

MASTERPIECE™

Based on a true story

The Durrells in Corfu

Starring Keeley Hawes in a miniseries inspired by

Gerald Durrell's Corfu Trilogy

On MASTERPIECE

Sundays, October 16 - November 20, 2016 at the special time of 8pm ET on PBS

Keeley Hawes (*Upstairs Downstairs*, *Wives and Daughters*) stars as an intrepid widow who decamps from dreary 1930s England to a sun-dappled Greek island with her four recalcitrant children, ages 11 to 21, on *The Durrells in Corfu*, a six-part adaptation of Gerald Durrell's *My Family and Other Animals* and its two sequels, airing on MASTERPIECE, Sundays, October 16th - November 20th, 2016 at the special time of 8pm ET on PBS.

Critics were enthralled by *The Durrells in Corfu* during its recent UK broadcast: *The Daily Mail* called it "a masterclass in ideal Sunday telly," while *The Daily Telegraph* wrote "...it has all the classic ingredients for Sunday night viewing," and praised the program's "warmth, nostalgia, beautiful locations and a star, in Keeley Hawes.... [It's] more than enough to lift the spirits, salve the soul, and make us dive for a laptop to book our very own bit of bliss in the sun."

Co-starring with Hawes, who plays Louisa Durrell, are Josh O'Connor (*Florence Foster Jenkins*) as her eldest son, Larry, the instigator of the family's sudden move to Corfu and a budding writer on his way to becoming the famous novelist Lawrence Durrell; newcomer Callum Woodhouse as son number two, Leslie, an impulsive firearms enthusiast; Daisy Waterstone (*Cyberbully*) as daughter Margo, sixteen and man-crazy; and Milo Parker (*Mr. Holmes*) as eleven-year-old Gerry, who only has eyes for wildlife and grew up to be a world-renowned naturalist.

Also appearing are Alexis Georgoulis (*My Life in Ruins*) as Spiros, a Greek taxi driver and all-around fixer for the disoriented Durrells; Yorgos Karamihos (*Ben-Hur*) as Dr. Theo Stephanides, Gerry's zoological soulmate; and Ulric von der Esch (*183 Days*) as Sven, a handsome Swedish expat, living his own bucolic fantasy on Corfu, into which he entangles Louisa.

A tight budget and desperation—not holiday-making—originally drive the Durrells to sink their meager savings into boat fare to Corfu, where they hope to find a refuge more welcoming for their unconventional ways than the stuffy UK. They arrive on an island with no beach resorts, night clubs, tourist shops, or even electricity—for this is 1935. What Corfu does have is endless opportunity for living, loving, shooting, and animal collecting—depending on your preferences.

— more —

Gerald Durrell drew on (and embellished) the family's real-life adventures to create three bestsellers: *My Family and Other Animals* (published in 1956), *Birds, Beasts, and Relatives* (1969), and *Fauna and Family* (1978).

These serve as inspiration for *The Durrells in Corfu* screenwriter, Simon Nye (*Men Behaving Badly*, MASTERPIECE's *My Family and Other Animals*), whose adaptation has a bit of the epic quality of Greek myth: There's Gerry's enchantment with the marvelous animals that populate the island; Margo and Leslie's quest to cast a spell on members of the opposite sex; Larry's titanic struggle to produce a novel that someone will publish; and Louisa's futile stratagems to force her children to get jobs.

But the central odyssey is the children's search for a suitable mate for their lovelorn mom. Of course, success hinges on whether mother and offspring can agree on what constitutes "suitable."

The Durrells in Corfu is a Sid Gentle Films Ltd/MASTERPIECE coproduction, based on the *Corfu Trilogy* by Gerald Durrell. It is written by Simon Nye, directed by Steve Barron and Roger Goldby and produced by Christopher Hall. The executive producers are Sally Woodward Gentle, Lee Morris, and Simon Nye for Sid Gentle Films Ltd and Rebecca Eaton for MASTERPIECE on PBS.

About MASTERPIECE

The top-rated primetime show on PBS, MASTERPIECE is celebrating its 45th anniversary in 2016. MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston. Rebecca Eaton is Executive Producer. Funding for *The Durrells in Corfu* is provided by Viking River Cruises and POM Wonderful with additional support from public television viewers and contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust. MASTERPIECE is known for presenting iconic shows such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga*, *Poldark*, *Sherlock*, and *Downton Abbey*.

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