

MASTERPIECE & UKTV to co-commission TV adaptation of *The Marlow Murder Club* starring Samantha Bond

Boston, MA; June 5, 2023 - MASTERPIECE and UKTV announce the co-commissioning of the TV adaptation of Robert Thorogood's novel *The Marlow Murder Club*. From the creator of global hit *Death in Paradise*, and the producers of award-winning show *Ghosts*, the series will star Samantha Bond who is joined by Jo Martin, Cara Horgan and Natalie Dew. Airing in four parts on MASTERPIECE in the US, the series is a UKTV co-production with MASTERPIECE on PBS, produced by Monumental Television in association with ITV Studios.

Samantha Bond (*Downton Abbey*, *Home Fires*) takes the lead as Judith Potts, alongside Jo Martin (*Doctor Who*, *Back to Life*) as Suzie Harris, Cara Horgan (*The Sandman*, *Traitors*) as Becks Starling and Natalie Dew (*Sandylands*, *The Capture*) as DS Tanika Malik. Steve Barron (*The Durrells in Corfu*, *Mrs Sidhu Investigates*) is set to direct.

Robert Thorogood said: "After over a decade of working on *Death in Paradise*, I'm thrilled to be creating a brand-new murder mystery series for TV. I can't wait for audiences to join Judith, Becks and Suzie on their adventures as they solve a series of fiendishly puzzling murders."

Susanne Simpson, MASTERPIECE executive producer, added: "*The Marlow Murder Club* is exactly the kind of show that our MASTERPIECE Mystery! viewers will love. We're thrilled to be working with Samantha Bond again and to partner with Monumental Television on this exciting new series." MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by GBH Boston.

Debra Hayward, Monumental co-founder, said: "We instantly fell in love with Robert's book, and we're delighted that he is bringing it to the screen with us. Combined with Steve Barron's brilliant directing and our superb cast led by Samantha Bond, we hope that audiences will be as captivated by Robert's Marlow as we are."

Retired archaeologist Judith Potts (Bond) lives alone in a faded mansion in the peaceful town of Marlow, filling her time by setting crosswords for the local paper. During one of her regular wild swims in the Thames, Judith hears a gunshot coming from a neighbor's garden and believes a brutal murder has taken place.

When the police are reluctant to believe her story, Judith finds herself forming an unlikely friendship with local dog-walker and empty-nester Suzie (Martin) and unfulfilled vicar's wife Becks (Horgan) as they start an investigation of their own. Eventually asked to assist with the official police investigation, headed by newly promoted Tanika (Dew), the women must piece together clues, grill suspect witnesses, and face down real danger as they work against the clock to stop the killer in their tracks.

Philippa Collie Cousins, senior commissioning editor for UKTV, said: "After a highly rewarding period of collaboration we are thrilled to be greenlighting Robert Thorogood's adaptation of his hit novel for Drama. The brilliant team at Monumental have found the perfect cast for the show and the perfect director in Steve Barron. I'm very much looking forward to seeing these great scripts burst into life on screen."

Emma Ayech, channel director for Drama, added: "It's an incredibly exciting time for Drama, as we start commissioning UKTV Originals for the channel. Whether you're a fan of the book or new to the adventures of the wonderful Judith Potts, our viewers are in for a real treat."

The Marlow Murder Club executive producers for Monumental Television are Debra Hayward, Alison Owen and Alison Carpenter. Susanne Simpson is executive producer for MASTERPIECE. Philippa Collie Cousins is executive producer for UKTV. The series is written by Robert Thorogood. It will be directed by Steve Barron and produced by Jane Wallbank. Barron and Thorogood also serve as executive producers. ITV Studios will handle international distribution. PBSd is the North American distributor.

pbs.org/masterpiece

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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. 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 *Victoria*, and beloved classics such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsythe Saga* and *Poldark*.

About Monumental Television

Monumental Television was launched in 2015 by Oscar-nominated, Golden Globe and BAFTA-winning producers Alison Owen (*Suffragette*, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, *Jane Eyre*, *Temple Grandin*, *Small Island*, *Elizabeth*, *Saving Mr. Banks*) and Debra Hayward (*Bridget Jones's Baby*, *How to Build a Girl*, *Mary Queen of Scots*, *Les Misérables*).

Monumental Television's credits include three series of Hulu's critically acclaimed *Harlots*, starring Samantha Morton, Lesley Manville, Jessica Brown Findlay and Liv Tyler, and five series of the twice BAFTA-nominated *Ghosts* for BBC1. The US version of *Ghosts* is the highest rating comedy this year, and CBS have renewed it for a third season.

Family drama *Maryland* has recently aired to rave reviews on ITV, starring Suranne Jones, Eve Best and Stockard Channing, and crime series *Murder in Provence*, starring Roger Allam, Nancy Carroll and Keala Seale aired on Britbox and ITV in 2022. Also due for release this year is *Mrs Sidhu Investigates* starring Meera Syal for Acorn. Hayward and Owen also served as Executive Producers on *Will* (TNT) and three seasons of the award-winning *Anne With An E* (Netflix), Emmy award-winning writer Moira Walley-Beckett's adaptation of the children's classic *Anne of Green Gables*. *Sanctuary: A Witch's Tale* by *Poldark* writer Debbie Horsfield, a brand new series about modern day witches for AMC, is currently in post-production.

Owen and Hayward are also in post-production on *Back To Black*, a theatrical movie about the making of the iconic album by Amy Winehouse.

About Drama

Free-to-air channel Drama is passionate about bringing Britain the best quality drama. From period to contemporary, family to comedy, the channel is a treasure trove of well-loved classics and modern drama which showcases the greatest stories ever told. With programmes including familiar favourites *Call the Midwife*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *New Tricks* and *Silent Witness*, and brand new and exclusive hits *The Sister Boniface Mysteries* and *The Brokenwood Mysteries*, this is the channel where viewers can escape and indulge in a handpicked range of the nation's most celebrated TV dramas.

About UKTV

UKTV has been at the forefront of branded television for over 30 years, entertaining the nation with programmes they love. Its leading brands - Dave, Gold, W, Drama, Alibi, Eden and Yesterday - span comedy, entertainment, natural history, factual and drama, and are delivered to audiences through UKTV Play, Freeview, Sky, Virgin Media, BT, TalkTalk, YouView, Freesat and Amazon Fire. The broadcaster is a significant investor in British creativity and is committed to working with new and established writers, directors and programme-makers.

UKTV is part of BBC Studios, the UK's most-awarded production company, a world-class distributor with international branded services, and a commercial subsidiary of the world's leading public service broadcaster, the BBC.