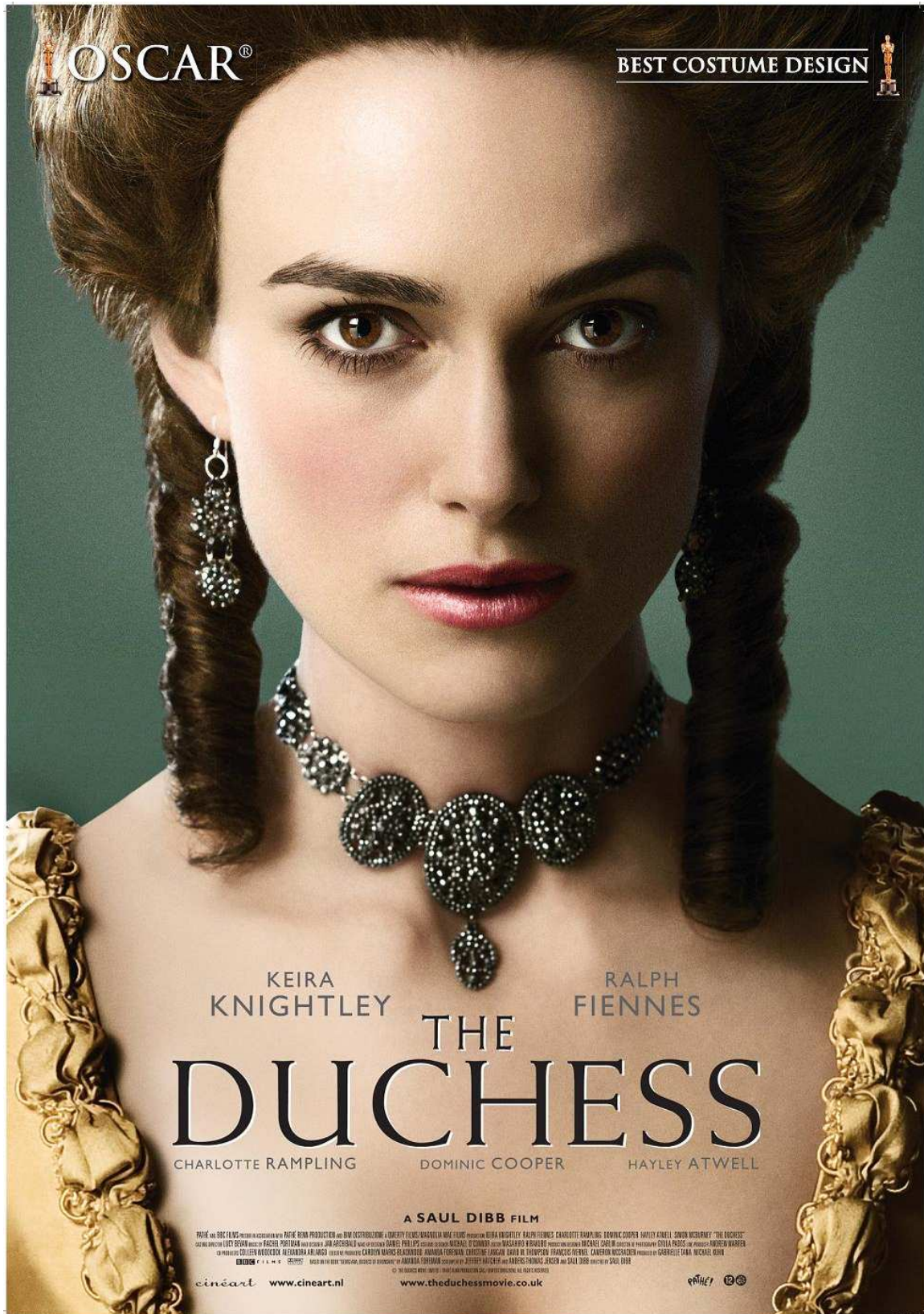


# Persmap



# The Duchess

Een film van Saul Dibb

UK · 2008 · 35mm · color · 110 min. · Dolby Digital · scope

*De mooie en stijlvolle Engelse Georgiana Spencer, verre familie van Prinses Diana, is de meest fascinerende vrouw van de 18<sup>de</sup> eeuw. Op haar 17<sup>de</sup> trouwt zij met de rijke en machtige Hertog van Devonshire. Met haar oogverblindende schoonheid, haar scherpzinnigheid en levenslust groeit Georgiana uit tot een beroemdheid, een mode-icoon, geliefd bij het gewone volk en vereerd door prinses en ministers. Ze komt in aanraking met de politiek en wordt het boegbeeld van de liberale partij 'The Whigs'. Maar achter haar vurige imago schuilt een vrouw die verwaarloosd wordt door haar echtgenoot en hunkert naar liefde. De Hertog, de enige man die ongevoelig is voor haar charme, heeft meer een oogje voor haar beste vriendin Elizabeth Foster. Wanneer hij een affaire met haar begint, begint Georgiana een gepassioneerde verhouding met de jonge graaf Charles Grey, de grote liefde van haar leven. 'The Duchess' is een hedendaags verhaal over beroemdheid, beruchtheid en de zoektocht naar liefde.*

**winnaar Oscar 2009 : Best Costume Design**

Release datum: 19 maart 2009

Distributie: cinéart

---

**Meer informatie:**

Publiciteit & Marketing: cinéart

Noor Pelsers & Janneke De Jong

Ampèrestraat 10, 1221 GJ Hilversum

Tel: +31 (0)35 6463046

Email: [noor@cinéart.nl](mailto:noor@cinéart.nl), [janneke@cinéart.nl](mailto:janneke@cinéart.nl)

Persmap en foto's staan op: [www.cinéart.nl](http://www.cinéart.nl)

Persrubriek inlog: cinéart / wachtwoord: film

---

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Set at the end of the eighteenth century, *The Duchess* is the story of the beautiful and glamorous Georgiana Spencer, the most fascinating woman of the age.

While her beauty and charisma made her name, her extravagant tastes and appetite for gambling and love made her infamous. Married young to the older, distant Duke of Devonshire, intimate of ministers and princes, Georgiana became a fashion icon, a doting mother, a shrewd political operator and darling of the common people. But at the core of her story is a desperate search for love.

From Georgiana's passionate and doomed affair with Earl Grey to the complex ménage à trois with her husband and her best friend, Lady Bess Foster, *The Duchess* is a very contemporary tale of fame, notoriety and the search for love.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

Althorp. 1774. On the back lawn of the Spencer family country estate six aristocratic young men prepare to run a race. 17 year-old GEORGIANA backs CHARLES GREY to win. Inside LADY SPENCER, Georgiana's mother, negotiates a marriage settlement with the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, a man some years older than Georgiana.

The marriage contract entitles Georgiana to a handsome financial reward once she has produced a son and heir to the Duke's estate.

Lady Spencer tells Georgiana she is to become the Duchess of Devonshire. Georgiana is excited at the prospect, believing the Duke loves her.

After the marriage Georgiana takes to her role as society hostess and entertains the Whigs—the political party supported by her husband—impressing the party leader, CHARLES FOX, with her wit and beauty.

Married life, however, is quickly a disappointment and Georgiana realises the Duke is more interested in sleeping with the maids and talking to his dogs than he is in her. Her final disillusionment comes when he expects her to mother his illegitimate daughter who comes to live with them.

Georgiana's response is to throw herself into society parties, where she is attended on by Fox and playwright RICHARD SHERIDAN. Georgiana, by now heavily pregnant, goes into labour and gives birth. The Duke is disappointed and disinterested as the child is a girl. Lady Spencer assures him an heir will soon come.

A few years later and another daughter added, the family travel to Bath. The Duke and Duchess attend a huge ball. Georgiana wows the crowds wearing a huge wig adorned with ostrich feathers. She's become known for her extraordinary outfits and is the centre of attention wherever she goes. She sees the Duke speaking to BESS FOSTER and Georgiana engages Bess in conversation to find out what he wanted. They find they like each other and determine to meet again.

Bess and Georgiana become friends and Bess reveals that her husband has taken her children and won't allow her to see them. Georgiana takes pity on her and invites her to stay.

At the theatre, the Duke, Duchess and Bess watch a performance of Sheridan's 'The School for Scandal'. Sir Peter and Lady Teazle are modeled on the Duke and Duchess and the play makes a mockery of their marriage. The Duke, mortified, endures the humiliation. After the performance Fox

introduces his protégée – CHARLES GREY. Bess notices Georgiana and Grey are preoccupied with each other.

Georgiana, now at the centre of Whig party politics, introduces Grey to a huge crowd. Grey's rhetoric takes flight and Georgiana is thrilled. Back stage there is tension between them and Grey confesses he thinks of her every day.

Back at Devonshire House Georgiana hears Bess and the Duke having sex. It's loud and passionate and completely unlike the kind she has with him. Georgiana confronts the Duke and tells him Bess must leave. The Duke refuses. Bess tries to explain to Georgiana that the Duke, as the most powerful peer in the country, is her only chance of ever seeing her children again. Georgiana suggests there are limits to the sacrifices one makes to see one's children. Bess disagrees.

Bess's plan, to seduce the Duke into helping her get her children back, works and Bess is re-united with her children. Georgiana is moved to see them together. When she sees Bess, her sons and the Duke together, they look to Georgiana like the happy family she hasn't given him.

Georgiana begins an affair with Grey. She proposes a deal to the Duke, she will give her blessing to Bess staying if he will accept her feelings for Grey. The Duke is furious. Without an heir he fears becoming a laughing stock. The Duke follows Georgiana to her room and snaps. He rapes her. Afterwards the Duke tells her she can do as she pleases once she has given him an heir.

Georgiana is forced to part with Grey. Finally she produces a son, but is miserable without Grey until Bess contrives a meeting with him.

Georgiana escapes to Bath to spend time with Grey and is blissfully happy with him. He provides her with the love and attention she desperately craves. Her happiness is short-lived as the Duke and Lady Spencer arrive and demand she give Grey up. The Duke threatens her that if she does not he will ensure Grey's political career will be over and she will never see her children again.

Georgiana knows she cannot be without her children and so returns to Devonshire House, but she is pregnant with Grey's child. The Duke forces her to give up the child to Grey's family.

Back in Devonshire House the Duke tells Georgiana he doesn't want her to undergo further suffering and for their life to return to normality. He watches the children playing and comments how wonderful to be so free. Georgiana is for the first time sympathetic to him as she finally begins to understand that he is as trapped within the confines of his role in society as she is and begins to accept her situation.

At a society gathering Georgiana is caught off guard when she runs into Grey, the guests fall silent sensing a whiff of scandal. Grey is awkward, but acts for the crowd. The polite small talk works and the crowd lose interest. Grey tells her he is to be married to a girl he has met twice. They both understand he is making a practical marriage and that they still love each other. Grey tells Georgiana that their daughter is much loved.

I

## INTRODUCTION

The Duchess stars:

*Keira Knightley* (Pirates of the Caribbean, Pride & Prejudice, Atonement) as The Duchess

*Ralph Fiennes* (Schindler's List, The Constant Gardener) as her husband The Duke

*Hayley Atwell* (The Line of Beauty, Brideshead Revisited) as her best friend Lady Elizabeth Foster



*Dominic Cooper* (The History Boys, Mamma Mia) as her lover, Charles Grey.

The film is directed by Saul Dibb (Bullet Boy, The Line of Beauty) and produced by Michael Kuhn for Qwerty Films and Gabrielle Tana for Magnolia Mae Productions.

The film is from a script by Jeffery Hatcher (Casanova, Stage Beauty) based on the best selling historical biography, "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire" by Amanda Foreman.

The Duchess is a Qwerty Films/Magnolia Mae Production in association with Pathé Renn Production and BIM Distribuzione for Pathé, BBC Films and Paramount Vantage.

---

## PRODUCTION STORY

Georgiana Spencer was born at Althorp in 1757. At the age of 17 she became the Duchess of Devonshire and mistress of Chatsworth House. The Duke's wealth and power brought her to the attention of the public and she became the queen of fashionable society, alternately fawned on and caricatured by the press and providing the inspiration for Lady Teazle in Sheridan's "The School for Scandal." Allying herself to the politician Charles James Fox she became an important figure in the Whig party, canvassing for their cause in the election of 1784. Her public success concealed a personal life that was fraught with suffering and a sterile marriage. The Duke of Devonshire was notoriously indifferent to his wife's charm and preferred her best friend Lady Elizabeth Foster, who inveigled her way into his bed and his heart. Georgiana embarked on a passionate love affair with Charles Grey, and when she became pregnant by him was sent into exile by the Duke. On her return she continued to live with the Duke and Bess Foster for many years in a ménage a trois.

The Duchess is based on the biography of Georgiana, written by Amanda Foreman, which won the Whitbread prize for Best Biography in 1997 and stayed on the best-seller lists for months. Producer Gaby Tana snapped up the rights of the book soon after its publication in 1998. "I knew Amanda for quite a long time before she wrote the book and when I read it I found it totally fascinating and thought it was great material for a film. I was in a privileged position because she was a friend and that helped because there was a lot of other interest. Amanda liked the vision that I had for the project and has been a great sounding board along the way because she knows these characters so well. When you talk to her about these characters it is like she's channeling them right there before you."



Tana was very taken with Georgiana. “The character of The Duchess is extraordinary and inspiring. Even though on the surface she seemed to have everything, you realise that this was not really the case. With her privileges came a lot of burden and things were never quite what they appeared to be. She was original and very smart. In a way she was a precursor of the liberated woman –becoming very involved in social change and in politics. But alongside this, there was this decadent, compulsive gambler who lost millions and millions of pounds. She was filled with contradictions and I think that makes for an interesting story. Her internal struggles make Georgiana a very interesting and surprising character.”

Foreman’s book covered the whole of Georgiana’s life, Tana, however, was not interested in making a biopic. “It was a fabulous biography, but we weren’t interested in making her life story. We were interested in making a film that had a real story line. We ended up focusing on the marriage and a particular period of the marriage. Although set in the 18th Century the contemporary parallels are extraordinary, and it really is timeless. It’s a story that resonates as much today as then. It’s surprising, you realise people have been having the same sorts of problems forever. This is where we found much of the appeal and is why we believe people will enjoy it today”.

Foreman, who acted as a consultant on the film, was happy to relinquish control. “One of the things that producers are always frightened about is that the writer will be angry when they see that their book is not represented word for word, page for page in the film. Actually that rarely happens and most writers know that what they’re watching is the dramatic truth. The book is about a literary journey and the film is about an experience of an emotional journey. What they have ended up producing is very true and faithful to the book and to Georgiana’s life.”

Producers Gaby Tana of Magnolia Mae and Michael Kuhn of Qwerty brought Saul Dibb on board to direct the film. Gaby Tana says of Dibb. “He came to see us and said all the right things. He had the same approach to the film as we did, which was to make a period film with contemporary resonance. He had a lot of input into the script and continuously proved himself to be right for the job.”

Saul Dibb saw some parallels between the story and his acclaimed feature debut, *Bullet Boy*. “They are both tragedies, for want of a better description, which deal with young people at a crucial moment in their lives who are trying to break free from controlling social forces. When I was sent the script I wasn't looking to make a period film, the British period film that I grew up watching isn't necessarily my favourite genre, but this felt new and different. It was a complex and dark story about a woman trapped in an arranged marriage. It was emotionally powerful and not just a nostalgic view of English life—a trap which I feel a lot of period films fall into.”

Dibb was interested in paring back the setting and getting as close to the emotional heart of the story as possible. “I wanted to make this film purely from Georgiana's point of view, to focus really tightly on her story and her journey, to allow us to put ourselves in her shoes and explore that situation. I wanted to make something intimate. Coming from documentaries and *Bullet Boy* I was interested in making this unreal world as real as possible and tried to strip away all those layers that could distance the viewer, from the characters’ lives—be it the language, the settings, the costumes or the make-up—and just try to portray the real people in these complex relationships.”

The producers tell of their luck in securing Keira Knightley. Gaby Tana explains how fortuitous it was. “A little bird told me that she was looking for a movie to do at that time, it is very rare that that happens, so we jumped on it right away. It was all about timing, we were really fortunate that she was there at that moment in time and that this spoke to her. I’ve heard through the grapevine that she was reading the book on the set of the movie that she was finishing, it captured her imagination and she was perfect for it.”

The combination of the script, the role and the book had grabbed Knightley's attention. "The script was really interesting and had a very strong female role, so when you get offered something like this you certainly don't turn it down. I've done films based on books before, but never one based on a biography. I felt the character in the script and the character in the book were quite different from each other. The book is really extraordinary and there is so much in it, you could make so many films out of it. The script was quite cleverly done to keep to a very specific story line: the story of a doomed marriage. I think any actress would relish playing Georgiana, she's an extraordinary character with a real lust for life."

For Saul Dibb casting was vitally important. "Finding people who would be able to embody the characters is the biggest challenge of any film. We were very ambitious. It was absolutely necessary for us to find two people who naturally had the strange kind of chemistry that the real Duke and Duchess had. When Keira and Ralph first appeared together for the screen test, they completely embodied the parts and I got a little tingle of excitement. They are absolutely a strange couple and that's the idea of the film."

Dibb enthuses about his leading lady. "I think Keira embodies naturally quite a lot of Georgiana's characteristics. She's incredibly bright, she's beautiful, and she's a celebrity. There's a kind of vulnerability to her, but also an open and passionate side. She's well read and she understands Georgiana's ideas and arguments. It's quite hard to find, someone who's got all those things rolled into one. It's a challenge to ask people to engage with a very wealthy, beautiful young woman from the English upper class of 200 years ago. That was the main challenge of the film. How do you make an audience forget their preconceptions of what life was like in the past and encourage them to identify with a life that is so hugely different from their own and empathise with the problems that a person like Georgiana would have faced. I think that Keira totally achieves this."

Knightley was impressed by Dibb's talent and persuasiveness. "I saw *Bullet Boy* and I thought it was beautifully acted and beautifully made and I was just very, very impressed with that. I thought it was interesting to take this guy who has done a very contemporary, south London story about gun culture and chose him to direct this piece. Actually the truth is I read the script, met him, liked him a lot and then he sent me three huge white ostrich feathers. I thought "come on" a man who sends you ostrich feathers with a gold ribbon around them is worth working with!"

Cast opposite Knightley was Ralph Fiennes as the Duke of Devonshire. The producers were persistent in persuading him to take the role, as Tana explains. "He just was the Duke. I don't think he was looking to do another period drama and he took more convincing than anybody else. But we were determined and would not take no for an answer."

Dibb explains how important it was to Fiennes that the Duke becomes a rounded character. "On the page the Duke could very easily have become a two-dimensional character. He could have become a cartoon villain of repressed aristocratic male Englishness and when I sent the script to Ralph that was his big worry. I think he thought the script was well written and there were great possibilities with the character. He wanted to know that there would be the freedom to try and understand him and who he was beyond this sometimes horrible, enigmatic figure. That's how I knew he was absolutely the right person for the role. He avoided going for the obvious in every scene and every choice he made was about making the character and performance more subtle or more layered."

Fiennes explains how he saw the Duke as a complex character bound by the codes of behaviour of his time. "I am a bit wary of period costume dramas, but I liked this and thought it was a good story. I liked the character of the Duke a lot, but thought the character could be made a bit more complicated in the interpretation. As written he's emotionally constipated, rather cold, unemotional

and quite cruel, but he's a man of his time. There were certain values that he holds to and we have to understand those values and not pre-judge them."

Speaking of the Duke's relationship with The Duchess Fiennes says, "She's the open-eyed young woman who is emotionally available and marries this man in a kind of arranged marriage. The Duke probably does feel for her deep down, but he's holding on to a code of behaviour and belief that he sees as important. To 21st Century eyes he could be seen as slightly hypocritical and it would be very easy to box him in and label him. I tried to understand him through the values of his own time."

The co-stars worked closely together to bring out the complexities of the on-screen relationship. "Neither of us wanted it to be obvious from the beginning that this marriage is not going to work." Says Knightley. "I think if it's a foregone conclusion that the Duke's the baddy and Georgiana is the goody, then it's never going to be that interesting a story and I think it's more the case of two personalities that just don't go together and don't understand each other. Georgiana can be a complete nightmare. The Duke doesn't know how to cope with her and this creates an interesting dynamic within this relationship of two people that just don't fit."

Fiennes was very taken with the young actress. "I had just seen *Atonement*, which I loved and I think Keira's got an amazing quality. I'm very impressed by her spirit and how present she is and her dedication and her discipline. She combines a sweet nature as a person with a focus and discipline and a wonderful emotional range. She's got that rare thing where it seems she is doing nothing, but thoughts are flooding through her face, through her eyes. I think she's a pleasure to work with."

Dibb explains his ideas behind casting the other key characters. "For the Duchess, the Duke and Lady Spencer we wanted three iconic actors, as they represent iconic people of their time. It seemed to work to have people who already had a stature and prominence playing those parts. Charlotte Rampling has an impressive and slightly unsettling presence on screen and I also thought she looked very much like Keira—that they had a very similar kind of poise and stature. For Bess and Grey we wanted to have actors who are up and coming. We didn't want them to be people that you recognise necessarily. I'd worked with Hayley before on "The Line of Beauty" and I'd always felt that she was perfect for Bess. She's a great actress. Her quality is that you're not always sure what's going on behind her eyes and with Bess you want to feel you're not always sure what her plan is. She's got a plan, but you don't want it to be obvious. Hayley is someone who's got these qualities. She's very attractive and she's got a devilish charm that people warm to."

Atwell says, "I loved the script and I was moved by the story, all the more so because it was true. Bess is someone who could so easily be seen solely as devious and calculating, but I found a book called "Elizabeth and Georgiana" about Bess's life, her personal life, and it was a lot more heartfelt. Bess was a very complicated and troubled woman who was trying to survive in society. All she wanted was to have her children back. She was a woman who would do anything for her children and I thought that was wonderful."

Amanda Foreman was on hand to advise the actors. "My involvement in the film was two-fold. Firstly I was on hand in case any of the actors wanted to know what their character's childhood was like, or what their emotions would have been on a certain day. My other role was to give some 18th Century advice: how they would have walked, how would they have talked. This group of actors was so accomplished they didn't really need any help, but I was happy to be a sounding board and they were happy to use me."

Saul Dibb was impressed with the lengths his actors went to familiarise themselves with the period and the characters. "Keira was willing to put a lot of herself and her thoughts and her time into trying to understand this woman and trying to embody her whole story."



She's very hard working and did a lot of research. She read Amanda Foreman's book several times, but she also went out and read lots of other books, that she found for herself. Ralph did exactly the same. You would go in his trailer and there would only be pictures of 18th Century dukes on the wall and he'd only be listening to music from the period. Those kinds of things really help an actor to try and understand what it was like to live then."

Knightley went to look through some of the archive of Georgiana's belongings held at Chatsworth. "I was very fortunate. When we were filming at Chatsworth, the present Duchess of Devonshire showed me some of the letters, jewellery and paintings and all the notes from her creditors that showed how much debt she was in. When she died she had been terrified of disclosing to her husband the amount of she owed, because she was convinced he was going to divorce her or send her away and actually when she died he found out how much she was in debt and said is that all. There's something incredibly sad about her, I think that she's a victim of herself, of her own innocence. She's a victim of people using her for their own gain, but what is rather wonderful about this story is she finds a way to live with this. She finds a way to triumph over something and to regain some power in a time when women really had very little."

Fiennes read around the subject in order to uncover the Duke. "I've read the Amanda Foreman book which is fantastic, but in it the Duke remains enigmatic. I found another couple of books about him and Bess Foster and I managed to find out a bit more about him. He was very contained and never very expressive or demonstrative socially, but people who knew him said he was incredibly informed and incredibly knowledgeable. If ever there was debate in a men's club his opinion was always considered the final word."

Shot over nine weeks in the autumn of 2007, the film is set in three principal locations, the Devonshire's London home, Devonshire House; their country estate, Chatsworth and Bath. A number of different locations and magnificent country houses were used to reconstruct the Devonshire houses and other sets, including Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, the Bristol Old Vic theatre, the Bath Assembly Rooms, Holkham Hall in Norfolk, Osterley Park, Greenwich Naval College and Somerset House in London. Filming also took place at Chatsworth, the ancestral home of the Devonshire's. The current Duke and Duchess of Devonshire still live there.

Shooting in some of England's most spectacular country houses also helped the cast. Stepping into centuries of history gave them a valuable sense of their characters' backgrounds. Ralph Fiennes explains, "I think to shoot in real locations and to have the actual fabric of the times around you is fantastic. Aside from the room you are shooting in, all around you are bookshelves, corridors, paintings, gardens, vistas, ceilings. You soak all this up. Just being in the space that someone of that standing lived their life in does something to you imaginatively. It's all instinctive stuff. You immediately take on the confidence and the assurance of the place. Chatsworth was inherited and trying to get your head around inheriting a lot of land, a lot of people even, servants, requires such a different mentality from today's life so it helps to be in the actual place."

Knightley adds: "It made a huge difference actually being in the houses, in the actual spaces, knowing how cold they are. It's very different to being in the studio. You really get a sense of where these people were, of the scale that they lived in and their reality and they are absolutely stunning." It wasn't just the actors who felt this, Gaby Tana comments. "We shot in these incredible mansions throughout England and you felt as if you really were re-creating and re-living something. These characters actually walked through these halls and these things happened in these rooms. There's something very visceral and exciting about that."

The biggest challenge of all the locations was to re-create Devonshire House, the London residence, as it no longer exists. While the interiors were shot at Kedleston and Holkham Halls, the exterior was

shot at Somerset House in London. Dibb explains. “We made the decision early on that we had to see real locations not create sets. The real locations had to do a lot of the work for us so we spent a lot of time choosing the right places. Devonshire House was known as this big, austere, slightly prison-like fortress and we had to re-create that by putting together a few houses. The first is Kedleston Hall, which has an extraordinary ballroom and a particular kind of look, and we put that together with Holkham Hall in Norfolk. Although they are by different architects the look is the same and I think the architect who did Holkham had seen Kedleston and wanted to do something a bit like that, so we were able to create this austere, but beautiful bachelor pad for the Duke. It was a very specific look.”

Georgiana, was Diana Spencer’s great-great-great-great aunt and at times their stories’ bear uncanny parallels. Gaby Tana comments, “The parallels are there and they are real, especially in the way they both manipulated the press. I think Georgiana really understood how to make things work for her and then of course used it for political means. Georgiana was probably first celebrity—in the way that we perceive celebrity today. When she appeared in the papers they sold out, she was followed around by cartoonists—the equivalent of the paparazzi. She was a fashion icon and she captured people’s imagination.”

Amanda Foreman adds, “Georgiana was a cross between Marilyn Monroe and Lady Diana. She’s a star, she’s a celebrity but she’s also an immensely tragic figure, incredibly shy inside, but desperately seeking attention. Very intelligent and very talented in her own right. What’s relevant to Georgiana’s story is the idea of a woman who is desperately seeking to define herself when all the men around her, especially in the press, are trying to define her in ways that she doesn’t recognize.

Both Princess Diana and Georgiana were intelligent, powerful women who were almost ripped to shreds by the press and then fought to remake themselves to finally be the women they wanted to be. One of the aspects of Georgiana’s life that makes it so relevant today is that she had to live under the intense glare of public scrutiny. I see Keira playing Georgiana now and I’m amazed that she is able to keep her composure with the constant press attention she receives - this is something that Georgiana also had to suffer.”

“We are trying not to tell the story of Diana through Georgiana,” states Dibb, “but everyone’s aware and it would be a bit naive if they didn’t know that Diana is a direct descendent of Georgiana. Georgiana was born a Spencer, born in Althorp and there are parallels - she became a celebrity of her day, she married a man who was complicated and distant and she married him very young. After a while there were three people in the relationship, but it came about in a very, very different way and I think we’re talking about very different people, so the parallels go up to an extent and then they stop. The parallels are in the staging posts in her life more than they are in her character. If people want to make comparisons, that’s fine but there’s no way that we were trying to tell the story or manipulate the story to chime in with what people knew of Diana’s life.”

## ABOUT THE CAST

**KEIRA KNIGHTLEY** - Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire

At just 21 years of age Keira Knightley confirmed her status as a rising star with Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations for Best Actress for her acclaimed performance as Elizabeth Bennett in Joe Wright's *Pride & Prejudice*. She has recently been nominated for a Golden Globe and received a BAFTA nomination for her role in the critically acclaimed *Atonement*, directed by Joe Wright from the novel by Ian McEwan.



Knightley first made headlines in Gurinder Chadha's hit, *Bend It Like Beckham*, for which she won the London Critics Circle Award for British Newcomer of the Year. She was then selected by director Gore Verbinski and producer Jerry Bruckheimer to star opposite Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom and Geoffrey Rush in the 2003 worldwide blockbuster *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* which was followed with the international box office smash hits: *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* and *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*.

Knightley's diverse range of credits include Tony Scott's action drama *Domino*, Antoine Fuqua and Jerry Bruckheimer's *King Arthur*, John Maybury's thriller *The Jacket* opposite Adrien Brody, and as part of the impressive ensemble cast in Richard Curtis' *Love Actually* with Hugh Grant, Colin Firth, Laura Linney, Liam Neeson, Alan Rickman, Bill Nighy and Emma Thompson amongst others.

Making her professional acting debut at the age of six on British television in "Royal Celebration", some of Knightley's early credits include "A Village Affair" and "Innocent Lies" as well as performances in the TV series "The Bill" and the TV films "Treasure Seekers", "Coming Home" and Walt Disney's "Princess of Thieves". Knightley's mini-series credits include "Oliver Twist" and the adaptation of Boris Pasternak's classic novel "Doctor Zhivago". Her other feature film credits include *Star Wars: Episode 1 - The Phantom Menace*, *The Hole*, *Pure* and more recently she was seen in the adaptation of Alessandro Baricco's best-selling novel *Silk* for director Francois Girard, co-starring with Michael Pitt.

Knightley can currently be seen in *The Edge of Love* alongside Cillian Murphy, Sienna Miller and Matthew Rhys in which she takes the role of Vera Phillips. The film directed by John Maybury is based on the early life of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas.

In addition to her acting roles, Knightley was recently chosen to be the face of *Coco Mademoiselle* for Chanel. This occasion was marked by her third collaboration with Joe Wright, as writer and director of her debut commercial for the brand.

## **RALPH FIENNES** - The Duke of Devonshire

Fiennes was born in Suffolk and grew up in England and Ireland. He attended RADA (the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts), after which he began his professional acting career on stage. He performed at London's Regents Park and two years after graduating RADA, he joined Michael Rudman's company at the Royal National Theatre. He later joined the Royal Shakespeare Company, where for two seasons he appeared in such plays as HENRY VI, KING LEAR, and LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.



In 1991, Fiennes landed his first television appearance in the award-winning PRIME SUSPECT. Fiennes was then cast by David Puttnam as T.E. Lawrence in A DANGEROUS MAN: LAWRENCE AFTER ARABIA.

Fiennes made his feature film debut starring opposite Juliette Binoche as Heathcliff in Peter Kosminsky's, EMILY BRONTE'S WUTHERING HEIGHTS. Steven Spielberg then cast him as the sinister Nazi Aman Goeth in SCHINDLER'S LIST, opposite Liam Neeson. His role as Aman Goeth earned him an Academy Award nomination, and awards from BAFTA, the New York Film Critics Circle, National Society of Film Critics, Boston Society of Film Critics, Chicago Film Critics Association, and London Critics Circle for best supporting actor.

Other notable performances include Robert Redford's acclaimed QUIZ SHOW, Kathryn Bigelow's STRANGE DAYS, Gillian Armstrong's OSCAR AND LUCINDA and Martha Fiennes' ONEGIN opposite Liv Tyler, which Fiennes also executive produced. Fiennes also starred in Neil Jordan's THE END OF THE AFFAIR, THE GOOD THIEF, THE AVENGERS and Istvan Szabo's SUNSHINE. In 1994 Fiennes opened as HAMLET in a sell-out production by Jonathan Kent for the Almeida Theatre Company at the Hackney Empire.

The production moved to Broadway, and Fiennes won the coveted Tony award for his performance in June of 1995. In 1995, Fiennes starred in the Academy Award-winning THE ENGLISH PATIENT, directed by Anthony Minghella, for which Fiennes was nominated for an Academy Award, a Golden Globe and a BAFTA for Best Actor.

Fiennes then returned to the theatre in Jonathan Kent's acclaimed production of IVANOV at the Almeida Theatre in London. During 2000, Fiennes appeared triumphantly on the London stage in the title roles of Richard II and Coriolanus for the Almeida Theatre, and he triumphed in a guest cameo role in Kenneth Branagh's West End production of THE PLAY I WROTE.

In 2002 Fiennes starred in David Cronenberg's film SPIDER as the disturbed schizophrenic and in RED DRAGON as the psychotic but vulnerable serial killer, opposite Emily Watson and Edward Norton. He had a cameo role in Neil Jordan's THE GOOD THIEF and also starred opposite Jennifer Lopez in MAID IN MANHATTAN. In 2005, Fiennes appeared in THE CHUMSCRUBBER, opposite Rita Wilson and Glenn Close. Fiennes was also seen in Martha Fiennes', CHROMOPHOBIA with Kristen Scott Thomas and Penelope Cruz. Fiennes voiced Lord Quartermaine in the animated feature, WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERE RABBIT. That same year, Fiennes starred in THE CONSTANT GARDENER opposite Rachel Weisz and Danny Huston, directed by Fernando Meirelles. Fiennes received a London Critics Circle award for Best British Actor and a British Independent Film award for Best Actor for this role. Fiennes also starred in the final Merchant - Ivory film, THE WHITE COUNTESS,

opposite Natasha Richardson.

Finally that year, Fiennes played the pivotal role of the dreaded Lord Voldemort, in HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE. In April of 2006, Fiennes reunited with director Jonathan Kent to star in Brian Friel's Tony Award nominated play FAITH HEALER, which originally premiered at Dublin's Gate Theatre. Fiennes starred opposite Cherry Jones and Ian McDiarmid to rave reviews. Fiennes and the play received Tony nominations. Fiennes then reprised his role as Lord Voldemort in HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX, the fifth installment of the Harry Potter series. In February 2008, Fiennes starred in the critically acclaimed HBO film BERNARD AND DORIS, opposite Susan Sarandon and directed by Bob Balaban. That same year, Fiennes starred in the film IN BRUGES, opposite Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson. Directed by Martin McDonagh.

Fiennes recently finished production on THE READER, David Hare's adaptation of the bestselling novel by Bernhard Schlink. Starring opposite Kate Winslet, THE READER takes place in postwar Germany and centers around Michael Berg (Fiennes), a man who recounts the story of his awakening in a covert love affair with an older woman in the wake of WWII. Directed by Stephan Daldry and produced by Anthony Minghella, Sydney Pollack and Scott Rudin, THE READER will premiere in 2009. Fiennes can currently be seen starring in a production of Yasmina Reza's GOD OF CARNAGE at London's Gielgud Theatre. GOD OF CARNAGE, a new comedy that has opened to rave reviews, follows what happens when two sets of parents meet up to deal with the unruly behavior of their children.

This July, Fiennes can be seen in Samuel Beckett's one-man show, "First Love," directed by Michael Colgan at New York's Lincoln Center Festival and presented by the Gate Theater of Dublin. Directed by Michael Colgan, Fiennes will then reunite with director Jonathan Kent to star opposite theatre legend, Clare Higgins, as the title role in OEDIPUS REX, which will be staged at the National Theatre in London this October.

Fiennes was introduced to UNICEF in 1999 and became an avid supporter of the organization for many years before becoming an ambassador in 2001. He has travelled to multiple countries on their behalf. UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

#### **CHARLOTTE RAMPLING - Lady Spencer**

After beginning her acting career at age seventeen in a starring commercial role and working as a model for a while, Rampling's first screen role was uncredited as a water skier in Richard Lester's film The Knack...and How to Get It in 1965 which was followed a year later by the role of Meredith in the film Georgy Girl. After this her acting career blossomed in both English and French cinema. Rampling has often performed controversial roles.

In 1969, in Luchino Visconti's The Damned, she played a young wife sent to a concentration camp. She co-starred with Dirk Bogarde. In 1974's The Night Porter she portrayed a former concentration camp inmate entangled in a sado-masochistic relationship with her former guard, played by Bogarde. In 2005 Rampling starred in Laurent Cantet's Heading South (Vers le Sud), a film about female sexual tourism.

Rampling gained recognition from American audiences in 1975's detective story *Farewell My Lovely* and later with Woody Allen's *Stardust Memories* (1980) and particularly in *The Verdict*, an acclaimed drama directed by Sidney Lumet that starred Paul Newman. She has collaborated with Francois Ozon on several films: *Under the Sand*, *Swimming Pool* and *Angel*. Her recent credits include: *I'll Sleep when I'm Dead*, directed by Mike Hodges; *Lemming*, directed by Dominik Moll, *Basic Instinct 2*, directed by Michael Caton-Jones and the forthcoming *Babylon A.D.*, directed by Matthieu Kassovitz.

#### **HAYLEY ATWELL** - Bess Foster

Young British actress Hayley Atwell has featured in prominent TV, theatre and film productions since graduating from the London Guildhall of Music and Drama in 2005. She made her film debut opposite Colin Farrell and Ewan McGregor in Woody Allen's *Cassandra's Dream*, which premiered at the 2007 Venice Film Festival. 2007 also saw Hayley take the lead in Anthony Byrne's *How About You* alongside screen veterans Vanessa Redgrave and Imelda Staunton. Hayley can be seen next in Julian Jarrold's *Brideshead Revisited*, alongside Ben Whishaw and Matthew Goode.

Hayley's major TV break through was playing Catherine Fedden in the BBC's mini-series "*The Line of Beauty*," adapted from Allan Hollinghurst's Booker prize-winning novel by Andrew Davies, directed by Saul Dibb.

She has also starred in the lavish ITV adaptation of "*Mansfield Park*" (2007) alongside Billie Piper. Additional TV credits include "*Fear of Fanny*," based on Fanny Cradock the famous fifties TV chef, and TV-movie adaptation of Phillip Pullman's "*Ruby in the Smoke*" for the BBC.

Hayley made her theatre debut in "*Women Beware Women*" as Bianca in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production. She went on to play Lo in the Sound Theatre stage production of "*Prometheus Bound*" directed by James Kerr, and most recently George Etherege's "*Man of Mode*" and George Bernard Shaw's "*Major Barbara*" directed by Nicholas Hytner for the National Theatre.

#### **DOMINIC COOPER** - Earl Grey

Dominic Cooper trained at LAMDA. He originated the role of Dakin in Nicholas Hytner's award-winning National Theatre production of "*The History Boys*," written by Alan Bennett. He reprised his role in the regional and international tours of the play and on Broadway and he also played the role in the film version, directed by Hytner.

Other theatre credits include Will in "*His Dark Materials*" and "*Mother Molly's Clap House*" at the National Theatre, the Caryl Churchill Event at the Royal Court and "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*" for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

On television, he has appeared in "*Down to Earth*", "*Sparkling Cyanide*," "*The Gentleman Thief*", "*Davison's Eyes*", "*HG Wells*," and the recent Andrew Davies adaptation of "*Sense and Sensibility*" for the BBC, in which he played Willoughby.

His feature film credits include Neil Jordan's *Breakfast on Pluto*, *From Hell*, directed by the Hughes brothers, *Starter for Ten*, alongside James McAvoy, directed by Tom Vaughn. He will next be seen in *Mamma Mia!* alongside Meryl Streep and Colin Firth, directed by Phyllida Lloyd. He recently completed filming *An Education*, directed by Lone Scherfig from a Nick Hornby script which is due to be followed by Peter Howitt's *David Copperfield*, in which he will play Steerforth.



## **SIMON McBURNEY** - Charles James Fox

Simon McBurney is an actor, writer and director who was most recently seen in *The Last King of Scotland* with Forest Whitaker. He also starred with Jennifer Aniston and Frances McDormand in *Friends with Money*. His other feature films include *The Human Touch*; Jonathan Demme's *The Manchurian Candidate*; Paul McGuigan's *The Reckoning*; the title role of *Eisenstein*; Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow*; *Tom and Viv*; *Being Human*; *Mesmer*; *Cousin Better*; *Onegin*; *Skaggerak* and *Bright Young Things*.

In theatre, McBurney is one of Europe's leading directors. As the co-founder and artistic director of *Theatre de Complicite*, he has devised, directed and acted in over 30 productions, toured all over the world and won numerous international awards. His production of *"Mnemonic"* earned a *Time Out Live Award*, a *Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience*, a *Lucille Lortel Award* and *The Critics Circle Award for Best New Play*, among others. His plays also include *"The Elephant Vanishes"* at Lincoln Center and *"The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui"* starring Al Pacino, Paul Giamatti, Billy Crudup, Steve Buscemi, John Goodman and Charles Durning. On Broadway he directed *"The Chairs"* for which he received a *Tony Nomination*. In London, he recently both directed and starred in *"Measure for Measure"* and *"A Minute Too Late"* at the National Theatre.

## **AIDAN MCARDLE** – Sheridan

Aidan trained at RADA after making his professional debut at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin playing Don Parritt in *"The Iceman Cometh"*. Most recently Aidan performed in the premiere of *"There Came a Gypsy Riding"* by Frank McGuinness at the Almeida Theatre. He was nominated for an *Olivier Award* for his portrayal of Donal Davoren in Sean O'Casey's classic drama, *"The Shadow of a Gunman"* (Tricycle). Other theatre roles include; The title role in *"A Prayer for Owen Meany"* (National Theatre), Benjamin Murphy in the U.K premiere of Tennessee Williams' *"Stairs to the Roof"* (Chichester), Orestes in *"Under the Curse"* (The Gate), Pip in *"Great Expectations"* (Bristol Old Vic) and many productions with the RSC including Roderigo in *"Othello"* Puck in *"A Midsummer Night's Dream"* Richard in *"Henry VI (Parts I - III)"*, and Richard III in *"Richard III"* (the youngest actor in the history of the company to play the role).

Television credits include: John Eshton in *"Jane Eyre"* (BBC), Martin Cable in *"Afterlife"* (ITV), Dave in *"All About George"* (ITV) and Aaron in *"Footprints in the Snow"* (ITV). Other credits include: *"Bad Crowd"* (C4), *"Miss Marple: Sleeping Murder"* (ITV), *"No Angels"* (World Productions/C4), Jeremy in *"Morris : A Life with Bells on"*, Peter in *"Perfect Day"* (Channel 5), Igor Stravinsky in *"Riot at the Rite"* (BBC), Albert Einstein in *"E-MC2"* (Nova), and Dudley Moore in Terry Johnson's highly acclaimed television film *"Not Only But Always"* in which he starred opposite Rhys Ifans.

Film credits include: Slannen of Pimm in *Ella Enchanted* (Miramax). He is currently playing Martin Gabel in *Me and Orson Welles* and will be shooting a six-part comedy drama *"Beautiful People"* later in the year.

## ABOUT THE CREW

### SAUL DIBB – Director

Saul Dibb made his feature film debut in 2004 with *Bullet Boy*, a gritty and realistic look at life in the violent world of Britain's gun culture. The film starred So Solid Crew's Ashley Walters and won an Evening Standard British Film Award for Most Promising Newcomer.



His previous work had included a number of documentaries: *Easy Money*, about a porn actress, *Lifters*, Dibb directed two of a series of four documentary films offering a daring insight into the lives of shoplifters. It was nominated for RTS Documentary Series in 2002. *Abducted* about parents of abducted children and *Electric Avenue*, a series of films about inner-city life in Brixton.

In 1997 he served as cinematographer on Jon Ronson's documentary *Tottenham Ayatollah*, about a Muslim fundamentalists' attempt to turn Britain into an Islamic state.

In 2006 he directed the acclaimed tv series "The Line of Beauty", adapted by Andrew Davies from the Booker prize winning Alan Hollinghurst novel, set in Thatcher's Britain. It starred Hayley Atwell and Dan Stevens.

### MICHAEL KUHN - Producer

Michael Kuhn was born in Nairobi, Kenya in 1949. After primary school he left to attend Dover College in England in 1962 and went on to Clare College Cambridge in 1968 to read Law.

He joined Polygram N.V (now part of Universal) in 1975 and in 1991 set up Polygram Filmed Entertainment, which made and distributed over 100 feature films and which between them won 14 Academy Awards. These films included *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Notting Hill*, *Dead Man Walking*, *The Usual Suspects*, *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, *Elizabeth*, *Trainspotting* and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.

BAFTA awarded him the Michael Balcon Award for services to British Cinema, in 1999.

He set up Qwerty Films in 1999 and secured finance to produce bigger budget movies. Qwerty Films has produced eight features in its first six years of operation, including *Severance*, directed by Christopher Smith (*Creep*), and *Kinsey*, directed by Bill Condon and starring Liam Neeson and Laura Linney.

His book "100 Films and a Funeral" was published in 2001 and a documentary based on it is being released this year. He was appointed Chair of the British National Film and Television School in 2002, and is a member of council for BAFTA.

### GABRIELLE TANA - Producer

Gabrielle Tana has worked in film production and development in the United States and Europe since 1983. Through her production company, Magnolia Mae Films, Ms. Tana has produced a number of features, including Michael Di Giacomo's *Animals*, Goran Paskaljevic's *Someone Else's America*, and

Nannette Burstein and Brett Morgen's Academy Award-nominated documentary, *On the Ropes*. In addition, Ms. Tana is co-creator of the long-running New York live storytelling series, *The Moth*, which she produced as television series for the Trio Network. She lives in New York and London.

#### **GUYLA PADOS** - Director of Photography

Gyula's graduating film, *Dawn* (Director and DOP) earned widespread international recognition, including the Wim Wenders Prize at the Munich Film Festival and the Grand Prize at the Short Film Festival of Oberhausen. Gyula was asked by Renegade Films to shoot two short films (*The Star* and *The Sin Eater*). Gyula has won many prizes and one of the most coveted is the one he earned for Best Cinematography at the Munich Film Festival in 1995 for *Angel Street*.

His features include *Evening*, directed by Lajos Koltai, starring Glenn Close, Meryl Streep and Vanessa Redgrave, *Basic Instinct 2: Risk Addiction*, directed by Michael Caton-Jones and starring Sharon Stone. *Fateless*, directed by Lajos Koltai, *Kontroll*, directed by Nimrod Antal, *The Heart of Me*, directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan and *Hotel Spendide*, directed by Terence Gross.

#### **MICHAEL CARLIN** - Production Designer

Production Designer Michael Carlin studied sculpture in Perth and Sydney and practiced as a fine artist before moving to London in the late eighties to pursue a career in film. He worked in various capacities on independent films such as Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, Richard Stanley's *Dust Devil* and Iain Softley's 1994 Beatles film *Backbeat*. At the same time he also designed commercials and music videos for, amongst others, Michael Jackson, Duran Duran, Elton John and George Michael.

Michael's first film as production designer was *Fever Pitch* starring Colin Firth. This was followed Tim Roth's *The War Zone* starring Ray Winstone, Sandra Goldbacher's *Me Without You* and Julian Jarrold's "Crime and Punishment" for which he won a Royal Television Society Award for Best Production Design. After *The Heart of Me*, starring Paul Bettany and Helena Bonham Carter and directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan, Michael designed *What a Girl Wants* and *New York Minute* for Warner Brothers and director Dennie Gordon.

Michael spent most of 2005 working in Africa, first in Uganda on *The Last King of Scotland* directed by Kevin MacDonal and starring Forest Whitaker; followed by almost four months in Mozambique and South Africa prepping the period epic *Toussiant* for director Danny Glover. Shooting was postponed.

Michael went on to design *Mr Bean's Holiday* and most recently designed *In Bruges* for director Martin McDonagh, starring Colin Farrell.

#### **MICHAEL O'CONNOR** - Costume Designer

Michael O'Connor has worked as an Assistant Costume Designer on a wide range of features: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* directed by Chris Columbus, Chen Kaige's *Killing Me Softly*, Philip Kaufman's *Quills*, Mike Leigh's *Topsy Turvy* and Gillian Armstrong's *Oscar and Lucinda*.

O'Connor's recent credits include, *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*, directed by Bharat Nalluri, starring Amy Adams, Frances McDormand and Shirley Henderson, *Brick Lane*, directed by Sarah Gavron and *The Last King of Scotland*, directed by Kevin MacDonal, starring Forrest Whitaker, and James McAvoy. His other film credits include *Nomad*, directed by Ivan Passer and *Mystic Masseur*, directed by Ismael Merchant.

## **DANIEL PHILLIPS** - Make-up Designer

Award-winning hair and make-up designer Daniel Phillips studied at the London College of Fashion. He spent eight years at the BBC honing his craft in the make-up department, covering a host of period and contemporary film and studio based projects. His recent television credits include "The Other Boleyn Girl", "He Knew He Was Right", "Tsunami: The Aftermath" and "Bleak House" for which he won an Emmy.

His recent film credits include The History Boys, directed by Nicolas Hytner, Venus, directed by Roger Michell and starring Peter O'Toole and Leslie Phillips and The Queen directed by Stephen Frears and starring Helen Mirren, for which he was nominated for a BAFTA.

He created the look for the World War Two set The Edge of Love, starring Keira Knightley, Cillian Murphy, Sienna Miller and Matthew Rhys and directed by John Maybury. He is currently working on the Stephen Frears directed Cheri starring Michele Pfeiffer and Rupert Friend.

## **JAN ARCHIBALD** – Hair Designer

Award-winning hair designer Jan Archibald has worked on a wide range of films. She was recently awarded an Academy Award and a BAFTA for her work with Marion Cotillard on La Vie en Rose.

She was a previous BAFTA winner for her work on Iain Softley's The Wings of the Dove, and has received nominations for her work on Robert Altman's Gosford Park, Sense and Sensibility directed by Ang Lee and Interview with a Vampire, directed by Neil Jordan.

Her other credits include: Possession, The Man who Cried, Tom and Viv, Rob Roy, Orlando and A Private Function. She is currently in production on The Damned United, directed by Tom Hooper from a script by Peter Morgan, and starring Michael Sheen as Brian Clough.

