



PREVIEW

Boiling Point

+ Q&A with director Philip Barantini and actors Ray Panthaki, Lauryn Ajufu and Alice Feetham

Actor-turned-director Philip Barantini follows his award winning short of the same name and feature debut *Villain* (2020) with this breathlessly kinetic, formally dazzling and ultimately moving single-take thriller set in an elite London restaurant. We follow Andy, an emotionally damaged and drug addicted chef, played by an electrifying Stephen Graham, across one crazily busy night in his top London restaurant. He has to deal with acrimonious staff, difficult customers, an old adversary and the pressures of keeping a frenetic kitchen and busy restaurant floor going. A smart character study, a realistic slice of life and a vivid window into a highly pressurised and strange working world, Barantini's film makes superb use of its formal conceit, an excellent ensemble cast and terrific central performance to deliver something genuinely nerve-jangling and exciting.

Paul Ridd, BFI London Film Festival 2021

Expanding on the BIFA-nominated short film of the same name that he made in 2019, Philip Barantini's exhilarating *Boiling Point* takes us behind the scenes at a busy east London restaurant in the run-up to Christmas, on a night when seemingly everything is going wrong for head chef Andy Jones (Stephen Graham). When the film opens on Andy he is already stressed and running late, and when he arrives at Jones & Sons in Dalston, the news that a visiting hygiene inspector has downgraded his restaurant from a five-star rating to a three (largely as a result of Andy's failure to maintain proper paperwork) sets the tone for the evening. Tensions in the kitchen continue to rise when it is revealed that Andy has also forgotten to make a substantial meat order, and by the time celebrity chef and former colleague Alastair Skye (Jason Flemyng) has turned up for dinner with a notorious food critic (Lourdes Faberes) on his arm, we can see what the film's title is getting at.

We experience every excruciating minute of this night from hell alongside Andy and his staff because, as in his short (which was essentially made a dry-run/proof of concept for the feature), Barantini has chosen to film *Boiling Point* in a single continuous shot, and his cast and crew have met the challenge of sustaining a 90-minute take with aplomb. With nimble work from cinematographer Matthew Lewis, the film places us right in the middle of a chaotic environment but always maintains a sense of clarity. Unlike other recent one-take movies such as *Victoria* (2015) or *Utøya: July 22* (2018), *Boiling Point* is restricted primarily to a single indoor location, and Barantini quickly establishes the geography of the restaurant within the opening minutes to ensure we always know where we are going when the camera leaves one character to follow another. The film's fluidity is a marvel of intelligent choreography and blocking.

The relay-style approach of having the camera pick up the trail of a different character every few minutes also allows Barantini and his co-writer James Cummings to expand their point of view and introduce a wider variety of themes into the drama. As you'd expect in a modern London establishment,

the staff in Jones & Sons is international and multicultural, and while it's never made explicit, there is clearly a racial element to some of the micro-aggressions depicted in the film. You can see it in the different tone that the hygiene inspector (a wonderfully supercilious Thomas Coombes) takes when speaking to white and non-white staff members, or the way one particularly obnoxious customer addresses young black waitress Andrea (Lauryn Ajufu) after she has replaced Robyn (Áine Rose Daly), the white waitress he was on jovial terms with.

The script also fleetingly touches on many of the supporting characters' personal issues, creating the sense that they all have a life outside of this kitchen. There's a beautifully handled moment when one of the restaurant's younger staff members is revealed to be self-harming. The colleague he shares this fact with doesn't push the issue any further – they simply don't have time to get into it on a night like this – but the incident is more moving for being underplayed.

The actors play everything with absolute authenticity. Barantini was an actor for many years before turning to directing, and he gets exceptional work from this cast, with Stephen Graham again proving that he is one of the most honest and empathetic actors working today.

The foul-mouthed and red-faced chef barking at his staff is a cliché we are all too familiar with, and Andy explodes with anger on multiple occasions during the film, often having to apologise to the target of his rage shortly afterwards, but Graham ensures these rapid emotional gear-changes always feel organic and rooted in his own internal pain and frustration. The outstanding Vinette Robinson matches Graham as the level-headed sous-chef whose loyalty to Andy has been stretched to the limit, and Alice Feetham impresses as the restaurant manager who is out of her depth, but it doesn't seem entirely fair to single out individuals from such a remarkable ensemble piece. *Boiling Point* is a virtuoso filmmaking feat, and one that could only have been achieved through an extraordinary team effort on both sides of the camera.

Philip Concannon, *Sight and Sound*, [bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound](https://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound), 11 October 2021

BOILING POINT

Directed by: Philip Barantini

©: Ascendant Films Ltd

Production Companies: Ascendant Films, Burton Fox Films

In association with: Matriarch Productions, White Hot Productions,

Three Little Birds, Alpine Films, Bromantics, Insight Media Fund,

Urban Way, The Electric Shadow Company

Executive Producers: Stephen Graham, Hannah Walters, Ian Kirk, Sara Sehdev, Ming Zhu, Michael Gilmore, Philip Barantini, Ray Panthaki, Bob Clarke, Gareth Jones, John Jencks, Jay Taylor, Angus Henderson, Charlotte Henderson, William Henderson, Paul Mellor, Peter Maddock, Samantha Warham, Ward Trowman, Anthony Jabre, Oscar Veronese, Adrian Foulger, Wei Xu

Produced by: Bart Ruspoli, Hester Ruoff

Co-producer: Stefan D'Bart

Production Executive for Electric Shadow Company: Sarah Laita

Production Manager: Gabriella Callea

1st Assistant Director: Jamie Hetherington

2nd Assistant Director: Nic Pringle

Key 3rd Assistant Director: Ashley Turner

Additional 3rd Assistant Directors: Patricia Sommer, Alexander Lloyd, Georgina Mandefield

Script Supervisor: Jodie Woodall

Casting Director: Carolyn McLeod

Casting Assistant: Matt Sheppard

Written by: James Cummings, Philip Barantini

Director of Photography: Matthew Lewis

1st Assistant Camera: James Woodbridge

2nd Assistant Camera: Christopher J. Orr

Gaffer: Max Hodgkinson

Camera Grip: Will Anderson

Stills Photography: Christian Black, Alex Fountain

Visual Effects by: Technicolor VFX

Production Designer: Aimee Meek

Art Director: Deb Milner

Standby Art Director: Bibi Baker

Assistant Art Director: Millie Wilkie

Propmaster: Jessica Jones

Construction: Bill Milner, Ibby Injoya

Costume Designer: Karen Smyth

Costume Supervisor: Nick Flynn

Hair and Make-up Designer: Julia S. Merino

Hair & Make-up Artists: Sofi Keenan, Rebecca Wheeler

Titles: Alex Fountain

Colourist: Tom Alexander

Original Music Composed by: David Ridley, Aaron May

Sound Designer: Blair Jollands

Sound Recordist: Nick Olorenshaw

Production Mixers: Kiff McManus, Rob Entwistle

Re-recording Mixer: James Drake

Supervising Sound Editor: James Drake

Dialogue Editor: Oscar Bloomfield-Crowe

Sound Effects Editor: Vicente Villaescusa

Foley Artist: Javi Delgado

Foley Recordist: Amaya Soler

Stunt Co-ordinator: Eddie Lee

Digital Intermediate Technician: Shahidul Khan

Cast

Stephen Graham (*Andy Jones*)

Vinette Robinson (*Carly*)

Alice Feetham (*Beth*)

Hannah Walters (*Emily*)

Jason Flemyng (*Alistair Skye*)

Malachi Kirby (*Tony*)

Izuka Hoyle (*Camille*)

Taz Skylar (*Billy*)

Lauryn Ajufo (*Andrea*)

Ray Panthaki (*Freeman*)

Lourdes Faberes (*Sara Southworth*)

Daniel Larkai (*Jake*)

Robbie O'Neill (*Frank*)

Áine Rose Daly (*Robyn*)

Rosa Escoda (*Mary*)

Stephen McMillan (*Jaime*)

Thomas Coombes (*Mr Lovejoy*)

Gary Lamont (*Dean*)

Rob Parker (*Kevin*)

Katie Bellwood (*Lizzie*)

Alex Heath (*Ollie*)

Heather Gould (*Joan*)

Gala Botero (*Maria*)

Philip Hill-Pearson (*Mark*)

Jay Johnson (*Michael*)

Kieran Urquhart (*Tim*)

Hannah Traylen (*Holly*)

Diljohn Singh (*Krish*)

Jordan Alexandra (*Bryony*)

Shereen Walker (*Hannah*)

Precious Wura Arabi (*Emma*)

Ayanna Coleman-Potempa (*Philly*)

Kimesha Campbell (*Lola*)

Gina Ruysen (*Kathryn*)

George Hawkins (*Sean*)

John McHale (*Owen*)

Caroline Garnell (*Gloria*)

UK/Australia 2020©

95 mins

Courtesy of Vertigo Releasing

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

TV Preview: Ghosts Christmas Special + Q&A with actors

Simon Farnaby, Martha Howe-Douglas, Jim Howick,

Lolly Adefope and Kiell Smith-Bynoe

Thu 9 Dec 18:10

tick, tick... BOOM! + pre-recorded Q&A with director Lin-Manuel

Miranda, producer Julie Yoh, executive producer Julie Larson,

writer Steven Levenson and actors Andrew Garfield, Vanessa

Hudgens, Alexandra Shipp, Robin de Jesus and Judith Light

Thu 9 Dec 20:30

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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