

PRESS RELEASE

Gillian Anderson to Play Miss Havisham in New *Great Expectations*

MASTERPIECE on PBS/BBC Coproduction
to Air During Dickens Bicentennial

Gillian Anderson will star in the iconic role of Miss Havisham in a bold new adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. The cast of the star-studded MASTERPIECE on PBS/BBC coproduction also includes David Suchet (*Poirot*) and Ray Winstone (*Sexy Beast*).

"I can't wait to see Gillian delicately sink her teeth into the role of the beautiful, mysterious and manipulative Miss Havisham. She's one of the most intriguing female characters in literature," says MASTERPIECE executive producer Rebecca Eaton. "Gillian's hypnotic portrayal of Lady Dedlock in *Bleak House* showed that she and Dickens are a perfect match."

Ms. Anderson's 2006 performance in *Bleak House*—her first television role after rising to stardom as Agent Dana Scully in *The X-Files*—earned her rave reviews and Emmy and Golden Globe nominations.

The MASTERPIECE broadcast of *Great Expectations* will air in April 2012, during the bicentennial of Dickens' birth. Including *Bleak House*, MASTERPIECE—currently celebrating its 40th anniversary on PBS—has aired nine Dickens adaptations equaling nearly sixty hours of television to date, including *Little Dorrit*, the winner of seven Emmy awards in 2009, and *David Copperfield*, which introduced Daniel Radcliffe (*Harry Potter*) to American audiences.

As part of the Dickens bicentennial, MASTERPIECE will also partner with the BBC on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, an unfinished work that will be given a new ending by writer Gwyneth Hughes (*Five Days, Miss Austen Regrets*).

Widely considered one of Dickens' greatest novels, *Great Expectations* tells the story of Pip the battered orphan boy, who rises from blacksmith's apprentice to gentleman under the patronage of a mysterious benefactor, who assures him of "great expectations." As Pip grows up, he befriends Magwitch, a convict, becomes the pet to Miss Havisham, an insane heiress, and falls in love with Estella, her cold-hearted ward. A series of shocking setbacks teaches Pip the true source of moral worth.



David Suchet, who will play Jaggers, and Ray Winstone (Magwitch), are well known to MASTERPIECE audiences. Suchet is renowned as the Belgian super-sleuth in the popular *Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot* series, and Winstone's portrayal of Henry VIII on MASTERPIECE was called "a brilliant tour de force" by *The Hollywood Reporter*.

Great Expectations begins filming in London in July.

Great Expectations is a MASTERPIECE co-production with BBC Drama Production for BBC One. The producer is George Ormond (Emma). The director is Brian Kirk (*Luther*, *Boardwalk Empire*). The writer is Sarah Phelps (*Oliver Twist*), and the executive producers are Anne Pivcevic (*South Riding*, *Little Dorrit*) for the BBC and Rebecca Eaton for MASTERPIECE.

MASTERPIECE on PBS is presented by WGBH Boston. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Funding for the series is provided by public television viewers with additional support from contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust, created to help ensure the series' future.

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