

# BIOGRAPHY JONATHAN LYNN

*director/writer/producer*

Filmmaker, screenwriter and novelist Jonathan Lynn's prolific career spans nearly four decades and includes directing, writing, producing and acting in motion pictures, television and theatre as well as authoring best-selling books. His most recent projects are the stage play *Yes Prime Minister* and the book *Comedy Rules*. The play opened to excellent reviews at the Gielgud Theatre, London, last September. It has recently concluded a 22 week national tour of the UK, will open in Australia in January 2012 and in various other European cities during the next year. Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay reunited after 24 years to write a bang up-to-date *Yes Prime Minister* for the stage.



His new book *Comedy Rules* was published by Faber and Faber on August 18th.

Prior to that, Lynn directed feature film *WILD TARGET* (2009), starring Bill Nighy, Emily Blunt, Rupert Grint and Rupert Everett. The all-star British cast also includes Eileen Atkins, Martin Freeman and Gregor Fisher.

In 2000, Lynn directed the "screwball noir" movie *THE WHOLE NINE YARDS*, a critical and audience favorite that featured Bruce Willis, Matthew Perry and Amanda Peet. It was number one at the US box-office for three weeks.

Lynn wrote and directed his first feature film *CLUE* (1985), a comedy/mystery based on the popular board game with an all-star cast. Lynn solved the complex who-done-it with three different endings, all of which were screened at different theaters and are now on the DVD/video. Lynn then directed his own screenplay *NUNS ON THE RUN* (1990), which starred Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane, and the acerbic comedy *MY COUSIN VINNY* (1992), which launched Marisa Tomei's career and earned her an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress.

Lynn's *THE DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN*, starring Eddie Murphy, was released in 1992 and raised the issue of campaign finance reform long before politicians ... and the average American ... recognized the problem. He followed with *GREEDY* (1994) featuring Michael J. Fox and Kirk Douglas; *SGT. BILKO* (1996) with Steve Martin and Dan Aykroyd; and *TRIAL AND ERROR* (1997) starring Michael Richards and Charlize Theron.

Lynn directed *THE FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS* (2003), starring Cuba Gooding, Jr. and Beyonce Knowles, along with an eclectic ensemble cast, the film is an uplifting tour de force of gospel music. The film won the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Picture of 2003 and Mr Lynn also won the American Black Film Festival Award for Film Of The Year, 2004.

It was the 1980's BBC phenomena *YES, MINISTER* and *YES, PRIME MINISTER* that initially propelled Lynn to fame in his native Great Britain. He co-created and co-wrote all of the series' episodes, which lampooned his native country's political system. *YES, PRIME MINISTER*, listed among the top ten series of all-time according to the British Film Institute, Both series are now released in their entirety on DVD by BBC Video.

Lynn won the British Academy Writers' Award and the series garnered numerous BAFTA, Broadcasting Press Guild and Pye Television Writer's Awards as well as an ACE Award for Lynn in the US for Best Written Comedy Series on Cable Television, and a Special Award from the Campaign For Freedom Of Information. Lynn carried the theme into three novels, *The Complete Yes Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*, Volumes 1 and 2, which cumulatively sold more than a million copies in hardback, were on the British top-ten bestseller list for three years and have been translated into numerous languages.

Lynn began his career acting and writing for theatre, film and television. As an actor, his roles were wide-ranging: aged 21 he performed in *Cambridge Circus*, a revue on Broadway with John Cleese and Graham Chapman (among others), and made his TV debut on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, was nominated for a Plays and Players Award as Most Promising New Actor for his performance in *Green Julia* (1965); played Hitler in *The Comedy Of The Changing Years*, then *Motel The Tailor* in the original London cast of *Fiddler On The Roof*. Lynn also starred in several notable British telefilms, among them Jack Rosenthal's *Bar Mitzvah Boy*, *The Knowledge* and *Outside Edge*, and two British television series: *Doctor In The House* and *My Brother's Keeper*, which he also wrote. His film performances include playing Kirk Douglas's butler in his own film *Greedy*.

From 1977 to 1981 Lynn served as Artistic Director of The Cambridge Theatre Company, where he produced more than forty plays, twenty of which he directed. The company's production of *Macbeth* featuring Brian Cox toured the United Kingdom and India and staged a special performance for then Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi. Lynn went on to direct one of the companies at the National Theatre of Great Britain, which performed his *Society of West End Theatres* award-winning production of *Three Men on a Horse* (1987).

Lynn directed numerous plays that appeared throughout London beginning in the mid 1970s. They include: *The Glass Menagerie* (1977), working with Tennessee Williams; *Songbook* (1979), which won the Society of West End Theatres Award, the Ivor Novello Award and the Evening Standard Award for Best Musical; *Anna Christie* (1979-80), at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford and London; *A Little Hotel on the Side* by Georges Feydeau, adapted by John Mortimer at the National Theatre; *Pass the Butler* (1982), written by Eric Idle and staged at the Globe Theatre; and *Joe Orton's Loot* (1984) starring Leonard Rossiter, staged first at the Ambassadors and Lyric Theatres.

Jonathan Lynn received an MA in Law from Cambridge University, an Honorary MA from the University of Sheffield and an Honorary PhD from the American Behavioral Studies Institute. He currently lives in Los Angeles, where he is Distinguished Artist-In-Residence at the American Film Institute.