

# The Pianist 2: The screenplay adapted from Bei La's novel becomes Ronald Harwood's swan song

UNITED KINGDOM, February 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Recently, Bei La expressed her anticipation in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, for the movie *The Pianist 2*. The screenplay of this movie is adapted by Sir Ronald Harwood from Bei La's novel *The Cursed Piano*. Bei La believes that this film will become an epic film paying tribute not only to the late renowned British playwright but also calling for peace and love of humanity.

On September 8, 2020, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported the passing away of Sir Ronald Harwood, acclaimed contemporary playwright and Oscar winner for Best Adapted Screenplay for *The Pianist*. He passed away at the age of 85.



Ronald Harwood was born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1934. In 1951, he moved at the age of 17 to the United Kingdom to study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. In 1961, he published his first novel and subsequently embarked on a career of writing stage plays and screenplays for film and television. In 2002, Ronald Harwood won the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for *The Pianist*, a film directed by Roman Polanski and starring Adrien Brody. This achievement brought him acclaim in Hollywood. Throughout his life, he contributed significantly to playwriting, with notable works including *Quartet*, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Australia*, among others. In 2013, he adapted Bei La's novel *The Cursed Piano* into a screenplay for a film of the same title, which he referred to as the sister piece to *The Pianist*. At that time, President Ren Zhonglun of Shanghai Film Group and top Hollywood producer Mike Medavoy went to Cannes together. During the film festival's press conference, they announced their collaboration to shoot this film. This film will be jointly produced by three Oscar winners: Ronald Harwood, Barry Levinson (director of *Rain Man*), and Mike Medavoy. They will be responsible for scriptwriting, directing, and serving as producers, respectively. At the press

conference held in Shanghai, Mike Medavoy stated, "No one would refuse such a great film." Unfortunately, later on, due to reasons related to the Shanghai Film Group, the production of this film was halted.

In memory of Ronald Harwood, who passed away during the COVID-19 pandemic, the much-anticipated filming of the sister film to *The Pianist* has once again been scheduled and is eagerly anticipated. It is reported that *The Cursed Piano* is the only remaining screenplay by Ronald Harwood that has not been turned into a film. In homage to him, the script has been renamed *The Pianist 2*. This new title not only aligns with the profound memory of Harwood by his global fans but also reflects the theme consistently presented by the original author Bei La in her literary works, the theme of "peace and love reborn in the midst of war."

Barry Levinson, winner of the Oscar for Best Director for *Rain Man*, once came to Shanghai. In the company of Bei La, he met with one of China's finest actresses, Tang Wei. In his opinion, Tang was the most suitable choice for the female lead. Tang was also Bei La's favorite Chinese actress.

"Ronald Harwood's screenplay depicts scenes set in Shanghai, and Bei La is currently refining and enriching the portrayal of Shanghai residents, local customs, and linguistic expressions. We look forward to the early release of this film; we have been waiting for it for too long," said An Boshun, Bei La's agent.

Bei La's transnational love stories embody a spirit of cosmopolitanism and humanism, which is particularly significant in the current situation. She uses literature to call for peace and freedom," said Professor Wang Ning, Foreign Member of Academia Europaea.

The tentative Chinese title for *The Pianist 2* is *The Shanghai Lover of the Pianist*. The major difference between Ronald Harwood's screenplay and the original work lies in his choice to unfold the story from the perspective of Adam, a Polish Jewish pianist who fled to Shanghai during World War II. In Bei La's novel, the narrative unfolds gradually from the viewpoint of Li Mei, the Shanghai lover of the pianist Adam, who escaped to Shanghai. Both portray epic love stories that transcend the vicissitudes of time and space, race, and life and death.

Bei La's other novel, *Song of Survivors*, which focuses on Shanghai during World War II, has been adapted into a French opera, *Lover of Shanghai*, which will premiere in Paris this year before embarking on a global tour. *Song of Survivors* is known as the Shanghai version of *Gone with the Wind*.

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