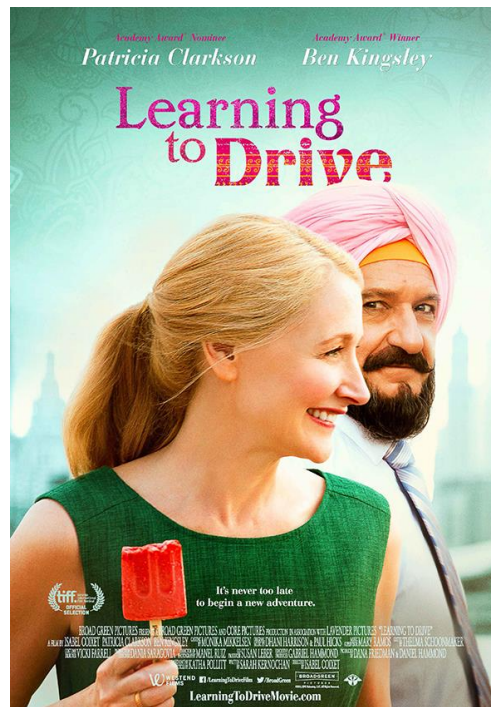


LEARNING TO DRIVE



Von Isabel Coixet
Mit Patricia Clarkson, Ben Kingsley
90 Minuten, Englisch, USA, 2013

Verleih:

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SYNOPSIS

Wendy (Patricia Clarkson), eine viel beschäftigte Literaturkritikerin aus Manhattan, fällt aus allen Wolken, als Ted (Jake Weber) ihr nach 21 Jahren das Aus ihrer Ehe verkündet. Bislang liess sich Wendy von ihrem Mann überall hinchaffieren. Auf einmal sieht sie sich gezwungen, sich selbst hinters Steuer zu setzen. Nur fehlt ihr der Führerschein.

So fragt sie den Sikh Darwan (Ben Kingsley), Taxi-Chauffeur am Abend, Fahrlehrer am Tag, ob er ihr das Autofahren beibringt. Während Wendy lernt, sich alleine durch die Strassen New Yorks - und durch ihr neues Leben - zu steuern, entwickelt sich eine innere Verbundenheit zwischen den beiden, die über kulturelle Grenzen hinwegsieht und die ihre Gefühle in ungeahnte Bahnen lenkt.

Basierend auf einem Kurzesay, verwandelt Regisseurin Isabel Coixet (ELEGY) die Geschichte in eine augenzwinkernde *Romantic Comedy* mit einem Twist über kleinere und grössere Krisen und deren Bewältigung sowie über eine aussergewöhnliche Freundschaft.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

I first became involved with *Learning to Drive* when I was shooting *Elegy* with Patricia Clarkson and Ben Kingsley, 8 years ago! Patricia gave me the script and I was completely fascinated by it and it moved me very deeply. At that moment I was going through a separation with my daughter's father and I didn't have a driver's license. The script gave me the strength to move forward and the push I needed to learn to drive. It spoke to me in a very personal level and it was a dream come true when, after all these years, we made the film.

I'm a big fan of Katha Pollitt's writing and the essay she wrote has become a classic because it has her smart, intelligent, and compassionate point of view about love, loss and moving forward in life. I think *Learning to Drive* has captured the essence of her essay, even if some things are totally different. Katha came to the shoot herself and was delighted by what she saw.

When it came to casting, I immediately thought of Ben and Patricia. Wendy is a hard worker – a cultivated, tough, witty and extremely accomplished woman. But her world crumbles when her husband is leaving her. She learns to drive and in the process she also learns to be in her own and to be open to the world. Darwan is an honest, up tight and traditional Sikh man who has a strict honor code. When he teaches Wendy to drive, he starts discovering things about himself and learns to be more flexible and generous. They were simply born to play these characters. Since this is my second film with them, I have to say it was extremely easy and fun, it feels like we're family now!

Visually I wanted to show New York in summer as a sweaty, beautiful and shiny place to be as well as show there's another colorful world in Richmond Hill. It plays well with the ever present theme of self-discovery. The "it's never too late for anything" attitude. The fact love is hard work as much as marriage. How we can easily lose perspective of our lives and how we can regain it. The beauty of the pure friendship between a man and a woman.

BIO ISABEL COIXET (director)

Isabel Coixet started filming when she was given a 8mm camera on the occasion of her First Communion. She received many accolades for her spots, and founded her own production company in 2000, Miss Wasabi Films. In 1996, she made her first feature in English: Things I Never Told You (Cosas que nunca te dije). In this moving drama, the cast was made up of American actors led by Lili Taylor and Andrew McCarthy. Coixet achieved her second nomination at the Goya Awards for Best Original Screenplay. International success took place with the intimate drama My Life Without Me (Mi vida sin mi, 2003), based on Nancy Kincaid's short story, starring Sarah Polley. In 2005, Coixet joined eighteen other great international filmmakers, among them Gus Van Sant, Walter Salles and Joel & Ethan Cohen, to make the groundbreaking collective project Paris, je t'aime, where each helmer explored a different Paris quarter. In 2008, Elegy was released.

BIO PATRICIA CLARKSON

Patricia Clarkson is an Academy Award nominee and Emmy Award-winning actress. Her recent films include Cairo Time, Easy A, Friends With Benefits, Whatever Works, and Shutter Island. This summer she starred opposite Bradley Cooper in The Elephant Man at Williamstown, now playing on Broadway an acclaimed and box office record breaking production. She has appeared in numerous off-Broadway and Broadway productions, including Three Days of Rain, Raised in Captivity and Eastern Standard, and has performed the role of "Blanche" in A Streetcar Named Desire at The Kennedy Center. Other film credits include High Art, Pieces of April, The Station Agent, Far From Heaven, Good Night and Good Luck, and The Green Mile. Television credits include Six Feet Under, Five, and Parks and Recreation. Other awards and nominations include NY Film Critics Circle Award, Golden Globe, SAG Award, The National Board of Review and The National Society of Film Critics.

BIO SIR BEN KINGSLEY

After earning an Academy Award, two Golden Globes and two BAFTA Awards for his riveting portrayal of Indian social leader Mahatma Gandhi, Ben Kingsley continues to bring unequalled detail and nuance to each role. Kingsley went on to earn three additional Oscar nominations for Bugsy (1991), Sexy Beast (2000) and House of Sand and Fog (2003). His other roles have been as diverse as his talents, from a sturdy vice president in Dave to the scheming Fagin in Oliver Twist. A coveted and ubiquitous talent, 2013 has already seen Kingsley starring in three films, Iron Man 3, A Common Man by Sri Lankan film maker Chandran Rutnam, and the independent comedy A Birder's Guide to Everything. Kingsley will also be seen this fall in Ender's Game. The past few years have seen him starring in such films as Sacha Baron Cohen's The Dictator, Jerry Bruckheimer's Prince of Persia, and two Martin Scorsese films: Shutter Island and Hugo, which earned five Academy Awards. He was nominated British Actor of the Year by the London Critics Circle Film Awards for his starring performance in his previous project with Isabel Coixet, the sexually charged Elegy, opposite Penelope Cruz.

BIO JAKE WEBER

Jake Weber has worked extensively in film, theatre and television for over 25 years. His film credits include: Learning to Drive, opposite Ben Kingsley and Patricia Clarkston, Hungry Hearts, opposite Adam Driver, Roland Emmerich's White House Down, Zach Snyder's remake of Dawn of the Dead, Martin Brest's remake of Meet Joe Black, Jonathan Mostow's U-571, Mike Newell's Pushing Tin, Tarsem Singh's The Cell, Marshall Herskovitz's Dangerous Beauty, Alan J. Pakula's The Pelican Brief, Sidney Lumet's A Stranger Among Us, and Larry Fessenden's Wendigo. His first job was in Oliver Stone's Born on the 4th of July.

He was a series regular on Mind of the Married Man (HBO), American Gothic (CBS), Something Wilder (CBS), starring Gene Wilder, and, for 7 years, Medium (NBC), starring Patricia Arquette. He recently recurred on the hit (FOX) show The Following and can be seen next season as a series regular on AMC's Hell on Wheels as Joseph Campbell, the first governor of Wyoming. A theatre veteran, he has appeared extensively on and off Broadway and regionally at Williamstown Theatre Festival and Arena Stage.

He attended Juilliard in New York City, A.S. Neil's Summerhill School in England, Middlebury College in Vermont, where he studied English and Political Science, and The Moscow Art Theatre in the then Soviet Union.

He was born in London in 1964.

BIO GRACE GUMMER

Grace made her professional acting debut in Kristjan Thor's Off-Broadway project, The Sexual Neuroses of Our Parents. After starring in the TeenNick series Gigantic, Grace completed her run as 'Hero' in Much Ado About Nothing at the Kirk Douglas Theater in Los Angeles, before debuting on Broadway as 'Chloë Coverly' in Tom Stoppard's Arcadia on Broadway. For her performance, Grace won a Theatre World Award. Grace then played opposite John Lithgow in Daniel Sullivan's The Columnist on Broadway.

Last year, Grace was seen in Noah Baumbach's FRANCES HA!, and since recurred on NBC's hit series (added a missing space) SMASH, prior to shooting a ten-episode arc on Season 2 of HBO's THE NEWS ROOM, playing a young journalist on the campaign trail.

More recently, Grace Gummer played opposite Hilary Swank and Tommy Lee Jones in THE HOMESMAN, which was in competition at 2014 The Cannes International Film Festival. Subsequently, Grace starred in JENNY'S WEDDING opposite Tom Wilkinson and Katherine Heigl. Grace is currently a season regular on Steven Spielberg's series EXTANT for CBS, while concurrently recurring heavily on Season 3 of THE NEWSROOM for HBO and AMERICAN HORROR STORY: COVEN, and most recently AMERICAN HORROR STORY: FREAK SHOW for Ryan Murphy at F/X.

Grace is currently NYC-based.

BIO SARITA CHOUDHURY

Sarita Choudhury portrays the role of Jasleen in Isabel Coixet's drama *LEARNING TO DRIVE*, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival this September 2014. Choudhury will next appear opposite Tom Hanks in Tom Tykwer's film, *A HOLOGRAM FOR THE KING*.

Choudhury can currently be seen on *HOMELAND* in the pivotal role of Saul Berenson's wife Mira. Recent film credits include the Paul Weitz comedy *ADMISSION*, the Independent Spirit Award nominated film

GAYBY, Deepa Mehta's adaptation of the Salman Rushdie novel *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN*, Mark Mann's drama *GENERATION UM...*, Sona Jain's *FOR REAL*, and the Tribeca Film Festival selection *ENTRE NOS*. Other films include *THE ACCIDENTAL HUSBAND*, M. Night Shyamalan's *LADY IN THE WATER* and the Independent Spirit Award nominee, *THE WAR WITHIN*.

Choudhury made her film debut as the love interest to Denzel Washington's character in Mira Nair's *MISSISSIPPI MASALA*. Choudhury's performance as the Queen in Mira Nair's controversial film *KAMA SUTRA: A TALE OF LOVE* captured the attention of many critics. Other film credits include Spike Lee's *SHE HATE ME*, Sarah Rogacki's *RHYTHM OF THE SAINTS*, Lee Davis' *3 A.M.*, Fisher Stevens' *JUST A KISS*, David Attwood's *WILD WEST*, Lisa Cholodenko's *HIGH ART*, Bille August's *THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS*, Sidney Lumet's *GLORIA*, and Andrew Davis' *A PERFECT MURDER*.

Garnering raves on stage for her performance as Frida Kahlo in *THE RISE OF DOROTHY HALE*, Choudhury has also appeared in the acclaimed productions of playwright Vijay Tendulkar's *SAKHARAM BINDER*, The New Group's *ROAR* with Annabella Sciorra, and *RAFTA, RAFTA...* On television, Choudhury has portrayed recurring roles on *KINGS*, *DEADLINE*, *100 CENTRE STREET*, and *HOMICIDE: LIFE ON THE STREET*. She has also appeared on *THE GOOD WIFE*, *BORED TO DEATH*, *DAMAGES*, and *LAW & ORDER*.

CREDITS

Director	Isabel Coixet
Producer	Dana Friedman, Daniel Hammond
Screenplay	Sarah Kernochan
Cinematographer	Manel Ruiz
Editor	Thelma Schoonmaker
Production Designer	Dania Saragovia
Sound	Anton Gold
Music	Dhani Harrison, Paul Hicks
Production Company	Broad Green Pictures
Executive Producer	Gabriel Hammond