



SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES Presents

GOOD LUCK TO YOU, LEO GRANDE

A Hulu Original



Directed by SOPHIE HYDE

Written & Created by KATY BRAND

Starring

EMMA THOMPSON

DARYL MCCORMACK

DIRECTED BY..... SOPHIE HYDE
 WRITTEN & CREATED BY..... KATY BRAND
 PRODUCED BY.....DEBBIE GRAY, ADRIAN POLITOWSKI
 CINEMATOGRAPHER.....BRYAN MASON
 EDITOR.....BRYAN MASON
 COSTUME DESIGNER.....SIAN JENKINS
 PRODUCTION DESIGNER.....MIREN MARANON
 SOUND DESIGNER.....STEVE FANAGAN
 ORIGINAL MUSIC BY.....STEPHEN RENNICKS

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Running time: 1hour, 37 minutes

Rating: R

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GOOD LUCK TO YOU, LEO GRANDE

In *GOOD LUCK TO YOU, LEO GRANDE*, two-time Academy Award® winner Emma Thompson (*Love, Actually*) embodies the candor and apprehension of retired teacher Nancy Stokes, and newcomer Daryl McCormack (*Peaky Blinders*) personifies the charisma and compassion of sex worker Leo Grande. As Nancy embarks on a post-marital sexual awakening and Leo draws on his skills and charm, together they find a surprising human connection.

Directed by Sophie Hyde, written & created by Katy Brand, *GOOD LUCK TO YOU, LEO GRANDE* is produced by Debbie Gray and Adrian Politowski. Bryan Mason is the cinematographer and editor, along with costume designer Sian Jenkins, production designer Miren Maranon, and with original music by Stephen Rennicks.

GOOD LUCK TO YOU, LEO GRANDE made its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival.

A Knock on the Door

“I had had the vision of the opening scene for quite a long time,” says screenwriter Katy Brand. “A woman of around 60 is waiting in a hotel room for a young man that she has booked to have sex with. A sex worker. I saw the image of this scene, this woman waiting, and the guy coming up and you're just hearing this soft knock on the door and she opens the door and then we begin.”

Brand kept writing and found that she loved the back and forth between Nancy and Leo. “I really started to enjoy hearing them talk to each other. What would actually happen in this situation, how would it play out? And so I wrote it quite freely, that first draft, but I was excited by it. I felt a thrill of writing that dialogue and hearing them talk.”

Brand passed the script along to producer Debbie Gray of Genesius Pictures, who responded to it instantly. “It was an immediate yes, it was very funny and original. Beneath the humour, Katy was dealing with sexuality, intimacy, and the connection between strangers. Power and intimacy and the interplay - I loved it.”

Brand was quick to share that for the role she had always pictured Emma Thompson, a friend with whom she had worked with before on *Nanny McPhee*. “I wrote the script for Emma and with her tone of voice in mind,” Brand says. “I knew that she would have a certain cadence and a way of delivering lines, a way of being funny, but also true at the same time.” Brand sent the script to Thompson and she came back quickly.

“I read it and I had a kind of visceral reaction to it and I wrote immediately saying it had to be made and that I really wanted to be in it,” explains Thompson. “It was like nothing I'd ever read before – it was so funny and so moving. I laughed so hard, I was in tears at the end, and then it quickly took off from there.”

With Emma committed to the role of Nancy, producer Gray found early partners in Cornerstone who fell in love with an early outline of the script. Having recently worked with Sophie Hyde on *Animals*, the Cornerstone team instantly thought of her, believing her visual style, emotional intelligence and raw honesty would be a great match for the material.

Both the concept of the story and Emma's involvement were exciting for Hyde. "I got a message that this was Emma Thompson in a story in which she hired a sex worker, and it was all set in one space. And I just thought well, I want to do that, that sounds amazing; I just knew that it was going to be something really interesting, and there's so much room in there to create something."

Casting Leo Grande

With Hyde on board to direct and financing in place, it was important to find someone who could go toe to toe with Thompson. "Emma Thompson is a legend, and we were fortunate that she agreed to attach herself to the project very early on," says Gray. "It enabled Emma to develop her journey through the development phase and also assist in the casting of Leo Grande. The chemistry of the two lead characters was vital – it is a two-hander and it had to feel authentic."

Daryl McCormack was sent the script. "Before I'd even read the script or understood it was a two-hander, I was excited by the idea of working with Emma," explains McCormack. "Once I started reading, I couldn't believe this was something I might be considered for. I fell in love with the character of Leo and what he represented, what seeing a young man like him on screen could mean and the chance to embody that. And then to see how these two people in one room can really change each other's lives through intimacy."

McCormack came in to audition and filmmakers liked him immediately. "It was finding that energy we wanted Leo to have. That openness and charisma and a sort of gentleness, but also a naughty sense of humour. We thought Daryl could make Leo come to life," says Brand. Hyde says of McCormack, "Daryl is empathetic and he relaxes everybody, it's a really lovely quality and this teamed with his drive to present an interesting, specific, and rich character meant we really got to the heart of who Leo is and how good he is at what he does."

McCormack met with Thompson to discuss the role and the story together, and she immediately wanted him to play Leo. "I couldn't believe it, I thought maybe she'd saved my number incorrectly or that they really wanted someone else." But there was no confusion and in under a week McCormack had the role and rehearsals were set to begin.

The Right Research

Hyde and Brand worked through several drafts of the story asking themselves questions about how to push the film into really interesting territory. “How can we ensure that the story feels authentic to the audience? How can we make sure that we’re consulting sex workers and that we’ve got the right material to tell that story, that’s not harmful, that’s perhaps empowering in some way?” Hyde recollects, “Katy was very generous with allowing me to find things as well, and those became part of the story.”

Says Brand, “Sophie’s director’s notes and insights were the best I’ve had. I knew that she was going to create the atmosphere on set and create that intimacy and trust with the actors.” According to Gray, this is one of the qualities that made Hyde perfect for the project. “Sophie brought a strong point of view and a fearless ability to lean into the material,” says Gray.

“Whilst I was reading through the script with Sophie, she was spotting everything that I was spotting and I just kind of instantly began to trust her so much because she was seeing the same film that I was seeing,” explains McCormack.

“She examined this forensically, and really, really took us through it – little piece by little tessellated piece,” adds Thompson. “Without Sophie, it wouldn’t have become what it had the potential to be. It could have been generalized – but it’s funny and touching and unafraid.”

Integral to the film was making sure that sex workers were consulted through every stage. “I did a lot of research with sex workers,” says Hyde. “We had some wonderful consultants with lived experiences and their stories and insights were just brilliant. We wanted to make sure that what we were saying felt real to people that were engaged in this kind of deeply intimate work.”

It was also crucial for McCormack to depict the job accurately. “Meeting with sex workers that Sophie had been consulting with was massively important for me in preparing for the role,” explains McCormack. “I’m not representing all sex workers in the role because the work and workers are so diverse, it would be impossible to do. But it

was important to speak to them about their profession, their experiences, and hear them as people to help us to understand Leo's character."

Lastly, Emma Thompson notes a final takeaway on behalf of her costar: "I hope that lots of people will be talking about Mr. McCormack; it's a massive great role. It's a two-hander and you know I'm a war horse that's done a lot of stuff, and Daryl's done loads, but you know he's still young and it's a remarkable, remarkable performance, and I'm really excited to see people reacting to that."

Getting Vulnerable

In a script that approaches intimacy and sex in a sometimes comedic way, vulnerability and openness were vital. "To get to the place that I think we got to, Emma and Daryl had to be really willing to go somewhere," explains Hyde. "They were both ready for this film in a certain way, and they were willing to put themselves physically on the line, to reveal themselves."

Rehearsal was an important part of building a comfortable space for both the actors and filmmaking team. "I felt like Emma, Daryl, and I stepped onto set knowing the level we wanted to go to and felt in control of that," says Hyde. "We worked up to the intimacy by talking a lot, about nudity, about sexual touch, and how we were going to do that in the film. We did a lot of workshops, exercises, games, and I led them through a process of opening up to each other so they could feel comfortable."

Having a crew that was sensitive to the material and incredibly capable also helped to set the environment and keep Thompson and McCormack feeling safe. Ultimately, it was a trust and ability to communicate openly between Thompson, McCormack, Hyde, and the crew that made the scenes possible. "The great thing about Emma and Daryl is that they created, not just in the rehearsal room, but between them a really comfortable space," says Hyde. "They got to know each other very well and they chose how to create the film and the characters, and I feel that at all times they were in control of that. And I very much felt my job was to set up the potential for that and protect it."

A Not-So-Simple Set

Given that the film largely takes place in one room, plenty of planning went into the design of the hotel room that would be Nancy and Leo's meeting space. "We wanted the film to feel intimate but not claustrophobic and I think we achieved this with a clever use of design, camera movement, lighting, and a large translight which provided a physical view from our studio built set," notes Gray.

Hyde worked closely with the production designer, Miren Maranon, to create a hotel room that was "modern-ish and quite neutral, which means something that wasn't luxurious, and didn't have heaps of colour." One of the challenges of setting a film in a hotel room," says Hyde, "is that it doesn't have any revelation of character like you'd have in somebody's home for instance." To address this, Hyde and Maranon brought elements of "sensuality, I suppose, into the furnishings. So there's lots of really tactile fabrics in there. For instance, we ended up with this beautiful blue carpet that's really lush." In the end, the goal was to balance keeping the room neutral, not too expensive or cheap looking, all while maintaining a visually entertaining space."

Another crucial factor of the setting was lighting. Hyde and Maranon worked closely with Cinematographer Bryan Mason to achieve the right lighting for each meeting, in order to make them distinct and different but with the same set. "To change the light, we decided to have a large window with a translight outside," says Hyde of the view from the large window in the hotel room. The first meeting moved from day into night, another during a sunny day, and another when it was raining.

The camerawork played into changing the feel of each meeting as well. "At the beginning there's a kind of very composed, very symmetrical style and then by the end that gets a little bit messier. And there's certain very particular scenes where Bryan's suddenly got the camera handheld instead of being on the dolly, which is what we were doing most of the time."

Of the overall effect, Hyde says, "It's a really brilliant thing to be making something where it's just set in one room with two actors where you can really focus on performance. Performance is everything in a film like this so as a director that's a really

beautiful thing to make.” Thompson adds, “It’s two humans, lighting, and a camera. It couldn’t be more pure, really.”

On top of the construction of the set, filmmakers had to be conscious of the difficulties in shooting during a full Covid lockdown, on an incredibly intimate, small set. The nature of this, caused by the lockdowns, increased the feeling of intimacy and focus of the production.

Emma Thompson on Nancy Stokes

“Nancy is a 60-ish retired religious education teacher who’s been widowed for 2 years and who makes this sort of fabulously bold and unusual decision to hire a younger sex worker. She is brave but also deeply flawed. So many of her beliefs are the opposite of woke which I love because that’s sort of 90% of the population. It’s not uncommon -- her attitudes, her prejudices, her biases. She is just a wonderfully normal person who initiates this very strangely intimate, not-romantic relationship. Nancy obeyed the rules her whole life; she’s what you would describe as a pillar of society. She’s conducted herself incredibly well -- she’s had a long, successful 31-year-old marriage. She’s got two successful, healthy children. She had a long career in religious education. Yet slowly, you see how this construction that looks so perfect is in fact far from it; that it contains an emptiness that has prevented her from really being fully a human being.

We’re so conditioned. A lot of our societal constructions make it impossible for us to be present and I think that’s also what the film starts to address. If you weren’t following the rules, what would you want? How would you express it and how would you find it?

Seeing Nancy go from being so tense that she can’t even cope with being touched, like that, to having a kind of a very beautiful attachment with this man, a deep and unromantic intimacy I’d never seen before.”

Daryl McCormack on Leo Grande

“Leo Grande is a modern young man who makes a living as a sex worker and meets Nancy after she books him for a session. I was really excited by him because he’s someone who navigates his own identity and pleasure so openly -- it’s his superpower. He’s had his own experiences with sexual shame, and in response to that he empowered himself. He uses his expressiveness and his own sexual desires to help others discover theirs. Nancy is a woman who has been pretty much starved of healthy and beautiful sexual experience and Leo has found a vocation in helping to introduce that to his clients and help them see their own power through sexuality.

Different generations don’t necessarily have the same understanding around sex and pleasure, which is also something we explore. It’s a topic that has affected Leo personally and he’s able to take those experiences and use it as momentum for himself to find his own identity. It also helps him with Nancy, and working with her to understand these parts of herself for the first time.

Leo has a full life and a past that he doesn’t share with his clients and that shape who he is, but he also creates lines for himself within his work like you should in any professional setting. His job is intimacy, and it’s really interesting to explore the different kinds of intimacies that can develop between two people.”

Empowerment through Intimacy

“I made this film as an important reminder that someone unlikely might free you from your own limitations in a small but significant way. And that the search for intimacy and connection can be powerful and necessary,” says Hyde. “I would like audiences to go out feeling so released, so much freer and braver, brave enough to say, finally, you know, What do you want, really? How do you experience pleasure? Do you allow yourself to experience pleasure, and if you don’t then why not? Where do you carry your shame and why are you ashamed? Why are pain and pleasure and shame so inextricably linked?”

Thompson adds, "These are conversations that live with everyone, in all cultures, across all borders."

As a director, Hyde was interested in showing a certain freedom that can be found in pleasure and connection. "It's something that takes a while to open up for some of us but is really worth something."

She continues, "This film is simple - two actors in one room exploring intimacy, connection, sex, frustration, and shifting power dynamics – but in our currently divided world, these intimate stories about connection feel even more vital. Our bodies, our shame, our mis-communications, our sexual connections, and sexual frustrations are funny, touching, and often tragic, and I believe we are longing for stories that reflect us and challenge us and allow us to consider how we treat each other."

"I hope that they'll have a laugh," adds McCormack. "I hope that they really enjoy what we can bring to each other as humans, just humor and kindness and an endeavor to understand one another."

Grounding the Film

Nancy and Leo derive more from their relationship than sex, however. The ability to connect on a deeper level with each other, and how powerful that can be. "I think that you can make a connection with anyone anywhere, and it doesn't mean it has to last a lifetime. Just be open to having little connections with people, even when you least expect it." McCormack says he hopes that viewers come away understanding that it is possible to overcome what society has projected upon us about intimacy. "To get past that is a lot of freedom," he concludes.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

There is much to be said between two characters who meet to have good sex, and much that cannot be expressed in words. I love to work with desire, our wants and needs, the way our wants compete with each other and the way we try to reject them or embrace them.

Nancy is a wonderful character, repressed but motivated to make a huge change. She is unflinchingly honest about her own discomfort around sex and determined to explore what it could be. She can be abrasive and seem uncaring, but over the film she grows to understand that she may have perpetuated values she didn't believe in. She may have accepted and reinforced a status quo that is unhelpful to those around her and also to herself. This is as much of an awakening as her physical one. Emma is an actor who can switch from witty to heartbreaking instantly and it has been a total joy to work with her in this role.

Leo is a refreshing character. A truly impassioned and emotionally healthy sex worker is a character we don't see a lot of onscreen. Leo's work is therapeutic, warm and emotionally liberating. It is sex positive, grounded and open. Leo's deep wounds around his mother are also the thing that gives him great power to be good at what he does. His boundaries are clear, but he is also having a human connection which sometimes doesn't follow the rules. He is able to decide how to respond to a boundary crossed. Daryl is an actor with a warmth and charm, who expanded Leo to have a really connected emotional capacity. It was such a delight to work with him.

The two characters together allow us to be part of a conversation between two people we might not normally watch interact. In this film, what is sexy is intimacy; the thrill, touch, sensations, the way someone can take your breath away, and the reality of two human bodies together for real, not for show. We explore the specificity of these two people exploring the oddities of erotic response which can be funny and moving.

Sex and the body are fundamental to the film and having been soaked in a culture that teaches us to be ashamed and want to control and change our bodies. It's a joy to watch Nancy find pleasure in and gain an appreciation for hers and to see how Leo and his significant skills offer her a freedom to get there.

Filmmaker Bios

SOPHIE HYDE, Director

Sophie Hyde is a founding member of film collective Closer Productions. She lives and works on the lands of the Kaurna people in South Australia and makes provocative and intimate films and television.

Her debut feature drama *52 Tuesdays* (director/producer/co-writer) won the Directing Award at Sundance and the Crystal Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. She directed and produced the Australian/Irish co-production *Animals* starring Holliday Grainger and Alia Shawkat, which premiered in Sundance 2019 and won a BIFA for Best Debut Screenplay. She created, produced and directed episodic series “F*!#ing Adelaide”, which premiered in competition at Series Mania and screened on ABC Australia. She created, produced and directed (EP4) series “The Hunting”, which won two Australian Academy Awards for Best Screenplay in Television and Best Supporting Actor for Richard Roxburgh and the Australian Writers Guild award for Best Series. It is network SBS’s highest rated commissioned program to date. Hyde was nominated for two Australian Directors Guild awards in 2020 for feature film *Animals* and “The Hunting”.

Hyde’s feature documentaries include *Life in Movement* (producer /co-director), winner of the Australian Documentary Prize, *Shut Up Little Man! An Audio Misadventure* (producer) and Sam Klemke’s *Time Machine* (producer), which both premiered at Sundance Film Festival and *In My Blood It Runs* (Producer) which premiered at Hotdocs, had a very successful cinema run, and has screened on PBS (USA), ABC (Australia) and ARTE (France and Germany).

KATY BRAND, Written & Created by

Katy Brand wrote her first comic monologue in 2004 and began performing live original comedy in pubs around the U.K. She later joined a group of sketch comedians to write and perform a weekly live sketch show at the Ealing Film Studios, called Ealing Live! In 2005 Brand took her debut Edinburgh show *Celebrities Are Gods* to the Fringe, which was immediately picked up for a Comedy Lab for Channel 4 (“Slap”).

This later became the award-winning ITV sketch show, "Katy Brand's Big Ass Show", which Brand devised, wrote and starred in. It ran for three series, and later became a nationwide live tour. She won a British Comedy Award for the show in 2008, and was also nominated for an RTS Award. During this period she also wrote and performed "Mouthtrap" with Katherine Parkinson which ran for two series on BBC Radio 4.

Since then, Brand has written for and appeared in numerous radio and tv shows, from Radio 4's "News Quiz" to Channel 4's "Peep Show". Most recently she presented "The Origin of Stuff" on BBC Radio 4, a show which looks at the history of everyday objects. She has also scripted "Katy Brand's Christmas Cracker" for Sky and "Common People: Eleanor" for Baby Cow and Sky. Acting jobs cover a wide array of TV, Film and Radio shows, alongside regular live work. These include "Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang" (Universal Pictures), "Peep Show" (Channel 4), "Grandpa's Great Escape" (BBC), "Annually Retentive" (BBC), "Mongrels" (BBC), and "Psychobitches".

In 2016, Brand took a new stand-up comedy show *I Was A Teenage Christian* to the Edinburgh Fringe ('intelligent story-telling...she makes us hang on her every word' - The Times; 'The church's loss is comedy's gain' - Evening Standard) and later toured with it nationwide. She returned to the Fringe in 2017 with the follow-up show, *I Could've Been An Astronaut* ('Laugh out loud funny' - The Skinny).

Her debut play "3Women", starring Anita Dobson, opened at Trafalgar Studios 2 in May 2018 ('it has heart and lots of laughs' The Daily Mail, 'sharp and convincing' The Guardian, 'witty and insightful – I really recommend this' Woman's Hour BBC Radio 4), and is published by Samuel French.

Her debut novel "Brenda Monk Is Funny" ('...essential reading' - Irvine Welsh) was published in 2014, this was followed by "I Carried A Watermelon", part memoir-part homage to Dirty Dancing which was published in 2019. Her next book *Practically Perfect: Life Lessons from Mary Poppins* was published in 2020.

She has a forthcoming series on BBC Radio 4 "Influencers", written and performed with Katherine Parkinson.

DEBBIE GRAY, Producer

Debbie Gray is a Producer and Executive Producer with over 25 years' experience in Film, Television, and Music. Having produced BAFTA nominated and award-winning film *Northern Soul* (Universal Pictures), *The More You Ignore Me*, written by BAFTA winner Jo Brand, *Mrs Lowry and Son* starring Timothy Spall and Vanessa Redgrave, and *A Christmas Number One*, starring Freida Pinto.

Prior to her Film Productions, Gray was an Executive Producer at ITV studios for five years where she developed and produced drama and observational documentaries. She was an executive producer of "Ibiza Rocks" for Channel 4 and has produced dramas and entertainment for the BBC.

Gray is currently in production of *The Radleys* based on a book by Matt Haig directed by Euros Lyn and is developing a film written by Jeff Pope and directed by Kevin MacDonald called *The Ice Man* starring Joseph Fiennes for shooting this year.

ADRIAN POLITOWSKI, Producer

Adrian Politowski is CEO of Align. A production company with headquarters in LA and presences in London, Brussels, and Luxemburg. It is backed by a greenlight fund enabling to produce and fully finance features and TV.

He is the Co-Founder and previous CEO of Umedia (2004-2019) where he grew the group organically with Nadia Khamlichi from a modest 3-person organization into the \$100M+ turnover international film group with 200 staff. In 2020, he sold his stake in Umedia.

Politowski worked as a producer on over 450 films including such hits as the multi Academy Award winning *The Artist*, *Mandy* (Sundance Film Festival '18) starring Nicholas Cage, HBO's *My Brilliant Friend*, Paramount's *Paws of Fury* (summer '22 release), *Grace of Monaco* (Official Selection Cannes '14) starring Nicole Kidman, *Little Nicholas* (Official Selection Cannes '22), and *The Mustang* (Sundance Film Festival '19) to name a few.

His films have garnered 25 Official Cannes Selection, 11 Oscar Nominations (5 wins), and 77 nominations (22 wins) at the French César Awards.

Politowski also sits on the Board of Directors of publicly traded VFX/gaming company Goodbye Kansas, as well as cutting edge medical company Nordic Executive Medicine, and sits on the Advisory Board of WIFTI (Women in Film and TV International).

He holds a Masters in Engineering and a Masters in Economics, both from Oxford University. He splits his time between Los Angeles, Brussels, and Stockholm.

Cast Bios

EMMA THOMPSON, Nancy Stokes

Emma Thompson is one of the world's most critically-lauded and respected talents for her versatility in acting as well as screenwriting. She is the sole artist thus far to have received an Academy Award for both acting (*Howards End* / Sony Pictures) and screenwriting (*Sense and Sensibility* / Columbia Pictures). In June of 2018 she was appointed a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Last May she starred opposite Emma Stone in the hit Disney feature film *Cruella*. Also in 2021 she shot three additional feature films back-to-back: *What's Love Got to Do With It* (StudioCanal UK), starring Lily James and Shazad Latif, directed by Shekhar Kapur from a screenplay by Jemima Khan; and the film adaptation of Tim Minchin's hit stage musical *Matilda* (Netflix), based on the Roald Dahl classic novel, in which she plays the dreaded school head mistress, 'Trunchbull', for director Matthew Warchus.

Thompson's film credits begin with *The Tall Guy* (Miramax), her feature debut in 1988. They include the aforementioned *Sense and Sensibility* (Columbia Pictures) (for which she also received a Best Actress Oscar nomination); *The Remains of the Day* (Columbia Pictures)(Oscar nomination); *In the Name of the Father* (Universal Pictures)(Oscar nomination); *Last Christmas* (Universal Pictures)(for which she was also co-screenwriter and producer), *Late Night* (Amazon Studios), *The Children Act* (A24), *Love Actually* (Universal Pictures); *Saving Mr. Banks* (Disney); *The Meyerowitz Stories* (Netflix); Disney's live action *Beauty and the Beast*; *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Warner Bros); *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Warner Bros); *Henry V* (BBC); *Dead Again* (Paramount Pictures); *Peter's Friends* (Entertainment Film Distributors); *Much Ado About Nothing* (MGM); *Junior* (Universal Pictures); *Carrington* (MGM); *The Winter Guest* (Capitol Films); *Primary Colors* (Universal Pictures); *Stranger Than Fiction* (Columbia Pictures); *Last Chance Harvey* (Paramount Vantage); *Love Punch* (Entertainment One); *Brave* (Pixar); and two of the *Men In Black* sequels (Columbia Pictures).

Thompson starred as the title character in both *Nanny McPhee* and *Nanny McPhee Returns* (Universal Pictures), for both of which she also wrote the screenplay, based on

Christiana Brand's Nurse Matilda storied and was an Executive Producer on the latter. She is currently developing a stage musical on the character.

Television credits include the BBC One/HBO six-part Russell T. Davies series "Years & Years"; HBO's "Wit" (2001 Golden Globe nomination) and "Angels in America" (2002 SAG Award, Emmy nomination), both for director Mike Nichols; "Song of Lunch" for BBC Two (2012 Emmy nomination); "Walking the Dog"; "Alfresco"; and the eponymous BBC series "Thompson".

Stage credits include the New York Philharmonic's staged production of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* opposite Bryn Terfel, which they reprised at the London Coliseum with the English National Orchestra; *Me and My Girl* first at Leicester and then London's West End; and *Look Back in Anger* at the Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue. Thompson was commissioned to write the 24th, 25th and 26th tales in the existing collection of Peter Rabbit stories beginning in 2014, the only author since Beatrix Potter to do so.

Thompson is President of the Helen Bamber Foundation, a UK-based human rights organization, formed in April 2005, to help rebuild the lives of, and inspire a new self-esteem in, survivors of gross human rights violations. On behalf of the Foundation, Thompson co-curated "Journey", an interactive art installation which used seven transport containers to illustrate the brutal and harrowing experiences of women sold into the sex trade. Thompson and "Journey" traveled to London, Vienna, Madrid, New York and the Netherlands for exhibitions and interviews.

Four years ago, Thompson joined Greenpeace on their Save the Arctic campaign and she continues as an active supporter of Greenpeace. She is a supporter of the UK-based Food Foundation and Child Hunger. She is also an Ambassador for the international development agency, ActionAid, and has spoken out publicly about her support for the work the NGO is doing, in particular, in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic that continues to sweep across Africa. She has been affiliated with the organization since 2000 and thus far has visited ActionAid projects in Uganda, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, Liberia and Myanmar. She is a Patron of the Refugee Council and also patron of Edinburgh College's Performing Arts Studio of Scotland.

Thompson was born in London to Eric Thompson, a theatre director and writer, and Phyllida Law, an actress. While at Cambridge, she was a member of the Footlights comedy troupe, alongside contemporaries Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry. She is married to actor Greg Wise and they have a daughter, Gaia Wise, and a son, Tindyebwa Agaba Wise.

DARYL MCCORMACK, Leo Grande

2021 Screen International Star of Tomorrow, Daryl McCormack studied Theatre and Performance at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama.

McCormack joined the season 5 cast of “Peaky Blinders” (BBC) as a preacher’s son, taking over the role of ‘Isaiah Jesus’ from Jordan Bolger, and returned for the 6th iteration of the BBC hit last month.

In 2020, McCormack starred in Barnaby Thompson’s *Pixie* as Harland McKenna. The comedy thriller follows Pixie Hardy who sets out to avenge her mother’s death and attempts a heist that will allow her to leave her small town behind. When the plan goes awry, Pixie teams up with two misfits played McCormack and Ben Hardy, to scheme and swindle anyone they come across.

Other notable television roles include Aram in “The Wheel of Time” (Amazon Prime), David in Dominic Savage’s “I Am Maria” (Channel 4), and Ryan in Lewis Arnold’s “Cleaning Up” (ITV).

On stage, McCormack made his West End debut in 2018 as Brendan in the *Lieutenant of Inishmore*. Additional theatre credits include *Citysong* at the Abbey Theatre and Soho Theatre and *Mouth of a Shark* at The Lab, Dublin.

ISABELLA LAUGHLAND, Becky

Izzy Laughland is currently a series regular in the next season of “Foundation” for Apple+. She recently starred in the BBC shows “Ghosts” and “Trigonometry”, as well as having a great role in “The Barking Murders” opposite Stephen Merchant. She recently

starred alongside Jodie Turner Smith in the miniseries “Anne Boleyn” which aired on AMC +. Before that she starred in “Chimerica” (Channel 4) opposite Alessandro Nivola.

Laughland shot the Nick Frost and Simon Pegg horror comedy *Slaughter House Rulez* (Sony Pictures) opposite Michael Sheen and Asa Butterfield. She also starred in an episode of the Netflix anthology series “Black Mirror”, as well as in a lead for the critically acclaimed Michael Caton-Jones film, *Urban Hymn* at the Toronto Int’l Film Festival she was considered one of the Top 5 Breakthrough Performances.

Laughland burst onto the scene playing a supporting role in the last three films of the billion-dollar Harry Potter franchise (Warner Bros). Since then she has built an extensive theater career on the British stage showcasing her talents in productions such as *Cock* at Chichester theater, *King Lear* playing Cordelia opposite Frank Langella, *Pride & Prejudice* playing Elizabeth Bennett, and *The Last of the Haussmans* featuring an all-star cast including Rory Kinnear, Julie Walters, Helen McCory and Taron Egerton.

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