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Brit Mably crowned for Par-Lion pic

Coolidge to direct 'Freshman' love story

By CLAUDE BRODESSER

British thesp Luke Mably has landed the starring role opposite Julia Stiles in "The Prince and the Freshman" a co-production between Paramount Pictures and Lions Gate Intl.



Having just added Endeavor for U.S. representation last Thursday, Mably will play the prince of the title in Katherine Fugate's script. Pic is the story of a female student at a Midwestern university who has the dubious fortune to fall in love with a European prince spending the semester there incognito.

Mably just appeared in Danny Boyle's medical epidemic thriller "28 Days Later," due out this spring Stateside from Fox Searchlight.

Martha Coolidge ("Out To Sea") will direct the romantic comedy, which is also the first pic from Sobini Films, the production company founded by former Trimark owner Mark Amin with Robin Schorr shortly after Amin sold Trimark to Lions Gate in October 2000.

Par will release the film in North America, with Lions Gate Intl. handling foreign distribution.

The film reps the second time that Par and Lions Gate have joined forces. Last April, the companies jointly acquired domestic distribution rights to the Sundance Film Festival hit "Narc," starring Jason Patric and Ray Liotta.

Mably continues to be repped in the U.K. by the Peters Fraser & Dunlop Group.