

# Persmap



# LOVE & FRIENDSHIP

Een film van Whit Stillman

*LOVE & FRIENDSHIP is de ironische titel van de bruisende Jane Austen-verfilming waarin Lady Susan het leven van iedereen in haar omgeving op doortrapte wijze opschudt.*

*LOVE & FRIENDSHIP is een vilein en fris liefdesdrama gebaseerd op Jane Austens nooit eerder verfilmde brievennovelle Lady Susan. Lady Susan (Kate Beckinsale) trekt tijdelijk in bij haar schoonzus. Samen met haar Amerikaanse hartsvriendin Alicia (Chloë Sevigny) bekokstoofd ze sluwe plannetjes om zichzelf en haar dochter aan een echtgenoot te helpen. De mannen in haar leven blijven blind voor haar doortrapte gedrag. Regisseur Whit Stillman (Metropolitan, The Last Days of Disco) geeft het oer-Britse, aan het eind van de achttiende eeuw gesitueerde verhaal een bruisende impuls.*

*LOVE & FRIENDSHIP was genomineerd voor de VPRO Big Screen Award op het Internationaal Filmfestival van Rotterdam en ging in wereldpremière op het Sundance festival.*



Speelduur: 94 min. - Land: Ireland/Frankrijk - Jaar: 2016 - Genre: Komedie/drama

Release datum bioscoop: 26 mei 2016

Distributie: Cinéart

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## Cast

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Lady Susan	Kate Beckinsale
Reginald de Courcy	Xavier Samuel
Catherine Vernon	Emma Greenwell
Alicia Johnson	Chloë Sevigny
Frederica Veron	Morfydd Clark
Charles Vernon	Justin Edwards
Lady Decourcy	Jemma Redgrave
Sir Reginald	James Fleet
Sir James Martin	Tom Bennett
Mr Johnson	Stephen Fry

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## Crew

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Regisseur	Whit Stillman
Scriptschrijver	Whit Stillman
Producent	Katie Holly
	Lauranne Bourrachot
	Whit Stillman
Cinematografie	Richard van Oosterhout
Editing	Sophie Corra
Productie design	Anna Rackard
Kostuum design	Eimer ni Mhaoldomhnaigh
Coproducent	Raymond van der Kaaij
	Marco Cherqui
Line producer	Cathleen Dore
Muziek	Mark Suozzo

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## Regisseur Whit Stillman

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Whit Stillman is geboren in 1952 in Washington D.C. Nadat Stillman afgestudeerd was aan Harvard in 1973, begon hij te werken als redactie assistent bij Doubleday in New York. Daarna werkte hij als junior editor bij The American Spectator. Stillman kwam in contact met een aantal filmproducenten uit Madrid en overtuigde hen dat hij hun Spaanstalige films kon verkopen in de Verenigde Staten. De jaren die daarop volgden bleef hij in Spanje werken als sales agent voor de regisseurs Fernando Trueba en Fernando Colomo.

Stillman begon zijn regiecarrière met een trilogie: METROPOLITAN (1990), BARCELONA (1994) en THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO (1998). Vervolgens publiceerde hij een boek gebaseerd op deze drie films. Stillman's vierde film, DAMSELS IN DISTRESS (2011) ging in première op het 68ste Venice International Film Festival. Dit jaar komt LOVE & FRIENDSHIP uit, een filmversie van Jane Austens Lady Susan.



### Filmografie:

2016	LOVE & FRIENDSHIP
2011	DAMSELS IN DISTRESS
1998	THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO
1994	BARCELONA
1990	METROPOLITAN

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## Kate Beckinsale / Lady Susan

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Kate Beckinsale early established herself playing in classic and literary adaptations, some with an Austen pedigree. While still a student at Oxford she played opposite Robert Sean Leonard as "Hero" in Kenneth Branagh's version of Much Ado About Nothing. She also won the title role in the widely admired British mini-series adaptation of Jane Austen's Emma and particular notice for her performance in John Schlesinger's version of the Emma update, Cold Comfort Farm.

"It was from Cold Comfort Farm that I thought Kate would be perfect for the Charlotte character in The Last Days of Disco," Stillman says, "and her role in the Schlesinger film was essentially Austen-derived. It was the first time I wrote a part with a particular actor in mind. Lady Susan was the second time, and it was again Kate whom we thought would be ideal to play it."



The Last Days of Disco, in which she was cast with Chloe Sevigny, would be Kate's first American role, winning her the London Film Critics' "Best Supporting Actress" award, and leading to stardom in America in a series of notable films including Michael Bay's epic Pearl Harbor, the hit romantic comedy Serendipity opposite John Cusack, and the ensemble drama, Laurel Canyon, with Christian Bale and Frances McDormand.

Then began her remarkable run as the iconic action hero 'Selene' in the Underworld series for which she has recently completed the shoot for a fifth installment, focusing its story on the next generation of Vampires and Lycans and the war that continues to wage between the two species.

Beckinsale will also soon be seen in the psychological thriller *The Disappointments Room* written by Wentworth Miller. The film centers on a mother and her young son who face unimaginable horrors stemming from the attic of their rural dream home.

Her additional film credits include her early British film *Shooting Fish*, Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator* where she starred as screen legend Ava Gardner, *Contraband* with Mark Wahlberg, *Total Recall* with Colin Farrell and Jessica Biel, *Everybody's Fine* with Robert De Niro, the thriller *Vacancy* with Luke Wilson, *Click* with Adam Sandler, Jonathan Kaplan's *Brokedown Palace* with Claire Danes, *Van Helsing* with Hugh Jackman, *Absolutely Anything* with the late Robin Williams and the independent dramas *Nothing But The Truth*, *Stonehearst Asylum*, *The Face of an Angel*, *Snow Angels*, and *Fragments* (aka *Winged Creatures*).

Beckinsale's television appearances include playing in *One Against the Wind* for Hallmark Films. On the stage, Beckinsale has appeared in 'Clocks & Whistles', 'Sweetheart', and the National Theatre's touring production of 'The Seagull.'

Beckinsale, who was born and raised in London before going on to Oxford, has for some years been based in Los Angeles.

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## Chloë Sevigny / Alicia Johnson

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Chloë Sevigny made her debut in the film sensation *Kids*, written by Harmony Korine and directed by Larry Clark. Early film roles included Steve Buscemi's *Trees Lounge* and Volker Schlöndorff's *Palmetto*, written by E. Max Frye. Chloë then played Alice Kinnon, the lead in Whit Stillman's *The Last Days of Disco*, with Kate Beckinsale.

Chloë's tour de force performance opposite Hilary Swank in Kimberly Pierce's *Boys Don't Cry* attracted particular notice, gaining Academy Award, Golden Globe and Screen Actors' Guild nominations as well as winning an Independent Spirit Award, the Los Angeles Film Critics Award, the Boston Film Critics Award, Chicago Film Critics, the National Society of Film Critics and a Golden Satellite Award.



Most recently, Sevigny has been seen starring in the new Netflix series *Bloodline*, which began production on its second season in October 2015.

She also appears as the fashion journalist Vicky Fraser in the pilot for Whit Stillman's Europe-set series, *The Cosmopolitans*, currently streaming at Amazon Prime.

In April 2015, Sevigny published her first book, 'Chloë Sevigny', a collection of photographs and personal ephemera focusing on her teenage years and early career. The book sold out.

Chloë most recently completed production on *Look Away*, a dark comedy with Matthew Broderick, to be released in 2016.

Chloë is well known for her Golden Globe-winning portrayal of Nikki on HBO's *Big Love*. The series was created by Mark Olsen and Will Scheffer, produced by Tom Hanks and Gary Goetzman's Playtone Entertainment and ran for five years.

She has appeared in many notable films including David Fincher's *Zodiac*, Jim Jarmusch's *Broken Flowers*, Woody Allen's *Melinda and Melinda*, Lars von Trier's *Dogville*, Olivier Assayas' *Demon Lover*, Billy Ray's *Shattered Glass*, and Harmony Korine's *Gummo* and *Julien: Donkey Boy*. Other films include: *The Wait*, *Mr. Nice*, *My Son, My Son*, *What Have Ye Done*, *Sisters*, *Lying*, *3 Needles*, *Mrs. Harris*, *Party Monster*, *A Map of the World*, and *American Psycho*.

Chloë's stage work includes: 'Abigail/170' by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, the New Group's 'Hazelwood Jr. High', directed by Scott Elliot, and 'What the Butler Saw' also directed by Scott Elliot.

Chloë has designed six celebrated fashion collections under the label 'Chloë Sevigny for Opening Ceremony.' The collections are sold worldwide in high-end boutiques and department stores and continue to achieve critical and commercial success. Chloë has been the face of many fashion and cosmetic brands including the French fashion house Chloé, Miu Miu, Louis Vuitton, the Gap, and MAC Cosmetics, Uniqlo, Tomboy, a.t.corner, H&M and Absolut Elyx.

In addition to the recent *American Horror Story: Asylum*, Chloë's other television work includes: *Portlandia*, *The Mindy Project*, *Louie*, *Hit and Miss* and *Those Who Kill*.

Chloë lives in Brooklyn, New York.



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## Xavier Samuel / Reginald DeCourcy

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Xavier Samuel first rose to international fame as the villain Riley Biers in worldwide blockbuster *Twilight Saga: Eclipse*. Following this, he appeared as the Earl of Southampton in Roland Emmerich's *Anonymous* and David in Stephan Elliot's *A Few Best Men*, as well as starring in *Adore* alongside Robin Wright and Naomi Watts.

Samuel also played in World War II film *Fury* opposite Brad Pitt and in the titular role of Bernard Rose's *Frankenstein*. He will soon be appearing alongside Eddie Murphy in Bruce Beresford's *Henry Joseph Church*, due for release in 2016.



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## Morfydd Clark / Frederica Vernon

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Morfydd Clark graduated from The Drama Centre London in 2013; that fall she auditioned for the part of Frederica in *Love & Friendship*, becoming the first actor cast in the film. She then landed the role of 'Camille' in *Madame Bovary* before appearing as Miss Charron in Carol Morley's critically acclaimed film *The Falling*. Upcoming films include Austen genre parody *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (directed by Burr Steers, who played the "door Nazi" Van in *The Last Days of Disco*) and *The Call Up*, both due for release in 2016.

Theatre credits include 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' (Donmar Warehouse); 'Romeo and Juliet' (Crucible, Sheffield); 'Violence & Son' (Royal Court); 'Blodeuwedd' (Genedlaethol Cymru, Wales) and 'No Other Day Like Today' (National Youth Theatre of Wales).

Television appearances include *Arthur and George* for ITV, *A Poet in New York* with Tom Hollander and Phoebe Fox, and *New Worlds*.

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## Stephen Fry / Mr. Johnson

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A renowned actor, writer and TV personality, Stephen Fry attended Cambridge University before finding mainstream success with *A Bit Of Fry & Laurie* and as Lord Melchett in *Blackadder II* in 1986.

Other television credits include *Blackadder Goes Forth*, *Jeeves & Wooster*, 14 series as host of the BBC Quiz show *Q.I.*, *Longitude*, *Absolute Power*, *Kingdom*, US drama *Bones* and Ricky Gervais's *Extras*.

Film credits include the title role in *Wilde*, for which he received a Golden Globe nomination, *Peter's Friends*, *Cold Comfort Farm*, *The Wind In The Willows*, *Gosford Park*, *The Hobbit* films, as the Master of Laketown, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game Of Shadows*, and *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*.

Fry also wrote and directed *Bright Young Things*, the 2003 adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's 'Vile Bodies' starring Stephen Campbell Moore, Emily Mortimer and Dan Aykroyd.

His theatre credits include: 'Twelfth Night', 'Forty Years On' and 'The Common Pursuit.'

Fry has also written four novels, several non-fiction works and three volumes of his autobiography. He is also well known as the voice for the British versions of all seven Harry Potter audiobooks

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## Emma Greenwell / Catherine Vernon

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Emma Greenwell was raised in London where she studied acting, first at Hurtwood House and then at the London Academy Of Dramatic Arts (LAMDA).

Shortly after graduating, Greenwell moved to Los Angeles where she won the role of 'Mandy Milkovich' on the critically acclaimed US series *Shameless*.

Emma is currently shooting the new Jason Katim's series *The Path* alongside Aaron Paul, Michelle Monaghan and Hugh Dancy. She will next be seen in Austen genre parody *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* alongside Morfydd Clark, Lily James, Jack Huston and Bella Heathcoate. Before that she filmed the independent film *The Holy Ghost People* and appeared on the hit HBO series *True Blood*.

Emma currently resides in Los Angeles.

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## James Fleet / Sir Reginald

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A veteran actor of stage and screen with over a hundred credits to his name, James Fleet first found major recognition on the big screen as Tom in Mike Newell's international comedy hit, *Four Weddings and a Funeral* before going on to star as John Dashwood in Austen adaptation *Sense & Sensibility*.

Other film credits include *Charlotte Grey*, Mel Smith's *Blackball*, *A Cock & Bull Story* by Michael Winterbottom and most recently as the painter John Constable in Mike Leigh's *Mr. Turner*.

James is well known in the UK as the affable Hugo Horton in smash TV comedy series *The Vicar of Dibley*, which ran for five series. Recent TV credits include *Outlander*, *The Hollow Crown*, *Partners in Crime*, *Top Coppers* and *Indian Summers*. Other TV credits include *Little Dorrit*, *Skins*, *Lewis*, *Blandings* and Mr Bennett in *Death Comes to Pemberley*.

James has appeared on stage in 'The Ladykillers' in London's West End, 'The Heretic' at the Royal Court, Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night' at the RSC, Richard Eyre's 'The Observer' at the National Theatre and 'Cloud Nine' at the Almeida.

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## Jemma Redgrave / Lady DeCourcy

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A member of the renowned Redgrave acting dynasty, Jemma Redgrave trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) before landing her first part in a 1988 production of *Lady Windermere's Fan*.



Her most recent theatre credits include Mrs. Cheveley in 'An Ideal Husband' at the Chichester Festival Theatre, 'Farewell to the Theatre' directed by Roger Michell, 'The Afghanistan Plays' both in the UK and on Broadway and as Varya in Chekov's 'The Cherry Orchard.'

Redgrave is perhaps best known on the small screen for her recurring guest role as Kate Stewart in *Dry Who* and in 2016 will be joining the cast of *Holby City* as new general surgeon Bernie Wolfe. Other TV credits include *George Gently* for the BBC, *Churchill: 100 Days that Saved Britain*, *Dracula* alongside Jonathan Rhys Meyers, *Law & Order UK*, *Unforgiven*, *Cold Blood* for ITV, and as Lady Bertram in *Mansfield Park*.

Jemma's previous film credits include *Lassie, I'll Be There*, *The Acid House*, *Power And Lovers* and Evie Wilcox in Merchant Ivory production *Howards End*.

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## Justin Edwards / Charles Vernon

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Justin Edwards is an actor and writer who appeared on the big screen most recently as Sir Francis Drake in *Bill*, in *Paddington* by Paul King and in Lone Scherfig's *The Riot Club*. Previous film credits include *Thor: The Dark World*, *Albatross* and Saul Dibb's *The Duchess*.

Justin's TV credits include *From The Cradle To The Grave*, *Puppy Love*, *W1A*, *VEEP*, *The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher II*, *The Thick of It*, *Skins*, *Black Mirror: National Anthem*, *The Trip*, *Perrin*, *The Old Guys*, *Skins*, *Ruddy Hell It's Harry & Paul*, *Black Books*, *Peepshow* and *The State We're In*.

Theatre credits include 'The Rivals' at the Arcola Theatre, 'Art' at Holders Festival, 'Jeremy Lion Goes Green' at the Pleasance Edinburgh, the role of Antipholus in 'The Comedy of Errors', 'Breakfast with Jonny Wilkinson' at The Chocolate Factory, 'My Very First Kidnapping' at the Edinburgh Festival and 'Unaccompanied As I Am,' also at the Edinburgh Festival.

Justin was a writer and performer on 'The Consultants: Finger in the Wind' at the 2002 Edinburgh Festival, which won the Perrier Award for Best Newcomers.

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## Tom Bennet / Sir James Martin

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Tom trained at the Guildford School of Acting and since graduating in 2004 has appeared in numerous television programmes including *Silent Witness*, *Foyle's War*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Great Night Out*, *Ultimate Force*, *Eastenders*, *Doctors*, *Murder Prevention*, *My Hero*, *Life Begins*, *Red Cap*, *Minder*, *Mistresses*, *Comic Strip Presents*, *Booze Cruise II*, *Pulling*, *Babylon* and *The Bill*.

Tom is sometimes vaguely recognized as 'Christophuck' from E4's cult comedy series, *Phoneshop*, and hardly ever recognized in the US for playing 'Pete' in Christopher Guest's HBO series, *Family Tree* and 'Roger' in the ABC/CBS pilot, *Save The Date*.

In the theatre, Tom entertained London audiences in 'Pushing Up Poppies' and 'Incident At The Border' at Trafalgar Studios as well as being able to channel his inner eight-year-old in 'Swallows & Amazons' at the Bristol Old Vic.

Tom has recently returned from LA after persuading Christopher Guest to let him star in his new film *Mascots* for Netflix and has just completed filming on The David Brent Movie, *Life On The Road* for Ricky Gervais.

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## Jenn Murray / Lady Lucy Manwaring

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Jenn Murray made her big screen debut as the eponymous character in Agnès Merlet's *Dorothy Mills* in 2008 alongside Carice van Houten, for which she was nominated for an Irish Film and Television Award in 2008.

She recently starred alongside Saoirse Ronan, Domhnall Gleeson, Julie Walters and Jim Broadbent in John Crowley's *Brooklyn* and also appeared alongside Alicia Vikander in *Testament Of Youth* and with Rafe Spall in *Earthbound*, as well as the BBC dramas *Truckers* and *The Fades*.

She recently wrapped on David Yates' prequel to the Harry Potter series *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them*, in which she took on the role of Chastity alongside Eddie Redmayne and Ezra Miller.



**A "New Austen"**

The great attraction of adapting Jane Austen's early (and not-truly-finished) novella concerning the clever and triumphant Lady Susan Vernon was the hope of adding another Austen volume to the shelf of her great mature works -- though in film form.

Her youthful novella suggested a female, 18th century Oscar Wilde or Evelyn Waugh piece perhaps more than what is conventionally seen as Austenian. The work is a comic gold mine but in its original "epistolary" form -- a dominant one at the time she wrote it -- that gold was somewhat hard to mine. The first drafts of both her early great novels *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* had also been in the style. ‘

As Austen moved away from the epistolary form she also started using imposing nouns, rather than character names, in her book titles.

**Love & Friendship - an Austenian title**

"Lady Susan" was the title Austen's nephew had given her untitled manuscript when her family finally allowed it to be published a half century after her death. For our film, which would involve more characters and a larger canvas, the more Austenian *Love & Friendship* -- derived from the title one of her youthful short stories (called *Love and Friendship* [sic]) -- seemed better. While in her 1805 draft Austen had "completed" the story in short, summary form, there is a strong sense of "unfinished" about it, with no title and in a form she had otherwise abandoned. Not until 1811 did one of her novels first appear in print, seventeen years after she is believed to completed the novella's initial composition.

**Genesis**

It started out as a lark, as something to work on, essentially for fun, with no one looking. Starting in 1998 I was based in Paris and pursuing internationally-set film projects that seemed logical to produce out of London. After several years I was somewhat stymied and longing to have something to work on essentially solo over the long term, not subservient to tight film draft deadlines and ticking book option agreements and the house of cards of film projects built atop them, but even when essentially solo it is good to have *some* company. I had been delving deeply into Austen's work for other reasons and had been thrilled to discover Lady Susan Vernon and her DeCourcy nemeses. Having drinks with some young writer friends, one had brought along her fiancé, Trevor Brown, who had been backing (tiny) theatrical productions (mostly at the Jermyn Street Theatre which accommodates casts as large as three). Believing that lurking within the breast of every producer of tiny theatricals there might be the producer of small, slow-gestating films, I sang the praises of Jane Austen's "Lady Susan" and challenged him to produce a film of it. Trevor, who resembled a young Scottish Hugh Grant, signed on and helped me get started on the script, encouraging more focus on Frederica. "The key is Frederica," he would say. Trevor then married his American fiancée, moved to New York, and now works in natural resources -- but has been fully paid back and appears in the front credits as Associate Producer/Dramaturg.

**Groundhog Days**

Cracking a script which could have been a nightmare under a deadline became a delight and a refuge without that pressure. The material also had the Austen-advantage of being fun to contemplate in small doses or large, so that even fairly early drafts could be read with a degree of pleasure or at least

without great embarrassment. Periodically I would think that the project was possibly "ready to show" and even in its early stages won supporters. But then I would have to conclude it was too far from ready and go back underground. Happily, other projects were finally moving forward, like the Castle Rock backed film *Damsels in Distress*, as well as some bread and butter script assignments, allowing the Austen project to lie fallow, which is almost always helpful.

### **The Dublin Connection**

In the 18th Century Dublin was the second city of the British Empire, particularly wealthy, and many sections remain gorgeously Georgian. Close to town are stunning English castles and great houses, ideal for making such a period film without losing shooting hours to transport time. And crews are particularly experienced and expert with period films.

That my elder daughter had long been a resident there, with Trinity College Dublin her university, law studies and later work at an Irish firm, had also given me a particular familiarity with the city and made routing European travel through Dublin especially appealing. Other Austen and Georgian-era films had been made there with great success.

Key to our decision to base the production in Ireland was the targeted help provided by the Irish Film Board, especially by its then executive Naoise Barry. When in July 2010, prior to beginning preproduction on *Damsels*, I was passing through Dublin, he arranged a location scout from the airport to see Georgian Dublin locations and then a side trip to the Galway Film Fleagh where he introduced an up and coming producer, Katie Holly. (The IFB would be an enormous help at every stage of the production.)

Work on *Damsels* and the other projects concluded, as well as several more drafts. I took the project to the 2013 Cannes film festival, meeting with Katie Holly as well as UK-based producers and financiers. Everything seemed promising but, as usual, the low ratio between "promising" and actual soon became apparent. In London line producers and location managers warned of the cost and difficulty of recreating an 18th Century environment for filming in an enormous and bustling metropolis.

But London would be the center for casting and many aspects of the production. It started with meetings with a series of brilliant and insightful casting directors: One, Colin Jones, who had recently gone out on his own, made an especially good impression by advocating Kate Beckinsale as ideal for the Lady Susan part, just what we were thinking.

### **London, Fall 2013**

Casting started that fall in London with Morfydd Clark, fresh from drama school, the first to be cast, for the Frederica role ("key," according to Trevor). Since then Morfydd has collected many credits, including an Austen, but we claim her as our discovery. To find the first actor, absolutely right for a project, is an exciting moment; an idea starts to become real.

James Fleet's first reading as Sir Reginald DeCourcy was also magical, as was meeting for the first time Jemma Redgrave who brought a precious sweetness to the Lady DeCourcy part and Tom Bennett who would create a Sir James Martin all his own.

For Los Angeles casting Kerry Barden -- a connection deriving from Billy Hopkins' casting for *Barcelona* and *Disco*, on which Kerry was associate -- would provide crucial help, with partner Paul Schnee and Allison Estrin handling the New York side. Kerry brought in Xavier Samuel, whose audition as Reginald DeCourcy bowled us over, not to mention Xavier's matinee idol good looks.



### **The French & Dutch Connections**

As Blinder Films' Katie Holly started putting the film's financing together the first recruit was coproducer Raymond van der Kaaij of Revolver Amsterdam. The Dutch connection would expand to include support from the Netherlands Film Fund and allow us to bring Belgian-based Dutch cinematographer Richard van Oosterhout over to shoot the film (as it happened Richard had recently shot another period film at Howth Castle which became the Vernon's' "Churchill" in the film) as well as to do our picture work at Filmmore Amsterdam and sound editing with Amsterdam-based Ranko Paukovic of Editson studios.

Katie also recruited Lauranne Bourrachot of Paris-based Chic Films (producers of Cannes-winner "A Prophet") to produce with her -- and Lauranne was able to bring in Sophie Dulac Distribution, the exhibition arm of which had been key to the French release of *Damsels* and 2014 French re-release of *Metropolitan*. Olivier Pere brought in the crucial backing of the culturally-oriented Franco-German ARTE network. A French sound crew would join the shoot, adding to the continental atmosphere, and both editing and the sound mix would be in Paris, where I was again based following the shoot of Amazon's *The Cosmopolitans*.

It can be somewhat tricky when a prolific and opinionated film journalist and critic turns foreign sales agent such as former Screen editor Mike Goodridge has done with London-based Protagonist Pictures. The pain of his deprecating Cannes 2008 reference to *Barcelona* had started to fade by the time Katie and I met with him at the American Film Market -- and Mike quickly won us over by suggesting that ideal actress to play Lady Susan Vernon was the same Kate Beckinsale we had in mind.

Colin Jones and his associate Toby Spigel had also signed on to handle European casting for *The Cosmopolitans*, through which we met Emma Greenwell and asked if she would read for the key part of Lady Susan's antagonist, Catherine DeCourcy Vernon. Chloë Sevigny and I had already been speaking about her taking the Alicia Johnson role when the freeing up of her schedule allowed her to take a part in *The Cosmopolitans* also, our first chance to work together again since *The Last Days of Disco*. Our spirits were also greatly raised when the great Stephen Fry approved of the script and agreed to do a key cameo as the "very respectable" Mr. Johnson; it seemed a very encouraging augury.

Many worthy film projects still fail to take off if there is not a key agent or manager determined to make them happen. That role on our film was filled by UTA talent agent Shani Rosenzweig who moved mountains to free Kate Beckinsale to take on the lead role as the beautiful and brilliant Lady Susan Vernon.

As we prepared for a February-March 2015 shoot in and around Dublin, the American "indie film finance model" came to our aid, with a group of investors, including those who had backed *Metropolitan* or advanced sums for our Angels-in-rocksteady-60s-Jamaica project, rounded up with astonishing speed by Executive Producer Russell Pennoyer, who, uncredited, had fulfilled the same role with *Metropolitan*.

The key Irish crew, all exceptionally experienced in period film-making, seemed to hire each other, each

recommending those they considered best in other departments, with stunning results in terms of production design, costumes, hair and make-up. Londoner Jules Benoiton ran the shoot, recruiting his daughter to play the Vernon daughter. Oxonian period dialect coach Jordan Waller also doubled 14 memorably as the Johnsons' Head Footman. A 27-day schedule was set and we particularly galvanized for the seventh shooting day – "Stephen Fry-day the 13th," when we would have "Mr. Johnson" for only the day -- and a later shoot day when we would have to complete all the populous Churchill scenes. By meeting these two challenging days we were in fact able to finish a day early -- a tribute to the letter perfect cast and dedicated crew. The experience was a dream -- the good kind.

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## Spotlight on the costume design

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The highly regarded costume designer Eimer Ni Mhaoldomhnaigh was the production's first key crew hire. She not only found or created the entire wardrobe but gave the production invaluable help in finding the best and most experienced collaborators.

Whit: "Eimer's role in the production was truly crucial. Hers was the first key crew name which had come up: Michael Lindsay-Hogg, of 'Brideshead Revisted' mini-series fame and a friend, praised Eimer who had worked as costumes assistant on his feature, *Frankie Starlight*. Eimer and I met early and started plotting, reviewing masses of period costume research. I am not keen the loose-fitting, high-waisted Grecian shifts of the later Jane Austen period, finding them unflattering for most women. The much earlier likely period for *Lady Susan* gave us the freedom to consider a broader time-frame for the fashions we liked. Also, the fact that different generations would continue with different dress."

Eimer: "Love & Friendship was a great project from a costume point of view. Firstly, it was period and Jane Austen, secondly, [the filmmakers' aspirations were high], and thirdly, we had a great cast which included Kate Beckinsale, Chloe Sevigny, Xavier Samuel, Emma Greenwell, Stephen Fry and Jemma Redgrave. The budget was very, very small, so had to make some hard decisions as how best to spend it."

Whit: "My recollection is that we kept increasing the costumes budget, we were so pleased and excited by what Eimer was achieving."

Eimer: "The story pivots around Lady Susan, (Kate Beckinsale's character), so it was very important to create a strong look for her. Also, the storyline depicts Lady Susan arriving as a widow and slowly shedding her widows weeds and returning to society in all her grandeur ready to find a new and rich husband. So, with Kate's costumes, we mirror that transition with the costumes starting as black and then transitioning to grey, lilac, purple and suddenly bold bold red.

"Kate and Chloe arrived a few days before we were due to start filming, and we immediately started the fitting process. Chloe came straight from the airport and Kate had to meet Whit first but then came straight to us and from the word go both were great fun and up for the challenge. Kate is very *au fait* with period projects but it was a first for Chloe and she loved the dresses and how they added to the sense of drama and to the performance. Kate and Chloe were both a dream to design for. They wear and carry costume to great effect, using the costume to further explore the character."

"Some of my favourite scenes were the exterior scenes where we see Lady Susan and Alicia's clandestine meetings. I love how the cloaks, hats and gloves enriched the colour palette. Colour was everything for this film and with the budget constraints, I decided the use of colour could make a statement. Whit was very interested in the costume process, and I showed him all the ideas. The purple dress with the black lace that lady Susan wears in London, he initially thought might be a bit too much, but I hope he's as happy as I am that he had a change of heart.

"Sometimes it's important to be bold. This is a comedy, so we had some license to push the boundaries a little. As I studied Design History, accuracy is very important, but I always marry accuracy to my belief that I am a designer. I love researching different eras and I will keep the silhouette true, but hopefully create a personal look that works for the particular film and story I am designing for. Some people might be surprised that we didn't go for the traditional empire line or Regency look, so beloved of Jane Austen films, but *Lady Susan* was written in 1794 and thus it was perfectly feasible to set it a few years earlier. The restrictions that these large corseted dresses impose only add to the drama and comedy."

Whit: "The wardrobe department had a vast space on the ground floor of the nearly vacant office tower where pre-production had begun and for a time I based myself there to take advantage of their more reliable WiFi -- and not to have to go up down the elevator as Eimer came up with one more stunning look after another. It was a beehive of activity with work on her designs proceeding at an amazing clip. Costumes were also hired at Cosprop and Angels in London and I got to spend a day with Eimer at

Cosprop where she did an amazing job fitting much of the cast with the aid of the professionals there. It was the first time I had seen most of the cast since the auditions as much as a year before and a delightful atmosphere for becoming re-acquainted. Jemma Redgrave came in looking young and lovely -- but we were obliged to turn her into a grandmother!"

Eimer: "I also designed many of the men's costumes including for Stephen Fry who is a wonderful raconteur and great authority on the period. And I loved designing the wedding dress for Frederica and the maternity dress for Lady Susan. We don't see maternity dresses too often in period films, so it was great fun fitting Kate for that. It was very much about pulling together a look that spoke of town and country, single and married ladies, fun and mischief. It was a rollercoaster, but that's what I enjoyed most!"

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## Spotlight on the film music

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All the music heard in *Love & Friendship* was recorded in August and September 2015, under the direction of Mark Suozzo. Mark has played the key role in the music for all of Whit Stillman's projects since 1989 when (for "Metropolitan") he arranged a two-handed piano version Biedrich Smetna's *Die Moldau*, each hand recorded separately, among other feats. Their second collaboration -- "Barcelona" -- reflected a shared enthusiasm for Baroque music which finds fuller expression in the soundtrack for *Love & Friendship*. Jane Austen's story of Lady Susan Vernon & her amours was written between 1793

and 1805 but music from an earlier period seemed to better reflect the spirit of the piece -- and also, the collaborators especially loved this music.

In Paris period music expert Etienne Jardin greatly helped with the musical research. Film editor Sophie Corra, from an editing room facing the Opera Comique de Paris and surrounded by streets named after many of the composers cited, cut the music to image and image to music. Paris-based composer Benjamin Esdraffo wrote key additional tracks including the title music. In late August 2015 Mark, associate composer Tomas Peire Serrate and the London-based mixer Steven McLaughlin convened at Windmill Lane Studios in Dublin where Mark conducted the Irish Film Orchestra in recording nearly all the music, adding some additional touches at Ted Spencer's Studio when back in New York. Handel, Purcell, Boyce, Fremart, Mozart, Vivaldi & other composers of the Pantheon created the music which conjures the world of the Vernons, DeCourcys -- and Martins.

