

= Meryl Streep =

Mary Louise " Meryl " Streep ( born June 22 , 1949 ) is an American actress . Cited in the media as the " best actress of her generation " , Streep is particularly known for her versatility in her roles , transformation into the characters she plays , and her accent adaptation . She made her professional stage debut in *The Playboy of Seville* in 1971 , and went on to receive a 1976 Tony Award nomination for Best Featured Actress in a Play for *A Memory of Two Mondays / 27 Wagons Full of Cotton* . She made her screen debut in the 1977 television film *The Deadliest Season* , and made her film debut later that same year in *Julia* . In 1978 , she won an Emmy Award for her role in the miniseries *Holocaust* , and received her first Academy Award nomination for *The Deer Hunter* . Nominated for 19 Academy Awards in total , Streep has more nominations than any other actor or actress in history ; she won Best Supporting Actress for *Kramer vs. Kramer* ( 1979 ) , and Best Actress for *Sophie 's Choice* ( 1982 ) and for *The Iron Lady* ( 2011 ) .

Streep is one of only six actors to have won three or more competitive Academy Awards for acting . Her other nominated roles are *The French Lieutenant 's Woman* ( 1981 ) , *Silkwood* ( 1983 ) , *Out of Africa* ( 1985 ) , *Ironweed* ( 1987 ) , *Evil Angels* ( 1988 ) , *Postcards from the Edge* ( 1990 ) , *The Bridges of Madison County* ( 1995 ) , *One True Thing* ( 1998 ) , *Music of the Heart* ( 1999 ) , *Adaptation* ( 2002 ) , *The Devil Wears Prada* ( 2006 ) , *Doubt* ( 2008 ) , *Julie & Julia* ( 2009 ) , *August : Osage County* ( 2013 ) , and *Into the Woods* ( 2014 ) . She returned to the stage for the first time in over 20 years in The Public Theater 's 2001 revival of *The Seagull* , won a second Emmy Award in 2004 for the HBO miniseries *Angels in America* ( 2003 ) , and starred in the Public Theater 's 2006 production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* .

Streep has also received 29 Golden Globe nominations , winning eight ? more nominations , and more competitive ( non @-@ honorary ) wins than any other actor ( male or female ) in the history of the award . Her work has also earned her two Screen Actors Guild Awards , a Cannes Film Festival award , five New York Film Critics Circle Awards , two BAFTA awards , two Australian Film Institute awards , five Grammy Award nominations , and five Drama Desk Award nominations , among several others . She was awarded the AFI Life Achievement Award in 2004 and the Kennedy Center Honor in 2011 for her contribution to American culture through performing arts . President Barack Obama awarded her the 2010 National Medal of Arts and in 2014 the Presidential Medal of Freedom . In 2003 , the government of France made her a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters .

= = Early life = =

Mary Louise Streep was born on June 22 , 1949 in Summit , New Jersey , to Mary Wolf Wilkinson ( 1915 ? 2001 ) , a commercial artist and art editor ; and Harry William Streep Jr . ( 1910 ? 2003 ) , a pharmaceutical executive . The eldest child , she has two younger brothers , Dana David and Harry William III .

Streep 's father was of German and Swiss ancestry . Her father 's lineage traces back to Loffenau , Germany , from where her second great @-@ grandfather , Gottfried Streeb , emigrated to the United States , and where one of her ancestors served as mayor ( the surname was later changed to " Streep " ) . Another line of her father 's family was from Giswil , Switzerland . Her mother had English , German , and Irish ancestry . Some of Streep 's maternal ancestors lived in Pennsylvania and Rhode Island and were descended from 17th @-@ century immigrants from England . Her eighth great @-@ grandfather , Lawrence Wilkinson , was one of the first Europeans to settle in Rhode Island . Streep is also a distant relative of William Penn , the founder of Pennsylvania ; records show that her family is among the first purchasers of land in the state . Streep 's maternal great @-@ great @-@ grandparents , Manus McFadden and Grace Strain , the namesake of Streep 's second daughter , were natives of the Horn Head district of Dunfanaghy , Ireland .

Streep 's mother , whom she has compared in both appearance and manner to Dame Judi Dench , strongly encouraged her daughter and instilled confidence in her from a very young age . Streep has said : " She was a mentor because she said to me , ' Meryl , you 're capable . You 're so great . '

She was saying , ' You can do whatever you put your mind to . If you 're lazy , you 're not going to get it done . But if you put your mind to it , you can do anything . ' And I believed her . " Although Streep was naturally more introverted than her mother , at times when she later needed an injection of confidence in adulthood she would consult her mother , asking her for advice . Streep was raised as a Presbyterian in Bernardsville , New Jersey , where she attended Bernards High School . Author Karina Longworth described her as a " gawky kid with glasses and frizzy hair " , yet noted that she liked to show off in front of the camera in family home videos from a young age . At the age of 12 , Streep was selected to sing at a school recital , which led to her having opera lessons from Estelle Liebling . However , despite her talent , she remarked that " I was singing something I didn 't feel and understand . That was an important lesson ? not to do that . To find the thing that I could feel through " . She quit after four years . Streep had many Catholic school friends , and regularly attended mass .

Although in high school Streep appeared in numerous school plays , she was uninterested in serious theatre until acting in the play Miss Julie at Vassar College in 1969 , in which she gained attention across the campus . Vassar drama professor Clinton J Atkinson noted , " I don 't think anyone ever taught Meryl acting . She really taught herself " . Streep demonstrated an early ability to mimic accents and to quickly memorize her lines . She received her BA cum laude from the college in 1971 , before applying for an MFA from the Yale School of Drama . At Yale she supplemented her course fees by waitressing and typing , and appeared in over a dozen stage productions a year , to the point that she became overworked , developing ulcers . She contemplated quitting acting and switching to study law . Streep played a variety of roles onstage , from Helena in A Midsummer Night 's Dream to an 80 @-@ year @-@ old woman in a wheelchair in a comedy written by then @-@ unknown playwrights Christopher Durang and Albert Innaurato . One of her teachers was Robert Lewis , one of the co @-@ founders of the Actors Studio . Streep disapproved of some of the acting exercises she was asked to do , remarking that the professors " delved into personal lives in a way I find obnoxious " . She received her MFA from Yale in 1975 . Streep also enrolled as a visiting student at Dartmouth College in the fall of 1970 , and received an Honorary Doctor of Arts degree from the college in 1981 .

= = Career = =

= = = 1970s = = =

= = = Theater and film debut = = =

Streep moved to New York City in 1975 , and was cast by Joseph Papp in a production of Trelawny of the Wells at the Public Theater , opposite Mandy Patinkin and John Lithgow . She went on to appear in five more roles in her first year in New York , including in Papp 's New York Shakespeare Festival productions of Henry V , The Taming of the Shrew with Raúl Juliá , and Measure for Measure opposite Sam Waterston and John Cazale . She entered into a relationship with Cazale at this time , and resided with him until his death three years later . She starred in the musical Happy End on Broadway , and won an Obie for her performance in the off @-@ Broadway play Alice at the Palace .

Although she had not set out for a film career , Robert De Niro 's performance in Taxi Driver ( 1976 ) had a profound impact on young Streep , who said to herself , " that 's the kind of actor I want to be when I grow up " . Streep began auditioning for film roles , and underwent an unsuccessful audition for the lead role in Dino De Laurentiis 's King Kong . Laurentiis stated in Italian to his son : " This is so ugly . Why did you bring me this " . Unknown to Laurentiis , Streep understood Italian and she remarked , " I 'm very sorry that I 'm not as beautiful as I should be but , you know ? this is it . This is what you get " . She continued to work on Broadway , appearing in the 1976 double bill of Tennessee Williams ' 27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Arthur Miller 's A Memory of Two Mondays . For

the former , she received a Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play nomination . Streep 's other Broadway credits include Anton Chekhov 's The Cherry Orchard and the Bertolt Brecht @-@ Kurt Weill musical Happy End , in which she had originally appeared off @-@ Broadway at the Chelsea Theater Center . She received Drama Desk Award nominations for both productions .

Streep 's first feature film role came opposite Jane Fonda in the 1977 film Julia , in which she had a small role during a flashback sequence . Most of her scenes were edited out , but the brief time on screen horrified the actress : " I had a bad wig and they took the words from the scene I shot with Jane and put them in my mouth in a different scene . I thought , I 've made a terrible mistake , no more movies . I hate this business " . However , Streep cites Fonda as having a lasting influence on her as an actress , and has credited her as " open [ ing ] probably more doors than I probably even know about " .

= = = = Breakthrough = = = =

Robert De Niro , who had spotted Streep in her stage production of The Cherry Orchard , suggested that she play the role of his girlfriend in the war film The Deer Hunter ( 1978 ) . Cazale , who had been diagnosed with lung cancer , was also cast in the film , and Streep took on the role of a " vague , stock girlfriend " to remain with Cazale for the duration of filming . Longworth notes that Streep " made a case for female empowerment by playing a woman to whom empowerment was a foreign concept ? a normal lady from an average American small town , for whom subservience was the only thing she knew " . Pauline Kael , who would later become a strong critic of Streep 's , remarked that Streep was a " real beauty " who brought much freshness to the film with her performance . The film 's success exposed Streep to a wider audience and earned her a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress .

In the 1978 miniseries Holocaust , Streep played the leading role of a German woman married to a Jewish artist in Nazi era Germany . She found the material to be " unrelentingly noble " and professed to have taken on the role for financial gain . Streep travelled to Germany and Austria for filming while Cazale remained in New York . Upon her return , Streep found that Cazale 's illness had progressed , and she nursed him until his death on March 12 , 1978 . With an estimated audience of 109 million , Holocaust brought a wider degree of public recognition to Streep , who found herself " on the verge of national visibility " . She won the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Miniseries or a Movie for her performance . Despite the awards success , Streep was still not enthusiastic towards her film career and preferred acting on stage .

Hoping to divert herself from the grief of Cazale 's death , Streep accepted a role in The Seduction of Joe Tynan ( 1979 ) as the chirpy love interest of Alan Alda , later commenting that she played it on " automatic pilot " . She performed the role of Katherine in The Taming of the Shrew for Shakespeare in the Park , and also played a supporting role in Manhattan ( 1979 ) for Woody Allen . Streep later said that Allen did not provide her with a complete script , giving her only the six pages of her own scenes , and did not permit her to improvise a word of her dialogue . In the drama Kramer vs. Kramer , Streep was cast opposite Dustin Hoffman as an unhappily married woman who abandons her husband and child . Streep thought that the script portrayed the female character as " too evil " and insisted that it was not representative of real women who faced marriage breakdown and child custody battles . The makers agreed with her , and the script was revised . In preparing for the part , Streep spoke to her own mother about her life as a wife with a career , and frequented the Upper East Side neighborhood in which the film was set , watching the interactions between parents and children . The director Robert Benton allowed Streep to write her own dialogue in two key scenes , despite some objection from Hoffman , who " hated her guts " . Jaffee and Hoffman later spoke of Streep 's tirelessness , with Hoffman commenting , " She 's extraordinarily hardworking , to the extent that she 's obsessive . I think that she thinks about nothing else but what she 's doing . " The film was controversial among feminists , but it was a role which film critic Stephen Farber believed displayed Streep 's " own emotional intensity " , writing that she was one of the " rare performers who can imbue the most routine moments with a hint of mystery " .

For Kramer vs. Kramer , Streep won both the Academy Award and Golden Globe Award for Best

Supporting Actress . She was also awarded the Los Angeles Film Critics Association Award for Best Supporting Actress , National Board of Review Award for Best Supporting Actress and National Society of Film Critics Award for Best Supporting Actress for her collective work in her three film releases of 1979 . Both The Deer Hunter and Kramer vs. Kramer were major commercial successes and were the consecutive winners of the Academy Award for Best Picture .

== 1980s ==

=== Rise to stardom ===

In 1979 , Streep began workshopping Alice in Concert , a musical version of Alice 's Adventures in Wonderland , with writer and composer Elizabeth Swados and director Joseph Papp ; the show was put on at New York 's Public Theater from December 1980 . Frank Rich of The New York Times referred to Streep as the " one wonder " of the production , but questioned why she had devoted so much energy to it . By 1980 , Streep had progressed to leading roles in films . She was featured on the cover of Newsweek magazine with the headline " A Star for the 80s " , with Jack Kroll commenting , " There 's a sense of mystery in her acting ; she doesn 't simply imitate ( although she 's a great mimic in private ) . She transmits a sense of danger , a primal unease lying just below the surface of normal behavior " . Streep denounced the fervent media coverage of her at this time as " excessive hype " .

The story within a story drama The French Lieutenant 's Woman ( 1981 ) was Streep 's first leading role . The film paired Streep with Jeremy Irons as contemporary actors , telling their modern story , as well as the Victorian era drama they were performing . Streep perfected an English accent for the part , but considered herself a misfit for the role : " I couldn 't help wishing that I was more beautiful " . A New York Magazine article commented that , while many female stars of the past had cultivated a singular identity in their films , Streep was a " chameleon " , willing to play any type of role . Streep was awarded a BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role for her work . The following year , she reunited with Robert Benton for the psychological thriller , Still of the Night ( 1982 ) , co -starring Roy Scheider and Jessica Tandy . Vincent Canby , writing for The New York Times , noted that the film was an homage to the works of Alfred Hitchcock , but that one of its main weaknesses was a lack of chemistry between Streep and Scheider , concluding that Streep " is stunning , but she 's not on screen anywhere near long enough " .

Greater success came later in 1982 , when Streep starred in the drama Sophie 's Choice ( 1982 ) , portraying a Polish holocaust survivor caught in a love triangle between a young naive writer ( Peter MacNicol ) and a Jewish intellectual ( Kevin Kline ) . Streep 's emotional dramatic performance and her apparent mastery of a Polish accent drew praise . William Styron wrote the novel with Ursula Andress in mind for the role of Sophie , but Streep was determined to get the role . She obtained a bootlegged copy of the script , and threw herself on the ground begging the director Alan J. Pakula to give her the role . Streep filmed the " choice " scene in one take and refused to do it again , finding it extremely painful and emotionally exhausting . Emma Brockes of The Guardian believes the scene in which Streep is ordered by an SS guard at Auschwitz to choose which one of her two children would be gassed and which would proceed to the labor camp , is her most famous scene , remarking : " It 's classic Streep , the kind of scene that makes your scalp tighten , but defter in a way is her handling of smaller , harder @-@ to @-@ grasp emotions " . Among several notable acting awards , Streep won the Academy Award for Best Actress for her performance , and her characterization was voted the third greatest movie performance of all time by Premiere magazine . Roger Ebert said of her delivery , " Streep plays the Brooklyn scenes with an enchanting Polish @-@ American accent ( she has the first accent I 've ever wanted to hug ) , and she plays the flashbacks in subtitled German and Polish . There is hardly an emotion that Streep doesn 't touch in this movie , and yet we 're never aware of her straining . This is one of the most astonishing and yet one of the most unaffected and natural performances I can imagine . " Pauline Kael on the contrary called the film an " infuriatingly bad movie " and thought that Streep " decorporealizes " herself ,

which she believed explained why her movie heroines " don 't seem to be full characters , and why there are no incidental joys to be had from watching her " .

The year 1983 saw Streep play her first non @-@ fictional character , the nuclear whistleblower and labor union activist Karen Silkwood who died in a suspicious car accident while investigating alleged wrongdoing at the Kerr @-@ McGee plutonium plant , in Mike Nichols 's biographical film Silkwood . Streep felt a personal connection to Silkwood , and in preparation she met with people close to the woman , and in doing so realized that each person saw a different aspect of her personality . She said , " I didn 't try to turn myself into Karen . I just tried to look at what she did . I put together every piece of information I could find about her ... What I finally did was look at the events in her life , and try to understand her from the inside . " Jack Kroll of Newsweek considered Streep 's characterization to have been " brilliant " , while Silkwood 's boyfriend Drew Stephens expressed approval in that Streep had played Karen as a human being rather than a myth , despite Karen 's father Bill thinking that Streep and the film had dumbbed his daughter down . Pauline Kael believed that Streep had been miscast . Streep next played opposite Robert De Niro in the romance Falling in Love ( 1984 ) , which was poorly @-@ received , and portrayed a fighter for the French Resistance during World War II in the British drama Plenty ( 1985 ) . For the latter , Roger Ebert wrote that she conveyed " great subtlety ; it is hard to play an unbalanced , neurotic , self @-@ destructive woman , and do it with such gentleness and charm ... Streep creates a whole character around a woman who could have simply been a catalogue of symptoms . " In 2008 , Molly Haskell praised Streep 's performance in Plenty , believing it to be " one of Streep 's most difficult and ambiguous " films and " most feminist " role .

== == Out of Africa and backlash == ==

Longworth considers Streep 's next release , Out of Africa ( 1985 ) , to have established her as a Hollywood superstar . In the film , Streep starred as the Danish writer Karen Blixen opposite Robert Redford 's Denys Finch Hatton . Director Sydney Pollack was initially dubious about Streep in the role as he did not think she was sexy enough , and had considered Jane Seymour for the part . Pollack recalls that Streep impressed him in a different way : " She was so direct , so honest , so without bullshit . There was no shielding between her and me . " Streep and Pollack often clashed during the 101 @-@ day shoot in Kenya , particularly over Blixen 's voice . Streep had spent much time listening to tapes of Blixen and began speaking in an old @-@ fashioned and aristocratic fashion , which Pollack thought excessive . A significant commercial and critical success , the film earned Streep another Academy Award nomination for Best Actress , also winning Best Picture . Critic Stanley Kaufmann wrote , " Meryl Streep is back in top form . This means her performance in Out of Africa is at the highest level of acting in film today " .

Longworth notes that the dramatic success of Out of Africa led to a backlash of critical opinion against Streep in the years that followed , especially as she was now demanding \$ 4 million a picture . Unlike other stars at the time such as Sylvester Stallone and Tom Cruise , Streep " never seemed to play herself " , and certain critics felt her technical finesse led people to literally see her acting . Her next films did not appeal to a wide audience ; she co @-@ starred with Jack Nicholson in the dramas Heartburn ( 1986 ) and Ironweed ( 1987 ) , in which she sang onscreen for the first time since the television movie , Secret Service ( 1977 ) . In Evil Angels ( 1988 ) , she played Lindy Chamberlain , an Australian woman who had been convicted of the murder of her infant daughter despite claiming that the baby had been taken by a dingo . Filmed in Australia , Streep won the Australian Film Institute Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role , a Best Actress at the Cannes Film Festival , and the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress . Streep has said of perfecting the Australian accent in the film : " I had to study a little bit for Australian because it 's not dissimilar [ to American ] , so it 's like coming from Italian to Spanish . You get a little mixed up " . Vincent Canby of The New York Times referred it to her performance as " another stunning performance " , played with " the kind of virtuosity that seems to redefine the possibilities of screen acting " .

In 1989 , Streep lobbied to play the lead role in Oliver Stone 's adaption of the play Evita , but two

months before filming was due to commence she dropped out , citing " exhaustion " initially , although it was later revealed that there was a dispute over her salary . By the end of the decade , Streep actively looked to star in a comedy . She found the role in *She @-@ Devil* ( 1989 ) , a satire that parodied Hollywood 's obsession with beauty and cosmetic surgery , in which she played a glamorous writer . Though not a success , Richard Corliss of *Time* wrote that Streep was the " one reason " to see the film and observed that it marked a departure from the dramatic roles she was known to play . Reacting to her string of poorly received films , Streep said : " Audiences are shrinking ; as the marketing strategy defines more and more narrowly who they want to reach ? males from 16 to 25 ? it 's become a chicken @-@ and @-@ egg syndrome . Which came first ? First they release all these summer movies , then do a demographic survey of who 's going to see them " .

= = = 1990s = = =

= = = = Unsuccessful comedies and *The Bridges of Madison County* = = = =

Biographer Karen Hollinger described the early 1990s as a downturn in the popularity of Streep 's films , attributing this partly to a critical perception that her comedies had been an attempt to convey a lighter image following several serious but commercially unsuccessful dramas , and more significantly to the lack of options available to an actress in her forties . Streep commented that she had limited her options by her preference to work in Los Angeles , close to her family , a situation that she had anticipated in a 1981 interview when she commented , " By the time an actress hits her mid @-@ forties , no one 's interested in her anymore . And if you want to fit a couple of babies into that schedule as well , you 've got to pick your parts with great care . " At the Screen Actor 's Guild National Women 's Conference in 1990 , Streep keynoted the first national event , emphasizing the decline in women 's work opportunities , pay parity , and role models within the film industry . She criticized the film industry for downplaying the importance of women both on screen and off .

After roles in the comedy @-@ drama *Postcards from the Edge* ( 1990 ) and the comedy @-@ fantasy *Defending Your Life* ( 1991 ) , Streep starred with Goldie Hawn in farcical black comedy , *Death Becomes Her* ( 1992 ) , with Bruce Willis as their co @-@ star . Streep persuaded writer David Koepp to rewrite several of the scenes , particularly the one in which her character has an affair with a younger man , which she believed was " unrealistically male " in its conception . The seven @-@ month shoot was the longest of Streep 's career , during which she got into character by " thinking about being slightly pissed off all of the time " . Due to Streep 's allergies to numerous cosmetics , special prosthetics had to be designed to age her by ten years to look 54 , although Streep believed that they made her look nearer 70 . Longworth considers *Death Becomes Her* to have been " the most physical performance Streep had yet committed to screen , all broad weeping , smirking , and eye @-@ rolling " . Although it was a commercial success , earning \$ 15 @. @ 1 million in just five days , Streep 's contribution to comedy was generally not taken well by critics . *Time* 's Richard Corliss wrote approvingly of Streep 's " wicked @-@ witch routine " but dismissed the film as " *She @-@ Devil* with a make @-@ over " and one which " hates women " .

In 1993 , Streep appeared with Jeremy Irons , Glenn Close and Winona Ryder in *The House of the Spirits* , set during the military dictatorship of Chile . The film was not well received by critics . Anthony Lane of *The New Yorker* wrote : " This is really quite an achievement . It brings together Jeremy Irons , Meryl Streep , Winona Ryder , Antonio Banderas , and Vanessa Redgrave and insures that , without exception , they all give their worst performances ever " . The following year , Streep featured in *The River Wild* , as the mother of children on a whitewater rafting trip who encounter two violent criminals ( Kevin Bacon and John C. Reilly ) in the wilderness . Though critical reaction was generally mixed , Peter Travers of *Rolling Stone* found her to be " strong , sassy and looser than she has ever been onscreen " .

Streep 's most successful film of the decade came in the 1995 romance *The Bridges of Madison County* from director Clint Eastwood , who adapted the film from Robert James Waller 's novel of the

same name . It relates the story of Robert Kincaid ( Eastwood ) , a photographer working for National Geographic , who has a love affair with a middle @-@ aged Italian farm wife in Iowa named Francesca ( Streep ) . Though Streep disliked the novel it was based on , she found the script to be a special opportunity for an actress her age . She gained weight for the part , and dressed differently from the character in the book to emulate voluptuous Italian film stars such as Sophia Loren . Both Loren and Anna Magnani were an influence in her portrayal , and Streep viewed Pier Paolo Passolini 's Mamma Roma ( 1962 ) prior to filming . The film was a box office hit and grossed over \$ 70 million in the United States . The film , unlike the novel , was warmly received by critics . Janet Maslin of The New York Times wrote that Eastwood had managed to create " a moving , elegiac love story at the heart of Mr. Waller 's self @-@ congratulatory overkill " , while Joe Morgenstern of The Wall Street Journal described it as " one of the most pleasurable films in recent memory " . Longworth believes that Streep 's performance was " crucial to transforming what could have been a weak soap opera into a vibrant work of historical fiction implicitly critiquing postwar America 's stifling culture of domesticity " . She considers it to have been the role in which Streep became " arguably the first middle @-@ aged actress to be taken seriously by Hollywood as a romantic heroine " .

= = = = Late 1990s = = = =

In 1996 , Streep played the estranged sister of Bessie ( Diane Keaton ) , a woman battling leukemia , in Marvin 's Room , an adaptation of the play by Scott McPherson . Streep recommended Keaton for the role . The film also starred a young Leonardo DiCaprio as Streep 's character 's rebellious son . Roger Ebert stated that " Streep and Keaton , in their different styles , find ways to make Lee and Bessie into much more than the expression of their problems . " The film was critically acclaimed , and Streep earned another Golden Globe nomination for her performance .

In 1998 , Streep played an Irishwoman opposite Michael Gambon and Catherine McCormack in Pat O 'Connor 's Dancing at Lughnasa , which was entered into the Venice Film Festival of 1998 . Janet Maslin of The New York Times remarked that " Meryl Streep has made many a grand acting gesture in her career , but the way she simply peers out a window in Dancing at Lughnasa ranks with the best . Everything the viewer need know about Kate Mundy , the woman she plays here , is written on that prim , lonely face and its flabbergasted gaze " . Later that year , Streep played a cancer sufferer caught in a difficult family situation , playing the mother of Renée Zellweger and wife of William Hurt in One True Thing . The film was well received by critics . Mick LaSalle in the San Francisco Chronicle declared , " After ' One True Thing ' , critics who persist in the fiction that Streep is a cold and technical actress will need to get their heads examined . She is so instinctive and natural ? so thoroughly in the moment and operating on flights of inspiration ? that she 's able to give us a woman who 's at once wildly idiosyncratic and utterly believable . " Los Angeles Times film critic Kenneth Turan noted that Streep 's role " is one of the least self @-@ consciously dramatic and surface showy of her career , but that she " adds a level of honesty and reality that makes [ her performance ] one of her most moving . "

In 1999 , Streep portrayed Roberta Guaspari , a real @-@ life New Yorker who found passion and enlightenment teaching violin to the inner @-@ city kids of East Harlem , in the music drama Music of the Heart . A departure from director Wes Craven 's previous work on films like A Nightmare on Elm Street and the Scream series , Streep replaced singer Madonna who left the project before filming began due to creative differences with Craven . Required to perform on the violin , Streep went through two months of intense training , five to six hours a day . Streep received nominations for an Academy Award , a Golden Globe and a Screen Actors Guild Award for her performance . Roger Ebert gave the film three stars out of four and wrote that " Meryl Streep is known for her mastery of accents ; she may be the most versatile speaker in the movies . Here you might think she has no accent , unless you 've heard her real speaking voice ; then you realize that Guaspari 's speaking style is no less a particular achievement than Streep 's other accents . This is not Streep 's voice , but someone else 's ? with a certain flat quality , as if later education and refinement came after a somewhat unsophisticated childhood . "

=== 2000s ===

==== 2000 ? 05 ====

Streep entered the 2000s with an uncredited voice cameo in Steven Spielberg 's A.I. Artificial Intelligence , a science fiction film about a childlike android , played by Haley Joel Osment . The same year , Streep co -@ hosted the annual Nobel Peace Prize Concert concert with Liam Neeson which was held in Oslo , Norway , on December 11 , 2001 , in honour of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate , the United Nations and Kofi Annan .

In 2001 , Streep returned to the stage for the first time in more than twenty years , playing Arkadina in The Public Theater 's revival of Anton Chekhov 's The Seagull , directed by Mike Nichols and co -@ starring Kevin Kline , Natalie Portman , and Philip Seymour Hoffman . The same year , she began work on Spike Jonze 's comedy @-@ drama Adaptation ( 2002 ) , in which she portrayed real @-@ life journalist Susan Orlean . Lauded by critics and viewers alike , the film won Streep her fourth Golden Globe in the Best Supporting Actress category . A. O. Scott considered Streep 's portrayal of Orlean to have been " played with impish composure " , noting the contrast in her " wittily realized " character with love interest Chris Cooper 's " lank @-@ haired , toothless charisma " as the autodidact arrested for poaching rare orchids . In 2002 Streep appeared alongside Nicole Kidman and Julianne Moore in Stephen Daldry 's The Hours , based on the 1999 novel by Michael Cunningham . Focusing on three women of different generations whose lives are interconnected by the novel Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf , the film was generally well received and won all three leading actresses a Silver Bear for Best Actress .

In 2003 , Streep had a cameo as herself in the Farrelly brothers comedy Stuck on You ( 2003 ) and reunited with Mike Nichols to star with Al Pacino and Emma Thompson in the HBO adaptation of Tony Kushner 's six @-@ hour play Angels in America , the story of two couples whose relationships dissolve amidst the backdrop of Reagan Era politics . Streep , who was cast in four roles in the mini @-@ series , received her second Emmy Award and fifth Golden Globe for her performance . In 2004 , Streep was awarded the AFI Life Achievement Award by the board of directors of the American Film Institute . She appeared in Jonathan Demme 's moderately successful remake of The Manchurian Candidate , co @-@ starring Denzel Washington , playing the role of a woman who is both a U.S. senator and the manipulative , ruthless mother of a vice @-@ presidential candidate . The same year , she played the supporting role of Aunt Josephine in Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events alongside Jim Carrey , based on the first three novels in Snicket 's book series . The black comedy received generally favorable reviews from critics , and won the Academy Award for Best Makeup . Inspired by her love of Giverny in France and Claude Monet , Streep did the narration for the film Monet 's Palette , with Alice Waters , Steve Wynn , Daniel Boulud and Helen Rappel Bordman .

Streep was next cast in the 2005 comedy film Prime , directed by Ben Younger . In the film , she played Lisa Metzger , the Jewish psychoanalyst of a divorced and lonesome business @-@ woman , played by Uma Thurman , who enters a relationship with Metzger 's 23 @-@ year @-@ old son ( Bryan Greenberg ) . A modest mainstream success , it eventually grossed US \$ 67 @. @ 9 million internationally . Roger Ebert noted how Streep had " that ability to cut through the solemnity of a scene with a zinger that reveals how all human effort is " .

==== 2006 ? 09 ====

In August and September 2006 , Streep starred onstage at The Public Theater 's production of Mother Courage and Her Children at the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park . The Public Theater production was a new translation by playwright Tony Kushner ( Angels in America ) , with songs in the Weill / Brecht style written by composer Jeanine Tesori ( Caroline , or Change ) ; veteran director George C. Wolfe was at the helm . Streep starred alongside Kevin Kline and Austin



Pendleton in this three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ hour play . Also in 2006 , Streep , along with Lily Tomlin , portrayed the last two members of what was once a popular family country music act in Robert Altman 's final film *A Prairie Home Companion* . A comedic ensemble piece featuring Lindsay Lohan , Tommy Lee Jones , Kevin Kline and Woody Harrelson , the film revolves around the behind @-@ the @-@ scenes activities at the long @-@ running public radio show of the same name . The film grossed more than US \$ 26 million , the majority of which came from domestic markets .

Commercially , Streep fared better with a role in *The Devil Wears Prada* ( 2006 ) , a loose screen adaptation of Lauren Weisberger 's 2003 novel of the same name . Streep portrayed the powerful and demanding Miranda Priestly , fashion magazine editor ( and boss of a recent college graduate played by Anne Hathaway ) . Though the overall film received mixed reviews , her portrayal , of what Ebert calls the " poised and imperious Miranda " , drew rave reviews from critics and earned her many award nominations , including her record @-@ setting 14th Oscar bid , as well as another Golden Globe . Upon its commercial release , the film became Streep 's biggest commercial success yet , grossing more than US \$ 326 @. @ 5 million worldwide .

In 2007 , Streep was cast in four films . She portrayed a wealthy university patron in Chen Shi @-@ zheng 's much @-@ delayed feature drama *Dark Matter* , a film about a Chinese science graduate student who becomes violent after dealing with academic politics at a U.S. university . Inspired by the events of the 1991 University of Iowa shooting , and initially scheduled for a 2007 release , producers and investors decided to shelve *Dark Matter* out of respect for the Virginia Tech massacre in April 2007 . The drama received negative to mixed reviews upon its limited 2008 release . Streep played a U.S. government official who investigates an Egyptian foreign national suspected of terrorism in the political thriller *Rendition* ( 2007 ) , directed by Gavin Hood . Keen to get involved in a thriller film , Streep welcomed the opportunity to star in a film genre for which she was not usually offered scripts and immediately signed on to the project . Upon its release , *Rendition* was less commercially successful , and received mixed reviews .

Also in 2007 , Streep had a short role alongside Vanessa Redgrave , Glenn Close and her eldest daughter Mamie Gummer in Lajos Koltai 's drama film *Evening* , based on the 1998 novel of the same name by Susan Minot . Switching between the present and the past , it tells the story of a bedridden woman , who remembers her tumultuous life in the mid @-@ 1950s . The film was released to a lukewarm reaction from critics , who called it " beautifully filmed , but decidedly dull [ and ] a colossal waste of a talented cast . " Streep 's last film of 2007 was Robert Redford 's *Lions for Lambs* , a film about the connection between a platoon of United States soldiers in Afghanistan , a U.S. senator , a reporter , and a California college professor . Like *Evening* , critics felt that the talent of the cast was wasted and that it suffered from slow pacing , although one critic announced that Streep positively stood out , being " natural , unforced , quietly powerful " , in comparison to Redford 's forced performance .

In 2008 , Streep found major commercial success when she starred in Phyllida Lloyd 's *Mamma Mia !* , a film adaptation of the musical of the same name , based on the songs of Swedish pop group ABBA . Co @-@ starring Amanda Seyfried , Pierce Brosnan , Stellan Skarsgård and Colin Firth , Streep played a single mother and a former girl @-@ group singer , whose daughter ( Seyfried ) , a bride @-@ to @-@ be who never met her father , invites three likely paternal candidates to her wedding on an idyllic Greek island . An instant box office success , *Mamma Mia !* became Streep 's highest @-@ grossing film to date , with box office receipts of US \$ 602 @. @ 6 million , also ranking it first among the highest @-@ grossing musical films for now . Nominated for another Golden Globe , Streep 's performance was generally well received by critics , with Wesley Morris of the *Boston Globe* commenting " the greatest actor in American movies has finally become a movie star . "

Streep 's other film of 2008 was *Doubt* featuring Philip Seymour Hoffman , Amy Adams , and Viola Davis . A drama revolving around the stern principal nun ( Streep ) of a Bronx Catholic school in 1964 who brings charges of pedophilia against a popular priest ( Hoffman ) , the film became a moderate box office success , but was hailed by many critics as one of the best of 2008 . The film received five Academy Awards nominations , for its four lead actors and for Shanley 's script . Ebert

, who awarded the film the full four stars , highlighted Streep 's caricature of a nun , who " hates all inroads of the modern world " , while Kelly Vance of The East Bay Express remarked : " It 's thrilling to see a pro like Streep step into an already wildly exaggerated role and then ramp it up a few notches just for the sheer hell of it . Grim , red @-@ eyed , deathly pale Sister Aloysius may be the scariest nun of all time . "

In 2009 , Streep played chef Julia Child in Nora Ephron 's Julie & Julia , co @-@ starring Amy Adams and Stanley Tucci . ( Tucci and Streep had worked together earlier in Devil Wears Prada . ) The first major motion picture based on a blog , Julie and Julia contrasts the life of Child in the early years of her culinary career with the life of young New Yorker Julie Powell ( Adams ) , who aspires to cook all 524 recipes in Child 's cookbook Mastering the Art of French Cooking . Longworth believes her caricature of Julia Child was " quite possibly the biggest performance of her career while also drawing on her own experience to bring lived @-@ in truth the story of a late bloomer " . The same year , Streep starred in Nancy Meyers ' romantic comedy It 's Complicated , with Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin . She received nominations for the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress ? Motion Picture Musical or Comedy for both Julie & Julia and It 's Complicated ; she won the award for Julie & Julia and later received her 16th Oscar nomination for it . She also lent her voice to Mrs. Felicity Fox in the stop @-@ motion film Fantastic Mr. Fox .

= = = 2010s = = =

Streep 's first film of the 2010s was Phyllida Lloyd 's The Iron Lady ( 2011 ) , a British biographical film about Margaret Thatcher , which takes a look at the Prime Minister during the Falklands War and her years in retirement . Streep , who sat through a session at the House of Commons to observe British MPs in action in preparation for her role , called her casting " a daunting and exciting challenge . " While the film had a mixed reception , Streep 's performance got rave reviews , earning her Best Actress awards at the Golden Globes and the BAFTAs as well as her third win at the 84th Academy Awards . Former advisers , friends and family of Thatcher criticized Streep 's portrayal of her as inaccurate and biased . The following year , after Thatcher 's death , Streep issued a formal statement describing Thatcher 's " hard @-@ nosed fiscal measures " and " hands @-@ off approach to financial regulation , " while praising her " personal strength and grit . "

In 2012 , Streep reunited with Prada director David Frankel on the set of the comedy @-@ drama film Hope Springs , co @-@ starring Tommy Lee Jones and Steve Carell . Streep and Jones play a middle @-@ aged couple , who attend a week of intensive marriage counseling to try to bring back the intimacy missing in their relationship . Reviews for the film were mostly positive , with critics praising the " mesmerizing performances [ ... ] which offer filmgoers some grown @-@ up laughs ? and a thoughtful look at mature relationships " .

In 2013 , Streep starred alongside Julia Roberts , Ewan McGregor , Chris Cooper , and others in the black comedy drama August : Osage County about a dysfunctional family that reunites into the familial house when their patriarch suddenly disappears . Based on Tracy Letts 's Pulitzer Prize @-@ winning play of the same name , Streep received positive reviews for her portrayal of the family 's strong @-@ willed and contentious matriarch , who is suffering from oral cancer and an addiction to narcotics , and was subsequently nominated for another Golden Globe , SAG , and Academy Award . At the National Board of Review Awards in 2013 , Streep labeled Walt Disney as " anti @-@ semitic " and a " gender bigot . " Former actors , employees and animators who knew Disney during his lifetime rebuffed the comments as misinformed and selective . The Walt Disney Family Museum issued a statement rebuking Streep 's allegations indirectly , citing , among others , Disney 's contributions to Jewish charities and his published letters stating that women " have the right to expect the same chances for advancement as men . " However , Disney 's grandniece , Abigail Disney , wholeheartedly agreed with Streep 's statements , stating that he was an " anti @-@ Semite , " and " racist " who was also an exemplary filmmaker whose work " made billions of people happy . "

Streep 's first film of 2014 was the motion picture adaptation of the young adult novel The Giver . Set in 2048 , the social science fiction film tells the story of a post @-@ apocalyptic community

without war , pain , suffering , differences or choice , where a young boy is chosen to learn the real world . Streep , who plays the community 's leader , was aware of the book before being offered the role by co @-@ star and producer Jeff Bridges . Upon its release , The Giver was met with generally mixed to negative reviews from critics . The same year , she also had a small role in the period drama film The Homesman , Set in the 1850s midwest , the film stars Hilary Swank and Jones as an unusual pair , who helps three women driven to madness by the frontier to get back East . Streep appears not until the end of the film , playing a preacher 's wife , who takes the women into care . The Homesman premiered at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival where it garnered largely positive reviews from critics .

Her final film of 2014 was the Disney film adaptation of the Broadway musical Into the Woods , directed by Rob Marshall . A fantasy genre crossover inspired by the Grimm Brothers ' fairy tales , it centers on a childless couple , who sets out to end a curse placed on them by a vengeful witch , played by Streep . Though the film was dismissed by some critics such as Mark Kermode as " irritating naffness " , Streep 's performance earned her Academy Award , Golden Globe , SAG , and Critic 's Choice Award nominations for Best Supporting Actress . In July 2014 , it was announced that Streep would portray Maria Callas in Master Class , but the project was pulled after director Mike Nichols 's death in November of the same year .

In 2015 , Streep starred in Jonathan Demme 's Ricki and the Flash , playing a grocery store checkout worker by day who is a rock musician at night , and who has one last chance to reconnect with her estranged family . Streep learned to play the guitar for the semi @-@ autobiographical dramedy film , which reunited her with her eldest daughter Mamie Gummer . Reviews of the film were generally mixed . Streep 's other film of the year was director Sarah Gavron 's period drama Suffragette , co @-@ starring Carey Mulligan and Helena Bonham Carter . In the film , she played the small but pivotal role of Emmeline Pankhurst , a British political activist and leader of the British suffragette movement who helped women win the right to vote . The film received mostly positive reviews , particularly for the performances of the cast , though its distributor earned criticism that Streep 's prominent position within the marketing was misleading .

In February 2016 , Streep served in her first appearance as president of the main competition jury at the 66th Berlin International Film Festival . Streep will next be seen in the Stephen Frears @-@ directed comedy Florence Foster Jenkins , a biopic about the eponymous opera singer . Other cast members include Hugh Grant , and Simon Helberg .

= = Acting style and legacy = =

Such is Streep 's contemporary position in world cinema that Vanity Fair has commented that " it 's hard to imagine that there was a time before Meryl Streep was the greatest @-@ living actress " . Emma Brockes of The Guardian notes that despite Streep 's being " one of the most famous actresses in the world " , it is " strangely hard to pin an image on Streep " , in a career where she has " laboured to establish herself as an actor whose roots lie in ordinary life " . Despite her success , Streep has always been modest about her own acting and achievements in cinema . She has stated that she has no particular method when it comes to acting , learning from the days of her early studies that she can 't be articulate . She said in 1987 , " I have a smattering of things I 've learned from different teachers , but nothing I can put into a valise and open it up and say ' Now which one would you like ' ? Nothing I can count on and that makes it more dangerous . But then the danger makes it more exciting . " She has stated that her ideal director is one who gives her complete artistic control , and allowing a degree of improvisation and her to learn from her own mistakes .

Karina Longworth notes how " external " Streep 's performances are , " chameleonic " in her impersonation of characters , " subsuming herself into them , rather than personifying them " . In her early roles such as Manhattan and Kramer vs. Kramer , she was compared to both Diane Keaton and Jill Clayburgh , in that her characters were unsympathetic , which Streep has attributed to the tendency to be drawn to playing women who are difficult to like and are devoid of a mutual emotional understanding with others . Streep has stated that many consider her to be a technical

actor , but she professed that it comes down to her love of reading the initial script , adding , " I come ready and I don 't want to screw around and waste the first 10 takes on adjusting lighting and everybody else getting comfortable " .

Mike Nichols , who directed Streep in Silkwood , Heartburn and Postcards from the Edge , praised Streep 's ability to transform herself into her characters , remarking that " in every role she becomes a totally new human being . As she becomes the person she is portraying , the other performers begin to react to her as if she were that person " . He said that directing her is " so much like falling in love that it has the characteristics of a time which you remember as magical but which is shrouded in mystery " . He also noted that Streep 's acting ability had a profound impact on her co -@ stars and that " one could improve by 1000 % purely by watching her . " Longworth believes that in nearly every film , Streep has " slyly infused " a feminist point of view in her portrayals . However , film critic Molly Haskell has stated , " None of her heroines are feminist , strictly speaking . Yet they uncannily embody various crosscurrents of experience in the last twenty years , as women have redefined themselves against the background of the women 's movement " .

Streep is well known for her ability to imitate a wide range of accents , from Danish in Out of Africa ( 1985 ) to English received pronunciation in Plenty ( 1985 ) , The French Lieutenant 's Woman ( 1981 ) , and The Iron Lady ( 2011 ) ; Italian in The Bridges of Madison County ( 1995 ) ; a Minnesota accent in A Prairie Home Companion ( 2006 ) ; Irish @-@ American in Ironweed ; and a heavy Bronx accent in Doubt . Streep has stated that she grew up listening to artists such as Barbra Streisand , The Beatles and Bob Dylan , and she learned a lot about how to use her voice , her " instrument , " by listening to Barbra Streisand 's albums . In the 1988 film Evil Angels , in which she portrays a New Zealand transplant to Australia , Streep perfected a hybrid of Australian & New Zealand English . Her performance received the Australian Film Institute Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role , as well as Best Actress at the Cannes Film Festival , and the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress .

For her role in the film Sophie 's Choice ( 1982 ) , Streep spoke both English and German with a Polish accent , as well as Polish itself . In The Iron Lady , she reproduced the vocal style of Margaret Thatcher from the time before Thatcher became Britain 's Prime Minister , and after she had taken elocution lessons to change her pitch , pronunciation , and delivery . Streep has commented that using accents as part of her acting is a technique she views as an obvious requirement in her portrayal of a character . When questioned in Belfast as to how she reproduces different accents , Streep replied in a perfect Belfast accent : " I listen . "

= = Other work = =

After Streep appeared in Mamma Mia ! , her rendition of the song " Mamma Mia " rose to popularity in the Portuguese music charts , where it peaked at No. 8 in October 2008 . At the 35th People 's Choice Awards , her version of " Mamma Mia " won an award for " Favorite Song From A Soundtrack " . In 2008 , Streep was nominated for a Grammy Award ( her fifth nomination ) for her work on the Mamma Mia ! soundtrack . Throughout her career , Streep has narrated numerous audio books , including three by children 's book author William Steig : Brae Irene , Spinky Sulks , and The One and Only Shrek ! .

Streep is the spokesperson for the National Women 's History Museum , to which she has donated a significant amount of money ( including her fee for The Iron Lady , which was \$ 1 million ) and hosted numerous events . On October 4 , 2012 , Streep donated \$ 1 million to The Public Theater in honor of both its late founder , Joseph Papp , and her friend , the author Nora Ephron . She also supports Gucci 's " Chime For Change " campaign that aims to spread female empowerment . Streep , when asked in a 2015 interview by Time Out magazine if she was a feminist , answered , " I am a humanist , I am for nice easy balance . "

In 2014 , Streep established two scholarships for students at the University of Massachusetts Lowell ? the Meryl Streep Endowed Scholarship for English majors , and the Joan Hertzberg Endowed Scholarship ( named for Streep 's former classmate at Vassar College ) for math majors . In April 2015 , it was announced that Streep had funded a screenwriters lab for female screenwriters

over forty years old , called the Writers Lab , to be run by New York Women in Film & Television and the collective IRIS . As of the announcement , the Writers Lab is the only initiative in the world for female screenwriters over forty years old .

In 2015 , Streep signed an open letter for which the ONE Campaign had been collecting signatures ; the letter was addressed to Angela Merkel and Nkosazana Dlamini @-@ Zuma , urging them to focus on women as they served as the head of the G7 in Germany and the AU in South Africa respectively , which was set to set the priorities in development funding before a main UN summit in September 2015 to establish new development goals for the generation . Also in 2015 , Streep sent each member of the U.S. Congress a letter supporting the Equal Rights Amendment . Each of her letters was sent with a copy of the book Equal Means Equal : Why the Time for the ERA is Now by Jessica Neuwirth , president of the ERA Coalition . In March 2016 Streep , among others , signed a letter asking for gender equality throughout the world , in observance of International Women 's Day ; this was also organized by the ONE Campaign .

= = Personal life = =

Author Karina Longworth notes that despite her " high level of stardom " for decades , Streep has managed to maintain a relatively normal personal life . Streep lived with actor John Cazale for three years until his death from lung cancer in March 1978 . Al Pacino remarked that " I 've hardly ever seen a person so devoted to someone who is falling away like John was . To see her in that act of love for this man was overwhelming . " Streep said of his death , " I didn 't get over it . I don 't want to get over it . No matter what you do , the pain is always there in some recess of your mind , and it affects everything that happens afterwards . I think you can assimilate the pain and go on without making an obsession of it " .

Streep married sculptor Don Gummer six months after Cazale 's death . They have four children : musician Henry ( born 1979 ) , actresses Mamie ( born 1983 ) and Grace ( born 1986 ) , and model Louisa ( born 1991 ) . In August 1985 , the family moved into a \$ 1 @. @ 8 @- @ million private estate in Connecticut , with an extensive art studio to facilitate Streep 's husband 's work , and lived there until they bought a \$ 3 @- @ million mansion in Brentwood , Los Angeles , in 1990 . They eventually moved back to Connecticut .

When asked if religion plays a part in her life in 2009 , Streep replied : " I follow no doctrine . I don 't belong to a church or a temple or a synagogue or an ashram . " In an interview in December 2008 , she also alluded to her lack of religious belief when she said : " So I 've always been really , deeply interested , because I think I can understand the solace that 's available in the whole construct of religion . But I really don 't believe in the power of prayer , or things would have been avoided that have happened , that are awful . So it 's a horrible position as an intelligent , emotional , yearning human being to sit outside of the available comfort there . But I just can 't go there . "

When asked from where she draws consolation in the face of aging and death , Streep responded : " Consolation ? I 'm not sure I have it . I have a belief , I guess , in the power of the aggregate human attempt ? the best of ourselves . In love and hope and optimism ? you know , the magic things that seem inexplicable . Why we are the way we are . I do have a sense of trying to make things better . Where does that come from ? "

= = Credits = =

= = Awards and nominations = =