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BBC FIRST ACQUIRES INDIAN SUMMERS STARRING JULIE WALTERS

New premium drama channel BBC First has announced epic 10-part drama series *Indian Summers* starring **Julie Walters** (*Harry Potter*, *Mamma Mia*), as its latest acquisition.

The series, which has just gone into production, is set in the summer of 1932 against the sweeping grandeur of the Himalayas and the tea plantations of Northern India. India dreams of Independence, but the British are clinging to power. In the foothills of the Himalayas stands Simla; a little England where every summer the British power-brokers of this nation are posted to govern during the summer months.

The drama tells the rich and explosive story of the decline of the British Empire and the birth of modern India, from both sides of the experience. But at the heart of the story lie the implications and ramifications of the tangled web of passions, rivalries and clashes that define the lives of those brought together in this summer which will change everything.

The multi award-winning Walters, who received a BAFTA Fellowship this year, stars as Cynthia, a widow and doyenne of the expats Royal Club. A force to be reckoned with, her influence spreads throughout the community.

Also starring are **Henry Lloyd-Hughes** (*The Inbetweeners*, *Harry Potter*), **Jemima West** (*The Borgias*), **Roshan Seth** (*A Passage to India*, *Gandhi*) **Nikesh Patel** (*Bedlam*) and **Lillete Dubey** (*Monsoon Wedding*). The series from New Pictures is created and written by Paul Rutman (*Vera*).

Natalie Edgar, Director of Television, BBC Worldwide Australia and New Zealand, said: "We are focused on bringing our audiences the very best British dramas so we are delighted to have secured *Indian Summers* for BBC First. Julie Walters is one of the most talented actresses of her generation. With its rich cast of characters, stunning locations and stories of promises, secrets, politics, power, sex and love in tumultuous times, *Indian Summers* is set to be a stand-out series for next year."

Indian Summers will be seen on BBC First in 2015.

The BBC Worldwide channel, which will showcase the very best new British dramas and comedies in one place for the first time, launches on Foxtel on August 3. Titles which will be shown on the channel in launch month include:

- *The Musketeers* – a thrilling world of action, adventure and romance inspired by Dumas' legendary characters, starring Luke Pasqualino, Tom Burke, Santiago Cabrera, Howard Charles and Peter Capaldi.
- *Peaky Blinders* – acclaimed epic gangster family saga set in the lawless streets of post-war Birmingham on the cusp of the 1920s, starring Cillian Murphy.
- *The Politician's Husband* – a gripping drama about the shifting balance of power in a political marriage, starring David Tennant and Emily Watson and created by Paula Milne.
- *Burton and Taylor* – starring Helena Bonham Carter and Dominic West and telling the story of Hollywood's original 'it' couple Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, acting together in Noel Coward's 'Private Lives'.
- *Alan Partridge* – his two new mockumentaries *Welcome To The Places of My Life* and *On Open Books With Martin Bryce*, starring Steve Coogan.

BBC First joins existing BBC channels – UKTV, BBC Knowledge, CBeebies and BBC World News – on the Foxtel platform. It will also be available on Foxtel GO and in high definition. Drama and comedy fans will be able to check what's coming up on BBC First via the programme page bbc.com/first.

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