



# The LEADING LADIES of CINEMA

It's that time of year when we celebrate achievements in the film industry, with the BAFTA awards in February and the Oscars on 12 March. We talk to five women who all have starring roles in this hugely important industry

Interviews: **BRYONY GOOCH** AND **GEORGIA GREEN**

**'I like to tell stories that have humanity – we need empathy more than ever'**

**Barbara Broccoli is best known as co-producer of the James Bond films, taking over the mantle from her father Albert R 'Cubby' Broccoli. In a rare interview, she talks about ensuring the stories of amazing women are brought to the cinema.**

**H**aving been on film sets with my father, Albert, since I was a young child, I saw his passion for filmmaking and it was infectious. I remember when I was seven, my father produced *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and, as a present for my sister's birthday, we were both allowed to appear in the background for the carnival scene. I was always trying to help him, although I imagine I was just being a nuisance.

In 1995, my half-brother, Michael G Wilson, and I took over Eon Productions, which is best known for producing the Bond films. Our father trained us with on-set experience and we get on remarkably well because we have a similar sensibility. Still, even with this experience, I felt it was important to go to film school to learn about the history of film and critical film theory.

The Bond films have been going for 61 years, and I think Bond has evolved at the same rate that men have – in fact, probably more. Daniel Craig made a tremendous difference, showing the humanity of Bond. We felt that when Daniel's James Bond retired the role, it would require someone with tremendous balls to take on the 007 moniker.

Although I'm best known for producing the Bond films, I want to help tell the stories of women from all backgrounds. The film I just produced, *Till*, about civil rights activist Mamie Till-Mobley, is an example of that. The lynching of her 14-year-old son, Emmett Till, by two white men in 1955 shocked America. When Keith Beauchamp, who helped produce this movie, saw a photo of Emmett when he was 10, he dedicated the rest of his life to making sure this story was never forgotten. When Keith told me the story of Mamie and Emmett Till 18 years ago, I was so interested in how a mother had turned her pain

into purpose in the depths of grief that I decided then and there to help him make the film.

It's been a long journey because people didn't want to support it; they thought it was too sad and people wouldn't want to see it. But we stuck with it, and Whoopi Goldberg – who has been my friend for 35 years – joined our fight to get it filmed. Then, three years ago, we met our director, Chinonye Chukwu, who was very specific about how to tell the story. She didn't want to focus on Mamie's trauma but on her as an inspiration.

I like to tell stories that have humanity, as I believe this is a time in the world where we need empathy more than ever. Even Bond is a hero; he doesn't do it for his own personal gain but for the betterment of the world. He did it for Queen and country – now King and country. That was personified at the 2012 London Olympics. I'll never forget being in the stadium when the film with Bond came on and initially focused on the back of Her Majesty. Everybody thought it would be Helen Mirren playing the part, and when The Queen herself turned around, it was

such an extraordinary moment.

When you're a film producer, the work is the culmination of so many people's efforts – you don't really achieve anything on your own. Being appointed CBE in 2022's New Year's Honours List for my work in film as well as charity was a great honour, but really I'm receiving the accolade on behalf of everyone I've worked with.

*Till* is an achievement that is very meaningful to me; Bond is a fictional hero, but Mamie Till-Mobley was a real-life hero, and not many people are aware of her contribution to the world. It's led me to understand that, in the future, I want to tell more stories about people who have made a difference.

• *Till* was released in cinemas in the UK in January

## First take

**Sweet or salty popcorn?** Salty.

**Comedy or drama?** Drama.

**Favourite film?** *The Best Years Of Our Lives*.

**Best movie soundtrack?** *Out Of Africa*.

**Favourite movie character of all time?** Barbara Stanwyck as Phyllis Dietrichson in *Double Indemnity*.

**First movie memory?** Peter O'Toole coming out of the desert in *Lawrence Of Arabia*.

**Best awards ceremony after-party you've attended?**

The best after-party is getting home, taking your shoes off and having a cup of tea and a digestive biscuit in bed.

## Women who lead

“  
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”



Barbara Broccoli with her half-brother Michael G Wilson and actors Daniel Craig and Michelle Yeoh



Barbara attended the *T///* Tastemaker event with Whoopi Goldberg and Dame Jenni Murray



Jalyn Hall as Emmett Till and Danielle Deadwyler as Mamie Till-Mobley in *T///*

## Women who lead

### 'Awards inspire future generations of writers, designers and acting talent'

As CEO of BAFTA, Jane Millichip outlines how the organisation is opening up the film and TV industries to everyone – and reveals an exciting change to this year's awards ceremony.

If you're watching the EE BAFTA Film Awards from home this month, you'll have the best seats in the house. We've remodelled the awards ceremony TV show so that the final four categories will be live, meaning you'll find out who wins as we do.

I've worked in the TV industry for 25 years. I started as a journalist, editing business magazine *TV World*. I interviewed many producers and distributors about how and why they did what they did. With this perspective on the industry, I moved into sales and distribution for TV companies.

I worked my way up to become Sky's chief content officer, helping acquire a large stake in Love Productions, which makes *The Great British Bake Off*. While working at Sky, I joined BAFTA as a voting member four years ago. The position of CEO opened while I was leaving Sky, and I just felt it was such an important arts charity that I would love to look after it.

BAFTA may be best known for its awards ceremonies, but we're also the only arts charity that represents the film, TV and games industries. We work hard to level the playing field across the arts through bursaries, mentoring and talent acceleration schemes. The Prince William BAFTA Bursary, for example, offers financial support for young people as part of our work to remove barriers from underrepresented groups to access careers in the screen industries.

In 2020, BAFTA did a major review of the awards process to address a lack of equality and representation and to ensure that it became much more representative. For example, we found that over 54 years of awards ceremonies, there had only been six female director nominations and one win. Since our review, we have made changes to our entry criteria to ensure films are seen more widely by our voters. All voters are asked to watch at least 15 films selected randomly. That way, smaller films without big marketing budgets get seen as much as big-budget films. This means that every film entered for the selection process will have a certain number of views and it is then up to the voters whether they like it enough to vote for it as a potential nomination.

Since those changes, we've seen better representation in the nominations; in fact, two female directors have won the EE BAFTA Film Awards' Best Direction category in the last two years: Chloé Zhao for *Nomadland* and Jane Campion for *The Power Of The Dog*. It's an example of



We work hard to level the playing field across the arts



The new panel of industry experts who'll decide the five nominees for the EE BAFTA Rising Star Award 2023

how a simple clarification and

change in attitude towards representation reaps rewards.

We take a similar approach to representing sustainability in the media. Like many other industries, film and TV has a carbon footprint that needs reducing. The average TV programme produces tens of tonnes of carbon dioxide, while a feature film produces thousands. For 12 years, through our sustainability certification called albert, we've established

industry-wide guidelines on reducing carbon footprints when it comes to lighting and waste.

As CEO, I hope to bring our charity work closer to our efforts in acknowledging excellence. Awards are so important in inspiring future generations of writers, designers and acting talent. Vice versa, our learning and talent schemes give a real sense of gravitas to what we do in recognising greatness. I want to have these two aspects of what we do work together.

• *The EE BAFTA Film Awards 2023 will be broadcast on BBC One on Sunday 19 February 2023 (also on BBC One HD and BBC iPlayer)*

### First take

**Sweet or salty popcorn?** Neither.

**Comedy or drama?** Both.

**Favourite film?** *Casablanca*.

**The last film that made you cry?**

*CODA* (I cried in a good way).

**Best movie soundtrack?**

Elmer Bernstein for *The Magnificent Seven*.

**Favourite movie character of all time?**

Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*.

**First movie memory?** *Laurel and Hardy*, courtesy of my dad.

**I**t takes two and a half hours to get my whole costume, hair and makeup done on the set of *Bridgerton*.

The wigs are so big, there's an art to moving around in them and I train my core three times a week when filming so that I can hold them up. These grand-scale TV and film productions are a far cry from my roots in theatre, but I relish every new experience I get.

I grew up in Guyana, born to a white English mother and a Black South American father. We came to England when I was five, first living in Worksop, but we moved around a lot because my dad was a priest. I come from a very musical, storytelling family, and I think I first learned acting at home. My parents loved to have people over, cook for them and tell stories from their past.

At school, sports and drama were my great loves. I was training to be an Olympic heptathlete, but a bad injury put a stop to that dream, so I turned my full attention to acting instead.

I was always in the drama club and starring in school plays. I played the lead in *Bugsy Malone*, which was quite an ahead-of-its-time thing for the school to do. But interestingly, I've gone on to play a lot of gender-flipping roles throughout my career, including a female Mercutio and portraying Othello as a lesbian woman.

My first acting job out of drama school at the London Studio Centre was playing Donna in a touring production of *Hair* around Europe. It was a thrilling experience to be let loose with this production all about rebellion and finding yourself – it was a baptism of fire.

I mainly stayed in theatre from then on, with small TV parts here and there. I was consistently being handed parts like the social worker, mum with wayward child, the doctor, all those archetypal parts that are given to people of colour. It showed me how the industry saw me, and it was frustrating. As time went on, I made peace with playing these roles, but I decided they had to be part of the main storyline – not an afterthought character. As a result, I didn't work



## 'We need diversity on screen and stage – that's where the learning happens'

**After spending much of her nearly 30-year acting career on the stage, playing a wealth of impressive characters including Othello and Mary Magdalene, Golda Rosheuvel burst on to our screens as Queen Charlotte in Netflix's *Bridgerton* in 2020.**

Playing Queen Charlotte has opened up doors of possibility for me

to think outside the box because money is involved, but positive steps are being taken and [executive producer] Shonda Rhimes has paved the way with *Bridgerton*.

Playing Queen Charlotte has opened up the doors of possibility for me when it comes to screen acting. In 2020, I was cast in *Dune* as Shadout Mapes, which was my first taste of a Hollywood set. It was a real pinch-me moment walking on to the set for the first time – it was breathtaking. I had to be aged up for the role, which meant spending several hours in the makeup chair having prosthetic wrinkles applied to my face and hands.

In 2023, we've got the Queen Charlotte spin-off coming out as well as season three of *Bridgerton* – and we'll start filming season four in the spring. I think *Bridgerton* will continue for a few more years yet, but I'd also love to do some more theatre soon and another huge film would be great fun – I'd love to play a leading lady.



### First take

**Sweet or salty popcorn?** A mix of both.

**Comedy or drama?** Drama.

**Favourite film?**

*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

**Best movie soundtrack?** *Dune*.

**Favourite movie character of all time?**

I love Frances McDormand in *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*.

**First movie memory?**

Probably *Bugsy Malone*.

**Best awards ceremony after-party you've attended?** *Bridgerton* came out during the pandemic so I haven't been to many awards ceremonies yet.

## 'I have no personal interest in clothes or fashion!'

Jenny Beavan has won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design three times for *A Room With A View*, *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Cruella*. She also caused a stir when she wore an M&S jacket to pick up one Oscar.



To me, clothes are purely storytelling devices

commissioned a film called *Hullabaloo Over Georgie And Bonnie's Pictures* in 1978 by Merchant Ivory

Productions, and he knew they needed some help getting the costumes together for Dame Peggy Ashcroft. The next film Merchant Ivory made was *The Europeans*, and they asked me to be the costume designer's assistant.

I've worked on nearly 50 films now, and there are still many I thoroughly enjoy rewatching: *The Remains Of The Day*, *Sense And Sensibility*, *The King's Speech*, *The Gathering Storm*, *Howards End* and *Christopher Robin*. I recently worked on *Mrs Harris Goes To Paris*, which is a film about fashion house Dior and was a lovely project. Dior doesn't own many archive pieces from that time, so we had to create fake Dior dresses.

Attending awards shows is another big part of the job, although I find them quite normal these days. Of course, there are some people who are completely overdressed, but I always like to wear something that honours the film I'm there for. In 2016, I won the Oscar for Best Costume Design for *Mad Max: Fury Road*. In tribute to the film, I wore biker jeans, boots and a faux leather jacket from M&S, which I had bedazzled with the Immortan Joe symbol on the back. I was unknowingly making one of the biggest fashion statements – or rather understatements – of the season. Apparently, people didn't like that I wasn't wearing a ballgown and there was uproar on social media, but honestly, I didn't dwell on the situation too much.

I'm extremely proud of every award I've won, but it is a true team effort. The costumes in *Mad Max: Fury Road* were some of the most challenging I've ever done, especially as it was a big step away from the period films I'm used to.

Being a costume designer is a hugely fun job; my favourite part of the process is the research stage, gathering the ideas and seeing it all come together. And I love working with people – especially actors. I don't get starstruck, but I do admire actors and the work they do, especially people like Lesley Manville, Emma Thompson, Helen Mirren and Gillian Anderson.

I'm looking forward to working on a wonderful film with my daughter, Caitlin, who's the co-producer of Genesius Pictures. I also have other projects in the pipeline, but I can't say too much because films can be very touch and go – but that's all part of the magic.



Jenny's work features in *Mrs Harris Goes To Paris* (top) and *A Room With A View*



### First take

**Sweet or salty popcorn?** Salty.

**Comedy or drama?** Comedy.

**Favourite film?**

*The Remains Of The Day.*

**The last movie that made you cry?**

*White Bird: A Wonder Story.*

**Best movie soundtrack?**

*A Room With A View.*

**Favourite movie character of all time?**

Buzz Lightyear. He's wonderful.

**First movie memory?** *White Wilderness.*

**Best awards ceremony after-party you've attended?** The *Vanity Fair* party after the Oscars.

Some people find it surprising when I say I have absolutely no personal interest in clothes or fashion. To me, clothes are purely storytelling devices. Most days I wear comfortable

workwear, but as soon as I'm working with clothes in terms of telling a story, that's when they become very interesting to me. I love nothing more than picking my way through the racks at a costume house or sketching out ideas that will help bring a character to life.

I studied theatre design at the Central School for Art and Design (now Central Saint Martins) and I loved creating the on-stage worlds, painting scenery and making props. I worked in theatre set design until my late 20s, working at the Royal Opera House and on ballets in Germany and Poland.

I fell into costume design by pure accident. My friend Nick Young

## ‘There is a movement of amazing female filmmakers’

Frances O’Connor has been working as an actor for 30 years. In 2022, she celebrated the release of *Emily*, the first feature-length film she wrote and directed.

**W**hen I wrote the script for *Emily*, it was as much about me coming into my writing and exploring myself as it was about getting to know Emily Brontë. She had always resonated with me.

I read her poetry when I was 15, and you could really feel who she was behind the words; she was introverted, sensitive and highly creative. It was like getting close to her.

*Emily* debuted in British cinemas in October 2022, and it was different to anything I had experienced as an actress. It’s more exposing in a way, even though I’m not on camera. Every time I screen the film and attend a Q&A, there’s always a younger woman who comes up to me and says: ‘Thank you for your film. I felt like that was me up there.’

The thing about acting is the job description is about your attractiveness. I struggled to reconcile this at the beginning of my career. Film is an aesthetic medium. Nowadays, as we embrace diversity, we recognise that you can have different faces, shapes and sizes and it can be beautiful.

My film debut as an actress was in *Love And Other Catastrophes*, an independent romantic comedy directed by my friend Emma-Kate Croghan. Our group of friends made it for \$30,000 and it ended up at the Cannes Film Festival. The next thing we knew, we were on the world stage. *Mansfield Park* was also directed by a woman – Patricia Rozema.

Afterwards, I worked with a lot of men. Tom Shankland, who I worked with in *The Missing*, was incredibly talented, and I was starstruck when I got to work with Steven Spielberg early on in my career for *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. But the projects where I’ve worked with female directors have probably meant the most to me. Ana Kokkinos, who directed me in *Blessed*, was an amazing director to work with.

There is a movement of amazing female filmmakers who are telling stories from their own perspective and you feel it in their films. They’re so fresh and exciting to watch; you feel at home when you’re watching them. Seeing directors such as Chloé Zhao, Greta Gerwig and Jane Campion, I knew I wanted to be a part of that.

I’d been writing this script for years in between acting jobs. Then, five years ago, I decided I had to get it made and I had to direct it. I gave it to a friend, an Australian producer Rob Connolly, who has two teenage daughters, and he felt that there was a real story there. We gave it to a sales agency in the UK called Embankment Films, which is a great champion of female filmmakers. Once Warner Bros invested £1.1m, everything came together fairly quickly and we received £5.1m in funding. It made

Writing a film is more exposing in a way, even though I’m not on camera

### First take

**Sweet or salty popcorn?**

I like when you mix it up.

**Comedy or drama?** I love comedy, but I would probably lean towards drama.

**Favourite film?**

*Vertigo* by Alfred Hitchcock.

**Best movie soundtrack?** *Midsommar*.

**Favourite movie character of all time?**

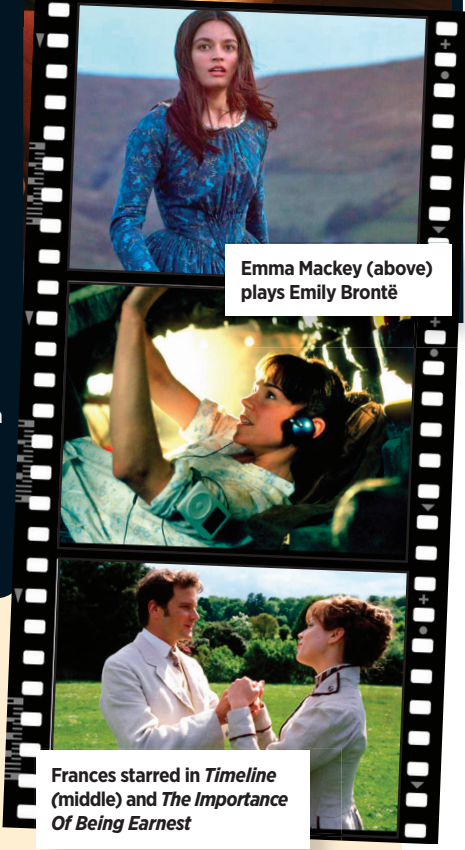
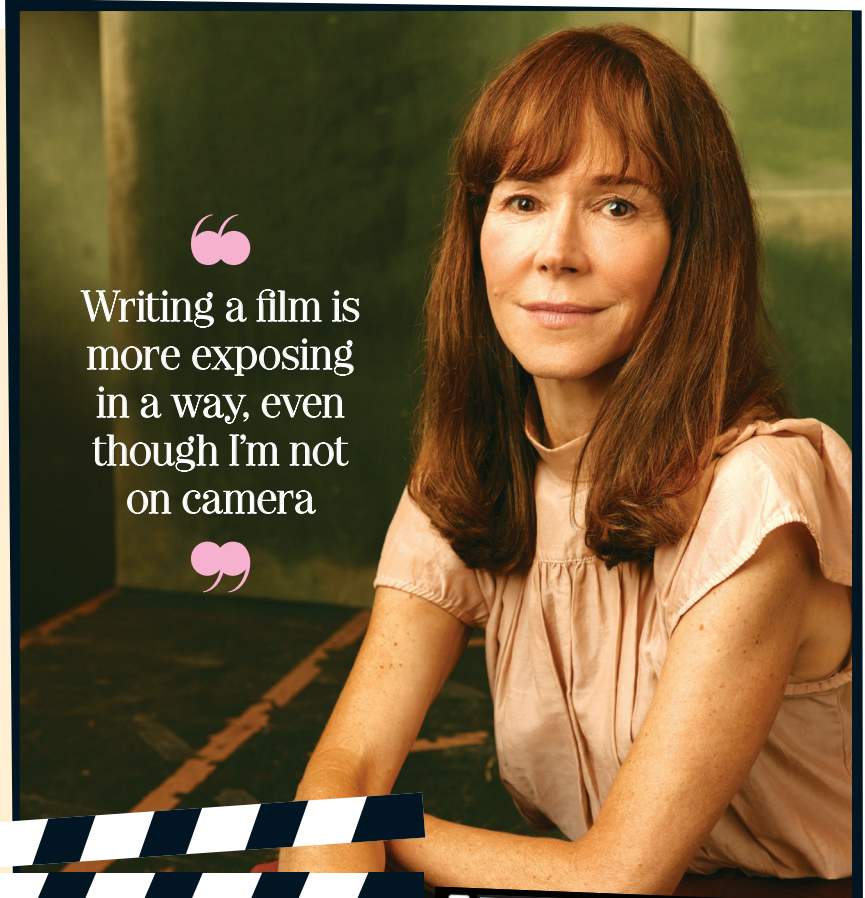
Marilyn Monroe as Sugar Kane in *Some Like It Hot*.

**First movie memory?** Seeing *Fantasia* when I was really little was utterly terrifying.

**Best awards ceremony after-party you’ve attended?** The Golden Globes parties I’ve been to were pretty amazing.

shooting tight, and with Covid-19 and the logistics of remote locations, we had to increase the budget to £6m, which is a lot of money to give to a first-time director! I got very lucky, but it helped that we had Emma Mackey playing Emily as everyone was so excited about that.

I’ve already written my next film, and I’m in the middle of script editing at the moment. After *Emily* came out, I got offered a few acting jobs as well. Now I have some time to think about whether I should do a bit of acting next, but I’d be really excited to go straight into directing my next story. □



Emma Mackey (above) plays Emily Brontë

Frances starred in *Timeline* (middle) and *The Importance Of Being Earnest*

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