

THE SOLOIST

*"Then let us all do what is right,
strive with all our might toward the unattainable . . ."*
– Ludwig van Beethoven

From the director of the Academy Award®-nominated "Atonement," Joe Wright, and starring Oscar® winner Jamie Foxx and Oscar® nominee Robert Downey Jr., comes this poignant and ultimately soaring tale. It is based on an incredible true story of a disenchanting journalist's transformative odyssey through the hidden streets of Los Angeles, where he discovers and builds a most unlikely friendship with a man from those same streets, bonding through the redemptive power of music.

Columnist Steve Lopez (Downey) is at a dead end. The newspaper business is in an uproar, his marriage to a fellow journalist has fallen apart and he can't entirely remember what he loved about his job in the first place. Then, one day, while walking through Los Angeles' Skid Row, he sees the mysterious bedraggled figure Nathaniel Ayers (Foxx), pouring his soul into a two-stringed violin. At first, Lopez approaches Ayers as just another story idea in a city of millions. But as he begins to unearth the mystery of how this alternately brilliant and distracted street musician, once a dynamic prodigy headed for fame, wound up living in tunnels and doorways, it sparks an unexpected quest. Imagining he can change Ayers' life, Lopez embarks on a quixotic mission to get him off the streets and back to the world of music. But even as he fights to save Ayers' life, he begins to see that it is Ayers – with his unsinkable passion, his freedom-loving obstinacy and his valiant attempts at connection and love – who is profoundly changing Lopez.

DreamWorks Pictures and Universal Pictures Present In Association with StudioCanal and Participant Media A Krasnoff/Foster Entertainment Production In Association with Working Title Films "The Soloist" starring Jamie Foxx, Robert Downey Jr., Catherine Keener, Tom Hollander and LisaGay Hamilton. The film is directed by Joe Wright from a screenplay by Susannah Grant based on the book by Steve Lopez. The producers are Gary Foster and Russ Krasnoff. The executive producers are Tim Bevan, Eric Fellner, Jeff Skoll and Patricia Whitcher. The director of photography is Seamus McGarvey, B.S.C. The production designer is Sarah Greenwood. The editor is Paul Tothill, A.C.E. The costume designer is Jacqueline Durran. The music is by Dario Marianelli. This film has been rated PG-13 for thematic elements, some drug use, and language. Distributed by Paramount Pictures Corporation.

PROLOGUE:
"THE SOLOIST" JOURNEYS FROM STREET TO PAGE TO SCREEN

In April 2005, *Los Angeles Times* columnist Steve Lopez kicked off a riveting series of features about Nathaniel Anthony Ayers, an astonishingly talented, yet utterly lost street musician Lopez had happened upon pushing his shopping cart and playing, with astonishing virtuosity, a two-stringed violin on the hard-knock streets of Skid Row. Very shortly thereafter, Lopez's stories became a phenomenon unto themselves.

As Lopez began to dig into Ayers' past as a Juilliard prodigy of great promise, and set out on his own challenging quest to bring dignity to Ayers' current life on the street, the articles continued to draw a vast readership. Rife with emotion and eye-opening in their raw reality, the stories of Lopez's unusual encounters with Ayers captured the city's imagination. Ayers himself, with his whimsical belief that

Beethoven must be the leader of Los Angeles, his unwavering commitment to art and personal freedom in spite of his circumstances, and his steely knowledge of how to survive the dangers of the streets – was an irresistible true-life character.

However, his story seemed to be about so much more than just a man down on his luck. It was about the secret, yet transcendent dreams that exist even at the American margins; it was about crossing the gulf between the privileged and the outcast; and, perhaps most intriguingly, it was about the often perilous task of trying to change a friend's life, and how such a quest can lead paradoxically to exhilarating revelations about one's own.

Recalls Lopez: "Readers got very involved in the story and began rooting in some way for Mr. Ayers." Letters, e-mails and packages flooded into Lopez's inbox, including violins and cellos, all to show their support for the homeless man whose meteoric ups and downs had become part of their daily lives.

It soon became clear that this story had leapt beyond the boundaries of Lopez's column. He began writing a book about his remarkable, ongoing bond with Ayers, The Soloist: A Lost Dream, an Unlikely Friendship, and the Redemptive Power of Music, which was published in early 2008. Well before that happened, there had already been avid interest in transferring Lopez's remarkable odyssey in befriending Ayers to the screen.

Although many producers expressed interest in the story, it was Russ Krasnoff and Gary Foster, partners in a leading production company Krasnoff/Foster Entertainment, who gained Lopez's trust.

The producing partners had been driven by a near instantaneous reaction to Lopez' columns. Explains Krasnoff: "I can't remember ever reading newspaper articles that so moved me like those Steve wrote about Nathaniel. Here was a story about two men, one who is troubled and who society says is broken, and another who is seen as very successful. Yet Steve discovers in Nathaniel a passion he will

never know. I was intrigued because Steve was not just investigating a story about an unusual homeless man; he was looking deeper into the motivations and rationales for *all* our lives. He had gotten down to the very root of these characters, which for a film, is everything.”

Adds Foster: “We felt that in the right hands this could become a film about love, about inspiration, about the power of how people can help each other. That’s what we wanted. We saw right away that this was a story of life-altering friendship. Nathaniel helped Steve discover more of his humanity and Steve gave Nathaniel the hope for more in his life than just sitting in a tunnel and playing a two-stringed violin. There’s great drama, great emotion, and I was also inspired by the fact that it takes place in Los Angeles and explores the many aspects of the city, from the glimmering beauty of downtown to the stark grayness of skid row. One block separates them but it feels like they’re worlds apart.”

Soon after striking a deal with Lopez, Krasnoff and Foster brought DreamWorks on board, who in turn approached Oscar®-nominated screenwriter Susannah Grant, best known for turning the true story of “Erin Brockovich” into an acclaimed and award-winning hit movie. To pique Grant’s interest, they simply sent her a packet of Lopez’s columns.

“I knew as soon I read the columns that I didn’t want anyone else to touch this story,” she says of her reaction. “I just knew I needed to write it, and the challenge was trying to communicate what excited me so much about the material.”

Grant quickly had in mind a vision for structuring Lopez’s prose into a dramatic screen narrative. She honed in on the different kinds of transformation each of the two men undergoes in their relationship, and the way friendship pushes each of them to places they had never imagined. “I always saw ‘The Soloist’ as a love story, a story of a great, deep friendship unlike any other, about two people trying to connect despite the loneliness of the city and the inherent differences

between them," she says. "There aren't many movies about male friendship, so that was another plus."

Ultimately, Grant fictionalized the two characters and situations to some extent. She created an ex-wife for Lopez (who is happily married) to add an extra layer of isolation to the columnist's world; compressed Ayers' two sisters into one character; and adjusted the chronology of their friendship in subtle ways to maintain dramatic pacing. At the same time, to capture the reality of the story, Grant spent considerable time with both Lopez and Ayers, getting to know them personally. She spent days hanging out at Disney Hall in downtown Los Angeles and going off on sheet music buying expeditions with the duo. "They're two wonderful men and it was a privilege to spend time with them," she says.

Later, on the set, Grant would be amazed to see Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey Jr. bring the very essence of each man to life through her words. "For me, it was almost unnerving how completely Jamie embodied the experience of being Nathaniel without ever being an imitation. The way he captured the vulnerability Nathaniel carries out into the world each day was amazing to watch," she observes. "And I loved the assuredness Robert brought to the character. The way you see Steve's heart open up bit by bit is really beautiful."

Yet as inspirational as both Ayers and Lopez might be at times, Grant was also insistent on staying away from the urge towards fairy-tale sentimentality in the story. Rather, she wanted to reveal the truth of their challenges as people. "It was important to honor the fact that a significant friendship isn't going to cure an illness like schizophrenia and that it is always going to be an ongoing struggle for Nathaniel," she explains. "Most of all, I wanted to pay homage to the humanity of these characters."

ADAGIO:
DIRECTOR JOE WRIGHT JOINS "THE SOLOIST"

When it came to choosing a director for "The Soloist," the filmmakers followed a suggestion from DreamWorks' head Stacey Snider about a young, rapidly rising British director who had just garnered international acclaim with his debut film, "Pride & Prejudice," and had recently completed an epic adaptation of Ian McEwan's beloved novel Atonement. "Atonement" would go on to win a Golden Globe and a BAFTA Award for Best Picture of the Year, as well as an Academy Award® nomination for Best Picture, and make Wright one of today's most sought-after directors.

Gary Foster recalls, "When I saw 'Atonement,' I got very excited because I could see that Joe Wright was a man who believes in complex cinema, who knows that dialogue and characters matter. After we sent him the script, Joe called me and said, 'I've read many scripts from Hollywood and this is the first one that moved me to consider making my first film in America.' He saw this story as a way of bringing Hollywood and British realism together, which we were very excited about."

Although Wright had never made a film in the U.S. before, he felt this was a film that might benefit from his distinctly outsider's point of view. "Both Steve and Nathaniel are sort of outside observers of the world they live in, and therefore it felt more appropriate for me as an outsider to come in and tell this story," he comments. "What interested me is that Steve and Nathaniel have kind of cut themselves off from society and also from their emotional lives. Steve is, in a way, as much of a 'soloist' as Nathaniel. And yet, they each learn something about love by trying to become friends."

The chance to present a fresh cinematic view of Los Angeles also intrigued the director, who sees the film as setting up a mirror image to the glitzy city, which encompasses great beauty and streets of squalor all within blocks of each other. "I think this story gets to the tenacity of humanity that is expressed in Los Angeles daily life," he says. "There's an extraordinary survival instinct in L.A. that is both literal and in terms of the fantasies people have about coming here to fulfill dreams. There's something quite powerful and, at times, tragic in that, which comes out in 'The Soloist.'"

Before signing on, Wright flew to Los Angeles to talk further about the script with the producers and used the opportunity to make his own personal forays alone into Skid Row. This had a profound effect on him and changed the direction of the film, firing up Wright with a desire to bring the rich humanity of this invisible part of the city's population out into the open.

Recalls Russ Krasnoff: "Joe went on a bit of his own emotional journey in exploring Skid Row to determine if he could commit to immersing himself in this film. Then, he thrilled us all by saying, 'I'm in, but on the condition that I be able to make the film *in* and *with* the community in which the story is being told.'"

Adds executive producer Patricia Whitcher: "He really wanted to do something unique that hadn't been attempted before."

Wright says it was his trip to visit Skid Row and the Lamp Community – the advocacy group that offers nearly 200 private apartments for the homeless, including the one where Ayers currently lives, that made everything clear. "The people I met on Skid Row are the reason I'm making this film," he states. "They are the kindest, gentlest, funniest and most honest people I've ever met. If you let them, they will change your life. I hoped involving them would bring an authenticity to the film, but also would do something for them in return. It would be work, they'd learn skills and it would be something to be proud of. These people are the most

disenfranchised people in American society and don't generally have a voice. I wanted our film to be able to give them that voice."

From the moment Wright committed to the movie, the filmmakers carved out time every day to reach out to the community. "Joe spent two or three days a week getting to know the people who populate Lamp Community," says Foster.

Wright also utilized members of the Lamp Community, as well as others from Midnight Mission, Union Rescue Mission, the Downtown Women's Center and Volunteers of America as extras. "It was an essential part of the process but it didn't come easy," notes Foster. "We had to be careful on so many levels, but at the end of the day, the members of the community who worked with us added a power and emotion to the movie that we couldn't have imagined."

Yet for all his emphasis on stark authenticity, Wright also wanted to shine a light on the joy inherent in Steve and Nathaniel's odd-couple friendship. "I was always nervous about the film taking itself too seriously," he says. "With material like this, which crosses themes of homelessness and poverty and schizophrenia, it would be easy to fall into that pitfall, so it was very important to make sure there was a lot of light and shade in the movie. The film goes to some places that are very dark, which meant that the light parts had to feel that much lighter."

He concludes: "I wanted it to feel like we were taking a real look at this community, without glossing things over. There's a lot of hope, light and beauty in this movie."

SCHERZO:
JAMIE FOXX AND ROBERT DOWNEY JR. TAKE THE LEAD
ROLES

As distinctive and complicated a person as Nathaniel Ayers is, the filmmakers knew that the character would be an extremely demanding one to portray. After all, what actor would be able to travel the distance between Nathaniel's undeniable genius and his unalterable moments of mental imbalance?

Fortunately, almost as soon as the script was completed, Academy Award® winner Jamie Foxx expressed interest in the role. The actor was looking forward to using the same focus and commitment he had shown in his rich portrait of Ray Charles in "Ray," and hit the ground running. Although he came to the production with the advantage of being a highly accomplished musician in his own right, he spent six intensive months learning advanced cello and violin techniques.

Notes Gary Foster: "From the outset, Jamie's appetite for this role was voracious and he grabbed it to the point where he moved away from his life during filming. We rented him an apartment to play the cello and think about the next day's scenes without interference from his normal existence. He really put himself inside this bubble and I cannot thank him enough for understanding what it was going to take to play this part."

Adds Joe Wright: "Jamie has a heart the size of America and a very sensitive and gentle one at that. I believe he really loves Nathaniel, which was so important."

Foxx immediately had an emotional reaction when he first read the script on a plane to London. "I guess altitude makes you even more emotional and I was getting misty on the plane," he says. "It's so seldom you find a character captured with so many nuances and have everything work so well together on the page. I

thought it was amazing. It's a story about how trying to understand someone else's world can take you a long way in your own, and it's really a beautiful love story."

Soon after taking on the role, Foxx met the real-life Nathaniel Ayers, which kicked everything into high gear. "It was just great to meet him, to get to know him up close and personal, to really be able to see his passion for music and his day-to-day life," says the actor. "I wanted to get his speech down, I wanted to get all his subtleties down but, most of all, I wanted to capture his spirit."

Foxx understood that accomplishing the latter was going to take him to some dark and uneasy places, as well as some magical ones. "It was tough," he admits, "because I had to try to submerge myself into the mind of a schizophrenic in order to really understand what Nathaniel's journey is all about. You have to kind of slip off the deep end a bit, and the biggest challenge was letting go."

Still, no matter how strange Nathaniel's reality could be at times, Foxx held on to a deep respect for his individuality and his sheer resourcefulness in navigating the twists and turns life throws at him. "The thing that makes Nathaniel like everyone else is that he is a person who is trying to make sense of the world. He has all these thoughts floating around, and he's trying to make sense of them," says Foxx. "From the outside looking in, it looks like he's disturbed but actually I think he has figured out how to remain functional in his own way in our society. What seems abnormal to us is normal for Nathaniel. That's his mojo, that's how he gets around. And, even while he's in this homeless situation, he's toiling with these great dreams."

The deeper he got into Nathaniel's way of seeing the world, the more Foxx realized just how strange his first encounter with Steve Lopez must have been. "I think he thought maybe this guy was a dream or something," observes Foxx. "And he certainly didn't get why someone would want to write articles about him. They start off butting heads because Steve wants to save this guy's life and Nathaniel

doesn't think his life needs saving. Yet, these two people who begin on opposite ends of the spectrum end up discovering each other's worlds."

The more Lopez allows Nathaniel to be himself, the deeper their friendship grows, culminating in a moment that brings Nathaniel face-to-face with his lost dreams of musical greatness at Disney Hall. "For Nathaniel, to see musicians in perfect harmony playing the most beautiful music is heaven and he is amazed that someone could give him such a special gift," says Foxx.

Foxx himself found a special harmony in working side-by-side with Robert Downey Jr. to forge this life-changing friendship. "I was in awe working with Robert," says Foxx. "I think he's one of the greatest actors you'll ever see; his talent is just so deep. On the set, I watched every little thing he did and took note of it."

He continues: "The way Robert plays Steve Lopez, showing all his trials and tribulations, gives the film a breath of fresh air."

For Foxx, the role was not only a chance to dive into a mind unlike any other, it was also an opportunity to tell a new story about the power of something very close to his own heart: music. Like Ayers, Foxx trained most of his young life to be a classical musician – a pianist – and knows first-hand the kind of single-minded dedication that is required to become a world-class artist. For the film, however, he had to train all over again, this time to transform himself into a virtuoso cellist in a matter of months. "For me, it was essential that Nathaniel's playing be genuine," says Foxx.

To take Foxx through a musical boot camp, the production recruited L.A. Philharmonic cellist Ben Hong, who had the distinct advantage of being a real-life friend of Ayers, and familiar with his musical style (indeed, later Hong would record the tracks Foxx plays on screen, as an homage to Ayers). Hong knew they would both have to work hard to get Foxx to the point of embodying a cellist of Ayers' exceptional talent and skill.

The first order of business was getting Foxx comfortable with the large, body-shaped instrument. “Jamie is a great pianist, but the cello is obviously quite different from the piano. So one of the most important things was just getting the basic posture and hold of the instrument and the bow,” Hong explains. “From there, Jamie had to learn the fingerings and the bowings very accurately, because, since the instrument’s neck is right next to the actor’s face, the posture and hand positions are all very much on display.”

“Ben made it fun,” says Foxx, “but he also challenged and pushed me. We sat up for hours every night trying to make sure every aspect of the cello playing was seamless.”

To speed up the learning curve, Hong worked out a system where he would call out numbers to help Foxx remember which finger to play on which note. “The way we did it in our training was by singing the melody along with the fingering numbers to each note, and that worked quite well,” says Hong.

Foxx notes that the teaching process made an enormous difference. “It was a great system because it sort of translated the music directly to the fingers, and put me on a fast track to learning all the film’s pieces. It felt like I practiced a zillion hours a day, but when it came to shooting, it really came in handy.”

Although the cello is Nathaniel Ayers’ main instrument, when Steve Lopez first meets him he plays the violin – because a cello doesn’t fit in his shopping cart. To authentically create these scenes, Foxx worked closely with Alyssa Park, an internationally known violinist and the youngest prizewinner in the history of the Tchaikovsky International Competition. They practiced at least once a week for two months to learn proper violin bowing and fingering techniques.

As much as the reality of the film’s music was important to Foxx, he also wanted his performance to get across the metaphor of how we all strive to lead harmonious lives. “I think both Nathaniel and Steve can ultimately be seen as

soloists,” says Foxx. “They’re each trying to find a way to play the music of their life – and have it be heard by someone.”

With Foxx already cast, the filmmakers began searching for an actor with the strengths to contrast and connect with him as Steve Lopez – which led them straight to Academy Award® nominee Robert Downey Jr., fresh off his very different blockbuster role as “Iron Man.”

For Joe Wright, Downey’s casting was just as vital as that of Jamie Foxx. “When I started working on ‘The Soloist’ it seemed Nathaniel was the film’s extraordinary character, but I soon realized that Steve Lopez is equally so,” says Wright. “He is the film’s Everyman. Steve is someone who’s never been able to commit to other people and he goes into this relationship thinking that he can save Nathaniel, but actually it’s he who’s changed by the experience in the end. Robert was able to bring a great humanity and a fierce intellect to that.”

For Downey, who portrayed a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter in David Fincher’s “Zodiac,” playing a columnist in “The Soloist” was both familiar and a complete turnabout from his two most recent roles in big, summertime action films: “Iron Man” and “Tropic Thunder.” He says: “This last year I’ve done these really big, fun, showy movies and I think it was just what the cosmos ordered for me – to do something about humanity and humility and tolerance.”

It was Downey’s initial meeting with Joe Wright that sealed the deal. “I was so taken by the way he saw the movie,” he says. “He spoke about how he wanted to pepper the cast with actual members of the Lamp Community, how he really wanted this to be a film not about mental illness but about faith. He also said it was a love story, which I thought was a charming notion.”

Downey then met with Lopez, which gave him further insights into how to approach the role. “Steve is very charming, very engaging and a great storyteller but, when we met, he insisted that I not try to impersonate him in any way, so we

ended up going in a somewhat different direction,” says Downey. “Joe and I talked about trying to really create a sense of a man in crisis, and that crisis is matched, mirrored and somewhat healed by this relationship with Nathaniel.”

After spending time watching Nathaniel and Steve together, Foxx and Downey also latched onto the fun at the center of their unusual relationship, something that really came across when they were on set together. “I think Robert brought levels of passion and compassion that really elevated the script,” says Krasnoff. “Any time an actor can take a brilliant script and elevate it, you have something very special. He brought humor and life to the movie in a wonderful way.”

Adds Foster: “I have never seen anyone on set as detailed as Robert. He works so hard. He looks for every moment and every beat of every scene and tries to find every opportunity to give you options. “It’s been an unbelievable pleasure and honor to watch him create.”

FUGUE: **THE SUPPORTING CAST**

Surrounding Foxx and Downey in “The Soloist” is an ensemble of highly accomplished actors in crucial supporting roles. They include Catherine Keener, a two-time Supporting Actress Oscar® nominee for “Capote” and “Being John Malkovich,” in the role of Mary Weston who, in the film, is Steve Lopez’s editor and ex-wife. (Utilizing some dramatic license, the character of Mary is actually a composite of several real-life figures in Lopez’s life. Lopez is happily married to his wife, Alison, who is not his editor at the *Los Angeles Times*.)

Keener had already expressed interest in working on Joe Wright’s next film without knowing what it might be but was thrilled when she found out it would be

the story of Nathaniel Ayers. "I already knew of the story because I had followed it when Steve Lopez was writing about it, so it was already kind of etched in my being," she explains. She also found herself intrigued by the fictional Mary's role in Lopez's life. "She's the one who kind of calls him on his B.S.," she laughs. "Their relationship is close, yet contentious. I think they were quite young and idealistic when they met and now, she's the person who can challenge him to be who he used to believe he could be."

On the set, Keener and Downey found a unique rapport that had traces of the classic Hepburn-Tracy repartee, filled at once with conflict and underlying affection. "Robert is so lovable, and so good at what he does, he makes it easy," says Keener. "But when the character antagonized me, I reacted. We really had an excellent time together."

Also joining the supporting cast was Stephen Root, last seen in the Oscar®-winning "No Country for Old Men," as Curt Reynolds, Lopez's fellow reporter who becomes the victim of the newspaper world's economic woes. "The character I play is kind of an amalgamation of a couple of *Los Angeles Times* reporters," Root says. "He's one of those guys that everyone in the office tolerates because he's been around for a long time. But he's not very confident that his job is secure, and he's always looking over his shoulder. And, in this case, it turns out he's right."

LisaGay Hamilton, best known for her role on ABC's "The Practice," plays Jennifer Ayers-Moore, Nathaniel's estranged sister, who isn't even certain her brother is still alive until Lopez's columns unexpectedly bring them back together. "I loved the honesty of the script and the very positive attempt to tell the story of someone who is quite brilliant but, unfortunately, suffers from the debilitating disease of schizophrenia," Hamilton says. "That's a topic that we don't often see depicted truthfully in movies."

Hamilton was able to spend some time with the real Jennifer Ayers-Moore, which added to her enthusiasm for the role. “The family couldn’t have been more supportive,” she says. “I saw up-close how losing touch with Nathaniel for so long was extremely difficult for Jennifer. I think their reunion was very important for both of them. Jennifer could finally face the feelings of responsibility she felt for her brother and Nathaniel regained the opportunity to have a vital family connection.”

Says Jamie Foxx of her performance: “LisaGay brought so much integrity to the part. I was captivated by her presence and at how much she is able both to take in and give out.”

Tom Hollander, who previously worked with Wright on “Pride & Prejudice,” portrays Los Angeles Philharmonic’s cellist Graham Claydon, a fictional character in the film, whose creation was inspired by several real-life musicians. “Graham is a cellist who works with Nathaniel and encourages him to give a recital that goes wrong,” Hollander explains. “He’s one of the people who tries to make Nathaniel better without any success. He’s also a very committed Christian, so he hopes that, through him, God can save Nathaniel and bring transformation into his life.”

Like Jamie Foxx, Hollander dove into cello training in preparation for the role. “Having to learn the cello was the most burdensome aspect of the job, but also the best,” Hollander says. “It was a wonderful experience for me.”

Rounding out the supporting cast are Jena Malone (who previously appeared as Lydia Bennet in Wright’s “Pride & Prejudice”) as a lab technician; comedic actress Rachael Harris as Lopez’s *Los Angeles Times* co-worker, Leslie; and Nelsan Ellis as David Carter, the head of Lamp Community.

INTERMEZZO:
THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY EXTRAS

Director Joe Wright knew from the beginning he wanted to draw extras for “The Soloist” from the ranks of the downtown Los Angeles community depicted in the film. For him, the extras were the heart of the film and its link to the real world.

To find hundreds of homeless background extras, extras casting coordinator Maryellen Aviano initiated a series of open calls at several homeless outreach centers, including Lamp Community, the Midnight Mission, Union Rescue Mission, Volunteers of America and SRO Housing – ultimately signing up 450 members. Among them were a core group of about 20, nicknamed “the Lamp Chorus,” who appear in several scenes with Foxx and Downey inside the Lamp Community building where Nathaniel Ayers resides. (The Lamp Chorus was also joined by ten SAG actors for scenes that required specialized performance skills.) Lamp and the other programs maintained their own personal advocates on the set to assure the extras’ needs would be effectively communicated.

Despite early uncertainty about how it might all work out, the experience was unforgettable for everyone involved. “I’ve never had a more enthusiastic group of extras in my 32 years in the business,” Aviano says. “The downtown community completely embraced the movie because Joe Wright spent several months working with them and invited them to share their experiences. The film gave them an opportunity to step up and show how resourceful they can be as a community.”

Wright worked with the homeless extras using an organic process and an almost documentary approach. To keep these diverse extras comfortable and relaxed in the strange world of moviemaking, Wright tried to maintain a very human atmosphere by keeping the crew’s footprint to a minimum so the set was spare with very little in the way of lighting or equipment.

Says Wright: “Working with members of the Skid Row community was, without exaggeration, kind of life-changing really. It taught me a lot of humility and to never underestimate anyone, and also that it’s possible, even within the film industry, to bring about some good and to have a positive, practical effect on people’s lives. That was tremendously exciting.”

The cast felt much the same way. Says Downey: “It was quite an immersion, being with these members of Lamp, many of whom were mentally ill, drug-addicted or in various states of homelessness. It was a fantastic leap of faith that this was somehow going to work out and we’d all interact and get along and simultaneously shoot a movie about this story – and yet we did.”

Adds Foxx: “Joe Wright had the beautiful insight to give the film the authentic quality of the people who live there. He took a risk and he made it work. Joe stuck to his guns and came out with his heart wide open and that opened us all up.”

ALLEGRO MOLTO:
“THE SOLOIST’S” FRESH LOOK AT LOS ANGELES

Wright came to “The Soloist” with a very specific vision of the film’s design – aiming to reflect the naturalistic truth of life on the streets of L.A. while at the same time bringing a musicality to the camera movements that mirror the transcendent themes of the story. For Foxx, the simple poetry of Wright’s approach was key to the film. “The way Joe uses the camera captures everything the movie is about,” says the actor. “He always contrasts the darkness with beauty and light.”

To do so, Wright brought on board a largely British team of collaborators, most of whom had worked with him before. He worked especially closely with

Irish-born cinematographer Seamus McGarvey, who received an Oscar® nomination for his lyrical photography for “Atonement.”

“Joe and I initially thought of a very simple, unadorned style for the film,” McGarvey reflects. “We both were thinking of the style of the British realists, particularly John Schlesinger’s ‘Midnight Cowboy,’ and the Italian neo-realists as well because I think this film, although grander than reality, does have some of the lyrical flashes the neo-realists had.”

He continues: “Most of all, we wanted a spare sort ascetic quality to the images, so you see the characters within a very believable frame. And because we used a lot of real people, we didn’t want to in any way enhance the artificiality that you sometimes sense in Hollywood movies.”

Over several weeks, Wright and McGarvey storyboarded the entire film. They also made the key decision to shoot the film in 35mm anamorphic format, which, McGarvey notes, gives the film an even stronger sense of veracity. Just as important as veracity, however, was a musicality to the photography to echo the vital importance of music in holding together the threads of Nathaniel’s world. “Music was absolutely critical to the photography for this film,” McGarvey emphasizes. “We would often film to a playback of music. It’s amazing how this creates a synthesis between the actor and the camera, and how the camera sort of fuses with how the actor moves.”

Music often inspired specific photographic sequences in “The Soloist.” McGarvey gives an example: “When Nathaniel is playing underground in the tunnel, we wanted to show how the music elevates him, and give a sense of him taking flight. We devised a shot that would lead us into a symphonic, lyrical sequence, a centerpiece scene in the film that required a 100-foot Strada crane to rise up above an aperture in the street overpass and reveal the city above.”

Wright and McGarvey also coordinated closely with Sarah Greenwood, the film's production designer who won the BAFTA Award and received Oscar® nominations for her work on "Pride & Prejudice" and "Atonement." With "The Soloist," she continues her collaboration with key set decorator Katie Spencer, a relationship that has spanned more than a decade.

The concept that Greenwood and Spencer had in mind was to contrast Los Angeles' soaring wealth and lofty-minded dreamers with its less visible pockets of struggle and grit. This was all done in a compact, if highly charged, two square miles, in that vastly diverse zone between Disney Hall, Skid Row and the *Los Angeles Times* building. "In downtown Los Angeles, within those two square miles, we could create a microcosm of all the different aspects of the city," Greenwood says. "Here, you have images of the wealth of the city and the glorious Disney Hall and literally, within spitting distance, you have the extreme poverty of Skid Row. The film emphasizes this contrast between Steve and Nathaniel's worlds by having Steve living on top of the hill from which he can look down at L.A. from on high, whereas Nathaniel is often found underground, in a basement or a tunnel."

Greenwood spent time poring through the work of some of Los Angeles' most notable documentary street photographers, citing the deep humanity of Alfredo Falvo's 2007 photo book Lost Angels: A Photographic Impression of Skid Row Los Angeles and the baroque street photos of Philip-Lorca diCorcia as inspirations. Like those artists, she knew Wright wanted to capture the vibrant kinetic energy of this part of the city where sky and building and graffiti all flow into and through one another, creating a mix of human and natural rhythms.

Yet, shooting on Skid Row itself was not possible because the last thing the production wanted to do was to further disrupt already fragile lives. So Greenwood and her team of artisans took a bland section of industrial buildings between the Fourth Street and Sixth Street bridges and transformed them into a condensed Skid

Row, circa 2005 (right before Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's Safer City Initiative, a controversial effort to clean up Skid Row of crime and drugs, went into effect). One by one, the design team replicated the graffiti-strewn buildings, rusted cars and homeless tenting that infamously lined the streets where Nathaniel lived and played. "All the merchants on the block were tremendously cooperative in letting us recreate Skid Row 2005, and it feels authentic," says Greenwood.

The production design also extended to Nathaniel's personal effects, which are emblazoned with the writings and scribbles he uses as another outlet for his constant urge for expression. To help create Nathaniel's personal graffiti, Greenwood enlisted Sean Daly, a graphic artist who frequently works as a set designer for *Vanity Fair* photographer Annie Leibovitz, to be the "Hand of Nathaniel." "The real Nathaniel writes on everything – himself, his clothes, the walls, his violin. There was an unselfconscious beauty created by him within his world," says Greenwood. "Our artist, Sean Daly, became the 'Hand of Nathaniel' and did a wonderful job recreating every aspect of this for us; he worked on all the costumes, sets, the cart, and the props connected with his character so they would create a cohesive link throughout the film."

Daly went about his job in the same way an art historian might, analyzing every aspect of Nathaniel's life and personal style. "The beautiful thing about Nathaniel is his ability to absorb the world around him and incorporate it into his clothing and everything he owns," Daly comments. "He's a literal genius who is not bogged down by the rules or the confines of details. His art permeates and inhabits his entire being."

Continuing with the theme of authenticity, "The Soloist" became the first production ever to shoot inside the editorial offices of the *Los Angeles Times* building, filming in the third floor's Metro section, the actual working space for Steve Lopez and his colleagues. "People had shot in the building before but never in a working

newsroom,” notes producer Foster. “The then-publisher of the paper, David Hiller, just opened the doors and said, ‘Come in. This story is as much a part of us as anybody.’”

“The Soloist” also marks the first time a motion picture crew filmed inside the auditorium of Los Angeles’ newest architectural icon – the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall, which is practically a character in the film. Says Foster, “Deborah Borda, the L.A. Philharmonic’s CEO, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the entire staff of the L.A. Philharmonic welcomed Nathaniel back to music, and they generously allowed us to recreate that great moment.”

Says Borda of the decision: “It was quite unlike anything we have done, but then this orchestra is known for doing things nobody else does. It was a great fit, not to mention a unique opportunity. What a moving human story set against the backdrop of the Walt Disney Concert Hall and the remarkable place it occupies in the lives of Angelenos. And, of course, the story of Nathaniel and the inspiration his relationship with the orchestra provides to himself and our musical family, is deeply touching.”

Other Los Angeles locations captured include Pershing Square Park on Olive Street, the site of the Beethoven statue Ayers believes signifies the composer’s standing as the city’s leader; the auditorium of Jordan High School in Long Beach, which stood in for New York’s Juilliard; Elysian Park, site of Steve Lopez’s bicycle accident; as well as the historic Millennium Biltmore Hotel, La Cita Bar and the Barclay Hotel, all in downtown Los Angeles.

The final days of shooting took place in Cleveland, Ohio, where Ayers and his two real-life sisters grew up. For these scenes, the art department turned the clock back on a two-block stretch of the Hough section of the city, transforming it into a snow-covered family neighborhood circa 1966. They blanketed the area with snow, painted homes, and built an old-fashioned gas station, to create the backdrop

for scenes in which the young Nathaniel ventures out to his Cleveland music school and watches the famous Hough riots that tore apart the community over a six-night span in summer 1966.

Equally key to bringing Nathaniel's look to life was the work of costume designer Jacqueline Durran, who received Academy Award® nominations for both of her previous collaborations with Wright on "Pride & Prejudice" and "Atonement." As with the rest of the artistic team, the emphasis was on creating a street authenticity that would add to the realism of the story.

Sums up executive producer Patricia Whitcher: "We were very lucky to have Joe's creative team because they're an incredibly talented and dedicated group of people. From day one, it was always about doing right by Nathaniel and Steve's story and giving the film a very subtle and authentic texture."

FINALE: *"THE SOLOIST'S" MUSIC*

One of the great, stirring mysteries of "The Soloist" is how two such disparate men as Steve Lopez and Nathaniel Ayers were able to create a life-changing friendship. The answer may lie in their ability to communicate at a level deeper than words: via the power of music.

Joe Wright realized from the start that this uplifting, inexplicable power had to be infused into the film, yet without ever overwhelming the basic humanity of the story. A creative decision was made early on to focus primarily on the works of Beethoven, one of many composers the real Ayers reveres and obsesses over, because Beethoven seemed to speak to the very core of Ayers' love of music.

"Beethoven has such an enormous spectrum of emotions. Indeed, all human feeling is contained within his music," says Wright. "And I think also that

Beethoven is a fascinating character in terms of this particular story because he himself had so many personal struggles, including his deafness, to overcome.”

For the film’s original score, inspired largely by Beethoven’s soaring Third and Ninth Symphonies, Wright reunited with composer Dario Marianelli, who garnered an Oscar® nomination for “Pride & Prejudice” and won both the Oscar® and the Golden Globe for his memorable score for “Atonement.” “Dario is an enormous fan of Beethoven,” notes Wright, “and one of the great pleasures of this film was really learning, through working with Dario, about the history of classical music and especially Beethoven.”

Marianelli also had the further pleasure of having the L.A. Philharmonic at his disposal and the chance to utilize a true-life mentor to Nathaniel Ayers, Ben Hong, to record the cello tracks Jamie Foxx is seen playing.

Hong saw the chance to play cello as Ayers as an exciting challenge. “It was a very creative process because I had to basically act with the cello,” he explains. “I wasn’t playing as myself; I had to play like somebody else. In fact, I had to play like three different people. I had to play like the young Nathaniel, then as Nathaniel when he was at Juilliard, and then as Nathaniel in the present day. I altered the way I played the instrument for all of them to make it sound believable.”

Like Wright and Marianelli, Hong believes Beethoven will be another source of inspiration in the film. “There’s such a full spectrum of emotional expression in Beethoven’s works,” he says. “The music heard in the film moves from the tender and incredibly beautiful second movement of the Beethoven Triple Concerto to the very, very intense, almost angry and violent moods of certain moments of the Eroica Symphony, and reflects so much of the story.”

Continuing to use the local community, Wright brought in the University of Southern California Orchestra, conducted by Michael Nowak, to stand in for the Juilliard Orchestra in the performance of Beethoven’s Third Symphony.

The real coup was capturing globally acclaimed conductor and the Philharmonic's then-music director, Esa Pekka Salonen, in his first film appearance, seen conducting movements from both Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica") and his Symphony No. 9, from tracks pre-recorded for Marianelli several weeks earlier.

For Salonen, who became a part of Ayers' and Lopez's real-life story, it was a pleasure to be part of its retelling on screen. "Nathaniel is one of us because he's a musician," says Salonen. "His situation is very difficult and complex, but he's still very much one of us."

Salonen recalls his first, remarkable meeting with Ayers: "We spoke briefly about Beethoven and music and he said that he felt I was Beethoven reincarnated, which is quite a statement, so I would say it's the best review I have ever had in my life."

Most of all, Salonen was pleased to be part of "The Soloist" because of the moving nature of a story so close to all the things he holds dear: music, Los Angeles and the human spirit. "I think this story is a very concrete way we can see the power of music, the power of music to be an incredibly strong bond between people, the power of music to allow you to imagine things and to allow you to step out of your actual situation and, at least for a time, be completely free."

ABOUT LOS ANGELES AND U.S. HOMELESS

- ❖ According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the most recent estimated number of homeless persons in L.A. County is 73,702.
- ❖ On any given night, the city of Los Angeles is home to 40,144 homeless individuals.
- ❖ Families make up 24% of the homeless population.
- ❖ About 10,000 of the homeless in Los Angeles are under the age of 18.
- ❖ Over 50% of the homeless are African-American; nearly 24% are Latino and approximately 19% are Caucasian.
- ❖ 12% of Los Angeles' homeless have served in the U.S. military.
- ❖ There are currently about 5,131 homeless individuals living in Downtown Los Angeles' Skid Row. That number is down from the estimated 8,000 to 11,000 who were living there in 2005, when "The Soloist" takes place.
- ❖ 83% of the homeless in Los Angeles are living outside of shelters, sleeping in streets, alleys, cars, encampments, doorways, etc.
- ❖ Up to 77% of the homeless do not receive, or choose not to receive, the benefits available to them.
- ❖ 22% of the homeless surveyed by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority say they have been unable to get needed medical attention.
- ❖ About 31% of homeless individuals say they are experiencing mental illness and 35% say they have a physical disability.
- ❖ 42% of the homeless say they have an addiction to drugs or alcohol.

- ❖ The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority notes that there is a shortage of 36,000 units of supportive housing for the County's current homeless population.
- ❖ According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, there were about 170,000 homeless men and women in the state of California as of its latest estimate in 2005 – before the present downturn in the housing market and the ensuing rash of home foreclosures.
- ❖ The National Coalition for the Homeless estimates that in the U.S. roughly 1 percent of the population is homeless (about 3.5 million), 39 percent of them children.

EXCERPT FROM:

THE SOLOIST: A Lost Dream, an Unlikely Friendship and the Redemptive Power of Music

By Steve Lopez

PREFACE

I'm on foot in downtown Los Angeles, hustling back to the office with another deadline looming. That's when I see him. He's dressed in rags on a busy downtown street corner, playing Beethoven on a battered violin that looks like it's been pulled from a dumpster.

"That sounded pretty good," I say when he finishes.

He jumps back three steps, eyeing me with suspicion. I see the name Stevie Wonder carved into the face of the violin, along with felt-pen doodles.

"Oh, thank you very much," he says, obviously flattered. "Are you serious?"

"I'm not a musician," I answer. "But yes. It sounded good to me."

He is black, just beyond fifty, with butterscotch eyes that warm to the compliment. He is standing next to a shopping cart heaped over with all his belongings, and yet despite grubby, soiled clothing, there's a rumpled elegance about him. He speaks with a slight regional accent I can't place. Maybe he's from the Midwest or up near the Great Lakes, and he seems to have been told to always stand up straight, enunciate, carry himself with pride and respect others.

"I'm trying to get back in shape," he says. "But I'm going to get back in there, playing better. I just need to keep practicing."

"So you like Stevie Wonder?" I ask.

"Oh, yes, certainly. 'You Are the Sunshine of My Life.' 'My Cherie Amour.' I guess I shouldn't have written his name on my violin, though."

I write a column for the *Los Angeles Times*. The job is a little like fishing. You go out and drop a line, cast a net. I'm figuring this vagrant violinist is a column. Has to be.

"I'm in a hurry at the moment," I tell him, "but I'd like to come back and hear you play again."

"Oh, all right," he says, smiling appreciatively but with trepidation. He looks like a man who has learned to trust no one.

"Do you always play in this spot?" I ask.

"Yes," he says, pointing across the street with his bow to Pershing Square, in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. "I like to be near the Beethoven statue for inspiration."

This guy could turn out to be a rare find in a city of undiscovered gems, fiddling away in the company of Beethoven. I would drop everything if I could, and spend a few hours pulling the story out of him, but that will have to wait for another day. I've got another column lined up and not much time to shape it. The deadlines come at you without mercy, even in your dreams.

"I'll be back," I say.

He nods indifferently.

Back at the office I sweat out another column, scan the mail and clear the answering machine. I make a note on the yellow legal pad where I keep a list of possibilities.

Violin Man.
It's got potential. Who knows where it will go?

Part One

I can't get the image out of my head, this odd picture of grubby refinement. But when I go back to look for the violinist in Pershing Square, I come up empty. His disappearance only makes the mystery more provocative.

Who was he? Where did he go? What is his story?

Three weeks later, he's back, reappearing in the same spot, and I watch from across the street for a while before approaching. His playing is a little scratchy and tentative, but just like before, it's clear this is no beginner. There'd been some serious training in there, somewhere along the way. He doesn't appear to be playing for money, which seems strange for a homeless guy. He plays as if he's a student, oblivious to everyone around him, and this is a practice session.

Strange place to practice. The ground shakes when buses roar by, and his strings are barely audible in the orchestra of horns, trucks and sirens. I gaze at the tops of buildings adorned with gargoyles and grand cornices. Men and women move about, duty-bound, ignoring him for the most part as they disappear around corners and into entryways. The man plays on, a lone fiddler. He throws his head back, closes his eyes, drifts. A portrait of tortured bliss.

When he pauses, I move in.

"Hello," I say.

He jumps back, startled just as before.

"Do you remember me?" I ask.

"I remember your voice."

He's still suspicious of me, suspicious of everything around him, it seems. He says he was trying to remember a Tchaikovsky piece he once knew quite well, but now it is as elusive as the meaning of a dream. It's obvious that he's troubled in some way, like so many others who wander the streets as if they inhabit a different planet than the rest of us, wrapped in many-layered outfits to keep from coming unraveled. He's wearing a ratty blue sweater with a light brown T-shirt over it and the collar of a shirt spilling out over the top of it all. Wrapped around his neck, like a scarf, is a yellow terry-cloth towel. His pants hang low on his waist, fitted for a man three sizes bigger, and his grimy white sneakers have no laces.

He tells me his name is Nathaniel Anthony Ayers. From Cleveland. He's going to keep practicing until he's proud of what he hears, he says, and I tell him I might like to write about him for the *L.A. Times*.

"Seriously?" he asks. "You'd really want to write about me?"

"Why not?" I ask.

He's a handsome guy, lean and fit-looking, with a strong jaw and clean white teeth. He reminds me a little of Miles Davis. I ask where he lives and he says at the Midnight Mission, one of the biggest rescue operations on nearby Skid Row. Not inside, he specifies. But on the street, though he showers and takes some meals inside.

"Why not sleep inside?"

"Oh, no," he says. "I wouldn't want to do that."

I wonder how safe it can be for a man trying to reconnect with Tchaikovsky as drug dealers, prostitutes and hustlers work streets teeming with the lame and the afflicted.

Skid Row is a dumping ground for inmates released from the nearby county jail, and it's a place where the sirens never stop screaming.

"Maybe I'll come by and visit you at the mission," I tell him.

He nods, but I can see he doesn't trust me. He tucks the violin back under his chin, eager to get back to his music, and I know that if this one ever pans out, it's going to take some time. I'll have to check back with him now and again until he's comfortable enough to open up. Maybe I could go on his rounds with him over the course of a day or so, see if anyone can help fill in the blanks in his story or explain his condition. As he begins to play, I wave good-bye, and he responds with a suspicious glance in my general direction.

Two weeks later, I go looking for him once more and he's disappeared again. I stroll over to the mission at Fourth and Los Angeles streets, where I see street people by the dozens, some of them drug-ravaged, some of them raving mad, some of them lying so still on the pavement it's hard to tell whether they're napping or waiting for a ride to the morgue.

I check with Orlando Ward, the public information man at the Midnight. He tells me he's seen the violinist around, but doesn't know the backstory. And he hasn't seen him lately.

Now I'm worried that I've lost the column.

Weeks go by and I get distracted by other things, shoveling whatever I can find into that empty space on the page. And then one day while driving to work from my home in Silver Lake, a neighborhood five miles northwest of downtown, I cut through the Second Street tunnel and there he is, putting on a one-man concert in a location even noisier than the last one.

He remembers me this time.

"Where have you been?" I ask.

He says he's been around, here and there. Nowhere special.

A car whooshes by and his mind reels.

"Blue car, green car, white car," he says. "There goes a police car, and God is on the other side of that wall."

I nod, not knowing what to say. Maybe he's a little more unreachable than I realized. Do I take notes for a column, or do I make a few calls to see if someone can come and help him?

"There goes Jacqueline du Pré," Nathaniel says, pointing at a woman a block away. "She's really amazing."

I tell him I doubt that it's the late cellist, who died in 1987.

Nathaniel says he isn't so sure.

"I don't know how God works," he tells me sincerely, with an expression that says anything is possible.

I scribble that down in my notebook, and I also copy what he's written on his shopping cart with a Magic Marker:

"Little Walt Disney Concert Hall—Beethoven."

I ask Nathaniel if he has moved to this location to be near the concert hall and he says no, he isn't even sure where Disney Hall is, exactly.

"Is it around here?" he asks.

"Right up the hill. The great big silvery building that looks like a schooner."

"Oh, that's it?"

He says he moved to this spot because he could see the *Los Angeles Times* Building two blocks away.

"Don't you work there?" he asks.

Having lived in Cleveland, New York and Los Angeles, Nathaniel tells me, it's reassuring to be able to look up at the *L.A. Times* Building and know where he is.

He plays for a while; we talk for a while, an experience that's like dropping in on a dream. Nathaniel takes nonsensical flights, doing figure eights through unrelated topics. God, the Cleveland Browns, the mysteries of air travel and the glory of Beethoven. He keeps coming back to music. His life's purpose, it seems, is to arrange the notes that lie scattered in his head.

I notice for the first time that his violin, caked with grime and a white chalky substance that looks like a fungus, is missing an important component or two.

"Your violin has only two strings," I say. "You're missing the other two."

Yes, he says. He's well aware.

"All I want to do is play music, and the crisis I'm having is right here. This one's gone," he says of the missing top string, "that one's gone, and this little guy's almost out of commission."

His goal in life, Nathaniel tells me, is to figure out how to replace the strings. But he got used to playing imperfect instruments while taking music classes in Cleveland's public schools, and there's a lot you can do, he assures me, with just two strings.

I notice while talking to him that someone has scrawled names on the pavement where we're standing. Nathaniel says he did it with a rock. The list includes Babe Ruth, Susan, Nancy, Kevin and Craig.

"Whose names are those?" I ask.

Oh, those people, he says.

"Those were my classmates at Juilliard."

ABOUT THE CAST

JAMIE FOXX (Nathaniel Anthony Ayers) won an Academy Award® for Best Actor in 2005 for his portrayal of the legendary Ray Charles in the Taylor Hackford-directed biopic “Ray.” In addition to winning the Oscar®, Foxx swept the Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild (SAG), BAFTA and NAACP Image Awards, as well as numerous critics’ awards for his performance. He also shared in a SAG Award nomination received by the film’s ensemble cast.

Also in 2005, Foxx garnered Oscar®, Golden Globe, SAG Award, BAFTA Award, and Image Award nominations in the category of Best Supporting Actor for his work in Michael Mann’s dramatic thriller “Collateral,” in which he starred with Tom Cruise. That same year, Foxx also earned Golden Globe and SAG Award nominations and won an Image Award for Best Actor in a Television Movie for his portrayal of condemned gang member-turned-Nobel Peace Prize nominee Stan “Tookie” Williams in the FX Network’s movie “Redemption.”

This marked the first time that a single actor has received three Golden Globe nominations and four SAG Award nominations in the same year. Foxx is also the first African-American actor to be nominated for two Oscars® in the same year, and is only the second man in history to receive two acting Oscar® nominations in the same year for two different movies.

In 2006, Foxx was seen in the highly anticipated screen adaptation of the Broadway musical “Dreamgirls” from DreamWorks Pictures and Paramount Pictures. The film was written and directed by Bill Condon and co-starred Beyoncé Knowles and Eddie Murphy. The film won a Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture Musical Comedy, and received a SAG nomination for Best Ensemble Cast. “Dreamgirls” was nominated for an NAACP Image Award for

Outstanding Motion Picture, and Foxx was nominated in the Best Actor Category for his performance as Curtis Taylor Jr.

In 2007, Foxx took on the role as executive producer of the film "Life Support." The film, which starred Queen Latifah, closed the Sundance Film Festival and is an inspirational true-life story of a mother who overcame an addiction to crack cocaine and became a positive role model and an AIDS activist in the black community. The film debuted on HBO later in the year.

In addition to his outstanding work in front of the camera, Foxx has also achieved a thriving career in music. The release of Foxx's long-awaited J Records debut, "Unpredictable," was just one taste of his recent unprecedented accomplishments as an artist. "Unpredictable" topped the charts in late December 2005 and early 2006, as it held the number one spot for five weeks, selling over one million units in 20 days. Foxx was nominated for eight Billboard Music Awards, three Grammy Awards, one Soul Train Music Award and two American Music Awards, for which he won Favorite Male Artist. His NBC special, "Unpredictable," was a creative live performance of his album, which included an all-star line up of artists such as Mary J. Blige, Common, Snoop Dogg, The Game and Angie Stone. The album was nominated for three Grammy Awards in 2006, including Best R&B Album; the track "Love Changes," featuring Mary J. Blige, for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group; and the track "Unpredictable," featuring Ludacris, for Best Rap/Sung Collaboration.

Foxx's second album, "Intuition," was released last December to strong notices.

In January 2006, Foxx announced his partnership with SIRIUS Satellite Radio to start his own radio station called Foxxhole, a combination of comedy and music.

The Texas native first came to fame as a comedian. After spending time on the comedy circuit, he joined Keenan Ivory Wayans, Jim Carrey, Damon Wayans and Tommy Davidson in the landmark Fox sketch comedy series "In Living Color," creating some of the show's funniest and most memorable moments. In 1996, he launched his own series, "The Jamie Foxx Show," which was one of the top-rated shows on the WB Network during its five-year run. Foxx not only starred on the series but also was the co-creator and executive producer, and directed several episodes.

Foxx's big-screen break came in 1999 when Oliver Stone cast him as star quarterback Willie Beamen in "Any Given Sunday" with Al Pacino. In 2001, he played Drew "Bundini" Brown in Michael Mann's "Ali" alongside Will Smith. Foxx followed "Ali" with his second HBO comedy special, "Jamie Foxx: I Might Need Security," in February 2002.

Foxx has also starred in Michael Mann's feature film "Miami Vice" alongside Colin Farrell and Sam Mendes' Gulf War drama "Jarhead" with Jake Gyllenhaal.

In September 2007, Foxx was seen in "The Kingdom," in which he portrayed the leader of a counter-terrorist team on the hunt for those responsible for a deadly bombing attack on Americans working in the Middle East. He will next star in the drama "Law Abiding Citizen" directed by F. Gary Gray.

ROBERT DOWNEY JR. (Steve Lopez) has evolved into one of the most respected actors in Hollywood. Downey received an Academy Award® nomination and won the BAFTA Award for Best Actor for his performance in the title role of "Chaplin," released in 1992. This year he was again nominated for an Oscar®, in the Best Supporting Actor category for the action comedy "Tropic Thunder," as well as a SAG, BAFTA and Golden Globe Award.

Downey starred in two of last summer's biggest hits, the aforementioned "Tropic Thunder" with Ben Stiller and Jack Black, and in the title role of the superhero "Iron Man" alongside Jeff Bridges and Gwyneth Paltrow. Downey is currently filming the sequel to "Iron Man," due for release in May 2010. Later this year he will star in the title role of "Sherlock Holmes" opposite Jude Law and Rachel McAdams under the direction of Guy Ritchie.

Downey was also seen as the high school principal in "Charlie Bartlett"; in David Fincher's "Zodiac" alongside Jake Gyllenhaal and Mark Ruffalo; in Richard Linklater's 2006 summer release "A Scanner Darkly" co-starring Keanu Reeves, Winona Ryder and Woody Harrelson; and "Fur" opposite Nicole Kidman in a film inspired by the life of Diane Arbus, the revered photographer whose images captured attention in the early 1960s.

In 2005, Downey was in the Academy Award®-nominated film "Good Night, and Good Luck" directed by George Clooney. He was also seen in the action comedy "Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang" directed by Shane Black and co-starring Val Kilmer.

In 2003, Downey starred in two very different films: "The Singing Detective," a remake of the popular BBC hit musical drama featuring Downey singing and dancing alongside Adrien Brody, Katie Holmes and Robin Wright Penn; and "Gothika" starring Halle Berry and Penelope Cruz, in which Downey played a psychiatrist who works in a mental institution.

Downey made his primetime television debut in 2001 when he joined the cast of the Fox-TV series "Ally McBeal," playing the role of attorney Larry Paul. He won the Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Series, Miniseries or Motion Picture Made for Television, as well as the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male

in a Comedy Series. In addition, Downey was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series.

In 2000, Downey co-starred with Michael Douglas and Toby Maguire in "Wonder Boys" directed by Curtis Hanson, in which he played a bisexual literary agent. In April 2000, he appeared alongside Steve Martin and Eddie Murphy in the hit comedy "Bowfinger."

In 1999, he starred in "Black and White" written and directed by James Toback and co-starring Ben Stiller, Elijah Wood, Gaby Hoffman, Brooke Shields and Claudia Schiffer. "Black and White" is about a group of white high school teens and their excursions into the lives of Harlem's black hip-hop crowd. He also played the villain opposite Annette Bening and Aidan Quinn in "In Dreams" directed by Neil Jordan.

In 1998, Downey co-starred with Tommy Lee Jones and Wesley Snipes in "U.S. Marshals" directed by Stuart Baird; and with Heather Graham and Natasha Gregson Wagner in the critically acclaimed "Two Girls and a Guy" directed by James Toback.

In 1997, Downey was seen in Robert Altman's "The Gingerbread Man" along with Kenneth Branagh, Daryl Hannah and Embeth Davitz; and "One Night Stand" directed by Mike Figgis and starring Wesley Snipes and Nastassja Kinski.

Other film credits include "Restoration," "Richard III," "Natural Born Killers," "Short Cuts," "The Last Party," "Soapdish," "Air America," "Chances Are," "True Believer," "Johnny Be Good," "Less Than Zero," "The Pick-up Artist," "Back to School," "Weird Science," "Firstborn" and "Pound," in which he made his feature film debut and which was directed by Robert Downey Sr.

On November 23, 2004, Robert Downey Jr. released his debut album, "The Futurist," on the Sony Classics label. The album, which contains eight original songs, showed off his sultry singing voice.

An accomplished actress at once vibrantly potent and firmly grounded in her roles, **CATHERINE KEENER** (Mary Weston) continues to be a dominant force on screen.

Keener was most recently seen in the Charlie Kaufman drama "Synecdoche, New York" opposite an ensemble cast including Philip Seymour Hoffman, Michelle Williams, Samantha Morton, Hope Davis and Jennifer Jason Leigh.

This year she will also be seen in Warner Bros' big-screen adaptation of Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are," which was written and directed by Spike Jonze. The film is set for release on October 16th. She also recently wrapped production on Nicole Holofcener's film the "Untitled Nicole Holofcener Project" opposite Oliver Platt and Rebecca Hall. The film is a look at the lives and relationships between the residents of a New York apartment building and will be released by Sony Pictures in the fall.

She recently appeared in Showtime's "An American Crime" opposite Ellen Page. She was nominated for both an Emmy and a Golden Globe for her portrayal of Gertrude Baniszewski, a suburban housewife who kept a teenage girl (Page) locked in the basement of her Indiana home during the 1960s.

Additional film credits include: Barry Levinson's "What Just Happened"; Andrew Fleming's "Hamlet 2"; Sean Penn's "Into the Wild"; Nicole Holofcener's "Friends With Money," which made its debut at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival; "Capote" starring opposite Philip Seymour Hoffman, for which her performance as Nelle Harper Lee earned her an Academy Award® nomination

for Best Supporting Actress, as well as a nomination from the Screen Actors Guild. She was also named Best Supporting Actress by the Toronto Film Critics Association. She has also appeared in Judd Apatow's "The 40-Year-Old Virgin"; Sydney Pollack's "The Interpreter" with Sean Penn and Nicole Kidman; Rebecca Miller's "The Ballad of Jack and Rose" opposite Daniel Day Lewis; Spike Jonze's "Adaptation"; Andrew Niccol's "Simone"; Steven Soderbergh's "Full Frontal" and "Out of Sight;" Danny DeVito's "Death to Smoochy"; Neil LaBute's "Your Friends and Neighbors"; Holofcener's "Walking and Talking"; and the screen adaptation of Sam Shepard's "Simpatico." She also appeared in four films by Tom DiCillo: "Box of Moonlight," "Johnny Suede," "Living in Oblivion" and "The Real Blonde."

In 2003, Keener received an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Actress for her performance in Nicole Holofcener's "Lovely & Amazing." The film also stars Brenda Blethyn, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emily Mortimer and Dermot Mulroney.

In 2000, she received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her performance as Maxine, the manipulative co-worker who seduces the puppeteer, his wife and the title character in Spike Jonze's "Being John Malkovich."

Keener's television credits also include HBO's critically acclaimed anthology "If These Walls Could Talk" directed by Nancy Savoca, and a notable guest appearance on "Seinfeld."

On stage, she starred opposite Edward Norton in the Signature Theater Company's critically acclaimed off-Broadway revival of Langford Wilson's "Burn This" (2003).

TOM HOLLANDER (Graham Claydon) grew up in Oxford, went to school locally and read English literature at Cambridge. As a boy he was a member of the National Youth Theatre and the National Youth Music Theatre. Spotted at the Edinburgh Festival while still at school he played the title role in the BBC children's drama "John Diamond." At university, he was a member of the Cambridge Footlights Revue, and played a much-celebrated "Cyrano de Bergerac" for The Marlowe Society at the Arts Theatre.

His early career was primarily theater-based. In 1991, he was nominated for the Ian Charleson Award playing Celia to Adrian Lester's Rosalind in Cheek by Jowl's all-male production of "As You Like It." In 1992, he won the same award for his performance as Witwoud in Peter Gill's production of "The Way of the World" at the Lyric Hammersmith. He went on to play Macheath in "The Threepenny Opera" at the Donmar Warehouse and then created the central role of Baby in the original production of Jez Butterworth's "Mojo" at the Royal Court Theatre.

This brought him to the attention of filmmakers Terry George and Jim Sheridan, who cast him as the head of the Northern Irish Security Forces in the controversial "Some Mother's Son" opposite Helen Mirren and Fionnula Flanagan. He then returned to the theatre to star in the title role of "Tartuffe" at the Almeida for Jonathan Kent, for which he received a Best Actor Award from Time Out and a special commendation from the Ian Charleson Awards. In 1997, he received another special commendation for his performance as "The Government Inspector," again at the Almeida and directed by Jonathan Kent. In the West End and on Broadway he played Lord Alfred Douglas opposite Liam Neeson's Oscar Wilde in David Hare's "The Judas Kiss."

After playing Saffy's euro-trash fiancé in the final episode of "Absolutely Fabulous," Hollander went on to star opposite Joseph Fiennes and Rufus Sewell

in the 1998 film "Martha, Meet Frank, Daniel and Lawrence." He subsequently appeared in such features as "Bedrooms and Hallways," "The Clandestine Marriage," Ben Elton's "Maybe Baby," "The Announcement," Michael Apted's "Enigma" and Neil LaBute's "Possession." He also portrayed Osborne Hamley in the BBC's "Wives and Daughters" for Andrew Davies.

For Robert Altman, he played the long-suffering Captain Anthony Meredith in "Gosford Park" and appeared opposite Bill Nighy in Neil Hunter and Tom Hunsinger's celebrated "The Lawless Heart."

Hollander returned to the stage to play the title role of Moliere's "Don Juan" at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre for Michael Grandage. It was followed by playing Edgar in "King Lear" opposite Oliver Ford Davies in Jonathan Kent's final production at the Almeida Theatre.

He then portrayed King George V in Stephen Poliakoff's BBC Emmy Award-winning "The Lost Prince," and the infamous Guy Burgess in the BBC's four-part drama "Cambridge Spies," for which he won Best Actor at the International Television Awards in Biarritz.

In 2003, Hollander appeared in "Stage Beauty" directed by Richard Eyre, with Billy Crudup and Claire Danes. The same year he played Laurie in the Donmar Warehouse's revival of John Osborne's "Hotel in Amsterdam" directed by Robin Lefevre.

Hollander received a British Independent Film Award nomination as Best Supporting Actor for his performance as George Etherege opposite Johnny Depp in 2004 in "The Libertine." For his performance as The Reverend William Collins in director Joe Wright's "Pride & Prejudice," he won the Evening Standard's Peter Sellers Award for Comedy and Best Supporting Actor from the London Critics Circle.

For Ridley Scott he played Charlie in "A Good Year" opposite Russell

Crowe. For Scott's company Scott Free, he has recently completed the role of Adrian Philby in TNT's CIA-drama "The Company."

For director Gore Verbinski, he recently appeared as Lord Cutler Beckett in both "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" and "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End" starring Johnny Depp. He also appeared opposite Cate Blanchett and Samantha Morton in Working Title's "Elizabeth: The Golden Age," and most recently appeared to critical acclaim at The National Theatre in Roger Michell's production of Joe Penhall's new play "Landscape With Weapon."

LISAGAY HAMILTON (Jennifer Ayers-Moore) is a graduate of the Tisch School of the Arts and the Juilliard School of Drama. Her extensive theater credits include Isabella in "Measure for Measure" and Lady Hotspur in "Henry IV Parts I & II" at the New York Shakespeare Theatre Festival. She was an original cast member in the Broadway Company of August Wilson's "The Piano Lesson" and "Gem of the Ocean." In the fall of 2007, she won an Obie Award for her performance in Adrienne Kennedy's "The Ohio State Murders" at Theater for a New Audience in New York City.

Hamilton was an Ovation Award nominee for Best Actress for Athol Fugard's "Valley Song" at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Her performance earned her an Obie Award, the Clarence Derwent Award and a Drama Desk nomination.

Hamilton's film credits include "The Truth about Charlie" and "Beloved" for director Jonathan Demme; Clint Eastwood's "True Crime"; the independent films "Palookaville" and "Drunks"; Showtime's "A House Divided" opposite Sam Waterston; Ophelia in director Campbell Scott's film version of "Hamlet"; and "Nine Lives" directed by Rodrigo Garcia. Her latest film credits include

“Tourist” directed by Marcel Langenegger; and “Honeydripper” directed by John Sayles.

She co-starred for seven years on the Emmy Award-winning David Kelley drama “The Practice,” and just completed her role opposite Ray Romano and Andre Braugher in the TNT pilot “Men of a Certain Age.”

Hamilton made her prime-time directorial debut on “The Practice,” and “BEAH: A Black Woman Speaks” marked her documentary directorial debut. “BEAH: A Black Woman Speaks” received the 2003 AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival Grand Jury Prize, Documentary Competition, won the 2004 Miami Film Festival Audience Award, made the 2005 list of Notable Videos selected by the American Library Association and won the 2005 Fespaco Film Festival Paul Robeson Award.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JOE WRIGHT (Director) recently received international accolades as the director of the British romantic drama “Atonement,” the 2008 BAFTA and Golden Globes Award winner for Best Picture (Drama), and an Academy Award® nominee for Best Picture. “Atonement” was nominated for seven Academy Awards®, including Best Art Direction, Cinematography, Costumes, Supporting Actress, Screenplay, and Score (which it won).

For his feature film directorial debut, Focus Features and Working Title Films’ “Pride & Prejudice,” Wright won BAFTA’s Carl Foreman Award for Special Achievement by a British Director, Writer or Producer in Their First Feature Film. He was also honored with the London Film Critics Circle’s Award

for British Director of the Year and the Boston Society of Film Critics' Award for Best New Filmmaker.

"Pride & Prejudice" was nominated for five additional BAFTA Awards, four Academy Awards® (including Best Actress Keira Knightley), and two Golden Globe Awards; and won a second London Film Critics Circle Award for Best British Supporting Actor (Tom Hollander), among other honors. Wright had earlier won a BAFTA Award for the miniseries "Charles II: The Power & The Passion" (which aired in the U.S. as "The Last King"), which he directed and which starred Rufus Sewell. The project won two additional BAFTA Awards, and was nominated for three more.

His prior credits as director include another highly acclaimed miniseries, the epic drama "Nature Boy" (for which he was a BAFTA Award nominee), starring Lee Ingleby; the miniseries "Bodily Harm" starring Timothy Spall; and episodes of the television series "Bob & Rose" (which won several international awards).

Wright has also directed two short films, "The End" (written by Kathy Burke, it aired on the U.K.'s Channel 4) and "Crocodile Snap" (starring Claire Rushbrook, which aired on the BBC). The latter was a BAFTA Award nominee.

He directed his first short film, "Whatever Happened to Walthamstow Marshes," back in 1991, while enrolled at the Camberwell School of Arts. From 1991 to 1994, he studied Fine Art, Film and Video at St. Martin's.

In 1993, Wright was awarded a Fuji Film Scholarship to make "The Middle Ground." As part of the development process, he spent six weeks teaching drama at Islington Green School, where the short was cast and subsequently filmed.

SUSANNAH GRANT (Writer) received Academy Award®, Writers

Guild and BAFTA nominations for best original screenplay for “Erin Brockovich” directed by Steven Soderbergh and starring Julia Roberts and Albert Finney. Roberts received the Academy Award® for her portrayal of whistleblower Erin Brockovich, a single mother whose discovery of a cover-up by Pacific Gas & Electric involving contaminated water resulted in the largest class-action lawsuit in American history against a multi-billion dollar corporation.

That same year, 2000, Grant’s screenplay, “28 Days,” was produced. The film, about drug and alcohol rehab, was directed by Betty Thomas and starred Sandra Bullock.

Most recently, Grant wrote and directed “Catch and Release” starring Jennifer Garner and Timothy Olyphant. Grant co-wrote the screenplay for the live-action/CGI version of “Charlotte's Web” based on the book by E.B. White. Prior to that, she wrote the script for “In Her Shoes” directed by Curtis Hanson and starring Cameron Diaz, Toni Collette and Shirley MacLaine. Previously, she co-wrote the screenplays for “Ever After,” the critically acclaimed update of the Cinderella fairy tale starring Drew Barrymore, and “Pocahontas,” the blockbuster 1995 Disney animated feature.

From 1995-1998, Grant was a writer-producer-director on the popular television series “Party of Five,” which received a Golden Globe Award for Best TV Drama.

Born and raised in Englewood, New Jersey, Grant is a graduate of Amherst College, with a degree in English, and the American Film Institute's Center for Advanced Film and Television Studies screenwriting program. In 1992, she was a recipient of the Nicholl Fellowship in screenwriting given by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

STEVE LOPEZ (Based on the Book by) is a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, where he first wrote a series of enormously popular columns about Nathaniel Ayers. His book, based on his experiences with Ayers, *The Soloist: A Lost Dream, an Unlikely Friendship, and the Redemptive Power of Music*, was published earlier this year. He is the author of three novels: *Third and Indiana*, *The Sunday Macaroni Club* and *In the Clear*. He is also the author of *Land of Giants*, a collection of columns from his days at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. He has won numerous national awards for his work at several publications, including *Time* magazine and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Lopez, the father of three children, currently lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Alison, and their daughter, Caroline.

A 1983 graduate of the University of Southern California, **GARY FOSTER** (Producer) began his career as a producer in the mid 1980s. At the age of 25, he produced his first film, "Short Circuit," having discovered the screenplay by two unproduced writers (Brent Maddock and S.S. Wilson) who were attending UCLA Extension's screenwriting class. "Short Circuit's" success spawned the sequel "Short Circuit 2" and the young producer's career was in full swing. In 1993, Foster produced the Oscar® and Golden Globe-nominated hit "Sleepless in Seattle," which grossed more than \$300 million worldwide.

Foster served as president of Lee Rich Productions from 1993-1995 and produced "Just Cause" starring Sean Connery and Lawrence Fishburn, "The Amazing Panda Adventure," and "Big Bully." In 1996, he and golfing buddies Ron Shelton and John Norville, made "Tin Cup" co-written and directed by Shelton. The film starred Kevin Costner and Rene Russo.

In 2001, Foster produced "The Score," which brought together the talents of Robert De Niro, Edward Norton and Marlon Brando. Frank Oz directed the

crime thriller, which was the last film of Brando's legendary career.

Foster then teamed with writer-director Mark Steven Johnson to form Horseshoe Bay Productions. In 2003, Foster produced "Daredevil" written and directed by Johnson, which was followed in 2005 by "Elektra" starring Jennifer Garner, and most recently, "Ghost Rider" starring Nicolas Cage.

Foster's feature credits also include: "Gloria," "Desperate Measures," "Loverboy" and "Side Out."

Currently, Foster is partnered with former head of Sony Television Russ Krasnoff. Working in both the feature film and television worlds, Krasnoff/Foster Entertainment develops for both the big and small screens. The company has a first-look deal with Columbia Pictures, as well as an exclusive deal with Sony Pictures TV. Their offices are located on the Sony lot in Culver City.

Foster is currently in production on the comedy "When in Rome" for Disney. The film is Foster's fourth collaboration with writer/director Mark Steven Johnson.

RUSS KRASNOFF (Producer) formed Krasnoff/Foster Entertainment with Gary Foster in 2006 focusing on the production of feature films and television series. The company has an exclusive production arrangement in television with Sony Pictures Television, a company for which Krasnoff served as president of programming and production for 5 years.

While at SPT, Krasnoff was responsible for the development and production of scripted and reality programming for network, cable and syndicated television. The diverse slate of projects under his purview included the original primetime series "The King of Queens," "Rescue Me," "The Shield," "Huff," "Joan of Arcadia" and "Strong Medicine," as well as top-rated telefilms

and miniseries, including "Ike: Countdown to D-Day," "Revenge of the Middle-Aged Woman" and "Stone Cold."

In syndication, SPT produced the daytime programs "Wheel of Fortune," "Jeopardy," "Judge Hatchett," "Pyramid" and "Ricki Lake," among others. On the animated programming front, the series "The Boondocks," "Dragon Tales," "Harold and the Purple Crayon," "Spider-Man" and "Stuart Little: The Animated Series" represent a sampling of the projects developed and produced by Krasnoff since his appointment in 1997 as executive vice president, programming and production.

Previously, Krasnoff produced the feature film "Side Out" with Foster for TriStar Pictures.

Krasnoff graduated from the University of Denver with Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in Finance and Marketing. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Hollywood Radio and Television Society. Krasnoff lives in Los Angeles with his wife and son.

Working Title Films, co-chaired by **TIM BEVAN** and **ERIC FELLNER** (Executive Producers) since 1992, is one of the world's leading film production companies, making movies that defy boundaries as well as demographics.

Founded in 1983, Working Title has made nearly 90 films that have grossed over \$4.5 billion worldwide. Its films have won six Academy Awards® (for Tim Robbins' "Dead Man Walking"; Joel and Ethan Coen's "Fargo"; Shekhar Kapur's "Elizabeth" and "Elizabeth: The Golden Age"; and Joe Wright's "Atonement"), 26 BAFTA Awards, and prestigious prizes at the Cannes and Berlin International Film Festivals.

Bevan and Fellner have been honored with two of the highest film awards given to British filmmakers: the Michael Balcon Award for Outstanding British

Contribution to Cinema, at the Orange British Academy Film [BAFTA] Awards, and the Alexander Walker Film Award at the *Evening Standard* British Film Awards. They have also both been honored with CBEs (Commanders of the Order of the British Empire).

Working Title is currently making its seventh film with the Coen brothers, "A Serious Man." This follows on the heels of the highly successful "Burn After Reading" starring George Clooney, Frances McDormand, John Malkovich, Tilda Swinton and Brad Pitt. They have also produced: "Fargo"; "The Hudsucker Proxy"; "The Big Lebowski"; "O Brother, Where Art Thou?"; and "The Man Who Wasn't There."

As well as the Coen brothers, Working Title enjoys ongoing and successful creative collaborations with filmmakers Richard Curtis, Paul Greengrass, Stephen Daldry, Edgar Wright and Joe Wright; and actors Rowan Atkinson, Cate Blanchett, Hugh Grant, Keira Knightley and Emma Thompson, among others.

Its worldwide successes (in addition to those mentioned above) include Mike Newell's "Four Weddings and a Funeral"; Richard Curtis' "Love Actually"; Stephen Daldry's "Billy Elliot"; Roger Michell's "Notting Hill"; Mel Smith's "Bean" and Steve Bendelack's "Mr. Bean's Holiday"; Sydney Pollack's "The Interpreter"; both Bridget Jones movies (directed by Sharon Maguire and Beeban Kidron, respectively); Joe Wright's "Pride & Prejudice"; Kirk Jones' "Nanny McPhee"; Paul Greengrass' "United 93"; and Edgar Wright's "Shaun of the Dead" and "Hot Fuzz." The company recently released Nick Moore's "Wild Child" with Emma Roberts.

The success of "Billy Elliot" on film has since been repeated on the London stage. Director Stephen Daldry and screenwriter Lee Hall reunited for a stage musical version in 2005, with songs composed by Sir Elton John. The hit production, marking Working Title's debut theatrical venture (co-produced with

Old Vic Prods.), continues to play to full houses in London and garnered nine 2005 Olivier Award nominations, with a win for Best New Musical. It has repeated its success in Sydney and opens on Broadway in late 2008.

Among their current productions are Ron Howard's "Frost/Nixon," adapted by Peter Morgan from his play of the same name and starring Frank Langella and Michael Sheen, which was nominated for five Academy Awards® including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Actor, as well as six BAFTA Awards and five Golden Globes; Beeban Kidron's "Hippie Hippie Shake" starring Cillian Murphy, Sienna Miller, Emma Booth and Max Minghella; Kevin Macdonald's "State of Play" starring Russell Crowe, Ben Affleck, Robin Wright Penn and Helen Mirren; Richard Curtis' "The Boat That Rocked" starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Bill Nighy, Rhys Ifans and Nick Frost; and Paul Greengrass' "Green Zone" starring Matt Damon.

JEFF SKOLL (Executive Producer) founded Participant Media in January 2004 and serves as chairman. Skoll's vision for Participant is to create a long term, independent, global media company to produce and finance entertainment focused on long term benefit to society. Skoll served as executive producer on Participant's films "Good Night, and Good Luck," "North Country," "Syriana," "American Gun," "An Inconvenient Truth," "The World According to Sesame Street," "Fast Food Nation," "Angels in the Dust," "Jimmy Carter Man from Plains," "Darfur Now," "The Kite Runner," "Charlie Wilson's War," "Chicago 10," "The Visitor," "Standard Operating Procedure" and "Food, Inc." He is this year's recipient of the Visionary Award from the Producers Guild of America.

PATRICIA WHITCHER (Executive Producer) most recently served as executive producer of DreamWorks' Oscar®-nominated musical "Dreamgirls,"

written and directed by Bill Condon and starring Jamie Foxx, Beyoncé Knowles, Eddie Murphy, Danny Glover, Anika Noni Rose and Jennifer Hudson. Before that, she executive-produced Rob Marshall's "Memoirs of a Geisha," the screen version of the bestseller by Arthur Golden.

She had previously executive-produced Steven Spielberg's "The Terminal" starring Tom Hanks and Catherine Zeta-Jones. Whitcher's producing credits also include Brad Silberling's "Moonlight Mile" starring Dustin Hoffman and Susan Sarandon, "Where the Heart Is" starring Natalie Portman and Ashley Judd, and P.J. Hogan's smash hit "My Best Friend's Wedding" starring Julia Roberts, as well as "How to Make an American Quilt," "High School High" and "A Dangerous Woman."

Before producing, Whitcher was the unit production manager on "True Lies," "The Meteor Man," "The Lawnmower Man," "Iron Maze" and "Darkman." Whitcher is a life-long Los Angeles resident and the mother of two children.

SEAMUS McGARVEY, B.S.C. (Director of Photography) continues his collaboration with director Joe Wright, having served as cinematographer on the Golden Globe Award winner for Best Picture (Drama), "Atonement," for which he received an Oscar® nomination for Best Cinematography.

McGarvey was born in Armagh, Northern Ireland. He began his career as a stills photographer before attending film school in London. After graduating in 1988, he began shooting short films and documentaries, including "Skin," for which he was nominated for a Royal Television Society Cinematography Award. He also photographed and directed more than 100 music videos for such artists as Coldplay, Paul McCartney, Dusty Springfield, the Rolling Stones, U2 and Robbie Williams.

In the late 1990s, McGarvey began his continuing association with Sam Taylor-Wood, lighting many of her installations, photographs and films (including "Atlantic," which was nominated for the Turner Prize).

In 1998, the British Society of Cinematographers (B.S.C.) invited him to become a member. In 2004, he was awarded the Royal Photographic Society's prestigious Lumière medal for contributions to the art of cinematography. In 2008 he was nominated for an Academy Award® for Cinematography for "Atonement."

McGarvey's features as director of photography include Oliver Stone's "World Trade Center," for which he was nominated for an Irish Film and Television (IFTA) Award; Gary Winick's "Charlotte's Web"; Stephen Daldry's "The Hours," for which he won the *Evening Standard* British Film Award for Best Technical/Artistic Achievement; Breck Eisner's "Sahara," for which he won an IFTA Award; John Hamburg's "Along Came Polly"; Stephen Frears' "High Fidelity"; Mike Nichols' "Wit" for HBO; Michael Apted's "Enigma"; Tim Roth's "The War Zone"; Alan Rickman's "The Winter Guest" and Michael Winterbottom's "Butterfly Kiss."

His most recent project was the late Anthony Minghella's "The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency."

"The Soloist" marks **SARAH GREENWOOD'S** (Production Designer) sixth collaboration with director Joe Wright, following her work on the Golden Globe-winning drama, "Atonement," for which she won a BAFTA Award. She earned Academy Award® nominations for her production design on both "Atonement" and Wright's "Pride & Prejudice." This year she is being honored by the Hollywood Film Festival as the Production Designer of the Year.

Greenwood and Wright's prior projects together were the miniseries "Nature Boy," "Bodily Harm" and "Charles II: The Power & the Passion" (a.k.a. "The Last King"). She earned a BAFTA Award nomination for her work on "Charles II."

Greenwood had earlier been nominated for a BAFTA Award as production designer of Mike Barker's miniseries "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall," for which she won a Royal Television Society Award.

Her other credits as production designer include Patrick Marber's "After Miss Julie" for the BBC; Sandra Goldbacher's "The Governess"; David Kane's "This Year's Love" and "Born Romantic"; and Tom Vaughan's "Starter for Ten."

After graduating with a BA from the Wimbledon School of Art, she designed extensively for stage productions and later joined the BBC as a designer. She has also designed for television commercials. Greenwood's work was most recently featured in Bharat Nalluri's "Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day" starring Frances McDormand and Amy Adams. She is currently working in London on Warner Bros.' "Sherlock Holmes," again starring Robert Downey Jr. and directed by Guy Ritchie.

PAUL TOTHILL, A.C.E. (Editor) first worked with director Joe Wright on the miniseries "Charles II: The Power & The Passion" (a.k.a. "The Last King"), and on the films "Pride & Prejudice" and "Atonement." His work on "Pride and Prejudice" earned Mr. Tothill an American Cinema Editors (A.C.E.) Eddie Award nomination in the Best-Edited Feature Film (Comedy or Musical category). For "Atonement," Mr. Tothill was nominated for a BAFTA Award for Best Editing. He started his career at the BBC. In addition to several Royal Television Society Award nominations, he has received five BAFTA Award nominations for his work on the following television miniseries: Bille

Eltringham's "The Long Firm"; Stephen Poliakoff's "Perfect Strangers"; Andy Wilson's "Gormenghast"; Metin Hüseyin's "The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling"; and Anthony Page's "Middlemarch."

Tohill's other film credits include Paul Weiland's "Sixty Six," and Shane Meadows' "A Room for Romeo Brass." His other television credits include Stephen Poliakoff's miniseries "Shooting the Past"; Beeban Kidron's miniseries "Murder"; and Simon Cellan-Jones' segments of the epic miniseries "Our Friends in the North."

JACQUELINE DURRAN (Costume Designer) first worked with director Joe Wright on "Pride & Prejudice," for which she earned a Best Costume Design Academy Award® nomination. Her work on the film also brought her a BAFTA Award nomination and a Satellite Award. Durrán recently reunited with Wright on the Golden Globe-winning drama "Atonement," which garnered her a second Academy Award® nomination for Best Costume Design.

Her first feature as costume designer was Mike Leigh's "All or Nothing." She and Leigh have since collaborated on "Vera Drake" starring Imelda Staunton, for which Ms. Durrán won the BAFTA Award for Best Costume Design.

Her other features as costume designer include David Mackenzie's "Young Adam" starring Ewan McGregor, and Sally Potter's "Yes" starring Joan Allen and Sam Neill.

Durrán's credits as assistant costume designer include Mike Leigh's award-winning "Topsy-Turvy"; Simon West's "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider"; George Lucas' "Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones"; and Lee Tamahori's "Die Another Day."

DARIO MARIANELLI (Music) won both an Academy Award® and Golden Globe Award for Best Original Score for his work on director Joe Wright's "Atonement." He also was nominated for the BAFTA Award.

For his original score of Wright's "Pride & Prejudice," Marianelli was an Academy Award®, Ivor Novello Award, European Film Award and double World Soundtrack Award nominee. He was honored with the 2006 Classical Brit Award for Best Score for his work.

His film credits as music composer include two BAFTA Award winners, Michael Winterbottom's "In This World" (which also won the top prize at the Berlin International Film Festival) and Asif Kapadia's "The Warrior." He has since reteamed Kapadia to score Rogue Pictures' "The Return" and "Far North"; and most recently scored Neil Jordan's "The Brave One" starring Jodie Foster.

Marianelli has also composed the music for Bille August's "Goodbye Bafana" starring Dennis Haysbert as Nelson Mandela; Terry Gilliam's "The Brothers Grimm"; James McTeague's "V for Vendetta"; Michael Caton-Jones' "Shooting Dogs" (a.k.a. "Beyond the Gates"); Peter Cattaneo's "Opal Dream"; Tim Fywell's "I Capture the Castle"; David Thewlis' "Cheeky"; Julien Temple's "Pandaemonium"; Philippa Collie-Cousins' "Happy Now"; and Paddy Breathnach's "Ailsa, Shrooms, and I Went Down," which won four awards at the San Sebastián International Film Festival.

A native of Perth, Australia, **RIKKI LEA BESTALL** (Co-Producer) graduated from Perth's WAAPA (Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts) where she received degrees in Production and Arts Management.

Following graduation she spent several years working in a variety of capacities in Australian film and television. She then served two years as a producer at Disney Channel Australia.

In 2005, Bestall worked with producer Gary Foster on the international box-office hit "Ghost Rider" directed by Mark Steven Johnson and starring Nicholas Cage. In early 2006, she joined Foster and his producing partner Russ Krasnoff as director of feature development for their new production company, Krasnoff/Foster Entertainment, which has several film and television projects in development.

With Krasnoff/Foster, Bestall is currently producing the comedy "When in Rome" directed by Mark Steven Johnson and starring Kristin Bell and Josh Duhamel.

Bestall currently resides in Los Angeles.

NATHANIEL AYERS, a talented cellist, was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. A musical prodigy, as a teenager he studied music under Harry Barnoff at the Cleveland Music School Settlement. He won a scholarship to the music school at Ohio University. During his freshman year, he auditioned for the prestigious Juilliard School's music division and was granted a scholarship. He continued his studies at Juilliard for three years. His friendship with *Los Angeles Times* columnist Steve Lopez is the inspiration for the drama "The Soloist."