



The Arts



Highlights

In a tiny Kerry church The National had just finished a blistering set for the **Other Voices** TV show. Ringmaster Philip King told everyone they could pop out to a local hostelry and "we'll ring the bell when we want ye". Those lucky enough to get one of the golden tickets got to see Rich Hawley and Jarvis Cocker banter their way through a cracking set of covers, Ellie Goulding showing her mettle, and Anna Calvi and John Smith proving why they are the rising stars of 2010. And if you didn't get a ticket? You could pop over the road to Benner's Hotel and prop up the bar with the musicians in person, with not a velvet rope or fussy clipboard person in sight. Magical.

The larger festivals delivered some thrilling weekends, but it was the smaller organisations that really shone this year. **Other Voices**, **Kilkenny Arts** and the **Immrana Travel Writing Festival** were terrific events, and it was fantastic to see independent promoters putting on intricate events, which very often were non-profit or fundraising. The likes of **Kaleidoscope**, **Young Hearts Run Free**, **Theatreclub** and the **Centre for Creative Practices** deserve to be celebrated.

And the most stand out, too-cool-for-school moment of the year? Hearing the **theme from Bullitt** performed by Lalo Schifrin and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra with effortless swagger. Outta sight.

I have seen the future and it is . . .

Anna Calvi has already been tipped hotly as the rising star of 2011, and after her performance at *Other Voices*, believe the hype. She also has something of an Irish counterpart in Jennifer Evans.