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David Threlfall, Joanne Whalley, Ashley Walters and Nico Mirallegro to star in The Ark for BBC

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Filming has begun in Morocco on BBC One's brand-new single drama The Ark, from Red Planet Pictures - the makers of hit series Death In Paradise and the forthcoming The Passing Bells.

A stellar cast is headed up by David Threlfall (Tommy Cooper, Shameless, What Remains) as Noah, Joanne Whalley (The Borgias, Jamaica Inn) as his steadfast wife Emmie and Nico Mirallegro (The Village).

The one-off special, written by Tony Jordan (Hustle, The Nativity), is a retelling of the biblical story of Noah and The Ark. Noah, a farmer and family man, is instructed by an angel to build an ark in the middle of a desert in order to save both his family and the faithful from a devastating flood. A seemingly impossible task, especially when his sons refuse to believe him and help, Noah risks ridicule and humiliation from the degenerate townsfolk as well as his loving but exasperated family, in his quest to carry out his God-given task.

The Ark is a timeless tale; a story of family and faith; about one man's belief and fixation with building the ark which will ultimately save his family and mankind. It is an obsession which leads to the fragmentation of his family, a test of their faith in their father and their father's faith in God and everything he believes in.

Other names who will appear in the special include Ashley Walters (Top Boy, Truckers), Emily Bevan (In The Flesh), Hannah John-Kamen (The Hour, Death In Paradise), Georgina Campbell (One Night), Ian Smith (The Syndicate), Michael Fox (New Worlds) and Andrew Hawley (Hinterland, Borgia).

Commenting on his role, David Threlfall says: "The story jumped off the page at me from the first reading. It's not just a family saga but the first family saga. It takes its inspiration from many faiths and speaks of values which should be shared across all cultures. It was something I immediately wanted to be part of."

Belinda Campbell, Executive Producer for Red Planet Pictures, says: "The Ark is a timeless tale which will touch those who are both familiar with the story from the Bible, as well as those who are seeing it for the first time. Warm and humorous, it tells the tale of the impact on a family when an ordinary man undertakes to do an extraordinary thing."

Polly Hill, BBC Head of Independent Drama, says: “It is great to see Tony Jordan’s fantastic scripts attract such a talented and stellar cast which combined will bring this wonderful story to life.”

The Ark is a Red Planet Pictures production, in association with Lip Sync Productions and Great Point Media, for the BBC. The series was penned by Tony Jordan, with Belinda Campbell and Tony Jordan as executive producers for Red Planet and Polly Hill for the BBC, directed by Kenny Glenaan (Charlie, Yasmin, The Cops). It is produced by Jules Hussey (In The Flesh, Complicit, The Nativity), and was commissioned by Danny Cohen, Former Controller of BBC One, Ben Stephenson, Controller of BBC Drama and Polly Hill, Head of Independent Drama.