



Culture Monster

All the Arts, All the Time

An early look at Julie Taymor's film version of 'The Tempest,' starring Helen Mirren

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Shakespeare's final play, "The Tempest," gets a big-budget makeover -- plus a feminist twist -- in Julie Taymor's film version starring Helen Mirren that is set to open in the U.S. in December.

Mirren plays the role of Prospera, a female version of the Bard's Prospero, who lives in exile on a magical island with her daughter, Miranda. Visited by a shipwrecked crew, the aging sorceress and her daughter must confront the impending end of their blissful isolation.

The film, which is being released by Touchstone Pictures, also stars Ben Whishaw as Ariel, Djimon Hounsou as Caliban, Russell Brand as Trinculo, Chris Cooper as Antonio and Felicity Jones as Miranda. Reeve Carney, who has been cast in the title role of Taymor's "Spider-Man" production on Broadway, plays the role of Ferdinand.

Rounding out the supporting cast are three seasoned Shakespeare veterans: Alan Cumming, Alfred Molina and David Strathairn.

Mirren has played many Shakespearean roles with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre in London in her lengthy stage career. Taymor previously adapted Shakespeare's "Titus Andronicus" for the big screen in 1999.

"The Tempest" had its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival and recently made its U.S. debut as the centerpiece selection at the New York Film Festival.

As Culture Monster previously noted, Shakespeare's final play has inspired radical reinterpretations over the years from filmmakers as diverse as Peter Greenaway, Derek Jarman and Paul Mazursky.

Check out the first trailer for "The Tempest," which comes courtesy of Comingsoon.net and Apple.

-- David Ng