



Searchlight Pictures presents

A Sam Mendes Film

# EMPIRE of LIGHT

Starring

Olivia Colman	Micheal Ward
Tom Brooke	Tanya Moodie
Hannah Onslow	Crystal Clarke
with Toby Jones	
and Colin Firth	

Written and Directed by..... Sam Mendes  
 Produced by..... Pippa Harris p.g.a., Sam Mendes p.g.a.  
 Executive Producers..... Michael Lerman, Julie Pastor  
 Co-Producers.....Celia Duval, Lola Oliyide  
 Director of Photography.....Roger Deakins ASC, BSC  
 Production Designer..... Mark Tildesley  
 Costume Designer..... Alexandra Byrne  
 Editor..... Lee Smith, ACE  
 Music by.....Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross  
 Hair and Make-Up Designer..... Naomi Donne  
 Music Supervisor.....Randall Poster  
 Sound Mixer..... Stuart Wilson  
 Casting by..... Nina Gold

# EMPIRE *of* LIGHT

From Academy Award®-winning director and writer Sam Mendes, **EMPIRE OF LIGHT** is an intimate and moving story about love, friendship, and connection, set in a coastal town in Southern England against the social turmoil of the early 1980s. Hilary (Olivia Colman), a woman with a difficult past and an uneasy present, is part of a makeshift family at the old Empire Cinema on the seafront. When Stephen (Micheal Ward) is hired to work in the cinema, the two find an unlikely attraction and discover the healing power of movies, music and community.

Searchlight Pictures presents **EMPIRE OF LIGHT** written and directed by Sam Mendes. The film features a stellar cast led by Olivia Colman, Micheal Ward, Tom Brooke, Tanya Moodie, Hannah Onslow, Crystal Clarke, with Toby Jones, and Colin Firth.

The filmmaking team includes longstanding Mendes' collaborators including Producer Pippa Harris, Director of Photography Roger Deakins, who reunites with Mendes for his fifth collaboration, Production Designer Mark Tildesley, Costume Designer Alexandra Byrne, Hair and Make Up Designer Naomi Donne, Editor Lee Smith, Sound Mixer Wilson, Casting Director Nina Gold, Music Supervisor Randall Poster, Composers Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross, Executive Producers Michael Lerman and Julie Pastor, and Co-Producers Celia Duval and Lola Oliyide.



## ABOUT THE FILM

Academy Award® winner Sam Mendes (*1917*, *Revolutionary Road*, *Road to Perdition*, *Jarhead*, *American Beauty*) writes and directs **EMPIRE OF LIGHT**: “For most people, their most formative period is their teenage years. For me, that was the late ’70s and early ’80s: the music, the movies, the pop culture of that period generally formed who I was. It was a period of great political upheaval in the U.K., with a great deal of very incendiary racial politics – but at the same time, an amazing period for music and for culture generally – very creative, very politicized, very energized. **EMPIRE OF LIGHT** itself, however, is a movie almost entirely born out of the pandemic. Lockdown was a period of intense self-examination and reflection for all of us. And for me it meant starting to confront these memories that I’d been wrestling with since childhood. That was the spur to write – to explore those memories and to see if I could unlock anything interesting.”

“Movies deal in mythic landscapes,” Mendes continues. “You’re always looking for a point where the past becomes somehow bigger in scale, and greater in theme, and more fabled than the present. Looking back now, this period in England seemed to me one where the intersection of racial politics and music and movies was particularly special and unusual.”

Mendes has created two characters, Hilary and Stephen, played by Academy Award® winner Olivia Colman (*The Favourite*, *The Lost Daughter*) and rising star Micheal Ward (“Top Boy”, *Lovers Rock*), and has woven them into a story exploring some of the ties that bring us together – the music, the movies, and the makeshift families that get us through. At the center of **EMPIRE OF LIGHT** is their relationship – though they seem different in every conceivable way, they find a rite of passage that brings them both some degree of happiness and strength.

One of the first people Mendes shared the **EMPIRE OF LIGHT** screenplay with was producer Pippa Harris, who he worked with on *1917* and *Revolutionary Road*, and with whom he founded Neal Street Productions twenty years ago. Harris found the story and context very moving. “This is the first screenplay Sam has written completely from scratch on his own, with no input from another writer. The writing, particularly the delineation of the characters, was extraordinary. This story of a lost soul who finds a strange family within the cinema – I found it truly moving.”

“Hilary is a middle-aged woman who lives alone on the coast and has worked in the cinema for a few years,” Mendes explains. “She has a complicated past and some demons of her own but, in the way that ad hoc families can support each other, she has been embraced by this eccentric bunch that work in the cinema. She’s struggling to find a meaningful relationship in her life, when Stephen, who is open-hearted and gentle but still very young, also comes to work there.”

Mendes says that the part of Hilary was written for Colman. As he started writing the screenplay during the pandemic, he says, he was watching “The Crown.” “And there was Olivia being brilliant, and I thought, ‘Oh, that’s who should play Hilary.’ I didn’t particularly know Olivia – but I started writing it with her very much in mind.”

For Colman, the idea that Mendes was writing a part for her was “quite surreal,” she says. “I had been a drama student going to the Donmar, knowing all about Sam and *American Beauty*. But I didn’t know Sam at all when my agent called and said Sam Mendes wants to do a Zoom. Ohhhhhhhhhhhkay.”

Though Colman may have been nervous or intimidated, she needn’t have been. “I don’t know what I was expecting, but he really is so gentle and so kind,” she says. On set, she saw that reflected in the way he directs. “He’ll hold people’s hands. He knows how to speak to every single person in a way that is understanding to them. He’ll become the character – he’ll talk to me like Hilary might, or move like she might.”

Mendes comments, “Olivia is very available and open, and yet also somehow mysterious. For me, that’s what makes her so extraordinary, along with her amazing skill.”

Micheal Ward says that when he first read the script – even before he was cast in the role – Mendes asked for his input on the character. “It was good for Sam to do that,” he says. “He didn’t need to – I’m a new actor, I haven’t been doing this long. But he valued my opinion – it was exciting to know that he was willing to collaborate on the character. Sam lived through that period, but he recognizes he’s not a Black man, and so while he would have seen the tension around him, he wouldn’t know what that walk was like himself.”

If moviegoers see echoes of the current moment in Mendes’ period piece from the 1980s, that’s no coincidence. “In the middle of lockdown there was a racial reckoning in the world. We were left alone to contemplate how our own racial politics had been formed, and whether we had fallen down in our attempts to make sure the world was evolving. When I wrote the movie there was also another common obsession: we were all worried whether the cinema was going to die, along with live performances. So, all of those things have gone into this movie, and in that regard, it’s quite raw,” he says.

Harris also hears other echoes in the screenplay to the current moment. “The relationship between Colin Firth’s (*The King’s Speech*, *A Single Man*) Mr. Ellis and Hilary is obviously quite demeaning for her, but one she feels she has to go along with, and again, that’s something that we see replicated around the world still today. So, on one level, you look at **EMPIRE OF LIGHT** and

it feels as though it's a world away, and yet on another level, we still see the themes every day in contemporary life."

The film is a remembrance for more than just Mendes, but also for his friends since childhood – Harris and actor Toby Jones (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*), who plays the role of Norman, the projectionist. "The first time I remember seeing Sam was, coincidentally, with Toby Jones," continues Harris. "We grew up in Oxfordshire in the 1980s. I was about fourteen, and they were a little bit older, maybe sixteen. We had gone to a rather insalubrious party in a village hall, and across the crowded dance floor I see these two little figures in their rather sharp, natty suits with their little pork pie hats on, and they were dancing, bizarrely, to some of the music that is in this film – I think it was The Specials. I just thought they looked really great, and they were friends of friends, and we all got talking, and the rest is history."

The songs that populate the film are the soundtrack of Mendes' life and a key part of the film. "The politics of the period – especially the racial politics, Thatcher's 'there's no such thing as society', the racism of Enoch Powell and the National Front, the Brixton riots, the Toxteth riots, the high unemployment and extreme divisiveness – all fed into the music and the culture of the period," says Mendes. "Stephen loves and adores The Specials, and The Beat, and The Selecter and all the two-tone recording artists - that particular meeting of ska and punk, which was in its heyday. Those diverse bands were able to make great music whilst still being politically relevant. Songs about unemployment, and the death of the inner cities, about teenage pregnancy, and kids who had nothing to do but drink, and about Thatcher... a song like 'Ghost Town', for example, could go straight to number one. Those songs were part of the popular culture, and those bands were a great creative melting pot of black and white that has never quite been achieved again."

## CREATING THE CHARACTERS

At the beginning of the story, Hilary, played by **Olivia Colman**, has come out of a mental health episode that has put her on medication. "She doesn't really feel anything very strongly," says Colman. "She's going through the motions at work, going through the motions with Mr. Ellis. She lives alone, doesn't speak to anyone – it's a pretty lonely existence, and she wants more. She wants to *feel* more."

That is when **Micheal Ward**'s Stephen enters her life. "She's dazzled by him," she continues, explaining that the relationship changes her life. "She transforms, from feeling nothing, to feeling tingles. And she comes off her medication and then goes through phases to a point where she's heroic in her mania. I loved playing Hilary because of the different emotional states that we find her in."

Hilary is a woman living with mental illness, and together, Mendes and Colman bring her to life with sensitivity, nuance, gentleness, and complexity. "Sam is so emotionally engaged," says

Colman, noting the special quality that comes through in all of his work. “He understands what kindness is and that it is needed. What she’s going through is not her fault, and you can see the triggers that set her off when she has an episode.”

Simultaneously, Ward’s character Stephen must walk through a racist world – whether it’s by a reactionary government or violent youths – but keeps true to himself as he finds an unlikely connection with Hilary, and with the cinema itself. “He’s been rejected by universities and he’s at a crossroads and trying to find himself,” says Ward. “When something like that is taken away from you, you have to find something else that fulfills you. He’s a young Black man, excited by the opportunities in life; he loves people, loves to connect with music and movies, and he refuses to allow an oppressive society to define who he is.”

Mendes says that Stephen is relentlessly positive, even with everything he faces, from Thatcherite politics that limit his opportunities to skinhead violence that poses a daily threat. “He’s a glass half-full person,” explains the director. “Stephen is not naïve – the racism that he experiences is real and hurtful in so many ways – but he doesn’t let his trauma define him.”

“For Stephen, the film is a coming-of-age story, where he’s finding himself and his place in this world,” says Ward. “But for me, when I first read the script, my reaction was focused on how much of an impact the character could have – not just in the story, but for a lot of young Black people. It’s so important for them to see themselves in something like this, because then they realize everyone’s stories are relevant and worth telling.”

Ward says that the relationship between Stephen and Hilary is a unique exchange as each helps the other to grow. “Stephen gives Hilary a lot of optimism, a lot of love, a lot of enthusiasm, exposure to different culture and art, and his experiences,” says Ward. “She gives him her perspective, life impression, her love of poetry and words, and just simple encouragement. She sees him. They both have been slightly ostracized from society, and that connective tissue draws them together, whether they realize it or not. It’s an exchange of energies and love. They give each other things that they don’t even know they need. Hilary has never met anyone like Stephen before, and that allows her to figure out who she is as a person as well.”

Academy Award® winner **Colin Firth**, who previously starred for Mendes in *1917*, takes on the role of Mr. Ellis, the manager of the theater. A man who uses and abuses the people around him, Ellis especially takes advantage of Hilary’s fragile state. “Sam and I talked quite a bit about the relationship between Ellis and Hilary, because the short answer is, he’s a predator,” says Firth. “He’s unfaithful to his wife, he doesn’t have Hilary’s best interests at heart. The way he treats her is atrocious.”

How does one play such a despicable a character? “My job as an actor is find why he is the way he is,” he says. “I think he is frustrated – he dreamed of bigger things professionally. I do think he cares for his wife and Hilary, or believes he does. But he’s not really fluent in the language of consent – and that’s especially apparent in a man of his age at that time.”

But if Ellis is particularly selfish, Hilary is surrounded by a group of people – a makeshift family at the cinema – who give her the support she needs. In particular, the characters of Norman and Neil are loyal friends to Hilary, which they manifest by simply being accepting of her. “It is a family of outsiders and misfits and outcasts. They don't quite fit anywhere else but somehow within the walls of that cinema they become a kind of family. Norman, Neil– they love Hilary and they're going to look after her, in a way, and she's going to look after them.”

**Toby Jones** takes the role of Norman, the projectionist. “He’s an old-school projectionist – it’s a very skilled job and he takes it incredibly seriously. Because he has to change reels every fifteen minutes, he pretty much lives constantly in the projection room, where he has to attend each film,” explains Jones. “What we find out is that – like many of the characters – he has found a refuge in the cinema.” And it is that inspiring space, he says, that gives him a kind of empathy or understanding of Hilary’s troubled mind. “He loves film, and he’s an enigma... until he isn’t.”

Today, the art of film projection has largely passed to digital, but Norman is part of a time when films were projected by a skilled professional using two machines, with celluloid passing by an arlight, watching for secret signals to switch reels. Because Norman has been projecting films for decades, it was necessary for Jones to master the art. “There’s an element of timing in it, as you switch between projectors, and of careful manipulation – how you hook up the celluloid as it passes through the projector. You can’t learn 20 years of skill, but I learned enough to make me look better than I am!”

Continues Mendes, “People talk a lot about shooting on film dying, but for me, the big loss is film projection. The projectionist gives the movie to the audience, and it’s that sense that even if there's only one person out there in the dark, they know there's someone up there showing them the film, giving it to them. You talk to the projectionists and for them, they are part of the filmmaker’s world. They see themselves as the last link in the chain. If they are projecting Lawrence of Arabia, they feel they are representing David Lean.”

**Tom Brooke**, who previously acted in Mendes’ 2014 production of “King Lear” at the National Theatre, says that the first scene he filmed as Neil, the theater’s junior manager, was also his favorite – and the most challenging he would face on the movie. “The script says, ‘Neil entertains everybody.’ Everybody finds Neil hilarious. You’ve got to be funny, and you’ve got to be funny all day. If you do forty takes, you’ve still got to be funny. So I prepped it – ad-libs, tweaks, a range of pitches, voices, sounds – all kinds of stuff that would keep it light and moving.”

**Hannah Onslow** (“This is Going to Hurt”) takes the role of Janine, another worker at the cinema. “She’s eighteen years old, in that in-between stage of being a teenager and becoming an adult,” says the actress. “It’s a turning point in her life and she doesn’t really know what she wants to do, so she’s focusing on simple things – music, going out with friends and looking for a boyfriend. Like Hilary, she forms quite a strong relationship with Stephen, but she contrasts with Hilary – Janine’s whole life is ahead of her, while for Hilary, there are a lot of ‘could haves’ and ‘should haves.’”

Playing Ruby, who has an on-again relationship with Stephen, is **Crystal Clarke** (*Assassin's Creed*). “Ruby is very carefree,” she says. “She represents home, a sense of comfort – something familiar. She was really fun to play, because in most of her scenes with Stephen, there’s a bit of flirtation and she’s harmonious. It’s refreshing to be able to play somebody who’s always in a good mood.”

**Tanya Moodie** (“The Man Who Fell to Earth”) rounds out the cast as Delia, Stephen’s remarkable and unwavering mother. While her son is first-generation British-born, Delia is an immigrant to Britain from Trinidad and her experiences with racism once in the UK caused them both great pain that have conditioned her to be distrustful of white people. Moodie, like Ward, was actively involved in conversations with Mendes to make sure he got it right. “Sam doesn’t shy away from tough things,” says Moodie. “During the rehearsal weeks, we talked about the elements in the script that we could bring into sharper focus, from my experience, and Micheal’s, as an African-Caribbean person. That is what makes Sam a master – he acknowledges, he has the dialogue, and we bring as much input from our authentic experiences into the film and character creation as possible.”

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

**EMPIRE OF LIGHT** reunites Mendes with one of his most important collaborators: director of photography Roger Deakins (*1917*, *Blade Runner 2049*, *Skyfall*, *The Shawshank Redemption*), the 15-time Oscar®-nominated and two-time winning cinematographer who now teams with Mendes on their fifth film together.

Deakins describes his process as being very collaborative. “When I read a script, it’s the same as if I’d read a novel,” he says. “I’m not thinking about the cinematography; I’m involved in the story. I don’t want to focus on much until I speak with the director, because it’s the director’s vision, not mine. Sam and I spent a number of days talking through how to approach this film – it could have been all handheld, like a docudrama, which we did discuss. And I don’t know if it was a reaction to *1917*, a film where the camera doesn’t stop moving, but I think it struck both of us that what felt right for this film was more stylized, more quiet – much more static to allow people the space in a frame.”

A career-long user of ARRI cameras, Deakins again called on the company’s Alexa large format camera and its Signature Prime lenses, but with a key difference from his experience in filming *1917*. “On *1917*, we basically used one lens, because that was the whole conceit of doing the film from one perspective. On this film, we’ve used a wider range of lenses – 35, 40, 47, in that range.”

Once that vision was in place, Deakins was very involved in the production, as he always is. “I’m very hands-on on set, and part of the reason I work as I do is I like the camaraderie of working



with the crew. I've always operated the camera – being on the eyepiece, it's like I'm seeing something very special for the first time.”

The film was produced on location in Margate, a town on the northern shore of Kent. “I grew up in a seaside town in Southwest England, so this brought a lot back for me,” Deakins notes. “Margate brought a reality to this movie. I think Sam had a slightly different feeling in his mind for the town than some of the other locations we scouted – Brighton and Worthing and Eastbourne... Margate feels more like a Yorkshire seaside town.”

“I was drawn to this particular place because it offered so much opportunity in the scale of the visual landscape,” says Mendes. “It's where J. M. W. Turner painted most of his famous paintings – he went there because he said that the skies were the finest in Europe. It's where T. S. Elliot wrote The Waste Land, sitting in a bus shelter just outside of the cinema looking out over the beach and the grey sea that sits beyond. There's a breadth about the place, which gives it poetry and a cinematic scope.”

But perhaps the biggest reason Mendes chose Margate was it was there that production designer Mark Tildesley (*No Time To Die*, *Phantom Thread*, *In the Heart of the Sea*, *28 Days Later*), found Dreamland: a former cinema and ballroom with an impressive art deco exterior attached to a seaside funfair.

When Mendes saw the location, he rewrote the screenplay to match it. Scenes that had been set in a disused balcony were rewritten to take advantage of Dreamland's ballroom, and a scene at the funfair's roller rink was added.

The location, which had seen better days, underwent a massive transformation from Tildesley's team. The theatrical auditorium, which had been converted into a pea green bingo hall, became the Empire's beautiful cinema: everything inside, from the seats to the material on the walls to the proscenium arch, was installed by Tildesley and his team. Other aspects of the building were refreshed as well – the ballroom was given a much-needed facelift and the art deco ladies' bathrooms were rebuilt – and then these sets were aged to be period-appropriate. “There's an extraordinary art deco glory to it – there's a sense that it was built in the 1930s and now it's 1980 and it's beginning to creak and crumble,” says Tildesley. “It's an analogy with the story – the lead characters are weathered and broken people, and they need care and healing and mending.”

The one important part of Mendes' vision and story that Dreamland could not accommodate was that it lacked a large art-deco lobby looking over the seascape. But Margate came through with a solution: steps down the street from Dreamland was a large open space where Tildesley could build a set of the lobby interior. “The foyer is a centerpiece – it's where all of the characters meet. It had to be visually captivating,” says Tildesley. “The feeling you get is coming in from the seafront, which is cold and stormy in winter, into this delicious foyer with loads of sweets and popcorn, and then you watch a movie that takes you off into another world.”

The set's windows and doors looked out over the sea with a view that would match the Dreamland exterior shots. That proved a bit of a challenge for Deakins, but one that he welcomed.

“It was basically shooting on a location. Yes, it’s a set, but at the seafront, the light’s ever changeable and most of the work was in the daytime,” says Deakins. “Sam could have built a set on a stage with a greenscreen, but obviously, the downside of that is the naturalism of it. I don’t think we would have gotten the realism that we did if we had been a soundstage.”

Another key design challenge for Tildesley was to replace Dreamland’s neon exterior signage with one announcing the theater as the Empire, as well as giving Deakins enough light to capture the scenes at night. “We took down all of the neon and replaced it with our own, and we rebuilt the front façade – they call it the canopy,” says Tildesley. “Then, Roger was wondering how on Earth we were going to light these night scenes, so at his instruction, we installed festoon lights along the entire seafront.”

The makeshift studio on the seafront was also where Tildesley would build other sets including the cinema offices, where Mr. Ellis conducts his illicit relationship with Hilary. The projection booth, with moveable walls to accommodate filming, and the interiors of Hilary’s and Stephen’s apartments, were all built in a hangar at Manston airport nearby. Hilary’s flat, in particular, represented a challenge for the design team. “Because Sam wanted to shoot in sequence as much as possible, we had to have everything prepared up front and then redress the set as it occurs in script order,” says Tildesley. “The set develops in the same way the story does; we project Hilary’s struggles into the set and show a progression as she deteriorates and recovers. Sam had an idea that the character would decide to repaint the room with extraordinary colors – purple and a dark green – and that she got halfway through and gave up. We also decided that she would start to write some of her thoughts on the wall. Those details give her state of mind more than just a messy room – it’s character-driven.”

## THE MUSIC OF EMPIRE OF LIGHT

Mendes’ film is filled with music of the era – key songs hand-picked by Mendes, many from his formative years growing up in the UK that Stephen and the young staff at the Empire listen to. These songs from the early 80s, along with folk tracks from the late 60’s and early 70’s that Mendes chose for the music Hilary listens to at home, accompany a score composed by two-time Oscar® winners Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross.

“I’ve always felt the 80s were an incredibly prolific and extraordinary time in music, you had a number of different forces all coalescing around the same time,” says Mendes. “Everyone had a clique: some were floppy haired New Romantics, some were wearing their two-tone suits, some were into heavy metal, some were Goths like Janine in the movie, listening to Joy Division and Siouxsie and the Banshees and The Cure.”

Songs that feature in the film such as “Do Nothing” and “Too Much Too Young” by the Specials and “Mirror In The Bathroom” by The Beat represent the Two-Tone music scene that had

emerged at the time and changed the UK musically, culturally, and politically. The film also includes “Love Will Tear Us Apart” by Joy Division and “Spellbound” by Siouxsie and the Banshees that reflect the era’s Goth scene.

“If you’re a kid who grew up in London, that was your music,” says Ross. “It was much like the era before, punk rock – it was an agent of change, and I think for the better. There was an inclusive aspect to it that transformed culture in Britain.”

Continues Mendes, “Everyone was part of a tribe and you felt that people stood for something. Music and culture weren’t as available as they are today, you had to make an effort to go and listen and see. You had to go out and find it in the world.”

The musical score is by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross, who collaborate for the first time with Mendes after garnering acclaim for their work on films as diverse as *The Social Network*, *Mid90s*, *Bird Box*, *Soul*, *Mank*, and the television series “*Watchmen*.”

“We’ve been intrigued by and admirers of Sam’s work. And the idea of seeing what would happen, and seeing what would rub off on us from him, was exciting,” says Reznor. “It’s inspiring to be around people who are firing on all cylinders and putting their all into a project. When we were introduced to Sam, he exceeded any expectations we had about his integrity and his intellect.”

Mendes brought Reznor and Ross into the process of the film very early – while he was still writing the movie. “It feels like you’ve been invited into the secret chamber,” explains Ross. “We spoke to Sam at least once a month, if not every couple of weeks, for six months before he picked up the camera. He shared a lot of deeply personal information, the essence of which we would need to emotionally express with music.”

The composers note that they have “every sound in the world” available to them, so the first step was to set limitations for what felt right for **EMPIRE OF LIGHT**. “Our first couple of rounds of composition often happen before there is picture,” Reznor explains. “We absorb as much information and clues as we can, and we sit and think very editorially initially about what palette would be good for the score. What feels like the DNA of this world? We’ll choose some instruments or approaches and we’ll spend a few weeks improvising, composing, putting it in the blender of music that feels like it’s happening in this world.”

For Reznor and Ross, Mendes was precise in his direction, kind in his praise, and inspiring to others to raise their game. “Sam is so clear in what he wants to say and express,” explains Reznor. “There was still a freedom to compose – he’s not holding our hands – but in terms of the narrative, the feeling, and the emotional journey, he was laser-focused on keeping it with the right sentiment behind it.”

That demand – an inspiration to do one’s very best work – made *EMPIRE OF LIGHT* Reznor and Ross’s most challenging score so far, they say. “I think when we started this project, we thought, ‘this won’t be too hard to pull off.’ But it was challenging throughout. I’m up for a good challenge, and we got what we asked for. There was no faking it. The stakes were high. I found it

intimidating in a lot of ways. But that's what made it a cherished experience. I'm incredibly proud of how it turned out, and came out a better composer."

One cue that Reznor and Ross are particularly proud of is one of the movie's first scenes, as Hilary opens the Empire. Mendes had written in the script that it would be set to a particular song by jazz pianist Bill Evans. "When I heard that piece at the beginning of the film, I sensed nostalgia, comfort, and it worked well. But as composers, we wondered if we could replace that with an original composition, one that might be less nostalgic, where you're less certain of what this is, to help set the tone of the score – it might change the expectation of what you're watching from the beginning."

"Bill Evans, rightly or wrongly, was putting us in a place where you might make some assumptions about the film," adds Ross. "With the opening now, you're not sure what's coming next. We could tell that Sam was unsure about placing it there, and 24 hours later, he said, 'I watched it in an actual cinema, and you were right. It made the scale of the film feel different'."

Reznor and Ross' score is largely piano-based, but that only tells half the story. On top of the piano compositions are human voices, strings, and other instruments, which provide a framework in which the piano sits – and those came about in a method unique to Reznor and Ross. "The score is traditional-sounding; it's not experimental by nature," says Reznor. "If you listen closely, there's a lot more going on than just the piano. It's all around the edges and it's subtle – a nice, warm orchestration around the foundation of the piano."

The composers used tape loops to provide that subtle layer. "We had a microphone going into a looper pedal that we'd put on record for two hours at a time. And in that mic, I'll pick up a cello. It starts to mesh into a texture," Reznor explains. "And it might be a string line that gets in there, it might be vocals, it might be anything that happens to be laying around the studio at that time. The end result is very organic and natural. It sounds familiar, comfortable. That felt exciting to us and we were able to shape it into the right kind of atmosphere."

These techniques give a texture that underscores the film's emotional experience. "Hilary's journey is from one kind of love into another one, and into her own acceptance. We're hoping audiences can feel truly transported, that they're not aware of their surroundings, and lost in the film."

**EMPIRE OF LIGHT** is a valentine not just to movies, but to movies as exhibited in the cinema. "As Stephen says in the movie, "That little beam of light is escape", and I believe it's a human need to escape life, to let our imaginations be released to find another part of ourselves either in books, or music, or theatre, or in this case in the cinema," Mendes explains. "**EMPIRE OF LIGHT** was definitely inspired by the concern that people weren't going to go to these places anymore. We created these temples, to visit these lit dreams, these spells that filmmakers cast. Are they now just going to lie empty?" Adds Harris, "They're a beacon and a place that bring people together,

that's what cinema always should do and can do. It's a place where people go who maybe don't fit in elsewhere but can find a home and joy in that shared experience of watching a film together."

Continues Mendes, "This group of people in **EMPIRE OF LIGHT** find friendship and all come together in this extraordinary building. At its core, the film deals with the families we create around us that help get us through life – and how people are drawn together to take care of each other, choosing kindness, compassion and empathy. I guess it's worth remembering in this new world we find ourselves in..."

## FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

### **SAM MENDES, p.g.a. (Written, Directed, and Produced by)**

Sam Mendes founded and ran the Donmar Warehouse in London for ten years. He was the founding director of Neal Street Productions and The Bridge Project. His work has been seen at the National Theatre, RSC, Royal Court, Old Vic, Young Vic, BAM, the West End, and on Broadway. Films include *American Beauty*, *Road to Perdition*, *Jarhead*, *Revolutionary Road*, *Away We Go*, *Skyfall*, *Spectre*, and *1917*. Awards include the Academy Award for Best Director and Best Picture and three other Academy Award nominations, five BAFTA Awards, three Golden Globe Awards, three Tony Awards, five Olivier Awards, the Olivier Special Award, three Evening Standard Awards, two Directors Guild of America Awards, the PGA award, the Jason Robards Award, and the Hamburg Shakespeare Prize. He has also won the Director's Guild Award for lifetime achievement. He is an Honorary Fellow of the National Film and Television School, and a Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge. He was made a CBE in 2000 and knighted in 2020 for services to drama.

### **PIPPA HARRIS, p.g.a (Produced by)**

Pippa Harris is an Oscar nominated, BAFTA award-winning, film and television producer, who established Neal Street Productions in 2003 alongside Sam Mendes and Caro Newling and runs the company's Film and TV division together with Nicolas Brown.

Since the formation of Neal Street Productions, Harris has produced *Starter for Ten*, *Stuart A Life Backwards*, and co-produced *Jarhead*. She also executive produced *Things We Lost in the Fire*, *Away We Go*, and the Oscar-nominated *Revolutionary Road*, as well as the feature documentary *We Are Many*. Harris produced the First World War epic *1917*, directed by Sam Mendes and co-written by Sam Mendes and Krysty Wilson-Cairns, starring George MacKay, Dean-Charles Chapman, Mark Strong, Andrew Scott, Richard Madden, Colin Firth, and Benedict Cumberbatch. The film has won over 100 awards, including the Producers Guild Award for Best Picture, two Golden Globes for Best Picture and Best Director, three Academy Awards for Best Cinematography, VFX, and Sound Mixing, and seven BAFTAs including Best Film, Best British Film, and Best Director.

Harris is Executive Producer on the BBC's award-winning "Call the Midwife" – the 12th series is due to air early 2023 and is still one of the most watched TV dramas in the UK, as well as "Britannia", Jez Butterworth's highly acclaimed drama for Sky Atlantic, and John Logan's multi award-winning "Penny Dreadful". Previous projects for Neal Street which Harris has executive produced include the BAFTA winning "The Hollow Crown" – a series of Shakespeare films for the BBC/PBS, as well as a second series "The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses".

Previously, Harris was the Head of Drama Commissioning for the BBC where her commissions included *The Lost Prince*, “State of Play”, and “Daniel Deronda”. Harris joined the BBC in 1997 as a Development Executive for BBC films before becoming the Executive Producer of BBC Drama Serials. Her production credits include the BAFTA-winning dramas *The Way We Live Now*, *Care*, and *Warriors*.

Following her tenure as Chair of the Academy for BAFTA, Harris is now its Vice President of Television. Harris is also Chair of Charleston, a museum and gallery which was home of the Bloomsbury group. She is an Ambassador for Women for Women International and a Patron of the neonatal charity Best Beginnings.

In 2015 she was made a Dame in the Dissolution Honours.

### **ROGER DEAKINS, ASC, BSC (Director of Photography)**

Sir Roger Deakins, CBE, ASC, BSC is an Academy Award-winner, published author, and the first cinematographer to be knighted at Windsor Castle. Before spending almost half a century working in film, growing up in Devon in the early 1960s, Deakins only knew films as a viewer. He had no connection to the art of making films. His interest in painting led him to Bath Academy of Art, where he developed a passion for capturing images through a lens rather than with a brush. Deakins thought he might find a career as a photographer but a chance encounter with a fellow student took him in a different direction. In 1971, the National Film School opened its doors and the possibility of a career in film became more of a reality. After initially being rejected, an even more determined Deakins was accepted the following year. He has gone on to shoot documentaries and an estimated 70 feature films. His work has taken him across the globe to India, Eritrea, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Budapest, Berlin, New Mexico, and the list goes on. One of Deakins’ first professional assignments was a documentary about an entrant in the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race, where he spent nine months at sea. Over his tremendous career, Deakins has developed working relationships with top filmmakers such as the Coen Brothers, Sam Mendes, and Denis Villeneuve. He has been nominated for 15 Academy Awards and won twice – winning for Villeneuve’s *Blade Runner 2049* and Mendes’ *1917*. Deakins has also received five BAFTAs and five American Society of Cinematographers Awards – in addition to earning the 2011 ASC Lifetime Achievement Award. Not even a historic pandemic could slow down the legendary cinematographer. Beginning in April of 2020, Deakins started the “Team Deakins” podcast with his wife, James. Together they’ve recorded over 160 episodes, interviewing different filmmakers, and discussing the art of film. In November 2021, Deakins published *Byways* – his first book of still photography containing personal black-and-white stills from 1971 to the present. At the beginning of 2022, he was knighted by Prince Charles at Windsor Castle.

## MARK TILDESLEY (Production Designer)

Mark Tildesley is the award-winning British production designer behind Cary Joji Fukunaga's James Bond film *No Time to Die*, as well as Fernando Meirelles' *The Two Popes* starring Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce. Tildesley and Meirelles previously worked together on *The Constant Gardener*, for which Tildesley earned an Art Directors Guild Nomination. Other recent credits include Paul Thomas Anderson's critically acclaimed *Phantom Thread*, Oliver Stone's biopic *Snowden* starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, and Ron Howard's *In the Heart of the Sea*. Tildesley's work encompasses notable collaborations with several other directors such as Danny Boyle, for whom he designed *T2: Trainspotting*, *Trance*, *Millions*, *28 Days Later*, and *Sunshine*, which awarded Tildesley with a British Independent Film Award (BIFA). Tildesley is also a frequent collaborator with director Michael Winterbottom, working together on *The Killer Inside Me*, *Code 46*, *24 Hour Party People*, *The Claim*, *Wonderland*, *With or Without You*, and *I Want You*. Furthermore, Tildesley co-designed the Summer Olympics Opening Ceremony in London in 2012, for which he won a Primetime Emmy Award.

## ALEXANDRA BYRNE (Costume Designer)

Costume Designer Alexandra Byrne trained as an architect at Bristol University before studying Theatre Design on the Motley Course at the English National Opera under the legendary Margaret Harris. She has worked extensively in television and theater, both as a set and costume designer. Her television credits include Roger Michell's *Persuasion*, for which she received the BAFTA Award for Best Costume Design, and "The Buddha of Suburbia", for which she received a BAFTA nomination and RTS award. In theater, Alexandra received a Tony nomination for Best Set Design for *Some Americans Abroad*, which transferred from the Royal Shakespeare Company to the Lincoln Center in New York. Following on from her work in theater, Byrne designed the costumes for Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*, for which she gained her first Oscar nomination. Other credits include *Phantom of the Opera*, *Sleuth*, and *The Garden of Eden*. She received two further Oscar nominations for her costumes in *Elizabeth* and *Finding Neverland*. *Elizabeth*, *The Golden Age* finally won her the Oscar. Byrne worked with Kenneth Branagh again on *Thor*, her first production with Marvel, and won the Saturn Award. She then followed on to work with Joss Whedon on Marvel's *The Avengers*. After designing costumes for Warner Bros.' *300*, *Rise of an Empire*, Byrne returned to Marvel for James Gunn's *Guardians of the Galaxy*, and to work again with Joss Whedon on *Avengers*, *Age of Ultron* (Saturn Award), followed by *Doctor Strange*, directed by Scott Derrickson, for which she won the CDG Award. She then reunited with Kenneth Branagh for *Murder on the Orient Express*. Byrne has recently designed the costumes for *Mary Queen of Scots* (Oscar nominated) and *Emma*, directed by Autumn de Wilde, both with Working Title Films. She completed work with Kevin Macdonald on *Prisoner 760* and is currently designing the costumes for Frederick Ashton's *Cinderella* for the Royal Ballet, and *The Flash*, directed by Andy Muschietti for Warner Bros. Byrne is married to the actor Simon Shepherd, and they have four children.



## LEE SMITH, ACE (Editor)

Lee Smith, ACE, earned an Academy Award and ACE Eddie Award for his work on Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*. He also earned Academy Award, BAFTA Award, and ACE Eddie Award nominations for his work on Nolan's *The Dark Knight*, and BAFTA Award and ACE Eddie Award nominations for his work on Nolan's *Inception*. He and Nolan also collaborated on *Batman Begins*, *The Prestige*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, and *Interstellar*.

Smith has enjoyed a long association with director Peter Weir, earning an Academy Award nomination for his editing work on Weir's *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*, for which he also received an Eddie Award nomination. Smith reunited with Weir for the fact-based drama *The Way Back*. He had earlier served as editor and sound designer on Weir's *The Truman Show*, *Fearless*, and *Green Card*; an additional editor on *Dead Poets Society*; and an associate editor and sound designer on *The Year of Living Dangerously*, which began their collaboration.

Smith reunited with director Sam Mendes for the award-winning feature *1917* after first working with him on *Spectre*.

Hailing from Australia, Smith won an Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award for Best Editing on Gregor Jordan's *Two Hands*, on which he was also the sound designer. As a sound designer, he won an AFI Award and earned a BAFTA Award nomination for his work on Jane Campion's *The Piano* and won an AFI Award for Phillip Noyce's *Dead Calm*.

Smith's other credits include the upcoming Matthew Vaughn film *Argylle*, *The 355*, and *X-Men: Dark Phoenix* for director Simon Kinberg, *Ender's Game*, *Elysium*, *X-Men: First Class*, *The Rage in Placid Lake*, *Black and White*, *Buffalo Soldiers*, *Risk*, *Joey*, *RoboCop 2*, *Communion*, and *Howling III*.

## TRENT REZNOR & ATTICUS ROSS (Music by)

Trent Reznor formed Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees Nine Inch Nails in Ohio in 1988 and, over the next 30 years, proceeded to sell over 30 million records worldwide. The band's studio albums include the multi-Platinum releases *Pretty Hate Machine* (1989), *The Downward Spiral* (1994), and *The Fragile* (1999), which became the first NIN album to reach No. 1 on the US Billboard 200, a feat mirrored by *With Teeth* (2005). The 1992 EP *Broken* yielded two Grammy awards and also achieved Platinum status.

In 2008, Reznor teamed with Atticus Ross, his now-partner in NIN, and began a prolific career in composing music for film. Their first project, David Fincher's *The Social Network*, earned the pair an Oscar and a Golden Globe.

Reznor and Ross have continued to compose music for a diverse array of film and television projects, including the acclaimed "Watchmen" series for HBO, which earned the duo an Emmy for Outstanding Music Composition for a series. Reznor and Ross won numerous awards (including an

Oscar, Grammy, Golden Globe, and British Academy Film Award) for the score for the 2020 animated Pixar film *Soul*. Their score for David Fincher's biopic *Mank* received nominations for many of the same awards, in the same year. These projects are a testament to the fact that their talents are not beholden to any singular genre.

In 2013, Reznor helped to develop and launch the Beats Music streaming service in his role as Chief Creative Officer. When Apple purchased Beats, the tech giant hired Reznor so that he would stay involved as they built the Apple Music platform, recognizing his value not just to the app, but his unique perspective as an artist.

NIN experienced a pop culture resurgence in 2019, reaching a fresh audience through some unlikely sources. In addition to a savvy pairing with Captain Marvel – which saw the superhero donning a vintage NIN shirt throughout much of the film -- the band returned to the charts through a clever cover (a pop makeover of "Head Like a Hole" called "On a Roll," which was performed by fictional pop star Ashley O, depicted by Miley Cyrus in the show "Black Mirror") and as co-writers and co-producers on the longest-reigning No. 1 record in the history of Billboard ("Old Town Road").

The band continues to set stages across the world ablaze with its 2022 tour. After NIN headlined Boston Calling on two consecutive nights, *Boston Magazine* marveled, "how cool was Trent Reznor and the rest of the band this weekend? Just off the charts, really." Praising their "unbridled intensity," Kerrang hailed the London show as "one of the year's most exceptional gigs...[from] a live band that, on form like this, is inarguably the best in the world. Bow down."

## NAOMI DONNE (Hair and Make-Up Designer)

As a hair and make-up artist in film, theater, and television, Naomi Donne has been a leading name in her profession for many years. She has divided her time between Britain and America, and worked with such stars as Daniel Day Lewis, Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Kristin Scott Thomas, Ben Stiller, Anthony Hopkins, Emma Thompson, Helen Mirren, Robert Pattinson, among many others. Her film credits include *Chocolat* (BAFTA nomination), *Zoolander* (Hollywood Guild Award), *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Hollywood Guild Award), *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* (BAFTA and Academy Award Nomination), *Cruella* (Emma Thompson, Academy Award Nomination, BAFTA Nomination), *Matilda* (Personal to Emma Thompson), *Good Luck to You, Leo Grande*, and *The Batman*.

Her theater 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 honored by New York Women in Film and has an Honorary Fellowship from the University of the Arts London.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### OLIVIA COLMAN (Hilary)

Olivia Colman will next be seen in the Marvel action series “Secret Invasion” alongside Kingsley Ben-Adir, Emilia Clarke, and Samuel L. Jackson. Additionally, Colman will lend her voice to Joel Crawford and Januel Mercado’s *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* which Universal will release December 21, 2022, as well as Stephen Donnelly’s *Scrooge: A Christmas Carol* for Netflix.

Next year, Colman will be in Paul King’s *Wonka* alongside Timothée Chalamet and Sally Hawkins. Set as a prequel to *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, it follows the origin story of Willy Wonka based on characters created by Roald Dahl. Warner Bros. is slated to release the film March 17, 2023. Colman will also be seen in FX/BBC’s “Great Expectations” opposite Shalom Brune-Franklin and Fionn Whitehead. The limited series is an adaptation of Charles Dickens’ acclaimed novel of the same name.

Colman will soon begin lensing Thea Sharrock’s *Wicked Little Letters* starring opposite Jessie Buckley. Set in the 1920s, the film is based on a true story and follows two neighbors (Colman and Buckley) who come together to solve a mystery. Colman and Ed Sinclair’s South of the River Pictures will also produce the film.

Last year, Colman was seen in Maggie Gyllenhaal’s directorial debut, *The Lost Daughter*, opposite Dakota Johnson, Jessie Buckley, and Peter Sarsgaard. The film is based on the novel of the same name by bestselling author Elena Ferrante, which follows a college professor (Colman) who confronts her unsettling past after meeting a woman (Johnson) and her young daughter while on vacation in Italy. For this role, Colman received nominations for an Academy Award, Golden Globe, SAG Award, and Critics Choice Award, and won the Gotham Award in the category of Outstanding Lead Performance in 2021.

Most notably, Colman won the 2019 Academy Award in the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role as Queen Anne in Yorgos Lanthimos’s critically acclaimed *The Favourite*, opposite Emma Stone, and Rachel Weisz. The same year she also won the Golden Globe for the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture (Musical or Comedy), the BAFTA award in the category of Best Leading Actress, British Independent Film Award in the category of Best Actress, the Critics’ Choice award in the category Best Actress in a Comedy, and the Volpi Cup for Best Actress at the 2018 Venice Film Festival. It marked her second collaboration with Lanthimos following her role in his dystopian romantic comedy, *The Lobster*, for which Olivia received a British Independent Film Award in the category of Best Supporting Actress, and a nomination for an Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Comedy Performance.

In 2011/2012 Colman won the Best Actress prize at the British Independent Film Awards, Evening Standard British Film Awards, Critics Circle Awards, and Empire Awards for her brilliant

performance in Paddy Considine's feature directorial debut *Tyrannosaur*, opposite Peter Mullan and Eddie Marsan. The film also won the World Cinema Special Jury Prize for Breakout Performance at the Sundance International Festival the same year.

Other film credits include: Florian Zeller's *The Father* for which she received an Academy Award, Golden Globe, SAG, and Critics Choice Award nomination, Emer Reynolds' comedy *Joyride*, Eva Husson's *Mothering Sunday*, Will Sharpe's *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, Sarah Smith, Jean-Philippe Vine, and Octavio E. Rodriguez *Ron's Gone Wrong*, Michael Rianda and Jeff Rowe's *The Mitchells vs the Machines*, Britt Poulton and Dan Madison Savage's thriller *Them That Follow*, Kenneth Branagh's *Murder On The Orient Express*, Phyllida Lloyd's *The Iron Lady* opposite Meryl Streep, Rufus Norris' *London Road*, Roger Michell's *Hyde Park On Hudson*, Steven Knight's *Locke*, James Griffiths' *Cuban Fury*, and Edgar Wright's *Hot Fuzz*.

On television, Colman was last seen starring in the HBO/SKY limited series "Landscapers", opposite David Thewlis. The series, created and written by screenwriter Ed Sinclair, was inspired by real-life events, telling the story of a couple in the northern English city of Nottingham who become the focus of an investigation when two dead bodies are discovered in a back garden. Colman and Sinclair's South of the River Pictures co-produced the series.

In 2021, Colman won an Emmy Award in the category of Outstanding Lead Actress in A Drama Series for her role as Queen Elizabeth II in season 4 of the critically acclaimed Netflix Original series "The Crown", opposite Tobias Menzies and Helena Bonham Carter. This is a reprisal of her role from season 3, for which she won a Golden Globe Award in the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Drama Television Series in 2019. Across both seasons, she also received nominations for a BAFTA, SAG, and Critics Choice Awards.

Also on the small screen, Colman also won a Golden Globe in the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television, for her portrayal of Angela Burr in the BBC/AMC's "The Night Manager". In 2013, Colman was the double award winner at the Television BAFTA's, winning Female Performance in a Comedy Programme for her recurring role in BBC's "Twenty Twelve", as well as Best Supporting Actress for her role in BBC's "Accused".

Other television credits include the BBC/Amazon's award-winning "Fleabag" which she garnered an Emmy nomination for Best Supporting Actress and a Television BAFTA nomination in the category of Best Female Performance in a Comedy Programme, ITV's "Broadchurch" which ran for three seasons and a she won a Television BAFTA for Leading Actress, BBC's "Rev" which she received a Television BAFTA nomination in the category of Best Female Performance in a Comedy Programme, PBS/BBC Studios' "Les Misérables", Netflix's "Watership Down", Channel 4's "Flowers", "Peep Show", and "Greenwig", BBC's "The Thirteenth Tale", "The Secrets", and "Exile", Sky Atlantic's "Mr. Sloane", and ITV1's "The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher II".

On stage, Colman's credits include *Long Day's Journey into Night* (Lyric Theatre), *England People Very Nice* (National Theatre), *Hayfever* (Noel Coward Theatre), and most recently Lucy Kirkwood's

*Mosquitoes* at the National Theatre, directed by Rufus Norris, for which she won Best Actress in the 2018 Whatsonstage Awards.

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

### **MICHEAL WARD (Stephen)**

Winner of the 2020 EE BAFTA Rising Star Award, Micheal Ward plays the lead role in Netflix's critically acclaimed series "Top Boy". The resurgence of "Top Boy" hit headlines after it was announced Drake would executive produce, with Reinaldo Marcus Green and Nia DaCosta directing.

In 2019, Ward played Marco, one of the lead roles in Paramount's *Blue Story*, the debut feature film from UK grime artist and director Rapman, whose ground-breaking music and short film trilogies became a viral sensation. *Blue Story* follows Timmy and Marco, two young boys from opposing postcodes that quickly form a firm friendship which is tested when they wind up on rival sides of a street war.

Ward earned his second BAFTA nomination in the Best Supporting Actor category last year for Steve McQueen's *Lovers Rock*, part of his anthology series "Small Axe", which premiered to rave reviews at Cannes.

He recently wrapped production on Netflix's *The Beautiful Game* opposite Bill Nighy and directed by Thea Sharrock.

### **TANYA MOODIE (Delia)**

Tanya Moodie is one of the UK's most sought-after actresses, both on screen and theater.

Moodie will soon be seen in the upcoming series "The Man Who Fell to Earth" alongside Oscar nominees Chiwetel Ejiofor and Naomi Harris (she plays Harris' best friend) from writer-director Alex Kurtzman (*The Amazing Spider Man 2*, *Star Trek*).

Moodie appeared in the J. J. Abrams' smash hit blockbuster *Star Wars: Episode IX – The Rise of the Skywalker* opposite John Boyega, Daisy Ridley, and Oscar nominee Adam Driver. She has appeared in the hit series "Sherlock" opposite Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman; and "Skins" opposite Nicholas Hoult, Daniel Kaluuya, and Dev Patel.

Moodie won the 2020 RTS Award for Best Newcomer for her standout role in Sharon Horgan's hit BBC series "Motherland".

Moodie can currently be seen as a series regular in the Sky Original series “Discovery of Witches” opposite Matthew Goode, Teresa Palmer, and Alex Kingston. She also starred in a leading role opposite Tim Roth in the Sky series “Tin Star”.

Moodie’s many stage roles have included Rose in *Fences* for which she was nominated for Best Actress in the 2014 What’s On Stage Awards. For her performance as Esther in *Intimate Apparel* at the Park Theatre she was nominated for Best Actress at the 2014 London Evening Standard Theatre Awards, as well as an Olivier 2015 nomination for Outstanding Achievement In An Affiliate Theatre. That same year she was also nominated for an Olivier for Outstanding Achievement In An Affiliate Theatre for her performance as Makeda in *The House That Will Not Stand* at the Tricycle Theatre. Moodie appeared in Sony’s *Absentia* and in *The Terror* (Lyric Hammersmith), directed by Sean Holmes.

She was wonderful leading in *Trouble in Mind* at the Theatre Royal Bath and The Print Rooms and was outstanding at Gertrude in *Hamlet* at The RSC.

### **HANNAH ONLSOW (Janine)**

Hannah Onslow’s growing resume positions her as one of a few, super exciting, up-and-coming actors working today. Graduating from RADA in 2019, Onslow circumnavigated covid to work opposite Rory Kinnear in “Ridley Road” for Red Productions, and alongside Ben Wishaw in Sister Pictures/BBC’s “This Is Going To Hurt”. Onslow’s other screen credits include the much-loved series “Call The Midwife” and the fifth installment of the *Indiana Jones* franchise, directed by James Mangold, starring Harrison Ford.

### **CRYSTAL CLARKE (Ruby)**

Crystal Clarke was born and raised in the USA and graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2014.

Clarke can currently be seen in the second series of ITV/Masterpiece’s “Sandition”, adapted by Andrew Davies from Jane Austen’s unfinished novel. On television, Clarke’s other recent credits include David Hare’s “Roadkill” for the BBC and “Black Mirror Smithereens”, starring alongside Andrew Scott. Clarke played the role of Tina in BBC/Amazon’s adaptation of Agatha Christie’s “Ordeal By Innocence”, written by Sarah Phelps and directed by Sandra Goldbacher. She starred alongside Bill Nighy, Anna Chancellor, Matthew Goode, Luke Treadaway, Anthony Boyle, Eleanor Tomlinson, and Ella Purnell.

Clarke was seen most recently on the big screen in Will Sharpe’s feature *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*. She starred alongside Benedict Cumberbatch, Claire Foy, Olivia Colman, and Taika Waititi. Her other film credits include roles in Alex Garland’s *Annihilation*, *Assassin’s Creed* opposite

Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard, *Star Wars: Episode VIII: The Last Jedi*, and *Woman in Gold*.

Clarke's theater credits include *A Woman of No Importance* at the Vaudeville Theatre directed by Dominic Dromgoole and starring Eve Best and Anne Reid.

### **TOBY JONES (Norman)**

Toby Jones is an award-winning actor of stage and screen. Known as one of Britain's most recognizable and versatile actors, Jones' many acclaimed film credits include the Oscar-nominated and BAFTA-winning *Tinker Tailor Solider Spy*, the BAFTA-winning *Berberian Sound Studio*, *The Hunger Games* series, and his Emmy-nominated performance as Alfred Hitchcock in *The Girl*.

His notable television credits include the BAFTA-winning "Detectorists", "Danny Boy", the BAFTA and Emmy-winning "Sherlock", and "Don't Forget the Driver".

He is also an accomplished stage actor, with his Olivier Award-winning performance in the London production of *The Play What I Wrote*, and its subsequent Broadway run and his Olivier Award-nominated turn in *Uncle Vanya* among his impressive list of stage performances.

Jones has most recently been seen in Kelly Reichardt's acclaimed film *First Cow*, Gil Kenan's *A Boy Called Christmas*, and Will Sharpe's *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*.

Next, he will be seen in Jon S Bair's *Tetris*, Sebastian Lelio's *The Wonder*, and the upcoming *Indiana Jones* film. He has recently finished filming the ITV drama, "The Long Shadow".

### **COLIN FIRTH (Mr. Ellis)**

Academy Award winning actor Colin Firth is a veteran of film, television, and theater, with an impressive body of work spanning over four decades. He has appeared in three films that have won the Academy Award for Best Picture: *The King's Speech*, *Shakespeare in Love*, and *The English Patient*. Firth's performance as King George VI in *The King's Speech* earned him an Academy Award as well as a Golden Globe Award, Screen Actors Guild Award, British Independent Film Award, Critics' Choice Award, and his second consecutive BAFTA Award in 2011. Firth also won the BAFTA Award in 2010 and the Volpi Cup for Best Actor at the 2009 Venice Film Festival for his performance in Tom Ford's *A Single Man*.

In 2008 Firth starred in Universal Pictures' global smash hit *Mamma Mia!* The film grossed over half a billion dollars around the world.

In 2012 Firth was seen in Tomas Alfredson's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* opposite Gary Oldman and Tom Hardy. The thriller is based on John Le Carré's Cold War spy novel. The film garnered three

Academy Award nominations including Best Writing and won the 2012 BAFTA Film Award for Outstanding British Film and Best Adapted Screenplay.

In 2013 Firth appeared in *The Railway Man* directed by Jonathan Teplitzky, which also stars Nicole Kidman and Jeremy Irvine. The film is based on the true story of Eric Lomax, played by Colin, who sets out to find those responsible for his torture during his time as a prisoner in World War II.

In 2014 Firth starred in *Kingsman: The Secret Service* as a secret agent who recruits and trains an unrefined but promising street kid into the agency's competitive training program. Directed by Matthew Vaughn, it is based on the acclaimed comic book of the same name. The cast includes Samuel L Jackson, Michael Caine, and Taron Edgerton.

In 2016 Firth appeared in *Genius*, a chronicle of Max Perkins's time as the book editor at Scribner, where he oversaw works by Thomas Wolfe, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The film premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival. In the same year, Firth also reprised his role of Mark Darcy in *Bridget Jones' Baby*.

*Eye in the Sky* was also released in 2016 and was Firth's first film produced by his company, Raindog Films, with producing partner Ged Doherty. Raindog Films also produced the British-American feature *Loving*, the true story of Richard and Mildred Loving, the plaintiffs in the 1967 US Supreme Court case which ultimately invalidated laws prohibiting interracial marriage. Directed and written by Jeff Nichols and starring Joel Edgerton and Ruth Negga, the film was released in November 2016 and was nominated in both Best Actress and Best Actor categories at the 74<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards. The film was also selected for the 2016 Cannes Film Festival.

In September 2017, Firth reprised his role of Harry Hart in *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*, the sequel to *Kingsman: The Secret Service*. Again, directed by Matthew Vaughn, the film also starred Taron Edgerton, Julianne Moore, and Mark Strong. The film grossed \$39 million in its opening weekend and won the Best Thriller award at the Empire Awards.

In February 2018, Firth starred alongside Rachel Weisz and David Thewlis in biographical drama *The Mercy*. The film is based on the true story of the disastrous attempt by the amateur sailor Donald Crowhurst, played by Firth, to complete the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race in 1968 and his subsequent attempts to cover up his failure.

Also in 2018, Firth appeared in *The Happy Prince*, a film written and directed by Rupert Everett, depicting the final years of Oscar Wilde. The film was released at Sundance Film Festival in 2018 and was well received to many four and five-star reviews. Firth also executive produced *The Happy Prince*.

In July 2018, Firth returned to the role of Harry in the iconic musical sequel *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*. Firth was joined by Meryl Streep, Amanda Seyfried, Lily James, Jeremy Irvine, and many more in the highly successful musical comedy, which earned \$400,000,000 at the global box office.



In December 2018, Firth starred as William Weatherall Wilkins in Disney's highly anticipated *Mary Poppins Returns*. The box office hit was written by Oscar nominee David Magee and based on *The Mary Poppins Stories* by P.L. Travers. Directed by Rob Marshall, the feature film also starred Emily Blunt, Meryl Streep, and Lin-Manuel Miranda.

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

In 2020, Firth starred in the latest adaptation of children's book *The Secret Garden*. Firth played Archibald Craven alongside Julie Walters as Mrs. Medlock. The film was directed by BAFTA-winning Marc Munden and adapted by Jack Thorne. He also appeared in British independent film *Supernova*, a love story between Firth's character, Sam, and Stanley Tucci's character, Tusker, on a road trip around England as the couple deals with Tusker's dementia diagnosis.

In 2021, Firth starred in *Mothering Sunday*, a British drama film directed by Eva Husson based on the eponymous novel by Graham Swift. Firth appeared alongside Odessa Young, Josh O'Connor, and Olivia Colman.

This year Firth played Ewen Montagu in John Madden's WWII drama, *Operation Mincemeat*. Based on the Ben Macintyre book of the same name, the story takes place in 1943, focusing on one of the greatest deception intelligence operations of all time, as the Allies prepare to launch an all-out assault on Nazi-held Europe.

Firth has recently appeared in HBO Max's "The Staircase", which is based on the Netflix docuseries of the same name. Firth portrayed Michael Peterson, for which he was Emmy-nominated in the Lead Actor – Limited Series category, who was accused and convicted of murdering his wife in 2001. Firth starred alongside Toni Colette, Sophie Turner, Patrick Schwarzenegger, and Juliette Binoche.

Firth's other film credits include the Oscar-nominated *Girl with the a Pearl Earring*; *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*; *Devil's Knot*; *Arthur Newman*; *Then She Found Me*; *When Did You Last See Your Father?*; *Easy Virtue*; Micheal Winterbottom's *Genova*; *A Christmas Carol*; *The Importance of Being Ernest*; Atom Egoyan's *Where the Truth Lies*; Marc Evans' thriller *Trauma*; *Nanny McPhee*; *What a Girl Wants*; *A Thousand Acres*, with Michelle Pfeiffer and Jessica Lange; *Apartment Zero*; *My Life So Far*; Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch*; *Circle of Friends*; *Playmaker*; and the title role in Milos Forman's *Valmont* opposite Annette Bening.

On the small screen, Firth is famous for his breakout role as Mr. Darcy in the 1995 BBC adaptation of "Pride and Prejudice", for which he received a BAFTA nomination for Best Actor and the National Television Award for Most Popular Actor.

In March 2004, Firth hosted NBC's "Saturday Night Live". He was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2001 for Outstanding Supporting Actor in the critically acclaimed HBO film *Conspiracy* and also received the Royal Television Society Best Actor Award and a BAFTA nomination for his performance in *Tumbledown*. His other television credits include BBC television movie *Born Equal*; *Donovan Quick*; "The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd"; "Deep Blue Sea"; *Hostages*, and the mini-series "Nostromo". His London stage debut was in the West End production of *Another Country* playing Guy Bennett. He was then chosen to play the character Judd in the 1984 film adaptation opposite Rupert Everett.

He was honored with the Humanitarian Award by BAFTA/LA at their 2009 Britannia Awards. In 2008 he was named Philanthropist of the Year by *The Hollywood Reporter* and prior to this, in 2006, Firth was voted European Campaigner of the Year by the EU.

###