



PREVIEW

Pirates + Q&A

+ Q&A with writer-director Reggie Yates and actors Elliot Edusah, Jordan Peters and Reda Elazouar.

New Year's Eve 1999. Cappel (Elliot Edusah), Two Tonne (Jordan Peters) and Kidda (Reda Elazouar) drive through London in their tiny Peugeot 205, pumping a live garage set from the stereo and arguing about their Avirex jackets and Naf Naf imports. As the eighteen-year olds step into adulthood they know their lives and friendships are on the brink of change. Determined to end the century on a bang they drive from place to place in a desperate search for tickets for the best millennium party EVER. In their efforts to end up somewhere, they end up closer together.

Production Story

Reggie Yates' first experience on set came as an actor at the age of eight on Channel Four's sitcom *Desmond's*. After his first day, he was convinced his career would always be in the world of film and television.

'Nearly 30 years later, the chance to make my first feature film is not one I took lightly, and I couldn't be prouder of the story I'm telling,' Yates recalls.

Mathieu Kassovitz' 1995 French film *La Haine*, which depicts 24 hours in the lives of three young men the day after a riot, was the first time Yates remembers seeing a world similar to his own screen.

'It was multicultural, young, scrappy and unashamedly full of colloquialisms. It had a whip smart screenplay all while making the mundane cinematic,' Yates remembers.

Yates paid homage to his favourite film by shooting a scene with his three cast in front of a local North London mural of a snail, which is over two decades old and known amongst locals as the Seven Sister Snail. During pre-production, the shot was referenced as the 'La Haine shot' because of its similarities to a shot in the film where the three boys are in a playground with one of them sitting on a hippopotamus slide.

'This is my way of saying thank you to Kassovitz for making me believe these stories can be told and have cinematic value,' Yates explains. 'Our North London version of the Hippo slide, is the Seven Sisters Snail.'

When it came to writing the script, preparation was a trip down memory lane for Yates.

'It was a lot of sitting down and going back to my youth and asking myself questions about what were the fun moments,' Yates continues. 'I belong to a generation of big city kids who have never seen their experience or more importantly themselves, on screen. Writing *Pirates* felt like an overdue and inclusive opportunity.'

Producer's Polly Leys and Kate Norrish started developing *Pirates* with Yates after producing his short film *Shelter* which was also for BBC Films. Leys and Norrish both loved the idea of *Pirates* after Yates' first pitch and felt it had great potential for his first feature film. Happily, Rose Garnett at BBC films felt similarly and commissioned a script right away.

‘It was a story so close to Reggie’s heart. It poured out of him relatively quickly, so the development process was more about honing and structuring the story and the comedy. The warm funny tone came naturally in Reggie’s writing,’ Leys and Norrish recall.

Development started towards the end of 2018 and by December 2019, with the BFI on board alongside BBC Films, *Pirates* was green lit. Production began in January 2020, but come March, and with just 10 shoot days left, filming was halted due to the global pandemic.

‘It was a heart-breaking moment and difficult for anyone to deal with, let alone a debut feature director. Although initially no-one knew whether the film would ever be finished the whole team stayed in touch over zoom and there was real enthusiasm to do everything possible to help re start and complete *Pirates*, which was a real testament to Reggie as a director,’ Leys and Norrish explain.

As soon as it was deemed safe, and with all the new COVID protocols in place, filming resumed in September 2020. Ironically on the day that the completed film was originally due to have been delivered to the financiers.

‘It’s a story for anyone who has ever had a friend’ (Reggie Yates)

For the filmmakers and cast, the opportunity to tell an uplifting positive film about teenagers growing up in London was a rewarding experience and one they wish they had watched growing up themselves.

‘It’s a rarity to have three people of colour leading a film of this scale, especially one that intends to be positive’ Yates explains. ‘I grew up like many people of my age watching coming of age films and there is something really amazing about watching something that feels similar to your experiences on the big screen.’

‘The time we are in right now, a lot of performances are based on the struggles of growing up as a black Londoner,’ Edusah explains. ‘*Pirates* highlights the fun, thrilling, vibrant side of young black people that a lot of people haven’t seen; it’s a side I want to see more of on screen.’

‘The film could have easily been spun to stick to the narrative that the media portrays,’ Elazouar continues. ‘Even when I read the script, part of me subconsciously expected some level of crime or violence.’

‘Cappo is at university living his dream, Two Tonne is so driven and Kidda just wants to be with his friends,’ Peters adds. ‘It’s so important to tell these stories now, growing up as a young kid I would have loved to see a film like this.’

At the heart of the film is a friendship, a universal theme that makes *Pirates* a film for audiences from any background, culture or age.

‘It’s about three friends who love each other and just want to have a good time,’ Edusah describes. ‘It’s hilarious and silly at times, but it also shows true brotherhood and friendship that every good film needs.’

‘It’s such a unique story of three teenagers of colour, having fun together,’ Elazouar adds. ‘Togetherness is a beautiful message you don’t see often enough. *Pirates* is about friendship and understanding your path in life. It’s a beautiful story and a love letter to brotherhood.

‘*Pirates* is a story about friendship. For anyone who has ever had a friend, who has fallen out with their friends or anyone who has just wanted the perfect night out with friends,’ Yates concludes.

Production notes

PIRATES

Directed by: Reggie Yates
©: New Year Film Ltd, British Broadcasting Corporation, The British Film Institute
a Hillbilly Films production
In association with: Five7 Limited
Developed by: BBC Film
Made with the support of the: BFI’s Film Fund
Presented by: BBC Films, BFI
In association with: Magellanic Media Limited
Executive Producers: Rose Garnett, Farhana Bhula, James Reeve
Producers: Kate Norrish, Polly Leys
Line Producer: Dylan Rees
Associate Producer: Reggie Yates
Production Manager: Juliette Cerceau
Production Co-ordinator: Esmé Hicks
Production Accountant: Shane Savill
Unit Managers: Mark Stanton, Irmantas Kancevicius
Location Managers: Oliver Laurenson-Gore, Emma Harrison
Post-production Supervisor: Nadiya Luthra
First Assistant Director: Jeroen Bogaert
Second Assistant Director: Erin Large
Script Supervisors: Maria-Laura Hanson, Hannah Kenneally-Muir
Casting Director: Shaheen Baig
Written by: Reggie Yates
Director of Photography: Rachel Clark
Steadicams: Stamos Triantafyllos, Jake Whitehouse, Andrew Bainbridge
Still Photographers: Ludovic Robert, Charlotte Croft, Jack Smith
Visual Effects by: Atomic Arts
Editor: Ash White
Production Designer: Francesca Massariol
Art Director: Katherine Black
Set Decorator: Elena Riccabona
Graphic Designer: Lee Gray
Production Buyer: Eliora Darmon
Props Masters: Charles Dalton, Andie Vining
Costume Designer: Nat Turner
Hair & Make-up Designer: Diandra Ferreira
Senior Colourist: Jateen Patel
Additional Music: Kevin McPherson
Music Supervisor: Iain Cooke
Production Sound Mixer: David Giles
Re-recording Mixers: Stuart Hilliker, Lee Walpole
Supervising Sound Editor: Lee Walpole

Stunt Co-ordinator: John Street
Covid Supervisor: Roxanne Holman
Unit Publicity: Premier
Unit Publicist: Ellen Steers
Digital Intermediate by: Molinare
Thanks: Richard Curtis

Cast
Elliot Edusah (Cappo)
Reda Elazouar (Kidda)
Jordan Peters (Two Tonne)
Youssef Kerkour (Uncle Ibbs)
Kassius Nelson (Sophie)
Rebekah Murrell (Kelly)
Aaron Shosanya (Megaman)
Tosin Cole (Clips)
Shiloh Cole (Princess)
Gbolahan Obisesan (Ronnie Herel)
Elroy ‘Spoonface’ Powell (bouncer)
Darren Hart (MC)
Chris Streeks (Jim)
Valerie Paul (Mrs Mensah)
Tsion Habte (Ella)
Peyvand Sadeghian (Lisa)
Matthew Highton (Uptown Records punter)
Michael McGarry (Twice as Nice barman)
Bushkin
MC Creed
DJ Fonti
Lonyo
Manny Norte
Mercston
Mighty Moe
Pied Piper
PSG
Ronnie Herel
DJ Spooky
Wretch 32

UK 2021
80 mins

Courtesy of Picturehouse Entertainment

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Preview: Encanto + Q&A with director Jared Bush, co-director Charise Castro Smith, producer Clark Spencer and Yvett Marino
Sun 21 Nov 11:30
Preview: Boxing Day + Q&A with writer-director Aml Ameen
Sat 27 Nov 18:30
TV Preview: The Amazing Mr Blunden + Q&A with writer-director-actor Mark Gatiss and actor Tamsin Greig
Mon 29 Nov 18:15
Doctor Who: City of Death
Sun 5 Dec 12:00
Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI
Mon 6 Dec 18:10
TV Preview: The Mezzotint + Q&A with director Mark Gatiss
Tue 7 Dec 18:10

TV Preview: The Tourist + Q&A with actors Jamie Dornan, Danielle Macdonald, Shalom Brune-Franklin and creatives
Tue 7 Dec 20:30
TV Preview: Ghosts Christmas Special + Q&A (guests TBA)
Thu 9 Dec 18:10
Patti Boulaye
Sun 12 Dec 15:30
Woman with a Movie Camera: Bridget Jones’s Diary at 20 + Q&A with director Sharon Maguire
Thu 16 Dec 18:00
Preview: Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy (Guzen to sozo)
Wed 29 Dec 18:00

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