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BBC Films

THE LADY IN THE VAN

Directed by Nicholas Hytner

Written by Alan Bennett from his memoir

103 min

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CREDITS

CAST

Maggie Smith	MISS SHEPHERD
Alex Jennings	ALAN BENNETT
Jim Broadbent	UNDERWOOD
Frances De La Tour	MRS VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
Roger Allam	RUFUS

DIRECTED BY

Nicholas Hytner

WRITTEN BY

Alan Bennett from his memoir

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Christine Langan, Ed Wethered, Charles Moore, Miles Ketley

PRODUCERS

Kevin Loader, Nicholas Hytner, Damian Jones

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COMPOSER

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COSTUME DESIGNER

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HAIR AND MAKE UP DESIGNER

Naomi Donne

CASTING DIRECTOR

Toby Whale

SYNOPSIS

Alan Bennett's story is based on the true story of Miss Shepherd (played by a magnificent Maggie Smith), a woman of uncertain origins who "temporarily" parked her van in Bennett's London driveway and proceeded to live there for 15 years. What begins as a begrudged favor becomes a relationship that will change both their lives. Filmed on the street and in the house where Bennett and Miss Shepherd lived all those years, acclaimed director Nicholas Hytner reunites with iconic writer Alan Bennett (*The Madness of King George*, *The History Boys*) to bring this rare and touching portrait to the screen.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

As a young director living in North London in the early 1980s, Nicholas Hytner often used to walk down a glorious Victorian sweep of a street called Gloucester Crescent. Then, as now, Gloucester Crescent was a pretty, leafy street on which lived many famous names from London's stage and literary worlds, including director and TV presenter Jonathan Miller, writer and journalist Claire Tomalin, playwright and novelist Michael Frayn, novelist Alice Thomas Ellis and playwright Alan Bennett. As Hytner strode through on his way to the urban bustle of Camden High Street, he would try to work out who lived at which house. He knew Alan Bennett lived at number 23. It was a lovely house not dissimilar to others in the street. But what marked out number 23 was the entirely unlovely, dirty and decrepit yellow van parked in its drive, under which was crammed various layers of detritus, old shopping bags and bits of carpet.

Hytner was aware an old lady of indeterminate age lived in the van. She was a well-known figure around Camden Town – what locals tend to call a ‘character’ – sometimes mocked and persecuted by passers-by. Hytner also noticed a strange system of wires running between the van and the house. What he didn't know was what the van and the lady had to do with Alan Bennett.

“I could not work out what this yellow van was or who this old lady was. I wondered briefly if she was his mother. But then I thought he can't be keeping his mother in a van in the drive,” Hytner recalls. “I would walk on by.”

The director and the playwright did not meet properly until several years later in 1989, which turned out to be just after the lady had died and the van had gone. “I visited number 23 to talk about what became the first play [The Wind In The Willows] in a long collaboration,” Hytner remembers. “It didn't occur to me to ask what that yellow van was. I later discovered nobody ever asked him what the van was, even when it was there. The English are too polite.”

When Bennett had first moved into the Crescent in the late 1960s, the woman, whom he came to know as Miss Shepherd, was already living in the van, although further up the street. He gradually became aware of her as she and the van drifted down the Crescent, as she systematically outstayed her welcome outside every other house.

“Over about a year or so she got to the bottom of the slope which is where number 23 is and she was parked opposite,” Bennett explains. “She couldn't go any further as I don't think the van worked at that time. I got used to her being in my eye line as I sat working at the bay window.”

Slowly Bennett became the person she related to in the street. “Because I lived just opposite,” he says. “She used the loo once or twice, which appalled me really and I think she once used the telephone. But she didn't ever want anything, not food or anything like that.”

For a while Miss Shepherd was parked legally on the street. An understanding Camden Council painted yellow lines on the road as far as the van and then started them again on the other side.

“But eventually they decided she couldn’t be parked there and they decided they had to move her on,” Bennett remembers. “At that point I said she could put the van in the drive, thinking it would be for a few months. It turned out to be 15 years.”

The first Hytner knew of the whole story was when Bennett published a memoir of those years in the London Review of Books’ 25th anniversary edition in October 1989. The LRB’s editor, Mary Kay Wilmers, also lived on Gloucester Crescent. Bennett had taken a slight hiatus from his theatre work to work regularly in film and TV but in 1991 he returned to a productive streak on the stage, writing *The Madness Of King George*, which was directed by Hytner and performed at the National Theatre and subsequently turned into a feature, also directed by Hytner, in 1994. In 1999, he wrote *The Lady In The Van* stage play, starring Maggie Smith as Miss Shepherd.

It has taken another 15 years for Bennett to feel ready to revisit the material as a feature film. In 2006, he and Hytner had transformed their hit play *The History Boys* into a two-time BAFTA nominated feature, as they had with *The Madness Of King George*, which garnered 14 BAFTA nominations, including a win for the Alexander Korda Award for Best British Film, and four Academy Award nominations and one win. So happy had been the collaboration on *The History Boys* that Bennett and Hytner were keen to work again with the film’s established British producers, Kevin Loader of Free Range Films and Damian Jones of DJ Films.

“Those of us involved in *The History Boys* had been looking for something to do together again and it was suggested *THE LADY IN THE VAN* had film potential,” says Jones, one of the UK’s leading producers with feature credits that include *THE IRON LADY*, *BELLE*, *ADULTHOOD* and *KIDULTHOOD*. “I turned to Nick, Alan and Maggie’s agent and said ‘What about this?’ They all said they would do if the others wanted to do it, that if Nick thought there was a movie there, they would sign up to it. And they did, thankfully.”

“It was very much a case of ‘Let’s get the team back together!’” remarks Loader, whose prolific filmography takes in some of the most successful British films of recent times, including *CAPTAIN CORELLI’S MANDOLIN*, *IN THE LOOP*, *NOWHERE BOY* and *LE WEEKEND*. “A film made complete sense - providing you could get Maggie.”

Hytner approached Smith and the signal came back she was very interested indeed. The production quickly gathered momentum as, thanks to Smith’s shooting commitments on *Carnival Film & Television’s* award-winning period TV series, *Downton Abbey*, the team wanted to shoot in London in the autumn of 2014.

Jones and Loader, with executive producers Charles Moore and Miles Ketley of Wiggin, took the project to BBC Films, with which many of the team have a long relationship and which had backed *The History Boys*. At the same time they approached Tom Rothman, the then-head of TriStar Productions who had revitalised TriStar and was running it as a joint venture between himself and Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE). Rothman was appointed chairman of Sony Pictures' Motion Picture Group in February 2015, continuing to oversee his TriStar features.

“Tom had been our patron at Fox Searchlight for *The History Boys* and he had been the executive for *Nick on The Madness Of George* at Samuel Goldwyn Films,” Loader explains.

In fact, Rothman and Hytner are close and follow each other's work. Rothman has distributed all of Hytner's films in the US and was familiar with the stage play of *THE LADY IN THE VAN*. He was also very excited by the prospect of seeing Maggie Smith in a leading dramatic role on film.

“It was a combination of the filmmaking team and the pedigree of the material, at the right price,” says Jones of the pitch.

Principal photography on *THE LADY IN THE VAN* began in October 2014 in North London. Loader took on the day-to-day producing duties as Jones' was needed in Yorkshire where production had also started on another film on which he was producer, *DAD'S ARMY*.

“*THE LADY IN THE VAN* is a portrait of a powerful but puzzling, extraordinary woman who arrived from nowhere and completely took over nearly 20 years of Alan Bennett's life,” says Loader of what he loves about the story. “It's the story of their relationship and the strange connection they developed through bad-tempered convenience and his curiosity into her life.” “All the great universal stories are universal because they are so particular,” Hytner suggests. “Most of this story happens on a tiny patch of land. That tiny little drive outside a particular house in North London.”

He points out *THE LADY IN THE VAN* is also a study of how an artist creates art and how a writer writes. “The film is also about the act of creation,” he says. “It's about Alan's realisation you don't put yourself into what you write, you find yourself there. While Miss Shepherd is living on his doorstep he slowly realises this is what he's got to write about. And in writing about her, he realises important things about himself.”

Writing about Miss Shepherd

Remarkably, Alan Bennett is adamant the geographical living arrangements between himself and Miss Shepherd did not greatly impinge on him.

“She kept herself very much to herself,” Bennett explains. “But when I was writing or trying to write, it was very often just staring out of the window. And the van was in my eye line. Her day would begin with the doors of the van being theatrically flung wide and then various bags, contents nameless, would be hurled out. Two white legs appeared and she would come out backwards. I got used to all that, and of the sound of the van door. And I was slightly accommodating to her in the sense that I didn’t make a row at night if I was coming in.

“But I don’t think she accommodated herself to me,” he laughs. “She did exactly as she wanted. She also had no sense of humour at all. I never saw her laugh. She did say things which were funny which I instantly wrote down. She talked of herself in the third person, which is always a danger sign, I think, with people. And she talked of the nation. She had a notion of herself as a person of some substance and equated herself with the nation’s leaders.

“She was very strong-willed,” he admits. “Her will was much stronger than mine. If I would have tried to get her out it would have been such a performance that it just wasn’t worth it really. Also, I wasn’t bothered about the garden, I’m not one of nature’s gardeners.”

Perhaps as equally remarkable was Bennett’s ability to resist the temptation to write about the curious woman who lived just under his nose for so long.

“Ha, I’ve never had to resist the temptation to write!” he guffaws. “It’s quite easy to resist the temptation to write. I could see she was an interesting subject because she was very eccentric but there would be no question of writing about her while she was there as that would focus attention on me as well. I didn’t want people coming to look at the van or coming to look at me.”

After Bennett published his memoir in the London Review of Books, Miss Shepherd’s brother contacted Bennett and filled in the many blanks about his sister’s life and how she had landed in the van. He revealed Miss Shepherd had been an extremely accomplished concert pianist before the Second World War who had trained in Paris with the virtuoso Alfred Cortot. He talked about Miss Shepherd’s religious fervour and her desire as a young woman to become a nun. The reality of life in a strict convent where music was forbidden nearly broke her, something she would suffer from psychologically throughout her life.

Her brother also told Bennett about a hit-and-run road accident with which Miss Shepherd had been involved and how she believed she had been solely responsible for the death of a young motorcyclist.

The discovery of the sad but fascinating details of Miss Shepherd’s life, gave Bennett the colour and the texture he needed with which to write the play. But a problem remained – himself.

“I could see how she would make a good character in a play but I couldn’t see how I could tell my own story. That made it quite difficult to write,” Bennett explains. “It was only when I thought of splitting myself in two that I could see how I could do it.”

Hytner explains how he sees it: “I think a lot of writers and creative people see themselves as both the person who lives the life and the person who turns the life into literature and into art.”

When it came to the film version, Bennett and Hytner spent nine months working on the screenplay together.

“The script was constantly being revised and improved and tinkered with,” Loader explains. “Alan and Nick have a shorthand and Alan trusts Nick’s judgement so Nick asks Alan for things he thinks are missing. It was a discovery of what had worked in the play and would work on film and a discovery of what had worked in the play and wouldn’t work in the film.”

The creative team discovered a freedom that came with distance. The script for the stage play had been written 10 years after Miss Shepherd’s death. Now a further 15 years on and Bennett felt less of a need to hold certain things back and less inclined to stick to a precise chronology of events. For example, knowing what he now does about Miss Shepherd which he did not know when she was alive, the Miss Shepherd of THE LADY IN THE VAN is infused with a real sense of regret and of what might have been that Bennett does not claim to have noticed during her lifetime.

“She was what I was given to write about,” he says. “Some writers spend their lives writing about going to Patagonia or their time between the thighs of two dozen women. This was rather duller but nevertheless this is what I was landed with. That’s what you have to do when you write, you just have to play the card next to your thumb, as it were.”

ABOUT THE CAST

DAME MAGGIE SMITH, MISS SHEPHERD

Dame Maggie Smith made her debut with the Oxford University Drama Society (OUDS) as Viola in 1952 and since been awarded two Academy Awards, countless best actress nods, and has been honoured with both the CBE and DBE. In 2014 she was honoured to be made a Companion of Honour by Her Majesty the Queen. She received the Hamburg Shakespeare Prize in 1991, is a Fellow of the British Film Institute, and was awarded a Silver BAFTA in 1993. She is an Honorary D.Litt of Cambridge University and St Andrews, and is a patron of the Jane Austen Society. Her theatre credits include: AS YOU LIKE IT, THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, RICHARD II and WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS. In 1963 she joined the National Theatre at the Old Vic and appeared in OTHELLO playing Desdemona opposite Laurence Olivier, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, MISS JULIE, THE RECRUITING OFFICER, HAY FEVER, THE MASTER BUILDER, BLACK COMEDY, THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM, THE THREE SISTERS, HEDDA GABLER and COMING IN TO LAND for Peter Hall at the RNT. In several seasons at Stratford, Ontario, between 1976 and 1980 she appeared in ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, THE WAY OF THE WORLD, THE THREE SISTERS, THE GUARDSMAN, AS YOU LIKE IT, MACBETH, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, THE SEAGULL and VIRGINIA. Her West End work includes: SHARE MY LETTUCE, RHINOCEROS, THE REHEARSAL, THE PRIVATE EAR & THE PUBLIC EYE, MARY MARY, PRIVATE LIVES, PETER PAN, NIGHT AND DAY, VIRGINIA, INTERPRETERS, THE INFERNAL MACHINE, LETTICE AND LOVAGE, THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, THREE TALL WOMEN, TALKING HEADS, A DELICATE BALANCE, THE LADY IN THE VAN, THE BREATH OF LIFE, and THE LADY FROM DUBUQUE. Her film credits include OH, WHAT A LOVELY WAR!, THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE, DEATH ON THE NILE, TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT, CALIFORNIA SUITE, A PRIVATE FUNCTION, THE LONELY PASSION OF JUDITH HEARNE, HOOK, SISTER ACT, THE SECRET GARDEN, RICHARD III, FIRST WIVES CLUB, WASHINGTON SQUARE, TEA WITH MUSSOLINI, THE LAST SEPTEMBER, GOSFORD PARK, DIVINE SECRETS OF THE YA-YA SISTERHOOD, KEEPING MUM, BECOMING JANE, THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL, QUARTET, THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL and MY OLD LADY. She is also known worldwide as Professor McGonagall in the Harry Potter films. Television credits include: MRS SILLY, TALKING HEADS: BED AMONG THE LENTILS, MEMENTO MORI, SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER, ALL THE KING'S MEN, DAVID COPPERFIELD, MY HOUSE IN UMBRIA, CAPTURING MARY, and most recently as the Dowager Duchess in DOWNTON ABBEY.

ALEX JENNINGS, ALAN BENNETT

Since training at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, Alex Jennings has become one of the most successful British theatre actors of his generation. His achievements include three Laurence Olivier awards: for the Russian comedy *TOO CLEVER BY HALF* (Comedy Performance of the Year), Ibsen's *PEER GYNT* (Best Actor), and as Henry Higgins in *MY FAIR LADY* (Best Actor in a Musical or Entertainment), a role he recently reprised on stage in Paris. He has also recently played Willy Wonka in Sam Mendes' *CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY*, and Alan Bennett in *HYMN & COCKTAIL STICKS (UNTOLD STORIES)*. The versatile actor's career includes performing with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), the English National Opera, and at the National Theatre. On television, he is well known for his roles in TV series including the BBC period drama *CRANFORD*, Carnival Films' *WHITECHAPEL*, the BBC's legal drama *SILK*, and the forthcoming Netflix series *THE CROWN*, in which he plays the Duke of Windsor. His film appearances include roles in Amma Asante's *BELLE*, Stephen Frears's *THE QUEEN* (in which he played Prince Charles), Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's *BABEL*, John Stephenson's *FIVE CHILDREN AND IT*, Iain Softley's *THE WINGS OF A DOVE*, and Shekhar Kapoor's *THE FOUR FEATHERS*.

JIM BROADBENT, UNDERWOOD

Jim Broadbent is an Academy Award, BAFTA, Emmy and Golden Globe-winning theatre, film and television actor, best known for roles in *IRIS* (for which he won Best Supporting Actor at the Academy Awards and the Golden Globes in 2001); *MOULIN ROUGE!* (for which he was awarded the BAFTA for performance in a Supporting Role in 2001) and the international phenomenon the Harry Potter franchise. He was BAFTA nominated most recently for his role alongside Meryl Streep in Phyllida Lloyd's *THE IRON LADY* (2011). Since his film debut in 1978, Jim has appeared in countless successful and acclaimed films, establishing a long-running collaboration with Mike Leigh (*LIFE IS SWEET*, *TOPSY-TURVY*, *VERA DRAKE* and *ANOTHER YEAR*) and demonstrating his talents as a character actor in films as diverse as Neil Jordan's *THE CRYING GAME* (1992), Woody Allen's *BULLETS OVER BROADWAY* (1994), Mark Herman's *LITTLE VOICE* (1998); Sharon Maguire's *BRIDGET JONES' DIARY* (2001); Edgar Wright's *HOT FUZZ* (2007); Tom Hooper's *THE DAMNED UNITED* (2009) and Tom Tykwer and the Wachowski siblings' *CLOUD ATLAS* (2012). Also honoured for his extensive work on television, Broadbent received a Royal Television Award and BAFTA nomination for his leading performance in *ANY HUMAN HEART*, based on William Boyd's novel of the same name) and has been recognised for his performance in Tom Hooper's *LONGFORD*, winning a BAFTA and a Golden Globe, as well as being nominated for an Emmy. He received an Emmy for *THE STREET* (2006) and his earlier role in *THE GATHERING STORM* (2002) earned him Golden Globe and Emmy nominations. Having studied at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, Broadbent has also appeared extensively on the

stage, notably with the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company. His work on the stage has seen him appear in acclaimed productions ranging from Peter Flannery's *OUR FRIENDS IN THE NORTH*, at the RSC Pit, and Athol Fugard's *A PLACE WITH PIGS*, at The National, through to Alan Bennett's *HABEAS CORPUS* at the Donmar and Martin McDonagh's *THE PILLOWMAN* at the National.

FRANCES DE LA TOUR, MRS VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

British actress Frances de la Tour boasts a hugely successful career spanning theatre, television and film. A regular at the National Theatre, the RSC and on London's West End; Her celebrated stage performances include Helena in Peter Brook's iconic production of *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*, *THE HISTORY BOYS* (a role she reprised on film for which she earned a BAFTA nomination for Best Supporting Actress in 2007), and on Broadway for which she received a Tony Award. She starred in the title roles of *HAMLET* at the Half Moon Theatre and *ST JOAN* for the National Theatre as well as *LES PARENTS TERRIBLES*, a role which garnered her an Olivier award nomination for Best Actress. De la Tour won the Evening Standard and Olivier awards for Best Actress for *DUET FOR ONE*, the Variety Club Best Actress prize for *FALLEN ANGELS*, the Olivier award for Best Supporting Actress for *WHEN SHE DANCEED*, and the Olivier award for Best Actress for *A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN*. Her television roles include BAFTA-nominated performances in *DUET FOR ONE*, and for Kudo Productions' *VICIOUS*. Frances also starred in the BBC comedy series *BIG SCHOOL*. On film, in addition to *RISING DAMP*, the film, for which she received The Evening Standard Best Actress Award; De la Tour has also appeared in Martin Scorsese's *HUGO*, David Yates' *HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS* and *THE GOBLET OF FIRE*, Albert and Allen Hughes' *THE BOOK OF ELI*, Tim Burton's *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* and James Bobin's *ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS*. Recently Frances appeared in *SURVIVOR* and *MR HOLMES*. Her last stage appearance was the starring role in *PEOPLE* by Alan Bennett at The National Theatre directed by Nicholas Hytner.

ROGER ALLAM, RUFUS

The three-time Laurence Olivier award-winning actor Roger Allam is a well-known face on UK television and film and voice on radio. A member of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) since 1981, Allam originated the role of Inspector Javert on the London stage in *LES MISERABLES* in 1984. His many and varied theatrical roles include Macbeth in *MACBETH*, Graves in John Caird's *MONEY* (for which he won the Best Supporting Actor prize at the Laurence Olivier Awards), Captain Terri Dennis in Michael Grandage's *PRIVATEES ON PARADE* and Falstaff in Dominic Dromgoole's *HENRY V PARTS 1 & 2*. He won the Laurence Olivier award for Best Actor for the latter two roles. In film, Allam is the winner of the

Peter Sellers' award for comedy at the Evening Standard Film Awards 2011 for his role in Stephen Frears' TAMARA DREWE. He has enjoyed further dramatic and comedy roles in an eclectic line-up of titles including Michael Winterbottom's A COCK AND BULL STORY, James McTeigue's V FOR VENDETTA, Ken Loach's THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY, Stephen Frears' THE QUEEN, James Watkins' THE WOMAN IN BLACK, Phyllida Lloyd's THE IRON LADY and the Wachowski's SPEED RACER. Most recently Allam has appeared in Julian Jarrod's A ROYAL NIGHT OUT and Declan Recks' THE TRUTH COMMISSIONER. Allam's TV performances include memorable roles in Armando Iannucci's THE THICK OF IT, Susanna White's PARADE'S END, ENDEAVOUR and Al Campbell's BAD EDUCATION.

DEBORAH FINDLAY, PAULINE

British actress Deborah Findlay began her career in Leeds with a theatre group touring plays, music, community theatre and cabaret before moving to London to work at the Theatre Royal Stratford East in 1978. She was in the original production of TOP GIRLS by Caryl Churchill and performed in seasons at the RSC and National Theatre where she received an Olivier Award and Outer Critics Circle Award for STANLEY. Her TV work includes roles in COALITION (as Harriet Harman), LEAVING, POIROT, SILENT WITNESS, TORCHWOOD, CRANFORD, WIVES AND DAUGHTERS and STATE OF PLAY. Findlay's feature film work has brought her together with leading international directors including Anthony Minghella in TRULY MADLY DEEPLY, Neil Jordan for THE END OF THE AFFAIR, Mira Nair in VANITY FAIR, and SAUL DIBB for Suite Francaise. Findlay also appeared in the incredibly successful CORIOLANUS performed at the Donmar released through NT Live to wide acclaim and success.

GWEN TAYLOR, MAM

Gwen Taylor is one of Britain's leading actresses, well known for her many popular television roles. Her last theatre role came in SUNSPOTS at the Hampstead Theatre where she played the role of Olive.

Her numerous roles include Ann Foster in CORONATION STREET; Peg in HEARTBEAT for Yorkshire Television; the title role in three series of BARBARA for Carlton TV; Rita Simcock in two series of the BAFTA-nominated A BIT OF A DO ; Margaret in three series of the BBC Wales drama BELONGING; Gen in two series of CONJUGAL RITES; DUTY FREE; CLASS ACT with Joanna Lumley; PILGRIM'S REST; A PERFECT STATE; INSPECTOR MORSE (guest role); MURDER MOST HORRID (guest role); MOVING STORY; WYCLIFFE; SHARP END; HOLBY CITY (guest role); SCREAMING; SOME KIND OF LIFE; TIES OF BLOOD,

THE BILLY PLAYS with Kenneth Branagh; KEEPING TOM NICE; HAPPY CHRISTMAS, I LOVE YOU; SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE for HTV; SOB SISTERS for Central; COLIN'S SANDWICH; YES PRIME MINISTER; ANTIGONE; FOREVER YOUNG; DING BRASS and RIPPING YARNS. Recently Gwen has had guest roles on CASUALTY, DOC MARTIN, MIDSOMER MURDERS, TABLE 12, BORN AND BRED, and FAT FRIENDS.

Her wealth of theatrical experience includes: THE LAST OF THE DUTY FREE (UK Tour); THE BUTTERFLY LION (UK Tour); DRIVING MISS DAISY (UK Tour); THE BUTTERFLY LION (Leicester Curve and Derby Theatre); CALENDAR GIRLS (UK Tour); QUARTET (UK Tour); PRICK UP YOUR EARS (Comedy Theatre and UK Tour); ABOUT ALICE on national tour; Catherine in ARMS AND THE MAN on national tour; MOMENT OF WEAKNESS on national tour; PICASSO'S WOMEN on national tour, starring with Jerry Hall; LETTICE AND LOVAGE (Theatre Royal, Bath and tour); the title role in the national tour of SHIRLEY VALENTINE; HERITAGE (Hampstead Theatre and national tour); THE GLASS MENAGERIE (Derby Playhouse); MOTHER TONGUE (Greenwich Theatre); CLOUDS and RIPEN OUR DARKNESS (Royal Court); DEAD SHEEP (Bush Theatre), SKIRMISHES and SPOOKHOUSE (Hampstead Theatre); TRUMPETS AND RASPBERRIES (Phoenix Theatre); THE BIG KNIFE and CONJUGAL RITES (Watford Palace Theatre); LIGHT UP THE SKY (Windsor Theatre Royal and Globe Theatre); TOP GIRLS (Royal Court and New York); THE MAINTENANCE MAN (Comedy Theatre); WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? (West Yorkshire Playhouse), and TIME OF MY LIFE (Vaudeville Theatre and national tour). Gwen also played Gertrude in Sir Peter Hall's HAMLET (Gielgud Theatre and national tour), Mo in LOVE (West Yorkshire Playhouse), a play written by her husband, Graham Reid.

Her film appearances include: THE LADY AND THE VAN, RICHARD'S THINGS and MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN

PANDORA COLIN, FIONA PERRY

Most recently Pandora Colin appeared in James Graham's THE VOTE directed by Josie Rourke for the Donmar Warehouse. Other theatre credits include CORNELIUS (Finborough/Theatre 59e59e New York), Richard Eyre's THE DARK EARTH AND THE LIGHT SKY at the Almeida Theatre, AFTER THE DANCE directed by Thea Sharrock and EVERY GOOD BOY DESERVES FAVOUR, both for the National Theatre. Pandora's film credits include I GIVE IT A YEAR, RUN, FAT BOY, RUN, A BUNCH OF AMATEURS and WHAT RATS WON'T DO. Television appearances include THE HOLLOW CROWN directed by Dominic Cooke for the BBC, MR SELFRIDGE for ITV, LIFE BEGINS for Granada Television, HOTEL BABYLON, COUPLING both for the BBC and mini-series TITANIC.

NICHOLAS BURNS, GILES PERRY

British actor Nicholas Burns first won acclaim for his title performance in Chris Morris' satirical TV show NATHAN BARLEY. His further TV work includes roles in the BBC's ABSOLUTE POWER, Talkback's MAN STROKE WOMAN, Tiger Aspect's BENIDORM, Baby Cow's UNCLE and Cuba Pictures' political drama COALITION for Channel 4 in which he played Ed Balls. In film, Burns has appeared in Edgar Wright's THE WORLD'S END for Working Title Films and Tom Harper's WAR BOOK for Sixteen Films. His theatre work includes Neil LaBute's FAT PIG and Josie Rourke's THE VOTE at the Donmar Warehouse.

DAVID CALDER, LEO FAIRCHILD

David Calder is one of Britain's leading classical actors whose extensive theatre credits include many seasons at the RSC and productions at the National Theatre. They include HAMLET, directed by Nicholas Hytner, in which he starred as Polonius. Calder's numerous TV credits include ITV's TITANIC and BBC's THE WRONG MANS and his feature work is headed by Milos Forman's GOYA'S GHOSTS, Tom Tykwer's PERFUME, Ron Howard's RUSH, and Werner Herzog's upcoming QUEEN OF THE DESERT.

MARION BAILEY, HOUSEKEEPER AT CONVENT

British film, TV and theatre actress Marion Bailey trained at The Guildhall School of Music & Drama and at the National Youth Theatre. She is best known for her film work in the seminal feature MEANTIME, directed by Mike Leigh, and her subsequent roles in Leigh's films, ALL OR NOTHING, VERA DRAKE and, most recently, MR TURNER, in which she starred as Turner's confidante Mrs Booth (nominated for London Critics' Circle Best Supporting Actress). Bailey's further film credits include Debbie Isitt's NASTY NEIGHBOURS, Craig Ferguson's I'LL BE THERE, and SJ Clarkson's TOAST. Bailey has established herself as a familiar face on television, appearing in a wealth of popular series including CASE HISTORIES, BEING HUMAN, HIM & HER and soon to be released THE TRIALS OF JIMMY ROSE. Marion's numerous TV films include WAY UPSTREAM and Adrian Shergold's PERSUASION. On the stage, her performances range from GOOSE-PIMPLES (nominated for Theatre Critics' Award Most Promising Newcomer) to GRIEF, both directed by Mike Leigh. Marion's most recent stage credits include BLURRED LINES at the National Theatre and as the Queen in Moira Buffini's award winning HANDBAGGED at The Vaudeville Theatre.

CECILIA NOBLE, MISS BRISCOE - SOCIAL WORKER

Cecilia Noble trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Her veteran and impressive career encompasses film, TV and theatre, with her stage work including various seasons at The National Theatre, Young Vic Theatre and The Royal Shakespeare Company. In 2014 Cecilia's portrayal of Sister Moore in *THE AMEN CORNER* directed by Rufus Norris at The National Theatre saw her nominated for an Olivier Award and win What's On Stage and Evening Standard awards for Best Supporting Actress.

Noble's TV credits include, *CAPITAL* (BBC), *NURSE* (BBC) and *OUR GIRL* (BBC), while her filmography includes Suri Krishnamma's *NEW YEAR'S DAY* and Ian Sharp's *MRS CALDICOTT'S CABBAGE WAR*.

CLAIRE FOY, LOIS - SOCIAL WORKER

Claire Foy has most recently been seen and nominated for a Critics Choice Award for her role as Anne Boleyn in *WOLF HALL*, the BBC's critically acclaimed adaptation of Hilary Mantel's Man Booker Prize-winning novels *WOLF HALL* and *BRING UP THE BODIES*. Further television credits include lead roles in *CROSSBONES* (NBC), *WHITE HEAT* (BBC), *HACKS* (Channel 4) *UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS* (Channel 4), *GOING POSTAL* (Sky 1), *THE NIGHT WATCH* (BBC), *THE PROMISE* (Channel 4) and *LITTLE DORRIT* (BBC) winner of Best Mini Series at the 2009 Emmy's. Claire's performance earned her a nomination for Best Actress at the RTS Awards 2009. On the big screen Claire has recently been seen opposite Gael García Bernal in Jon Stewart's *ROSEWATER* which was released in November 2014 in the US. 2014 also saw Claire in 'VAMPIRE ACADEMY' as 'Sonya Karp' amongst a cast including Joely Richardson and Olga Kurylenko. Claire has appeared in a number of prestigious theatre projects. She last starred as 'Lady Macbeth' at the Trafalgar Studios opposite James McAvoy in 'MACBETH'. In 2012 Claire appeared at the Royal Court in two separate productions, Mike Bartlett's 'LOVE, LOVE, LOVE', and 'DING, DONG THE WICKED'. She made her professional stage debut at the National Theatre in 'DNA/ THE MIRACLE/ BABY GIRL', one of a trio of acts, directed by Paul Miller.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

NICHOLAS HYTNER, DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

NICHOLAS HYTNER's films are *The Madness of King George* and *The History Boys* (both in collaboration with Alan Bennett), *The Crucible* and *The Object of My Affection*.

He was director of the National Theatre from 2003-2015, where he brought in a new community of artists, produced in equal measure the classical repertoire and new work, introduced National Theatre Live cinema broadcasts around the world, and established the Travelex ticket seasons which – by radically reducing ticket prices – filled the National with large new audiences.

At the National he directed plays by Alan Bennett (*The Madness of George III*, *The History Boys*, *The Habit of Art*, *People*, *Cocktail Sticks*); Shakespeare (*Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet*, *Timon of Athens*, *Othello*); Richard Bean (*England People Very Nice*, *One Man Two Guvnors*, *Great Britain*); and plays from the classical repertoire (*The Alchemist*, *Phèdre*, *London Assurance*) and new plays by David Hare (*Stuff Happens*), Ayub Khan Din (*Rafta, Rafta*), John Hodge (*Collaborators*), Tom Stoppard (*The Hard Problem*) and a two part stage adaptation of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*.

He produced, in addition, a repertoire of 20 plays a year, including *War Horse* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*.

He has worked widely in the West End and on Broadway (*Miss Saigon*, *Carousel*), and in opera - in London, Paris, Munich and at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

He received the BAFTA award and Evening Standard award for best British film for *The Madness of King George*. His theatre awards include three Olivier awards, five Evening Standard awards and three Tony awards. He recently became an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts at the Juilliard School.

He is currently working (with Nick Starr) on plans for a new theatre company in London, which will be announced shortly.

ALAN BENNETT, WRITER

Alan Bennett has been one of the UK's leading dramatists since winning acclaim for *BEYOND THE FRINGE* in the 1960s. In film, credits include his original screenplay *A PRIVATE FUNCTION*, directed by Malcolm Mowbray, his adaptation of *PRICK UP YOUR EARS*, directed by Stephen Frears. For television he wrote the screenplay for *AN ENGLISHMAN ABROAD* (1984), and adapted his play *A QUESTION OF ATTRIBUTION* (1990), both

directed by John Schlesinger. Bennett's television series TALKING HEADS has become a modern-day classic, as have many of his works for the stage, including FORTY YEARS ON, THE LADY IN THE VAN, A QUESTION OF ATTRIBUTION, THE MADNESS OF GEORGE III (for which Bennett wrote the Oscar-nominated screenplay for the film adaptation THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE) and an adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS.

At the National Theatre, THE HISTORY BOYS, directed by Nicholas Hytner, won Evening Standard, Critics' Circle and Olivier awards, and the South Bank Award. On Broadway it won five New York Drama Desk Awards, four Outer Critics' Circle Awards, and a New York Drama Critics' Award for Best Play, a New York Drama League Award and six Tonys including Best Play. The film of THE HISTORY BOYS was released in 2006 and was nominated for the Best Screenplay award at the BIFAs the same year.

Bennett's play, THE HABIT OF ART played at the National Theatre and then around the country in 2009, while Bath Theatre Royal's production of THE MADNESS OF GEORGE III (starring David Haig) toured the UK and transferred to the Apollo Theatre, London in 2012, Alan Bennett's latest play, PEOPLE, opened at the National Theatre in 2012 and went on to tour the UK. His two short plays, HYMN and COCKTAIL STICKS (UNTOLD STORIES) opened at the National Theatre at the end of 2012 and enjoyed successful transfers to the Duchess Theatre, London. The film version of LADY IN A VAN, for which Bennett wrote the screenplay, is an adaptation of his 1999 hit West End play of the same name, which was directed by Nicholas Hytner and starred Dame Maggie Smith.

KEVIN LOADER, PRODUCER

Kevin Loader is one of Britain's most experienced film producers. He spent his early career at the BBC, starting in news and current affairs before making arts programmes for strands such as ARENA and OMNIBUS, before becoming first managing editor of THE LATE SHOW. He moved to BBC Drama in 1990. His productions there included the award-winning mini-series THE BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA and CLARISSA. He left the BBC in 1996 to run a film company for Sony Pictures and Canal+, The Bridge. His first feature film as producer was CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN, starring Nicholas Cage, Penelope Cruz and John Hurt. Subsequently his producing credits include Armando Iannucci's Oscar-nominated IN THE LOOP, Sam Taylor-Johnson's NOWHERE BOY, Andrea Arnold's IUTHERING HEIGHTS, Julian Jarrold's film version of BRIDESHEAD REVISITED, and ALPHA PAPA: THE ALAN PARTRIDGE MOVIE.

His and Roger Michell's company, Free Range Films, has produced most of Michell's British films over the past 15 years, including LE-WEEKEND, starring Jim Broadbent and Lindsay Duncan; VENUS, for which Peter O'Toole received his final Oscar nomination; THE MOTHER,

starring Daniel Craig and Anne Reid; the film of Ian McEwan's ENDURING LOVE; and HYDE PARK ON HUDSON, starring a Golden Globe-nominated Bill Murray as Franklin D. Roosevelt. Free Range is preparing several films, including Sarah Gavron's film of Rachel Joyce's best-selling novel THE UNLIKELY PILGRIMAGE OF HAROLD FRY; Michell's version of Daphne Du Maurier's MY COUSIN RACHEL and a new Armando Iannucci version of DAVID COPPERFIELD.

THE LADY IN THE VAN marks Loader's second collaboration with Nicholas Hytner and Alan Bennett after he produced 2006's film of Bennett's award-winning play THE HISTORY BOYS. Loader is also working with BBC Films on GOLD, telling the story of the on-track rivalry between British Olympic athletes Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett; and GYPSY BOY, an adaptation of Mikey Walsh's best-selling memoir about growing up in a Gypsy community in England.

DAMIAN JONES, PRODUCER

Damian Jones is a British film producer and the founder of DJ Films Ltd. His award-winning career spans over 30 feature films, working with prestigious directing talents including Phyllida Lloyd (THE IRON LADY), Amma Asante (BELLE), , Danny Boyle (MILLIONS), Mat Whitecross (SEX & DRUGS & ROCK & ROLL), Nicholas Hytner (THE HISTORY BOYS, LADY IN THE VAN) and Michael Winterbottom (WELCOME TO SARAJEVO). Jones has recently simultaneously completed principal photography on a feature version of the heritage British comedy series, DAD'S ARMY directed by Oliver Parker and starring an A-list line up including Toby Jones, Bill Nighy, Catherine Zeta Jones, Michael Gambon and Tom Courtenay and released February 2016. Jones' most recent producing success is the critically- acclaimed THE IRON LADY in 2011. Starring Meryl Streep as British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the film went on to win Streep an Academy Award for Best Actress and a Best Make-up Designer Oscar as well as further Best Actress awards from the Golden Globes and BAFTA. Further 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, and Menhaj Huda's hard-hitting KIDULTHOOD. Jones is now prepping AB FAB THE MOVIE based on the iconic TV series with Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley; and developing GOODBYE CHRISTOPHER ROBIN with Steve Christian and director Simon Curtis and also developing an as-yet-untitled biography of the late fashion designer ALEXANDER MCQUEEN with writer Chris Urch and director Andrew Haigh.

ANDREW DUNN, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Andrew Dunn BSC is a BAFTA award-winning cinematographer, He received the BAFTA for Best Film Cameraman three times for his work in the 1980s on THREADS, EDGE OF DARKNESS and TUMBLEDOWN. He has been Director of Photography on a wealth of films and works with many of the industry's most respected directors including Stephen Frears, Richard Eyre, Lee Daniels, Martin Campbell, Robert Altman, Mick Jackson, Bill Forsyth, Dennis Potter and Nicholas Hytner. Andrew was BAFTA nominated for Hytner's THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE and won the British Society of Cinematographer's Award and the London Evening Standard Award for his work on the film. He shot the Oscar-nominated dramas GOSFORD PARK and PRECIOUS. His further credits include L.A. STORY, THE BODYGUARD, HITCH, SWEET HOME ALABAMA, THE HISTORY BOYS, MISS POTTER, CRAZY, STUPID, LOVE, THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER, THE BUTLER, HELLO CARTER, EFFIE GRAY AND THE FORTHCOMING COMEDY MAN UP. Andrew is now working on KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES with director Greg Mottola and THE LADY IN THE VAN is his fourth film with Nicholas Hytner.

JOHN BEARD, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

John Beard's eclectic feature credits include Martin Scorsese's THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST, Julien Temple's ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS and Michael Apted's ENIGMA. Beard has worked regularly with director Iain Softley on projects including INKHEART, THE SKELETON KEY, K-PAX, THE WINGS OF THE DOVE and HACKERS. THE LADY IN THE VAN marks his second collaboration with Alan Bennett and Nicholas Hytner, having previously worked on the critically acclaimed film version of THE HISTORY BOYS. Beard drew on personal experience in designing the film, as he, like Bennett and Hytner, is a long-term resident of Camden and observed the last days of the Van. Among Beard's further design credits are MAP OF THE HUMAN HEART, THE BROWNING VERSION, THUNDERBIRDS, DORIAN GRAY and HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS AND ALIENATE PEOPLE.

TARIQ ANWAR, EDITOR

Having spent 18 years at the BBC, Tariq Anwar learnt his craft by cutting a huge array of programmes for almost every department. From the News department, to Music and Arts, to the History and Geographic channels Tariq worked on an extremely tight schedule, and the lessons he learnt in terms of storytelling, structure and how to make fast decisions were invaluable to his later work. Tariq has since cut a diverse selection of feature films and television dramas and has won and been nominated for multiple awards. He won the European Editor Film award for his work on THE KING'S SPEECH, for which he also received nominations for the Academy

Awards, BAFTA and ACE awards in 2011. Other recent feature film work includes CURVE, LIBERTADOR, GREAT EXPECTATIONS, HUSSEIN WHO SAID NO, LAW ABIDING CITIZEN, THE OTHER MAN, REVOLUTIONARY ROAD, THE GOOD SHEPHERD, STAGE BEAUTY AND SYLVIA, as well as AMERICAN BEAUTY, for which he was nominated for an Academy Award, an ACE award and won the BAFTA for Best Editor. Further BAFTA wins include the television dramas OPPENHEIMER and CAUGHT ON A TRAIN, and nominations include THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE, SUMMER'S LEASE, FORTUNE'S WAR, THE MONOCLED MUTINEER and TENDER IS THE NIGHT.

GEORGE FENTON, COMPOSER

George Fenton is an internationally renowned British film and TV composer. His film work includes composing the music for Richard Attenborough's GANDHI and CRY FREEDOM, Stephen Frears' DANGEROUS LIAISONS, Terry Gilliam's THE FISHER KING and THE ZERO THEOREM, Nora Ephron's YOU'VE GOT MAIL, Harold Ramis' GROUNDHOG DAY, Michael Caton-Jones' MEMPHIS BELLE, Ken Loach's LAND AND FREEDOM, MY NAME IS JOE, LOOKING FOR ERIC, THE ANGEL'S SHARE AND JIMMY'S HALL, Andy Tennant's SWEET HOME ALABAMA, HITCH and the upcoming WILD OATS, Nicholas Hytner's THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE, THE CRUCIBLE, and THE HISTORY BOYS and Terry Jones' upcoming ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING. Fenton's TV work includes TALKING HEADS, OUT, FOX, THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN, THE MONOCLED MUTINEER,

BEYOND THE CLOUDS, BLUE PLANET, PLANET EARTH, LIFE and FROZEN PLANET, as well as many theme tunes including SHOESTRING, ON THE RECORD, BERGERAC and NEWSNIGHT. Fenton also works in theatre. Recent scores include COLLABORATORS for Nicholas Hytner and UNTOLD STORIES, which includes the string quartet "Hymn". Fenton has just completed a new musical MRS HENDERSON PRESENTS in production this year. He works regularly with the BBC Concert Orchestra and The Philharmonia Orchestra, both of whom performed for the score for THE LADY IN THE VAN. Fenton's work has been recognised with numerous awards and he has received five Oscar nominations, multiple Ivor Novello, BAFTA and Emmy awards; a Classical Brit; the Nina Rota award at Venice; a Lifetime Achievement award from the Royal Television Society and a Fellowship of The Royal College of Music and BASCA.

NATALIE WARD, COSTUME DESIGNER

After graduating from the Wimbledon School of Art in 1992 with a BA Hons Degree in Costume Design, Natalie Ward began her career assisting Rachael Fleming on productions including DAD

SAVAGE starring Patrick Stewart and I WANT YOU directed by Michael Winterbottom and starring Rachel Weisz. Ward went on to work as Wardrobe Supervisor on INTIMACY and BRIDGET JONES' DIARY and was reunited with Michael Winterbottom as costume designer on WONDERLAND, TWENTY FOUR HOUR PARTY PEOPLE, CODE 46 and GOAL. As a designer, Ward's work has included ENDURING LOVE and LE WEEK-END for director Roger Michell, THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS for Mark Herman, BREAKING AND ENTERING for Anthony Minghella, WELCOME TO THE PUNCH for Eran Creevy and THE DEBT for John Madden. Her recent design credits include BLACK SEA for Kevin MacDonalD and THE LADY IN THE VAN for Nicolas Hytner.

NAOMI DONNE, HAIR AND MAKEUP DESIGNER

As a hair and make-up artist in both film and theatre, Naomi has become a leading name in her profession. She has divided her time between Britain and America, and worked with such stars as Daniel Day Lewis, Judi Dench, Ben Stiller and Helen Mirren among many others. Her film credits include CHOCOLAT (BAFTA nomination), ZOOLANDER, THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS (Hollywood Guild Award), THE CRUCIBLE, QUANTUM OF SOLACE, SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN, SKYFALL, PHILOMENA and CINDERELLA. Her theatre work both on Broadway and the West End includes MARY POPPINS, SHREK THE MUSICAL, STARLIGHT EXPRESS, TARZAN and NINE. She has been honoured by New York Women in Film. Naomi is currently working on the latest Bond film, SPECTRE.

TOBY WHALE, CASTING DIRECTOR

Toby Whale is a British casting director whose film credits include BELLE, FAST GIRLS, ASHES, THE DARK NIGHT RISES, SEX & DRUGS & ROCK & ROLL, POPE JOAN, POPPY SHAKESPEARE, MR NOBDOY, FRENCH FILM, THE HISTORY BOYS, ASHES & SAND, WONDROUS OBLIVION, BEFORE YOU GO, and EAST IS EAST. Whale has also done the UK casting for a number of French films including BELLES FAMILLES, MOBIUS, LARGO WINCH, and UN JOUR MON PÈRE VIENDRA.

Whale's theatre work includes over 50 productions as head of casting at the National Theatre for Nicholas Hytner. They include THE HISTORY BOYS (also Broadway), ON THE SHORE OF THE WIDE WORLD, BURN CHATROOM CITIZENSHIP, SOUTHWARK FAIR, PILLARS OF THE COMMUNITY, THE OVERWHELMING, STUFF HAPPENS, THE PERMANENT WAY, SING YER HEART OUT FOR THE LADS, and THE PILLOWMAN. His other theatre work includes over 40 productions principally for The Royal Court Theatre, Out of Joint, The Almeida, The Old Vic, Sheffield Theatres. Recent theatre includes THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME (Gielgud and UK tour), PRIVATES ON PARADE,

PETER AND ALICE (Michael Grandage Company), QUARTERMAINE'S TERMS (West End), DANCING AT LUGHNASA, SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION, THE REAL THING (Old Vic), and A DELICATE BALANCE (Almedia.) Whale's TV credits include CAPITAL, ARTHUR & GEORGE, WALTER, ATLANTIS, SILK, THE POLITICIAN'S HUSBAND, THE BEST OF MEN, WE'LL TAKE MANHATTAN, ASHES TO ASHES, DOC MARTIN, MUTUAL FRIENDS, TRUE DARE KISS, GEORGE GENTLY, GAVIN & STACEY, REVERSALS, TRUST, HEARTS AND BONES, PARADISE HEIGHTS, WIRE IN THE BLOOD, MEN ONLY, and TABLE TWELVE.