



**Presents**

# **GOOD VIBRATIONS**

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

A screenplay by Colin Carberry and Glenn Patterson

Canderblinks Film & Music Ltd/Revolution Films

**Directors** – Lisa Barros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn

**Producers** – Chris Martin and Andrew Eaton, David Holmes

**Starring** – Richard Dormer, Jodie Whittaker, Liam Cunningham, Adrian Dunbar and Dylan Moran

Running Time: 97 Mins

Ratio: Scope 235:1

Sound: Dolby Digital

### **World Sales**

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In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.  
H. G. Wells

**Terri Hooley** is a radical, rebel and music-lover in 1970s Belfast, when the bloody conflict known as the Troubles shuts down his city. As all his friends take sides and take up arms, Terri opens a record shop on the most bombed half-mile in Europe and calls it Good Vibrations. Through it he discovers a compelling voice of resistance in the city's nascent underground punk scene. Galvanising the young musicians into action, he becomes the unlikely leader of a motley band of kids and punks who join him in his mission to create a new community, an Alternative Ulster, to bring his city back to life.

### SYNOPSIS

**Since the age** of five Terri Hooley has had only one eye. He has never seen things as others see them. And in the world of Belfast's Troubles, thank fuck.

Terri's a DJ, an anarchist, son of a radical socialist father and believer in the revolutionary power of the seven-inch single. Music can bring people together. The right music: his music.

For a moment in the 1960s it seemed everyone of his generation in Belfast shared his vision – but there was something else going on beneath the surface. Belfast erupted into violence. Friends became enemies, murders became commonplace.

In his mid twenties, in the mid 1970s, Terri survives a paramilitary murder bid. Terri's response? Not 'get out, fast', but open a record shop in the middle of the chaos. And as a further gesture of defiance against the bad vibes all around him, he names the shop Good Vibrations.

It becomes a haven for a ragtag crowd of kids and up-and-coming bands with nowhere else to go, and through them Terri discovers what he's looking for: a compelling voice of resistance to the Troubles that have shut down Belfast. His first excursion into the underground punk scene is an epiphany: these kids making brilliant, urgent music no-one else will hear, these are the ones who'll bring his city back to life. Terri becomes their unlikely leader, galvanising them into action, touring them round the dead spaces of

Northern Ireland and beyond, opening up the wide world to them and making the world sit up and listen.

Good Vibrations: first a record shop, then a label, always a way of life. But from the outset it is assailed from all sides: by the cops, convinced it is a front for drug dealing, by the constant threat of the paramilitaries, by Terri's socialist father who mounts an anti-capitalist on the pavement outside, by Terri's own inbuilt urge to self-destruct and even, when the Undertones wander into the picture, by the prospect of the Big Time.

But Terri rejects success on anyone else's terms. As ever, he looks at things in his own way. At a fundraising concert at the Ulster Hall, the crowds turn out, but will it be enough to keep the shop open? For Terri that night, saving the shop is less the point than saving the city. As old friends and followers celebrate all that Good Vibrations means to them, it's clear Terri has triumphed in his own way: he's created his community, his Alternative Ulster.

### **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

**Directors Lisa Barros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn** have long known the story of Terri Hooley, Belfast's 'Godfather of Punk', who in the 1970s opened up a record shop on the most-bombed quarter-mile anywhere in Europe. He called his shop Good Vibrations and from there he helped ignite Belfast's punk scene, which spewed forth the likes of Rudi, The Outcasts and The Undertones.

A radical, exuberant and peace-loving man, Hooley had no interest in the Troubles that plagued Northern Ireland at the time, looking past the religious and political affiliations that split his city and instead concentrating his myriad talents on promoting harmony, good times and high-quality music.

"He definitely affected change on those around him," begins co-director Glenn Leyburn. "He was about self-expression, he always trod his own idiosyncratic path, and that's what makes him such a great subject for a film."

Though his own musical taste is eclectic and diverse, Hooley became famous, or perhaps infamous, for his work in the fledgling underground punk scene that bubbled up through a beleaguered Belfast youth. After cutting his first record, *Big Time*, with local punk band Rudi, Hooley went on to release *Teenage Kicks* by The Undertones on his own home-grown label.

He sent the record to the pioneering disc jockey John Peel, who played it incessantly, securing *Teenage Kicks* a place in rock'n'roll history while nudging the band towards a major record deal that they signed in 1978.

Beyond his successes, and failures, in the music industry, however, Hooley also played a pivotal role in establishing an underground scene in Belfast, offering up an outlet for kids who could direct their energies away from the Troubles.

“Many people who grew up through the scene around Good Vibrations say it saved them from being drawn down darker paths during the Troubles.” says Leyburn’s co-director Barros D’Sa. “Terri and Good Vibrations offered a different way of life, a vision of an alternative Ulster: focussed on music and creativity, anti-sectarian, all about thinking for yourself. Good Vibes was a light in the darkness for a lot of young people, it encouraged them to raise their expectations, not to accept the version of the world or of their city that the Troubles offered. When Belfast had effectively been shut down at night, punk music brought life back to the city. And Terri fought to get the music heard in an outside world that in many ways had written off Belfast.’

Leyburn agrees: “A lot of people got involved in bad things. That scene really did save a lot of people and that's one of the reasons there is a real warmth for Terri and the music scene at that time. This is a story about the irrepressible spirit of youth and the power of music even in the toughest of places and times. Belfast needed punk, the stuff that punk bands across the world were singing about, the punks in Northern Ireland lived through. As Joe Strummer said, "If punk was hard, Ulster was harder". This scene meant more than whether or not the bands topped the charts, or whether you were wearing the right bondage trousers, it changed how people thought and how they went on to live their lives.

And a whole new generation of local bands and musicians cite Terri and Good Vibrations as an inspiration, so it still resonates decades later."

The two directors, a husband and wife team, took on Good Vibrations just as they were finishing up their feature debut, the 2009 drama Cherrybomb, which starred Rupert Grint. They knew the Good Vibrations writers Colin Carberry and Glenn Patterson socially and had first discussed the story idea with the pair ten years ago.

"Terri is renowned throughout Belfast and there was a campaign at one time to get him elected as Mayor!" says Leyburn. "Terri's well known and well loved in Belfast not just by music fans but across the board."

Hooley has been involved with the project from the get-go. As Barros D'Sa says "The script is based on Glenn and Colin's conversations with Terri. Terri is a great raconteur and he's lived a life full of turbulence and adventure; narrowing the content down was one of the biggest difficulties. There were some brilliant scenes from the vibrant world of 60s Belfast, before the Troubles shut down the city, that were hard to leave out, but we decided to focus on the decade from the early 1970s to 1980. It's the time when Terri opens the shop, signs the bands, and in which we see Good Vibes at its peak. Focussing on that period provided a strong trajectory for the story'. It was his famous record shop, Good Vibrations, which set the pattern for Terri's future industry, culminating, in the film at least, with his successes with The Undertones and his unlikely bid to stage a legendary night of music at Belfast's esteemed venue, Ulster Hall. His dream, however, came at a price.

"The way that we tell it in the story — and the way it was in reality — is that Terri saw the shop as a statement against everything that was going around him," says Leyburn. "To open a record shop on the most-bombed quarter-mile in Europe and call it Good Vibrations was definitely a gesture of defiance.

"And when the punk scene came along, that became the vehicle for Terri's vision. He saw a way to resurrect the lost spirit of the city he loved. That's what he heard in those young bands and musicians" he adds. "Terri calls himself an 'old hippie', which he is, but he is probably more 'punk' than anyone else I know.

He was punk before punk, and so when the scene moved along that proved ideal for Terri and his belief system.”

Though Hooley had numerous run-ins with the dangerous groups battling for control of his area of the city, the filmmakers are keen to stress that Good Vibrations is not a film about the Troubles per se.

“There have been wonderful films made on that subject, but usually they’re looking at the story through the divide, or looking at things from one side or another,” says Barros D’Sa. “But Terri’s story transcends those boundaries and that’s what captivated us, and what makes the story so engaging. It’s about people who tried to live other lives in a world polarised by the conflict. Terri and Good Vibrations created an alternative to the Troubles. Terri didn’t plan a mission or set out to turn himself into some kind of counter-culture hero. He improvised as the world shifted around him and created some magic - as well as a certain amount of trouble and chaos for himself. That’s why it’s such an engaging story. ”

Leyburn agrees "Terri is an extraordinary character, someone who was always going to swim against the tide. It happened that he did so during extraordinary times, to the huge benefit of many people.

Producer Chris Martin notes: “The film explores all sorts of musical tastes of Belfast at that time culminating in the punk scene. It is very much a biopic of Terri and the Troubles are simply the backdrop.

“In saying that, however,” he notes, “recognising that environment of the troubles and the struggles Terri faced makes his story even more remarkable. Ignoring that would be to take away from Terri’s achievements”

Leyburn adds: “While the film is set in conflict-ridden Belfast, we’re not making a movie about the war torn city. We’re looking at things through Terri’s eye, or his glass eye.” He laughs. “in fact, that’s an important motif and visual metaphor for us. He is a man who sees things differently.”

Hooley lost an eye as a youngster, courtesy of a kid's game gone awry, and ever since he's always seen things a little differently from those around him — both literally and metaphorically.

'Terri is not a born businessman. And for him, it was never about the money,' smiles Barros D'Sa. Much of that comes from his upbringing. Hooley's mother was from Northern Ireland while his father was a staunch Socialist and political activist from England and a keen supporter of the Trade Union movement.

Hooley was heavily involved with the counter-culture movement that took root in the 1960s, with its anti-War and Vietnam posters and slogans. "People quite naturally associate Northern Ireland with the Troubles, but of course, there were many other lives and stories going on there during that period.' says Barros D'Sa.

"Those stories can get overlooked because of the situation that was unfolding at the time. Ours is a film about young people, with all the preoccupations they share, no matter the backdrop in which they grow up. Despite the darkness around them, what kind of thing did these bands write songs about? Fancying a girl on the bus home. The Good Vibrations story is about the power of youth and creativity to shine through the bleakest of times, themes we believe will have resonance for audiences anywhere in the world. It's a universal story, told as it is through the particular prism of Terri's fascinating, often chaotic life. And captured with dark, irreverent wit and comedy in Glenn and Colin's brilliant script."

To bring Hooley to life, the filmmakers turned to Armagh-born actor Richard Dormer, who won widespread critical acclaim for his performance in the stage play Hurricane, where he played the troubled snooker ace Alex Higgins.

"I'm really glad we stuck with Richard all the way through development," says Chris Martin. "When you're looking to finance a movie it's easier to go for a big name, but we stuck with Richard for three or four years. Terri's such a complex character that I can't see anyone else playing him on screen.

“Richard has all of the traits that Terri has,” he continues. “I know Richard and Terri had a few nights out on the Guinness and brandy. But Richard’s role is not an impersonation of Terri — and you don’t need to know Terri to see what a terrific performance Richard has given.”

Leyburn concurs. “We had seen Richard on stage and knew what he was capable of,” says the co-director, “He’s a fantastic actor, hugely committed and talented, and he also brings a great understanding because he grew up through that period and gets the local humour that’s in the story. He’d understand Terri as a person; Terri is unique but he’s also somebody that people who live in Northern Ireland might recognise as a character as well.”

Alongside Hooley stood his first wife, the tower of strength that is Ruth, played by Venus and Attack the Block star Jodie Whittaker.

“It’s a very organic performance from Jodie and very free-spirited,” says Martin. “Ruth has real strength and Jodie captures that so beautifully.”

The support cast, meanwhile, includes Adrian Dunbar, Liam Cunningham and Dylan Moran among others. “They all make small screen appearances,” says Leyburn, “but it’s good to have people of this quality in the film. They all just loved the script and were happy to be involved in small roles. I hope that says a lot for the strength of the story we’re trying to tell.”

While both Leyburn and Barros D’Sa were equally involved in the development of the story, script and visual style of the film, their duties on set can diverge.

“Time wise, Glenn focussed more on the aesthetics of the film and the styling and the cinematography and Lisa was focussed more on performance and working with the cast,” explains Martin. “They do overlap but it tends to fall more or less within those brackets, which can have advantages. There is never any confusion.”

Leyburn says: ‘We are involved equally in all stages of script development, prep, shoot and post-production.



On set, we just try to ensure that cast and crew aren't confused by hearing differing voices. We trust each other to make decisions and changes on set as we know we're operating from the same clear vision of the film as a whole.'

Key to Hooley's story is the music that he championed, and more than 20 different artists contribute to the film's soundtrack. "From losing his eye as a child through to the punk era, we go from country and western and reggae through the whole gamut," says Martin. David Holmes' soundtrack includes original score and will be a treat for music fans of all kinds.

"The music licensing has been a long process but there's such goodwill about the project that people are happy to be involved." Brian Young from Rudi helped advise on things like costume design, "and the old bands chipped in, helping us to recreate that era," says Martin. "Terri's is a wonderful story and we all feel very privileged in bringing it to the screen."

### **Lisa Barros D'Sa & Glenn Leyburn Directors Biography**

#### **Lisa Barros D'Sa**

Lisa studied English at Oxford University and has an MA in Screenwriting from London University of the Arts. Her short stories have appeared in magazines, album liner notes and an anthology of Irish fiction. Lisa worked in feature film development for several years. In 2006 she wrote the screenplay for award-winning short The 18th Electricity Plan, which she directed with Glenn Leyburn. This was followed by Cherrybomb, Lisa and Glenn's first directorial feature film, starring Rupert Grint, Robert Sheehan, Kimberley Nixon and James Nesbitt. Cherrybomb was released theatrically in the UK by Universal in 2009. Along with Glenn and long-time collaborator David Holmes, Lisa founded the production company Canderblinks Film and Music. In 2011, Lisa and Glenn made a music video for Cashier No. 9's celebrated single 'Goldstar', before directing their second feature film, Good Vibrations, the story of Belfast's godfather of punk, Terri Hooley, and the legendary Good Vibrations record shop. The screenplay was written by Colin Carberry and Glenn Patterson and the film was produced by Canderblinks and Revolution Films, in collaboration with BBC Films, Northern Ireland Screen and the Irish Film Board.

The Canderblinks team are currently developing a slate of feature film projects with new and established talent, including further collaborations with the Good Vibrations writing team.

### **Glenn Leyburn**

Glenn is a filmmaker born in Northern Ireland who worked as a graphic designer for many years, predominantly in the music industry. He is known in particular for his ongoing collaborations with soundtrack composer David Holmes, at first as album cover designer and subsequently as record label art director and promo film director. It was this ongoing collaboration that led Glenn and Lisa Barros D'Sa, his wife and directing partner, to set up their production company Canderblinks Film and Music with David.

Glenn's design work has been shown at several group exhibitions including the 2008 Helvetica exhibition at the Design Museum in London, and has featured in international design journals such as Creative Review and Eye Magazine. He is regularly invited to lecture at colleges and industry events. Over the years, Glenn's clients have included EMI, Sony, Mercury Records, Commotion Records New York, and the BBC NI. Glenn and Lisa's debut directorial short film and Canderblinks' first production, The 18<sup>th</sup> Electricity Plan, premiered at the Los Angeles Short Film Festival and went on to play in festivals around the world, winning prizes at The Cork International Film Festival and Galway Film Fleadh. Their feature film debut, Cherrybomb, starring Rupert Grint, Robert Sheehan, Kimberly Nixon and James Nesbitt had its world premiere in competition at the 2009 Berlinale Generations. It went on to win the Belfast Film Festival Audience Award In that year, and subsequently was bought by Indi Vision/Universal Pictures for distribution in the UK.

Glenn and Lisa have completed their second feature, Good Vibrations, the story of Terri Hooley and the Belfast punk scene in the 70s. The film is a Canderblinks co production with Revolution Films London, made with BBC Films, Irish Film Board and NI Screen. Glenn with Lisa and David are continuing to develop a full slate of new feature film projects.