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LIMERICK LEADER

Limerick's Troy Studios prepares for full flight as Nightflyers takes off

by Alan Owens 23 Nov 2017

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James
Blackley,
CEO,
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Nightflyers
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Studios,
Chairman,
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Studios
from
pilot
to
full
series

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THE big budget sci-fi show Nightflyers being filmed at Troy Studios has moved beyond pilot stage and straight to full series, with filming to start early in the new year, the Limerick Leader can reveal.

The move to full commissioned series is the starting point for major film and TV production to kick off in the region.

Mike Cantwell of Innovate Limerick, the council's investment arm that was crucial to finalising the Troy deal, confirmed that Nightflyers was now "past pilot and are straight into series, which has gone into production.

"The original plan was that they would have filming completed by Christmas, but because the construction phase is at a scale which is much bigger than any of us ever thought, they will be in construction until end of January, February and then filming will commence roughly around then until probably around the end of August. And we believe it is the biggest production that was ever done in the Republic," he added.

There are currently six workshops in use at Troy, with 50 construction craftsmen and women from Limerick and the wider region working there, while a host of local suppliers have also been engaged by the production company.

Troy prepares for full flight

Deep in the bowels of an enormous soundstage, located in a non-descript building in Castletroy, a futuristic spaceship is being built.

The stage, the size of several football pitches, is one of three at Troy Studios that is gearing up for filming on its first production.

That is [Nightflyers \(news/home/267237/nbc-pilot-to-film-at-troy-could-be-start-of-mega-industry-for-limerick.html\)](#), based on writings by the [Game of Thrones creator George R.R. Martin \(news/home/264506/series-based-on-book-by-game-of-thrones-writer-is-set-for-limerick-s-troy-studios.html\)](#), which has moved beyond pilot stage and straight to full series, with filming to start early in the new year.

As a result, Limerick is well positioned to become the film hub of the country, poised for a multi-million euro spin-off, with this sci-fi series likely bound for Netflix, who [have been in negotiations with producers Universal Cable Productions for international and US rights \(news/local-news/270656/limerick-s-troy-studios-set-for-further-boost-as-netflix-eyes-up-nightflyers-series.html\)](#).

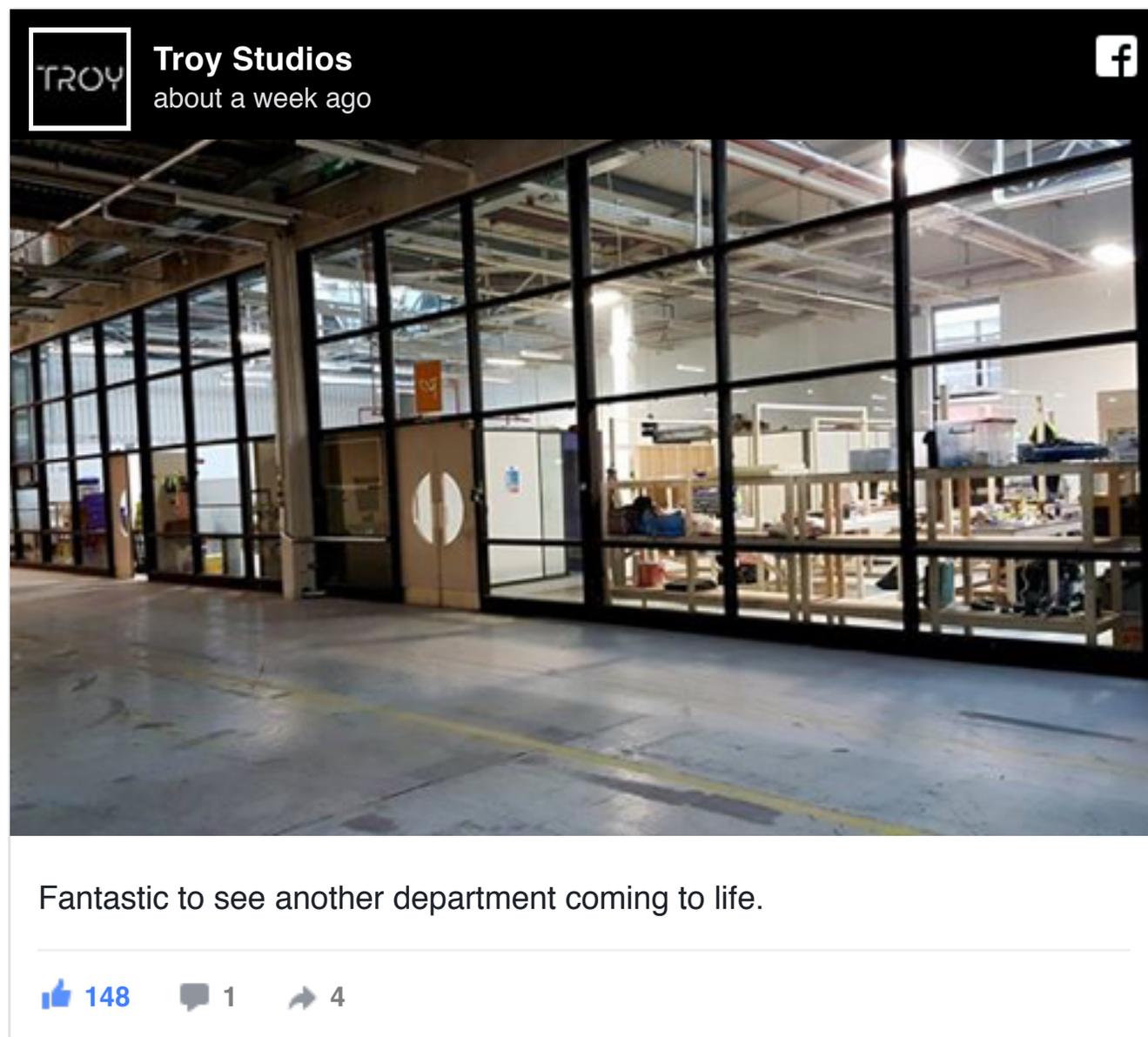
Works ongoing at Troy have largely been kept hush-hush and under wraps, but the move to full commissioned series is the starting point for major film and TV production to kick off in the region, the series proving an anchor point for Troy to lure more major productions here.

The series is set in the future on the eve of Earth's destruction and follows a crew of explorers who journey on the most advanced ship in the galaxy, the Nightflyer. Director Doug Liman, who was previously behind box-office films including The Bourne Identity and Mr & Mrs Smith, has said "it's a big

ambitious series and I think we'll be in Ireland for many years".

There are currently six workshops in use at Troy, formerly the old Dell building in Castletroy, now a 350,000 square foot facility with three massive soundstages, one running to 30,800 sq ft and two at 18,000 sq ft. Crucially, the height of the 'high bay' area in facility rises to about 60 feet, an almost unique element in this country - which is well covered with generous tax breaks to attract the eye of film and TV producers.

All they needed was the space, which is now the envy of the industry.



As well as the craftspeople working on the production, it is also sourcing a huge amount of raw material locally, from local suppliers, while about 14 engineering businesses in the Mid-West are also working directly with the production company, Mr Cantwell said.

"From the local authority, the reason for getting involved in it in the first place was because for the potential for film investment in the region and that is coming through now and creating jobs for people in the region," he explained.

The council, through LCO Enterprise Development Limited, bought and refurbished the building for around €8m, with Troy taking a 20-year lease.

Fianna Fail councillor James Collins, a board member of Limerick Twenty Thirty, said the development of Troy Studios “could be a game-changer for Limerick” and was borne from a need “to diversify Limerick’s employment base”.

“There’s a lot of jealousy out there that Troy is in Limerick, and not in Kilkenny or Galway or Killarney, and we’re delighted it is here,” he said.

“It was a leap of faith. We bought the studios, we convinced Troy to set up there and the idea now is to attract the type of industry to Limerick that hasn't been here before.”

The studio is *[to host an intensive Production Assistant bootcamp \(news/business/280818/limerick-s-troy-studios-to-host-production-assistant-bootcamp.html\)](https://www.limerickcitycouncil.ie/news/business/280818/limerick-s-troy-studios-to-host-production-assistant-bootcamp.html)* for graduates, trainees and new entrants to the film industry over three days in December, with specialist trainers coming from Los Angeles to work with recruits.

Cllr Collin said the "model is not to import people in for a couple of weeks and months and then turn around and leave - obviously you will have people that come and do that, but we want it to be sustainable for Limerick.

"It is something that we haven't done before, it is a different skill set, it is trying to retain people that work in that industry in Limerick or entice them to come back and there are lots working in the industry around the country and worldwide," he added, noting the purchase of the former Biblical Institute in the city, which will act digital media hub and training centre, feeding into Troy.

Conn Murray, CEO of the Council, has estimated that Troy could result in a €70m spin-off for the local economy, creating hundreds of jobs.

Troy, run by Siún Ní Raghallaigh, Ossie Kilkenny and John Kelleher, has so far maintained a discreet media profile but Michelle Brassil, who also works with the studio, said that “in providing world class film studio infrastructure, Troy Studios will be the enabler for incoming productions that will seek to employ local production crews, trained to a very high standard”.

It is now ready to take flight.