

2015 BAFTA BREAKTHROUGH BRITS, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BURBERRY

Biographies

Charlie Covell – Writer/Actress

Charlie Covell, 30, grew up in Blackheath and now lives in central London.

Charlie has been acting for 10 years and writing for three. As well as roles in *Peep Show*, *The Inbetweeners* and *Misfits*, she recently wrote two episodes of Russell T Davies' series *Banana*, and was asked to play the protagonist in one of them. Charlie also wrote the feature script for *Burn Burn Burn*, which shot last year starring *Downton Abbey* actress Laura Carmichael. Charlie was selected for the Channel 4 screenwriting course, 4Screenwriting, in 2014 and was named one of Broadcast magazine's 'Hot Shots' in the same year.

Charlie said: "It's still sinking in that I've been named one [of the BAFTA Breakthrough Brits], to be honest. It's obviously utterly wonderful and a huge honour, but it feels very surreal. It's just brilliant. It means being able to seek advice from people in the industry that I've admired for years; it means meeting people whose work I've watched and loved since I was a kid. I couldn't be more thrilled or excited. (Or grateful)."

Lauren Dark – Producer

Lauren Dark, 31, grew up in a village in south Oxfordshire and now lives in Clapton, north London.

She worked at Ken Loach and Rebecca O'Brien's production company Sixteen Films for five years, on films such as *Les bien-aimés (Beloved)*, *Cesar Chavez*, and *Dheepan*. Lauren also produced the 2013 documentary *Mediastan*, a WikiLeaks road movie, alongside Julian Assange and Rebecca O'Brien, before producing her first narrative feature, *War Book*, in 2014. Written by Jack Thorne and directed by Tom Harper, *War Book* was executive produced and co-financed by previous BAFTA Breakthrough Brit honourees Steve Jamison and Mike Brett. The film screened at the 2014 London Film Festival and opened the 2015 Rotterdam Film Festival. Lauren has been working at Ivana MacKinnon's Stray Bear Films since January 2014 and was selected in the Producers category of the Screen International Future Leaders 2015.

Lauren said: "It's really thrilling and enormously encouraging to be named a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit. I think being part of an initiative like this is particularly useful after making a first feature. Being supported and given the opportunity to be mentored, to explore next steps and to have access to a community like BAFTA will be incredibly useful moving forward ... the prospect of meeting other people from different creative industries on the scheme is exciting and I'm sure I will learn a lot."

Chris Davis – Games Developer

Chris Davis, 33, grew up in Derby in the Sunnyhill and Normanton areas; he still lives in Normanton.

After leaving school at 16, Chris worked as a roofer while developing games as a hobby. In 2012 he released his first game, *Spud's Quest*, via the crowd-funding website Kickstarter. The funding allowed him to give up roofing to pursue games development full time and he began work on his follow-up game *The Escapists*. Building on his previous success, Chris again pledged the game on Kickstarter and ultimately raised more than double his initial goal. *The Escapists* was greenlit by the Steam Community within three days and signed to Team 17 as publishing partner. Since its release in February 2015, *The Escapists* has sold over 500,000 copies.

Chris said: "It means a lot to be even considered, but to be actually chosen by an organisation like BAFTA is just bizarre! [I'm] very pleased to be noticed. My game had very humble beginnings and was originally only intended as something to keep me ticking over. It's come a long way since that and now having BAFTA's recognition gives me more confidence and drive to aim higher in future projects. I'm really excited to be an example for other small bedroom coders who tend to underestimate their own work. You don't need to be a coding wizard, a genius or anything like that, all you need is a fresh idea and the motivation to make it a reality."

Stephen Fingleton – Writer/Director

Stephen Fingleton, 32, grew up in Warrenpoint and Enniskillen, Northern Ireland and now splits his time between Enniskillen and London.

He was selected by Screen International as a 2013 Star of Tomorrow, and the Irish Independent named him one of '14 names to watch in 2014'. His 2013 short *SLR* was shortlisted for an Oscar after being chosen as one of 16 shorts to receive funding as part of a BFI scheme to support the UK's most promising filmmakers. *SLR* won Best Irish Short at the Foyle Film Festival, and was nominated at the Cracow Film Festival and Glasgow Short Film Festival. His feature-length screenplay *The Survivalist* was voted onto Hollywood's Black List and topped the UK Brit List for the year's best unproduced scripts. *The Survivalist* premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in April 2015 where it was awarded a Special Mention by the jury in the Best New Narrative Director category.

Stephen said: "I am really thrilled to have the support of BAFTA at this point in my career. I am thrilled BAFTA is able to use its reputation, experience and connections to support my career at a time when I am still early in my career. It will be great getting [to] meet so many exciting filmmakers, actors and creators, and forging connections that will hopefully last across our career[s]."

Daisy-May Hudson – Producer/Director

Daisy-May Hudson, 24, is from Essex; she grew up in Epping and now lives in Waltham Abbey.

She filmed her and her family's experiences of living in a homeless hostel over a year in 2013 and successfully raised £10,000 on crowd-funding website Indiegogo, which she used to turn 250 hours of raw footage into the feature-length documentary *Halfway*. She is now a journalist at VICE and recently had her own series commissioned called *Superhuman*, the first episode of which, *Iceman*, was released earlier this year. Daisy-May has written for publications including The Times, Independent, The Debrief and VICE, and is currently writing a feature-length screenplay, which she hopes to complete this year.

On being named a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit, Daisy-May said: "This is everything! I feel really proud of myself and it's that kind of recognition and encouragement that's priceless. I feel like it's given me so much more confidence to believe I can do this and that my work is saying something about the world. It means the sky's the limit now really and I'm going to have the support to get there, whether that's through networking, mentoring or just having access to resources. I want to tell really powerful and important stories about people that haven't been represented properly on screen – and it's those stories that can change political and social narratives – they have a profound impact on the people you're speaking to and listening to. I'm in a position where a lot of doors are being opened which might not have been had I not become a Breakthrough Brit."

Aysha Kala – Actress

Aysha Kala, 24, grew up in Snaresbrook, east London and now lives in Chigwell, Essex.

Her first onscreen role was as aspiring doctor Sita Desai in season eight of *Shameless*. She went on to appear in the film *Jadoo* alongside Ray Panthaki, a Breakthrough Brit in 2014, who later cast her in his film *Convenience*. Aysha was nominated for the prestigious Ian Charleston Award for her performance in Iqbal Khan's *Much Ado About Nothing*, and for an Off West End Award for best female performance in the role of Khadija in *Khadija is 18*. Whilst acting in *The Djinnns of Eidgah* at the Royal Court Theatre, Aysha was spotted by casting directors to play the role of Sooni Dalal in the Channel 4 series *Indian Summers*, a role she will be reprising in the upcoming second series.

Aysha said: "I am so thrilled to be named a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit. It feels like a recognition of where I'm at in my career. And I'm looking forward to meeting some new and exciting people all thanks to BAFTA!"

Alex Lawther – Actor

Alex Lawther, 20, grew up in Petersfield, Hampshire and now lives in Peckham in south-east London.

He began acting in theatre at 16, when he played the lead role in David Hare's *South Downs* at the Minerva Theatre in Chichester. Following a sell-out run, the play transferred to London and Alex was nominated for a WhatsOnStage London Newcomer of the Year award. He made his feature film debut in *X + Y* and played a young Alan Turing in 2014's *The Imitation Game*, for which he was nominated at the BFI London Film Festival Award for 'Best British Newcomer', and won the London Film Critics' Circle Award for Young British Performer of the Year. Alex co-starred with Juliet Stevenson in the film *Departure*, which is currently in post-production. Most recently, he has shot a pilot for *Virtuoso* for HBO.

Alex said: "It feels wonderful [to be named a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit]. For me it means having access, in a profession that can sometimes present itself as a bit confusing, to pick at a collective brain of established artists. I am so honoured to be given that opportunity ... It is brilliant that the tradition of shared learning is encouraged through Breakthrough Brits and I can't wait to make the most of the opportunity to be an apprentice."

Martin McCann – Actor

Martin McCann, 32, grew up in Belfast and now lives in Kennington, south London.

He began acting at a community drama group and, at 19, played the main protagonist Alex in a stage production of *A Clockwork Orange*, where his performance was seen by Richard Attenborough. As a result, he was cast in Lord Attenborough's final film *Closing the Ring*, as his first feature-length role. Since then, Martin has appeared in *Whole Lotta Sole*, *71*, *Shadow Dancer*, *My Boy Jack*, *Killing Bono* and in the miniseries *The Pacific*, produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. Martin has most recently starred in *The Survivalist*, which premiered at this year's Tribeca Film Festival, and in the BAFTA-winning and Oscar-nominated short film *Boogaloo and Graham*.

Martin said: "It's an exciting time and I'm very grateful to be a part of this [year's BAFTA Breakthrough Brits]. I will try and use this opportunity as much as I can and most importantly have fun with any experience that comes along with it. This is a wonderful chance to learn and make great connections."

Regina Moriarty – Writer

Regina Moriarty, 47, is from south-east London; she grew up in Lewisham and now lives in Deptford.

After leaving school at 15, Regina went back to college in her thirties. She worked as a tutor in the Probation Service for 10 years, and as a volunteer with adults with learning disabilities, while writing stories in her spare time, before enrolling on a short course in screenwriting. In 2010 Regina studied for an MA in Screenwriting at the National Film and Television School. On graduating she was accepted on to the Channel 4 '4Screenwriting' scheme, and subsequently onto their 'Coming Up' scheme which offers new writers and directors the opportunity to make an original film with a guaranteed network broadcast. Her first television credit, *Sammy's War*, was followed by her next commission, *Murdered By My Boyfriend* for BBC Three, which this year saw Regina nominated for a BAFTA for Breakthrough Talent, and a second nomination as part of the writing team in the Single Drama category. She is currently co-writing a three-part drama with BAFTA-winning director Dominic Savage, and has further commissions lined up.

Regina said: "Of course it's really nice to be selected. One of the things I'm happy about is that I can use this opportunity to say to people, 'Don't think you have to be young, rich or connected, or that you have to have been to Oxbridge to start screenwriting. I went to film school at 41 as a single mum, so if I can do it other people can. Whatever your gender, age or social status; you don't need anyone's permission to write. [I am looking forward to] having a legitimate excuse to bother people whose work I admire."

Tess Morris – Writer

Tess Morris, 38, was raised and still lives in Wandsworth, south-west London.

A former journalist, Tess won the Lloyds Bank/Channel 4 Film Challenge for her short film *Beer Goggles* in 1997 and in 2008 was chosen for the BFI/Skillset Think Shoot Distribute Scheme for emerging talent in the British film industry. Beginning her writing career on soap operas and sitcoms, in 2011 she decided to write a screenplay on spec: the romantic comedy *Man Up*. The script made the 2011 Brit List for the year's best unproduced scripts, and was picked up by Big Talk Pictures, financed by Studio Canal and BBC Films. *Man Up* was released earlier this year, directed by Ben Palmer and starring Simon Pegg, Lake Bell and Rory Kinnear. Tess is currently writing two original screenplays, as well as a rewrite on a feature for a major studio in the US.

Tess said: "To be supported and encouraged by BAFTA, especially in the genre I write in, is such an incredibly exciting and inspiring thing, and makes me feel so hopeful and excited for my future! Which is always a good thing to feel as a writer. [I am looking forward to] so many things, but particularly being able to meet and talk to some of my industry heroes, I'm also very excited about having access to the screenings and Q&As at BAFTA, as I am at my happiest when in a darkened room, watching movies."

Ed Perkins – Director

Ed Perkins, 29 grew up in Upper Wield, Hampshire and now live in Hammersmith, west London.

His student documentary *For God's Sake* won The Eva Marie Saint-Jeffrey Hayden Humanitas Award, and he went on to make films for National Geographic Channel, The New Yorker and Esquire Network. Ed also shot and edited behind-the-scenes documentaries for the BAFTA-winning *Searching For Sugar Man* and *The Imposter*, and the BAFTA-nominated *Project Nim*. Most recently, he directed his first feature documentary, *Garnet's Gold*, produced by double-BAFTA winner Simon Chinn. *Garnet's Gold* screened on BBC Four and was nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and Tribeca Film Festival in 2014.

Ed said: "It is both an immense honour and opportunity to be named as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit. As proud as I am of the films I have made so far, I have an enormous amount to learn and am my

own harshest critic. This is a unique opportunity to grow as a filmmaker. I want to make films that challenge perceptions, embrace ambiguity, and give audiences the respect and space to come to their own conclusions. And it will be such an honour to hopefully do this under the guidance and mentorship of BAFTA."

Jenny Saunders – Producer

Jenny Saunders, 35, grew up in south Bristol and now lives in Barnet, north London.

She worked in politics and public relations, mostly campaigning on health and social issues before embarking on her career as a producer. In 2009, she produced an animated series about mental health for children called *Troubled Minds* which won a BAFTA at the Children's Awards, and has since gone on to work with some of the UK's foremost filmmakers, including BAFTA winners Jeremy Brock and Peter Kosminsky. Jenny co-developed and produced *Baby P: The Untold Story* which was nominated for the BAFTA for Best Single Documentary at the 2015 Television Awards and is currently working on projects with her *Baby P* collaborator Henry Singer and with Jeremy Brock. Jenny is also writing a fact-based drama and developing a documentary that she hopes to produce and direct.

Jenny said: "I just can't stop grinning! BAFTA is such an inspiring, iconic institution – long before I started working in TV and film, I'd always watch the Awards – so it feels like a bit of a dream to be named as a Breakthrough Brit. It also feels like the challenge is really on. I want to make great films and hope that BAFTA's support will help take me to the next level, creatively and professionally – so now I'm just really looking forward to making the most of this opportunity. Every aspect of being a Breakthrough Brit excites me, not least the element of the unknown. I also can't wait for the mentoring meetings and the chance to meet and learn from some of the filmmakers who have most inspired me over the years."

Jessica Saunders – Games Sound Designer

Jessica Saunders, 27 grew up in Godalming, Surrey and now lives in Clapham, south-west London.

Inspired by her fascination with sound as a child, Jessica pursued a career in sound design and now works at games studio Rocksteady Studios. In her role as Sound Designer, she was a major content creator for *Batman: Arkham Knight*, which currently holds the record for the fastest selling game of 2015. Jessica was in charge of creating, implementing and maintaining multiple audio systems, as well as several main path audio sequences. She also composed and integrated final music into the game. Jessica's other credits include *Fable Heroes* for Lionhead Studios and *Kinect Sports Rivals* for Rare.

Jessica said: "I am terrified, humbled and excited. This is an opportunity to further my already incredibly lucky career. I can't wait to see where this leads. [I am most excited about] the chance to converse with industry idols, and to learn all I can."

Anna Valdez Hanks – Cinematographer

Anna Valdez Hanks, 35, grew up in Crouch End, north London and now lives in the Kings Cross area of London.

She began working in the film industry 11 years ago, beginning as a camera trainee, then later as a clapper loader and focus puller. Her short films have won awards and been screened at international festivals, with 2012's *Goblin Market*, which she also co-wrote and produced, being exhibited at Tate Britain and the Pushkin Gallery in Moscow. Anna provided additional cinematography on Pete Travis's film *Endgame*, and was Focus Puller on the BAFTA-winning series *The Village* for Antonia Bird, and B Camera Operator on Nick Murphy's *Occupation*. Anna is

currently working on a series of four short story adaptations for SkyArts directed by Adrian Shergold, and is in discussions about two feature films.

Anna said: "It feels fantastic to be named as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit. It has given me a renewed desire to work harder and to strive to find projects that I find more personally important. I'm most looking forward to meeting other cinematographers and film makers."

Laura Wade – Writer

Laura Wade, 38, lived in Ecclesall, Sheffield until her teenage years, before moving to the Derbyshire Peak District. She now lives in Islington, north London.

She has been a professional playwright for 12 years, and describes her time before that as 'a playwright who worked as an office temp to pay the bills'. Laura now combines playwriting and screenwriting as a career. Her 2010 play *Posh*, ran at the Royal Court Theatre before being revived in the West End and was adapted into a feature-length film called *The Riot Club* in 2014, directed by Lone Scherfig. Laura's most recent project, an adaptation of Sarah Waters' novel *Tipping The Velvet* played at the Lyric Theatre until late October 2015, and she is now looking forward to starting work on a new screenplay.

Laura said of being selected as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit: "It feels brilliant. It's a huge confidence-boost. I've written one screenplay, an adaptation of a play I wrote, and loved the whole process of creating the script and seeing the film being made. I'm keen now to build on that experience and get better at the job, and it will make such a difference to me, as I embark on my first original screenplay, to have the support of BAFTA Breakthrough Brits, and to be able to meet and learn from some new mentors."

Luke Whittaker – Games Creative Director

Luke Whittaker, 34, grew up in Eynsford, Kent and now lives in Brockley, south London.

He worked as a freelance Flash designer, creating games for clients including BBC, MTV and charities Oxfam and Macmillan, before founding State of Play Games, an independent games studio based in south London, where he is creative lead. The studio's most recent game *Lumino City* was triple-BAFTA nominated and won the award for Artistic Achievement in 2015. Luke was the director, animator and games designer on that project and also contributed to the music and sound design. State of Play's previous game, *KAMI*, was an Apple 'Editor's Choice' when it was released in 2013 and was nominated for the SXSW Gamer's Voice Award 2014.

Luke said: "It was one of the best phone calls of my life hearing that I'd been named [as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit] and it feels wonderful to know that my work has been recognised by BAFTA, there's no greater honour. As far as future plans go, it's going to open up an array of opportunities and I'm open to any new ideas which spring out of this. I'm interested to see how they influence the things I make. I can't wait to see who I meet and what potential collaborations come out of it."

Catherine Woolley – Senior Games Designer

Catherine Woolley, 28, grew up in Chelmsford, Essex and now lives in Horsham, West Sussex.

Catherine attended the University of Wales, Newport, where she completed a bachelors in Games Design and was awarded a first class honours. After graduating, she worked at EA Bright Light for two years, creating a series of interactive books for the Nintendo DS called *Flips*, before working on the final two titles in the *Harry Potter* game series. Catherine moved to Creative Assembly in 2011 where she worked on *Alien: Isolation* on the studio's console team. She has twice

been named in MCV magazine's 'Top 100 Women in Games' initiative and is now a Senior Designer at Creative Assembly.

Catherine said: "I think it's amazing that I've been picked as a BAFTA Breakthrough Brit, I never would have expected to get this far when there's so much competition. I look forward to the support programme to further my skills and knowledge as a designer. All I now know is I have to be even better than ever to prove I'm worthy of the title. And here's to hoping for an exciting career following on from my current experience."

Letitia Wright – Actress

Letitia Wright, 22, was raised and still lives in Tottenham, north London.

Letitia moved to the UK from Guyana aged six and began acting while still at primary school. After roles in *Top Boy*, *My Brother The Devil*, and *Glasgow Girls*, she recently appeared in Russell T Davies' interlinking series for Channel 4 & E4, *Cucumber* and *Banana*, where she played the lead role of Scotty in Episode Two of *Banana* and a supporting role throughout both series. Letitia will star as the lead in Michael-Caton Jones' upcoming feature film *Urban Hymn* later in 2015. She was selected as one of Screen International's UK Stars of Tomorrow in 2012.

Letitia said: "I am honoured to be a part of the initiative. With BAFTA behind me I can continue to make a positive impact in the industry as I continue my journey in acting. I am most looking forward to the mentoring programme and meeting other industry professionals who can guide me so I'm able to learn more about the industry and will lead me towards cultivating a successful career. I am very excited about that."