

LEGEND OF THE GUARDIANS THE OWLS OF GA'HOOLE

Acclaimed filmmaker Zack Snyder makes his animation debut with the fantasy family adventure “Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga’Hoole,” based on the beloved *Guardians of Ga’Hoole* books by Kathryn Lasky. The film follows Soren, a young owl enthralled by his father’s epic stories of the Guardians of Ga’Hoole, a mythic band of winged warriors who had fought a great battle to save all of owlkind from the evil Pure Ones.

While Soren dreams of someday joining his heroes, his older brother, Kludd, scoffs at the notion, and yearns to hunt, fly and steal his father’s favor from his younger sibling. But Kludd’s jealousy has terrible consequences—causing both owlets to fall from their treetop home and right into the talons of the Pure Ones. Now it is up to Soren to make a daring escape with the help of other brave young owls. Together they soar across the sea and through the mist to find the Great Tree, home of the legendary Guardians—Soren’s only hope of defeating the Pure Ones and saving the owl kingdoms.

The film features the voices of Helen Mirren, Geoffrey Rush, Jim Sturgess, Hugo Weaving, Emily Barclay, Abbie Cornish, Ryan Kwanten, Anthony LaPaglia, Miriam Margolyes, Sam Neill, Richard Roxburgh and David Wenham.

Snyder directed “Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga’Hoole” from a screenplay by John Orloff and Emil Stern, based on the *Guardians of Ga’Hoole* novels by Kathryn Lasky. The film was produced by Zareh Nalbandian, with Donald De Line, Deborah Snyder, Lionel Wigram, Chris deFaria, Kathryn Lasky and Bruce Berman serving as executive producers.

The film’s production designer was Simon Whiteley, its art director, Grant Freckelton, its editor, David Burrows, its digital supervisors, Aidan Sarsfield and Ben Gunsberger, its animation director, Eric Leighton, its previz & lensing director, David Scott, its head of story, Alexis Stadermann, its

supervising sound editor and designer, Wayne Pashley, its animation supervisor, Alex Weight, its character supervisor, Damien Gray, its environment supervisor, Greg Jowle, and its composer, David Hirschfelder.

Warner Bros. Pictures presents, in association with Village Roadshow Pictures, a Village Roadshow Pictures Production, an Animal Logic Production, “Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga’Hoole.”

Opening nationwide in theatres and IMAX starting September 24, 2010, the film will be presented in 3D and distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures, a Warner Bros. Entertainment Company, and in select territories by Village Roadshow Pictures.

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ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“Our dreams are who we are...”

~ TAKING ‘GUARDIANS’ FROM THE PAGE TO THE SCREEN ~

Young owlet Soren embarks on a quest to follow his dreams...only to discover they’re *real*. Stepping into the legend that he’s faithfully followed through his father’s nest-time stories, he becomes a crucial part of the next chapter in the epic tales.

Now on a true hero’s journey of self-discovery, young Soren and his friends join their mentors in an action-packed battle against the evil Pure Ones to protect not only their freedom, but the very existence of the Guardians of Ga’Hoole, who have sworn an oath to mend the broken, make strong the weak, and vanquish evil.

“Isn’t it every kid’s fantasy to become a character in his or her favorite story?” director Zack Snyder asks. “In our film, it’s a young owl who wants to find these legendary warrior owls that have been part of his personal mythology since he was born. And when the stories actually turn out to be true, it’s very powerful.”

In “Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga’Hoole,” Snyder and the gifted creative team at Animal Logic sought to open a window into a world that hasn’t been seen before, with mythic environments and expansive terrains like nothing they’d ever imagined, and owls so wonderfully realized that you almost forget they’re not real.

“Zack brings a visual language to his movies that is distinctive, and so do we at Animal Logic, so the marriage between Zack’s vision and our vision was easy right from the get-go,” says the film’s producer, Animal Logic CEO Zareh Nalbandian.

Drawing from his experience on the Academy Award®-winning “Happy Feet,” Nalbandian assembled a crew of more than 500 digital professionals, including a team of computer animation specialists, to bring “Legend of the Guardians” from the page to the screen, with the added dimension of a 3D film.

“We don’t think about our movies as animated,” he continues, “we think of them as movies; Zack didn’t come on board to make an animated movie, he came to make a great action fantasy adventure, tracking a hero’s journey, which happened to be in an animated world. It was about creating a visual feast for audiences that would be unique.”

In addition to the challenge of taking on his first entirely computer-generated project, Snyder, whose previous work includes the epic action films “300” and “Watchmen,” found that his motivation for making this particular story hit close to home. “I know it sounds cliché,” the director admits, “but my kids are always saying to me, ‘Dad, when are you gonna make a movie we can see?’ And the chance to work with the animators at Animal Logic really appealed to me; there were moments in ‘Happy Feet’ that I found artistically breathtaking. So when I saw their initial ‘Guardians’ artwork, and then read the stories of Soren and his friends on this incredible quest, I looked at it as a perfect opportunity to bring my own sensibilities to a family film.”

“Both Zack and I loved the notion of this young boy—who just happens to be an owl in an owl world—learning to believe in himself and in something bigger than himself,” executive producer Deborah Snyder says. “He has to battle the odds, and in doing so, becomes the owl kingdom’s only hope for survival. We felt it was a story we would love to bring to the screen.”

The filmmakers first came upon the tales of these heroic owls when executive producer Lionel Wigram discovered the popular *Guardians of Ga’Hoole* series of 15 books by American author Kathryn Lasky. Recognizing their cinematic potential, Wigram urged executive producer Donald De Line to read them.

“I found the books completely enchanting,” De Line says. “They tackle traditional themes—good versus evil, believing in your dreams and becoming anything you want to be—all while telling a great adventure story. The *Guardians of Ga’Hoole* reminded me of the *Knights of the Round Table*.”

Actress Helen Mirren, who takes a rare turn as a villain, says, “I loved the classic, archetypal personalities of the characters and the fact that the story is set in the animal kingdom. While it is highly entertaining, it isn’t sentimentalized, and still conveys a deep sense of morality.”

Wigram asserts, “We wanted to capture the feeling of the books and give the movie the same sense and tone of a grand adventure, something that would take on a life of its own. That is what Zack does in his work and what made him such an exciting choice for this picture.”

Jim Sturgess, who voices Soren, states, “Zack loves classic storytelling and is famous for putting together amazing visual sequences, so I knew from the start that this had the potential to be really stunning.”

“While some of his films may deal with dark material Zack, has a very child-like sense of wonder,” De Line observes. “He is also a real artist, and a whole different side of his talent comes through in this movie. Big action, creatures that fly through the air, huge battle scenes—combine all of those things with 3D animation in 3D and he’s a kid in a candy store.”

“In taking this adventure from the ground to the air and across the sea, there was no better way to capture the scope of this expedition than to make it

in 3D, and no medium lends itself better to 3D than computer animation,” Snyder affirms.

Author and executive producer Lasky put her stamp of approval on the filmmakers’ efforts. “When I saw the film, it was a dream come true,” she states. “I couldn’t believe how brilliantly Zack Snyder had realized the Ga’Hoole world on screen, yet remained so true to the spirit of the universe I created. I was totally swept up in ‘Legend of the Guardians.’”

Lasky’s first three books in the series were adapted into screenplay form by writers John Orloff and Emil Stern.

“The day I finished reading the first book, I thought, ‘Oh, my God, it’s a fantastic book and I have to do this,’ Orloff declares. “Then, as soon as I knew Zack Snyder was directing, I knew the movie was really going to be mind-blowing and that it would look like nothing we’ve ever seen before.”

“It was a great deal of fun working with a director as visual and action-oriented as Zack, as well as getting to know Animal Logic’s extremely gifted and dedicated team of animation wizards,” writer Emil Stern reflects. “We wanted to capture the spirit of the author’s world in making the script both cinematic and adventure-packed.”

Nalbandian offers, “The books are rich in imagery and the world of owls is fascinating; add to that the idea of flying above the clouds in a 3D movie in a very naturalistic environment...at every phase it became more and more compelling to develop the world of this movie.”

“There’s real vigor in the story and a full spectrum of characters, from cute and cuddly to downright evil,” says star Geoffrey Rush. “Adding to that, the sophistication, the brilliance really, of the technique has truly been elevated in animated movies. I believed this could be a film that would be appreciated by both kids and their parents on many different levels.”

Stepping into the animation realm for the first time, Snyder enthuses, “Animation is filmmaking without limits. When I saw the potential of what the movie could be, and thought about the chance as a filmmaker to actually be able to create any shot I wanted...I couldn’t wait to see what we could do.”

“Words were the only proof I’ve ever had that the Guardians were real, and still I believed.”

~ ANIMATING OWLS ~

In animation, nothing physically exists before the filmmakers begin to make the movie. Therefore, it's the responsibility of the director and the art department to imagine what the world and its creatures are going to look like. Simple pencil drawings turn into simple animation and the character rigs follow, then musculature, and eventually all the body parts are moving and every feather is in place; but it's a long, layered and sometimes daunting process.

That didn't deter Snyder in the least. "From the very first meetings that we had, I was very enthusiastic about the way the characters and locations were coming together," he recounts, "and continued to feel that every step along the way."

Creating from scratch, the artists tried to look at the world in the way that an owl would see it. For example, as nocturnal creatures, much of the story takes place at night, so the moon is their sun. Production designer Simon Whiteley and art director Grant Freckelton, the latter of whom had forged a strong working relationship with Snyder as visual effects art director on "300," carefully researched the various owl species, as well as the locations that would go into establishing the look and feel and inhabitants of the film.

"I like to use design to back up the story and create an emotional response to the image on screen," Freckelton says. "Simon influenced the shapes of things—what each owl or a tree might look like, the structures and so on—whereas I focused more on how the scenes would be lit, the overall mood and tone of the imagery. We literally sat next to each other daily and theorized about how this world was going to come together, asking questions like, 'If these owls create armor, how does it differ in design from a human's? If they wear helmets, how does that work when they turn their heads 180 degrees?' That's where the battle claws—natural extensions of their talons—came into play, as did the helmets some of them wear."

Whiteley, who spent time at an owl sanctuary in England and became something of an owl expert during production, states, "When working with owls in the sanctuaries, you immediately see that they've got personalities just like

humans. There are happy owls, grumpy owls, angry owls, friendly owls. One particular British barn owl named Fluffy, at the Screech Owl Sanctuary in the UK, was really like a pet; you could scratch him and stroke him, and he really liked being around people. We filmed all the different species flying, running, eating, bathing and even casting—regurgitating the bits of rodent bone and hair they can't digest—so we could replicate those behaviors in the film.”

The production designers set up an “owl school” for their animation team, immersing them in everything owl, including field trips to Sydney's natural history museum and the local Sydney zoos. Even the rig designed to build the owls' bodies was based on an actual owl skeleton that they were able to closely observe. The animators and technicians were taught to think and act and move like an owl.

“You have to really study them to understand the nuances of what makes up your characters,” Nalbandian relates. “As part of the crew, you've got to become the characters to be able to make them truly come alive on screen. The team became engrossed in the owl world, and I think the richness of that experience comes across in the movie.”

According to animation supervisor Alex Weight, the in-depth study enabled the animators to “respect the owl's anatomy and only let the owls do as characters what they could do if they could really walk and talk. It made the performances a lot more genuine, because you could suspend your disbelief and accept the experiences they were going through and from that, the emotions they were feeling.”

In order to help convey those emotions, the animators would have to deviate from true owl anatomy in one critical area: the eyes. “Owls have these incredibly big eyes,” Weight reports, “but they can't move them. In order to compensate, they rotate and move their heads around a lot.”

“We wanted to show so much emotion with our characters, but if they were constantly moving their heads it would become very distracting very fast,” Freckelton points out. “So we had to find a happy medium.”

The animators integrated some of that familiar head movement, along with the owl's nictitating membrane—their inner eyelid that causes them to “double blink”—into their animation, as almost imperceptible anatomical details

that would add to the realism. However, says Weight, “We had to take a little artistic license by adding color and movement to the eyes, because we needed the ability to have the characters express what they’re feeling through them.”

In order to achieve the level of expressiveness they needed, digital supervisor Ben Gunsberger explains, “We put a lot of work into making the eyes interesting and detailed, adding imperfections and studying how the light bounces around inside the eyes to give them a kind of glow, making them more engaging for the audience.”

Freckelton adds, “We also made the eye motion of the bad guys a lot more animal-like and a little scarier, while the good guys’ eyes are a little more human so they moved around and emoted, making them the more relatable of the two.”

“A family needs all of its members to play their parts.”

~ THE VOICES OF ‘LEGEND’ ~

One of the good guys is the central character Soren, a tyto barn owl raised in the Forest of Tyto, who believes in the existence of the legendary warriors the Guardians of Ga’Hoole, a mythical band of owls that have pledged their lives to mend the broken, vanquish evil and protect the owl kingdoms from harm.

When Soren and his brother Kludd are snatched up by the Pure Ones—evil owls who want to conquer those who are not of their “elite” tyto type and to make soldiers out of the ones who are—Soren holds out hope that his heroes not only exist, but that he can find them and enlist their aid in saving all of owlkind.

Voicing the hero of the story is British actor Jim Sturgess. “Jim brought a real sense of wonderment to Soren,” Snyder says. “In a world of realists, Soren believes the dream, and Jim really captured that.”

Like his director, Sturgess was new to animation and says it took some time to find the right balance in voicing a character without over- or under-playing it. “A lot of film acting is what you do with your face and what’s going on behind your eyes,” he relates. “And Soren has such an enthusiastic spirit, I thought I would have to really amp up my performance to convey that. But

after I started playing with the character a bit, I realized I didn't need to overdo it, that it wasn't going to be flat just because I wouldn't be seen. There would be a character with wonderful facial expressions, thanks to the talents of our animators."

In the end, Sturgess's initial qualms about voice acting were more than quelled. "It was a little mind-blowing to see my voice coming from this owl's face," Sturgess smiles, "with his eyes telling the story just as I would hope mine would have if it were me on screen."

Even those times when he was on one continent and his director was on another, technology bridged the gap. "Zack was always there during the recording sessions—on Skype or talking to me through a television. It could've been strange, but he's so expressive in the way he describes things and so passionate and intelligent about how he views the material, that we went through the scenes and he directed me like he would if we were together, making a live-action film. It worked out great."

Soren's first rival in the film isn't a Pure One, but rather his older brother, Kludd, who envies Soren's natural talent for flight and finds his enthusiasm for their dad's tales of the Guardians tiresome. "When Kludd is taken by the Pure Ones, he quickly becomes enamored by the idea that he can be a great soldier for them, that he can be the more important brother now," Deborah Snyder says. "He embraces their ways because he likes the attention, which starts him on this dark path. But Soren still wants to believe in Kludd's salvation, that he can bring Kludd back around."

The wayward owl is voiced by Ryan Kwanten. "Kludd is sort of a tortured individual," the actor comments. "He's the oldest sibling, but he doesn't have the natural abilities of his younger brother; he feels like he's not living up to expectations. When he's approached by the Pure Ones' queen, Nyra, who praises him just for being a tyto owl, he's vulnerable and easily manipulated into joining their efforts."

No stranger to portraying a monarch, Helen Mirren plays the evil Nyra, the powerful co-leader of the Pure Ones, with snowy-white feathers and icy-blue eyes that bear a seductive gaze.

“Who makes a better queen and sounds more regal than Helen Mirren?” Zack Snyder smiles.

Wigram expounds, “Helen accomplished something extraordinary with just her voice—she made Nyra not only a villain you love to hate, but also one that makes evil seem very attractive.”

“Nyra is ambitious and smart but her thinking is very twisted, and that makes her extremely dangerous,” Mirren states. “She’s a manipulator in an autocratic dictatorship and she enjoys it. She feels superior, thinks that she knows best, and can run things better than anybody—probably even her husband, the king of the Pure Ones—and she doesn’t want anyone else to have a voice.”

One rather gruff, if secretive, voice opposing Nyra is Grimble. Frustrated by the unfulfilled promises made to him by the Pure Ones, the old boreal owl decides to go against them. He quietly helps Soren and his newfound friend, fellow captive Gylfie, to escape from St. Aegolius Academy for Orphaned Owls, the terrible place where hundreds of young owls are forced to help further the Pure Ones’ cause.

Hugo Weaving does double duty in the film by voicing Soren and Kludd’s father, Noctus, as well as Grimble. “Grimble’s pretty rough around the edges,” Weaving says of the owl who puts his own life on the line to help the youngsters. “Because of threats against his family, he’s toed the line for a long time, but he’s come to a stage in his life where he’s ready to fight back, no matter the cost.”

Thanks to Grimble’s efforts, Soren and Gylfie narrowly manage to flee St. Aggie’s. Gylfie, a plucky elf owl who hails from the desert kingdom of Kuneer, is the first to join Soren on his quest to find the Guardians. A gifted navigator, she becomes not only a great friend but an invaluable member of the group.

Emily Barclay, who gives voice to her, says, “Gylfie is pretty gutsy. She’s this tiny thing, but she’s always speaking her mind when she feels something isn’t right. She has an incredible knowledge of the constellations, which she uses to help lead the little band of owls toward the Guardians.”

Rounding out the band of journeymen owls are Digger and Twilight. Digger, voiced by David Wenham, is a little burrowing owl who comes upon

Soren and Gylfie shortly after their escape. Anthony LaPaglia is Twilight, a large great grey owl with a flair for the dramatic and Digger's his best friend. The dichotomous pair provide a good deal of comedy amidst the high-flying adventure.

"Digger and Twilight are outrageously eccentric," Snyder observes. "They have giant personalities and are, in a way, very Shakespearean, supplying a lot of the humor in the film."

The only member of the band lacking wings is Soren and Kludd's nest nurse, a blind snake named Mrs. Plithiver, who is voiced by Miriam Margolyes. Along the way, the group encounters a shaman-like figure, the Echidna, played by Barry Otto, who imparts his wisdom upon the travelers as they embark on the final leg of their voyage. Though not appearing in the novels, the character was created by Snyder "as a means of introducing the archetypal wise man essential to a true hero's journey."

When Soren and his friends finally arrive at the Great Tree of Ga'Hoole, they befriend a young Guardian named Otulissa. Played by Abbie Cornish, the young short-eared owl helps the newcomers find their way through the vast society.

Much to his surprise, a very familiar face soon arrives at the tree: Soren's baby sister, Eglantine, who has been "moon-blinked," or spellbound, by the Pure Ones. The baby owlet's voice came from six-year-old Adrienne deFaria, in her acting debut.

Veteran actor Geoffrey Rush provides the sonorous tones of Ezylyrb, a war-weary whiskered screech owl with more crusades behind him than he'd care to remember.

"Ezylyrb has a powerful past as a great leader," Rush relates, "but he's a crusty old sod who, apart from being a once-great warrior, becomes a true mentor to Soren. He sees the younger owl as someone who shows real promise, and so he helps the boy find his own heroic path."

"One of my favorite characters is Ezylyrb," Nalbandian reveals. "He's just so enigmatic, and he truly personifies 'trusting in your gizzard'—believing in yourself—and tries to teach Soren to do just that."

Snyder comments that “Geoffrey Rush brought a quality to the voice of the character that demands respect, even while the character himself is very matter-of-fact about his duty and honor as a war hero.”

Sam Neill plays Ezylyrb’s longtime comrade in arms, Allomere, a battle-worn and somewhat pompous great grey. On the opposing side of those long-ago wars was sooty owl Metal Beak, voiced by Joel Edgerton. Now the Lord High Tyto of the Pure Ones, he is leading the charge against the owl kingdoms and hoping to tempt the Guardians into combat once again. Angus Sampson and Leigh Whannell play Jutt and Jatt, two of Metal Beak’s minions.

The decision to fight against the Pure Ones must be made by the King and Queen of the Guardians—regal snowy owls Boron, voiced by Richard Roxburgh, and Barran, by Deborra-Lee Furness.

“Our cast was really an embarrassment of riches,” De Line declares. “We were so fortunate to have such world-class actors to help bring our characters to life in such distinctive ways.”

“You’ve all come this far...so go...look to the sky. And fly!”

~ CREATING FLIGHT ~

There is perhaps nothing more wondrous about owls than their gift for silent flight—swooping in undetected and then disappearing again into the night sky. Therefore, the filmmakers knew that a major key to bringing their winged characters to life was “capturing the majesty of an owl in flight,” says Zack Snyder. “The animators did an extraordinary job of taking our owls to new heights, literally and figuratively.”

For the animators, allowing the owls to take flight began with replicating the arc of their wings, which was an intricate process that began with models and evolved in the computers with the riggings. “When you see an owl soaring through the air, or opening and folding its wings, you might take for granted how effortless and natural those movements appear. But when you start to break it down, you see there’s actually an incredible amount going on,” marvels characters supervisor Damien Gray.

Whether flapping to gain altitude or speed or just riding the air currents with the subtlest of shifts, “it was crucial to make the motion of the wings fluid

and in no way rigid,” Gray continues. “The wings are perpetually changing posture as they propel the owls through the air, and, obviously, are quite different when the owls are ‘grounded.’ We knew we had to provide the control that would allow the animators to move the characters organically between these states.”

Nevertheless, the finer point of animating the owls was also the greatest challenge: the owls’ innumerable feathers, with their wide range of colors, shapes, sizes and textures. The rendering of the feathers demanded a true union of design and function.

“As most production does, we started in modeling and rigging to achieve the underlying character movement; then each character had to have thousands of feathers placed on it. Those had to be hand-groomed so they would appear separate, yet connected,” Gray says. “Many feathers were quite literally hand-placed to a certain design, specific to the character. Nyra, for example, is white and quite sleek, whereas Eglantine is covered with down, and appears very soft and fuzzy.”

Whiteley adds, “For example, we learnt that owls have developed special comb-like fringed edges to their primary feathers and soft down on the upper surfaces of their wings, both helping to break up the air and make them silent fliers.”

The team worked hard to achieve realism in the feathering of each owl, so that the movements were precise, species by species. “From the very beginning, we realized we needed to bring that level of detail to the animation, so we developed tools and techniques in order to get that very fine level of control down to each feather,” Gray says.

The feathers also had to be constantly affected by the characters’ movements and the atmospheric effects of the scene. The filmmakers found that the iterative process was invaluable when dealing with all of the details of the various featherings, both on the ground and in the air. “Patterning—keeping all the feathers in order—was quite difficult, given some of the extremes that come both from the environment and the performance,” Gray notes.

Another important factor was determining how much to use the owls’ wings, beyond flight. Inspired by the actors’ movements when voicing their

characters, Gray says, “We knew we needed to open up their wings and perform with them.” But the filmmakers decided that the owls would not use their wings as “fingers” or “hands,” instead having them grab things with their talons, as would a real owl.

Additionally, though the owls in the film would be talking and using tools and weaponry, Snyder and the Animal Logic team wanted to avoid hyper-anthropomorphizing the characters and making them overly-humanistic. Rather, the filmmakers incorporated as much real owl physicality in the performances as possible, exploring a variety of subtle attributes they could use.

Gray describes, “An owl’s face feathers are very flat and act like a radar dish, their ears are positioned so they can pick up sounds in front of them and they use muscles in the face to alter the shape of this facial disk. They also have this ability to pant: they can’t sweat, so their neck swells and they puff out air rapidly to cool down. They have three toes at the front of their foot, and one at the back; but one of these front toes actually bends all the way around to the back, so they can position two front and two back toes when they need to grasp things. Getting those little things right as part of the owls’ realistic repertoire was critical.”

The art department developed what they called “owl ergonomics” for the film, ensuring the talons could actually grip and grasp and that the owls and the items in their environment fit together in the correct way.

“The work these guys at Animal Logic did was pretty groundbreaking,” Snyder states. “Everything they accomplished not only met but exceeded my expectations. They made it possible for us to really push the boundaries at every stage.”

In addition to the visual choices made by the director and the artists, supervising sound editor and designer Wayne Pashley had to determine what the owl world should sound like. In keeping with the naturalistic sensibility of the film, Pashley was able to utilize the wide array of sounds owls make. “Most people think that owls just hoot, but, depending on the species, they can purr, growl, whisper, click...their communication is just so varied. In the film, we’ve got barn owls, desert owls, great greys, and so on, so we used the real calls and

cries, morphing them with the dialogue from the cast to cross over into character signatures.”

The actors were of great help to Pashley, providing him with their own imitations of the various sounds of their species, which the sound team then layered in with the real owl sounds, achieving a seamless transition from dialogue into the actual bird noises, and vice versa.

“By combining both the real owl sounds and the great actors’ voices, Wayne brought in an extra layer of texture that takes you even more into the characters, and gives you that extra bit of perspective about the world of owls,” Nalbandian observes.

Snyder was also a great help in that capacity because he was able to “model” many of the sounds he was looking for—and not just owls. “Zack is very sound-literate,” Pashley attests. “For example, when he wanted a funny-sounding frog, we recorded him imitating the style of frog sound he was after, and then I approximated that recording into the scenes. So now we have unique atmospheres based on how we felt it might sound from an owl’s point of view.” Pashley hopes their combined efforts will help the audience “be immersed in the world of Ga’Hoole.”

*“We’re on our way to the Sea of Hoolemere.
We’re going to find the Guardians of Ga’Hoole.”*

~ DESIGNING AN OWL KINGDOM ~

“Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga’Hoole” takes us into a fantastical land belonging solely to its winged heroes and villains.

Though there are people mentioned in relation to the environments in Kathryn Lasky’s books, for the film Snyder wanted to imagine a world untouched by humans, populated instead solely by ancient owl and animal cultures. Whiteley expands, “If there were any built or carved structures, they would have to be created by owls using owl tools, and didn’t have to be built from the ground up, as in the case of Metal Beak’s palace, which was carved out from the ceiling of a massive cave.”

This dictate affected the designers’ search for reference locations. “The nice thing about Australia is that there is a lot of wild, untouched landscape.

Tasmania, an island at the southeastern end of the continent, is open to the Indian and Pacific oceans and is blasted by wild weather and amazing light, perfect for our owls. It also has large areas of terrain that are untouched, ancient forests and rivers, alpine mountains and cradle lakes—the raw elements that we needed. Tyto Forest, Soren’s home, is based on the cradle lakes of the Western Arthur Range in the southwest of Tasmania,” he details further.

The team flew by helicopter around the lakes, out to the ocean and back up the estuaries. “On the other side of the island, you have Cape Raoul, a coastline full of columns of rock, which are represented in the film when the band of travelers meets the Echidna, overlooking the Sea of Hoolemere.”

“We took some creative liberties, mixing up some of the vegetation,” environment supervisor Gregory Jowle allows, “but for the most part, everything we have is indigenous to the areas we studied, and the overall rock structures are reminiscent of the specific places we scouted throughout Australia and Tasmania. We wanted our environment to look like a world that could actually exist, so why not base it on one that really does?”

Despite basing their designs on reality, Snyder and the animators endeavored to do more than present a photo-realistic look to the film, they wanted to take even that up a notch to what they called hyper-realism. Freckelton explains, “In the film, you’re looking at something that, hopefully, could be a convincing reality. But, for instance, since owls are nocturnal and much of the story takes place at night, we didn’t always have the luxury of bright sunlight. We often relied on moonlight, but we amped it up by making it appear as if the moon were perpetually full, with light striking both sides of a character’s face, and maybe coming from behind him as well. At the same time, we might have played the background much darker, making for some moody atmospheres that allow the owl to pop in the scene.”

The centerpiece of the film is the Great Tree, a magnificent, 1,000-year-old tree growing out of a volcanic rock in the middle of the Sea of Hoolemere. Home to the Guardians, inside is an idyllic, self-contained ancient world with the intricacies of a modern-day city, including a wide array of hollows, rooms and common areas. The scale of the tree is about five times that of the largest

redwood trees, and other, smaller trees sprout from its many branches. In coming up with the design, Whiteley was influenced by Japanese bonsai trees, the way they are sculpted into beautifully interesting shapes.

Freckelton elaborates, “The idea was to have a central core in this kind of twisting shape. The tree itself is modeled on an oak tree, but from that we put gums and ferns and bracken bushes growing over the surface. The Guardians celebrate life and knowledge and preservation, and the tree is a symbol of that spirit.”

In stark contrast to the Great Tree—and the Guardians themselves—the world of the Pure Ones at St. Aggie’s is gloomy and oppressive, as if to represent the smothering of diversity and growth.

“They’re the bad guys,” Freckelton relates, “so everything is being decimated. Instead of encouraging new life, they just take what they find and repurpose it for their own use.”

Wigram states, “With Zack’s clarity of vision leading our amazing team at Animal Logic, a world has been created that is filled with fantasy, but also feels real—and beyond. The textures and colors of landscape and sky create an ancient place that feels like it truly exists apart from our own. My hope is that this will allow the audience to fully immerse themselves in the world of Ga’Hoole and share in the grand adventure of our heroes.”

“Guardians! We must uphold our oath. To battle!”

~ CINEMATOGRAPHY AND CHOREOGRAPHY ~

As a live-action director who has operated cameras throughout his career, Snyder is very hands-on and very in-tune with the camera. But with “Legends of the Guardians...” there was no camera he could pick up. In an animated movie, filmmakers have to work with virtual cameras, just as they have to generate the animated characters that populate the story.

Previz & lensing director David Scott, whose team determined the camera work for the film, was thrilled to work with someone with Snyder’s background. “Zack brought an entire live-action aesthetic to filmmaking that you don’t often see in animation. He’s all about camerawork. I spent a long time talking to him about his filmmaking style, lens choices, the way he likes to block a scene,

basically just downloading from him. Based on that, I ended up putting together a ‘lensing bible,’ which was essentially a how-to on making a Zack Snyder movie.”

Scott reveals his playbook emphasized that “the cameras needed to feel like live-action cameras: if we had a dolly shot, it needed to feel like someone was pushing the dolly; if we had a handheld shot, we needed to make the same kind of adjustments you’d make with a handheld camera. Same goes for crane shots. And Zack was very specific about when he wanted to slow things down to give you an awe-inspiring look at the action in detail.”

“In lensing this movie, we were really trying to create a different experience for an animated film,” Deborah Snyder shares. “Zack wanted the camera—which in animation, you can place wherever you choose—to be placed where it would normally be if we were actually shooting the film. That, along with giving the film a short depth of field since most scenes take place in the moonlight, stylistically gives it a different flavor.”

The director’s preference for a shallow depth of field challenged the animators, who weren’t always accustomed to taking the beautiful backgrounds they’ve created and knocking them out of focus in order to draw the viewer’s attention to what is most critical in the scene.

“We played around with the literal eye of the movie,” Zack Snyder says. “Though it’s counterintuitive for computer animation, we really tried to manipulate the tools of 3D to make it work...to stretch those concepts.”

In order to achieve everything that their director envisioned, Scott and the team spent a day at the Australian Film and Television School. “With a virtual camera, you can do anything,” he says. “You can put it anywhere and make it go as fast or slow as you want. There’s a lot of freedom in that. But the mandate from Zack was to make it look like we actually went out and photographed these owls. In order to accomplish that, we needed to have that live-action feeling of weight. If you’ve got a push in, you don’t want to just go ‘whoosh,’ you want to make sure you get the sense someone is there pushing a heavy camera forward. We trained with real handheld 35mm cameras, went up on the cranes, did everything we could to experience what it’s like physically to move these heavy cameras around.”

Scott felt that the schooling helped immensely in the end, as did the filmmakers' decision to play with the speed of the film. "Because owls move quickly and are lightweight, from the outset we decided that the movie should look like it was shot at 48 frames per second to slow things down and lend extra weight to the performances. Also, when you see a character land, or crash and hit the ground, we put a little camera shake in there to give things a bit more gravity, even though that would never happen in the real world."

Another way in which Snyder wanted to stretch the traditional sensibilities of animation was by enlisting an "owl stunt team" to perform choreographed battle sequences that the animators could then translate in the computer as the skirmishes between the characters.

Film editor David Burrows illustrates, "For example, there's a lot of martial arts-style action going on in the scene where Nyra and Grumble fight in the St. Aggie's library. So what Zack did was to stage it on a soundstage, with people dressed up as owls. No motion or performance capture, just stunt fighters and cameras. It was actually quite amusing to watch, but all the moves were there, blocked and edited and given to the previz department to realize, shot for shot. We refined it, but the actual choreography and camera work are intact, and it translated to the screen beautifully."

Scott recalls, "They were all wearing cardboard, and I think in some cases they were even on roller skates, which was really hilarious. It was great fun to watch but, to be honest, the entire shot structure was really well-developed. The energy and the intent of that footage were there, and we were able to convert the human performance into owl behavior and get the camera rig to reflect that handheld quality and timing perfectly."

"I loved the idea of getting real stunt guys to show the animators the body language of an actual fight," Snyder says. "As a result, I think they rendered it really well in the movie."

*"My dreams are what make me strong.
They led me to the Guardians."*

~ ORCHESTRATION FOR OWLS ~

To score the epic adventures of Soren and the Guardians, director Zack Snyder turned to composer David Hirschfelder, who leapt at the chance. “I got the opportunity to tell the story of a hero’s journey through music,” he recounts. “The music had to reflect Soren’s dreams, his hope and, starting small, grow into something much bigger.”

“David captured the movie’s themes beautifully, complementing both the action and the emotions throughout the story,” Snyder says.

Adding to the composer’s enthusiasm for the story was the fact that the characters were owls. “There’s something mysterious about owls, something very haunting. They carry so much symbolism in our world, and they fly with strength and power.” In order to convey those qualities, Hirschfelder says he “went with natural sounds, incorporating lots of wind instruments, in order to evoke the sense of air and flight.” He also used orchestral sounds in order to evoke the magical qualities of the story.

Hirschfelder worked in tandem with Wayne Pashley. “As a composer writing music for film, you are part of the sound design, and Wayne, in turn, was part of the “orchestra.” We’re telling a story in sound and really trying to create an atmosphere—the power of the wings, the clashing of the battle claws—so that it all washes over the audience and articulates the passion of the story and the characters.”

“David’s music truly underscores what these characters, especially Soren, are learning in this film,” Nalbandian asserts. “That by doing what’s right, by believing in yourself, you can overcome what’s evil in this world.”

“Soren is the moral compass of the movie,” Snyder states. “It’s about family—your true family—and the fact that you can, and should, fight for that.”

ABOUT THE CAST

HELEN MIRREN (Nyra) has won international recognition for her work on stage, screen and television. For her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in Stephen Frears' 2006 hit "The Queen," she received an Academy Award®, Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award®, and BAFTA Award for Best Actress. She was also named Best Actress by virtually every critics' organization from Los Angeles to London.

On the small screen, Mirren was also honored for her performance as Queen Elizabeth I in the 2005 HBO miniseries "Elizabeth I," winning an Emmy Award, a Golden Globe and a SAG Award®.

Most recently, Mirren earned both Oscar® and Golden Globe nominations for her performance in the historical drama "The Last Station," playing Sofya Tolstoy.

Mirren will put a new spin on Hobson in the reimagining of "Arthur," the role which earned John Gielgud an Oscar® in the original film. In another gender twist, Mirren will star as Prospera in Julie Taymor's big screen adaptation of Shakespeare's "The Tempest." In October, she will star as a retired assassin in Summit's "Red," based on the DC comic of the same name. In December, she stars as a Mossad agent in the John Madden-directed thriller "The Debt."

Mirren began her career in the role of Cleopatra at the National Youth Theatre. She then joined the Royal Shakespeare Company, where she starred in such productions as "Troilus and Cressida" and "Macbeth." In 1972, she joined renowned director Peter Brook's theatre company and toured the world.

Her film career began with Michael Powell's "Age of Consent," but her breakthrough film role came in 1980 in John Mackenzie's "The Long Good Friday." Over the next 10 years, she starred in a wide range of acclaimed films, including John Boorman's "Excalibur"; Neil Jordan's Irish thriller "Cal," for which she won the Best Actress Award at the Cannes Film Festival and an Evening Standard Film Award; Peter Weir's "The Mosquito Coast"; Peter Greenaway's "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover"; and Charles Sturridge's "Where Angels Fear to Tread."

Mirren earned her first Oscar® nomination for her portrayal of Queen Charlotte in Nicholas Hytner's "The Madness of King George," for which she also won Best Actress honors at the 1994 Cannes Film Festival. Her second Oscar® nomination came for her work in Robert Altman's 2001 film "Gosford Park." Her performance as the housekeeper in that film also brought her Golden Globe and BAFTA Award nominations, several critics groups' awards, and dual SAG Awards®, one for Best Supporting Actress and a second as part of the winning ensemble cast.

Among her other film credits are Terry George's "Some Mother's Son," on which she also served as associate producer; "Calendar Girls," for which she got a Golden Globe nomination; "The Clearing"; "Shadowboxer"; "National Treasure: Book of Secrets"; "Inkheart"; and "State of Play."

On television, Mirren starred in the award-winning series "Prime Suspect" as Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison. She had earned an Emmy Award and three BAFTA Awards, as well as numerous award nominations, for her role in early installments of the "Prime Suspect" series. She won another Emmy Award and earned a Golden Globe nomination when she reprised the role of Detective Jane Tennison in 2006's "Prime Suspect 7: The Final Act," the last installment in the PBS series.

Her long list of television credits also includes "Losing Chase," for which she won a Golden Globe Award; "The Passion of Ayn Rand," winning an Emmy and earning a Golden Globe nomination; "Door to Door," for which she received Golden Globe, Emmy and SAG Award® nominations; and "The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone," earning Golden Globe, Emmy and SAG Award® nominations.

Mirren has also worked extensively in the theatre. She has received two Tony Award nominations, the first for her work in "A Month in the Country," and another for her role opposite Sir Ian McKellen in "Dance of Death." She also received an Olivier Award nomination for Best Actress for her performance in "Mourning Becomes Electra" at London's National Theatre. In 2009, Mirren returned to the National Theatre to star in the title role in "Phèdre," directed by Nicholas Hytner.

Helen Mirren became a Dame of the British Empire in 2003.

GEOFFREY RUSH (Ezylryb) has won multiple international awards and acclaim, appearing in over 70 theatrical productions and more than 20 feature films since his start on stage in Australia.

Catapulted to fame with his starring role in Scott Hicks' feature "Shine," Rush received worldwide accolades, including an Academy Award® for Best Actor, as well as Golden Globe, SAG®, Australian Film Institute (AFI) and BAFTA Awards. His memorable performance also garnered international critical acclaim, winning the Film Critics' Circle of Australia Award, Broadcast Film Critics, and New York and Los Angeles Film Critics' Awards. Rush went on to earn an Academy Award® nomination for his performance in Philip Kaufman's "Quills," and Academy Award® and Golden Globe nominations for his role in "Shakespeare in Love." His captivating performance as the title character in HBO's "The Life and Death of Peter Sellers" won Rush an Emmy, a Golden Globe and a SAG Award®.

More recently, Rush starred in all three popular "Pirates of the Caribbean" blockbusters, which grossed more than \$2.7 billion worldwide. He will once again reprise his role in the much-anticipated "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides," alongside Johnny Depp. Also upcoming is Tom Hooper's historical drama "The King's Speech," opposite Helena Bonham Carter, Guy Pearce and Colin Firth; "Eye of the Storm," alongside Charlotte Rampling and Judy Davis; and the film version of the successful Australian stage musical "[Bran Nue Dae](#)," directed by [Rachel Perkins](#), which premiered in the U.S. at January's Sundance Film Festival and is set for release in September.

In 2009, Rush won a Tony Award for Best Leading Actor in a Play for his acclaimed performance as the ailing king in Ionesco's comedy "Exit the King." Previously, his life's work in the theatre was acknowledged with the prestigious Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award. A principal member of Jim Sharman's pioneering Lighthouse Ensemble in the early 1980s, Rush played leading roles in many classics. He was honored with the Sydney Critics Circle Award (SCCA) for Most Outstanding Performance, for his role in Neil Armfield's "The Diary of a Madman," as well as the Variety Club Award for Best Actor and the 1990 Victorian Green Room Award. He also received SCCA Best Actor nominations

for his starring roles in Gogol's "The Government Inspector," Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya" and Mamet's "Oleanna."

Rush received a degree in English at the University of Queensland, and studied at the Jaques Lecoq School of Mime, Movement and Theater in Paris. Returning to Australia, his early roles included starring in the theatre production of "King Lear" and alongside Mel Gibson in "Waiting for Godot."

His other film credits include "Munich," "Elizabeth: The Golden Age," "Candy," "Intolerable Cruelty," "Finding Nemo," "Ned Kelly," "Lantana," "Frida," "The Tailor of Panama," "House on Haunted Hill," "Mystery Men," "Les Miserables," "A Little Bit of Soul," "Children of the Revolution," "On Our Selection," "Twelfth Night," "Oscar and Lucinda" and "Starstruck." He is also the voice of God in ABC's comedy series "Lowdown."

JIM STURGESS (Soren) most recently starred as Jamie, opposite Timothy Spall and Clemence Posey, in Philip Ridley's critically acclaimed "Heartless," released in the UK in February. He will next be seen this fall as Janusz in Peter Weir's fact-based "The Way Back," starring opposite Colin Farrell and Ed Harris as a group of soldiers who engineer a grueling escape from a Siberian gang in 1942. He also stars as Dexter, opposite Anne Hathaway, in the romantic comedy "One Day," based on David Nicholls' acclaimed novel, and as Adam opposite Kirsten Dunst in the sci-fi fantasy "Upside Down," set for release next spring.

He was last seen in Kari Skogland's award-winning independent film based on Martin McGartland's shocking real life as an undercover spy who infiltrated the IRA, "Fifty Dead Men Walking," starring opposite Sir Ben Kingsley. The film premiered at the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival and Sturgess was nominated for the 2009 Vancouver Film Critics (VFC) Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Canadian Film.

Sturgess also starred in Robert Luketic's 2008 box office hit "21," alongside Kate Bosworth and Kevin Spacey; opposite Evan Rachel Wood in Julie Taymor's critically acclaimed film "Across the Universe"; "Crossing Over"; and "The Other Boleyn Girl."

Sturgess was nominated as the Best Newcomer by the Empire Film Awards in 2009.

HUGO WEAVING (Noctus/Grimble) is widely known for his role as Agent Smith in the Wachowski brothers' highly acclaimed "The Matrix" trilogy and for his starring role in "V for Vendetta"; and as Elrond in the award-winning "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy. He will next be seen as Johann Schmidt/The Red Skull in Joe Johnston's "Captain America," set for a 2011 release. He most recently starred in Johnston's "The Wolfman," and in the Australian film "Oranges and Sunshine," opposite Emma Watson and David Wenham.

Weaving's numerous credits in voice work include the characters of Megatron in Michael Bay's blockbuster "Transformers" and its sequel "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen"; Noah the Elder in George Miller's award winning "Happy Feet"; and Rex the Sheepdog in "Babe" and its sequel "Babe: Pig in the City."

Weaving is the recipient of three Australian Film Institute (AFI) Best Actor Awards, receiving the first in 1991 for his portrayal of a blind photographer in Jocelyn Moorhouse's breakthrough feature "Proof." He received a nomination in the same category in 1994 for the role of Mitzi Del Bra in Stephan Elliott's "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert." Weaving won his second AFI Award in 1998 for his role in "The Interview," written and directed by Craig Monahan, for which he also received the 1998 Best Actor Award at the World Film Festival in Montreal. In 2005, his role in the critically acclaimed "Little Fish," opposite Cate Blanchett and Sam Neill, earned Weaving his third AFI Award.

Weaving's extensive stage credits include the Sydney Theatre Company's "Hedda Gabler," opposite Cate Blanchett; "Riflemind," directed by Phillip Seymour Hoffman; and numerous productions with Sydney's acclaimed Belvoir St Theatre, including "The Alchemist," and "The Popular Mechanicals," with Geoffrey Rush.

EMILY BARCLAY (Gylfie) won the 2005 British Independent Film Award for Most Promising Newcomer and the 2005 New Zealand Screen Award for Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role for her role of Celia in the drama/thriller "In My Father's Den," starring with Matthew Macfadyen and directed by Brad McGann. She again garnered critical acclaim for her portrayal

of teenage mom Katrina, who plots to kill her father, in Paul Goldman's "Suburban Mayhem," for which she received a 2006 Best Actress Award nomination from the Film Critics Circle of Australia, and the 2006 Best Lead Actress Award from the Australian Film Institute (AFI) as well as the 2006 IF Award for Best Actress. She will next be seen playing Brenda in Paul Murphy's romantic comedy "Love Birds," alongside Rhys Darby, filming in New Zealand.

Her other films include "Lou," playing Rhia opposite Oscar®-nominated John Hurt, which debuted at Australia's Dungog Film Festival this year; comedy/drama "Prime Mover," starring Michael Dorman and directed by David Caesar; and John Laing's horror thriller "No One Can Hear You," starring with Kelly McGillis and Kate Elliott.

She has received accolades for her numerous television performances as well, including "The Silence," for which she earned a 2006 AFI nomination for Best Guest or Supporting Actress in Television Drama, and a 2007 Logie-Graham Kennedy Nomination for Most Outstanding New Talent. Additionally, she received the New Zealand Film Best Actress Award in 2009 for her role as Young Flora in "Pieces of My Heart," opposite Keisha Castle-Hughes.

On stage, she recently played Mia in "That Face" and Suzette in "Gethsemane" at Belvoir St Theatre.

ABBIE CORNISH (Otulissa) is best known for her starring roles in the independent films "Candy," opposite Heath Ledger, and "Somersault," with Sam Worthington, both Australian productions that garnered her Best Lead Actress Awards from the Film Critics Circle of Australia. She was also awarded Best Lead Actress from the Australian Film Institute (AFI) for "Somersault" and received a nomination for "Candy."

Cornish most recently starred as poet John Keats' lover, Fanny Brawne, alongside Ben Whishaw and Paul Schneider, in Jane Campion's period drama "Bright Star," which premiered at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival, and for which she received a British Independent Film Award nomination for Best Actress as well as international critic accolades. She will next be seen in the thriller "The Dark Fields," alongside Robert De Niro and Bradley Cooper, and Zack Snyder's "Sucker Punch," both scheduled for release in 2011, as well as Madonna's

“W.E.,” a historical fantasy examining the relationship between King Edward VIII and American socialite Wallis Simpson.

Her other feature credits include Kimberly Pierce’s “Stop Loss”; Shekhar Kapur’s “Elizabeth: The Golden Age”; Ridley Scott’s “A Good Year,” opposite Russell Crowe; “One Perfect Day”; and “The Monkey’s Mask.” Cornish’s acting debut came at the age of 15 in her homeland on the Australian Broadcasting Company’s television series “Children’s Hospital.” She then co-starred on the ABC series “Wildside,” which earned Cornish her first AFI honor in 1999. In 2003, she earned an AFI nomination for her guest role on the ABC mini-series “Marking Time.”

RYAN KWANTEN (Kludd) can currently be seen starring in the acclaimed HBO series “True Blood,” based on the books by Sookie Stackhouse, for which he received a Screen Actors Guild Award® nomination for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series.

He spent his hiatus from the popular Golden Globe-nominated show working on feature films, playing a police officer in the modern-day revenge western “Red Hill,” which debuted at this year’s Berlin Film Festival to rave reviews, and crafting the title role of secret agent and part-time superhero “Griff the Invisible.” He is currently in production on the film “The Knights of Badassdom,” alongside Steve Zahn. His other film credits include “Don’t Fade Away”; “Flicka”; the title role in “American Brown,” which received the Audience Award for Best Film at the Montreal Film Festival; “Liquid Bridge,” nominated for Best Picture at the Australian Film Festival; and James Wan’s “Dead Silence.”

Kwanten appeared in numerous films and television shows while earning his business degree at Sydney University, gaining international notoriety when he joined the cast of his native homeland’s long-running popular Australian series “Home and Away.” Among his other credits are the critically acclaimed series “Summerland” and the ESPN original movie “The Junction Boys.”

An accomplished athlete, Kwanten qualified for the world Biathlon in Sweden in 2006 and Italy in 2007 after winning the Los Angeles Biathlon series two years running.

ANTHONY LAPAGLIA (*Twilight*) received widespread critical acclaim for his portrayal of Jack Malone in the hit television series “Without a Trace,” for which he won a Golden Globe Award and earned an Emmy Award nomination and two Screen Actors Guild Award® nominations. In 2002, LaPaglia won an Emmy for his recurring role in “Frasier,” and was nominated in 2000 and 2004 for the same role.

He won a Tony Award, Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics Circle Award for his performance in the Arthur Miller classic “A View from the Bridge.” LaPaglia is also producing a feature film version of the Miller play. LaPaglia’s additional stage credits include the off-off-Broadway production of “The Guys,” the story of a fire captain who must prepare eulogies for the men he lost on 9/11. Sigourney Weaver and LaPaglia starred in the feature film adaptation of the same title.

LaPaglia received an Australia Inside Film Award nomination in 2009 for his performance in “Balibo,” playing war correspondent Roger East, who travels to East Timor to investigate the murders of the Balibo Five in 1975. He also produced the film.

His other film credits include the critically acclaimed “Lantana,” for which he won an AFI (Australian Film Institute) Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role, “Betsy’s Wedding,” “The House of Mirth,” “Sweet and Lowdown,” “The Client,” “Company Man,” “Summer of Sam,” “Autumn in New York,” “Lansky,” “Phoenix,” “Commandments,” “Brilliant Lies,” “Winter Solstice,” “The Architect” and “Happy Feet.”

LaPaglia has also appeared in the television series “Murder One” and the telefilms “Never Give Up: The Jimmy V Story”; “Criminal Justice,” for which he received a Cable ACE Award nomination; and “Garden of Redemption.”

MIRIAM MARGOLYES (Mrs. Plithiver) voiced the character of Mrs. Astrakhan in George Miller’s award-winning “Happy Feet” as well as Fly in his award-winning feature “Babe” and its sequel, “Babe: Pig in the City”; the Glowworm in “James and the Giant Peach”; and the Matchmaker in “Mulan”; as well as the famous Cadbury’s Caramel Rabbit. Her voice will next be heard in “Sir Billi,” alongside Sean Connery and Alan Cumming, as Baroness Chantal McToff.

She will next be seen in the last installment of the blockbuster film franchise “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2,” having previously appeared in “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.” Her other numerous film credits include appearances in over 40 major films in such diverse roles as Nurse in Baz Luhrmann’s “Romeo + Juliet,” with Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes; Mrs. Mingott in Martin Scorsese’s “The Age of Innocence,” for which she won the BAFTA Award for Best Supporting Actress; Peg Sellers in “The Life and Death of Peter Sellers,” with Geoffrey Rush; Dolly de Vries in “Being Julia,” with Annette Bening; Dorcas, the housekeeper in “Ladies in Lavender,” with Judi Dench and Maggie Smith; and Flora Finching in “Little Dorrit.”

SAM NEILL (Allomere) will soon be seen in “Ice,” alongside Richard Roxburgh and Stephen Moyer.

Early in his career, Neill starred opposite Judy Davis in Gillian Armstrong’s acclaimed “My Brilliant Career,” and in the Fred Schepisi films “Plenty” and “A Cry in the Dark,” for which he received the 1989 Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role. Other local films include John Ruane’s “Death in Brunswick,” for which he received the 1991 AFI nomination for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role; Phillip Noyce’s “Dead Calm,” opposite Nicole Kidman; and “Little Fish,” alongside Cate Blanchett, for which he received the Film Critics Circle of Australia (FCCA) Award nomination for Best Actor in a Supporting Role.

Neill’s extensive international credits include John McTiernan’s “The Hunt for Red October”; Wim Wenders’ “Until the End of the World”; Jane Campion’s Academy Award®-winning “The Piano”; Stephen Spielberg’s “Jurassic Park” and the sequels; Michael Hoffman’s “Restoration”; Robert Redford’s “The Horse Whisperer”; Chris Columbus’ “Bicentennial Man”; and most recently, Michael and Peter Spierig’s “Day Breakers.”

He has appeared in numerous television films and recurring roles in several series, including the recent ABC’s “Happy Town” and Showtime’s critically acclaimed “The Tudors.” He has been nominated three times for a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor: for the 1998 mini-series “Merlin’s Apprentice,” which also garnered him an Emmy Award nomination for Best Actor; 1992’s “One Against the Wind”; and the series “Reilly Ace of Spies,”

which also garnered him the honor of being awarded 1989's Best Actor on British Television. He received the 2004 AFI Best Actor in a Leading Role in a Television Drama or Comedy for his performance in "Jessica," as well as The TV Week Silver Logie nomination for Most Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series.

RICHARD ROXBURGH (Boron) has performed in over 25 films, including "Sanctum"; "Ice"; "Love and Mortar"; "Rob Cohen's Stealth"; Stephen Sommers' "Van Helsing"; Stephen Norrington's "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen"; Baz Luhrmann's "Moulin Rouge!"; John Woo's "Mission: Impossible II"; Gillian Armstrong's "Oscar and Lucinda"; and 1996's "Doing Time for Patsy Cline," for which he received the Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role as well as the Film Critics' Circle of Australia (FCCA) Award for Best Actor.

He has starred in a dozen television longforms, including most recently playing the role of Australia's longest-running Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, in "Hawke," and the "The Silence," for which he received a 2007 Silver Logie Award Nomination for Most Outstanding Actor, as well as the AFI Award nomination for Best Lead Actor in a Television Drama. For Roxburgh's performance in "Blue Murder," he received great critical acclaim and won an AFI nomination in 1996 for Best Actor in a Leading TV Drama Role as well as a Silver Logie Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role. He has also had recurring roles on several series, including the lead role in the ABC series "East of Everything."

Roxburgh made his feature film directing debut with "Romulus My Father," starring Eric Bana in the lead role, for which he won the 2007 AFI Award for Best Director.

Among Roxburgh's many theatre performances for Sydney's Belvoir St Theatre are "Toy Symphony," for which he received the 2008 Helpmann Award for Best Male Actor in a Play as well as the Sydney Theatre Award for Best Actor; and "Hamlet" with Geoffrey Rush, which garnered him the 1995 Green Room Award nomination for Best Actor, the Sydney Theatre Critics' Circle (STCC) Award for Best Performance by an Actor, and the STCC Shakespeare Globe Centre Award nomination for Best Performance by an Actor. His numerous roles for The Sydney Theatre Company include "The Closer" and "The Homecoming," the latter for which he received the 1992 STCC Award for Best

Performance in a Supporting Role. In 1995, he was honored with the Variety Club of Australia Stage Award.

Roxburgh has also directed several theatre productions including “Ray’s Tempest,” and “Twelfth Night” for Belvoir St Theatre, and “That Eye the Sky” for Burning House Theatre Company at the Melbourne International Festival and Sydney Festival, which garnered the 1994 STCC Award nomination for Best New Play or Musical and the STCC’s John Tasker Award for Freelance Director.

Roxburgh graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Art in 1986.

DAVID WENHAM (Digger) was already an award-winning star in his native Australia when he garnered international attention for his work in such acclaimed features as Baz Luhrmann’s “Moulin Rouge!,” with Nicole Kidman, and the last two installments in Peter Jackson’s blockbuster “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy, “The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers” and “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.” For his work in the latter, Wenham shared in the Screen Actors Guild Award®, Broadcast Film Critics Award and National Board of Review Award in the category of Best Ensemble. He more recently starred in “Oranges and Sunshine,” opposite Emma Watson and Hugo Weaving; “Public Enemies,” alongside Johnny Depp and Christian Bale; Baz Luhrmann’s epic drama “Australia,” opposite Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman; as Dilios in Zack Snyder’s blockbuster “300”; and in the horror thriller “Van Helsing.” Some of Wenham’s other film credits include “The Children of Huang Shi,” “The Proposition,” “Pure,” “The Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course,” “Dust,” “Russian Doll,” “No Escape” and “Greenkeeping.”

In 1997, Wenham starred in the miniseries “Babies,” for which he won his first Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award. The following year, he earned dual AFI Award nominations, one for his recurring role in the series “SeaChange,” for which he also won a Logie Award, and another for his performance in the screen adaptation of “The Boys,” for which he also received a Film Critics Circle of Australia (FCCA) Award nomination. Wenham has since won AFI, FCCA and Australian Comedy Awards for his role in the film “Gettin’ Square”; garnered AFI Award and FCCA Award nominations for the films “Better than Sex” and “The Bank”; and received an AFI Award nomination for “Molokai: The Story of Father Damien.” He more recently earned an AFI Award

nomination for the telefilm “The Brush-Off,” and won an AFI Award for his performance in the miniseries “Answered by Fire.”

Wenham attended the University of Western Australia before starting his career with small roles on television. He first gained attention for his memorable turn as an embittered ex-convict in the stage play “The Boys,” and for his role as a pyromaniac in both the stage and screen versions of “Cosi.”

ADRIENNE DEFARIA (Eglantine) is six and recently performed as Bussing Bee #3 in the La Canada Kindergarten Easter Parade. Before that she enjoyed a regular stint in Friday Night Charades at the deFaria household.

She is a full-time student studying to be a fireman or the President or a ballerina, depending on her mood...

JOEL EDGERTON (Metal Beak) last appeared in David Michod’s “Animal Kingdom.” He will next be seen in Matthijs Van Heijningen Jr.’s “The Thing,” produced by Marc Abraham, and Gavin O’Connor’s “Warrior,” opposite Nick Nolte, Tom Hardy and Jennifer Morrison.

He has appeared in over 20 films, including George Lucas’ blockbusters “Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones” and “Star Wars III: Revenge of the Sith”; Antoine Fuqua’s “King Arthur”; Joe Carnahan’s hip “Smokin’ Aces”; and Julian Jarrold’s critically acclaimed comedy “Kinky Boots.” He received the 2002 Films Critics’ Circle of Australia Award (FCCA) Nomination for Best Supporting Actor for his role of Shane in “The Hard Word,” and the 2003 FCCA Nomination for Best Actor in a Supporting Role for “Ned Kelly.” His work on “The Square” garnered him the 2008 FCCA for Best Screenplay as well as a nomination for Best Supporting Actor, along with accolades from the Australian Film Institute (AFI), including Best Original Screenplay and Best Supporting Actor. He also received the 2008 Melbourne Underground Film Festival Award for Best Actor for “Acolytes.”

Edgerton’s other credits include “The Waiting City,” “Separation City,” “\$9.99,” “Whisper,” “Open Window,” “The Night We Called It a Day,” “Dogwatch,” “Sample People,” “Praise,” “Erskineville Kings,” “Initiation,” and “Race the Sun.”

He has appeared on stage in numerous productions, including most recently playing Stanley, opposite Cate Blanchett, in Sydney Theatre Company's "A Streetcar Named Desire," for which he won the 2009 Sydney Theatre Award Nomination for Best Actor in a Lead Role; the role of Katurian in Melbourne Theatre Company's "Pillow Man"; and the role of King Henry in Bell Shakespeare Company's "Henry V."

His television credits include several longforms and recurring roles in series, including "The Secret Lives of Us," for which he received the 2002 AFI Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role in a TV Drama, the 2002 Silver Logie Nomination for Most Outstanding Actor, and the 2000 AFI nomination for Best Actor in A Supporting Role.

DEBORRA-LEE FURNESS (Barran) won Best Actress awards from the highly regarded Film Critics Circle of Australia, the Variety Award, and the Seattle International Film festival for her work in the movie "Shame." For her role in "Waiting," she received a Best Actress Award at Spain's San Sebastian International Film Festival. Furness was nominated by the Australian Film Institute for her guest-starring role in "SeaChange," and for Best Supporting Actress in Ray Lawrence's "Jindabyne," which also garnered her the Film Critics Circle Award of Australia for her portrayal of Jude. She is soon to be seen in Ana Kokinos "Blessed."

A graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, Furness directed the one-woman show "Portrait of a Lady" for the London Stage and a series of plays for The Hollywood Playhouse. She also wrote and directed the short film "Standing Room Only," which has been shown throughout Europe, Asia, Australia and the U.S. at major film festivals. In addition, she hosted the television series "Directors on Directing" for FOXTEL Australia.

Furness is founder, along with husband Hugh Jackman and business partner John Palermo, of film company Seed Productions.

Furness is to be honored at the Worldwide Orphans Gala in New York City for her work in advocacy for vulnerable children, which includes serving as World Vision ambassador, patron of various children's humanitarian organizations and co-founder of the Rafiki Society in Vancouver and Orphan Angels in Australia.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ZACK SNYDER (Director) made the jump to feature direction from the commercial and music video world with his inspired re-imagining of the George Romero classic “Dawn of the Dead.” He then directed the groundbreaking action epic “300,” adapted from the Frank Miller Graphic novel. Grossing more than \$450 million worldwide, “300” established Snyder as one of the film industry’s most artistic and sought-after directors. He followed with the expertly crafted “Watchmen,” bringing the “unfilmable” graphic novel to the big screen in 2009.

Snyder’s next film is the action fantasy “Sucker Punch,” which he directed and co-wrote, and also produced with Deborah Snyder. Opening on March 25, 2011, the film follows a young girl whose dream world provides the ultimate escape from her darker reality. “Sucker Punch” features an ensemble cast led by Emily Browning, Abbie Cornish, Jena Malone, Vanessa Hudgens, Jamie Chung, Carla Gugino, Jon Hamm and Scott Glenn.

Snyder produces through his Warner Bros.-based shingle, Cruel and Unusual Films, which he co-founded with wife and producing partner, Deborah Snyder. They are presently developing a wide range of films, including “The Last Photograph,” with a story by Snyder and screenplay by Kurt Johnstad; and “Army of the Dead,” an action-thriller being written by Joby Harold, from an original story by Snyder, with award-winning commercial filmmaker Matthijs van Heijningen, Jr. set to direct.

In addition, Snyder is scripting “Xerxes,” with his “300” collaborator Kurt Johnstad, based on Frank Miller’s upcoming graphic novel of the same name. Cruel and Unusual Films is also developing “The Illustrated Man,” based on Ray Bradbury’s classic, and “Cobalt 60.”

ZAREH NALBANDIAN (Producer) began his creative collaboration with Zack Snyder during production on the 2006 box office smash hit “300” and continues for Snyder’s upcoming action fantasy feature film “Sucker Punch.”

He served as an executive producer on the Academy Award®-winning “Happy Feet,” a groundbreaking film due to its photo-realistic visuals, highly

complex dance sequences and dramatic performances. His other projects under the Animal Logic banner include the visual effects-laden, Alex Proyas-directed sci-fi thriller “Knowing”; Baz Luhrmann’s epic “Australia” and “Moulin Rouge!”; as well as “Hero”; “The Matrix”; and “House of Flying Daggers.”

Nalbandian began his career in the early ‘70s as a film effects artist, working on feature films and television commercials in the pre-digital world. In 1991, he co-founded Animal Logic, with the vision to build a creative environment allowing artists and technicians to harness the opportunities offered by digital technologies for design, visual effects and animation production. With his commitment to creative and technical excellence, he has steered Animal Logic to become one of the world’s leading digital production studios.

JOHN ORLOFF (Screenwriter) is an acclaimed screenwriter who has been honored for his work in both film and television.

Orloff most recently wrote and executive produced “Anonymous,” a period drama centered on the question of Shakespeare’s authorship of his famous plays, directed by Roland Emmerich. Starring Vanessa Redgrave, Sir Derek Jacobi, David Thewlis, and Rhys Ifans, the film is slated for release in 2011.

Previously, Orloff received an Independent Spirit Award nomination for his screenplay for “A Mighty Heart,” about the tragic kidnapping of Daniel Pearl, directed by Michael Winterbottom and starring Angelina Jolie.

In addition, Orloff was nominated for an Emmy Award for his writing on HBO’s “Band of Brothers,” the widely acclaimed World War II miniseries, produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks.

Orloff has a diverse line-up of projects currently in development, including “How Starbucks Saved My Life” for director Gus Van Sant and producer/actor Tom Hanks.

EMIL STERN (Screenwriter) has credits as screenwriter which include “Tenderness,” starring Russell Crowe, and “The Life Before Her Eyes,” starring

Uma Thurman. Additionally, he has written projects for various production companies and studios.

Stern lives in Sydney, Australia and is an honors graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

KATHRYN LASKY (Author/Executive Producer) is the award-winning author of *The New York Times* best-selling children's 15-book series *Guardians of Ga'Hoole*, published by Scholastic.

She has written over 120 children's and young adult fiction and nonfiction books and sold over 11 million copies. Her awards include a Newbery Honor; twice winner of the National Jewish Book Award; citations from the American Library Association (ALA) for Best Book for Young Adults; Library of Congress Notable Book Award; National Academy of Science for the Best Book of the Year Award; Parents' Choice Honor Award; the Boston Globe Horn Book Award; *The Washington Post* Children's Book Guild Award; The John Burroughs Award for outstanding Nature Books for Children; the National Cowboy Hall of Fame Western Heritage Award; and two-time nominee for the Best Children's Mystery of the Year, Writers of America Edgar Award.

Lasky is currently at work on three new series for Scholastic: *Wolves of the Beyond*, *Daughters of the Sea* and *The Deadlies*.

DONALD DE LINE (Executive Producer) has, during his more than 20 years in the movie business, collaborated with some of the industry's biggest names on both sides of the camera. His upcoming releases are "Green Lantern," directed by Martin Campbell and starring Ryan Reynolds, which brings the DC Comics classic character to the big screen for the first time; Eric Brevig's "Yogi Bear," a live-action/CG animated adventure starring Dan Aykroyd as Yogi to Justin Timberlake's Boo Boo; and "Burlesque," starring Cher, Christina Aguilera, Kristen Bell and Stanley Tucci.

Some of De Line's prior films include John Hamburg's "I Love You Man"; Ridley Scott's "Body of Lies," starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Russell Crowe; and "Observe and Report," starring Seth Rogen. He scored his first major hit as

a producer with the 2003 heist thriller “The Italian Job,” starring Mark Wahlberg, Charlize Theron, and Edward Norton.

Before his producing career, De Line spent 20 years as a top studio executive, including President and Vice Chairman of Paramount Pictures, and President of Touchstone Pictures. During De Line’s tenure, Touchstone’s films grossed in excess of \$2.5 billion worldwide and garnered an impressive 24 Academy Award® nominations.

Films produced under his regime included "Pretty Woman"; "What About Bob?"; both "Father of the Bride" films; Ron Howard’s “Ransom”; the Oscar®-nominated biopic “What’s Love Got to Do With It”; Wes Anderson’s first studio feature, “Rushmore”; Tim Burton’s critically acclaimed “Ed Wood”; and the worldwide smash hit “Armageddon.”

DEBORAH SNYDER (Executive Producer) has emerged as a filmmaker who develops and produces visually arresting films that are both thought-provoking and entertaining.

Snyder is currently producing “Sucker Punch,” directed by Zack Snyder from an original screenplay he co-wrote. Slated for release in March 2011, “Sucker Punch” is an action fantasy that follows a young girl whose dream world provides the ultimate escape from her darker reality. The film features an ensemble cast, including Emily Browning, Abbie Cornish, Jena Malone, Vanessa Hudgens, Jamie Chung, Carla Gugino, Jon Hamm and Scott Glenn.

In addition, Snyder is a producer on a wide range of films that are presently in development, including “The Last Photograph,” “Army of the Dead,” “The Illustrated Man” and “Cobalt 60.” All of the films are being produced under the banner of Cruel and Unusual Films, the company she formed with Zack Snyder.

Snyder made her producing debut as an executive producer on the worldwide hit feature “300,” inspired by the Frank Miller graphic novel and directed by Zack Snyder. A breakout success, “300” took in more than \$70 million at the box office in its opening weekend and went on to gross over \$450 million worldwide. Snyder then produced Zack Snyder’s critically acclaimed “Watchmen,” the long-awaited adaptation of Alan Moore’s graphic novel.

LIONEL WIGRAM (Executive Producer) started his production company, Wigram Productions, in 2006 with a deal at Warner Bros. He most recently produced the international blockbuster “Sherlock Holmes,” starring Robert Downey Jr., Jude Law and Rachel McAdams, which made over \$500 million worldwide.

He is an executive producer on the much-anticipated two-part film adaptation of “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows” and previously served as executive producer on the hugely successful “Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix” and “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince,” and “August Rush.”

Wigram was educated at Oxford University, where he was one of the founding members of the Oxford Film Foundation. He started working in the film business while still at Oxford, serving as a production assistant for producer Elliott Kastner during summer holidays. Following graduation, he went to work for Kastner in California. Wigram produced his first film, “Never on Tuesday,” in 1987, followed by “Cool Blue,” starring Woody Harrelson, and “Warm Summer Rain,” starring Kelly Lynch, in 1988. In the same period, Wigram was involved in the development of the early drafts of what would become “Carlito’s Way.”

In 1990, Wigram became a development executive at Alive Films, where he worked on films by Wes Craven and Sam Shepard. He also produced “Cool as Ice,” and was an executive producer on Steven Soderbergh’s “The Underneath.” In 1993, he started a chef management company, Alive Culinary Resources, with Alive owner Shep Gordon. In addition to managing most of the top chefs in the U.S., they produced a cooking video series for Time Life, which featured Emeril Lagasse for the first time.

In 1994, Wigram joined Renny Harlin and Geena Davis’s company, The Forge, where he headed up development. Some of the projects on which he worked include “The Long Kiss Goodnight,” “Cutthroat Island” and the HBO film “Mistrial.”

Before his producing deal, Wigram was Senior Vice President of Production at Warner Bros. for 10 years. During his tenure, he was responsible for buying the *Harry Potter* book series for the studio and subsequently

overseeing the film franchise. In addition, he supervised such projects as “The Avengers,” “The Big Tease,” “Charlotte Gray,” “Three Kings” and “The Good German.”

CHRIS DEFARIA (Executive Producer) is Executive Vice President of Digital Production, Animation & Visual Effects at Warner Bros., overseeing the development and production of visual effects and feature animation for the studio. Recent projects include the “Harry Potter” films, “The Dark Knight,” “I Am Legend,” “Where the Wild Things Are,” “Watchmen,” “Sherlock Holmes” and “Clash of the Titans.”

Spearheading the studio’s expanding efforts in innovative animation and hybrid filmmaking, deFaria was instrumental in the production of “300,” “Corpse Bride,” “Happy Feet” and the upcoming film “Sucker Punch,” on which he serves as executive producer.

Prior to that, deFaria produced the hit “Cats and Dogs” and the combination animation/live action comedy “Looney Tunes: Back in Action.”

He is the recipient of three regional Emmy Awards and two NATPE Iris awards. His extensive television credits include numerous documentaries, prime-time specials and longforms including, as producer, “In Concert Against AIDS,” NBC’s “And Then She Was Gone,” “Amityville 5,” “Amityville 6” and “Tremors II.”

A graduate of The University of California, Los Angeles, he is a founding board member of the nonprofit organization FilmAid International.

BRUCE BERMAN (Executive Producer) is Chairman and CEO of Village Roadshow Pictures. The company has a successful joint partnership with Warner Bros. Pictures to co-produce a wide range of motion pictures, with all films distributed worldwide by Warner Bros. and in select territories by Village Roadshow Pictures.

The initial slate of films produced under the pact included such hits as “Practical Magic,” starring Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman; “Analyze This,” teaming Robert De Niro and Billy Crystal; “The Matrix,” starring Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne; “Three Kings,” starring George Clooney; “Space

Cowboys,” directed by and starring Clint Eastwood; and “Miss Congeniality,” starring Bullock and Benjamin Bratt.

Under the Village Roadshow Pictures banner, Berman has subsequently executive produced such wide-ranging successes as “Training Day,” for which Denzel Washington won an Oscar®; the “Ocean’s” trilogy; “Two Weeks’ Notice,” pairing Bullock and Hugh Grant; Eastwood’s “Mystic River,” starring Sean Penn and Tim Robbins in Oscar®-winning performances; “The Matrix Reloaded” and “The Matrix Revolutions”; Tim Burton’s “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” starring Johnny Depp; the Oscar®-winning animated adventure “Happy Feet”; the blockbuster “I Am Legend,” starring Will Smith; the hit comedy “Get Smart,” teaming Steve Carell and Anne Hathaway; the comedy “Yes Man,” starring Jim Carrey; the acclaimed drama “Gran Torino,” directed by and starring Clint Eastwood; “Where the Wild Things Are,” the screen adaptation of the beloved book, directed by Spike Jonze; and director Guy Ritchie’s hit action adventure “Sherlock Holmes,” starring Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law. He most recently served as executive producer on the comedy “Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore.” Village Roadshow’s upcoming releases include the romantic comedy “Life As We Know It,” directed by Greg Berlanti and starring Katherine Heigl and Josh Duhamel.

Berman got his start in the motion picture business working with Jack Valenti at the MPAA while attending Georgetown Law School in Washington, DC. After earning his law degree, he landed a job at Casablanca Films in 1978. Moving to Universal, he worked his way up to a production vice president in 1982.

In 1984, Berman joined Warner Bros. as a production vice president, and was promoted to Senior Vice President of Production four years later. He was appointed President of Theatrical Production in September 1989, and in 1991 was named President of Worldwide Theatrical Production, where he served through May 1996. Under his aegis, Warner Bros. Pictures produced and distributed such films as “Presumed Innocent,” “GoodFellas,” “Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves,” the Oscar®-winning Best Picture “Driving Miss Daisy,” “Batman Forever,” “Under Siege,” “Malcolm X,” “The Bodyguard,” “JFK,” “The

Fugitive,” “Dave,” “Disclosure,” “The Pelican Brief,” “Outbreak,” “The Client,” “A Time to Kill” and “Twister.”

In May of 1996, Berman started Plan B Entertainment, an independent motion picture company at Warner Bros. Pictures. He was named Chairman and CEO of Village Roadshow Pictures in February 1998.

SIMON WHITELEY (Production Designer) has art directed and designed visual effects sequences for various Animal Logic film projects, including the Academy Award®-winning “Happy Feet,” “Babe,” “Babe: Pig in the City,” “The Matrix,” “The Thin Red Line,” “Moulin Rouge!,” “Danny Deckchair” and “Swimming Upstream.”

Whiteley began his career in the early 1980’s in television as a graphic designer for the BBC, working on a diverse range of programs before moving into the commercial sector to produce TV and print advertising for the British Printing Communication Corporation. Whiteley immigrated to Sydney to join Video Paintbrush Company before joining Animal Logic in 1991.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Communications from Birmingham College of Art.

GRANT FRECKELTON (Art Director) forged a strong working relationship with Zack Snyder as Visual Effects Art Director during the production of the box office hit “300” and in 2007 received a Satellite Awards for his work on the project. He also served as Animal Logic’s VFX Art Director for the Wachowski brothers’ feature “Matrix: Reloaded,” and on “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.” His additional credits include “Moulin Rouge!,” “Garage Days” and “Rabbit-Proof Fence.”

Freckelton joined Animal Logic as a concept designer in 1998, contributing to numerous feature films and broadcast projects as an Illustrator, Matte Painter and Art Director. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in film and a minor in illustration from Curtin University in Perth, in 1998.

DAVID BURROWS (Editor) started as an assistant editor on a number of films, including “Michael Collins,” “The Avengers,” “Moulin Rouge!,” and “The Quiet American” before joining Animal Logic in May 2004 to work as visual effects editor on “Happy Feet.”

Burrows was born in Dublin, Ireland. He studied communications at Dublin Institute of Technology, majoring in film and graduating in 1994.

AIDAN SARSFIELD (Digital Supervisor) joined Animal Logic’s film division in 1999 following a successful career as a freelance industrial designer and in-house product designer for fashion label Mambo. Since joining Animal Logic, Aidan has worked on such high profile projects as “Baz Luhrmann’s Moulin Rouge!,” on which he was a senior 3D animator; as a 3D supervisor on “Matrix: Reloaded,” directed by the Wachowski brothers; and on Jane Campion’s “Holy Smoke.”

In 2003, Sarsfield was invited by producer Zareh Nalbandian to serve as character supervisor, overseeing a team of 40 character specialists on the company’s—and Australia’s—first 3D animated feature film, Happy Feet, directed by George Miller, which went on to win an Academy Award® for Best Animated Feature Film.

Sarsfield also served as visual effect supervisor on the 79th Annual Academy Awards® “Road to the Oscars” opening segment featuring “Happy Feet.” He also served as digital supervisor for the feature film “28 Weeks Later.”

Sarsfield holds a degree in industrial design from the University of Technology, Sydney, and was accepted into the NSW Film and Television Office Digital Effects Traineeship Scheme that helped launch his career with Animal Logic.

BEN GUNSBERGER (Digital Supervisor) launched his career in the mid-1990s, while still studying at University, by taking a job with Bump Map in Sydney, where he helped produce corporate videos, commercials and interactive movies for clients such as Sega. In 1996, not long after graduating, he began working at Animal Logic as a system support engineer, soon joining Animal Logic’s 3D team, first working on commercials before moving on to the feature

film “The Matrix,” as a technical director for the Agent Takeover and Lightning Gun sequences.

He left Australia and joined PDI/DreamWorks in the U.S. to work as a lighting artist on the boxoffice hit “Shrek.” He then moved to ESC in San Francisco to work as color and lighting technical director on “Matrix: Reloaded,” including a scene which went on to win a Visual Effects Society Award for the Best Visual Effect of the Year.

Gunsberger returned to Australia in 2003 and rejoined Animal Logic as lighting supervisor on George Miller’s “Happy Feet,” supervising a team of almost 70 specialists and support personnel on the Academy Award®-winning film. In 2006, he also took on the additional role of visual effects department supervisor, which involved working closely with digital supervisor Brett Feeney to oversee shot production for the entire film.

He holds a degree in computer science from the University of New South Wales and studied photography at the University of California, Berkeley. Gunsberger is a member of the Visual Effects Society, Associate Member of the Australian Cinematographers Society and is contracted to Workbook, a Los Angeles stock photo agency that represents his photographic work.

ERIC LEIGHTON (Animation Director) received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Visual Effects for his work as animation supervisor on Tim Burton’s “The Nightmare Before Christmas,” directed by Henry Selick. Leighton later collaborated with Burton and Selick in development on “James and the Giant Peach.” Leighton also co-directed the blockbuster computer-animated film “Dinosaur.”

He most recently served as lead animator on Selick’s “Coraline.” His other credits include animation supervisor for “Charlotte’s Web” and animation director for Peter Jackson’s Academy Award®-winning “King Kong.”

Leighton began his career in the ‘80s as a preminent stop-motion animator, working on many American classics, including the TV series “Gumby” and the Pillsbury Doughboy. His move into feature stop-motion came with “Robocop 2.”

DAVID SCOTT (Previz & Lensing Director) has worked across a number of digital disciplines over the past 15 years, from directing animated children's television to his current role at Animal Logic.

In 2006, Scott directed 40 episodes of the Emmy Award-winning CGI animated series "Animalia."

Previously, Scott worked with Peter Jackson as a pre-visualization artist and creature technical director on "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy; was a lead concept artist on the Oscar® winning animated feature "Happy Feet"; and visual effects art director for sequences on both "Superman Returns" and Baz Lurhmann's "Australia."

He began his career in animation and visual effects as a digital artist in New Zealand during the mid-1990's. He holds a Bachelor of Design in Visual Communications.

ALEXS STADERMANN (Head of Story) was most recently head of story/senior story artist at the Animation Lab in Jerusalem on "The Wild Bunch."

Prior to that, Stadermann spent 13 years with Walt Disney Animation in Sydney, Australia, starting his career with the company as a special effects supervisor for "Lion King 2," "Aladdin and the King of Thieves" and "Aladdin and the Return of Jafar." He then moved to the character department as a senior character animator on several titles, including "Jungle Book II," "Return to Neverland" and "Another Goofy Movie." In 2003, he led a team of 250 artists as unit director for "Bambi II" and "Tarzan II."

Stadermann then joined Aardman Animation in the UK as a series director on "Planet Sketch." In addition, he developed a range of projects for the company, from visual and concept stage through story.

WAYNE PASHLEY (Supervising Sound Editor and Designer) is a Sydney-based supervising sound editor/sound designer whose feature film credits include Australian and international titles. Starting his career in sound at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation during the early 1980's, he worked exclusively in drama and on many of the acclaimed mini-series of that time,

including “Captain James Cook,” “The Boy in the Bush” and “Great Expectations.”

In 1987, Pashley moved into a freelance career as a sound designer, opening the doors to his own sound studio, Big Bang Sound Design, and working with some of the finest directors and producers in the film industry. Since then, he has contributed to the soundtracks of over 40 feature films, including Peter Weir’s “Greencard” and “Fearless”, George Miller’s “Lorenzo's Oil” and “Babe” movies, Bruce Beresford’s “Paradise Road”, Gillian Armstrong’s “Oscar & Lucinda” and Steve Irwin’s “Crocodile Hunter – Collision Course.”

In 1997, Pashley received local and international recognition for his work on Bill Bennett’s “Kiss or Kill” with an Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award for Best Achievement in Sound, and Best Artistic Contribution Award from the Montreal World Film Festival. A second AFI award for Best Achievement in Sound came in 1999 for “In a Savage Land.” He received recognition from the British Academy and the American Motion Picture Sound Editors Guild for his work on Baz Luhrmann's “Strictly Ballroom” and “Australia,” which also won soundtrack of the year from the Australian Sound Editors Guild; Chris Noonan's “Babe,” George Miller’s “Babe: Pig in the City” and the Oscar®-winning motion picture “Happy Feet.”

Pashley is currently engaged on the upcoming George Miller films “Happy Feet 2” and “Mad Max: Fury Road.”

ALEX WEIGHT (Animation Supervisor) has spent more than 13 years working professionally in 3D Animation. After studying fine arts at Sydney’s National Art School and the prestigious Julian Ashton College, a six-month traineeship with Disney followed before he began working on computer games at Brilliant Interactive Ideas in Sydney, commercials for various companies, and stints for Fox Network, Flap Jack Animation and Sydney’s Ambience Entertainment.

In 2001, Weight joined Animal Logic to work on “The Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course” and a game cinematic for “Ty the Tasmanian Tiger.” He then worked as a senior animator for Rising Sun Pictures on “George of the Jungle

2,” before returning to Animal Logic to work on the Oscar®-winning “Happy Feet,” where he was quickly promoted to lead animator.

Following the success of “Happy Feet,” Weight was invited to mentor the graduating year of students in Animation & Media Studies at the Australian Film Television & Radio School. In 2008, he added “The Ruins” to his list of visual effects credits.

DAMIEN GRAY (Character Supervisor) joined Animal Logic as a 3D Animator in 2003, following three-and-one-half years at a prominent 3D game development company, Atari Melbourne House. While at Atari, Gray developed his modeling, texturing, rigging and animation techniques for characters featured in the games “Looney Tunes: Space Race,” “Men in Black II: Alien Escape” and “Transformers” for Playstation 2.

When Animal Logic started production on George Miller’s Academy Award®-winning animated feature film “Happy Feet,” Gray was invited to join the team as a 3D animator, but due to his superior technical skills was quickly promoted to character technical director, then to supervising character technical director.

Gray holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts in Animation from the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University in Brisbane.

GREG JOWLE (Environment Supervisor) joined Catapult Productions in 1998, working on the animated TV series “Monster by Mistake,” subsequently freelancing on various TV shows, music videos, and commercials before becoming development artist at Nelvana for its slate of animated TV series and films. In 2002, he took on the role of assets supervisor, leading a team of artists in the modeling, surfacing and rigging departments.

Jowle went to C.O.R.E. in 2003 as a lead environment artist on the feature “The Wild,” and later as a shot finalizing artist for the feature “The Ant Bully.” In 2006, Jowle moved on to Vanguard Animation as the supervisor of environments and surfacing on the feature animation “Space Chimps.”

Jowle graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design, starting his career as a visual artist, working mainly in sculpture before moving into computer animation and 3D studies at the University of Toronto, Canada.

DAVID HIRSCHFELDER (Composer) has been twice-nominated for an Oscar® for Best Original Film Score for the films “Shine” and “Elizabeth.” He also received a Golden Globe Award nomination for Best Original Score – Motion Picture for “Shine” and The Chicago Film Critics Awards nomination for Best Original Score for “Elizabeth.”

He is a three-time BAFTA Award nominee, winning Best Original Film Score twice, for both “Strictly Ballroom” and “Elizabeth”; and a three-time nominee for the Australian Film Institute Award for Best Original Film Score, winning for “Shine.” He has been nominated twice and won a Genie Award for Best Achievement in Music – Original Song for “Shake Hands with the Devil,” and twice for the Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards, winning for Best Music Score for “The Interview.”

He has also been nominated three times for ARIA Music Awards for Best Original Soundtrack Album, winning for “Elizabeth,” and received a nomination from ARIA for Producer of the Year. In addition, he won the New Zealand Film and TV Awards for Best Original Music for “What Becomes of The Broken Hearted” and a 1987 Penguin Award for the documentary “Suzy’s Story.”

Among his numerous film credits are Baz Luhrman’s “Australia” and “Strictly Ballroom,” Roger Spottiswoode’s “The Children of Huang Shi” and “Shake Hands With the Devil,” Shekur Kapur’s “Elizabeth” and “Elizabeth: The Golden Age,” “Aquamarine,” “Better Than Sex,” Kathryn Bigelow’s “Weight of Water,” Diane Keaton’s “Hanging Up,” “What Becomes of the Broken Hearted,” “The Interview,” “Sliding Doors,” “Shine,” “Dating the Enemy” and “I Love You Too.”

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