



Pathé, BBC Film and Ingenious Media present, a DJ Films/Redstart Production

ALLELUJAH

Directed by Richard Eyre

Written by Heidi Thomas

Based on the play by Alan Bennett

Starring Jennifer Saunders, Bally Gill, Russell Tovey,
David Bradley, Derek Jacobi and Judi Dench

PRODUCED BY	Damian Jones and Kevin Loader
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	Ben Smithard, BSC
COSTUME DESIGNER	Jacqueline Durran
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	Donal Woods
HAIR & MAKE UP DESIGNER	Naomi Donne
FILM EDITOR	John Wilson, ACE
MUSIC BY	George Fenton

Running time: 99 minutes



SHORT SYNOPSIS

ALLELUJAH is a warm, humorous, and deeply moving story about surviving old age. When the geriatric ward in a small Yorkshire hospital is threatened with closure, the hospital decides to fight back. ALLELUJAH celebrates the spirit of the elderly patients whilst paying tribute to the deep humanity of the medical staff battling with limited resources and ever-growing demand.

LONG SYNOPSIS

The below synopsis contains spoilers

Night turns to morning in Wakefield. DR VALENTINE (Bally Gill) gets into his car and takes a call from his grandmother and extended family in India whilst driving to work at the Bethlehem Hospital (known locally as 'the Beth').

In London, COLIN COLMAN (Russell Tovey), a consultant to the Minister of Health, rushes to catch a train from King's Cross station.

Arriving at the hospital, DR VALENTINE greets SISTER GILPIN (Jennifer Saunders) and reminds her that a local TV news crew is coming today to film material for a story about saving the Beth from closure. GILPIN informs him that they lost a patient, MR JESSOP, during night.

On the Women's Ward, NURSE PINKNEY (Jesse Akele), starts her morning round, cheerfully waking the elderly patients; whilst on the Men's Ward, VALENTINE draws the curtains around MR JESSOP's bed. AMBROSE HAMMERSLEY (Derek Jacobi), a former teacher being treated for cancer, wryly comments from his bed on MR JESSOP having 'jumped the queue'.

In the nurse's office, GILPIN calls the City Infirmary to let them know she has a free bed on the geriatric ward and can take one of their patients. She is indifferent to PINKNEY's excitement about the upcoming celebrations for GILPIN who will be receiving a medal for outstanding service.

In the hospital reception, a group of volunteers have set up a stall to raise funds for their campaign to 'Save the Beth'. VALENTINE greets the newly arrived KIERAN (JP Conway) and ABDUL (Arian Nik), the local TV news crew. He thanks them for their support but is distracted when he spots an ambulance pulling up and goes to help.

MRS MAUDSLEY (Julia McKenzie) is being lifted out of the ambulance on a stretcher by two paramedics. Her daughter, MRS EARNSHAW (Lorraine Ashbourne), tries to calm her but she is distressed, repeating over and over that 'It was my house'.

In the examination room, MRS MAUDSLEY sings to herself. VALENTINE tells her she has a lovely voice and MRS EARNSHAW explains she used to sing in concert halls as a child and was known as 'the Pudsey Nightingale'. MR EARNSHAW (Gerard Horan) rolls his eyes.



On the Women's Ward, GILPIN informs the patients they are in for a treat: GORGEOUS GERALD (Ross Tomlinson), the physio, will be paying them all a visit for music therapy.

In the hospital board room, GREGORY SALTER (Vincent Franklin), the Chairman of the Beth, is being filmed by KIERAN and ABDUL. SALTER explains that the fight to save the Beth is a fight 'for the right to care'.

In the nurse's office, GILPIN scrutinises a sulking teenager called ANDY (Louis Ashbourne-Serkis), who has been sent by his school for work experience. GILPIN adds to his discomfort by commenting on the practicality of his white trainers: 'I hope they're wipe clean'.

COLIN arrives at Wakefield Station and jumps into a taxi.

Back at The Beth, the patients are gathered in the day room for choir rehearsal. GERALD is an enthusiastic conductor and reminds them that they will be performing at the ceremony to honour GILPIN.

After the rehearsal, PINKNEY helps organise the patients to be interviewed by KIERAN and ABDUL. MARY (Judi Dench), a former librarian, stands to one side, eavesdropping on the filming. VALENTINE spots her and tries to persuade her to join in but MARY explains that she does not want 'to be noticed'.

On the Women's Ward, VALENTINE examines MRS MAUDSLEY. MRS EARNSHAW asks about the survival rate. VALENTINE is surprised by the question: 'there is no cure for old age.'

COLIN finally arrives at the Beth and bumps into GILPIN, asking her for directions to his father's ward. GILPIN bristles when she realises that this is the son JOE COLMAN (David Bradley), a former coal miner who has been brought to the Beth from his care home having contracted an infection. GILPIN knows from JOE that COLIN works for the Health Minister, the man who wants to close the hospital. She guides him to JOE's bed where he lies propped up to help his breathing. JOE reprimands COLIN for not wearing a suit - given that he's told everyone his son works for the Minister - and for not bringing him anything, not even a grape. Theirs is a troubled relationship.

The following day, COLIN returns to the hospital with a punnet of grapes. SALTER intercepts him and brings him to the boardroom, where he lobbies COLIN over the future of the Beth. Colin is unmoved: an efficient health service has no place for small, local hospitals; the future is about economies of scale and specialisation - fewer, bigger, better.

On the ward, VALENTINE is checking MARY's monitors. She tells him about her passion for 'marginalia': the comments people write in the margins of the library books - she was supposed to rub them out, but sometimes she chose not to.

KIERAN and ABDUL conduct further interviews with patients in the day room, filming LUCILLE (Marlene Sidaway), MAVIS (Patricia England), HAZEL (Marjorie Yates) and NEVILLE (Jeffery Kissoon). They bicker amongst themselves whilst VALENTINE takes advantage of the moment to ask AMBROSE some questions about English grammar, explaining he is studying to become a UK citizen.



In the nurses' office, MRS EARNSHAW confronts GILPIN about her mother being upset. GILPIN shrewdly observes that she is not the cause of MRS EARNSHAW's distress; she cares. Their argument is interrupted by the City Infirmary calling in desperation for an available bed. GILPIN tells them there is nothing.

VALENTINE shows MARY how to use an iPad to film everyday life on the ward so that she can then share it with the TV news crew. MARY is delighted.

That evening, outside a nearby Chinese restaurant, GILPIN and VALENTINE sit in her car eating a takeaway. GILPIN admits to him that she doesn't know what to say in her medal presentation speech. She thinks the only message of any value is 'don't leave it too late to die.'

At COLIN's hotel, he catches up on the phone with his partner GEORGE. He comments that the Beth must be doing something right because his father is obviously desperate not to go back to his care home.

The following morning COLIN sits in the hospital café working on his laptop. VALENTINE spots him and asks if he could show COLIN something. He leads him to a part of the hospital that has already been closed – a deserted ward with empty beds. VALENTINE explains that each bed represents the entirety of the NHS, that all the institution's resources are made available to each patient who has a bed. COLIN challenges him on the cost. VALENTINE responds that the cost is not the first thing he thinks about. The comment lands with COLIN.

PINKNEY approaches JOE in the day room and asks if she can cut and remove his wedding ring - his fingers are swollen and the ring must be causing him pain. He furiously refuses. GILPIN enters, informing Joe that it is time for a shower and instructing ANDY to wheel him to the bathroom. GILPIN helps JOE remove his clothes and is startled by COLIN opening the door looking for his father, only to slam it shut at the sight of JOE standing there naked. ANDY comes out of the shower room and says GILPIN insists COLIN go back in because 'no one wants to feel they cause revulsion in a loved one'.

Having showered JOE, GILPIN decides that he needs some physio. ANDY wheels him back to the day room where GILPIN puts on a Bossa Nova CD and starts to dance with a delighted JOE. COLIN is amazed at the mobility of his bed-ridden father. JOE tells GILPIN that COLIN has the voice of an angel – he asks him to sing. COLIN refuses, breaking the spell.

Later that evening, MARY, MAVIS and LUCILLE chat on the ward. MARY shows them her new iPad and wanders off, filming as she goes. On the Men's Ward, VALENTINE speaks to JOE about trying to remove his wedding ring without cutting it. VALENTINE manages to ease the ring off his finger and JOE is delighted. At the same time, on the Women's Ward, GILPIN tucks MRS MAUDSLEY into bed. As MRS MAUDSLEY continues to repeat the phrase 'It was my house', GILPIN calms her and helps her drink a beaker of warm milk.

The next day, the curtains have been drawn around MRS MAUDSLEY's bed. MR and MRS EARNSHAW confront SALTER and VALENTINE, angry that MRS MAUDSLEY has died. VALENTINE reassures them that in time they will be grateful that she died peacefully in her sleep. But it quickly becomes apparent that their anger is driven by the fact that MRS MAUDSLEY's house had been 'gifted' to them and that by dying prematurely they will now have to pay Inheritance Tax.



VALENTINE returns a book of poetry he has borrowed from AMBROSE. He asks VALENTINE to read one of the poems out loud, a poem about hospital visitors. VALENTINE does so but falters at the final verse about 'the last visitor' who has no name – death.

COLIN wheels JOE to the park for some fresh air. JOE talks to him about the miners' strike of 1984 and how he finds it inconceivable that his son would end up working for the Government. COLIN tells him that he has to go back to London and in a gesture of reconciliation, sings to his father.

A new day in the Beth. ANDY enters the Men's Ward and JOE tells him he is bursting for the toilet. ANDY does not understand the urgency and JOE wets himself. To JOE's horror, GILPIN arrives and witnesses his incontinence: he knows that for GILPIN, incontinence is the beginning of the end for her elderly patients, heralding a loss of dignity and independence.

We find GILPIN and VALENTINE eating another takeaway at a local beauty spot overlooking the town. VALENTINE asks when GILPIN felt the calling to care for the elderly. GILPIN said she had no choice. Her mother needed money and so she looked after elderly neighbours whose families could not cope with caring for them. She became her mother's assistant and ultimately her carer; she came to excel in doing what other people 'couldn't do, or wouldn't'

Back on the Men's Ward, JOE sits in bed with a mobile phone and calls COLIN. He is at the opera with the Minister but takes the call. JOE seems frightened and tells him he is 'on the list'. COLIN doesn't understand but is worried by his father's tone. He tells JOE he will come to see him soon.

On her way out, PINKNEY informs GILPIN that the Infirmary has been on the phone again begging for beds. GILPIN goes to JOE and tells him that his infection has cleared up and he can go back to the care home in the morning. JOE does not want to leave; he says he liked it when they danced. GILPIN takes him for a final dance and tells him he will be missed. She makes him comfortable in bed and offers him a beaker of hot milk. JOE says he doesn't know whether he wants it. She leaves it at the side of his bed.

The following morning, COLIN meets with the Health Minister in London. He asks him to reconsider his plans to close the Beth. The Minister mocks his sudden conversion to supporting a small community hospital. COLIN storms out saying he is going back to the hospital to see his father.

That same morning, as VALENTINE arrives at work, MARY insists that VALENTINE watch the film she has recorded on her iPad. VALENTINE sits with MARY and watches the footage of GILPIN giving beakers of milk to MRS MAUDSLEY and JOE. PINKNEY interrupts them to announce that he is needed on the ward – JOE can't be woken. VALENTINE rushes to JOE – he is dead – he sees the empty beaker of milk and JOE's wedding ring on the bedside table.

GILPIN enters the nurse's office, her hair freshly styled for that morning's medal presentation. She finds VALENTINE seated there with MARY's iPad and the empty beaker of milk. GILPIN watches the footage and realises that VALENTINE knows. She is unrepentant – she has simply done what generations of carers have done before her to ease suffering, end the loss of dignity and help the old die in peace once they are 'too far gone'. In doing so, she has helped the system, freeing up beds for the elderly with a greater need. VALENTINE sits in mute horror.



GILPIN leaves him behind as she makes her way to the day room where all the patients and staff, the Lady Mayor and the TV crew have been gathered for the presentation.

GILPIN makes her speech, declaring defiantly 'I have cared.' The Mayor presents GILPIN with her medal and the patients start their performance of 'Get Happy'. As they sing, VALENTINE approaches SALTER, taking him to one side. We see a flicker of doubt in GILPIN's eyes.

COLIN runs through the hospital to his father's bed. He stares down at JOE's body then takes his wedding ring from the bedside table and slides it onto his finger. He turns and angrily draws the curtains. SALTER and VALENTINE approach him – he wants to know why his father was frightened, and why he thought he was on a list...

We hear VALENTINE in voice over tell us that MARY's footage ensured that GILPIN was sentenced to life imprisonment and that the Beth was closed. But its staff, the carers, keep caring...

We move forward in time to find VALENTINE working in an Intensive Care Unit, dressed in full protective gear, treating a virus that 'shows no mercy'. He realises that the latest admission to the ICU is AMBROSE. In a moment of lucidity AMBROSE refers to the poem he once had VALENTINE read to him: the last visitor who is not generally named. VALENTINE cries, holding AMBROSE's hand as he dies.

VALENTINE turns and talks directly to camera: yes, public health services are expensive, imperfect and yes they make terrible mistakes, but they are an expression of our best selves and deserve our support: 'For love there is no charge.'



THE PRODUCTION STORY

The stage production of Alan Bennett's ALLELUJAH premiered at the Bridge Theatre in London on 11th July 2018. Producers of the film Damian Jones and Kevin Loader invited Cameron McCracken, Executive Producer and Managing Director of Pathé UK, to see the play. They could all see its potential to form the basis for a feature film that could be both entertaining and politically urgent.

Conversations took place with Bennett about adapting his play for the big screen. He did not feel he had the time to do the adaptation himself, but he gave his blessing to the project and, says McCracken, 'suggested that we treat him as if he were deceased!'

Heidi Thomas (writer of *Cranford* and creator of *Call the Midwife*) agreed to come on board. For Jones and Loader this was a great coup, 'We all knew of her excellent writing and felt like she would be the perfect fit. She was able to reshape and focus the story whilst retaining much of Alan's brilliant character work and dialogue, making the transition from stage to screen seamless.'

Despite being a huge fan of Bennett's work, Thomas had missed seeing the play when it was first staged but fell in love with the work after reading it: 'The project was hugely appealing – I felt the world was familiar and something that I could identify with, so I was very keen to get into talks with the team to see if I could bring something to the table based on my own experience,' she recalls, 'The play was very bold, and it had certain surreal elements, but to succeed as a film, it was going to have to become more intimate and in a sense more real.'

Thomas met with the producers in late March 2020 just before COVID brought the world to a halt. She describes the writing process as a 'lockdown pandemic project – when everyone thought it was just going to be three weeks, but ended up stretching to a few months and then to a couple of years.' She also adds that it was a very strange feeling to go out every Thursday evening and clap for the NHS and then return to her desk to continue writing ALLELUJAH: 'It was very interesting to be writing a film that was about the NHS at a time when the NHS was facing an unprecedented challenge, so it certainly informed my thinking.'

When Thomas sent a draft of the script to Bennett for his thoughts, she found him to be extremely supportive. McCracken comments that Bennett had said that when he was laughing as he read the script "he didn't know if he was laughing at his original lines or Heidi's! I can think of no greater compliment!'

With the script in good enough shape to start the search for a director, everyone agreed that Richard Eyre was the perfect candidate. Aside from being a brilliant award-winning director of stage and screen, Eyre was of an age to be able to relate deeply and personally to the material and to have formed friendships over the years with many of the actors needed to populate the large ensemble cast of elderly patients. Indeed, Eyre had first directed a screenplay by Alan Bennett almost 40 years ago – THE INSURANCE MAN (1986) starring Daniel Day-Lewis. Eyre recalls being offered the job: 'It was a no-brainer – to be offered the opportunity of working on something of Alan's again was just completely irresistible, and Heidi is an extremely bright and accessible writer and a perfect complement to Alan'.



With Eyre on board, he continued to refine the script with Thomas whilst approaching the key cast. Actors did not hesitate – the combination of Eyre, Bennett and Thomas' screenplay proved a powerful draw for many of the UK's greatest (and oldest!) actors including Judi Dench, Derek Jacobi, David Bradley and Julia McKenzie. Eyre also drew on a pool of 'younger' talent for his leads: comedy legend Jennifer Saunders; and newcomer Bally Gill. Says Thomas: 'I can't believe we found somebody so perfect to play Dr. Valentine, someone who's at the beginning of his career and is able to bring all of that innocence and sincerity to the role'.

Of his actors, Eyre comments: 'They all responded to the writing of Alan and Heidi because they all have a wit, and that is one of their most attractive characteristics. They all act with a real relish for the writing.'

McCracken adds, 'The particular alchemy achieved by Richard is remarkable. How is it possible to make a film that is both funny and moving yet also politically confrontational? Not only that, but the film also delivers an unexpected twist that totally wrongfoots the audience. Richard, with Alan and Heidi and his amazing cast, has created a darkly comic tale about surviving old age that also manages to be a clarion call for public health care. That's quite an achievement!'

'The meaning of the film is contained in the lives of the many characters portrayed, so it's a kaleidoscope of meanings. I'm thrilled I got to make this film in the company of wonderful actors and extraordinarily supportive producers,' Eyre explains.

Loader adds that when people emerge from the cinema having seen the film, he wants them 'to go out and celebrate life, to celebrate the vivacity and variety of old age, and to think about how we preserve the human spirit as we get older.'

A LOVE LETTER TO THE NHS

2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the UK's National Health Service ('NHS').

The NHS was one of the first national health services in the world. Established in 1948, the founding principles were that the NHS should be comprehensive, universal and free at the point of delivery - a health service based on clinical need, not ability to pay

For the cast and crew, the most important message of the film is gratitude to those working on the frontline of the NHS – the work that they do and the sacrifices they make. There may be terrible failings that come to light, but the idea of the NHS and everything it stands for deserves celebration and protection.

Eyre comments 'The line that Russell Tovey's character has about the NHS being the most important idea that British politics has come up with, resonates very, very strongly for me.

As Thomas states: 'The thing about the NHS is if you are under the age of 75 and have lived in the UK all your life, the NHS is written into your bones: the NHS cut your umbilical cord, the NHS vaccinated you, the NHS bandaged your broken limbs, has given you a hip replacement. It is a skeleton that holds all our lives together.'



For Judi Dench, it is clear that NHS staff go above and beyond, often at the expense of their own wellbeing: 'There can never be enough congratulations and praise for what the NHS does, especially during the pandemic. They've been a wonderful safety net for people and have worked so tirelessly.'

'Being a member of society and knowing that we all have access to the same level of healthcare is so important. It's galvanising and something that we must protect. What we've been through over the past few years just shows how important it is to value our health workers and people on the front line,' continues Russell Tovey.

For Jennifer Saunders, the NHS is a huge part of our national culture and identity and should be something that we are proud of: 'When you go to other countries that do not have public healthcare and you realise how much people pay for basic medication, it's shocking. We love the NHS because we own it: it's ours.'

However, the NHS is under immense pressure and the frequent subject of criticism both justifiable (where tragic mistakes have been made) and unjustifiable where the expectations of the patients cannot be met for want of funding.

'Everybody has a story about being saved by the NHS and everybody has a story about being kept waiting by them. On balance, I know that we all value it as the most extraordinary resource. It affects everybody's lives. If it is taken away, everybody's lives will be affected for the worse,' says Thomas.

Eyre concludes, 'Nothing created by human beings is perfect. Every institution created by man has the flaws and virtues of the people who created it and continue to build it. It's as fallible as humanity is fallible, but I would defend it to my death.'

THE STING IN THE TALE

Like a sugar-coated pill, ALLELUJAH is not only a witty entertainment – it is also a provocation, challenging us to think hard about how we resource care for the elderly.

'Our ageing population is only going to become more important, not less important', says Loader, 'It feels very timely to be focusing on what we want from our community healthcare, particularly in regard to the elderly.'

As Eyre comments: "At the end of the film, we see what the consequence of the actions of the two medical practitioners are - the doctor and the nursing sister. The doctor is an idealist. The nursing sister is a realist, and that's really the tension in the film between an ideal world in which the NHS is flawless and a perfect conception. And the reality of the NHS, which is that the government is constantly demanding greater efficiency, greater cost saving, greater cost-effectiveness. So, you see the strain between idealism and pragmatism. The thing that probably is the most complex issue in the film is the issue of whether you should continue to keep somebody alive - somebody who's in pain, somebody who feels their life has come to an end - because it's your duty. Is it your duty to care for the person regardless of their circumstance? We all know that in practice, what Sister Gilpin does, happens in the world - quite often compassionately." And I would like to think that if I was in a position where I was in extreme pain, in extreme old age, and simply being kept alive by painkillers, that somebody would do me the favour. So, these are highly complex moral and philosophical



issues. And I wouldn't just draw a line that is a straight line and say, 'what sister Gilpin does in any circumstance is unforgivable'. Yes, it's wrong. And yes, she is in good faith. And I say in good faith because, in trying to fulfill the demand for efficiency and cost effectiveness, she is doing what she has been asked to do. It begs the question of whether the instructions coming from the national health service or from the government to the national health service are right. Are they proper? Do they encompass the moral issues that her actions embodied?"

Jennifer Saunders, who plays Sister Gilpin, comments that having herself cared for her own elderly mother, her immediate reaction to the script was that 'this just absolutely has to be said now - what do we do with old people? The film isn't a criticism of the NHS, it's a criticism of trying to introduce corporate efficiency into a caring system. It doesn't work, unless you're brutal'. As for the character she plays, Saunders is equally emphatic: 'She's been dedicated to the care of the old from a very early age, and she is dedicated to it, she does care.'

Thomas agrees; 'Gilpin has her own humanity. A villain will often believe they are a hero and she believes she is working for the greater good; she is doing what she perceives as the best that she can do in a system that is crumbling under its own weight.'

THE GENIUS OF BENNETT

One of the nation's greatest writers, with a career spanning over sixty years, Bennett has the ability to tackle difficult and taboo subjects through the lives and turns of phrase of everyday people. Eyre has commented: 'What we mean when we describe something as "very Alan Bennett" is that it is droll, sharp, overheard and unexpected.' That quality - as exemplified in his previous acclaimed work, including THE HISTORY BOYS, THE LADY IN THE VAN, TALKING HEADS and THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE – means that cast and crew hold Bennett in incredibly high regard.

For Thomas, although she was invited by Alan to adapt his play, she still found the idea of stepping into his shoes very daunting, mainly because she is such a huge fan: 'I've always revered Alan's writing. I feel incredibly affirmed by it, not necessarily as a writer, but as a person, because Alan writes from a place of deep respect and admiration for people who lead very ordinary lives. He understands that small lives can be filled with enormous things.'

'It took some courage for Heidi to take up an Alan Bennett script and adapt it, like handing over a precious stone to someone and asking them to carve it,' Eyre explains.

Eyre was immediately impressed by the way Heidi was able to weave her own experiences into the script, whilst still keeping her screenplay true to Bennett's spirit and voice: 'Heidi's tone of voice and jokes are similar to Alan's – they're from the same comedic tribe. She's done a supremely clever and self-effacing job taking Alan's wonderful lines and throwing in a different perspective'. McCracken adds 'Heidi is far too modest to ever take credit for the fact that without her this film would not have been made; the wonderfully complex ensemble work that she has so beautifully crafted for so many years - from CRANFORD to CALL THE MIDWIFE - perfectly equipped her to reinvent the stage play and bring The Beth vividly to life on the big screen'



For many of the cast, this is the first Alan Bennett project that they have been involved in. Dench has always held a deep admiration for him, as she explains further: 'Alan's writing is so easily recognisable – every word is written in his own special way. The dark and the light are very marked and apparent. He's a playwright who allows the audience to look further than what is written in the script and what is shown on screen. There's a lot more behind the words.'

For Bradley, learning the script was not difficult: 'I did absolutely nothing in order to learn my lines, the words just leapt off the page and said, learn me!'

Saunders recalls feeling flattered at being offered the role of Nurse Gilpin: 'My generation grew up with Alan Bennett's plays, plus TALKING HEADS on the television. He's a National Treasure. You can hear his voice in everything that he does. What I loved about the script was the fact that it catches you by surprise – nothing is ever quite as it seems.'

Until ALLELUJAH came along, Gill had never had the chance to perform in any of Bennett's works, despite having studied his plays: 'I've been really looking forward to it. He, of course, has the comedy, but he also writes in a way that makes you recognise all the characters – they are your mum, your dad, your grandparents. That's such a beautiful thing – being able to connect with them on a human level - for example having someone whose job it is to close down a hospital when his father is a patient there - it's so beautifully layered. The characters that he writes are so three-dimensional.'

For Tovey, having worked with Bennett many times, most famously in THE HISTORY BOYS, he was eager to sink his teeth into this new project: 'It's typical Alan Bennett brilliance. He's an incredibly subversive writer – outwardly, proudly subversive. He tackles everything, even difficult subjects, in a very bolshie, confident way.'

'He writes these great jokes and these marvellous characters, and then suddenly he'll hit you with a reality that really make you sit up and pay attention,' Saunders continues. 'He has this tremendous ability to make you laugh and cry at the same time. He's so funny, and you can hear his voice through all of the characters.'

'Alan Bennett's way of looking at the world is pretty unique. He has a very warm, humanitarian view of people, but he is not a cosy writer, he's not a cute writer. He relishes the individual selfishness and darkness within people, as well as celebrating their humanity. So, I think there is that particular Bennett flavour in this film, which is something we can all enjoy,' says Loader.

For Jacobi, it's the cleverness of Bennett's writing that makes it such a joy to read: 'He's a very real writer but he has this wonderful humour which is not forced. It's a natural humour that's not imposed, it's just who the characters are and how they express themselves. He's not a writer who shows off, his words don't come from left field – they're there right in front of you but they're supremely clever.'

WORKING WITH RICHARD EYRE

With a career spanning film, television and theatre over more than five decades, Eyre is one of the greatest British directors working today. Loader and Jones admit that they felt very blessed when he agreed to direct the film.



'He is one of the most important theatre directors of his generation. Having run the National Theatre for many years, his CV is longer than both my arms,' Loader comments.

'Richard is a delight, he's just been so collaborative and knows exactly what he is doing. He's so precise and is able to easily choreograph these big scenes with lots of characters – it's very impressive,' Jones agrees.

For Thomas, Eyre's contribution was invaluable: 'Richard was able to bring a wisdom and sensitivity, as well as a marvellous ability to interrogate and really get to the heart of a scene or line of dialogue. He's both a writer's director and an actor's director, and he can really make the smallest moments resonate, which I absolutely love.'

ALLELUJAH also reunites Eyre with some of his past collaborators, including Dench and Bradley. Dench worked with Eyre on both IRIS and NOTES ON A SCANDAL, with her performance in each film earning an Oscar nomination.

'We have a relationship where he can say very little, and I know exactly what he wants. He's very relaxed and always has a moment to come and chat with you. It was lovely to be back working with him again,' Dench recalls.

Similarly for Bradley, who last worked with Eyre at the National Theatre over 30 years ago. 'He's a lovely man and I just loved what he has done with this film – he understands the process and knows the value of even a small bit of rehearsal time. He isn't overbearing – he doesn't tell you how to play it. His notes are just great – just small hints that really affect your performance. I just automatically trust his judgement.'

When filming began, it was clear that his directing style was one of collaboration and teamwork. For Gill, who studied Eyre's work at drama school, working with him was a delight: 'He is one of the most wonderful, gentle, encouraging directors that I've ever worked with. He brings a great energy to set. He'll come over and we'll talk about the scene and speaking with him will just unlock things for me. I trust him implicitly.'

Jacobi agrees with this sentiment: 'Richard is very forensic yet very encouraging. I've worked with directors who bully performances out of actors – almost terrorising them. Richard is not like that. He coaxes, he cajoles, he teases and offers lots of encouragement. He's very much part of the team. Richard is one of us, which is nice.'

Working with Eyre had always been on Tovey's bucket list: 'I've loved the projects that he has done, the films that he has made. I've seen so many of his productions on stage. So taking this role was an easy yes.'

For Eyre himself, the most exciting part about filmmaking is the opportunity to work in a creative team, as he explains: 'I'm always wary, as a director, of being close-minded and doing the first thing that comes into your head. So often there's an opportunity for a different, more heartfelt viewpoint. I always find it best to present the world in a slightly idiosyncratic way so that it doesn't look like everything else you see. Being able to work so closely with so many knowledgeable people was extremely beneficial.'



Additionally, he admits it was lovely just to watch these actors perform. Eyre particularly enjoyed shooting the final dance between Saunders and Bradley: 'I love that scene because it's so droll and both Jennifer and David dance with such grace – it's very touching.'

THE HOSPITAL STAFF

Leading the cast as Gilpin is Saunders: 'It was amazing – the people that I'm caring for are some of the greatest British actors', Saunders recalls. But it's not just the older, more-established cast members that Saunders has enjoyed working with, as she explains further: 'Bally Gill is a tremendous actor, and one of the loveliest people. I've particularly enjoyed my scenes with him as Sister Gilpin takes Dr Valentine under her wing.'

Thomas was thrilled when Saunders signed on to play Gilpin as she thought she was one of the most interesting characters on the page: 'I knew that Jennifer would not only have the dramatic chops for it, but also the comedy chops. This is not a glamorous role, it's not a character who goes home to a glamorous life. I knew that Jennifer would have the wit and the necessary lack of vanity.'

For Bally Gill, an award-winning stage actor facing his first major film role, he admitted that he wrote essays about many of his co-stars at drama school, so getting the chance to act alongside them has been a joy: 'All of the actors that I had scenes with have been amazing in terms of their characterisation and dedication to the role.'

For Eyre, finding an actor like Gill was immensely important to the production, as he explains: 'If a star means somebody who shines brightly in the firmament, Bally Gill is one of those. No matter how good of an actor you are, you can't fake charm.'

THE HOSPITAL PATIENTS

For the older actors, working on ALLELUJAH provided an opportunity both to reunite with old friends and to work with people they'd always admired.

For Dench, David Bradley and Derek Jacobi, this is the first chance they've had to work together, despite having known each other for many years. Dench and Bradley first met 60 years ago at an amateur dramatic group in York. Comments Bradley, 'We don't have any scenes together, but it's wonderful to be in the same film!'

And the last time Dench and Julia McKenzie acted together on stage was at the Haymarket Theatre in 2001. Judi was very keen to repeat the experience: 'We had tremendous fun starring together all those years ago,' she recalls.

Having worked with Dench previously on *Cranford*, Thomas admitted that there couldn't be a finer form of casting: 'Mary carries so much within her as a character. She sees things of which



she does not speak. She's really quite an engine of discovery within the film. So, you really need an actor of Judi's calibre to play that level of complexity.'

Bradley and Russell Tovey, who play father and son, agree that working together has been wonderful. Says Tovey, 'The first week of filming was just us two and that was magic. He's incredible. In the film, we have quite a fraught relationship, so having that chance to get to know David was tremendously helpful.' Add Bradley: 'With Russell, there was always time for a giggle, which is very important.'

Eyre sums up his thoughts on his cast as follows: 'The great adage about all productions is that the whole has to be greater than the sum of its parts. And the sum of the parts is absolutely astonishing because of the generosity of the actors who give themselves without any airs and graces.'



ABOUT THE CAST

Jennifer Saunders as Sister Gillpin

Jennifer Saunders is best known for writing and starring in the seminal sitcom *ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS* and for being one half of renowned comedy duo French & Saunders alongside Dawn French. She has recently finished filming Mike Myers' Netflix series *THE PENTAVERATE*. Other credits include Harlan Coben's *THE STRANGER*, *DEATH ON THE NILE*, directed by Kenneth Branagh; *SING & SING 2*, *GHOSTS*, *SHREK 2*, *FRIENDS*, *GIRLS ON TOP* and *JAM & JERUSALEM*.

Theatre credits include *BLITHE SPIRIT* (Theatre Royal Bath/Harold Pinter Theatre), *LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN* (Vaudeville Theatre) and she will be starring as Mother Superior in *SISTER ACT* in 2022. Jennifer is a regular panellist on Sky's *THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE MOVIES* alongside Michael Sheen and hosted by Alan Carr and her acclaimed podcast *TITTING ABOUT* that she co-hosts with comedy partner Dawn French has just been released for its second series.

Bally Gill as Dr. Valentine

Having trained at the Rose Brunford College, Bally won the 2018 Ian Charleson award for his portrayal of Romeo in the Royal Shakespeare Company's '*ROMEO AND JULIET*'. TV credits include *SHERWOOD*, *SLOW HORSES*, *THIS IS GOING TO HURT*, *EXTINCTION*, *MANHUNT*, *WANDERLUST* and *NW*.

Theatre credits include *WHEN THE CROWS VISIT* (Kiln Theatre), *ROMEO & JULIET* (The Royal Shakespeare Company), *MACBETH* (The Royal Shakespeare Company), *CORIOLANUS* (The Royal Shakespeare Company), *SALOME* (The Royal Shakespeare Company), *VICE VERSA* (The Royal Shakespeare Company), *THE ISLAND NATION* (Arcola Theatre), *ALWAYS ORANGE* (The Royal Shakespeare Company), *FALL OF THE KINGDOM*, *RISE OF THE FOOT SOLDIER* (The Royal Shakespeare Company) *A LOCAL BOY* (The Arts Theatre), *DINNER WITH SADDAM* (Menier Chocolate Factory), *THE BUREAU OF LOST THINGS* (Theatre 503).

Judi Dench as Mary Moss

Since playing Ophelia in *HAMLET* at The Old Vic Theatre over 60 years ago, Judi Dench has garnered wide popular and critical admiration for a career marked by outstanding performances in both classical and contemporary roles. She has won numerous major awards – including an Academy Award, ten BAFTA Awards and a record eight Laurence Olivier Awards – for work on both stage and screen, and in recognition of her many achievements she received an OBE (Order of the British Empire) in 1970, became a DBE (Dame of the British Empire) in 1988, and in 2005 was awarded a Companion of Honour. She has also received the Japan Arts Association's prestigious Praemium Imperiale Laureate Award for Film and Theatre.



Dame Judi most recently wrapped on *BELFAST*, for which she was nominated for an Academy Award. In the past years she has appeared in Kenneth Branagh's *MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS*, and starred in *VICTORIA & ABDUL*, directed by Stephen Frears. This latter performance was nominated for a Golden Globe, SAG and AACTA International Award. This is the second time in her career she has played Queen Victoria. For her first such performance, directed by John Madden in *MRS BROWN*, she won BAFTA and Golden Globe awards and was nominated for an Academy Award.

Dame Judi received an Academy Award and a BAFTA Award, both for Best Supporting Actress, for another magisterial performance as Queen Elizabeth I in *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE*, and she has received Academy Award nominations for performances in a further five films: Lasse Hallstrom's *CHOCOLAT*, for which she was also nominated for a Golden Globe; *IRIS*, directed by Richard Eyre, for which she also won a BAFTA Award; *MRS HENDERSON PRESENTS*, directed by Stephen Frears, for which she was further nominated at the BAFTAs and the Golden Globes; *NOTES ON A SCANDAL*, directed by Richard Eyre, which also brought her BAFTA and Golden Globe nominations; and *PHILOMENA*, directed by Stephen Frears and co-starring Steve Coogan, for which she also received BAFTA, Golden Globe and SAG award nominations.

Dame Judi is recognised globally for her legendary role as M in seven James Bond films, from *GOLDENEYE* to *SKYFALL*. Her other film work includes *TEA WITH MUSSOLINI*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli; *A ROOM WITH A VIEW* and *A HANDFUL OF DUST*, both of which brought her BAFTA Awards for Best Supporting Actress; *84 CHARING CROSS ROAD*, directed by David Jones; *HENRY V* and *HAMLET*, both directed Kenneth Branagh; *NINE*, directed by Rob Marshall; *JANE EYRE*, directed by Cary Fukunaga; *MY WEEK WITH MARILYN*, directed by Simon Curtis; *J. EDGAR*, directed by Clint Eastwood; the hugely successful India-set comedy *THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL*, and its sequel *THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL*, both directed by John Madden; Roald Dahl's *ESIO TROT*, opposite Dustin Hoffman; and *MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN*, directed by Tim Burton.

Dame Judi is also revered for her television work. Most recently she starred as Cecily, Duchess of York, in *THE HOLLOW CROWN* for the BBC, and past credits include: *THE LAST OF THE BLONDE BOMBSHELLS*, for which she received BAFTA and Golden Globe Awards and an Emmy Award nomination; the long-running hit BBC sitcom *AS TIME GOES BY*; and the critically acclaimed *CRANFORD* and *CRANFORD: RETURN TO CRANFORD*, for which she received a number of major award nominations.

Dame Judi's achievements on screen are mirrored by her celebrated career on stage. She received an Olivier Award for Best Supporting Actress for her most recent role as Paulina in Kenneth Branagh's celebrated West End production of *THE WINTER'S TALE*, and she has previously won Olivier Awards for *Macbeth* and *JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK* for the RSC; *PACK OF LIES* at the London Lyric; and *ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA*, *ABSOLUTE HELL*, and *A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC*, all at The National Theatre. Her performance in David Hare's *AMY'S VIEW*, directed by Richard Eyre, brought her a Critics Circle Award and an Olivier Award nomination when it played in London at The National and Aldwych, followed by a Tony Award for Best Actress when the play transferred to Broadway. Her other theatre credits include: *THE ROYAL FAMILY*, directed by Peter Hall; *THE BREATH OF LIFE*, directed by Howard Davies and co-starring Dame Maggie Smith; *ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL*, for the RSC; *HAY FEVER*, directed by Peter Hall; *THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR*, for the RSC; *MADAME DE SADE*, directed by Michael Grandage for The Donmar West End; Peter Hall's production of *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*



at the Rose Theatre, KINGSTON; *PETER AND ALICE*, directed by Michael Grandage in the West End; and *THE VOTE*, directed by Josie Rourke for The Donmar in 2015, which was also broadcast live on UK General Election night in a landmark television event.

Derek Jacobi as Ambrose Hammersley

One of Britain's most celebrated actors, both on stage and on screen, Sir Derek Jacobi has garnered critical acclaim over his distinguished career. Jacobi has appeared in numerous stage productions of William Shakespeare, including *HAMLET*, *ROMEO AND JULIET*, *KING LEAR* and *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*. Jacobi has been the recipient of numerous awards, including two Primetime Emmy Awards, a BAFTA TV Award, two Screen Actors Guild Awards, two Olivier Awards, a Tony Award and three Evening Standard Awards. He has also been nominated for a further four BAFTA Awards, a Golden Globe and three Drama Desk Awards. In 1994, Jacobi was awarded a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to theatre.

Throughout his career, Jacobi has appeared in numerous acclaimed films, including *OTHELLO*, *HENRY V*, *HAMLET*, *GLADIATOR*, *GOSFORD PARK*, *THE KING'S SPEECH*, *MY WEEK WITH MARILYN*, *ANONYMOUS*, *CINDERELLA* and *MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS*.

Jacobi also starred alongside Ian McKellen in the ITV sitcom *VICIOUS*, and alongside Anne Reid in BBC drama *LAST TANGO IN HALIFAX*. Jacobi guest-starred as the Duke of Windsor in series three of *THE CROWN*, and as Metatron in *GOOD OMENS*. Jacobi also starred as The Master in the rebooted *DOCTOR WHO* series.

David Bradley as Joe Colman

David is a BAFTA-winning actor. He trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art before joining the Royal Shakespeare Company where he appeared in many productions including *HENRY IV PART II*, for which he was nominated for the 1993 Olivier Award for Best Supporting Actor. His appearances at the National Theatre include *THE HOMECOMING*, the title role in *HENRY IV PARTS I & II* and The Fool in *KING LEAR*, for which he won the 1990 Olivier Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role.

David's work for film includes Edgar Wright's *HOT FUZZ* and *THE WORLD'S END*, *ANOTHER YEAR*, directed by Mike Leigh, and his celebrated performance as Argus Filch in all seven of the beloved *HARRY POTTER* films.

His television appearances include *DOCTOR WHO*, *THE STRAIN*, Walder Frey in HBO's Primetime Emmy Award-winning *GAME OF THRONES*, *GILLENORMAND* in the BBC's recent adaptation of *LES MISÉRABLES*, Ricky Gervais's *AFTER LIFE* for Netflix, and Jack Marshall in ITV's *BROADCHURCH*, for which he won the Best Supporting Actor BAFTA. He also recently appeared in BBC One's *THE RESPONDER*.

Russell Tovey as Colin Colman

With an extensive background in film, television and theatre, award winning actor Russell Tovey can recently be seen in a leading role in ITV/HULU drama series *THE SISTER*. He was nominated for a 2020 Critic's Choice Award for best supporting actor for his role in the critically acclaimed BBC/HBO Drama series *YEARS AND YEARS*, written by Russell T. Davies. He also starred in Bill Condon's *THE GOOD LIAR* for Warner Bros opposite Ian McKellen and Helen Mirren and will next be seen in Sony's Screen Gems romantic drama *TEXT FOR YOU* with Celine Dion and Priyanka Chopra.



As well as acting, Russell is also a published writer and co-hosts an art podcast, Talk Art, with friend and gallerist Robert Diament, where they interview leading artists, curators, gallerists, and celebrities about their shared passion. Their first book "Talk Art: Everything You Wanted To Ask About Contemporary Art But Were Afraid To Ask" has been listed as one of The Sunday Times's Top Ten Bestsellers.

Other noteworthy film and television credits include *PRIDE*, *GRABBERS*, *THE PASS*, *MINDHORN*, *THE LADY IN THE VAN*, *THE HISTORY BOYS*, *LOOKING*, *LEGENDS OF TOMORROW*, *THE FLASH*, *BEING HUMAN*, *HIM AND HER*, *THE NIGHT MANAGER*, *THE JOB LOT*, *SHERLOCK*, *QUANTICO*, *DOCTOR WHO* and *LITTLE DORRIT*. Noteworthy Stage credits include *PINTER AT THE PINTER: THE LOVER/THE COLLECTION* (Harold Pinter Theatre), *ANGELS IN AMERICA*, *HIS DARK MATERIALS*, *HIS GIRL FRIDAY*, *HENRY V*, *HOWARD KATZ* (National Theatre), *A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE* (Lyceum Theatre, Broadway), *THE HISTORY BOYS* (National Theatre / Broadhurst Theatre, Broadway), *THE PASS*, *A MIRACLE*, *PLASTICINE* (Royal Court Theatre) and *A RESPECTABLE WEDDING* (Young Vic).

Jesse Akele as Nurse Pinkney

Jesse was raised in Bradford before moving to London to join the LAMDA foundation course. She then went on to study on the BA Acting course at East15 where she was the receiver of the Laurence Olivier Bursary Award. Since graduating in 2018, her credits include *THE UNNATURAL TRAGEDY*, *BARE* and *THERE ARE NO BEGINNINGS SIRENS*.

ABOUT THE CREW

Richard Eyre | Director

RICHARD EYRE has directed in theatre, opera, TV and film. His first feature film was *THE PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH*, which won the Evening Standard Best Film Award in 1983. Since when, he has directed *IRIS* (which he co-wrote), *STAGE BEAUTY*, *NOTES ON A SCANDAL*, *THE OTHER MAN* and *THE CHILDREN ACT*. He was producer of Play for Today for BBC TV from 1978-1980 and has directed many films for the BBC including the BAFTA-winning *TUMBLEDOWN*, *COUNTRY*, *SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER*, *THE INSURANCE MAN* (written by Alan Bennett), *THE DRESSER* and *KING LEAR* (with Anthony Hopkins).

He was Artistic Director of the National Theatre from 1988 – 1997 and has directed many plays and musicals in the West End and on Broadway. He has directed opera at the Royal Opera House in France, Germany and at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He has written several stage adaptations and published five books. He has won numerous awards for theatre, TV and film. He was knighted in 1997 and was made a Companion of Honour in 2017.

Damian Jones | Producer

Damian Jones is one of Britain's most prolific independent film producers. A career that spans over fifty feature films, he has collaborated with prestige directing talent and cast to create critical and commercial films including the Oscar-winning *THE IRON LADY*, *THE LADY IN THE VAN*, *BELLE*, *WELCOME TO SARAJEVO*, *MILLIONS*, *GOODBYE CHRISTOPHER ROBIN*, *SEX, DRUGS & ROCK & ROLL*, *THE HISTORY BOYS*, *DAD'S ARMY*, *KIDULthood*, *ADULTHOOD* and *ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS THE MOVIE*. Other film credits include M.J. Delaney's *POWDER ROOM*, Gregg Araki's *SPLENDOR*, Regan Hall's *FAST GIRLS*, and Vondie Curtis-Hall's *GRIDLOCK'D*.



Most recent productions and releases include Michael Winterbottom's *GREED*, Argyris Papadimitropoulos's *MONDAY*, Romola Garai's *AMULET*, Rapman's *BLUE STORY*, and Catherine Tate's *THIS NAN'S LIFE*. He is currently in post on Rupert Majendie's *BRIAN & CHARLES*, Raine Ann Miller's *RYE LANE* and Tom George's *SEE HOW THEY RUN*, as well as Eddie Steinberg's *I USED TO BE FAMOUS*. He is currently shooting the comedy *SEIZE THEM*, directed by Curts Vowell and written by Andy Riley.

Kevin Loader | Producer

Kevin Loader is one of the UK's most experienced film and television producers. After a career in arts programmes and drama at BBC Television, he started making feature films over twenty years ago. He has produced three previous works by Alan Bennett: Nicholas Hytner's film versions of *THE HISTORY BOYS* and *THE LADY IN THE VAN*, and the re-makes of Bennett's 12 seminal series of television monologues, *TALKING HEADS*.

His body of work also includes over ten of Roger Michell's films, including *VENUS* (for which Peter O'Toole received his final Oscar nomination), the award-winning *LE WEEK-END*, and *MY COUSIN RACHEL*; and Armando Iannucci's three films to date, *IN THE LOOP*, *THE DEATH OF STALIN* and *THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD*. His credits also include Andrea Arnold's *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*, Sam Taylor Johnson's *NOWHERE BOY* and Julian Jarrold's *BRIDESHEAD REVISITED*.

Loader is currently working on the second season of Armando Iannucci's HBO space comedy series *AVENUE 5*, starring Hugh Laurie, Josh Gad, Zach Woods and Rebecca Front; Hettie McDonald's film of *THE UNLIKELY PILGRIMAGE OF HAROLD FRY*, starring Jim Broadbent; and Roger Michell's final film, an archive documentary about the Queen, *ELIZABETH: A PORTRAIT IN PARTS*.

Heidi Thomas, OBE | Writer

After reading English at Liverpool University, Heidi's first stage play, *SHAMROCKS AND CROCODILES*, won the John Whiting Award in 1985. Her play *INDIGO* was performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company in their 1987/88 season. Other theatrical work includes *SOME SINGING BLOOD* at London's Royal Court Theatre, and an adaptation of Ibsen's *THE LADY FROM THE SEA*, presented in London and at the National Theatre of Norway in Oslo. Her play *THE HOUSE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE* was staged at the Chichester Festival Theatre in 2010. A production of the musical *GIGI* was newly adapted by Heidi and ran at the Kennedy Centre in January 2015, and then on Broadway.

Heidi's extensive television work includes adaptations of *MADAME BOVARY*, *BALLET SHOES* and *LITTLE WOMEN* for the BBC. In 2007 she created, wrote and executive produced the original BBC period drama *LILIES*. She wrote the screenplays for two major BBC adaptations of Elizabeth Gaskell novellas *CRANFORD*, and *RETURN TO CRANFORD*, and was the writer and executive producer of a major revival of the classic British television drama series *UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS*. Her film credits include the screenplay for *I CAPTURE THE CASTLE*.

In 2012, Heidi's hit period drama series *CALL THE MIDWIFE* (BBC/NEAL STREET PRODUCTIONS) was launched by the BBC, breaking viewing records for the channel. Now in its twelfth season, the series still averages 9 million UK viewers per episode and is seen in over 200 territories worldwide. It remains at the forefront of debate surrounding issues of healthcare, including childbirth, disability, abortion and the NHS.



In March 2008, Heidi received the Best Writer award at the UK Royal Television Society awards for her work on *CRANFORD*. In April 2008 she received the Best Writer award at the UK Broadcasting Press Guild Awards for her work on *CRANFORD*, *BALLET SHOES*, and *LILIES*. She was nominated for two BAFTA TV Awards for *CRANFORD* as well as a Primetime Emmy. In November 2008 she received the Writers' Guild of Great Britain award for Best TV Series for *CRANFORD*. In 2011 she received a Primetime Emmy nomination for *UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS*. In December 2012, the annual UK 'Women in Film and Television' awards presented her with the Technicolor Writing Award in recognition of her contribution to the industry. In January 2019, Heidi was presented with the Outstanding Contribution to Writing Award by the Writers' Guild of Great Britain for her body of professional work. She holds honorary doctorates from the University of Liverpool and Edge Hill University, is an Ambassador for the National Down Syndrome Policy Group and an Honorary Associate of The London Film School. In 2022 Heidi received an OBE for Services to Drama in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Ben Smithard, BSC | Director of Photography

Award-winning DOP, Ben Smithard has worked on multiple films, television series and commercials over his career. He was awarded the Primetime Emmy for Best Cinematography for the television series, *CRANFORD*. Further television credits include *THE ROYLE FAMILY*, *SPOOKS*, *THE TRIP*, *TRUE LOVE*, *THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS*, *THE DRESSER* (also directed by Richard Eyre) and two episodes of *THE HOLLOW CROWN*. Ben's film credits include *THE DAMNED UNITED*, *MY WEEK WITH MARILYN*, *BELLE*, *ALAN PARTRIDGE: ALPHA PAPA*, *THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL*, *THE MAN WHO INVENTED CHRISTMAS* and *BLINDED BY THE LIGHT*.

More recent credits include Judd Apatow's *THE BUBBLE*, *DOWNTON ABBEY*, the multiple Academy Award winning film, *THE FATHER*, and will also be working on Florian Zeller's follow up to this, *THE SON*. Ben has also been nominated for three British Society of Cinematography Awards for his work on *THE DRESSER* and *THE HOLLOW CROWN*.

Jacqueline Durrant | Costume Designer

Jacqueline Durrant is an acclaimed Costume Designer whose career began in the wardrobe department on Stanley Kubrick's film *EYES WIDE SHUT*. She worked as an Assistant Costume Designer on several renowned films, including *THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH*, *LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER*, and *STAR WARS: EPISODE II – ATTACK OF THE CLONES*.

Durrant frequently collaborates with two directors, alongside whom she has completed seven films each. The first, Mike Leigh, met Durrant while in production on his 1999 film *TOPSY-TURVY*; at the time, she was working as the Second Assistant Costume Designer. Since then, Leigh has selected Durrant as his Costume Designer on every directorial project, from *ALL OR NOTHING* to *PETERLOO*. Durrant won a BAFTA Film Award for her costume design in Leigh's *VERA DRAKE* and received eight nominations – including BAFTA and Academy Award nominations – for her work on his film *MR. TURNER*.

Jacqueline has also received numerous accolades for her achievements in costume design on the films of her other frequent collaborator, director Joe Wright. For her designs in *ANNA KARENINA*, Jacqueline won eleven awards, including a Costume Designers Guild Award, a BAFTA Film Award, and an Academy Award. She received multiple nominations and awards for Wright's films *PRIDE & PREJUDICE* and *ATONEMENT*.

In 2018, Durrant received Academy Award and BAFTA nominations for two films – *DARKEST HOUR*, yet another Wright collaboration, and *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*. She received a total of



five awards and nine nominations for the latter. In 2019, Jacqueline designed the costumes for two films which swept the Academy Awards – the impressive ‘one shot’ *1917*, directed by Sam Mendes, and Greta Gerwig’s adaptation of *LITTLE WOMEN*, the latter of which won her the Academy Award.

Jacqueline’s recent work can be seen in *SPENCER*, directed by Pablo Larrain and starring Kristen Stewart as Princess Diana and *THE BATMAN*, directed by Matt Reeves and starring Robert Pattinson.

Donal Woods | Production Designer

Donal Woods was born in Dublin and brought up in Newark, Nottinghamshire. He was educated at The Magnus Grammar School, Newark, and then went on to study for a BA. Hons. Degree in Interior Design at De Montford University in Leicester. After leaving university he joined the BBC Television Design Department as a Design Assistant, progressing to Art Director and finally Production Designer. He left the BBC in the mid-1990s to go freelance.

In 2019, Donal was awarded a Doctor of Arts by Nottingham Trent University. Donal has received eight Prime Time Emmy nominations in the United States and five BAFTA nominations in the UK, and he has won a BAFTA for *CRANFORD* and an Emmy for *DOWNTON ABBEY*. He has also designed the Oscar-nominated and Golden Globe-winning film *MY WEEK WITH MARILYN*, both instalments of Shakespeare’s Henry VI from *THE HOLLOW CROWN*, *HOMELAND*, *JAMESTOWN*, and *THE DRESSER*. He has recently finished working on the second *DOWNTON ABBEY* feature film.

Naomi Donne | Hair & Makeup Designer

As a hair and make-up artist in film, theatre and television, Naomi has been a leading name in her profession for many years. She has divided her time between the UK and the US and has worked with such stars as Daniel Day-Lewis, Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Kristin Scott Thomas, Ben Stiller, Anthony Hopkins, Emma Thompson, Helen Mirren, and Robert Pattinson.

Her film credits include *CHOCOLAT*, for which she received a BAFTA nomination; *ZOOLANDER*, *THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS*, *THE CRUCIBLE*, *QUANTUM OF SOLACE*, *SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN*, *SKYFALL*, *PHILOMENA*, *CINDERELLA*, *THE LADY IN THE VAN*, *SPECTRE*, *THE CHILDREN ACT*, *KING LEAR* (Royal Television Society Award, Hollywood Guild Award). *1917*, for which she received a BAFTA and Academy Award nomination; *CRUELLELLA*, for which she received an Academy Award and BAFTA nomination, and *THE BATMAN*. Upcoming projects include Sam Mendes’ *EMPIRE OF LIGHT*.

Her theatre work both on Broadway and the West End includes *MARY POPPINS*, *SHREK THE MUSICAL*, *STARLIGHT EXPRESS*, *TWELFTH NIGHT* at the Lincoln Centre, *BETRAYAL*, *TARZAN*, *NINE*, *ONCE THE MUSICAL* and *THE INHERITANCE*. She has been honoured by New York Women in Film and has an Honorary Fellowship from the University of the Arts London.

John Wilson, ACE | Film Editor

One of Britain’s leading film editors, John Wilson’s films include *BILLY ELLIOT*, for which he received an ACE Eddie nomination for Best Film Editing; *THE HISTORY BOYS*, *THE BOOK THIEF*, *LONDON ROAD* and *ME BEFORE YOU*. Recent credits include Sara Sugarman’s *SAVE THE CINEMA* and *LOVE IN KILNERRY*

Television credits include an episode of BBC’s *THE HOLLOW CROWN*, *THE MINIATURIST*, two episodes of *ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL*, thirteen episodes of *DOWNTON ABBEY*, for



which he was nominated for a BAFTA, two Emmys, an Eddie, as well as winning two HPA awards. John is also a member of the American Cinema Editors (ACE).

George Fenton | Composer

George Fenton has composed music for over 100 films, many plays and television series. For his film and television work, he has received five Oscar nominations and won multiple Ivor Novello, BAFTA, Golden Globe, Emmy and BMI Awards, as well as the Nina Rota award at Venice and a Classical Brit. George has enjoyed long collaborations with directors Richard Attenborough, Stephen Frears, Nicholas Hytner, Nora Ephron, Andy Tennant and notably Ken Loach, for whom he has scored eighteen films.

George's film credits include *GANDHI*, *CRY FREEDOM*, *COMPANY OF WOLVES*, *DANGEROUS LIAISONS*, *THE FISHER KING*, *SHADOWLANDS*, *GROUNDHOG DAY*, *YOU'VE GOT MAIL*, *THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE*, *SWEET HOME ALABAMA*, *HITCH*, *THE LADY IN THE VAN*, *THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY*. Recent projects include *THE SECRET: DARE TO DREAM*, *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*, *THE UNITED WAY*, *THE DUKE* and the forthcoming *ELIZABETH: A PORTRAIT IN PARTS*.

His many TV credits include the BBC's *BLUE PLANET*, *PLANET EARTH* and *FROZEN PLANET*. He created concert versions of these scores which he has toured and conducted worldwide.



CREDITS

Directed by

RICHARD EYRE

Screenplay by

HEIDI THOMAS

Based on the play by

ALAN BENNETT

Produced by

DAMIAN JONES

KEVIN LOADER

Co-Producer

NICOLA MORROW

Executive Producers

CAMERON MCCRACKEN

JENNY BORGARS

ROSE GARNETT

ANDREA SCARSO

Executive Producers

ALAN BENNETT

NICHOLAS HYTNER

CHARLES MOORE

PAUL GRINDEY

Casting by

NINA GOLD & MARTIN WARE

Director of Photography

BEN SMITHARD BSC

Editor

JOHN WILSON ACE



Production Designer

DONAL WOODS

Costume Designer

JACQUELINE DURRAN

Hair and Makeup Designer

NAOMI DONNE

Music by

GEORGE FENTON

First Assistant Director BARRIE MCCULLOCH

Associate Director KATIE HENRY

CAST in alphabetical order

Nurse Pinkney	JESSE AKELE
Mrs Earnshaw	LORRAINE ASHBOURNE
Mother	NIVEDITA BHARGAVA
Joe Colman	DAVID BRADLEY
Minister	NICHOLAS BURNS
Richard	PAUL BUTTERWORTH
Kieran	JP CONWAY
Molly	EILEEN DAVIES
Mary	JUDI DENCH
Ruha	NISHU DIKSHIT
Mavis	PATRICIA ENGLAND
Mr Salter	VINCENT FRANKLIN
Dr Valentine	BALLY GILL
Mr Earnshaw	GERARD HORAN
Ambrose	DEREK JACOBI
Pianist	CATHERINE JAYES
Nani	RAJINDER KAUR



Shirina	HARSHEEN KAUR
Neville	JEFFERY KISSOON
Mrs Maudsley	JULIA MCKENZIE
Abdul	ARIAN NIK
Cynthia	AMANDA ROOT
Sister Gilpin	JENNIFER SAUNDERS
Andy	LOUIS ASHBOURNE-SERKIS
Juneeta	RHEA SHARMA
Lucille	MARLENE SIDAWAY
Gerald	ROSS TOMLINSON
Colin Colman	RUSSELL TOVEY
Police Officer	ALEX WILLIAMS
Hazel	MARJORIE YATES
Music Supervisor	DAVID FISH
Supervising Location Manager	KIM FENTON
Production Sound Mixer	SIMON CLARK
Re-recording Mixers	MIKE DOWSON JASPER THORN
Colourist	GARETH SPENSLEY
Post Production Supervisor	ROBERT PLATT-HIGGINS
Production Accountant	MAXINE STANLEY
B Camera & Steadicam Operator	SVEN JOUKES
First Assistant A Camera	ROZEMARIJN STOKKEL
First Assistant B Camera	DEREK CARLOW
Second Assistant A Camera	ANDY JONES
Second Assistant B Camera	ELIZABETH KHAN-GREIG
Digital Imaging Technician	MATT HUTCHINGS
Video Playback Operator	PACU TRAUTVETTER
Video & DIT Assistant	KYLE PERRY
Script Supervisor	SUSANNA LENTON



Key Grip A Camera	TONY SANKEY
Grip B Camera	JAMIE BRITTAIN
Grip Assistant A Camera	PETE CHATTERTON
Grip Assistant B Camera	ELLIOT BURLEY
Grip Trainee	TREVINO WILLIAMS
Camera Trainee	JACK O'LEARY
First Assistant Sound	BALINT CSAKI
Second Assistant Sound	NICK AGER
Sound Trainee	LARA STOFFERS
Supervising Art Director	MARK KEBBY
Assistant Art Director	NAOMI BAILEY
Set Decorator	LINDA WILSON
Assistant Set Decorator	GEORGINA SYBORN
Production Buyer	SOPHIE HARRIS
Art Department Trainee	ELI KNOX
On-Screen Graphics	REVOLVER
Assistant Costume Designer	EMILY BOWEN
Costume Standbys	ORLA KELLEHER LEO PEART
Costume Assistant	JO STOBBS
Costume Trainee	NADIA JELJELI
Key Makeup Artist	REBECCA COLE
Makeup Juniors	SOPHIA MASCARENHAS - HELEN MCGINTY
Makeup Trainee	EMMA BARUA
Crowd Makeup Supervisor	ANN FENTON
Crowd Makeup Junior	EYESHA YATES
First Assistant Accountant	EVE DAUTREMANT-TOMAS



Accounts Trainee	AMY RUDLING
Accounts Junior	KIMBERLEY RICHARDS
Accounts Clerk	TIAGO DI MAURO
Post Accountants	TREVANNA LONDON ANNIE GAUDET - GUILLERMO QUINTANILLA
Second Assistant Director	DAN COX
Crowd Second Assistant Director	GEMMA READ
Third Assistant Director	ELLA WOOD
Base Runner	SYMONE JOHNSON
Floor Runner	JOE WILLIS
Cast Assistants	JENNI CARVELL PENNY RYDER
Production Manager	REBECCA SMITH
Assistant Production Coordinator	YINKA OBISESAN
Production Secretaries	IJAZ KATO MOLLY CRISP
First Assistant Editor	MARK NEALE
Post Production Coordinator	STEPHEN WALSH
Prop Master	TOM PLEYDELL-PEARCE
Standby Props	DOMINIC BYLES WILL CANN PAUL WHALE
Dressing Props	JOHN CONDRON DON SANTOS
Gaffer	MARK TAYLOR
Best Boy	DANNY GRIFFITHS
Electricians	NATHAN CARSON



	BEN PIPER
	DAVID O'SHAUGNESSY
	MATTHEW HUTCHINGS
Genny Operator	DANNY MILLS
HOD Rigger	ASHLEY CONNELL
Standby Rigger	DANNY HUGHES
Standby Carpenter	CRAIG ELDERFIELD
Rigger	ALFIE SMITH
Assistant Location Manager	LOTTIE TURNER
Unit Managers	JASON ATKINS
	TONY SINGH
Assistant Unit Manager	DECLAN GOSSLING
Location Manager - St Anne's	JONATHAN CHURCH
Location Marshal	BILLY BRIDGER
Trainee Assistant Unit Manager	ALFIE ATKINS
Head of Security	ALEX LANEY
Security	GREENSCREEN LOCATIONS
Dialect Coach	RICHARD RYDER
Choreographer	SCARLETT MACKMIN
Casting Assistant UK	SACHA GARRETT
Casting Director India	TESS JOSEPH
Casting Associates India	RAHUL BATRA - ATIF ALY DAGMAN
SFX Supervisor	STEVE BOWMAN
Indian Unit	
Director	MRIIDU KHOSLA
Creative Director	CHARU KHOSLA
Cinematographer	JASON MOSS
Production Head	DANISH HURZOOK



Creative Producer	AKSHAT MALIK
Spot	MOHSIN
Sound Design by	SOUND24
Supervising Sound Editor	MARK HESLOP
Supervising Dialogue Editor	GILLIAN DODDERS
Dialogue Editors	IAN MORGAN ARTHUR TURNER
Foley Mixer	FRANCESCA BOURNE
Foley Artists	ZOE KING - REBECCA HEATHCOTE
Foley Editor	KIRSTY GRAHAM
Sound Design Consultant	GLENN FREEMANTLE
Sound Re-recorded at	PINEWOOD STUDIOS
Mix Technicians	ISA YOUSUFZAI - FERGUS PATEMAN HEATHER LINNIE
Client Coordinator	SOPHIE MADDEN
Runners	SALINA ZAHER - SAM BLACKER
Dolby Sound Consultant	ROBERT KARLSSON
Visual Effects by	INVISIBLE ARTS COLLECTIVE
Senior Composer	JOHN HARDWICK
Lead Composer	WILL HARDWICK
Composer / Producer	STEPHANIE STAUNTON
Visual Effects by	UNION
Visual Effects Supervisor	ADAM GASCOYNE
Visual Effects Producer	ROB VASSIE
2D Lead Composer	NICHOLAS ZISSIMOS
Compositors	EMM ROUSE JON ATKINS-POTTS
Roto Lead	KEVIN NORRIS
Roto/prep Artist	JENNIFER CARTER
Head of Editorial	SIMON ARNOLD



Managing Director	LUCY COOPER
Studio Operations Manager	SHOBHA PANDYA
Colour & Finish by	COMPANY 3
Finishing Editors	THOMAS LAMBERT JULIEN MATHUS
Finishing Producer	LEIGH MYERS
Finishing Coordinator	FRANCOIS KAMFFER
Production Coordinator	CODY CARDARELLI
Colour Assistants	THERESA CROOKS SHING HONG CHAN JONAS JANGVAD
Data I/O	DAN HELME LEON-RAY RYDER-POTTER AGNE JANUSAITYTE
Image Science	DR. JOHN QUARTEL BRETT RAYNER
Technologists	CALEB GIBSON WARREN INCE BEN JONES
Head of Production	LAURA METCALFE
Account Executive	JON GRAY
Head of Operations	CLAIRE MCGRANE
Digital Dailies	CINELAB FILM & DIGITAL
Dailies Head of Production	JOHN BUSH
Senior Lab Operator	DANIEL ROSENBERG
Junior Lab Operator	DYLAN SAVILLE
Titles designed by	MATT CURTIS
Unit Stills Photographer	ROB YOUNGSON
Unit Publicity	PREMIER



Unit Publicists	ELLEN STEERS - BRODIE WALKER NICKI FOSTER
EPK Producer	TOBY JAMES - PUSH THE BUTTON MEDIA
Medical Consultant	MARTIN SCURR
Covid Medical Advisor	NICK HELEY
Health & Safety Advisor	MICK HURRELL
Unit Medic	SALLY POWELL
Covid Supervisor	SARAH VAN PARYS
Covid Assistant	STACY LIU
Covid On-set Officer	SHAWNEY ROSS
Covid On-set Assistant	REBECCA DRAPER
Pre-Production Covid Supervisor	ASH SMITH
Post Production Covid Testing	CIGNPOST DIAGNOSTICS
Facilities	TRANSLUX - SAM CLARKE
Facilities hod	SIMON MANN
Drivers & Service Crew	VALENTIN SOARES - OLLIE MANN PAGE FREEMAN - STANISLAV TISCENCO

MATERIAL FROM AFRICA UNITED © PATHÉ PRODUCTIONS LIMITED, BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION, UK FILM COUNCIL, AFRICA UNITED LIMITED, DUDU PRODUCTIONS LIMITED AND MANBURY TRADING (PROPRIETARY) LIMITED 2010.

THE TIMES / NEWS LICENSING

ISTOCK BY GETTY IMAGES

Camera Equipment	ARRI RENTAL
Grip Equipment	ALPHA GRIPS
Lighting Equipment	PANALUX
On Set Radios & Mobile Phones	AUDIOLINK



Costumes	FOXTROT - PROPS GALORE
Department Trainees provided by	SCREENSKILLS
Catering	J&J INTERNATIONAL
Clearances	TONIA COHEN - REVIEWED & CLEARED
Post Production Script	ELSTREE SCRIPT SERVICES
Audit	SHIPLEYS LLC
World Revenues collected and distributed by FREEWAY CAM B.V.	
Production Legals	WIGGIN LLP
	ALEXANDER LEA - ED CHALK
Media Insurance	PAUL HILLIER - TYSERS INSURANCE BROKERS

International Sales PATHÉ INTERNATIONAL

MARIE-LAURE MONTIRONI

MAYALEN DE CROISOEUIL - AGATHE THÉODORE

For PATHÉ

Director of Business Affairs	PIERRE DU PLESSIS
Finance Director	JAMES CLARKE
Head of Physical Production	IMOGEN BELL
Head of Theatrical Distribution	LEE BYE
ADAM BARA-LASKOWSKI - ALESSIA BOLOGNA FINKELSTEIN - ISOBEL CARTER	
SOPHIE GLOVER - JEN HAWLEY - JOHN MCGRORY - JACK MYLES	
WAIHUN TANG - FAITH TAYLOR - LLOYD VANSON - DANIELA VIZUETE	

For BBC FILM

Head of Production and Finance	MICHAEL WOOD
Head of Legal and Business Affairs	GERALDINE ATLEE
Head of Communications	EMMA HEWITT
Legal and Production Assistant	RUTH SANDERS

For GREAT BISON PRODUCTIONS and INGENIOUS MEDIA

PETER TOUCHE

CHRISTELLE CONAN



MICKEY ROGERS

TASNEEM CHOWDHURY

LEIGH HILLS

LINDSEY HUNT

SOPHIE HYDE

Production monitoring services for Great Bison Productions provided by
NADINE LUQUE and AGAR FORJÁN of GOLDEN ARROW ENTERTAINMENT

Legal services for Great Bison Productions provided by
DAVID QULI and NANCY AWAD of WIGGIN LLP

Post Consultant	LOUISE SEYMOUR
Conducted by	GEORGE FENTON
Orchestra Leader	TOM PIGOTT-SMITH
Piano	SIMON CHAMBERLAIN
Harp	HUGH WEBB
Cello	CAROLINE DEARNLEY
Choir	LONDON VOICES
Choirmaster	BEN PARRY
Musicians contracted by	SUSIE GILLIS FOR ISOBEL GRIFFITHS LTD
Orchestrations	GEOFFREY ALEXANDER
Music Preparation	SZE YING CHAN
Recorded and mixed by	MAT BARTRAM
	AIR STUDIOS LYNDHURST HALL
Protools	JACK MILLS
Music Editor	GRAHAM SUTTON

"GOOD MORNING"

Written by Nacio Brown and Arthur Freed

Published by EMI Robbins Catalog Inc."



"YOURS"

Written by Augustin Rodriguez,
Gonzalo Roig and Jack Sherr
Published by E B Marks Music Corp"

"YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU"

Written by Joe McCarthy / James Monaco
© Broadway Music Corp. /
Edward Kassner Music Co Ltd"

"BESAME MUCHO"

By Ray Conniff
Written by Consuelo Velazquez
Published by Promotora Hispano Americano De Musica,
administered by Peer International Corp.
c/o Originally Released 1960.
All rights reserved by Columbia Records,
a division of Sony Music Entertainment
Licensed by Sony Music Entertainment UK Limited

"LA TRAVIATA - PARIGI O CARA"

By Giuseppe Verdi
Sung by Ann De Renais &
Benjamin Vischal Thapa

"FOR THE GOOD TIMES"

By Perry Como
Written by Kristoffer Kristofferson
Published by Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd.
on behalf of Universal Music
c/o 1973 RCA Records,
a division of Sony Music Entertainment
Licensed by Sony Music Entertainment UK Limited

"CONGRATULATIONS"



Written by Phil Coulter and Bill Martin

Published by Peter Maurice Music Co Ltd

"JAANA JOGI DE NAAL"

By Kully B, Gussy G

Licensed courtesy of Cavendish Music

"GET HAPPY"

Written by Ted Koehler and Harold Arlen

Published by Remick Music Corp, S A Music Co. /

Administered by Reel Muzik Werks, LLC. Used by Permission.

All Rights Reserved.

Used by kind permission of Carlin Music Delaware LLC,

on behalf of Redwood Music Ltd

Thanks to

ANTHONY JONES - MILO JONES

THE BRIDGE THEATRE - ST ANNE'S HOSPITAL

SHOOTER'S HILL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - LONDON COLISEUM

KAL BIGGINS, SADLY MISSED



Filmed on location in Wakefield & London, UK

The characters, events and incidents portrayed and depicted in this motion picture are fictional. Any similarity or resemblance to the name, character or history of any real person, living or dead, or to any real events is entirely coincidental and any resemblance should not be inferred.



The animals featured in this motion picture were under supervision at all times and any scenes appearing to place animals in jeopardy were simulated.

The financiers and producers of this motion picture did not receive any payment or other consideration, or enter into any agreement, for the depiction of tobacco products in this motion picture.

Developed by Pathé

Executive producing services provided by Viewfinder Film



This production was made possible by the support of HM Treasury & DCMS' Film and TV Production Restart Scheme.

A DJ Films/Redstart Production for

Pathé, BBC Film & Great Bison Productions

© Pathé Productions Limited and British Broadcasting Corporation 2022



**BBC
FILM**

INGENIOUS

Distributed by Pathé