

A
Moving Pictures Theatre
production

The Mirror

Starring
Isabella McCarthy Sommerville

written by
Lucy Nordberg

Directed by
Marc Green

Director of Photography: Michael Danks
Casting Director: Peter Mantle
Editor: Jonny Simpson-Lee
Sound Design/Dialogue Editor: Pete Gill
Production Design: Paula Wrightson

produced by
Nordberg & Green



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©NORDBERG & GREEN FOR "THE MIRROR" ISABELLA MCCARTHY SOMMERVILLE ROSANNA BANI
©LUCY NORDBERGS
©PETER MANTLE ©MICHAEL DANKS ©JONNY SIMPSON-LEE
©LUCY NORDBERGS MARK GREEN ©MARK GREEN



The Mirror

A literal reflection on the passing of time, *The Mirror* is a short film available in two stand-alone versions: as both a 360 production, and a conventional film. Isabella McCarthy Sommerville gives a compelling performance as the Lady of a country house over a hundred years ago, as she gazes into her table mirror. While preparing to go out, she talks about the practical, everyday use of the mirror in the present, and the objective help it gives to show how we look to others in the world. But then, she warns that the image in the mirror can also just reflect and reinforce the distorted image we have of ourselves, as we seek to find meaning in what we see. The ending is different in the 360 and normal film versions - in the 360 version, the Lady's image, which always seems 'ghostly', disappears, while her reflection still talks to us. In the conventional footage, she leaves but her voice continues. Both endings impart the same message - that however important self-image may be to us, we too will disappear one day.

Creator's statement

Producer/writer Lucy Nordberg and producer/director Marc Green formed Moving Pictures Theatre to create new work inspired by classic storytelling, expressing universal ideas and experiences powerful and engaging to audiences. Moving Pictures Theatre are keen to explore the story-telling possibilities of 360 VR, alongside their traditional productions. The two versions of *The Mirror* stand alone, but show different techniques to tell the same story. We have longer projects in planning stage, that will be filmed with both methods – this film has helped us to test the production process and explore the creative possibilities.

The Mirror is part of a completed series of filmed poems by Lucy involving scenes in evocative locations. We have large productions planned in historic or notable locations, and these short films have given us valuable experience working within the limitations and possibilities of these sites. *The Mirror* is our first film where we shot both a conventional version and a 360 version, which can be enjoyed separately. New film-making techniques are often thought of as futuristic, but we are interested in using classic stories as well as exploring new possibilities. We saw this as an opportunity to tell a story and immerse the viewer in a historic location – a period drama can be powerful if the viewer can fully enter that world.

Isabella McCarthy Sommerville gives a strong performance that echoes the slightly unsettling nature of the poem, which dwells on the passing of time as opposed to the importance we place on how we see ourselves - and are seen - in the present. The historic period setting helps to emphasise the central point of the poem, with the character reflecting that one day they will be gone, and leave no trace in the mirror - leaving the audience to think about their own place in history. The production design by Paula Wrightson, evoking the everyday world of the Edwardian era, was important to get right in order to bring this lost world to life.

In the 360 version, the viewer is situated between the mirror and The Lady, with the Lady and her maid appearing to be slightly transparent, as if they are ghosts. The image in the mirror remains clear. When the Lady leaves, the reflection keeps talking, before itself disappearing, echoing the loss mentioned in the last lines of the poem. In the traditional version, the Lady leaves the room, but her voice continues, while the viewer is left looking at the empty mirror. These two approaches give a different emphasis to the story, with the 360 version giving us agency to look from the mirror to the Lady and piece together the story, as we can see her disappearing and then turn to see the reflection continuing.

Despite its reference to loss, the film themselves offer hope, as film is a medium that can, at least to some extent, recreate and connect us to the past. This is especially true of the 360 film, where the setting feels very real and can immerse the audience in an entire 'world'.



Lucy Nordberg

Writer & Producer of
The Mirror



Lucy formed the company Moving Pictures Theatre (MPT) with co-producer and director Marc Green. Their short film trilogy *Time and Tide*, starring Greta Scacchi, John Locke and Samuel West, is currently winning awards and being shown in festivals around the world. As well as co-producing, Lucy wrote the films in the trilogy: *The Arena*, *The Last Lighthouse Keeper* and *Homecoming*.

As a writer of versatile scripts with large-scale potential, Lucy has built up teams for previous productions around a shared interest in classic style and modern writing. In the theatre, productions of Lucy's work range from cabaret comedy material set in nightclubs to large-scale performances in the grounds of a castle. She is drawn to strong stories and memorable characters with the potential to shed light on the questions facing us today.

Her scripts include *King Arthur*, an ambitious modern take on the legend, which was performed at the Edinburgh Festival, and subsequently picked by arts impresario Richard Demarco for a large-scale production at Craigcrook Castle. She enjoys experimenting with genres, for example including a film-within-a-play scene in her script *When All the Crowds Have Gone*, performed at the Brighton Festival.

Well-received by audiences and critics alike, her work has also gained academic attention, including a workshop of *King Arthur* at the Cambridge University Shakespeare Conference, which included analysis of a filmed version of the play.

[Visit the Moving Pictures Theatre website here](#)

[Visit Lucy's IMDB page here](#)

Lucy outside the set of The Mirror, Preston Park Manor



Marc Green

Director & Producer of
The Mirror



Marc formed the company Moving Pictures Theatre (MPT) with co-producer and writer Lucy Nordberg. Their short film trilogy *Time and Tide*, starring Greta Scacchi, John Locke and Samuel West, is currently winning awards and being shown in festivals around the world. As well as co-producing, Marc directed the first of the trilogy to be completed, *The Last Lighthouse Keeper*.

Marc has a background in both creative and commercial worlds. Starting out as an artist and photographer, he was particularly drawn to landscape and portraiture, with an interest in the very early photography of the 19th century. He taught photography to people with disabilities and the elderly, including putting together an exhibition of his students' work. He has moved further into film, developing a painterly style that has resulted from his past work as an artist.

Marc is fascinated by the changing world of both photography and film. He is also interested in how classic techniques can inform work in completely new mediums, for example 360 degree filming and augmented reality.

In the commercial world, Marc worked as a graphic designer for a media company, while also helping out on the firm's film shoots. He went on to work in management and sales, enjoying the collaborative process of creating teams. As well as his creative eye, he has brought these management experiences to his role as producer for Moving Pictures Theatre.

[Visit the Moving Pictures Theatre website here](#)

[Visit Marc's IMDB page here](#)

Marc on set



Isabella
McCarthy Sommerville

The Lady of the House



Isabella is an accomplished actor and voice-over artist from Brighton. Since graduating from Royal Holloway, University of London with a degree in Drama & Theatre Studies, she has gone on to work with a great variety of directors and theatre companies, touring the UK and internationally.

In 2017, Isabella won the Arts Council Best Actress Award for her portrayal of the title role in a production of Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* - one of her favourite roles to date. In 2019 she embarked on performing her first one woman show, *Betsy: Wisdom of a Brighton Whore*, with Something Underground Theatre Company. The production was highly acclaimed by critics and audience alike, and the show will return in 2022 in an exciting new Brighton space. Isabella is currently also writing and developing her own solo show, which she hopes to bring to audiences in 2023.

Isabella relished the opportunity to perform *The Mirror* at the beautiful location of Preston Manor and found shooting in 360 film fascinating. She can't wait for audiences to experience watching it.

[Visit Isabella's IMDB page here](#)

Interview with Isabella McCarthy Sommerville

How did you find performing in a 360 film?

I loved it! I'd never filmed in 360 before and it was quite an experience. The fact I was left alone in the room to perform was really freeing – especially when you're used to having a crew standing round watching you normally. Aside from that though, I was just really interested in what the finished product would look like – and turns out, I wasn't disappointed! It's fascinating to me that you can shoot like that, then put on a headset and watch the footage, and genuinely feel like you're in the room, face to face with the performer – which is even weirder when you are the performer.

Did the historical location, and the time period of the poem, help you with your performance?

I had such a great experience – we had a brilliant cast and crew, and Preston Manor is a beautiful building, so it was a joy to shoot. The building definitely helped me get into character- you only have to walk through the long corridors and up and down the staircases a couple of times, and you quickly begin to imagine that you're the lady of the house – well I do, anyway! Lucy's poem also aided me in getting into character – it's so beautifully written and flows so freely – it was a joy to recite.

What was it that drew you to the acting profession?

I think I've always been drawn to stories – the idea that people can be brought together through storytelling, that whether they're reading a book, watching a play or film, listening to a song – they're getting lost in a story in some way. It's escapism and it's so necessary. As an actor, being a part of that is addictive.

How do the challenges of working with other actors differ from your one-person performances, if at all?

It's just a completely different experience. Working with other actors is incredible, for obvious reasons. To share intimate moments with another performer, to experience those magical moments where something just 'clicks' – that's so precious. You also have other people there to hold you, to rely on and work as a team with. On the flip side, for solo shows you don't have that – you're completely alone and if anything goes wrong, it's only you who can fix it. Equally though that's really rewarding – to accept full responsibility and just dive in head first to something that's pretty terrifying. So there are pros and cons for both – I enjoy them equally.

Do have any interesting stories you can tell us about from your times on set?

I've heard from some people that Preston Manor may be haunted – now, I'm not one to spread rumours, but I'll just say that there was a point where I was alone in a room, minding my own business, running my lines, and very, very slowly, the door in front of me began to creak shut...

Behind the Scenes

As Moving Pictures Theatre is based in Brighton, the company was keen to film at the city's historic Preston Manor, which was left to Brighton Corporation in 1932 by its last private occupants. Today, it is open to the public to show how such a building would function in the period before and after the First World War, reflecting the way of life of a well-to-do Edwardian family and their servants. Cast and crew greatly enjoyed working in this evocative setting, with one of the main bedrooms forming the perfect backdrop to bring the past to life. Appropriate props and costumes completed the scene. In the 360 version, the camera was situated between the mirror and Isabella McCarthy Sommerville, who was alone for the main part of the performance as no crew or equipment could appear in shot - meaning that the viewer is completely immersed in this lost world.



360 Stills



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