

## **JOSH APPIGNANESI** *Writer-Director*

BIOGRAPHY – SEPT 2010

Josh's second feature *The Infidel* is an indie comedy written by David Baddiel about a Muslim everyman who finds out he was born a Jew. The film stars BBC1 comedian Omid Djalili (*The Mummy*) and Emmy-winners Richard Schiff (*The West Wing*) and Archie Panjabi, alongside Matt Lucas. Slingshot produced and Revolver-distributed with 4K+ screen averages on opening weekend, rising to over 60 screens. Salt pre-sold worldwide with sales to 65 territories, and the film helped launch Tribeca Films's new US distribution arm, playing in fifteen cities.

[www.infidelfilm.com](http://www.infidelfilm.com)

Josh Appignanesi's debut feature, *Song Of Songs*, was an austere psychological dissection of religious desire, starring Natalie Press (*My Summer Of Love*, *Red Road*.) International festival success included a special Commendation at the Edinburgh Festival, official selection in Rotterdam's Tiger Awards, an award at London, and a BIFA nomination. Produced by Gayle Griffiths, distributed by Soda Pictures, it was received with critical acclaim in the UK press and in France.

[www.songofsongsmovie.com](http://www.songofsongsmovie.com)

Josh recently worked with John Malkovich on a Sony commercial. Previous works include a documentary (tx Channel 4) and several award-winning short films such as BBC Talent winner *Nine ½ Minutes* starring David Tennant (*Doctor Who*), and Wellcome Trust funded, BIFA-nommed *Ex Memoria* with Sara Kestelman. Josh also founded a post-production company which edited Emmy- and BAFTA-award winning political documentaries with Misha Manson-Smith.

He is currently writing an adaptation of Linda Grant's Orange-winning novel *When I Lived In Modern Times* for David Kustow. He has several other features in development including Jay Basu's psycho-chiller *Within*, supported by the UK Film Council, and comedy stageplay about psychotherapy, *Cognitive Behaviour*, with director Matthew Lloyd (*Duet For One*). Josh script-edits, teaches and mentors in writing/directing at institutions including London Film School, Arista, Script Factory, Film London, and the Met Film School, where he was head of fiction direction.

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### Acclaim for **THE INFIDEL**:

Cracking, joyful and instructive, the film is already certain... to be the summer's funniest film. Appignanesi jumps, in one beautifully executed move, to join the front rank of new British directors. His timing is perfect, his feel for the rhythm of

moral action is bracing, and I hope he goes on to make a ton of interesting movies.

\*\*\*\***Andrew O'Hagan, THE EVENING STANDARD**

Startlingly, for this second project, [Appignanesi] shifts gear for something more confrontational and taboo-busting... a broad comedy that gleefully and repeatedly stamps on the tender toes of liberal correctness.

\*\*\*\* **Peter Bradshaw, THE GUARDIAN**

This is essentially a writer's film, but Baddiel's script is well served by an excellent cast, and the director, Josh Appignanesi, whose only previous feature was a deadly serious look at an Orthodox Jewish family... has directed with a light touch. **Philip French, THE OBSERVER**

A terrific odd couple: there's a real bromantic spark between Djalili and Schiff... a perfectly pitched buddy dynamic. **TIME OUT**

Great laughs in this sweet comedy.... Djalili is delightful.

**THE NEW YORK TIMES**

It's very funny; even metaphysical... Sight gags abound. **VARIETY**

The two leads make a terrific comic team, with Djalili's deadpan style of physical humor perfectly complementing Schiff's hilarious, fast-paced wisecracking.

**HOLLYWOOD REPORTER**

Acclaim for **SONG OF SONGS:**

A cinematic milestone... a challenging, unashamedly intellectual rigour to it. Song of Songs confirms [Natalie Press] as a star. In both style and content, the film reveals a distinctive and bold new voice in British cinema.

**Jason Solomons, THE OBSERVER**

Terrific performance from Press... something uncomfortably compelling about this tale of murky deviant flipside of religious ecstasy. A daringly original debut.

**Wendy Ide, THE TIMES**

A powerful and confident work and shows that Appignanesi is seriously committed to cultivating a real cinematic language.

**Peter Bradshaw, THE GUARDIAN**

Appignanesi's intelligent low-budget feature debut... Press is compelling. The film modulates into a kosher version of Cocteau's *Les Enfants Terribles*... assembled with considerable psychological authority.

**Philip French, THE OBSERVER**

Boasts superb playing from Press and Chalfen... It is framed edited and scored with a precision and confidence belying its limited resources, and the script is brimming with provocative ideas... Appignanesi is clearly a talent to watch... Press confirms [her] considerable promise.

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**Michael Brooke, SIGHT & SOUND**

A brave debut... Persuasive playing from [Press] and Chalfen... the atmosphere is suitably claustrophobic.

**Derek Malcolm, EVENING STANDARD**

L'oeuvre ne cesse d'intriguer par son atmosphère irréelle et maléfique.

*(The film is ceaselessly intriguing, with its dreamlike and maleficent atmosphere)*

**Agnès Poirier, LIBÉRATION**

La naissance d'un grand cinéaste... quatre vingt minutes bouleversantes qui nous rappellent l'exigence de Krzysztof Kieslowski

**Arno Gaillard, PARISCOPE 2008**

**Agent: Matthew Bates**