

PERSMAP

PATRICIA CLARKSON BRUNO GANZ CHERRY JONES EMILY MORTIMER CILLIAN MURPHY KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS TIMOTHY SPALL

# THE PARTY

A FILM BY SALLY POTTER

★★★★ "DELICIOUSLY WICKED FUN" ★★★★★  
THE GUARDIAN DAILY MAIL EMPIRE



**A COMEDY OF TRAGIC PROPORTIONS**

GREAT POINT MEDIA PRESENTS AN ADVENTURE PICTURES PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH DANWICH MEDIA AND COPENHAGEN FILM FUND A FILM BY SALLY POTTER THE PARTY  
PATRICIA CLARKSON BRUNO GANZ CHERRY JONES EMILY MORTIMER CILLIAN MURPHY KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS TIMOTHY SPALL CASTING IRENE LAMB HEIDI LEVITT SOUND JEAN-PAUL MUGEL  
HAIR AND MAKEUP DESIGN NAOMI COOPER COSTUME DESIGN JANE PERRIE EDITORS ANDERS BIEHN EMILIE ORSINI PRODUCTION DESIGN CARLOS CONTI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ALEXEY FOTONOVY LINE PRODUCER ALICE DAWSON  
CO-PRODUCERS HEIDI LEVITT MICHAEL MANZI EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JOHN BIVA-AMU JIM BEEVE ROBERT HALIM JR PRODUCER KURBAN KASSAM  
PRODUCED BY CHRISTOPHER SHEPPARD WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY SALLY POTTER

**VANAF 14 DECEMBER IN DE BIOSCOOP**

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# THE PARTY

Een film van Sally Potter

*THE PARTY is een zwarte komedie, vol scherpe dialogen. De nieuwe film van Sally Potter (ORLANDO) spat van het scherm met briljante rollen van Kristin Scott Thomas, Timothy Spall, Patricia Clarkson, Cherry Jones, Cillian Murphy, Bruno Ganz en Emily Mortimer. Een zowel wrang als hilarisch portret van een groep vrienden die hun zekerheden in duigen zien vallen.*

*Janet heeft net een belangrijke functie gekregen in de Britse politiek. Dit is het kroonstuk van haar carrière en dat moet gevierd worden. Terwijl de vrienden arriveren krijgt het feestje een dramatische wending als Bill, de man van Janet, een schokkende mededeling doet. Het blijkt niet zijn enige geheim te zijn en de andere gasten worden meegesleurd in de opeenstapeling van onthullingen en confrontaties. Liefde, vriendschap en politieke idealen komen op losse schroeven te staan. Alle illusies die de vrienden over elkaar en zichzelf hebben gaan in rook op, samen met de canapés.*

*THE PARTY werd geselecteerd voor de competitie van het Filmfestival van Berlijn.*



Speelduur: 71 min. - Land: UK - Jaar: 2017 - Genre: Komedie  
Releasedatum bioscoop: 14 december 2017

Voor meer informatie over de film:  
<http://www.cineart.nl/films/party-the>

Persmaterialen te vinden en downloaden:  
<http://www.cineart.nl/pers/party-the>

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## SALLY POTTER – Writer/Director

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Sally Potter made her first 8mm film aged fourteen. ORLANDO (1992), Potter's bold adaptation of Virginia Woolf's classic novel, was nominated for two Academy Awards and brought her work to a wider audience. It was followed by THE TANGO LESSON (1996), THE MAN WHO CRIED (2000), YES (2004), RAGE (2009) and GINGER & ROSA (2012).

She has also directed many short films (including THRILLER and PLAY) and a television series, and has directed opera (Carmen for the ENO in 2007) and other live work. Her background is in choreography, music, performance art and experimental film.

Sally Potter is known for innovative form and risk-taking subject matter and has worked with many of the most notable cinema actors of our time. Her films have won over forty international awards and received both Academy Award and BAFTA nominations. She has had full career retrospectives of her film and video work at the BFI Southbank, London, MoMA, New York, and the Cinematheque, Madrid. She was awarded an OBE in 2012. Her book Naked Cinema - Working with Actors was published by Faber & Faber in 2014.



### Filmography

2017	THE PARTY
2012	GINGER & ROSA
2009	RAGE
2004	YES
2000	THE MAN WHO CRIED
1997	THE TANGO LESSON
1992	ORLANDO
1983	THE GOLD DIGGERS
1979	THRILLER (short)
1970	PLAY (short)
1969	JERK (short)

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## Director's Notes

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THE PARTY is a comedy wrapped around a tragedy, in which a celebratory gathering of friends goes violently wrong in a very short space of time.

A week may be a long time in politics, but a few minutes can be a long time in a relationship. When under extreme pressure, in a confined environment – and any house that once felt like a sanctuary can quickly feel like a jail – everything hidden can come hurtling to the surface. This was the abyss I looked into as a writer. I wanted to invite laughter on a knife-edge, as we witness - through the inquisitive eye of the lens - this group of people failing abysmally to keep to their own party-line of what is morally right and politically left.

THE PARTY was conceived as a 'bare-bones' film turning confinement of place (and the constraints of real-time) into a virtue. In a black and white cinematic world without elaborate special effects or multiple changes of location, apparently simple elements have to do the work of storytelling. Everything is exposed. There is no-where to hide when working with the primary ingredients of story, character, light and dark, voices and music. The camera peers into the shadows and stares unflinchingly at the faces of these characters in their moment of crisis - a crisis that develops as each one starts to tell the truth. I was blessed with an ensemble of great, risk-taking actors who launched themselves into the process with gusto and discipline in the service of the healing power of bitter-sweet laughter, at a moment when events in the world make us all want to weep.

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## Cast

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April	PATRICIA CLARKSON
Gottfried	BRUNO GANZ
Janet	KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS
Bill	TIMOTHY SPALL
Martha	CHERRY JONES
Jinny	EMILY MORTIMER
Tom	CILLIAN MURPHY



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## PATRICIA CLARKSON as 'APRIL'

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Patricia Clarkson is an Academy-Award nominee and Emmy Award-winning actress. Her recent films include *LEARNING TO DRIVE*, *THE MAZE RUNNER* franchise, *THE EAST*, *CAIRO TIME*, *EASY A*, *FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS*, *WHATEVER WORKS*, *SHUTTER ISLAND*, and *VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA*.

Recently, Patricia was seen opposite Bradley Cooper in *The Elephant Man*, for which she received a Tony Award nomination. Following its successful run on Broadway, the cast reprised their roles on the West End at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. Other Broadway and off-Broadway credits include: *Three Days of Rain*, *Raised in Captivity*, *Eastern Standard* and the role of "Blanche" in *A Streetcar Named Desire* at The Kennedy Center.

Patricia's other film credits include *OCTOBER GALE*, *HIGH ART*, *GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK*, *THE GREEN MILE*, and *PIECES OF APRIL*, for which she received a Golden Globe nomination. Television credits include 'Six Feet Under,' 'Five,' and most recently 'Parks and Recreation.' She will next be seen in an upcoming arc on the hit Netflix show 'House of Cards.'

Last year Patricia wrapped production on two other films: Isabel Coixet's *THE BOOKSHOP*, alongside Bill Nighy and Emily Mortimer, and the hotly anticipated indie drama *JONATHAN*, opposite Ansel Elgort.

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## BRUNO GANZ as 'GOTTFRIED'

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Bruno Ganz started his career as an actor in the 1960s, appearing mostly in theatre productions. Thereafter, he promptly moved onto films and had his breakthrough in *SOMMERGÄSTE* in 1976. Since then, Bruno has celebrated a prominent career as one of Germany's leading actors, starring in both European and American productions. He is best known for working with internationally acclaimed directors including Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Ridley Scott and Francis Ford Coppola. Over the years, Bruno has won numerous awards, as well as being honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2010 European Film Awards.

His portrayal of Adolf Hitler in Oliver Hirschbiegel's Academy-Award nominated 2004 film *DOWNFALL* won him countless international awards and worldwide recognition. Other prominent film credits include Francis Ford Coppola's pre-World War II romantic mystery *YOUTH WITHOUT YOUTH*, Stephen Daldry's Academy-Award winning adaptation of the best-selling German novel *THE READER*, and Jaume Collet-Serra's *UNKONWEN IDENTITY*. Most recently, Bruno was seen alongside Stellan Skarsgård in the Norwegian film *KRAFTIDIONEN* and in the iconic production of *HEIDI* by Alain Gsponer.

Bruno will next be seen in Terrence Malick's newest drama *RADEGUND* alongside August Diehl, Maria Simon and Matthias Schoenaerts, which was shot in Germany in 2016 and is expected to be released in 2018, as well as Lars von Trier's *THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT* scheduled for release in early 2017.

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## KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS as 'JANET'

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Kristin Scott Thomas is a bilingual actress working in French and English. She is the recipient of a BAFTA, four Evening Standard Awards, a London Critics' Circle Award and a Screen Actors Guild Award for her extensive film work, as well as a DBE for her services to drama.

Kristin's break-out role was the British cult romantic comedy *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*, starring opposite Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell, for which she won the Best Actress Award at the 1995 BAFTAs. She is perhaps best known for starring in the 1996 multi-Academy Award-winning film *THE ENGLISH PATIENT*, for which she received a Best Actress Oscar nomination. Her recent film credits include *SUITE FRANCAISE*, *MY OLD LADY*, *THE INVISIBLE WOMAN*, and Nicolas Winding Refn's *ONLY GOD FORGIVES*. She will next be seen in Joe Wright's upcoming war drama about Winston Churchill, *DARKEST HOUR*.

Kristin's recent theatre credits include Peter Morgan's *The Audience*, Ian Rickson's production of *Electra* at the Old Vic, following appearances in his West End productions of *Old Times* and *Betrayal* and his acclaimed Royal Court staging of *The Seagull*. For her portrayal of Arkadina in *The Seagull*, she received the 2008 Olivier Award for Best Actress, reprising the role on Broadway the following year. Other theatre includes West End productions of *As You Desire Me* and *Three Sisters*.

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## TIMOTHY SPALL as 'BILL'

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Timothy Spall OBE is one of Britain's best-loved and most talented character actors. He trained at the National Youth Theatre and RADA, and began his acting career in the theatre, with seasons at Birmingham Rep and the RSC. We recently saw Timothy return to the stage in the most lauded *The Caretaker* at The Old Vic. He received wide acclaim for his role as J.M.W Turner in Mike Leigh's MR TURNER, for which he won seven international awards, including the Cannes Film Festival Best Actor Award.

Timothy is perhaps best known for his role as Peter Pettigrew in the Harry Potter film series, and his diverse film work includes: THE KING'S SPEECH, THE DAMNED UNITED, SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET, PIERREPOINT, ALL OR NOTHING, LUCKY BREAK, TUPSY TURVY, and SECRETS AND LIES, among others.

His television credits include: 'Fungus the Bogeyman,' 'The Enfield Haunting,' 'Blandings,' 'The Syndicate,' 'The Fattest Man in Britain,' 'Oliver Twist,' 'The Street,' 'Bodily Harm,' 'Auf Wiedersehen Pet,' 'Perfect Strangers,' 'Shooting the Past,' 'Our Mutual Friend,' and his own documentary 'Timothy Spall: Somewhere at Sea.'

Other upcoming screen credits include: DENIAL with Rachel Weisz and Tom Wilkinson, Nick Hamm's THE JOURNEY and David Blair's AWAY. As well as THE PARTY, he has recently wrapped on two other feature film projects: THE CHANGEOVER, and FINDING YOUR FEET with Imelda Staunton and Celia Imrie.



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## CHERRY JONES as 'MARTHA'

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Cherry Jones is an American actress, best known for her work in theatre and television. She has starred most recently in the triumphant revival of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, which originated at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she is a founding member and where earlier in her career she appeared in more than 25 productions including *Twelfth Night*, *The Three Sisters* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Cherry is a five-time Tony Award nominee for her work on Broadway, winning the Award for the 1995 revival of *The Heiress* and for the 2005 original production of *Doubt*, for which she also won the Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle and Obie Awards. Her other Broadway credits include Nora Ephron's play *Imaginary Friends*, *Angels in America*, *Millennium Approaches*, and *Our Country's Good*.

Cherry may be best known for her role as US President Allison Taylor on the Fox series '*24*,' for which she has won an Emmy. Most recently, she has had the recurring role on the Primetime Emmy Award-winning Amazon comedy-drama series '*Transparent*' in its second and third seasons, for which she was nominated for the Critics' Choice Television Award for Best Guest Performer in a Comedy Series in 2015, and Charlie Brooker's '*Black Mirror*.'

Cherry's film appearances include *THE HORSE WHISPERER*, *ERIN BROCKOVICH*, *SIGNS*, *THE VILLAGE*, *OCEAN'S TWELVE* and most recently Terrence Malick's critically lauded *KNIGHT OF CUPS*, *I SAW THE LIGHT* opposite Tom Hiddleston, and Tina Fey's comedy *WHISKEY TANGO FOXTROT*.

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## EMILY MORTIMER as 'JINNY'

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Emily Mortimer is a British actress and producer, known for her film and television work. The daughter of famed writer Sir John Mortimer, she attended St. Paul's Girls School in Hammersmith, London and went on to study English and Russian at Oxford University.

Emily is currently shooting Disney's new adaptation of *MARY POPPINS*, starring opposite Meryl Streep, Colin Firth, and Emily Blunt and directed by Rob Marshall. She recently wrapped award-winning director Isabelle Coixet's new film *THE BOOKSHOP*, alongside Bill Nighy and Patricia Clarkson. She will next be seen in Ritesh Batra's drama *THE SENSE OF AN ENDING* with Jim Broadbent, Charlotte Rampling and Michelle Dockery.

Throughout her career, Emily has worked with numerous acclaimed directors. She starred in Martin Scorsese's *HUGO* as well as *SHUTTER ISLAND*, alongside Leonardo DiCaprio. She also starred in Woody Allen's *MATCH POINT*. Other notable film credits include *RIO, I LOVE YOU*, helmed by acclaimed director Paolo Sorrentino; *OUR IDIOT BROTHER* opposite Paul Rudd; Brad Anderson's *TRANS-SIBERIAN* opposite Woody Harrelson and Ben Kingsley; *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST*, directed by Kenneth Branagh; *LARS AND THE REAL GIRL* opposite Ryan Gosling and David Mamet's *RED BELT*. Her breakthrough performance was in Nicole Holofcener's acclaimed *LOVELY AND AMAZING*, for which she won an Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Actress.

On the small screen, Emily was last seen in the second season of her HBO show 'Doll & Em,' co-written and co-starring her real-life best friend Dolly Wells. She also starred in the HBO series 'The Newsroom,' created by Aaron Sorkin, as well as in Tina Fey's critically-acclaimed comedy '30 Rock.'

Emily also runs a production company King Bee Productions with her husband Alessandro Nivola.

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## CILLIAN MURPHY as 'TOM'

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One of the most acclaimed, versatile actors of his generation, Cillian Murphy has starred in major studio hits, award-winning independent films, a celebrated television series and on the stages of London, New York and around the globe. He will next be seen in Christopher Nolan's World War II epic DUNKIRK, Ben Wheatley's shoot-out comedy FREE FIRE and screenwriter Mark O'Rowe's directorial debut, THE DELINQUENT SEASON.

For television, Cillian also stars as Thomas Shelby in the BBC Two/Netflix gangster saga 'Peaky Blinders.' Production on the fourth season commences this spring.

Cillian first garnered international attention for his performance in Danny Boyle's 28 DAYS LATER. In 2005, he made an indelible impression as Dr. Jonathan Crane/The Scarecrow in Christopher Nolan's BATMAN BEGINS, for which he received a London Film Critics' Circle Award nomination. He reprised the role in Nolan's THE DARK KNIGHT and THE DARK KNIGHT RISES and later reunited with the director for the critically acclaimed hit INCEPTION.

In 2006, Cillian received a Golden Globe nomination for his performance as the transgender outcast Patrick "Kitten" Brady in Neil Jordan's BREAKFAST ON PLUTO. He also garnered consecutive BIFA Award nominations for his performances in Ken Loach's Palme d'Or-winning THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY, Danny Boyle's SUNSHINE, and the BIFA-winning BROKEN, directed by Rufus Norris.

Cillian regularly returns to the stage, often collaborating with Irish playwright Enda Walsh. Following critically acclaimed, sold out runs in Ireland, their most recent collaboration, Ballyturk, ran at the National Theatre in London. Cillian previously starred in Walsh's stunning monologue Misterman (2012 Drama Desk Award, The Irish Times Theatre Award) and first made his mark on stage with an explosive performance in Walsh's Disco Pigs.

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## Production Notes

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### The Invitation

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A prescient story about people and relationships, politics and ideology, THE PARTY began life as a script Sally Potter was developing alongside several others. The writer-director has developed this technique over the years as “her cure for writer’s block...if she’s stuck on one she goes to the other,” says Christopher Sheppard, her long-time producer. “I find it a very fluid and interesting way of working,” says Potter. “I often work on more than two. In this case, I was working on six or seven until two came to the fore.”

With a joint development deal with BBC Films and the BFI in place, Potter saw two scripts emerge from this flurry of activity: MOLLY and THE PARTY. Typical of Potter’s output, the two projects couldn’t be more different. While the former is a 24-hour odyssey in the life of a man and his daughter, THE PARTY is an ensemble story set over the course of one evening. Both were ready to cast and finance. “Given the realities of the film industry, I didn’t know which of those would come to fruition first,” says Potter. “But it was this one.”

When it came to writing THE PARTY, one of the jumping off points for Potter was her last film, 2012’s GINGER & ROSA. “There was a climactic scene in it, in which all of the characters – who had previously only been seen on their separate trajectories – came together and there was a confrontation,” she explains. “It was a very difficult scene to do. All the actors and myself were nervous about doing it, but in the end, it was immensely satisfying. It gave me the appetite for making an entire film that was, if you like, a form of confrontation, a cracking open of the illusions that people have about themselves.”

GINGER & ROSA wasn’t the only inspiration. Potter also wanted to write something that would, in some way, examine the state of the nation. “I started writing this just before the last general election in Britain. It was a reflection on party politics and political language; the relationship with truth that gets subsumed to the idea of spin. Certain ideas become current that politicians believe people want to hear, and think will help them win. So, it’s a reflection on what that does to all of us, when truth in our personal lives, as well as our political lives, becomes distorted.”

With Potter determined to set the film in real time, the story began to form around a gathering at the London townhouse of a married couple: Bill and Janet. “We learn very quickly that she works in politics and has just been promoted to being Shadow Minister for Health in the party in opposition, which is unnamed,” says Potter. “He is an academic who has given up some opportunities in his working life in order to support hers. And with that decision come some disappointments, some frustrations.”

With five other guests (and one significant absentee), the set-up immediately recalls such classics as Mike Nichols’ adaptation of Edward Albee’s WHO’S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? and Luis Buñuel’s THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE. “Each of these people hold secrets. Things that have been hidden come out in a sequence of revelations in a somewhat catastrophic way,” says Potter, “which all makes it sound rather bleak and heavy, but, in fact, this is a comedy, albeit wrapped around some tragic elements.”

Potter made the decision early on to shoot the film in black-and-white in collaboration with her cinematographer Alexey Rodionov, whose relationship with the writer-director stretches all the way back to her 1992 debut Orlando. In her mind, it was an aesthetic choice that immediately recalled “a period of British filmmaking” in the 1960s: movies like SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY MORNING,

THE L-SHAPED ROOM and THIS SPORTING LIFE, “which had behind them a very strong sense of the state of the nation...a reflection on the cracking apart of party politics”.

Rodionov was also taken with the idea of shooting in black-and-white. “There are more advantages in shooting in black-and-white,” he says. “The problem with colour and especially shooting digitally, the image is too naturalistic. The reproduction of colour in a digital camera is too real. You need a little work just to give some artistic quality to the image, to the action. Black-and-white, of course, helps because it eliminates the colour and makes it easier to concentrate on the action and on the state of the actors and their faces.”

Written with what Potter calls “an awareness of the absurdity of human suffering”, her ambitions for THE PARTY were far-reaching. “I really wanted to do something that came at political life through the prism of the politics of personal life; relationships, shifting tectonic plates of power, love, desire, betrayal, longing, disappointment, and so on. In a way, these were universal human experiences people might have in a lifetime but condensed into an hour-and-a-half of real time.”



## The Guest List

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As Potter formed the script, a production plan came to fruition: to assemble the cast, rehearse over the course of a week and shoot it in just two more. “It was always the idea that in the same spirit of the quick-fire nature of the dialogue and the action, there was a way of making the film that would respect that and echo it,” says Sheppard. “It was something that could be done fast and furious. And that’s indeed how it’s turned out...the trick was to follow the spirit of the script into the production.” Producing the film through his and Potter’s Adventures Pictures, Sheppard turned to Kurban Kassam to come onto the project as his producing partner and help assemble the financing (which finally came together from Great Point Media). An associate producer on Ginger & Rosa, Kassam’s experience working on British productions with two or three-week shooting schedules was invaluable. “I knew how tricky it was but also how fulfilling it can be if you can get it done right,” he says. “Because, of course, you can make a feature film in a short period of time, but it’s amazing if you can do it well.”

When gathering the crew together, Potter turned to a mix of old friends and new colleagues – like costume designer Jane Petrie. “In my experience, she is very open to working with new Heads of Departments, and she researches them quite a lot before she brings them on board,” says Kassam. “Generally she treats not only her actors but her H.O.Ds very much as her kindred brothers and sisters, and the primary qualification that anyone needs to work with Sally is kindred spirit, where they’re in it together.”

Potter, meanwhile, began to consider her actors. “I take ages casting,” she laughs. “I watch hours and hours and hours and hours of work people have done as I gradually start to imagine the alchemy of the different kinds of combinations.” Particularly in the case of THE PARTY – with three very different couples central to the story – finding the right chemistry between actors was essential. For months, Potter worked with two casting directors – Irene Lamb and Heidi Levitt – from London and Los Angeles, both of whom had put their stamp on previous Potter productions.

“I always aim for the feeling that when people see the film, they can’t imagine anyone else in that role,” says Potter, “as if it could only be played by that person. A feeling of rightness, a psychological and emotional dramatic precision. And that’s the new challenge with every film; one that applies across the board. I have found that only to an extent do the lessons learned from a previous film apply to the next. You can’t fall back on the habits you developed before, if it is to become what it really needs to be.”

The first two to join were Timothy Spall and Kristin Scott Thomas. Potter had already worked with Spall on GINGER & ROSA and knew she wanted to work with him again. Offered the role of Bill - the mournful academic with revelations at the ready - Spall felt the same way about working with Potter. “She’s incredibly detailed, and gets the people she aims to get, and she thinks long and hard about the combinations,” he says.

Alongside Spall came Kristin Scott Thomas, cast as Bill’s wife Janet, the high-flying politician hosting the party to celebrate her own promotion to Shadow Minister of Health. Sheppard calls it a ‘eureka’ moment when Potter hit on casting the actress in “what isn’t an obvious role” for her. As soon as Scott Thomas read the script, she was intrigued. “I thought, ‘Oh, this looks interesting!’ Read it in one fell swoop, and then met Sally, and we decided there and then – it was very simple, a straightforward decision.”

Spall and Scott Thomas, naturally, spent time thinking about their couple’s backstory: a thirty-year marriage, lasting “more or less all of their adult lives”, says Spall. “And [they’ve] been on a long journey...obviously a childless marriage, with all of the sub-textual complexities of that: discussions of sacrifice, all these things. They are, to all intents and purposes, a very strong, combined duo.”

With the two main roles fleshed out, “everything started to gel around that”, recalls Sheppard. Cherry Jones remembers meeting Potter at a dinner in New York, before she got a call to come and discuss playing Martha, Bill’s oldest friend and a fellow academic. After a second meeting – at Jones’ house – the actress committed. “I said ‘yes’, because how can you say ‘no’ to Sally Potter?” she laughs.

Similarly enticed to the project to play Martha’s younger partner Jinny, Emily Mortimer concurs about the magnetic Potter and her “very particular” casting process. “It’s always quite a long conversation, but never hard – just quite in depth and specific and careful, and you can tell from the first conversation that you have that it’s going to be a really interesting and considered project and experience. She’s impossible to say ‘no’ to.”

Mortimer was immediately struck by the conflicting tones in the scripts: “It’s kind of heightened...but in a way that feels totally real. It’s like being at one of those evenings that you have only once or twice in a lifetime, when the shit just hits the fan in every way, and things go off, and it all comes out. That can be really funny and really absurd, but also just...awful! It will take a while for everyone to recover, I think!”

The unfolding relationship between Martha and Jinny – which begins as Jinny discovers she is pregnant with triplets – acts as a fascinating counterpoint to the childless Bill and Janet. “For Martha,

she wants Jinny,” says Jones. “She will do anything to keep Jinny. If that means having a child at 60 – or three children – that’s what she’ll do! It’s an unlikely relationship, and yet we get strains throughout of this real devotion to one another; at some level, as unlikely as it is, it seems to work.”

If it initially seems that Jinny is much keener on these babies than Martha, the further Mortimer burrowed into the script that observation changed. “We realised it’s kind of the blind leading the blind. I really don’t know what the hell I have got myself into either. We’re completely in the dark as to what it means to have a baby. I’m just as terrified as she is. There’s something quite sweet about the lack of any kind of understanding of what’s going to happen to us.”

As with Jones, Potter also met Patricia Clarkson in New York. The actress immediately tapped into the role of April, Janet’s withering best friend: “I never really cared for Bill. I adore Janet, that’s obvious. And Martha, I used to really adore, but now she’s become all conventional. Even though she is a gay woman, she’s got this marriage, and she’s got children on the way... it makes my skin crawl. I am this fiercely independent woman, and I love the fact that Janet was this career woman.”

In an inspired bit of casting, Potter paired Clarkson with the legendary German actor Bruno Ganz, who plays April’s on-off partner Gottfried, a life-coach she appears to hold utter contempt for. “Sometimes it reminds me of this book I read a very long time ago, which is called *The Idiot* by Dostoyevsky,” comments Ganz. “He’s too nice, too friendly, not made for this kind of world...he’s a mix of different things, but I like, for the part, to imagine that he is coming from the Dostoyevsky side, [that] kind of an idiot.”

Playing Tom, the sharp-suited banker who arrives at the party wired, anxious and with revenge on his mind, Cillian Murphy was drawn to the script’s one-location set-up. “I loved the contained, parlour nature of it. I love stories or films that happen in real time. They’re rare enough in cinema, and it’s a hard thing to pull off, I think. I like the humour of it. I read the first scene and thought, ‘How is she going to write herself out of that?’ It’s such a brilliant opener, and then you work backwards – it’s very, very clever.”

Murphy also got to play the film’s outsider: the moneyed capitalist at odds with the intellectuals and academics around him. “I think there’s a lovely tradition in storytelling of the knock on the door and who’s at the door. And Tom embodies that storytelling device; he is the knock-at-the-door, an unexpected guest. I like to think of him, in a very positive way, as a human hand-grenade! Or a story hand-grenade! Because when he comes and knocks on the door, things change.”

With the cast assembled, Potter began to individually work with each actor, both face-to-face and over Skype. Less a formal rehearsal, Potter sees it more “as a form of deep preparation,” she says, “for me to get to know the actor, the actor to get to know me; for me to understand the text I’ve written by beginning to hear it spoken aloud; to learn the responses of each actor, and begin to sense what is going to help them to get to that magic place of going beyond what they’ve done before.”

As Potter worked with her cast, Sheppard had the near-impossible task of finding a two-week window that would accommodate all seven cast members. While most films will see actors come in and out of the production, this would be different. “Sally wanted the cast altogether for the whole time, so that they could work as an ensemble and the film could be shot in script order,” he says.” In fact that’s the way it’s turned out, with the exception of Cillian having to be best man in Ireland for four days, which we knew about from the start.”

When the cast finally came together, the week-long rehearsal period was crucial, with Potter and the actors working out the basics of everybody’s relationships. “It was very interesting,” comments Scott

Thomas, “to get into a room with six or seven of us – that I’ve never met before, apart from Cherry – and meet people who have a completely different idea about who this character is...it’s fascinating, to say, ‘Oh you read that! I don’t read that at all, I read this.’ That was really, really great. You are thrown in the deep end. And then you have to get up and do it.”

As Spall points out, with such a “classy and varied bunch” of actors, it made everything that little bit easier. “When everyone is so precise as well...we share a bit, and a lot of this is about what people haven’t said to each other...there is a lot of value in thinking about it, but not sharing it. It’s all about sub-textual, private journeys going on... they’ve made these assumptions about each other, but it doesn’t come out ’til there and then...the truth, the resentment.”



### **The Dress Code**

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To accommodate the rapid shooting schedule, the decision was made to look for a studio space, something new for a Sally Potter film. “Sally’s automatic preference tends to be to shoot on location, because of the authenticity from being in real places,” says Sheppard. “In other films, we have shot some parts, some scenes in built sets, but this is the first time we’ve done a whole film on stage.” In particular, the lighting was key. “The story goes from day to dusk to night, and to try to recreate those lighting changes on location would be very, very tough.”

From Pinewood to Twickenham, different studios were assessed, but in the end, the production chose West London Film Studios in Hayes. “Where we ended up was the only place that could give us the time that we thought we needed to build, light and dress [the set] to the specific requirements of Sally and her production designer Carlos Conti,” says Kassam, “so that Sally still had enough time to rehearse with the cast on set. Obviously, the more she could do that, the more shooting the film in two weeks would be possible.”

For Potter, it was all about maximising her time on set with the actors without the inevitable interruptions location shoots bring. “My prime consideration was that we couldn’t afford to stop



shooting, for example, for an aeroplane overhead,” she explains. “And it seemed perfectly possible to create a set with the immense skill of Carlos Conti that felt entirely real and solid, which would also suit the fluidity of the action. So people move in between rooms and spaces that also have different significance.”

In the end choosing a more boutique studio space worked perfectly for the needs of the production. Unlike a larger studio, where THE PARTY would’ve likely been dwarfed by big-scale movies happening concurrently, the production had its own “dedicated team”, as Sheppard puts it, with everything on tap: the dressing rooms next to the sound stages close to the production office. “It’s been a dream in terms of efficiency,” he says.

Potter agrees, noting just how convenient the space was, especially whilst staying in a hotel just five minutes away. “[It meant] being able to start very, very early in the morning and work all day without interruption,” she says. The only limitations were technical: “how quick it’s possible to light to a certain standard of perfection, get the performances to the right level and negotiate and choreograph all those elements together to meet the schedule. That’s been the challenge but a studio helps that.”

The actors immediately noticed the impact using a studio space had on such a production. “It’s more containable,” says Murphy, “for everybody, for the crew and for the production. You’re not just driving around. You’re all just there and you get into a rhythm quicker, because you’re not unloading packing trucks and figuring out where you are in the day. It helps in terms of efficiency and speed...without sacrificing anything creatively.”

Carlos Conti, the production designer who previously worked with Potter on THE TANGO LESSON, YES and GINGER & ROSA, brilliantly replicated the downstairs living space of Bill and Janet’s London townhouse, consisting of: a living room, kitchen, back garden, hallway and bathroom, where all the scenes took place. “It’s like a home!” remarks Clarkson. “You can set up shop...you sometimes forget it’s a set. It’s like you really are in someone’s living room.”

Early on, Conti mapped out a model of the house, paying particular attention to the geography of the living room, where the characters spend much of the story. Sat in a chair for much of the film, Bill is “the sun of this place with all the other planets around him”, says Conti. “That makes it more complicated in terms of a location; having one character not moving, sat in a chair, and the other characters going around him. We changed the model several times until we found the perfect position for each character for each scene.”

When it came to the design of the Bill and Janet’s house, Potter did a great deal of research into the worlds of politics and academia. Together she and Conti location-scouted several real houses, which proved inspirational. As ever, time was the real enemy – with building, painting, dressing and ageing the set all taking place in a very short window – but Conti and Potter never lost sight of the need to design the house according to Bill and Janet’s personality types.

“Janet is someone who is away, outside most the time,” says Conti. “It’s not a completely decorated house; it’s almost an empty house, except for Bill’s area. Bill’s space is full of books. I like the idea of not having paintings hanging on the walls. I love that; it’s a very good idea. It’s challenging, though, to have blank space. Sometimes it’s difficult to have empty walls. But it was good for them, for the characters. You feel how they live. You feel that she comes back late, every day after work. You feel that in the house; this emptiness.”

Naturally, the decision to shoot in black-and-white affected every aesthetic choice made by Conti. At one point, he even considered dressing the entire set in grey, but rejected the idea. “Actually that is

very difficult for the actors,” he says. “It’s too artificial; it’s too technical. This was a very emotional film and it was better to have it in a real house, let them feel comfortable and real. And for that reason, I said we should do it in colour.” Nevertheless each piece of furniture was tested to see how it looked in black-and-white.

As the set was being built, costume designer Jane Petrie (Moon, Suffragette) began working on outfits for the characters. “I’m not really the kind of designer that would impose anything on the script,” she says. “I try to find it all, [to]get the answer from the page.” Her early meetings with Potter were open, collaborative and encouraging. “We just talked about the script and the characters and how we saw them as people, before we got around to talking about how they might look and how they might dress.”

The most obvious starting point was Tom, the only character whose outfit – “a metallic-grey suit” – is described in the script. “From the beginning, Sally wrote very clearly how he’s dressed and groomed,” says Murphy. “You know those guys who have too much money and spend too much money on their appearance. They spend a lot on cosmetics!” Fortunately, Petrie was able to secure a suit from Prada for Murphy to wear. “They very graciously donated the suit to the effort,” says Murphy, “so he’s head to toe in Prada!”

When it came to Janet, Petrie had to give thought to exactly where the character had come from. “I knew from talking to Sally that Janet had come home and wanted to organise this party for her friends by herself. So she’d literally walked in the door and got straight to work. So she is in fact in work clothes – except she has her apron on. She still has her shoes on. Then we started looking at how female politicians dress, and what their dress code might be. We wanted it to be authentic.”

As for Janet’s husband Bill, Petrie points to just how collaborative the process was in designing his look. “We all worked together on Bill,” she says. “The first time I met Tim, everybody had just come out of rehearsals, so everybody was all fresh and full of ideas, and he said he imagined Bill in a linen suit. So that really fitted well for us. And actually it’s a crumpled linen jacket and a pair of trousers. So we took Tim’s lead on that because that was his instinct.”

With the “irresistible” Gottfried clothed “a little bit like a guru”, his partner April was shown to be the polar opposite. “She’s so spiky on the page,” says Petrie. “I thought we might want to look at softening her a little bit so she’s not all daggers. But the delivery is so nuanced, you can take her all the way, we ended up going with quite a sharp, armoured look for her that a lot of her dialogue reflects. She’s not one-dimensional at all, and that all comes out as the script unfolds.”

When it came to Martha and Jinny, Petrie wanted them to feel like they were really good friends. Her first idea was to dress them in the same shoes, as if they’d been out shopping together, but she eventually moved in a different direction. “But there’s a reflection in the way both of them dress, with their jackets and their shirts and the colours. Hopefully it’s tonally balancing, thinking of them side-by-side in black-and-white, making it work on texture as well as the characters.”

## **The Main Event**

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With THE PARTY shooting in June 2016 – just as the British public voted in the referendum to leave the European Union – it did not go unnoticed just how timely it felt. “I think at the core it’s a deeply political film,” says Clarkson. “I think politics informs all of these characters, it really informs their lives.” Spall agrees, believing Potter has tapped into the mood of the nation. “It’s capturing something, I think,” he says. “People are searching for integrity versus power. What is the reality of achieving change? Is sincerity enough? Is honesty enough?”

For Ganz, as a foreigner to the nation, he was particularly taken with the themes surrounding Britain's National Health Service and Janet's idealistic feelings towards state healthcare. "I didn't know much about the British health service, which was founded after the Second World War, which I think is a great thing. But now, after [Margaret] Thatcher, it starts to be modified...that's one of the issues in this whole thing. It's a very British thing. I think that's interesting. It's a very serious matter."

Murphy also believes it says a great deal about British political life. "Obviously it's commenting – I think it's fair to say – on the Labour Party," he says. "I think it's commenting on relationships and how there is no normal relationship nowadays; there are so many different variations of what a normal relationship is. It's talking about the state of long-term relationships, relationships that are there for power...Tom speaks to that. People who get together just to succeed."

With politics of Brexit in the air, the fourteen-day shoot was intense for the actors. "It's been physically challenging for all of us," says Clarkson. "But it's also kind of aided us in the journey." Murphy agrees. "We needed a few days to find our feet, like any production or film, but once we did [it worked] without sacrificing anything." Despite the constricted shoot, Potter ensured that "the performances" were "given the time that is needed", he adds.

For Rodionov, who had just come off two television series with more than 100 shooting days, it was a shock to the system. "I never actually tried to shoot a film in only two weeks," he laughs. "We started to discuss it and we came to the decision that the only way to be on schedule would be to shoot with an absolutely free camera: which means a hand-held camera and 'easy rig' (a special harness for handheld camera operating). It was clear that using a traditional weight camera on a dolly, there was no way we'd be on schedule."

Rodionov estimates that ninety percent of THE PARTY was shot hand-held, with just several static shots used at the beginning of the story before the guests arrive. With takes lasting up to ten minutes, it required the cinematographer to be at his most nimble. "I felt a sort of drive to shoot with such great actors without interrupting the whole scene and being so close," he says. "It was a drive for me to be at the distance of two, three feet from them. Really, it was fascinating for me."

Despite thirteen years between THE PARTY and their previous collaboration, 2004's Yes, he admits that he and Potter immediately established their old rapport. "Sally is unique for me," he notes. "I work with a lot of directors but I don't work with directors who are so efficient in their work. Also, she's an amazingly hard worker. I'll admit she's the first director to never have a chair on the set! She's either with the camera or in the corner with the monitor or with the actors but never just sitting down. It's amazing, really."

Towards the end of the shoot, Potter's editor Anders Refn was at the studio, and began to cut some footage. Refn, who also cut Ginger & Rosa, was taken with the script straight away. "It was a page-turner for me," he says, "I liked the script from the very beginning. That was my first reaction. And that's very important for me: my first approach to the film. We discussed that Sally wanted to do it in black-and-white, and I think it's a very good thing to do. It's a long time since we saw black-and-white."

While they also discussed the concept, the camera and the one-set location, other early conversations, recalls the Danish-born Refn, revolved around the Russian playwright Anton Chekhov and other key influences. "Both Sally and I, we have seen so many of the same films," says Refn. "We have that common language. She loves Buñuel, she loves Renoir, she loves the French New Wave. You refer to a lot of films when you're working together."

Refn admits that their relationship was necessarily combative. "You have to be honest in the editing room. You cannot sweet-talk people. You have to say what you think and be honest, and that can sometimes lead to long discussions. But that's the Scandinavian tradition – the role of the editor is not just to be a loyal collaborator but to be a critic, a hard critic. All criticism is interesting before the opening night, but after the opening night, it's just pathetic. You can be happy, you can cry but you cannot change the film." Sally worked with a second editor, Emilie Orsini, on the fine-tuning of the picture. Together, they crafted the final version of the film, working both in Emilie's native France and in London. For Emilie, it is the sense of adventure that most stands out when working with Sally: "Sally has the ability to take you on a creative journey where you are fully able to express yourself and bring your very best. She is a strong woman with incredible story telling skills. Working with her was a privilege. "

With THE PARTY over, at least as far as the production was concerned, what can audiences expect? "I think they'll be disarmed by it," says Murphy. "It has so many different elements to it. First and foremost, it should be entertaining. Second of all, it should charm them. And thirdly, it should hopefully make them think about things. That's my ambition for it anyway." Potter promises a rollercoaster. "It's a bit of a 'fasten your seat-belts, this is going to be a bumpy ride' experience," she smiles, "with lots of surprises."

"What I find in it, is tenderness, honesty, humour," says Sheppard. "It's very funny. There are a lot of laugh-out-loud moments. That's one of the most gratifying experiences you get as a filmmaker, when you show your film for the first time to a real audience, and they laugh at the gags. It's a huge feeling of relief that comes with that. But I think it's the mixture of the tenderness, and the compassion for the characters...I think that's key for all the parts Sally writes. You can love them even if they are flawed."



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## Crew

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Written and directed by	Sally Potter
Produced by	Christopher Sheppard
Producer	Kurban Kassam
Executive Producers	Jim Reeve Robert Halmi Jr John Giwa-Amu
Cinematographer	Alexey Rodionov
Production Designer	Carlos Conti
Editors	Anders Refn Emilie Orsini
Costume Designer	Jane Petrie
Hair and Make-up Designer	Naomi Donne
Production Sound Mixer	Jean-Paul Mugel
Casting Directors	Irene Lamb Heidi Levitt CSA
Line Producer	Alice Dawson
Co-Producer	Michael Manzi

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## CHRISTOPHER SHEPPARD – Producer

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Producer Christopher Sheppard founded Adventure Pictures when he first joined forces with Sally Potter in 1990. He has produced all of her feature films since *ORLANDO*, which marked his debut feature as producer in 1992. Prior to that, he worked as a journalist, then editor and as a consultant for several United Nations organizations. He has directed many documentary films and been nominated for an Emmy and two Royal Television Society awards, as well as producing a number of innovative internet projects including *SP-ARK.org*, the online Sally Potter archive.

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## KURBAN KASSAM – Producer

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Kurban Kassam is a British producer, whose first feature as an associate producer, *GINGER & ROSA*, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2012 and was nominated for three BIFAs. He then joined Pulse Films producing *WHO IS DAYANI CRISTAL?*, winner of the Cinematography Award at Sundance 2013, then *20,000 DAYS ON*, which won Best Direction and Best Editing awards at Sundance 2014, followed by *THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS*. He has recently co-produced *THE PASS*, released by Lionsgate in December 2016. After *THE PARTY*, he completed principal photography for *THE HUNGRY*, a modern day adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* for which he is also a co-writer.

Kurban also works for Rainmark Films developing television and feature film projects. His short films have screened regularly at major international festivals and won major awards, including *SPLIT SCREEN: A LOVE STORY AND ORBIT EVER AFTER*, a 2014 BAFTA-nominated short, and he is a graduate of the National Film and Television School, where he won the Christie Award for outstanding contribution.

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## CARLOS CONTI – Production Designer

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Carlos Conti was born in Argentina, and currently lives in Paris, France. As a production designer, he has worked on five of Sally Potter's features and among his fifty-two feature film credits he is perhaps best known for THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES and THE KITE RUNNER. He also collaborated with Jack Kerouac on ON THE ROAD, and most recently worked on Stephanie Di Giusto's THE DANCER.

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## ALEXEY RODIONOV – Director of Photography

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Alexey Rodionov has been Sally Potter's regular cinematographer since their first collaboration on ORLANDO in 1992. He was born in Moscow, Russia where he attended the Russian State University of Cinema. Upon graduating, he became the camera assistant to the eminent Russian cinematographer Sergey Urusevsky, and worked on his last film SING YOUR SONG, POET. Since then, he has worked on a number of Russian and international productions, including Lavinia Currier's A PASSION IN THE DESERT, and CINDERELLA, directed by the English director Beeban Kidron, OBE.

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## ANDERS REFN – Editor

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Anders Refn is a Danish film editor and director. After graduating from the National Film School of Denmark in 1969, he has had a monumental career with credits for over a hundred features and television series, as well as ten shorts and twenty-six documentaries. He is perhaps most well known for his work with Lars von Trier, as editor of BREAKING THE WAVES and ANTICHRIST, and as additional director on the Palme d'Or-winning DANCER IN THE DARK, DOGVILLE, MELANCHOLIA, and NYMPHOMANIAC. He previously worked with Sally Potter on GINGER & ROSA.

Throughout his career, Anders has been awarded 5 Bodil Awards and 12 Roberts, the Danish Academy Awards. In 2004, he was awarded an honorary Bodil Award for his overall achievement in Danish film.

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## JANE PETRIE - Costume Designer

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Jane Petrie is British costume designer with twenty years of experience, best known for her work on British independent drama feature films. She has worked in the wardrobe departments on films such as ELIZABETH, NOTTING HILL, GOSFORD PARK, and THE CONSTANT GARDENER, before taking on the role of costume designer for titles such as 28 WEEKS LATER, FISH TANK, BROKEN, and more recently the historical dramas '71, SUFFRAGETTE and the futuristic technology dystopian series 'Black Mirror.'

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## JEAN-PAUL MUGEL – Sound Designer

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Jean-Paul Mugel has been a sound mixer for the last 30 years, and has worked with Sally Potter on all her films since THE TANGO LESSON. He is best known for his work with Michael Haneke on the Cannes-Award winning CACHÉ, and for his work with the Oscar-nominated German filmmaker Wim Wenders, in particular his features PARIS TEXAS and WINGS OF DESIRE.

Most recently he has completed the critically acclaimed ELLE for Paul Verhoeven, starring Golden-Globe winning actress Isabelle Huppert.