

JEREMY HERRIN TO DIRECT KATHERINE PARKINSON'S DEBUT PLAY FOR BBC

KATHERINE PARKINSON TO STAR

"art models reveal all in Katherine Parkinson's smart debut...[she] delicately reveals connections that, by the end, give the play a wistful emotional weight" - Stage review
Mark Fisher, The Guardian

24th March 2021 – BAFTA Award winning **Katherine Parkinson's** (*Home, I'm Darling, The IT Crowd*) debut play *Sitting* has been adapted for the screen, airing at 10.30pm on Wednesday 7th April on BBC Four. After a television directorial debut with *Unprecedented* followed by *Alan Bennett's Talking Heads* (both BBC) in 2020, former Artistic Director of Headlong Theatre **Jeremy Herrin** (*People, Places and Things*) directs the hour-long comedy-drama forming part of *BBC Lights Up*, BBC Arts' Culture In Quarantine season celebrating British Theatre.

Starring Parkinson for the first time, the one-off special follows three characters as they sit for a silent painter. In these sittings, 'Luke' (**Mark Weinman** - *I May Destroy You, After Life*), 'Cassandra' (**Alex Jarrett** - *Les Misérables, Adult Material*) and 'Mary' (Parkinson) reveal truths in a play about love, loss and the importance of human connection.

Award winning figurative painter **Roxana Halls'** (*National Portrait Gallery's B.P. Portrait Award, The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition*) work will feature.

Parkinson made her debut as a playwright with *Sitting* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe as part of a BBC Arts and Avalon playwright's initiative, with the play subsequently transferring to London's Arcola Theatre.

Sitting was commissioned for the BBC by Jonty Claypole. It is produced by Avalon with Jon Thoday and Richard Allen Turner as Executive Producers.

What The Press Said About Parkinson's Stage Play, *Sitting*

"Parkinson paints intense, quietly devastating portraits of her characters with accomplished brush strokes"
★★★★ Heather Swain, Metro

"Sitting is a sharp, perceptive piece of work, delivered brilliantly"
★★★★ David Kettle, The List

★★★★ BritishTheatre.com ★★★★★ London Box Office ★★★★★ The Upcoming ★★★★★ London Theatre 1

"Parkinson's ear for the cadences of comedy is, unsurprisingly, very sharp." Henry Hitchings, Evening Standard

"charming" Luke Jones, Daily Mail

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About Avalon

Avalon is a multi-award-winning talent management, television production and live promotion group with offices in London, Los Angeles and New York.

Avalon, Artist Rights Group (ARG) and The Agency represent a prolific roster of artists including comedians, actors, presenters, writers and directors. Avalon's numerous ground-breaking returning television shows currently in production include: *Not Going Out* (BBC), the UK's longest running sitcom on air; *Taskmaster* (Channel 4), the BAFTA-winning hit entertainment format showing in 100 countries; multi Emmy-winner, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (HBO); *The Russell Howard Hour* (Sky), the network's most successful entertainment show launch since 2010; *Starstruck*, a new sitcom from the 2018 Edinburgh Comedy Award winner Rose Matafeo (HBO Max/BBC); *Everything's Gonna Be Okay*, from creator Josh Thomas (Freeform); *Breeders*, a sitcom starring Martin Freeman and Daisy Haggard (FX/Sky); a new series of the iconic British satirical puppet show, *Spitting Image* (BritBox UK); and multiple comedy specials for Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max and Netflix.

Other landmark Avalon shows include BAFTA winning and multi Emmy nominated *Catastrophe* (Amazon Prime Video/Channel 4), *Fantasy Football League* (BBC/ITV), multi BAFTA-winning *TV Burp* (ITV), and *Workaholics* (Comedy Central USA). Avalon also distributes its catalogue of programmes to over 150 countries worldwide. Avalon has produced many globally successful podcasts and is at the top of the UK iTunes chart with the multi-award-winning *Shagged. Married. Annoyed* by Chris and Rosie Ramsey.

As a leading promoter of live comedy, Avalon produced *Newman and Baddiel: Live at Wembley*, the UK's first arena comedy show; *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, the first West End show to win all four UK 'Best New Musical' awards; and has continued to produce and promote live shows globally, as well as promoting more winners and nominees of the prestigious Edinburgh Comedy Award than any other company.

For Avalon news visit: www.avalonuk.com/press or follow @avalonent

About BBC Arts

The BBC is the biggest creator of Arts content and is Britain's creative partner – a stage for the nation to experience the very best arts - when they want, how they want.

- The nation's stage: access to arts and culture programming for all through the licence fee – we create and showcase more arts and culture than any other broadcaster
- An Innovator: constantly finding new ways to bring the best quality culture to audiences - working with the Arts sector as partner and acting as a hot-house for new talent
- Britain's creative partner - a bold force in the UK creative sector as creator and commissioner, also a platform for new talent
- An investor in quality - we only present the highest quality Arts and culture programming, crafted by skilled production teams and shared with all audiences
- Bringing the nation together - like no other we create and amplify moments in Arts and culture, cutting through with a broad audience

About Culture In Quarantine

BBC Arts' Culture in Quarantine initiative is an essential arts and culture service across BBC platforms that will keep the arts alive in people's homes, focused most intensely across BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, BBC Two, BBC Four, BBC Sounds, BBC iPlayer and www.bbc.co.uk/bbcarts. We are doing this in close consultation and collaboration with organisations like Arts Council England and other national funding and producing bodies.

This arts and culture service includes:

- Guides and access to shuttered exhibitions, performances or permanent collections in museums, galleries and performance spaces.

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- Ways to experience books with privileged access to authors including a collaboration with the Big Book Weekend amongst other initiatives.
- Jewels from the archive as well as brand new content ensuring that brand new theatre and dance performances will join with modern classics to create a repertory theatre of broadcast.
- Participatory offers including masterclasses and ways to enable audiences to create at home through Get Creative.
- Topical arts through Front Row, Inside Culture With Mary Beard, Free Thinking and more.
- A fund with Arts Council England to support around 25 artists to create new work.
- A place for arts organisations to share innovations from quarantine and for audiences to discover new things through www.bbc.co.uk/arts