

PRESS RELEASE

Something to be glad about

POLLYANNA

by Eleanor H. Porter

on MASTERPIECE THEATRE

November 28, at 9pm ET on PBS

A freckled-faced girl with an uncommonly upbeat outlook on life gladdens the hearts of MASTERPIECE THEATRE viewers in an uplifting new adaptation of the children's classic *Pollyanna*, airing Sunday, November 28, at 9pm ET on PBS (check local listings).

Eleven-year-old Georgina Terry stars as Pollyanna Whittier, an orphan sent to live with her gloomy Aunt Polly, who is played by Amanda Burton (*Forgotten*).

Also appearing are Kenneth Cranham (*Lady Audley's Secret*) as the morose millionaire Mr. Pendleton, Aden Gillett (*The Innocents*) as the depressed Dr. Chiltern, and Pam Ferris (*Our Mutual Friend*) as the shut-in cynic Mrs. Snow.

All these grown-ups are stuck in a rut and therefore ideal—if unwilling—candidates for Pollyanna's Glad Game, a cheery contest to find "something about everything to be glad about." Pollyanna is a past master at finding a silver lining in the most threatening of storms.

Rounding out the exceptional cast are Kate Ashfield as Aunt Polly's housemaid, Nancy, and Tom Ellis as Tim the shy chauffeur—a perfect pair for Pollyanna's matchmaking schemes.

Simon Nye wrote the script from Eleanor H. Porter's 1913 bestseller. Nye also scripted another MASTERPIECE THEATRE family favorite, *The Railway Children*, which *The Houston Chronicle* deemed "delightful... impeccably performed...charming."

The same adjectives definitely apply to *Pollyanna*, which charts the impish heroine's inauspicious arrival in a veritable *Peyton Place* of misanthropes (translated from Porter's original New England setting to Britain for this UK production).

When Pollyanna is assigned a Spartan attic room in her aunt's well appointed, virtually empty mansion, the girl is glad for its splendid access to a climbing tree. She is similarly glad to chance across Jimmy the homeless orphan (Ben Thornton), since he offers a cause to champion. And she is definitely glad to discover that Aunt Polly once had a lover, since it opens a strategy for warming her very cold heart.

But all is not straightforward in Pollyanna's war against pessimism, since she must overcome a personal tragedy that threatens to banish "glad" from her vocabulary forever.

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With its message of effervescent optimism, *Pollyanna* was sensationally successful in pre-World War I America, and its heroine's name rubbed off on countless babies, businesses, and even a brand of milk.

The name also found a place in the dictionary, with a faintly and unfairly pejorative nuance. "Pollyanna: a person regarded as being foolishly or blindly optimistic," says one modern reference work.

Not fair! Pollyanna was no fool, as she proves by raising the sick, restoring faith to the troubled, placing Jimmy in a loving home (with a legacy to boot!), while expunging heartbreaks from the past and uniting two couples in happy marriage.

Not bad for a foolish, blind optimist!

Pollyanna is a production of Carlton Television, and is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston. It is adapted for television by Simon Nye from the book by Eleanor H. Porter. The producer is Trevor Hopkins, and the director is Sarah Harding (*Dead Gorgeous*). Charles Elton is the executive producer for Carlton.

MASTERPIECE THEATRE has been presented on PBS by WGBH Boston since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. The series is funded by PBS. For more information about MASTERPIECE THEATRE, visit the series Web site at pbs.org/masterpiece.

MASTERPIECE THEATRE is closed captioned for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers by The Caption Center at WGBH. A special narration track is added to the series by Descriptive Video Service® (DVS®), a service of WGBH to provide access to people who are blind or visually impaired. The DVS narration is available on the SAP channel of stereo TVs and VCRs

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer. More than one-third of PBS's primetime lineup and companion Web content as well as many public radio favorites are produced by WGBH. The station also is a pioneer in educational multimedia and in access technologies for people with disabilities.

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