

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX and DREAMWORKS ANIMATION
Present


HOW TO TRAIN YOUR
DRAGON
2

Directed by Dean DeBlois

Running Time: 1h34

Official website: www.howtotrainyourdragon2.com

Distribution

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From DreamWorks Animation, the studio that brought you “Shrek,” “Kung Fu Panda” and “The Croods,” comes the highly anticipated sequel to the Academy Award®-nominated HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON, based on the children’s book series by Cressida Cowell. In the thrilling second chapter of the epic trilogy, five years have passed since the heroic young Viking Hiccup (Jay Baruchel) befriended an injured dragon and forever changed the way the residents of Berk interact with the fire-breathers. Now, Vikings and dragons live side-by-side in peace on the fantastical isle that has been transformed into a dragon’s paradise.

But when grown-up responsibilities loom on the horizon, Hiccup and his faithful dragon Toothless take to the skies in search of answers. It’s much more than he bargained for, though, when Hiccup discovers that a mysterious dragon rider is really his long-lost mother Valka (Academy Award®-winning actress Cate Blanchett) and that the peace between dragons and Vikings is threatened by the power-hungry Drago (Academy Award-nominated actor Djimon Hounsou) with help from the dragon trapper Eret, son of Eret (“Game of Thrones” actor Kit Harington).

As Astrid (America Ferrera), Gobber (Craig Ferguson) and Viking friends Snotlout (Jonah Hill), Fishlegs (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) and twins Ruffnut (Kristen Wiig) and Tuffnut (T.J. Miller), lend their support, Hiccup, his mother and tribal chief father Stoick the Vast (Gerard Butler), must work together to protect the dragons they have grown to love. In the process, Hiccup finds the answers he has been looking for in ways he could never have imagined.

DreamWorks Animation SKG proudly presents HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2, featuring the voices of Jay Baruchel, Cate Blanchett, Gerard Butler, Craig Ferguson, America Ferrera, Jonah Hill, Christopher Mintz-Plasse, T.J. Miller, Kristen Wiig, Djimon Hounsou and Kit Harington. The film is written and directed by Dean DeBlois (“How to Train Your Dragon,” “Lilo & Stitch”). It is produced by Bonnie Arnold (“How to Train Your Dragon,” “Over the Hedge,” “Tarzan”). The executive producers are Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders (“The Croods,” “How to Train Your Dragon,” “Lilo & Stitch”). The music is by John Powell. This film is rated PG for adventure action and some mild rude humor.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE FIVE YEARS MAKES

In 2010, DreamWorks Animation's HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON soared into theaters and stole the hearts of audiences around the world with its blend of high-flying action, witty humor and dramatic depth, earning \$495 million in worldwide box-office receipts and nabbing two Academy Award nominations along the way, for best animated feature and best original score.

But the success of the film, written and directed by Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, was gradual. Even though it was a critics' darling from the get-go and No. 1 at the box office in its opening weekend, "It actually underperformed according to studio expectations," DeBlois says. "But it had amazing legs. It clung at or near the top of the box office for seven weeks. We were all really proud of the fact that the word of mouth surrounding the movie was bringing audiences to see it, and bit by bit, we ended up surpassing studio expectations."

The triumph of HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON spawned a TV series, a live stage show, a bevy of DRAGON merchandise — and legions of loyal fans.

"It's deeply satisfying to know that the passion we put into the film is reciprocated," DeBlois adds. "We see so much love coming back to us — fan videos and fan fiction and character drawings — it exists in a bigger way than we ever intended it to be."

From the beginning, DreamWorks Animation executives viewed DRAGON as a potential franchise. Its stellar reception and box-office achievement easily put sequel plans in motion. Since Sanders was turning his attention to directing DreamWorks Animation's "The Croods," they approached DeBlois about helming HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2 on his own, with Sanders taking on an executive producer role.

"I told them, 'I'm really interested if you'll entertain the idea of it being a trilogy,'" DeBlois recalls. "'The first movie can serve as the first act, this'll be the larger second act and then there must be a third culminating act.' Thankfully, they bought into that concept."

"Dean, in Hollywood terms, is the real deal," says Producer Bonnie Arnold. "He's a great storyteller. He thinks like a little boy, which is always helpful when you're making movies about boys and their dragons. He's creative, but the best news is that he

lets the other creative members of the team bring the best things they have to offer to the movie.”

Agrees Visual Effects Supervisor David Walvoord: “Working with Dean is amazing. He’s not just the director, but the writer, too. He has an incredibly special relationship with the characters and the world, and he has such a strong vision for what that world should be that it was really inspiring for us and, at the same time, made our job so much easier because he’s really able to articulate what he’s looking for, which helps send us in the right direction.”

The first film, based on the children’s books written by British author Cressida Cowell, introduced to audiences the gangly teenage Viking Hiccup, whose world is flipped upside down when he encounters and befriends an injured dragon he names Toothless. According to Arnold, DeBlois viewed HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2 as Hiccup’s coming of age story, “not the ‘further adventures’ of Hiccup and Toothless” as some sequels are prone to do. “When Dean pitched his idea for the second film to DreamWorks Animation executives, another crucial element of his pitch was the fact he wanted to age the characters by five years,” she adds. “It just made it a more interesting place to go and was something different that you don’t see in animation, honestly. That was a bold choice on his part and we feel really grateful that DreamWorks supported that idea.”

Not that it was always an *easy* choice.

According to DeBlois, it was a bit of a challenge on the design front and a trial-and error process for the artists to retain the charm and appeal of each character while at the same time aging them.

“We discovered ultimately, with most of the cast, that if we could just retain their overall silhouette and stamp, but increase their size, change their wardrobe, age their face in subtle ways and give them different hairstyles, that seemed to do it,” he says. “Hiccup was maybe the trickiest one just because in aging him, we wanted to make sure that he didn’t become a classic Hollywood hero. He had to retain his gangly quality, because there’s so much of his charm in that, that dorky awkwardness that he possesses.

“So we made sure that even though he did get taller, he never quite filled out the way his father, tribal chief Stoick the Vast, had hoped he might in the first movie,”

DeBlois continues. “He’s still slight of build but he continues to compensate with his intelligence, wit and advanced thinking.”

Returning as Hiccup is actor Jay Baruchel, who personifies those very qualities, according to DeBlois.

“I can’t think of anyone else who could ever play Hiccup in this way, because the character *is* Jay, to a large degree,” he says. “He embodies so much of what Hiccup is: A guy who’s quick-witted, intelligent, spry on his feet...there’s an adorable awkward quality to him that he’s very aware of and plays to his advantage.”

And it’s through Baruchel’s ability to convey Hiccup’s emotions that the audience connects with the character, says Arnold.

“The audience is experiencing the movie through Hiccup. What makes the whole experience of the movie even more rewarding is understanding how Hiccup feels about a given situation,” she says. “Jay is so passionate about the character and brings so much of that into his voice performance. As much as Dean is a great writer of the Hiccup dialogue — and he really is — Jay knows Hiccup better than anybody.”

DeBlois is quick to agree.

“Jay often makes modifications to his own dialogue because he knows the character so well,” he says.

Thanks to Hiccup’s efforts in the first film, in **HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2**, the residents of Berk, who once viewed dragons as a scourge to be eliminated, now live alongside (and ride!) them in friendship. This time around, they face a different kind of dragon problem, albeit a good one: There’s so many of them! With everyone owning his or her own personal dragon and dragons permeating their way of life, the isle of Berk is a vastly different place.

To accommodate the new inhabitants, an abundance of modifications have been made on the island so that life is a little less dangerous for everybody: An aqueduct system is in place for putting out fires in a hurry; all-you-can-eat feeding stations mean no dragon ever goes hungry; caves have been repurposed into custom stables; a one-stop-shop dragon armory provides for all kinds of needs.

“The armory used to be the old blacksmith stall where Hiccup, in the first film, learned to be an apprentice,” says DeBlois. “Anything can be taken care of there — whether a dragon has a toothache or needs to be groomed.”

Says Production Designer Pierre Olivier Vincent (affectionately known as P.O.V.), “It’s a much more joyful, decorative place now, and that’s reflected in the many new colors we used when we were redesigning the village. In fact, the colors of the film’s main dragons came into play when we reimagined it.”

Keeping up with the demand at the dragon armory is Gobber, the village blacksmith and put upon right-hand man of Stoick the Vast. Always up for adventure, he’s played once again by Craig Ferguson.

“Gobber is the guy who has to build all these things that make living with dragons less dangerous so he longs for the days of the past where they fought dragons instead of living with them peacefully. Craig plays that frustration very well,” DeBlois says.

Even though their relationships have changed, one thing hasn’t: Vikings are still Vikings...and dragons are still dragons. The HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2 team recognized that the citizens of Berk needed a new outlet for their natural aggressions, so they created...dragon racing!

With Vikings on the backs of dragons, “Dragon racing is exhilarating as long as you’re not a sheep, I suspect,” says Jay Baruchel. That’s because participants have to head around the island hunting for the marked animals, scoop them up and dump them in a basket. Each one is worth a point; the black sheep is worth 10. “It’s kind of like the Monte Carlo race of Berk,” says DeBlois.

A dragon race also proved to be an excellent way for the filmmakers to introduce audiences to the new Berk.

The opening sequence of HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2 is “this kinetic, visceral obstacle race of a game that flies by all the new updates in Berk and introduces familiar characters from the first film with their personal dragons, five years into those relationships,” DeBlois says.

The tough and competitive Astrid (America Ferrera) streaks through the sky on the back of Stormfly the Deadly Nadder; quarrelsome twins Ruffnut (Kristen Wiig) and Tuffnut (T.J. Miller) straddle the two-headed Zippleback Belch & Barf; the timid and

skittish Fishlegs (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) wobbles furiously on his Gronckle Meatlug, while the smug and cocky Snotlout (Jonah Hill) zooms by on Hookfang, his Monstrous Nightmare.

“It’s meant to be very energetic, fun and reassuring for audiences familiar with the first film — everything they loved about Berk is bigger and better — and it helps set the stakes for the rest of the movie,” DeBlois says. “You realize that because this place is such a Utopia, anything that threatens it is really bad news” ...and there *will* be a threat...

Notably absent from the dragon race is Hiccup and Toothless. Instead, the inseparable duo are doing what they love best — taking to the skies in search of new dragons and new lands to add to Hiccup’s ever-expanding map.

“In their spare time, not only have Hiccup and Toothless been pushing the limits of what’s possible with flight, but they’ve been out there mapping the world, which has become their new hobby,” DeBlois says.

Adds Head of Story Tom Owens: “They’ve taken that Viking map from the first movie and they’ve been adding pieces onto it in every direction. Hiccup is just a curious and restless soul. He’s always out looking for the next adventure.”

On this morning, taking flight into the vast unknown is also a way for Hiccup to blow off some steam: Before the start of the races, he’s told by father Stoick that it’s time for the young Viking to assume leadership of the island, a task that Hiccup isn’t quite ready for.

“Stoick, who is a burly, brawny, gregarious mountain of a man, is incredibly proud of his son, despite his size, for what he has accomplished in bringing peace to Berk,” says Gerard Butler, who portrays Stoick. “Their relationship has changed for the better in the past five years. Hiccup used to be an embarrassment to Stoick but now he wants to make his son the island’s next leader.”

Unsure what his true purpose is, Hiccup can’t imagine filling his father’s large boots — literally *and* figuratively.

“With Hiccup, we’ve seen some of his promise in the first movie realized a bit here,” Baruchel says of his character, “but the obligations of adulthood are starting to pile up. It doesn’t take a math whiz to know that as the son of the chief, he’s next in line, and he struggles with that.”

While he may be seeking to find his purpose, he does know where his strengths lay and he has been putting his talents of ingenuity to good use by creating a variety of inspired tools.

“Hiccup and Toothless often come across hostile new dragons in these new lands they’ve discovered, and so Hiccup, being the advanced thinker that he is, built himself a tool that harnesses the power of dragon fire,” DeBlois says. “It’s a sword hilt with a collapsible blade, but inside of it are two cartridges: One contains the saliva of a Monstrous Nightmare, which is a sticky napalm-like fire. The blade comes out pre-coated in that saliva and a rudimentary lighter ignites it. To dragons, that’s a very arresting image. It helps them see Hiccup as a dragon himself because he can produce his own fire. If Hiccup gets surrounded by a bunch of hostile dragons, he uses the back end of the sword, which contains a cartridge of highly flammable Hideous Zippleback gas in it: He sprays a ring around himself and ignites it, creating a flash explosion that gets their attention,” DeBlois says.

Adds Baruchel: “It’s his light saber. It’s really, really cool. He’s also constructed my favorite thing in the new movie: This really wicked flying suit that not only keeps him warm and looks cool but is outfitted, on his forearms, with everything he needs on his aerial excursions. He’s got a dagger, which he uses as a tool; extra paper for his expanding map; a pen and a rudimentary compass; and not only can he ride Toothless now, he can also fly side-by-side with him, which is pretty special.”

“Dean DeBlois was instrumental in the design of Hiccup’s outfit,” says P.O.V. “He really wanted Hiccup to have a suit that gave the sense that he had, in five years, perfected his understanding of dragons and had trained himself to behave like one — at least in the art of flying. Hiccup is a little bit of a Leonardo da Vinci in the Middle Ages.”

The only other person who has contributed to Hiccup’s map nearly as much as he has is the tough and spunky Astrid, who has become a fellow explorer — and more than just a friend.

“Astrid is Hiccup’s girlfriend now,” says America Ferrera, who returns to voice the courageous Viking maiden. “She is Hiccup’s No. 1 defender and champion. She’s a leader in her own right. Their relationship is one of equals. When Hiccup goes off to an adventure, she’s not sitting back hoping that he gets back safely.”

“Although Astrid doesn’t think the same way that Hiccup does, she knows him well enough that she’s capable of prodding him into finding an answer he might not have been able to find on his own,” says Tom Owens. “She knows how to get the best out of him.”

“I’m so thankful that America came back to play Astrid,” DeBlois says. “She has such a strong, powerful voice and it comes through in the character with this spunky, up-for-anything quality. But also inherently in America’s voice is a sense of reason and self-assuredness that the character of Astrid really represents to the story.”

Astrid is right by Hiccup’s side when he discovers a trapper’s fort in the northern reaches of Norway, which has been blown to bits by what appears to be an enormous ice storm; all that remains are giant splinters of wood lodged in massive spikes of ice. As they fly closer, they encounter a ship and its motley crew, led by a brawny young dragon trapper. He’s got a repetitive name, an over-sized ego and an eye for Toothless and Stormfly.

“Eret, son of Eret, who is one of three new characters in DRAGON 2, is a little bit full of himself. He claims to be the finest dragon trapper alive,” says DeBlois, “because he and his team have been successfully trapping them for some time.”

“Eret thinks that he knows more about dragons than anybody, but it turns out that he doesn’t have an inkling how deep a connection to dragons can go,” Tom Owens says.

In time, his opinion will change. “There’s more substance to him than Hiccup and Astrid give him credit for when they first meet him,” DeBlois says. “Through their influence, Eret comes around to realizing that dragons aren’t the commodity he has thought them to be; that they are loyal and if you take the time to earn their loyalty, they will do anything for you.”

The filmmakers chose Kit Harington, the popular young British actor from HBO’s “Game of Thrones,” to bring Eret, son of Eret, to life.

“Kit showed up on a short list of possible actors to voice Eret,” says DeBlois. “I knew him from ‘Game of Thrones’ and I can safely say he’s my favorite character on that series. I thought he was perfect for the role.”

Adds Arnold: “Eret is supposed to be about 20, the same age as Hiccup. We liked that Kit’s voice was youthful, commanding and charming at the same time.

“‘Game of Thrones’ was just taking off when we met and it was serendipitous that he’s gotten such a following in the years that we’ve been making the movie,” she says.

Despite his abilities, Eret doesn’t trap dragons for his own amusement. He works for Drago Bludvist, a vicious megalomaniac without conscience or mercy, who once claimed to be a man of the people, devoted to freeing mankind from the tyranny of dragons. In reality he presents an even bigger danger than Eret, who’s just a middleman: Drago is building a dragon army.

“Drago Bludvist is a man whose reputation is well known across lands but for all the wrong reasons,” says Gerard Butler. “He’s killed many Vikings. He puts the fear of God into Stoick. He knows from past experience what Drago is capable of.”

Adds Owens: “Drago really doesn’t like dragons, but he’s a little bit like Hiccup in that he’s figured out how to work with them — only in a negative way. He’s like a dog trainer who trains attack dogs: He can make dragons bend to his will through fear and control.”

To play the fierce character, the filmmakers turned to Academy Award-nominated actor Djimon Hounsou, a man who is known for portraying intense and often formidable roles to full effect.

“What a great, powerful voice he has,” says Owens. “I watched Djimon record once. When he warmed up, he made all these loud, primal noises to get himself in the mood. He really took it to another level. When he recorded, he looked furious and got really sweaty from his exertion. It was very intense and so much fun to watch.”

Standing in the way of Drago’s quest to round up herds of dragons is a mysterious dragon rider who consistently rescues them from Eret’s traps and hides them deep in the Arctic. As Hiccup searches for answers and gets deeper into the mystery, it’s not long before he and Toothless come face-to-face with the dragon rider, who turns out to be someone Hiccup thought he would never meet: his mother. Taken by a dragon when Hiccup was just a baby, she’s been missing for 20 years and presumed dead by the villagers of Berk.

“It was never stated in the first movie that Hiccup’s mother was actually dead; it was just implied,” says Owens. “That gave us the open door to say, well, what if she wasn’t dead?”

In HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2, she's far from it. Valka is a dragon-whisperer who is accomplished in the ways of dragons and knows secrets about them that Hiccup hasn't even discovered yet.

Residing in Dragon Mountain, an epic ice formation with an amazing tropical oasis microclimate nestled inside in its core, "She's been living like Dian Fossey with thousands of dragons all this time, learning their ways and becoming their fierce protector," DeBlois says. It's a big moment in the film when Valka reveals to Hiccup the place she calls home.

"Right from the beginning, Dean DeBlois had a strong vision of what the Dragon Oasis was all about," says Head of Layout Gil Zimmerman. "We knew it would be this surprising place where plant life could live in an arctic region that was big enough to support a whole bunch of dragons.

"From a cinematic standpoint we had to figure out how to reveal it to the audience, because it's a hugely impactful story point and we really wanted this visually stunning way to introduce it," he continues. "So we went old-school: there's an old adage that if you're going into a big, wide-open space, you start off in a very tight, confined space."

In the movie, as Valka introduces Hiccup to her world, she leads him through a dark, confined tunnel. As they approach the oasis, the first inkling the audience gets of the grandeur is a tight shot on Hiccup's stunned face. "Then it's revealed to the audience how spectacular it is," Zimmerman says.

"It's breathtaking, right? For us in lighting it was also the opportunity to convey that," says Head of Lighting Pablo Valle. "You have to feel that moment's sense of awe, where the world opens up through Hiccup's eyes — he's seeing this and not believing what he's seeing because it's so vast and so beautiful. It was important for us to carry that idea.

"There are two things going on in this scene, each of which was fun to play with," Valle continues. "Mother and child reconnecting after so many years on one level, and Hiccup's awareness that the world is much bigger than he ever imagined it to be on another."

In this improbably immense space, tropical ferns, free-flowing waterfalls and bubbling hot springs abound while thousands of dragons permeate the space.

“It was one of two seminal moments from the script — the other being the epic battle sequence — that we knew we needed to create something that was extra-special,” Zimmerman adds.

The questions Hiccup has for his mother! Meeting her is like finding an elusive, missing piece to a puzzle as he soon realizes how similar he is to Valka.

“Hiccup knows that he’s not a carbon copy of his father and feels a little uncomfortable knowing that there’s this other part of his soul that pines for something more, that is most comfortable when he’s out there with his dragon, searching for a purpose,” DeBlois says. “So meeting his mother and knowing that she has this great purpose to her life is deeply meaningful for Hiccup, because he feels, in that moment, that he’s found the missing half of his soul. He finally knows who he is.”

The only challenge is that Valka and Hiccup have differing philosophies about human interaction with dragons. Valka doesn’t believe co-existence is possible because “she’s seen too much of the evil ways of humans,” according to DeBlois. She thinks the only way to keep dragons safe is to hide them from humans. Hiccup, on the other hand, knows co-existence is possible not only because he has experienced it first-hand but also because he knows he can change minds and bring peace. That becomes the issue that they have to resolve, and ultimately it is Valka’s arc in the story.

From the moment he conceived Valka as a character, DeBlois knew whom he wanted for the part: Oscar®-winning actress Cate Blanchett.

“I wrote the character with Cate in mind, not knowing whether she’d be interested at all,” DeBlois says. “I just thought she was a perfect model. She has played characters in the past that have such a fiery strength and command to them.

“And then, when we were at the Academy Awards the year we were nominated for ‘Dragon,’ I spotted Cate mixing with people before the ceremony. I walked over and introduced myself. I told her, ‘I wrote a part for you in HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2, whether or not you’re interested,’” DeBlois laughs. “She wanted to know more on the spot. So I told her a little bit about the character. She said, ‘Well, listen. My

boys are huge fans of the first movie and we watch it a lot at our home and I'm not doing anything at the moment. Please send me the script.”

“We were all very excited to have her on board,” says Owens. “She’s a powerhouse actress and has such emotional depth in her speaking voice.”

There’s an inevitable moment in *HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2* when Stoick and Valka are reunited after two decades. To fully appreciate the significance of the occasion, the filmmakers set out to make the scene a poignant one. After all, it isn’t every day one encounters a loved one who has been presumed dead for 20 years.

“The scene where Stoick sees Valka for the first time is virtually unchanged from the first script,” DeBlois says. “It has remained very pure: We wanted Stoick to be wordless — to be struck as though he’s seeing a ghost — when he runs into her. Valka, meanwhile, has all this defensive babble to get out of the way because she knows that she made the wrong decision by not returning to her family and she’s trying to justify it but she’s just making herself fall apart. The whole time he’s steadily approaching as though he can’t believe what he’s seeing. It ends in this beautiful single phrase from Stoick and a kiss and we let the audience know that all’s been forgotten and forgiven as far as he’s concerned. I love the idea we suggest — that Valka was Stoick’s only love and that he never had any other interest.”

“Stoick had resigned himself to life without Valka, and then suddenly, she’s there,” says Butler. “For him, it’s a change at something that he never thought would be possible anymore, to have his wife back, to have a mother for Hiccup and to be a family again. It’s romantic, exhilarating and heartbreaking. He’s a young man all over again, and he’s so happy.”

For Hiccup, too, seeing his parents together for the first time is momentous. In both of them he sees fiery, powerful, headstrong personalities — and finds his identity in understanding both of them.

“So many animated films take for granted that there’s a parent — or maybe both parents — missing,” DeBlois says. “We saw this as an opportunity to bring together a family that had been seemingly torn apart forever and to really feel that Hiccup’s life had become complete before thrusting him into a new chapter of his life.”

“I’ve never seen animated characters seem so complex and deep and have such an emotional reconnection,” offers America Ferrera. “You get to see Hiccup and his parents be a family at last. You get to see what could have been, had his mother and father not been torn apart.”

Adding to the emotion of their reunion is Academy Award-nominated composer John Powell’s sweeping score and a song he and Icelandic folk singer Jónsi wrote for Stoick and Valka, one of three pieces on which the musicians collaborated.

“Dean wanted something that sounded like an old folk song that they could sing together,” Powell says, “a melody that in the story had been their courting song long ago. So Jónsi and I sat down and started writing melodies and the arrangement. The tune became the theme music that represents Stoick and Valka’s relationship in the film.”

Adds Jónsi: “John and I both worked on DRAGON but this was the first time we collaborated on music together. Even though our styles are so different, I learned a lot from him and I’m really happy with this song and the result of all our work.”

As the menace of Drago and his army of dragons continue to loom, the timing of the family reunion couldn’t be better. It’s an opportunity for Stoick, Hiccup and Valka to pull strength from their family unity and, along with their loyal friends, to band together to fight the looming threat...and it’s a big one.

Meanwhile, those loyal friends are also the comic relief of HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2 — particularly Ruffnut, who develops a crush on Eret, son of Eret, while simultaneously fending off two suitors of her own: Snotlout and Fishlegs.

“Kristen Wiig, who plays Ruffnut, does it so well,” DeBlois says of her constant rejection of the boys and her slavish fawning over Eret. “She’s the last of Berk’s scarce and scary single ladies but she has no interest in either of them. We have some very strong female characters in Astrid and Valka. We thought there was room to have one that was completely shallow and vapid as well,” he chuckles. “We made Ruffnut as ridiculously shallow as possible. She’s willing to throw everything she has at Eret to try to get his attention, just as Snotlout and Fishlegs are dying for hers.”

This time around audiences get to see a different side of Jonah Hill: putting romantic charm into his character as Snotlout tries to gain the advantage over Fishlegs for Ruffnut’s affections. But he really hasn’t changed much.

“Snotlout is always trying to draw attention to himself, and he is always trying to impress,” says DeBlois. “Of all the friends, Snotlout is the only one who hasn’t actually grown much in five years, and so it adds to his overcompensating behavior.”

“Snotlout strikes me as the type of guy that peaked in high school,” says Tom Owens. “He’s always going to be at that level, mentally speaking. He’s gotten older — he’s got facial hair that he’s really proud of — but he’s still kind of a simple soul at heart.”

Christopher Mintz-Plasse is back as Fishlegs, the big, loveable oaf who knows everything there is to know about dragons. “We get to see a more aggressive side to him this time around because of his competition with Snotlout,” Owens adds.

Ruffnut’s antagonistic twin is played by T. J. Miller.

“T.J. Miller is one of the funniest people on Earth,” DeBlois says. “He gives us all sorts of ad libs that I love to use whenever we can. I just can’t get enough of the banter he has with Kristen as the battling twins — and they’re always at war with each other. It’s just kind of a silly, nonsensical joke. We love to play out the idea that even though they’re forced to work together, they’re always trying to sabotage each other.”

A WHOLE NEW WORLD...OF DRAGONS

In the first film, the “Dragon” team introduced the idea that there’s a dragon hierarchy — and that a monstrous Alpha dragon hidden away in a cave is served food by squadrons of other dragons or risk being devoured themselves. What if the Red Death of the first movie was actually not the top of the food chain? What if there were a couple of rungs above it and, at the very top, a behemoth of a dragon, bigger than anyone has ever seen?

“Heading into the second installment, I felt that was something we could expand upon,” DeBlois says. “In HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2, there are only a few Bewilderbeasts in existence but they are the natural-born Alpha of the dragon world. They have an unseen ability to communicate with, and force their will upon, other dragons — all except for the babies, who listen to no one,” DeBlois says. “So, if you control the Alpha, you control all the dragons.”

Drago's secret weapon is just such a beast, which he has trained to fight at his command. When he discovers that Valka is protecting a benevolent Bewilderbeast in her sanctuary, he sets in motion a plan to draw it out in an epic battle for dominance before moving on to pillage Berk and capture all of its dragons.

In creating the beast of all beasts, the filmmakers tasked themselves with challenging the notion of what a dragon is.

"The inspiration for the Bewilderbeast came from director Dean DeBlois," says Production Designer P.O.V. "He said that he wanted to have a creature as powerful as a polar bear. That was the starting point. After that, we had to do a lot of work to, of course, turning a polar bear into some sort of a dragon, but you can still see, in the anatomy of the Bewilderbeast, that when he lifts himself up on his back leg, he has a little bit of the posture of a polar bear."

"When we broke too far away from the conventions, there were a lot of failed attempts at designing this creature," DeBlois laughs. "At one point, we had a wooly mammoth-looking dragon, but the moment that you put fur or hair on a dragon it just doesn't feel right anymore."

"We landed on this creature with the giant tusks, which *were* actually inspired by a wooly mammoth," he continues. "The proportions of it were inspired by large Arctic muskoxs."

Interjects Baruchel: "They're massive and what's cool (no pun intended) is that they don't breathe fire — they breathe massive shards of ice."

"We decided that since a Bewilderbeast is a sea dragon, it ingests copious amounts of water and stores it in goiters in its neck," says DeBlois. "When needed, it regurgitates with such extreme force that it blasts apart its target, but because the breath is so intensely icy, it also freezes mid-blast, so you get these very interesting and alarming shapes that are created in the ice"...

... Which proved to be challenging to the visual effects team. "Ice is extremely difficult to render, ," Visual Effects Supervisor David Walvoord says. "It's not one of the things that we have down, like skin and hair. They're challenging, too, but we've done a lot of it. But ice! We had no idea what it should look like or how it should move. It took a lot of referencing and iterating different ideas to find something that was believable and

that would, at the same time, give you a funky, weird sculpture when you were done. It also needed make a powerful visual statement.”

As they face off in combat, the contrast between the two Bewilderbeasts is striking: Drago has trained his dragon to be an aggressive fighter and it wears many scars from earlier fights on its dark skin. Valka’s Bewilderbeast, on the other hand, is a kind creature, bright white and “quite magnificent,” says P.O.V.

“The surfacing department did an amazing job in making sure that there is detail all over their skins,” says Pablo Valle. In the larger-than-life battle sequence, “The camera keeps cutting in closer and closer and you still get a sense of the scaly texture they’re made of.”

Effective lighting was crucial in helping to differentiate the two Bewilderbeasts, says Valle, especially when they are in the throes of warfare; it helps to contrast the good from the bad.

“You definitely don’t want people confusing them,” he says. “They’re the same type of dragon, but you want to be absolutely clear whose side each of them is on. The biggest challenge for us in lighting was their scale. They’re each the size of a mountain. It’s easy to either not convey that sense of scale or just let them get so massive that they overpower everything.”

It was a challenge for other departments as well.

“Gil Zimmerman, our Head of Layout, spent a lot of time and effort trying to compose those shots to get that sense of drama and scale in all those characters,” says P.O.V. “It’s quite complicated, because you have the human scale, you have the dragon scale and you have the very large dragon scale. It’s not always easy to frame.”

Declares Zimmerman: “The battle sequence is, in my experience, beyond anything that’s been done in animation. It’s more akin to what ILM or Weta does. It was certainly the most challenging for every department to have accomplished it, just because of its sheer size.”

Supervising Editor John Carr enjoyed cutting the scene.

“The battle scene was fun to cut because when Stoick battles Drago, you also see the two Bewilderbeasts battling off in the distance, mirroring the Viking battle, each gaining the upper hand when their human counterparts do. So when Drago’s

Bewilderbeast is winning, Drago is winning; if Stoick is succeeding, so is Valka's Bewilderbeast."

Walvoord chimes in: "There are shots in that battle that are extraordinary. There's an eight hundred or nine hundred-frame shot, flying over the battlefield right at the start of the scene. The coordination between camera, animation, crowds, lighting, effects, character effects, with nets coming and downing dragons that are flying by and you're flying over the heads of all these crowd guys, and the armies running, is just incredible and so much fun to watch.

"That whole battle has such a striking look," he continues. "Everyone is used to animated films being colorful and happy and this is almost a black and white sequence. It's not quite, but it's very dark characters on white snow and we totally played up those silhouettes to try and get as powerful a graphic read as we could. Dean wanted this really bright sequence that, at the same time, felt like a real battle. I think we pulled it off nicely."

In the chaos of battle, of course, are thousands of other dragons, including our hero dragon, Toothless, and some other familiar faces.

When asked why Toothless is so beloved by audiences, Gil Zimmerman cites the dragon's ability to connect with audiences.

"There are times where he is absolutely a puppy dog, other times when he's clearly a cat, other times he's something in between," he says. "Toothless is an innocent character — as a dragon, he does have a certain amount of intelligence that's beyond a regular pet — but he has this supreme naïveté about him that makes him a beloved character. People see their own pets in Toothless. In response to that, we're always looking for good moments to bring the Toothless factor into a scene."

Producer Bonnie Arnold says audiences will appreciate the many types of dragons that show up in *HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2*.

"They won't be let down when they see what we've got, both old and new. We were able to make the dragons that audiences knew from the first movie even more interesting by giving them proper names, more features and more defined personalities. There's closeness between the characters and their dragons as they work together. It's fun but it's also heroic and poignant at times."

Stoick has a brand new dragon, **Skullcrusher**, that wasn't seen in the first film. "He's a big rhino of a dragon, mixed with a truffle pig," DeBlois laughs. "He's a very eager but very serious tracking dragon and can find just about anything on scent. He's a bloodhound. We wanted a dragon that was sizeable so that when Stoick sits up on top of him, it feels like this thing could carry his weight — but also doesn't make Stoick look ridiculously small in the process."

Butler describes him this way: "Skullcrusher is the dragon version of Stoick: He's prideful and doesn't suffer fools gladly. He's super powerful and strong and he's not going down anytime soon."

Valka's dragon **Cloud Jumper**, which exhibits a lot of owl behavior, is an amazing creature with two sets of wings that can split apart and makes for a very distinct silhouette in the sky. It also happens to be the same dragon that abducted her 20 years ago. Because of their long-term relationship, "they have such an intuitive way of flying together that Valka doesn't even need a saddle," DeBlois says. "She stands up on it and it barrel rolls and she walks around it."

Astrid's relationship with **Stormfly** the Deadly Nadder has evolved, much like the other riders and their dragons. "They're five years in, they understand each other, and they reflect each other's personalities to some degree," DeBlois says. "Astrid is very headstrong and extremely capable. We gave Stormfly a personality that complements that by making her more like a dotting fetch dog in the sense that she listens to Astrid's every command with great enthusiasm. So Stormfly does love to fetch whatever it is, whether a ball or a human! They have a really playful relationship, which is a nice outlet for Astrid because she's otherwise so serious and strong."

The twins Ruffnut and Tuffnut ride the same dragon, a two-headed Zippleback named **Belch & Barf**, each which have distinct personalities and are always at war with each other. "We love playing out the idea that even though they're forced to work together, they're always trying to sabotage each other," DeBlois says.

"Fishlegs and his Gronckle, **Meatlug**, are the loveable pair. Meatlug is Fishleg's steady and stalwart buddy. She gives off the appearance of being somewhat dimwitted, a quality that is reflected on Fishlegs. But you can't write Fishlegs off as a dullard because

he's actually quite intelligent. She's there for him at all times...they just move at a slower pace," DeBlois says.

"Snotlout and his dragon, **Hookfang**, a Monstrous Nightmare, are the aggressive showmen. They're always trying to draw attention to themselves, always trying to impress. He's kind of like the little guy who drives the big expensive car just to make himself seem more impressive," DeBlois laughs.

Gobber's dragon is **Grump**, a large, lazy, walrus of a dragon. "He lives up to his name," DeBlois says. "He's always grumpy, always in the way, always falling asleep, all of which adds to Gobber's aggravation on a daily basis."

Of all the dragons in the film, there's only one, the Monstrous Nightmare, that looks like a "traditional" dragon ("If you do a Google search on dragons, most of the time, you're going to get some lizards with wings, basically," says P.O.V.) and that's intentional. "We're creating dragons that have more personality," he says. "For example, what do you get by mixing a bulldog and a dragon? You get a Gronckle. We found inspiration in the animal world, and not necessarily just reptiles. If we found a funny-looking bird that we were going to turn into a dragon, we'd perhaps keep some of its colors in the new creature."

When it came to creating the multitude of background dragons safely housed in Valka's sanctuary, the DRAGON team turned to its new technology (more on that in a minute), which allowed the artists to quickly multiply them.

And then there are the baby dragons.

"We call them Scuttle Claws and they're introduced in the Dragon Oasis, just as kind of manic little fire-starters everywhere they go," says DeBlois. "They're the only dragons that are not susceptible to the control of the Bewilderbeast, because they're too young and Hiccup actually uses that to his advantage a bit later in the movie."

THE INSPIRATION...THE ART...

After the first DRAGON wrapped and before production began on the second film, Director Dean DeBlois, Producer Bonnie Arnold, Head of Layout Gil Zimmerman, Production Designer Pierre Olivier Vincent (P.O.V.), Supervising Animator Simon Otto

and Supervising Editor John Carr took a trip to Norway to glean inspiration from the Nordic setting.

“We had talked about doing it for movie one, since the film was obviously loosely based on Viking culture, but it didn’t happen,” Arnold says. “Then we felt it would be a good time, before we started movie two, before Dean even wrote the script, to take a trip to the Norwegian Folk Museum and the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo.”

“The inspiration for me was most evident when we went to a fjord — just the sheer grandeur and spectacle of this big river with giant mountains coming out of the water as its banks,” says Zimmerman, who as head of layout, is to an animated film what a cinematographer is to a live-action one, responsible for the rough blocking of characters and cameras, working closely with the director and editor.

Offer Arnold: “It ended up being a little bit of a photo safari. We did a lot of research on Movie One, but things that we found there helped us to make Movie Two an even a better experience.”

“My big takeaway from that trip is the way it solidified us as a team,” Zimmerman adds. “We developed investment in each other’s lives and learned how to communicate really well with each other. The challenges of this movie really required that we had something other than just a corporate relationships to draw from.”

Making any film, animated or live action, necessitates a lot of teamwork. But one might argue that HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2, with its epic scale and scope, requires even more teamwork, especially since it’s much more like an original story, with many new sets. In fact, only one from the first DRAGON — the isle of Berk — has been reused for DRAGON 2.

“That’s one of our most complex sets, so it did help us, especially early on,” Zimmerman says. “One of the first scenes that we had to do was on Berk but because of Hiccup’s explorations, there are a lot of different worlds now. The first thing I got involved with is scouting sets with our production designer, P.O. V.

“Having Dean in the room with us deciding how we were going to stage things, what we needed to see, really gave us a sense of investment in the choices that we were making really early, as well as from a practical sense,” he continues. “He was with us in

the mo-cap room, too, when we moved the virtual camera around on the set and chose where we were going stage various parts of the action.”

One of the early stages in the production process is called pre-visualization, when the filmmakers fine-tune what scenes are going to look like. To achieve that on HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2, the layout team relied heavily on motion capture technology as a tool (about 80 percent of the film’s sequences went through the mo-cap room), which gave the filmmakers creative control of the camera and allowed them to stage scenes in different ways to find the most emotional impact.

“Gil has two guys on his crew that are also mixed martial arts fighters,” says Supervising Editor John Carr. “When they were mapping out the scene where Stoick battles Drago, he put them in the mo-cap suits and let them go at it. They came up with a whole bunch of different scenarios.” The scenes were then handed off to the artists and animators to further develop.

...AND THE TECHNOLOGY

Art and technology obviously come together in a big way at DreamWorks Animation, with the technology always standing in service of the artist and the animation.

“We’re always engaging with the artists and the end-users in order to ensure that we’re not just creating technology solutions, we’re actually creating real solutions for real people who are doing real things,” says Kate Swanborg, Head of Technology Communication and Strategic Alliances.

In other words, the studio wants to give its artists creative free reign with a tool set that will allow them to work effortlessly, efficiently and effectively in making their creative visions reality.

That’s why DreamWorks Animation embarked on creating an entirely new technology to be used in the design of its films. HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2 is the first film to fully employ DreamWorks Animation’s new proprietary technology known as Apollo. Five years in the making, Apollo technology allows artists to control and manipulate data in an effortless and intuitive way, creating an end result that is visually richer and greater in scope for the audience.

Apollo has two primary software components, Premo and Torch: “Premo is the animation tool that allows artists to work with characters in real time, on their tablets, just with a stylus, manipulating the character in any way that they want to,” DeBlois says. “It allows them to be much more intuitive with their choices, whereas before, they had to work with numeric keypads and deal with all sorts of curves and graphs. Now it’s just grab the character, move whatever part you want to move, create a key frame and move on. It not only increases their speed, it just makes it feel much more natural.”

According to Otto, Premo “allowed us to have more detail on the dragons, much more detail in the flight suit, and allowed us to build more complex scenes in general. Toothless, in the first movie, had about four times as many controls as Hiccup or any other average human character with four legs, two wings, ear plates, tail, fins...Now in this second movie, we have a dragon that has two sets of wings; it’s the X-Wing Fighter of dragons. Using Premo has allowed us to go and explore and to ask the question, ‘How can we make the idea of dragons even fresher to the audience?’ We’ve raised the bar and pushed our expectations much higher for this film,” he says. “We’re able to make better calls much quicker. When we block our scenes, we don’t have to wait for the computer to tell us what it’s going to look like; we can actually see them make those creative choices right in front of our eyes.”

Torch is the lighting package, similarly created to help the workflow of the lighting department. “With Torch, our lighting has become much more sophisticated,” says DeBlois. “We’re able to take our world, which is caricatured and it has a whimsy to it, and render it in such a believable way that this movie seems to transcend kind of the cartoon parameters of movies past and sit in a weird space between live action and animation that is all our own for the moment.”

“We had been using the same set of tools for about 18 years and it was time for a big overhaul to make sure that not only we’re on par with the industry, but also to set our own goals of what we want to do with these tools,” says Head of Lighting Pablo Valle. “So an amazing group of talented R&D developers worked closely with us from the get-go, and they delivered a tool that makes handling all of these different elements that go into lighting a scene a lot simpler.”

The lighting team was also fortunate to have 10-time Academy Award nominated cinematographer Roger Deakins (whose stunning work is seen in such films as “Skyfall,” “True Grit,” “No Country for Old Men” and “O Brother, Where Art Thou?”) on board as a visual consultant for HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2, as he was for the first DRAGON and subsequent DreamWorks Animation films including “Rise of the Guardians” and “The Croods.” Just as they do in a live-action film, lighting, camera moves and angles play an essential role in the storytelling of an animated feature.

From a visual standpoint, says Visual Effects Supervisor David Walvoord, one of his favorite scenes is in the blacksmith’s shop in the beginning of the film.

“One of the reasons I love it is because we shot it a lot more like a live-action sequence,” Walvoord says. “Roger walked us through it. If he hadn’t been around, we wouldn’t have tried to do it the way we did — it’s not really how we were trained to light in animation. It’s an incredibly visually complex sequence: There are shafts of light and little bright bits of light everywhere — they’re things that are really busy and should be distracting, but it’s all done in a way where it’s not. Instead, it really supports the atmosphere of this bustling workshop where there’s this water wheel turning in the back creating all these shadows and all the sawdust that’s up in the air. It makes you feel like stuff’s going on and it just feels really successful.”

“Working with Roger is one of the highlights of my career so far,” says Pablo Valle. “It’s not often that you get somebody of his talent to come and help us work in a movie like this. It’s the perfect combination of a DRAGON world that we all know and love and a visionary like Roger who has been doing this for so long. He brings vision and energy and he’s been an educator to us. In a sense, he has come in and freed us. We used to stay in a safe zone where we knew it had been done before. Sometimes it’s easy to fall into a track where you say, ‘Let’s do it again.’ He doesn’t let you do that. He looks at a sequence and says, ‘you know what, the most important thing is *this*.’ He simplifies. He’s a wonderful artist because he’s able to boil it down to its essence and he’s also a great collaborator. There’s no ego. There’s nothing more rewarding than when the artists’ artistic instincts are rewarded when they take chances, and the response is, ‘that looks great. Can you do it a little more?’”

When it comes to 3D, a key feature in all DreamWorks Animation films, the technology is never used in a gimmicky way, but rather is used as a means of enhancing the story as a whole and making it an immersive experience. In fact, P.O.V. hopes audiences forget it's there.

“There are a lot of technical complexities that you have doing a movie like this but you don't want people to think about that. You just want them to relate to the characters, so everything we do is this representation of a world, which doesn't really exist, but it needs to be believable for the time the people are looking at it. Yes, there's a lot of sophistication to the tools we have today but hopefully people won't think about this.

“There are a few tricks (in the film), but that's just part of the craft,” he continues. “When you deal with stereo and 3D, you deal with space. When people are in the theater we're trying to not have them look at the screen and think of something flat; we want them to look at a window and through that window to see the space of our world.”

Says Walvoord: “3D, in a lot of ways, makes our job a lot harder in effects. Things have a spatial representation. For many years, we could get away with cheating the camera visually with tricks to hide the depth when we needed to. But now, with 3D or stereo, you've got two cameras and you can perceive all that depth, so as the camera's moving around, all those tricks fall apart, and we have to be a lot more honest about how the effect is realized. It has to be true to the space and true to the acting and true to the action. That's made it a lot more challenging — but it could have a huge payoff, as well, especially when you're watching a scene and you *feel* the space in a way that you can't in 2D.”

LOVING 'DRAGON'

What is it about the DRAGON story that has touched the hearts of so many people? Producer Bonnie Arnold suggests that it's the universal appeal of Hiccup and Toothless' relationship.

“This is the first time I've been a part of a film that continues to grow and become more beloved as time goes by,” she says. “We still get little love letters from adults that say, ‘Should I be embarrassed that I love HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON and I'm

40 years old?’ It’s exciting to know that people of all ages have been touched by the story and adventures of Hiccup and Toothless.”

It’s both awesome and frightening to be part of such a successful franchise, according to Gil Zimmerman: “It’s awesome because we’re incredibly proud of the first movie and humbled by the reaction that we have gotten from the many fans that we have out there people of every age and culture in the world. It’s frightening because there is such a high expectation, you know? We want the fans to be every bit, if not more, excited about this story as they were about first one and hopefully, audiences will walk out of the theaters anticipating the third installment of the franchise.”

“My hope is the same for every film I work on,” says David Walvoord, “that the audience feels like they’ve just seen something they’ve never seen before; that they think this was worth going to a theater and experiencing with an audience. I hope that, for 90 minutes, they forget everything else and really believe that somewhere this universe exists a place where kids ride dragons, and then, hopefully, they’ll go see the film again!”

“I’ve worked on a lot of projects, but it’s rare that you work on one that touches this kind of a nerve,” says Head of Story Tom Owens. “It’s really special.”

Sums up Jay Baruchel: “Being a part of the DRAGON franchise is one of the best things that ever happened to me. I had no idea when I showed up for the very first recording session, the adventure that it would take me on. I played one role out of thousands of people involved, but I’ll just say I’m privileged to be involved in a movie that means as much as HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON does to people.”

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ABOUT THE VOICE CAST

JAY BARUCHEL (Hiccup) continues to cement his leading man status in 2014 with many exciting projects on the horizon. He was most recently seen in Sony's "Robocop" opposite of Joel Kinnaman, Gary Oldman and Michael Keaton, and opposite Kurt Russell and Matt Dillon in the heist film "The Art of the Steal," which premiered at the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival and earned him a Best Supporting Actor nomination at this year's Canadian Screen Awards. He also has wrapped production on an untitled Cameron Crowe project opposite Emma Stone, Bradley Cooper, Rachel McAdams and Bill Murray. The film will release on Christmas Day. Additionally, Baruchel recently signed on to star in and executive produce the film adaptation of Stephen King's short story "The Ten O'Clock People," and he will star in FX's comedy pilot "Man Seeking Woman."

Baruchel previously starred opposite Seth Rogen, James Franco and Jonah Hill in Sony's hit comedy "This Is the End," a feature length film based on a short film that he completed with Rogen, "Jay and Seth vs. the Apocalypse." He also was seen in the hockey comedy "Goon," which he co-wrote with Evan Goldberg, produced and starred in opposite Sean William Scott and Liev Schreiber. The film premiered to rave reviews at the Toronto Film Festival, and Baruchel was nominated for two 2013 Canadian Screen Awards in the Best Supporting Actor category and for Adapted Screenplay. He was also seen in David Cronenberg's "Cosmopolis" opposite Robert Pattinson, which debuted at the Cannes Film Festival. Both films made the Toronto Film Festival's top film list of 2012.

Also in development for Baruchel are a number of writing projects. He is currently adapting the book "Baseballismo," written by Dave Bidini, into a screenplay; he is adapting the graphic novel "Random Acts of Violence" for Kickstart Entertainment; and is also working on a sequel to "Goon."

Previously, Baruchel was seen in the Bruckheimer Films/Disney feature "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," directed by Jon Turteltaub, in which he starred as the "Apprentice" opposite Nicolas Cage. He also was seen in Paramount's romantic comedy

“She’s Out of My League,” and DreamWorks Animation’s Academy Award-nominated animated feature, “How to Train Your Dragon,” as the lead voice of Hiccup. Baruchel won a 2011 Annie Award for his voice work on the film. He also was seen starring in “Good Neighbors,” which premiered at the 2010 Toronto Film Festival.

Roles in the Academy Award-winning movie “Million Dollar Baby” opposite Clint Eastwood, Hillary Swank and Morgan Freeman and the blockbuster hit “Tropic Thunder” opposite Ben Stiller, Jack Black and Robert Downey Jr., garnered Baruchel much praise for his versatility. He has also been lauded for his starring role in Jacob Tierney’s comedy “The Trotsky,” which premiered at the 2009 Toronto Film Festival to rave reviews. Baruchel received a Genie Award Lead Actor nomination for his performance.

Baruchel has a long list of additional feature credits, including “Nick & Norah’s Infinite Playlist” opposite Michael Cera and Kat Dennings; “Knocked Up” opposite Seth Rogen and Katherine Heigl; “Just Buried,” which premiered at the 2007 Toronto Film Festival; “Real Time” opposite Randy Quaid, and in the memorable role of Vic Munoz, the obsessed Led Zeppelin fan in “Almost Famous.”

Baruchel began acting at age 12 when he landed a job on the Nickelodeon hit television series “Are You Afraid of the Dark?” — transforming what was to be a one-time guest appearance into a recurring role. The role was a springboard for his career, leading to his first Canadian series, “My Hometown.” He then made his debut to American audiences as the star of the critically acclaimed Judd Apatow television series “Undeclared” on Fox.

CATE BLANCHETT (Valka) served as the co-artistic director and co-CEO of Sydney Theatre Company, alongside Andrew Upton from 2008-2013. She is a graduate of the Australian National Institute of Dramatic Art and holds Honorary Doctorates of Letters from the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney.

Blanchett starred as Jasmine in Woody Allen’s “Blue Jasmine,” for which she won the 2014 Best Actress Academy Award. She also earned the best actress awards at the Screen Actors Guild, Golden Globe® and BAFTA Awards.

In 2004, Blanchett won the Best Supporting Actress Academy Award, BAFTA Award and Screen Actors Guild Award for her portrayal of Katharine Hepburn in Martin Scorsese's Howard Hughes biopic "The Aviator." She was also nominated for a Golden Globe Award. In 2008, Blanchett was nominated as Best Actress for "Elizabeth: The Golden Age" and as Best Supporting Actress for "I'm Not There," making her only the fifth actor in Academy history to be nominated in both acting categories in the same year. Additionally, she received dual Screen Actors Guild Award® and BAFTA Award nominations, for Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress respectively, for "Elizabeth: The Golden Age" and "I'm Not There." For the latter, she also won a Golden Globe Award, an Independent Spirit Award, several critics groups' awards, and the Volpi Cup for Best Actress at the 2007 Venice Film Festival.

Blanchett earned her first Oscar nomination and won BAFTA, Golden Globe Award and London Film Critics Circle Awards for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth I in Shekhar Kapur's "Elizabeth." She also received Oscar, Golden Globe and SAG Award™ nominations for her performance in "Notes on a Scandal." Additionally, Blanchett has earned Best Actress Golden Globe nominations for the title role in Joel Schumacher's "Veronica Guerin" and her work in Barry Levinson's "Bandits," and, earlier, another BAFTA Award nomination for her performance in Anthony Minghella's "The Talented Mr. Ripley."

In February 2014, Blanchett appeared in "The Monuments Men," directed by George Clooney. Blanchett recently wrapped production in London on Disney's live-action "Cinderella." She has also completed production on two untitled Terrence Malick films with pending release dates. Blanchett is currently in production on Todd Haynes' film "Carol," based on the Patrica Highsmith novel "The Price of Salt."

Blanchett originated the role of Galadriel in Peter Jackson's "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy and reprised her role in the recent "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey." Additional film credits include Joe Wright's "Hanna"; Ridley Scott's "Robin Hood"; David Fincher's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button"; Steven Spielberg's blockbuster "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull"; Steven Soderbergh's "The Good German"; "Babel"; and Wes Anderson's "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou."

Among her other film credits are Jim Jarmusch's "Coffee and Cigarettes," earning an Independent Spirit Award nomination; Ron Howard's "The Missing"; Gillian Armstrong's "Charlotte Gray"; Lasse Hallström's "The Shipping News"; Rowan Woods' "Little Fish"; Mike Newell's "Pushing Tin"; Oliver Parker's "An Ideal Husband"; Sam Raimi's "The Gift"; Sally Potter's "The Man Who Cried"; Bruce Beresford's "Paradise Road"; "Thank God He Met Lizzie," for which she won both the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) and the Sydney Film Critics Awards for Best Supporting Actress; and Gillian Armstrong's "Oscar and Lucinda," for which she also earned a Best Actress AFI nomination.

Blanchett has worked extensively on the stage in Australia and abroad. Blanchett's roles on stage include *Hedda Gabler*, for which she won the Ibsen Centennial Award, Helpmann Award and the MO Award for Best Actress; Richard II in the celebrated STC production of *The War of the Roses*; Blanche Du Bois in Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which traveled to much acclaim from Sydney to Washington and New York (her performance was considered the 'performance of the year' by the *New York Times*) and for which she received the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Actress in a non-resident production; Yelena in Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, in a new adaptation by Andrew Upton, which toured to Washington in 2011 and New York in 2012 to great critical acclaim and for which she received the Helpmann Award for Best Female Actor in a Play and the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Actress in a non-resident production; and Lotte in Botho Strauss' *Gross und Klein*, which toured extensively throughout Europe in 2012 and was part of the London Cultural Olympiad, and for which she received the Helpmann Award for Best Female Actor in a Play. Blanchett is currently performing opposite Isabelle Huppert in STC's production of Jean Genet's *The Maids*, directed by Benedict Andrews and co-adapted by Andrew Upton and Benedict Andrews.

Blanchett has been awarded the Centenary Medal for Service to Australian Society through Acting and in 2007 she was named one of TIME Magazine's 100 Most Influential People. In 2012, she was awarded the *Chevalier de l'Ordre des arts et des lettres* by the French Minister for Culture, in recognition of her significant contributions to the arts. She has also received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

In 2008, Blanchett co-chaired the creative stream of the Prime Minister of Australia's National 2020 Summit. She is a patron of the Sydney Film Festival and an ambassador for the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Australian Film Institute.

Blanchett resides in Sydney with her husband and their three children.

GERARD BUTLER (Stoick the Vast) mostly recently starred opposite Morgan Freeman, Angela Bassett and Aaron Eckhart in Antoine Fuqua's "Olympus Has Fallen" as a Secret Service agent trying to stop a terrorist takeover of the White House. He is currently in pre-production on several films, including Alcon's remake of the early 1990s classic surf film, "Point Break," Summit's "Gods of Egypt" opposite Nikolaj Coster-Waldau and "London Has Fallen," the sequel to "Olympus Has Fallen."

In addition to acting, Butler launched a production shingle with his longtime manager Alan Siegel in March 2008. Their debut project starring Butler, "Law Abiding Citizen," grossed more than \$100 million worldwide and became Overture Films' most lucrative opening to date. Most recently, the duo produced "Olympus Has Fallen," which went on to gross more than \$161 million worldwide at the box office.

Butler solidified himself as a leading man when he starred as the bold and heroic King Leonidas in Zack Snyder's blockbuster film "300." The film broke box office records in its opening weekend and went on to earn more than \$450 million worldwide.

Butler's other \$100 million plus films include "The Bounty Hunter" opposite Jennifer Aniston; Robert Luketic's "The Ugly Truth," opposite Katherine Heigl; "Nim's Island" with Jodie Foster and Abigail Breslin; "P.S. I Love You" opposite Hilary Swank; Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera" opposite Emmy Rossum; and "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life" opposite Angelina Jolie.

Butler has appeared in a wide variety of films spanning across all genres including: "Playing for Keeps," "Chasing Mavericks," Marc Forster's "Machine Gun Preacher"; "Coriolanus"; Lionsgate's "Gamer"; Guy Ritchie's "RocknRolla"; "Beowulf & Grendel"; "The Game of Their Lives"; the independent feature "Dear Frankie" opposite Emily Mortimer; "Timeline"; "Reign of Fire"; and John Madden's award-winning drama "Her Majesty, Mrs. Brown," starring Judi Dench. His early film work

includes roles in “Harrison’s Flowers,” “One More Kiss,” “Fast Food” and the screen adaptation of Chekhov’s “The Cherry Orchard.”

Born in Scotland, Butler made his stage debut at the age of 12 in the musical *Oliver*, at Glasgow’s famous Kings Theatre. As a young man, his dreams of acting were temporarily deterred and he went on to study law for seven years before returning to the stage in London. In 1996, he landed the lead role in the acclaimed stage production of *Trainspotting*. He later starred on the London Stage in such plays as *Snatch* and the Donmar Warehouse production of Tennessee Williams, *Suddenly Last Summer* opposite Rachel Weisz.

CRAIG FERGUSON (Gobber) entered the world of late-night comedy following a diverse career that encompasses film, television and the stage. Since taking the helm of “The Late Late Show” on Jan. 3, 2005, Ferguson has received an Emmy® Award nomination; a Peabody Award for the show; and has set all-time viewer records, achieving the highest ratings since the show’s inception in 1995.

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Ferguson started in the entertainment industry as a drummer for some of the worst punk bands in the U.K., a profession he held for several years. Following his musical stint, he began bartending in a local pub in Glasgow where he was introduced to Michael Boyd, the artistic director of The Tron Theatre in Glasgow, who persuaded Ferguson to give acting a go. After several low-paying acting gigs, Ferguson discovered he had a knack for comedy and was soon the star of his own BBC television show, “The Ferguson Theory.”

Ferguson brought his act to America in 1995 to star with Betty White and Marie Osmond in the short-lived ABC comedy “Maybe This Time.” He then joined “The Drew Carey Show,” playing Drew Carey’s boss, Nigel Wick, from 1996 to 2003.

Ferguson has written the feature films “The Big Tease” and “Saving Grace.” In 2003, he made his directorial debut with “I’ll Be There,” which he also wrote and starred in. The film went on to receive the Audience Award for Best Film at the Aspen, Dallas and Valencia Film Festivals. He was also named Best New Director at the Napa Valley Film Festival. Ferguson’s other film credits include “Niagra Motel,” “Lenny the Wonder Dog,” “Prendimi l’anima,” “Life Without Dick,” “Chain of Fools” and “Born Romantic.”

Ferguson's animated feature credits include the Academy Award-winning feature "Brave," "Winnie the Pooh" and "How to Train Your Dragon."

In April 2006, Ferguson debuted his first novel, "Between the Bridge and the River," which became a critically acclaimed bestseller. In September 2009, Ferguson released his memoir, a New York Times bestseller, "American on Purpose," an achingly funny account of living the American dream as he journeyed from a small town in Scotland to the entertainment capital of the world.

Ferguson was sworn in as a United States Citizen in February 2008. Currently he lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two sons.

AMERICA FERRERA (Astrid) is perhaps best known for her fearless portrayal of Betty Suarez on ABC's hit comedy "Ugly Betty." This breakthrough role earned Ferrera an Emmy for Best Actress in a Comedy Series, a Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series-Musical or Comedy, and a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance for a Lead Actress in a Comedy Series, as well as ALMA and Imagen Awards.

Ferrera can currently be seen in two films. The first, Diego Luna's biography, "Cesar Chavez: An American Hero," centers on the civil-rights activist and labor organizer, Cesar Chavez. Portraying his wife, Helen Chavez, Ferrera stars opposite Michael Peña and alongside an impressive cast including Rosario Dawson and Gabriel Mann. Ferrera also stars in and serves as a producer on Ryan Piers Williams' *X/Y* opposite Amber Tamblyn, Melanie Diaz and Common.

Other recent credits include David Ayer's crime thriller "End of Watch," co-starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Anna Kendrick, Michael Peña and Cody Horn and Todd Berger's comedy "It's a Disaster" opposite Julia Stiles and David Cross.

In October 2012, Ferrera was seen in the four-hour television series for PBS and international broadcast, the "Half the Sky" project. The series, which was shot in 10 underprivileged countries, delivers audiences with an intimate and dramatic portrayal of the women and young girls in the world that live under some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable. Ferrera joined reporter Nicholas Kristof, and actresses Diane Lane, Eva Mendes, Meg Ryan, Gabrielle Union and Olivia Wilde in an inspiring program

that captivates the struggling and empowering stories of females fighting for change.

In tandem with her work on the “Half the Sky” series, Ferrera served as ambassador on a campaign called “America4America” joining Voto Latino, the leading non-partisan national youth empowerment organization. The campaign aimed to reach people across the country by using online content to engage in conversations with the actress and discusses issues related to voter ID laws, education and immigration.

Ferrera starred as Roxie Hart in the West End production of the hit musical *Chicago* for an eight-week run that started in November 2011. Earlier that year she was also seen in a recurring role on the second season of the CBS hit series “The Good Wife,” in which she played an illegal, nanny and object of Eli’s (Alan Cumming) affection.

Prior to this, she was seen in Ryan Piers Williams’ “The Dry Land” opposite Melissa Leo and Jason Ritter. Ferrera also executive produced the film, which premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival and won Best International Film at the 2010 Edinburgh Film Festival. Maya Entertainment released the film.

Other feature film work includes Fox Searchlights’ “Our Family Wedding,” DreamWorks Animation’s “How to Train Your Dragon” and Warner Bros.’ “The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2,” the sequel to the 2005 original. She also starred in the bilingual independent film “Towards Darkness,” which she executive produced, and Fox Searchlight’s independent film “Under the Same Moon.” Additional credits include the Brian Jun film “Steel City,” Catherine Hardwicke’s “Lords of Dogtown,” and the 2005 Sundance Film Festival entry “How the Garcia Girls Spent Their Summer.” Ferrera also appeared off-Broadway in *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead*, directed by Trip Cullman.

Ferrera first secured her place as one of Hollywood’s most vibrant young talents with her starring role in the Patricia Cardoso film “Real Women Have Curves.” Her performance earned her a Sundance Jury Award for Best Actress, an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Debut Performance, and a Young Artist Award nomination for Best Performance for a Leading Young Actress.

JONAH HILL (Snoutlout) has quickly become one of Hollywood's most sought after talents, due in part to his dynamic evolution from laugh-out-loud comedy to 2011 Academy Award nominee for his supporting role in Bennett Miller's "Moneyball."

In addition to his Oscar nomination, Hill was nominated for a Golden Globe Award in the category of Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture, and a SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role. "Moneyball" was also a Best Picture nominee at the Academy Awards and a Best Motion Picture Drama nominee at the Golden Globes.

Hill recently starred in Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street" opposite Leonardo DiCaprio. Released by Paramount Pictures, the film has earned more than \$375 million worldwide. It received a Best Picture Academy Award nomination; a Best Motion Picture, Musical, or Comedy Golden Globe nomination; two Critics' Choice nominations for Best Picture and Best Acting Ensemble; was honored by AFI as one of the best Movies of the Year; and was recognized by the National Board of Review as one of the Top Ten Films. Additionally, Hill received Variety's Creative Impact Award for Acting on behalf of his performance in the film.

Hill recently wrapped production on "22 Jump Street," the sequel to 2012's "21 Jump Street," starring opposite Channing Tatum. "21 Jump Street" opened at No. 1 at the box office and went on to make more than \$200 million worldwide. Additionally, Hill co-wrote the screenplays and served as an executive producer on both films. Sony Pictures will release "22 Jump Street" on June 13, 2014.

Hill also wrapped production on Rupert Goold's "True Story" opposite James Franco. The drama is centered around the relationship between journalist Michael Finkel (Hill) and Christian Longo (Franco), who was on the FBI Most Wanted List for murder and lived for years outside the U.S. under Finkel's name.

Hill starred in Quentin Tarantino's "Django Unchained," which grossed more than \$425 million worldwide and was nominated for a Best Picture Academy Award. He also starred in Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg's "This Is the End" starring opposite Rogen, Franco and Jay Baruchel; and Akiva Schaffer's "The Watch," opposite Ben Stiller and Vince Vaughn.

It was Hill's breakout role in the acclaimed 2007 hit "Superbad," starring opposite

Michael Cera, that put him on the comedy map. Since then, Hill has become a mainstay of the Judd Apatow clan, starring in the Apatow-produced summer comedies “Get Him to the Greek” in 2010, “Funny People” in 2009, and “Forgetting Sarah Marshall” in 2008. Jonah’s first appearance under Apatow Productions was in “The 40-Year-Old Virgin” in 2005.

Hill departed the comedy world and surprised audiences with his starring role as the title character in the independent feature “Cyrus,” directed and written by Jay and Mark Duplass. The film premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival to glowing reviews and was nominated as Best Comedy Movie by the Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards.

Hill’s other film work includes lending his voice for the DreamWorks Animation films “Megamind” and “How to Train Your Dragon,” which respectively grossed \$322 million and \$495 million globally. Hill also voiced the character Tommy in “Dr. Seuss’ Horton Hears a Who!” which took in \$297 million worldwide.

In 2011, Hill co-wrote, created and voiced the title character in the critically acclaimed animated series “Allen Gregory” for Fox Television. He also directed the Sara Bareilles music video, “Gonna Get Over You” in 2011.

Hill continues to confirm his place among a new generation of multi-hyphenated writer-actors. He is currently co-writing “The Adventurer’s Handbook,” in which he will also co-star alongside Jason Segel. He is writing “Pure Imagination,” an Apatow-produced comedy on which he will serve as executive producer. Hill was an associate producer on the Sacha Baron Cohen comedy “Bruno” and an executive producer on “The Sitter.”

Hill began his career performing one-scene plays that he wrote and performed at the gritty Black and White bar in New York City. His first feature role was in David O. Russell’s “I Heart Huckabees” with Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin.

CHRISTOPHER MINTZ-PLASSE (Fishlegs) has been one of the most sought-after young comedic actors in Hollywood since his unforgettable 2007 film debut as “Fogell” a.k.a. “McLovin” opposite Michael Cera and Jonah Hill in the acclaimed teen hit “Superbad.” In 2008, Mintz-Plasse was featured in the hit comedy “Role

Models,” opposite Paul Rudd, Seann William Scott and Ken Jeong. In 2009, Mintz-Plasse was reunited with Cera in Harold Ramis’ “Year One.”

Mintz-Plasse starred as Red Mist in the teen superhero film “Kick-Ass” in 2010. The film also starred Nicolas Cage, Chloë Grace Moretz and Clark Duke. That same year, Mintz-Plasse voiced Fishlegs in DreamWorks Animation’s “How to Train Your Dragon.” In 2011, he appeared in the remake of “Fright Night” opposite Anton Yelchin, Colin Farrell and David Tennant; and in 2012, he lent his voice to the animated character Alvin in “ParaNorman.”

Last year, Mintz-Plasse was seen in “The To Do List,” which featured an all-star comedy cast including Donald Glover, Aubrey Plaza and Andy Samberg, and “Kick-Ass 2,” opposite Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Moretz. Mintz-Plasse can currently be seen in “Neighbors,” opposite Seth Rogen and Zac Efron. Next up is CBS Films’ “Get a Job,” in which he stars opposite Anna Kendrick and Bryan Cranston.

T.J. MILLER (Tuffnut) was named one of *Variety*’s Top 10 “Comics to Watch” as well as one of *Entertainment Weekly*’s “Next Big Things in Comedy.” Miller has wrapped production on Universal’s “Search Party,” in which he will star opposite Adam Pally and Thomas Middleditch this fall. He will also be seen this June in “Transformers: Age of Extinction,” directed by Michael Bay and opposite Marc Wahlberg. On TV, Miller stars in the new HBO comedy series “Silicon Valley,” which was created by Mike Judge. Miller also has a popular podcast on nerdist.com, “Cashing in with T.J. Miller,” which turns the traditional interview comedy podcast on its head, as it’s an interview show, but host Cash Levy only has one guest: T.J. Miller.

Miller has been seen in a number of major studio films including the Focus Features comedy “Seeking a Friend for the End of the World,” opposite Steve Carrell, and “Rock of Ages,” opposite Tom Cruise. He co-starred in The Weinstein Company’s “Our Idiot Brother” opposite a cast led by Paul Rudd. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2011 to rave reviews and critics singled out Miller for his scene-stealing moments. He also starred as Ranger Jones in the Warner Bros. live-action/CGI feature film “Yogi Bear.” Miller appeared opposite Jack Black in the 20th Century Fox live action 3D film “Gulliver’s Travels” and in Tony Scott’s dramatic

thriller “Unstoppable” opposite of Denzel Washington. Additionally, he co-starred in the Paramount comedy, “She’s Out of My League,” and voiced the character Tuffnut in DreamWorks Animation’s “How to Train Your Dragon.” Miller also had a role in Universal’s “Get Him to the Greek.” Other TV credits include the Fox comedy series “The Goodwin Games” and hosting Comedy Central’s “Mash-Up.”

Miller hails from Denver, Colorado, and toured with Second City for almost two years.

KRISTEN WIIG (Ruffnut) is paving her own path in the industry as a writer and actor. Most known for her work on “Saturday Night Live” and “Bridesmaids”, Wiig is making the transition into drama while continuing to make comedic films and work in television. In 2012, Time magazine honored Wiig in their esteemed Time 100 issue. In 2009, Entertainment Weekly acknowledged Wiig as one of the top 15 great performers for her work on “Saturday Night Live”. Wiig has been nominated for four Emmy Awards and received her first Oscar nomination for writing “Bridesmaids.”

Kristen Wiig can currently be seen in the IFC film “Hateship Loveship,” starring alongside Guy Pearce, Nick Nolte, and Hailee Steinfeld. Based on the short by the Nobel Prize winning Canadian author Alice Munroe, “Hateship Loveship,” directed by Liza Johnson, is currently in theatres. In a dramatic turn, Wiig portrays Johanna, a shy, introverted housekeeper hired to care for Mr. McCauley (Nolte) and his granddaughter Sabitha (Steinfeld.) Through the act of a mean spirited practical joke, Johanna is forced to deal with the repercussions of falling in love with an illusion.

Wiig will next be seen in “The Skeleton Twins,” directed by Craig Johnson, starring opposite Bill Hader and Luke Wilson. “The Skeleton Twins” tells the story of twins Maggie (Wiig) and Milo (Hader) who cheat death on the same day, prompting them to reunite after ten years. The film screened at the Sundance Film Festival this January to rave reviews. Roadside Attractions and Lionsgate will release the film on September 19th.

Earlier this year, Wiig starred in the epic IFC television miniseries spoof, “The Spoils Of Babylon,” written and directed by Matt Piedmont and Andrew Steele and executive produced by Will Ferrell. Wiig, starring opposite Tobey Maguire and Tim

Robbins portrayed Cynthia Morehouse, the daughter of the rich and successful patriarch, Jonas Morehouse (Robbins.) Cynthia falls madly in love with her adopted brother, Devon (Maguire.) The six-episode miniseries takes you through two decades of this unlikely family's trials and tribulations. "The Spoils Of Babylon" was one of the highest-rated debuts ever on IFC television.

Wiig recently completed production on three independent films, "Welcome To Me, Nasty Baby" and "The Diary Of A Teenage Girl." "Welcome To Me," directed by Shira Piven (Fully Loaded) is produced by Gary Sanchez productions. The film tells the story of Alice (Wiig) who suffers from borderline personality disorder and wins the lottery. Alice chooses to spend her newfound fortune on a talk show about herself. Starring alongside Wes Bentley, Linda Cardellini and Joan Cusack, "Welcome To Me" is a dramatic look into the life of a woman who desperately wants to be famous, even if it means alienating her friends and family along the way. "Nasty Baby," "written and directed by Sebastian Silva (Crystal Fairy,) chronicles the lives of a gay couple (Silva and Tunde Adebimpe) who embark on a failed mission to have a baby with the help of their best friend, Polly (Wiig.) "The Diary Of A Teenage Girl," directed by Marielle Heller is based on the coming of age graphic novel written and illustrated by Phoebe Gloeckner. The story follows a teenage artist living in 1970's San Francisco who enters into an affair with her mother's (Wiig) boyfriend. Wiig stars opposite Alexander Skarsgard and Vanessa Ross.

Last Christmas, Wiig starred in the critically acclaimed Twentieth Century Fox drama "The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty" opposite Ben Stiller, who also produced and directed the film. Based on the 1939 short story by James Thurber, "Walter Mitty" is a breathtaking look into the world of fantasy seen through the eyes of Walter (Stiller) and his daydream sequences. Wiig portrays Cheryl Melhoff, Walter's co-worker at Time Magazine who inspires him to take action into his own hands when their jobs are threatened. Also in December 2013, Wiig starred in the box office smash, "Anchorman Two, The Legend Continues" portraying Chani Lastname, opposite Steve Carell. Wiig also voiced the character of SexyKitten in the Oscar nominated film, "Her." Last summer, Wiig voiced the character of Lucy in the Oscar nominated box office smash, "Despicable Me 2" starring opposite Steve Carell.

In 2012, Wiig finished her seventh and final season as a cast member on NBC's revered show "Saturday Night Live." During her time on SNL, Wiig received four Emmy nominations for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series, playing such memorable characters as the excitable Target Lady, Lawrence Welk singer Doonese, the irritating one-upper Penelope, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Suze Orman. In 2013, Wiig was nominated for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series for her return as a host on the show earlier that year.

In 2011, Wiig starred in the critically acclaimed breakout film "Bridesmaids," which she co-wrote with Annie Mumolo, and for which they were nominated for an Academy Award, Writers Guild of America Award, and BAFTA Award for Best Original Screenplay. Directed by Paul Feig and produced by Wiig and Judd Apatow, "Bridesmaids" is Apatow's highest-grossing production and is the top R-rated female comedy of all time. Wiig was also nominated for a Golden Globe for Lead Actress in a Comedy or Musical, along with the film being nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical. The film also received a SAG nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

Other film credits include Apatow's smash-hit comedy "Knocked Up"; "Girl Most Likely," directed by Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini, "Friends With Kids," written and directed by Jennifer Westfeldt; Greg Mottola's "Paul" and "Adventureland," "All Good Things" with Ryan Gosling and Kirsten Dunst; "MacGruber" alongside Will Forte; Mike Judge's "Extract" with Jason Bateman and Ben Affleck, Drew Barrymore's "Whip It," David Keopp's "Ghost Town" and Jake Kasdan's "Walk Hard," another Apatow-produced film in which she starred opposite John C. Reilly. Voice acting credits include the Cartoon Network's "The Looney Toons Show," nominated for three Emmy awards, Fox's The Simpson's and the animated feature films "Despicable Me (1 and 2)" and "How To Train Your Dragon (1 and 2.)" Wiig has also guest-starred in the NBC television series "30 Rock," HBO's "Bored To Death" and "Flight of the Conchords," Netflix's "Arrested Development," Comedy Central's "Drunk History" and IFC's "Portlandia."

A native of Rochester, New York, Wiig began her career as a main company member of the Los Angeles-based improvisational and sketch comedy group, The Groundlings. Wiig currently resides in New York City.

DJIMON HOUNSOU (Drago Blutvist) is a two-time Academy Award-nominated actor for his work in Ed Zwick's "Blood Diamond" and Jim Sheridan's "In America."

Hounsou is currently shooting "Fast & Furious 7" for Universal Pictures and director James Wann and the independent thriller "Air," directed by Christian Cantamessa and co-starring Norman Reedus. Later this year, he will be seen as Korath the Pursuer in Disney's "Guardians of the Galaxy," James Gunn's adaptation of the Marvel Comic, and in Mark Neveldine's thriller "The Vatican Tapes" for Lionsgate. Next year, Hounsou also appears in the Universal fantasy adventure film "Seventh Son" with Jeff Bridges and Julianne Moore.

Born in Benin, West Africa, Hounsou moved to Paris at the age of 13 to pursue a Western education. As an adult, he was discovered by fashion designer Thierry Mugler and subsequently modeled for and appeared in several iconic music videos for legendary photographer Herb Ritts and director David Fincher. Small film roles followed before Hounsou's breakthrough performance as Cinque, the African who leads an uprising to regain his freedom in Steven Spielberg's 1997 film "Amistad." Hounsou earned a Golden Globe nomination and a NAACP Image Award for the part. He later shared a SAG Award nomination as a member of the cast of Ridley Scott's Academy Award-winning Best Picture "Gladiator."

In 2006, Hounsou received an NAACP Image Award, a National Board of Review citation and a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination for his role as a forced laborer who discovers a rare gem in "Blood Diamond," starring Leonardo DiCaprio. For his performance as an artist afflicted with AIDS in the film "In America," Hounsou garnered an Independent Spirit Award, was named 2004's ShoWest Supporting Actor of the Year and shared an ensemble SAG Award nomination.

More recently, Hounsou starred opposite Helen Mirren, Russell Brand, Alfred Molina and Chris Cooper in Julie Taymor's screen adaptation of "The Tempest." His film

credits also include “Baggage Claim,” Michael Bay's “The Island” with Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson, “Eragon,” “Constantine” with Keanu Reeves, Jan de Bont’s “Lara Croft, Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life” with Angelina Jolie and Shekhar Kapur’s “The Four Feathers” with the Kate Hudson and the late Heath Ledger.

For television, Hounsou voiced the Black Panther in the BET animated series based on the Marvel Comic. He also starred as a refugee seeking asylum in a memorable six-episode arc on “ER” and played a recurring role in the series “Alias,” starring Jennifer Garner.

Hounsou is also producing and developing a slate of feature films and documentaries via his company Fanaticus Entertainment.

As a celebrity ambassador for Oxfam, Hounsou advocates for the poor, aid to Africa, farmers affected by unfair international trade rules and other social justice issues. In 2009, he opened the United Nations General Assembly in New York with a compelling speech about the impact of climate change on developing nations. Hounsou also appeared before the U.S. Senate on behalf of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and participated in a hearing and summit for the International Arms Ban Treaty.

Born in Worcester, England, **KIT HARINGTON** (Eret, Son of Eret) studied drama and theater at the Central School of Speech & Drama, a constituent of the University of London. Even before graduating in 2008, he won the lead role of Albert in the Royal National Theatre's London production of the smash hit *War Horse*. The production transferred to London's West End at the New London Theatre, and he stayed with the role until 2009 after which he appeared in *Posh*, by Laura Wade, at the Royal Court Theatre in London.

Harington now stars as Jon Snow, the bastard son of Eddard Stark, in HBO’s highly acclaimed series “Game of Thrones,” which has returned for a fourth season.

Harington has transitioned into the feature film world with his first leading role as Milo, a slave turned gladiator, in Paul W.S. Anderson's period disaster film, “Pompeii.”

Harington’s upcoming feature film projects include the World War I drama, “Testament of Youth” and the big-screen adaptation of the hit British spy series, “Spooks: The Greater Good.”

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Canadian-born **DEAN DEBLOIS** (Writer, Director, Executive Producer) is equally at home in the worlds of live-action and animation filmmaking. Although already an accomplished animator and writer at the time the film became a worldwide hit, he is perhaps best known for writing and directing Walt Disney Animation Studios' "Lilo & Stitch" with Chris Sanders. DeBlois later stepped behind the live-action camera to direct the indie critical darling "Heima," which documents alternative/post-rock band Sigur Rós' series of free, unannounced concerts performed in their home country of Iceland. He also previously served as head of story on the Disney hit "Mulan."

DeBlois once again collaborated with Chris Sanders to write and direct the 3D animated fantasy adventure comedy "How to Train Your Dragon" for DreamWorks Animation. In addition, DeBlois is set to write, produce and direct the live-action comedy "The Banshee and Finn Magee." He also has several live-action projects in development at Universal Studios and The Walt Disney Studio, on which he is serving as writer, director and producer.

DeBlois started his career at Hinton Animation Studios and worked as animator on the television series "The Raccoons." He next joined Don Bluth's Sullivan Bluth Studios in Ireland and worked on the animated features "Thumbelina" and "A Troll in Central Park."

BONNIE ARNOLD (Producer) is an accomplished filmmaker in nearly every genre. She produced the Sony Pictures Classics release "The Last Station," which received two Academy Award nominations as well as award nominations from the Screen Actors Guild, the Golden Globes and the Independent Spirit Awards, including a nomination for Best Picture. For DreamWorks Animation she produced the 2010 smash hit "How to Train Your Dragon" and 2006's "Over the Hedge"; for Disney she produced the blockbuster "Tarzan" and the history-making film "Toy Story," which combined have earned more than \$1 billion in worldwide box office revenue.

Arnold's previous production credits include a list of titles, among them the Oscar-winning epic Western "Dances With Wolves" and the hit comedy "The Addams Family."

Arnold's interest in journalism led to her first entertainment industry assignment as the unit publicist for American Playhouse's debut production, "King of America." Following that, she worked with several independent filmmakers via the American Film Institute and the Atlanta Independent Film and Video Festival. Her work in promoting independent films influenced her decision to pursue a career as a producer.

Arnold is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as well as the Producers Guild of America.

TOM OWENS (Head of Story)

TBD

SIMON OTTO (HEAD OF CHARACTER ANIMATION) has been a key artist at DreamWorks Animation for nearly 17 years and most recently worked as the head of character animation for the studio's Academy Award-nominated film "How to Train Your Dragon" in 2010.

Before that, Otto worked as an animator on DreamWorks Animation's "Bee Movie," and as a supervising animator on the DreamWorks Animation/ Aardman Animations computer-animated comedy "Flushed Away." He was a character designer on 2006's "Over the Hedge," and served as an animator on the studio's Academy Award-nominated comedy "Shark Tale." Prior to that, he worked as a supervising animator on the title character of Sinbad, as well as his crewmates Jin and Li, on the studio's animated adventure tale "Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas." Additionally, he worked as an animator on the lead character in the Academy Award-nominated adventure "Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron," and also supervised the animation of the eagle in that film. Otto began his career at DreamWorks Animation in 1997, as an animator on the epic "The Prince of Egypt" as well as the comedy adventure "The Road to El Dorado."

Prior to joining DreamWorks, Otto studied animation at the renowned Les Gobelins in Paris, France, and received additional training during an internship with Walt

Disney Feature Animation in Paris. He began his career in the arts industry as a snow sculpture artist and news cartoonist. Otto is a native of Switzerland.

GIL ZIMMERMAN (Head of Layout) previously served as Head of Layout on the Academy Award-nominated DreamWorks Animation films “Puss in Boots,” “How to Train Your Dragon” and “Shark Tale.” He also worked in the same capacity on the studio’s box-office hit “Over the Hedge.”

Before joining DreamWorks Animation, Zimmerman worked on a number of notable Disney titles, among them the Academy Award-nominated “Bolt,” “Treasure Planet” and “Tarzan.” He also worked on the live-action horror-comedy “Demon Slayer.”

DAVE WALVOORD (Visual Effects Supervisor) most recently served as Head of Lighting on DreamWorks Animation’s “Kung Fu Panda 2” as well as a CG supervisor on the Academy Award-nominated “Kung Fu Panda,” “Over the Hedge” and “Shark Tale.”

Prior to joining DreamWorks Animation, Walvoord worked at Blue Sky Studios as a supervising technical director on the animated feature “Ice Age” and as a Digital Effects supervisor on the Academy Award-winning short “Bunny.” In the live-action realm, he has contributed his talents to “Fight Club” and “Star Trek: Insurrection.”

JOHN CARR (Supervising Editor)

TBD

PIERRE OLIVIER VINCENT (Production Designer) served as the art director of the Academy Award-nominated “How to Train Your Dragon.”

Prior to his work on that film, Vincent worked on the computer-animated DreamWorks Animation/Aardman Animations comedy, “Flushed Away.” Vincent joined the studio as a layout artist on “The Road to El Dorado” and went on to character design for the animated adventure “Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron.” He also served as lead sequence design artist on “Shark Tale.”

Prior to joining DreamWorks Animation, Vincent worked as a visual development artist at Gaumont Multimedia on various television animation projects.

PABLO VALLE (Head of Lighting)

TBD

ROGER A. DEAKINS (Director of Photography) is an eleven-time Academy Award® nominee for Best Cinematography, for his work on Joel and Ethan Coen's "Fargo," "The Man Who Wasn't There," "O Brother, Where Art Thou?," "No Country for Old Men" and "True Grit"; Frank Darabont's "The Shawshank Redemption"; Martin Scorsese's "Kundun"; Andrew Dominik's "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford"; Stephen Daldry's "The Reader," which he shared with Chris Menges; Sam Mendes' "Skyfall." and, most recently, Denis Villeneuve's "Prisoners"

Deakins has been nominated twelve times for the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) Award and won three, for "Shawshank Redemption," "The Man who Wasn't There" and "Skyfall." Cited was his work on the ten features listed above, as well as on Sam Mendes' "Revolutionary Road." He received the ASC's Lifetime Achievement award in 2011.

Nominated seven times for the BAFTA Award, Deakins has won three: for "The Man Who Wasn't There," "No Country for Old Men" and "True Grit." His work has also garnered him eight nominations for the British Society of Cinematographers (BSC) Best Cinematography Award, with five wins, and two Independent Spirit Awards, with an additional nomination. In 2008, he received the National Board of Review's Career Achievement Award, and in 2013, Deakins was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the UK, the only cinematographer to have been given this high honor.

Deakins was born in Torquay, Devon, England, attended art college and the National Film School, and began his career by working in the medium of still photography. Many of his first cinematographic projects were documentaries, often shooting in Africa. He also covered the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race, which required him to work for more than nine months as a crew member while filming and

directing the documentary. He then moved on to feature film cinematography, starting in England and later in the United States.

Deakins' numerous additional credits include such diverse films as "Sid & Nancy," "Barton Fink," "The Hudsucker Proxy," "Courage Under Fire," "The Big Lebowski," "A Beautiful Mind" and "Doubt." He has also served as visual consultant for several animated features, including "WALL•E," "How to Train Your Dragon," "Rango," "The Guardians" and "The Croods," and the most recent, "How to Train Your Dragon 2."