

PRESS RELEASE

Love has no boundaries. And neither does she.

EMMA

By Jane Austen

on MASTERPIECE Classic

Hosted By Laura Linney

Sundays, January 24th, 31st, and February 7th 2010 at 9pm ET on PBS

Romola Garai (*Atonement*) stars as Jane Austen's most enterprising and exasperating heroine, a passionate matchmaker concerned about everyone's marital prospects but her own, in the most complete-ever film adaptation of *Emma*, airing in three parts on MASTERPIECE Classic, Sundays, January 24th (9 to 11pm), 31st (9 to 10pm), and February 7th (9 to 10pm), 2010 on PBS (check local listings).

Considered by many critics to be the most perfect of Jane Austen's blissfully romantic plots, *Emma* also found favor with reviewers during the UK broadcast of this fiercely funny new adaptation. The London *Times* enthused, "What's not to love? Delicious interiors, ravishing dresses, gutsy acting... Jane Austen is simply made for television!"

Following in the elegant footsteps of previous film Emmas, including Gwyneth Paltrow, Kate Beckinsale, and Alicia Silverstone (in the comic parody *Clueless*), Garai makes the role her own with an unbridled, joyful interpretation of this well-meaning meddler. "Garai brings a delicious spark which makes all her matchmaking delusions endearing," applauded the Edinburgh *Scotsman*.

Garai is joined by Jonny Lee Miller (*Endgame*, *Eli Stone*) as Mr. Knightley, Emma's best friend and stern moral taskmaster. Both are rich, energetic—and resolved to stay single. Michael Gambon (*Cranford*, *Harry Potter*) stars as Emma's hypochondriacal father, a widower and fear-monger on the subject of diet, weather, travel, matrimony, and all of life's other perils.

Also appearing are Tamsin Greig (*The Diary of Anne Frank*, airing on MASTERPIECE in April) as Miss Bates, a talkative but lovable busybody; Laura Pyper as Miss Bates'

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spectacularly accomplished niece, Jane Fairfax, whom Emma resents as a rival; and Rupert Evans as the Byronic mystery man, Frank Churchill.

Emma's game of playing cupid seems to succeed with her former governess, Anne Taylor (Jodhi May, *The Amazing Mrs. Pritchard*), but backfires when Emma tries to arrange the future happiness of her new friend, the pretty orphan Harriet Smith (Louise Dylan, *Lewis*).

And therein lies the central plot: How badly can Emma muddle the romantic order of her little world, a world of subtle and not-so-subtle courtship signals that she misreads disastrously? Before matters straighten themselves out, she will have been proven mistaken about practically all of her nuptial intuitions—including one about a possible suitor for herself!

Jane Austen was at the height of her powers when she wrote this gloriously comic novel in 1814–15. Yet she fretted that she had created a heroine “whom no one but myself will much like.”

She needn't have worried. Austen's genius was to create such real-life people and throw them into a situation that reflects the everyday mix-ups of the human condition—and to make it all immensely entertaining. Almost two-hundred years later, *Emma* is as fresh as Mr. Knightley's celebrated strawberry beds, the scene of an excursion that proves one of the turning points of this very satisfying story.

Emma is a coproduction of WGBH and the BBC. It was adapted by Sandy Welch (*Jane Eyre*, *Our Mutual Friend*) from the novel by Jane Austen. The director is Jim O'Hanlon (*Shameless*). MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Funding for the series is provided by public television viewers.

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pbs.org/masterpiece

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

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