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PERSMAP



MOTHERING  
SUNDAY

# MOTHERING SUNDAY

EEN FILM VAN EVA HUSSON



Drama - 2021 - VK - 110 minuten

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Meer over de film: [cineart.be/nl/films/mothering-sunday](https://www.cineart.be/nl/films/mothering-sunday)

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# SYNOPSIS

MOTHERING SUNDAY is een intrigerend en eigentijds Brits drama rond Jane Fairchild, het dienstmeisje van een aristocratische familie, dat zich tot gelauwerd schrijfster ontwikkelt. Regisseur Eva Husson maakte een oogstrelende verfilming van de succesvolle roman van Graham Swift. Met Odessa Young als Jane, en daarnaast Olivia Colman (THE FATHER), Colin Firth (SUPERNOVA) en Josh O'Connor (THE CROWN).

Het is 30 maart 1924, Moeders Zondag. Dit is de dag waarop al het huispersoneel vrij krijgt voor familiebezoek. Jane Fairchild (Odessa Young) is het dienstmeisje van de gegoede familie Nivens (Colin Firth, Olivia Colman). De Nivens gaan die dag traditiegetrouw lunchen met de Sheringhams. Jane heeft zelf geen familie meer. Zij gebruikt de vrije dag om in het geheim haar minnaar Paul (Josh O'Connor) te ontmoeten. Hij is de zoon van de Sheringhams. De dag neemt een dramatische wending, maar Jane zal haar ervaringen gebruiken om uit te groeien tot een gevierd schrijfster.

MOTHERING SUNDAY werd geselecteerd voor het Filmfestival van Cannes. De film vertelt meer dan je ziet en vangt de emotie in magistrale beelden. Met een bijrol van Glenda Jackson.



# EVA HUSSON (DIRECTOR)

Husson has been a nomad most of her adult life, living between France, the States, the UK, Spain and Puerto Rico. She's trilingual and speaks French, Spanish and English. She went to drama school, then minored in philosophy, and majored in English literature at the Sorbonne University, where she got a Masters in English Literature (summa cum laude) and a BA in Spanish Literature. She then went on to pursue an MFA in Directing at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles.

Husson's shorts made the round of international festivals. In 2013, she made a 52 min comedy in English, *THOSE FOR WHOM IT'S ALWAYS COMPLICATED*, which was released on French TV Arte, and in 2015 she made her feature film *BANG GANG (A MODERN LOVE STORY)*, which garnered a lot of international interest since its debut in competition at the Toronto Film Festival.

In 2018, Eva was nominated for the Palme d'Or for her second feature film *GIRLS OF THE SUN* which premiered in Cannes, Main Competition. In television, Husson directed the opening episodes of "Hanna" season 2 for Amazon.

In 2021, Husson is back in Cannes again with her English debut, *MOTHERING SUNDAY*, selected in the new section Premiere.



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The MOTHERING SUNDAY script fell on my lap like a little spark of pure energy visiting me from a galaxy, far, far away. I was working on a TV show, when I got an email from my agent – she knew I was drowning in work, but she said to me; “Read this. You have to. You’ll understand why.” I read the script in one day, in fragments of 5 or 10 minutes, I always made sure I went back to it because I realised I had to. I finished the script in tears.

MOTHERING SUNDAY seemed to have, somehow, found its way to me, and there it was, this wonderful screenplay, speaking to me, playing a frequency that opened me up like only the most honest works of art do. I have never felt so at home with another writer’s script, and suddenly there it was, seeming to whisper in my ear. It was a culmination of everything that I am passionate about in life: writing, sex, and pure cinema.

The opportunity to bring to the big screen the story of a ‘Doris Lessing-esque’ writer. To explore the fragility and power of sex, love and the impact it has on a creative female artist. To do that in some sort of holy triumvirate composed of Alice Birch’s impeccable writing, Elizabeth Karlsen’s effortless charisma, and myself, is nothing short of an extraordinary privilege.

What I found truly exciting is that the movie already existed and lived on the page.

*Eva Husson*

# BACKGROUND

Graham Swift's novella, *Mothering Sunday*, was published in 2016 to glowing reviews. The Guardian said that it "feels like a masterpiece"; The Independent hailed its "dream-like mixture of recall and reality". Producing partners Elizabeth Karlsen and Stephen Woolley of Number 9 Films, longtime admirers of the Booker Prize winning author, were sent a galley copy of the novella shortly before publication. They loved it instantly. The filmmakers were then coming off the success of the achingly romantic *CAROL*, starring Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara, and had a long history of developing original stories and literary adaptations of just that kind of thoughtful, emotional material.

"We thought it was a really interesting piece of work," says Karlsen of the book. "We met Graham a couple of times and it all just fell into place." Although other producers were interested, Karlsen and Woolley – who had worked with Swift previously on a 1993 adaptation of his novel *Waterland* – won the day, alongside Film4 who had optioned the book.

"I've always loved Graham's work," says Woolley. "He's got incredible skill. His work is very funny, at the same time as being subtle and moving. This was just something we thought was quite original. What really appealed to us was the fact that Jane was such a well-drawn character. It was a retelling of a period that is very familiar, up to the 1980s. In one character it takes you through this one day, *Mothering Sunday*, and the events that really did shape her life, told from her perspective."

The novella is a tricky story of memory. While the older Jane casts her mind back to the day that shaped her, her memory sometimes branches off in unexpected directions, with other stops along the long thread of her life. So this is no simple upstairs-downstairs drama about romance across the class divide. It required a subtle and rounded approach to encompass Jane's later life as an author and the woman she becomes. That's why the producers brought in playwright and screenwriter Alice Birch to adapt the script. Then, fresh off the success of her first film, *LADY MACBETH*, Birch has since gone on to acclaim for her adaptation of "Normal People" and her work on season two of TV hit "Succession".

Birch began drafting the script, almost instantly deciding upon a time-fractured structure that echoes but does not replicate the book. "It felt very clear to me that it couldn't be an entirely linear structure; that didn't feel like my experience while reading it. I felt interested in the different ways that we move through time with an image or a word, what triggers a memory. That was relatively instinctive. It was so incredibly emotional, and the writing was just so elegant. She [Jane] was such an interesting character and it felt so cinematic when I was reading it. I thought, yeah, I know what this is about, and I know where it's going to go. It's sort of huge, as well as relatively short, so rich. There's a heartbeat, but it contains an entire life."

After Birch figured out the script there came the job of finding a director. Karlsen had met Eva Husson at the Toronto Film Festival, and the pair had bonded instantly. "I'd seen Eva's film *BANG GANG* and I just thought she had a boldness that we really needed in this script to match Alice's boldness," says Karlsen. "She has a real feeling for the nuance, the quiet moments and things that aren't being said. She's very sensitive to the emotional moment and physicality of the piece. She is able to hone in on the emotional necessity of a scene, and the choices she makes about the framing and the delivery feel very astute to me."

"We thought, there's somebody with a political conscience, who at the same time is not frightened of being real," agrees Woolley. "She seemed to have a fantastic combination."

Sure enough, Husson felt an instant connection to the material when she read Birch's script. "The TV show I was prepping had a lot of action," says Husson of her first look at the piece. "And there comes this delicate, literary script and I thought, oh, this is heaven. This is gold. It all comes down to the raw emotions, this delicate line of vulnerability and intimacy between people. I'm very keen on that. How do you survive life? It's rough and throws countless tragic events at you, so how do you keep creating, how do you keep laughing and loving, despite everything?"



## CAST & CREW

With the director and script in place, it was time to cast the film. A few names immediately came to mind. Josh O'Connor was an early favourite for the role of Paul, thanks to his barnstorming performance in GOD'S OWN COUNTRY. He had a pre-pandemic meeting with Husson that convinced both that they wanted to work together. "I read the script very quickly, which is a good sign," says O'Connor. "I'm a great admirer of Alice's writing. Then I met with Eva about a week later and I was very clear that I wanted to do it. That was it! These are the roles that interest me, the big emotions and the big questions of life."

But Husson couldn't absolutely confirm O'Connor's casting until she found her Jane, to be sure that the two would have the necessary chemistry. That took a little longer. Then she saw Odessa

Odessa Young in SHIRLEY, more than holding her own against Elisabeth Moss, and realised that they might have found their leading lady. By this time, Covid was spreading and travel was difficult so the pair spoke via Zoom, but the spark was instantly right for the role.

"I read the script and it was astounding," says Young. "I had a wonderful meeting with Eva, maybe three days before lockdown. I don't even remember if we really talked about the job, or just giggled and set up this beautiful rapport we've had ever since. I recognised from the get-go that she had an immense emotional stake in the story. You know, it's a movie about a female creator creating the things that she does against the odds of her class and her education levels. I think that any creator feels like it is a struggle to create, in a world that is not necessarily set up to aid our desires, and especially female creators. That's why I connected very, very powerfully to the story. When everybody's on the same page it always feels electric."

Conscious that the script would see the film's leads spending a lot of time together, much of it naked, the two young actors knew that they would need to get along well. O'Connor invited Young out for lunch the moment she cleared quarantine. "I was a great admirer immediately," he says. "I knew the importance of having a good relationship with your co-star when you're putting yourself in those very vulnerable places. It was really important to me, and I'm sure to Odessa, to build that relationship so that we felt safe. I took her out for lunch and we went for a walk along Camden Canal and from then on, we just had an amazing working relationship. She definitely had the essence of Jane."

Young admits that it wasn't always as easy as she made it look. As she rushed from quarantine into costume fittings and make-up tests, the actress had not had time to do the vast quantities of research that she prefers, and she had to work from a more instinctual place. "I was nervous," she says. "It's the first time I've ever played someone who goes from being a 15, 16-year-old [in flashbacks to 1918] to a woman in her forties, and I really I didn't know that I was going to be able to do it or that it was happening until maybe two weeks before I was due to be out there. Luckily enough we had real geniuses involved to rely on because the emotional stakes in the movie were incredibly high. So it wasn't as much of a challenge as it could have been."

"With casting, we were very lucky," says Husson. "We got Odessa and Josh, and from there on, everyone seemed to just love the script and said yes. Colin Firth, yes! Olivia Colman, oh yay! It brings such gravitas and stature to each character, they instilled the whole story with just another layer."

The script came to Colin Firth, who plays Jane's employer Mr Niven, as lockdown loomed. But he had faith that Karlsen and Woolley would be able to get it made, and he instantly connected with the themes. "I felt it was a very compassionate piece, an extremely thoughtful and honest observation," he says. "The focus is on [Jane], and we see the emergence of an incredibly intense, extraordinarily intelligent person, and the budding of her imagination. I loved the way the dialogue is written, because it's not obvious. It's broken up. I think Alice Birch has very successfully tried to identify thought patterns, the way people speak when communication is not easy, for cultural or emotional reasons. It's quite exhilarating as an actor to be presented with speech patterns that are very truthful in that respect. It doesn't make it necessarily easy to land it, or easy to learn, because it doesn't have the obvious logic of perfect syntax. You have to go deeper. So in some ways that is a challenge. But if you solve it, it pays huge rewards in terms of finding something substantial."

Olivia Colman, fresh from her role as Queen Elizabeth in "The Crown", was similarly moved by the material and signed on as Mrs Niven. "It's always the script for me," she says. "It's a beautifully written piece. It doesn't matter if you're in it very much or not; just to be part of something beautiful. And to be Colin Firth's wife is quite nice!"

Colman laughs at that, but her character has one of the heaviest emotional burdens in the entire story. "Mrs Niven lost both her sons [in the War], and she's just a sort of broken woman. She was very cool, a woman of money in that period who could have rowed a boat or flown a plane, very sporty. She was an exciting woman and they had a lovely life. But since losing her sons she says nothing, there's no point to life for her. She's just having a horrible time."



For Sope Dirisu, the star of last year's hits *His House* and TV's "Gangs Of London", who plays Donald, the audition for the film was a minor milestone. "It was the first lockdown self-tape that I did," laughs Dirisu. "I read the sides with my sister. I had never read with her before and it was really fun. It was a real relief to have something to read over the lockdown period." Donald is not a large part of the novella, but he becomes a key figure in Jane's later life in Birch's script. "I was really surprised when I read the novella," says Dirisu. "I was like, wow, Alice has created a whole life out of a couple of sentences. I think that just speaks to her incredible imagination and incredible writing."

Dirisu was not the only actor raring to go after lockdown. Another key figure is Glenda Jackson, as the older Jane in the 1980s looking back on her life, who was a particular inspiration to Young.

"I'm getting to a point in life and in my career where I am beginning to understand that acting is not everything," says Young, "and that you can only do it to the best of your ability if you have interests in other places. So meeting Glenda Jackson at that time felt like Kismet because, with her political career as well as her acting, she just has her head screwed on. She's this cool lady who smokes in the backyard when she's not on camera and is down for anything. If I had half the grace that she does now, at any point in my life, I would be very fortunate."

As well as the cast, the production managed to draw impressive behind-the-scenes talent to its ranks. Costume designer Sandy Powell, a three-time Oscar® winner, has been friends with Elizabeth Karlsen and Stephen Woolley for years and worked with them on a number of their films, notably *Carol* and *Interview with a Vampire*, so they sent her a copy of the script early on. She met with Husson and jumped aboard.

"Sandy Powell, as you might be aware, is a bit of a genius," says Olivia Colman, who also worked with the designer on *THE FAVOURITE*. "On at least two of the costumes she had a bit of fabric in her house which, to me, looked like a bit of curtain, but she went [flutters her hands] and pins it and tada! You've got a 1920s dress. I'm not doing justice to it but she's very clever."

Nadia Stacey, who worked with Powell on *THE FAVOURITE* and won a BAFTA for her work, followed as hair and make-up designer, while BAFTA winner Helen Scott (*WUTHERING HEIGHTS*, *SMALL AXE*) signed on as production designer. "Helen Scott has basically created the world we're walking into here and in some ways it solves half the problems you have as an actor," says Firth. "If the world has been created as vividly as this, it's like having another character you can respond to. There's a rather melancholic elegance to things. Just props on a table in front of you, there's a sense of a whole life that comes with those things."

South African director of photography Jamie Ramsay, best known for his work on the BAFTA nominated *MOFFIE*, got on board, and Husson continued her collaboration with composer Morgan Kibby, who also scored *BANG GANG* and *GIRLS OF THE SUN* for the director. By September 2020, despite the best efforts of a global pandemic to derail the whole enterprise, all the pieces were in place for production to start. If indefatigable producers, a great script and a fair amount of luck had seen the film that far, it would require even more discipline than usual to get the film through its shoot.

## THE SHOOT

Making a film is almost impossible at the best of times, but shooting during a pandemic adds multiple extra layers of difficulty. Pre-production on *Mothering Sunday* began with the UK and other countries still in various stages of lockdown, and there was real uncertainty about what would be possible once restrictions eased.

"The whole production team was working remotely," says Karlsen. "Initially it was impossible to judge whether it was even viable to make a film. These were totally uncharted waters. So the

first thing I did was organise a Zoom call, where I brought together the director, the costume designer, the art director, the DoP and all the key talent. I thought, let's at least connect people and say, we're still here, the script is still here, we're still going for it."

That meeting confirmed that everyone was committed to the film, and was followed by a socially distanced recce of a promising-looking location that Karlsen and her team had found just before lockdown. Husson, stuck in Paris, joined via Facetime, and the visit around the house, with an assistant director acting as Husson's arms and legs, lasted nearly two hours. "That's when I thought, this is going to work," says Karlsen. "Everyone wants this to happen and we can do this." Remote pre-production wasn't easy; communication between departments could be difficult and Karlsen admits to some moments of despair. But sheer determination got them to their first day of shooting on location, and once there everything seemed to click into place. "I compare it to a race that's about to begin, with all the horses agitated and tossing their heads," says Karlsen. "You just need the gate to open and the horses to do their thing. As with everything, the anticipation of the event is more overwhelming than the event itself."

"We couldn't quite believe we were working," says Woolley. "Elizabeth was at the coalface every day, making a film with a mask on, which is not easy. But it was nerve-wracking because we were testing all the time, and if one test comes up positive, where do you go? Studios of course have all the money to immediately isolate people, and bigger crews, but we're on a more restricted budget, so we had to be diligent at all times."

That diligence needed to be absolute. All cast and crew had semi-weekly tests for Covid and obeyed strict social distancing protocols throughout their daily work. Karlsen and her producing team added regular reminders about mask discipline and distancing to their regular duties, and crew kept sanitising equipment handy. It wasn't always easy – the rules meant that meals were taken scattered about the set or location, with food balanced on knees and no craft services tent or bus to gather in – but the strict measures worked. The film never had to shut down because of Covid infection, and miraculously managed to start and finish its shoot between the UK's first and second lockdowns.



"One of the great things about filmmaking – or about any job, I suppose – is seeing people's faces, human interaction," says O'Connor. "And that's limited due to Covid. Then there's the obvious Covid testing, which is uncomfortable. But really, it doesn't affect filmmaking, the creativity and the artistry of it. Day to day, in the actual nuts and bolts of making a film, it didn't affect it that much."

Compared to other productions, *Mothering Sunday* had several factors working in its favour for shooting during a pandemic. First of all, it was nearly ready to go before the UK's first lockdown and was able to put the final pieces in place during that hiatus, so that the team could leap into action once the restrictions were lifted. Secondly, it's a small, contained story without large crowd scenes or complicated action that might require vast numbers of crew members. The story is set in a small number of locations, most of them country houses with limited public access, which also helped.

"It was incredible to be in those landscapes and in those houses," enthuses Young about the shoot. "I've been to England once before but I stayed in London most of the time and didn't get a chance to see that kind of bucolic beauty that everybody talks about."

That beauty was everywhere in evidence on one day of shooting in the village of Hambleden, standing in for the book's Tither-ton. It is a small collection of red-brick and stone houses, with sagging slate roofs and gardens tumbling with roses. When *Mothering Sunday* took over the village crossroads that day, the War Memorial was stacked high with flowers to reflect the scene's 1924 setting, the loss of a generation still fresh in the residents' minds. Production designer Helen Scott and her crew rushed to plant spring flowers around the scene to camouflage the fact that filming was happening in October, with daffodils scattered through the churchyard of St Mary's and wild flowers along the walls. As filming continued by the church, traffic passed by along the village's main road and some curious hikers paused opposite to see what was going on before continuing into the hills above the town. Shooting stopped at one point to allow the postman to do his rounds, delivering a van full of pandemic care packages and online shopping.

The sun cooperated at first but soon the weather turned damp and drizzly – which posed a challenge for cinematographer Jamie Ramsay as he strives to make every day of this shoot match the sun-drenched, blessed Sunday described in both book and script. "70% of the movie takes place over one spring day, which in autumn in the UK, for a South African cinematographer, is quite a challenge," says Ramsay. "Obviously in South Africa the light is super hard and sunny. Here it's softer. So we're going from establishing really sunny moments to trying to make rain look like it's an attractive day. Then obviously you have creative challenges, trying to subtly separate the time periods, so that you avoid the tropes of flashbacks. We've used various lenses to help separate moments, and we've also treated the lenses in certain ways. You just try to subtly implant visual details that will sub-consciously separate your time periods."

Even as the rain grows heavier, the crew stay upbeat, efficiently wrapping their equipment in plastic and smoothly erecting tents to get tech under cover. Husson doesn't stop, huddling with Ramsay one moment and Scott the next, smiling most of the time.

"Eva has an extraordinary, fierce energy, but it powers this intellect that she has," says Firth of her working style. "She keeps questioning things. I don't know if it's significant that she's not English when observing something so English. But I think that works. She's not overly focused on the protocols of being English but what's underneath. She's extremely engaged, and it's wonderful to find a director who understands the text, the craft, has skills with actors and everybody else as human beings, but she also understands photography and lenses and everything else, as well."

The cast – Odessa Young as Jane and Patsy Ferran as her fellow servant Milly today, on bikes on their way to the station – stuff heat packs in their shoes and down the back of their Sandy Powell designed costumes to keep warm. They spend some time engaged in a heated discussion about the merits of cheese strings (they're pro) and Percy Pigs (the Australian-born Young is unconvinced).

Make up and hair designer Nadia Stacey touches up her work between takes. "It's such a strong

narrative that you shouldn't notice the make-up," she says. "It should work along with everything and you should believe the era that you're in. So there's very little. But the hair, because of who Jane is and because they're not in central London, it's a little behind the times, there's a real Edwardian shape to the hair. And it needed to be something practical, that she could do herself." Despite the emotional intensity of the characters and the themes of grief and lost love that run through the film, the set itself remained upbeat. "Colin and Olivia are both such generous performers, kind of best-case scenarios," says Young. And really fun people! I count myself very lucky to have gotten to know them personally as well as professionally."

"The set has been a lot of fun with both Odessa and Olivia," says Firth. "I often find that the more intense the project, the more fun we have in between times. It's when you're making a comedy that everyone's anxious and pessimistic! They're great fun and stimulating company. But they're also very invested. Olivia finds this quite an emotional experience; it's hard for her to stay dry eyed even talking about it. Odessa as well, she's thought very deeply about this and has an extremely intelligent approach."

"For me, the challenge is to try not to cry all the time," says Colman. "There's moments where she's just meant to be broken and I keep listening to what everyone's saying and it just makes me cry. So I have to not listen to what's going on or just think of something different. But working with Colin is an absolute dream. He's as lovely as I thought he'd be and much more prone to giggles."

Karlsen is unflappable as the rain pours. "It all comes good in the end," she says, shrugging, and gets back on her phone to recon-firm the film's safety protocols with another upcoming location. Miraculously, none of the locations fell through, and the film wrapped in early November as the UK went back into lockdown later that month.

## THE LOVE STORY

All of this effort was in service of the film's extraordinary love story. The spine of it takes place on that titular March day, with stolen moments of intimacy between Young's Jane and O'Connor's Paul. Their characters have maintained a love affair for years across the class divide, despite the gulf of wealth and opportunity between them and despite his engagement to another woman. For many of their scenes they're naked, in a post-coital embrace that requires an extraordinary degree of trust and intimacy for any performer. Everyone was clear that these scenes are anything but gratuitous.

"There is a large portion of this movie that would not have the same emotional resonance if the nudity wasn't in it," says Young firmly. "In fact, the starkness of a naked body in these scenes is the heart of the movie, because Jane is so exposed and so vulnerable, but so powerful. There was no other way it could be done. I'd seen Eva's work; her film *Bang Gang* is all about sex and you could see how another director would make it gratuitous but that's not her, so that gave me a great amount of confidence. I knew that these scenes in *Mothering Sunday* were going to be done with a great deal of finesse."

Jane not only spends the morning with her lover but wanders his house nude, in a rare moment of freedom for a girl who has – at that point – spent most of her life in service to others. The scenes had to convey a certain liberation, which wasn't always simple. "This is the first time that I've done anything, quite frankly, so naked," says Young. "I had a certain amount of nerves going in. There was a week of nudity in the schedule. As it was coming up, I started to realise that when I had an idea or a question, I would start speaking and Eva would finish my sentence, because she was having the same idea. That was really comforting, because by the time we got to the nude scenes, we were very much on the same page. By the end of that week, I was forgetting to put my robe back on. All of a sudden, my naked body did not feel exposed, because of the safety of that set."

"It was about communication, common sense and kindness," says Husson. "It's preparing the scenes and making sure everyone is onboard and everybody knows how far it goes. We laughed a lot. Honestly there's nothing sexy about shooting a sex scene. It's uncomfortable for absolutely everybody. As a director, you're directing the emotions on someone's face when they're pre-tending to have sex, it's miserable! But I treat it like dance choreography; I kept that mind frame that the body is a tool, and cho-reographed the physical interaction. Then it becomes much easier for the actors not to get wrapped up in something too per-sonal. And both Josh and Odessa seemed to react pretty well to that."

O'Connor agreed. "Odessa and I had a week, maybe two, of rehearsals, which was really good. That was spent sorting out the relationship from beginning to end. And nudity is one of those things where, fortunately or not, I've done a fair bit so far in my career." It was the dramatic content that took a greater toll on the stars, so that they had to find ways to unwind. After one par-ticularly demanding day where O'Connor says they were "emotionally and physically naked all day", they spent the lunch break playing a childhood game he calls "Dub Dub" in the grounds of their stately home location, to switch off and re-energise before facing the lovers' dilemma once again.

If you thought that such nude scenes made Sandy Powell's job easier as a costume designer, incidentally, you're dead wrong; she laughs at the suggestion. "It actually gives you more to think about because you see every layer, you can't cheat," she says. "The insides of clothes have to look absolutely authentic, because you don't know at the beginning how those are going to go off or whether we're going to see the inside of a pair of trousers or a blouse." So from Jane's working class civvies, simple and practical, to Paul's "pristine" dinner wear, every detail had to be precise.

The tragedy is that Jane and Paul don't only face a class divide, but also the aftermath of World War I, where all the young men in villages died, leaving bereaved parents and families to cope with devastating loss.

Paul's parents, the Sheringhams, are best friends with Jane's employers, the Nivens, and another family called the Hobdays. Paul is the sole surviving son of all three families, and his marriage to Emma Hobday (Emma D'Arcy) represents the great white hope for six bereaved parents.

"I spent a lot of time on the concept of survivor's guilt," says O'Connor about his preparation for the character. "There's three estates, and five boys died in the War. So the one left behind carries all the weight of expectation from the parents of the other boys. I spent a lot of time trying to get to grips with that, a young man who is desperately in love with someone who he can't be with. The hardest thing has been trying to keep hold of it being a character and not go too deep into the sadness of it."



# JANE'S LATER YEARS

"The big difference between the book and the screen is that the book is very much set on this one day, Mothering Sunday," says Young. "That's obviously the heart of the movie, but Alice really extrapolated on these other chapters of Jane's life. That meant we got an opportunity to have other characters in the story that weren't simply the lovers. I got to work with Sope, this incredible actor, and that feels like two different movies – not in a way that is disconcerting. It was really beautiful to live these two parts of Jane's life."

After Jane's experiences in 1924, we also see fragments of her life in the 1980s, where Glenda Jackson takes the role, and in the late 1940s, where an older Jane is in a new relationship, with Dirisù's Donald – a character mentioned but not much portrayed in the book.

"His race is important," says Dirisù. "This is pre-Windrush, so for a Black man to study at Oxford was quite remarkable. But it was important to me and Eva that we stay away from the usual narratives of forbidden love. I felt tired of constantly portraying inter-racial love as a struggle; I just wanted to celebrate the love story. He and Jane connect on an intellectual level; they have a good mutual sense of humour. And it was lovely to portray a Black man in that time period who was celebrating his excellence."

For Young, only 22 at the time, playing the 40-something Jane required a whole new physicality and some prosthetic assistance. "I worked closely with a fantastic dialect and movement coach called Neil Swain [The King's Speech, The Favourite]," says Young. "We had a lot of conversations about the way that a voice develops over the years. Especially because Jane is a maid, she worked scrubbing floors, and never looked people in their eyes. So there's an evolution from that part of her life to when she starts to blossom as a self-possessed person. We talked about the little things that could bring life to that."

Stacey's make up team added to that voice and physical work. "Those [1940s] scenes use prosthetics, because the time jump had to be noticeable – but subtle!" says Stacey. "There's this thing sometimes where a person gets older and films age them a lot, but some people don't change much. A few wrinkles around their eyes, jowls maybe. She wears a wig there too, to give her a less vibrant hair colour. It's always looking at what's right for the character."

"We're both playing older," agrees Dirisù. "There was a really excellent team, and we would sit in the make-up chairs for a couple of hours before the shooting day to get some prosthetic wrinkles. They made me a fake beard as well. It was quite amazing; the difference is remarkable." "You have to keep in mind that she's still the same person," says Powell of the costumes in that later era. "She's a woman who charges around on a bike, someone who is active, so whatever she wore had to be practical and comfortable. Something that a free-spirited woman would wear when she had more money to spend on clothes." When the film jumps again, to Jackson's elderly Jane, Powell's inspiration was a picture of Doris Lessing winning her Nobel Prize and being caught unaware by the press on her doorstep. Still, the oldest Jane is wearing a remixed version of the sort of clothes she wore in the 1940s, because tastes don't necessarily change much in adulthood.

Ultimately, all of those later scenes are given weight and context by the crucial events of Mothering Sunday, the events that Jane never tells anyone. "I did a draft of the script where Jane didn't keep [her love story with Paul] a secret, where she's writing it as a story" says Birch. "And Graham [Swift] said that that wasn't right. That was really useful. I realised that the reader [or the viewer] is Jane's confidant. She has this secret that she will never tell anybody, and that is fundamental to her character."

This film finally reveals that secret, to the audience if to no-one else in Jane's life. And it's in depicting the huge emotional impact that a single day can have that the filmmakers found a creative project that they could work towards, even in the midst of a global pandemic. At a time like this, themes of love, loss and starting over seem more important than ever.

# CAST BIOGRAPHIES

## **Odessa Young (young Jane Fairchild)**

Odessa Young is currently shooting "The Staircase", HBO Max's limited series drama adaptation based on the true-crime docuseries. Starring Colin Firth and Toni Collette, it explores the story of Michael Peterson who was convicted of murdering his wife. Odessa plays "Martha", one of Peterson's daughters. She will next be seen as the lead of MOTHERING SUNDAY, Alice Birch's feature adaptation of Graham Swift's acclaimed novel which is premiering at this year's Cannes Film Festival. Directed by Eva Husson and also starring Olivia Colman, Colin Firth and Josh O'Connor, Odessa plays "Jane Fairchild", a young maid in 1924 England who is carrying on a secret affair with a young aristocrat. On one hot spring day a few weeks before Easter, tragedy strikes and Jane's life is forever altered.

Odessa previously starred opposite Elisabeth Moss and Michael Stuhlbarg in Josephine Decker's SHIRLEY for Killer Films. She received rave reviews for her portrayal of a young pregnant woman who moves in with famed suspense author Shirley Jackson and becomes entangled in the complicated drama that is Shirley's life. Odessa was recently seen in the CBS All Access limited event series "The Stand", adapted from Stephen King's novel. She plays "Frannie Goldsmith", a pregnant young woman navi-gating a strange new world, who also has the foresight to recognize that there is evil lurking beyond the Dark Man.

Previous credits include Trip Cullman's Atlantic Theater Company's production of *The Mother* opposite Isabelle Huppert, the Sundance hit ASSASSINATION NATION directed by Sam Levinson, Sam Taylor Johnson's A MILLION LITTLE PIECES opposite Aaron Taylor-Johnson and THE PROFESSOR opposite Johnny Depp.



## Josh O'Connor (Paul)

Josh O'Connor trained with the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and has garnered critical acclaim for his roles across film, television and theatre. He is also an accomplished and exhibited artist and photographer. O'Connor was named a Screen International Star of Tomorrow in 2016 and has gone on to receive a Golden Globe Award, a Critics' Choice Award and two British Independent Film Awards.

Up next, O'Connor will star alongside Letitia Wright in Director Frank Berry's (Michael Inside) indie film AISHA. The film will chronicle the story of a young African woman fleeing persecution, who ends up spending over two years in Ireland's asylum system. While there, she befriends a security guard (O'Connor) who she develops a connection with.

Also upcoming, O'Connor will star in Eva Husson's drama, MOTHERING SUNDAY, alongside Olivia Colman, Colin Firth, and Odessa Young. The film is set to premiere at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival.

Most recently, O'Connor starred in season four of Peter Morgan's "The Crown," in which he played Prince Charles. His performance in this season garnered him SAG and BAFTA nominations, and Critics' Choice and Golden Globe wins in the Lead Actor category. He was introduced in season three to rave reviews, a SAG ensemble award, and a BAFTA nomination for Supporting Actor. Both seasons are available on Netflix.

Also this year, O'Connor starred alongside Jessie Buckley in a stage-to-film, present-day adaptation of Romeo & Juliet, directed by Simon Godwin. Originally meant for the stage at the National Theatre in London, the filmed performance premiered on PBS in the US on Sky Arts in the UK.

Last year, O'Connor starred as Mr. Elton in Autumn de Wilde's critically acclaimed film adaptation of Jane Austen's Emma, and in HOPE GAP with Annette Bening and Bill Nighy, directed by William Nicholson. HOPE GAP won Best Film and O'Connor won Best Actor at the Barcelona Film Festival. In 2018, O'Connor starred with Laia Costa in Harry Wootliff's BAFTA nominated film, ONLY YOU, for which he won the British Independent Film Award for Best Actor. He also undertook the role of Lawrence "Larry" Durrell last year, in the final season of ITV's hit television show, "The Durrells"; and the role of Marius in BBC One's mini-series adaptation of "Les Misérables."





In 2017, O'Connor starred in Francis Lee's hugely successful, BAFTA nominated and BIFA winning directorial debut, GOD'S OWN COUNTRY. O'Connor's performance earned him a BIFA award for Best Actor, a BAFTA award for Breakthrough Brit, an Empire award for Best Male Newcomer, and nominations for BAFTA's EE Rising Star award and London Critics Circle's British / Irish Actor of the Year award.

In 2014, O'Connor made his feature film debut in Lone Scherfig's THE RIOT CLUB, opposite Sam Claflin and Douglas Booth. He followed this up shortly thereafter working with Stephen Frears, both in THE PROGRAM and in FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS, alongside Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant.

Other film and television credits include BRIDGEND, HIDE & SEEK, MAGNIFICENT ELEVENT, Moving Pictures, BAFTA-winning Netflix series "Peaky Blinders," "Ripper Street," "Father Brown," "Wipers Times," "Law and Order," "London Irish," "Dr. Who," and "Lew-is VI: Vipers."

Other theatre credits include Philip Breen and RSC's The Shoemaker's Holiday, Angus Jackson and RSC's Oppenheimer, Angus Jackson's Versailles for Donmar Warehouse, and Guy Unsworth's Farrahut North for the Southwark Playhouse.

### **Sopé Dìrísù (Donald)**

BAFTA Rising Star nominee Sopé Dìrísù is quickly establishing himself as an internationally renowned actor, showcasing a range of disciplines across film, television and theater.

Dìrísù can currently be seen in Remi Weekes' horror/thriller, HIS HOUSE, opposite Wunmi Mosaku on Netflix. The film follows a refugee couple (Dìrísù and Mosaku) that make a harrowing escape from war-torn South Sudan, but then they struggle to adjust to their new life in an English town that has an evil lurking beneath the surface. For this role (in addition to his BAFTA Rising Star nomination) he was nominated for a British Independent Film Award for Best Performance by an Actor and Best Actor in a Horror Movie at the Critics Choice Super Awards. The film received 16 nominations at the BIFAs and was nominated for Outstanding British film at the BAFTAs.

Dìrísù can also be seen in the SKY/AMC action series, "Gangs of London" opposite Joe Cole. The series tells the story of London being torn apart by the turbulent power struggles of its international gangs and the sudden power vacuum that's created when the head of London's most powerful crime family is assassinated. Dìrísù is seen as the role of 'Elliot Finch', a lowly Wallace footsoldier who seizes an opportunity to rise up the ranks within the inner workings of the largest criminal organization in London. Following a successful launch in the UK, the series was released in the US on AMC+, and then came a broadcast run of the show on AMC in early 2021, and an expansion to territories across the globe. Dìrísù is currently shooting the much anticipated second series.

Later this year, Dìrísù lends his voice as 'Sergi', the daemon of Ruta Skadi (played by Jade Anouka), in the second season of HBO/BBC's "His Dark Materials", which is slated to premiere November 16, 2020. Following, Dìrísù will be seen in Camille Griffin's holiday drama, Silent Night, alongside the ensemble cast of Lily-Rose Depp, Kiera Knightley, Annabelle Wallis, Matthew Goode and Roman Griffin Davis. The film surrounds an extended family that comes together for a Christmas dinner in the country.

Next up we will see him in Eva Husson's period drama, MOTHERING SUNDAY, opposite Odessa Young, Josh O'Connor and Olivia Colman. The film will receive its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. He will be seen in the role of 'Donald', a significant figure in the later life of Jane Fairchild (Young). Recently, Dìrísù wrapped filming on Emma Holly Jones' romantic comedy, MR. MALCOLM'S LIST, opposite Constance Wu, Frieda Pinto and Sam Heugan. Based on Suzanne Allain's novel by the same name, the film follows Julia (Wu), a society lady jilted by London's most eligible bachelor Mr. Malcolm (Dìrísù). Feeling shunned and humiliated, she enlists her friend Selina (Pinto) to help her take revenge on Mr. Malcolm by tricking him into thinking he has found his perfect match. Throughout the course of the film, Mr. Malcolm wonders whether

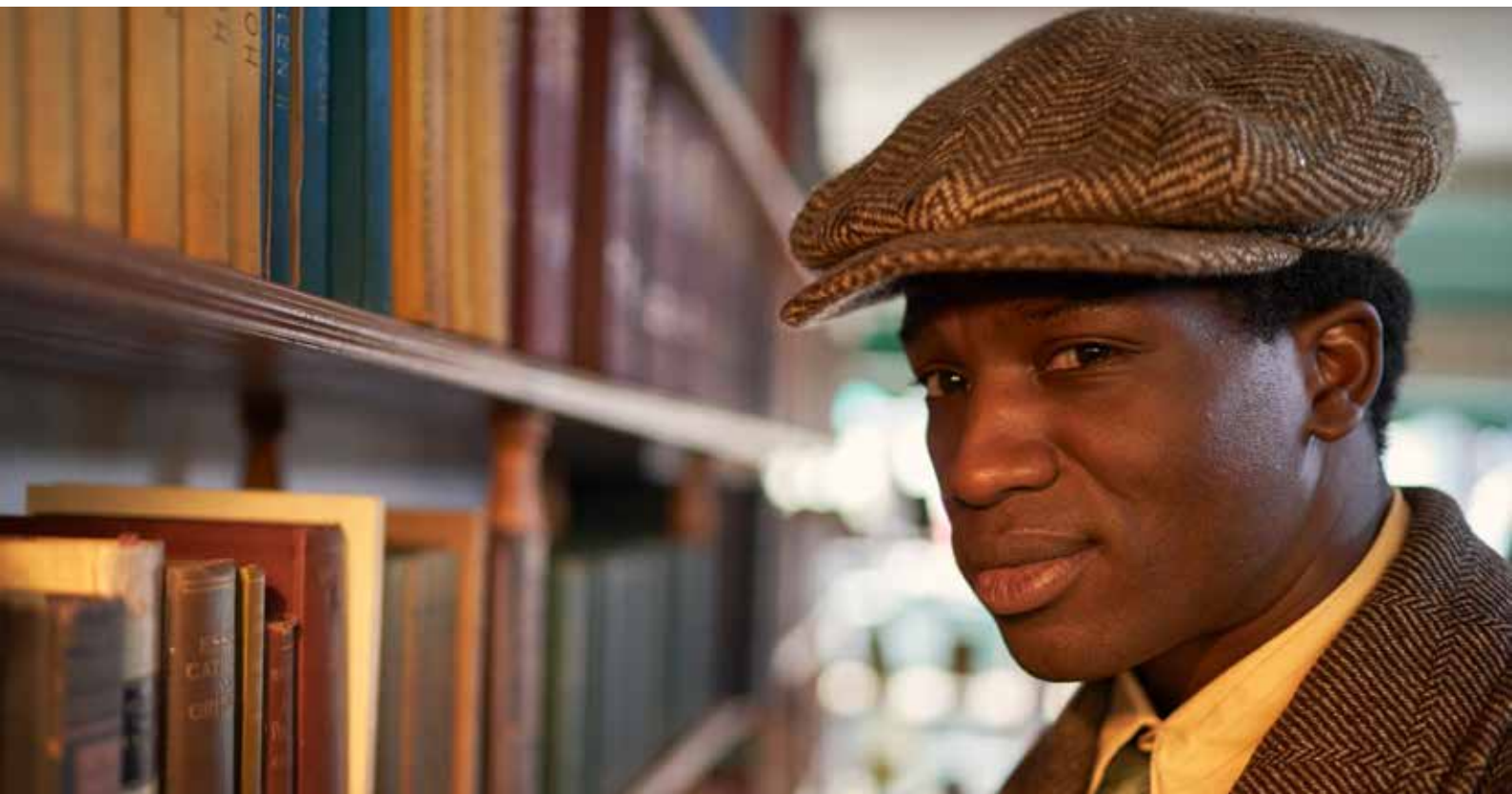
he's found the perfect woman, or the perfect hoax.

Previous film credits include Fernando Coimbra's war drama, *SAND CASTLE*, alongside Henry Cavill and Nicholas Hoult; Cedric Nicolas-Troyan's action drama, *THE HUNTSMAN: Winter's War*, alongside Chris Hemsworth, Charlize Theron, Jessica Chastain and Emily Blunt; as well as Ariel Vromen's sci-fi thriller, *CRIMINAL*, opposite Kevin Costner, Gary Oldman, Tommy Lee Jones, Ryan Reynolds and Gal Gadot.

On television, most notably, Dirisù was seen in AMC's "Humans". The series takes place in a parallel present where the latest must-have gadget for any busy family is a 'Synth', a highly-developed robotic servant that's so similar to a real human it's transforming the way we live. Dirisù is seen as his reprised role of 'Fred,' a core member of the Elster 'family', as one of the original Synth prototypes, seen alongside other Synths played by Gemma Chan, Ivanno Jeremiah and Emily Berrington. Additionally, Dirisù was seen in Netflix's critically acclaimed series, "Black Mirror", for which he received the 2017 Rising Star Award for the Screen Nation Film and Television Awards.

Other television credits include, Sundance TV's "State of the Union" and "Next of Kin"; BBC Three's "Five by Five"; EntertainTV Serien's "The Halcyon"; BBC's "Undercover" and "Siblings"; Netflix's "Utopia"; Warner Bros. Television's "The Casual Vacancy"; and Channel 4's "The Mill". On stage, Dirisù was most recently seen in Marianne Elliott's acclaimed *Death of a Salesman* opposite Wendell Pierce and Natey Jones, performed at the Piccadilly Theatre in London's West End. The play follows a man named 'Willy' (Pierce) who's stress from an unsuccessful business trip causes him to drift in and out of daydreams and hallucinations throughout the play. Willy is also angry with his sons who are still living at home, mainly with his son, Biff (Dirisù), in addition to feelings of disregard for those whom he apparently deems not worthy, notably his other son, Happy (Jones).

Prior theatrical credits include the titular roles of the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Pericles*, as well as *Coriolanus*, for which he received a nomination for the Ian Charleson Award of 2017; *Young Vic's The Brothers Size*; *Donmar Warehouse's One Night in Miami*; and *Theatre Royal Plymouth's The Whipping Man*.



## **Glenda Jackson (Jane Fairchild)**

Glenda Jackson is an award-winning actress with a prolific career across several decades spanning film, television and theatre. She was awarded the CBE in 1978 for her services to drama. She has been nominated for 4 Academy Awards and won twice, winning her first in 1971 for her breakout leading role as artist Gudrun Brangwen in *WOMEN IN LOVE*.

She followed this success with another stellar performance in *SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY*, receiving an Oscar nomination and winning a BAFTA Film Award for Best Actress in 1972. That same year, she received critical acclaim for her performance as Queen Elizabeth I in the BBC television series *ELIZABETH R*, winning two Primetime Emmy Awards for her role.

The following year in 1973, she earned her second Academy Award for Best Actress in the romantic comedy *A TOUCH OF CLASS*, co-starring George Segal.

Glenda started her career in theatre and returned to Broadway in 1981 with the Andrew Davies drama *Rose*, leading to a Tony Award nomination.

Glenda took a leave of absence from acting in 1992 to pursue a very successful career in politics, winning a seat in the House of Commons and winning re-election for a number of years until her last term ended in 2015.

She returned to acting after a 25-year absence and returned to the stage in 2016 playing the title role in Shakespeare's classic play, *King Lear* at the Old Vic Theatre in London, garnering an Olivier Award nomination for her performance. In 2018, she won her first Tony Award in a revival of Edward Albee's *Three Tall Women*.

More recently, Glenda has received praise for her role as a grandmother suffering with dementia in BBC One's "*Elizabeth is Missing*", winning a BAFTA TV Award and International Emmy last year for Best Actress.

## **Olivia Colman (Mrs. Niven)**

Olivia Colman won the Leading Actress award at the 2019 Academy Awards for her performance as Queen Anne in Yorgos Lanthimos's critically acclaimed *THE FAVOURITE*, opposite Emma Stone and Rachel Weisz.

The same year she also won the Golden Globe for the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy); the BAFTA award in the category of Best Leading Actress; British Independent Film Award in the category of Best Actress, the Critics Choice award in the category Best Actress in a Comedy, and the Volpi Cup for Best Actress at the 2018 Venice Film Festival. It marked her second collaboration with Lanthimos following her role in his critically acclaimed, dystopian romantic comedy, *THE LOBSTER*, for which she received a British Independent Film Award in the category of Best Supporting Actress, and a nomination for an Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Comedy Performance.

She is currently playing the leading role of Queen Elizabeth II in Season 4 of the critically acclaimed Original Netflix series "*The Crown*" opposite Tobias Menzies and Helena Bonham Carter, having previously appeared in Season 3.

Olivia plays a leading role opposite Anthony Hopkins in *THE FATHER*, a feature film adaptation of Florian Zeller's hit stage play. The film won the 2021 Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay, and is currently in cinemas and on various streaming platforms.

In 2011/2012 Olivia won the Best Actress prize at the British Independent Film Awards, Evening Standard British Film Awards, Critics Circle Awards and Empire Awards for her brilliant performance in Paddy Considine's feature directorial debut *TYRANNOSAUR*, opposite Peter Mullan and Eddie Marsan. The film also won the World Cinema Special Jury Prize for Breakout

Performance at the Sundance international Festival the same year.

Other film credits include: a supporting ensemble role in BRITT POULTON and Dan Madison Savage's thriller THEM THAT FOLLOW, Kenneth Branagh's MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS; Carol Thatcher opposite Meryl Streep in Phyllida Lloyd's THE IRON LADY; Rufus Norris' LONDON ROAD, Roger Michell's HYDE PARK ON HUDSON; Steven Knight's LOCKE; James Griffiths' CUBAN FURY; and Edgar Wright's HOT FUZZ.

On television, Olivia can most recently be seen in the BBC/Amazon's award winning "Fleabag" in her role as 'Godmother' for which she previously received a Television BAFTA nomination in the category of Best Female Performance in a Comedy Pro-gramme in 2017, and an Emmy nomination in 2019 for Best Supporting Actress for her work in the final series.

Also on the small screen, Olivia won a Golden Globe® in the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television, for her portrayal of 'Angela Burr' in the BBC/AMC's "The Night Manager". Prior to that, she also won a Television BAFTA for Leading Actress in 2014 for her role as 'DS Ellie Miller' in the acclaimed ITV series "Broadchurch", which ran for three seasons. In 2013, Colman was the double award winner at the Television BAFTA's, winning Female Performance in a Comedy Programme for her recurring role in BBC's "Twenty Twelve", as well as Best Supporting Actress for her role in BBC's "Accused". Olivia has also received a Television BAFTA nomination in the category of Best Female Performance in a Comedy Programme in 2015 for her role as 'Alex Smallbone' in BBC's "Rev".

Other television credits include "Les Misérables" (PBS/BBC Studios); "Watership Down" (Netflix); "Flowers" (Channel 4); "The Thirteenth Tale" (BBC); "Mr. Sloane" (Sky Atlantic); "The Secrets" (BBC); "The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher II" (ITV1); Peep Show (Channel 4); Exile (BBC); and Greenwing (Channel 4).

On stage, Olivia's credits include Long Day's Journey into Night (Lyric Theatre), England People Very Nice (National Theatre), Hay-fever (Noel Coward Theatre) and most recently Lucy Kirkwood's Mosquitoes at the National Theatre, directed by Rufus Norris, for which she won Best Actress in the 2018 Whatsonstage Awards.

Olivia has been awarded the title of Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for her services to drama, and a BFI Fellowship.



## **Colin Firth (Mr. Niven)**

Academy Award winning actor Colin Firth is a veteran of film, television and theatre, with an impressive body of work spanning over four decades. He has appeared in three films that have won the Academy Award for Best Picture: *THE KING'S SPEECH*, *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE* and *THE ENGLISH PATIENT*. Colin's performance as King George VI in *THE KING'S SPEECH* earned him an Academy Award as well as a Golden Globe Award, Screen Actors Guild Award, British Independent Film Award, Critics' Choice Award and his second consecutive BAFTA Award in 2011. Colin also won the BAFTA Award in 2010 and the Volpi Cup for Best Actor at the 2009 Venice Film Festival for his performance in Tom Ford's *A SINGLE MAN*.

In 2008, Colin starred in Universal Pictures' global smash hit *MAMMA MIA!* The film grossed over half a billion dollars around the world. In 2012 Colin was seen in Tomas Alfredson's *TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY* opposite Gary Oldman and Tom Hardy. The thriller is based on John Le Carré's Cold War spy novel. The film garnered three Academy Award nominations including 'Best Writing' and won the 2012 BAFTA Film Award for 'Outstanding British Film' and 'Best Adapted Screenplay.' In 2013 Colin appeared in *THE RAILWAY MAN* directed by Jonathan Teplitzky, which also stars Nicole Kidman and Jeremy Irvine. The film is based on the true story of Eric Lomax, played by Colin, who sets out to find those responsible for his torture during his time as a prisoner in World War II.

In 2014 Colin starred in *KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE* as a secret agent who recruits and trains an unrefined but promising street kid into the agency's competitive training program. Directed by Matthew Vaughn, it is based on the acclaimed comic book of the same name. The cast includes Samuel L Jackson, Michael Caine and Taron Edgerton. In 2016, Colin appeared in *GENIUS*, a chronicle of Max Perkins's time as the book editor at Scribner, where he oversaw works by Thomas Wolfe, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The film premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival. In the same year, Colin also reprised his role of Mark Darcy in *BRIDGET JONES'S BABY*. *Eye in the Sky* was also released in 2016 and was Colin's first film produced by his company, Raindog Films, with producing partner Ged Doherty. Raindog Films also produced the British-American feature *LOVING*, the true story of Richard and Mildred Loving, the plaintiffs in the 1967 US Supreme Court case which ultimately invalidated laws prohibiting interracial marriage. Directed and written by Jeff Nichols and starring Joel Edgerton & Ruth Negga, the film was released in November 2016 and was nominated in both Best Actress and Best Actor categories at the 74th Golden Globe Awards. The film was also selected for the 2016 Cannes Film Festival.

In September 2017, Colin reprised his role of Harry Hart in *KINGSMAN: THE GOLDEN CIRCLE*, again directed by Matthew Vaughn, the film also starred Taron Egerton, Julianne Moore and Mark Strong. The film grossed \$39 million in its opening weekend and won the Best Thriller award at the Empire Awards. In February 2018, Colin starred alongside Rachel Weisz and David Thewlis in biographical drama *THE MERCY*. The film is based on the true story of the disastrous attempt by the amateur sailor Donald Crowhurst, played by Colin, to complete the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race in 1968 and his subsequent attempts to cover up his failure. Also in 2018, Colin appeared in *THE HAPPY PRINCE*, a film written and directed by Rupert Everett, depicting the final years of Oscar Wilde. The film was released at Sundance Film Festival in 2018 and was well received to many four and five-star reviews. Colin also executive produced. In July 2018, Colin returned to the role of Harry in the iconic musical sequel *MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN*. Colin was joined by Meryl Streep, Amanda Seyfried, Lily James, Jeremy Irvine and many more in the highly successful musical comedy, which earned \$400,000,000 at the global box office. In December 2018, Colin starred as William Weatherall Wilkins in Disney's highly anticipated *MARY POPPINS RETURNS*. The box office hit was written by Oscar nominee David Magee and based on "The Mary Poppins Stories" by P.L. Travers. Directed by Rob Marshall, the feature film also starred Emily Blunt, Meryl Streep and Lin-Manuel Miranda.

In 2019, Colin appeared in Sam Mendes' multiple award-winning World War I film *1917* alongside George McKay, Benedict Cumberbatch, Andrew Scott and Mark Strong. The film won Best Motion Picture (Drama) at the Golden Globe Awards, won seven BAFTAs including Best Film, Outstanding British Film and Director, and was nominated for ten Oscars.

In 2020, Colin starred in the latest adaptation of children's book THE SECRET GARDEN. Colin played Archibald Craven alongside Julie Walters as Mrs Medlock. The film was directed by BAFTA-winning Marc Munden and adapted by Jack Thorne.

Colin can currently be seen starring in British independent film SUPERNOVA, a love story between Colin's character, Sam, and Stanley Tucci's character, Tusker, on a road trip around England as the couple deals with Tusker's dementia diagnosis. Directed by Harry MacQueen, the film premiered at San Sebastián International Film Festival in September 2020 and was released in the UK on 25th June.

It has also been announced Colin will be seen starring in the action comedy NEW YORK WILL EAT YOU ALIVE. The film is set in City H, where the water supply has been contaminated by an ancient coffin and people who drink the water turn into "Zombie Brothers" who eat others to evolve. STC Films will distribute the film in the US, as well as the UK, and release date is to be announced. Later this year, Colin will also be seen starring in John Madden's WWII drama, OPERATION MINCEMEAT, which was recently acquired by Netflix. Based on the Ben Macintyre book of the same name, Michelle Ashford has written the screenplay. The story takes place in 1943, focusing on one of the greatest deception intelligence operations, as the Allies prepare to launch an all-out assault on Nazi-held Europe.

It was recently announced that Colin has been cast in HBO Max's limited series "The Staircase," which is based on the Netflix docuseries of the same name and various books and reports on the high profile Michael Peterson case. Colin will play Peterson, who was accused of murdering his wife, Kathleen, in 2001. He claims she died after falling down the stairs at their home, however, the police suspected he bludgeoned her to death and staged the scene to look like an accident. Colin will star alongside Toni Colette, Sophie Turner, Patrick Schwarzenegger and Juliette Binoche.

Colin's others film credits include the Oscar-nominated GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING; BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON; DEVIL'S KNOT; ARTHUR NEWMAN; THEN SHE FOUND ME; WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR FATHER?; EASY VIRTUE; GENOVA; A CHRISTMAS CAROL; THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST; WHERE THE TRUTH LIES; TRAUMA; NANNY MCPHEE; WHAT A GIRL WANTS; A THOUSAND ACRES; APARTMENT ZERO; MY LIFE SO FAR; FEVER PITCH; CIRCLE OF FRIENDS; PLAYMAKER; and VALMONT.

On the small screen, Colin is famous for his breakout role as Mr. Darcy in the 1995 BBC adaptation of "Pride and Prejudice," for which he received a BAFTA nomination for Best Actor and the National Television Award for Most Popular Actor. In March 2004, Colin hosted NBC's Saturday Night Live. He was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2001 for Outstanding Supporting Actor in the critically acclaimed HBO film CONSPIRACY and also received the Royal Television Society Best Actor Award and a BAFTA nomination for his performance in TUMBLEDOWN. His other television credits include BBC television movie BORN EQUAL; DONOVAN QUICK; THE WIDOWING OF MRS. HOLROYD; DEEP BLUE SEA; HOSTAGES and "Nostro-mo."

His London stage debut was in the West End production of Another Country playing Guy Bennett. He was then chosen to play the character Judd in the 1984 film adaptation opposite Rupert Everett. He was honored with the Humanitarian Award by BAFTA/LA at their 2009 Britannia Awards. In 2008 he was named Philanthropist of the Year by The Hollywood Reporter and prior to this, in 2006, Colin was voted European Campaigner of the Year by the EU.

# CREW BIOGRAPHIES

## **Elizabeth Karlsen (Producer)**

Elizabeth Karlsen is an internationally renowned, award-winning producer, who co-founded the leading independent UK-based production company Number 9 Films in 2002 with partner Stephen Woolley.

In February 2019, Elizabeth and Stephen jointly received the highly prestigious and coveted BAFTA Award for Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema. She has produced some of the most celebrated independent films in the US and Europe including: Todd Haynes's CAROL (nominated for 6 Academy Awards®, 6 Golden Globe Awards and 9 BAFTA Awards), Mark Herman's LITTLE VOICE (winner of a Golden Globe Award, nominated for 1 Academy Award®, 6 Golden Globe Awards and 6 BAFTA Awards), Neil Jordan's THE CRYING GAME (winner of an Academy Award®, a BAFTA Award and nominated for 6 Academy Awards®), MADE IN DAGENHAM (nominated for 3 BAFTA Awards) and Phyllis Nagy's MRS HARRIS (nominated for 12 Emmy® Awards, 3 Golden Globe Awards and a PGA Award) and Wash Westmoreland's COLETTE (Nominated for 4 BIFA's and an Independent Spirit Award).

Other work includes: On Chesil Beach, written by Ian McEwan and directed by Dominic Cooke and Paolo Sorrentino's YOUTH (nominated for 1 Academy Award® and winner of 3 European Film Awards). Her work with Stephen Woolley has garnered a total of 52 BAFTA nominations and wins and 20 Academy Award® nominations and wins. Her latest feature MOTHERING SUNDAY written by Alice Birch and directed by Eva Husson, starring Odessa Young, Josh O'Connor, Sope Dirisu, Colin Firth and Olivia Colman has been selected for the Cannes Film Festival 2021 and is scheduled for international release later in the year. She and Stephen are currently in production on LIVING scripted by Kazuo Ishiguro, directed by Oliver Hermanus and starring Bill Nighy, Aimee-Lou Wood and Alex Sharp.

## **Stephen Wooley (Producer)**

Stephen Woolley is one of British cinema's most respected independent producers, having produced over 65 films during an esteemed four-decade long career. Some of his many successes include THE COMPANY OF WOLVES, MONA LISA, SCANDAL, THE CRYING GAME, INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, BACKBEAT, LITTLE VOICE, MADE IN DAGENHAM and CAROL.

Woolley began his career at The Screen On The Green, Islington in 1976. He went on to run and own both the infamous Scala Cinema in Kings Cross as well as distribution company Palace Pictures with Nik Powell, successfully distributing films from the likes of Mike Leigh and Ken Loach as well as international hits like PARIS, TEXAS, WHEN HARRY MET SALLY and THE EVIL DEAD.

He has been Oscar nominated, a BAFTA winner and the winner of the prestigious Producers Guild of America Award, with his films garnering a total of 52 BAFTA nominations and wins and 20 Academy Award® nominations and wins.

Woolley currently partners Number 9 Films with Elizabeth Karlsen. Their recent productions include COLETTE, starring Keira Knightly and MOTHERING SUNDAY, written by Alice Birch and directed by Eva Husson, starring Odessa Young, Josh O'Connor, Sope Dirisu, Colin Firth and Olivia Colman, which has been selected for the Cannes Film Festival 2021 and is scheduled for international release later in the year.

Most recently, Woolley has started principal photography on LIVING scripted by Kazuo Ishiguro, directed by Oliver Hermanus and starring Bill Nighy, Aimee Lou Wood, Alex Sharp, and Tom Burke.

## **Alice Birch (Writer)**

Alice is an award-winning playwright and screenwriter whose recent plays include [BLANK] (Donmar Warehouse / Clean Break); Orlando (Schaubühne, Berlin) and Anatomy of a Suicide (Royal Court Theatre).

Alice wrote on the TV adaptation of "Normal People," alongside Sally Rooney and Mark O'Rowe, for which she and Sally were nominated for an Emmy. She is now writing on the TV adaptation of "Conversations with Friends." She also worked as Story Editor on Season 2 of "Succession" for HBO and is currently the lead writer and an exec producer on "Dead Ringers" for Annapurna and Amazon starring Rachel Weisz.

Her first feature was LADY MACBETH which won 5 British Independent Film Awards in 2017 including Best Screenplay.

Her second feature will be an adaptation of the Graham Swift novel MOTHERING SUNDAY for Number 9 Films and Film4.

Other Awards include: Winner Susan Smith Blackburn Prize 2018, George Devine Award (for Revolt. She said. Revolt again); Arts Foundation Award for Playwriting.

## **Jamie D. Ramsay (Director of Photography)**

Jamie D Ramsay is a South African born cinematographer. His previous work includes SKOONHEID (Oliver Hermanus 2011) which competed in the Un Certain Regard competition at the 64th Cannes Film Festival. His most recent film, MOFFIE, earned him his first BIFA nomination for cinematography. He is currently in production on his fourth collaboration with director Oliver Hermanus, LIVING. The film is a retelling of the 1952 Kurosawa classic, Ikiru. Ramsay's next film release is the Fox Searchlight production, UNTITLED MURDER MYSTERY.

## **Emilie Orsini (Editor)**

Emilie is an acclaimed editor working across multiple mediums including film, television, shorts and commercials.

In addition to MOTHERING SUNDAY, she previously collaborated with Eva Husson on her feature film directorial debut, BANG GANG: A MODERN LOVE STORY as well as her sophomore feature, LES FILLES DU SOLEIL (GIRLS OF THE SUN).

She also frequently collaborates with director Sally Potter having edited both the award-winning and critically acclaimed THE PARTY as well as Universal's THE ROADS NOT TAKEN starring Javier Bardem and Elle Fanning which premiered in competition at the 2020 Berlin International Film Festival and was released last year.

Her work across television includes editing "Les Papillons Noirs", the second series of "Maroni" as well as working with Husson on editing an episode of Amazon Original series "Hanna".

## **Kharmel Cochrane (Casting)**

Kharmel's early projects as a Casting Director include the acclaimed Daniel Wolfe music video Time to Dance starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Callum Turner. She followed up with award winning films such as LILTING (2014) and the BAFTA award winning HOME (2016)

Over the past 12 years, she has earned a reputation for championing new and diverse talent and projects like THE WITCH, THE END OF THE F\*\*KING WORLD and THE LIGHTHOUSE firmly cement her position as one of the most exciting British Casting Directors working today.

Recent projects include SAINT MAUD which has been released to wide acclaim, MOTHERING SUNDAY and ANNE BOLEYN.



## **Helen Scott (Production Designer)**

Helen Scott has worked extensively in both British film and television. Her credits as Production Designer include *SOME DOGS BITE* (Dir. Marc Munden); "Public Enemies" (Dir. Dearbhla Walsh); *THE POLITICIAN'S HUSBAND* (Dir. Simon Cellan Jones); *THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY* (Dir. Julian Jarrold, James Strong); "The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies" (Dir. Roger Michell), for which she received a nomination for Best Production Design at the 2015 RTS Craft & Design Awards; "Doctor Foster" (Dir. Tom Vaughan); and "Baghdad Central" (Dir. Alice Troughton, Ben Williams). "A Very English Scandal", which she designed for Academy Award-nominated director Stephen Frears, was nominated for Best Mini-Series at the Golden Globes, BAFTA TV Awards and RTS Television Awards in 2019, and Helen was nominated for Best Production Design at the BAFTA Television Craft Awards for her work on it.

Helen's work in film includes successful collaborations with both Andrea Arnold – *DOG, WASP* (Academy Award for Best Short Film – Live Action, 2005), *RED ROAD*, *FISH TANK* and *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* – and Clio Barnard, for whom she designed *THE SELFISH GIANT* and *DARK RIVER*. *HOW TO TALK TO GIRLS AT PARTIES*, which she designed for director John Cameron Mitchell, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2018, and *MANGROVE AND LOVERS ROCK*, the first two films in the Small Axe sequence, which she designed for Academy Award-winning director Steve McQueen, were both in the Official Selection for the Cannes Film Festival in 2020. For her work on *SMALL AXE*, Helen received a BAFTA Television Craft Award for Best Production Design in 2021.

## **Morgan Kibby (Music)**

Morgan Kibby, a classical pianist, cellist and vocalist, grew up studying privately, performing in the chorus of the San Francisco Opera House as well as the Marin Theater Company, and soloing with orchestra throughout her youth.

After attending the Lycée Français, a gap year post-high school turned into a 7 year journey as a member of the French band M83, during which Kibby wrote, played keys and sang on two M83 albums and tour cycles (*Saturdays=Youth* & *Hurry Up We're Dreaming*). The culmination of this collaboration was her first platinum single with *Midnight City*, a Grammy nomination and headlining the Hollywood Bowl.

As a writer, producer and performer, Kibby has among many other endeavors, gone on to co-write with Panic! at the Disco on their platinum and Grammy nominated 2016 album *Death of a Bachelor* and 2018's *Pray for the Wicked*, produce write and record solo material under the moniker *White Sea*, remix over 20 tracks from Lorde to The Weeknd and sing on the international trailers for *Harry Potter* and *Lady In the Water*. She has been described by *Rolling Stone* as "epic and ardent," while *LA Weekly* coined her "LA's renaissance woman of pop."

In 2015 however, Kibby shifted course to focus on projects outside of traditional pop recording. Her first score was the critically acclaimed French film *BANG GANG* which premiered to high praise in the new Platform competition series at Toronto International Film Festival and the British Film Institute in London. *BANG GANG* went on to win the Jury Prize, Youth Prize and Best Original Score Award at Les Arcs European Film Festival in France in December 2015.

Continuing to explore her interest in composition and performance art, 2016 saw Kibby collaborating with chef Craig Thornton of *Wolvesmouth* on the Lucy Walker directed documentary for *The New Yorker* on Amazon, and contributing score and sound design to his art installation at MOCA in Los Angeles that same year. She was shortly after selected as a 2016 Sundance Composer Lab fellow, spending two weeks at the iconic Skywalker Sound in Marin County with mentors such as Harry Gregson-Williams, Blake Neely, and Christophe Beck.

Post Sundance lab, Kibby has scored projects for Amazon, Netflix, Hulu and the CW, as well as films that have premiered at major international film festivals including the official competition at Cannes, Tribeca and many more.

2020 projects included production on Harry Style's latest release "Fine Line," contributing/collaborating with Geoff Barrow and Ben Salisbury on the score to Season 2 of Hana on Amazon, writing, arranging and producing on Lady Gaga's Chromatica and scoring the Netflix series Grand Army.

## **Sandy Powell (Costume Designer)**

Boldness, creativity, precision and attention to detail are all hallmarks of three-time Academy Award winning Costume Designer Sandy Powell, who has become a recognizable personality in her own right thanks to her distinctive personal style.

Powell has already broken two Oscar records with the distinction of 14 Best Costume Design nominations - more than any other living designer. This astounding feat appears even more impressive knowing that she is also the only designer living to have achieved a double nomination three times — In 2019 with the royal pomp romp *THE FAVOURITE* and the natty '30s-era stylings of the musical comedy *MARY POPPINS RETURNS*. In 2015 for her work on *CAROL*, a story of forbidden love, and the reimagining of *Cinderella* and originally in 1998 for attiring the ensemble casts of the glam rock salute *VELVET GOLDMINE* and *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE* for which she took home the Golden Statue.

Powell began her career designing for director Derek Jarman. The punk-influenced director hired Powell to make the costumes for *CARAVAGGIO* (1986) after she called him up and expressed the desire to work with him. The collaboration was a resounding success and they continued to work together until Jarman's untimely death in the early 1990's.

However, her big breakthrough came from the film adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *ORLANDO* (1992). The movie would have been challenging for even the most seasoned designer. The story followed Orlando travelling through several centuries of British history and experiences as well as a variety of lives from both gender perspectives. Naturally, the costume design was integral to the success of the film and earned Powell her first Oscar nomination. In addition, she has received Oscar nominations for *THE WINGS OF THE DOVE* (Iain Softley), *GANGS OF NEW YORK* and *HUGO* directed by Martin Scorsese, *MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS* (Stephen Frears), *THE TEMPEST* (Julie Taymor), *CINDERELLA* (Kenneth Branagh), *CAROL* (Todd Haynes), *MARY POPPINS RETURNS* (Rob Marshall), and *THE FAVOURITE* (Yorgos Lanthimos) for which she also won a BAFTA.

Powell's other film credits include *SHUTTER ISLAND*, the award winning *THE DEPARTED* and *THE WOLF OF WALL STREET*, all directed by Martin Scorsese, *FAR FROM HEAVEN* and *WONDERSTRUCK* directed by Todd Haynes, *THE MIRACLE*, *THE CRYING GAME*, *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE*, *THE END OF THE AFFAIR*, *THE BUTCHER BOY* and *MICHAEL COLLINS* all directed by Neil Jordan, *SYLVIA* (Christine Jeffs), *THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL* (Justin Chadwick), and *HOW TO TALK TO GIRLS AT PARTIES* directed by John Cameron Mitchell. Her most recent film work includes *THE IRISHMAN* directed by Martin Scorsese for which she received both BAFTA and Academy Award nominations and *THE GLORIAS* directed by Julie Taymor.

Ms. Powell has also designed for the theatre with costumes for the Lindsay Kemp productions of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Nijinsky* and *Cruel Garden*, the latter for London Festival Ballet. She also designed the costumes for Gerard Murphy's production of *Edward II* at the Royal Shakespeare Company, for Atom Egoyan's production of *Dr. Ox's Experiment* at the English National Opera, for Verdi's *Rigoletto* in Amsterdam directed by Monique Wagemacher, and designed costumes over 25 years for dance companies *The Cholmondeleys* and *Featherstonehaughs* with director/choreographer Lea Anderson.

In 2010, Ms. Powell was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to the British film industry.

## **Nadia Stacey (Hair & Makeup Designer)**

Nadia trained at Yorkshire Television and gained experience as a trainee and Make-up Assistant in theatre, ballet and opera before gaining her first film job with Academy Award-winning Hair & Make-up Designer Lisa Westcott on *MISS POTTER* (Dir: Chris Noonan), starring Renée Zellweger.

Nadia's first credit as Hair & Make-up Designer was on Paddy Considine's BAFTA-winning debut feature *TYRANNOSAUR*, and since that time she has gone on to design features including: *SIGHTSEERS* (Dir: Ben Wheatley); *PRIDE* (Dir: Matthew Warchus); *EDDIE THE EAGLE* (Dir: Dexter Fletcher); *THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS* (Dir: Colm McCarthy); *THE SENSE OF AN ENDING* (Dir: Ritesh Batra); *JOURNEY-MAN* (Dir: Paddy Considine), for which she was nominated for a BIFA for Best Make-up & Hair Design; *BEAST* (Dir: Michael Pearce); and *TOLKIEN* (Dir: Dome Karukoski). For her work on *THE FAVOURITE* (Dir: Yorgos Lanthimos), starring Olivia Colman, Emma Stone and Rachel Weisz, Nadia won both a BIFA, a BAFTA and a European Film Award for Best Hair & Make-up, and the film itself was nominated for 10 Academy Awards including Best Picture.

Alongside her work in film, Nadia has also designed television dramas in a wide variety of genres, from zombies (the BBC's "In the Flesh", for which she was nominated for an RTS North-West Award for Make-up Design), to period crime ("The Suspicions of Mr Whicher"), to fantasy (DC Films's "Krypton" pilot). Her most recent project for television, "Devs" – written, directed and cre-ated by Alex Garland – aired in 2020.

Nadia's work is most recently seen in features *OFFICIAL SECRETS* (Dir: Gavin Hood), *THE SECRET GARDEN* (Dir: Marc Munden), and *THE FATHER* (Dir: Florian Zeller), which was nominated for 6 Academy Awards including Best Picture. Upcoming feature films that she has designed the hair and make-up on include: *EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE* (Dir: Jonathan Butterell), the feature film adaptation of the Laurence Olivier-nominated musical; *CRUELLA* (Dir: Craig Gillespie), starring Emma Stone as the eponymous villain; *TRUE THINGS ABOUT ME* (Dir: Harry Wootliff); and *MOTHERING SUNDAY* (Dir: Eva Husson), starring Josh O'Connor, Odessa Young, Olivia Colman, Colin Firth and Glenda Jackson.



# CAST

Jane Fairchild	ODESSA YOUNG
Paul Sheringham	JOSH O'CONNOR
Dick	NATHAN REEVE
Young Paul	SAMUEL BARLOW
Freddy	DEXTER RAGGATT
Mr Godfrey Niven	COLIN FIRTH
Mrs Clarrie Niven	OLIVIA COLMAN
Jane (Older)	GLENDA JACKSON
Milly	PATSY FERRAN
Ethel	CHARLIE OSCAR
Emma Hobday	EMMA D'ARCY
Giles Hobday	SIMON SHEPHERD
Sylvia Hobday	CAROLINE HARKER
Mr Sheringham	CRAIG CROSBIE
Mrs Sheringham	EMILY WOOF
Donald	SOPE DIRÍSÚ
Richard	ALEX CUBB
Samuel	FORREST BOTHWELL
Mr Paxton	ALBERT WELLING
Journalist 1	SARITA GABONY
Journalist 2	STEVE BRODY

# CREW

A film by	EVA HUSSON
Written by	ALICE BIRCH
Produced by	ELIZABETH KARLSEN STEPHEN WOOLLEY
Director of Photography	JAMIE D. RAMSAY
Editor	EMILIE ORSINI
Casting	KHARMEL COCHRANE
Production Designer	HELEN SCOTT
Music	MORGAN KIBBY
Costume Designer	SANDY POWELL
Hair & Makeup Designer	NADIA STACEY
Production Manager	LIZA CARMEL
First Assistant Director	ADAM MORRIS
Supervising Art Director	ADAM MARSHALL
Production Sound Mixer	ADRIAN BELL AMPS, CAS
Supervising Sound Editor	LEE HERRICK
First Assistant Editor	GILES BURGESS