

PRESS RELEASE

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A young girl's journal of hope and tragedy.

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

on MASTERPIECE Classic

Hosted By Laura Linney

Sunday, April 11, 2010 at 9pm ET on PBS

A Jewish teenager hiding from the Nazis pours out her heart to the only true friend she has left: her diary. MASTERPIECE Classic presents the most accurate-ever adaptation of one of the world's most beloved and widely read memoirs, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, premiering on Holocaust Remembrance Day, April 11, 2010 at 9pm ET on PBS (check local listings).

"Every generation needs to look at Anne from its own perspective," says MASTERPIECE executive producer Rebecca Eaton. "In this new MASTERPIECE adaptation, viewers will see Anne as a bright, charming, and difficult teenager—and as the gifted writer she was destined to become."

Adapted by Deborah Moggach (*Pride and Prejudice* starring Keira Knightley) and drawing on Anne Frank's actual words to a greater extent than any previous dramatization, *The Diary of Anne Frank* stars newcomer Ellie Kendrick (*An Education*) as Anne, a typical thirteen-year-old at the outset of the film, at odds with her mother, interested in boys, clothes, her appearance, and intrigued by her unfolding sexual development.

"She doesn't just play Anne Frank, she becomes Anne Frank," wrote *The Guardian* in its enthusiastic review of the UK broadcast.

Anne matured remarkably during the two traumatic years that she, her family, and four others were closeted in the "secret annex" of her father's business in Amsterdam. Yet she never lost the distinctive traits of a normal teenager.

But she was a teen with a very unusual gift. In *Anne Frank: The Book, the Life, the Afterlife*, author Francine Prose praises the surprising literary quality of the diary, marveling that "one of the greatest books about the Nazi genocide should have been written by a girl between the ages of thirteen and fifteen."

The MASTERPIECE production co-stars Iain Glen (*Into the Storm*) as Anne's optimistic and unflappable father, Otto, and Tamsin Greig (*Emma*) as her mother, Edith, who sees with clear-eyed horror the fate that may await them all. Felicity Jones (*Northanger Abbey*) plays Anne's older sister, Margot, a quiet and obedient girl, who throws herself into her studies to keep from going mad.

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Appearing as the other residents of the Secret Annex are: Ron Cook (*Little Dorrit*) and Lesley Sharp (*Return to Cranford*) as Hermann and Petronella van Daan, family friends who are far more emotionally volatile than the Franks; Geoff Breton (*The Old Curiosity Shop*) as the van Daan's teenage son, Peter, who evolves from a figure of ridicule into Anne's first true love; and Nicholas Farrell (*Collision*) as Albert Dussel, a middle-aged dentist who becomes Anne's difficult and demanding roommate.

Kate Ashfield (*Collision*) plays Miep Gies, an employee of Otto Frank's firm who serves as an indispensable link to the outside world, along with her co-workers Johannes Kleiman (Roger Frost), Victor Kugler (Tim Dantay), and Bep Voskuijl (Mariah Gale).

Together, this amazing acting ensemble recreates what it was like for the eight fugitives to live in close quarters in their secret hiding place, and how a kind of normal life evolved, with chores, meals, parties, jokes, domestic arguments, philosophical musings, and innocent assignations between Anne and Peter.

"Thanks to Anne's diary, all human life is captured there in the annex during those two years," says screenwriter Moggach. "It's totally gripping what was going on."

One thing that Anne's housemates noticed was that she threw herself into her writing with uncharacteristic seriousness and discipline. What her diary and journals held they couldn't imagine—nor could the Nazi officer who unceremoniously dumped the seemingly mundane notebooks onto the floor, to be abandoned and later rescued for posterity.

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To inspire fresh and diverse perspectives on *The Diary of Anne Frank*, MASTERPIECE and the WGBH Lab Open Call series have launched the ***Masterpiece Media Diary Project***. The project invites the next generation of media makers and storytellers, ages 13 and up, to submit online video or audio diaries on the subject of intolerance in 2010. More information about the Corporation for Public Broadcasting-funded project can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/masterpiece>

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The Diary of Anne Frank is a Darlow Smithson Production (an IMG Media company), presented on PBS by MASTERPIECE. The director is Jon Jones. The screenwriter is Deborah Moggach. The producer is Elinor Day. MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston. The executive producer is Rebecca Eaton. Funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by public television viewers. Laura Linney is the host of MASTERPIECE Classic.

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