

PRESS RELEASE

A story of undying love—and revenge
WUTHERING HEIGHTS
by Emily Brontë
on MASTERPIECE CLASSIC

Sundays, January 18 and 25, 2009 at 9pm ET on PBS

The fiery romance of Heathcliff and Cathy reignites in a lush new adaptation of Emily Brontë's incendiary love story, *Wuthering Heights*, airing in two parts on MASTERPIECE CLASSIC, on Sundays, January 18 and 25, 2009 at 9pm ET on PBS (check local listings).

British heartthrob Tom Hardy (who will play Bill Sikes in MASTERPIECE's new *Oliver Twist*, airing in February) stars as Heathcliff, the mysterious gypsy adopted as a boy by the Earnshaw family of *Wuthering Heights*. Newcomer Charlotte Riley is Heathcliff's stepsister, Catherine Earnshaw (Cathy), who accepts him into her home—and heart.

Also appearing are Burn Gorman (*Bleak House*) as Cathy's sadistic brother, Hindley; Andrew Lincoln (*Love Actually*) as the Earnshaw's straight-laced neighbor Edgar Linton, who is also Cathy's suitor; and Rosalind Halstead (*Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*) as Edgar's pliant younger sister, Isabella.

Set on the Yorkshire moors in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, *Wuthering Heights* is a turbulent tale of passions unleashed across two generations, as Heathcliff rises out of a servile position to work his fiendish will on the Earnshaws and Lintons—all out of love for the unattainable Cathy.

What's new about this adaptation is its focus on the intertwined fates of the generation following Heathcliff, Cathy, Edgar, Isabella, and Hindley and his wife, Frances (Sia Berkeley). These characters produce three children—Heathcliff's son Linton (Tom Payne); Cathy's daughter and namesake, Catherine (Rebecca Night); and Hindley's son, Hareton (Andrew Hawley)—who grow up and figure prominently in the climax of the film.

Published in 1847, *Wuthering Heights* scandalized contemporary critics. A prominent journal called it “one of the most repellant books we ever read.” The eventual revelation that the author, Ellis Bell, was in fact a pseudonym used by a country vicar's daughter, Emily

Brontë, made the consternation even more acute, since many were convinced that no woman could possibly have written such a book.

Emily turned out to be the sister of Charlotte Brontë, whose sexually charged *Jane Eyre* had created its own sensation just two months before the publication of *Wuthering Heights*.

The richly inventive Brontës included another literary sister, Anne, whose disturbing novel of marital breakdown, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, appeared in 1848—the same year that Emily tragically died at age 30 of tuberculosis, having no chance to create another masterpiece to succeed *Wuthering Heights*.

Wuthering Heights is a co-production of Mammoth Screen and WGBH/Boston. It is adapted by Peter Browker (*Blackpool*), and directed by Coky Giedroyc (*Oliver Twist*). The executive producers are Michele Buck, Damien Timmer, Hugo Heppell for Mammoth Screen and Rebecca Eaton for WGBH.

MASTERPIECE has been presented on PBS by WGBH since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Laura Linney is the host of MASTERPIECE CLASSIC. Public television viewers provide funding for MASTERPIECE.

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