

# MASTERPIECE

They're not in Kansas anymore.

## ***The Chaperone***

Elizabeth McGovern and Haley Lu Richardson star in a  
captivating drama scripted by Julian Fellowes  
on MASTERPIECE  
Sunday, November 24, 2019 at 9pm on PBS

The star, writer, and director of *Downton Abbey* the series and film reunite in *The Chaperone*, based on Laura Moriarty's best-selling novel and featuring actress Elizabeth McGovern, screenwriter Julian Fellowes, and director Michael Engler. Portraying a Jazz-age quest for personal fulfillment by two markedly different women, the 90-minute program premieres on MASTERPIECE, Sunday, November 24, 2019 at 9pm ET on PBS after a successful theatrical run. *The Chaperone* is the inaugural production of MASTERPIECE FILMS, a movie-making spinoff of the multi-award-winning drama series, which is nearing its 50th anniversary.

*The Chaperone* is a co-production of MASTERPIECE, PBS, FIBONACCI FILMS, ANONYMOUS CONTENT and ROSE PICTURES.

McGovern (*Downton Abbey*, *Ordinary People*) stars as Norma Carlisle, the diffident chaperone to fellow Kansan, Louise Brooks, destined to become a 1920s sex symbol, played by co-star Haley Lu Richardson (*Split*). The cast also includes Victoria Hill (*First Reformed*), Géza Röhrig (*Son of Saul*), Campbell Scott (*House of Cards*), Blythe Danner (*Will & Grace*), Miranda Otto (*Homeland*, *The Lord of the Rings*), and New York City Ballet principal dancer Robert Fairchild.

Telling the fictionalized backstory of real-life silent-screen star Louise Brooks, *The Chaperone* begins in 1922, when Brooks is a teenage modern-dance sensation in her hometown, Wichita, Kansas. Winning a place at the renowned Denishawn Dance Company in New York City, run by Ruth St. Denis (Otto) and Ted Shawn (Fairchild), Louise requires a chaperone for her journey from staid Middle America to the Gatsby-like glory of the big city.

Enter a family friend, Norma, who is the middle-aged mother of twin grown-up sons and the wife of an emotionally distant local attorney (Scott). She has her own reasons to sign on as Louise's minder. In many ways, she is less worldly wise than her fifteen-year-old ward. Nonetheless, she does her best to enforce Presbyterian values on Louise—a job that grows increasingly difficult as their train makes its way east.

Once in New York, Louise pursues dance by day and forbidden pleasures by night (whenever she can sneak away from Norma), while the chaperone embarks on a personal mission: discovering exactly who she is. Years before, Norma was raised by nuns in a New York orphanage, then placed on a notorious "orphan train," where she eventually landed with a farm couple in Kansas. Tracking down the orphanage, Norma asks for the records of her adoption but is refused by the mother superior. She then enlists the friendly caretaker, a German immigrant named Joseph (Röhrig), to help her penetrate the mystery of her identity.

*The Chaperone* is a story of self-discovery during a tumultuous period in American history. Louise will go on to become an icon of the Roaring 'Twenties and a rebellious model for her generation, pursuing her glittering career from New York to Hollywood to Berlin. But Norma, too, will embrace rebellion—and in Wichita, Kansas, no less!

*The Chaperone* is a co-production of MASTERPIECE, PBS, FIBONACCI FILMS, ANONYMOUS CONTENT and ROSE PICTURES. The Executive Producers are Rebecca Eaton, Simon Curtis, Julian Fellowes, Karin Catt, Eli Selden and Adam Shulman. The Co-Executive Producer is Jon Levin and the Co-Producer is Jolian Blevins. The producers are Victoria Hill, Rose Ganguzza, Kelly Carmichael, Elizabeth McGovern, Greg Clark, Luca Scalisi and Andrew Mann. It is adapted by Julian Fellowes from the novel by Laura Moriarty. The director is Michael Engler.

### **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 FIBONACCI FILMS**

Fibonacci Films is a neoteric independent film company based in Los Angeles founded in 2016. Chairman Greg Clark, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and former CEO of the American software company Symantec along with actor, writer, producer Victoria Hill, created Fibonacci Films to produce and finance independent films predicated on character-driven stories of originality across genres that push boundaries, create discussion and have strong theatrical potential. Fibonacci Films has the unique distinction of being a vertically integrated company capable of developing, financing and producing films in-house giving them the ability to seize promising opportunities when they arise. In 2018, Fibonacci Films released the critically acclaimed film *First Reformed*, written and directed, by seminal screenwriter/director Paul Schrader (*Raging Bull*, *Taxi Driver*) who received a 2019 Oscar nomination for Best Screenplay and Spirit Award nomination for Best Director and Screenplay. The film stars actor Ethan Hawke, nominated for the Spirit Award for Best Actor. The film co-stars Amanda Seyfried and Victoria Hill. *First Reformed* was released theatrically in the US by A24 on May 18, 2018. Upcoming titles for Fibonacci Films include *The Secrets We Keep* directed by Yuval Adler, *Voyagers* directed by Neil Burger, and *Breaking News In Yuba County* directed by Tate Taylor.

**[pbs.org/masterpiece](https://pbs.org/masterpiece)**

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