

Wild Rose

DIRECTED BY TOM HARPER

WRITTEN BY NICOLE TAYLOR

PRODUCED BY FAYE WARD

STARRING

JESSIE BUCKLEY

SOPHIE OKENEDO

JAMES HARKNESS

JAMIE SIVES

AND JULIE WALTERS

Being a mother and having big dreams – do they have no place existing alongside each other? WILD ROSE is a film about an ordinary woman trying to have a dream whilst also being a mother and trying to put food on the table for her children. Can the two co-exist?

Short Synopsis

Rose-Lynn Harlan, 23, is bursting with raw talent, charisma and cheek. She is also fresh out of jail and has two young kids to support. All she wants to do is get the hell out of Glasgow and make it as a country singer. Rose-Lynn thinks her only chance of happiness lies in the Country capital of the world – Nashville, Tennessee. Marion, Rose-Lynn's mother wants her to settle down, accept her life, and take responsibility for herself, but when a chance encounter brings Rose-Lynn closer to her dreams of Nashville, she faces what she perceives as a choice between family and stardom.

Long Synopsis:

22-year-old Rose-Lynn bounds out of her year in prison for a minor offence, having not learnt much and eager to pick up exactly where she left off – trying to become a Country (not Western, just Country) singer. The fact that Rose-Lynn's two children under 10 have been looked after by her mother for a year seems to have been momentarily forgotten, or certainly pushed to a part of Rose-Lynn's brain where she doesn't have to address it, not right now.

Rose-Lynn's first actions out of prison involve hooking up with her bit on the side, Elliot, but she is aware she is simply putting off the inevitable and must face her mother Marion. When Rose-Lynn finally arrives at her mother's house, understandably the relationship between them is frosty, to say the least. Rose-Lynn, of course, feels like she has gone from one jail to another. There is a moment between the two when the frost thaws and we see the love between them; but this is quickly replaced by deep-rooted misunderstanding and repressed feelings that have been simmering far too long.

Marion is keen for Rose-Lynn to get a job as cleaning lady (or just *get a job*), but Rose-Lynn wants to get back her job singing with what she perceives as her band at a country music bar in Glasgow. Unsurprisingly, this endeavour

doesn't go as well as predicted, or well at all, as it ends up with Rose-Lynn in a brawl with the guy she thinks has taken her job.

When Rose-Lynn gets a job as a cleaning lady to raise funds for her 'great escape', she meets Susannah, a wealthy, dissatisfied English woman, who hears her sing and is blown away. Unlike Rose-Lynn's own mum Marion, who wants to quash Rose-Lynn's ambition, Susannah is keen to nurture it, and with her help, the impossible dream begins to look possible. Only Rose-Lynn hasn't told Susannah the whole story – the fact that as well as being her protégé, she's a mum to two kids. Two kids who, it turns out, she loves and who need her in return, way more than she was ever previously able to admit.

The closer Rose-Lynn gets to her goal, the more pressure she's under, until finally, at the 11th hour, with the dream within touching distance, Rose-Lynn tells Susannah the truth. A life of ordinariness appears to be Rose-Lynn's fate after all. She finally gives up on her Nashville dream and Marion gets the daughter she thought she wanted – a girl with a regular job, who takes care of her kids, who doesn't harbour impossible desires. But the price is Rose-Lynn's soul. Her hope. Her very essence. And that's when Marion 'sees' Rose-Lynn for who she is. Someone who can no more live without music than she can live without her kids. Marion gives Rose-Lynn her life savings so that she can go out to Nashville and give it a shot. In recognizing Rose-Lynn's right to be who she is and want what she wants, Marion releases Rose-Lynn from a lifetime of expectations and finally sets her free.

What does Rose-Lynn do with that freedom? She goes to Nashville of course – but then she comes home. She had to see it, she had to go there. But she also knows that she can't stay; that she doesn't belong there; that her real quest is not lopping off her past and being 'reborn' somewhere else, it's owning her baggage and being who she is. For Rose-Lynn that means being a mum as well as a singer. It's through the reconciliation of both parts of herself that Rose-Lynn becomes whole. That wholeness – that authenticity –

is what enables her finally, to write her own music and to sing her own truth.

I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool - Creating WILD ROSE

The desire to write a film about Country music had long been burning in writer Nicole Taylor. She explains "Country music is my passion. I have loved it since I was twelve and it's probably the thing that I know most about in this world. The inspiration for WILD ROSE was my own obsession with country music. It's all I've listened to growing up, it's all I listen to now!"

Taylor explains what it was about Country that made her have such deep love for the genre, and why it would be the great basis for a film: "The way the emotionality in it helps people open up, certainly in places such as Glasgow. I'm from Glasgow and all my life I've been obsessed with Country music. I think it's popular in places and among people who are not used to talking about their feelings. Who might not even know their own feelings. But when they hear Country - which is raw and pure and unashamedly emotional - it's a way to process things and have a cathartic experience. It's had that function for me since I was 12 years old. I really wanted to write not only about country music but to write in a way to explain why I love it so much, why it is so important. For me it is an emotional outlet. It's very popular in places that are otherwise emotionally closed, and Glasgow is definitely one of those places. I feel like, in the two and half minutes of a Country music song I can get all my feelings out. It is such a cathartic process and that is so necessary in life. It's a language for the emotionally inarticulate - and that's Rose-Lynn!"

WILD ROSE had been in development with producer Faye Ward for a while. "As with most films, WILD ROSE has definitely been on its own journey. It's something that has been in Nicole's soul for a long time, something she just *had* to write; and the more you learn about Nicole, the more

you realise that this film is a lot of her and her relationship experiences.”

Ward expounds upon the qualities of Taylor’s script that made her continue to champion it, “I love what it says about women, parenthood, dreams and identity.” She goes on to say, “What it is to be a parent in this modern world versus what it is to want something else for yourself too, and that the film doesn’t give you a clear answer tied up in a bow, and that there are different journeys and roads to travel to find the answers.”

Taylor reveals the other inspiration she had for writing Rose-Lynn’s story “I was watching a talent show on a Saturday night, and there was a woman who had an amazing voice but then she revealed she had five children and a history of addiction, and a couple of her kids are in care and it made me question what her dreams should be. And I was struck by not knowing what to want for her. She was so talented. Did that mean she should pursue her talent regardless of the mess in her life? Or, as a mum, should she be knocking this on the head and just be taking responsibility for her kids? That question fascinated me because I didn’t know the answer to it. It became the basis for Rose-Lynn and her relationship with her mother.”

Taylor continues to talk about how the character of Rose-Lynn came to her and what she wanted to achieve with this character, whose life is entirely rooted and ruled by this musical genre. “I wanted to write a female character who in life is just pure chaos and angst, and making a total mess of her life, but when she sings country she is coherent to herself and that’s when she is pulled together and whole. That’s the relationship I have with it. I think I’d be a mad person without it, everything I’ve ever needed was in country music and I still think that today.”

Buckley recalls when she first read the script “I cried!” she says “It was an honest story, such an important story, such a social, political story, such a heart-warming story and I just thought this character was so full of life. Usually as a woman you get offered parts where there’s a sheen

over who you are as a woman and you're not allowed to be imperfect. And this Rose-Lynn was human and wasn't perfect and I totally related to that!" She continues "At its heart, I think WILD ROSE is about ordinary people doing something extraordinary, against the odds. It's about people that have been marginalised by society, and told they can only exist in that corner which for Rose-Lynn is on an estate, which is being in and out of prison, which is having kids when she was very young, working in the bakers. They may dream of going somewhere else, but they never have the opportunities or the courage to go grab their dreams. This woman, Rose-Lynn, has the bravery, and the will, and the hunger to fulfil her dreams, and be an inspiration to her kids, and give them an opportunity for another life. I hope this film will be about the people who are often forgotten or who are not given the opportunity, and inspire them to dream big and go grab their dreams."

Taylor sums it up: "WILD ROSE is about dreams versus reality, and going after something that nobody else around you can see, and what then becomes of that dream when it ossifies in the face of everyone else's disapproval."

Thinkin' of a Rendezvous – Tom Harper

The film was without a director until Producer Faye Ward had the idea to send the script to the brilliant Tom Harper. Ward had known Harper from many years and had admired his recent work on *War and Peace* and *War Book*; he was proving to be an incredibly confident and intuitive director. She says of Harper, "Tom is an incredibly generous and confident director. He picks his team, empowers them all and then allows them to be the very best versions of themselves, and that creates a wonderful world to work in."

From Harper's point of view, he explains that he was looking for another project that would really mean something to him. "I'm always looking for scripts that connect in some way, the human stories in scripts. It really comes down to how the film connects to me emotionally

and this film, from the moment I read it, I just fell in love with it. It affected me quite powerfully on an emotional level, and I found it quite moving whilst at the same time incredibly uplifting. It had all of the things that I want in a film, both to watch and to make. In this country we have a great history of celebratory, aspirational films about real people transcending their surroundings like *The Commitments*, *The Full Monty* and *Billy Elliot* and this has something of those films in it. I just fell in love with it.”

With Harper on board, the project gathered speed, and it was he who brought Buckley into the project having worked with her. “I had recently worked with Jessie on *War and Peace*, and I was looking for something to work with her on, and immediately I started discovering Rose-Lynn, I thought Jessie would play her so beautifully. Not just because she is such an extraordinary actress but also because I knew of her singing talent as well, so it seemed like a no brainer!”

Ward expounds on why Harper was the perfect director for the film: “Tom Harper is one of those wonderful directors who goes out of their way to make everybody feel at ease, happy and able to do their very best work. He creates such a safe and creative environment on set that everyone feels confident and excited about the job. He is a wonderful collaborator with both cast and crew, has a great eye and is extremely musical so perfect for *Wild Rose*! I love working with Tom and I hope this is the beginning of a long working relationship.”

Jessie reciprocates the affection for Harper: “I LOVE Tom Harper. It is one of the most fulfilling experiences, working with someone like Tom. He gave me my first film job in *War and Peace*. He is so incredibly collaborative, he’s got the biggest heart of anybody I’ve ever met, and he’s just a lovely, talented, brilliant man. It’s annoying (laughs). There’s a real lightness about him too, and I really hope this is the beginning of a long friendship and collaboration, because it was so rewarding and because we both know each others limitations. When building this character, it meant I took more risks than I ever did in my

life, and I feel like he did as well, and because of that we both jumped off the edge of the cliff together. Tom creates such a family atmosphere, so you can do your best work.”

Sophie Okenedo, who plays Susannah, agrees. “I had a really good experience last time we worked together, and I had a really good experience on WILD ROSE. I think it’s because he reads me quite well as an actor and knows when to step back, and when to come in with a suggestion, and he’s really calm and really silly! He’s got a great sense of humour, which I have too, so he keeps everything light. I just find he gets the best out of me. I think he trusts I can do my job. Whenever I work with directors who trust me I have a good time. I trust Tom, and trust he’ll tell me if it’s going completely the wrong way. To have that freedom is just brilliant, you feel like you can breathe. It’s invaluable for me”

Julie Walters who plays Marion reinforces the view of Tom’s artistic freedom: “Tom Harper is great, really gentle, really intuitive. He won’t let you get away with anything. He’s very sensitive. I think a director should create a safe space for people to create, and fail if necessary, and then get it right, and he’s got a very good ear for what’s authentic and what isn’t. You’ve got to be able to trust your director and I totally trusted him. The set was very calm and happy.”

Harper says, of his take on WILD ROSE, “In some films it is clear that the main character is right and battling society or whatever they are up against, and it is clear-cut. It is a much more complicated battle for Rose-Lynn, in that sense that we are never quite sure how much we actually want her to succeed as a singer, particularly if that means her relationship with her children is compromised. And if she has to comprise her career in favour of her kids, then that’s also tricky. It’s not a clear-cut journey where you know what the right journey is for her, and I think that makes it particularly interesting.”

Wildwood Flower - Finding ‘Rose-Lynn’

Having produced films such as *Suffragette* and *Brick Lane*, producer Faye Ward always looks to make films that centre on women or that paint a realistic, if sometimes flawed portrait of women; *Rose-Lynn* is certainly that. Ward elaborates, “*Rose-Lynn* is real. She can be fun then aggressive, assertive and vulnerable. She is flawed in many ways. Tom and I wanted to be confident about her flaws, not to be afraid of showing them, because that is what make *Rose-Lynn* feel very real. It’s refreshing in film, to be this honest about a character. People do things that they shouldn’t have done, and regret what they have done, be it five minutes, five hours or five years later. *WILD ROSE* is about a young girl finding her way, always getting it a bit wrong. You understand there is a genuine want and need and desire behind it. The constant internal and external battle in *Rose-Lynn* is fascinating to watch, and a depiction of real life, a real person. The conversation of what it is to be a mother and have a career is not onscreen very much. If it is, it is usually women who have highflying careers. *Rose-Lynn* is trying to make something of herself as well as being a mother, and it is that contradiction that society makes so difficult. That, to me, is fascinating.”

Nicole Taylor outlines her view of *Rose-Lynn* “*Rose-Lynn* is someone that Glaswegians would call Gallus – full of cheek, irrepressible, doesn’t care if she’s rude, but not in an obnoxious way, and there’s something quintessentially Glaswegian about that character.”

The casting of *Rose-Lynn* was at the epicentre of the success of the project, and the team were working to find the perfect *Rose-Lynn*. Tom Harper then pulled a rabbit out of the hat in the shape of Jessie Buckley. Of course Buckley at this point still only had limited film credits under her belt, including the critically acclaimed *Beast*, so Harper had to convince the various financiers that he was 100% right in the casting of Jessie. He recalls “Jessie sang a little on *War and Peace* but I don’t think I knew she could properly sing, I just knew she had this ability. So when I read the script I asked Jessie if she had anything she could send me of her singing so I could send to the financiers and bring them up to speed regarding her ability as a singer. I

remember sitting down and watching what she had sent through and thinking oh my God, this is unbelievably good!”

Writer Nicole Taylor was immediately behind the casting of Buckley. “Jessie is - as they say – ‘country as dirt’! She just IS country. She just IS Rose-Lynn. It's unbelievable to me still that such a person exists, who so perfectly is this girl I had in my head for so long. Her voice, her charisma, her sensitivity, her vulnerability. And maybe her Irish-ness! Because although Rose-Lynn is Glaswegian I think Jessie understands depths about this girl and her world because Scotland and Ireland share so much, not least their connections to America and American music.”

Ward goes on to praise Buckley’s talent and why the role was made for her. “Jessie Buckley is a dream come true. She is a firecracker of a human being, she has such a wise soul and this belting voice. She is just incredible, and I have to say, she is one of the best actresses I have worked with for a long, long time. You can just *feel* her huge potential. She herself has experiences not too dissimilar to Rose-Lynn. She is from a small place in Ireland, was plucked from obscurity for a TV show which she didn’t win, and then found her own way into this world, and like Rose-Lynn, wasn’t destined to be in that world anyway. She has had to find her own path.”

Harper says, “I think country is such an honest music genre and that’s why Jessie suits it so much, because she is such an open and honest person. That is also clear in the way she goes about her work, and her acting and her singing is such a direct reflection of what’s inside her, and that’s why she’s able to step so well into that genre.”

Sophie Okenedo who plays Susannah says of working with Jessie, “I think we really hit it off, Jessie and I, on a personal level, but I feel like she has made the job for me. She is so responsive and true, that it has made it really easy for me to act with her, as most of my stuff is reactive. So when they are giving you so much, it's easy to work with someone. I like seeing what happens, not having any rules to the scene, and going through it on camera, and only

hearing it out loud when the camera is rolling. She likes that too and I think its been a really good pairing. She is just an amazing singer, to be able to act so well and sing with such heart is just amazing.”

The read-through for WILD ROSE was, according to many in the room, unlike anything they’d ever been to. Wanting to try out the songs for the first time, Buckley plunged straight in and sang – to the utter delight of all of those present. Julie Walters elaborates, “I’ve never been to the read-through of a script that was like that. People were whooping and cheering and clapping. Normally they are rather tense affairs, but her voice and performance were so fantastic. So organic and real and earthy and she is connected to it. And her voice is something else, it comes from the gut, its not just a pretty voice. As Marion says to Rose-Lynn in the film, ‘there are loads of folk who can sing’, and she’s right, there are millions who have got great voices, but very few who have that heart connection that Jessie has, and that earthiness that’s part of it. And also she is a wonderful actress, so she interprets the song. She is fantastic, and she should be huge after this, or I want to know why!”

Rose-Lynn’s ‘bit on the side’ is played by rising star James Harkness. Ward explains why it was important to her and to Taylor that Elliot wasn’t made into Rose-Lynn’s official boyfriend. “It was incredibly important to us that he remained on the side-lines of Rose-Lynn’s life and didn’t become her boyfriend; in film, men are allowed lovers whereas women have to have boyfriends, so we were keen to keep him as a lover. James has a real presence; he’s got some huge parts coming up. He has a realness and rawness that is powerful and perfect for the role of Elliot.”

Buckley describes the natural appeal Harkness has. “I adore James Harkness, he is such a breath of fresh air. He is an amazing actor and he knows Glasgow, he’s grown up there, and knows the heart beat that those people are feeling every day.”

Finally Tom Harper recalls Harkness' audition tape: "He took his clothes off and sang topless into the camera and I thought, yeah he's got what it takes! Having grown up in Glasgow, James is the real deal, but also he has a magnetism about him that made him perfect for the role."

Mama Tried – Mothers and Daughters in Wild rose

As much as WILD ROSE is a film about country music it is so much more than that. It is a film about ordinary people, about dreams, and at its core: motherhood. Writer Nicole Taylor says "It is a mother-daughter story and pretty universal in that way. There are a hell of a lot of daughters who are different to their mothers and looking to live their lives in a different way, and that can tear them asunder. My feeling is that it's really important to come to terms one way or another with where you come from and the people you love come from. WILD ROSE is definitely about being true to you. Rose-Lynn has a lot to make peace with before she can be the amazing artist she has the potential to be."

Marion and Rose-Lynn's relationship is a vital part of the story and as mentioned by Taylor, it is a universal theme. She elaborates, "Women's lives have changed so rapidly. Of course, many daughters are living vastly different lives to their mothers and they can't understand why their daughters want to be going off doing this or that. But if you can come out of that, then you've got somebody who is always on your side."

The task of finding someone who could play Marion was daunting at first, as director Tom Harper points out "Marion is a tricky character because she's quite brutal to begin with, and she's quite harsh to her daughter - for good reason, but as an audience we don't know the reasons up front."

In Marion, Taylor has written a layered character whom we peel away slowly and get to the heart of, but it is a slow process and one that it is imperative that the audience goes along with. Harper explains, "It was very important that

Marion had a warmth and humanity to her - that was immediately apparent.”

The first actress to spring to mind and the person they all knew was perfect for the part was the inimitable Julie Walters. To the complete delight of Ward, Harper and Taylor, she read the script and said yes! Walters recalls “I read the script and I thought ‘this is something special’. Then I met Faye Ward and Tom Harper and I thought that they were something special as well! Then when I heard that Jessie was doing it, I thought ‘well, that’s fantastic, what a great package this is’.”

Thrilled to have an actress with such movie star qualities and gravitas on-board, Harper elucidates, “Julie has that instant warmth and humanity in spades. She is so immediately likeable that she can take the tiny nuances of delivering a performance - one that is both hard and soft enough that you can see the warmth inside. That balance is so important for that mother-daughter relationship that warms up towards the end of the film, but also one that has a particularly fractured beginning.”

Julie Walters, who plays Marion, says of the character “I was utterly touched by Marion and her relationship with her daughter, I was touched by her strength and her conviction and her love for her daughter and grandchildren; I just found her utterly moving. I found the story very, very real, and couldn’t think of a mother who wouldn’t be moved by or relate to it.” She continues, “Marion and Rose-Lynn are both alpha females, basically, so they’re going to come up against one another. They don’t realise how alike they are, like a lot of mothers and daughters don’t until much later in life. I think they both have a love of Country; she probably introduced that music to her daughter, but it’s about fear for Marion because Rose-Lynn is just so chaotic.”

Having a movie star like Walters become involved with the project immediately gives the project a gravitas and a sense of excitement. Harper recalls, “The first day we had with Julie was at the fruit market and I remember

everyone being absolutely enraptured by this movie star who arrived on set and completely captivated everyone. Her performance is just so restrained, I think it really is a beautiful piece of performance. That very first take is the one that made the cut and is in the end of the film. She's sensational."

Queen of Hearts – Finding Susannah

The third female in this triumvirate of strong women is the one who tries to help Rose-Lynn the most with her dream. The path might not be the right one, but it comes from a place of genuine kindness and interest in Rose-Lynn. The character of Susannah, an upper-middle-class rich housewife in amongst all this working class angst was a difficult one to cast, and to get right tonally. Director Tom Harper says, "Susannah is a tricky part. There is a danger that it could feel a little clichéd if not approached in the right way - the danger is the role could've easily become the cliché of the middle class woman in Glasgow."

It fell to the filmmakers to cast an actress who could navigate these clichés and it came in the form of formidable actress Sophie Okonedo.

Producer Faye Ward says, "Sophie Okonedo is incredible, it is a joy to see her laugh and smile in the film. She was the 'light' in the film and in some ways has the hardest role. The other characters in this film are working class and in comes Susannah, this 'airy fairy' middle class do-gooder. However, again back to the complexity of the human psyche, she is also struggling with her own demons."

Jessie agrees, "These women are all prisoners within their own set of circumstances. There's Susannah, living a life of privilege but totally bored because she doesn't have escape. Susannah's got a hunger to live a life that is human and connected and that's what Rose-Lynn and Susannah give each other."

Writer Nicole Taylor agrees, “There’s always a danger when writing a middle-class character, especially in British cinema, that they can come across as arch and unsympathetic, and obviously I didn’t want that. Even though the audience should feel ambivalent about her relationship with Rose-Lynn, she should still feel like a fully human character and what Sophie has brought to it is a sense that this woman and Rose-Lynn could be friends. Sophie brings this almost kind of geeky warmth to Susannah, which is a funny thing to say about one of the most beautiful women I’ve ever seen in my life. She seems so fully Susannah and takes it away from any middle-class stereotype, and Sophie and Jessie really connect and it is lovely to watch.”

Okenedo herself says of Susannah, “I found her quite difficult to engage with at first. I felt that she was quite a difficult character to play because she is quite hard to someone of a different class. It’s easy to make the slightly ‘posher’ person not nice, and in the end, I was talking to Nicole and I could see a heart to Susannah and a way to make her a rounded human being even though she’s quite neurotic! Nicole was open to working on making her more fulsome. Susannah needed layers to make sure she isn’t someone you switch off from emotionally.”

Harper explains how he perceived Okenedo avoiding the obvious clichés of the ‘middle-class villain’: “Sophie simply skirted all of that and brought a real three-dimensional quality to the role. I love seeing Sophie play a slightly quirky character. She’s so good at the powerful emotional stuff, but I’ve loved seeing her play a quirkiest side and show some light-hearted stuff that she is just so brilliant at. Sophie has managed to create a performance of such layered delicacy, we completely understand her life and her own issues and where she is coming from.”

Faye Ward agrees and outlines the importance of the relationship of the two women “Susannah and Rose-Lynn are a great pairing - they are such stark opposites of each other. Rose-Lynn has a blatant blindness of middle class politeness and values, and Susannah is so deeply

entrenched in this world of hers, but of course wasn't always like that - and sees something of her former self in Rose-Lynn."

Working with Okenedo was an experience Jessie Buckley won't forget in a hurry. Buckley explains, "Sophie Okenedo is an incredible, vivacious human who, again, I grew up watching in films, thinking she was amazing. The relationship between Susannah and Rose-Lynn, is that in a way they give each other an injection to be involved with life. Sophie is an amazing actress, so giving and just such fun to be around."

Mountain Music – Making the Music

There are, surprisingly, many similarities between Nashville and Glasgow – in their geography, their inhabitants, but mainly in their love for music. To put it simply, music is everywhere in Glasgow, as it is in Nashville, and music is the beating heart of WILD ROSE.

Like any film about music, the key to making it realistic and embraced by the community the film is trying to portray is by working with the musicians involved. As Producer Faye Ward says "The one thing we really had to do was to find the authenticity of Glasgow and Nashville."

Music Supervisor and composer Jack Arnold has collaborated with Tom Harper many times before so it was clear to Harper that it was Jack who would be the perfect person for the job. Harper says of Arnold, "He is a very open, genuine person and he has been fundamental on the musical journey of the film and just realising the musical vision of the film."

Jack Arnold says, "Jessie hadn't really listened to Country music before WILD ROSE and Country music suffers from a PR problem. People think of cheesiness and Dolly Parton. I sent her a list of 8 big-name Country stars from old times up to date and she went and started to listen to and went straight for Emmy Lou Harris and Bonnie Raitt.

Initially she was worried about not sounding like a Country music singer but as Neill MacColl later said to us, it's not really about that, it's folk music so it's just about singing the song. Even from those early days when I simply recorded Jessie on my phone, you could tell she had it."

Arnold explains what it was about WILD ROSE that made him keen to be a part of the project: "I just really loved the story. In some ways, it's a familiar story but there was something unobvious about the way Nicole has structured it. The way the songs are dropped in gradually thought the film is really clever. The audience only really hears Jessie sing about three or four times properly so that when you do eventually hear her sing, and because Jessie is SO good, it lands better."

With Jessie in place and the film starting to take shape the next step was to find a band that would work for Rose-Lynn and for Jessie Buckley and give the film the gravitas needed to be taken seriously in the Country world. No mean feat!

Jack Arnold explains how he started the somewhat daunting process: "I emailed a guitarist friend of mine and asked if they knew anyone who played slide guitar, and he said Neill MacColl, who is steeped in the folk-country world. I found out when I spoke to him that he knew a fair bit about Nashville and he helped us start to put together our band."

Nicole Taylor illustrates the significance of MacColl: "To have as our band leader the amazing Neill MacColl, an amazing guitarist, and an absolutely amazing musician is just wonderful. There are only three slide guitar players in the whole of Britain and we have one of them. It was an amazing feeling."

Both Arnold and writer Nicole Taylor were, unbeknownst to each other, hooked on a TV show called Transatlantic Sessions and this unlocked the key to the next big part of the band. Taylor explains, "All the years I've been trying to get this film made, every year I would go to a gig called Transatlantic Sessions. It's the best of Scottish

musician and some Irish and English and some US musicians. The bandleader is Aly Bain and if you're Scottish then this guy is like Elvis - he can't walk down the street without being stopped. I would go every year to this gig with Phil Cunningham and all of these amazing musicians, and I would close my eyes and imagine Rose-Lynn on stage with them. It really helped me write the script, I've been writing the script that long that I went to a fair few Transatlantic Sessions! And I could see, in my mind's eye, Rose-Lynn on stage. When this all became real, I said to Faye Ward, we HAVE to get Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham because they helped inspire me. And they said yes! Aly Bain, world-class fiddler, Phil Cunningham, accordionist extraordinaire, and they are in Rose-Lynn's band. Amazing."

Arnold says, "Transatlantic Sessions showed that Country is not just American. We decided to approach Phil and Aly to see if they would be part of it. We approached them, met them, had a chat, and they'd read the script and said it was exactly like the story of a friend of his, so they came onboard and then - we had our band!"

Ward compounds, "It was imperative to us that the sound was authentic and cemented the relationship between Nashville & Glasgow within the music. To do that we were lucky enough to get some of the best Country musicians working today. We managed to land the legendary Neill MacColl as our band director, and then in turn Aly Bains and Phil Cunningham. They embody the world of Glasgow meets Nashville. They really responded to Nicole's script and because she was a fan, she got it right. All the band started to rehearse with Jessie, they bonded, and became a true band, which is not easy. Neill MacColl was key to that, he and Jessie found a real trust. The involvement of these musicians roots the film in musical legitimacy but also empowered Jessie and Jack to be able to do the best possible version of the job they can. What they bring to the film is magical and really empowered everyone."

Jessie says, "I couldn't have done this without Neill MacColl - I love that man. He is such a quiet sensitive soul; he was the backbone of the band, incredibly encouraging and nurturing, teaching me and testing me to keep going into the world, in a patient way. So lucky. And to be exploring writing and making music; it's been an amazing experience."

She continues, "I still have to pinch myself that I got to work with Neill MacColl in a little studio in North London! And they taught me how to do it, how to sing country music. They wear their emotions on their sleeves and put it all into their music, there is a truth behind what they do. They are wonderful, brilliant friends, incredible musicians. Phil and Aly have played with Bonnie Raitt who is my absolute hero, and I actually got to meet her at the end when we shot in Nashville, and I didn't know if I was laughing or crying. I was overwhelmed that I was meeting my icon, the woman who had been my backbone in musically exploring this journey."

Once the band was in place rehearsals with Jessie began as they started to try and figure out the songs that Rose-Lynn would sing. This was early in the rehearsal process and Arnold points out that whilst Jessie simultaneously was working out the songs Rose-Lynn would sing "she was working out who Rose-Lynn was".

Buckley says, "It was interesting working with Jack on what songs we were going to use in the film, tonally what they were adding to a scene. It was an elimination process and just in your gut, what you would feel emotionally. Crying Over, which is on the album, is something which I really struggled with at first - it was a really interesting process because one day it was like the ground fell out beneath me and this song, all the fears this song brought out in the lyrics, all came out. That was really interesting - that the song brought on conflict - and that's the emotion of this song; not to fight it, but to go with it."

She goes on to elucidate on Country: "The lyrics of Country are extraordinary, the good songs in Country are 'three chords and the truth' and they really have a way of

getting right into your soul and pulling it out. Rose-Lynn is such a fireball of emotion and 'Outlaw State of Mind' has got such attitude and is like a Janis Joplin rock out. That is the art of Rose-Lynn's character, and it is such fun to play. But then at the other end of the spectrum, you have the song 'Peace in this House' where the lyrics are a lullaby to her children. As much as Rose-Lynn is scared that she is a mother, and that she has kids and she has love for them, her way of expressing that is through song. That enables her, in that one moment, to dive into that scary pool. Then the song 'Glasgow' is the first time her mum ever hears her sing really, and she has written this song to her mum, for her mum saying 'sorry', saying 'thank you, I love you, I am you and we are a family unit'."

Our Song - The end song

One of the key elements the team had to perfect was the song that Rose-Lynn sings in the final scene of the film. Producer Faye Ward explains, "At the end of the film is our key original track, sung by Jessie Buckley as Rose-Lynn, and it had to be the icing on the cake; it had to tell the story of the film from our character's perspective, for our audience to connect emotionally and to reflect on our story. If we were lucky and had pulled that off, then we would love it if they were humming that song when leaving the cinema! We really wanted to throw everything at making it perfect, Universal music sent out a request to the Nashville community for original tracks pitches and we got hundreds sent to us. One in particular stood out and that song unbeknownst to us was written for us by the wonderful actress Mary Steenburgen. It is such a beautiful song, it is raucous and heartfelt – it is simply perfect. I think the fact that she is an actress herself made her understand what we needed and deliver it in such a beautiful way."

Director Tom Harper says, "We always knew right from the beginning that we had this song Rose-Lynn had written and that it was the end of the film so knew we had to get it right. Many were brilliant but none of them quite got inside Rose-Lynn's mind. Then we got a track back that we

really liked. It wasn't quite right but suddenly someone had found Rose-Lynn's character and we were all quite surprised to find out it was Mary Steenburgen, who we knew as an actor but not as a screenwriter, but of course it makes perfect sense that an actress would read the script and understand the character and translate that into music. So we worked with her and she came back with the final song. The whole music of the film has been an organic process, the amazing songwriters and musicians have folded into it to very naturally and that feels right for the honest, truthful nature of the film and of country music. It's all felt like the right organic approach to the music."

Buckley's response to the song was quick and emotional. "Immediately upon hearing it everyone said 'this is the song'. It just captured the essence of the film entirely. It's a real moment in the film where this girl has gone as far as possible from her own life and at the end realises you can't run away from the roots of who you really are. Good song writing is like a 3-minute movie and Mary Steenburgen has caught the story of the movie in a 3-minute movie."

Give me Wings – How the soundtrack evolved

With a film where music is so deeply imbedded as it is within WILD ROSE, the soundtrack was always going to be something more ambitious, something that is inherently linked to the film and to Rose-Lynn's character. But perhaps none of the team quite expected what would happen. Tom Harper explains, "We always knew there would be a soundtrack but we didn't know just how much original music there would be. We started putting songs out to tender. There were three parts to the soundtrack and the part where Rose-Lynn starts writing her own music happens after the film has finished. So we started getting Nicole to write a little bit of her story for where Rose-Lynn ends up, to put out for tender and then Nicole started to realise that if she'd got that far she may as well have a go at writing the lyrics. By the point Jessie had started to get adventurous and started to write her own music. It all started coming together and we realised that instead of sending songs out

to musicians to tender, they should just be writing them themselves, so that's what happened."

So suddenly Jessie and Nicole were writing a soundtrack as if it was Rose-Lynn's debut album. This of course is a dream come true for Country fanatic Taylor! She says, "One minute I was writing a brief to send out to songwriters, the next Jessie and I were in a room with two amazing musicians, co-writing the album! It was the most natural, accidental thing... we ended up meeting up at my house every week or so for six months and before long we had a bunch of songs. Jessie and I know this girl (Rose-Lynn) inside out, so I guess it made sense for us to write the songs that this character would write. But I never ever dreamed that my lifelong obsession with Country music would result in this. My 12 year old self is very happy indeed!"

Faye says, "As is often the case with a film, what you end up with is not wholly what you started out with, and that's the fun part – that journey and our soundtrack is really typical of that. We now have Jessie opening the film singing the Primal Scream song Country Girl. Primal Scream are a Glasgow band so it throws us right into the world of Rose-Lynn, it has a real rawness to it which feels very Rose-Lynn. Then we have a mixture of contemporary and Country classic songs all given their own twist or, as was the case with the wonderful Kasey Musgrove, she adapted her own song to fit into WILD ROSE. That's how it has been with much of the music in the film, it has all had an injection of Rose-Lynn and her world in it so that it is 100% part of the film."

The team worked in a North London studio in an intense recording session that resulted in an album that is exciting, vital and 100% Rose-Lynn and WILD ROSE.

Hello Walls - Designing WILD ROSE

Nashville and Glasgow are both cities that have a distinctive look to them and one that director Tom Harper

was passionate about pitching correctly. The world of Country had to be handled correctly so the film wasn't guilty of pastiche. Harper elaborates, "When it came to making the aesthetic decisions about the film we wanted to make it truthful and feel real but at the same time we wanted to reference Americana and Country references. We didn't want it to get bogged down in grey, or too gritty, too much of the social realism we often see in films in this country so when it was more aspirational and when we did see the magic in Rose-Lynn's character, we wanted to see how that felt within the context of her surroundings."

Harper assembled a talented team to help him realise Rose-Lynn's world, in DOP George Steel, Production Designer Lucy Spink, Make Up Designer Jody Williams, and Costume Designer Anna Bartlett.

George Steel had previously worked many times with Tom Harper, but most recently on the lavish and beautiful *War and Peace*, and although a very different world, Harper and Steel were still keen to find the beauty within Rose-Lynn's universe.

Harper says, "George and I share a sensibility, we get excited about the same things, and he is a very inspiring person. In order to create a world and have a vision, it helps to have someone like George to work with, who has such a strong understanding of the story, the mood and the energy of what we are trying to create, that essentially he becomes one with the characters. That takes precedence over everything, so it's alive and magical because the camera takes its own form and then when that magic occurs with Jessie, or any of the cast, then George is right there capturing that. And if someone decides to move or do something differently he can just go with that, he's extremely instinctive."

Ward agrees, "George has to balance both a naturalistic and cinematic look the whole way through and stay truthful to the character. It's a really very hard thing to pull off. George did it with aplomb."

Harper continues, “Stylistically, we are trying to echo Rose-Lynn’s feelings. Her journey is harsh at times but then can and should be aspirational. George and I are trying to replicate Rose-Lynn’s journey as much as possible. For example, when Rose-Lynn is upset, the camera is handled and is lit darker. But when she is singing and the magic bursts out of her, you get something much more sunny or some lens flare. We use the camera work to echo Rose-Lynn’s journey as we go throughout the film.”

Harper says of Anna Robbins, “I had been desperate to work with Anna for a while because she just understood and got under the skin of the characters and I think that’s the place that all the best costume designers come from. Contemporary costume is always difficult as you want something distinctive but at the same time rooted, natural, and part of the world. What Anna has done with all of the characters, but particularly with Rose-Lynn, is create this iconic look with the white boots and the white jacket and the stars and the stripes. Every piece of clothing Rose-Lynn wears subtly reinforces the character. Audiences coming out of the cinema will have a very clear idea of who Rose-Lynn is.”

Ward says, “Anna was fantastic. She found Rose – Lynn’s style effortlessly. Everything Rose-Lynn wore had a hint of Country & Americana in such a delicate way. I loved her wings waistcoat at the end – it’s that subtle detail that shows Rose-Lynn has made peace with herself. It’s the details like that which Anna excelled at.”

Ward goes on to praise production designer Lucy Spinks, “The glorious Lucy, for whom no job was too big or too small. Lucy was so great at finding a voice and a tone within the design. That Country voice can be overpowering if you’re not careful and she delicately trod the line from Glasgow through to Nashville and you see the similarities between the two cities. Lucy spent a lot of time finding those mirrors and relating it back to Rose-Lynn. It was going to Nashville that allowed us to see the obvious similarities between the two cities.”

Harper says, “Lucy took something that could potentially feel small scale and elevated it, made it feel universal and resonate with people around the world with her design. One of the things I loved that Lucy did with her design was that she took small hints of Americana and found them within Glaswegian architecture, bringing them out subtly. Like the pine-clad wall in Rose-Lynn’s flat.”

Lucy says, “When I first read Nicole’s script I absolutely fell in love with it. The story made me really want to be part of it - it was about three women, three strong women, and also Country music that I have got an interest in, so that just seemed like the perfect scenario for me to get involved in.”

She continues, “When you are designing you want to hold onto the initial emotions quite quickly. I started thinking about what I could feel, and the colours, and the look. I started thinking about the colour palate and of some of the colours in Glasgow. When I first read the script, for me a lot of warmth, sunshine, amber and hopeful colours came through, and that’s the first emotion I got when read it. So I spent time just going through Glasgow and looking at pictures of Glasgow, and the sandstone, and seeing how it is all integrated. Then I started working with Anna and Tom and everything started chiming. There is such a rich heritage with both Glasgow and Nashville, the Celtic connections - it’s all there waiting to be found. The industrial heritage of Glasgow, the physical - boats, canal, buildings - aspect. The parallels are all there, so it’s just a matter of shining a light on it, which I hope we did.”

“One of the most interesting things for me was that the Americana, the Glasgow heritage, and Country were all a major part, and it all became a sort of Venn diagram crossover of the three. If it was all truthful and you saw it as a reality, that is real Glasgow history and you could point to it then, that was an important part of it. I think that was exactly the same with Anna – the nod to Country, but never too contrived, never too out there. But you realise it is out there in the heritage of Glasgow, that Country look, that

Country feel is all there, so it's really a matter of scraping the surface."

One of the biggest challenges for Spink was getting Marion's house right. She says it was difficult because "it was the opportunity to show Country - not overdo it, but make it feel real. So, all the wood panelling, the net curtains, louvered doors... you can do too much, but it is an opportunity to say 'we are only here for a little while, so let's just show Glasgow Country'. The more I looked around and reasserted it, the more I realised it was real life. Country aesthetic in interior design is all the way through Glasgow, in the more domestic rooms, and that is where I found it a real labour of love making it real and giving Marion a home whilst retaining something a little austere and a little bit proper, which I think Marion does. Also it is Julie Walters! Come on!"

Rose-Lynn's house presented a different challenge. Harper remembers Spink going to countless flats in Glasgow to try and find the perfect one. Spink explains, "Putting such a firecracker and spark like Rose-Lynn into what is really quite a dreary and sad existence in that flat is quite hard. The flat had its own challenges because it had to evolve. It had to go from being a place of despair and sadness and, over the course of the film, the audience need to see it become something of hope and of home... and yet still retain some of the realistic grittiness and realism. Wood panelling and wood is a thread that comes through all of the houses. Marion, Rose-Lynn, and Susannah. What's nice about Rose-Lynn's house is that we eventually turned it into something that could be home at the end, where there could be hope, and she could see herself staying in Glasgow. That, I think, is important."

The Grand Tour - Filming in Nashville and The Glasgow/Nashville connection

The cast and crew had one thing in common when it came to their feelings on filming and living in Glasgow – they all adored their time there. Jessie Buckley says,

“Glasgow is a city I would move to in a heartbeat, I absolutely fell in love with it.

Ward agrees, “Glasgow is a fantastic city to film in. I completely understand Rose-Lynn more after spending time in the city, as she feels like a mascot for Glasgow. Glaswegians are so lovely, warm and welcoming. We all loved every minute being there.”

Director Tom Harper agrees with Ward in that being in Glasgow helped them ‘find’ Rose-Lynn. “Filming in Glasgow, it has such a strong sense of identify, at the same time as being so welcoming. To be somewhere that has such a strong sense of place... I hope it is a character in the film as it is so significant to Rose-Lynn, and to Nicole writing it. We had the most lovely time being there.”

For production designer Lucy Spink, the city is intrinsically linked with Rose-Lynn but also Nashville. “I love Glasgow! I really love it. I was daunted at first, as you often are when you begin a project, as you try to find the heart and soul of a place. Actually the music is all here. Like Nashville or Havana, where you hear music all the time. Glasgow is like that.”

Julie Walters said, “I loved working in Scotland. Loved the people - so warm, so kind. We were working on the estate where Rose-Lynn lived, and the people downstairs sent up treats for the crew, and for Jessie. And these were people with not a lot, and that’s indicative of Glasgow, people are really friendly and kind.”

Of course, as well as Glasgow the other key location in WILD ROSE is the mecca of country – Nashville. Faye Ward explains how essential to her it was to ensure the team could film there. “One of the most important aspects of the film was to ensure we could film in Nashville. It is the dream that, for most of the film, Rose-Lynn believes is what she wants and needs - particularly to sing at the Ryman where the Grand Ole Opry is held, and was held during Country’s biggest years. To be able to sing at the Opry is perhaps the highest accolade in Country. So obviously, to

be able to film there was quite something, and it took a lot of begging and calling lots of people and favours to get us through those doors. They were extremely gracious, and again it has given the film that country stamp of approval that is so vital.”

Nicole Taylor: “As soon as I came to Nashville I was struck by how familiar it felt. Ex-industrial, surrounded by green, on a formerly working river, super friendly. It has exactly the same population as Glasgow, which I didn't realise at the time. They're like twin cities! Also, Glasgow is a UNESCO world heritage site for music - did you know that? And Nashville is obviously Music City. So there is that too.”

Buckley says, “We had a few bumps getting out to Nashville so when we finally got there it felt really special, like it did for Rose-Lynn. Even flying in, walking down the Broadway, and just window after window after window is filled with incredible Country artists. The most special moments, of course, were filming in the Ryman. Standing on that stage, on the spot where Johnny Cash and Emmylou Harris and all of the greats have sung, in a church for Country music. The ghosts of Country music past swimming around you. One of the musicians playing that day told me that there is an attic upstairs, and he did a gig there one night and ended up wandering up to the attic, and found all these engravings in the wood of Elvis Presley and Jonny Cash. You're standing in this space knowing that they're there around you. I felt incredibly calm shooting there. It is such a special place. Then getting to record with Ray Kennedy in his amazing studio... it is like stepping into the coolest sitting room in the world, where there are amazing guitars strewn all over the walls, and he's hired Nashville musicians who have played with everyone at the top of their game. An amazing experience.”

Harper agrees with the magic of Nashville. “Recording in Nashville was fascinating,” he says. “In Glasgow it was much more about the band getting to know each other and being friends. For the Nashville side of it, we came in one day and Jessie hadn't met any of them. They were all the

most incredible session musicians who had played with a lot of the great Country artists, and great artists full stop. You can hear the difference too, I don't think either is better or worse it's just different and you can hear that. What was also interesting is Jessie's evolution as a Country singer, and as this has gone on she's been learning and growing in confidence, and finding her own sound as a Country singer and, I think, going from strength to strength."

Lucy Spink remarks on the similarities between the cities, "Glasgow and Nashville are so similar. When we went to Nashville on a recce, it was so useful because it really informed some of the Scottish location choices, because Rose-Lynn has this idea in her head that the romance she is yearning for is in America. But actually, if you look around in Glasgow, it is right there, all there for her to see - if she looks. We were just trying to add that element. It's all there in Glasgow for her to find and from that point of view it felt like archaeology – 'Oh look, that place is brilliant!' For example, Rose-Lynn's flat where she lives has a real motel feel. It's kind of got an American look as well as being gritty and 'real Glasgow'. It's sometimes hard to find the beauty in something poor, but I think with that kind of take on it we could spin it to say 'Look it's all here, Rose-Lynn! You just have to see it!'"

Spink continues, "The parallels between Glasgow and Nashville are many, and so noticeable when going between the two cities, and seeing just how many similarities. Music is at the heart of Glasgow - music is everywhere. Everything Rose-Lynn desires, and thinks is in America, is right there in front of her."

There were so many emotional and magical moments in the filming of WILD ROSE, and many of them have made it onto the screen in a hugely exciting and affecting film. Producer Faye Ward says, "I hope this movie will make audiences feel happy and warm inside. It allows you to get excited about things and champion the underdog. I LOVE what it says about women and motherhood and not just to you as a mother - to fathers too. What it is to be a parent in this modern world versus what it is to want something else

for yourself too... and that the film doesn't give you a clear answer, tied up in a bow, and that there are different journeys and roads to travel, to find the answers."

Harper: "I also think it's true to life. I have kids myself, and my wife and I are constantly struggling to balance what's right for them, what's right for our careers, what's right for us, and what we do to earn money. All of that is a constant juggling act and that feels true to life. So what I hope people take from the film is, first and foremost, I hope it will entertain and they will enjoy the great music, but I think it is representative of life, in that very often there are no easy answers and we are struggling to find our path through. And it is a story of this young girl who is fighting to get this magic in her out, and she succeeds - she does it. And, through her struggles, and her right and wrong decisions, ultimately finds a way through that is right for her, for her singing, for her kids, for her mother and for her. I find that a rewarding and uplifting watch. Even though it's tricky in places, you see this force of nature succeed in what she's good at and that is a really gratifying watch."

The Cast

Jessie Buckley

Jessie Buckley is an Irish singer and actress, who came in second place in the BBC talent show-themed television series *I'd Do Anything*, and subsequently played Anne Egermann in the West End revival of Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*. Most recently, Buckley appeared on three BBC television series, as Marya Bolkonskaya in BBC's adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, as Lorna Bow in *Taboo* and as Honor Martin in *The Last Post*

Julie Walters

For decades, British actress and comedienne Dame Julie Walters has served as a sturdy representation of the

working class with her passionate, earthy portrayals on England's stage, screen and television. A bona fide talent, her infectious spirit and self-deprecating sense of humor eventually captured the hearts of international audiences. The small and slender actress with the prominent cheekbones has yet to give an uninteresting performance.

She was born Julia Mary Walters on February 22, 1950 in Smethwick, West Midlands, England, the youngest of three children and only daughter of Mary Bridget (O'Brien), an Irish-born postal clerk from County Mayo, and Thomas Walters, an English-born builder, from Birmingham. Convent schooled in Birmingham, she expressed an early desire to act. However, her iron-willed mother had other ideas and geared her towards a nursing career. Dutifully applying at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, Julie eventually gave up nursing when the pull to be an actress proved too strong. Studying English and Drama at Manchester Polytechnic, she subsequently joined a theatre company in Liverpool and apprenticed as a stand-up comic. A one-time company member of the Vanload improv troupe, she made her London stage debut in the aptly-titled comedy "Funny Peculiar" in 1975, and went on to develop a successfully bawdy act on the cabaret circuit. While at Manchester, Julie befriended aspiring writer/comedienne Victoria Wood and the twosome appeared together in sketch comedy. A couple of their works, "Talent" and "Nearly a Happy Ending", transferred to television and were accompanied by rave reviews. Eventually, they were handed their own television series, Wood and Walters(1981).

In 1980, Julie scored a huge solo success under the theatre lights when she made her London debut in Willy Russell's "Educating Rita". For her superlative performance, she won both the Variety Critic's and London Critic's Circle Awards as the young hairdresser who vows to up her station in life by enrolling in a university. She conquered film as well when Educating Rita (1983) transferred to the big screen opposite Michael Caine as her Henry Higgins-like college professor, collecting a Golden Globe Award and Oscar nomination. Reuniting with Victoria Wood in 1984, the pair

continue to appear together frequently on television, most recently with the award-winning series *Dinnerladies* (1998). On stage, Julie has impressed in a variety of roles ranging from the contemporary ("Fool for Love", "Frankie and Johnny at the Clair de Lune") to the classics ("Macbeth", "The Rose Tattoo" and "All My Sons"), winning the Laurence Olivier Award for the last-mentioned play.

Following her success as Rita, she immediately rolled out a sterling succession of film femmes including her seedy waitress-turned successful brothel-owner in *Personal Services* (1987); the unsophisticated, small-town wife of Phil Collins in *Buster* (1988); a boozy, man-chasing mum in *Killing Dad or How to Love Your Mother* (1990); and Liza Minnelli's abrasive tap student in *Stepping Out* (1991). Playing a wide variety of ages, she also mustered up a very convincing role as the mother of Joe Orton in the critically-acclaimed *Prick Up Your Ears* (1987). She capped her career in films as the abrasively stern but encouraging dance teacher in *Billy Elliot* (2000) which earned her a second Oscar nomination and a healthy helping of quirky character roles, including her charming, charity-driven widow who poses à la natural in *Calendar Girls* (2003), and the maternal witch-wife Molly Weasley in the J.K. Rowling "Harry Potter" series. For her work on film and television, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts has honored Julie five times, including four awards in a row (2001-2004).

In 1999, Julie was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) at the Queen's Birthday Honours for her services to drama. In 2008, she was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) at the Queen's New Years Honours for her services to drama. In 2017, she was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire at the Queen's Birthday Honours for her services to drama.

Sophie Okenedo

Nigerian-Jewish actress Sophie Okonedo has shown increasing versatility in a divergent career. However, despite an Oscar nomination, she still seems poised on the verge of true recognition.

Born in summer 1968, she trained at RADA after attending Cambridge, and made her big-screen debut in Isaac Julien's ambitious but unsuccessful *Young Soul Rebels*(UK/France/Germany/Spain, 1991). She then had small parts in such TV staples as *Casualty*(BBC, 1991) and *The Bill* (ITV, 1994) before being offered a more significant supporting role in Michael Winterbottom's multiple sclerosis drama *Go Now* (BBC, 1995).

Although she made forays into Hollywood filmmaking with small roles in *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* (US, 1995) and *The Jackal*(US/UK/France/Germany/Japan, 1997), she was in more comfortable territory amongst the young ensemble cast of the romantic comedy *This Year's Love* (d. David Kane, 1999). She stood out as one of the protagonists of the legal drama *In Defence* (ITV, 2000), was excellent in *Never Never* (Channel 4, 2000) as a bedraggled single mother who gets involved with John Simm's loan shark, and good fun as a vengeance-seeking wife in David Morrissey's drama *Sweet Revenge* (BBC, 2001).

However, she still lacked a defining role. She impressed in *Dirty Pretty Things* (d. Stephen Frears, 2002) as the accommodating prostitute Juliette, but the part was less developed than the leads, though it still garnered a British Independent Film Award nomination. She was effective in the ensemble of Paul Abbott's *Clocking Off* (BBC, 2002), but also appeared in such formulaic television as *The Inspector Lynley Mysteries* and *Spooks* (both BBC, 2003).

A major breakthrough came with *Hotel Rwanda* (US/UK/Italy/South Africa, d. Terry George, 2004), for which she received a Best Supporting Actress Oscar nomination as the devoted, fearful Tatiana Rusesabagina, trying desperately to make some sense out of the Rwandan massacre that she and her husband Paul (Don Cheadle) found themselves caught up in. Two

challenging television roles followed: the determined single mother in *Whose Baby?* (ITV, 2004) and the supposedly infertile woman at the centre of an ethical and legal battle in *Born With Two Mothers* (Channel 4, 2005). The Hollywood sci-fi thriller *Aeon Flux* (US, 2005) was mainly notable for her character having hands instead of feet, but she has several other high-profile roles in the pipeline, including a major role in the eagerly awaited *Stormbreaker* (Germany/US/UK, 2006).

Jamie Sives

James Harkness

James Harkness began at the Citizens Theatre's Young Co in his hometown of Glasgow. After moving to London and graduating from Lamda, his standout performances have included as Angus in Justin Kurzel's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* alongside Oscar-winner Marion Cotillard and Michael Fassbender which was filmed around Scotland and Winston Churchill's war secretary in Joe Wright's *Darkest Hour*, which premiered at Toronto.

He also starred in *The Program*, the story of seven times Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong's fall from grace directed by Stephen Frears and most recently Paul Thomas Anderson's *Phantom Thread* alongside Daniel Day Lewis about the London fashion trade.

Film makers

Nicole Taylor wrote BBC One's critically acclaimed *Three Girls* about the Rochdale grooming scandal. "Searingly compelling drama" – The Times - "This is what TV is for". "TV with this kind of power and significance is rare today – telling, or asking us something about ourselves, in the Cathy Come Home tradition – and to see it three nights running in prime time on BBC One is astonishing" – The Herald.

Prior to that Nicole's BAFTA nominated single drama *The C Word* was produced for BBC1 and starred Sheridan Smith. Previously she has written on numerous series, including *Indian Summers* for Channel 4, *The Hour* for BBC2 and *Ashes to Ashes* for BBC1.

Nicole is the Edinburgh International Film Festival's screenwriter in residence for 2017-2018.

She is currently writing an original series for BBC1 and working on a feature adaptation for Fox Searchlight. A lifelong country music fan, Nicole co-wrote many of the songs on the film's soundtrack. She was born and raised in Glasgow.

Faye Ward

Faye Ward is one of the UK's most prominent young producers. 2015 saw the international release of 'Suffragette' starring Carey Mulligan, Anne Marie Duff, Helena Bonham Carter, Brendan Gleeson and Meryl Streep, which she produced for Pathe and Film4. Recently Faye was part of the producing team of the critically acclaimed drama series 'The Crown' for Netflix and Left Bank Pictures.

In 2016 she set up TV & film production outfit Fable Pictures alongside Eugenio Perez, with Sony Pictures Television taking a minority stake. The first feature film to shoot under the new company banner was 'Stan and Ollie' written by Jeff Pope and directed by Jon S. Baird for BBC Films / eOne, followed by 'Country Music' written by Nicole Taylor and directed by BAFTA nominated Tom Harper for Film4/ BFI/ Creative Scotland. Fable's slate includes four-part mini series 'Saint Mazie' starring Helena Bonham Carter, based on the novel by Jami Attenberg and adapted by Clara Brennan, and projects with a roster of British talent including Yann Demange, Hanif Kureishi and Moira Buffini.

Previously Faye worked at Ruby Film & Television alongside Alison Owen. Under the Ruby banner she produced the BBC's Golden Globe nominated series 'Dancing On the Edge', written and directed by Stephen Poliakoff, and an adaptation of Nigel Slater's memoir 'Toast' adapted by Lee Hall and directed by S.J. Clarkson. For Channel 4 she has produced 'Double Lesson' starring Phil Davies and written and directed by George Kay.

Other credits include: Co-producer on 'Jane Eyre' directed by Cary Fukunaga starring Michael Fassbender and Mia Wasikowska, Associate Producer on Stephen Frears' 'Tamara Drewe', 'Five Minutes of Heaven' directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel' and the multi award winning television adaptation of 'Small Island' for the BBC, directed by John Alexander and starring David Oyelowo.

Tom Harper

Tom Harper is a BAFTA nominated director who was born and brought up in North London. He started out making award winning short films, including CUBS (2006) and CHERRIES (2007), before moving on to direct a range of television drama in the UK including MISFITS (2009, E4), THIS IS ENGLAND '86 (2010, C4), and PEAKY BLINDERS (2013, BBC2 / Netflix).

Tom's feature film work includes THE SCOUTING BOOK FOR BOYS (2010), THE WOMAN IN BLACK: ANGEL OF DEATH (2015), and WAR BOOK (2015), which Tom also produced and opened the International Festival of Film Rotterdam.

In 2016 Tom directed all 6 episodes of WAR & PEACE for BBC1 and The Weinstein Company, starring Paul Dano, Lily James and James Norton. The series gained rave reviews and topped ratings with The Telegraph calling it "the greatest costume drama of the decade".

Most recently, Tom was director and executive producer on the opening episode of THE SON, an adaptation of Phillip Meyer's acclaimed novel for AMC, and directed THE COMMUTER, a standalone film as part of Channel 4 & Amazon's anthology series PHILIP K DICK'S ELECTRIC DREAMS. He is currently shooting the feature film COUNTRY MUSIC in Glasgow, starring Jessie Buckley, Julie Walters and Sophie Okonedo for Film4, the BFI and eOne.

George Steel

Brought up in Algeria (North Africa) and Scotland, Steel is a London-based Director of Photography who has garnered great acclaim for his work on the first season of the high profile UK television series, Peaky Blinders, starring Cillian Murphy and Sam Neill, directed by Otto Bathurst.

Steel's television credits include the groundbreaking Channel Four drama Cast Offs, directed by Miranda Bowen, with whom he reteamed for a major two-part feature length adaptation of D.H. Lawrence's novel, Women In Love, starring Rory Kinnear and Rosamund Pike. He also lensed the acclaimed miniseries, The Honourable Woman, directed by Hugo Blick, starring Maggie Gyllenhall, as well as the feature film, The Woman in Black: Angel of Death, directed by Tom Harper, starring Helen McCrory, for Exclusive Media. Next up, his work can be seen in the epic mini-series from BBC and the Weinstein Co., War and Peace.

With more than fifteen years of experience in film, Steel started his career as camera assistant working on such high profile films as Anthony Mingella's Cold Mountain, and the Lee Tamahori – directed James Bond film, Die Another Day. He moved swiftly up the ranks to Director of Photography and has shot a number of major international advertising campaigns for Sony, Canon, HSBC, together with many UK commercials for Toyota, Vodafone and Nokia, and over a hundred music

videos. Steel won a cinematography award at the International Craft Awards for the Philips short film El Secreto De Mateo.

Jody Williams:

Jody has over 10 years' experience working as a make-up artist, designer and consultant across all visual mediums. Her passion and unique creativity often sees her pushing the boundaries of make-up and hair design.

As a reflection of this Jody brings together professional teams, which are always a pleasure and a joy to work with – representing her commitment, creativity and professionalism to get the best results out of each and every job.

Although based in London, productions take her across the globe to work in many challenging locations, from remote snow laden forests to hot, humid beaches.

Jody's recent design credits include...

TELEVISION

Damilola – Our Loved Boy (Minnow Films/BBC1)

Directed by Euros Lyn

Produced by Sue Horth

Featuring Babou Ceesay, Wunmi Mousaku

National Treasure (The Forge/Channel 4)

Directed by Marc Munden

Produced by John Chapman

Featuring Julie Walters, Robbie Coltrane, Andrea

Riseborough

The Aliens (Clerkenwell Films/E4)

Directed by Jonathan Van Tulleken

Produced by Charlie Leech

Featuring Michael Socha, Michaela Coel, Jim Howick

Stag (Idiotlamp Productions/BBC2)
Directed and Jim Field Smith
Produced by Jim Field Smith, George Kay
Featuring Jim Howick

Murder In Successville Series 1 (Tiger Aspect/BBC3)
Directed by James De Frond
Produced by Ben Cavey, Andy Bereton, Sophie Cousins
Featuring Tom Davis, Morgana Robinson, Tom Storton

The Wrong Mans series 2 (BBC/Hulu)
Directed and produced by Jim Field Smith
Featuring James Corden, Matt Baynton, Dawn French

Cockroaches (Big Talk Productions)
Directed by Ben Taylor, produced by Clelia Mountford for
ITV2
Featuring Daniel Lawrence Taylor, Esther Smith, Jack
Whitehall, Caroline Quentin

Crackanory II (Tiger Aspect)
Directed by Richie Pengelley, produced by Arnold
Widdowson for Dave
Featuring Nicholas Burns, Steve Oram, Alice Lowe, Ruby
Wax, Rik Mayall, Vic Reeves, Noel Fielding, David Mitchell

Boy Meets Girl (Tiger Aspect – tv pilot)
Directed by Paul Norton Walker, produced by Margot
Gavan Duffy
Featuring Harry Hepple, Rebecca Root, Denise Welch and
Nigel Betts.

Atlantis (Urban Myth Films/BBC Wales)
Directed by Alice Troughton, Justin Molotnikov, Declan
O'Dwyer and Jeremy Webb
Produced by Johnny Capps and Julian Murphy
Featuring Mark Addy, Sarah Parish, Jack Donnelly, Robert
Emms, Jemima Rooper, Alexander Siddig

The Wrong Mans (BBC/Hulu)
Directed and produced by Jim Field Smith

Featuring James Corden, Matt Baynton, Dougray Scott,
Emilia Fox, Dawn French

Merlin IV (Shine/BBC Wales)

Directed by Alice Troughton, Justin Molotnikov, Declan
O'Dwyer.

Produced by Johnny Capps and Julian Murphy

Featuring Colin Morgan, Richard Wilson, Bradley James,
Katie McGrath, Angel Coulby, Janet Montgomery, Anthony
head

Episodes 2 (Hat Trick Productions/BBC)

Make-up Supervisor & Personal to Matt Le Blanc

Directed by Jim Field Smith, produced by Jimmy Mulville,
David Crane and Jeffrey Klarik

Featuring Matt Le Blanc, Tamsin Greg, Stephen Mangham,
James Purefoy, Sam Palladio, Mircea Munroe, Sophie
Rundle

Maddogs 2 (Left Bank Pictures)

Hair & Make-up Supervisor

Directed by James Hawes, produced by Andy Harries and
Suzanne Mackie

Featuring Max Beasley, John Simm, Marc Warren, Philip
Glenister, David Warner, Leticia Dolera

FILM

Aaaaaaaah! (Rook Films)

Directed by Steve Oram

Featuring Toyah Wilcox, Noel Fielding, Julian Rhind-Tutt,
Holli Dempsey, Alice Lowe, Tony Way

The Scouting Book For Boys (Celedor Films/Pathé)

Directed by Tom Harper, produced by Ivana McKinnon and
Christian Colson

Featuring Thomas Turgoose, Holliday Granger, Rafe Spall,
Steven Mackintosh, Susan Lynch

Fast Freddie, The Widow and Me (ITV)

Make-up Supervisor

Directed by David Richards, produced by Madonna

Baptiste

Featuring Laurence Fox, James Webber Brown, David Woodhead, Tamzin Outhwaite.

Shell Shock (Pixie Films)

Special effects make-up artist

Directed by James Price

Featuring Robert Whitelock, Nina Fog, Haruka Abe

Life & Lyrics (Fiesta Films)

Hair & Make-up Supervisor

Directed by Richard Laxton, produced by Esther Douglas & Fiona Nielson

Featuring Ashley Walters, Christopher Steward, Alexis Rodney , Jason Maza

Lucy Spink

QUACKS

Lucky Giant / NBC Comedy Series For BBC 2

Production Designer

October 16- December 16

CHEWING GUM SERIES 1 And 2

Retort Comedy For E4

Production Designer

May 15- July 15 And May 16- July 16

YONDERLAND SERIES 2 And 3

NBC/Working Title For Sky

Production Designer

September 14- December 14

December 15 - March 16

THE JOB LOT- SERIES 2 And 3

Big Talk Productions For ITV 2

Production Designer

April 15- May 15

January 14- March 14

DRIFTERS SERIES 1 AND 2

Bwark Productions For E4

Production Designer
May 14- August 14
May 13- August 13

TIMELESS- Sky Arts Short Film
Baby Cow Productions For Sky
Production Designer
March 14

REV
Big Talk Productions For BBC 2
Production Designer
September 13- December 13

BIG BAD WORLD
Objective Productions 6 Part Series For Comedy Central
Production Designer
October 12- January 13

DOCTOR BROWN PILOT
Eyeworks Production For Channel 4
Production Designer
May 12

PARENTS
Objective Productions 6 Part Comedy For Sky 1
Production Designer
January 12- April 12

LITTLE CRACKER- Harry Hill
Blurred Vision Production For Sky
Production Designer
August 11- September 11

PETE VS LIFE SERIES 1 AND 2
Objective Productions Comedy Series For Channel 4
Production Designer
February 10 - August 11

MENTALIST IDENT
Channel 5/ Hungry Man Productions
Production Designer

April 09

CAMPUS

Monicker Productions

Supervising Art Director

May 10- August 10

Production Designer: Dick Lunn

FREE AGENTS

Big Talk Productions Comedy Series

Supervising Art Director

Oct 08- Dec 08

Production Designer: Dick Lunn

JOHNATHAN CREEK CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

BBC - 2 Hour Drama

Stand-By Art Director

May 08- Aug 08

Production Designer: John Asbridge

THE REVENGE OF ALISTAIR FURY

BBC Children's Comedy Drama

Art Director

June 07- Sept 07

Production Designer: Sarah Beaman