



Top billing for French film festival's 30th anniversary

Sean O'Riordan

To mark this year's 30th anniversary of the founding of the Cork French Film Festival, organisers are preparing a packed programme to ensure it is the biggest and best to date.

Famous French actors, directors and DJs have been invited for the festival, which runs from March 3 to March 10. The opening gala features the screening of a film fol-

lowed by a party in St Peter's in Cork. A number of food events are also planned for that week as well as a focus on environmental issues in partnership with the Cork Environmental Forum.

Director of Alliance Française de Cork, Jean-Christophe Trentinella, said: "What I love about cinema is that it perpetuates the timeless practice of gathering. Since the dawn of time, people have ga-

thered around a fire to listen to stories. Today, the screen has replaced the fire but we are still here to listen to these stories because of the power they carry — the power to make us dream, to inspire us, to move us, to give us courage, to heal us and most of all to help us make sense of this great mystery that is called life."

The festival theme is "Together" or "Ensemble" with

the aim of exploring the ways in which we are interconnected, in which we try to address life's challenges and make sense of life together in this era of uncertainty.

Mr Trentinella said the shadow of Brexit makes us feel more acutely the sense of interdependence and reinforces the strong ties between Ireland and France.

"As such this year's programme is incredibly in tune

with what's happening today in our societies in general and in French society in particular. Some of the films might be difficult, with themes such as unemployment and social struggles, because these films give us a glimpse of other people's lives, their hopes and their challenges. There will be comedies of course, as well as family movies and classics.

"I am very proud of this year's programme, as it is a very sensitive account of what it means to be human."

The movies will be shown at The Gate Cinema, Cork and sponsors include Amarenco, Cork City Council Arts Office, L'Ambassade de France en Irlande, La Ville de La Rochelle and La Fondation Alliance Française. The full programme curated by guest festival programmer Marie-Pierre Richard will be announced shortly.