

# **EIFF premiere – The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde**

**The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, director Hope Dickson Leach's new version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic story, co-written with Vlad Butucea, will receive its world premiere at the Edinburgh International Film Festival on Monday.**

It is entirely fitting that it is premiered in the capital as much of the film was shot in Leith Theatre, and was originally presented in February 2022 as a performed live, filmic experience in the venue. Hope Dickson Leach is an award-winning film maker, based in Edinburgh, whose debut film, *The Levelling* won her a Scottish BAFTA and the inaugural IWC Filmmaker Bursary Award in association with the BFI.

The film will premiere at the Edinburgh International Film Festival on 21 and 22 August and will be broadcast on Sky Arts (Freeview Channel 11) later this year.

Hope Dickson Leach first worked with the National Theatre of Scotland during lockdown in August 2020, when she made *Ghost Light*, a love letter to Scottish theatre, for digital platforms, as part of the Edinburgh International Festival's My Light Shines On festival. Following on from this collaboration and with lockdown continuing to affect live performance, Hope began to develop this theatre/film hybrid

version of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, for National Theatre of Scotland and Selkie Productions (who also worked on *Ghost Light*) with the project going on to receive support from Screen Scotland and Sky Arts.

Hope Dickson Leach, co-writer and director, said: "I'm totally delighted that our film *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* will be having its world premiere at the Edinburgh International Film Festival on 21 August.. For a project that is so profoundly centred in the city of Edinburgh, I can imagine no better place to share this Scottish film with the world. Relocating Stevenson's iconic tale to the capital of Scotland allowed us to interrogate and expose some of the city's buried history, an endeavour which deepened my knowledge of my hometown. In 2022 we performed and streamed the live show from the historic Leith Theatre to audiences in the auditorium and across the UK. Since then we have re-edited the material, shot new footage and composed new music to create the final film that we will be sharing with Edinburgh audiences for the first time in August. It is the perfect conclusion to the creative journey I feel so lucky to have been aboard"

Embracing the duality of the storyline and the period authenticity, the film was shot in black and white. It features a cast of leading Scottish stage and screen talent and music by DJ and music producer Hudson Mohawke and composer Hutch Demouilpied (*Limbo*).

**Lorn Macdonald** takes on the role of Utterson. Lorn won the Best Actor Scottish BAFTA award for his portrayal of Spanner in the film *Beats*. His roles on TV include *Bridgerton*, *Deadwater Fell* and *Shetland*. He was noted as one of the top 25 theatre-makers to look out for in 2022 by The Stage. Dr Jekyll is performed by Scottish actor **Henry Pettigrew**. Henry's screen roles include *The Danish Girl* as well as TV series *The Crown* and *Guilt*. He has appeared in previous National Theatre of Scotland productions *Midsummer*, *Black Watch* and *Beautiful*

*Burnout*. They are both joined by Scottish stage and TV stalwart **David Hayman** who is playing the role of Sir Danvers Carew. David is a well know actor and director with recent film credits including *In Like Flynn* and *Our Ladies*. **Peter Singh** (Lanyon) has a prolific career on stage and screen, with recent film roles including *Cruella* and on TV, *The Capture I and II* (BBC) and *Hard Cell* (Netflix).

**Alison Peebles** (Poole) is an award-winning Scottish actor, writer and director. Her film work includes *Where Do We Go From Here* and *Seven Lucky Gods* and her TV work spans CBeebies hit *Molly and Mack* and *River City*. **Tam Dean Burn** (Councillor Begg) is a well-known Scottish actor whose recent screen work includes *Annika*, *Victim* and *Trust Me*. **Ali Watt** (Inspector Hay) has most recently been seen on television in Irvine Welsh's *Crime* and onstage at Pitlochry Festival Theatre in several productions including *About Love*. **Scott Miller's** (Tennant) most recent credits include feature film *The Road Dance* and the tour of *Warhorse* and *The Wife of Willesden* at the Kiln Theatre, London, **Caroline Deyga** (Mabel) has most recently been seen on stage in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and with the National Theatre in *Peter Gynt*. She appeared in *Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour* for the National Theatre of Scotland.

***The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*** by Hope Dickson Leach and Vlad Butucea, returns to Edinburgh born writer Robert Louis Stevenson's original story which was published in 1886. The drama follows Gabriel Utterson as he enters a world of dark duplicity to uncover the identity of the mysterious Mr Hyde and the hold he has over Utterson's old friend Dr Jekyll.

In this version, Utterson's journey is set against the background and backdrop of Victorian Edinburgh, where the wealth of the breweries is contrasted with the poverty of the Cowgate Vaults, exposing an underbelly of dark truths and corruption. Concerned by his good friend Dr Henry Jekyll's recent behaviour, Gabriel Utterson is driven to uncover the

identity of the mysterious and dangerous Mr. Hyde, to whom Jekyll is enthralled. Whilst on this search for the truth, Utterson finds himself seduced by the society of Edinburgh's rich and powerful, but beneath the glossy façade lies a grim and brutal reality. This is a Jekyll and Hyde reworked for a contemporary audience with the themes of power, class and masculinity brought to the fore.

## LEITH THEATRE

Leith Theatre offers the perfect backdrop to film. The venue's historic backstage maze of rooms and hallways and outside facades were transformed into film set location scenes of Victorian Edinburgh. Other scenes were filmed on location around Edinburgh.

Leith Theatre is a legendary music venue, performance space and community resource in the heart of Leith, which was a gift from the City of Edinburgh in the 1920s. Its main auditorium has played host to sporting events, the Edinburgh International Festival and iconic artists and bands.

The very first film version of Stevenson's novel is believed to be a 16-minute-long silent horror film of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* made in 1908, based on a stage play. Since then, there have been over 123 films made, from animation to satire to horror, with versions filmed across the world.

Screen Scotland's support is funded through the Scottish Government and The National Lottery. This film is part of the National Theatre of Scotland's growing On Screen programme which includes content for digital platforms and broadcast. Recent highlights include National Theatre of Scotland and Hopscotch Film's special filmed version of *Adam* commissioned for BBC Scotland and BBC which won the Audience Award for Best Film at the Vancouver Queer Film Festival and Best Scripted TV in the Scottish BAFTA's 2021.

Edinburgh based production company Selkie Productions was set up by Wendy Griffin in 2014 to develop a slate of film and TV projects. Selkie produced Hope Dickson Leach's short *Stronger is Better than Angry* and Wendy Griffin was producer on *Ghost Light* for National Theatre of Scotland and EIF. Recently Wendy co-produced 'The Origin' which just premiered at LFF and was co producer on Stephen Frears 'The Lost King' and Charlotte Colbert's 'She Will'. Selkie has several projects in development with Screen Scotland and BFI.

Adapted from the original novella and relocated from London to Edinburgh, this film is a National Theatre of Scotland and Selkie Productions supported by Screen Scotland and Sky Arts.





PHOTO Henry Home



The  
 S T R A N G E  
 C A S E  
 o f  
 D R J E K Y L L  
 a n d  
 M R H Y D E

a film by Hope Dickson Leach

NATIONAL SCOTLAND FILM BOARD AND SCREEN PRODUCTIONS PRESENT  
 A FILM BY HOPE DICKSON LEACH  
 CASTING BY ALEXANDER WATSON  
 COSTUME DESIGNER ALAN GILCHRIST  
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ANDREW WATSON AND JAMES WATSON  
 PRODUCED BY HOPE DICKSON LEACH AND JAMES WATSON  
 WRITTEN BY HOPE DICKSON LEACH AND JAMES WATSON  
 DIRECTED BY HOPE DICKSON LEACH  
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