

MASTERPIECE

Two lovers follow their hearts

Tom Jones

**Solly McLeod, Sophie Wilde, and Hannah Waddingham star
in a new adaptation of Henry Fielding's classic novel
on MASTERPIECE**

Sundays, April 30 – May 21, 2023 at 9pm on PBS

A timeless romantic comedy gets an exciting new adaptation in MASTERPIECE's retelling of Henry Fielding's novel *Tom Jones*, written by BAFTA-nominated Gwyneth Hughes (*Vanity Fair*) and airing in four parts, Sundays, April 30 – May 21, 2023 at 9pm ET on PBS. The coproducer of the series is Mammoth Screen. The program will also be available to stream on PBS.org, PBS Passport, and the PBS MASTERPIECE Prime Video Channel.

Solly McLeod (*House of the Dragon*) stars as the handsome, resourceful title character, with Sophie Wilde (*You Don't Know Me*) as the beautiful and bright, seemingly unattainable love of his life, Sophia Western. He is a foundling of uncertain parentage, while she is an heiress. In 18th-century England, their class differences make their journey to find each other complicated and treacherous. Emmy®-winning actress Hannah Waddingham (*Ted Lasso*) plays the seductive and vengeful Lady Bellaston, who comes between Tom and Sophia.

Says Gwyneth Hughes: "It's been the most joyful experience to bring this sparkling romance to the screen. It's a story in which the sun never stops shining, and in which Love Conquers All, and that just makes such a refreshing change after the last couple of years! Henry Fielding created brilliant characters, fully of their time, but still speaking directly to us in the modern world, as we strive towards our own versions of love and happiness. I've loved writing alongside him."

Says Executive Producer Susanne Simpson, "This new adaptation of *Tom Jones* is a big-hearted rom-com that will absolutely delight our viewers. It's fun—full of laughter and romance. I'm extremely proud to partner with producers Mammoth Screen, writer Gwyneth Hughes, and an outstanding cast on this joyful show."

The cast also includes James Fleet (*Bridgerton*) as Squire Allworthy, Tom's warm-hearted adoptive father, and Alun Armstrong (*Little Dorrit*) as Allworthy's hard drinking but loveable neighbor, Squire Western, who is Sophia's doting grandfather.

Felicity Montagu (*The Durrells in Corfu*) plays Allworthy's reserved sister, Bridget, with James Wilbraham (*In My Skin*) as her odious son, William Blifil—an unrelenting antagonist to Tom. He and Tom eventually battle for Sophia's hand, a contest that Blifil seems destined to win.

Sophia has a trio of watchful aunts, played by Shirley Henderson (*See How They Run*) as the headstrong Aunt Western, Tamzin Merchant (*Carnival Row*) as the diffident Aunt Harriet, and Waddingham as Lady Bellaston, who is attentive in her own way. Sophia also has a worldly-wise servant Honour, played by Pearl Mackie (*Doctor Who*).

When banished in disgrace by his adoptive father, Tom leaves for London. Not far behind him, Sophia heads there to escape a forced marriage to Blifil and seek the protection of her aunts. Along the way, Tom meets disgraced schoolmaster Partridge (BAFTA winner Daniel Rigby, *The Witchfinder*), Mrs. Waters (Susannah Fielding, *Wallander*), and the irascible soldier-of-fortune Fitzpatrick (Julian Rhind-Tutt, *Oliver Twist*).

Humor is a hallmark of Fielding's novel, which has been a bestseller for nearly three centuries and was famously depicted in the exuberant Academy Award®-winning 1963 movie adaptation starring Albert Finney as Tom and Susannah York as Sophia.

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Series Description

Sundays, April 30 – May 21, 2023 at 9pm on PBS

One of the greatest novels in the English language comes to MASTERPIECE in a four-part adaptation of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, giving a new twist to the tale of an illegitimate young man's love for a beautiful heiress. Solly McLeod stars as Tom, with Sophie Wilde as Sophia, the object of his infatuation and Hannah Waddingham as the iconic seductress Lady Bellaston. The stellar cast also includes James Fleet, Shirley Henderson, Alun Armstrong, Pearl Mackie, and a torrent of other talent, bringing mid-18th-century England to life in all its passion and prejudice, luxury and loose morals.

Episode One

Sunday, April 30, 2023 at 9/8c on PBS

Tom and Sophia hit it off, despite their wildly contrasting backgrounds. Molly complicates the picture for Tom, and Blifil for Sophia.

Episode Two

Sunday, May 7, 2023 at 9/8c on PBS

Tom is banished by Allworthy. Meanwhile, Sophia flees her impending marriage to Blifil. Adventures ensue, including fateful encounters at two inns.

Episode Three

Sunday, May 14, 2023 at 9/8c on PBS

Tom is lured to a masquerade by an insatiable paramour; complications develop. Blifil and a loathsome lord try to compromise Sophia.

Episode Four

Sunday, May 21, 2023 at 9/8c on PBS

Tom's letter to Lady Bellaston threatens to sink his prospects with Sophia. A swordfight puts him in even deeper trouble. A secret emerges.

Written by Gwyneth Hughes, *Tom Jones* is directed by Georgia Parris and produced by Benjamin Greenacre. The executive producers are James Gandhi, Gwyneth Hughes, Damien Timmer and Helen Ziegler for Mammoth Screen, Susanne Simpson and Rebecca Eaton for MASTERPIECE, and Polly Hill for ITV. *Tom Jones* is a co-production between Mammoth Screen and MASTERPIECE. Produced with funding from Northern Ireland Screen. Global distribution for the series is being handled by ITV Studios. North American distribution is with PBS Distribution.

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 and Rebecca Eaton is the executive producer-at-large for the series. 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 Forsyte Saga* and *Poldark*.

About PBS

PBS, with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature, and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS's broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS's premier children's media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math, and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a 24/7 channel – online at pbskids.org, via an array of mobile apps, and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at PBS.org, one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following PBS on Twitter, Facebook or through our apps for mobile and connected devices. Specific program information and updates for press are available at pbs.org/pressroom or by following PBS Communications on Twitter.