

MASTERPIECE®



EMBARGOED UNTIL: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 at 11AM ET

**MAIGRET, BASED ON THE NOVELS
BY GEORGES SIMENON, STARTS PRODUCTION;
PLAYGROUND PRODUCES FOR MASTERPIECE;
BANIJAY RIGHTS TO HANDLE WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION;
Benjamin Wainwright and Stefanie Martini star**

New York/London, September 10, 2024 – The first contemporary television adaptation of Georges Simenon’s beloved novels about the streetwise Parisian Chief Inspector Jules Maigret has started production in Budapest. Colin Callender and David Stern will executive produce for Playground, the Golden Globe and BAFTA award winning production company behind upcoming series *WOLF HALL: THE MIRROR AND THE LIGHT* for BBC/MASTERPIECE and Sky dramedy *SMALL TOWN, BIG STORY*.

Patrick Harbinson (*Homeland*, *24*, *The Tower*) serves as lead writer, executive producer on behalf of Windhover Films, and will direct the first two episodes of the series with Faye Gilbert (*The Tower*, *The Bay*) directing episodes 3 & 4 and David Evans (*Domina*, *Django*) directing episodes 5 & 6. Susanne Simpson serves as the executive producer on behalf of MASTERPIECE, the lead commissioning broadcaster. International distribution will be handled by Banijay Rights, the global sales arm of Banijay Entertainment.

Jules Maigret will be played by Benjamin Wainwright (*Belgravia: The Next Chapter*, *Lord of the Rings: War of the Rohirrim*), and Stefanie Martini (*The Gold*, *Last Kingdom*, *Emerald City*) stars as Madame Louise Maigret. Blake Harrison (*World on Fire*, *I Hate Suzie Too*), Reda Elazouar (*Sex Education*, *Pirates*), Kerrie Hayes (*The Responder*, *Criminal Record*), Shaniqua Okwok (*The Flatshare*, *It’s a Sin*) and Rob Kazinsky (*Star Trek: Section 31*, *Eastenders*) make up the “Les Maigrets,” Maigret’s loyal team of detectives, with Nathalie Armin (*Showtrial S2*, *Juice*) set to play Prosecutor Mathilde Kernavel.

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Chief Inspector Jules Maigret, the invention of former crime reporter turned prolific author Georges Simenon, inhabits a vividly realized Paris not often seen on camera that takes us from the glitzy upper-class world of luxury hotels and mansions to local bourgeois bistros and bars and the underground haunts of the professionally criminal.

Patrick Harbinson's adaptation reframes Maigret as an unconventional young detective with something to prove, a rising star in the Police Judiciaire, relentless in his investigations, with an uncanny ability to get under the skin of the criminals he is chasing and a matchless knowledge of Paris and its inhabitants. Faithfully and lovingly married to Madame Maigret, Maigret heads the elite police unit known as *La Crim*, responsible for investigating all serious crime in and around Paris.

The Jules Maigret series is the second best-selling detective series ever, behind only Sherlock Holmes. Playground licensed from Georges Simenon Limited the English speaking rights to the entirety of the series, consisting of 75 novels and 28 short stories. Simenon's entirely singular body of work, which includes a wider library of novels, reportages, photographs and other nonfiction, is among the most compelling in the global canon.

"To understand and not to judge": Maigret strives above all to unravel our motivations. He is good at this not because he is a genius, or has special methods, but because he listens – he doesn't solve crimes so much as he solves people.

Simenon, with his enduring concern for the essential humanity of the disenfranchised individual, is one of the most widely-read writers of all time. More than 800 million copies of his books have been sold in more than 50 languages.

Playground's Joint Managing Director David Stern said: "George Simenon's creation of Jules Maigret holds a firm place in the pantheon of great literary detectives and we are incredibly grateful to our partners MASTERPIECE, Banijay, ILP and John Simenon for their trust and support as we endeavor to bring a contemporary Maigret to a new, worldwide audience. Patrick Harbinson's brilliantly fresh take on this iconic IP is reflective of Playground's ambition to expand our growing slate of contemporary returning dramas that speak to a global marketplace."

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MASTERPIECE Head of Scripted Content and Executive Producer Susanne

Simpson said: “*Maigret* will be a perfect addition to MASTERPIECE’s line up of Mystery! shows. Our partners at Playground have assembled an incredible cast and creative team, and our audience is going to love Inspector Maigret and his unique style of crime solving.” MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by GBH Boston.

Simon Cox, EVP Content & Acquisitions, Banijay Rights, said: “Jules Maigret is one of the 20th century’s most famous fictional detectives, which makes it a privilege to work with Playground Entertainment and MASTERPIECE to take Georges Simenon’s French sleuth into a contemporary world for the first time. With a wonderfully diverse mix of acting, and writing talent onboard, we’re in no doubt *Maigret* will be a tour-de-force production and a potentially a long-running franchise.”

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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 for over 50 years. Susanne Simpson is the Head of Scripted Content and Executive Producer. Series funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by Viking Cruises, Raymond James, The MASTERPIECE Trust, and public television viewers. Produced for PBS by GBH Boston, MASTERPIECE is known for hits such as *All Creatures Great and Small*, *Sherlock*, *Downton Abbey* and *Wolf Hall*, and beloved classics such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect* and *Poldark*. For more information, please visit pbs.org/masterpiece and follow us on social media @masterpiecepbs.

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About Playground

Playground Entertainment, founded by the pioneering and award-winning producer Sir Colin Callender, is an independent production company dedicated to crafting exceptional television, film and theatre that counterpoint the mainstream and fill a void in the ever-changing entertainment landscape. Based in New York and London, it works with creative talent on both sides of the Atlantic, earning an industry reputation for producing distinctive, high-quality projects with a point of view, including *Howards End*, *Wolf Hall*, *The Dresser*, and currently *All Creatures Great And Small*, *The Hardacres*, *Lynley & Havers*, the upcoming *Wolf Hall: The Mirror and The Light*, starring Mark Rylance and Damian Lewis, and *Small Town, Big Story*, created and directed by Chris O'Dowd.

About Georges Simenon Limited

Created in 2001 under the stewardship of John Simenon, its CEO and Georges Simenon's second son, Georges Simenon Limited owns and manages the rights to Simenon's works of fiction and various Maigret trademarks.

About Banijay Rights

Leading global distributor, Banijay Rights, represents a world-class, multi-genre portfolio of 195,000 hours of standout programming. Handling the distribution for content powerhouse, Banijay Entertainment, the division specialises in the exploitation of premium scripted and non-scripted brands to broadcasters worldwide.

Representing quality, excellence and experience in the business of linear and non-linear television and ancillary activity across all platforms, Banijay Rights' catalogue encompasses a host of top titles from Banijay's 130+ in-house labels, and a number of third-party producers, spanning drama, comedy, entertainment, factual, reality, family, formats and theatrical.

Delivering high-quality IP, which was born locally and travels globally, the distributor offers the best stories told the best way. Its landmark brands include *Survivor*, *Big Brother*, *MasterChef*, *Peaky Blinders*, *Rogue Heroes*, *Marie Antoinette*, *Grantchester*, *Deal or No Deal*, *Home and Away*, *Mr Bean* and *Black Mirror*.

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Built on independence, creative freedom, entrepreneurialism and commercial acumen, Banijay Rights operates under the direction of Chief Executive Officer, Cathy Payne.

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