

Five Questions for Sean Mathias

April 1, 2013 By [David Mixner](#)



Sean Mathias (R) chatting with Breakfast at Tiffanys stars Cory Michael Smith and Emila Clark

Actor, writer and director Sean Mathias is as close to a Renaissance man as you will find.

The talented British import to Broadway is directing the new Broadway version of [Breakfast at Tiffany's](#). The play, based on the Truman Capote book, has just opened at the Cort Theatre (at 138 West 48th Street).

Mathias was selected by the Sunday Independent as one of the most influential LGBT people in Britain. The talented man worked closely with Sir Ian McKellen and was also his partner in life for a number of years.

While having acted in several plays in the West End of London, it is as a director that Mathias has achieved the most acclaim.

Many people around the globe will best know him for brilliant direction of the film [Bent](#). Both the stage version and film about homosexual inmates in a Nazi Concentration Camp moved people to tears.

When he directed a revival of Bent by Martin Sherman as a benefit, the production became legendary in the theater community. The play that night starred Sir Ian McKellen, Ian Charleson and Ralph Fiennes. The young handsome Charleson, who was the star of Chariots of Fire, was dying of AIDS.

The film version starred Jude Law, Rupert Graves, Clive Owen, Sir Ian McKellen, Mick Jagger and Lothaire Bluteau. The Cannes Film Festival bestowed the "Prix de la Jeunesse."

The credits for Mathias role as director are international. There is hardly a major star of the stage that has not clamor to work with him. Among those who he has directed on stage are Sir Ian McKellen, Jude Law, Judi Dench, Rupert Graves, Kathleen Turner, Cynthia Nixon, Billy Crudup, Alan Rickman, Helen Mirren and so many others.

Mathias has been honored for his work both with nominations and awards. Born in Wales, he lived in South Africa for awhile but has returned home to his native United Kingdom.

Here are Five Questions For.....Sean Mathias:

1. When did you come 'out' and what was that experience for you?

When I wrote the screenplay for the BBC film [The Lost Language of Cranes](#). It is a story about coming out. In order to promote it in the press, I described how I had come out at home. It is never easy.

2. You have been an actor, writer and director. Which one has given you the greatest satisfaction and why?

They have all fed each other. Romantically I am a writer but pragmatically I am a director.

3. You directed the film and stage versions of 'Bent' to great acclaim. There was a famous benefit performance in 1989 for Stonewall in London. The famous actor Ian Charleson (Chariots of Fire) was in that production and in the last stages of HIV/AIDS. What was it like that night to see his courage on the stage? Can you share a little about that legendary night?

Ian was a very close friend and I knew he was dying of AIDS. He played Greta, the Drag Queen, and had to change from female costume to male costume on stage. I placed screens all around the set to give him privacy. His body was covered with KS but his spirit was so beautiful, brave and true. It was one of the most memorable experiences of my life.



Ian Charleson

4. What project would you give your left arm to direct?

I am hanging on to my left arm.

5. What is the most embarrassing or funny event to happen to you as a director or actor?

When I made my debut in Hair on tour and they inserted a naked bath scene to be extra provocative, and I was the boy in the bath being bathed by two girls. We played my home town and my parents came to see, and my mother yelled out "Oh no, I can see his dick-dock!"