



EvanALMIGHTY

Production Information

When Universal Pictures' comedy *Bruce Almighty* arrived at the summer box office on Memorial Day weekend in 2003, it blew audiences and box-office records away. Director/Producer TOM SHADYAC had crafted yet another film that spoke to moviegoers' desires to suspend disbelief and spend time following extraordinarily funny people who were put in outlandish circumstances.

In the '90s, the talented filmmaker had made a household name out of *Bruce Almighty*'s star, comedian Jim Carrey, with such comedy classics as *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* and *Liar Liar*. Shadyac had also, along with comic actor Eddie Murphy, reintroduced a new generation to a lovable, unlucky college teacher known as Sherman Klump, a.k.a. *The Nutty Professor*.

Bruce Almighty would prove just as much a comic springboard for another man. The film was an explosive hit, earning almost one-half billion dollars in revenue at the global box office. In addition to the praise Carrey received, the world was quite enchanted by a polished, preening newscaster by the name of Evan Baxter. The chief rival of Jim Carrey's title character, Evan and his omnipresent smugness were rewarded with an interesting affliction by the all-powerful Bruce—the ability to speak only in a torrent of babble while Evan was on the air.

And so was launched the film career of actor STEVE CARELL (*The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, television's *The Office*). The comedian had previously found success on sitcoms and as a regular correspondent on Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*. Carell's scene-stealing performance led to parts in *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy* and as the lead of

NBC's hit comedy *The Office*. But it was the Second City alum's decision to portray a shy, romantically curious electronics store employee named Andy Stitzer in 2005's *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* that would officially put Carell on the star map.

Four years after his Buffalo reporter had audiences doubling over, Carell returns to the role, playing the next one anointed by God to accomplish a complicated and hilarious mission in Shadyac's latest comedy: *Evan Almighty*.

MORGAN FREEMAN (*Million Dollar Baby*, *Bruce Almighty*)—bringing his unique brand of sly comedy and quiet wisdom—also returns to the franchise as God, coming to intercede in the life of the Baxters with a command for the husband and father that will shake the very foundation upon which Evan stands.

Newly elected to Congress, Evan has left Buffalo behind to shepherd his wife, Joan (LAUREN GRAHAM, television's *Gilmore Girls*, *Bad Santa*), and three sons—Dylan (JOHNNY SIMMONS, *My Ambition*), Jordan (GRAHAM PHILLIPS, *The Ten Commandments: The Musical*) and Ryan (JIMMY BENNETT, *Firewall*)—to the suburban town of Huntsville, Virginia, where they will begin the next chapter of their lives.

As the Baxters become ensconced in their enormous home nestled within the pristine hills of northern Virginia, Evan prepares for his first day on the job as the freshman congressman from New York. The casually spiritual politico offers a prayer to God to “change the world.” Little does he know that The Man upstairs already has big plans for him.

Invited to co-sponsor a high-profile bill by one of the House's most powerful members, Congressman Long (JOHN GOODMAN, *The Big Lebowski*, television's *Roseanne*), Evan is sure that his prayers have been answered. His crackerjack team of aides—assistant Rita (WANDA SYKES, *Monster-in-Law*, *Clerks II*), chief of staff Marty (JOHN MICHAEL HIGGINS, *The Break-Up*, *Fun With Dick and Jane*) and intern Eugene (JONAH HILL, *Accepted*, *Knocked Up*)—couldn't be more thrilled at this opportunity, although Evan realizes it will take him away from his oft-neglected family. However conflicted, power is important to Evan, and so he accepts the offer.

Almost immediately, odd things begin occurring, and the self-centered representative's life becomes officially turned upside down. From mysterious deliveries

of ancient tools and large parcels of wood to curious stalkings by birds of every feather, Evan is certain he's losing it. His certain descent into comic confusion culminates with a visit from a tall stranger claiming to be God who has one simple, albeit ludicrous, command: Evan must build an ark to prepare his friends and family for a mighty flood.

With the help of his three boys and armed with a first edition "Ark Building for Dummies," Evan begrudgingly begins to build the ship, not knowing what's in store once it's completed. To his utter dismay, animals of all shapes and sizes begin appearing two by two, until a menagerie of God's creatures inhabits the wooded forest surrounding his home.

That's not the only thing changing. Evan's normally manicured appearance heads south as his befuddled wife observes him transforming into a barely recognizable bearded, longhaired, robe-wearing weirdo. No amount of trimming, tussling or trickery keeps the beard from growing...and growing.

Despite being on the verge of losing everything he previously held precious, Evan continues to build for the flood that will either destroy the land or prove to be a figment of his imagination. And while all around him shake their heads and stare, one man must discover whether he is having an extraordinary midlife crisis or is truly onto something of biblical proportions...

In addition to his duties as director, Tom Shadyac produces *Evan Almighty* with production partner MICHAEL BOSTICK (*Bruce Almighty*, *Accepted*) for Shady Acres Entertainment. GARY BARBER (*The Pacifier*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) and ROGER BIRNBAUM (*Shanghai Knights*, *Rush Hour 3*) produce for Spyglass Entertainment, along with NEAL H. MORITZ (*Click*, *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*). ILONA HERZBERG, DAVE PHILLIPS, MATT LUBER, TOM HANKS and GARY GOETZMAN serve as executive producers.

The film's behind-the-scenes team includes cinematographer IAN BAKER (*It Runs in the Family*) and *Bruce Almighty* alumni including costume designer JUDY RUSKIN HOWELL (*Guess Who*), production designer LINDA DESCENNA (*Yours, Mine and Ours*) and film editor SCOTT HILL (*Monster-in-Law*). Longtime Shadyac collaborator STEVE OEDEKERK (*The Nutty Professor*, *Bruce Almighty*) created the screenplay from a story by Oedekerk and JOEL COHEN (*Garfield*) & ALEC

SOKOLOW (*Cheaper by the Dozen*) and based on characters created by STEVE KOREN (*Bruce Almighty*) & MARK O'KEEFE (*Bruce Almighty*).

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

And Bruce beget Evan:

The Next Chapter in the *Almighty* Series

*“Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark,
and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.”*

—Genesis 6:14

Four years after the release of *Bruce Almighty*, Tom Shadyac remained intrigued by the spiritual. Though having declined offers to sequels before, he very much wanted to return to familiar territory with this next installment in the *Almighty* series. “We always thought it would be fun to make different chapters in a God series rather than just make a straight sequel to *Bruce Almighty*,” remarks the director. “It always felt more fruitful, creatively, to spin off different characters.”

With *Evan Almighty*, the director delivers the uproarious laughs he provided in films from *Patch Adams* to *The Nutty Professor*—comedies interwoven with morality tales, done in Shadyac’s inimitable way. Whereas *Bruce Almighty* debated the question of where true power comes from, this episode of divine intervention delves into what can be forsaken in the pursuit of happiness, and the humor that lies in that conundrum.

The search for an actor with the comic versatility to step into the lead role proved a bit easier than any of the filmmakers expected. A 40-year-old virgin who just so happened to be an alum of *Bruce Almighty* answered their prayers.

Steve Carell’s small but standout performance as Bruce Nolan’s nemesis, the preening, über-confident newscaster who is reduced to a babbling on-air mess, was the perfect segue for the next chapter. Carell’s success on *Virgin* and his popular, Golden Globe-winning performance as manager Michael Scott on NBC’s television series *The*

Office had recently further showcased his comedic talents. The filmmakers were impressed and excited about the possibilities.

Recalls Shadyac, “Steve did such an amazing job in *Bruce Almighty*; everybody remembers his scenes. He delivered some of the funniest stuff in the movie. We thought, ‘Why not take that character and spin him off into a different film?’ We already had the basic idea where God would come to someone and say, ‘Build an ark.’”

Story-wise, the filmmakers envisioned their lead character as a polished professional brimming with ambition and self-importance, yet imbued with a genuine desire to make a difference in the world. It was a premise that Shadyac and the producers realized could fit seamlessly with the character of Evan Baxter from *Bruce*.

“For this film, we’ve taken the American dream to its nth degree, which has nightmarish consequences,” Shadyac comments. “Evan desires the biggest house, biggest car, biggest job—the biggest everything—but he doesn’t understand the cost of all that. He ultimately discovers that everything he does has a cost.”

Producer Michael Bostick notes, “There was something about the characters that Steve created that we thought would be great fun for God to come into Evan’s life. And it just so happened that not only did it work for story purposes, but it was a blessing that Steve’s star was on the rise as we were developing this movie.”

For Carell, the opportunity to reprise the arrogantly funny Evan Baxter was one he couldn’t overlook. The actor was interested in expanding his role because of the direction in which Evan, a character with relatively little screen time in the last film, could go.

He explains: “I think this story is more of Evan’s journey to find out who he really is, as opposed to who he’s been posturing to be. His campaign promises were about changing the world, but they’re empty. And along the way, he finds that a platitude is one thing, but an actual effort and a self-awareness is something that is only gained through pain, suffering or introspection.”

With the title character cast, it was time to check in with the Academy Award®-winning actor who could be the only one to bring God back to the big screen: Morgan Freeman.

In 2002, when the filmmakers initially reviewed their casting options for the role of God, Shadyac maintained that Morgan Freeman was the only actor he could see in the role. Securing his return as The Almighty was paramount to the creators when considering any type of sequel. In their minds, there was no one else to don the whites and anoint a new messenger with a crucial and hilarious message. The director and producers agreed that Freeman—complete with his elegant dignity and infamously wicked sense of humor—was the only option.

Producer Bostick succinctly states: “There’s only one God, and there’s only one Morgan. He absolutely has that awesome, commanding presence.”

For Freeman, coming back to his role had everything to do with working with the director. “Tom so enjoys what he does, and people who enjoy their work primarily do things well. He is one of those people that I have an easy rapport with.”

The acclaimed actor is the first to admit that his niche is not always comedy. “Me, I’m not a comedian. Write it down, and I’ll say it,” he says with a chuckle. His philosophy is simple: “Learn the lines and be as honest as you can. If the material is funny and the timing is right, it will be funny.”

Working with the legend would prove a bit intimidating to the cast and crew, but Freeman instantly put them at ease, and proved to be quite the joker on set. Recalls Carell, “Morgan just wanted to be accepted like everyone else, and not with any sort of greater reverence. There’s such a calm to him and a confidence without arrogance.”

Armed with the triple threat of Carell, Freeman and another script written by Steve Oedekerk—a frequent collaborator of Shadyac’s on such comedy classics as *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* and *Liar Liar*—Shadyac and the producers were on track to recreate the magic that made *Bruce Almighty* a worldwide box-office hit. Now, they just needed an arkload of animals.

Lions and Tigers and Alpacas...

Live Animals of *Evan Almighty*

According to the Book of Genesis, God’s creatures instinctually gravitated toward Noah two by two. The filmmakers on the set of *Evan Almighty*, however, had to look to

veteran animal coordinator Mark Forbes to oversee the selection, care and training for well over 177 different species brought in from all over the country. From his first meeting with the team, Forbes knew he needed to surpass his past efforts on films such as *Dr. Dolittle 2* to fill the prow of Evan's mighty ship.

"It's Noah's Ark. You have to have lots of animals," Shadyac plainly states. "We have the most animals ever shot practically in a movie in show business history. And every animal you'll see in *Evan* looks seamless and very integrated, as each animal was placed into each shot individually."

Of the head trainer who helped work this magic, the director notes, "Mark Forbes is a miracle worker, and we could not have done this movie without him. He had to work with each animal individually, since each animal specifically responds to different things. It's very precise."

Forbes unveiled a veritable zoo that included lions, tigers, pelicans, leopards, giraffes, elephants, Kodiak bears, baboons, zebras, reindeer, camels, raccoons, cats, porcupines, dogs, buffalos and snakes, to name but a few. The menagerie surrounding them on a daily basis enamored cast and crew alike. Notably, animals were supervised by AHA representatives whenever filming of them occurred.

Of utmost importance to the filmmakers was to keep to the theme of Noah's biblical tale. Shadyac wanted the animals to help build the ark with the natural tools God gave them (e.g., an elephant would "hand" Evan a piece of timber with her trunk or a crow would bring Evan a nail in his claw). The filmmakers didn't want common gags, such as talking chimps and parrots rolling their eyes, to color the production.

Carell's on-screen wife, Lauren Graham, remembers the surreal aspects of filming with her co-stars: "People will be amazed at how much the animals really could do. They're incredibly trained. You can say specific things to the elephants and they understand. 'Rosie, move your right foot. Dixie, back up to the ark.' You just strangely get used to being close to these incredible animals and interacting with them."

But it was Carell who ended up spending the most time with his furry or feathered, two- or four-legged cast members. "I probably had a harder time remembering my lines than they did doing anything they had to do," laughs the actor.

Though amazed at the tasks that the animals were able to accomplish as they helped to build the ark, the actor had strong feelings about several of them. “The elephants, actually, were very soulful, as were the giraffes,” Carell offers. “There was an intelligence that you could see in their eyes. But the alpacas and camels were fairly disgusting. It’s literally an ungodly smell that comes from them.”

All of the animal training began weeks, and sometimes months, prior to their respective arrivals on set. Acclimating and training them for specific behaviors—especially for tasks that were consistent with their natures—was the norm on *Evan Almighty* and took the majority of the planning and shoot time for the filmmakers, including cinematographer Ian Baker. It also took quite a bit of nurturing from Forbes.

With so many different animals working so closely together, Forbes and his team of trainers made sure that exact safety precautions were taken during filming, particularly when it came to predator-prey issues with so many different species on hand. “I couldn’t put a wolf next to a sheep and have a nice, calm set,” he states. “Some of these animals are food to the others. So, we would film them separately to ensure it’s safe for the animals and safe for the crew.

“We would film the owls, and then we would put up a blue screen behind them,” Forbes continues. “And then we would film the pigeons flying in, and then we’d shoot the doves, and then the eagles flying in.” Often, domestic animals would take the place of wild ones for purposes of lighting. Two horses, for example, would stand in for larger, more dangerous animals such as rhinoceroses, which would later be shot against a blue screen and mapped in by the visual effects team—who provided many CG birds and mammals to complement the insane zoo—and compiled by film editor Scott Hill.

Director Shadyac was up to the challenge, but he wasn’t quite sure what he had gotten himself into by directing animals. “Seriously, we’re composing shots with these animals, and you’re asking a 1,000-pound bear, ‘Two inches to the left, Mr. Bear. Could you hit your mark?’ It’s a bear, after all.”

Animal harmony came at a minor cost to the human actors’ egos. Of Carell, Forbes laughs: “What a trooper. The very first day that we’re shooting with animals, we have him covered in pigeons and doves and blue jays. And he’s got bird poop all over

him, and he's got all these birds fluttering around, landing on his head. Steve's been wonderful with them."

God's Funniest Mammals:
Supporting Cast of the Comedy

The filmmakers set out to bring together a well-rounded ensemble of equally funny standout performers to complement their principal human and animal cast. Actress Lauren Graham, known for her role on the popular television series *Gilmore Girls*, joined the cast as Evan's patient wife on the ark, Joan (yes, pun intended). The filmmakers were thrilled when the performer, whom Shadyac considers "one of the most gifted comediennes on television today," agreed to be the better half of the Baxter couple.

Graham was interested in taking on the part, despite the hectic schedule of her shoot with her CW series. "I thought Joan shouldn't be a traditional kind of congressman's wife," she notes. "This is all new to them. The Baxters are just moving, leaving their lives to go follow Evan as he pursues this new career. I wanted her to be softer, not stereotypical."

Graham, who played opposite Carell for the majority of her scenes in the shoot, enjoyed watching the funnyman work his magic. "I'm the straight man to Steve's imagination, and that's been fun. He's smart and spontaneous, which keeps you engaged and on your game."

Known for his ability to elicit unforgettable comic performances from his cast, Shadyac encouraged his actors, particularly Carell, John Michael Higgins, Wanda Sykes and Jonah Hill—all who have strong improvisational backgrounds—to attempt new approaches to the material.

John Michael Higgins, cast as Marty, Evan's harried congressional chief of staff, looked forward to working with a story that crossed several genres—biblical epic, family comedy and special effects extravaganza. "*Evan Almighty* is a wonderful mix of genres, but with any good comedy, you need a good story," the actor notes. "The biblical telling of Noah's story is a fantastic one. It's got everything you want—it's human, it's epic and

it has a moral. We're only using a tiny piece of it and have obviously contemporized it. But it retains the heart of it all."

Though optimistic about the project, native Virginian Wanda Sykes was not thrilled about the upcoming weather battle. The actor knew that summers in her home state would be hot and humid. No matter how much she cared for the character of Rita, Evan's no-nonsense assistant, she needed further convincing.

Sykes met with the director and was immediately taken by his enthusiasm for the project. "He's just a cool dude," she says. "You can just see it in his eyes, that crazy passion for what he does. He was so excited about the film. I walked out of the meeting thinking 'Yeah! Let's get on the ark; this is going to be fun.'"

The process and the end result were just that. Adding Sykes to the mix of gifted actors provided a backdrop ripe for good comedy. Shadyac comments, "I love these moments of creativity and spontaneity. I've watched Wanda get into her head for a second, and then come back with this gem."

Another Shadyac alumnus, Jonah Hill, worked with the filmmaker on the last film Shadyac produced, the comedy *Accepted*. Hill had stolen scenes in both that and *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, and he reunited with Carell for *Evan*, this time as the eager-to-please intern Eugene. Like the rest of the cast, Hill was overwhelmed when he saw the ark, noting, "It's the biggest thing I've ever seen, complete with elephants and giraffes and so many animals. I've never seen anything that massive before. It's crazy big."

The addition of Academy Award®-nominated actor John Goodman to the cast as veteran Congressman Long added a layer to the story that further illustrates Evan's comic downward spiral. For Goodman, keeping his stoic demeanor in place during filming was a lesson in self-control. "It's hard to keep from laughing all the time; Steve's so damn funny," recalls the seasoned character actor. "It has been a lot of fun to see him in action."

Filling some of the smaller roles with comedic powerhouses like MOLLY SHANNON (*Year of the Dog*, *Talladega Nights: The Legend of Ricky Bobby*) as hyper realtor Eve Adams and up-and-comers such as ED HELMS (*The Daily Show*, *The Office*), the filmmakers knew that all the players—no matter how little their dialogue—had to be humorous to make *Evan Almighty* work well. Creating a family-friendly movie

was extremely important, and young actors Johnny Simmons, Jimmy Bennett and Graham Phillips were cast as Evan and Joan's three very different sons who help Evan out with the building specs.

With cast and crew in place, the production could begin the simple task of building an ark to biblical specifications—all the while making sure that they created a ship that left all who saw it awestruck, seamlessly integrated thousands of CG animals into the zoo already on set and left no ecological footprint over the course of production. Easy.

“Ark Building for Dummies”:

Rewriting the Manual

Early on during the writing process, Shadyac sat with Oedekerk, discussing the ark and what they envisioned for it. Little did they know that their preliminary research would set the foundation for one of the film's most elaborate and jaw-dropping set pieces. The design and timing of the construction schedule of the ark set, complex to say the least, would become one of the biggest challenges for the company.

The Herculean task of designing and building a practical ark—both exterior and interior sets—rested with production designer Linda DeScenna, a close member of Shadyac's team who has worked closely with the director on four previous films. Alongside art director Jim Nedza and a construction department of several hundred people—headed by veteran builder Dennis DeWaay—DeScenna's art department rose to the challenge of not only conceptualizing and constructing several enormous structures, but doing so in a short amount of time to accommodate a shooting schedule built around Carell's hiatus from his television series.

Armed with detailed research—including ancient Biblical specifications found in the Book of Genesis, both modern and dated equipment and a bit of movie magic—they constructed a vessel that attracted much attention from animals and humans alike. To design and build a set piece of such an immense scale and not rely entirely on computer-generated images was indeed an impressive sight—especially an ark that could dwarf the enormous creatures, such as elephants and giraffes, working alongside it.

The construction crew began preparing the site in the bucolic town of Crozet, Virginia, in January 2006. From laying the concrete foundation to building the eight 4,000-pound cedar-paneled steel ribs, the “sleeper” support beams, the keel—the main structural base that runs the full length of the ark—and the 59’-high carved-foam bow of the ark, they worked around the clock to have all the elements ready for filming in early April 2006.

The final rendering for the ark layout incorporated the original Biblical design and, surprisingly, elements from various children’s books that contained familiar images the cast and crew knew from their youth. Comments DeScenna: “Tom wants as much stage and as much of the real thing as he can get. It helps him and, in turn, it helps his actors.”

“It’s true,” remarks Shadyac with a nod. “I felt it was important for everyone, but especially for Steve, to stand there every day and think, ‘Oh, my God. What am I doing?’ The ark was impressive, and I wanted it to resonate with the actors and crew.”

Finding a practical location to mirror a detailed, plot-specific setting proved to be a fine coincidence for the filmmakers. A luxury housing development (in the midst of construction) nestled at the base of the stunning Shenandoah National Park would serve as home to the ark, as well as several other houses comprising the Baxters’ new suburban neighborhood in the fictitious town of Huntsville.

An added challenge to the process of working at the location was the delicate balance of a synchronized construction and filming schedule, which was all subject to the whims of Virginia’s notoriously mercurial weather.

Once the 250’ (W) X 260’ (L) X 8” (D) concrete base—the same thing engineers would use to build a runway at LAX for landing 747s upon—was laid into the Virginia countryside and covered in red clay soil, all phases of future ark construction would be dovetailed with the filming of the identical sequences over a six-week period. This resulted in a seamless ark-building schedule that complemented Evan’s journey and progress of shipbuilding.

The production schedule was mind-boggling. The company would film the actors at the ark during the day or relocate to another location while DeWaay’s crew worked throughout the night—or up to seven days in their absence—to build up the ark for their

return. “It was a huge endeavor,” remarks DeWaay. “I’m happy that we are able to build something of this scale. With all the advancements in CGI, it’s almost unheard of today.”

Once the company arrived in Virginia to begin filming, all the elements needed to begin building the ark were in place and ready to be assembled like a massive 3-D jigsaw puzzle. Supporting DeScenna and DeWaay’s efforts was special effects supervisor Dan Sudick, who worked in tandem with the pair, particularly on the structural elements of the ark.

The steel-reinforced ribs of the ark, which anchor the structure, were the brainchild of Sudick. He was also an integral part in the development of an additional set piece that had the ark’s bow piece suspended in the air against a massive blue screen and affixed to a hydraulic gimbal. The gimbal was rocked side to side while those aboard (cast and stunt members alike) were doused with hundreds of gallons of water during one of the film’s pivotal scenes. The special effects team would come along later and add even more water to the shots.

Although the ark—with its final dimensions set at 80’ (W) X 60’ (H) and 275’ (L) [ultimately digitally extended to 450’ (L), the length of Noah’s Ark in the Bible]—was the highlight of the Virginia movie set, the Baxter family’s “McMansion” and the surrounding three houses on the street were conceptualized and built by the art department on the site of an existing upscale housing development. Often, it was difficult to discern where DeScenna’s handiwork ended and where the actual neighborhood began—especially for the thousands of people who made the weekend trek to view the local wonder, often not realizing they were on a film set until they saw the awe-inspiring vessel sitting on a hill.

Production returned to Los Angeles in late spring 2006 to complete the remainder of the shooting schedule on Universal Pictures’ back lot. The sets included all of the scenes set inside, as well as those shot on the bow of the ark. Hundreds more animals and background extras—wet down by sprinklers on a daily basis—would file onto soundstages to film their scenes on the enormous ship at Stage 27.

While cast and crew were filming in Los Angeles, the disassembly of the Virginia ark set commenced and was, surprisingly, completed within a week’s time. The removal of the concrete foundation, however, would take another week. But after months of

shooting, nothing remained of the ark or the hundreds of people and animals who worked alongside it for months.

Digital Floods and Thousands of Creatures:

Visual Effects of the Production

Creating Water

While in days gone by, miniatures, rear projection and optical matting would provide a flood of biblical proportions on the silver screen, it was no longer feasible to bring movie audiences images that they could see through in an instant. To meet the specifications of the director and producers, *Evan Almighty* would need to break new ground (erm, water) in how it would render torrential waters onto an unsuspecting city.

In charge of the visual effects for the production was VFX supervisor Douglas Smith. Smith, the veteran filmmaker who cut his teeth on such seminal epics as *Star Wars* and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* has recently brought his talents as VFX head on pictures from *Independence Day* and *Dr. Doolittle 2* to *Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat* and *The Longest Yard*. It would require every trick in the book to bring *Evan Almighty* to life. Smith offers, “*Evan* was an ambitious task...and a huge technical challenge. Getting the audience to believe that this flood and the computer-generated animals were real required enormous effort and care on visual effects team’s part. I loved the fact that I got to help in re-telling of the story of Noah’s Ark.”

The San Francisco-based visual effects giant, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), was charged with working with Shadyac and Smith to create the flood that provides the breathtaking climax to the comedy. It would take an ILM crew of 80 people more than a year to develop just the water shots for the film.

All the elements of the production were carefully storyboarded, then roughly animated on computers through the process of previsualization (“pre-vis”). Once “pre-vised” scenes were agreed upon, the production team—including the director, production designer, director of photography, special effects coordinator and visual effects

supervisor—analyzed the shots to decide what could be done practically and what had to be represented through visual effects.

For example, if Shadyac wanted to show a giant wave crashing against the side of the ark as it flowed down a body of water, a decision was made whether it was best (or even possible) to photograph the scene on location, or on set, with a partial section of the ark in front of a giant blue screen. In every case, the pre-vis process helped guide the choice of process, location and the CG wave sequences that followed.

According to ILM's visual effects supervisor, Bill George, there were three stages mandatory to make Evan and his clan, their neighbors and the animals' journey on the ark as seamless as possible. "Creating the water is a very long process that requires a lot of artistry and a high degree of technical skill," George provides. "Once a background plate was shot, we did a *match move*—which is to re-create the movement of the camera in the computer—and that gave us a scene that we can work on."

He continues, "Next was the *fluid simulation*: the computer takes component pieces, such as the ark and the trees, and you send virtual fluid through there. Then, the computer figures out how the fluid would flow around these objects in nature." That would be a trial and error process for the filmmakers, because of the number of parameters to set for water, such as velocity, wind and gravity.

Once fluid simulation occurred, it was on to step three, the *rendering stage*, which would make the flat surface of the water on screen not so flat after all. As water has reflections, refractions, mist and waves, those component pieces all needed to be built in to make the images realistic. And they were built in separately. George says, "Our compositors had to control how bright the reflections on the water were, as that changes from scene to scene. So many pieces had to come together correctly for the flood to look like it was really happening." Indeed, one shot alone could take 15-20 weeks to make it through all three stages. And that was just the tip of the iceberg.

In the style of old-school filmmaking, miniatures would also play an integral role. The randomness of nature couldn't be denied; while digital technology allowed for the control of every drop of water in a painstaking process, the unpredictability of practical shots would add unexpected excitement to Evan's journey in the flood.

The team shot for approximately three months alone with miniatures of the ark, trees, cars, etc...For example, in one particular scene, where a bulldozer is hit by a monstrous wave, a third-scale miniature was used in place of a CG dozer. Digital and practical shots would be mixed in to make it truly look like the construction apparatus was flipping through space and millions of gallons of water were splashing it during its journey.

Redefining Feathers and Fur

Billions of drops of water would not be the only items the special-effects teams would re-create for *Evan Almighty*. While the animal actors were relatively well behaved on set, many CG creatures needed to be created to give the film the breadth and scope required of a biblical comedy tale. And visual effects shop Rhythm & Hues Studios was responsible for multiplying them in the digital world, two by two by two by...

The effects studio created 300 pairs of the large-scale CG animals to help fill Evan's ark, as well as 15 pairs of "hero" CG animals for close-up, brilliantly detailed shots. Though Noah had two of every species on his ship, it was necessary to duplicate some of Evan's zoo to give the effect that every pair on Earth was represented in the background. This would result in creating more individual CG animals than any production had ever before for a film.

Rhythm and Hues Studio was responsible for the CG animals and compositing of some of the blue screen animals. In addition, because of the vast amount of animal shots and animal elements, another visual effects company, C.I.S. Hollywood, also contributed a large number of composites, involving hundreds and hundreds of blue screen animal elements.

In a particular backyard scene—handled by C.I.S. Hollywood—in which Evan is backed up to the woodpile by numerous creatures, the only animals that actually existed in the shot with Freeman and Carell were the horses and cows. All of the rest of the creatures were photographed on a blue screen stage, then "composited" onto the scene. In many other shots, those that couldn't be brought to set were supplemented with CG animals. R&H would take the CG animals necessary to complete the background and

carefully place them around the “live creatures” (photographed on a blue screen)—complete with perfect shadowing and blades of grass placed carefully around respective paws and hoofs—to complete the look.

For every shot in which Evan and the Baxter family were surrounded by animals, it would take camera crews of up to 40 people an extra three to four days of photography to get all the creatures—who were to appear seamlessly next to him—shot on blue screen. Then, R&H and C.I.S. would have to put those animals back, one by one, into the same scene with the human actors and spend weeks or months blending the two.

Having the animals prepare to “walk” onto the ark for the climactic ride would prove one of the most difficult scenes of all for the crew. Initially, members of the production team thought they could have live creatures with their trainers walk around, in a carefully controlled fashion, the open Virginia field. The trainers would be removed via computer, CG creatures would fill in the blanks and it would provide a seamless look. However, that would prove impossible to accomplish with so many animals.

It was much more feasible to film empty plates of the open field, then separately photograph the creatures, one by one, in relationship to a layout that had been determined by pre-vis or a storyboard. Once the background and layout were determined, animals would be brought into a blue screen room and photographed. They were then repositioned, added back into the field and finally shadowed; the visual effects crew would then move on to the next creature. In the final, painstaking step, CG animals were blended into the scene.

Animation supervisor Andy Arnett, veteran of such films as *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Scooby-Doo*, was one of the scores of animators brought onto the production to flawlessly blend real and fictional creatures. Arnett relates, “The research was extensive. It took six or seven months to perfect the look and feel of the animals before we had the first shot out the door.”

The animals R&H created were the ones that would be difficult to work with on set, creatures that would never be available or ones which the filmmakers needed to get a specific performance from—things animals would never do so on set in front of a camera crew. With motion libraries, the production house could provide customized performances for their animals, every time.

It was vital to build these motion libraries for each of the CG animals. If the filmmakers wanted a musk ox to look to the left vs. right or to sit vs. stand, CG proved a fine compromise. “We built these libraries to see how the animals would look and the many types of movements they would make,” remarks Arnett. “Then, we could place them into a scene and multiply them out to fill in the background. Whether it was walking or showing a head turn, we created a set of actions for every animal we had that we could fold into a scene.”

Birds would prove to be some of the more difficult animals to create—especially a dove that needed to fly in a very specific path—as were the animals with a good deal of flowing fur (think polar bears and musk oxen). During the climactic ark ride, only a few of the real animals could actually be positioned on a moving platform in front of a blue screen to help show reactions to the swaying ark motion in the flood. Once again, CG stepped in to add the amount and variety of animals necessary within the ark interior. The animators allowed realistic reactions from animals in their pens as the ark bumps into gigantic waves of water, and CG made it possible to get accurate movements from the pandas or the wildebeests that would be jostled about at a specific instant.

Ecological *Almighty*:

How the Production Went Green

Attempting to modernize elements of a legendary biblical tale like that of Noah’s Ark necessitated a compelling, wide-reaching theme that would not trivialize a story cherished by many. The filmmakers felt an environmental theme was especially appropriate and strengthened the heart of the screenplay (and added to the humor). As the story took shape, Shadyac and the other producers made their own commitment to be environmentally conscious as they proceeded.

True to their word, the filmmakers accomplished their goal of being environmentally responsible citizens of the world. Working in conjunction with The Conservation Fund of Washington, D.C., the production “zeroed out” *Evan Almighty* carbon emissions—courtesy of planting 2,050 trees (ranging from hardwood species such as oak to cottonwood and willow trees). All were planted in the Rappahannock River

Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Warsaw, Virginia, and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge near Modesto, California.

Producer Bostick explains: “Given the movie’s environmental themes, we worked closely with The Conservation Fund to calculate our carbon emissions from what we used on the movie—whether from vehicles used or any of the construction equipment. Once our carbon emissions were calculated, we planted trees that will effectively zero out our climate-changing footprint left behind from the movie.”

“Our goal has always been to be a green film,” Shadyac continues. “We recycled during filming. Every piece of material—lumber, windows, door and window treatments, flooring, hardware, etc.—that was salvageable was recycled, repurposed and donated somewhere, as opposed to just throwing it into a landfill. We melted down the steel (from the ark’s steel infrastructure), sold it and then donated the money to Habitat for Humanity.”

Shadyac admits that creating a project of this magnitude is taxing to the Earth. But that wouldn’t stop a commitment to leveling the playing field. “Because you fly production planes to transport your crew, you try to zero that out by planting trees. The trees absorb carbon and release oxygen. Zeroing out kind of heals the damage.”

It was not only important to filmmakers to erase their footprint, but also to cast. Freeman thoughtfully adds to the discussion of planet preservation: “We are the new dinosaurs. And if we aren’t careful, we’re going to wind up just like the old ones did.”

Complementing the work with The Conservation Fund, green activities and efforts during the production of *Evan Almighty* included:

- Donation of materials from landscaping (approximately 300 shrubs and trees) and lumber (including windows and shutters) to Habitat for Humanity.
- Launch of the web site www.getonboardnow.org as the centerpiece to the film’s partnership with The Conservation Fund. Visitors are encouraged to “Go Zero” at the site, which features the “Almighty Forest”—an online destination where people can take real action (including buying and planting trees) to slow the effects of global warming.
- Recycling paper, and using recycled paper (including what you are reading right now), plastic, aluminum and glass on set.

- Use of two-sided scripts by cast and crew.
- Gifts of bicycles to crew members by Tom Shadyac to reduce car usage during the shoot.
- Planting trees near the site of the ark in Crozet, Virginia, as a thank you to the community.
- Use of bottled water company HtoO (Hope to Others) water on the set. Founded by Shadyac, the company donates 100 percent of profits after taxes to charities around the world.

Turning Steve into Evan:

Makeup and Costumes

When assembling the behind-the-scenes team, Shadyac, Bostick and Spyglass Entertainment producers Roger Birnbaum and Gary Barber and Original Film's Neal H. Moritz turned to the talented group of creative individuals with whom they collaborated on previous projects, including *Bruce Almighty*.

The artisans included costume designer Judy Ruskin Howell and Academy Award®-winning special-effects makeup designer David Leroy Anderson (*Cinderella Man*) to the fold. It was Anderson who developed and interpreted the evolution of Evan Baxter into a modern-day Noah.

The designer created approximately seven different looks for Carell's transformation—starting with the handsome, well-groomed professional ready to take on Capitol Hill and finishing with a longhaired, bearded man of the animals.

Anderson and his team toiled daily, taking an average of three hours to morph Carell into the different phases of Evan Baxter/"The Weirdo With a Beard-o." The veteran special-effects makeup designer kept his sense of humor throughout arduous months of filming, giving each of Evan's new looks such memorable names as "Mountain Man," "Metrosexual" and "Unabomber," among others.

The process of creating all of Evan's beards was a painstaking one that had a three-person team placing individual hairs onto Carell's face. Custom-made wigs completed the remarkable transformation that rendered the actor unrecognizable to some.

Says Shadyac, “Dave is an amazing artist. There was not a moment in the movie that I looked at Steve and said, ‘Oh, this isn’t real.’ It all looked absolutely real.”

Carell recalls of his time in the hair and makeup chair: “It always looked like something that was actually growing out of my face.” He slyly adds, “So, when I lose a little more hair in real life, I will be calling Dave to come over to my house every morning and apply a toupee for four hours, because I know it’ll look real.”

Completing Evan’s miraculous makeover, Carell donned several “ancient” robes to become the world’s most famous seafarer. As with any historical element for the comedy, research played an integral part in helping the team to craft together the iconic look of biblical character Noah.

Veteran costume designer Ruskin Howell designed the rough-hewn silk-burlap robes to look as authentic as possible, completing them with several functional touches to stand up to the punishments of the daily wear and tear of filming. Ruskin Howell conferred with textile experts, read up on her ancient history and aged fibers to achieve the proper patina and look for Carell’s multiple robes.

Months of filming, hundreds of animals and an exhausted cast and crew later, principal photography on *Evan Almighty* was finally finished, and it was time for editing and VFX to work their magic in their respective bays. A weary but wiser Shadyac reflects on not only the comedy of his film, but the place where it comes from and why it was so important to make the latest in the *Almighty* series.

The director/producer concludes: “You can give all the charity dollars to all the habitats you want, but if you’re polluting the air for that family and the kids that will be in that house in the future, you’re not doing a good thing. I just started waking up. I was Evan. The journey of Evan is so much the journey of me. The guy grows a beard and has long hair by the end of the movie. Coincidence?”

Universal Pictures and Spyglass Entertainment Present—In Association with Relativity Media—a Shady Acres/Barber-Birnbaum/Original Film Production of a Tom Shadyac Film: Steve Carell and Morgan Freeman in *Evan Almighty*, starring Lauren Graham, John Goodman, John Michael Higgins, Jimmy Bennett, Wanda Sykes, Jonah Hill. Music for the film is by John Debney; the costume designer is Judy Ruskin Howell.

Co-producers are Jonathan Watson, Amanda Morgan Palmer and Ori Marmur; the film editor is Scott Hill. *Evan Almighty*'s production designer is Linda DeScenna; the director of photography is Ian Baker. Executive producers for the film are Ilona Herzberg, Dave Phillips, Matt Lubber, Tom Hanks and Gary Goetzman. It is produced by Tom Shadyac, Gary Barber, Roger Birnbaum, Neal H. Moritz and Michael Bostick and based on characters created by Steve Koren & Mark O'Keefe. *Evan Almighty* is from a story by Steve Oedekerk and Joel Cohen & Alec Sokolow and a screenplay by Steve Oedekerk. It is directed by Tom Shadyac. www.evanalmighty.com © 2007 Universal Studios.

ABOUT THE CAST

STEVE CARELL (Evan Baxter) has emerged as one of the most sought after comedic actors in Hollywood. First gaining recognition for his contributions as a correspondent on Comedy Central's Emmy Award-winning *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, Carell has successfully segued into primetime television and above-the-title status in the film world with equal aplomb.

Carell opened his first lead feature, *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, which he co-wrote with director Judd Apatow, at number one, a spot it remained in for two straight weekends. The surprise hit of 2005 went on to gross more than \$175 million worldwide and had number one openings in 12 countries. The success of the film has continued, as it has also generated over \$100 million in DVD sales in North America alone. On an award level, the film was honored with an AFI Award (named one of the 10 Most Outstanding Motion Pictures of the Year) and took home Best Comedy Movie at the 11th annual Critics' Choice Awards. The film also earned Carell and Apatow a co-nomination for Best Original Screenplay by the Writers Guild of America.

Carell currently stars in the Americanized adaptation of the acclaimed British television series *The Office*. In its third season, the show continues to flourish in the ratings and has earned Carell an Emmy Award nomination for Best Actor in a Comedy. In 2006, Carell earned a Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series—Musical or Comedy for his portrayal of Michael Scott, the pompous and deluded boss of a Pennsylvania paper company.

This fall, Carell will star opposite Juliette Binoche as the title character in the romantic comedy *Dan in Real Life*. Next summer, he is set to star in the much-anticipated action-comedy from creator Mel Brooks, *Get Smart*, opposite Anne Hathaway.

In 2006, as part of an ensemble, he starred in *Little Miss Sunshine*, which earned an Academy Award® nomination for Best Picture and won the SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture. The black comedy, also starring Greg Kinnear and Toni Collette, was released last summer. Previous film credits for the actor include *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*, *Bruce Almighty* and *Bewitched*.

Born in Massachusetts, Carell now resides in Los Angeles with his wife, actress Nancy Walls (NBC's *Saturday Night Live*), whom he met while at the Second City Theatre Group in Chicago, where both were members. He is the proud father of a daughter and a son.

MORGAN FREEMAN's (God) extensive feature film credits include *Brubaker*, *Eyewitness*, *Harry & Son*, *Teachers*, *Marie*, *That Was Then...This Is Now*, *Street Smart* (for which he won the Los Angeles, New York and National Society of Film Critics Awards for Best Supporting Actor of 1987, and was nominated for both Golden Globe and Academy Awards®), *Clean and Sober*, *Johnny Handsome*, *Glory*, *Driving Miss Daisy* (for which Freeman earned his second Academy Award® nomination as well as a Golden Globe Award and Silver Bear for Best Actor at the Berlin Film Festival in recreating the role that he created on stage), *Chain Reaction* and Paramount's adventure *Hard Rain*. In 1993, Freeman made his feature directorial debut with *Bopha!*, starring Danny Glover and Alfre Woodard and soon thereafter formed Revelations Entertainment, a production company developing entertainment product in all existing and emerging media that "enlightens, inspires and glorifies the human experience."

The Shawshank Redemption, based on a Stephen King novella, brought Freeman his third Academy Award® nomination. He also starred as abolitionist Theodore Joadson in Steven Spielberg's *Amistad*; as the President of the United States in the box-office hit *Deep Impact*; and opposite Ashley Judd in the highly successful thriller *Kiss the Girls*. Neil LaBute's *Nurse Betty*, which saw Freeman performing with Chris Rock and

Renée Zellweger, was released to critical acclaim in 2000. Freeman then reprised his *Kiss the Girls* role as Alex Cross in *Along Came a Spider*, which was a box-office smash in the spring of 2001. Freeman again starred with Ashley Judd in Carl Franklin's *High Crimes*; performed opposite Ben Affleck in the hit action thriller *The Sum of All Fears*, based on the Tom Clancy novel; starred alongside Billy Bob Thornton, Kirsten Dunst and Holly Hunter in the independent film *Levity*, which was selected to open the 2003 Sundance Film Festival; performed in *Dreamcatcher*, also based on a work by Stephen King; and *The Big Bounce*, a thriller based on a novel by Elmore Leonard. Freeman co-starred in Clint Eastwood's *Million Dollar Baby*, which earned him a Golden Globe nomination, a SAG Award and an Academy Award® for Best Supporting Actor.

Other recent credits include Luc Besson's *Unleashed*, opposite Jet Li; *An Unfinished Life*, opposite Robert Redford and Jennifer Lopez; *Batman Begins*; and the Academy Award®-nominated *March of the Penguins*, which he narrated. Freeman most recently starred in *Lucky Number Slevin*, with Bruce Willis and Josh Hartnett; *10 Items or Less*, with Paz Vega; and *The Contract*, with John Cusack. Recently, he finished production on Rob Reiner's *The Bucket List*, co-starring Jack Nicholson.

Currently, Freeman is filming the fantasy-thriller *Wanted* for Universal Pictures, with Angelina Jolie and James McAvoy; and will reprise his role as Lucius Fox in the next installment of the *Batman* series for Warner Bros., *The Dark Knight*.

For her critically acclaimed portrayal of Lorelai Gilmore on *Gilmore Girls*, **LAUREN GRAHAM** (Joan Baxter) has been nominated for a Golden Globe award for best actress in a drama series, a Screen Actors Guild Award for female actor in a drama series and two Television Critics Association Awards for individual achievement in drama and comedy. Additionally, she has earned two Teen Choice Awards for Choice Parental Unit, a best actress nod from Viewers for Quality Television and an award for best actress in a drama from the Family Friendly Programming Forum and was recently honored by Planned Parenthood as a Champion of Choice for her work with family issues on and off screen.

This spring, Graham co-starred with Diane Keaton, Mandy Moore and Piper Perabo in the successful romantic comedy *Because I Said So*.

Graham's additional feature film roles include the dark comedy *Bad Santa*, opposite Billy Bob Thornton; *The Pacifier*, opposite Vin Diesel; *The Amateurs*, opposite Jeff Bridges and Tim Blake Nelson; Warner Bros.' *Sweet November*, starring Keanu Reeves; the thriller *Nightwatch*, starring Patricia Arquette and Ewan McGregor; and as Renée Zellweger's best friend and confidante in the Meryl Streep drama *One True Thing*.

In addition to *Gilmore Girls*, Graham's list of television credits includes parts in *Caroline in the City*, *NewsRadio*, *Law & Order*, *Seinfeld*, *3rd Rock From the Sun*, *Conrad Bloom* and *Townies*.

In 2002, Graham made a notable appearance on stage at the Williamstown Theatre Festival starring in *Once in a Lifetime*, the 1929 comedy about the advent of motion pictures.

Growing up an avid equestrian in northern Virginia, she attended Barnard College in New York, where she majored in English. She then earned a master's of fine arts in acting from Southern Methodist University.

Graham currently lives in Los Angeles.

JOHN GOODMAN (Congressman Long) remembers the day in 1975 when he left St. Louis for New York, armed only with a degree in fine arts from Southwest Missouri State University, \$1,000 his brother had lent him and a dream of being a professional actor. He didn't want to look back 15 years later and say, "I wonder if I could have..." He made the rounds, worked odd jobs and just tried to keep busy. He's been quite busy ever since.

Today, Goodman is one of the entertainment industry's most respected actors. He earned a Golden Globe nomination in 1992 for his chilling performance in the Coen brothers' heralded *Barton Fink*. Coincidentally, Goodman's breakthrough motion picture performance was in *Raising Arizona*, also a Coen brothers' film. He has since teamed with them for *The Big Lebowski* and *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

Goodman is currently filming *Speed Racer*, based on the classic 1960s Japanese animated series, with Susan Sarandon. He recently completed production on the film *Death Sentence*, for 20th Century Fox, opposite Kevin Bacon; and lent his vocal talents to DreamWorks' animated film *Bee Movie*, due out this November.

Goodman has lent his voice to numerous additional animated films including *Monsters, Inc.*, *The Emperor's New Groove*, *Tales of the Rat Fink* and *The Jungle Book*. He also voiced one of the main characters in NBC's animated series *Father of the Pride*.

Goodman was raised in St. Louis by his mother, his father having passed away when John was two years old. As a tall, broad-shouldered teenager, he attended Affton High School, where he dedicated himself to football (his team won one game). He intended to play football at Southwest Missouri State University but injured a knee and was forced to sit out a year. Goodman spent that year studying drama with fellow students Kathleen Turner and Tess Harper. He never returned to football and graduated in 1975 with a BFA in theater.

Goodman's stage credits include many dinner theater and children's theater productions, as well as several off-Broadway plays. His regional theater credits include *Henry IV (Part I and Part II)*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *As You Like It*. He performed in a road production of *The Robber Bridegroom* and starred in two Broadway shows—*Loose Ends* in 1979 and *Big River* in 1985.

In 2002, Goodman starred on Broadway in the Public Theatre's *Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. In 2001, he starred in the Shakespeare in the Park production of *The Seagull*.

Goodman's additional film credits include *Marilyn Hotchkiss' Ballroom Dancing and Charm School*, *Beyond the Sea*, *Masked and Anonymous*, *Storytelling*, *Coyote Ugly*, *What Planet Are You From?*, *One Night at McCool's*, *Bringing Out the Dead*, *Fallen*, *The Borrowers*, *Blues Brothers 2000*, *The Runner*, *The Flintstones*, *Mother Night*, *Arachnophobia*, *Always*, *Pie in the Sky*, *Born Yesterday*, *Matinee*, *The Babe*, *King Ralph*, *Punchline*, *Everybody's All-American*, *Sea of Love*, *Stella*, *Eddie Macon's Run*, *C.H.U.D.*, *Revenge of the Nerds*, *Maria's Lovers*, *Sweet Dreams*, *True Stories*, *The Big Easy*, *Burglar* and *The Wrong Guys*.

Goodman made his small-screen debut in the HBO production *Mystery of the Moro Castle*. Since then, he has given many acclaimed television performances. For eight seasons, he played Dan Conner in *Roseanne*, a role that earned him seven Emmy nominations and a Golden Globe. He received Emmy nominations for his starring role in TNT's *Kingfish: A Story of Huey P. Long* and for his role as Mitch in the CBS production

of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*. He also starred in the HBO film *The Jack Bull*.

Though he prefers to think of New York as a home base, Goodman, his wife, Annabeth, and their young daughter, Molly, reside in New Orleans. He has sold his New York apartment, which he still refers to as a "hunting lodge." He says, "It's a place I visited once a year. The bathtub is in the kitchen. I've had this place since the mid-'70s, and I really didn't want to give it up."

The New York Times has called **JOHN MICHAEL HIGGINS** (Marty) "one of the most skilled actors of his generation." An incredibly diverse artist, audiences are often surprised by his chameleon-like character changes. The guy who played David Letterman in the highly acclaimed HBO film *The Late Shift* is indeed the same guy who played the flamboyantly gay Shih Tzu handler Scott Donlon in Christopher Guest's blockbuster comedy *Best in Show*.

Higgins has recently finished principal photography on Warner Bros.' *Joe Claus*, for director David Dobkin, co-starring Vince Vaughn, Kevin Spacey and Dame Judi Dench.

Last summer, he starred in Universal Pictures' *The Break-Up*, with Vince Vaughn and Jennifer Aniston; last fall, he was part of the ensemble in Warner Independent's *For Your Consideration*, the latest Christopher Guest film.

He recently starred in Sony's *Fun With Dick and Jane*, opposite Jim Carrey and Téa Leoni. In addition to co-starring in Christopher Guest's comic triumph *A Mighty Wind*, Higgins also wrote the razor-sharp parody songs and created the complex vocal and instrumental arrangements for the film and the bestselling soundtrack.

In addition to his film work, Higgins has starred in the title role of the Lincoln Center/Broadway premiere of the A.R. Gurney play *Big Bill*, a searing drama about the fall from grace of the great American tennis champion Bill Tilden—a role Higgins reprised from his Williamstown Theatre Festival triumph, where he is a popular fixture. Higgins also provides countless over-the-top voices for Cartoon Network's *Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law* and for Fox's CGI animated show *Game Over*.

In Los Angeles, Higgins is a much sought-after actor for regular roles on pilots, as well as guest-starring roles on various series—such as his recurring role on Fox’s recent comedy, the critically acclaimed *Arrested Development*.

JIMMY BENNETT (Ryan Baxter) is a multi-talented 11-year-old who has worked with some of Hollywood’s heavyweights. Most recently, he co-starred in Wolfgang Petersen’s *Poseidon*, alongside Kurt Russell, Richard Dreyfuss and Josh Lucas; and *Firewall*, with Harrison Ford and Virginia Madsen. Bennett was also seen in *The Amityville Horror*, for producer Michael Bay, and starred opposite Bruce Willis in Miramax’s *Hostage*. In addition, his voice can be heard in Warner Bros’ *The Polar Express*, starring Tom Hanks.

His other film credits include Asia Argento’s *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things Else*, for Muse Films and based on the J.T. Leroy novel, and *Daddy Day Care*, with Eddie Murphy.

Bennett also worked on the hit WB television series *Everwood* and has appeared in the miniseries *Detective*, for the Hallmark Channel; *CSI*; *Judging Amy*; *The Guardian*; and *Strong Medicine*. In addition, he has voiced characters for some of the more popular children’s movies in recent history, including *I Want a Dog for Christmas*, *Charlie Brown*; *Fun With Roo (ABCs and 123s)*; and *Springtime With Roo*.

When not acting, he loves soccer, skateboarding, swimming, listening to heavy metal music and playing the guitar. Bennett resides with his parents and older sister in Huntington Beach, California.

WANDA SYKES (Rita) has been called “one of the funniest stand up comics” by her peers and ranks among *Entertainment Weekly*’s 25 Funniest People in America. Her smart-witted stand-up has sent her career in many different areas.

She was last seen co-starring with Luke Wilson and Uma Thurman in the romantic comedy *My Super Ex-Girlfriend* and in the New Line feature *Monster-in-Law*, opposite Jennifer Lopez and Jane Fonda, and was recently heard in the animated features *Over the Hedge*, for DreamWorks, and *Barnyard*, for Paramount Pictures. She also recently guest starred on *The New Adventures of Old Christine* and on NBC’s *Will &*

Grace. She was seen on Comedy Central's *Wanda Does It*, where she tried various non-showbiz jobs. Her first book, titled "Yeah, I Said It" and published by Simon & Schuster, hit bookstores in September 2004. "Yeah, I Said It" is a hilarious collection of essays touching on life, family and current events.

In fall 2003 she was seen on Fox's *Wanda at Large*, which she wrote and produced and in which she starred. She also starred in a one-hour Comedy Central special titled *Wanda Sykes: Tongue Untied*. In addition, she was recently seen on HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and heard on Comedy Central's *Crank Yankers* as the voice of Gladys Murphy.

Sykes was born in Portsmouth, Virginia, and raised in Maryland. She graduated with a bachelor of science degree from Hampton University. Her stand-up career began at a Coors Light super talent showcase in Washington, D.C., where she performed for the first time in front of a live audience.

She spent five years as part of HBO's critically acclaimed *The Chris Rock Show*. As a performer and writer on the show, she was nominated for three Primetime Emmys and, in 1999, won the Emmy for Outstanding Writing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program. In 2001, she won the American Comedy Award for Outstanding Female Stand-Up Comic. She won two more Emmys—one in 2002 and one in 2004—for her work on *Inside the NFL*. In 2003, Sykes earned a Comedy Central Commie Award for Funniest TV Actress. Other writing credits include the MTV 1999 Music Video Awards, the MTV Movie Awards, the 74th Annual Academy Awards®, *The Keenen Ivory Wayans Show* and *Wanda at Large*.

She has also appeared in the feature films *Clerks II*, *Pootie Tang*, *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* and *Down to Earth*.

In the short time since he debuted his penchant for dramatic comedy with the one-scene plays he wrote and performed at the gritty Black & White bar in New York City, **JONAH HILL** (Eugene) has already worked alongside many of the most sought-after actors, directors and producers in Hollywood. His first feature film was *I Heart Huckabees*, with Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin for director David O. Russell. He then secured a small role in Judd Apatow's summer comedy hit *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*,

with Steve Carell; and after a meeting with Adam Sandler, a small part for him was written into the feature *Click*. Last year, Hill was seen opposite Justin Long in the teen comedy *Accepted*.

This summer is quite busy for Hill, with three big comedies being released. In addition to *Evan Almighty*, he is currently co-starring in *Knocked Up*, Judd Apatow's latest project for Universal Pictures, opposite Katherine Heigl, Paul Rudd and Seth Rogen.

Finally, teaming again with Apatow, Hill—in his first leading-man role—will star in *Superbad*. Premiering in August and co-starring Michael Cera and Bill Hader, the story centers on two high school students (Hill and Cera) as they attempt to get alcohol for their last high school party in hopes of attracting women. Their separation anxiety takes center stage, however, as during the hijinks of the evening the boys realize this is their last adventure together before they go to separate colleges.

Next up for Hill is the comedy *The Middle Child*, which he both wrote and will star in for Apatow Productions. Loosely based on his own childhood, of having a sister born when he was a teenager, the film is set for a 2008 release.

Hill also appears in two independent projects. In the first, *Strange Wilderness*, he co-stars with Steve Zahn, Justin Long and Ashley Scott. *One Part Sugar* stars Hill as a confused teenager who turns to a life of buying and selling drugs when he finds out the man who raised him (Dylan Walsh) is not his biological father.

Previously, Hill was seen in the independent feature *10 Items or Less*, starring Morgan Freeman, for director Brad Silberling. He was also in *Grandma's Boy* for 20th Century Fox and Happy Madison Productions, and he had a recurring role in the improvisational television series *Campus Ladies*, a comedy from executive producer Cheryl Hines and the co-executive producers of *Reno 911!*

MOLLY SHANNON (Eve Adams) has successfully segued from television to the silver screen and has quickly become one of Hollywood's most sought after talents. She can currently be seen starring in *Year of the Dog*, for writer/director Mike White. The very busy Shannon recently appeared in Keenen Ivory Wayans' comedy *Little Man*, as well as *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*, with Will Ferrell, and had a

cameo in the box-office smash *Scary Movie 4*. In addition, Shannon was recently featured in two independent films, Sue Kramer's *Gray Matters* and Bruce Leddy's *Sing Now or Forever Hold Your Peace*.

Among Shannon's most memorable moments on film are her portrayal of Betty Lou Who in Ron Howard's worldwide blockbuster *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and her title role in Paramount's hit comedy *Superstar*, portraying everybody's favorite Catholic schoolgirl, Mary Katherine Gallagher—a character Shannon created during her days on *Saturday Night Live*.

Additional feature film credits include *A Night at the Roxbury*, a spinoff of the popular head-bopping, nightclubbing brothers sketch on *Saturday Night Live*; Warner Bros.' comedy *Analyze This*, opposite Billy Crystal and Robert De Niro; Todd Solondz's controversial *Happiness*; and Fox 2000's *Never Been Kissed*, opposite Drew Barrymore.

Additional credits include the CGI/live-action comedy *Good Boy!*; *My Boss's Daughter*; Miramax's romantic comedy *Serendipity*, opposite John Cusack and Kate Beckinsale; the animated comedy *Osmosis Jones*, co-starring Bill Murray; the independent feature film *Wet Hot American Summer*, opposite Janeane Garofalo and David Hyde Pierce; and a cameo role in Disney's *The Santa Clause 2*, opposite Tim Allen.

On television, Shannon was last seen opposite Christopher MacDonald and Jason Schwartzman in the offbeat comedy series *Cracking Up*. She also starred in the USA Network original film *12 Days of Christmas Eve* and appeared in the remake of the classic musical *The Music Man*, co-starring Matthew Broderick and Kristin Chenoweth.

Her television series credits include multiple guest appearances on *Will & Grace* and *Sex and the City*, among many others. Additionally, Shannon spent six seasons as a member of the repertory company on *Saturday Night Live*, primarily known for the eclectic characters she created. In addition to Mary Katherine Gallagher, she is also praised for her parodies of Courtney Love, Liza Minnelli, Monica Lewinsky and Meredith Vieira, roles that continue to be a highlight among the revitalized ensemble cast.

Prior to joining *SNL*, she appeared at the Up Front Comedy Theater in Los Angeles in *The Rob and Molly Show*, an improvisational show she co-wrote with Rob Muir.

Born in Shaker Heights, Ohio, Shannon earned a BFA in drama from New York University's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts. She currently lives in Los Angeles and New York.

GRAHAM PHILLIPS (Jordan Baxter) recently returned to his home in Laguna Beach, California, from months on location working on several projects. He was in New York City, where he played the title role in *The Little Prince* with the New York City Opera at Lincoln Center. *The New York Times* called Phillips' performance as the Little Prince "smashing." From there, Phillips went directly into the world premiere of *An American Tragedy* at the Metropolitan Opera, where he played the part of Young Clyde, both opening and closing the opera with a solo.

Phillips' other professional stage productions include *A Christmas Carol—The Musical* on Broadway, performed at Madison Square Garden, where he sang the role of Tiny Tim to Jim Dale's Scrooge; and *The Ten Commandments—The Musical*, with Val Kilmer at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles. Phillips, at 10 years old, was the youngest person to sing the national anthem to open a Los Angeles Dodgers baseball game. He has also debuted original songs composed by Martin Charnin and John Kander in New York.

Phillips' television credits include *Crossing Jordan*, *Judging Amy*, *King of Queens* and a Hallmark Movie titled *Love's Long Journey*, as well as appearing twice on the *Today* show as a soloist.

Phillips has recorded a solo composed by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz for the film *Noel*, starring Robin Williams and Susan Sarandon. He also was a soloist on Meat Loaf's *Bat out of Hell 3* album.

Currently, Phillips is set to start production on *Ben 10*. This television film is based on the popular kids animated show and will mark the first time that Cartoon Network has presented a live-action movie. Phillips is set to play the lead role, Ben.

JOHNNY SIMMONS (Dylan Baxter) is quickly gaining momentum in his burgeoning acting career. With a handful of auditions to his credit, Simmons impressed Tom Shadyac enough to win the role of Evan Baxter's eldest son and make his acting debut in *Evan Almighty*.

Born in Dallas, the 19-year-old arrived in Los Angeles prepared. At the early age of 12, the acting bug bit him. Even at that age, he knew he would come to California when he turned 18. He spent his teen years finding an agent who would help him get his SAG card, so he would be able to work immediately upon his arrival in L.A.

Only after a handful of auditions, Simmons has found himself breaking down doors that it takes most actors a lifetime to open. Getting down to the wire on a few huge franchise studio pictures before landing his current gig makes Johnny definitely one to watch as Hollywood's newest rising young star.

Currently, Simmons is in production on the horror film *Boogeyman 2*.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

TOM SHADYAC (Directed by/Produced by) has established himself as one of Hollywood's most successful directors. *Evan Almighty* is the follow-up to his 2003 blockbuster comedy *Bruce Almighty*, starring Jim Carrey. He is currently producing *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry*, starring Adam Sandler and Kevin James, and last summer produced the comedy *Accepted*, starring Justin Long, Jonah Hill and Lewis Black.

Shadyac began his directing career in 1994 with the breakout hit *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, starring Carrey. He then segued into the smash hit *The Nutty Professor*, starring Eddie Murphy. In 1997, he reteamed with Carrey for the box-office sensation *Liar Liar*. Shadyac also directed Robin Williams in the Golden Globe-nominated *Patch Adams* and directed Kevin Costner in the sci-fi thriller *Dragonfly*.

Shadyac's multifaceted career includes producing through his Shady Acres Entertainment banner, based at Universal Pictures. In addition to directing and producing feature films, Shadyac found success in the world of primetime television, producing the comedy series *8 Simple Rules...for Dating My Teenage Daughter* for Touchstone/ABC.

Shadyac attended UCLA film school, working toward his master's degree. At age 23, he became the youngest staff joke writer for Bob Hope.

STEVE OEDEKERK (Screenplay by/Story by) has quickly established a multifaceted career that includes producing, directing, writing, acting, stand-up comedy and animation. He has written and directed films that have grossed over \$1 billion in worldwide box-office revenue.

Most recently, he wrote, produced, directed and voiced characters in the animated feature *Barnyard* and is currently at work on *Kung Pow 2: Tongue of Fury*, the highly anticipated sequel (which he wrote, directs and stars in), to the wild, retro martial-arts comedy *Kung Pow: Enter the Fist*. That film grossed its entire budget on the opening weekend.

Oedekerck received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Animated Film for *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*. In addition, Oedekerck has appeared in the top comedy clubs in America and starred in and created television specials for NBC, ABC and UPN. In the world of animation, he has created original programming and supports them with groundbreaking technology.

In addition to *Bruce Almighty* and *Evan Almighty*, Oedekerck's wide array of projects include the expansion of the *Jimmy Neutron* franchise, which includes multiple episodes of *The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron* for Nickelodeon and Paramount.

Oedekerck's company, O Entertainment, led the way with the first IMAX 3-D animated film, *Santa Vs. the Snowman 3-D*, which was released in November 2002. Oedekerck also created "Thumbtation" technology, which marked its debut in a series of Thumb parody projects distributed worldwide on DVD and video by Image Entertainment. Kicking off the series was *Thumb Wars*, a send-up of the *Star Wars* trilogy. Five more films followed, including *Thumbtanic*, *Bat Thumb* and *The Godthumb*.

His writing credits include some of the most successful movies in recent history. While writing on the Fox series *In Living Color*, Oedekerck collaborated with Jim Carrey on the surprise hit comedy *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, contributing to the film as an unbilled writer. When that film became a breakout success, Oedekerck was asked to write and direct its sequel, *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls*, which proved to be one of those

rare sequels that surpassed the box-office gross of the original film.

Following the success of the *Ace Ventura* franchise, Oedekerk wrote *The Nutty Professor*, which became one of the highest-grossing films of 1996. He also wrote, directed and appeared (in a scene-stealing cameo) in *Nothing to Lose*, starring Tim Robbins and Martin Lawrence. He then went on to write the box-office smash and Golden Globe-nominated *Patch Adams*, which starred Robin Williams. On the small screen, Oedekerk directed, wrote and starred in his own television special for NBC, and produced an animated Christmas special for ABC as well as the original *Thumb Wars* special for UPN.

Oedekerk resides in Southern California with his wife; two children; and a badger, pound for pound known to be the most vicious mammal on the planet.

JOEL COHEN and **ALEC SOKOLOW** (Story by) have written some of the most memorable family films of our times, including *Toy Story*, for which they were nominated for an Academy Award®. Their other films include *Cheaper by the Dozen*, both films in the *Garfield* franchise, *Money Talks* and *Goodbye Lover*. Cohen lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Michele, and daughter, Pietra.

STEVE KOREN (Based on Characters Created by) began his writing career by handing jokes to Dennis Miller, Kevin Nealon and David Letterman in the hallways of the Rockefeller Center in New York City, where he worked as a tour guide. This led to a writing position with *Saturday Night Live*, where he earned several Emmy nominations, working with comedic talents such as Mike Myers, Adam Sandler, Chris Rock, Molly Shannon and Will Ferrell.

Koren eventually left the late-night show for the primetime sitcom world, where he worked as a writer/producer on the award-winning *Seinfeld*. Among his well-known episodes are “The Serenity Now,” “The English Patient” and “The Abstinence.”

Following *Seinfeld*, Koren spent several years as a writer/producer creating television sitcoms for NBC Universal, working with such actors as Steve Carell, Valerie Harper, Ron Liebman and Tiffani Thiessen.

In the motion picture world, Koren’s screenplay credits include *A Night at the*

Roxbury, starring Ferrell and Chris Kattan; *Superstar*, starring Will Ferrell and Molly Shannon; and the megahit *Bruce Almighty*, starring Jim Carrey. Most recently, Koren and his writing partner, Mark O'Keefe, teamed to write and produce *Click*, starring Adam Sandler and Kate Beckinsale. In addition, he has several screenplays in development at studios including Warner Bros., Paramount and Sony.

MARK O'KEEFE (Based on Characters Created by) grew up in the New York City suburb of Chappaqua. He started his career as a television writer for *The Late Show With David Letterman*. He has worked as a writer for such shows as *Politically Incorrect* and *NewsRadio*, and created and executive produced various pilots, as well as the short-lived series *The O'Keefes*.

O'Keefe teamed up with Koren to co-write and produce his first film, *Bruce Almighty*. The pair also teamed to write and produce *Click*, starring Adam Sandler and Kate Beckinsale.

With partner Roger Birnbaum, **GARY BARBER** (Produced by) founded the production, finance and distribution company Spyglass Entertainment, where he serves as co-chairman and CEO.

From the beginning, the company's savvy production choices led to the phenomenal box-office success of *The Sixth Sense*, starring Bruce Willis, which went on to gross more than \$661 million and garnered six Academy Award® nominations. Further successes include *The Count of Monte Cristo*, with Jim Caviezel and Guy Pearce; *Keeping the Faith*, with Ben Stiller and Edward Norton; *Shanghai Noon*, with Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson, and its sequel, *Shanghai Knights*; and the dynamic teaming of Al Pacino and Colin Farrell for *The Recruit*.

Barber executive produced and co-financed two milestone movies: *Bruce Almighty*, starring Jim Carrey and Jennifer Aniston, which grossed more than \$485 million at the worldwide box office and is considered one of the blockbuster comedies of all time, and the tale of a legendary racehorse, *Seabiscuit*, starring Tobey Maguire, Chris Cooper and Jeff Bridges. With its moving story of triumph over adversity, the film received seven Oscar® nominations.

Barber went on to produce *The Pacifier* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. *The Pacifier*, a family comedy starring Vin Diesel, earned approximately \$200 million at the worldwide box office, while *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, an adaptation of the Douglas Adams best seller, crossed the \$100 million mark globally.

Spyglass also co-financed and Barber executive produced: *The Legend of Zorro*, the sequel to the 1998 smash hit *The Mask of Zorro*, with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Antonio Banderas, directed by Martin Campbell, and *Memoirs of a Geisha*, based on the best-selling novel, starring Ziyi Zhang and Ken Watanabe, helmed by Rob Marshall. *Memoirs of a Geisha* earned Spyglass three Oscar® wins out of its six nominations and brought Spyglass' nominations to a total of 26.

2006's successful *Eight Below*, from Walt Disney Pictures, was co-financed by Spyglass and executive produced by Barber. In spring 2007, Spyglass produced and financed the releases of *The Invisible* and *The Lookout*, through Miramax Films and Touchstone Pictures, respectively.

Spyglass recently wrapped production on the live-action feature of the beloved classic cartoon series *Underdog*, slated for release in summer 2007. Currently, Spyglass is in production on *27 Dresses*, a romantic comedy starring Katherine Heigl.

A seasoned veteran of the business, Barber has been directly responsible for operating companies in feature-film production and distribution, foreign theatrical, video and television distribution, exhibition, pre-recorded music and music publishing. He was responsible for building these companies from the ground up.

In managing these businesses, Barber was instrumental in making many landmark deals, identifying and breaking new talent and producing major worldwide hits. His international expertise—with extensive relationships in worldwide theatrical, video and television—is considered one of the best in the business. As an executive with unparalleled experience and financial savvy, Barber has also developed strong relationships in the commercial and investment banking community and earned the respect of this tightly knit group through constant and successful deal making.

Barber is the former vice chairman and chief operating officer of Morgan Creek Productions. During his eight and a half years at the company, he was in charge of all

day-to-day operations for each of Morgan Creek's business entities, including feature film production, foreign distribution, music, exhibition and interactive.

Barber has produced or executive produced more than 50 feature films and television shows, including the 1994 hit that rocketed Jim Carrey to stardom, *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, its highly successful sequel, *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls*, and the 1991 blockbuster *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, starring Kevin Costner.

With partner Gary Barber, **ROGER BIRNBAUM** (Produced by) founded the production and finance company Spyglass Entertainment, where they share the title of co-chairman and CEO. The company develops and finances all of its projects independently.

The company's box-office successes range from *The Sixth Sense*, with Bruce Willis, which earned more than \$661 million at the worldwide box office, to the smash hit *Bruce Almighty*, starring Jim Carrey, which earned more than \$485 million. Also included in the Spyglass library are Oscar®-nominated favorites such as *Seabiscuit*, with Tobey Maguire, and *The Insider*, with Russell Crowe and Al Pacino. In total, Spyglass has garnered 26 Oscar® nominations, including three wins. Other company successes include *The Count of Monte Cristo*, with Jim Caviezel and Guy Pearce; *Keeping the Faith*, with Ben Stiller and Edward Norton; the dual hits *Shanghai Noon* and its sequel, *Shanghai Knights*, with Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson; *The Recruit*, with Al Pacino and Colin Farrell; *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, starring Sam Rockwell and Mos Def; and the smash-hit family film *The Pacifier*, with Vin Diesel.

Spyglass also co-financed and executive produced *The Legend of Zorro*, the sequel to the 1998 smash hit *The Mask of Zorro*, with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Antonio Banderas, directed by Martin Campbell, and *Memoirs of a Geisha*, based on the best-selling novel, starring Ziyi Zhang and Ken Watanabe, helmed by Rob Marshall. Both films were released internationally by Spyglass and have grossed more than \$150 million each at the worldwide box office to date. *Memoirs of a Geisha* drew numerous kudos and awards throughout the season, culminating in a win of three Academy Awards®.

In 2006, Birnbaum co-financed and produced the action adventure *Eight Below*, based on the true survival story about a group of sled dogs in Antarctica. The film had

strong legs at the box office, with earnings of more than \$120 million worldwide. Spyglass also produced and financed the crime thriller *The Lookout*, helmed by acclaimed writer-turned-director Scott Frank. Ramping up for a 2007 release, production recently wrapped on *Underdog*—the live-action feature with Walt Disney Pictures—based upon the beloved cartoon series, as well as the Ping-Pong comedy *Balls of Fury*.

Prior to founding Spyglass Entertainment, Birnbaum, co-founded Caravan Pictures, where he was responsible for such box-office hits as *Rush Hour*, *Six Days Seven Nights*, *Inspector Gadget*, *Grosse Pointe Blank*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Angels in the Outfield* and *While You Were Sleeping*.

Before joining Caravan, Birnbaum held the title of president of worldwide production and executive vice president of 20th Century Fox, where he developed such films as *Home Alone*, *Sleeping With the Enemy*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Hot Shots!*, *My Cousin Vinny*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Die Hard 2* and *Mrs. Doubtfire*, among others. Prior to that, Birnbaum was president of production for United Artists, where he developed the Oscar®-winning, all-time cinema favorite *Rain Man*.

Earlier in his career, he produced *The Sure Thing*, directed by Rob Reiner, and *Young Sherlock Holmes*, which were both presented in association with Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment. For television, he was executive producer of the telefilms *Scandal Sheet*, *Happily Ever After*, *When Your Lover Leaves* and the award-winning *All the Kids Do It*.

Born in Teaneck, New Jersey, and educated at the University of Denver, Birnbaum built a successful career as vice president of A&M Records and Arista Records before entering the film business to produce motion pictures.

He is currently co-artistic director of the AFI conservatory, and serves on the Advisory Board for the Center for Film, Television and New Media at UC Santa Barbara. He is also a mentor to the USC Peter Stark Motion Picture Producing Program, as well as the UCLA graduate film program.

NEAL H. MORITZ (Produced by) is one of the most prolific producers working in Hollywood today. Founder of Original Film, a feature film and television company established in 1997, Moritz most recently produced this past summer's successful comedy *Click*, starring Adam Sandler; Columbia Pictures' football drama *Gridiron Gang*, starring The Rock; and the action-packed *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*.

The busy producer is currently in production on *Made of Honor*, starring Patrick Dempsey and Michelle Monaghan, and in post-production on *I Am Legend*, starring Will Smith; *Vantage Point*, starring Dennis Quaid, William Hurt, Matthew Fox and Forest Whitaker; and the horror remake *Prom Night*, all due for release in 2007-08.

With 34 movies to his credit, Moritz's earlier successes include *Sweet Home Alabama*, starring Reese Witherspoon; *The Fast and the Furious* series; and *S.W.A.T.*, starring Samuel L. Jackson and Colin Farrell. He also produced the popular *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, which spurred the successful sequel, *I Still Know What You Did Last Summer*. Comfortable in any genre, whether comedy, horror, action or drama, Moritz is also responsible for Columbia's *Urban Legend* and *xXx*, both of which went on to spawn successful sequels.

In addition to *Volcano*; *Blue Streak*, with Martin Lawrence; and *Saving Silverman*, with Jack Black, some of Moritz's other credits include the college comedy *Slackers*, starring Jason Schwartzman; *The Glass House*; and *Not Another Teen Movie*, a spoof of the very teen film genre he helped create.

Moritz has produced five movies with director Rob Cohen, including the aforementioned blockbusters *The Fast and the Furious* and *xXx*, as well as *The Skulls*, *Stealth* and the HBO film *The Rat Pack*, which earned 11 Emmy nominations. Other features he has produced include the Denzel Washington thriller *Out of Time*, directed by Carl Franklin, and *Torque*, a motorcycle action movie starring Ice Cube. The first major feature film he produced was *Juice* in 1992, starring Omar Epps and the late Tupac Shakur.

When Moritz started Original Film, the company's first self-financed feature became the youth drama *Cruel Intentions*, starring Reese Witherspoon, Sarah Michelle Gellar and Ryan Phillippe. The film grossed more than \$75 million in box-office sales in

1999, and today it is considered a cult classic among teens who came of age at the time of its release.

A graduate of UCLA with a degree in economics, Moritz went on to earn a graduate degree from the Peter Stark Motion Picture Producing Program at USC.

MICHAEL BOSTICK (Produced by) is currently producing *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry*, starring Adam Sandler and Kevin James, and recently produced the comedy *Accepted*, starring Justin Long, Jonah Hill and Lewis Black.

Bostick was a producer of *Bruce Almighty*, 2003's summer blockbuster comedy starring Jim Carrey, which grossed more than \$485 million worldwide. Bostick also served as executive producer on the feature film *Dragonfly*, directed by Shadyac. In television, Bostick was an executive producer on the ABC series *8 Simple Rules...for Dating My Teenage Daughter*, starring John Ritter and winner of a People's Choice Award for "Favorite Television New Comedy Series."

Prior to joining Shady Acres, Bostick was an executive with Ron Howard and Brian Grazer's Imagine Entertainment for nearly 10 years, ultimately serving as president of production of Imagine Films. Helping manage the slate of feature film projects creatively through development and production, he most notably was responsible for bringing in and supervising two of the most successful films in the company's history: *Apollo 13* (as associate producer), which was nominated for nine Academy Awards®, including Best Picture, and *Liar Liar* (as executive producer). Both movies were awarded People's Choice Awards.

In 1999, Bostick won an Emmy, a Golden Globe and a Producers Guild Award for producing the HBO miniseries *From the Earth to the Moon*, with Tom Hanks as executive producer. The show also was honored with awards from both the Broadcast Film Critics Association and the Television Critics Association.

Bostick started his film career at Walt Disney and Touchstone Pictures, working as a creative executive for nearly two years. In addition to developing a number of films at Disney, he was instrumental in the creation of the New Writers Fellowship Program, aimed at discovering and developing minority talent.

Bostick received a master's degree from the Peter Stark Motion Picture Producing Program at the USC School of Cinema and Television. Prior to entering the film industry, Bostick worked in advertising and magazine publishing in San Antonio. He is a cum laude graduate of Trinity University, with majors in journalism and business administration.

ILONA HERZBERG (Executive Producer) served as producer of Jonathan Demme's films *Neil Young: Heart of Gold* and *The Manchurian Candidate* and as executive producer of *The Truth About Charlie*.

She has also acted as executive producer of such feature films as the acclaimed drama *Thirteen Days*, starring Kevin Costner; the disaster epic *Dante's Peak*, starring Pierce Brosnan; the sci-fi saga *Waterworld*; and the thriller *The River Wild*, starring Meryl Streep and Kevin Bacon.

Herzberg has served as creative executive for the CTV network in Canada and as a line producer for more than 250 hours of television concert specials and variety shows.

Former William Morris agent **DAVE PHILLIPS** (Executive Producer) is president and CEO of Corner of the Sky Entertainment, a multifaceted film and television production company based in Hollywood whose mission is to produce entertainment "that touches and teaches."

Another film of Phillips' arriving in theaters this summer is the irreverent Lionsgate comedy *Good Luck Chuck*, starring Dane Cook, Jessica Alba and Tony Award winner Dan Fogler.

Phillips was named to *The Hollywood Reporter's* inaugural "Next Generation" issue, which featured 35 of the hottest Hollywood executives under the age of 35 to watch. Some of the feature films and documentaries Phillips has packaged over years working with filmmakers including *While You Were Sleeping*, *Hoop Dreams*, *50 First Dates*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Peaceful Warrior*, *Brown Sugar*, *Like Mike*, *Stevie*, *Reel Paradise*, *Genghis Blues*, *Beyond the Call* and *Shottas*.

A well-known face for years at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, Phillips partnered with Canyons Ski owner Kenny Griswold to create several major

events at the festival: *Where Music Meets Film: Live From the Sundance Film Festival*, a televised music special starring Babyface, Joss Stone, Lindsey Buckingham, Joan Osborne, Sean Lennon and Shawn Colvin; Chefdance, 10 days of fine dining for filmmakers by James Beard chefs from around the country; and The Airborne Lounge, a great hangout next to Harry O's where "industry-ites" and up-and-coming influencers can de-thaw and get introduced to the nation's number-one cold medicine.

Corner of the Sky is currently developing a remake of the critically acclaimed 1975 telefilm *Something for Joey*, which is about the inspirational connection between out-of-the-blue Heisman Trophy winner John Cappelletti and his younger brother, Joey, who had leukemia. Also in the works is a feature franchise that Phillips and Tracey Edmonds are producing, based on the ever-popular Knott's Scary Farm's "Halloween Haunt." Corner of the Sky recently closed a deal with Our Stories Films, the first fully urban entertainment film studio, to produce the studio's first motion picture comedy.

Phillips lectures about breaking into Hollywood on college campuses around the country. He remains very fond of his days at Duke University, where he received an AB in English and psychology. He also received an MBA from UCLA's Anderson School of Management before joining the ICM talent agency. Phillips currently lives in Los Angeles with his two Labradors, Goose and Maverick, and his Almighty daughter, Jillian.

A young, talented and successful manager/producer, **MATT LUBER** (Executive Producer) has gained a reputation for cultivating and representing some of the hottest emerging actors and writers, while at the same time maintaining a focus on producing intriguing projects.

His talent roster includes clients such as Paul Walker, Neal McDonough, Adam Goldberg, Malik Yoba, Lauren Holly, Jacob Vargas and Billy Zane. He represents Walt Becker, who just directed the box-office smash hit *Wild Hogs*. His thriving writers have set up numerous projects around town. Art Marcum and Matt Holloway have written *Iron Man* and sold *Convoy* and *The Authority* to Paramount. Marty Scott and Toni Kotite wrote *Brigg's Ballet* for New Line. Tiffany Paulsen wrote *Nancy Drew* for Warner Bros. Jeremy Haft and Eddie Gonzalez recently sold *Cookie Queen*, with Isla Fisher attached to star.

Luber just wrapped production on *Love Lies Bleeding*. He has also acted as executive producer of New Line's *Running Scared* and *Into the Blue*, an underwater thriller directed by John Stockwell for MGM. Additionally, he was a co-producer of *Noel*, a drama starring Paul Walker, Penélope Cruz, Susan Sarandon and Robin Williams.

Luber's interest in the entertainment business began early. After graduating in 1993 from the University of Arizona with a degree in media arts, Luber moved to Los Angeles and learned the inside workings of production as a production assistant on *Beverly Hills Cop III* and *A Little Princess* and through work on the Paramount scoring stage.

Luber quickly rose from producer's assistant to respected manager. After catching the eye of producer Gary Lucchesi and assisting him on *Primal Fear*, *Virtuosity*, *Gotti* and *Three Wishes*, Luber moved over to management and worked with John Carrabino at Gallin Morey Management. After only one year in the company's talent department, Luber was recognized for his work and offered a job in development at Leslie Morgan's Diamond Heart Productions. After working on *One True Thing* and setting up *Trim*, *The Last Day* and *My Ivy Walls*, Luber realized his heart was in management and returned to the management game and joined Evolution Entertainment. Using his strong development skills, Luber built a solid literary talent list. After a year, Luber expanded into a talent business that complemented his literary clients. A true entrepreneur, he then decided to start his own company, Rubicon Entertainment. Currently, he is partnered with Larry Schapiro and Lena Roklin at Nine Yards Entertainment.

One of the world's most admired and respected actors today, **TOM HANKS** (Executive Producer) also holds the distinction of being the first actor in 50 years to be awarded back-to-back Academy Awards® for Best Actor. In 1993, he was rewarded for his compelling performance as an AIDS-stricken lawyer in *Philadelphia*, and the following year he won the Oscar® for his outstanding performance in *Forrest Gump*. He also won Golden Globes for both of these performances. For *Forrest Gump*, Hanks won a Peoples Choice Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award, a Chicago Film Critics Award, a National Association of Theater Owners Male Star of the Year Award and the Hollywood

Women's Press Club Award. In addition to the many honors Hanks has received, he was named Man of the Year by the nation's oldest undergraduate dramatic group, Harvard's Hasty Pudding Theatricals, for his performance as astronaut Jim Lovell in Ron Howard's *Apollo 13*.

In 1996, Hanks made his feature film writing and directing debut with *That Thing You Do!*, which followed the meteoric rise to fame of a local rock band named The Wonders in the summer of 1964. The film's title song not only reached the top 10 in many contemporary music charts, but it was nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Original Song. Hanks also appeared in the film in a supporting role.

Born and raised in Oakland, CA, Hanks first became interested in acting during high school. He attended California State University, Sacramento, where he appeared in a production of *The Cherry Orchard* and met director Vincent Dowling, the resident director of the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival in Cleveland. Dowling invited Hanks to intern with the company, where he made his professional debut portraying Grumio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Hanks appeared in other Great Lakes productions, including *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, for which he received the Cleveland Critics Award for Best Actor. From Cleveland, Hanks went on to New York, where he appeared in his first feature film, *He Knows You're Alone*, and onstage in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Hanks got his first big break when he was cast as the lead in the ABC television comedy series *Bosom Buddies*. This led to starring roles in *Bachelor Party* and Ron Howard's *Splash*—a box-office hit that started him on his path to becoming one of Hollywood's busiest and most sought-after leading men. Hanks' many film credits include *Volunteers*, *Nothing in Common* and *A League of Their Own*. In 1988, with his box-office success established, Hanks found himself a critical success with acclaimed performances in *Punchline* and *Big* (for which he earned his first Academy Award® nomination and his first Golden Globe Award). The same year, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association recognized both performances, bestowing on Hanks its Best Actor Award.

Constantly challenging himself, Hanks served as executive producer for HBO's *From the Earth to the Moon*—an ambitious, 12-hour dramatic film anthology that

explored the Apollo space program. Not only did Hanks personally help make this show a reality, he directed the first episode and wrote and appeared in the final episode.

In 1998, Hanks starred in Steven Spielberg's war drama *Saving Private Ryan*, in which he played a soldier who went deep behind enemy lines to save a trapped private during the Allied invasion. He received another Oscar® nomination for his work. The following year he starred in *The Green Mile*, which was written and directed by Frank Darabont and was based on the six-part serialized novel by Stephen King.

In 2000, Hanks starred in *Cast Away*, for which he received yet another Oscar® nomination for his portrayal of the sole survivor of a plane crash who is marooned on a deserted island. *Cast Away* was directed by Robert Zemeckis, with a screenplay by William Broyles, Jr.

In 2000, he served as executive producer for another epic HBO miniseries, *Band of Brothers*, based on Stephen Ambrose's book. He also directed one of the episodes. The miniseries aired in spring 2001 to wide-scale critical acclaim, leading to a Golden Globe win for Best Miniseries in 2002.

In 2002, Hanks starred in the Depression-era drama *Road to Perdition*, opposite Paul Newman and Jude Law and under Sam Mendes' direction. It was followed by Spielberg's stylish caper *Catch Me If You Can*, in which he played opposite Leonardo DiCaprio. The film was based on the true-life exploits of international confidence man Frank Abagnale, Jr.

Hanks teamed again with Spielberg in *The Terminal*, opposite Catherine Zeta-Jones, and followed it with the Coen brothers' dark comedy *The Ladykillers*, the story of an eccentric Southern professor who assembles a band of inept thieves to rob the Bandit Queen, a Mississippi riverboat casino.

In November 2004, Hanks starred in the film adaptation of the Caldecott Medal-winning children's book *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg. Hanks portrayed The Conductor of this beloved children's book, in a film that reunited him with *Cast Away* director Robert Zemeckis.

Hanks was recently seen playing Robert Langdon in *The Da Vinci Code*, the film adaptation of Dan Brown's best-selling novel, which has broken box-office records around the world. The film is helmed by Ron Howard and also stars Audrey Tautou,

Paul Bettany, Ian McKellen and Jean Reno. He is currently in post-production on *Charlie Wilson's War* and *The Great Buck Howard*.

Hanks resides in Los Angeles with his wife, actress Rita Wilson, and their family.

Producing credits for **GARY GOETZMAN** (Executive Producer) include *The Ant Bully*, *The Polar Express*, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *Beloved*, *That Thing You Do!*, *The Silence of the Lambs* (winner of five Academy Awards®, including Best Picture), *Philadelphia*, *Devil in a Blue Dress*, *Miami Blues*, *Modern Girls*, *Amos & Andrew*, *Storefront Hitchcock*, *Neil Young: Heart of Gold*, the IMAX short *Magnificent Desolation*, the HBO series *Big Love* and the Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning miniseries *Band of Brothers*.

At age 20, Goetzman production managed Jonathan Demme's directorial debut, *Caged Heat*. He also produced the Talking Heads' concert film *Stop Making Sense*; Neil Young's long-form video *The Complex Sessions*; and music videos for Bruce Springsteen, Suzanne Vega, David Byrne and Jane Child's number one music video *Don't Wanna Fall in Love*, which he also directed. Goetzman is producing the upcoming HBO miniseries *John Adam*; Spike Jonze's feature adaptation of Maurice Sendak's beloved book *Where the Wild Things Are*; *The Great Buck Howard*, starring John Malkovich and Colin Hanks; *City of Ember*, directed by Gil Kenan; and *Charlie Wilson's War*, starring Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts and Philip Seymour Hoffman and directed by Mike Nichols.

A native of Los Angeles, Goetzman has a rich musical background and has written and produced songs for many recording artists, including Smokey Robinson, Natalie Cole, Chaka Khan, The Staple Singers, Thelma Houston, The Manhattans, David Ruffin and Robert John.

He has contributed his talents to many motion picture soundtracks, including *Something Wild*, *Married to the Mob*, *Colors*, *That Thing You Do!*, *Devil in a Blue Dress*, Wim Wenders' *Until the End of the World* and *Philadelphia*, which included Bruce Springsteen's Grammy and Academy Award® winner for Best Original Song, "Streets of Philadelphia." He produced the socially provocative and star-studded music DVD

What's Going On? for the Artists Against AIDS Fund. In 1998, Goetzman teamed up with Tom Hanks to form Playtone, a film, television and recording company.

IAN BAKER (Director of Photography) has earned a reputation as a talented cinematographer in both his native Australia and in the U.S. His most recent theatrical film credit is the visually stunning drama *Japanese Story*, starring Toni Collette. For the film, he won an Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award and Film Critics Circle of Australia Award for Best Cinematography.

Baker's additional feature credits include the HBO telefilm *Empire Falls*, directed by Fred Schepisi and starring Paul Newman and Ed Harris. Baker has a longstanding collaboration, which spans decades, with fellow Australian Schepisi. Baker began his career working at Schepisi's Film House production house soon after graduating from the prestigious Swinburne Film and Television School in Melbourne.

They previously worked together on *It Runs in the Family*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Fierce Creatures*, *The Chamber*, *I.Q.*, *Mr. Baseball*, *The Russia House*, *A Cry in the Dark*, *Roxanne*, *Plenty* and *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*.

Other motion picture credits include *Queen of the Damned* and *Everybody Wins*.

LINDA DESCENNA (Production Designer) began her career as a set decorator and was one of the first three women to join the set decorators union as a set dresser. She received her first Academy Award® nomination in 1980 for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. Four nominations for set decoration followed for her work on *Blade Runner*, *The Color Purple*, *Rain Man* and *Toys*.

DeScenna became a production designer on Barry Levinson's *Jimmy Hollywood* and went on to design *A Family Thing*, *Father of the Bride Part II*, *Mousehunt* and *Galaxy Quest*. *Evan Almighty* marks DeScenna's fifth collaboration with director Tom Shadyac. They have also worked together on *Bruce Almighty*, *Patch Adams*, *Liar Liar* and *Dragonfly*. Other recent motion-picture credits include *Yours, Mine and Ours*, *The Pacifier* and *Bringing Down the House*.

SCOTT HILL (Film Editor) is a talented editor whose most recent motion-picture credits include the comedies *Accepted*, *Monster-in-Law*, *Win a Date With Tad Hamilton!* and *Just Married*.

Hill previously collaborated with director Tom Shadyac as an editor on *Bruce Almighty*.

JUDY RUSKIN HOWELL (Costume Designer) was born in Philadelphia and attended the Tyler School of Fine Arts there and in Rome. She designed costumes for four previous Tom Shadyac films: *Patch Adams*, *Liar Liar*, *Dragonfly* and *Bruce Almighty*. Her career includes a diverse collection of films including the period drama *Remember the Titans*, Robert Redford's *The Horse Whisperer* and Albert Brooks' *Mother*.

She designed for Alfonso Arau on *A Walk in the Clouds* and for three films in which Billy Crystal starred—*Forget Paris*, *City Slickers* and *City Slickers II: The Legend of Curly's Gold*. Her costume designs were featured in Forest Whitaker's *Waiting to Exhale* and Nora Ephron's *Sleepless in Seattle*. Howell made her debut on Oliver Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July*. Her other credits include *Dreamer: Inspired by a True Story*, *Guess Who*, *Melinda and Melinda*, *My Life*, *Jennifer Eight*, *Man Trouble* and *Young Guns II*.

JOHN DEBNEY (Music by) earned an Academy Award® nomination for his score in Mel Gibson's film phenomenon *The Passion of the Christ*. Debney's music was recently heard in 2006's *Barnyard*, *The Ant Bully*, *Idlewild*, *Everyone's Hero* and 2007's *Georgia Rule*; and soon it will be heard in the video game *Lair* and *Sin City 2*.

Debney has worked repeatedly with several noted directors, including Garry Marshall on his other films from *The Princess Diaries*, *The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement* and *Raising Helen*; Robert Rodriguez on *Spy Kids*, *Spy Kids 2: Island of Lost Dreams*, *Sin City* and *The Adventures of Sharkboy and Lavagirl 3-D*; Jon Favreau on *Elf* and *Zathura*; and Tom Shadyac on *Liar Liar*, *Dragonfly* and *Bruce Almighty*.

His extensive film credits include *The Pacifier*, *Swimfan*, *The Scorpion King*, *Snow Dogs*, *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*, *Scary Movie 2*, *Cats & Dogs*, *Heartbreakers*,

The Emperor's New Groove, End of Days, Inspector Gadget, Paulie, I Know What You Did Last Summer, The Relic, Little Giants and *Hocus Pocus*, to name but a few.

Debney's classical training as a composer has led him to emphasize live performance. He has conducted some of the world's greatest orchestras (performing his original works) and recently enlisted master violinist Joshua Bell to perform on his score for *Dreamer: Inspired by a True Story* and trumpet legend Arturo Sandoval for the score to *Idlewild*. Following the success of *The Passion of the Christ* film, he premiered "The Passion of the Christ Symphony" in Rome, featuring an 83-person choir and 96-piece orchestra.

In recognition of his many accomplishments, Debney, only in his 40s, received ASCAP's prestigious Henry Mancini Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005.

—*evan almighty*—