

Short Synopsis

Based in real theatrical history, ME AND ORSON WELLES is a comedic coming-of-age story about a teenage actor who lucks into a role in *Julius Caesar* as it's being re-imagined by a brilliant, impetuous young director named Orson Welles at his newly-founded Mercury Theater in NYC, 1937.

The rollercoaster week leading up to opening night has the charismatic-but-sometimes-cruel Welles (impressive newcomer Christian McKay) staking his career on this risky production while Richard (Zac Efron) mixes with everyone from starlets to stagehands in behind-the-scenes adventures bound to change him.

Claire Danes co-stars as Sonja Jones, the unapologetically ambitious assistant to Welles whom Richard tries to woo. Ben Chaplin plays Mercury Theater regular George Coulouris. Zoe Kazan, Eddie Marsan, Kelly Reilly and James Tupper are among the talented ensemble cast. The fast-moving screenplay by Holly Gent Palmo and Vince Palmo is based on Robert Kaplow's meticulously researched novel of the same name. Oscar®-nominated director Richard Linklater is at the helm of the CinemaNX and Detour Filmproduction, opening nationally in select cities November 25, 2009.

ME AND ORSON WELLES

Production Information

Zac Efron, Ben Chaplin, Claire Danes, Zoe Kazan, Eddie Marsan, Christian McKay, Kelly Reilly and **James Tupper** lead a talented ensemble cast of stage and screen actors in the coming-of-age romantic drama **ME AND ORSON WELLES**. Oscar®-nominated director **Richard Linklater** (“School of Rock”, “Before Sunset”) is at the helm of the CinemaNX and Detour Filmproduction, filmed in the Isle of Man, at Pinewood Studios, on various London locations and in New York City.

The screenplay by **Holly Gent Palmo** and **Vince Palmo** is based on the novel by Robert Kaplow, a thoroughly researched piece of historical fiction, set in the heady world of New York theatre. A teenage student, Richard Samuels, lucks his way into a minor role in the legendary 1937 Mercury Theatre production of “Julius Caesar”, directed by youthful genius Orson Welles. In the words of Kaplow’s protagonist: “This is the story of one week in my life. I was seventeen. It was the week I slept in Orson Welles’s pyjamas. It was the week I fell in love. It was the week I fell out of love.”

Ben Chaplin (“The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep”, “The Thin Red Line”) stars as Mercury Theatre regular George Coulouris, **Claire Danes** (“Stardust”, “Romeo + Juliet”) is production assistant Sonja Jones, the older woman who enchants Richard, played by **Zac Efron** (“17 Again” and the “High School Musical” series), **Zoe Kazan** (“Revolutionary Road”) is aspiring writer Gretta Adler, **Eddie Marsan** (“Happy-Go-Lucky”) stars as Mercury co-founder John Houseman, newcomer **Christian McKay**, an alumnus of RADA and the Royal Shakespeare Company, plays Orson Welles, **Kelly Reilly** (“Mrs Henderson Presents”) portrays spiky diva Muriel Brassler and **James Tupper** (“Men In Trees”) is the future movie star Joseph Cotten.

The film is produced by **Richard Linklater, Marc Samuelson** (“Stormbreaker”, “Wilde”) and **Ann Carli** (“Fast Food Nation”, “Crossroads”), with **Steve Christian, John Sloss** and **Steve Norris** as executive producers, **Holly Palmo & Vince Palmo Jr** and **Andrew Fingret** are co-producers, **Jessica Parker** and **Sara Greene** are associate producers and **Richard Hewitt** as line producer.

The behind-the-camera talent includes director of photography **Dick Pope BSC** (Oscar®-nominated for “The Illusionist”, “Vera Drake”), production designer **Laurence Dorman** (“Flashbacks of a Fool”, “Asylum”), editor **Sandra Adair A.C.E.** (“Fast Food Nation”, “School of Rock”), hair and make-up designer **Fae Hammond** (“The Darjeeling Limited”, “Stardust”), costume designer **Nic Ede** (“Wilde”, “Nanny McPhee”), music supervisor **Marc Marot** (“Notting Hill”), visual effects supervisor **Rob Duncan** (“Mr Bean’s Holiday”, the “Harry Potter” series) and casting director **Lucy Bevan** (“The Duchess”, “The Golden Compass”). The film also features music re-arranged and performed by **Jools Holland**, accompanied on stage by chart-topping singer **Eddi Reader**.

Filming began in the historic (and beautifully restored) Gaiety Theatre in Douglas, capital of the Isle of Man, which hosted the stage performances and backstage scenes at the Mercury Theatre, to which it bears an extraordinary resemblance. From there, the production moved to a New York street set, constructed on the backlot of Pinewood Studios, with interiors being filmed on Pinewood's sound stages. Other key scenes were shot in a variety of period locations around London, including the British Museum (which represented the interior of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art), Bloomsbury Square and Crystal Palace Park.

CinemaNX and Isle of Man Film, in association with Framestore Features, present a CinemaNX and Detour Filmproduction, a Richard Linklater Film, ME AND ORSON WELLES.

The Cast

Richard Samuels (<i>Lucius</i>)	ZAC EFRON
Sonja Jones	CLAIRE DANES
Orson Welles (<i>Brutus</i>)	CHRISTIAN MCKAY
George Coulouris (<i>Mark Antony</i>)	BEN CHAPLIN
Gretta Adler	ZOE KAZAN
John Houseman	EDDIE MARSAN
Muriel Brassler (<i>Portia</i>)	KELLY REILLY
Joseph Cotten (<i>Publius</i>)	JAMES TUPPER
Norman Lloyd (<i>Cinna the Poet</i>)	LEO BILL
Sam Leve	AL WEAVER
Vakhtangov	IAIN MCKEE
Walter Ash	SIMON LEE PHILLIPS
Joe Holland (<i>Julius Caesar</i>)	SIMON NEHAN
Lorelei Lathrop	IMOGEN POOTS
Grover Burgess (<i>Ligarius</i>)	PATRICK KENNEDY
Mrs Samuels	JANIE DEE
Grandmother Samuels	MARLENE SIDAWAY
Dr Mewling	GARRICK HAGON
Evelyn Allen (<i>Calpurnia</i>)	MEGAN MACZKO
Longchamps Kid #1	AARON BROWN
John Hoyt (<i>Decius</i>)	TRAVIS OLIVER
Radio Announcer	NATHAN OSGOOD
Radio Director	ROBERT WILFORT
Les Tremayne	MICHAEL BRANDON
Barbara Luddy	SASKIA REEVES
Martin Gabel (<i>Cassius</i>)	AIDAN McARDLE
I.L. Epstein	MIKE McEVOY
George Duthie (<i>Artemidorus</i>)	THOMAS ARNOLD
Jeannie Rosenthal	JO McINNES
William Mowry (<i>Flavius</i>)	DANIEL TUIE
Virginia Welles	EMILY ALLEN
Longchamps Kid #2	JOHN YOUNG
Singer	EDDI READER
Band Leader	JOOLS HOLLAND
Mercury Trumpet Player	STEVE PARRY
Mercury Percussion Player	JAY IRVING
Mercury French Horn Player	DAVID GARBUTT

Production Team

Director	RICHARD LINKLATER
Screenplay/Co-producers	HOLLY GENT PALMO VINCE PALMO
Based on the novel by	ROBERT KAPLOW
Producers	RICHARD LINKLATER MARC SAMUELSON ANN CARLI
Executive Producers	STEVE CHRISTIAN JOHN SLOSS STEVE NORRIS
Co-Producer	ANDREW FINGRET
Associate Producers	JESSICA PARKER SARA GREENE
Line Producer	RICHARD HEWITT
Director of Photography	DICK POPE, BSC
Production Designer	LAURENCE DORMAN
Editor	SANDRA ADAIR, A.C.E.
Hair & Make-up Designer	FAE HAMMOND
Costume Designer	NIC EDE
Music Supervisor	MARC MAROT
Visual Effects Supervisor	ROB DUNCAN
Casting Director	LUCY BEVAN
1 st Assistant Director	MATTHEW PENRY-DAVEY
Sound Mixer	COLIN NICOLSON
Supervising Art Director	BILL CRUTCHER
Property Master	BRUCE BIGG
Location Manager	JANE SOANS
Post Production Supervisor	MIRANDA JONES
Production Accountant	LINDA GREGORY

The Mercury Theatre

Time magazine once described the Mercury company's origin as "at first just an idea bounded North and South by hope, East and West by nerve." The co-founders were 35-year-old European émigré actor and producer John Houseman and 22-year-old Wisconsin-born actor and director Orson Welles. Houseman had spotted Welles in a production of "Romeo and Juliet" and was impressed with the young actor's creativity and drive. In 1935 Houseman was about to join the Federal Theatre Project, a New Deal initiative supporting live performance in the United States during the Great Depression and invited Welles to join him.

In 1936 Houseman assigned Welles to take charge of a project for Harlem's American Negro Theatre and the resulting "Voodoo Macbeth" established the young director as an extraordinarily precocious talent. In the summer of 1937, he and Houseman embarked on an ambitious plan to start a classical repertory theatre in New York City, based on the youthful nucleus of the company they had assembled for their staging of Marc Blitzstein's controversial opera, "The Cradle Will Rock", their final project at the Federal. The new enterprise was incorporated a few days later as the Mercury Theatre and they eventually found themselves a home in what had been the Comedy Theatre, on 41st Street and Broadway.

Built in 1909, the building had fallen into disrepair, but the company spent a month restoring and preparing the stage area for the first production, Welles's version of Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar", billed as "Caesar: Death of a Dictator", which would open a mere ten weeks after the Mercury Theatre was conceived. The stage was to appear bare, covered with platforms, steps, and ramps of varying heights and rakes. These had been acquired from a warehouse which stored lumber from the sets of other productions, hence the lack of uniformity, which Welles and his production team utilised with a particular creative flair. The rear wall of the theatre was left visible, also painted a rusty red, together with its steam pipes and heating ducts.

Another feature of the production design, which was based on Welles's original drawings and executed by Sam Leve, was the use of a series of open traps, from which steps led to the under-stage areas. These hazards were beloved of the director, despite the cast's apprehensions, although, following a blackout at the first dress rehearsal, the lights came up on the conspirators waiting to assassinate Caesar and one of their number was seen to be missing. Brutus, played by Welles himself, was found unconscious beneath the stage, fortunately with no lasting damage.

Welles's production was stunningly contemporary. The Roman senators and citizenry wore Fascist military uniforms or sharp suits with turned-up collars and black hats and the action was accompanied by Marc Blitzstein's martial music, the thump of the mob's feet on wooden boards and the forest of dramatic, vertical shafts of brilliance – the so-called 'Nuremberg lights' – reproduced by technical director Jeannie Rosenthal. Pared to an hour-and-a-half without an interval, this "Julius Caesar" lived up to the Mercury manifesto, which had been published in the New York Times on August 29th, 1937. Written by Welles and Houseman, it declared: "By the use of apron, lighting, sound devices, music, etc., we hope to give this production much of the speed and violence that it must have had on the Elizabethan stage."

John Mason Brown described the show as "by all odds the most exciting, most imaginative, the most topical, the most awesome and the most absorbing of the season's new productions. The touch of genius is upon it." The first outpouring of an avalanche of critical praise, this presaged the extraordinary success of what is still acknowledged to be a landmark in the history of American theatre and the anointing of the "boy wonder" who would go on to create cinematic legend.

When it came to reproducing the visual impact of this groundbreaking production, the filmmakers were determined to be as faithful to the original as the budget would allow. Basing the look of the theatrical performance on contemporary photographs taken by Cecil Beaton, as well as copies of the original stage plans, Richard Linklater and his team have recreated the dramatic lighting and stage effects, the Fascist imagery of sets and costumes, all to the accompaniment of Marc Blitzstein's original score.

Orson Welles and company

Orson Welles was very much the leader of the Mercury Theatre Company, despite his relative youth. Born in 1915 in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to an inventor and manufacturer father and a concert pianist mother, both of whom had died before he reached fifteen, Orson was blessed with a commanding physique and a deep and resounding voice. During a visit to Europe at the age of 16, he managed to persuade Dublin's Gate Theatre that he was a Broadway star and made his stage debut there in "Jew Süss". He became, in fact, a Broadway legend and a ubiquitous and groundbreaking radio star, following the stage success of "Caesar" with more than a year as the voice of The Shadow in the popular radio serial. All this by the age of 24, when he began work on his enduring cinema classic "Citizen Kane". Although many felt that his controversial 50-year career was one of unfulfilled promise, his legacy included such classic films as "The Magnificent Ambersons", "Othello", "Chimes at Midnight" and "Touch of Evil", his iconic performance as Harry Lime in Carol Reed's "The Third Man" and the memory of his notorious 1938 broadcast version of H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds".

John Houseman, whose collaboration with Welles was to prove so fruitful, was born Jacques Haussmann in Bucharest, to a British mother and Jewish father from Alsace. Educated in England, he emigrated to the United States in 1925, becoming a U.S. citizen in 1943. President of the Mercury Theatre (Welles was vice-president), he went on to become a successful film producer and an accomplished character actor, winning an Academy Award® as Best Supporting Actor in the 1973 academic drama "The Paper Chase". He died in 1988.

George Coulouris was born in Salford, England, in 1903 and educated at Manchester Grammar School and at Elsie Fogerty's Central School of Speech and Drama, where he was a contemporary of Laurence Olivier and Peggy Ashcroft. He made his stage debut at the Old Vic in 1926 and his Broadway debut three years later. He met Welles in 1936, who cast him as Mark Antony in "Julius Caesar" and as financier Walter Parks Thatcher in "Citizen Kane". A regular on stage, on radio, on television and in more than 80 films on both sides of the Atlantic, he received an Oscar® nomination for "Watch on the Rhine" in 1943 and died in London in 1989.

Joseph Cotten, although cast by Welles in a minor role in "Julius Caesar", became a star of the big screen, despite his comment that: "I didn't care about the movies, really. I was tall. I could talk. It was easy to do." Born in Virginia, he began his theatre career as a critic, a profession echoed by his later role in "Citizen Kane". Making his Broadway debut in 1930, he met Welles and joined the Mercury company. Their successful collaborations also included "The Magnificent Ambersons", "Journey Into Fear" (which he co-wrote with producer Welles) and, most memorably Hitchcock's "Shadow of a Doubt" and Carol Reed's "The Third Man". An enduring star, Cotten died at the age of 88 in California.

Norman Lloyd's career in entertainment has spanned more than seven decades. The scene of his murder (as Cinna the Poet) in "Julius Caesar" was the production's *coup de theatre*, producing the play's most chilling moment. He became a favourite

of Alfred Hitchcock's, appearing in "Saboteur" and "Spellbound" and being closely involved in the production of the television series "Alfred Hitchcock Presents". As a TV performer he is probably best remembered as Dr Ausschlander in 132 episodes of the hospital drama "St Elsewhere". His films include "Dead Poets Society" and most recently, "In Her Shoes".

Arthur Anderson appeared in the Mercury Theatre's "Julius Caesar" as Lucius, memorably photographed by Cecil Beaton as a 15-year-old, singing "Orpheus with his lute" for Brutus (Welles), an image which inspired novelist Robert Kaplow. The largely fictionalized template for Richard Samuels in ME AND ORSON WELLES, Anderson remained with Orson as a member of the Mercury Theatre On The Air and became one of the leading voice artists on radio, as well as making regular appearances on stage, in films and on television.

Of the other key members of the Mercury family portrayed in ME AND ORSON WELLES, **Martin Gabel** (Cassius, although he lacked the requisite 'lean and hungry look') made numerous appearances on "What's My Line" with his wife, series regular Arlene Francis, and won a Tony Award in 1961 for "Big Fish, Little Fish". He appeared in twenty films and is perhaps best remembered in America as the narrator/host of CBS's 1945 broadcast of Norman Corwin's epic dramatic poem "On A Note of Triumph", commemorating the fall of the Nazi regime. **Joe Holland** (Caesar), was born in Virginia and trained at RADA in London. He had a long career in the theatre and appeared in a number of Shakespearean plays including the Basil Rathbone productions of "Julius Caesar," "Coriolanus" and "Hamlet".

Leading ladies **Muriel Brassler** (Portia) and **Evelyn Allen** (Calpurnia), though accomplished stage actresses, were described by Houseman as 'decorative, adequate and hardly memorable'. **Grover Burgess** (Ligarius) appeared in Jules Dassin's classic 1948 film "The Naked City", after more than 20 years as a Broadway regular, including a leading role in William Saroyan's comedy "The Time of Your Life". **John Hoyt**, who also performed under his real name as John Hoysradt, topped the bill in 1938 at New York's Rainbow Room as 'The Master of Satire' and made hundreds of appearances on television and in films such as "Spartacus" and "Desperately Seeking Susan". **George Duthie** and **William Mowry** were also regular Mercury Theatre members, both on stage and radio. William Alland, whom Welles playfully dubbed **Vakhtangov** after the great Russian actor/producer, was the director's general factotum at the Mercury, but went on to his own success as an actor-producer, including playing the young reporter, Thompson, in "Citizen Kane".

Behind the scenes the company included top Broadway stage manager **Walter Thompson Ash** and **Sam Leve**, whose realisation of Welles's original concepts had a lasting impact on stage design. Perhaps the Mercury's greatest asset was technical director **Jean Rosenthal**, who went on to design the original stage lighting for such Broadway hits as "West Side Story", "The Sound of Music", "Hello Dolly!", "The Odd Couple" and "Cabaret".

Recreating 1937 New York

According to producer Marc Samuelson, "one of the issues that you face is that it's very hard to shoot 1937 New York in New York, so you're not shooting it in the actual place. New York has changed so completely that everything in the background is wrong, everything in the foreground is wrong, the people all look wrong, every building's been changed. It's enormously difficult. So you then end up shooting New York in some other North American city which looks vaguely like it did in 1937. By the time you've done all of that, you may as well have shot it anywhere."

As an independent feature, ME AND ORSON WELLES needed to make creative use of every penny of its limited budget and found a solution in basing the production in London, where a combination of Pinewood Studios and some imaginatively chosen locations brought New York to life. And thanks to some visual trickery, the imposing scale and distinctive architecture of the bustling city has been vibrantly recreated on a comparative shoestring.

“This movie doesn’t really exist any longer in New York,” says Richard Linklater. “If you go to where the Mercury Theatre was, you would never know. It’s an office building – there’s not even a plaque. That street looks so different, it didn’t really matter to me where we shot the film. As a filmmaker, wherever I could make this film I would, (and I did)”.

“It’s been wonderful working with production designer Laurence Dorman”, continues Linklater. “We went over to New York together – he wasn’t that familiar with the city, so we went to a lot of the actual addresses in the movie and I showed him around.”

Dorman’s visit inspired his design of the street set on Pinewood’s Orchard Lot: “It was worth every second actually, because we were able to visit the site of the theatre and I was able to get the geography of 41st Street into my mind, with Bryant Park and all the things that are mentioned in the script. And even though 41st Street was completely different to how it would have been in those days, I was able to just wander around the neighbourhood and take pictures all over midtown and all the way down to 22nd Street. I was picking out all of the old stuff, the architecture that I imagined would have been there at the time and turning it into our little composite street. I’ve taken a selection of buildings based on my photographs and put them together to suit my purposes.

“For the exterior of the Mercury Theatre we found a single photograph taken in the early 1900s when the building, then the Comedy Theatre, was putting on its first production. We took a little bit of licence here and there, but it’s great to see that original picture and then to be able to look at our street – it’s quite thrilling to do something like that.”

The Theatre:

Crucial to the success of the enterprise was finding a theatre that could play the interior of the Mercury itself. By a stroke of good fortune CinemaNX, the production company, is based in the Isle of Man and there in the capital, Douglas, is the magnificently restored Gaiety Theatre, an almost exact contemporary of the Mercury. “I don’t think we would have been able to make the film if we hadn’t been able to shoot it there,” says Marc Samuelson. “It was just the most fantastic set for us. It worked really well, looked great in the film, was just the right size – in every way it fitted the bill.”

The theatre opened originally as a large pavilion in 1893 and following a redesign by Frank Matcham, it re-opened as an opera house and theatre in 1900. After early success, years of neglect began to take their toll and the building was acquired by the Isle of Man Government in 1971. A comprehensive programme of restoration was launched in 1990 and completed in 2000. One of the last elements to be restored was the famous Corsican Trap, the only known original version of this classic stage effect.

“I really fell in love with the place,” admits Linklater. “It was almost too nice, too ornate, but I thought if we brought it down a little bit and didn’t look up at the beautiful domed cathedral-like ceiling, it had similar proportions to the Mercury Theatre in seats and size. The stage was about the same size and the below stage area and its trap door arrangement with locks and pulleys was far more complex and interesting

than you would ever be able to realise if you were building your own stage. So all of that felt great, and to shoot on the Isle of Man for those weeks was just kind of perfect. Some films are just meant to be. It just feels like it lines up and it's meant to happen."

The book:

Robert Kaplow, on whose novel the film is based, was eager to see Welles' production of "Caesar" for the first time on the screen. He remembers the origins of the story: "I was sitting in the basement of the Rutgers University Library, looking through a copy of 'Theatre Arts Monthly' from 1937, and there was a photograph from Welles' production of "Julius Caesar" which featured Welles in a dark coat and black gloves, sitting at the edge of the stage. Next to him was a young man playing a ukulele tricked up to look like a lute. My first thought was: the real story here is the kid. What does this moment feel like from the kid's point of view--to bear witness to a celebrity creating himself right in front of your eyes? Investigating the history of this theatrical moment, I discovered the young actor from 1937, Arthur Anderson, was alive and living in New York . He was an invaluable source, and he still has the ukulele, which he played for me at his kitchen table in a remarkable moment that felt as if I were melting through time. Linklater's film astonishingly recreates this photograph with heart-stopping accuracy."

The design:

A key element in the recreation of the period was the skill and experience of the Oscar-nominated cinematographer Richard Pope. "I had a great meeting with Dick," remembers Linklater, "and I just saw him as a kindred spirit. He had that wild attitude – he seemed like a kind of mad scientist. And what you want in that position is enthusiasm – and skill, obviously, that goes without saying. Other than that, it's a personality match. He seems in the spirit of the film and he said he fell in love with it when he read the passage in the script where one of the actresses, Muriel Brassler, played by Kelly Reilly, is talking about lighting and gels and about getting a little butterfly shadow under her nose. He just thought that was so amusing.

"I think people maybe know him for his Mike Leigh films, but it's some of his other films that are, I think, just as impressive. It's been really fun within this film for both of us. You rarely get the opportunity to recreate theatrical lighting. With most films, even a stylised period piece, you bend a little towards naturalism. But when you are recreating the exact lighting of this highly dramatic, very theatrical stage show, it's just fun. It was like shooting an old studio film with high contrast lighting and it's probably the only time I will ever get to do that. The story goes that the great cinematographer Gregg Toland saw this production of Julius Caesar and when he heard that Welles was going to Hollywood to make "Citizen Kane" he told him he wanted to work with him because of the lighting he had done for the play.

To establish the look of the Mercury Theatre, costume designer Nic Ede researched the Fascist imagery of the original Caesar production. "Thank goodness, there is a lot of visual reference, a lot of photographs and a lot of people wrote about it. When we were on the Isle of Man filming in the Gaiety Theatre, I looked at the way Dick Pope had lit it and the way Laurence had done the set – identical to the original – and it sent a shiver down my spine."

In addition to reproducing the uniforms on stage, there was the small matter of costuming the audience for Nic Ede and his team. This required clothing some 570 extras, who also needed to be fully made up and coiffed by Fae Hammond and her assistants, for the scenes involving a full theatre. "I love huge crowd scenes," says Ede. "I don't know what it is – something rather perverse. It's playing at make-believe and that's always a great, great thing to do. The joy of filming, from my point

of view, is to create something that the audience will look at that they absolutely believe. Every extra that comes into the fitting room is a bit of a challenge. You want to make them into a character, it's not just a body to put clothes on, it's somebody to represent... a fishwife... or a sweetcorn seller....

“The thing that was exciting for me in this film was the fact that in the thirties, leisurewear was much more accepted in America than elsewhere. I don't think it existed in Europe in the same way and certainly didn't unless you were rich and were wearing beach pyjamas! It made a change from the usual 1930s stuff I have done which is pretty upper class and extravagant, whereas this was a chance to do real people leading real lives. It's interesting, trying to achieve totally believable people through their clothes and their make up and hair.”

The '30s music for the film was selected by Linklater himself, a big fan of the music of the period and of the arrangements of maestro Jools Holland, described by the director as 'an English national treasure'. Another key element in recreating the sound of the era was the speaking voices of the Mercury Theatre players, which benefited from the specialist attention of distinguished Shakespearean Dramaturge Giles Block and veteran dialect coach Judith Windsor. Block, Master of Verse and Play at London's celebrated Globe Theatre, worked with the actors on the Shakespeare scenes during the rehearsal period, coaching and advising them on the authenticity of their verse speaking. Judith Windsor worked on the actors' delivery throughout the production, paying close attention to the fine details of their accents.

As an American, married to an Englishman and resident in England, Ms Windsor was particularly attuned to the challenges inherent in the script. “You have to remember that, at that time, American standard stage English was very English. Although, were we to hear Shakespeare as spoken in Shakespeare's time, it would sound more American than English!

The verse:

“Of course, we have worked on the speaking of Shakespearean verse and the mode followed goes back to the Central School of Speech and Drama in London – it's mentioned in the text by George Coulouris that he learned to speak Shakespeare there with Elsie Fogerty. This tradition can be traced down to the Royal Shakespeare Company – it's a sort of energising of the last of the line, so that the imaginative experience for the actor comes, not between the lines or the words, but on the words and as a result of the scansion. It's a wonderful thing – it frees the actor to experience through the text and through the pentameter, things he would never have thought of. They speak with rapidity and clarity – I'm always delighted and constantly surprised at how skillful the British actors are.

“Orson Welles himself was in terms of accent a kind of hybrid. He sounded English to Americans and American to English people – we listened to a great many tapes of Welles speaking, some of which were of the original Mercury production and in those you can hear that he is sometimes very English in how he pronounces things.”

And the Mercury rises

Richard Linklater is a director with an eclectic back catalogue of popular and critically-praised movies and when his long-time associate and first assistant director Vince Palmo recommended Robert Kaplow's book, he thought it sounded an interesting title and took it with him on vacation. He admits to liking the genre of historical fiction because as he says, all histories are fiction, anyway, and in this case the author had based it on every memoir and fact he could get hold of.

“It was just wonderful. The author was actually inserting himself as the young character, seeing Welles through his eyes and at that moment in time. It’s history, theatrical history – Welles’ career and a young man’s coming of age. So I found it utterly charming and really interesting. If you know Welles, you know he mastered theatre and radio before he went on to his more famous film career. It’s such a fascinating portrait of a moment in time in his life. I was just about to start another movie, but I could see that Vince and Holly Palmo were really passionate about it – their passion kept fuelling me, which was needed, because it seemed like such an ambitious movie.”

“Rick asked if we’d mind if he optioned it and we said no,” confirms Vince. “Holly and I had written a couple of scripts which he’d liked to varying degrees and we said we’d really like to take a shot at the screenplay. Having read the book and done our own research, it became an even richer milieu and time and place. We were interested in everything about that era and the fact that it was about young people – Welles was only 22 – was a big lure.”

Finding Orson:

“So we had a script and were really excited about it,” says Linklater, “but I said, before we start doing budgets and schedules and trying to go further, let’s get an Orson, because we are not going to do this thing at all unless we can get the right guy to play him. To me, that was the biggest piece of the puzzle that had to fit, before it even had the possibility of moving forward. We thought of all the usual Americans, but we weren’t really getting anywhere. And I remember theorising, ‘you know who our Orson Welles is? He’s in London right now, probably doing Shakespeare. I bet that’s where he is – or there’ll be some great unknown British actor who kind of looks like him’.

“A few months later, Robert Kaplow sends me an e-mail saying that there’s a guy performing in New York at this 50-seat theatre I had never heard of, performing a play called ‘Rosebud: The Lives Of Orson Welles’ for just a couple of weeks. And so I flew to New York and went straight to the play. I’d just had shoulder surgery and I had this brace on, I could barely move, it was really uncomfortable. My only test was, do I believe this guy is Orson Welles? Christian McKay just had that kind of Wellesian manner and he had clearly studied him closely. So I talked to him after the show and I got back to Austin just thinking about him and felt ‘let’s take this to another level’. So I flew Christian to Austin and we did a sort of old fashioned screen test.

“We did three scenes from the movie: I cast some people, did period wardrobe, we had an old car and we did a scene in the back; Christian came in and we worked together and hung out for a couple of days. After that, I didn’t even need to look at the footage. I just knew the kind of guy he was and thought the film Gods were making a very special offering, as they sometimes do. And I remember telling him we don’t have money, we don’t have anything – it may never happen, but we’d try. We started sending the script out and the good news was many seemed intrigued by it, but one of the stumbling blocks we had was a Welles who was unknown. Can you get a bigger name to play Welles? Ours was always the same argument: *no, this is Welles!*”

Christian McKay, graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and accomplished concert pianist, is an established theatrical all-rounder, but has been aware of his resemblance to Welles since his student days. “People said that I resembled him a little bit. I only remember Orson as this big, gargantuan iceberg of a man and at drama school, whenever they said ‘you look a bit like Harry Lime’, I really thought they were having a go at my weight! So I’d be very anti-Orson – I used to think ‘I’m

not that big....' Mind you, I must be the only actor who had to lose weight to play Orson Welles!"

"Christian's performance is a revelation," enthuses Marc Samuelson. "He's a sensational actor, enormously talented in many different ways and it's a fantastic, delicious secret that nobody knows about this, but they're all going to. He's not only a fantastically good, properly trained, really serious actor, who could do anything, but he is an absolutely extraordinary musician and he's also an unbelievably intelligent person. He's a great writer – it's nauseating – but he's a terrible dancer, which is good to know. Seriously, I think he's going to be one of the great discoveries."

Fellow producer Ann Carli agrees: "We did a reading in London, just so we could hear the script with actors. And it was also a way to have Christian interact with some of the other actors who have a lot of film experience. So we're all sitting around the table and here's this guy, an unknown British actor – how did he get this plum role? You can just feel the other actors thinking that. And then he gets into character and the room is mesmerised. It's like... 'holy cow, that's Orson Welles!'"

Dialect coach Judith Windsor is full of praise for the newcomer: "Christian is an extraordinary man and an extraordinary actor and it's been a great, great pleasure to meet him and to work with him and to envisage what his future may be. He may develop into, or may very well now be, what Welles said of himself – that he was a 'king' actor. A great deal of Christian's performance comes from his musicianship. The fact that he is such a glorious pianist is a great help to him vocally in shaping the line and in getting the way Welles uses phrases and, of course, in terms of Welles' very specific accent."

Casting:

With the Orsonian hurdle out of the way, the rest of the casting could proceed. The other key element, without which the project would be unworkable, is the leading role in this coming-of-age story, 17-year-old Richard Samuels. As Linklater points out, "He is very active. Even though he is the observer of the movie, he's really the motor, so I needed to find someone who could pull that off. It could come off totally wrong, if he wasn't likeable and sympathetic."

Someone mentioned the name of Zac Efron, whose image adorns the walls of teenage bedrooms across the world, following the success of 'High School Musical'. "Frankly," admits Linklater, "at that point, I had just seen 'Hairspray' and my first impression was that he's almost too good looking. But in my experience, you can't judge the full range of an actor based on what you've seen them in – so we set up a meeting. A minute or two into the conversation, I knew he would be the perfect Richard Samuels.

"He really responded to the script and got it. Zac's got so much going on, he's a natural song and dance man – he really does kind of have a song in his heart and a little dance in his step and he's really intelligent. But he's young and there's still a wide-eyed, it's-all-ahead-of-him kind of vibe that's perfect for Richard. He's got a rare quality that you don't see very often. Just photographing him, you go 'wow, that's a once in a generation kind of thing'. I just think, with his level of talent, he can go in a lot of interesting directions. He's been great to work with, I can't imagine anybody else playing it."

Producer Marc Samuelson was equally impressed: "We know he can sing and dance and that he's a decent actor. The revelation is going to be that he is a really first class dramatic actor and this film will reveal that to the world. Zac's the real thing. He's going to have a magnificent career – he's got it all and he's very serious about it."

Zac found he had a lot in common with Richard Samuels: “He’s just a kid at school in Jersey, he’s very into the arts and theatre and music, he plays certain instruments and, yeah...it’s kind of funny, we are parallel in that way – I think Richard is pretty typical for a Jersey kid in New York at his age in 1937. He’s not the coolest kid in school: he has a tough time with the ladies. He’s got a mischievous side – at one point he almost ruined the theatre! It’s just a wild adventure. He’s taken from being just a kid at school in Jersey. He’s given a week with Orson Welles and it’s the most magical week of his life. He falls in love, he stars on Broadway, he gets in a fight with Welles. How many people can say that they have done that?”

“It’s fun being an actor playing an actor playing an actor. Being in a play is an experience that I got to have quite a bit when I was a kid and there’s no feeling like it. Portraying that in a film is pretty surreal. I can totally relate with Richard on so many levels. Being in a play, thinking you know your lines – but maybe you’re a word off and the director comes down on you really hard. And finding romance during a play, that happens!”

Zac’s presence in the *Isle of Man* during the theatre scenes caused something of a local stir, as Christian McKay recalls: “These young girls were outside, screaming like banshees and he stood up and said ‘I’ll go out there.’ I said ‘you’re going out there? It’s terrifying!’ But later, when I went outside, there was this ten-year-old, who had met her hero and the great thing was, her hero had turned out to be everything that she wanted him to be and she’ll remember that for the rest of her life. He’s like that with everybody.”

When casting his female lead, Sonja Jones, Richard Linklater remembered auditioning a teenaged Claire Danes for a role in “*Dazed And Confused*” in 1992. “She was too young for that part, a couple of years too young, but I think she was one of the best actresses I met, she was so good. Even as a kid she was just so natural and real, so I always followed her career and was really lucky that our paths finally crossed. And she remembered that audition too. It’s just great when you hook back up with someone you admire. She’s such a good actress, a really good person and it’s been really fun to work with her, she’s a real trouper.”

“Sonja is an equivocal character,” says Marc Samuelson. “There’s no question that you’re not just supposed to go along with Zac and fall madly in love with her. You should have a slight sense, and maybe not quite realise why, that you’re not quite sure about this woman, her ambition is so completely focused and so enormous and she’s tough as old boots, so you perhaps hold back a slight level of sympathy. Claire’s such a clever actress because she manages to get across all the charm and the fun, and yet there’s just something.....”

Claire agrees: “Sonja’s very ambitious and capable and thinks that she’s savvier and more mature than she really is. So she’s very charming, but she’s very critical of others and she doesn’t see her own weaknesses, ever. I loved the script. It’s incredibly charming and witty and has a really surprising tone. It’s very light, but very intelligent.

“This production of *Julius Caesar* was radical, because it was a comment on the fascism that was starting to eat away at the world. Welles made it really relevant and urgent and fresh. Shakespeare, up until that point, had been performed in a much more studied, careful way. He just blew all of these conventions out of the water. This film does have a historical dimension that is fascinating and worth considering and exploring. Orson Welles is a hero of mine and a hero to so many people. It’s great to take a moment to admire everything that he achieved.”

Starring as the prickly and pessimistic English actor George Coulouris is Ben Chaplin. “In the States we think of him as a romantic comedy guy, but working with

him on the film we got to see that he's got tremendous range as an actor" says producer Ann Carli. "He's amazing. I just said thank you for every arched eyebrow, thank you for every hurt and indignant pause – thank you for all of that."

Chaplin who surprisingly, despite his extensive stage experience, had never performed Shakespeare before, enjoyed the opportunity to recreate Welles' legendary production. "I listened to a recording of Coulouris doing the funeral oration – 'Friends, Romans, countrymen'. There comes a point where you're representing him, but you're not discovering the speech for yourself, you're not feeling it as an actor. In the end I thought I just had to go for it, as I would if I were doing it. And then I just slipped in bits of George, because nobody will know how he did it – most of the people who saw it are now dead. It's really strange, because you're playing a good actor acting – it would be a lot easier to play a bad one."

Zoe Kazan was delighted to be cast by Richard Linklater. "I had known a lot of people who had worked with him and all of them had had nothing but the kindest things to say and they all turned out to be true. He's very easy-going and he's really hands-on as a director. He doesn't hold your hand or baby you, he let's you do the interpretation on your own and tells you what he needs and he's a lot of fun to work with.

"Gretta seemed very clear to me. Often when I'm reading a script I can tell right away whether or not it will be a character that I can play and I just sort of understood where she was coming from, being young and precocious and excited about the world. She loves to read and she's just very intelligent and interesting. I also liked her because she doesn't seem like a person of substance the first time you meet her, she's the way that very young people can be. She's a little in awe of everyone around her and in awe of her own ambitions and then she actually turns out to be an artist."

As an accomplished stage actress and a self-confessed history buff, she would have loved to have seen Welles' "Caesar" – "that kind of ambition and charisma and balls – quite a package. My hope is that the film will educate a younger audience about Orson Welles and about what the 1930s in New York were like. It's a very accessible and entertaining story."

Eddie Marsan appears as what Marc Samuelson calls "the solid centre of what's going on in the madness." John Houseman's late career as an actor makes him more familiar to many cinemagoers than some of the other characters in the film, but his particular appeal to Marsan was as "a Romanian Jew who reinvented himself as the quintessential Englishman in the New York theatre circuit and who continued to reinvent himself for the rest of his life. Houseman described his relationship with Welles as that of a father, a friend, somebody who had to be very firm with him and someone who was also at times in awe of Orson. We're filming a story about the theatre company, so all of those dynamics are on the film set, as well as being in the company.

"I'd like people to get a growing awareness of theatre in this period, because it was fascinating and it actually informed acting. The people of this period became the acting teachers for people like Brando, Paul Newman and Benicio del Toro. All the great acting schools in New York and Los Angeles came from these theatre projects, which were publicly funded at this time. So I want people to realise the genius of Orson Welles, which is under-appreciated, and also I want people to realise what it was like to be around someone so creative. Sometimes they can be so compassionate, you can fall in love with them, but also they can be so brutal."

Rising stage and screen star Kelly Reilly enjoys playing Orson's temperamental leading lady, Muriel Brassler: "It's fun, because you like to think that you are playing somebody so different from you. I hope I am, because Muriel is from New York and

she can be quite difficult, but only in the way that she is very concerned with how she looks, so everything is all about her. But if you think about this time in the '30s, women really were still second to the guys, they just had to look good. And she knows that, so she uses it. But I think she was also a very, very competent actress, so it's nice to be able to delve in. There's also the funny side – behind the scenes. We see this façade of actors but we never really get to see what their process is. And it's quite nice to see the silliness of it all – 'how do I look?' – looking in the mirror backstage before she goes on. You see her nerves and insecurities and then she goes on to create this world, to create this illusion.”

Canadian actor James Tupper was the last member of the principal cast to join the production, as Orson's friend and regular collaborator Joseph Cotten. He auditioned on a Sunday, was hired on the Tuesday and on the Wednesday he found himself on a plane to Europe. Familiar to television audiences from his role in the popular “Men In Trees”, he has extensive stage experience and found the milieu of the story fascinating. “The script was wonderful when I first read it, because I think it had so much of the spirit of doing theatre. It's joyful, you know, people come together and take a risk, pretending to be somebody else in a play, speaking other people's words and you end up forming a kind of family when you do it.

“When I read the script, to me that was a lot of what it was about. It was about a moment that took place a long time ago and it was also about the joy of creating theatre, which is weird in a film. Rick Linklater did a really wise thing, because he put us all in one rehearsal room for a period of time and we did the scenes over and over and over again. And I think, in a weird way, we formed our own company.”

All of the cast felt the same way. As Zac Efron puts it: “We were in the Isle of Man for a while and so the whole cast pretty much just had each other to talk to and hang out with and we had a lot of fun. We became a pretty tight troupe, a squad.....a family.”

BIOGRAPHIES

The Cast

ZAC EFRON (Richard Samuels) was born and raised in Northern California. One of Hollywood's most promising young talents, his career in film and television continues to evolve with exciting and challenging projects. Segueing effortlessly between the big and small screen, Zac quickly attracted attention and became the breakout star of the Emmy Award®-winning Disney Channel phenomenon "High School Musical." He reprised his role as Troy Bolton, head of the basketball team, in "High School Musical 2," which broke cable TV records as it garnered 17.5 million viewers, and again in "High School Musical 3: Senior Year", which grossed in excess of \$250 million at cinemas worldwide. His other television credits include a recurring role on the WB series "Summerland" and guest-starring roles on "The Suite Life of Zack & Cody," "ER," "The Guardian" and "C.S.I. Miami". He made his feature film debut in the box-office hit "Hairspray", for which he won an MTV Movie Award for Breakthrough Performance. The film won the Critics Choice award for Best Ensemble and the cast was also nominated for a Golden Globe and SAG Award. Most recently he starred alongside Matthew Perry and Leslie Mann in the film "17 Again," a "Big"-like dramedy in which a 36-year-old man wakes up in the body of a high school senior. Zac starred on stage in the musical "Gypsy" and has appeared in productions of "Peter Pan," "Mame," "Little Shop of Horrors" and "The Music Man". His next project will be "The Death and Life of Charlie St. Cloud" for writer/director Burr Steers.

BEN CHAPLIN (George Coulouris) trained at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, leaving early to try his luck in the theatre. He has made regular appearances on stage throughout his career, winning an Olivier Award nomination for "The Glass Menagerie" and a Tony Award nomination for "The Retreat from Moscow". He made his feature film debut in James Ivory's "The Remains of the Day" and followed this up with Chris Menaul's "Feast of July", but his first great screen success was in the TV sit-com "Game On". His previous films include "Washington Square", "Lost Souls", "Birthday Girl", "Murder By Numbers", "The Touch", "Chromophobia" and "Stage Beauty". He has been directed by the legendary Terrence Malick three times, in "The Thin Red Line" and "The New World" and upcoming "Tree of Life." Recent films Chaplin starred in were "The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep", which grossed more than \$100 million and Oliver Parker's "Dorian Gray". He is currently shooting acclaimed screenwriter William Monahan's directorial debut "London Boulevard".

CLAIRE DANES (Sonja Jones) has performed on stage, screen and television, making an impressive mark with her starring role in the acclaimed series "My So Called Life," which earned her a Golden Globe® Award and an Emmy® nomination. Her extensive list of films include "Shopgirl," "The Family Stone," "Evening," "Stardust," "William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet," "Igby Goes Down," "The Hours," Billie August's "Les Miserables," "Stage Beauty," "Brokedown Palace," "Polish Wedding," "The Rainmaker," "To Gillian On Her 37th Birthday," "Home For the Holidays," and "Little Women." She made her Broadway debut starring as Eliza Doolittle in George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" opposite Jefferson Mays. Her next film project will be the lead role in "Temple Grandin", HBO Films' biopic of an autistic woman who became a bestselling author and one of the top scientists in the field of humane livestock handling. She is also an accomplished dancer and has received critical acclaim for her performances in "Edith and Jenny" and "Christina Olson: American Model" both choreographed by Tamar Rogoff at P.S. 122. She is currently the face of Gucci's fine jewelry line.

ZOE KAZAN (Gretta Adler), Newcomer Zoe Kazan received high praises for her breakout role as Maureen Grube in Sam Mendes' "Revolutionary Road" opposite

Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet. An acclaimed theater actress and 2005 graduate of Yale University, Zoe made her New York stage debut in 2006 in the Off-Broadway revival of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" opposite Cynthia Nixon. Kazan continued to shine on stage in 2007, starring in Jonathan Marc Sherman's *Things We Want*, directed by Ethan Hawke and Playwrights Horizons' production of *100 Saints You Should Know*, for which she received a Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play, as well as the Lucille Lortel Award nomination for Outstanding Featured Actress. In January 2008, Kazan made her Broadway debut opposite S. Epatha Merkerson and Kevin Anderson in a revival of William Inge's "Come Back, Little Sheb". Following this role, Zoe was named the recipient of the 2008 Derwent Award. Zoe is the only actor to be awarded the Derwent Award for three roles in one year: "Come Back, Little Sheba, 100 Saints You Should Know and *Things We Want*". In the Fall of 2009, Zoe returned to Broadway in the New York adaptation of the critically acclaimed, London hit "The Seagull." She starred as Masha, opposite Kristin Scott Thomas and Peter Sarsgaard. Zoe is also a talented playwright who's family drama, *Absalom*, was produced at the 2009 Humana Festival at the Actor's Theater of Louisville. A second play has been commissioned by Manhattan Theater Club. In 2007 she was featured in Paul Haggis' thriller, *In the Valley of Elah and Fracture* and most recently appeared in Rebecca Miller's *The Private Lives of Pippa Lee* and *I Hate Valentine's Day*. Zoe recently wrapped picture on two new films: Josh Radnor's directorial debut, "HappyThankYouMorePlease," with Radnor, Malin Akerman, Kate Mara, and Pablo Schreiber; and Kelly Reichardt's latest movie, "Meek's Cutoff," which also stars Michelle Williams, Paul Dano, and Shirley Henderson. Up next you can see Zoe in Bradley Rust Gray's "The Exploding Girl," for which she was awarded Best Actress in a Narrative Feature Film by the Tribeca Film Festival; and Nancy Meyers' new film "It's Complicated" with Meryl Streep, Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin.

EDDIE MARSAN (John Houseman) was born and raised in Bethnal Green, East London. He served an apprenticeship as a printer before turning to acting, attending the Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. He has become a prolific and popular character actor on stage, on television and especially on film. His notable film credits include Martin Scorsese's "Gangs of New York", Alejandro González Inárritu's "21 Grams", Mike Leigh's "Vera Drake" (for which he won a British Independent Film Award as Best Supporting Actor) and "Happy-Go-Lucky", Adrian Shergold's "Pierpoint", James McTeigue's "V for Vendetta", Terrence Malick's "The New World", Michael Mann's "Miami Vice" and Peter Berg's "Hancock". On television he has appeared in the last twelve months in two acclaimed BBC dramas – "God on Trial" and Dickens adaptation "Little Dorrit", as well as in Channel 4's hugely acclaimed Red Riding trilogy as news reporter Jack Whitehead. His other forthcoming film roles include Guy Ritchie's "Sherlock Holmes", Philip Ridley's demonic "Heartless" and "The Disappearance of Alice Creed", also for CinemaNX.

CHRISTIAN McKAY (Orson Welles) began his musical education as a chorister at Manchester Cathedral, before studying piano at Chetham's School of Music and, subsequently, at the University of York, the Royal College of Music and the Queensland Conservatorium in Australia. After several years touring Europe and Australia as a successful and critically-acclaimed concert pianist, he turned to acting, training at RADA (The Royal College of Dramatic Art). On graduation, he was recommended by Lord (Richard) Attenborough to the Royal Shakespeare Company, performing in "Anthony and Cleopatra" at Stratford-Upon-Avon and in London's West End. His other successful stage appearances include his award-winning performance as Orson Welles in "Rosebud: The Lives of Orson Welles" at the Edinburgh Festival and in London, Toronto and New York. His feature film debut, "Abraham's Point", with Mackenzie Crook, was completed shortly before he began work on *ME AND ORSON WELLES*. He can next be seen in Bernard Rose's biopic of drug smuggler turned author and raconteur Howard Marks, "Mr. Nice" and the new untitled Woody Allen film which has just completed principal photography.

KELLY REILLY (Muriel Brassler) Kelly is well known for her work on stage, where she is one of Britain's most sought after actresses. In 2008 she played Desdemona to Chiwetel Ejoifor's "Othello" at the Donmar Warehouse, with Ewan MacGregor co-starring. The production earned numerous award nods, including an Olivier Best Actress nomination for Kelly (for her second time), as well as winning the South Bank Show Award for Theatre. In 2004, she was the youngest ever actress to be nominated as Best Actress at the Lawrence Olivier Awards, and was also nominated as Best Actress at Evening Standard Theatre awards for her portrayal of Miss Julie in the Donmar production "After Miss Julie," directed by Michael Grandage. She received praise for her role in "Look Back in Anger," opposite David Tennant at the Edinburgh Lyceum Theatre and previously stole the show in The Comedy Theatre production of "Sexual Perversity in Chicago." Last year she played a lead role in the Royal Court production "Piano/Forte," part of the Royal Court's 50th anniversary year. Kelly received a Best Actress nomination at the 2008 British Independent Film Awards, for her riveting performance in James Watkins debut thriller, 'Eden Lake' opposite Michael Fassbender. She also gained international acclaim playing a supporting lead role as Maureen in the Stephen Frears directed film "Mrs Henderson Present", a role for which she won Best Newcomer at the London Critics Circle Film Awards 2006 and was nominated as Best Supporting Actress at the British Independent Film Awards in 2005. Also in the same year, she appeared in Laurence Dunmore's directorial debut "The Libertine" and generated interest for her in the re-make of "Pride and Prejudice". It was for her roles in these three films that she was awarded the Steinmetz Award for Best Breakthrough at the 2006 pre-BAFTA London Party. Additionally, Kelly won the Chopard Award for Best Newcomer at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival, as well as a Best Supporting Actress nomination at the prestigious Cesar Awards for her performance as Wendy in the successful French film "Les Poupees Russes" (Russian Dolls), directed by Cedric Klapisch, a sequel to the award-winning "Auberge Espanol" in which she had lead roles. Other films credits include "Dead Bodies", "Last Orders", "Peaches", "Maybe Baby" and "Puffball". Other theatre credits include parts in, 'A Prayer for Owen Meaney' (Royal National Theatre), "Blasted" (Royal Court), "The Graduate" (Gielgud Theatre), "Three Sisters" (for which she was nominated as Actress in a Supporting Role for the Barclays TMA Awards) and 'The London Cuckolds' (Royal National Theatre) for which she earned an Ian Charleston Award. Later this year she will also be seen in Warner Brother's epic new adaptation of "Sherlock Holmes", alongside Robert Downey Jr in the title role with Guy Ritchie directing. Kelly also stars in "Meant to be", a romantic comedy directed by Paul Breuls and "Triage", a political thriller, directed by Danis Tanovic in which she stars alongside Colin Farrell. Also coming up, Kelly will revisit her lead role of DC Anna Travis in the second series of Lynda La Plante's adaptation "Above Suspicion", a television drama directed by Chris Menaul and co-starring Ciaran Hinds.

JAMES TUPPER (Joseph Cotten) Born and raised just north of New England in Nova Scotia, Canada, he describes his hometown as a place with old-fashioned charm. Tupper moved to New York where he was immediately spotted by talent agents and managers. While there, he produced and starred in the off-Broadway play "After the Rain," which won the Moliere Prize in Paris the same year. Tupper has been adding to his body of work ever since. Tupper's impressive acting resume includes roles in nationally recognized shows that include "How I Met Your Mother," "CSI: New York," "Gilmore Girls," "Time of Your Life," and "Dr. Vegas." Tupper's career-launching role in "Joe Dirt" led the ruggedly handsome actor to a star role in the critically-acclaimed independent film, "Peroxide Passion," for which he won the Toronto Planet Indie Film Festival's Best Actor Award. Tupper also starred in the Hallmark Channel's original movie "Love's Abiding Joy," written and directed by Michael Landon, Jr. of "Little House on the Prairie" fame. Other star roles for Tupper have included the independent films "For Heaven's Sake," playing the son-in-law of Florence Henderson, and the biopic "Who Flew?," playing legendary novelist Ken Kesey during his time spent writing the award-winning "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (the directorial debut of Ryan Hurst). Tupper enjoyed a starring role alongside

Hollywood elite Sissy Spacek and Alfred Woodard in "Pictures Of Hollis Woods." In addition to star roles, Tupper co-conceived and wrote "Loudmouth Soup," a fully-improvised film about actors trying to make it in Hollywood, which was released in 2005. On top of taking on television and film roles, Tupper continues to pursue his passion for the stage. He has performed in "King Lear" opposite James Gammon and "The Things We Do For Love" at the Odyssey Theatre in Los Angeles. Currently, James can be seen in the new NBC medical drama, "Mercy," starring opposite "Gossip Girl's" Michelle Trachtenberg.

The Production Team

RICHARD LINKLATER (Director/Producer) was born in Houston, Texas, and attended Sam Houston State University, before leaving to work on offshore oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. Moving to Austin, he founded the Austin Film Society in 1985, to showcase films from around the world that were not typically shown in the city. He began work on his debut film as writer/director, 1988's "It's Impossible to Learn to Plow by Reading Books" and, three years later, he wrote, produced and directed "Slacker", which became an Indie sensation in the early '90s. Despite its minuscule budget, the movie became the subject of considerable mainstream media attention, with the term "slacker" becoming a much-overused catch-all epithet for America's disaffected youth. In 1993, he wrote and directed "Dazed and Confused", another influential and popular coming-of-age comedy. Next, Linklater made "Before Sunrise", a romance set in Vienna, starring Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy. Nine years later, he, Hawke and Delpy received Oscar® nominations for their screenplay of "Before Sunset" which continued the lovers' story in Paris. His eclectic canon continued with "SubUrbia", based on the Eric Bogosian play; "The Newton Boys", a 1920s-set historical crime drama; "Waking Life", an animated feature based on live-action; "Tape", based on Stephen Belber's three-character one-act play; the short film "Live From Shiva's Dance Floor", featuring 'Speed' Levitch; the international comedy hit "School of Rock", starring Jack Black; "\$5.15/Hr.", an ensemble comedy about restaurant workers; "Bad News Bears", a remake of the hit baseball comedy; "Fast Food Nation", a searching dramatic examination of the burger business; Philip K. Dick's "A Scanner Darkly", an animated futuristic thriller starring Keanu Reeves and, most recently, "Inning By Inning: A Portrait of a Coach", a documentary about University of Texas baseball coach Augie Garrido. Linklater continues to serve as the Artistic Director for The Austin Film Society, which has given out almost \$1,000,000 in grants to Texas filmmakers and in 1999, received the first National Honoree Award from the Directors Guild of America in recognition of its support of the arts. Future projects include the return of Jack Black's Dewey Finn, who will lead a group of summer school students on a cross-country field trip in "School of Rock 2: America Rocks".

MARC SAMUELSON (Producer) is a former Director of the Association of Independent Producers, the Edinburgh International Television Festival and Managing Director of Umbrella Films, producers of "White Mischief", "1984" and "The Playboys". In 1990, he formed Samuelson Productions with his brother Peter, completing a number of film and television productions, including the critically-acclaimed and award-winning "Tom & Viv", "Wilde", and "Arlington Road", as well as "Guest House Paradiso", "Gabriel & Me", "The Gathering", "Things To Do Before You're 30", and the hugely successful "Stormbreaker". Marc was also executive producer of "The Libertine", "Chromophobia" and "Keeping Mum". In 2007, he set up a major new British film company, CinemaNX, with Steve Christian and Andrew Fingret. The company is based in the Isle of Man and London and its productions to date, as well as "Me and Orson Welles", include "A Bunch of Amateurs", directed by Andy Cadiff and starring Burt Reynolds, Imelda Staunton and Sir Derek Jacobi, Philip Ridley's "Heartless", with Jim Sturgess, Noel Clarke, Eddie Marsan, Timothy Spall and Clémence Poésy, and "The Disappearance of Alice Creed" written and directed by J Blakeson and starring Gemma Arterton, Eddie Marsan and Martin Compston. He is an ex-Board Member of the UK Film Council and Governor of the National Film and Television School and remains a Deputy Chairman of the British Screen Advisory Council.

ANN CARLI (Producer) produced her first feature film, "I Like It Like That", in 1994, the film debut of writer/director Darnell Martin. She also served as the music supervisor on the project and put together the eponymous international hit title song. The film was featured in Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival, and won

several Independent Spirit Awards. In 1996, Carli moved from New York City to Los Angeles to head Will Smith Enterprises where she was executive producer of the soundtrack for "Men In Black", which garnered Grammy, American Music and MTV Music Awards. She was also executive producer of Will Smith's solo album, "Big Willie Style", which sold more than 10 million copies worldwide, spawned numerous hit records and won Grammy and MTV Video music awards. In 1999, Carli received the Golden Ring Lifetime Achievement Award, which honours contributions to the arts by Asian Americans, for her contributions to music, film and video. In November 1999, A Magazine recognised Carli as one of the 100 most influential Asian Americans of the decade. In January of 2000, Carli started her own company, Fuzzy Bunny Films, Inc. and co-produced Takeshi Kitano's "Brother", a ground-breaking international co-production between Japan, the UK and the US which Takeshi Kitano wrote, directed, edited and starred in. The film was produced by Recorded Picture Company's Jeremy Thomas and Masayuki Mori of Office Kitano. Drawing on her music business experience, Carli produced "Crossroads", Britney Spears' film debut in 2002, directed by Tamara Davis. Her previous collaboration with Richard Linklater was as co-producer of his film "Fast Food Nation". She is currently producing an adaptation of Martin Amis' "Night Train", directed by Nicolas Roeg, and starring Sigourney Weaver, Nick Nolte, Michael Madsen and Toby Jones.

HOLLY GENT PALMO and **VINCE PALMO** (Screenplay/Co-Producers) have both worked in film production since the early '90s, Holly as a production co-ordinator and Vince as a 1st assistant director. In 1993, they both worked on a film by a young Texan writer/director who was beginning to make his mark on the industry, Richard Linklater. Since then, Holly has worked on such films as the Coen brothers' "The Hudsucker Proxy" and Jon Avnet's "The War", both alongside Vince, and Lasse Hallström's "Something To Talk About". Vince's solo credits include the "Spy Kids" trilogy (in the first of which, a Cool Spy was played by a certain R. Linklater). In 2005, Vince resumed his association with Linklater on "Bad News Bears", "Fast Food Nation" and "A Scanner Darkly". He also recently worked on Sean McGinly's "The Great Buck Howard", starring Colin Hanks, with John Malkovich, Tom Hanks and Emily Blunt and Danny Leiner's "Balls Out: Gary The Tennis Coach", starring Randy Quaid and Seann William Scott. Holly and Vince, who live in Austin with their three young children, recommended Robert Kaplow's novel, "Me And Orson Welles" to Richard Linklater, who gave them the opportunity to write the screenplay.

DICK POPE, BSC (Director of Photography) showed a boyhood interest in photography, taking portraits of his family and neighbours in Kent. He began as a trainee at the Pathé Film Laboratory in London before working as an assistant and then cameraman on a wide range of television documentaries for series such as "World in Action", "Disappearing World", "The South Bank Show" and "Omnibus". As a freelance, he travelled the world, often to remote and inaccessible places, including war zones, and also specialised in films about the planet's threatened and disappearing indigenous tribes. At the beginning of the music promo scene, he shot hundreds of concerts and music videos for bands and artists as diverse as Queen, Tina Turner, The Clash, The Police, Neil Young and AC/DC. Moving into feature films, he got his first cinematographer credit proper in 1985 on "Coming Up Roses", which was made for TV but selected for Cannes and then theatrically released. There followed a diverse selection of assignments, including "Porterhouse Blue" for TV, and Philip Ridley's "Reflecting Skin". In 1990 he was asked by director Mike Leigh to photograph "Life is Sweet", beginning a collaboration that has produced eight films including "Naked", "Secrets and Lies", "Topsy-Turvy", "Vera Drake" and "Happy-Go-Lucky". Pope has twice won the top prize at Camerimage, The International Festival of the Art of Cinematography, where he and Leigh have also been recognised with a major award for their career collaboration. Pope's other credits include "Nicholas Nickleby", "Swept from the Sea", "The Way of the Gun", and "13 Conversations About One Thing". More recently, he has photographed "Man of the Year" for Barry Levinson, "Honeydripper" for John Sayles and "Angus, Thongs and Perfect

Snogging” for Gurinder Chadha, whose next film “It’s A Wonderful Afterlife” he is currently shooting. Pope’s work on “The Illusionist” was nominated for Academy and ASC Awards in 2007.

LAURENCE DORMAN (Production Designer) graduated from the National Film and Television School in 1992, with John Roberts’ short “This Boy’s Story”, which won a Student ‘Oscar’ from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. In the same year, he began work on “The Young Americans”, directed by his fellow NFTS graduate Danny Cannon. His next feature films were Nick Willing’s “Photographing Fairies”, William Brookfield’s black comedy “Milk” and Julien Temple’s “Pandaemonium”, a drama about the poets Wordsworth and Coleridge, and Julian Richards’ crime thriller “Silent Cry”. He designed two films for director David Mackenzie, the award-winning “Young Adam”, a thriller starring Ewan McGregor and “Asylum”, a dark romantic drama starring Natasha Richardson. He then worked with Danny Cannon again on “Goal!” (2005), the FIFA-sanctioned drama about a young Mexican (Kuno Becker), who follows his dream to play professional football in England. 2008 saw the release of Baillie Walsh’s “Flashbacks of a Fool”, which starred Daniel Craig as a burnt-out Hollywood movie star reflecting on his life as a teenager in an English seaside town in the 1970s. Most recently Laurence’s work could be seen in Gerald McMorrow’s “Franklyn”, a disturbing story set both in contemporary London and in a futuristic metropolis where religious fervour holds sway, starring Sam Riley, Eva Green and Ryan Phillippe. His latest project is “Creation”, Jon Amiel’s film about Charles Darwin starring Paul Bettany and Jennifer Connelly.

SANDRA ADAIR, A.C.E. (Editor) Working as an assistant editor to some of Hollywood’s leading editors in the early 1970s, Adair learned the principles of post-production. She started editing small, low-budget films in the mid-1980s and, by 1990, Adair served as second editor on Paramount Pictures’ “Internal Affairs”. In 1991, Adair moved with her husband and two children to Austin, Texas, where she continued to work on both feature films and documentaries. She teamed with Texas documentarian Hector Galan on the award-winning “The Hunt for Pancho Villa” and “Songs of the Homeland”. Adair’s most active alliance in Austin has been with Academy-Award-nominated filmmaker Richard Linklater, for whom she has edited 14 films: “Dazed and Confused”, “Before Sunrise”, “SubUrbia”, “The Newton Boys”, “Waking Life”, “Tape”, the short film “Live from Shiva’s Dance Floor”, the hit comedy “School of Rock”, “Before Sunset”, “Bad News Bears”, the animated feature “A Scanner Darkly”, “Fast Food Nation”, based on Eric Schlosser’s best-selling book, and the documentary “Inning by Inning: A Portrait of a Coach”. Adair is a member of American Cinema Editors and of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She remains very active in the local film community in Austin, as a mentor and as a member of the Austin Film Society.

LUCY BEVAN (Casting Director) Having worked as a casting assistant on films such as Mike Barker’s “To Kill A King”, Jonathan Frakes’ “Thunderbirds” and Mira Nair’s “Vanity Fair”, she took on her first feature as casting director with Martha Fiennes’ “Chromophobia”, with Ben Chaplin, Penélope Cruz and Ralph Fiennes. Her other credits as casting director include Gregory J. Read’s “Like Minds”, with Eddie Redmayne, Tom Sturridge and Toni Collette, Colin Leffler’s “The Last Legion”, with Colin Firth, Ben Kingsley and Aishwarya Rai, David Leland’s “Virgin Territory”, with Hayden Christensen, Mischa Barton and Tim Roth, Chris Weitz’s epic “The Golden Compass”, Oliver Parker and Barnaby Thompson’s comedy revival “St. Trinian’s” and, most recently, Saul Dibb’s “The Duchess”, Lone Scherfig’s “An Education”, Oliver Parker’s “Dorian Gray”, J. Blakeson’s “The Disappearance of Alice Creed” and “Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang”. Lucy is also the casting director at The Gate Theatre in Notting Hill.

FAE HAMMOND (Hair & Make-up Designer) is a versatile and widely experienced make-up and hair designer for both feature films and television. She made her debut working on comedian Alexei Sayle's surreal TV series "Stuff" in 1988, with her first assignment as a make-up artist coming three years later with Peter Medak's '50s-set drama "Let Him Have It". Her subsequent film credits include Danny Cannon's "The Young Americans", John Henderson's "Loch Ness", Gary Oldman's "Nil By Mouth" (working again with Oldman, the actor, the following year in "Lost In Space"), Antonia Bird's "Ravenous", Denys Arcand's "Stardom", Guy Ritchie's "Snatch", Brian Helgeland's "A Knight's Tale", Charles Dance's "Ladies in Lavender", Matthew Vaughn's "Layer Cake" and "Stardust", Joe Wright's "Pride and Prejudice" and, most recently, Bharat Nalluri's "Miss Pettigrew Lives For a Day", Nick Moore's "Wild Child" and John Crowley's "Is Anybody There?". Her television credits include "Zhivago", "Trial and Retribution" and "Elizabeth I", for which she received the Emmy® for Best Make-up and Hair Design and was nominated for a BAFTA TV Award. In the same year, 2006, she was also nominated for a BAFTA Film Award for Hair and Make-up Design in "Pride and Prejudice".

NIC EDE (Costume Designer) trained at the London College of Fashion and went on to do a post-graduate degree in theatre design. After working in theatre and costume houses he found a niche in film and television. Over the last 20 years, Ede has designed costumes for many well-loved and critically-acclaimed British and international films. Prominent among them are "Fat Man and Little Boy", directed by Roland Joffé and starring Paul Newman; "Loch Ness", directed by John Henderson and starring Ted Danson and Joely Richardson; "Wilde", directed by Brian Gilbert and starring Stephen Fry and Jude Law; "Relative Values", directed by Eric Styles and starring Julie Andrews, Colin Firth and Jeanne Tripplehorn and "Bright Young Things", Stephen Fry's directorial debut with Emily Mortimer and Peter O'Toole. Ede has also enchanted younger audiences with his designs for "Nanny McPhee", a world-wide box office hit, directed by Kirk Jones and starring Emma Thompson and Colin Firth. His latest projects include "Flyboys", an adventure drama set in the First World War, which premiered at Cannes in 2006, directed by Tony Bill and starring James Franco, and "The Walker", directed by Paul Schrader and starring Lauren Bacall, Kristin Scott Thomas and Woody Harrelson.

JOOLS HOLLAND, O.B.E., (Musical Re-Arranger) was born in Blackheath, South East London. At the age of eight, he could play the piano fluently by ear, and by the time he reached his early teens he was proficient and confident enough to be appearing regularly in many of the pubs in South East London and the East End Docks. At the age of 15, Jools was introduced to Glenn Tilbrook and Chris Difford; together they formed Squeeze and were joined shortly afterwards by Gilson Lavis, who still plays drums with Jools. "Up The Junction" and "Cool For Cats" made Squeeze's success meteoric and their popularity rapidly extended to America, where their tour included performances at Madison Square Garden. In 1987, Jools formed The Jools Holland Big Band (comprising himself and Gilson Lavis), which has gradually metamorphosed into the current 20-piece Rhythm & Blues Orchestra, playing to audiences in excess of 500,000 each year. As well as formidable live performances, Jools has maintained a prolific recording career since signing to Warner Music in 1996, which includes the multimillion selling 'Jools and Friends' series. Jools' career as a television presenter has run parallel to his musical career. He started in the early 1980s when he interviewed The Police for a documentary. Jools then auditioned to become co-presenter (with Paula Yates) of The Tube, which achieved almost immediate cult status and discovered a whole new generation of musicians and comedians between 1981 and 1986. Jools also managed to secure a rare interview with Miles Davis, which was broadcast on 14th November 1986. In two subsequent documentaries – "Walking to New Orleans" and "Mr Roadrunner" – he unearthed some of the roots of American music, which led him to talk to (and play with) many of his heroes. In 1988, Jools wrote a six-part series with Roland Rivron, "The Groovy Fellas", about a Martian visiting Earth. In 1992, he began hosting

“Later...With Jools Holland”, for BBC2, combining his talent and experience as a musician with his skills as a TV presenter. His previous ‘acting’ role in a feature film – as a ‘Musical Director’ – was in “Spice World” (1997).

ROB DUNCAN (Visual Effects Supervisor) Having graduated in design at Middlesex Polytechnic, Rob worked at Marvel Comics before joining Framestore in 1986, where he was responsible for many award winning commercials and graphic design projects. In 1992 Rob headed up the creation of Framestore’s feature film effects department, where he played a senior role in projects such as GoldenEye, Lost in Space, The Borrowers, Fairytale - A True Story, Lawn Dogs, and A Life Less Ordinary. In recent years Rob has turned his hand to an enormous range of projects, from the VFX fireworks of Blade 2 to invisible assists for Mr. Bean’s gentle humour, from the broad surrealism of The League of Gentlemen to the epic spectacle of Australia.