

Photography: Jemma Merritt Fashion: Clementine Brown

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magazine



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DIGITAL COVER

1883MAGAZINE.COM

MILLIE

GIBSON

Millie

LEAVING THE
LEGENDARY
COBBLES BEHIND,
MILLIE GIBSON IS
SET TO DAZZLE US
ALL AS RUBY
SUNDAY IN BBC'S
HIT SERIES
DOCTOR WHO ON
CHRISTMAS DAY.

GIBSON

PHOTOGRAPHY JEMIMA MARRIOTT
FASHION CLEMENTINE BROWN

At just 19 years old, Millie Gibson is destined for the stars. After four years on ITV's Coronation Street, Gibson said goodbye to Kelly Neelan — a role that earned her a British Soap award — and hello to all of time and space as companion Ruby Sunday. A little over a year since her announcement, Gibson still hasn't grasped how any of this is real. However, she's opted for going with the flow. Learning lessons about herself along the way and taking everything in its stride, she is poised to make her debut on Christmas Day in the episode aptly titled "The Church on Ruby Road." And even then, Gibson isn't quite sure the penny is going to drop. For now, though, she's living in the moment, and soaking it all in while she can. It's the calm before the intergalactic storm.

With the 60th-anniversary specials having finished their run as of December 9th, we saw the exit of David Tennant's 14th Doctor and Catherine Tate's Donna Noble, paving the way for Ncuti Gatwa's 15th incarnation of the titular character. A new era (and a soft relaunch) of the show, Whovians both young and old are waiting with bated breath to see what Russell T. Davis has up his sleeve. Now, with an even bigger budget (thanks, Disney +) Doctor Who is being thrust onto the international stage in a way it never has been before, leaving the show open to welcome and embrace a fresh audience.



Bodysuit, leggings, skirt, cape and gloves SAFIYA

Finding herself in a unique pair of shoes, Gibson is thrilled about the journey ahead. Excited at the prospect of following in the footsteps of Karen Gillan, Catherine Tate, Mandip Gill, and Pearl Mackie to name a few, it's a coveted role that only a handful of actors can say they've had the privilege of taking on. Having started her career at a young age, it was almost as if every step she took was in preparation for this exact moment. On the very precipice of something big, Gibson is about to step into the (well-deserved) spotlight.

When speaking with Gibson, it isn't difficult to see what Davis and Gatwa must have seen during her audition. Gibson brings a vibrancy, a warmth, and a kindness that radiates all around her. She crackles with electricity, an energy that will surely encompass Gatwa's Doctor. A perfect pairing to kickstart what is sure to be an exhilarating new chapter for the franchise. For both Gibson and Ruby, the adventure is just about to begin.

In conversation with 1883 Magazine's Dana Reboe, Gibson discusses stepping into the TARDIS, her time on Coronation Street, the audition process, her experience with the Doctor Who fandom, teasing tidbits about Ruby Sunday, and so much more.

I love your Pulp Fiction poster, I'm obsessed! A lot of people say it's over-hyped, but I couldn't disagree more. Would you say that's your favourite Tarantino film? Oh, and Django (Unchained). That's such a good movie, too!



White shirt **ETON** Leather tie **stylists own** Leopard coat and skirt **MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION** Square toe leather boots **DEAR FRANCES** Heart and pearl earrings **HEY HARPER** Gold ring **HEY HARPER**

S-008 ARTIST

I love Django as well. One of his best. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today! To start us off, you started acting at Oldham Theatre on stage. Was there a moment when you realized that, "Yes, this is what I want to do?" It's funny you say that because we were watching baby videos with my mum and dad a few months ago. And oh-my gosh, if you could have seen them – I'm such a drama queen. I feel like it's been part of my personality since a very young age. But yeah, the Oldham Theatre workshop helped to pull that passion out and helped me explore my emotions. So, yeah, I'd say from about the age of 11 is when it all started clicking into place and becoming true to what I wanted in life.

Going back even further, do you have early memories of film and television that moved you? I'm an old soul [laughs]. From a young age I was watching a lot of what my mum did, bless her. Her favourite films were like Grease or Dirty Dancing, and it was amazing to watch those types of things together. I think that kind of brought in my musical aspect because I did start with musicals in the Oldham workshop. I think they've certainly influenced the theme I was going for. And Quentin Tarantino, obviously.

So then, I have to ask: what are your favourite musicals? What do you find yourself going back to watch over and over? Oh my God, okay. Are you ready for this?

Let's do it! My favourite musical of all time is Les Misérables. I'm obsessed with that. Recently, I've been loving Billy Elliot. I can't believe I hadn't seen it before. Why didn't anyone tell me about this before? I'm balling my eyes out over here. And Chicago. I don't want to bore you; I could go on and on and on. But those are definitely my top three choices.

We did Chicago in high school; it was a blast. I wish I could have done that. You must feel like such a bad bitch. [Millie sings] He had it comin'!

[Laughter] What are some of the most important things we stage has taught you?

The beautiful thing about theatre is anything can happen. I think with TV it's more like, okay, you've made a mistake, this is how you fix it. With theatre, it's like anything can happen tonight. You can try things in a new way, go with a different emotion if those tears aren't working, and you have the flexibility to live in the moment. The stage is such an amazing learning experience. I miss it so much. I'd love to go back to it. It's basically like having one shot and hoping it goes well. With TV you can do a take over and over; it's very structured and regimented. But with theatre it never gets old; it's sort of movable and flexible. You can change it however you want. So, I'd say it's taught me to go with the flow and live in the moment.

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KODAK

Would you say that screen and stage scratch a different creative itch for you? For sure! Even the characters you play are so over the top. They come across on screen sometimes, but in theatre, it's a whole new ball game the types of characters you play. I mean, comedy in that aspect as well, it's such a fun part to explore. I remember when I was younger, I used to play a lot of the male parts in these stage productions. You get to play the parts that TV wouldn't necessarily cast you for. "Oh, she doesn't look like Fat Sam." But in theatre, you can get away with that.

I'm just trying to envision you in that part. It was so much fun! I loved it!

How old were you? About nine!

Millie

What has been the most challenging part of your acting career so far? I'm not going to lie; I'm probably going to say Doctor Who. In the best way though. It's the biggest show I've been on. It's such an intense working schedule. I can't help but think about the hugeness of it. It's going to be a wild ride and I know I haven't explored it all yet. Another daunting thing is, on many television shows there's a cast of more than two people, and you'll think, "Oh, I'll have Wednesday off because so-and-so is in that day," with Doctor Who it's just the Doctor and companion from the start of the day until the end of the day, every day. We're sort of delirious by the end. I've learned so much, but it was definitely a lot.

How did you combat the deliriousness? When you watch it, you're probably going to think, "Oh my God, she's so tired." It's funny because the deliriousness comes in when we're doing emotional scenes. We can't help but start laughing and it's like, "No, Millie, this is really serious." Ncuti [Gatwa] just kept cracking up at the most inconvenient moments, too, which didn't help at all. But I will say, what really helps is when we have cameos coming in for an episode or more and we get that fresh burst of energy. So, it's fine, it all balances out [laughter].

I'm glad to hear that! Looking forward to some of those cameos already. Moving forward, what's some advice you'd give to young Millie knowing everything you do now? I would probably tell her, "You're going to have great experiences, and you're not going to have the best experiences, but all experiences are good. You're going to learn in different ways and meet so many amazing people. Never stop learning and never stop developing."

Oh, I love that. That came out wiser than I anticipated.

[Laughs] You've gone from the cobbles of Coronation Street and now to the TARDIS. There's a very small pool of actors that can say they've been on two iconic British properties. I must have a thing with shows running for 60 years.

Definitely looks that way! If you could be part of another franchise or television show, what would it be? I don't know! Maybe a movie franchise that has run for 60 years?

I mean, hey, Marvel has been making movies for nearly 20 years now, so... That's true! It could happen somewhere down the line! I think in terms of a television show, I'd like to do something like Fleabag. I just think it's so genius and dark, humourous, and strong-witted. The characters are so different and nuanced. There's so much room to play.

Red coat: ALBERTA FERRETTI Black zip top and black skirt: MARK FAST
Black mesh boots: ROGER VIVER Mismatched earrings: PHOENIX JEWELLERY



It was a very, very bold show, for sure. With Doctor Who now streaming on Disney+, it opens the show to an even bigger international audience. So, how are you feeling and has reality set in yet? No! No, it hasn't! I don't even think it's going to set in on Christmas Day when we're actually watching it. I feel like I'm going to say, "Guys, this was just a little thing that I did." Yeah, it's daunting, I will say. Russell posted this thing of the Japanese logo for Doctor Who, and I was like, "What?" It's insane to me. The penny hasn't dropped yet, but I'm really, really honoured.

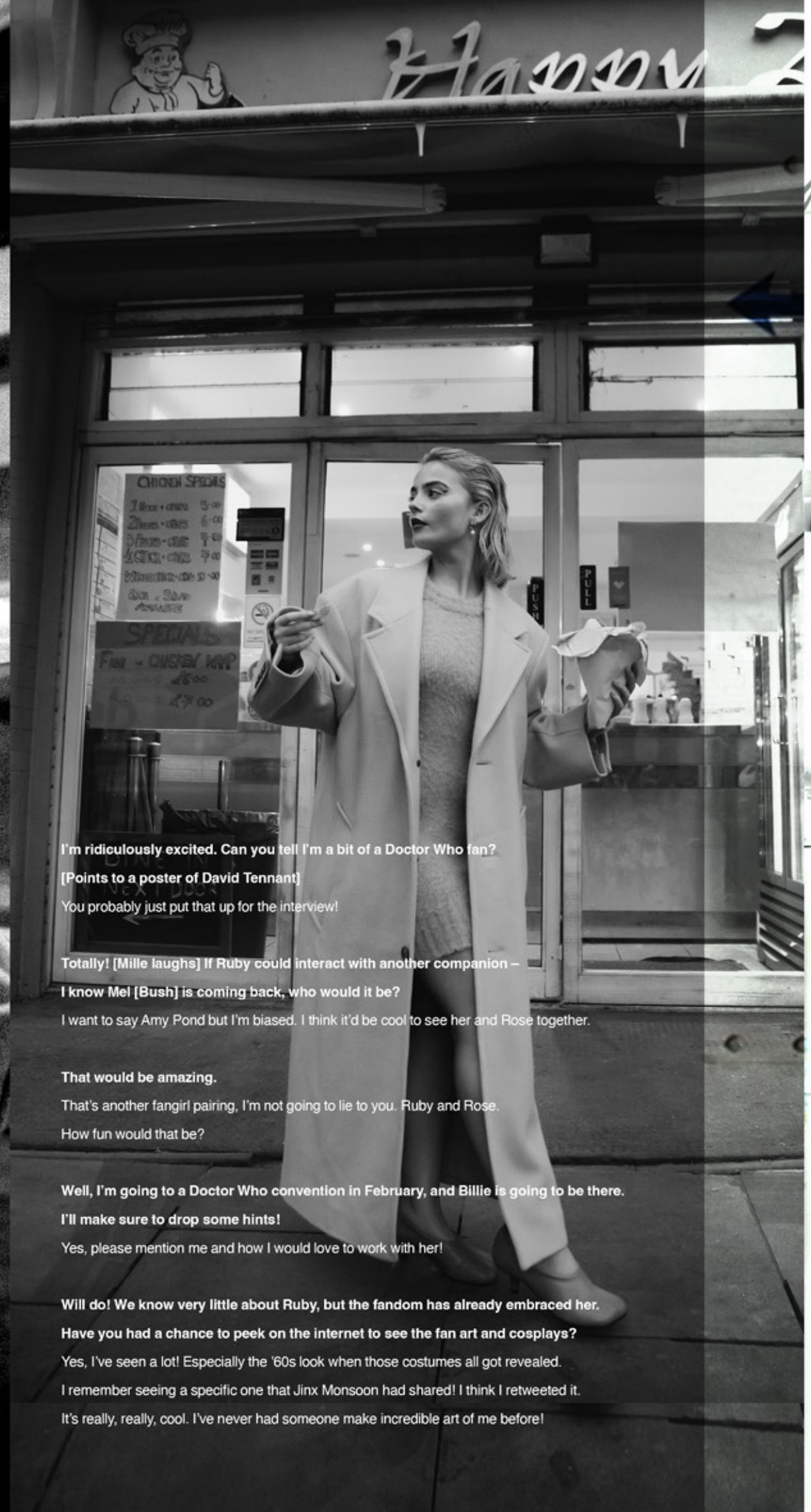
I don't think you have anything to worry about. The Doctor Who fandom is an incredibly passionate one, and they're fiercely loyal. You've already been embraced! They're so nice and they're so supportive! They don't even know me and they're already saying such nice things!

When you said goodbye to Kelly Neelan on Coronation Street and hello to Ruby Sunday, what were your first thoughts when you read for the role? Oh, that's such a good question. It was important for me to not be anything like Kelly. I think that's a lot of actor's worst fear because you want to be versatile and it's hard when you've been playing a character for a long time. You've gotten into the flow of playing that person, and you don't even have to think. You kind of have to shift everything you know. To come in and read for Ruby, the dialogue really helped me like great dialogue does. The lines were like, "Oh my God, yeah, that's just so Ruby." And I remember Russell saying to me that she's not the type to roll her eyes. Little nuggets like that really helped. She's very positive and bubbly and Ncuti helped an enormous amount as well because of their relationship, just in the sense of how she humanizes him, makes him more vulnerable and caring, which the Doctor struggles with because he's, you know, an alien [laughs]. Her youthful element and sort of pureness make him who he is, too. You kind of have to shift your mindset when you've been on something for so long. I had a lot of help from Russell.

As a point of interest, while I was doing research for this interview, I looked up how many episodes of Coronation Street you were in: 215! That's incredible. Oh my God!

Over four years. That's mad! You know I came in for 6 episodes as well. And then they were like, "Actually, I think we should carry on." Oh my God, 215 episodes. Was no one else in? [Laughter]

You've been watching Doctor Who since the Tennant and Smith eras. What about the show captivated then? And what do you hope the audience takes away from the Christmas special? I think I just remember Amy Pond and The Doctor's relationship. Even though the show has explosions and CGI monsters, at the root of it all is their friendship. They were so comforting to watch. I think a lot of people are going to find comfort in the show come Christmas Day. I think the series, in my opinion, becomes very Black Mirror in a way. I think people will really love this new era.



I'm ridiculously excited. Can you tell I'm a bit of a Doctor Who fan?

[Points to a poster of David Tennant]

You probably just put that up for the interview!

Totally! [Mille laughs] If Ruby could interact with another companion –

I know Mel [Bush] is coming back, who would it be?

I want to say Amy Pond but I'm biased. I think it'd be cool to see her and Rose together.

That would be amazing.

That's another fangirl pairing, I'm not going to lie to you. Ruby and Rose.

How fun would that be?

Well, I'm going to a Doctor Who convention in February, and Billie is going to be there.

I'll make sure to drop some hints!

Yes, please mention me and how I would love to work with her!

Will do! We know very little about Ruby, but the fandom has already embraced her.

Have you had a chance to peek on the internet to see the fan art and cosplays?

Yes, I've seen a lot! Especially the '60s look when those costumes all got revealed.

I remember seeing a specific one that Jinx Monsoon had shared! I think I retweeted it.

It's really, really, cool. I've never had someone make incredible art of me before!

KOD
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300-2
Blue knitted dress, blue coat AMI
Grey pumps MM6
Earrings and ring HEY HARPER



Just be prepared once the Christmas special areas, and all bets are off. There are so many people already trying to find screen-accurate clothing to cosplay as her! I know! I got tagged in something, and it was a guy who was dressed in my jacket and jumper! It's so surreal! Everyone's rocking it. I love how they're recreating Ruby! because it's such a unique one.



You did a cover for the Radio Times, for the 60th anniversary of Doctor Who with Bonnie Langford, from companion to companion, did she impart any advice? I really, really, loved working with Bonnie. She gave me loads of advice, but I think the biggest thing was, this show is going to follow you for years but you're always going to be your own person. It's extremely important because even though the show is huge and consuming, it's important to stay yourself. Don't get lost in anything you do and play. But also, she was so happy about how much the companion had grown as a character. In her day it was like, "Doctor, what are we going to do now?" But now, Ruby is her own person, she's got a family with responsibilities. I'm so thankful I got to work with Bonnie and chat frankly with her, and share experiences

Well, I would have loved to be a fly on the wall during that conversation. Don't worry, we'll invite you over to dinner next time.

Oh, thank you so much [laughter]. You snagged a British Soap award in 2022, for your portrayal of Kelly Neelan – congratulations. When you look back over the year, how much has changed and how do you feel you've evolved as an actress? When I look back, I just see how much I've grown and to be honest? Matured. Even my close friends and family have seen it as well. I think this job's really made me more independent. As an actor, I've learned so much working with Ncuti and all these amazing people who are part of the show. It was like a master class every day. It's like, "Oh my God, I have a line, it's not just me watching!" I've learned so much, it was my first time living away from home. It was having an intense work schedule, and not seeing my friends and family. It was really rewarding, to be honest. I've been really, really, lucky to have this experience. But looking back on the soap awards, at little Millie, I've definitely grown a lot.

When you auditioned for Doctor Who, you did a chemistry read with Ncuti. Did you immediately feel a connection? And when you walked out of that meeting, did you feel as though you got it? It's interesting because I remember being in the waiting room and hearing Ncuti's laugh. I mean, that's such a distinctive laugh. So, I was like, "There he is!" As soon as I went in, it just clicked. There was a part of me that did walk out thinking, he's such a bubbly, charismatic, guy, was it just me or did that work? And, obviously, it did. He was so easy to bounce off. Especially the scene we did, which didn't make it into the show, in the end, it was just a scene that Russell wrote. It was so much fun exploring that together. When we first did it, we just found ideas and it was kind of manic. We were feeding off each other. When I walked out, I was like, "That went well, he was so nice. Maybe he does this with everyone?" I had good feelings, but it also felt like I was floating on a cloud. When I finally heard back, it was such a lovely burst of reassurance. I was really, really, happy.

Green jumper
AMERICAN VINTAGE
Shredded skirt
MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION
Green leather gloves
PAULA ROWAN
Black mule ballet pumps MM6



How long did you have to wait to find out you got the part? A month!

A month! Some people I talk to, they're like, "I haven't heard back in four months or six months." I didn't know what to do with myself. I couldn't leave my house just in case my agent called, I couldn't tell anyone. It was really hard. The people I did tell, who were only close family, kept asking if I'd heard back. And then that was stressing me out, too. It was a very long month. I've had it good compared to some other actors I know, like, "Remember that part you auditioned for half-a-year ago? Yeah, you've got it." So, I think a month is pretty good.

Agreed! When you're not travelling through time and space, what does your ideal day off look like? So, when I'm in Cardiff and I've got a day off, I go to the Everyman cinema and watch everything. The other day, I jumped from watching *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* to *Saltburn*.

The whiplash between those two movies! I know! I was in the cinema for about six hours and when I left, I was like, "What the hell did I just watch?" But other than that, getting dolled up, for a nice brunch and drinks with friends or a nice wine night somewhere.

And lastly, what is something you'd like to manifest for yourself in 2024? Career-wise or in general?

In general! I really want to travel. I don't know about you, but I'm definitely more of an Italy and Greece girl. But I've just booked somewhere that's a little bit outside of my comfort zone. I'm excited about that, a bit nervous but more excited. So, travel more, experience more, live more, and grow more.

The Doctor Who Christmas special will air on BBC One and BBC iPlayer in the UK and on Disney+ in the US.

Interview **Dana Reboe**
Photographer **Jemima Marriott**
Stylist **Clementine Brown**
Hair **Alexis Day**
Make Up **Tania Grier** using **ByTerry Skincare** and **19/99 Beauty**.
Location **The Corner Hotel, London**

Bodysuit, leggings, skirt, cape and gloves **SAFIYAA**
Blue platform shoes **ROKER**