

MASTERPIECE

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Classic

**LAURA LINNEY TO HOST
MASTERPIECE CLASSIC 2009
ON PBS**

Lineup Includes Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Wuthering Heights, and "The Incomplete Charles Dickens"

November 18, 2008 (Boston, MA)—Emmy Award-winning actress Laura Linney will be the new host of MASTERPIECE CLASSIC, making her first appearance when the series premieres with a new adaptation of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* on January 4, 2009 on PBS.

Ms. Linney has had a year to remember. Nominated for an Academy Award for the box office hit *The Savages* opposite Philip Seymour Hoffman, she then won an Emmy for her portrayal of the nation's second first lady Abigail Adams in the HBO miniseries *John Adams*.

"Laura Linney is a classic, all by herself," says MASTERPIECE executive producer Rebecca Eaton. "She is an incredible actor, who delivers one brilliant performance after another. We're thrilled to have her introducing MASTERPIECE CLASSIC."

"Whether it's Austen or Dickens, timeless stories by great authors are worth telling again and again," says Ms. Linney. "The beauty of MASTERPIECE CLASSIC is that each generation brings a new and interesting interpretation to these programs."

Ms. Linney's long list of accolades includes Oscar and Golden Globe nominations for Kenneth Lonergan's *You Can Count on Me*; Oscar and Golden Globe nominations for *Kinsey* opposite Liam Neeson, and a Golden Globe nomination for *The Squid and the Whale*. Among her other film credits are Richard Curtis' ensemble comedy *Love Actually* and Clint Eastwood's *Mystic River*. On television, she won an Emmy for playing Frasier Crane's love interest Charlotte and another Emmy for her role as Iris Bravard in *Wild Iris*. She also starred as Mary Ann Singleton in Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City*. Her many theater roles include a Tony-nominated performance in Richard Eyre's *The Crucible*, and the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

The highly successful first season of the newly rebranded MASTERPIECE CLASSIC, which featured "The Complete Jane Austen" and Emmy-nominated *Cranford* starring Judi Dench, achieved a 50% improvement in viewership over the previous season in the overnight markets.



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In 2009, the series returns with works by three beloved British authors, including Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (January 4 and 11), starring new Bond girl Gemma Arterton (*Quantum of Solace*); Emily Brontë's haunting *Wuthering Heights* (January 18 and 25) with Tom Hardy (*The Virgin Queen*) as Heathcliff and newcomer Charlotte Riley as Cathy. In February, MASTERPIECE CLASSIC launches "The Incomplete Charles Dickens" with a bold new adaptation of *Oliver Twist*, starring Timothy Spall (*A Room with A View*), and Sophie Okonedo (*The Secret Life of Bees*) in a heartbreaking performance as Nancy. In March, there will be a repeat of the acclaimed *David Copperfield* starring Daniel Radcliffe in the role that led him to *Harry Potter*. Beginning on March 29 is the highly anticipated five-part miniseries *Little Dorrit* from *Bleak House* screenwriter Andrew Davies, starring Matthew Macfadyen (*Pride and Prejudice* with Keira Knightley), rising star Claire Foy as Amy Dorrit, and Tom Courtenay (*Billy Liar*) as her father. On May 3, "The Incomplete Charles Dickens" closes with a star-studded *The Old Curiosity Shop*, with Derek Jacobi, Toby Jones (*W., Infamous*), Zoë Wanamaker (*Harry Potter*), and Gina McKee (*The Forsyte Saga*).

MASTERPIECE MYSTERY! will return in May 2009, and MASTERPIECE CONTEMPORARY in October 2009.

MASTERPIECE has been presented on PBS by WGBH since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by public television viewers.

For more information about the MASTERPIECE CLASSIC 2009 schedule and host Laura Linney, visit pbs.org/masterpiece.

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For more information and photos, go to pressroom.wgbh.org and pbs.org/pressroom.

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