

Biographical Notes

World on Fire



Peter Bowker
Writer, *World on Fire*

MASTERPIECE fans remember Peter Bowker's impassioned adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* from 2009, which captured Emily Brontë's masterpiece in all its complexity. With *World on Fire* he has created a plot with even more twists, turns, and memorable characters, centered on the chaotic events at the outset of World War II. Bowker has been an established screenwriter in the U.K since penning scripts for *Casualty* in the early 1990s. Since then, he has written for many long-running series such as *Where the Heart Is* and *Clocking Off*. His original work has included *Undercover Heart*; *Flesh and Blood*, for which he won Best Writer at the RTS Awards; *Blackpool*, which was

awarded BANFF Film Festival Best Mini-Series and Global Television Grand Prize; and *Occupation*, which was awarded Best Drama Serial at the BAFTA Awards, in addition to Best Short-Form Drama at the WGGB Awards and another RTS Best Writer Award. He has since written *Eric and Ernie* and *Marvellous*. Both productions have won prestigious awards, including a Best Drama BAFTA for *Marvellous*, which became the most popular BBC2 single drama of the last 20 years. Most recently he has written an adaptation of John Lanchester's novel *Capital* and two series of the acclaimed *The A Word*.



Julia Brown
Lois Bennett, *World on Fire*

Driven to escape her cheating lover and dysfunctional family, Julia Brown's character in *World on Fire* finds a wartime role that exploits her remarkable singing talent. Luckily, Brown herself is a gifted vocalist and sang much of the soundtrack that accompanies the episodes. In earlier work, she has performed a host of supporting roles on prominent TV series. 2018 saw her as a recurring character in the fourth season of the critically acclaimed mystery crime drama *Shetland*, playing a misunderstood teenager. In the same year, she was seen as Ecgywn, future Queen consort of Wessex, in BBC America's popular *The Last Kingdom*, based on Bernard Cornwell's stirring *Saxon Stories*. Brown was previously best known for her

2014 portrayal of Keri Summers in CBBC's *M.I. High*, a whimsical action series following the exploits of four children fighting criminals on behalf of the fictional spy agency MI9. She reteamed with CBBC in 2015 for the TV series *Eve*, about the world's first fully sentient artificial person coming to live with an ordinary family. In 2020, Brown will also be in *The Angel of Darkness*, the anticipated sequel to 2018's *The Alienist*.



Jonah Hauer-King

Harry Chase, *World on Fire*

Jonah Hauer-King plays an idealistic British translator turned army officer in *World on Fire*. He is currently in production for the live action film of *The Little Mermaid*, directed by Rob Marshall, in which he will take on the role of Prince Eric. Jonah last appeared on MASTERPIECE as Laurie in *Little Women*. Most recently, in 2019 he starred alongside Clive Owen and Tim Roth in Francois Girard's film *The Song Of Names*, and played the young lead in Sony's *A Dog's Way Home*, alongside Ashley Judd. In 2018, he starred opposite Naomi Watts and Bobby Cannavale in James Demonaco's *Once Upon A Time In Staten Island*. Other credits include *Ashes In The Snow*, *Old Boys* and his first feature lead role, *The Last Photograph*. He was also in the West End's run of *The Entertainer* starring opposite Kenneth Branagh. Jonah studied at Cambridge University.



Helen Hunt

Nancy Campbell, *World on Fire*

Helen Hunt's character in *World on Fire* is a reporter addicted to danger, trying to discover the truth about Nazi Germany from inside the Third Reich itself. Winner of a Best Actress Oscar® for the romantic comedy *As Good as It Gets*, Hunt has had a remarkable career, not only for her acclaimed performances on film, TV, and the stage, but also as an accomplished writer, director and producer. She combined all these talents in *Mad About You*, the 1990s TV sitcom for which she acted, wrote, directed, and produced, earning four Emmy® Awards for Outstanding Lead Actress, four Golden Globe® Awards (three as lead actress and one as producer for Best Comedy), and a Screen Actors Guild Award®. The hit series is now in a limited revival on Spectrum Originals. In other work, her 2012 performance in the movie *The Sessions* garnered her an Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Female and nominations in the same category by the Academy Awards, Golden

Globe® Awards, SAG Awards, Broadcast Film Critics' Awards and BAFTA Awards. Hunt's recent big screen roles include *I See You*, *Candy Jar*, *The Miracle Season* and *Ride* (which she also co-wrote, produced, and directed), as well as *The Night Clerk*, due for release in 2020. On the small screen, she could last be seen in the 2017 Fox drama series *Shots Fired*, in which she played the governor of North Carolina, coping with a pair of racially charged shootings.



Zofia Wichłacz

Kasia Tomaszewski, *World on Fire*

Playing a Warsaw waitress turned freedom fighter, Zofia Wichłacz is an award-winning actress with many stellar credits on Polish film, television, and stage, now breaking into the international scene. Most recently, in 2019 she starred in the critically acclaimed Danish television program, *DNA*, playing Julita, the young mother at the center of the story. In 2018, she starred in the Netflix original series *1983*, an alternate take on history in which the fall of communism never took place. Also in 2018, she appeared in Matthew Weiner's Amazon series *The Romanoffs* and the critically acclaimed Polish program, *Rojst* for Showmax. The previous year, she won the Shooting Star Award at the Berlin Film Festival as one of the rising new international stars for her performances in *Warsaw '44*, *Amok*, and other impressive productions. Also for *Warsaw '44*, she was the youngest actress (at age 19) to win the Eagle/Discovery of the Year—Poland's Academy Award.



Susanne Simpson

Executive Producer, MASTERPIECE

Since joining MASTERPIECE in 2007, Simpson has been responsible for such programs as *Sherlock*, *Wolf Hall*, and *Victoria*, and oversaw all aspects of the U.S. broadcast of the hit series *Downton Abbey*, the most watched drama in PBS history and recipient of 59 Emmy® nominations and 12 wins. She is also the Executive Producer of MASTERPIECE Studio, a podcast with more than 14 million downloads since 2016. Simpson created the MASTERPIECE Trust, a fund to ensure the future of the series. She is a two-time Academy Award® nominee and two-time Emmy® winner for her documentary and dramatic films for television and theater. Prior to MASTERPIECE, she was a Senior Producer for the science series NOVA, responsible for the content development, financing, and production of new programming, and was the executive producer of IMAX productions such as the award-winning *Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure*. Simpson is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, and the Writers Guild.

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-at-large for the series, and Susanne Simpson is the executive producer. 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*.

pbs.org/masterpiece

MASTERPIECE Press Contacts

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

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