

NEWS: For immediate release

**STARZ ORIGINAL SERIES BECOMING ELIZABETH BEGINS 12 JUNE
– MADE AT THE BOTTLE YARD STUDIOS**

Tudor drama filmed at Bristol Cathedral & other South West historic properties

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BRISTOL, 8 June 2022: **Becoming Elizabeth**, the new STARZ Original Tudor drama exploring the fascinating, untold story of the early life of England's most iconic Queen, will premiere on Sunday 12 June after filming at Bristol's Bottle Yard Studios last year.



Catherine Parr (Jessica Raine), Alicia von Rittberg (Elizabeth I) and Thomas Seymour (Tom Cullen) in Becoming Elizabeth (image courtesy STARZ)

Made by UK production company The Forge (Help, Rules of the Game, Kiri), *Becoming Elizabeth* was predominantly filmed on a network of beautifully detailed period sets built at Bristol's Bottle Yard Studios between September 2020 and January 2021. Filming also took place at Bristol Cathedral, assisted by Bristol Film Office.

Locations further afield that will feature in the eight-part series include Wells Cathedral and The Bishops Palace & Gardens in Wells, Barrington Court in Somerset, Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire, Church of the Holy Cross in the Gloucestershire village of Avening, Cardiff Castle, Broughton Castle in Banbury and Haddon Hall in Bakewell.

Producer Lisa Osborne says: "The Bottle Yard Studios was the perfect base for *Becoming Elizabeth* in the pandemic year of 2020/21. A friendly welcoming home for our amazing Tudor sets - a palace, a manor house and a prison cell all fitted with ease into two of the Studios' cavernous Tank Houses - and brilliantly sited for access to the many period properties in South West England. Henry VIII built the Palace of Whitehall for Anne Boleyn so much of it would have been quite new during the period of *Becoming Elizabeth*, although none survived into later centuries. Production Designer Stevie Herbert was therefore able to draw on historical records for authenticity, but also to let her imagination go in using every inch of The Bottle Yard's biggest stage to create a suite of rooms suitable to the story's needs."

Production Designer Stevie Herbert says: "The stories about this court are set in two or three rooms at the very heart of Whitehall, where everyone is trying to get through to the King. So there must be a threshold, because the King is the power and key to their advancement in society. We created a suite of spaces getting closer and closer to the King's most private chambers, starting in Vicars Close in Wells, and up the Chapter House steps in Wells Cathedral, to the Long Gallery at Haddon Hall in Derbyshire and on to the Bottle Yard

sets, where we move from the splendour of the public Great Hall through semi-private state rooms to the intimacy of the King's bedchamber.

"The Bottle Yard's Tank House 2 studio had the ideal height and scale to accommodate our Whitehall Palace build. Exteriors and interior sections of the palace were shot on location, whilst the studio build is part of the centre of the Palace, the seat of power, where the King meets his Court. Whitehall was a warren like space, full of covert corners and large decorative impressive chambers, halls and living quarters. The build takes you along Norman corridors and through archways, into an antechamber. The large room attached is where the Privy Council meet to govern. Travel in another direction and you enter the Watching Chamber, which leads to a two storey build of the Presence Chamber/Great Hall with its vertical Gothic details. This is where ambassadors meet the King and the court feast. Beyond this threshold the build becomes Tudor in style, commissioned by Henry VIII these are the King's Privy Chambers, including his Bedchamber. Heavy, solid, decorative and glamorous, a world that speaks of wealth and power.

"Whilst our Chelsea Palace exteriors and interiors were filmed on location, the inner chambers of Catherine Parr's world, including corridors, bedchambers and salon, formed the composite set in The Bottle Yard's Export Warehouse stage. Henry VIII built this Tudor palace for his Queen, it is of scale, different in detail and style from the world of Whitehall and the Court. The inner chambers have a homely intimate feel with honey-coloured panelled walls, decorative details and elaborate plaster ceilings. The Export Warehouse stage also accommodated a build of living quarters and a cell from the Tower of London.

"This period is all about finishes and as our exteriors were Wells Cathedral and Haddon Hall in Derbyshire we had to compare with those locations. You look at Hampton Court as a reference and you think 'he's a King - it must be tall, it has to be elegant, it has to be powerful' and then you can choose to go back to the court of King Arthur and also make it colourful and gilded. I could go on decorating the sets forever!"

Laura Aviles, Senior Film Manager (Bristol City Council): "The sets for *Becoming Elizabeth* that The Forge created at The Bottle Yard Studios were utterly magnificent and historically accurate down to the finest detail. At The Bottle Yard we have space to create entire worlds, whilst being just a short drive from some of the most impressive historic properties and cathedrals in the UK. This, combined with supportive Film Offices and the bank of skilled crew in the region, makes Bristol and the West of England a consistently competitive destination for period drama filming. Our track record speaks for itself, with past STARZ dramas *The Spanish Princess* and *The White Princess* also made at The Bottle Yard Studios. It was an honour to add *Becoming Elizabeth* to this growing roster, a visually rich international drama, which looks utterly breath-taking on screen."

About *Becoming Elizabeth*

Long before she ascended the throne, young Elizabeth Tudor, played by Alicia von Rittberg (Fury, "Charité," "Genius"), was an orphaned teenager who became embroiled in the political and sexual politics of the English court. The death of King Henry VIII sees his nine-year-old son Edward, played by Oliver Zetterström (The Midnight Gang, "The Romanoffs"), take the throne and sets into motion a dangerous scramble for power when Elizabeth, Edward and their sister Mary, played by Romola Garai ("The Hour," "The Miniaturist") find themselves pawns in a game between the great families of England and the powers of Europe who vie for control of the country.

Additional key players in the relentless quest for power include King Henry's widow, Catherine Parr, played by Jessica Raine ("The Informer," "Patrick Melrose"), Thomas Seymour, played by Tom Cullen (Weekend, "Black Mirror"), the new King's uncle, who quickly marries the widowed Catherine but soon takes an interest in the teenage Elizabeth

and Duke of Somerset, played by John Heffernan (“The Pursuit of Love,” “The Crown”), who loses no time in claiming the position of Lord Protector for himself when the old King dies.

The upcoming drama series also stars Jamie Blackley (Greed, “The Last Kingdom”), Alexandra Gilbreath (Tulip Fever, RSC’s “Provoked Wife”), Jamie Parker (1917, “Harry Potter and The Cursed Child”), Leo Bill (Rare Beasts, In Fabric), Bella Ramsey (“Game of Thrones,” “The Last of Us”), Ekow Quartey (“This Way Up,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at Shakespeare’s Globe), Alex Macqueen (“Sally4Ever,” “Peaky Blinders”) and Olivier Huband (“I Hate Suzie,” “A Discovery of Witches”).

“Becoming Elizabeth” is created and written by award-winning playwright and television screenwriter Anya Reiss (“Spur of the Moment,” “The Acid Test”) who also serves as executive producer with The Forge’s George Ormond (“National Treasure,” “Great Expectations”) and George Faber (“Shameless,” STARZ’s “The White Queen”) with Lisa Osborne (“Little Dorrit,” “Man in an Orange Shirt”) producing, and director Justin Chadwick (“Bleak House”, “Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom”, “The Other Boleyn Girl”) helming the first series.

Becoming Elizabeth premieres on Sunday 12 June at midnight on all STARZ streaming and on-demand platforms and internationally on STARZPLAY (available in the UK on Apple TV, Rakuten TV, Roku and as an add-on channel to your Amazon Prime Video account).

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Images and series information available via <https://mediaroom.starz.com/signin>

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Bottle Yard Studios

A Bristol City Council initiative, The Bottle Yard Studios is the largest dedicated studio facility in the West of England and a major hub for film and TV production. Located in Bristol, an internationally recognised [UNESCO City of Film](#), the Studios are at the heart of a thriving screen industry in one of the UK’s most creative, film-friendly cities. Eight stages of up to 22,000 sq ft are available for hire across the seven-acre main site. Three additional stages are scheduled to open in Autumn 2022 following £12 million investment from the West of England Combined Authority.

More than 25 businesses are based on site, including award-winning VFX specialists [Axis Studios Group](#), [Bristol Costume Services](#) offering more than 90,000 items for hire, equipment rental suppliers [Films@59](#) and [Cinewest](#) and special effects providers [MTFX](#). EPSRC and University of Bath-funded [CAMERA](#) (Centre for the Analysis of Motion, Entertainment Research & Applications) opened its new state-of-the-art Motion Capture Innovation Studio on site last year. CAMERA is a key partner of the £46 million [MyWorld](#) project led by the University of Bristol to position the South West as an international trailblazer in screen-based media.

Productions made at The Bottle Yard Studios include: Chloe (BBC/Amazon), The Outlaws (BBC/Amazon), The Girl Before (BBC One/HBO Max), Showtrial (BBC One), The Beaker Girls (CBBC), The Pursuit of Love (BBC/Amazon), The Spanish Princess (Starz), The Salisbury Poisonings (BBC One), The Trial of Christine Keeler (BBC One), The Pale Horse (BBC One), McDonald & Dodds (ITV), Tipping Point (ITV), The Crystal Maze (Channel 4), The Crystal Maze US (Nickelodeon), Sanditon series 1 (ITV), ‘Andy’s Adventures’ series (CBeebies), Fortitude (Sky Atlantic), Poldark (BBC One), Eric, Ernie & Me (BBC Four), Ill Behaviour (BBC Two), The Festival (Entertainment Film),

Hellboy (Lionsgate), Three Girls (BBC One), The White Princess (Starz), Broadchurch (ITV), Trollied (Sky1), Crazyhead (E4/Netflix), Sherlock: The Abominable Bride (BBC One), The Living and the Dead (BBC One), Galavant (ABC Studios), Wolf Hall (BBC Two), The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies (ITV). www.thebottleyard.com

Bristol Film Office

Bristol Film Office, a division of Bristol City Council, is a free service to all productions planning to film in the city. Dedicated to making film, television or commercial photography shoots run as smoothly as possible when on location in Bristol, it is the one-stop-shop for all filming enquiries. It can assist at all stages of production, from initial location and crewing advice to reces and logistical support. www.filmbristol.co.uk

Working with city partners, Bristol Film Office leads the programme of activity delivered under the permanent UNESCO City of Film status awarded to Bristol in 2017. www.bristolcityoffilm.co.uk

The Bottle Yard Studios and Bristol Film Office are Bristol City Council initiatives.

