, when she had a brief reunion with an old boyfriend, her own life remained a bit of a mystery. "I remember when I read the script, I was wondering how are we going to do this with Kathleen?," Áine says. "How are we going to take her from where she is into that. But the interesting thing was that it worked."

Consequently Áine received a substantial amount of feedback. "In particular from women of Kathleen's age group and I thought it was lovely the way that the relationship was accepted in a serious fashion," she says. "Especially for a character to be dressed like that, with the hat, to be taken seriously in that kind of romantic thing was great. I was delighted with that episode."

"What I find interesting about Kathleen is that she is very curious about life and the way life is changing now in Ireland and in Ballykissangel," Áine continues. "There is an excitement there that anything can happen to her. It is interesting in that even in her little appearances Kathleen can easily integrate and she is capable of adapting to quite different situations," Áine says. "At the beginning, she was always seen going to the church and never going to the pub. But in the final episode of this series, she even gets a little bit drunk!" Despite her inquisitiveness, Kathleen bears no malice, a trait that is reflected throughout the programme. "I think *Bally K* gives people a feeling of goodwill," she says. "I often notice at home when the family are watching that they're smiling after seeing it."

"Kathleen's a bit of a loner and in a way that's like being an actor," Áine says. "There's a part of you that you keep private all the time. I suppose to be an actor you have to take yourself apart from family. I sometimes say that's the price you pay for it and that's an element in me that I recognise in Kathleen."

Last year Áine decided to take a break during the months between working on *Ballykissangel*. "There was a time when if you weren't working in our business, you were out, you were dead," she says of her years working as a member of the Abbey Theatre's troupe. "It's a great luxury in that you can afford to take time out."

Before *Ballykissangel*, Áine was a regular on RTE's soap series, *Fair City*, for seven seasons. "Back then I was always recognised as the character of Lily and people didn't even want to know your real name," she says. "Since *Ballykissangel*, I find that people recognise me more as an actor, as opposed to being defined by any one role. So that gives me a certain amount of satisfaction."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Marion O'Dwyer (Oonagh Dooley)

Last May, 1998, in the same week that she started work on *Ballykissangel*, Marion O'Dwyer had to pack her bags for Cannes to attend the world premiere of Anjelica Huston's movie, *Agnes Brown*. It was not only the Dublin actress's first major TV role, but it was also her feature film debut.

"I had been resting the week before, doing nothing," she says with a laugh. "So it was like 0 - 90 in the space of a few days."

In *Ballykissangel* Marion O'Dwyer plays Oonagh Dooley, the long-suffering wife of wheeler-dealer and ex-jailbird, Paul. "She has to be tough because her husband gets into so many scrapes," Marion says with a smile.

"She loves Paul, but there are times when she's pushed to the edge." She reckons that Oonagh regularly acts as a buffer between old enemies, Quigley and her husband. "Sometimes you'd imagine Quigley would pull the rug from under Paul Dooley, except for Oonagh, because she's straight as a die and he can trust her, whereas he can't trust her husband."

In Episode 4, Oonagh decides to make a fresh start for her family and buy a business in Ballykissangel. It is her attempt to put her husband (who is due out of jail) on the straight and narrow, but there is trouble ahead.

"I think she doesn't know the extent of the relationship between her husband and Brian Quigley when she brokers the deal, but I think she's pretty desperate at that stage," Marion says. "The family have been out on the street and they have to get something."

So how would she describe her TV family? "Somebody once described them as madcap and I thought that was pretty accurate," she says. "In one respect they are really normal but in another way they can be quite dippy."

"The kids are quite effervescent and Dooley seems to be always up to something. Oonagh seems to spend a lot of her time wondering what was that about or what's he up to now? She seems to be constantly bewildered by their antics. I feel though, if she didn't have to act as the controlling influence, she'd be as bad as them. I'd say she gets hare-brained notions sometimes."

But while she reckons that her screen alter-ego may be slightly dippy, she sees Oonagh as a great mum and a very patient wife. "She certainly has more patience than I'd have. I think she'd be more fun if she could be, if she had a chance to relax and not be trying to keep the whole family afloat all the time."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Marion O'Dwyer continued

Marion has spent a lifetime in acting. "My dad, Frank, was an actor on radio in RTE, but that didn't really impinge on me because he was a producer by the time I was born," she says. "I did drama classes at the Gaiety Theatre while I was still at school and I got a walk-on in one of the plays."

On stage, she received rave reviews when she played the title role in Bernard Farrell's *Stella By Starlight*. Up to 1998, when she secured one of the lead roles in *Agnes Brown*, her television work was limited to a cameo appearance in an episode of *The Ambassador*. *Ballykissangel* is her first major television role. "I was lucky but it was also a case of being thrown in at the deep end," she says of recent events.

Since then she has got a part in Conor McPherson's feature film debut, *Saltwater*. Marion is not totally unfamiliar with her new co-stars as she had worked with Owen Roe's wife, Michelle, for a year on the stage production of *Dancing At Lughnasa*, and it is her second time acting in a maternal role to Ciarán Owens (who plays Oonagh's son, Dermot) as she also looked after him in *Agnes Brown*.

Being in the BBC's hit drama series is likely to change some aspects of her life, and she is unsure of what to expect in the celebrity stakes after years of stage work where "you're completely anonymous." She still finds it hard to believe that she is playing in a TV show that five years ago she was watching as a fan.

"The funny thing is I remember sitting down to watch the very first episode of *Ballykissangel* and here I am now working on it."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Owen Roe (Paul Dooley)

At the beginning of this year, when the second and final series of *The Ambassador* (BBC) had been put to bed, Dublin actor Owen Roe was wondering where his next job would come from. "When my son Ethan was born six months ago there was nothing on the horizon, workwise," he says. "I was thinking what am I going to do? Then the phone rings and it was *Ballykissangel*."

Owen Roe had originally appeared in the first two series of *Ballykissangel* as Paul Dooley, the dodgy local councillor who takes on Brian Quigley. However he doesn't abide by the law and is put away for his white-collar crime. As far as Owen Roe was concerned, that was that. But now Dooley is back and is set to be a thorn in the side of his old nemesis.

In *The Ambassador*, Owen Roe played the wheeling-dealing Irish Minister for External Affairs, Kevin Flaherty – a role not entirely removed from Paul Dooley. "The thing about Flaherty was that he was a politician and he played the game of politics, whereas this time round there are different motives and agendas that Dooley is playing with," he says. "He finds himself in a business that he never really planned or is familiar with, and he's not really comfortable in a role that's too legitimate for him."

"I think Dooley is far more shady in his dealings than Quigley," Owen Roe explains. "He is not as sophisticated either but he is very bald in the way he tackles things. He wants to do well by his family but he gets too bored going down the usual routes. I don't think there's any malice in him. He just enjoys the fact that if he can get away without paying for something, or make a bit a money on the side, he gets a great kick out of that."

Owen Roe reckons that his man is a match for Quigley ("they can spar well") but he knows that he'd better keep his head down when his wife Oonagh is about. "She's tough so the less she knows about his dealings, the better for him," he says. "He can sweet-talk her a bit but she's not stupid. If she sniffs anything is wrong, she'll come down on him like a ton of bricks."

Owen Roe, one of Ireland's leading stage and screen actors, is delighted to be back on *Ballykissangel*. "The fact that it's not another cop show is great," he says. "In fact there's nothing typical about it. The nice thing about *Ballykissangel* is that it is somewhere totally idyllic, caught in its own time. To exist within that is great fun. It's not the real world and it's great to be able to play with what is in some sense a fantasy world."

Roe's acting career kicked off in stand-up comedy in Dublin during the early 1980s, when he wrote his own material ("vaguely political stuff") and modelled himself on "Steve Martin before he became a movie actor". Initially it was a case of die, die and try again. "We had some really rough audiences."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Owen Roe continued

After stand-up he went into straight acting, as part of a company called Reckless, where he met his future wife, Michelle Forbes, but he hasn't been on stage since he played Seamus Shields in *The Shadow of A Gunman* in 1995.

For television he starred in both series of *The Ambassador*, *Making The Cut* (RTE), *The Governor* (ITV) and *Shannongate* (BBC). His feature films include *Michael Collins* and *The Treaty*.

Owen is also an award-winning writer. His play, *Fear of Feathers*, which was produced in 1992, won the Stewart Parker Award. Consequently he was commissioned to write an hour-long drama, *Good Boy*, for Radio 4. Previously he had written children's television for three years, working on *The Whole Shebang* (RTE) and *Faillte Road Café* (RTE). He recently completed work on the TV series *DDU* (RTE) and a film based on the life of murdered crime journalist, Veronica Guerin, in which he played opposite Joan Allen.

Owen lives in Dublin and has two children, Megan and Ethan.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Katie Cullen (Grainne Dooley)

"I'm kind of like Grainne at home, so she was easy to play," says 11-year-old Katie Cullen. "But the first episode was kind of tough because you have to feel and understand her feelings when her parents didn't tell her that her father was in jail." She describes the Dooleys as a very strange family. "I think they are all pretty sly. The two children are bold, the father has been in jail and I think the mother is great for putting up with it all. I think that if it was real life she'd go insane."

Katie first heard of the *Ballykissangel* part through her acting tutor. "I go to acting classes with Ann Kavanagh and she rang me up and said that there were auditions," she says. "We didn't know that it was for *Ballykissangel*, we just knew that it was for a TV programme." Two weeks after the audition, Ann said that they really liked me but that I was too small. So that was that, I thought, but a few weeks later I got recalled." There were two more recalls, another audition and the numbers were slowly whittled down from three to two and then, bingo, Katie had the part of Grainne Dooley.

Katie, who has been with Ann Kavanagh for five years, had previously played in a stage project of *The Wizard of Oz* as a munchkin and was "a bold child" in a parenting video. "I was too young then to know that I wanted to be an actress," she says. "At one point I thought that I wanted to be a ballerina. My mum put me into the acting classes because she wanted me to speak clearly and properly, but as I got older I began to really like it. The plays were brilliant and I enjoyed going for auditions. I love acting. I love being able to express yourself and getting into the character which I find very interesting."

As for Grainne Dooley, Katie reckons that she is cunning. "She can get one past her parents. She thinks she knows better than her parents. She's very cheeky but she's clever. She has gone through a lot with her father being in jail and all that, but she's not as dumb as you might think."

When Katie celebrated her 11th birthday on set, the rest of the cast and crew bought her a birthday cake. "Everyone in *Ballykissangel* is really nice," she says. "They're just brilliant to work with." Her favourite part of Series 5 was the school fete. "It was crazy," she says with a laugh. "There were 150 extras running around, sheep everywhere, goats, the camera crew and the extras, parents... It was just mad."

None of Katie's immediate family are involved in theatre, but her cousin, Jimmy Fay, is the director of Bedrock Theatre Company and was involved in founding the Dublin Fringe Festival in 1996. Her mum and dad are delighted with Katie's success and she is looking forward to seeing herself on the small screen. "I think the ratings will go so high because everybody who knows I'm in *Ballykissangel* will be tuning in for the new series," she says with a laugh. "This is like a dream come true," she says of her *Ballykissangel* experience, adding that some day she hopes to make a move into acting full-time.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Ciarán Owens (Dermot Dooley)

Ciarán Owens was back at school after a hectic summer spent working in Avoca on *Ballykissangel*. "It was great fun," the 13-year-old recalls of his time playing Dermot Dooley, the latest role in an already burgeoning acting career. "I started off a few years ago," he says. "A casting director came to the school in Killeshandra and I auditioned for a part in *The Butcher Boy*. It was a wee part."

While Ciarán got the wee part (chopping ice from a frozen village fountain was one of the highpoints) his older brother, Eamon, nabbed the title role of Francie Brady. Eamon's subsequent performance was showered with superlatives but Ciarán says there is no sibling rivalry; in fact the two brothers rarely discuss their latest parts with each other.

He heard about the part of Dermot through his agent. "My agent told me that there was an audition for a new family in *Ballykissangel* and I just said I'd go for it and hope for the best," he says. By that time he had a fairly impressive acting CV under his belt, with roles in *The Butcher Boy*, *Angela's Ashes*, the BBC series *Eureka Street* and *Agnes Brown*.

"He's not a shy lad but he's not a hardy lad either," Ciarán says of Dermot. "But he's quite clever. He doesn't really talk about the father to other people. At least, if that was me, I'd keep it to myself."

In one respect Dermot is a million miles from Ciarán. "There is one episode where he sings and that wouldn't be me," he laughs. "I hate singing although I used to play the accordion in a local band." Ciarán really enjoyed working with his family co-stars. "Katie is good craic", he says. "And Owen and Marion were lovely."

Ciarán lives in the village of Killeshandra in County Cavan. Before he started working on *Ballykissangel*, he used to watch the series occasionally. "But I wouldn't be in every Sunday night in front of the TV," he adds. "I'd be out playing football. I'm mad into the football. I play Gaelic, soccer, snooker and pool, but soccer is my favourite. I have been following Liverpool for about six years, ever since I started playing. I play Gaelic for my local team but we don't have a soccer club where I live, although I play soccer with my friends."

Ciarán is a big fan of comedy and lists *The Simpsons*, *South Park* and *Friends* among his favourite TV shows and his favourite recent films were *There's Something About Mary* and *Waking Ned Devine*. He doesn't like watching himself on television. "No, in case I'm bad," he says with an impish smile. Some day he would like to be a full-time actor, but for the moment his feet are firmly planted on terra firma and his evenings are filled with homework. "I want to finish school first, just in case it doesn't go right," he says. "Then I'll always have that."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Owen Teale (Conor Devlin)

A few weeks after finishing his work on *Ballykissangel*, Owen Teale was back in his native Wales, playing the part of *Macbeth* in a Clywd Theatr Cymru (National Theatre of Wales) production of the Scottish play. It was, he admits, a very physical and bruising version of the Shakespearean drama – but not quite as bruising as his quad bike racing sequence in *Ballykissangel*. And certainly not as entertaining.

Ballykissangel marked Teale's first visit to Ireland. "It was quite an experience having it all in one go," he says. "All the clichés like the beautiful Guinness, the Wicklow hills and the warm welcome were true. And there was the wonderful spiritual Celtic world which I feel isn't that far from being Welsh, I suppose. What was difficult was that they all knew their characters so well and I was fitting into their world."

He met the producers of *Ballykissangel* after returning from Morocco where he had just completed a mini-series for US television. "When they described the kind of guy Conor was I just couldn't resist. I think he's a loner and in a very post-new-man way he knows himself.

He's not so vulnerable to suggestion; he has got quite a strong character in that respect. He's quite used to living on his own, so he has quite a lot to give up when he falls in love; he has got a lot to lose. He's not a boy, he is a man who has lived."

Having spent the previous 18 months away from Britain (between Morocco, Bulgaria and New York) Teale wasn't overly familiar with the latest developments in *Ballykissangel*. "But I knew of it and its popularity. However, I didn't really know what to expect. It was just fantastic and the sheer size of character of Vicki (Victoria Smurfit) is wonderful. She has such energy, she's a fantastic woman."

In some respects Owen is familiar with the world of fisherman Conor Devlin. "I grew up by the sea just across the water from the bay in Wicklow. I had been a lifesaver when I was younger. In fact, Conor is introduced when he saves Orla and Quigley's lives."

He lists the quad bike racing sequence, in which Orla and Conor battle to outdo each other, as his favourite scene and perhaps the most telling one in terms of the characters' relationship. "I think there was more said in the sheer physical elements of that sequence than was expressed through words."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Owen Teale continued

In 1997, Owen won a Tony award for his performance as Torvald in the Broadway production of *A Doll's House*. It was the pinnacle of a busy stage and screen career, most notably with the Royal Shakespeare Company and in films including Franc Roddam's *Cleopatra*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Hawk*.

His own entry into the thespian world was through an unusual route. "I had never been to the theatre as a kid," he says. "I didn't finish my A Levels and I was working at a fairground as children's entertainer. I dressed up in various animals costumes, like they do in Disneyland. I had sort of run away from home and I met a girl there who was training to be a dancer. She was at college in Guildford and it was really through love that I got into theatre. I fell in love with her and I auditioned for the college, having no real idea of what was to be expected of me. I actually thought, yes, I have come to the right place."

I finished the course, graduated and made a TV film straightaway about the Falklands. It was about the Welsh Guards who had been blown up. It was a BBC film called *The Mimosa Boys* which was the name of the ship which had taken some Welsh settlers down to Patagonia. So there were a lot of Welsh-speaking people who actually were fighting on the side of the Argentinians. It was ludicrous, which most wars are really."

Owen lives in London with his partner and their two children. "I try to take my children with me as much as I can," he says. "We have a little girl, Eliza, who is not quite two yet and we have a grown-up boy, Ion, as well. My girlfriend, Sylvestra Le Touzel, is also an actress."

He is looking forward to watching his debut performance in *Ballykissangel*. "I feel very nostalgic about Ireland now. I'm going to come back again."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Characterisations

Catherine Cusack (Frankie Sullivan)

To prepare for her new role as *Ballykissangel's* new garda, Catherine Cusack decided to do some homework. She visited Bray Garda station in Wicklow and spent some time with *ban gharda*, Patricia Hanley. "She was brilliant, telling me how she joined the force and how she feels about the work and what a difficult day is and what the training is like," the Dublin actress says. "She also told me stuff like how to wear your hat and make it appear real. I never played a policewoman before but it's great being in uniform."

Cusack plays Frankie Sullivan, a tough no-nonsense garda. "I'm really enjoying it. Frankie is strong and forthright, which is something I like as I have often played quiet characters. But Frankie says what she says and doesn't mince her words." From the outset (Episode 8), when she thwarts Paul Dooley's plans to sell poteen, Frankie is determined to lay down the law. "Frankie's really a Dublin policewoman and it's not the same kind of life as they live in Ballykissangel," Catherine says. "So she comes down and she is determined to do a good job and uphold the law and do what she thinks she should. Pretty soon that brings her into conflict with certain locals." Not surprisingly, it takes Frankie a while to adapt to the laid-back attitude of Ballykissangel. "She's a fast learner and knows that if she is to stay in Bally K for a while, she has to make friends and co-operate," Catherine says. "Also she finds that's the way to get things done."

Moving into a new series, midway through a shoot, can be a daunting experience, but Cusack was familiar with a few cast members. "I know about four or five people in *Bally K* from the theatre, so it wasn't so bad as there were a lot of familiar faces. But the crew were wonderful and very helpful so you're brought on board very quickly."

Catherine Cusack is the daughter of the late, great stage and screen actor Cyril Cusack, and one of a Dublin thespian dynasty that includes sisters Niamh, Sorcha and Sinead. She was Bridget in *Moonlight* directed by Karel Reisz. She is probably best known, however, for her role as Carmel, the nanny from hell, in Granada's long-running soap, *Coronation Street*. At the time, it was reported that the young actress was receiving bags of hate mail. "It was exaggerated for television purposes," she explains. "It wasn't all that bad and in fact there was only one letter that was truly unpleasant, whereas the rest of it was people writing stuff with tongue in cheek."

Ballykissangel was a great learning experience. "When I did *Coronation Street*, which was for about five months, it was very new to me and I didn't really take it in, the whole mechanics of it. Perhaps I wasn't old enough to learn from it. But it has been very interesting to watch *Bally K* and see how everybody works together."

In Avoca, where *Ballykissangel* is shot, the visiting fans were curious about the new face. "I wasn't prepared for that," Catherine says. "Doing *Coronation Street* or whatever you're not on view to the public. I was surprised at how they would watch a scene again and again. A few people asked me if I was going to be the new garda. They were very sussed."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Episode Synopsis

1. Two Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

The day after the bonfire, Niamh spends the day with Dillon discussing their future. She has decided to tell Ambrose that their marriage is over. But Ambrose has gone missing. A French man, D'Argan, challenges Quigley to a balloon race, to re-create an event that took place 200 years ago between their ancestors. The winner will receive £40,000. After an exciting race, Quigley's balloon overshoots the winning mark and ends up crashing into the sea. He is rescued by Conor Devlin. Meanwhile, the search party has tragic news for Niamh.

2. Hello and Farewell

It's the day of Ambrose's funeral. Aiden reads out a police statement from the couple Ambrose saved before falling to his death. He was a hero. After the burial the funeral party returns to Fitzgerald's. Tension is high between Dillon and Niamh, their eyes meet several times throughout the day but Niamh never allows him to speak. The next day, she asks him to stay away for a while as she needs time on her own. Elsewhere, Danny and Eamon are planning their organic pig farm and Orla moves into Murty Quinn's rundown old cottage. Her landlord is Conor Devlin.

3. Catch of the Day

Liam and Donal are busy stealing sand off the beach to fill Quigley's golf bunkers, when they find a large crate of expensive Beluga caviare floating in the sea. The owners are Wicklow's most wanted – the O'Reagan Brothers. Kieran is beginning to show the first signs of strain since Ambrose's death. Niamh decides she must leave Ballykissangel. Devastated, Dillon tries unsuccessfully to dissuade her. Orla and Conor go on their first date: a race on quad bikes.

4. Moving Out

The news breaks that Niamh is selling Fitzgerald's and moving to Dublin, leaving Ballykissangel. Quigley is to mastermind the sale. There are two prospective buyers: retired civil servant Malachy Mullan or Oonagh Dooley. Meanwhile, tension between Niamh and Dillon is so high, Emma decides to leave home – upsetting Danny, Conor and Orla in the process. Meanwhile, Aiden – never at his best with such temporal matters – has the rather unspiritual job of preparing for the diocesan auditor.

5. Eureka

It is Kieran's birthday and Imelda, Ambrose's mother, has come to stay. Nothing Niamh does seems to be up to her standards. To make matters worse, Kieran wants a puppy, and the only person who has puppies for sale is Dillon. Quigley is trying to stake his claim in an Australian goldmine. When Aussie Laurie Woskett arrives in town and tells him her company will buy back his stake for up to half a million Australian dollars, Quigley desperately starts to search for the proof of his ancestor. Elsewhere, Orla has been trying to improve Conor's business by getting his fishing trips into a local guidebook. Believing Mick Doyle to be the editor, she invites him onto Conor's boat. The day is disastrous and Doyle proves difficult to please.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Episode Synopsis

6. Behind Bars

Ex-prisoner Paul Dooley arrives in Ireland, to be greeted by his family and discover they are moving to Ballykissangel – home of his old enemy, Brian Quigley. It's not long before the two men are quarrelling again – over an 'Autoloo' (an automatic pay toilet)! Niamh is packing for her move to Dublin. She loves Dillon, but the shadow of Ambrose still hangs over them. Elsewhere, Orla is applying the finishing touches to her cottage and trying to fend off Conor's advances. Not getting the message, Conor prepares a surprise romantic dinner at the cottage, unaware that Orla has arranged a party for that evening. When half the village turns up, Conor has to swallow his disappointment and share the champagne and oysters.

7. Brendan's Crossing

Brendan is up for the post of headmaster of Ballykissangel National School. So is Brother Dominic, a teetotal Christian who is mad on hurling. In Fitzgerald's, Dooley, keen as ever to make a penny, has rented the upstairs room to a visiting school governor and needs it painted fast, while barmaid Orla finds herself in the middle of a dispute. The unscrupulous Paul is putting the slops back into the kegs. Rather than tell Oonagh the truth, she decides to leave – but it's nothing a little subtle blackmail can't sort out, thinks Quigley. Elsewhere, Danny's pig, Una, plays Cupid.

8. A Few Dollars More

Uncle Minto is back, making cheap, illegal liquor (poteen). Unknown to Oonagh, Dooley has bought some and offers it to Frankie, unaware that she is the new Garda! It's Brendan's first school fête, but Siobhan (who is judging the Best Pet Competition), has been called away. Dillon stands in for her, and upsets the local snob. While Conor's boat is being fixed, he asks Orla if he can stay in the cottage. She agrees, reluctantly, but things get even more awkward when he brings her breakfast in bed. Claiming she needs her own space, she offers to move out and let Conor have the cottage back. He finally senses that something is wrong, but she won't let him discuss it. Meanwhile in Dublin, Niamh is begging Siobhan not to tell Dillon how desperately unhappy she is.

9. The Outsiders

It is a tense day in the Dooley household as Paul prepares to meet the Garda and receive his punishment for the poteen affair: 50 hours of 'unofficial' community service to be spent redecorating the school gym. On seeing the amount of work to be done, Dooley drafts in the equally guilty Liam, Donal, Minto and Danny. Needless to say, chaos ensues, until Dermot suggests turning the decorating into a mural project involving the whole school. Elsewhere, Conor is still getting nowhere with Orla. A job in Spain has come up and he is thinking seriously about leaving. And Quigley stuns Dillon by giving him Niamh's address and telephone number in Dublin.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Episode Synopsis

10. With a Song in My Heart

Father Aidan is auditioning for the church choir but it's looking bleak, until the young Mairead enchants him with her beautiful voice. But when she does not turn up for the rehearsals, Father Mac has a history to confess and settle the past with Mairead's mother, Maureen. It is the anniversary of Dillon's wife and Emma's mother's death. Sean is maudlin but Emma encourages him to visit Niamh in Dublin, where he has a proposal to put to her. Meanwhile, Emma's relationship with Danny takes another step forward. Orla is enjoying the comforts of Quigley's house, even inviting Frankie round to share in the saunas and champagne. But things go horribly wrong when Liam and Donal turn up seeking distraction from the choir.

11. Love's Labours

Frankie has organised a raft-racing event. Aidan and choirgirl Mairead are team partners, Orla and Danny are another, much to Grainne's disappointment – she would much rather have Danny than her brother Dermot. With the race in full swing, Mairead pretends to twist her ankle, kisses Aidan, then runs away into the forest. Mairead's mother wants some answers and Frankie has to question Aidan, who blames himself for being so naive. Meanwhile, Niamh and Dillon are back to announce their engagement and discuss wedding plans. Everything seems fine – until Niamh discovers Dillon at Ambrose's grave. He has decided that, if they are to be together and move on with their lives, it cannot be in Ballykissangel.

12. Arrivals and Departures

It's the eve of Niamh and Dillon's wedding. The women's hen night involves a pub-crawl in Cilldargan, while the men are celebrating with a Celtic stag-night ceremony in the woods. Liam and Donal have a stall selling alcohol, but Uncle Minto's mysterious potion is having a strange effect on the men. Brendan is cured of a toothache while Danny keeps seeing rabbits! The next day, Father Aidan is asked by Frankie to help with a tricky case involving the Toomeys.. During a car chase, Frankie loses control and crashes. When she can't get a signal on her radio, Aidan begins to fret: will he make it back in time to marry Niamh and Dillon.?

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Ratings

Episode	UK Txn Date	Channel	Time On	Audience	Share
1	26.09.99	BBC1	2000	8.7 million	31.6%
2	03.10.99	BBC1	2000	8.7 million	31.1%
3	10.10.99	BBC1	2000	8.0 million	29.1%
4	17.10.99	BBC1	2000	7.8 million	28.6%
5	24.10.99	BBC1	2000	9.8 million	40.5%
6	31.10.99	BBC1	2000	8.2 million	30.7%
7	07.11.99	BBC1	2000	7.8 million	28.6%
8	21.11.99	BBC1	2000	6.9 million	24.2%
9	28.11.99	BBC1	2000	6.8 million	23.4%
10	05.12.99	BBC1	2000	6.9 million	23.7%
11	19.12.99	BBC1	2000	6.4 million	22.5%
12	28.12.99	BBC1	2000	9.2 million	34.9%

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

Awards

Series 1

National Television Awards 1996
Most Popular Actress
Dervla Kirwan

Series 2

Royal Television Society Awards 1997
Best Drama Series

Series 3

Promax UK Awards 1998
Gold Prize
Best Drama Production

BAFTA 1998
Nomination: Most Popular Drama Series
Nomination: Most Popular Actress – Dervla Kirwan

Series 4

TRIC Awards 1999
TV Theme Music of the Year

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

What the Papers Say

"Ballyk is alive and well and as entertaining as ever." *Weekend Mirror*

"...endearing. ...just when I thought the show had gone barmy, it struck back with a rather touching vein of illicit love, ending in a tragedy, the like of which should keep the plot boiling nicely over the coming weeks." *Bristol Evening Post*

"The gentle comedy drama is as welcome as a large Irish whiskey on a cold winter's evening." *Mirror*

"...the jokes are good and the writing is good and the performances are good..." *The Times*

"...the Sunday night Radox relax is the middle-aged, Mondeo-driving version of guzzling 12 Es on a Saturday night." *Guardian*

"Brian's quest for title is a classic." *Canberra Times*

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

What the Papers Say

Sunday Mirror

Interview with **Tina Kellegher** (Niamh)

I can play the vamp but I never see myself that way

She may be one of the sexiest stars of *Ballykissangel*, but Tina Kellegher sees herself in a very different light

She is the feisty barmaid whose passionate love life will leave the regulars choking on their pints of stout when *Ballykissangel* returns to the screen this week. Niamh Egan set the whole of the nation tut-tutting when she ditched her sweet but ineffectual policeman husband Ambrose for bad boy Sean Dillon, played by Lorcan Cranitch, at the end of the fourth series.

And the affair continues with electrifying consequences as *Ballykissangel* shows there's still plenty of life in the everyday story of Irish village folk after the departure of Dervla Kirwan and Stephen Tompkinson.

But while Tina Kellegher, who plays Niamh, has made a career out of playing vamps, in real life she couldn't be different. She is extremely happy with husband Gordon Wycherley... and she was even scared of what he would say when she had her hair cut for the show – hardly the actions of a take-me-or-leave-me vamp.

"When Niamh cut her hair short in the last series it was a big statement," says Tina. "She was saying, I want to rid myself of the past and shake off these shackles that have been holding me back.

"I wasn't mad about my long hair so it didn't bother me, but I was worried what Gordon would say as I know he loved my hair.

"Then when I did get it cut the girls at the salon made things worse by nearly crying and saying, 'This is a sin.' Gordon was pretty shocked when he saw the new me for the first time. He took a very deep breath and said, 'Yeah, OK, I'll get used to it,' quickly followed by, 'Oh my God, it's all gone.' But he loves it now and it's made a huge difference to the role.

"It's interesting how people perceive me differently now. It's as if I must have just discovered myself. They say, 'My God you look so much slimmer, so sophisticated and sexual.' I have lost some weight but not that much. I'm a size 12 and I've always been a size 12.

"I don't think about how I look, but I'd like to think I'm womanly, sensuous, and have sex appeal.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

What the Papers Say

Interview with **Tina Kellegher**...2

"I know I can play sexy parts. In the theatre they always say, 'Bring on Kellegher for the sexy roles.' I know I can get dressed up and make an impact but I don't channel a lot of energy into that because I don't perceive myself in that way.

"I'm not the kind of woman who would go and spoil herself at the beautician's and hairdresser's. I like to play out those things in roles, putting on all the vampy gear – it's a great crack. People on the street keep saying, 'Your hair's great, Tina, keep it that way.' It's made me feel more confident."

But the one thing that has really transformed her life is her marriage two years ago to Gordon, *Ballykissangel's* locations manager. "When I met Gordon there was an immediate magnetism," she says. "He's very calm, warm and gentle. We both just knew straight away that we wanted each other and we're very lucky." It's a very special thing to have in your life. I'd had relationships before but I knew this was the one."

They met six years ago when Tina was appearing in *The Comedy Of Errors* at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin with Gordon's brother, Don, who now plays Father Aiden in *Ballykissangel*.

"Don was trying to suss out if I was going out with anyone," says Tina. "I didn't have a boyfriend at the time and when Gordon came to see the show we hit it off immediately.

"He has a very calming influence on me, he makes people feel everything is OK. He's great. I'm pretty strong and self-sufficient but I've changed completely since I met him.

"I used to be harder on myself and far more serious. I'd put myself into knots about my work and get terribly upset, but he has made me feel calmer and given me a feeling of peace.

"I don't beat myself round the head, which is better for my approach to work and to life.

"I always worried before because I wanted everything to be just right. I used to get into a terrible state about silly bills. Even if I hadn't had the bill yet I'd worry myself sick about it arriving.

"But I've blossomed now. I'm a happily married woman. I've gone through that process of finding my real confidence and my sense of calm.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

What the Papers Say

Interview with **Tina Kellegher**...3

"And it's lovely to see Niamh finding her confidence now in *Ballykissangel*. I've gone through it myself. I know what's happening to her and understand it well. Even though there was a love between Niamh and Ambrose, he did push the wrong buttons with her. But first and foremost love is about passion and sex appeal, and Niamh discovers that with Sean.

"It's amazing what incredible power passion can have over people, the way it changes them and makes them blossom. It can be one of the strongest things in the world and that's the driving force behind the new series.

"I'm a very passionate person in my real life. I'm an actress, aren't we all? I've never wanted to be a star, I have just wanted to do good work and for people to enjoy it. I'm more interested in what's going on in my head, not in sexual chemistry.

"I have Niamh's seriousness, that's the strongest comparison between us. I'm a fire sign but don't like confrontations, I prefer happy atmospheres and I work hard to create that. I don't see the point of rowing unnecessarily, I'm a peace-keeper, but when my back's up against the wall I fight back, I'm not a wimp."

But she is a home bird and likes nothing better than relaxing in her home in the hills outside Dublin... when she isn't out walking.

"I don't go to the gym because I'm shy of people recognising me when I'm puffing, sweating and not feeling at my best. But hard walking gives me a tremendous buzz. I live 10 miles outside Dublin and have lost weight without meaning to because I like to walk into town," she says.

"Walking has always been part of my life, I'd walk when I was penniless and couldn't afford the bus. Gordon walks, but not fast enough and not like me. We go for nice leisurely Sunday walks up the mountain.

"I think through a lot in my head when I'm walking or just empty my mind and take in the surrounding areas. It's definitely time out.

"We would like to have a family and we will know when the time is right. I'm a great believer in following your instinct.

"In the past I've always been standing by the phone waiting for the next job offer - but now I have someone else in my life. I've found the right person for me so I'm very lucky and I know I'm lucky."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

What the Papers Say

Sunday People

Interview with **Ciarán Owens** (Dermot Dooley)

BROTHER ACT

Schoolboy stars revel in TV and film limelight

These are the two bursting-with-talent border brothers who can call Hollywood superstars workmates – but they just want to get on with school. Bright sparks Eamonn and Ciaran Owens have already starred in the kind of movies that would make adult actors green with envy. But the big time hasn't gone to the County Cavan lads' heads – because they just go on screen on school holidays "for the crack".

Ciaran, who has just turned 13, is starring in BBC Northern Ireland's *Eureka Street* as the joyriding hooligan Roache who paints a grim but lively picture of Belfast's urban youth. And now, after a summer's hard graft, he's about to debut on the channel's hit drama *Ballykissangel* as the colourful Dermot Dooley – but it's all just something to do between exams. "I've got to get back to school really because there's some big exams ahead of me," he told us during a break.

He said he used to watch the odd episode of hit *Bally K* before he went for a part in it. But the football-mad kid came clean and said: "I wouldn't be in every Sunday night in front of the TV!"

Ciaran – who says he doesn't like seeing himself on the screen – has also just finished playing a lead role in major movie *The Mammy* with Hollywood screen goddess, Anjelica Huston. "I don't know if she thought I was any good," he laughed. "She was great and she's a lovely woman, but I don't really know what she thought of me."

We know that she thought he was brilliant - and that the Cavan boy was one of the most down to earth actors she has worked with.

Fiery-haired Eamonn, now 16, has also wowed the big names. He played the comic book mad Francie Brady in the highly acclaimed *The Butcher Boy* before moving on to hi-jack the screen as the young Martin Cahill in *The General*. Brendan Gleeson was great as Martin Cahill," he told *Sunday People*. "People said I look a bit like him but I don't know what to say about that."

The two shopkeeper's sons started out after Eamonn was plucked from his Cavan classroom – then aged just 13 – to star in *The Butcher Boy*. The director had scoured Ireland in search of the right kid and knew straight away he had found him when Eamonn auditioned. Younger brother Ciaran played an extra in the hit movie, but soon moved on to take his own place under the spotlight.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

What the Papers Say

Interview with **Ciarán Owens**...2

The wily pair went on to star in the superb four-part BBC Northern Ireland *Amongst Women*, playing the same boy at different ages.

But Ciaran said *Eureka Street* has been one the hardest things he has ever done... because he had to work on his broad Belfast accent. "That was hard work," he said. "I've got a real bogger Cavan accent and the Northern one is very different. But that's part of what you have to do."

And Ciaran's energies don't end there. Whenever he gets half a chance he's out on the field playing for his local GAA team in Killeshandra. "I love sports. It's a pity Cavan never win anything, but I play Gaelic and pool and snooker. But I love bikes, I love the ramps on the mountain bikes. I think I just go mad when I get onto it."

Eamonn has put his love of Gaelic on hold for now while a lot of his time was spent working for his Junior Certificate. "The whole GAA thing was getting a bit too much for me so I've given it up altogether," he said. "I don't know what I'm going to do but I am staying on at school. I love the film work because it's always something different everyday. It's always a bit of crack."

On his curriculum vitae he can say how he also starred in the film of Frank McCourt's award-winning book *Angela's Ashes* about growing up in Limerick. And word has it that a "big project" is on the horizon for the new year.

Most recently he has worked on major US TV production *St Patrick*, with star Patrick Bergin playing the Patron saint. But Eamonn says he had to adapt when he was first launched into stardom. "I didn't get people asking me for autographs and all that, I just got loads of people coming up to me and asking me questions," he said.

Asked if the fame is paying off when it comes to romance, he just chuckles. "Ah, sure you never know what would be happening."

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

What the Papers Say

Sunday Mirror

Interview with **Lorcan Cranitch** (Sean Dillon)

BALLYKISS PASSION 12 HOURS A DAY IS FRYING MY BRAIN Actor Lorcan Cranitch Tells How TV Love Strains His Real Relationship

Handsome *Ballykissangel* star Lorcan Cranitch has pushed himself to the limit for the past six months filming one of the most intensely passionate love affairs ever seen on television. The exhausted actor, who plays brooding loner Sean Dillon in the latest BBC series, says the constant burning desire between Sean and his love Niamh made his adrenalin level "go bananas".

Lorcan, who has a strong presence with his jet black hair, piercing blue eyes and designer beard, has also revealed how the highly demanding role put a great strain on his relationship with his girlfriend of five years, radio journalist Susan Jackson.

Speaking in Dublin during a short break between scenes, Lorcan, 40, said: "This is one of the most exhausting roles I've ever had. Sometimes my brain is absolutely fried. I'm spending 12 hours a day in a state of high passion as Sean and at the end of it my adrenalin just goes bananas. I've lost a bit of sleep over the whole thing, that's for sure. My mind is going crazy for hours after we've stopped filming and I've had to find my own way of dealing with that.

"Some people start drinking but I'm not really a big drinker. Some people do yoga, but I've taken to chopping down trees and hacking away at bushes to be able to cope. A few years ago I bought myself a retreat in the Dublin hills so I disappear off there and clear the land, get back to nature a bit. Sean and Niamh's love affair is the huge backbone of this series and it's taking a lot out of me."

Lorcan says: "We've been chipping away at it since March and because it's the strongest story there's a big responsibility to give it your best. You've got to reinvent and rekindle a great deal of lust and passion every morning and there's a great relief when you manage to have a good day, and that's what fuels the next day. When you are filming so much passion every day it can completely drain you emotionally, especially as things are very edgy and full of mind games between the two of them.

"Sean is a lot like Heathcliff, passionate and brooding, but Niamh's not quite Cathy, and because of the circumstances the passion is bottled up. And, as we know with Cathy and Heathcliff, the passion is expressed in a physical way.

Drama

12 x 50 minutes



Ballykissangel

Series 5

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Interview with **Lorcan Cranitch**...2

"We don't flail around and chew the face off each other, but we do show our physical side. I'm afraid you don't see them actually making love, which I think is a great shame because there's a huge physical side to their relationship and the viewer should see that. It's an ideal opportunity for a lot of physical passion. There is a lot of it but I wanted much more. I can never get enough of that wild, romantic stuff.

"Sean and Niamh have a great many forces working on them. They've got to deal with how they're viewed in the community and whether it's the right thing to do, how much this love will conquer all and that's a hard one to call. I wish love conquered all, I'd like to think it did but there are too many examples of it not being able to. I do believe that it can but I'd like to see more evidence of it.

"Doing such a passionate storyline takes a lot out of you and puts a terrible strain on your relationship. If your partner is sympathetic and understanding about what you're going through then you're on a winner, and my partner Susan is absolutely like that. To be able to come home to somebody who says, 'It's OK, I know what you're going through and how much it's taking out of you,' is very, very important. Susan is great, very generous with her time and great about the business I'm in. I go home at night and crank up the volume, play good old rock 'n' roll, and try to forget about *Ballyk* and that seems to do the trick. It's TV, not real life, so I try and leave my work behind and go back to real life. I've had to live in a state of high passion for six months but at the end of the day you have to remember it's a job.

"Sean and Niamh are still at the beginning of this passionate relationship but unfortunately there's a darkness surrounding it which they're trying to break through. I would love to say the exhaustion has made me lose lots of weight but unfortunately the caterers are very good. I might even have put some on."

Lorcan has found happiness with Susan for the last five years but refuses to be rushed into proposing. And he doesn't feel his life is stable enough yet to consider having a family. He said: "I'm very happy with Susan. I'm absolutely in love with her. She's pretty damn gorgeous to look at - she has an elegance about her in a pair of jeans and a T-shirt. She's got a good sense of humour and is one of the kindest, most generous people I've ever met. We have a lot of fun. The thing about Sean and Niamh is that there's so much angst going on around them.

"While there's angst going on around Susan and I, it's for all sorts of other reasons not to do with our relationship. It's our families. We certainly have the same level of passion and excitement between us as Sean and Niamh."

His big regret about the new series is that the weather wasn't wild and windy enough to create a truly dramatic backdrop for the swirling passion between Sean and Niamh.

Drama

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