



Catriona Chandler.

Photographed by Klara Waldberg

On the cover



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As I read through Catriona's thoughtful responses in our conversation, her replies are imbued with a fervor that is indicative of her dedication to her profession. The atmosphere, though virtual, is charged with excitement as we explore her latest project 'Rivals' and the experiences that have shaped her journey. After delving into Catriona's reflections, I emerge with a deeper admiration for her—not just for her remarkable talent as an actress, but for her dedication to her art. Catriona's focus on bringing authentic characters to life shows her commitment to creating stories that resonate long after the show ends.



Credits.

Talent. **Catriona Chandler**
Interview. **Vanesa Miraglia**
Photography. **Klara Waldberg**

Special Thanks.

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Vanesa Miraglia

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V: You're starring alongside some serious heavyweights in David Tennant and Aidan Turner. What's it been like working with such established actors?

C: When I found out the cast of RIVALS I think I had to pick my jaw up from the floor! I'm such a huge fan of so many of the actors in the show, but surprisingly wasn't intimidated when I met any of them because they were all so incredibly warm and welcoming. The likes of David, Aidan and Victoria were so down to earth and all up for a gab and laugh between takes – so when it came to the actual acting part and doing scenes with them, I felt so comfortable and involved and a part of a gang. It was also so impressive to watch each of their processes, how they went from having a chat over a cup of tea in the green room, to fiercely monologuing in front of 30 plus extras over and over again for each shot and angle. Watching them perform in real time, up close, felt like a mini masterclass each day.

V: RIVALS dives into the world of 80s British high society. What drew you to the project and the character of Caitlin O'Hara?

C: I was so drawn to Caitlin because she is such a little pocket rocket. Here is this teenage girl who speaks her mind and isn't afraid to ask questions, or to say something controversial or out of pocket but also has shades of vulnerability like every 15-year-old. Perhaps in some ways, I related to her brashness as well. I think it's so freeing and fun to play a character who really doesn't care what others think of them. She's so full of life and encapsulates the 80s youth culture perfectly. When I read the script I was excited to see how I could put my own little spin on her, whilst honouring Jilly's distinctive writing and creation.

V: Having recently wrapped on RIVALS, you're jumping right into another leading role with THE WIVES. Seems like you're on a non-stop ride!

C: That wasn't long after we finished RIVALS! The character I play in THE WIVES is vastly different to Caitlin, so it was a bit of a challenge to switch from comedy to drama but also such a nice gear shift and I learnt so much on that job. I was away from home for a long period of time in another country, so it taught me the practicalities of this profession that some people don't talk about. Like how to maintain stamina so you can give your all to an emotion-

al scene (which I had to do a lot in THE WIVES) or simple things like homesickness. The more jobs that I do, the more I learn and pick up little tips and tricks of the trade.

V: Looking back at your career, you've worked with some impressive names - Danny Boyle, Henry Cavill. Any particularly memorable experiences?

C: The whole experience of PISTOL was pretty insane if I'm honest. We started filming just after lockdown and after I finished school, so it felt like I'd landed on another planet when I got on set. It might've been my first day, but I remember Danny wanted to do a one take shot of me and my co-star running along this street they'd built from scratch. We had to hop off a bus, run down the road and hit a mark – which of course I'd never done before! But Danny was so patient with me and explained how to position your body to camera in a certain way and how to angle your face towards the light and even how much to project my voice. It was like a crash course in filmmaking and it was incredible to be taught such simple but invaluable lessons from Danny Boyle himself.

V: Let's shift gears a bit. You started your career on the stage. Do you see yourself returning to theater in the future?

C: Yes! I'm dying to do some theatre. I am a theatre kid through and through. I truly adore theatre with my whole heart, there's something so nostalgic for me because I used to go to stage school every weekend and perform on stage every summer since I was 8. I love how much time you get to spend analysing and getting to know the story and journey of each character in a play. Anything goes in theatre as well, I have been so excited by some performances I've watched recently. I love going to Edinburgh Fringe and watching people just create the wackiest but coolest stuff. Regarding Danny Boyle, I saw TRAINSPOTTING: The Play last year at Fringe and it was like an immersive experience. I feel really inspired after watching theatre, it's almost like you absorb the actors energy and the audience can become a part of the performance.

V: As you navigate this exciting phase of your career, what are your biggest aspirations?

C: I do have a list of directors, actors and writers I want to work with. Some names on there are really out there,

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CATRIONA CHANDLER

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but also some are to fulfil childhood dreams, like playing a princess and having Olivia Colman be my fairy godmother. I think my main aspirations are to just tell stories that resonate with me, my family and my mates. My Nan loved Channel 5 dramas so I've ticked that box for her. I want to make sure I play characters that make people feel seen, heard and represented. That can be from telling the story of what it's like to grow up in Liverpool, or an action-packed fantasy drama about love and friendship. I'm up for everything and anything as long as whoever watching it feels like they can escape from everyday life and resonate and be entertained with what they see.

V: It's interesting to think about the journey of becoming an actor. There's the initial love of performing, but there's also this distinct feeling of "being an actor" that sets in later. Did you always feel this way from the moment you realized you enjoyed acting, or was it something that developed as you started doing it professionally? You know, how expectations and self-pressure can really change the way you see yourself in this profession.

C: It was definitely something that slowly developed. It was only recently, perhaps in the last year or two, that I've been brave enough to say to people when they ask me what I do, "Oh, I'm an actor". I think because to turn around and own it properly for the first time is like a silent promise to yourself that oh, OK, we're taking it seriously now, it's not just fun and games anymore, this is a job. But even though it's my job, it will never ever feel like work to me. I feel so lucky that I get to earn a living doing something I truly love doing. So now rather than be scared of saying I'm an actor I see it as such a privilege. Like, lucky me!

V: Being an actor seems to demand a lot of courage. You have to be vulnerable, take risks, and face rejection some-

times. How has courage played a part in your acting career? Was it something you always had, or did it develop over time in this profession?

C: I think this links so perfectly to the previous question. Because the thing with acting is you really put your all into it. When I do a scene or create a character, I can't help but pull from my own life experience and emotions, so each time you audition for a part or take on a role, you are exposing a mini part of yourself – which is terrifying. But even though there can be so many lows and the rejection can feel relentless, the highs really are so high. It's what I love to do and it's what I want to spend the rest of my life doing. This passion isn't going anywhere so I might as well own it and just go for it!

V: Catriona, it's been fascinating to hear your perspective. As we wrap up, I'm curious about something that goes beyond awards and accolades. In your experience, what truly defines respect within the acting industry? Is it the kind of characters you portray, the way you connect with your fellow actors, or maybe something else entirely? What resonates most with you as an artist when it comes to earning respect from your peers?

C: For me it's how you treat people and maintaining good core values on set and behind the scenes. No matter the circumstances it's about being kind and honest. I've been lucky enough to work with actors who reflect this way of working, like Danny Dyer for example, on *RIVALS*. He was so down to earth and truly loved hearing about everyone's day. When he asked how you were, he really was asking because he wanted to know. That might sound silly but being genuine and caring creates the important foundations that professional relationships can then build from. At the end of the day, we're all working together to create the same thing and make good art, so being a good human being makes the process of that run even more smoothly.

RIVALS WILL PREMIERE

ON FRIDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2024, EXCLUSIVELY ON DISNEY+



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