

Official Selection

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Toronto International
Film Festival 2022



HITCHCOCK D'OR 2022

PRIX PUBLIC 2022

MEILLEURE INTERPRETATION 2022

**EMMA
MACKEY**

Emily

A FILM BY **FRANCES O'CONNOR**

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Emily

DINARD
FESTIVAL
de FILM BRITANNIQUE
HITCHCOCK D'OR 2022
PRIX PUBLIC 2022
MEILLEURE INTERPRETATION 2022

A FILM WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
FRANCES O'CONNOR

WITH
EMMA MACKEY
OLIVER JACKSON COHEN
FIONN WHITEHEAD
ALEXANDRA DOWLING
AMELIA GETHING

DURATION : 2H10 – GREAT-BITAIN - FORMAT : 2.35 – SOUND : 5.1

12 APRIL 2023 IN DE BIOSCOOP

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Synopsis

Emily Brontë (Emma Mackey) past niet in het keurslijf dat haar familie en de burgerij van Yorkshire haar opleggen. Zij is een rebel en een buitenbeentje, een jonge vrouw die zichzelf probeert te zijn. Als ze onverwacht de liefde ontdekt, versterkt dit niet alleen haar passie, maar ook haar drang naar vrijheid. Aangemoedigd door haar broer Branwell (Fionn Whitehead) kiest Emily haar eigen weg en vindt de inspiratie voor een tijdloos meesterwerk: *Wuthering Heights*.



Production notes

The vision for EMILY 'No coward soul is mine..'

Without Emily Brontë there would be no Cathy or Heathcliff; those iconic, emotional scenes on the windswept Yorkshire moors seared into literary history, forever a part of popular culture (not to mention a stone-cold Kate Bush classic). While much has been written about the Brontë family, relatively little has been recorded about Emily, and the life she must have experienced to have written 'Wuthering Heights' and to have become such a respected poet in her short lifetime.

"Emily Brontë is fierce, rebellious, sensitive, creative and magical," begins EMILY writer-director Frances O'Connor, who's been evolving this project for the past decade. "I think she's the most neglected sister. There's a core group of hardcore fans who just love Emily because she's a bit of a rebel and a misfit and she'd probably be a goth or something these days, I think."

Bringing Emily Brontë to life on screen is Emma Mackey (Sex Education, Death on the Nile) who notes that, "Emily was intuitive, inquisitive, observant, imaginative, bold, creative, and quietly intelligent". The second youngest of the Brontë children, Emily was born in 1818, and lived with her family at Haworth in Yorkshire, with the moors on their doorstep. The family suffered great tragedy with the death of Emily's mother in 1821, followed by the deaths of the two eldest Brontë siblings, Maria and Elizabeth in 1825, who both died from tuberculosis after becoming ill while away at boarding school in Wakefield. Maria lived to just 11 years-old and Elizabeth was 10 years-old when she died.

Charlotte and brother Branwell, along with Anne (the youngest in the family) would all join Emily as writers, having all created stories practically as soon as they learned to read. The surviving three Brontë sisters would all publish their first novels in the same year, 1847; Charlotte with 'Jane Eyre', Emily with 'Wuthering Heights', and Anne with 'Agnes Grey'.

I've always loved the Brontë's", says Frances O'Connor. "I've always loved 'Wuthering Heights' and 'Jane Eyre' particularly. When I was doing my first international film, (Jane Austen's 'Mansfield Park'), after we wrapped, I took the opportunity to go up to Yorkshire for the first time and visit Haworth and it was so evocative. I walked out on the moors and thought 'Oh, I'd love to write "something one day' and then I just forgot about it for ages and followed my path as an actress. Eventually, I really wanted to start telling my own stories, so I went back to the idea of this."

"There were certain things in Emily's life that I identified with in mine," adds O'Connor, "Certain things that I think thematically are part of 'Wuthering Heights' and her life that I also relate to, and I think a lot of women would relate to, so the idea came from that." In writing the script for EMILY, O'Connor has blended historical accuracy about the Brontë's lives with Emily Brontë's "No coward soul is mine..." imagined world, so the story becomes "half her life, half 'Wuthering Heights' - and a little bit of things from my life," she says. "I could've told a story that was a straight biography, but I felt like that's been done. I was more interested in finding a way to celebrate who Emily is, that's connected to 'Wuthering Heights' and is more strongly narrative in a way that is a little like a fairytale."





"What struck me about this script", notes producer Piers Tempest, "Is that it really imagined and captured the spirit and the essence of how Emily could've been, because it was such a surprise that a book of such intensity and passion ('Wuthering Heights') was written by her." Tempest read the script for EMILY in September 2019 on the plane home from the Toronto Film Festival and was instantly impressed with the world Frances O'Connor had created. "Emily is such an interesting character, there must have been so much going on in her mind and I think Frances has brilliantly and expertly woven the facts that we know about Emily and the Brontës's, with her imagined process and inspirations for writing the book."

"More broadly EMILY is about a woman, a coming-of-age story", says Alexandra Dowling who plays Charlotte Brontë. "It's about a woman finding herself and her authentic voice and power in the world." The way the film humanises the Brontës so well and shows their faults was a strong draw for Fionn Whitehead, who plays Branwell Brontë. "It's unflinching in their portrayals and it's based in fact, but also partly fiction and that gives it a lot of room to play with different things and craft these engaging stories about these people's lives," he suggests.

"I knew about the Brontës of course, I'd read 'Wuthering Heights' and 'Jane Eyre' years ago," says Emma Mackey, who plays the eponymous lead, "but I didn't know that much about Emily. She is almost the lesser known of the three, because she wasn't very public and there's not an awful lot of information about her, so people like to conjure up and fabricate and imagine the life that she might have had. This film is a version of that, from Frances's mind."

"Often, these tellings of Emily Brontë and the sisters' lives are just about the books that they've written," says Amelia Gething, who plays Anne Brontë. "This film is showing their actual, day to day lives and obviously it's an imagined life, because we don't know exactly what they went through and what they did, but it covers their life at the parsonage and what they did on the moors – it shows that they can just be fun and silly too, instead of only being seen as serious writers."

"There is inevitably pressure when you're playing a person who existed," adds Emma Mackey, "but as it's not a completely factual biopic or a biography of Emily Brontë, it's a story, so the pressure is taken off in that regard."

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Blending the real and the imagined of Emily Brontë's life has precedent; when she died, her sister Charlotte famously retold Emily's life as seen through her own perspective. "I think Charlotte did actually re-write her (Emily's) narrative when she was alive and when she (Emily) was dead," explains Frances O'Connor, "and I just wanted to make a film that re-dressed the balance and really put Emily at the middle of it, looking at who she was in a way that was very full and celebratory."

As the actor playing Charlotte Brontë, Alexandra Dowling says she was intrigued by "the idea of Charlotte being controlling; she (Charlotte) definitely re-edited a lot of Emily's letters after she died. There's still a lot of mystery around the relationship but I think Frances's script really held the complexity of that sibling rivalry and mistrust but also the deep love, adoration and affection they had, too."



"The Brontë family are shrouded in mystery!" continues Emma Mackey, "They're sort of the untouchable sisters, especially Emily. She's called 'the Sphinx of English literature', this mysterious figure, and what I do like is that we're fleshing her out and giving her a character, a personality and a voice and making her a living, breathing woman, as opposed to this figure from history."

Aside from taking on the mantle of the Brontë legacy with her script, Frances O'Connor wanted to be the one to visualise her story, by directing EMILY as well. Turns out timing can be everything. "I knew I wanted to write, and I've always wanted to try directing," says O'Connor, "In the last five years, I've felt this yearning to expand beyond being an actor and tell my whole story. It coincided with my asking if I could direct it and the producers were into it. It also coincided with the #MeToo movement happening and a lot of women getting the opportunity to have their voices heard, whereas maybe five years ago I wouldn't have had that opportunity."

"I've always wanted to work with more female directors and also with an actor-turned-director," adds Alexandra Dowling. "I felt in such safe hands knowing she (Frances) had the vision for the film, too. The whole way through she knew exactly what she wanted but at the same time she's really collaborative and able to let you play, which has just been fantastic."

"You have to let the actors have freedom but you also have to guide them", says O'Connor of developing her directing style. "I found it was really helpful being an actor as well as a director, because you understand very deeply what it's like to be inside the process, so there are moments where you let your actors have space to be in the moment and there are times where you come in and help steer it. I felt like I learned a lot during the process of directing – at times I thought I'd just let them go and see what happened. Sometimes, I'd have the thought 'oh it'd be nice if the actor did this' and then they would do it on the next take; I just needed to give them time to get there, so it was a really interesting process."

"I really respect Frances," says Fionn Whitehead. "I think she's a brilliant director and amazing writer and she's just really lovely as well. She's got the three things I think you need: she's super patient, open to collaboration and to hearing your ideas, and just really enthusiastic." Oliver Jackson-Cohen, who plays fictional character William Weightman in the film, concurs; "Frances is an incredible actor, when you work with a director who knows acting so well, there's an immediate trust. This idea has been in Frances' head for the past ten years, so she knows every single scene inside out, there's no fat on the script. Frances would explain it to you and she was so clear and concise. It's been a really interesting working relationship, because she's got so much knowledge and she feels so much about how it's been written."

Legendary character actress Gemma Jones, who plays Aunt Branwell, already had a close working relationship with Frances O'Connor that she was happy to take further. "It's been lovely working with Frances," says Jones. "We knew each other from the theatre, she played Maggie the cat in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and I played Big Mama. That was a lovely experience and we got to know each other very well. So, when she called me about this, I thought 'oh that will be lovely to be a part of this adventure for her!' because it's a big challenge that she wrote this beautiful script and is also directing, so it's been very pleasurable to be part of that."

As for the logistics of filming amidst Coronavirus, producer Piers Tempest says the whole cast and crew found their way. "The pandemic of 2020 / 2021 has affected all films, it's changed the way we work and the systems in place, and it's really had an impact on the creative process. Luckily with EMILY, a lot of the film takes place outside, which is good and we were filming in quite remote locations, so that takes the risk down a little bit when shooting during Coronavirus. This is actually my fourth film that I've made during the pandemic, so we know what we're doing now in terms of our testing processes. It's really about trying to give as much creative freedom to the director as possible, whilst keeping everyone safe and following the guidelines."

The cast

'She dried her tears and they did smile...'

As for finding the actor to play Emily Brontë, director Frances O'Connor struck gold early on in the process by casting Emma. "I started working with Fiona Weir, our casting director, who is just marvellous," says O'Connor, "and Emma was one of the first people that auditioned and she was just so perfect from the word go. The thing about Emma is that she has this wild energy, she's got intelligence, she's obviously very beautiful but it's all there underneath, too. Because she was one of the first to audition, we kept looking, but I kept coming back to Emma. She's just so phenomenal in the film, she's a stunning actor."

Emma Mackey relished the chance to tackle such a beloved character, who changes immensely over the course of the film. "She's got a lot going on!" says Mackey. "We see her start off as this quite timid, shy, very observant girl. She's seeking her father's approval and doesn't really know what her place in the family is and what her place in the world is yet, but she's imaginative and curious and wants to tell all of these stories. Over the course of the timeframe of the film, we see her evolve and develop relationships with her brother and with Mr Weightman. Her relationships with her sisters evolve and change too, as well as her relationship with herself, her imagination and her confidence. We see her evolution into a woman up until the point where she writes 'Wuthering Heights'."

The cast had two weeks of rehearsals all together, incorporating movement lessons and singing, as they rehearsed the scenes, so Mackey says that "when we got to shooting, we were prepared and ready to dive straight in." All the cast had their research work cut out, with Alexandra Dowling, who plays Charlotte Brontë, admitting "...there are so many books to read!

I ordered SO many books!" She continues, "The one I really relied on was actually a book of Charlotte's letters to Ellen Nussey, because you've got so much of her private thoughts in there. A lot of her personality comes through in those letters and a side of Charlotte I hadn't really thought about or known about. There was also a great book by Lucasta Miller called 'The Brontë Myth' and a biography by Claire Harman ('Charlotte Bronte: A Fiery Heart') that I dipped into and then obviously the novels themselves, 'Wuthering Heights' and 'Jane Eyre' and the poetry. There was a lot to get into!"

Everyone came to set with a wide knowledge and respect for the tale they were setting out to tell. "So much of what Frances has written is supported by things that she (Charlotte) had written herself," adds Dowling. "For example, she wrote in a letter to Ellen Nussey how she had to suppress and conceal darker aspects of herself and sometimes these would come out in bursts and she felt really ashamed afterwards. I think that was the difference between Charlotte and Emily. Charlotte is constantly trying to suppress her wilder, darker nature and Emily is much more OK with it and especially as the film goes on, she actually embraces it. There was a point where it's talked about that Emily had an almost unconscious tyranny over Charlotte – that was really interesting, playing with these power dynamics between the two of them and how she (Emily) could kind of control where that was coming from."

Fionn Whitehead also absorbed as much as he could about Branwell Brontë, the lone brother amongst his female siblings, struggling to match his sisters' creative talents: "I bought a massive book full of Branwell's poems and his stories and used that for reference. I read Byron's Don Juan, which Branwell was massively influenced by. He loved writers like Shelley and Byron, so I referenced those a lot. Then it was more a case of looking into the effects of addiction, specifically alcohol and opiates, because he (Branwell) was a known alcohol and opium addict and I was thinking about that aspect of the character and his slow deterioration and descent into full-blown dependence."





As the film progresses, while circumstances lead Emily Brontë to extinguish some of her natural wildness, Branwell leans into it and eventually gets consumed by his demons. "When we first meet Branwell in the film, he's a young man with his whole life ahead of him," continues Whitehead. "He's about to go to London to study art and he seems like a character who very much has a lust for life. He loves reading and writing and being creative and the world around him and is full of excitement about going to London, where he's just been accepted into the Royal Academy of Arts. Then over the course of the story, he slowly deteriorates as he begins to lose hope about his writing and as his addictions take more of a grip on him."

Tonally, Fionn Whitehead noted that whilst Branwell is "always the life and soul of the party, it was important for me to be able to track where he was along the road to madness". Whitehead continues, "There are points in the story where I believe he comes out of it a bit and then gets thrown back into it and towards the end, he's just gone - he's given up hope. It was really heartbreaking to read, this character that starts so strong and slowly gives up."

"Frances and I talked a lot about how vibrant he is in the beginning and how important it was to play him as this soulful, joyful young guy who's really keen on having a good time and making sure everyone else is having a good time with him. But the background noise we talked about was that he is recovering from the loss of his mother and his two older sisters, and that sits with him a lot and the Brontës never really talk about it at all. I think that affects him a lot later in life; he doesn't deal with any of the feelings that come up around that. There's this constant need to be moving, because the moment he's still, his world comes crashing down around him."

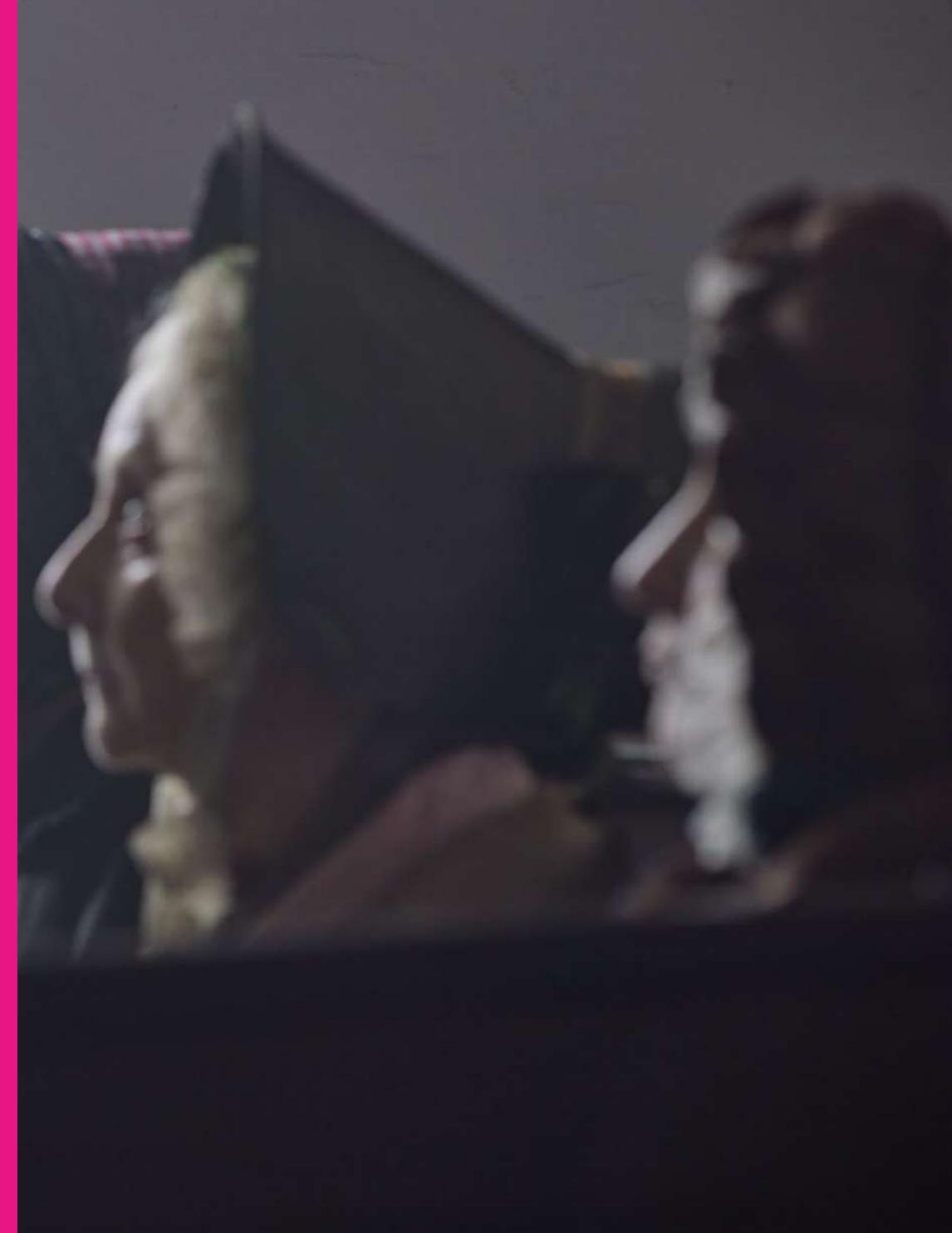
"Fionn Whitehead is so much fun on set and yet so truthful and real," says Frances O'Connor. "The character he created in Branwell, you really care for him and you want to see him be OK. Such a true talent."

Meanwhile the fourth and final sibling (and the youngest), Anne Brontë, "is kind of the mediator between Charlotte and Emily" says Amelia Gething, who plays Anne on screen. "She sees Emily's anxieties and Charlotte's need to be in control and she tries to keep everybody calm and not have too much sisterly bickering."

"Anne starts off messing about with Emily, writing their stories about Gondal (their imagined world) and then she leaves home and takes Emily's place at school, because Emily doesn't like being away from home," continues Gething. "When I first did my research on Anne, there were a lot of references to her being timid, calm, boring - or one of the three - and then when I did further research, reading some of her poems and her books, I found that she was so much more than that. She was funny, she's really clever and smart, so I tried to incorporate a lot of that into playing her. But I think her main role in the film, and in Frances' interpretation of it all, is that Anne is Emily's friend and her confidante. She's there to keep Emily's peace, not just as a sister but as a friend as well."

EMILY begins with a newcomer arriving in Haworth, clergyman William Weightman (who incidentally was a real person and is played here by Oliver Jackson-Cohen), who not only immediately disrupts proceedings but causes emotional ripples that gather momentum as the story unfolds. He brings with him this "very exciting, quite modern energy" says Jackson-Cohen of Weightman. "The way he approaches sermons is different to how it's been done in the past, and there hasn't been a young clergyman in the parish for a very long time. He comes into Haworth and changes the dynamic there entirely." This is especially true when it comes to the Brontë sisters, who seem enraptured - though not Emily, initially. "She sees through his bullshit," smiles Jackson-Cohen. But the ground shifts again when Weightman is tasked with giving Emily French lessons. "There's this incredible tension (between Weightman and Emily) that Frances plays with," he explains, "that eventually blossoms into a relationship, ultimately at great cost to both of them."

"Because I'm playing a clergyman," adds Jackson-Cohen, "I met quite a few priests from varying walks of life. It was really fascinating". Jackson-Cohen was struck by the overriding idea of the afterlife and how it can have a strong bearing on how people behave in this life. He continues, "The relationship that develops between Emily and Weightman completely destroys everything he's ever believed in. It destroys the meaning he's given his life; everything he has in his life is disrupted by Emily and that's a really interesting dynamic."



The setting

' Hope was but a timid friend... '

The drama of the Yorkshire moors plays out vividly on screen, mirroring Emily's own tussle with na-ture and her place in the world. "Anytime I'm running down a hill, I quite enjoy it," admits Emma Mackey as Emily Brontë "because it's quite freeing, but honestly any group scene that we've had with the rest of the cast has been an utter joy. The other day we were running across the moors all together and that was really fun. Being in the great outdoors and getting rained on was great!"

"I really enjoyed the intensity of it," Mackey continues. "It's only six weeks filming, so you're condens-ing a very ambitious project into a very short space of time, which allows for a lot of creativity. I think it brings strength to it because there's a time pressure, you have to be alert all the time and that's what I really liked about this project; it was a moment in time."

The task of capturing that wildness in a moment in time on screen fell to Cinematographer Nanu Segal, who says that she and Frances O'Connor "immersed ourselves in movies that we love and drew from those, whether there was a direct parallel to the material we were working on or not. The vision for the film came from a really extended conversation with Frances. We worked on it a lot during the lockdown (of 2020). We talked for hours and hours and we'd have three, to four, to five sessions a week on Zoom, and go through the script."

"We both wanted to make something that was instantly cinematic," continues Segal, "and also some-thing that wasn't too glossy, that had an earthiness to it. We did a bunch of lens testing and it led us to work with anamorphic lenses. They've got this older, softer quality so they don't flare. Both Frances and I loved the inherent beauty in the landscape and also our amazing cast and we wanted to

draw that out, but keep it really natural at the same time. While I was lighting, I was actually always trying to keep things as unlit as possible for the day work. For the night work, we used a lot of candlelight and we created bespoke candle rigs that we'd bring in and we'd augment that candlelight with some LEDs."

"We ended up shooting tableau," adds Segal, "these wider shots, where characters and objects are quite carefully arranged to almost create a painting. Once those were done, we wanted to have the camera very free form and responsive to the actors, so the movement had a natural flow to it. On this film we basically never used any marks for the actors, which is unusual. The idea was that we'd create an area for the actors to work in and they could move within that space, however they liked and because I was (using) handheld (cameras) it was very easy to adapt the frame as the actors move."

In charge of the production design is Steve Summersgill, who explains that the design work started, quite understandably, at the Brontë family home. "It was incredibly important for both myself and Frances to get a feel for their day to day lives," says Summersgill, "and what it might have been like living in the parsonage. We were lucky enough to have access to Ann Dinsdale from the Brontë Society and she was incredibly helpful guiding us with historical accuracy for all things to do with the parsonage."

A story depends very much on who is telling it, and "it was very important that the film be seen through the eyes of Emily," continues Summersgill. "She is very sensitive, emotional, and sometimes slightly awkward, but I think her character feels much more comfortable when she's surrounded and immersed in nature. I didn't want it to be dark and depressing, so we looked at bringing in a lot of colours from nature, particularly into the parsonage. We were choosing locations that had the most beautiful vistas. Playing with light and dark was very important; overcast skies contrasting with the lighter days and particularly when designing the parsonage, we tried to play around with this, bringing the characters from a lighter space into a darker space or vice versa."

Shooting in the Spring / Summer of 2021 in Yorkshire, provided expected climactic challenges. "The exteriors were at the mercy of the sky," says Summersgill, "and often we had to do quite dramatic schedule changes due to endless rain!"

The look

' Come hither child - who gifted thee... '

While the sweeping moors speak for themselves, the team worked collaboratively to place the actors authentically in that iconic setting. "Both Steve (Summersgill, Production Designer) and Michael (O'Connor, Costume Designer) – what I really liked was that they both talked about creating a 'real' world, making it authentic and true and characterful," says Frances O'Connor. "They did such an amazing job and went above and beyond to create the world. The house that Steve created for us, the parsonage was so beautiful. The level of detail in terms of him studying the actual parsonage and de-veloping a relationship with the woman that runs the parsonage, Ann Dinsdale. The same with cos-tume, everything felt like clothes, not costumes, even though they're beautiful, you feel like they are the things that they wear every day."

"One thing Michael and I came across was this lightning bolt pattern," continues O'Connor, "There's a reference in the script that Emily had bought material to make a dress out of it and it was a purple lightning bolt and Michael just loved that, so he made a lightning dress for Emily that was just gor-geous. Probably the most iconic of her dresses in the film."

"Technically, we decided to do some accent work," says Emma Mackey as Emily, "so all the Brontë family members have an accent, we did a soft Yorkshire lilt. We had to work on our voice and our pos-ture with the corsets and all these things that you forget about in modern life! I know people always talk about it, but it (the corset) really does change the way you breathe and the way that you hold yourself."

For Hair & Make-Up Designer Lucy Cain, Covid had scuppered some of her preferred routes to re-search. "Unfortunately, there weren't any art galleries or portrait galleries open, which is often a nice way to go round and get some reference points from that time, because obviously there weren't any actual photographs for the period of time that we are working through. So as well as

visual references, I just tried to read up on the sisters to find if there were any quirks that they had that we might be able to introduce into the characters in the film."

"I (initially) treated it more as an accurate biopic but as we drew nearer to filming and I spoke more with Frances about it, I realised it was Frances' imagined world and she wanted some of the costumes and make-up to be a bit more fluid. So we set Emily aside, keeping everyone else as historically accu-rate as possible, but giving Emily more freedom. I gave her a lower bun for her earlier years, when everyone else's bun was higher up. It just helped to give her a different silhouette and set her aside from her other sisters. Often, they would shoot the three of them and Emily would be stood back, and her different silhouette helped with that process. It was softer and freer and there were curls around her face. I just wanted to give her this sense that she wasn't conforming. I carried that through when she went out on the moors and would always wear her hair down, that was a nod towards 'Wuthering Heights', that when she left the confines of her home, was when she was free and she (literally) let her hair down."

"As Emily's journey progresses," continues Cain, "there is a pivotal point where the mask comes on and she starts to toe the line. She has conformed so much by the end of the film and she's lost that freedom and become more contained (in her look)." Cain concludes that working with the actresses playing the three Brontë siblings was a great experi-ence and that she was in awe of Emma's commitment in particular: "Emma Mackey is a legend. She's in every scene bar four, and there are 183 scenes and never once did she complain. She was never in a bad mood, always polite, hard-working and invested. No vanity, she just wanted everything to be right and if that meant stripped back (make-up) she was all up for that. All the girls were brilliant like that; they barely wore any make-up, there was no mascara and actually it was really refreshing to be able to work with that and to help make them feel more authentic."

EMILY takes audiences on a journey that initially might feel familiar to fans of the Brontës but which also offers up a fresh new take on the life of one of literature's most mysterious and little-known au-thors: young, brave, independent Emily Brontë. Frances O'Connor and her talented team take the viewer into the heart of Brontë country but delve deep into the psyche of Emily and those closest to her, as she navigates who she really is and what she is to become. Fionn Whitehead summarises the hopes of those closest to the project: "(I hope that) audiences get carried away for a couple of hours and feel really transported into the period and into the family - I hope audiences invest in the charac-ters as much as we all have in making EMILY."



Behind the camera

FRANCES O'CONNOR (Writer & Director)
EMILY is the directorial debut for Frances O'Connor.

She is an Australian-English actress living in London who is best known for her roles of 'Fanny Price' & 'Gwendolen Fairfax' in the films MANSFIELD PARK alongside Hugh Bonneville and Harold Pinter, & THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST alongside Judi Dench & Colin Firth and the TV series', Madame Bovary and The Missing. Her performance in both shows earned her a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actress.

Following her critically acclaimed film debut in Emma-Kate Croghan's LOVE & OTHER CATASTROPHES and award-winning performance in Bill Bennett's KISS OR KILL, O'Connor's film credits include THANK GOD HE MET LIZZIE alongside Cate Blanchett, Harold Ramis's BEDAZZLED starring Brendan Fraser & Elizabeth Hurley and the leading role of 'Monica Swinton' in Steven SPIELBERG'S A.I. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

Further film credits include her AACTA award-winning performance in Ana Kokinos's BLESSED, THE HUNTER opposite Willem Defoe, and WINDTALKERS opposite Nicolas Cage, and James Wan's THE CONJURING 2.

O'Connor will next be seen in the upcoming ten-part Sky Drama The End created by Samantha Strauss alongside Harriet Walter. Her TV credits also include ITV's Mr Selfridge, Troy: Fall of A City for BBC, Cleverman for ABC and Sundance, Iron Jawed Angels opposite Hillary Swank for HBO. Her work on stage includes the West End production of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof with Brendan Fraser, Ned Beatty, by Tennessee Williams, Tom and Viv at the Almeida theatre by Michael Hastings and the West End production of Florian Zeller's The Truth.

Devant la caméra

EMMA MACKEY (Emily Brontë)

Emma Mackey is a French/British actor with multiple film and television projects in development.

Early next year Emma will star as 'Jacqueline de Bellefort' in Kenneth Branagh's DEATH ON THE NILE. The Disney film is a follow up to Branagh's 2017 MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS and also stars Gal Gadot, Tom Bateman and Ali Fazal.

This autumn will see the release of Emma's first French language role, that of 'Adrienne Bourgès' in EIFFEL The film, directed by Martin Bourboulon, stars Romain Duris as 'Gustave Eiffel' and follows the true story of the inspiration that led to him designing the Eiffel Tower for the 1889 Paris World Fair.

Emma is perhaps best known for her leading role as 'Maeve Wiley' in Netflix's hugely successful com-edu series SEX EDUCATION. Created by Laurie Nunn and directed by Ben Taylor the show also stars Asa Butterfield, Gillian Anderson and Ncuti Gatwa. The first three seasons garnered both critical and audience acclaim worldwide, with Netflix recently announcing the series will be back for a fourth season in 2022.

Earlier this year Emma filmed the titular character in EMILY, a film re-imagining the life of Emily Brontë. Written by Frances O'Connor; Oliver Jackson-Cohen and Fionn Whitehead will also star. Last year THE WINTER LAKE had its World Premiere at the virtual Galway Film Fleadh and released in March. The independent thriller by first time feature director Phil Sheerin sees Emma in the role of 'Holly' opposite Charlie Murphy and Anson Boon.





OLIVER JACKSON COHEN (William Weightman)

Oliver can currently be seen playing opposite Olivia Coleman in Maggie Gyllenhaal's THE LOST DAUGHTER. He is internationally known for the hit Netflix anthology series THE HAUNTING OF BLY MANOR (a follow-up to THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE) from horror auteur Mike Flanagan and the title role in Universal/Blumhouse's feature THE INVISIBLE MAN, opposite Elisabeth Moss. In early 2021 Oliver shot the feature MR. MALCOM'S LIST opposite Sope Dirisu for director Emma Holly Jones and EMILY opposite Emma Mackey. His other film work includes; James McTeigue's THE RAVEN with John Cusack and Luke Evans, WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER opposite Chris Evans, Chris Pratt and Anna Farris, FASTER along-side Dwayne Johnson and Billy Bob Thornton, GOING THE DISTANCE with Drew Barrymore and DESPITE THE FALLING SNOW opposite Rebecca Ferguson.

Other TV work includes the BBC drama MAN IN AN ORANGE SHIRT from best-selling author Patrick Gale, NBC's limited event series EMERALD CITY, Australian mini THE SECRET RIVER opposite Sarah Snook (which was nominated for eight AACTA awards, including "Best Actor" for Oliver), MR. SELFRIDGE, DRACULA for NBC and the Scott Free production of WORLD WITHOUT END.



FIONN WHITEHEAD (Branwell Brontë)

Fionn Whitehead is well known for playing the lead in both the multi award-winning DUNKIRK and the Emmy Award winning BANDERSNATCH.

Other credits include leading roles in Richard Eyre's THE CHILDREN ACT opposite Emma Thompson and Stanley Tucci and PORT AUTHORITY which was Exec Produced by Martin Scorsese and premiered in competition at Cannes.

Fionn can currently be seen in Alex McAulay's debut DON'T TELL A SOUL and Neil Burger's VOYAGERS. He will be seen later this year in Roger Michell's THE DUKE opposite Helen Mirren and Jim Broadbent.

Whitehead is represented by Curtis Brown Group, United Talent Agency and Goodman, Genow, Schenkman, Smelkinson & Christopher.



ALEXANDRA DOWLING (Charlotte Brontë)

Alexandra Dowling is a British actress, who began her career on television, appearing in the long-running fantasy series, MERLIN. She guest starred as Roslin Frey in season 3 of GAME OF THRONES and appeared in POIROT opposite Zoë Wanamaker, Vanessa Kirby and David Suchet. Alexandra went on to play the recurring role of Queen Anne in the historical drama, THE MUSKATEERS, across 26 episodes for the BBC.

Theatre credits include Vassa at the Almeida Theatre (London); I Have Been Here Before and The Last of the De Mullins, both for the Jermyn Street Theatre (London) and the Theatre Royal Bath's production of While the Sun Shines. She has also appeared at the Southwark Playhouse and Shakespeare's Rose Theatre.

Alexandra can next be seen in the feature films STARBRIGHT for director Francesco Lucente and THE SILENCE OF MERCY for Floria Sigismondi.

AMELIA GETHING (Anne Brontë)

Rising star Amelia Gething is an actress, writer and creator. Amelia started her career creating content online which earned her cult status and a legion of loyal fans.

Amelia went on to create and star in her BBC series THE AMELIA GETHING COMPLEX (Series 1&2) and had a recurring role in THE SPANISH PRINCESS on Starz. Amelia is excited to be playing Anne Bronte in the new film Emily alongside Emma Mackey (Sex Education) and Fionn Whitehead (Dunkirk).



ADRIAN DUNBAR (Patrick Brontë)

Dunbar is an award-winning actor, director and writer. BAFTA nominated for his portrayal of the iconic Ted Hastings in all six series of LINE OF DUTY, he is one of our most celebrated actors. Screen credits include THE CRYING GAME, MY LEFT FOOT, MICKYBO AND ME, THE GENERAL, THE SNOWMAN, THE SECRET SCRIPTURE and HEAR MY SONG (which he starred in and co-wrote, earning him a BAFTA nomination), THE HOLLOW CROWN, BROKEN, INSIDE NO. 9 AND BLOODS 1 + S2. Dunbar is currently filming the title role in RIDLEY for ITV.

On stage, Dunbar recently starred in Hamlet opposite Cush Jumbo at the Young Vic. Other stage credits include: Conversations on A Homecoming and Brendan At The Chelsea (which he also directed).

Directing work includes Jimmy McGovern's MOVING ON in 2017 for BBC, Brendan At The Chelsea which opened at The Riverside Studios in 2008 and then The Lyric Belfast and New York in 2013. He also directed a production of Philadelphia Here I Come, which he re-worked with playwright Brian Friel.

Earlier this year he presented the hugely popular travel documentary ADRIAN DUNBAR'S COASTAL IRELAND.



Technical list

Written and directed by
Produced by
Executive producers

Frances O'Connor
Piers Tempest & David Barron
Robert Patterson, Jo Bamford,
Abel Korzeniowski, Tim Haslam,
Hugo Grumbar, Peter Touche,
Jamie Jessop, Andrea Scarso,
Michael Reuter, Sebastian Barker
& Oliver Parker

Director of photography
Sound
Editor

Nanu Segal
Niv Adiri
Sam Sneade

Direction artistique
Costume

Stephen Summersgill
Michael O'Connor

Make-up and hair designer
Original score

Lucy Cain
Abel Korzeniowski



Cast

Emily Brontë	Emma Mackey
Branwell Brontë	Fionn Whitehead
William Weightman	Oliver Jackson-Cohen
Charlotte Brontë	Alexandra Dowling
Anne Brontë	Amelia Gething
Patrick Brontë	Adrian Dunbar
Aunt Branwell	Gemma Jones

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