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OFFICIAL SELECTION 2014

Miss Julie

written & directed by

Liv Ullmann





Maipo Film AS, The Apocalypse Films Company, Senorita Films and Subotica Films presents

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international
film festival®
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2014

Jessica **CHASTAIN**

Colin **FARRELL**

Samantha **Morton**

Miss Julie

written and directed by **Liv Ullmann**

Adapted from **August Strindberg's** play *Miss Julie*

129 minutes/ Language : English/ Color / Format : DCP - 5:1/Sound : 1:85 /Norway-UK-Eire-France/ 2014

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High definition pictures and press kit can be downloaded from
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Synopsis

A country estate in Ireland in the 1880s. Over the course of one midsummer night, in an atmosphere of wild revelry and loosened social constraints, Miss Julie and John, her father's valet, dance and drink, charm and manipulate each other. She, all hauteur longing for abasement; he, polished but coarse - united in mutual loathing and attraction.

By turns seductive and bullying, savage and tender, their intimacy leads to desperate plans and vision of a life together...

Unsure if the morning brings hope or hopelessness, Julie and John find their escape in a final act as sublime and horrific as anything in Greek tragedy.

Miss Julie depicts a fierce battle for power and dominance, enacted through a cruel and compulsive game of seduction and repulsion.



Liv Ullmann

Screenwriter & Director

LIV ULLMANN took the lead in eleven of Ingmar Bergman's films, including *Persona*, *Cries and Whispers*, *Scenes from a Marriage* and *Shame*. The multiple award-winning Norwegian actress has been invited to serve as president of the jury at both the Cannes (2001) and Berlin (1984) Film Festivals. She has also been nominated twice for the Academy Award® for Best Actress.

During the 1990s, Liv Ullmann turned to directing (both films and stage plays), helming the feature films *Sofie* (1992) and *Kristin Lavransdatter* (1995) - both of which she also scripted - and the 1996 Swedish TV mini-series *Enskilda Samtal*. In 2000 she enjoyed a huge success with the drama *Faithless* (In Competition, Cannes FF 2000).

Liv Ullmann has directed numerous critically acclaimed stage plays all over the world, and recently she directed Cate Blanchett to extraordinary reviews in her sell-out production of "A Streetcar Named Desire" in New York and Sydney. Her latest play as a director was "Uncle Vanya" at the National Theatre in Oslo.



Interview with Liv Ullmann

What is your relationship with Strindberg's play *Miss Julie*?

I feel the play has always been a part of me. I had hoped to have the chance to play the role on stage when I was younger but it never happened. When the producers first contacted me, they asked me if I would be interested in making a film on the theme of a 'femme fatale', a proposal they had also made to a French and a Spanish director. I thought of *Miss Julie* straightaway and they agreed it was a marvellous idea. As soon as I started to work on the adaptation, I fell in love with it, and not only because of Strindberg's writing but also because of the themes that are important to me on a personal level: to be seen or to remain invisible, to present an image of oneself which does not correspond to whom one really is, to be loved for oneself and not for what others see in you, the relations between the sexes, and the crises that stem from them...

In all the films you have directed, there are stories of an impossible love fighting against the social order.

That's my theme! Something else revealed itself during the script writing, which I shared with the cast: *Miss Julie*'s melancholy and loneliness are born out of the fact that she has lost the will to live but does not know exactly how to put an end to it all. Suddenly, these two other people come into focus for her, and she subconsciously devises a plan that could lead to her death. It's not that the male character is the real murderer, but she leads him into this denouement. It's also a drama about the need to be heard: the crucial scenes are those where each of them is struggling to be heard by the others. It's the same for the cook, played by Samantha Morton, who also feels that nobody really understands her. Just as in real life, however people might talk, other people hear only what they want to hear.





Was it always conceived as an English language film?

Yes, it was part of the proposal from the producers that the film had to be in English. I studied several English translations of the play while writing the script, whilst also returning to the original Swedish and little by little I created my own version: it took 5 or 6 drafts. It was initially intended that we would shoot the interiors in a studio in Germany and the exteriors at Castle Coole in Northern Ireland. For budgetary reasons, the film was eventually shot entirely on location at Castle Coole. Our production designer Caroline Amies - who is a genius - completely transformed the raw space of a dilapidated 18th century kitchen into what you see on screen, and she brought back to life the servants' bedrooms in the basement of the house, while also using the hallways from another floor. I believe the film benefitted enormously from using the real spaces of this house, which were completely reinvented and modernized according to the needs of the film. Believe me, if you'd seen the place before we started, you wouldn't have thought it possible!

When did you decide to transpose the story to Ireland?

During the script writing. I didn't want it to take place in Sweden seeing as the characters would all be speaking English. It could have taken place in England but I thought the tension between the social classes was closer to the situation in Ireland at the time. Even the different ways of talking - the language of the nobility and that of the domestic servants - seemed to offer an interesting parallel. On set we used a fantastic dialogue coach who supervised the accuracy of the accents.

It's the first adaptation of the play which focuses entirely on the three protagonists, without either secondary characters or even extras.

It seemed necessary to me that these three individuals were completely isolated from the outside world. The story takes place over midsummer night, though we never see the festivities. In Strindberg's play, people burst into the kitchen and perform a grotesque dance. But I was very keen on the complete isolation of the three characters; I had to fight for that.





Were you aware of the risk of being theatrical?

Naturally, the film has a theatrical quality - but why should that be an issue? What absurd rules decree what can and cannot be cinema? We sit in the dark, facing the characters, just as we would in the theatre - so this doesn't frighten me at all. We can show close-ups but we can also gracefully follow the characters, whose behaviour, gestures and movements are very typical of their era. I am perhaps requesting a certain effort from younger generations, who are used to quick cutting: that's their prerogative. I would not say they are wrong but what is more cinematographic than the works of the great classic directors who influenced me?

How did you prepare for the editing?

The first thing we did was to rehearse with the cast for two weeks. Then, once on the set, the actors adapted their movements to the actual space; I gave them that freedom and I didn't hesitate to adapt my editing accordingly: I had to trust their instinct, and not put them in shackles... once they'd understood my intentions. A great relief for me was that they didn't have the least problem with the dialogue, which is often the case during the shoot! I had put so much of myself into it that I was a little anxious as we began. During the rehearsals, they showed themselves to be incredibly inventive.

Could you tell us a little about the casting process?

For the role of Miss Julie, it was enough that I met Jessica Chastain once, in Los Angeles, to realize that we were on the same wavelength: she had come prepared and straightaway imagined how she would play the scene with the bird at the end - it was amazing! Incidentally, in the film, when she seizes the knife after the bird has been killed, that was her idea. And the emotion in her face during that scene is astonishing: she is in a state of shock, as if she had lost the one thing in this world that she valued. I admire and love her.

What was your intention for the character of John, played by Colin Farrell?

Colin Farrell played John as someone who denies his nature as a servant but is unable to escape its defining qualities, in the way that a servant walks, talks or holds himself. It's unlike the traditional way this role is played, almost always with a brutal and unsophisticated machismo, even in the cinema. So in this case, we see a man who dreams of social advancement, who does everything in pursuit of that goal, but does not have the wherewithal to achieve it because, without realizing it, his role has been predetermined. I admire the way Colin knew how to give his character this uncommon elegance. In any moment, he retains the allure of the impeccably turned out valet, with his slicked back hair: that's how domestic servants behaved at the time, contrary to what one might believe. They imitated their masters.

Samantha Morton brings a lot to her role, which is a great deal richer and more complex than in the play.

Yes, thanks to Samantha, her role is no longer secondary. She becomes the only lucid character in the film. She's really superb! Samantha was the one actor I had in mind right from the start. I saw almost all her films and I rang her up to tell her that I thought she was just brilliant!

How are you as a director of actors?

As you know, I'm an actress myself. And I have worked with some very good directors, but also some very bad ones too! I've noticed that the bad ones never stop talking to you, they end up invading your imagination, and you can no longer do anything after that because, whatever might happen, it's their voice that you hear in your head! As for me, I push the actors to be creative themselves, though I'm willing to discuss any questions they might have. But I do not want to explain to them what I want a priori, because I prefer it to come from them, and I'm not especially keen to know their motives, nor to hear what they discuss between themselves, because those are their secrets. Usually, I put myself next to the camera during takes, even if some actors these days prefer the director to watch the monitor. I'm also keen that they communicate only with me on the set - in order to protect their creativity. All that aside, all three never stopped amazing me.

How did you work with your Director of Photography on the film's lighting?

I knew his work and right from the start I had considered him a painter of light. Together with the continuity girl, we had prepared the blocking really thoroughly, shot by shot: at which hour of the night was each scene taking place? How much light should appear on screen? On the other hand, I wanted the lighting to be a part of the story telling. When hope disappears and the horror of the situation descends, the faces are lit differently, in a harsher way, less flattering. It was also important to work very carefully on the candle lighting, where the darkness of the basement reflected the darker side of the characters.

Given that you were shooting in one location, did you try to shoot chronologically in order to respect the development of the characters?

Yes, in so far as it was possible, except for the exteriors, which we pushed to the end of the schedule because of the weather. But for the interior scenes, it helped us enormously to shoot chronologically: the final scenes were the ones that we had rehearsed the least, and they were hugely informed by what we had shot beforehand.



Do you believe that the clash of classes and sexes as described by Strindberg is still relevant today?

I would say more than ever. The lack of understanding and the difficulty of real communication between men and women are both worsened by the illusion that, thanks to mobile phones and computers, all our problems are resolved. We don't really listen to other people, that's what Strindberg tells us. The characters are looking to confide in each other, but they are not heard and they remain alone... just like us and our telephones!

As for class tensions, they are felt less today, they are less explicit, but they are no less brutal, even in western societies. I did cut a few passages from the play that seemed a bit dated to me, especially towards the end when *Miss Julie* talks about her relationship with her mother. But there is, for example, the moment when *Miss Julie* has her long monologue after the bird's death - that has not aged at all: the profound pain which is expressed then remains completely believable.

The exterior scenes allow for a breath of fresh air, they have a liberating effect in contrast to the huis clos of the rest of the film...

Castle Coole is a magical place! I think Strindberg would have adored this place, where nature reasserts itself and rightly revives one's hope in freedom.

Did you think of the parallel between Julie and Ophelia from the beginning?

Yes, I did think about the famous painting by the pre-Raphaelite artist John Millais. I hesitated a lot about showing Julie's death at the end. My DP was strongly in favour of it and he was right: we are left with a real corpse - this is a horror story, not a fairy tale. There are two angles, which coexist in the ambivalent relation between the two characters: does he really love Julie, or is he just using her? Has she committed suicide in a moment of despair or was she planning her death all along? I wanted to maintain this ambiguity, and so did the cast. There are occasional moments, looks, when we think that a genuine love could exist between them.

When Ingmar Bergman simultaneously staged Ibsen's A Doll's House, Miss Julie and his own adaptation of Scenes from a Marriage, he described the three female protagonists - Nora, Julie and Marianne - as sisters...

That's my opinion too. Of course, I played Marianne on screen in *Scenes from a Marriage*, and also Nora very often, in Norway and on Broadway. Three characters that are very comparable: even if they dance to a different tune and have quite different endings, these are three women who suffer from not being seen, in particular by those whose love they long for.

All three talk of the futures they dream about. The great difference is that Marianne, who is contemporary, achieves her dreams. She is not content just to talk but to act too. And frankly, I don't think Ingmar would have made this film when he was younger. Over time he came to appreciate what women are capable of. In the end, thanks to her own actions, Marianne is at peace with herself, while Julie finds this peace only in death. She has always known this will be the case. It's manifest from the moment she first appears, when she sees John and Kathleen as a couple: she is not made for this world. I'm not defending suicide, far from it, but I'm convinced that there are people, like her, who think death will bring them a serenity that they can't find on earth. They simply forget that they will no longer be here to enjoy that serenity!

Is that why you added the prologue, where Julie as a young girl lies down on the bed of her late mother?

Absolutely. To warn us that this 'femme fatale' will, first and foremost, prove fatal to herself. I really don't believe that Julie is a sinner who must be punished at the end! More than anything, deep down, she suffers from not being loved.



The actors & their characters



Jessica Chastain

Jessica Chastain was raised in a middle-class family in a northern California suburb. She discovered dance at the age of 9 and by the age of 13 was performing in a dance troupe. She took her mother's maiden name and began acting in Shakespearean productions all over the Bay area. An actor in a production of *Romeo & Juliet* encouraged her to audition for Juilliard as a drama major. She became a member of «Crew 32» with the help of a scholarship from one of the school's famous alumni, Robin Williams. In her last year at Juilliard she was offered a holding deal with TV writer/producer John Wells, and she eventually worked in three of his TV shows. Jessica continues to do theatre, having played in "The Cherry Orchard", "Rodney's Wife", "Salome and Othello". She divides her time between New York and Los Angeles, working in theater, film and TV.

In 2011, she had a prolific year in film. She was nominated for and won a number of awards, including a 2012 Academy Award® nomination for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role for *The Help* (2011).

She recently won a Golden Globe for best actress for her part in *Zero Dark Thirty*, and was Oscar-nominated for the same part. This year she attended the Cannes Film Festival in support of the Un Certain Regard wwscreening of Ned Benson's *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby* and can soon be seen in Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar*, J.C. Chandor's *A Most Violent Year* and Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak*.

Jessica Chastain will portray Marilyn Monroe in Andrew Dominik's *Blonde*, adapted from Joyce Carol Oates' acclaimed novel of the same name. Since 2011, she has been the face of Yves Saint-Laurent's Manifesto perfume.

Julie

Julie is the only daughter of a Baron, a significant member of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and a major landowner in Fermanagh, Ireland. She speaks with an English accent as their manor house in Ireland is just one of several properties in her family's possession - there is a large London town house, with which to entertain and influence the powerful political figures of the time, and further houses in the UK. Julie was the unhappy consequence of an unhappy union between her loving but ineffectual father and her dominant, man-hating mother. Her mother died when she was a young girl but not before she was able to instill in her daughter zrebellious streak - quite in keeping with the 'new woman' that was emerging in society at the end of the 19th century.

Unfortunately, this upbringing was out of keeping with Julie's natural character and she has grown into a young woman who is at once forceful, neurotic and desperately in need of being loved for who she is. She has just been left by her fiancé.



Colin Farrell

Born on May 31, 1976, in Dublin, Ireland, Farrell studied acting at the Gaiety School of Drama in Dublin and established himself as a recognizable talent back home with a starring role in the BBC series *Ballykissangel* (1996) and Deirdre Purcell's miniseries *Falling for a Dancer* (1998), in addition to a featured role in Tim Roth's directorial debut, *The War Zone* (1999).

He began turning heads in Hollywood when he starred in Joel Schumacher's *Tigerland* (2000), the story of American soldiers taken to the backwoods of Louisiana in 1971 to play war games in preparation for their first tour of duty in Vietnam. He garnered a Best Actor Award from the Boston Society of Film Critics for his portrayal of Bozz, a roughneck Texan recruit who helps his boot-camp buddies avoid Vietnam combat.

After *Tigerland*, Farrell took on the role of Jesse James in *American Outlaws* (2001), followed by a starring role in *Phone Booth* (2002) that reunited him with director Schumacher. He also co-starred with Bruce Willis in *Hart's War* (2002), which was shot on location in Prague, Czech Republic. Along the way Farrell has managed to work with legendary directors such as Steven Spielberg in *Minority Report* (2002).

His meteoric rise saw him being directed by some of Hollywood's finest: Oliver Stone (*Alexander*, 2004), Terrence Malick (*The New World*, 2005), Michael Mann (*Miami Vice*, 2006) and Woody Allen (*Cassandra's Dream*, 2007). In 2009, he won the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture - Comedy or Musical for *In Bruges*.

More recently, Farrell has starred in Martin McDonagh's *Seven Psychopaths* (2012), alongside Emma Thompson and Tom Hanks in John Lee Hancock's *Saving Mr. Banks* (2013) as well as voicing the character of Ronin in *Chris Wedge's Epic* (2013).

John

John is the valet of Julie's father, the Baron. He is a local boy, having grown up in the vicinity of the grounds of Julie's house in Fermanagh, no stranger to the debilitating effects of poverty and desire. His childhood was marked by the death of his younger brother and his awareness of the great and unattainable privileges of the local landowners - and he has reached manhood with a strong sense of ambition and an innate understanding that life is a brutal Darwinian struggle. If he had just once chance, he knows he has the competence and ability to rise above his lowly station. A proud man and an attractive physical presence, he has tried to improve himself with books and overhearing the conversations of the Baron, and knows he would be a better man in both temperament and refinement if it weren't for his social position. This discrepancy between his vision of himself and his reality has given him an unforgiving and aggressive edge. He is engaged to Kathleen.



Samantha Morton

Samantha Morton is an English actress and film director. She began her performing career with guest roles in television shows such as *Soldier Soldier* and *Boon* before making her film debut in the 1997 drama film *This Is the Sea*, playing the character of Hazel Stokes. After a string of roles in low-budget and television films, she landed the role of Hattie in 1999's *Sweet and Lowdown*, for which she received critical acclaim, attention from Hollywood and an Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actress.

Morton subsequently starred in 2002's *Minority Report* and *Morvern Callar*. She received her second Academy Award® nomination for her performance as Sarah, the young Irish mother coping with life in *New York City*, in 2003's *In America*. Morton starred in 2004's *Enduring Love* and *The Libertine* and 2005's *Lassie*. She won a Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Television Movie for her role as Myra Hindley in 2006's *Longford*, and appeared the following year in *Control*, *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* and *Mister Lonely*. Having starred in 2008's *Synecdoche, New York*, Morton appeared in the critically acclaimed *The Messenger* and made her directorial debut in the English television film *The Unloved*. In 2012, she starred in David Cronenberg's *Cosmopolis* and, in 2013, in Steven Bernstein's *Decoding Annie Parker* alongside Helen Hunt and Aaron Paul.

Kathleen

Kathleen is the cook of the house. She is also John's fiancé, though their plans for a life together remain ambiguous. She is extremely hard working and an authoritative figure among the servants - after all, she runs the kitchens of a vast country house. She is called 'Mrs.' by servants and masters alike. Like John, she speaks with a local, Irish accent - she was born and bred in the region. While her aspirations run to consolidating her life with John, she has no overreaching ambition to rise above her station. She is devout, sensible and, of the three characters, she is the most secure in her skin: she knows her place in the world and wouldn't even imagine any alternative. It's not that she likes the status quo; it's not that she willingly accepts it. It just is and that's that.



August Strindberg's Julia

"Miss Julie" is adapted from the eponymous play by the great Swedish dramatist August Strindberg, written in 1888 and first staged in Copenhagen the following year. A tragic nocturnal huis clos enacted between Julie, the young aristocrat, and Jean and Kristin, her father's valet and cook, the play demands particularly complex performances from its actors.

Deemed obscene and banned by the Swedish authorities, "Miss Julie" was not performed in the country of Strindberg's birth until 1906 (at the Lunds Student-teater), by which time it had already been staged in Denmark, Germany and France. Over the years, it has become one of the playwright's most widely and often performed works.

Strindberg's own preface to the play reveals the essence of his dramatic theories of naturalism and sheds light on vital aspects of the play. "Miss Julie" adheres strictly to the classical dramatic unities (of time, place and action) and plays out without any interval or break. This "naturalistic tragedy", as the author calls it, draws on the forces of pride and contempt as the wellsprings of the drama. Thus the confrontation between its characters is not only a class struggle but also a battle of the sexes, for power and moral dominance.

Driven by the characters' hopes of escaping the social destinies into which they have been born, this merciless combat leads inexorably to a tragic end. Strindberg saw the playwright as a smuggler of ideas in easily accessible forms, the better to convey them to the middle and working classes. For him, theatre harnessed the hypnotic power of illusion to be able to teach the young, the uneducated... and women. The dramatist was a "lay preacher", disseminating modern ideas in a popular form. Thus the play utilizes a process of understanding capable of bringing about a profound change in the spectator.



In "Miss Julie" everything rests on feelings as a means of heightening the audience's sense of identification, and the finely-honed dialogue aims to amplify the characters' realism, without recourse to any of the usual theatrical devices (symmetry, 'temps morts', and so forth). The elements of surprise are based on the characters' reactions, imbuing the action with a powerful naturalism.

Banned and censored throughout Europe at the end of the 19th century, "Miss Julie" was for a long time considered a socially and morally subversive work, embodying all the dangers of the modernist era. Numerous critical studies have attempted to analyse and interpret the play, without ever managing to exhaust the power of its mystery. All agree however that it possesses a universal dimension that goes far beyond a simple allegory of 19th century Swedish society.

"Miss Julie" has been staged countless times worldwide. In France, it has become emblematic of André Antoine's Théâtre Libre, bastion of naturalistic and enlightening drama supported by Émile Zola, where it was staged in 1893.



Cast

Miss Julie JESSICA CHASTAIN
John COLIN FARRELL
Kathleen SAMANTHA MORTON
Young Miss Julie NORA McMENAMY



Filmed at Castle Coole in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, and in Florence Court Forest Park, Northern Ireland.

Crew

Written and directed by **LIV ULLMANN**
Adapted from August Strindberg's play *Miss Julie*

DP	Mikhail Krichman
Editor	Michal Leszczykowski
Line Producer	Nina B. Andersson
Production Design	Caroline Amies
Props Master	Judy Ducker
Costume Design	Consolata Boyle
Makeup Design	Siw Järbyn
Continuity	Madeleine Fant
Sound Editor	Stefan Henrix
Production Sound Mixer	Ronan Hill
Musicians:	Arve Tellefsen (violin) Truls Mørk (cello) Håvard Gimse (piano)
Music producer	Morten Lindberg Recording Producer and Balance Engineer with 17 American GRAMMY-nominations since 2006. Eleven of these in categories «Best Engineered Album» and «Best Surround Sound Album».
Producers	Synnøve Hørsdal (Maipo Film - Norway), Oliver Dungey and Teun Hilte (The Apocalypse Films Company - UK)
Co-Producers	Tristan Orpen Lynch & Aoife O'Sullivan, Subotica (Eire) Rita Dagher, Senorita Films (France)
Executive Producers	Julia Balaeskoul Nusseibeh, Christian Baumard, Aaron Gilbert, Alain Kappauf, John Raymonds

Music

Performed by Arve Tellefsen, Truls Mørk, Håvard Gimse
Recording Jar Kirke
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Schubert, Piano Trio No 2 in E Flat, D 929-2,
Andante Con Moto
Performed by Arve Tellefsen, Truls Mørk, Håvard Gimse
Recording Jar Kirke
Maipo Film AS © 2013

Tchaikovsky, Dance Napolitaine, Swan Lake
Performed by Arve Tellefsen, Håvard Gimse
Recording Jar Kirke
Maipo Film AS © 2013

Schumann, Träumerei
Performed by Arve Tellefsen and Håvard Gimse
Recording Jar Kirke
Maipo Film AS © 2013

Chopin, Nocturne in F – Op 15, No 1
Performed by Håvard Gimse
Recording Jar Kirke
Maipo Film AS © 2013

Arensky, Trio in D Minor, Elegia – Adagio
Performed by Arve Tellefsen, Truls Mørk, Håvard Gimse
Recording Jar Kirke
Maipo Film AS © 2013

JS Bach, Cello Suite No 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008, Prélude
Performed by Truls Mørk
Recording Jar Kirke
Maipo Film AS © 2013

IRISH FOLK MUSIC

Bodhrán : MARTIN O'NEILL
Flute : TOM DOORLEY
Fiddle: DAIRE BRACKEN
Accordion : BENNY McCARTHY
Recording Studio: TEMPLE LANE RECORDING STUDIOS
Recording Engineer: LIAM KING, Ard Mhòr
Performed by Tom Doorley
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Heart Of My Kitty
Performed by Martin O'Neill
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wild bunch