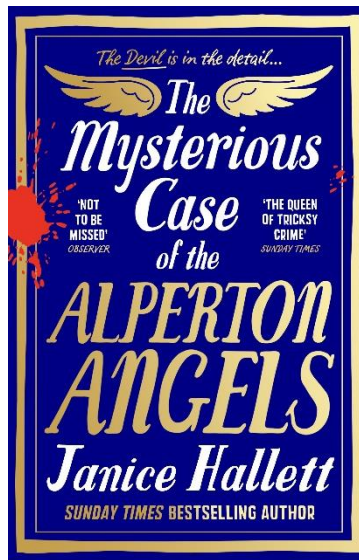


STUDIOCANAL INVESTS IN NEW U.K. START UP PRODUCTION COMPANY

BIRDIE PICTURES

FIRST DRAMA PROJECT WITH FOUNDER PHIL TEMPLE ANNOUNCED



London, Paris Thursday 2 March 2023 - STUDIOCANAL, Europe's leader in production, distribution and international sales of TV series and feature films has made a significant investment in new U.K. production house **BIRDIE PICTURES** announcing the company's first project.

Award-winning Founder and CEO of indie **BIRDIE PICTURES**, Phil Temple (*Code 404*, *Two Weeks to Live*, *The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies*, *The Last Kingdom*, *Stan Lee's Lucky Man*,) was formerly Executive Producer at Kudos, where he was most recently working on *This Town* by Steven Knight for BBC One.

As STUDIOCANAL's investment was announced, Temple also confirmed **BIRDIE PICTURES'** first project, optioning the rights to new novel **THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE ALPERTON ANGELS**, by best-selling author, Janice Hallett (*The Twyford Code*, *The Appeal*). The mystery thriller went straight into the Sunday Times Bestseller list in its first week of release and has been universally praised by critics.

Phil Temple comments: "I am thrilled to join STUDIOCANAL's growing group of creative production companies and very pleased to seal the deal on this truly brilliant book. It is just the twist-laden, fiendishly clever mystery that I have been looking for, and which audiences will be mesmerized by, just like I was when I read it and couldn't speak to anyone for two days as I raced to find out how it ended."

He adds, "Birdie will be a home where writers feel listened to, empowered and supported. We will make quality drama and comedy that audiences will fall in love with, and we also want to have fun doing it."

Francoise Guyonnet, Executive Managing Director TV Series, STUDIOCANAL expands: "We are delighted to announce our investment in BIRDIE PICTURES today and in a UK producer of this calibre. Phil is an extremely talented producer with a real gift for helping to bring a writers' vision to the screen. Phil has worked with all the U.K. broadcasters throughout his rich career and has excellent relationships with writers and talent. Phil shares STUDIOCANAL's global ambition for projects and we know he is going to bring a strong line-up of relatable English language programming to STUDIOCANAL to share with the international market and audiences worldwide."

Janice says "I am beyond thrilled to be working with Phil Temple, Birdie Pictures and STUDIOCANAL to bring *The Mysterious Case of The Alperton Angels* to the screen. Phil's expertise in, and enthusiasm for original storytelling will deliver this vivid and surprising tale to a wide TV audience. I am so proud to be a part of his new company's first screen project."

Fearless and enigmatic true-crime author, Amanda Bailey, is writing a book about the Alperton Angels. Eighteen years ago, this small cult of men convinced two of its young members their newborn baby was the anti-Christ, and that they had a divine purpose to destroy it. Luckily, the teenagers escaped before this ritual sacrifice could take place and all three disappeared into the care system. The cult imploded in a gruesome mass suicide, after which its only surviving member – charismatic leader Gabriel – was imprisoned for life. This explosive story has fueled the imaginations of fiction writers for the best part of two decades.

Amanda is on the case now because the baby has just turned 18 and, as an adult, can finally be interviewed. A scoop like that could revive Bailey's flagging career. However, her old nemesis - rival author Oliver Menzies – is also looking for the baby. Forced to collaborate, they discover that what everyone thinks they know about the Alperton Angels is wrong... the truth is much darker and stranger than anyone ever imagined.

Janice Hallett is the author of three best-selling novels. Her debut, *The Appeal*, was awarded the CWA Debut Dagger of 2021 and was a Sunday Times' Bestseller, Waterstones' Thriller of the Month and Sunday Times' Crime Book of the Month. Her second novel *The Twyford Code* was a Sunday Times' Bestseller and a Financial Times book of the year. *The Mysterious Case of the Alperton Angels* was an instant Times and Sunday Times bestseller on its launch in January 2023.

Janice is a former magazine editor, award-winning journalist, and government communications writer. As a playwright and screenwriter, she penned the feminist Shakespearean stage comedy *NetherBard* and co-wrote the feature film *Retreat*.

More about BIRDIE PICTURES

Birdie Pictures was set up by Phil Temple in September 2022 with backing from STUDIOCANAL. A television company specializing in scripted drama and comedy, Birdie's aim is to produce high-end, mainstream, and memorable TV for audiences in the UK and beyond, where talent always come first. From his very first job at Independent Talent, Phil has been supporting a huge range of writers and sharing their passion to tell entertaining stories with wit, a heart, and a message, and this remains the key ethos of Birdie Pictures. Whilst working at some of the UK's biggest production companies including Carnival/NBC Universal, BBC Drama Studios and Kudos, Phil developed and produced shows by many of the country's best writers. His credits include popular and award winning shows such as THE LAST KINGDOM, FIVE DAUGHTERS, CODE 404, TWO WEEKS TO LIVE, LADYBABY, THE LOST HONOUR OF CHRISTOPHER JEFFERIES and STAN LEE'S LUCKY MAN. Through its partnership with STUDIOCANAL, Birdie Pictures will become a vital and inclusive producer of quality television in the UK, and a home where key creative talent, from any background, can create their best work.