

# MASTERPIECE

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## The Princess and the President

### *Atlantic Crossing*

**Kyle MacLachlan stars as President Franklin Roosevelt  
with Sofia Helin as Norwegian Crown Princess Martha  
on MASTERPIECE**

**Sundays, April 4 - May 23, 2021 on PBS**

A friendship forged in war is beautifully portrayed by Kyle MacLachlan (*Twin Peaks*) as U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and Swedish star Sofia Helin (*The Bridge*) as Norwegian Crown Princess Martha in *Atlantic Crossing*, based on a true story of passion and politics, airing in eight episodes on MASTERPIECE, Sundays, April 4 - May 23 at 9/8c on PBS.

Airing during MASTERPIECE's 50th season, *Atlantic Crossing* ranges back and forth across the North Atlantic throughout World War II, depicting momentous events in the changing fortunes of Norway, Great Britain and the United States.

Also starring in this international co-production are Tobias Santelmann (*Kon Tiki*) as Martha's husband, Norwegian Crown Prince Olav; Søren Pilmark (*Downsizing*) as Olav's father, King Haakon VII; Harriet Sansom Harris (*Desperate Housewives*) as First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; Lucy Russell (*Wolf Hall*) as presidential secretary Missy LeHand; Daniel Betts (*The Crown*) as foreign policy advisor Harry Hopkins; and Suzanne Bertish (*The Wife*) as American diplomat Florence Harriman.

Probing deeply into the rarely told story of Norway's struggle against Nazi invasion and occupation, *Atlantic Crossing* features a supporting cast of acclaimed Norwegian actors, including Anneke von der Lippe (*Pan*), Stig R. Amdam (*Acquitted*), Trond Teigen (*Occupied*), and Maria Annette Tanderø Berglyd (*Totally True Love*).

*Atlantic Crossing* opens in 1939 with a goodwill visit by Olav (Santelmann) and Martha (Helin) to the United States where they befriend the president (MacLachlan) and first lady (Harris). Months later, Norway is fighting for survival as Nazi Germany invades the neutral country with the goal of seizing its strategic ports and securing access to iron ore mines for steel production.

During the assault, German troops try to capture the Norwegian royal family for use as bargaining chips, but the King (Pilmark) and Olav manage to escape to England where they set up a government-in-exile. Meanwhile Martha and the three children make their hazardous way to America where they are taken in at the White House by President Roosevelt.

This sets the stage for an epic drama that mixes war and diplomacy, desire and jealousy. At the outset, America is officially neutral. It would be political suicide if Roosevelt defies the strong isolationist sentiment in the U.S., yet Martha urges him to find a way to help Norway in the fight against Germany. Meanwhile across the ocean, Olav grows increasingly suspicious of Martha's close ties to the president. Is it friendship or something more?

The relationship also tries the patience of the first lady and Roosevelt's closest advisors: Harry Hopkins (Betts) and the president's rumored paramour Missy LeHand (Russell).

For Martha, the whole experience is an education like no other, as the shy and beautiful crown princess must play the roles of public figure, confidante, statesman, and single mother, while she anxiously awaits the outcome of a war that may unalterably transform her nation.

*Atlantic Crossing* is from Cinenord in co-production with Beta Film for NRK and MASTERPIECE. The series is created and directed by Alexander Eik. The co-director is Janic Heen. The writers are Alexander Eik and Linda May Kallestein. The executive producers are Tone Rønning, Justus Riesenkauff, Friedemann Goez, Sofia Helin, Anni Faurbye Fernandez, James Cabourne and Sofie Wanting Hassing. The executive producer for MASTERPIECE is Susanne Simpson. The producer is Silje Hopland Eik.

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### **About MASTERPIECE**

Winner of 83 Primetime Emmys® and 18 Peabody Awards, MASTERPIECE has been essential Sunday night viewing for millions of fans since 1971. Susanne Simpson is the executive producer and Rebecca Eaton is the executive producer-at-large for the series. Funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by Viking and Raymond James with additional support from public television viewers and contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust. Produced for PBS by GBH Boston, MASTERPIECE is known for recent hits such as *Sherlock*, *Downton Abbey* and *Victoria*, and beloved classics such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga* and *Poldark*.