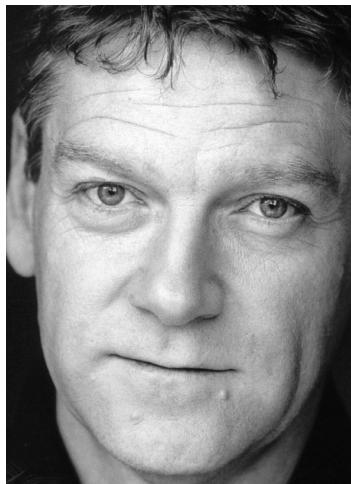


BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

MASTERPIECE MYSTERY!

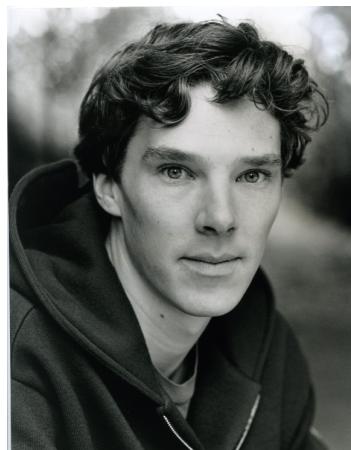


Kenneth Branagh

Kurt Wallander in *Wallander II*

Renowned for his interpretation of another melancholy Scandinavian—Prince Hamlet—Kenneth Branagh brings the existential Nordic outlook up to date as the gritty Swedish sleuth, Kurt Wallander, based on the bestselling thrillers by Henning Mankell. The first season of *Wallander* earned Branagh widespread critical acclaim and Emmy and Golden Globe nominations for Best Actor, and series II won him a coveted BAFTA Award for Best Actor. An avid consumer of

Wallander novels during his peripatetic life, Branagh is an acting, directing, producing, and screenwriting legend. After making his name in British theater, his first venture into film met instant success: his 1989 production of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, which won a score of international awards including Academy Award nominations for Best Actor and Best Director; it was also later broadcast on MASTERPIECE (on which Branagh first appeared in *Fortunes of War*). Four other critically acclaimed film adaptations of Shakespeare followed, including his 1996 full-length version of *Hamlet*, which received four Academy Award nominations. In an astonishingly wide-ranging career, Branagh has directed Robert DeNiro and John Gielgud, acted under Robert Altman and Woody Allen, and played everyone from Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which he also directed, to polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton in *Shackleton*, to anti-Hitler conspirator Major General Henning von Tresckow in the 2008 feature film *Valkyrie*. Not to mention he recently adapted and directed Mozart's whimsical *The Magic Flute* for film. He steps into another realm of whimsy with the movie version of the Marvel Comics classic *Thor*, which he is directing, due for release in 2011.



Benedict Cumberbatch

Sherlock Holmes in *Sherlock*

Now earning rave reviews for his leading role in Terrence Rattigan's *After the Dance* at London's National Theatre, Benedict Cumberbatch is no stranger to MASTERPIECE. He co-starred in *Small Island*, earning a BAFTA nomination for best supporting actor; he played the lead in *The Last Enemy*; and he won best actor at the Monte Carlo Television Festival and a Golden Nymph

Award for his starring role in *To the Ends of the Earth*. Not to mention, MYSTERY! is almost a family affair for him, since his father (Timothy Carlton) has played characters on *Poirot*, *Foyle's War*, and *Inspector Lewis*; and his mother (Wanda Ventham) has appeared

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on *Inspector Lewis* and had a recurring role on *Hetty Wainthropp Investigates*. Keeping the original family name for his own acting career, Cumberbatch notes that its antiquated ring makes “LA agents think I’m a Dickens character.” Although he has yet to play a Dickens part, he has done practically everything else. He gave a BAFTA-nominated performance as physicist Stephen Hawking on the BBC drama *Hawking*, he was the villain in the acclaimed feature film *Atonement*, he played Scarlett Johansson’s pompous husband in the movie *The Other Boleyn Girl*, and he was the male lead in Henrik Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler* at the Almeida Theatre under the direction of Richard Eyre, for which he received Olivier and Ian Charleson award nominations. Looking ahead, Cumberbatch will play the lead in the feature film *Last Star*, appears in *The Whistleblower* and *Four Lions*, and has just been cast in Steven Spielberg’s upcoming World War I epic, *War Horse*.



Mark Gatiss

Co-Creator, Co-Executive producer, and Co-Writer for *Sherlock*

Mark Gatiss is famous all over the UK as a member of the comedy team *The League of Gentlemen*, which started as a stage show and later moved to BBC Two, winning a cult following and BAFTA, Golden Rose, and Royal Television Society awards. *MASTERPIECE* viewers will recognize him as the spineless half-brother in Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*, the mellow Ratty in *Wind and the Willows*, and as dodgy suspects in episodes of *Marple* and *Poirot*. He has appeared in many other British TV series and in films ranging from *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* to Woody Allen’s *Match Point*. He starred with Diana Rigg and Lesley Manville in the stage premiere of Pedro Almodovar’s *All About My Mother*. Most recently, he appeared as impresario Malcolm McLaren in the Boy George biopic *Worried About the Boy* and, this Christmas, he will make his debut at the National Theatre in Alan Ayckbourn’s *Season’s Greetings*. As well as co-writing *The League of Gentlemen*, Gatiss has authored *The Worst Journey in the World*, *Crooked House*, and *The First Men in the Moon* for the BBC. In addition to episodes of *Poirot*, he has written three episodes of *Doctor Who*, becoming one of only three people to have written for the show and appeared in it. On *Sherlock*, he shares the same triple-threat credits as his *Doctor Who* colleague Steven Moffat (co-creator, co-Executive Producer, and co-writer)—with the addition that he also has a surprise role!



Steven Moffat

Co-Creator, Co-Executive producer, and Co-Writer for *Sherlock*

One of Britain’s most eminent television writers, Steven Moffat is best known as Chief Writer and Executive Producer for *Doctor Who*, which recently launched a new season to great acclaim with Matt Smith as the Eleventh Doctor, accompanied by his trusty assistant played by Karen Gillan. Moffat’s previous episodes for the series won multiple BAFTA and Hugo awards, along with the coveted

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“Television Moment of the Year.” He also wrote and was an Executive Producer of BBC One’s *Jekyll*, a six-part thriller starring James Nesbitt as a descendant of Robert Louis Stevenson’s multiple-personality protagonist. And as creator/writer of the cult BBC Two sitcom *Coupling* (produced by his wife, *Sherlock* producer Sue Vertue) he won the Silver Rose of Montreux 2001 and the award for Best TV Comedy at the British Comedy Awards. Moffat got his start in television in the late 1980s as creator and writer of *Press Gang*, a series about a group of wayward high school students who are given a local newspaper to run, which won BAFTA and Royal Television Society Awards. A string of innovative and acclaimed comedy projects followed. Looking ahead, he is co-writer of *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn* for Steven Spielberg, to be released during Christmas 2011.



Rebecca Eaton

Executive producer, MASTERPIECE

Since taking over the helm of the PBS series MASTERPIECE THEATRE and MYSTERY! in 1985, Eaton has been responsible for such high-profile titles as *Prime Suspect*, *Bleak House*, *The Lost Prince*, *Inspector Morse*, *Lewis*, Tony Hillerman’s *Skinwalkers*, *Coyote Waits*, and *A Thief of Time*, *The Complete Jane Austen*, *Cranford*, *Wallander*, and *Little Dorrit*. She has accrued a bookcase of accolades, with twenty-eight Primetime Emmy Awards (including seven in 2009 for *Little Dorrit* and twelve nominations for 2010), fourteen Peabody Awards, a Golden Globe and two Academy Award nominations for the MASTERPIECE co-production *Mrs. Brown*. In 2008, she oversaw the highly successful launch of the new MASTERPIECE, with new scheduling (Classic, Mystery! and Contemporary), new hosts and a new look. The revamped series has drawn a new generation of drama fans, and at the same time increased the size of the series’ core audience. Rebecca Eaton’s distinguished career has earned her the official recognition of Queen Elizabeth II—with an honorary OBE (Officer, Order of the British Empire), presented by the British ambassador in Washington, DC, in 2003. An alumna of Vassar College, Eaton was a producer for the BBC World Service before coming to WGBH.

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Online press materials available at pressroom.wgbh.org and pbs.org/pressroom

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