

REINVENTION



Sarah Ferguson at the Toronto International Film Festival last month with daughters, Eugenie (left) and Beatrice. Below: Princess Beatrice in costume for *Young Victoria*.



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her daughters—Princesses Beatrice, 21, and Eugenie, 19—the Duchess spoke to *Prime Time* about bringing together the two loves of her life: family and film.

Prime Time: At the beginning of *Young Victoria*, the line “My palace was a prison” was delivered by [British actor] Emily Blunt. Did that line speak to you?

Sarah Ferguson: [It is] universal. We can all be in our own prisons, whether we’re going about our daily jobs or if suddenly we become part of a royal family. We all have routines that can jail us. The question is, Do we truly have liberation? In [Queen Victoria’s] case, she was in a gilded cage. She couldn’t see anybody or talk to anybody. Everything was no. How do I compare my life? What she was born to, I had to learn how to do.

Do you think the world understood the full extent of your transition from civilian to royal?

Some, [but] not the British. Canadians have always been very supportive. That was a big

jump for me to give up all my life to go into an institution.

You just turned 50 on October 15. Do you think of it as a milestone year?

I don’t know about age, but I think this film is a milestone for me. It’s a huge sense of achievement. For 25 years, I’ve never looked at anything I’ve done as my own. Even [with] my children, Andrew had a hand. [Now, this film] makes me think, Okay, I really like who I am. [No one] else thought of the idea. I did.

What’s the first thing you’re going to do after your birthday?

I’m going to make more documentaries. And I’m making [another] film. It’s going to be similar to *The Horse Whisperer*.

When you were researching Prince Albert and Queen Victoria in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, what did you come across that most surprised you about the couple?

I was absolutely taken by the fact that Prince Albert loved Queen Victoria’s beautiful porcelain shoulders. I loved it that he would put his elbow on the mantelpiece as he watched six women undress her. He insisted on blue wildflowers in her hair. They’d sing duets together and learn how to paint.

Until I read [about it], I couldn’t believe the [intensity of the] passion between them. There’s a door-locking device at Osborne House [a former royal residence on the Isle of Wight] that is still in operation. It was invented by Prince Albert, so they didn’t have to get out of bed to lock the door [to keep] their children from coming in. It was so romantic!

Have you ever met someone who has that kind of bond?

I think Andrew now is very like that because he’s more and more secure. We’re the same age, and at 25, I think we were both sort of, you know, coming up like little buds. Of course, now we’ve changed. I think he is now very [much] like that.

Double Duchess

Sarah Ferguson is adding yet another title to her crown: film producer

BY ELIO IANNACCI

It took 15 years, but Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, finally managed to do something she’s always wanted to do: add “movie producer” underneath her royal title. The film that allowed her to do this is a personal passion of hers—*Young Victoria*, a costume-filled biopic chronicling the early life of the longest-reigning monarch of the U.K. It lands in

theatres on December 18. While in Canada to promote the film during the Toronto International Film Festival, Ferguson also took time to launch a northern chapter of her New York-based charity, the Sarah Ferguson Foundation, which supports international efforts to serve underprivileged children and families.

During her hectic visit to Toronto with

PRIME TIME ONLINE!

For the complete interview with Sarah Ferguson, go to thestar.com/primetime