

THE DURRELLS



itv

Sid Gentle
Films Ltd.



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The Durrells Returns For A Third Series

ITV returns to Corfu for more sun, sea and animals in a third series of hugely popular drama, *The Durrells*.

Produced by thriving drama indie, Sid Gentle Films Ltd. as a co-production with MASTERPIECE, the series sees acclaimed actress Keeley Hawes (*The Missing*, *Line Of Duty*) reprise her role as matriarch Louisa Durrell for a brand new eight-part series.

Written by BAFTA award nominee, Simon Nye (*Men Behaving Badly*, *Reggie Perrin*), and based on Gerald Durrell's trilogy of books, *The Durrells* tells the story of Louisa and her four spirited and unruly children, Larry (Josh O'Connor), Leslie (Callum Woodhouse), Margo (Daisy Waterstone) and Gerry (Milo Parker) as they start a new life in Corfu in the 1930s.

In the new series, Louisa has made the decision to give up searching for love, choosing instead to focus on her family. However, with Larry struggling to write his third novel, Margo in search of a new vocation, Gerry continuing to grow his menagerie and Leslie juggling three different girls, Louisa has her work cut out. With an imminent arrival from her Aunt (Barbara Flynn), Louisa hopes that Hermione will be able to help set her children back on the straight and narrow.

Also reprising their roles in the upcoming series are Alexis Georgoulis (*Marionettes*) as Spiro, Anna Savva (*Tyrant*) as Lugaretzia, Yorgos Karamihos (*Ben-Hur*) as Theodore, Lucy Black (*Call The Midwife*) as Florence, Ulric Von Der Esch (*Crossing Lines*) as Sven, James Cosmo (*SS-GB*) as Creech and Leslie Caron (*Chocolat*) as the Countess Mavrodaki. New faces to join the cast for the series include Miles Jupp (*Howard's End*), Henry Lloyd-Hughes (*Indian Summers*) and newcomer Elli Triggou.





The series is executive produced by Sid Gentle Ltd.'s founder, BAFTA award-winning filmmaker Sally Woodward Gentle (*SS-GB*, *Any Human Heart*) and Managing Director Lee Morris (*Da Vinci's Demons*, *The Damned United*) together with Simon Nye. Christopher Hall (*Dracula*, *Critical*) is series producer, and Roger Goldby (*Call The Midwife*, *Hustle*) and Niall MacCormick (*Complicit*, *The Game*) direct the series.

About Sid Gentle Films Ltd.

Sally Woodward Gentle formed Sid Gentle Films Limited in September 2013 to produce original and innovative television drama and feature films. Productions to date include adaptations of Neil Gaiman's *Likely Stories* for Sky and Len Deighton's epic *SS-GB* for BBC One. This year, in addition to *The Durrells*, the company is also producing Phoebe Waller-Bridge's *Killing Eve* for BBC America.

Prior to setting up her own company, Sally was Creative Director of Carnival Films responsible for the production of *Whitechapel*, *Murder on the Home Front*, *The Last Weekend*, *Any Human Heart* and *Enid*. Lee Morris, Managing Director, has produced many high profile dramas including the BAFTA award winning *Any Human Heart*, Peter Morgan's *The Jury*, and *Enid* starring Helena Bonham Carter. He was also co-producer on the feature film *The Damned United*, as well as producing *My Zinc Bed* and *A Number* (both for HBO/BBC Films).



FOREWORD BY WRITER, SIMON NYE

It's great to be back. We have been allowed to make eight episodes in series three - two more than usual, though admittedly short of Holby City's 64. Apart from being a vote of confidence from ITV, it has given me a chance to get to know the characters better than my own family. It is our best series to date, and I'm not just saying that.

Louisa Durrell steers her children through a new set of family crises, faux pas, neuroses and love trials. Gerry is becoming more combative as he bursts the bounds of innocent childhood, despite his mother being in denial. Margo has her first proper job but remains proudly the most "spiritual" and has a chance to prove it. Leslie's view that "bad things always happen to me" seems true then, delightfully, not true at all until the series builds to a climax... And Larry remains Louisa's confidante, but a confidante you frequently want to slap.

This being back in the 1930s, I didn't want to make too many facile parallels with our current Brexit trauma, but the subject of Europe and our place in it hovers over the whole show. Spiro and Theo love the British, who love them; Lugaretzia, the third leg of the Durrells' beloved Greek triumvirate, is sceptical about everyone wherever they come from. Leslie, at least, has learnt Greek, whereas Larry and Louisa, convinced internationalists, would rather everyone buckled down and learned English...

The Durrells, in many ways so very English, are feeling more Greek by the year. Especially after being exposed again to their English relatives and a disconcerting trip back to England.

Each episode features at least something from Gerald Durrell's fabulous trilogy. The charismatic Indian guest Prince Jeejeebuoy, Gerry's beloved wall of insects, Margo's hobby sculpting soap, Leslie's burglar-shooting system, Larry's artist visitors including a frequently naked Henry Miller, and so on.

I've taken other new elements from historical truth, which Gerald left out of his already highly fictionalised reminiscences. Theo Stephanides, when not being a naturalist-poet-raconteur-polymath, was a radiographer, bringing much needed medical help to the island. Margo agrees to work with him, largely because she likes to see men with their shirts off. Leslie was in reality a part-time member of the Corfu police force, despite or perhaps because of his fondness for shooting anything that moves, so in this series he is seen on the beat.

The political situation in Greece, though too chaotic to be as oppressive as in Germany or Italy, was deeply reactionary. As the only gay goat herder on the island, arguably, Sven falls foul of the new moral conservatism, and needs the politically engaged Larry to campaign passionately but ineptly to get him out of prison.

One of the main spines of the third series is another element I've explored from real life - Leslie's painful passage to maturity as he falls in love, several times concurrently in episode one. He goes on to discover that sex can have serious consequences, even if, as he protests, "We only did it one and a half times..."

Louisa's relationship with Spiro forms the other spine. The attraction is potent but inconvenient - Louisa is in no mood for love after the trouble it's caused her since being on the island, and Spiro is married with children. But this series sees him and Louisa drift closer and closer together...



But the show remains light on its feet, I hope. Louisa is happy, or would be if she could just tweak her children to be how she wants them. An episode involving a “perfect” Italian family makes her realise she could do a lot worse.

And we have thrown ourselves into the glorious Mediterranean countryside again. Gerry’s perpetual hunt for new and more exotic animals takes him out and about - experimenting humanely with flamingos, tracking down baby vultures, and finding a girlfriend who’s as passionate about animals as he is.

The wildlife remains a joy - to look at if not to film. It turns out that flamingos are rather highly strung, and make the pelicans look positively professional. We all fell in love with the sloth, and unlike with the other creatures there was no danger that he would make a dash for it - fortunately as we filmed him in England and he would quickly have found himself on notoriously ungulate-averse Ealing Broadway.

We hope The Durrells will continue to find a large audience, despite its blatant lack of heavy duty crime and procedural bleakness. It is family viewing but hopefully with a bit of surprise and nuance. Come for the sunshine and the animals, stay for the brilliant acting, the reminder that we are all Europeans, and a closing episode featuring a contortionist, magic, and the climax of at least two heartrending love stories.

Keeley Hawes plays Louisa Durrell

As you near the end of filming, how do you reflect back on making this third series?

“There’s always a sense of achievement. This time we’ve filmed eight episodes for the first time, instead of six. So along with the tiredness is a great sense of satisfaction that you have made eight hours of television. It’s a lot. And when it’s as good as *The Durrells* is - which I believe it is - that’s really nice.

“Particularly when you’re back for a third series. You know people like it and everyone has worked out what works and what doesn’t work. I feel we’re all in very capable hands with everyone who makes *The Durrells*. So, hopefully, it’s just got bigger and better and people will like it.”

Where do we find Louisa when we meet *The Durrells* again?

“Louisa has decided to give up her search for love and concentrate on herself and the children. Which is not a bad idea judging by her previous involvement with men. The family is still in financial dire straits, but Larry is earning a little bit of money with his writing and some money is trickling in from the market. Even so, they all need to get jobs. Then Aunt Hermione, played by the brilliant Barbara Flynn, comes to visit.”

What is it like returning to Corfu to film another series?

“It’s a second home for us now. When we return to Corfu we don’t need any time at all to get back into the swing of things. Everyone is so brilliant there that we are immediately back to being *The Durrells* and it all just starts rolling again.

“We filmed earlier in the year this time and so we didn’t really have any rain at all. It was spring time and beautiful. I would advise anybody thinking of going to Corfu to go at that time of the year because it’s just gorgeous.”



How do people on the island react to the production?

“People are always very pleased to see us. And now the series has been going for a few years, when people see the production trucks, they know exactly what it is. There’s lots of shouts of, ‘Oh Mrs. Durrell, Mrs. Durrell!’ It’s just very nice. Always a really positive thing.

“Sometimes people have been looking for us. I went to Corfu Airport to go home for the weekend and was queueing to get on the plane when a lady came up to me with her little girl and said, ‘We’ve been searching for you for 10 days and now we’ve found you!’

“I was still fully done up as Louisa Durrell with my hair and make-up because it had been a mad rush to the airport, so that was good for them. People look for our locations, the house and so on, which is very flattering.”

Louisa returns to England for a visit. Tell us about that?

“Louisa ends up having an adventure in London, which was great fun to film. We filmed in Richmond, Surrey, and it rained non-stop for 12 hours. They had booked rain machines but we didn’t really need them.

“It was a little odd to be back in England filming as this character, but good to take us back to the roots of this family and it was a lovely contrast to the sunshine of Corfu. As much as we love being in Greece, it was good to have that time at home as well.”

We meet the American writer Henry Miller. Is that inspired by real life?

“Larry Durrell knew Henry Miller and invited him to Greece. In the new series we end up with a naked Henry Miller in Corfu. Trevor White, who plays Henry, took off all of his clothes and just went for it. There was nothing shy about it, which is great. It makes it less awkward for everyone and we were all very grown up about it. It’s very funny.”

How do Louisa and Spiro get on in this series?

“We go a bit deeper into their relationship in this series, which is very exciting and easy to play because Alexis Georgoulis, who plays Spiro, is brilliant. We get on so well and really enjoy those scenes.

“It’s a bittersweet thing. Louisa and Spiro would be so good together. They’re both wonderful people but Louisa would never go there because he’s married with a couple of children. It’s 1937 and a very different time. But wait and see what happens.

“We also visit Spiro’s house for the first time in this series. That’s when we get to see a completely different side of him. Louisa has never been to his house and I think people will be very interested in that. It expands the world of The Durrells beyond our house. We’ve been to Sven’s house, to town, the doctor’s and other various locations, but it’s great to go into other characters’ houses.”

How does Louisa react to another foreign family arriving in Corfu?

“Louisa’s nose is put totally out of joint by that. In every way. Spiro helps this new family as he did when the Durrells first arrived. She questions whether Spiro is really her best friend, or if he’s just being polite, as he is to the new family. It really throws her. She becomes very jealous and competitive with them.”

Is Louisa’s Greek improving?

“Louisa hardly speaks any Greek. And she didn’t in real life. Her Greek was famously bad. Callum, who plays Leslie, is very good at it. I’d say he has the most Greek lines to say in this series, but Louisa, thankfully, is supposed to be rubbish at it. As I am. Although I did learn to say, ‘Thank you, my star,’ in Greek. Which people seem to like. If you’re going to say anything, say that.”



Are the animals still stealing scenes?

“We have flamingos this time. They are beautiful. And the pelicans were babies when we started and now they are fully grown birds. We know no-one is going to be listening to anything you say when there is an animal in the scene. We’re used to that now.

“And in this series we also have Frank the sloth. That was quite extraordinary because it’s not an animal you get to see very often. In fact, I don’t think I’d ever seen one before. It’s so unusual - just gorgeous and so cute. However, he was very heavy!

“We had scenes written for Gerry (Milo Parker) sitting with the sloth and moving around with it, but it turned out the sloth was too heavy for Milo. His hands were too small. As were Daisy’s (Margo), so they roped me in - which is why I have a scene holding the sloth.

“It really is an extraordinary animal which, of course, decides to become most animated in the back of someone’s close-ups. Then when you want it to do something, it just won’t move. It was amazing to have that on set.”

Does Louisa come to terms with both Leslie and, particularly, Gerry growing up?

“There’s a line about how every year the children all move further away from Louisa. ‘The last time I brush your teeth for you, the last time you let me hold your hand as we cross the road.’ It’s heartbreaking. And it’s so true. I do remember the last time I brushed my children’s teeth for them.

“Our writer Simon Nye is so good at that because he’s got children, been there and done it. He deals with all of that so beautifully.

“It’s been really exciting for Milo. He’s had some lovely scenes where Gerry is changing and growing up. It’s great that it’s been addressed because he’s clearly taller than when we started and we’ve got a small moustache on the go.

“Gerry was a real man and he did grow up. I think it’s addressed in a brilliant way with some lovely scenes. Anyone with an angry adolescent will be very sympathetic! It’s a learning curve for all of us.

“There’s one scene involving Gerry which we’ve yet to film involving a poem he’s written about his mother. And I can’t even read the scene without crying my eyes out.

“It always has this added layer when you know these were real people. It’s heart-wrenching, but they are some of my favourite scenes. Louisa knows Gerry will grow up and has to accept it. Eventually Louisa’s children did fly the nest.”

Simon Nye describes The Durrells as comforting television that illuminates and celebrates family life. There is obviously a place for that in today’s world?

“I think that’s a lot to do with its success. Exactly that. I’ve got to the point where I don’t want to read the news anymore. The Durrells is very comforting. It’s like the Victoria Sponge of TV, in the loveliest way because it is comforting and you can forget about those other things just for a little while.”

Yet this series also touches on issues of the day, including dictatorship and fascism?

“It deals with all of these issues ahead of the Second World War. And we’re still dealing with them today. It does resonate. The Durrells is not mushy in any way, ever. The cute stuff is always cut with very sharp humour and observation, so it’s never twee.



“That’s what I love about it. It is so clever. It’s such an easy and funny read. That sort of writing is some of the most difficult to do because it’s actually a little bit sharper than you imagine.

“The Durrells were immigrants to Corfu and were completely welcomed. They had a wonderful time in a period where things were about to become very messy.

“It was a very well-timed thing for them to do. For Gerry to have that childhood and that moment. And for all of them to become the people they did. Although not all of them entirely successful. Some had very sad endings. But Louisa did a wonderful thing.”

One episode features a travelling circus. How was that to film?

“The travelling circus was fantastic. It looked beautiful. Simon Nye had so much confidence in all of the departments that work with us, including the art and costume departments. To visualise something like that and have the confidence that people are going to make it work.

“It was so beautiful and jaw-dropping. Everyone has their moment to shine. We were really excited about that episode. In a simpler time before Xbox and things, a circus like that would have been hugely entertaining. It is rather magical, as is The Durrells in lots of way.”

Did your family visit you on set for this series?

“Matthew and the children came over again for 10 days and had a nice holiday. I also go back home a lot more than everybody else because of the children.”

Josh O'Connor plays Larry Durrell

How do you look back on the making of this third series?

“It’s very emotional when filming is nearing its end and various cast members are saying goodbye. We all get on so well and we are a family for these months of filming every year. It takes a few weeks before you can reflect back on the series.”

Where do we find Larry when we meet him again?

“Larry is in the process of writing another novel. He has tried to move away from the family and that didn’t go as well as he would have liked. On Larry’s mind is this thing of him being the father in this family in a way. So that obsession about finding his mother a partner is, perhaps, about shifting responsibility a little bit and trying to find his own independence.

“There’s an air of that in this series. We find Larry settling back into family life with a new outlook. And then we see him falling back into his old ways.”

Do you think Simon Nye relishes writing for Larry?

“Certainly from the conversations I’ve had with Simon, for a writer to write a character who is a writer is such a joy. You can also tell how much a writer enjoys writing a character because you get some great lines. There’s a rhythm with Larry and these nuggets of a line. You can just see Simon laughing at himself in his little office. It’s a pleasure saying those deadpan, negative lines from Larry. They’re always really good to undercut scenes.”

Larry and Louisa return to England for a visit. How was that to film?

“We filmed some exteriors in Richmond, Surrey. That was a lot of fun. It was weird to be filming on location but not in Corfu. And it rained a lot. Which is great because you want to show the contrast with Corfu.



“The London scenes are fantastic and that whole storyline is brilliant. We meet some new characters, including the writer Henry Miller. Seeing Larry in that setting makes for a good storyline in terms of, ‘How long has Larry got left staying in this family?’ That’s a really interesting side of it.

“It is strange to take those characters out of that Greek setting. It works all the better for the performances. The whole point is that Larry and Louisa have come away from England and then they have to come back. There are cars on the road when they’re used to one car, Spiro’s car. I loved throwing ourselves into a new setting.”

Is it almost like Larry has found his real home?

“That’s exactly right. There’s a lot of writing about Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell being friends and even some photographs of Henry being in Corfu. I’m a huge fan of Henry Miller’s work so it was nice to actually live that.

“Larry is very much torn. As much as he might complain and moan about it, he loves his family and loves the setting. In the second series he spoke about wanting stuff to go wrong with his family because it gives him something to write about.

“But at the same time there’s this other yearning to be in London and be with the Bloomsbury Set and the whole literary movement. So it’s a real battle. In London he finally finds people like him. He’s not the weird one.”

How do fans react when they see you filming?

“It’s amazing how that has grown. From starting the series in Corfu and none of us being recognised. Then gradually as series one came out and did so well and then series two, more and more people stop us and say how much they love the show. It’s always nice to hear that.

“We have our regular spots we go to in Corfu and we now know the locals so well. There’s a restaurant we go to which we absolutely adore and the people who own it have pictures of us up on the wall. It’s a lovely community.

“We all hope the series will go on. But whatever happens we’ve had an amazing experience on The Durrells. It’s been the best possible job. You go to Corfu and meet people who say, ‘We didn’t know where to go on holiday. Then we watched the show and now we come to Corfu and will keep coming.’ It’s a great thing to have been involved in.”

Larry has an adventure on a boat. Are you a good sailor?

“No. I’m terrible. I think I had sailed once before and was knocked off the boat. That was amazing to film. They took this boat out with a little motor and we went in the middle of the ocean between Albania and Greece.

“Then all of the camera department and everyone else got off this sailing boat and went away, leaving me on my own. They filmed me from a distance. So I found myself in this weird position where I don’t know how to sail and I’m stuck alone in the middle of the ocean looking at Albania, where I’ve never been, looking back at Greece. I was totally isolated.

“There were a couple of hairy moments but that was probably one of my favourite scenes to ever film. It was so much fun. Not much acting was required in terms of not knowing how to sail the boat.”

Does Larry still avoid Gerry’s animals?

“We’ve got Frank the sloth in this series, who was brilliant. As much as the character of Larry avoids the animals, I do anything I can to be with them. They are astonishing animals. While Roger the dog - whose real name is Mossup - is the best dog in the world. We’re all very hands on with the animals.”



Larry says, ‘One family, entirely different people.’ Does that, in part, sum up why this series works so well?

“Yes. It’s that thing that everyone can recognise someone. In that family dynamic everyone has got their trait. The Durrells are such an eclectic group of misfits, really. I love that and I think everyone relates to that. They can see parallels in their own families. It’s brilliant. That line sums it up. And is a perfect reason why Gerald Durrell wrote the book.”

Larry joins the Corfu Fire Brigade. How was that to film?

“We had some brilliant Corfiot and Greek actors coming in for that. Again, we had an unbelievable set. The art department and designers on this show are just phenomenal. The whole fire brigade storyline was great fun and quite unexpected for Larry. Another one of my favourite episodes. Larry likes a bit of flourish in his outfits. I won’t say too much about his uniform but he does jazz that up.”

One episode features a travelling circus. That must have been fun?

“It was a logistical nightmare. Niall MacCormick, who directed the last four episodes, has had some amazing challenges. Like an entire episode in the house. And the circus has some of the best material. It’s so funny. There’s a new fling for Larry, and the circus itself is amazing.”

There is a dangerous stunt at the circus. Have you ever done anything dangerous?

“Well apart from being left alone in the middle of the ocean, I did a film a few years ago where I had to jump into a lake. In Wales. In November. It snowed the morning we were jumping in. It was absolutely terrifying. I think that was probably the closest I’ve ever been to packing it all in.”

Does Larry speak more Greek in this series?

“Yes, Larry does have a number of Greek lines in this series. And as actors we’re learning more and more as we go along. It’s quite funny that Larry doesn’t really care about learning the language and doesn’t want to. He enjoys being the odd one out.

“We see Leslie trying to speak Greek. While Larry loves his English language because that’s what he writes in. But there is a hint this time of Larry maybe trying to get a bit more on board with the Greek.

“When it comes to us off screen I think my Greek is coming along very well. All of the Greeks seem to think we’re pathetic. But I can say all the key stuff. I can go into a restaurant and order and then say please and thank you.”

Did your friends and family visit you during filming this time?

“My mum and dad came out again to Corfu, along with my girlfriend. My mum may even be in the series. So people can watch out and guess who that is. If she makes the cut. She gave it everything.”

Do you think a series like The Durrells is even more attractive to viewers in today’s sometimes scary world?

“I think so. I remember when I was first sent the script before series one. I always thought there was a gap in television scheduling. We have a lot of brilliant TV in the UK. But not necessarily a light-hearted drama with high emotion and comedy. A gap The Durrells fills.

“With everything that’s going on in the world at the moment, it is scary times politically. So to settle down on a Sunday evening and you’re looking out into summer on screen, it just lifts everyone’s spirits. The time is absolutely right for what Simon Nye says is a celebration of family life.”



The story has now reached 1937, two years before the outbreak of World War Two. Is that reflected in this series?

“That’s starting to be reflected a little bit. Most dramas set in that period are about impending war. The Durrells are far from that but there’s a definite nod to it in this series. Again, it’s that thing of escaping from the politics and the fear. Simon keeps it light but still makes points about various issues.

“The Durrells are a bunch of immigrants who are accepted, generally speaking, into this community. Just as we as a group of actors and crew have been accepted into Corfu life with open arms. And maybe that’s a nice message to people that we can be like that and that’s a really positive thing.”

The Durrells has a global audience. Have you been recognised anywhere unusual?

“I was at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah and was recognised on a bus by some mid-American person who loved what is called ‘The Durrells In Corfu’ over there. It’s amazing how the series has spread and how people respond to it.

“Previous to The Durrells I had done a lot of theatre and television and film. But I’d never had an ongoing series like this. I always knew when I first read the scripts that this was something special.

“But beyond that, the magic of this series is the crew, the cast and everyone who works on the show. It genuinely is a family. That’s magical.”

Callum Woodhouse plays Leslie Durrell

What can you tell us about this new series of The Durrells?

“There’s a great feeling of pride among the cast and crew having filmed this third series. Before the last final push the producer Chris Hall is good enough to show us a little sizzle reel of some of the work we’ve done in Corfu and maybe the first couple of weeks of stuff at Ealing Studios. It really does give everyone a real boost, thinking, ‘Wow, this is what we have been working on and it looks amazing.’

“The make-up, costume, scenery, lighting and so on all comes together and you can see how it will eventually look on screen. Sometimes in the middle of all of the work you can forget people will actually be watching this. It’s not just us having fun in Corfu.”

What is Leslie up to when we see him again?

“As we start the new series Leslie is probably in one of the happiest situations we’ve seen him in so far. He’s playing the Casanova of Corfu a little bit, balancing his time between three girls. Obviously in typical Durrells’ fashion, the family get involved and it all goes terribly wrong.

“A lot of scenes where the family are meddling in Leslie’s affairs were shot without me, so I’m really looking forward to seeing them. It’s always a joy watching everyone else on screen. I’m genuinely a fan of everybody in the show. They’re all so good.”



Will fans be shocked by Leslie's approach to his love life?

"I think people may be a little shocked and a little disappointed in Leslie at first. But as the episodes play out and you start to see Leslie's reasoning, you can empathise with him a little bit. It's not something I, personally, would ever do in real life, but reading it I could definitely see where the character was coming from."

Does Leslie have to do some growing up in this series?

"Leslie is confronted by an issue that he shouldn't necessarily be facing at such a young age. One of his main storylines is seeing if he can rise to the challenge of that and become the man Leslie did eventually become. At times his mother Louisa has to pick up the pieces.

"It's definitely the most meaty storyline I've had so far in The Durrells. It's been challenging doing it, in the best possible way. Leslie has to go from boy to man."

He joins the Corfu Police Force. How does that go?

"Leslie gets himself a proper job in this series and one he is very happy with. Being in a uniform and walking around Corfu Town was great to do. Leslie also gets an amazing police partner called Filimonas, played by Vassilis Papadimitriou. He is brilliant. Some of their scenes together are so funny. That's a really great part of the new series.

"To be a police officer you have to be level-headed and tolerant of other people. Which isn't something you would necessarily go to Leslie for, but it's his favourite job ever."

Leslie is also involved in a story about the political backdrop to this time?

"We're just two years away from war and there are issues about fascism and dictatorships. It was quite tough filming some of those scenes, but that was the reality of the time and it impacted on people's lives. While Leslie would get into serious trouble if he disobeyed police orders, World War Two was just around the corner and there were dilemmas to be faced."

Leslie, Margo and Gerry are left home alone at one stage. How do they cope?

"They were some of my favourite scenes to film this time around. Basically the house turns into an absolute tip. The three Durrells really do need their mum Louisa on hand at all times to make sure they're not being little terrors. So when she's not there, they fall into this madness.

"At the end of that whole storyline when Louisa comes back and we have to suddenly, really quickly, get the house tidy, that was one of the most fun times I've ever had on set. It was hilarious."

Leslie travels on a zip wire. Did that require a stunt double?

"Unfortunately it did. I was really upset about it. I wanted to do that stunt but there was a whole list of health and safety reasons why I couldn't. I had to hand it over to the stunt double for part of the scene. It was really interesting to shoot as we filmed it both in Corfu and then back at Ealing Studios. Just another example of that movie magic. When you see it in the episode you would never know how it was filmed."



Are you recognised a great deal in Corfu?

“When we filmed the first series I had just left drama school and I really was the baby of the production, even with Milo on set. And, of course, no-one knew who the cast were - aside from Alexis Georgoulis (Spiro) who is a big star in Greece.

“But now, having done two series, people do recognise us. They are very welcoming in Corfu and have got to know us. And because The Durrells has been so good for tourism a lot of the locals are grateful to the series. Which is always so nice. We really get looked after very well there. They are all really friendly.

“There were many people who bumped into us during filming for this third series and said that had made their holiday. Which is a really sweet thing to hear. One day we were filming down by the harbour and all of the railings at the top were filled with people looking down and watching the show being filmed.”

Any notable encounters with the animals in this series?

“I wasn’t as hands on with the animals this year, which was a shame. Last season I had to do a little goat milking and things like that which I really enjoyed. It’s all learning new skills. We have some amazing animals this year like flamingoes and a vulture.”

Leslie is put on the spot by some unexpected arrivals. Have you ever turned up for something at the wrong time?

“I did that recently. I went for a theatre audition, turned up, strolled in and found out I was there 24 hours too early.”

One episode features a travelling circus. Was that fun to film?

“When I read the script for that episode I had no idea how any of that was going to happen. The costume Leslie gets to wear was another highlight of the series for me. You’ll have to wait and see what it is. But it includes a huge hat. Leslie is not happy about having to wear it.”

How is your Greek coming along?

“My Greek is coming along really well. Out of the Durrell family I think I have the most Greek lines to say in this series. And I feel like I really rose to the challenge!”

What makes The Durrell family so appealing?

“One of the nicest things about the show is all of the Durrells are different and people can relate to that. It’s good that you have these five characters who could not be more different.

“Every scene I had with Josh, who plays Larry, just ended up with us both in fits of laughter. While Elli Tringou, who plays a new character called Daphne, has been great to work with. Really amazing. And any scene with Keeley is always a joy to film.

“This series has also been my favourite in terms of the guest stars we have. They have all been fantastic and play some wonderful characters.”

Daisy Waterstone plays Margo Durrell

What is Margo up to when we meet her again?

“Margo has ditched her boyfriend and still hasn’t got a job after leaving the Countess at the end of series one. So she’s being the normal Margo – trying to find new hobbies and gets into soap sculpting. She does all these new bizarre things until she finally manages to find a job in an X-ray unit and also as a part-time nanny.

“She’s become very adaptable and figured out what it is she is good at and the things she can do. It’s just her growing up, really.”

How was the soap sculpting?

“It was really cool. The art department made these amazing sculptures. There was one scene that took a long time to film when I had to carry this massive soap sculpture on a tray. It was so heavy.”

Louisa says, ‘Margo has a brain like a room full of starlings.’ Is that entirely fair?

“I don’t think it is fair. Margo may not be intelligent, but she is bright. She’s definitely not stupid. Occasionally she brings out her spark and is starting to do that more and more. As Margo gets older she has a lot more confidence in herself. She is on a different wavelength to other people – she does her own thing in her own little world.

“I think Margo is very brave. She doesn’t really care what people think about her. She has a lot of courage.”



Do you get recognised off screen because of The Durrells?

“People recognise us now in Corfu. It’s nice because they talk to you as if you’re one of the locals. They are very friendly and welcoming.

“A lot of people came up to us when we were filming this series to say they came to Corfu because of The Durrells. It’s nice it’s had such an impact on people to make them actually want to spend money and do something because of the show. That’s quite rewarding.

“I’ve only been recognised a few times in England. Probably because I look a lot different off screen to Margo. My hair is so straight, I dress very differently and I hold myself differently to how Margo does.

“But it is an odd thing to be recognised. Especially when I’m with friends who I’ve known for a long time. It’s very odd for them. You feel like you have to be on good form all of the time. I’ve been recognised a few times on the London tube.”

How does Margo react to the arrival of another foreign family in Corfu?

“Margo meets this girl called Clara (Antonia Desplat) from Italy, who is around the same age as she is, and is amazed at her natural beauty. As with any other teenage girl, she feels depressed by the fact she is not like that.

“It’s great that Simon Nye wrote that in because it’s so true to so many young girls out there. That’s exactly how everyone feels. It’s very relatable to a lot of teenage girls and I certainly felt it growing up. So it was very easy to draw on that.”

Do we see Leslie Caron as the Countess again?

“We do. The Countess returns briefly. It was very nice to see Leslie again. It was also quite moving because it’s been two years since we started. Working with her in series one was, for me, a dream come true. And every time I see her it’s lovely because it reminds me of how lucky I am to be able to work with her at my young age.”

Margo, Leslie and Gerry are left home alone at one stage. How do they cope?

“Being Margo, Leslie and Gerry, they all get up to no good. They are left to their own devices. Which leads to lots of mayhem. Then they realise they can’t really cope without their mother. The house becomes a mess.

“In terms of Margo, Leslie and Gerry, we’re all growing up together with our characters. Everyone is starting to become adults, becoming more independent and finding themselves a lot more. Even Gerry.”

How was your adolescence?

“I was quite naughty at school but I wasn’t particularly difficult for my parents. I always got on really well with them but I did get into trouble a lot at school. They were always very forgiving because they knew I just wanted to act. I was the class clown. I went through adolescence quite late. I started double grumpy stuff when I was about 17 and it didn’t last very long. I’ve always been quite chirpy and energetic.”



Margo goes to Spiro's house in this series. Is that the first time we have seen it?

"It is the first time we have seen Spiro's house. I had a really weird experience when we filmed the exterior of that scene in Corfu. A man from the village where we were filming came up to me and said, 'You have been here before.' I said, 'I don't think I have.' And he said, 'Yes, when you were a child. You came to stay in a house here and I remember you.'

"It turned out I had actually stayed in a house there. I went there with my family when I was four or five. But didn't remember. So it was like coming back without even knowing I had been to that village before. Amazing."

Do the Durrell family have more Greek lines this time?

"They have been there for a while so they would be speaking a little bit more Greek. Although I don't think Margo speaks very much Greek. My own Greek is still not great."

What role does Margo play when a travelling circus comes to Corfu?

"Margo turns into The Amazing Margoni. We had so much fun filming the travelling circus scenes. It was a dream come true for me because I've always been fascinated by all those old circuses. Just walking on to that set that was decorated so beautifully and truthfully was an amazing experience.

"Getting to do magic as well was great. I don't do magic now but I used to do a lot of magic when I was a kid. The usual child magic where the adults say, 'Oh, that's amazing.' And actually it was awful.

"I loved being The Amazing Margoni. Doing those magic scenes will always be close to my heart as something that was very fun to do. And being involved in The Durrells itself has created magic for me and my life.

"The Durrells family is like a circus anyway so it was nice to have a real one as well. Every member of the family has a different personality. We have Larry, the troubled writer. Leslie is the outcast of the family. Margo is the young, sparky kid. And Gerry is a wild child and animal genius."

There is a dangerous stunt at the circus. Have you ever done anything scary?

"I have done things that have frightened me. I was quite reckless as a kid. I never broke any bones but I liked doing reckless things. I used to climb up the side of the fences at the tennis courts at my primary school."

Have you visited Jersey Zoo, which Gerry went on to create and run?

"I went to Jersey Zoo last year. His widow Lee Durrell was there. They told me a little bit about Margo and a lot about Gerry. It's such a beautiful place."

Why do you think The Durrells has been such a success?

"It is escapism from today's world and it's beautiful to watch on screen. It's a calming drama but there are hints in this series that the world is going to change. It still remains light but World War Two is only a few years away. It would be great to tell the story right up to the point where the family left Corfu."

Milo Parker plays Gerry Durrell

What is ahead for Gerry in the new series?

“We see Gerry growing up in this series. He is faced with the typical issues that come with entering the teenage years. His hormones mean he’s quite snappy and Gerry has arguments with Louisa this year. He also gets his first girlfriend - Galini, played by Olivia Lebedeva-Alexopoulou.

“From their first meeting, Gerry is attracted to Galini and wants to spend some time alone with her. However, his friend Theo (Yorgos Karamihos) is getting in the way a bit. So that leads to quite a difficult conversation between Gerry and Theo.”

Gerry has some adolescent outbursts. Did you enjoy filming those?

“It is fun to film, but it can be quite awkward. There’s one scene where Gerry has an outburst at a party. There were lots of people in the room and I had to do it so many times.

“I’m 15 now and I think every teenager can face stropmy moments and mood swings. Those hormonal related issues. You’ve just got to get through these teenage years.”

How does his mother Louisa react?

“She doesn’t really understand just how fast Gerry is growing up. For Louisa, it doesn’t seem that long ago that Gerry was a baby crawling about on the floor. She is struggling to let go, whilst Gerry doesn’t really understand Louisa’s point of view. He gets annoyed because he wants more independence.”



His brother Larry says Gerry is 13 going on 30. Do you think that's true?

"Gerry is more mature because he's been given so much independence by his family to roam around the island. That helps."

What about the animals Gerry encounters in this series?

"One of the new animals Gerry meets in this series is Frank the sloth who's a dream to work with. Very professional. Normally we have doubles of the animals but there's just one Frank."

"We also filmed with a young vulture in Corfu - an incredible creature. Even at that age it is huge and it was really fascinating to observe. It was on the top of this beautiful mountain with stunning views."

"Gerry's menagerie is larger than ever and now includes two flamingoes. They're not vicious animals but they do have quite an interesting temperament. It was genuinely incredible to see them. As usual, all the members of the team who work with the animals were amazing."

"Gerry tests out theories with the flamingoes to see if their colour changes in relation to their diet. He does this with Theo's help. A little more of that side of Gerry's interest in animals comes out in this series."

"He also has a wall of insects. That was one of the first scenes we filmed. The heat was extraordinary that day. We had some stick insects all over the wall."

"And we see Gerry campaigning against animal cruelty. He becomes quite passionate about how the locals treat their donkeys. Gerry goes out campaigning in Corfu Town appealing to locals to treat their donkeys with respect. He's trying to convey the idea that animals have feelings too. They can experience pain and neglect."

"I think that was the beginning of Gerry really advancing in this conservation world he has entered. Which, of course, ended up with him creating Jersey Zoo."

Are you recognised much off screen?

"We're all recognised in Corfu quite a bit now. There are lots of photos taken, especially when we're filming. It's all very new to me. The Durrells has been a fantastic experience with so many positive effects on all of our lives."

"There has also been quite a significant increase in tourism to Corfu since the first series aired. It's lovely that people want to travel to see where we have filmed and great that the series has been able to have that impact on the island."

One episode features a travelling circus. How was that filmed?

"It took a week and a half to film the travelling circus scenes. There were so many people involved and lots of extras. It was very organised chaos, but very good fun to film. Especially my act, which involves pelicans, a donkey and a seagull. There was a lovely atmosphere around the circus and it looks brilliant."

"A travelling circus would have been the pinnacle of entertainment back then. And with Corfu being such a remote island then, it wouldn't have got many touring circuses. It would have been fantastic for the locals to see."

"Gerry obviously takes an interest in the animals at the circus and enjoys the company of the animal handler as they, of course, have shared interests."

What else does Gerry get up to?

"Gerry decides to cook his own veggie meals. The family get quite jealous of his cooking because there are plenty more vegetables available on the island than there is meat. So the rest of the family are on rations of rabbits and grisly meats, and there's Gerry cooking up a massive stir-fry."

"My own cooking skills are pretty diabolical. I don't cook very much. I did a couple of Home Economy lessons in school last year, but everything ended up burned. So I don't cook very often for the family."





Does Gerry speak more Greek?

“The family has been on the island for around three years now. They are learning the culture and some are making more of an effort with the language to communicate in Greek. As for me in real life, I know all the rude words. But I’m not too good with the vocabulary.”

You are an ambassador for Jersey Zoo, which Gerry created. Does that keep you busy?

“I’ve visited Jersey Zoo and last year I went to an event in Coventry which was raising money for the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. It was a concert with an orchestra and with Gerry’s widow Lee Durrell I read a couple of extracts from My Family and Other Animals and the trilogy, which was fantastic.

“I’m also hoping to get back to Jersey Zoo to see how all the animals are doing and see the new arrivals. The exhibition about Gerry at the zoo is so detailed and gives you a real insight into his life.”

How do you look back on filming?

“It’s been fantastic fun filming this third series, but it’s really sad at the end of filming. We’ve all worked so closely together and then we have to go our separate ways. Looking back at the hard work that everyone has put in, we can all be very proud of the finished product. I think people will really enjoy this series.”

Alexis Georgoulis plays Spiro

How do you look back on filming this third series of The Durrells?

“There are mixed feelings when you come to the end of filming a series. We all feel happy to have made eight episodes after five months of constant shooting. Everything went very well, which is very satisfying. Yet it’s bittersweet because it will be some time before we all see each other again. But there are so many great memories to treasure from filming this third series of The Durrells.”

What is in store for Spiro in the new series?

“Spiro has always been around the Durrell family. Eager to help. But in this series he is getting closer to them and is involved in more family moments. He has his own wife and children but he also admires the Durrell family and enjoys spending more time with them.

“We learn more about Spiro and his background in this series. It delves deeper into his character. That was a great opportunity for me to explore more aspects of him. He was, of course, a real person so it’s interesting to do that.”

What is it like returning to Corfu for filming?

“It was like going back home. I don’t know how long The Durrells will go on for but I know I will go back to Corfu again, no matter what. Because it really does feel like home.

“We get a lot of attention when we’re filming now. Before the first series was screened people recognised me because I’m a Greek actor. Now Keeley Hawes and the rest of the cast are well known because people have seen the series and love it. They are part of the island now.



“The local Corfiots know that every year the cast and crew will be in Corfu, taking a trip back in time with the production. So it’s like we are part of the island now and the local society.

“The Durrells has also been very good for tourism. There has been a great increase in the number of tourists coming, especially from Britain. And the season now stretches over a longer period of the year. Everybody is happy about that. This TV series has nothing but good words to say about Corfu and people can see how lovely it is on screen. Corfu is like a paradise.

“The series is also shown on cable TV in Greece. Many people in Greece now know about The Durrells and love it.”

St Spyridon is the Patron Saint of Corfu. So Spiro is named after him?

“Spiro is the most common name in Corfu because of St Spyridon who is said to have been involved in many miracles. On his saint’s day people go to the place where his body is kept and whisper their wishes and it is believed those wishes will be done.”

Is Spiro involved when a new foreign family arrive on Corfu?

“The arrival of an Italian family makes Louisa understand how valuable Spiro is for the Durrell family. I think she gets a little bit jealous because I become the driver for this new family as well. And Louisa gets a little nervous because she thinks she’s going to lose Spiro. For the first time we see Spiro and Louisa arguing about something they disagree about.”

Do we finally get to see Spiro’s house?

“We get to see Spiro’s house. That was a great surprise for me. In the first two series there was the question of where Spiro actually lived. I was very curious to see how the art department would portray Spiro’s house.

“Spiro is usually very happy and buoyant. But in this series we see another side to him. In one episode he gets very gloomy. And in order to express all of the

sadness he has inside, Spiro sings sad songs along with his guitar. Including an original Spiro composition. So we shall see how he does as a composer!”

Does he still drive the same car?

“It is the same car we have used from the start. I have a lot of scenes driving that car. Because it’s old it sometimes doesn’t work very well, but I talk to it and say, ‘Come on. Let’s work now.’ It is my friend.”

One episode features a travelling circus. What did you think of that?

“It was a fantastic idea. Back then a travelling circus would have been a big attraction in the entertainment world. It was very interesting to film.”

We see a dangerous stunt at the circus. Have you ever done anything dangerous?

“The scariest thing I have done in my real life is probably riding motorbikes. I like high speed so I drive them on race tracks. Sometimes I do paragliding. I jump from the top of the mountain. At first it was very scary, but now it’s very enjoyable. I feel like a bird. Those are my extreme hobbies.”

Why do you think The Durrells has been such a success with viewers?

“One of the reasons for the success of The Durrells is because it’s a very interesting drama but there are no great explosions, murders or major crimes. It’s different from the majority of other dramas because it’s always positive without being boring.

“But with World War II just a few years away now, it’s like the calm before the storm. I think it would be very interesting to tell the full story of the Durrell family.

“The Durrells were welcomed into Corfu. In real life as well as in our series. And people from Britain, Greece and all over the world work on this series. It’s an example of people coming together.”



Episode Synopses

EPISODE 1

In the first episode of the new series, Louisa has her hands full when she discovers that Leslie is seeing three different girls at the same time. Concerned that Leslie will get hurt, Louisa takes it upon herself to help him decide who he should pick by visiting each of the girls. However, with all of the family members having an opinion, Leslie is faced with an awkward dilemma.

Meanwhile, Larry injures his leg, whilst unemployed Margo struggles to find a vocation. With Larry in excessive pain, Louisa seeks advice from Theo who sources a new up X-ray unit to examine it.

EPISODE 2

Still reeling from the disastrous afternoon tea, Leslie goes to make amends with Dionisia, who he has decided he wants to be with. He sends a letter to Daphne to let her down gently, whilst Larry and Louisa take it upon themselves to discuss 'the birds and the bees' with him.

Meanwhile, Gerry becomes fascinated with an overgrown wall of insects in the garden and Margo busies herself with her new job as Theo's assistant in his new X-ray facility in Corfu. However, the tranquility in the Durrells' household doesn't last long when Daphne's father pays a visit to Louisa to deliver some life-changing news.

Character Credits

Louisa Durrell	KEELEY HAWES
Larry Durrell	JOSH O'CONNOR
Leslie Durrell	CALLUM WOODHOUSE
Margo Durrell	DAISY WATERSTONE
Gerry Durrell	MILO PARKER
Spiro Hakaiopulos	ALEXIS GEORGOULIS
Aunt Hermione	BARBARA FLYNN
Lugaretzia	ANNA SAVVA
Theodore Stephanides	YORGOS KARAMIHOS
Florence	LUCY BLACK
Sven	ULRIC VON DER ESCH
Dr Petridis	ALEXIS CONRAN
Daphne Likourgos	ELLI TRINGOU
Dionisia	ERIFILI KITZOGLOU
Tsanta	FENIA SXINA
Mr Likourgos	GERASIMOS SKIADARESIS
Zoltan	MERCH HUSEY
Prue	FELICITY MONTAGU
Geoffrey	JEFF RAWLE
Creech	JAMES COSMO
Countess Mavrodaki	LESLIE CARON
Basil	MILES JUPP
Durant	HENRY LLOYD HUGHES
Henry Miller	TREVOR WHITE
Ruby	LAURA FERRIES
Jonquil	ALICE HENLEY
Jeejeebuoy	TANMAY DHANANIA
Pavlos	NIKOS ORESTIS CHANIOTAKIS
Guido Ferrari	LUCA CLAVANI
Clara Ferrari	ANTONIA DESPLAT

Character Credits

Violetta Ferrari	FABIENNE PIOLINI-CASTLE
Demetrios	VASILLIS VASILAKIS
Galini	OLIVIA LEBEDEVA-ALEXOPOULOU
Uncle Leonidas	SPIROS IOANNOU
Elena	CHARLOTTE ATKINSON
Dragan	GORAN NAVOJEC
Zob	ANNA-MARIA EVERETT
Mr Kralfesky	VERNON DOBTCHEFF
Viggo	MARTIN LAER
Nelly	GRACE HOGG-ROBINSON

Production Credits

Executive Producer	SALLY WOODWARD GENTLE
Executive Producer	LEE MORRIS
Executive Producer & Writer	SIMON NYE
Producer	CHRISTOPHER HALL
Director (Block 1)	ROGER GOLDBY
Director (Block 2)	NIALl MCCORMICK
Casting Director	SUZANNE CROWLEY
Casting Director	GILLY POOLE
Production Designer	STEVIE HERBERT
Costume Designer	CHARLOTTE HOLDICH
Make-up Designer	SARAH GRUNDY
Location Manager	NIKOS KOUMANTARAKIS
Line Producer	PAT LEES
Animal Co-ordinator	LIZ THORNTON
Script Editor	SAM SYMONS
Editor (Block 1)	DAVID THRASHER
Editor (Block 2)	VICKI TOOMS



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