

Film Review: Meryl Streep Accentuates Margaret Thatcher in ‘The Iron Lady’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 14, 2012 - 4:12am

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CHICAGO – It would be a cheap jab to say that “The Iron Lady” is a drag version of “J. Edgar,” and also redundant (hyy-ooh). Meryl Streep takes on the role of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, with a dreamy and vague interpretation of the PM’s life that at times feels like it’s told through the wrong end of a telescope.



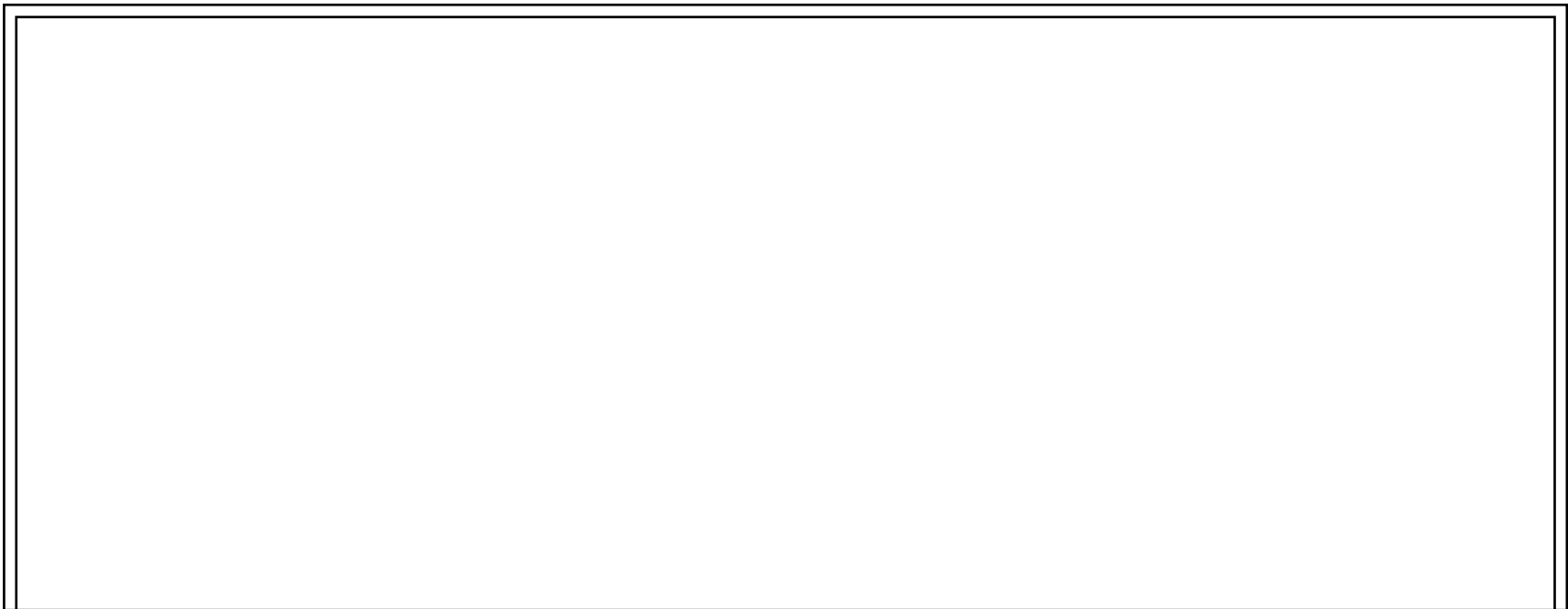
Encompassing a life such as Margaret Thatcher is a daunting task – she was as much reviled as lionized in her years in leadership. She came from very humble roots, and was a woman gaining power during an era where that wasn’t an easy thing to do. Screenwriter Abi Morgan (co-writer of the recent “Shame”) and director Phyllida Lloyd (“Mamma Mia!”) tackle the biography with a cinematic approach – depicting the still living Thatcher as a dementia-oriented old woman dreaming of and conjuring her own past. This technique yields some interesting passages, but is an incomplete version of her overall history.

Margaret Thatcher (Meryl Streep) is in retirement, but still relies on the rock steadiness of her deceased husband Denis (Jim Broadbent) to get her through the day. Once one of the most powerful leaders of the Western World as British Prime Minister, during a significant transition period in the UK, Thatcher now assesses her life through a series of memories and dreams. She is taken care of by her daughter Carol (Olivia Colman), and confounded by these interpretations of the past.

Margaret Roberts (portrayed in her youth by Alexandra Roach) was a shopkeeper’s daughter, who was inspired by her the leadership rhetoric of her father (Iain Glen). An overachiever, she has ahead-of-her-time notions for her role in society, a view shared by her eventual husband Denis Thatcher (Harry Lloyd, in youth). After losing her first election, she is driven to conquer the rough-and-tumble of the British political system, eventually being named Prime Minister in 1979. Like her American counterpart Ronald Reagan, she sought to narrow the role of government at home and fight the perceived enemies abroad. She survives intense criticism and an assassination attempt to establish an unforgettable legacy.

“The Iron Lady” opens everywhere on January 13th. Featuring Meryl Streep, Jim Broadbent, Alexandra Roach, Iain Glen, Olivia Colman and Harry Lloyd. Screenplay by Abi Morgan. Directed by Phyllida Lloyd. Rated “PG-13”

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Jim Broadbent (Denis Thatcher) and Meryl Streep (Margaret Thatcher) in ‘Iron Lady’

Photo credit: Alex Bailey for Pathe Productions/The Weinstein Company



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