

MASTERPIECE

Time stops when the heart breaks.

The Child in Time

**Starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Kelly Macdonald
in an adaptation of Ian McEwan's acclaimed novel
on MASTERPIECE**

Sunday, April 1, 2018 at 9pm on PBS

An everyday moment triggers a crisis in the lives of a happy, successful British couple in Ian McEwan's haunting tale of a lost child and redeemed love, in *The Child in Time*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch (*Sherlock*, *The Imitation Game*) and Kelly Macdonald (*Boardwalk Empire*, *Goodbye Christopher Robin*), and airing on MASTERPIECE, Sunday, April 1, 2018 at 9pm ET on PBS.

Adapted from McEwan's 1987 Whitbread Prize-winning novel, which critic Christopher Hitchens called the author's "masterpiece," this 90-minute film earned high praise during its recent UK broadcast. The *Guardian* found it "a deeply affecting portrait of loss and what that does to love," and *The Times* lauded it as "a rarity: nuanced, unmawkish, unsentimental."

The Child in Time represents the first TV production by Pinewood Television and Benedict Cumberbatch's UK production company SunnyMarch TV. It is coproduced by MASTERPIECE for BBC One. MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston.

Cumberbatch stars as Stephen Lewis, a noted children's book author, and Macdonald plays his wife, Julie, a professional musician. They are the doting parents of Kate (Beatrice White), an impish four-year-old, their only child. Then one day Kate mysteriously disappears during a shopping outing with Stephen. It's every parent's worst nightmare, and it upends Stephen and Julie's lives in extraordinary ways.

The Child in Time also stars Stephen Campbell Moore (*The Last Post*, *Goodbye Christopher Robin*) as Charles, Stephen's publisher and best friend, and Saskia Reeves (*Wolf Hall*) as Charles' wife, Thelma. Charles gets Stephen appointed to a government commission on child care reform in hopes of taking his friend's mind off Kate, who by this point has been missing for three years. But to Stephen, whose vivid memories of Kate are ever present, the committee's direction seems maddeningly out of touch with what children actually need.

Kate haunts every aspect of Stephen's life—as a phantom at his side, a voice in his ear, a fleeting glimpse in a crowd of school children.

Estranged from Julie due to the stress of their mutual loss, Stephen makes an attempt to reconnect, going to the village where she now lives.

There he is overcome with a powerful feeling of *déjà vu* at a pub called The Bell, where he spots a woman who appears to be from a moment in time, decades ago, and the woman acknowledges him. He is certain he has been there before, but he can't think when.

Meanwhile, Charles has abruptly left his publishing job and retired to the country with Thelma, where he reverts deeper and deeper into his boyhood in a disquieting reversal of normal aging.

With the gentlest touch of the fantastical, this riveting story takes viewers in and out of the present, past, and future, exploring the twin themes of the title—childhood and time—and leading to a conclusion that is as surprising as it is gratifying.

Reviewing the novel thirty years ago, Nicholas Spice of *The London Review of Books* wrote, “The book is about many things: about loss and its effect upon love, about the nature of childhood and how adulthood betrays it, about being a parent and being one’s parents’ child, about the mysteries and magic of time.”

The Child in Time is produced by Pinewood Television and SunnyMarch TV and co-produced by MASTERPIECE for BBC One. Stephen Butchard (*The Last Kingdom*) adapted, Julian Farino (*Entourage*) is Director and Grainne Marmion is Producer. Executive Producers are Helen Gregory for Pinewood Television, Benedict Cumberbatch, Adam Ackland and David Boulter for SunnyMarch TV, Lucy Richer for the BBC, Rebecca Eaton for MASTERPIECE and Stephen Butchard.

The MASTERPIECE coproduction partnership was established by Rebecca Eaton at MASTERPIECE and Rola Bauer, Managing Director at STUDIOCANAL TV. The drama is distributed worldwide by STUDIOCANAL, investment partners in SunnyMarch TV.

pbs.org/masterpiece

Press Contacts

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

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