

MASTERPIECE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 7:01PM ET TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 24TH

Channel 5, Playground And MASTERPIECE On PBS Announce Cast For *All Creatures Great And Small*

**Newcomer Nicholas Ralph to play beloved vet James Herriot opposite
Samuel West, Anna Madeley, Callum Woodhouse and Rachel Shenton**

Channel 5, BAFTA and Golden Globe-winning production company Playground (*Howards End*, *Wolf Hall*) and MASTERPIECE on PBS today announced the casting of key roles for their upcoming adaptation of best-selling author James Herriot's cherished collection of stories, written by Ben Vanstone (*The Last Kingdom*) and directed by Brian Percival (*Downton Abbey*).

Exciting newcomer Nicholas Ralph will make his television debut as the iconic vet who became renowned for his inspiring compassion, humour and love of life. Samuel West (*Mr. Selfridge*, *On Chesil Beach*) joins as Siegfried Farnon, the wonderfully eccentric veterinary surgeon and proprietor of Skeldale House who reluctantly hires the recently qualified Herriot into his rural practice. Mrs Hall, the resident housekeeper and matriarch of Skeldale House will be played by Anna Madeley (*The Child in Time*, *Patrick Melrose*). Siegfried's errant and charismatic younger brother, Tristan, will be played by Callum Woodhouse (*The Durrells in Corfu*). Rachel Shenton (*Switched at Birth*, *White Gold*) takes the role of Helen Alderson, an independent local farmer's daughter who helps her father manage the family farm and care for her younger sister.

"This is an exceptional cast made up of a wonderful mix of exciting new and established talent," says executive producer Colin Callender. "Re-visiting the world of *All Creatures Great and Small* is like going home and re-discovering old friends whom we haven't seen in years. We're thrilled to be bringing James Herriot's beloved characters back to life with Sam, Anna, Callum, Rachel and Nicholas."

"This is exactly the right ensemble cast to deliver the warmth, wit and charm of *All Creatures Great and Small*," says MASTERPIECE executive producer Rebecca Eaton. "Like the original, this new series will capture the hearts of MASTERPIECE viewers."

"Growing up I, like many others, adored this show," says director, Brian Percival. "It was very much a part of Sunday evenings at home. So I was thrilled to be offered the opportunity to revisit such a much loved story. I am so excited to have such a fantastic cast and crew filming in such a beautiful area of the UK. Sam, Anna, Callum, Rachel and Nicholas will have a whole new audience falling in love with James Herriot's world."

Colin Callender's Playground is producing an initial series of six episodes plus a Christmas special of *All Creatures Great and Small*. It is the latest drama commission announced for Channel 5. MASTERPIECE on PBS in the US will co-produce and All3Media International is the international partner. The production will also receive funding and support from Screen Yorkshire.

-more-

All Creatures Great and Small was commissioned by Digital Channel Controller Sebastian Cardwell, who said: “We are really excited to be welcoming new talent to Channel 5 in our forthcoming *All Creatures Great and Small*. The cast will help to bring James Herriot’s books to life and tell his story to a 21st century audience.”

All Creatures Great and Small will be produced by Richard Burrell (*New Tricks*, *Silent Witness*). Alongside Colin Callender, the Executive Producers are Melissa Gallant for Playground, Ben Vanstone, Hugo Heppell for Screen Yorkshire, Rebecca Eaton for MASTERPIECE, which is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston, and Louise Pedersen for All3Media International.

The series will shoot on location in Yorkshire, England in the autumn of 2019. 2020 sees the 50th anniversary of the original publication of the much-loved books.

About James Herriot

Since their first publication in 1970, the beloved books of James Alfred Wight published under the pen name James Herriot, have held a special place in people’s hearts throughout the world. Chronicling the heartwarming and humorous adventures of a young country vet, the books introduced readers to his unconventional mentor and the cast of farmers and townsfolk who lived and worked in the Yorkshire Dales in the 1930s. This new adaptation will preserve the rich spirit, tone and values of Herriot’s iconic characters and stories and will bring to life his sharply observed, entertaining and incredibly funny tales of country life in the North of England for a modern audience, introducing a new generation to his life affirming stories.

Never out of print, the books have sold 60 million copies internationally, becoming a global cultural phenomenon with devoted fans around the world. Their focus on community and its importance in our lives gives Herriot’s work an enduring power and contemporary resonance that reminds us all that belonging to a community makes us part of something greater than ourselves.

James Alfred Wight OBE FRCVS was a veterinary surgeon who graduated from Glasgow Veterinary College at the age of 23. He headed to a veterinary practice in Thirsk, Yorkshire, in 1940 where he fell in love with the Dales and the woman he would marry, Joan Danbury. Wight later wrote stories based on his own adventures as a young country vet, under the pen name James Herriot. Herriot quickly became one of Britain’s best-loved authors.

All Creatures Great and Small is a timeless classic that continues to be loved by generations. The collected works of *All Creatures Great and Small* is comprised of Herriot’s debut novel *If Only They Could Talk*, originally published in the UK in 1970, and its follow-up *It Shouldn’t Happen to A Vet*. Herriot went on to write over a dozen subsequent stories and collections which have gone on to sell millions of copies internationally.

pbs.org/masterpiece

MASTERPIECE Press Contacts

Ellen Dockser, 617-300-5338, ellen_dockser@wgbh.org

Laura Garvey, 617-300-5342, laura_garvey@wgbh.org

-more-

About Channel 5

Channel 5 is a public service broadcaster and the UK's third latest commercial TV station. Launched in March 1997 Channel 5 has been owned by Viacom International Media Networks since September 2014. Channel 5, 5STAR, 5USA, 5Spike, 5Select and My5 TV reach 3 in 4 of the UK viewing public each month with a diverse schedule including issue-led documentaries, popular factual, accessible history, stunning natural history, inclusive entertainment and reality, top level sport, high quality scripted programming and critically acclaimed children's and news programming. Through its agenda-driving commissions, Channel 5 has led on societal issues from inequality to inner city gang life, homelessness to mental health, aiming to tell the story of modern Britain by reflecting the lives of people across the nation. My5 is an on-demand service allowing viewers to watch content online for free from Channel 5, 5STAR, 5USA, 5Select and 5Spike. In 2018, Channel 5 won its first BAFTA for *Cruising with Jane McDonald* and was named 'Channel of the Year' at the Edinburgh TV Festival.

About Viacom International Media Networks

Viacom International Media Networks (VIMN), a unit of Viacom Inc. (NASDAQ: VIA, VIAB), is comprised of many of the world's most popular multimedia entertainment brands, including MTV, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central, BET, Paramount Channel, VH1, VIVA and COLORS. Viacom brands are seen globally in more than 600 million households in 170 territories and 37 languages via more than 200 locally programmed and operated TV channels and more than 550 digital media and mobile TV properties. For more information about Viacom and its businesses, visit www.viacom.com. Keep up with Viacom news by following Viacom's blog at blog.viacom.com and Twitter feed at www.twitter.com/Viacom

About Playground

Playground is a New York and London based television, film and theatre production company founded in 2012 by award-winning producer Colin Callender. It is committed to producing smart, entertaining drama for the screen and the stage bringing together the finest US and UK talent from the worlds of theatre, film, and television.

Playground has produced over 75 hours of primetime television drama garnering 15 Emmy nominations, 26 BAFTA nominations, and 12 Golden Globe nominations, including winning a Golden Globe for Best Miniseries.

Recent productions include *Wolf Hall*, the BAFTA, Golden Globe and Peabody Award winning miniseries starring Mark Rylance, Damian Lewis and Claire Foy for the BBC and MASTERPIECE, and *The Dresser*, the RTS winning television adaptation of Ronald Harwood's acclaimed play starring Ian McKellen and Anthony Hopkins and directed by Richard Eyre for the BBC and Starz, *The White Princess*, a limited series for Starz drawn from the bestselling book by Philippa Gregory, *Howards End*, Academy Award-winner Kenneth Lonergan's adaptation of E.M. Forster's classic novel starring Hayley Atwell, Matthew Macfadyen and Tracey Ullman directed by Hettie Macdonald for the BBC and Starz, *Little Women* adapted by Heidi Thomas and starring Emily Watson, Michael Gambon and Angela Lansbury for the BBC and MASTERPIECE, *King Lear* starring Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson and directed by Richard Eyre for the BBC and Amazon, Lucy Kirkwood's *Chimerica* starring Alessandro Nivola, Cherry Jones and Sophie Okonedo for Channel 4, and *The Spanish Princess*, a continuation of *The White Princess* and *The White Queen* starring Charlotte Hope, Laura Carmichael and Harriet Walter for Starz.

-more-

Playground's previous theatre productions on Broadway include: Nora Ephron's Tony-nominated *Lucky Guy* directed by George C. Wolfe starring Tom Hanks in his Broadway debut, Harvey Fierstein's Tony-nominated *Casa Valentina* directed by Joe Mantello, the Tony award-winning revival of musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, Jez Butterworth's *The River* directed by Ian Rickson starring Hugh Jackman, and Kenneth Branagh and Rob Ashford's critically acclaimed groundbreaking production of *Macbeth* at The Park Avenue Armory in New York, and, in the West End, John Tiffany's *The Glass Menagerie* and Casey Nicholaw's *Dreamgirls*.

Playground, in partnership with Sonia Friedman Productions, is currently producing *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* in the West End where it won a record-breaking 9 Olivier Awards, on Broadway where it won 6 Tony Awards, including Best Play, and in Melbourne. Other current theatre productions include the Tony Award-winning best musical *Dear Evan Hansen* on Broadway.

About MASTERPIECE

Winner of 83 Primetime Emmys® and 16 Peabody Awards, MASTERPIECE has been essential Sunday night viewing for millions of fans since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is the executive producer of the series. Funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by Viking and Raymond James with additional support from public television viewers and contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust. Presented on PBS by WGBH Boston, MASTERPIECE is known for recent hits such as *Sherlock*, *Downton Abbey* and *Victoria*, and beloved classics such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga* and *Poldark*.

About Screen Yorkshire

Screen Yorkshire champions the film, TV, games and digital industries in Yorkshire and the Humber, UK. Its aim is to secure and support the very best projects, companies and individuals, helping to make the region one of the most sought-after destinations for production in the UK.

Screen Yorkshire offers production financing through its Yorkshire Content Fund. Credits include: *Hope Gap*, *Official Secrets*, *Ackley Bridge*, *Dark River*, *Yardie*, *Ghost Stories*, *Stardog & Turbocat*, *Journeyman*, *Dad's Army*, *Swallows and Amazons*, *Testament of Youth*, '71, *National Treasure*, *The Great Train Robbery*, *Peaky Blinders*, *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* and *Hank Zipzer*.

Screen Yorkshire delivers the Film Office services for Yorkshire & Humber and has been leading the development of the Yorkshire Screen Hub, a cluster for the screen industries, recognised by the BFI in 2016 as the first awardee of funds from its Creative Cluster Challenge Fund. Screen Yorkshire also works with ScreenSkills, NFTS and the BFI to develop regional and UK wide talent by devising and delivering industry schemes www.screenyorkshire.co.uk

About all3media international

all3media international distributes popular, award-winning TV programmes to over 1,000 broadcasters and media platforms around the world.

The company has been celebrated for producing, marketing and distributing quality, ground-breaking and pioneering shows to global audience – consistently topping the Broadcast and Televisual annual Indies Surveys and we have been awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of our growth – twice.

-more-

Our catalogue contains over 11,500 hours of content across all genres, with a focus on drama, comedy, factual, entertainment and formats. As well as Britain's top-selling series *Midsomer Murders*, our lead dramas include *National Treasure*, *The Missing*, *Clique*, *Safe House*, *Indian Summers*, *Liar* and *Hinterland*. Our contemporary comedy slate features *Fleabag* and *GameFace*. Factual, entertainment and format bestsellers include *Gogglebox*, *Undercover Boss*, *Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares*, *The Gadget Show* and *The Cube*.

As part of the UK's leading multi-label studio we partner with UK and international producers – including our own studios – in developing, financing and delivering content and formats.