



| In the age of heroes comes the mightiest warrior of them all, Beowulf. After destroying the overpowering demon Grendel, he incurs the undying wrath of the beast's ruthlessly seductive mother, who will use any means possible to ensure revenge. The ensuing epic battle resonates throughout the ages, immortalizing the name of Beowulf.

Academy Award®-winning director Robert Zemeckis tells the oldest epic tale in the English language with the most modern technology, advancing the cinematic form through the magic of digitally enhanced live-action.

Unlike anything you will see this year, "Beowulf" represents a decade long quest for New York Times best-selling author Neil Gaiman (the graphic novels *Mirrormask* and *Sandman*), and Academy Award®-winning screenwriter Roger Avary ("*Pulp Fiction*") to see the myth adapted to the big screen.

With Real D, Dolby Digital 3D and IMAX 3D "Beowulf" delivers an unparalleled immersive experience that transports you to the age of heroes.

A stellar cast is led by Ray Winstone ("*The Departed*," "*Sexy Beast*") in the title role. Joining him are Academy Award® winner Anthony Hopkins as the cursed King Hrothgar, John Malkovich, Robin Wright Penn, Brendan Gleeson, Crispin Glover, Alison Lohman and Oscar® winner Angelina Jolie as Grendel's mother.

Paramount Pictures Presents In Association with Shangri-La  
| Entertainment An ImageMovers Production "Beowulf" starring Ray Winstone,

Anthony Hopkins, John Malkovich, Robin Wright Penn, Brendan Gleeson, Crispin Glover, Alison Lohman and Angelina Jolie. The film is directed by Robert Zemeckis from a screenplay by Neil Gaiman & Roger Avary. The producers are Steve Starkey, Robert Zemeckis and Jack Rapke. The executive producers are Martin Shafer, Roger Avary and Neil Gaiman. The co-producer is Steven Boyd. The director of photography is Robert Presley. The production designer is Doug Chiang. The film is edited by Jeremiah O'Driscoll. The costumes are designed by Gabriella Pescucci. The senior visual effects supervisor is Jerome Chen. The music is by Alan Silvestri. The original songs are by Glen Ballard and Alan Silvestri. This film has been rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violence including disturbing images, some sexual material and nudity.

## **A HEROIC EPIC FOR THE AGES**

Set in a magical era veiled by the mists of time, replete with heroes and monsters, adventure and valor, gold and glory, one exceptional man, Beowulf, emerges to save an ancient Danish kingdom from annihilation by an ungodly creature. In return, this legendary six foot-six-inch Viking, brimming with daring confidence and ambition, succeeds to the throne.

The name Beowulf resounds throughout the kingdom and songs are sung of his exceptional prowess and deeds after he comes to the rescue of King Hrothgar, whose kingdom has been devastated by Grendel, a ruthless monster who has tortured and devoured its residents, leaving them in a constant state of panic and fear.

In ridding the kingdom of this savage beast, Beowulf gains fame and fortune for himself. Great riches and overwhelming temptations are thrown at him. How wisely he chooses to handle his newfound power will forever define his fate as a warrior, a champion, a leader, a husband and, most importantly, as a man.

Beowulf is the oldest surviving epic poem in the English language. While Robert Zemeckis' film adaptation contains many of the poem's characters and themes – great monsters and heroes, the eternal conflict between good and evil, and a layered exploration of the nature of valor and glory – it is definitely not your high school teacher's Beowulf.

“Frankly, nothing about the original poem appealed to me. I remember being assigned to read it in junior high school and not being able to understand it because it was in Old English,” admits Zemeckis. “It was one of those horrible assignments. I never really thought about it after that, never considered that it might make for an interesting story. But when I read the screenplay that Neil Gaiman and Roger Avary did, I was immediately captivated. I asked them, ‘What is it about this screenplay that makes this story so fascinating when the poem, to me, was so boring?’ And their answer was, ‘Well, let’s see, the poem was written somewhere between the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the 12<sup>th</sup> century. But the story had been told for centuries before that. The only people in the 7<sup>th</sup> century who knew how to write were monks. So, we can assume they did a lot of editing.’ Neil and Roger explored deeper into the text, looking between the lines, questioning the holes in the source material, and adding back what they theorized the monks might have edited out (or added) and why. They managed to keep the essence of the poem but made it more accessible to a modern audience and made some revolutionary discoveries along the way. This should stir some debate in academia.”

As he worked with the writers to develop the story further, Zemeckis became a student of the subject in a way that would make his junior high school teacher proud. “Once I became intrigued by the script, I went back and re-read the poem, talked to Beowulf scholars and immersed myself in the legend. Many of the themes that are in Beowulf were lifted from the Bible – a heroic man’s journey, the fight between good and evil and the price of glory. And you see that Beowulf is the foundation for all our modern heroes, from Conan to Superman to the Incredible Hulk.”

“What’s so attractive about the Beowulf legend is that it is wrapped up in this great action-adventure-mythological-epic world with monsters and seductresses, creatures that have certainly existed, at least in our subconscious, since ancient times,” adds producer Jack Rapke.

In retrospect, Gaiman and Avary seem the perfect talents for this project. Gaiman, as his biography notes, “... is listed in the Dictionary of Literary Biography as one of the top ten living post-modern writers and is a prolific creator of prose, poetry, film, journalism, comics, song lyrics and drama.” In particular, Gaiman is beloved by comic book fans for his DC Comics series Sandman, which won nine Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards and three Harvey Awards; Sandman #19 took the 1991 World Fantasy Award for best short story, making it the first comic ever to win a literary award.

Avary is similarly celebrated for his dark, edgy, groundbreaking screenplays and films, including his Oscar®-winning screenplay for “Pulp Fiction,” (shared with Quentin Tarantino), and his influential cult films as a director, the Cannes Prix très spécial winning “Killing Zoe” and the adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis’ novel The Rules of Attraction.

Gaiman and Avary originally began their collaboration when they decided to work together on a screenplay version of Gaiman’s Sandman. While that project never came to fruition, the two recognized that they were kindred spirits. Nevertheless, adapting the Beowulf poem for the screen proved to be a long, strange and ultimately rewarding trip for Gaiman and Avary.

“Roger and I hit it off during the Sandman process. I very much liked him and the way his mind worked,” says Gaiman. “At some point, Roger mentioned to me that he’d always wanted to make Beowulf into a movie, but he’d never been able to work out a way to get from the first two acts to the third, because the structure is such that you begin with Beowulf’s fight, then fighting Grendel’s mother and then move forward 50 years when he fights the dragon. It’s not the normal three-act structure of screenplays. I suggested a few ways that it could work. There was a pause and Roger said, ‘When are you free?’”

Basically, Neil came up with the key operator of a unified field theory of Beowulf, which I had been working on for a decade.” says Avary. “The poem always seemed disjointed to me and, in particular, Beowulf never seemed to be the most reliable of narrators. For instance, Grendel never attacks Hrothgar; he just torments him. Why? It made me ask the simple question that for some reason no one has ever asked before: who is Grendel's father? It really plagued me. All of Grendel's behavior began to make sense when examined in that light. Later, Beowulf tears off Grendel's arm and Grendel slinks off to his cave to die. After Grendel's mother's retribution, Beowulf ventures into the cave, ostensibly to kill Grendel's mother. Yet he emerges from the cave with Grendel's head, not the head of the Mother, which is really perplexing. Beowulf says he killed Grendel's mother, but we only have his word. Where's the proof that he killed the mother? It became obvious to me that Beowulf had fallen prey to the same temptations I surmised had befallen Hrothgar – the temptations of a siren. He had made a pact with a demon.

“Then, in the second half of the poem,” Avary continues, “after Beowulf has become king, a dragon attacks him and his kingdom. I couldn't figure out how this fit into everything. I was telling Neil about my theories, when he made the remarkable insight that the dragon might be Beowulf's son – his sin comes back to haunt him. Suddenly, the two halves of the Beowulf epic, which had always seemed so disjointed, made perfect story arc sense. Had it been a snake, it would have bit me. It's quite possible that these elements of the structure had been lost over hundreds of years of verbal telling, and further diluted by the Christian monks who added elements of Christianity when they transcribed it to the parchment we now know as MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv.”

Gaiman and Avary are not the first to notice the awkward construction of the original poem. David Wright points out in the Penguin Classics edition of Beowulf that “... the early critics and commentators of Beowulf and a good many of the later ones have been sarcastic about the clumsiness of the plot. For the poem is a bit of a rag-bag as well, stuffed with fragments from the history of Scandinavian tribes and spilling over with untidy-looking references

to apparently irrelevant events and legends.” Wright also notes that Lord of the Rings creator J.R.R. Tolkien appreciated the poem’s power. In his famous essay, *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, Tolkien noticed, among other things, that although Beowulf is a superhero of sorts he is, in the end, human and his all-too-human traits contribute to his downfall. “He is a man and that for him and many is sufficient tragedy.” Zemeckis saw the hero along similar lines. “Our Beowulf is a bit more flawed, more like a human hero than a god. He’s not a Thor character. He is a real person who has a lot of flaws – hubris being chief among them.”

It’s a good bet that Tolkien did not have as much fun as Gaiman and Avarny did when writing about their main character. “Roger and I flew down to Mexico and he borrowed a house from a friend for a week,” says Gaiman, “a week of absolute madness. We were surrounded by translations of Beowulf, all the different ones we could find, including some with Old English on one page and the English translation on the other. We hooked up our computers and we wrote like mad. We returned home with a script, one that Bob Zemeckis read and immediately wanted to do.”

Zemeckis, whose groundbreaking film “The Polar Express” featured a new format he had developed called performance capture, realized that this new art form would lend itself perfectly to Gaiman and Avarny’s epic “Beowulf” – a tale populated by larger-than-life characters – great heroes and demons – and spectacular battles, all set in a mythic land.

“Bob saw the possibilities of telling this story in this new style that we had established on ‘Polar Express,’” says producer Steve Starkey. One of the advantages afforded by performance capture, Starkey points out, is less about technology and more about actors. A myriad of digital sensors are attached to their faces and to their bodies, via a form-fitting lycra suit, so that the actors’ live performances are “captured,” to be input into a computer. All the action takes place in an invisible box called a volume, which is divided up into quadrants that can house as many as 40 cameras. (The volume is performance capture-speak for soundstage and is so-called because it allows multiple cameras to photograph the scenes in a three-dimensional space. The classic geometric

formula for “volume” is x, y and z, representing width, height and length). Specifically, a volume is the area where the cameras are all aimed, within which face and body data may be captured. Takes or “beats” from multiple capture sessions can be edited and blended, mixed and matched and, as Zemeckis demonstrated in “The Polar Express,” the result can be a compelling new medium that is not at all “cartoony” but rather tethered to the actual creative expression of the actors and director.

Now, with “Beowulf,” Zemeckis was ready to take the technology to the next level. “When you do a performance capture film you have the ability to do two forms of casting, one for performance and one for likeness, which means you can actually separate what a character looks like in the film from the performer who portrays that character,” says Starkey. “It’s one of the reasons we decided to do the film in this style; for instance, no one on the planet looks like the character Bob envisioned for Beowulf or could perform on the level Bob wanted for this film. Beowulf is bigger than life and there is no single human actor who embodies everything Bob saw in the character. So, how do you blend these two irreconcilable aspects? By casting the best actor possible and creating that look, a six-foot-six Christ-like image in the computer. The same is true with Grendel. If we were doing Grendel in a traditional film, we would have had a 12-foot puppet on set and created additional computer graphics. In this case, we could get the perfect performer, who portrayed all of Grendel’s pain and suffering but wasn’t limited by prosthetics or uncomfortable suits. If we had shot this film traditionally, we could never have done all that,” Starkey concludes.

“Because it is a mythological fable, the demand for photo reality was not as paramount as it might be,” adds producer Rapke. “Also, to replicate the conceptual visual world Bob envisioned would be almost impossible in the 2D world. Using this process gave us the opportunity to cast whoever we felt was the perfect actor for each part. So, for us, it was the best way to get over certain hurdles and do a lot of things which would have been impossible in a traditional live action format.”

Avary adds that performance capture realized the film the way he had always envisioned it and, in addition, it presented an almost limitless canvas.

“The interesting thing to me was that the performance capture process really allowed the film to be performance-based. I had always seen it as a chamber piece – it’s in court, and there’s intrigue between people with their myriad relationships. I always wanted it to be a fully formed, emotional experience. I also remember Bob saying, ‘C’mon, guys, do whatever you want – when Beowulf fights the dragon, let’s really have him fight the dragon.’ We weren’t restricted by anything, so Neil and I were able to write without the shackles we’d normally have on a film,” Avary notes.

Although Avary had initially written the film with the intention of directing it himself, ultimately he understood that Zemeckis’ performance capture model was the best way to bring his vision to the screen. What surprised and gratified Avary was that he continued to be a part of the filmmaking process.

“In most other Hollywood scenarios, I would have been banned to a gulag in Siberia. I fully expected that. It’s not only a testament to how great a director Bob is but also how great a man he is that he did the exact opposite. With no ego, he invited me closer into the circle. He recognized that Neil and I had a distinct point of view of the film and he welcomed our involvement and input throughout,” Avary explains.

## **CAPTURING GREAT PERFORMANCES**

Essentially, performance capture removed appearance, age, color, and gender from the casting equation. Zemeckis’ choice of Ray Winstone to play the lead character is the quintessential example of the freedom in casting performance capture provides. Initially, Zemeckis hadn’t thought of Winstone, but when he heard the actor’s distinctive voice he was convinced he’d found his Beowulf. “My wife was watching Ray doing an adaptation of ‘Henry VIII’ on TV and I heard his voice and said, ‘Oh my God that sounds like Beowulf!’ I went and

watched him and he had so much power and this ability to tap into the animal part of his humanity. That's a big part of Beowulf – he has a real visceral quality. He cares only about what he can kill, what he can eat, who he can screw. Ray is an amazing, powerful actor who has the ability to tap into that primeval aspect,” Zemeckis says.

No one was more surprised than Winstone when Zemeckis approached him for the part. “I was doing Martin Scorsese’s film ‘The Departed’ in New York when I got the call that they were interested in seeing me for ‘Beowulf.’ I came to Los Angeles to meet with Bob, and I thought, I’m traveling a long way for a job interview, but I did it because I think he’s a genius. He asked what I thought of the script and I told him I thought it was the story of a man whose greed for gold, ambition, power and fame ultimately consumes him. He’s a bigger monster in many ways than any of the demons he faces. As the conversation went on, I realized that it wasn’t an audition; Bob actually wanted me to do the film, which was quite a shock to me,” Winstone recalls.

The adventure elements of the script appealed to Winstone as did the opportunity to delve into a medium that was new to him. The candid Winstone is the first to say “... I didn’t know anything about the original poem. My children tell me they know about it. But (the script) is a fantastic story and I’ve always wanted to play a Viking. The great thing about the (performance capture) technique, is that it allowed someone like me, who is 5’10” and a little on the plump side, to play a 6’6” golden-haired Viking. The process initially sounded complicated and a little bit uncomfortable, but I am a bit of a sucker for things I think I can’t do, so I was very excited to try it,” Winstone says.

An equally important attraction for Winstone was the stellar cast of co-stars Zemeckis had assembled. “The people working in this movie are amazing – the list goes on and on. Anthony Hopkins has been one of my favorites since I was a kid, and it was such a pleasure just to watch him work. I happened to work with Robin Wright Penn in London and she is a fine actress, as is Angelina Jolie, who I’d known for five years and is just fantastic. And Brendan Gleeson, my old mate, who I worked with on “Cold Mountain,” as well as Crispin Glover

and John Malkovich, who are so clever and inventive. They're such excellent actors, I knew I'd learn something on a job like this, just working with them," says Winstone.

Zemeckis notes that performance capture, in addition to fulfilling Winstone's wish to play a Viking, gave all his actors the luxury of performing unfettered by the demands of conventional filmmaking. "The thing I love about performance capture is that it allows the actor to give the director those magic moments, those things the actor does you never expected," Zemeckis explains. "You have this wide open canvas where the actor can bring whatever he or she wants to the character because you're not under the same constraints that you'd have on a live-action film. The actors are liberated from the tyranny of a normal movie – it's not about lighting, it's not about setting up the camera, it's not about the hair and make-up or costumes. It is absolute performance and great actors, like the ones in this movie, relish that. You don't have to break up the scene to get coverage – we did wide shots and close-ups at the same time. So the actors dictate the rhythm of the scenes, which we did from beginning to end, as much as we could. It was like theater, except that it was being captured in 3D."

Anthony Hopkins, who plays King Hrothgar, notes that the performance capture technique coupled with Zemeckis' directing style made for an open, laid-back atmosphere that aided the creative process. "What's interesting about this way of acting – with no sets, no costumes, just these silly suits with dots all over your face, is that you can do the whole scene and it goes very quickly because you don't have to break it up the way you do on a conventional film. And Robert Zemeckis is a pretty free and easy director, although he has a strong vision and knows what he wants. We'd play a five or six page scene out in its entirety and after maybe five or six takes, whenever Bob was confident he had the performances, we'd move on. So, my character appears early in the drama, maybe page three or four of the script, and finishes on page 76, but I worked on the film for only about eight days, which is an impossible schedule on a traditional film. The first day I was a little apprehensive but the process gives you a great sense of freedom, that anything goes," Hopkins says.

King Hrothgar harbors a secret past that comes back to haunt him and his kingdom, in the form of the monster Grendel. Until Grendel's horrifying appearance, however, Hrothgar leads a charmed life and enjoys it; he and his people are profligate and celebratory, partaking in sensual pursuits and pleasures whenever they can.

"I thought, well, Hrothgar is a man of his people and at the beginning of the film I play him as a candid kind of drunken buffoon, which was fun. I also found some darker elements to him and went for those – played another level of him," Hopkins explains.

Hopkins, the first actor cast, decided to use his native Welsh accent "because Welsh is an ancient language, several thousand years old." Zemeckis notes that "there were long debates about how Welsh might have grown out of Old English. Whatever it was, when Anthony said these wonderful phrases that Roger and Neil wrote in his Welsh accent they sounded perfect."

Hopkins' lilting cadence became the template for the other actors. "We all decided to do a Welsh-ish accent," Robin Wright Penn, who plays Hrothgar's wife, the lovely, hapless Queen Wealtheow. "The story is obviously set in Denmark but it was written in Old English and Tony had such a great Welsh accent naturally. It seemed like a good middle-line to go for, instead of traditional British, and we couldn't really do Old English because nobody would understand it. The dialogue was asking for us to be able to roll and tap our Rs and the Welsh accent allowed us to access that."

Wright Penn and Zemeckis had worked together before on the Oscar®-winning "Forrest Gump." As in that film, the "Beowulf" story follows her character through several decades.

"Robin is so subtle and wonderful and real and grounded in everything she does as an actress. She brought a maturity to the part, even when she was playing Wealtheow as a 16-year-old girl. That's another great thing about working in performance capture. Robin was able to bring all her experience to this part and the technique allowed her to appear as a teenager and to follow her saga as an adult. She was just magnificent. She understood the torment and the pain

Beowulf is putting her through and she played it with such realism that it takes your breath away,” says Zemeckis.

Beowulf falls for Wealthow when he comes to save her husband’s kingdom. But like King Hrothgar, Beowulf’s fatal flaws, his lust for power and glory, his weakness for other women and the Faustian bargain he makes with a demonic but beguiling seductress, ultimately poison his relationship with Wealthow.

“She marries King Hrothgar at a very young age, an arranged marriage, and he is unfaithful,” Wright Penn observes. “Wealthow later falls in love with Beowulf when he comes to save them and, sadly, the pattern repeats itself. In way, she falls in love with the hero and becomes blind to what true heroism is. Beowulf is a hero but, ultimately, he is a human being and when he betrays her – just as the king did, she loses the love and admiration she had for him.”

The story called for Wealthow to undergo several emotionally distressing moments and Wright Penn notes that the performance capture approach assisted him in tackling her scenes. “It was an incredibly fast pace and the notion that we could play out a scene was great. You don’t have the wait of spending 12 hours on one scene from 4,000 different angles. We’d sometimes bang out a scene in 15 minutes, do a five-page scene in two takes. It’s almost what you yearn for when you come to the set – you want to be in that mode. It’s like working out on a treadmill. You don’t want to get on for five minutes and then sit down for 20, and then have to get right back on again and work up your heart rate again. The way Bob worked, we were able to get in there, do the sequences with intense focus and finish the day by 5 p.m. That’s civilized. Especially when it’s emotional, the down time, the stop-start thing is a drag,” she says.

Crispin Glover, another Zemeckis alumnus, plays the tortured monster Grendel. “I worked with Crispin on ‘Back to the Future’ and, for some reason, I just saw Crispin playing this guy,” Zemeckis says. “He loves to portray creatures and characters who are deformed, both physically and mentally. I just knew that Crispin would understand Grendel. He didn’t play Grendel as just a monster, he

created a character who was helpless and tormented but who also happened to be a physical monstrosity, someone who was persecuted and literally demonized because of what he looked like. Crispin brought a tremendous warmth and humanity to this unbelievable, hideous creature. The only note of direction I gave him was that everything Grendel does causes him physical pain. Crispin took that bit of direction and ran with it. He used his entire body – every cell, every strand of hair – as an instrument when he performed.”

“I hadn't worked with Bob for 21 years since in the first 'Back to the Future' film. So I was kind of surprised,” says Glover. “But I knew of Beowulf and Grendel and I thought it sounded like a great part. I was working on another film, so I couldn't come in to meet with everyone. They asked me to put myself on tape. I did that at home with my computer and sent it in. Eventually I was able to read for Bob and he liked what I did and I got the part. I'm very glad I did because it is a great role.”

Grendel, the embodiment of pain and rage, is not the most eloquent fellow. To access Grendel's primal side, Glover underwent his own version of scream therapy. “For Grendel, there was a lot of emotional variation within a relatively compact amount of dialogue. I hadn't planned on a lot of screaming vocalizations but initially I had some of it – it seemed to convey his wretched pain. Bob said, 'Just keep screaming.' I'm glad he encouraged it – it was a good suggestion because the scream does have a lot of the emotive element, you can feel so much from it and I hadn't realized it could be so expressive,” Glover says.

“Zemeckis also said early on, a few weeks before we started filming, that pain was a definite problem for Grendel and the cause of most of his responses,” he continues. “So, especially in the fight scenes, for every movement, he would react. Combined with the vocalizations, the screaming, hopefully will make for a very potent image.”

Glover's ability to mine the depths of Grendel's pain, pathos and venom in such a unique and compelling way mesmerized the cast and crew and often elicited spontaneous applause. “He was amazing. When I saw what he was doing, I thought, right, OK, he's a very clever boy who has just upped the stakes,”

says Winstone. “He was able to let himself go, in a room full of people, but he wasn’t messy, he knew exactly what he was doing. He definitely brought the horror of Grendel and even in a wet suit with spots, you could see what he was creating. It was something impressive to watch.”

Glover developed his own variation on Old English for Grendel. It made some sense that Grendel, who abhors all things human and, as Glover puts it, “is basically a momma’s boy and all his human (neighbors) are just pests who annoy him and whose voices and carousing hurt his ears,” would speak in an ancient language that only he and his mother would share.

“The script didn’t indicate any Old English intonation but it seemed to suit Grendel to speak that way. I had this sound in my head – it was a challenge to go through the Old English version of Beowulf and find words that were accurate but also could be understandable, because if you just go to some of the direct translations, it is a totally different language. It’s impossible to understand, yet there are words that are similar enough to the way we speak today. We tried to get that balance,” Glover says.

Grendel’s sole confidante, guardian and avenger is, of course, his mother – a dangerous, seductive creature who plays on men’s flaws and weaknesses to her own devilish advantage. Angelina Jolie was chosen for the role of this magnificent fiend. “Grendel’s mother is a demon and a seductress to the nth degree and nobody can do that kind of sultry character as well as Angelina Jolie,” says Zemeckis. “When she stepped on the set and became that character, it was a powerful thing to watch. She was just magnetic and she hypnotized everyone on the set.”

For Jolie, performance capture was alluring and powerful. “I loved it. At first, I thought, oh this is going to be so weird, all of us actors with these dots on our faces, in these wetsuit-type costumes, with no props or sets ... but what it really does is strip everything down to the essentials of performing, especially in the scenes between Crispin and me – they were just pure amazing emotion. There is so much freedom to just be everything, in the moment, give it your all, because it’s being covered completely and you can overlap and you can play and

you can improvise. There's also an immediate friendship between the actors. When you're both covered in dots, you become very close and you rely on each other. What's also great about the process was that it felt like every single crew member was integral to it and equally in the moment with the actors. It's not like we were hanging out in our trailers and would come in and do a scene from time to time, everyone was in it, every second," she notes.

A bemused Jolie notes that "when you mention Grendel's mother, you find that everyone has an opinion about her. I think she's lovely and everybody else thinks she's a bit off."

The character's actions, Jolie points out, are beyond good and evil, driven by a profound maternal instinct. "Yes, she's a monster, but she's also a mom and that's the essence behind everything she does. Grendel is like a full-grown man but there's something vulnerable and childlike about him. I thought about her as a mother. If someone hurts your son, you would go to the ends of the earth to avenge him. So, I approached it that way."

Although Jolie had seen sketches of what her character would ultimately look like – she describes her as a "sexy lizard" who could assume a quasi-human form – personifying the beguiling woman-reptile, without benefit of costumes, prosthetics, props or make-up was a unique experience. Jolie had to piece together her role based partly on Zemeckis' direction.

"At one point, Bob told me to feel free to lisp. So, I thought, hmm, possibly here I have a lizard tongue. Or, I'd be doing something as the woman and Bob would say something like, 'Pick that up,' and I'd say, 'But I have my hands on the sword.' Then Bob would say, 'Well, pick it up with your tail.' So then I realized I had a tail. At some point, he asked me to pose my foot as if it were in a high heel and I thought, oh, that's nice, he wants me to feel sexier. But, Bob said, 'No, no, your hand is like a foot, your foot is like a hand...' So, then I was totally confused. He showed me a picture of a really sexy woman made of all this gold and then you look to her feet and they're just a little bit funky. So I have a tail and hands for feet and they're slightly high heeled! I'm very curious to see the movie, to find out how I ended up!"

She ended up as a fantastically alluring, wily, dangerous female creature of iridescent gold with high-heeled cloven feet and an appendage-like braid of hair.

Zemeckis elaborates: “We had this idea that she would have a long braid of hair that is sort of like a tail. So we could get the right feel and movement of her tail/braid, I actually had her do a take where she moved her hand in the same way her tail would, to get the right feel. And the rhythm was perfect. That’s what I love about this art form – you get the actors’ interpretation of everything, including what a magical tail might move like,” he says.

The performance capture process also allows the actors to lend their talents to several characters and their performances inform everything about the ultimate animated representation of their characters. Director Zemeckis used John Malkovich’s gifts this way to great effect, as Unferth, who is initially skeptical of Beowulf’s legend and intentions and, later, when he plays his own son.

“John is one of my favorite actors. He can do anything and you never know what you’re going to get with him,” says Zemeckis. “He put such a spin on Unferth and completely understood what we wanted from the nemesis of Beowulf, the naysayer who debunks our hero and accuses him of exaggeration. When John got his hands on that and the accent – I can’t even describe it, but it was just the most magnificent interpretation of the character. And the great thing about performance capture is that it allowed John to not only play his son but himself as an older man. He played it as if he had had a stroke and survived it with a physical debilitation. So, based on his performance, we could make him look drawn and withered away.”

Malkovich remembers reading Beowulf as a teenager. “I had not looked at it since we were forced to read it in our high school literature class. My school was old-fashioned, we actually still had to read it. So I did know of it,” he says. He adds that in general “I think it is always dangerous to compare a movie script with the source material, whether it be a novel or a piece of non-fiction, or, in this case, an epic poem.” For Malkovich, the script’s ominous elements were

appealing. “I thought it was a very good script, quite dark and exciting, in the fashion of mythic fairy tales,” Malkovich says.

Echoing Zemeckis, Malkovich also came to love the creative opportunities afforded by performance capture. “The process is fantastic. It allowed me to play my character when he is much younger than I actually am and then older and also to play his son. I would be hard-pressed to be able to do that in a conventional movie,” Malkovich says.

A theater veteran, Malkovich likens the process to stage acting, albeit possibly for an arctic production. “Filming like this is kind of a function of imagination, like performing in a play because your image, your acting is being recorded on four sides so you’re actually always on – you’re in the wide shot, you’re in the close up, the shot is on your fingers, on your back. The great thing about it is that you just act and you don’t have to worry about anything else. Even the ‘set’ is very much like the rehearsal space you’d have in a play – there was representation tape on the floor where doors would be, there were minimal props so you’d know where things were in space. It was freezing all the time, however; I think it has something to do with the machinery and the fact that you have dots all over your face recording your expressions and movements – the (technicians) don’t want you to sweat. Of course, a film set is usually 65,000 degrees because of all the lights. So, that was very different,” Malkovich laughs.

Wearing the sensors and the skintight suits, after a while, is no different than any other cinematic process, although, at first, it seems otherworldly, the actor continues. “You come in the morning and they put a transparent mask on your face. They draw on a grid-like pattern and put on the sensors, paying attention to the eye and mouth area. Then you have a kind of bicycle helmet with all sorts of electrodes and gizmos attached. You put on a sort of wetsuit and gloves, which are also covered with sensors. The whole thing wouldn’t take much more time than a slightly involved make-up procedure. You get used to it quickly. To tell the truth, I never even thought about it after the first day,” Malkovich says.

It helps, he adds, to have a director as relaxed and straightforward as Zemeckis. “Bob was an absolute joy. He’s a Midwestern guy who is very direct and clear – if he doesn’t see what he wants, he tells you. If he doesn’t know, he expresses that he’s not quite sure but what he’s looking for is in this area. He is enthusiastic and focused and he and his team are incredibly organized. Just a pleasure,” Malkovich says.

Rounding out the cast is veteran British actor Brendan Gleeson, as Beowulf’s trusted companion and steadfast warrior Wiglaf. Wiglaf fights to the end with his king. Although he harbors suspicions about Beowulf’s secrets and his true intentions, ultimately Wiglaf inherits Beowulf’s legacy of glory and temptation. What he does with that is left to the audience to decide.

“I went to London on a casting tour and when Brendan came in, I immediately saw him as Wiglaf,” Zemeckis recalls. “He is the classic antithesis of Beowulf but he is Beowulf’s number one guy, who loves Beowulf as a hero. And he completely nailed it. Wiglaf is like one of these men who follow these charismatic guys with utter loyalty. He is willing to lay his life down for Beowulf for what he believes Beowulf is about and Brendan totally, inherently understood that. He turns out to be, in my opinion, if not the most interesting character, certainly one of them. What Brendan brought was the idea that despite his love for Beowulf, Wiglaf has doubts and questions; his character is conflicted by what he wants the truth to be versus what he knows the truth to be.”

At first, Gleeson had some misgivings about joining the cast of “Beowulf” – qualms Zemeckis soon allayed. “I have to admit I had a certain resistance to the movie because I had done a number of epic films – I had been in “Troy” and “Kingdom of Heaven” – and I was a little bit afraid of becoming ‘That Guy.’ It was only when I met Bob that I changed my mind. His enthusiasm was phenomenal and the process was fascinating,” Gleeson says.

Gleeson, also a veteran of the “Harry Potter” films, is accustomed to acting in films that feature copious visual effects. But this was something completely different. “The key term was black box theater, that’s what got me. All the performances happen in this big square thing and your world is created

within that – it's not blue or green screen, it's a completely different concept. Most of the theater I'd done in the '80s, for example, was in the black box – we couldn't afford props so we'd mime them or create them in the audience's head and that's what this process is a little bit like. Now, all the dots and the embarrassing black suit aside, it's the same kind of thing, you've got to transport yourself within that volume," Gleeson says.

As Beowulf's right-hand man, the film offered Gleeson the opportunity to reunite with Winstone.

"We first met on 'Cold Mountain,' where we soldiered through Romania, and Ray is always great fun. He is up for anything, really," says Gleeson.

"Anything" in this case included slaying several demons, culminating with a breathtaking battle with a flying, fire-spewing, bad-tempered dragon hell-bent on revenge. "There's something very primeval about what the two of them go through – my own notion was that Beowulf and Wiglaf were always stripping off and fighting and adventuring. But, even then, it's a good example of their different personalities. Wiglaf's steadfastness is a foil to Beowulf's madness and charisma – when they fight the dragon, Wiglaf goes for what he considers the most obvious, vulnerable point, which doesn't work at all. Beowulf works out what is actually the way to destroy the dragon. Beowulf has a reckless magnetism and many people follow him, including Wiglaf, but that can lead down many roads, as we all know," Gleeson says.

Gleeson notes that Wiglaf's destiny as it relates to Beowulf's also intrigued him. "They do work as a team, even though Wiglaf is inclined to put a bit of an anchor on Beowulf every so often. But also, it was important for me that at the end, Wiglaf succeeds Beowulf to become king. At some stage, we see certain qualities of leadership in Wiglaf, and certain flaws in Beowulf foreshadow this event. For me, he wasn't just a lieutenant, he was, in some way, a king-in-waiting. I found that very interesting," Gleeson explains.

Great crusades and life-or-death clashes against 12-foot tall demons and livid dragons require concomitant stunts – even if there are no sets and the

costumes are only spider webs of dots. This came as something of a surprise to Winstone, who, like his character, wholeheartedly committed to that adventure.

“I didn’t realize I’d do so many of the stunts – well, I didn’t realize I was able to, honestly,” says Winstone. “I enjoyed myself so much that one stunt turned into another. At first, I figured, well, that’s what the stunt boys are for, that’s their job and they’re good at it. So I said, ‘Well, I’ll do what you think I’m capable of.’ It turns out they thought I was able to do it all! And, boy did I feel it! But, also it was like being a seven-year-old kid again, being flown across the room on a high wire, swung into walls. So I’m glad I did it.”

It’s the kind of daredevil stuff Avary hopes will appeal to a broad audience, particularly to younger folks.

“I think teens will get their rocks off with this film,” he says bluntly. “For the younger generation, there are thrill-ride moments that Bob amped up about a hundred times more than what we’d originally written. He definitely knows how to deliver excitement and action, as well as engaging, character-driven drama. And there’s enough meat on the bone for people who crave some modicum of depth to their storytelling.”

## **REIMAGINING 2-D IN 3D**

Although the digital process plays a major role in generating the film, Zemeckis notes that traditional filmmaking still informs the art and provides its structure. “There’s cinematic feel to it because I do move the camera the way I would in a normal two-dimensional movie. We actually operate every final camera with human hands, director of photographer Robert Presley’s the camera operator. When we finally get the shot down the way we wanted it, we’d hook a remote camera head system to the computers and he actually moves the digital cameras with his hands,” Zemeckis notes.

That cinematic sensibility ultimately lends a realistic look to the film, as Zemeckis explains:

“If you watch a lot of the cartoons that are made today, the cameras are just hooked to the characters; where the character moves, ZIP, the camera is right there. It doesn’t have any sort of elegance to it. It’s just like a click. I call it click and drag camera. Whereas, when you see a movie, the audience isn’t aware of it but the camera is always slightly behind the subject, it always moves a little bit and is somewhat late. It follows the actor, which makes you feel comfortable because you are not ahead of the action. That can make a viewer feel jittery and nervous. Ideally, the audience feels like a voyeur enjoying the scene as it plays out and those few frames of lag puts the audience in that comfort zone. That’s another reason we need a person to operate that camera. If it was all computerized, there would be no reason for it to be late, it’s a computer program that can hit within a millisecond. With the human hand-eye coordination, you get that little bit of lag, that slight imperfection that reads as real.”

This ephemeral *je ne sais quoi* that describes filmmaking, of course, is a foreign language to the performance capture folks, like the layout team that assembles the shots in the computer. Indeed, they have their own arcane lexicon, fondly called The Mocabulary.

“I learned on ‘Beowulf’ that they come from a different discipline and have a different terminology, so we all had to get on the same page. I use a lot of slang that comes from making movies for 25 years. I’d say something like, ‘We’ll slide the camera over’ or ‘Drop it down,’ or ‘We’ll hinge it to the right,’ stuff like that. And they would look at me blankly. So we brought them all out to the parking lot one day during lunch and basically gave them a lesson in 2-D camera operation, and what we call different shots, all the slang terms. We showed them techniques that we might take for granted, like if we’re doing a dolly shot to the right, you have to also pan back to the left to keep the subject in the frame. Ultimately, we spoke the same language,” Zemeckis says.

Traditional filmmaking disciplines, like costumes and production design, while not utilized the same way as they would be in a conventional film, also called for some innovative changes. According to producer Starkey, “when I first

started doing films of this nature, I quickly recognized that my foundation was in traditional filmmaking. Whether it be costumes or production design, I felt much more comfortable doing that in the real world and then bringing it into the computer rather than inventing it in the computer. So, what happens is that we design the movie very much like we would a traditional film and then it gets built in the computer. The complicated aspect on 'Polar Express' was figuring out, well, how do we then take that information and bring it back to the stage for our performers? So we did the research and development and set up an elaborate system that now seems like an everyday thing. The same thing happens with costume design. We hire our costume designer, Gabriella Pescucci, to create the wardrobe and end up building every costume on the entire film. We put the actors into their wardrobe one at a time, scanned it in the computer, and that became the template. Same thing with hair and so on – even the actors' bodies got scanned into the computers as references so that they could create the final character in the computer. Everything came from a real foundation, as opposed to some abstract concept in the computer.”

The only break with reality came with the mythic, demonic creatures that terrorize and entice the hapless humans. “To build a creature that doesn't exist in this world, like, for example, Grendel, we had to start from scratch, by building a miniature sculpture. That sculpture got scanned into the computer and became the basis of the creature. Same thing with the dragon – we started with the closest physical likeness that exists and began from there,” Starkey explains.

Zemeckis says the film's look will be a blend of reality and fantasy that's peculiarly appropriate for a story like “Beowulf.” It's kind of an interesting hybrid. It's very photo-real, but it's not completely real. And I think what that does is allow us to be able to tell stories that are kind of real but not completely real, and it gives them ultimately the correct palette to tell stories that are bigger than life, stories that are mythic. And it's interesting, when you think about doing a movie like 'Beowulf' the conventional, photo-realistic way, there's a beat where you think, 'Hmm, you know, I'm not sure. Actors running around, you know, with plastic swords that are supposed to be steel and you know, I don't know.'

There's something about the taste of the modern filmgoer and I think it has to do with the fact that we're so surrounded by digital images. You know, whether they're coming from television or the computer or video games. As filmmakers, we have a new visual palette in which to tell these stories. And I think that we're getting close to what we're doing here on 'Beowulf.'"

That palette, to some degree, is reflected in the lighting.

"We have three lighting schemes for the movie, based on what light would have looked like in the 4<sup>th</sup> century," says Zemeckis. "There's sun but it would be Danish sun in the winter, which is fairly cool and diffused. Then there's fire. And you've got gold, the reflection of light off gold. That's our color palette and we lit everything like that. The great thing you can do in computers is that you can use fire as your key light, as your fill light. So we were able to establish a look in the computer that we could never achieve with electric light."

The computer and traditional film worlds merged with a technology called EOG, developed specially for "Beowulf." The human eye, with its unique form and movement and distinctive ability to convey emotion, has always been a favorite of filmmakers and a challenge to animators and motion capture technicians. That was not the case on "Beowulf." "One of the most serious limitations on 'Polar Express,' was that we couldn't capture the eye performance simultaneously with the face. And the reason was because we couldn't put dots on the eyes and track their movement. On 'Beowulf,' they came up with an EOG device that allowed us to actually track muscle pulses being given off by the eye and the eyelids while simultaneously capturing the facial performance and the body performance," Starkey explains.

Ultimately, all the dots, suits, the EOG, every bit of technology is meant to disappear, as Beowulf's world appears seamlessly on screen and audiences follow the hero's cautionary journey.

The overwhelmingly positive response to the 3D release of "The Polar Express," the first performance capture film, convinced the filmmakers that all subsequent projects should be presented in the process. "After releasing 'Polar Express' in 3D, and receiving such a positive reaction to the theatrical

experience, we have been committed to presenting all of our movies in 3D,” says producer Starkey. “Our performance capture films are made entirely in 3D so they can be presented in the 3D format with very little difficulty.”

What is most striking about the 3D experience, Starkey continues, is that “due to the nature of the 3D experience, the audience members feel they are fully immersed in the scene they are watching and are stimulated by the scale and depth of the image. The movie appears to be in the immediate space surrounding the viewer.”

“Beowulf” will roll out in the largest 3D release of any film ever, including IMAX 3D, Real D and Dolby 3D Digital Cinema on more than 700 screens nationwide. As with “Polar Express,” however, audiences who experience “Beowulf” in 2-D will not be disappointed. “Having seen ‘Polar Express’ in both formats, I felt that the 2D experience was as exciting as any film I’d seen in recent years, and I feel that ‘Beowulf’ will be equally spectacular.”

Regardless of what format the audience sees the movie, “In the end, I hope it’s a movie for everybody. It’s got a very sophisticated, human story with great action and a lot of themes that resonate, I believe, with what’s going on in the world around us,” says Zemeckis, “because the quest for glory and power and gold, the timeless battle between good and evil – all that is around us and has never gone away.”

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF BEOWULF**

The events of Beowulf, which is a single poem 3,000 lines long, takes place in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. – based on the mention of a battle for which there is corroborating evidence. Though most of the story transpires in Denmark, it was told by Anglo-Saxons in northern England two hundred years after the fact. The Anglo-Saxons did not see themselves as British, but as Vikings and all their heroes were from Scandinavia.

The actual author of Beowulf is unknown. The original poem was written down on thin sheets of shaved leather. It was later copied and re-copied over the

next two hundred years. By the 900s, it had been collected in a volume that also contained the story of San Christopher, a collection of outlandish anecdotes about the Far East, an alleged letter from Alexander the Great and a poem about the Biblical heroine Judith.

This volume was partially destroyed in a fire at The Cotton Library, the world's greatest collection of literature from the Middle Ages, on October 23, 1731. Not only was the document charred, but the poem's reputation suffered over the ensuing years. Written in Old English, it was deemed confusing in its mixture of pagan and Christian themes. Structurally, it was seen as flawed because it had three antagonists instead of one, the last of whom was separated from the other two by half a century.

In addition, Beowulf doesn't rhyme; it alliterates instead. It has no iambic pentameter because, according to the Anglo-Saxon storytellers, it didn't matter how many syllables a line had as long as it was short and had three alliterations in it. By comparison to ancient masterpieces like Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, Beowulf just seemed like bad poetry. Worse, its heroism and morality was centered on a man fighting monsters. Scholars couldn't really take a poem about trolls and dragons all that seriously.

It wasn't until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Beowulf was reassessed by none other than J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In his 1936 essay "Beowulf: The Monster and the Critics," Tolkien wrote that the problem everyone was having with Beowulf had nothing to do with its quality, but rather the fact that it was being unfairly compared to Homer and Virgil. Beowulf didn't conform to the rules of epic poetry created by the ancient Greeks and Romans because it was a Scandinavian tale with its own specific meter – not better, not worse, just different. And contrary to most scholars before him, Tolkien claimed that the 50-year gap between the fight with Grendel's mother and the battle with the dragon was exactly what gave the poem its claim on greatness. Beowulf, he wrote, was not the story of a young hero who triumphs over monsters, nor is it about an old king who dies trying to kill a dragon, but instead it is the combined tale of a man who, once young and impervious,

knowingly proceeds to his own tragic death. It was precisely the two halves of the story that made it work.

Without Tolkien's reassessment, Beowulf would have remained an obscure text read only by doctoral candidates in medieval English literature. Today it is widely read in high schools across the country. Tolkien not only revived the poem's reputation, he imitated it in his own works. The Two Towers chapter, "The King of the Golden Hall," is lifted from the beginning of Beowulf. The fire-breathing dragon in Beowulf, who rises in anger after a thief steals his treasure, is mimicked in the climax of *The Hobbit*.

Other writers have used the poem in their own literature. Author John Gardner wrote the popular 1971 novel *Grendel*, a philosophical musing by the monster about the randomness of life. Michael Crichton, of *Jurassic Park* fame, took all the monsters out of the story and wove a historical action fantasy called *Eaters of the Dead*.

- "Excerpted from the essay by Jason Tondro, Ph.D., Issue #3 of the BEOWULF Comic book series from IDW Publishing."

## ABOUT THE CAST

**Ray Winstone** (Beowulf) was recently seen in Martin Scorsese's Oscar®-winning drama "The Departed" and Anthony Minghella's "Breaking and Entering" opposite Jude Law and Juliette Binoche. Upcoming films include Steven Spielberg's fourth installment of "Indiana Jones" opposite Harrison Ford and Shia LaBeouf and John Hillcoat's comedy "Death of a Ladies Man" written by Nick Cave.

Winstone won a 1998 British Independent Film Award for Best Actor and earned a BAFTA Award nomination for his performance in Gary Oldman's "Nil By Mouth." The following year, he earned another British Independent Film nomination for his work in Tim Roth's drama "The War Zone." He received his third British Independent Film Award nomination for Best Actor for his work in

“Sexy Beast.” Additionally, he shared a National Board of Review Award for Best Ensemble for the 2001 film “Last Orders.” Winstone earned an Australian Film Institute Award nomination for Best Actor for his work in “The Proposition.”

Born in Hackney in the East End of London, Winstone was a champion boxer in school and fought twice for England. He studied acting at the Corona School before director Alan Clarke cast him in the controversial project “Scum,” which was originally made as a BBC play but was banned for its brutally violent content. Later remade as a feature film, “Scum” launched Winstone’s career. Subsequent film credits include “Quadrophenia,” “Ladybird, Ladybird,” “Face,” “The Sea Change,” “The Very Thought of You,” “Agnes Brown” and “Fanny and Elvis.” More recent films include Anthony Minghella’s “Cold Mountain” and Antoine Fuqua’s “King Arthur.” He was the voice of Mr. Beaver in the fantasy blockbuster “The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.”

Winstone has also worked extensively in television, starring in series and television movies. His credits include the title roles in the British tele-films “Henry VIII” and “Sweeney Todd.”

**Anthony Hopkins** (Hrothgar) received an Academy Award® for his performance in “The Silence of the Lambs” (1991), and was subsequently nominated in the same category for his performances in “The Remains of the Day” (1993) and “Nixon” (1995). He was also given the Best Actor Award by the British Academy of Film & Television Arts for “The Remains of the Day.” In 1993, he starred in Richard Attenborough’s “Shadowlands” with Debra Winger, winning numerous critics awards in the U.S. and Britain. In 1998, he was nominated as Best Supporting Actor for his performance in “Amistad.”

In 2001, Hopkins starred in the sequel to “Silence of the Lambs” entitled “Hannibal,” opposite Julianne Moore. Directed by Ridley Scott, the blockbuster film grossed over \$100 million domestically. He also recorded the narration for the 2000 holiday season’s hit film “Dr. Seuss’ How The Grinch Stole Christmas.”

In 1998, he starred in “Meet Joe Black” directed by Martin Brest, “Instinct” directed by Jon Turteltaub and “Titus,” Julie Taymor’s film adaptation of Shakespeare’s “Titus Andronicus” with Jessica Lange.

In 1992, he appeared in “Howard’s End” and “Bram Stoker’s Dracula” before starring in “Legends of the Fall” and “The Road to Wellville.” He made his directorial debut in 1995 with “August,” an adaptation of Chekhov’s “Uncle Vanya,” for which he composed the musical score and also played the title role. He also starred in the title role of “Surviving Picasso” and opposite Alec Baldwin in “The Edge,” a dramatic adventure written by David Mamet and directed by Lee Tamahori. “The Mask of Zorro,” directed by Martin Campbell and co-starring Antonio Banderas and Catherine Zeta-Jones, was released in July 1998, and “Amistad” directed by Stephen Spielberg was released in December 1997.

Earlier films include “84 Charing Cross Road,” “The Elephant Man,” “Magic” and “A Bridge Too Far.” “The Bounty” and “Desperate Hours” were his first two collaborations with the Dino De Laurentis Company. In American television, he received two Emmy Awards for “The Lindbergh Kidnapping Case” (1976), in which he portrayed Bruno Hauptmann, and “The Bunker” (1981), in which he played Adolph Hitler.

Born December 31, 1937 in Margum near Port Talbot Wales, he is the only child of Muriel and Richard Hopkins. His father was a banker. He was educated at Cowbridge Grammar School. At 17, he wandered into a YMCA amateur theatrical production and knew immediately he was in the right place. With newfound enthusiasm, combined with proficiency at the piano, he won a scholarship to the Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff, where he studied for two years (1955-1957).

He entered the British Army in 1958 for mandatory military training, spending most of the two-year tour of duty clerking in the Royal Artillery unit at Bulford.

In 1960, he was invited to audition for Sir Laurence Olivier, then director of the National Theater at the Old Vic. Two years later, Hopkins was Olivier’s understudy in Strindberg’s “Dance of Death.” Hopkins made his film debut in

1967, playing Richard the Lionheart in “The Lion in Winter” starring Peter O’Toole and Katherine Hepburn. He received a British Academy Award nomination and the film received an Academy Award® nomination as Best Picture.

American television viewers discovered Hopkins in the 1973 ABC production of Leon Uris’ “QBVII,” the first American miniseries, in which he played the knighted Polish-born British physician Adam Kelno who is ultimately destroyed by his wartime past. The following year, he starred on Broadway in the National Theatre production of “Equus” and later mounted another production of the play in Los Angeles, where he lived for 10 years, working extensively in American films and television.

After starring as Captain Bligh in “The Bounty” (1984), he returned to England and the National Theatre in David Hare’s “Pravda,” for which he received the British Theatre Association’s Best Actor Award and The Observer Award for Outstanding Achievement at the 1985 Laurence Olivier Awards. During this time at the National, he starred in “Antony and Cleopatra” and “King Lear.”

Hopkins also appeared in the feature adaptation of Stephen King’s “Hearts In Atlantis” for director Scott Hicks, the action comedy “Bad Company” co-starring Chris Rock and the box-office hit prequel to “Silence of the Lambs,” “Red Dragon” co-starring Ed Norton, Ralph Fiennes and Emily Watkins and in Miramax Films’ adaptation of the Phillip Roth novel “The Human Stain” opposite Nicole Kidman and directed by Robert Benton.

Hopkins was most recently seen in Miramax Films’ “Proof” opposite Gwyneth Paltrow, “The World’s Fastest Indian” for director Roger Donaldson, “All The King’s Men” for director Steven Zallian and co-starring Sean Penn, Jude Law and Kate Winslet, and the crime thriller “Fracture” opposite Ryan Gosling. He also wrote, directed and composed the score for his debut independent feature, “Slipstream,” which premiered at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival.

Hopkins was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1993 and became a U.S. citizen in 2000.

**John Malkovich (Unferth)** – John Malkovich is one of cinema's most in-demand actors, and works frequently in both American and international productions. He has worked with many of cinema's leading directors, making indelible impressions in such films as: Liliana Cavani's "Ripley's Game," Spike Jonze's "Being John Malkovich," Jane Campion's "The Portrait of a Lady," Wolfgang Petersen's "In the Line of Fire," Gary Sinise's "Of Mice and Men," Bernardo Bertolucci's "The Sheltering Sky," Stephen Frears' "Dangerous Liaisons," Steven Spielberg's "Empire of the Sun," Paul Newman's "The Glass Menagerie," Roland Joffé's "The Killing Fields" and Robert Benton's "Places in the Heart." He has twice been nominated for the Academy Award® for Best Supporting Actor, in 1985 for "Places in the Heart" and in 1994 for "In the Line of Fire." His performance in "Places in the Heart" also earned him the Best Supporting Actor Award from the National Society of Film Critics and the National Board of Review. In 1999, he won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Supporting Actor for "Being John Malkovich." He recently starred in the epic adventure "Eragon" based on the best-selling novel. Upcoming are such films as "The Great Buck Howard" with Tom Hanks, "Drunkboat," "Gardens of the Night," "In Tranzit," "Disgrace," "The Mutant Chronicles" and "Afterwards."

Malkovich is a longstanding member of the groundbreaking Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. He joined the company immediately upon completing college, and between 1976 and 1982 he acted in, directed or designed sets for more than fifty Steppenwolf productions. Malkovich's debut on the New York stage in the Steppenwolf production of Sam Shepard's "True West" earned him an Obie Award. Other notable plays include "Death of a Salesman," "Slip of the Tongue," Sam Shepard's "State of Shock" and Lanford Wilson's "Burn This," which he performed in New York, London and Los Angeles. He has directed numerous plays at Steppenwolf, including the celebrated "Balm in Gilead" in Chicago and off-Broadway, "The Caretaker" in Chicago and on Broadway, "Hysteria" and "Libra," which Malkovich adapted from Don DeLillo's novel.

Malkovich has also acted in several acclaimed television productions and won an Emmy Award for his performance in the telefilm "Death of a Salesman" directed by Volker Schlöndorff and co-starring Dustin Hoffman. Other television credits including the recent miniseries "Napoleon" and the acclaimed HBO telefilm "RKO 281," both of which garnered him Emmy Award nominations.

In addition to directing "The Dancer Upstairs," Malkovich directed three fashion shorts ("Strap Hangings," "Lady Behave," "Hideous Man") for London-based designer Bella Freud. In 2003, his French stage production of "Hysteria" was honored with five Moliere Award nominations, including best director.

**Robin Wright Penn** (Wealthow) made her debut in Rob Reiner's cult classic "The Princess Bride," and has since become one of cinema's most acclaimed actors.

Wright Penn has received many kudos for her outstanding performances over the years. Two of her first nominations, a Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild, came in 1995 for her unforgettable role as 'Jenny' opposite Tom Hanks in Robert Zemeckis' Best Picture Oscar® winner "Forrest Gump." She earned her second Screen Actors Guild nomination for Best Lead Actress in Nick Cassavetes' "She's So Lovely," and her third nomination for Best Actress in a Television Movie or Miniseries in Fred Schepisi's "Empire Falls." She has received three Independent Spirit nominations for her performances in Erin Dingman's "Loved" opposite William Hurt; Rodrigo Garcia's ensemble "Nine Lives" and Jeff Stanzler's "Sorry, Haters." Additionally, Wright Penn starred in and served as an executive producer on Deborah Kampmeier's "Virgin," which received an Independent Spirit nomination for Best First Feature (under \$500,000) aka the "John Cassavetes Award."

Other film credits include Keith Gordon's "The Singing Detective" opposite Robert Downey Jr.; Peter Kosminsky's "White Oleander" with Alison Lohman; Anthony Drazan's "Hurlyburly" starring Kevin Spacey; Sean Penn's "The Pledge" opposite Jack Nicholson; Luis Mandoki's "Message in a Bottle" co-starring Kevin Costner and Paul Newman; M. Night Shyamalan's "Unbreakable," which starred

Bruce Willis and Samuel L. Jackson; Pen Densham's "Moll Flanders" with Morgan Freeman; and Barry Levinson's "Toys" opposite Robin Williams. Most recently, Wright Penn appeared in the short film "Room 10" directed by Jennifer Aniston for Glamour magazine's "Reel Women Film Series."

Wright Penn most recently starred in Anthony Minghella's "Breaking and Entering" opposite Jude Law; and co-starred in Deborah Kampmeier's "Hounddog" opposite Dakota Fanning, which she executive-produced and premiered at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival.

Wright Penn is currently directing a documentary on female surfers.

**Brendan Gleeson** (Wiglaf) was most recently seen as Alastor "Mad-Eye" Moody, the role he first played in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" and reprised in "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix."

Gleeson has been seen in more than 40 films since he made his debut in Jim Sheridan's "The Field." He then had small roles in films such as Mike Newell's "Into the West" and Ron Howard's "Far and Away" before landing the role of Hamish in Mel Gibson's Oscar®-winning Best Picture "Braveheart." He followed with the Neil Jordan films "Michael Collins" and "The Butcher Boy," and also starred in the independent film "Angela Moody" produced by John Boorman.

In 1998, Boorman directed Gleeson in the role of real-life Irish folk hero Martin Cahill in the acclaimed biographical drama "The General." For his performance, Gleeson won several acting honors, including the London Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actor. He has since collaborated with Boorman on "The Tailor of Panama," "In My Country" and "The Tiger's Tale."

Gleeson's additional credits include John Woo's "Mission Impossible II," "Harrison's Flowers," "Wild About Harry," Steven Spielberg's "A.I.: Artificial Intelligence," Danny Boyle's "28 Days Later," Martin Scorsese's "Gangs of New York," Anthony Minghella's "Cold Mountain," Wolfgang Petersen's "Troy," M. Night Shyamalan's "The Village," Ridley Scott's "Kingdom of Heaven," Neil Jordan's "Breakfast on Pluto" and "Black Irish." On television, Gleeson stars in the title role of HBO's upcoming "Churchill at War."

Born in Ireland, Gleeson started out as a teacher but left the profession to pursue a career in acting, joining the Irish theater company Passion Machine. His stage credits include “King of the Castle,” “The Plough and the Stars,” “The Prayers of Sherkin,” “The Cherry Orchard” and “Juno and the Paycock” at the Gaiety Theatre, which was also presented at the Chicago Theatre Festival. In 2001, he returned to the stage at Dublin’s Peacock Theatre in Billy Roche’s play “On Such as We” directed by Wilson Milam.

**Crispin Hellion Glover** (Grendel) is a multifaceted American artist. He is primarily known as a film actor, but is also a publisher, filmmaker and author. His career has been marked by some portrayals of wonderfully eccentric people, such as George McFly in “Back to the Future” or Willard Stiles in “Willard.” In the late 1980s, Glover started his own publishing company Volcanic Eruptions, which turned in to a production company in the 1990’s for his film works.

Born in New York City, Glover moved to Los Angeles at the age of three and a half. As a child, he attended the Mirman School for the academically gifted. His father, Bruce Glover, is an actor best remembered for playing the offbeat Spectre assassin Mr. Wint in the James Bond movie “Diamonds Are Forever” and one of Jack Nicholson’s hood assistants, Duffy, in “Chinatown.” Crispin Glover’s first professional acting appearance was in 1978 in Los Angeles at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in “The Sound of Music.” He played Friedrich Von Trapp to Florence Henderson’s Maria. He also appeared in some commercials and several sitcoms as a teenager, including “Happy Days” and “Family Ties.” His first film role was in 1983’s “My Tutor.” He has a small role in “Racing With the Moon” opposite Sean Penn. He also played the title role in an AFI film “The Orly Kid,” in which he portrayed a young man whose obsession with Olivia Newton-John raises the ire of his small-town neighbors. Later that year he appeared in “Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>: The Final Chapter” (1984) and “Teachers.” His breakout performance came in Robert Zemeckis’ “Back to the Future,” an international box office smash. Glover next starred in “River’s Edge.” From that point, Glover pursued a defiantly individualistic path. His characters were

notable for their peculiar personality traits and unconventional thought processes. He played Andy Warhol in Oliver Stone's "The Doors" in 1991 and continued to play exceedingly eccentric types, e.g. the title characters in "Bartleby" (2001) and "Willard" (2003). He has received some mainstream attention recently as the Thin Man in the "Charlie's Angels" films

One of our most exciting and versatile young actresses, **Alison Lohman** (Ursula) first gained our attention with her acclaimed performance as Astrid in "White Oleander," in which she starred opposite Michelle Pfeiffer, Renée Zellweger and Robin Wright Penn.

Lohman has been acting in professional theater since she was nine years old, starting with the role of Gretl Von Trapp in a local theater production of "The Sound of Music." As a senior in high school, she was a National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts winner and was also offered a scholarship to NYU for Theater, but decided to move to Los Angeles to pursue a film and television career.

Prior to "White Oleander," Lohman starred opposite Mare Winingham in the telefilm "Sharing the Secret."

Other film credits include starring opposite Nicolas Cage and Sam Rockwell in Ridley Scott's "Matchstick Men," opposite Ewan McGregor in Tim Burton's "Big Fish," "The Big White" opposite Giovanni Ribisi and in Atom Egoyan's "Where the Truth Lies" opposite Kevin Bacon and Colin Firth.

Lohman was recently seen in Michael Mayer's "Flicka," "Delirious" opposite Michael Pitt and Susanne Bier's "Things We Lost in the Fire" opposite Benicio Del Toro and Halle Berry.

Earlier this year, Academy Award® and three-time Golden Globe winner **Angelina Jolie** (Grendel's Mother) starred opposite Dan Futterman in the searing story of Marianne and Daniel Pearl, "A Mighty Heart." Prior to that, she starred opposite Matt Damon in "The Good Shepherd" directed by Robert DeNiro and with Brad Pitt in the action-comedy-romance "Mr. & Mrs. Smith" for director

Doug Liman. In 2004, she starred in Oliver Stone's epic "Alexander" with Colin Farrell, Val Kilmer and Anthony Hopkins, as well as the action/adventure "Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow" with Jude Law and Gwyneth Paltrow. She also lent her voice to the animated feature "Shark Tale" along with Will Smith, Jack Black and Robert De Niro and starred in the thriller "Taking Lives" with Ethan Hawke.

Jolie reprised the lead role in "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life" in 2003, and starred in the drama "Beyond Borders." She starred in the romantic comedy "Life Or Something Like It" in 2002. Her work in 2001 includes Simon West's "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider," as well as "Original Sin" opposite Antonio Banderas. In 2000, Jolie, Nic Cage and Robert Duvall starred in "Gone in 60 Seconds" for producer Jerry Bruckheimer.

Jolie's portrayal of a mental patient in "Girl, Interrupted" brought her an Academy Award®, her third Golden Globe Award, a Broadcast Film Critics Award and Best Supporting Actress awards from ShoWest and the Screen Actors Guild.

Prior to that, Jolie portrayed a rookie police officer opposite Denzel Washington's veteran detective in the thriller "The Bone Collector" directed by Phillip Noyce. She also co-starred in Mike Newell's "Pushing Tin" with Billy Bob Thornton and John Cusack. Jolie won the National Board of Review's Award for Breakthrough Performance for "Playing by Heart," a character-driven drama directed by Willard Carroll and starring Sean Connery, Gena Rowlands and Ellen Burstyn.

With the HBO film "Gia," Jolie won critical praise as well as a Golden Globe Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award and an Emmy nomination for her portrayal of the supermodel who died from AIDS complications. She earned her first Emmy nomination for her work opposite Gary Sinise in director John Frankenheimer's "George Wallace," about the controversial Alabama governor. The film brought Jolie her first Golden Globe Award and Cable Ace nomination for her portrayal of Wallace's second wife, Cornelia.

A member of the MET Theatre Ensemble Workshop, Jolie trained at the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute and has also studied with Jan Tarrant in New York and Silvana Gallardo in Los Angeles.

On August 27, 2001, Jolie was named Goodwill Ambassador for the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), accepting the responsibility of meeting with and advocating for the protection of refugees on five continents.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**Robert Zemeckis** (Director/Producer) won an Academy Award®, a Golden Globe and a Director's Guild of America Award for Best Director for the hugely successful "Forrest Gump." The film's numerous honors also included Oscars® for Best Actor (Tom Hanks) and Best Picture. Zemeckis re-teamed with Hanks on the contemporary drama "Cast Away," the filming of which was split into two sections, book-ending production on "What Lies Beneath." Zemeckis and Hanks served as producers on "Cast Away," along with Steve Starkey and Jack Rapke.

Earlier in his career, Zemeckis co-wrote (with Bob Gale) and directed "Back to the Future," which was the top-grossing release of 1985, and for which Zemeckis shared Oscar® and Golden Globe nominations for Best Original Screenplay. He then went on to helm the successful "Back to the Future" sequels.

In addition, he directed and produced "Contact" starring Jodie Foster, based on the best-selling novel by Carl Sagan and the macabre comedy hit "Death Becomes Her" starring Meryl Streep, Goldie Hawn and Bruce Willis. He also wrote and directed the box office smash "Who Framed Roger Rabbit," cleverly blending live action and animation; directed the romantic adventure hit "Romancing the Stone," pairing Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner; and co-wrote (with Bob Gale) and directed the comedies "Used Cars" and "I Wanna Hold Your Hand."

Zemeckis also produced “House on Haunted Hill” and executive-produced such films as “The Frighteners,” “The Public Eye” and “Trespass,” which he also co-wrote with Bob Gale. He and Gale previously wrote “1914,” which began Zemeckis’ association with Steven Spielberg.

For the small screen, Zemeckis has directed several projects, including the Showtime feature-length documentary “The Pursuit of Happiness,” which explored the effect of drugs and alcohol on 20<sup>th</sup> century society. His additional television credits include episodes of Spielberg’s “Amazing Stories” and HBO’s “Tales From the Crypt.”

In 1998, Zemeckis, Steve Starkey and Jack Rapke partnered to form the film and television production company ImageMovers. “What Lies Beneath” was the first film to be released under the ImageMovers banner, followed by “Cast Away” and “Matchstick Men.”

In March 2001, the USC School of Cinema-Television celebrated the opening of the Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts. This state-of-the-art center is the country’s first and only fully digital training center and houses the latest in non-linear production and post-production equipment as well as stages, a 50-seat screening room and the USC student-run television station, Trojan Vision. He also taught the first motion capture class ever at USC.

In 2004, Zemeckis produced and directed the motion capture film “The Polar Express” starring Tom Hanks. Most recently, he brought the true-life story of “The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio” starring Julianne Moore and Woody Harrelson, to the big screen. In addition, he served as executive producer on both “Monster House” and the Queen Latifah comedy “Last Holiday.”

**Neil Gaiman** (Screenplay by/Executive Producer) is the award-winning, prolific creator of works of prose, poetry, film, journalism, comics, song lyrics and drama. His acclaimed four-part novel Stardust, which appeared in DC Comics in 1997 with illustrations by Charles Vess, recently became a movie directed by Matthew Vaughn starring Claire Danes. His best-selling novel American Gods earned the Hugo, Nebula, Bram Stoker, SFX and Locus Awards, alongside many

award nominations, including the World Fantasy Award and Minnesota Book Award and appeared on many best-of-the-year lists. Gaiman's novel *Anansi Boys* debuted on the New York Times Bestseller List in September 2005.

Gaiman wrote the screenplay adaptation of his children's novel *Coraline*, which Henry Sellick directed. Gaiman also wrote the feature film "Mirrormask" directed by Dave McKean for The Jim Henson Company. "Mirrormask" premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2005 and was released later that year, augmented by a lavishly designed book by the same name as well as a picture book for younger readers, also written by Gaiman.

Gaiman is co-author, with Terry Pratchett, of *Good Omens*, a comic novel about how the world is going to end, which spent 17 consecutive weeks on the London Sunday Times Bestseller List in 1990 and went on to become an international bestseller. Gaiman was creator/writer of the monthly cult DC Comics horror-weird series *Sandman*, which won nine Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards, including the award for best writer four times, and three Harvey Awards. *Sandman* #19 took the 1991 World Fantasy Award for Best Short Story, making it the first comic ever to win a literary award.

Gaiman's six-part fantastical TV series for the BBC "Neverwhere" aired in 1996. His novel, also called *Neverwhere*, set in the same strange underground world as the television series, was released in 1997. It appeared on numerous bestseller lists. Gaiman has also written a screenplay based on the novel for Jim Henson Productions.

Gaiman's first book for children, *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*, illustrated by Dave McKean, came out in May 1997 and was listed by Newsweek as one of the best children's books of the year. HarperCollins re-released it in 2003 to great acclaim. His collection of short fiction, *Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions*, was published in 1998. It was nominated in the UK for a MacMillan Silver Pen Award as best short story collection of the year.

Gaiman's 1999 return to *Sandman*, the prose book *The Dream Hunters*, with art by Yoshitaka Amano, won The Bram Stoker Award for best illustrated

work by the Horror Writers Association and was nominated for a Hugo Award. "Two Plays for Voices" (2002), an audio adaptation of two of Gaiman's short stories read by Brian Dennehy and Bebe Neuwirth, won a 2002 Audie Award by the Audio Publishers Association. In 2003, Gaiman issued his first Sandman graphic novel in seven years and *Endless Nights*, published by DC Comics, was the first graphic novel to make the New York Times Bestseller List. In 2004, Gaiman published the first volume of a serialized story, entitled *1602*, for Marvel; it was the best-selling comic of the year.

At the end of 2002, Gaiman wrote and directed his first movie, in association with Ska Films; a short, dark, funny work called "A Short Film About John Bolton."

Gaiman's work has appeared in translation in dozens of countries. His journalism has appeared in *Wired*, *Time Out London*, *The London Sunday Times*, *Punch* and *The Observer Color Supplement*. He has reviewed books for *The New York Times Book Review* and *The Washington Post Bookworld*.

Tori Amos sings about Gaiman on her albums "Little Earthquakes," "Under the Pink," "Boys for Pele" and "Scarlett's Walk." Gaiman has written songs for the Minneapolis band *The Flash Girls*, for Chris Ewen's *The Hidden Variable* and for the band *One Ring Zero*. In August 1997, the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund awarded Gaiman their Defender of Liberty Award.

Gaiman's official website is [www.neilgaiman.com](http://www.neilgaiman.com).

Award-winning filmmaker **Roger Avary** (Screenplay by/Executive Producer) first began experimenting in Beta I video and 8mm film formats during the late 1970s. In 1983, his Super-8mm supernatural thriller "The Worm Turns" won Best Film from the Los Angeles Film Teachers Association Film Expo. He went on to attend the Pasadena Art Center College of Design's prestigious film program alongside fellow directors Michael Bay and Tarsem Singh.

In 1994, Avary was awarded an Academy Award® for his work as a writer with Quentin Tarantino on their screenplay for "Pulp Fiction." His Oscar® was presented to him by the man who would eventually play Hrothgar, Anthony

Hopkins, during the same award show that future “Beowulf” director Robert Zemeckis won for “Forrest Gump.” The screenplay for “Pulp Fiction” earned Avary and Tarantino additional accolades, including a BAFTA, the Boston Society of Film Critics Award, the Chicago Society of Film Critics Award, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association Award, the New York Film Critics Circle Award, and the Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay.

Also in 1994, Avary wrote and directed the French neo-noir crime thriller “Killing Zoe,” which Roger Ebert hailed as “Generation X’s first Bank Caper Movie.” “Killing Zoe” is notable as the first feature film to utilize swing and tilt bellows lenses in its production. The film was honored with le Prix très spécial à Cannes, the very same year that “Pulp Fiction” took home the Palm d’Or. “Killing Zoe” continued to win awards worldwide on the festival circuit, including Best Film at Japan’s Yubari International Film Festival and the Italian Mystfest. The film was also celebrated by the Cinémathèque Française, who heralded Avary as “the Antonin Artaud of cinema” during their Cinema of Cruelty retrospective.

In 1996, Avary directed a music video for the Go-Go’s song “The Whole World Lost Its Head.” Avary has also worked as a producer in indie film on “Boogie Boy” in 1997 and “The Last Man” in 2000. He also produced several pilots for television. In 1997, Avary teamed with New York Times best-selling novelist Neil Gaiman to write their screenplay adaptation of the oldest English language story Beowulf.

In 2002, Avary wrote and directed the filmed adaptation of the Bret Easton Ellis novel “The Rules of Attraction,” which he also executive-produced. “The Rules of Attraction” is notable as the first studio motion picture to prove reliable use of Apple’s Final Cut Pro editing system. Roger Avary became a spokesperson for Final Cut Pro 3, appearing in Apple print and web ads worldwide. His film within the film, “Glitterati” (2004), used elements of Victor’s European trip and was shot entirely on digital video with a crew of two (Avary, and producer Greg Shapiro). In 2005, he purchased the rights to another Bret Easton Ellis novel, Glamorama, which is in development at Avary’s company for him to direct.

In 2006, he penned the movie adaptation of the hit Konami videogame “Silent Hill” for French director Christophe Gans. “Silent Hill” debuted as #1 at the U.S. box office and has been embraced by video game fans as one of the first game-to-film adaptations that is true to the imagery and spirit of its source material.

In 2007, the fruit of Avary and Gaiman's “Beowulf” collaboration was successfully realized by director Robert Zemeckis. Utilizing a complex process of digitally enhanced live action, the film tells the oldest English language story through the use of the most modern technology available.

Avary is currently prepping as director the filmed adaptation of id Software's successful video game franchise “Castle Wolfenstein” for “Killing Zoe” producer Samuel Hadida.

As a hobby, Avary collects and restores vintage Atari XY monitor arcade machines like Battlezone, Tempest, and Lunar Lander. Avary divides time between his California olive farm and apartments in Rio de Janeiro and Paris.

**Steve Starkey** (Producer) earned an Academy Award® as one of the producers of Best Picture winner “Forrest Gump.” The film, directed by Robert Zemeckis and starring Tom Hanks, became one of the highest-grossing movies of all time and collected six Oscars®, including Best Director and Best Actor, as well as a Golden Globe Award, the National Board of Review's highest honor in 1994, two People's Choice Awards, the Producers Guild Golden Laurel Award and Best Picture BAFTA nomination.

Starkey produced the big screen adaptation of Chris Van Allsburg's popular children's book The Polar Express starring Tom Hanks and directed by Zemeckis. He has also produced “The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio” directed by Jane Anderson and “Monster House” directed by Gil Kenan.

In 1998, Starkey, along with Zemeckis and Rapke, formed ImageMovers, re-teamed with Zemeckis and Tom Hanks on the epic drama “Cast Away” and produced the psychological thriller “What Lies Beneath” starring Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer, also directed by Zemeckis.

Starkey's professional association with Zemeckis began in 1986 when he was associate producer on the innovative feature "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" and went on to serve as associate producer on the second and third installments of the "Back to the Future" trilogy. Their collaboration continued as Starkey and Zemeckis produced the black comedy "Death Becomes Her," followed by "Forrest Gump" and "Contact." Starkey also co-produced the feature comedy farce "Noises Off" and produced the Showtime feature-length documentary "The Pursuit of Happiness," exploring drug and alcohol addiction, which was directed and executive-produced by Zemeckis.

Early in his career, Starkey worked with George Lucas at Lucasfilm, Ltd., where he became an assistant film editor on "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi." He later edited documentary films for Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, was associate producer of Spielberg's "Amazing Stories" television anthology series and was executive producer on the 1993 CBS series "Johnny Bago."

**Jack Rapke** (Producer) is partnered with Robert Zemeckis and Steve Starkey in ImageMovers, the production company they co-founded in 1998. Two years later, they released their first two features, both helmed by Zemeckis: the hit summer thriller "What Lies Beneath" starring Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer, which marked Rapke's first producing credit, and the acclaimed drama "Cast Away" starring Tom Hanks.

Under the ImageMovers banner, Rapke then produced "Matchstick Men" starring Nicolas Cage and Alison Lohman and directed by Ridley Scott. The company broke new ground with the motion capture film "The Polar Express," on which Rapke served as executive producer. Directed by Zemeckis and starring Tom Hanks, the film was based on the classic children's holiday book by Chris Van Allsburg.

Under the ImageMovers' banner, Rapke produced "Last Holiday" starring Queen Latifah and directed by Wayne Wang; "The Prize Winner of Defiance,

Ohio” starring Julianne Moore and Woody Harrelson and the motion capture film “Monster House” directed by Gil Kenan.

A graduate of NYU film school, Rapke moved to Los Angeles in 1975 and started in the mailroom of the William Morris Agency. Four years later, he joined Creative Artists Agency (CAA) and began his 17-year association with the company. During his tenure, Rapke represented a long roster of successful writers, directors and producers, including Robert Zemeckis, Jerry Bruckheimer, Ridley Scott, Imagine Entertainment partners Ron Howard and Brian Grazer, Michael Mann, Harold Ramis, Michael Bay, Terry Gilliam, Bob Gale, Bo Goldman, Steve Kloves, Howard Franklin, Scott Frank, Robert Kamen, John Hughes, Joel Schumacher, Martin Brest and Chris Columbus.

Rapke was also the co-chair of the company’s motion picture department for seven years, during which time he was instrumental in building production companies around his high-profile client list. At the time he departed CAA, he was considered one of Hollywood’s most accomplished and admired businessmen.

**Martin Shafer** (Executive Producer) is the chairman and chief executive officer of Castle Rock Entertainment. Castle Rock most recently produced “Fracture,” “Music and Lyrics,” “No Reservations,” “Sleuth,” “Michael Clayton” and “The Polar Express.” The company has also produced such critically acclaimed films as “When Harry Met Sally,” “A Few Good Men,” (which was nominated for four Academy Awards®) “Absolute Power,” “City Slickers,” “In the Line of Fire,” “Honeymoon In Vegas,” and “Misery,” for which Kathy Bates won the Academy Award® for Best Actress, “The American President,” “The Shawshank Redemption” (nominated for seven Academy Awards®) and “The Green Mile” (nominated for four Academy Awards®). The company also produced the enormously popular hit television show “Seinfeld.” In 1995, Castle Rock Entertainment received the Excellence in Filmmaking Award at ShoWest.

Prior to forming Castle Rock, Shafer was president of production for Embassy Pictures and served as executive vice president of production at

Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. In October 2000, Shafer received the Lifetime Achievement Award at ShowEast.

**Robert Presley** (Director of Photography) was the cinematographer on Robert Zemeckis' "The Polar Express" alongside Don Burgess. Presley previously worked with Zemeckis as a camera operator and Steadicam operator on "What Lies Beneath."

Presley's credits include many acclaimed and high-profile films, including the upcoming contemporary fairy tale "Enchanted," "Radio," "When a Stranger Calls," "Die Hard: With A Vengeance" and "The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior" for director John McTiernan. Additional credits include Joel Schumacher's "A Time To Kill," "Breakdown," "Hard Rain," Ron Howard's "Edtv," "The General's Daughter," "The Kid," Michael Bay's "Pearl Harbor" and "The Rookie." His television work includes the series "The Agency" and "L.A. Doctors."

**Doug Chiang** (Production Designer) studied film at UCLA and industrial design at the Center of Creative Studies, College of Art and Design. He got his start as a Stop Motion animator on the television series "Pee Wee's Playhouse" and soon rose to become a Clio Award-winning commercial director and designer for Rhythm and Hues, Digital Productions, and Robert Abel and Associates.

In 1989, Chiang joined Industrial Light and Magic and became Creative Director in 1993. During this time, he worked as Visual Effects Art Director for films including "Ghost," "Back to the Future II," "The Doors," "Terminator 2," "Death Becomes Her," "Forrest Gump," "Jumanji" and "The Mask." He earned both an Academy Award® and a BAFTA Award for "Death Becomes Her" and another BAFTA for "Forrest Gump."

In 1995, Chiang left ILM to head the art department as Design Director for "Star Wars – Episode I – The Phantom Menace" and "Episode II: Attack of the Clones." He also served as production designer on "The Polar Express."

Chiang published a book entitled Robota, and has received many awards as an independent filmmaker. These include a First Place FOCUS Award for his

film “Mental Block.” His teaser film for the book *Robota* and its video game was awarded both the Prix Du Rendu Award at the Imagina 2003 Film Festival and Best Advertising/Promotional Film in the 2003 Annecy Animation Festival.

Chiang’s paintings have appeared nationwide in various publications as well as limited edition prints and posters and have been featured in major national and worldwide exhibitions. In 2003, he received an Honorary Doctorate from the prestigious Academy of Art College in San Francisco.

**Jeremiah O’Driscoll** (Editor) previously collaborated with Robert Zemeckis as editor of “The Polar Express” alongside R. Orlando Duenas, and as assistant to Arthur Schmidt on five of the director’s feature films, starting with “Death Becomes Her,” followed by “Forrest Gump,” “Contact,” “What Lies Beneath” and “Cast Away.” Among his additional feature credits as an assistant editor are “Driving Miss Daisy,” “The Last of the Mohicans,” “Addams Family Values,” “The Birdcage” and “Primary Colors.”

**Steven Boyd** (Co-Producer) continues his long-standing relationship with director Robert Zemeckis with “The Polar Express.” Additional producing credits include “Cast Away,” “What Lies Beneath,” “The 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The Pursuit of Happiness” and “Contact.”

**Jerome Chen** (Senior Visual Effects Supervisor) joined Sony Pictures Imageworks shortly after its inception in 1992 and worked his way up through the production ranks as a digital artist, senior animator, computer graphics supervisor and digital effects supervisor before becoming visual effects supervisor. He is an expert in the technique of integrating digital imagery with live action, especially in the area of photorealistic effects. Chen’s film credits include “Stuart Little,” “Stuart Little 2,” “Godzilla,” “Contact,” “James and the Giant Peach,” “The Ghost and the Darkness,” “In the Line of Fire,” “The Polar Express” and “Last Holiday.”

For “Stuart Little,” Chen earned his first Academy Award® nomination for groundbreaking visual effects in the creation of the title character.

Chen is a two-time Monitor Award winner for Best Electronic Effects in a Theatrical Release for “Stuart Little” and “Contact” and also earned Monitor nominations for “Godzilla” and “James and the Giant Peach.” Additionally, he was honored with a 1998 ANNIE Award nomination for Best Special Effects Animation in a Feature Film for his work on “Godzilla.” Chen and his colleagues’ work on “Stuart Little 2” led to the Visual Effects Society Award for Best Character Animation in an Animated Film, as well as the Prix du long Metrage (Best Feature Film) at the Imagina Awards.

Oscar®-nominated and Grammy-winning composer **Alan Silvestri** (Music and Original Songs) has written music for an extraordinary number of hugely successful films, including Robert Zemeckis’ “Back to the Future” trilogy, “Who Framed Roger Rabbit” and Best Picture Oscar® winner “Forrest Gump.” Other recent films among his more than 70 scores include “Night at the Museum,” “The Polar Express,” “Cast Away,” “What Women Want,” “The Mummy Returns,” “Something’s Gotta Give,” “Identity,” “Van Helsing,” “Maid in Manhattan,” “Lilo and Stitch” and “Stuart Little 2.” Additional credits include “Father of the Bride,” “The Bodyguard” and “Predator.”

Born in Manhattan, Silvestri was raised in Teaneck, New Jersey and attended Boston’s prestigious Berklee College of Music before joining a Las Vegas band as a guitarist. His performing and arranging skills earned him work in Los Angeles, including an accidental gig scoring a film. Later, he wrote the music for more than 100 episodes of “CHiPs,” which led to the composer’s first major film, “Romancing the Stone,” directed by Zemeckis.

Zemeckis and Silvestri have made many more films since then, including the black comedy “Death Becomes Her,” the science fiction epic “Contact” and the thriller “What Lies Beneath.” Their collaboration spans 20 years and next to that of Steven Spielberg and John Williams, it is Hollywood’s longest-running, most successful director-composer association.

Silvestri collaborated with Glen Ballard on the song “Believe” for “The Polar Express,” which earned a Golden Globe and an Academy Award® nomination for Best Original song. It won a Grammy Award in 2005.

For other filmmakers, Silvestri has written equally diverse and powerful music, including the scores for James Cameron’s “The Abyss” and Gore Verbinski’s “The Mexican.”

A resident of Carmel, Silvestri is an instrument-rated pilot and has begun a second career as a vintner on his 300-acre vineyard in the Carmel Valley. Active in the fight against Juvenile Diabetes, he has testified before a Congressional committee on the issue and has written a song, “Promise to Remember Me,” which became a rallying tune for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

With five Grammy Awards, sales of nearly 150 million records and #1 hits across the Pop, Modern Rock, Jazz, Adult Contemporary, Country and R&B charts, **Glen Ballard** (Original Songs) is one of the most acclaimed and successful songwriter-producers today. His last collaboration with Alan Silvestri on Robert Zemeckis’ “The Polar Express” resulted in the song “Believe,” which earned Golden Globe and Academy Award® nominations for Best Original song. It won a Grammy Award in 2005. He has also written original songs for the movies “Titan A.E.,” “The Mummy Returns,” “Shallow Hal,” “The Matrix Reloaded,” “XXX,” “Must Love Dogs,” “She’s the Man,” “The Break-Up” and “Charlotte’s Web.”

In recent years, Ballard has produced and co-written songs for Christina Aguilera, Dave Matthews, Aerosmith, No Doubt, Anastacia, Shakira and Van Halen, among other.

Although Ballard had a long track record of hits written for Michael Jackson, Wilson Philips and George Straight, it was his 1995 collaboration with Alanis Morissette on “Jagged Little Pill” that officially catapulted him into international prominence. The chart-topper was certified 16 times platinum with worldwide sales over 30 million copies and it remains the #3 best-selling album in history as well as the best-selling solo and best-selling debut album of all time,

earning Ballard four Grammys and a nomination for Producer of the Year. He subsequently co-wrote and produced Morissette's "Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie" and the Dave Matthews Band's "Everyday," both triple platinum sellers. He produced tracks on No Doubt's platinum album "Return of Saturn" and "Best of Van Halen, Vol. 1." He wrote and produced Shelby Lynne's "Love, Shelby."

Born in Mississippi in 1953, Ballard started playing piano as a child, wrote his first song before his 10<sup>th</sup> birthday and was a familiar face in local rock bands by the fifth grade. Upon graduation from the University of Mississippi, Ballard moved to the west coast and by sheer luck, joined Elton John's company in Los Angeles. He started as an assistant and played piano for Kiki Dee. His first chart single was Dee's recording of "One Step," in 1978, which secured a songwriting position with MCA Music Publishing, beginning a relationship that continues to this day.

Through the early 80s, Ballard composed songs for artists including George Benson, the French superstar Johnny Hallyday and The Pointer Sisters. Quincy Jones took note of the young composer and under his aegis, Ballard wrote "Try Your Love Again" for James Ingram and went on to write and produce for R&B singer Patti Austin. Soon he was writing and producing for Qwest Records. Spurred by his success he went independent, writing George Strait's 1986 Country Song of the Year, "You Look So Good in Love" and Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror," and arranging "Keep the Faith" for Jackson's album "Dangerous."

In 1990, he received his first Grammy for arranging "The Places You Find Love," for Chaka Khan and Siedah Garrett, and three nominations for his work on Wilson Phillips' eponymous album. In 1991, he wrote and produced Wilson Phillips' platinum follow-up "Shadows and Light." Others who have recorded his pop songs include Celine Dion, Al Jarreau, Earth, Wind & Fire, Sheena Easton, The Corrs, Lisa Loeb, Amy Grant, Philip Bailey and K.T. Oslin.

In 1997, he was named Songwriter of the Year by both ASCAP and the National Academy of Songwriters, and received the prestigious Governor's Award from NARAS. In 2001, Billboard Magazine honored Ballard with a tribute

issue marking his extraordinary achievement of penning and/or producing records selling over 150,000,000 copies worldwide.

**Gabriella Pescucci** (Costume Designer) has had an extensive career in feature films, television, opera and theater productions.

She received an Academy Award® for her work on Martin Scorsese's "The Age of Innocence" and an Oscar® nomination for Terry Gilliam's "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen."

Her recent feature film credits include "A Midsummer's Night Dream," "Le Temps Retrouve," "Secret Passage," "Van Helsing," Terry Gilliam's "The Brothers Grimm" and Tim Burton's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." Other film credits include "Les Miserables," "Dangerous Beauty," "Cousine Bette," "The Scarlett Letter," "Indochine," "The Name of the Rose," "Once Upon a Time in America" and Federico Fellini's "La Cite Della Donne" and "Prova D'Orchestra."

Pescucci's opera credits include "Norma," "Manon Lescaut," "Il Trovatore," "La Traviata," "La Boheme" and "Pagliacci," among many others.

Her theater credits include "Mahogany," "Napoli Chi Resta e Chi Parte," "Fior de Pisello" and "Strano Interludio."