

MASTERPIECE

KEELEY HAWES TO LEAD IN ADAPTATION OF
GILL HORNBY'S INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING NOVEL

MISS AUSTEN

**UK SHOOT GETS UNDERWAY FOR MASTERPIECE ON PBS WITH
ROSE LESLIE, PATSY FERRAN, JESSICA HYNES, PHYLLIS LOGAN,
KEVIN MCNALLY, MAX IRONS, ALFRED ENOCH, MIRREN MACK,
CALAM LYNCH AND LIV HILL**

Filming is underway on an all-star production of Gill Hornby's best-selling and much loved novel *Miss Austen*, produced by Bonnie Productions for MASTERPIECE in the US and distributed by Federation Studios. The series has already been acquired by the BBC in the UK.

The adaptation from BAFTA-winning writer, Andrea Gibb (*Elizabeth is Missing*, *Mayflies*) boasts a stellar cast including Keeley Hawes (*It's A Sin*, *Bodyguard*, *Line of Duty*), Rose Leslie (*Game of Thrones*, *Vigil*), Patsy Ferran (*Living*, *Hot Milk*), Jessica Hynes (*Life After Life*, *Years and Years*), Mirren Mack (*The Witcher: Blood Origin*, *The Nest*), Phyllis Logan (*Downton Abbey*, *Shetland*), Kevin McNally (*The Crown*, *Ten Percent*), Max Irons (*Condor*, *The Wife*), Alfred Enoch (*How to Get Away with Murder*, *Foundation*), Calam Lynch (*Bridgerton*, *Archie*) and Liv Hill (*The Serpent Queen*, *Elizabeth Is Missing*).

The four-part drama, directed by BAFTA-winning filmmaker Aisling Walsh (*Maudie*, *Elizabeth is Missing*) started filming last month in the UK and is produced by Stella Merz (*Gentleman Jack*, *Renegade Nell*).

Miss Austen takes a literary mystery – Cassandra Austen notoriously burning her famous sister Jane's letters – and reimagines it as a fascinating, witty and heart-breaking story of sisterly love, while creating in Cassandra a character as captivating as any Austen heroine.

The drama begins in 1830, a while after Jane has died. Cassandra (Keeley Hawes) races to see her young friend Isabella (Rose Leslie) who is about to lose her home following her father's death. Cassandra is ostensibly there to help her friend, but her real motive is to find a stash of private letters which, in the wrong hands, could destroy Jane's reputation. On discovering them, Cassandra is overwhelmed as she is transported back to her youth. In flashback, we meet Young Cassy and Jane (Patsy Ferran) as they navigate the infatuations, family feuds and dashed hopes which shaped their lives and laid the foundations for Jane's unforgettable stories. Cassandra's re-evaluation of her past eventually leads her to realise how blind she has been to the real cause of Isabella's heartache and distress. Finding a way to guide Isabella towards true happiness, Cassandra is finally able to understand and celebrate the sacrifices she chose to make for her brilliant sister, Jane.

Miss Austen is a Co-production of Bonnie Productions and MASTERPIECE, in association with the BBC and Federation Stories.

The Executive Producers are Christine Langan for Bonnie Productions, Susanne Simpson for MASTERPIECE and Polly Williams for Federation Stories. Keeley Hawes, Andrea Gibb and Aisling Walsh are also Executive Producers.

Executive Producer, Christine Langan said: "To have this hugely entertaining female-driven story told by such a stellar cast, led by Keeley Hawes, as Bonnie Productions' first drama is genuinely a dream come true. Gill Hornby has found an ingenious way into the Austen world, creating female characters modern audiences can empathise with and delight in. I'm so honoured to be bringing this wonderful novel to the screen in collaboration with the deeply talented trio of writer, Andrea Gibb, director, Aisling Walsh and producer, Stella Merz."

Susanne Simpson, MASTERPIECE Executive Producer added: "*Miss Austen* is a beautifully told story about the loves and losses of the Austen sisters. I'm thrilled that this heartfelt, romantic, and funny adaptation is in the hands of a remarkable ensemble cast led by the incredible Keeley Hawes." MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by GBH Boston.

Sue Deeks, Head of BBC Programme Acquisition, says: "*Miss Austen* is the perfect blend of intriguing mystery, vivid and engaging characters and beguiling period charm – BBC viewers certainly have a treat in store."

pbs.org/masterpiece

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About Bonnie Productions:

Bonnie Productions was set up in 2020 by award winning Film and TV producer, Christine Langan. Bonnie's first feature film, *Hot Milk*, based on the bestselling novel by Deborah Levy, is currently in post-production and is adapted and directed by Rebecca Lenkiewicz and stars Emma Mackey, Fiona Shaw, and Vicky Krieps. Christine was formerly Head of BBC FILMS where she executive produced an array of award-winning films including *Philomena*, *Brooklyn*, *An Education*, *Saving Mr Banks*, *Fish Tank*, *Bright Star* and *Pride*. Christine produced BAFTA and Academy Award winning film *The Queen* starring Helen Mirren. Her extensive TV credits include hit ITV show, *Cold Feet*, Stephen Frears', *The Deal*, for which she won her first BAFTA, *Dirty Filthy Love*, and the acclaimed BBC comedy *This Time* with Alan Partridge.

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 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*, *The Forsyte Saga* and *Poldark*. For more information, please visit pbs.org/masterpiece and follow us on social media @masterpiecepbs.

About PBS

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