

# Ruth Negga: The 'Loving' Interview

With Kam Williams  
For The Skanner News

**R**uth Negga was born in Addis Ababa on Jan. 7, 1982 to an Irish mother and Ethiopian father. An only child, Ruth was raised in Limerick, Ireland from the age of 4, and attended Trinity College in Dublin where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Acting.

Her body of work spans award-winning theatre productions, big-screen dramas, independent films, and innovative television series. She won the Irish Film & Television Academy (IFTA) Award for Best Actress for her portrayal of legendary singer Shirley Bassey in the telefilm Shirley.

lin's Abbey Theatre. Her extensive theatre credits include Duck at London's Royal Court Theatre, for which she received an Olivier Award nomination; "Playboy of the Western World," at The Old Vic; "Hamlet," at the National Theatre; "Phaedra," also at the National Theatre, for which was honored with the Ian Charleson Award, given annually to young classical stage actors in Britain; "Oedipus Loves You," at the Peter Pan Theatre; "Lay Me Down Softly," "The Crucible," "The Bacchae," and "Burial at Thebes," all at the Abbey Theatre; and, at the Project Theatre, "Titus Andronicus," for which she received the Irish Times Award for Best Actress.

drama about the couple who took their challenge of the Commonwealth of Virginia's law against interracial marriage all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Kam Williams:** Hi Ruth. Thanks for the interview.

**Ruth Negga:** Oh, hi Kam. How are you?

**KW:** Great! And you?

**RN:** I'm not bad. Not too bad at all, now.

**KW:** I loved the film and both your and Joel Edgerton's performances.

**RN:** Oh, thank you!

**KW:** What interested you in Loving?

**RN:** That's a good question. Let me try to give

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Stateside, she joined the Marvel Universe as Raina on the hit show "Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.," for which she received an IFTA Award nomination. Currently, she co-stars as Tulip O'Hare opposite Dominic Cooper in the AMC series "Preacher," an adaptation of the DC Comics graphic novel of the same name.

Ruth made her stage debut in "Lolita" at Dub-

Ruth was named a Shooting Star at the 2006 Berlin International Film Festival. On the big screen, she's been featured in "World War Z"; "The Samaritan," alongside Samuel L. Jackson; "Breakfast on Pluto," for which she received an IFTA Award nomination; "Of Mind and Music"; "Noble"; "Jimi: All Is by My Side"; "Warcraft"; and in the title role of Iona.

Here, Ruth talks about her latest outing as Mildred Loving in "Loving," the biopic/courtroom

you a concise answer. I basically fell in love with Mildred and Richard [Loving, the main characters]. I thought they were an extraordinary couple whose love just seemed so apparent. To be honest with you, Jeff's [writer/director Jeff Nichols] script was such a beautiful reflection of these human beings that I really wanted to spend time with them.

**KW:** What convinced Jeff Nichols to trust such an American story in the



Ruth Negga in 'Loving'

hands of leads from Australia and from Ireland by way of Ethiopia? Had you ever heard of the Supreme Court case, Loving v. Virginia?

**RN:** Yes, but I don't think that being an expert in the Loving case is what would qualify me to play Mildred. Do you know what I mean?

**KW:** Yes.

**RN:** I think my job is to be a chameleon and to disappear, so I don't think my being Irish and

Ethiopian should prohibit me from playing Mildred at all. I believe that what should matter more is my skill set and my willingness to work.

**KW:** This is very intimate film, with a quiet chemistry generated between you and Joel via looks and tender touches. Had you two worked together before? How long did you get to rehearse with each other?

**RN:** Well, Jeff doesn't rehearse. He casts quite instinctively. In this case,

I think he knew he was casting two actors who would be willing to work very hard. I did audition for him, and I think he was impressed with the extent to which I'd prepared for that. The thing is, he wanted people who could embody this couple, not mimic them. He'd previously worked with Joel in "Midnight Special," so he'd already witnessed Joel's ability to disappear into a char-

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## Movies

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ic violence) Kim Coates plays the title character in this adaptation of the sci-fi comic book about a reincarnated cop who repeatedly returns from the dead every time he gets shot to patrol the mean streets of L.A. With Tyler Ross, Lauren Luna Velez and Alison Lohman.

**A Street Cat Named Bob** (Unrated) Heart-warming biopic recounting the real-life story of a recovering drug addict (Luke Treadaway) whose life was transformed by a stray cat that crossed his path. With Ruta Gedminas, Joanne Froggatt, Anthony Head and Darren Evans.

**The Take** (R for violence, profanity and nudity) Action thriller about a pickpocket (Richard Madden) recruited by a CIA agent (Idris Elba) to help thwart a terrorist mission. Charlotte Le Bon, Kelly Reilly and Jose Garcia. (In English and French with subtitles)

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