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# SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

BIG BEACH PRESENTS  
A BIG BEACH Production  
In Association with  
ROSTO, INC. / OLIVE PRODUCTIONS

# PUZZLE

Directed by  
MARC TURTLETAUB

Screenplay By  
OREN MOVERMAN  
and POLLY MANN  
Based On The Film ROMPECABEZAS  
By NATALIA SMIRNOFF

Opens NY/LA  
102 min

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## CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Agnes: KELLY MACDONALD

Louie: DAVID DENMAN

Ronnie: DANIEL SHERMAN

Gabe: AUSTIN ABRAMS

Ziggy: BUBBA WEILER

Ezster: HELEN PIPER COXE

Grocery Clerk: MANDELA BELLAMY

Nicki: LIV HEWSON

Fanny: LORI HAMMEL

Train Conductor: LAWRENCE ARANCIO

Puzzlemania Clerk: SEBASTIAN CHACON

Father Kutsah: BARRY GODIN

Robert: IRRFAN KHAN

Subway Singer: MATTHEW SHIFRIN

Maria: MYRNA CABELLO

Aunt Emily: AUDRIE NEENAN

Puzzle Competition MC: MHARI SANDOVAL

## CREDITS

Directed By  
Marc Turtletaub

Screenplay By  
Oren Moverman  
And Polly Mann

Based On The Film "*Rompecabezas*"  
By Natalia Smirnoff

Produced By  
Wren Arthur, P.G.A.  
Guy Stodel, P.G.A.

Produced By  
Marc Turtletaub, P.G.A.  
Peter Saraf, P.G.A.

Production Designer  
Roshelle Berliner

Editor  
Catherine Haight, ACE

Costume Designer  
Mirren Gordon-Crozier

Original Music By  
Dustin O'halloran

Music Supervisor  
Susan Jacobs

Casting By  
Avy Kaufman, CSA

## SYNOPSIS

PUZZLE is a closely observed portrait of Agnes, who has reached her early 40s without ever venturing far from home, family or the tight-knit immigrant community in which she was raised by her widowed father. That begins to change in a quietly dramatic fashion when Agnes receives a jigsaw puzzle as a birthday gift and experiences the heady thrill of not only doing something she enjoys, but being very, very good at it.

After years of concerning herself exclusively with the needs and wants of her husband Louie and sons Ziggy and Gabe, Agnes has found something that *she* wants to do. Stepping out of her domestic bubble to pursue her new hobby, Agnes meets Robert, a wealthy, reclusive inventor who immediately recognizes her talent and recruits her as his partner for an upcoming world jigsaw tournament. Each day she spends out in the world, puzzling and conversing with Robert, takes Agnes further along on the road to a new understanding of herself and her strengths. With that understanding come new insights and an assertiveness that finds her speaking out on her own behalf and pushing back against the assumptions and routines that have until now defined her role in her family. Ultimately, Agnes will decide for herself what comes next.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

This is a story so rarely seen in film, one about a woman over 40 finding her true self. Agnes is a suburban woman who has spent her entire life attending to her father, husband, and sons until she discovers - in the most unlikely of ways - her own voice. I grew up in New Jersey with a mother who doted on her husband and son and didn't get to live the life she would have liked to live. To discover such a story in a screenplay as powerful as this was irresistible.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“Life is random, but when you finish a puzzle you know you’ve made all the right choices.”

This wistful observation, spoken by one of the competitive jigsaw puzzlers at the center of *Puzzle*, articulates the subtle lure of puzzles in this quietly surprising character drama. As explained by PETER SARAF, one of the film’s producers, “You think of jigsaw puzzling as something incredibly solitary and inward, something that pulls you into a smaller world, but in *Puzzle*, this very solitary activity actually opens up the world for our heroine.”

Collectively, the filmmakers who bring us *Puzzle* have opened up the world for many years with beguiling stories and complex characters. *Puzzle* marks the directorial debut of longtime producer MARC TURTLETAUB, Saraf’s partner in Big Beach Productions and also a *Puzzle* producer. Big Beach has produced such acclaimed and popular character-driven films as *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Everything Is Illuminated*, *Away We Go*, and *Loving*. Big Beach collaborates on producing *Puzzle* with Olive Productions’ WREN ARTHUR (*Submission*, *Final Portrait*, *A Prairie Home Companion*) and producer GUY STODEL (*Be Kind Rewind*, *Bastille Day*). Screenwriter OREN MOVERMAN (who shares writing credit with POLLY MANN) adds *Puzzle* to his list of distinguished script credits, which include *The Dinner*, *Time Out of Mind*, *Love & Mercy*, and *The Messenger*.

*Puzzle* is adapted from the Argentine film *Rompecabezas* (Spanish for puzzle), writer/director NATALIA SMIRNOFF’s debut film set in Buenos Aires. Producer Stodel, a former acquisitions executive, had long experience identifying foreign films that could click with American audiences; he was charmed by the idea of jigsaw puzzles as an unlikely instrument of self-discovery, and saw in *Rompecabezas* a strong candidate for an English-language adaptation.

“The film’s sensibility was very Argentinian, but it had a universal story about a middle-aged woman who’s been underestimated and taken for granted by her family,” Stodel explains. “She discovers she has this talent for jigsaw puzzling and secretly enters a competition with a man she meets through an ad. The puzzles are the catalyst for figuring out her life and relationships and making choices. That’s something anybody can identify with.”

After acquiring adaptation rights, Stodel teamed up with producer Wren Arthur, who recalls: “I fell in love with this character, with her vulnerability and her courage in trying to figure out who she was in a roomful of men who weren’t really interested in knowing her. It was a very specific way to show a woman waking up and reckoning with her life. It’s small but it’s hers and it’s real. I’d never done an adaptation before and thought it was a really exciting opportunity.”

In late 2013, Arthur and Stodel began developing the screenplay with Moverman, with whom Arthur had worked on several projects.

Moverman, who grew up in Israel, was intrigued by the story’s heroine, a product of traditional immigrant culture where women tend to husband, home and children, and men are the unchallenged heads of households. “I liked the idea of a woman who finds a way out of a world that keeps her very limited when she has all this potential,” remarks Moverman. “And I related to

it from a personal perspective, from the world I grew up in. I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to write a leading female character who has a real voice and ultimately makes choices that are first and foremost right for her, and not just for the people in her environment.”

Big Beach had actively been seeking a directing project for founding partner Marc Turtletaub when Moverman’s script crossed their door. As Turtletaub recalls, “The story resonated for me on a personal level because I grew up in New Jersey with a mother who doted on her husband and son and didn’t really get to live the life that she would have liked in New York,” he explains. “I wasn’t looking for something that connected me to my mother’s own story, but it did do that. I also love stories about people finding their authentic selves and becoming free. It’s rare to find one with a female at the center who is past the age of forty, and it’s rarer still to find it in a screenplay as beautiful as Oren’s.”

Turtletaub and Moverman were particularly mindful of giving the characters the full measure of their humanity and avoiding stereotypes. “We didn’t want Agnes to be this browbeaten housewife or someone who is mundane or without interests,” says Turtletaub. “So, the film reveals all these little gems about her as it progresses.” Likewise, “We didn’t want her husband to be a clichéd browbeater; instead, we see this big guy who’s just unaware. Creating fully dimensional characters starts with the writing, really—and Oren is a brilliant writer.”

*Puzzle* introduces Agnes, played with still-waters-run-deep eloquence by KELLY MACDONALD (*T2 Trainspotting*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Goodbye Christopher Robin*) on the afternoon of a birthday party in her home. She moves virtually unnoticed among her guests, quietly serving platters of food and cleaning up messes (although, as we discover, it’s her own birthday). She’s a believer in order and routine: running the household and tending to husband and sons as she tended to her widowed father before them; volunteering at church; cooking dinner for the family. A birthday gift of an iPhone bewilders her—she’s firmly in the analog world—but a gift of a thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle absorbs her with unexpected delight.

“She’s just sort of there in body,” says Macdonald, who was intrigued by the self-effacing Agnes. “She was married and had children very, very young, probably straight out of high school. Her life has been almost pre-ordained. Her character arc was very appealing in that she eventually, in her own way, finds herself.” Agnes secretly thinks of herself as a mathematician; her mind silently whirs away beneath her placid exterior, and her flair with puzzles shifts this clamped-down part of her persona into gear.

“It was important to us that Agnes not be drawn as a depressed or melancholic character,” comments Turtletaub. “She is living the life she knows. And then as she discovers this unique talent that she has, a door is opened on a world that she didn’t know existed.” (Indeed, who knew that competition jigsaw puzzling is a subculture?)

As Big Beach’s Saraf relates: “Kelly McDonald is somebody we’ve admired for a really long time. Whether it’s in a comedy or in a drama, in a period piece or a contemporary piece, she blows you away. She always brings a sense of true empathy and pathos, and you can’t help but identify with and fall in love with the characters that she draws. It was such a wonderful, exciting day when we got the call that she’d read the script and wanted to be Agnes. We couldn’t imagine a more perfect person to play Agnes.”

With Macdonald on board, the filmmakers turned their attention to casting the film's male roles. As they began creating a list of potential candidates with casting director AVY KAUFMAN, Peter Saraf had a flash of inspiration and suggested acclaimed Indian actor IRRFAN KHAN (*Life of Pi*, *Jurassic Park*) for the part of Robert, the wealthy puzzle master who recognizes Agnes's talent—which outshines his own—treats her without condescension, and sees her beauty and strength with fresh eyes. "Irrfan is one of those actors who immediately draws you in and you can't take your eyes off him," says Saraf. "I thought about the scene where Agnes goes to meet the man who placed the personal ad for a puzzle partner. Wouldn't it be extraordinary if Irrfan Khan opens the door?"

As it happened, after a number of Bollywood studio films, Khan had been hoping to find a smaller, more personal movie. He found it was an irresistible offer. "I was in love with the script and its language," he affirms. "Marc sent me his short film, which I loved. There were great producers behind it. And Kelly is an extraordinary actor whom I've admired for years. The combination of factors was very promising and I thought it would be great fun to do this simple, beautiful movie."

Khan found much to explore in Robert, who is at a low point in his life when he meets Agnes. His wife has abruptly left him and he has given up on his career as an inventor, certain that his breakthrough discovery is all he will ever be able to achieve. "Robert has closed his doors to everybody but he's looking for something to engage him emotionally," Khan reflects. "I think that when Agnes comes to his house, he's not ready for a relationship at all. But he is drawn to her personality. There's some distinct quality about her, which is very spontaneous. She has an intelligence and perceptiveness about the world. When they meet, she is in her shell, he is in his shell. Somehow, together, those shells are broken. It's a very sweet love story."

Turtletaub was delighted with Khan's approach to his character. "Irrfan brings an unexpected lightness to Robert, and there's no way you can predict something like that," the director remarks. "There's a famous old director who said, 'Every time I cast an actor, it's like a little death,' because the director had an idea how that role should be played. To me, it's just the opposite, it's a birth. Every time that we cast one of our actors, it felt like, 'Oh that's a way of interpreting that character that I never envisioned.' And that was particularly true of Irrfan. He's tremendous. And the chemistry between him and Kelly was wonderful."

If Robert falls in love with the unexpected side of Agnes's character, her husband values her solid, reliable predictability above all else. Louie, played by DAVID DENMAN, is a hard-working auto mechanic whose conception of family is the one he grew up with: the husband is the breadwinner, head of the family and sole decision maker; the wife stays home and tends to her husband, children and household.

Comments Denman, "Louie has very strong ideas about what everyone's role in the family should be, and that's worked all right for him for twenty years. He's a good guy, but there's a lot he doesn't understand about his wife, a lot he doesn't understand about his kids. When Agnes begins standing up for herself and challenging his ideas, it shakes the foundation of everything that he's known, everything that they've had and been through. Initially, he's very defensive and



confused; it doesn't make sense to him. But then he has to regroup and reassess the situation and we see him begin to make changes. To portray that journey was exciting to me.”

Turtletaub notes that the character of Louie presented certain challenges as a man who loves his wife but has also failed to see her fully. “Because he loves Agnes, Louie tries to change. And as much as we see his weaknesses, we begin to see a different Louie. David had to skirt that line of being unlikeable and very likeable. That’s very difficult to do and he did it beautifully.”

Rounding out Agnes’ immediate family are BUBBA WEILER as Ziggy and AUSTIN ABRAMS as Gabe, her sons. Weiler notes that Ziggy has always appreciated and connected to his mother. He is heartened by her burgeoning independence. “I think Agnes is Ziggy’s best friend,” he comments. “They are so in tune with each other and they can read each other's feelings in a way that the rest of the family just doesn’t. When Ziggy sees Agnes becoming more confident and coming into herself, it inspires him to do the same thing.”

Younger brother Gabe is portrayed as a bit spoiled and cocky—not only does he fail to lift a finger around the house, but he expects his mom to prepare a special diet for his vegan Buddhist girlfriend at the family dinner table. Still, Abrams found his likeable side: “Gabe is trying to get outside of the family, and his girlfriend is helping him open up to new ways of thinking. Gabe is aware that his mom is very sheltered and giving her the iPhone is his way of encouraging her to do that for herself.” (Go Gabe—but no mocking mom’s digital illiteracy.)

*Puzzle*’s location shooting, over approximately six weeks in the spring of 2017, filmed the family scenes first in Yonkers and then moved into the Manhattan townhouse that serves as Robert’s posh but strangely hollow habitat. Agnes and her family live in the house where she grew up with her father; it hasn’t changed in forty-odd years. Robert’s mansion is home to a well-traveled, wealthy and idiosyncratic individual who is very much alone. Turtletaub sought to distinguish between the two locations through cinematography, lighting and production design.

Describing the strategies employed by director of photography Chris Norr, Turtletaub recalls: “Since much of the action is interior in both places, it becomes a little tricky to create individualized looks, but through the way he handled lighting and camera, Chris achieved a different feel between New York and Bridgeport. It’s palpable but also subtle. For example, in terms of lighting in Bridgeport we used smoke machines to create a sense that this house has been here forever, unchanged, and that this family has been frozen in time. You get the sense in the beginning of the movie that you’re in a different era. When we moved to New York City, inside the house it was brighter and we tried to accentuate the light differently.”

Production designer Roshelle Berliner introduced strong and sometimes surprising elements to the sets. “Roshelle gave a clear, unexpected feeling about that house,” Turtletaub comments. “She put up this metallic, reflective wallpaper, which was great for camera. But it also created an interesting backdrop for Agnes. So, in the first scene, Agnes could stand against a wall in a dress that was similarly patterned and almost get lost. For Robert’s house, we took out most of the furniture that was in the location to create a sense that it was kind of empty in his life at that point, with his wife being gone. We just let the architecture of the house speak for the isolation of this man.”

Costume designer Mirren Gordon-Crozier created a wardrobe for Agnes that subtly tracks with her emotional journey. At the birthday party that opens the film, Agnes wears a dress with a print and silhouette reminiscent of the 1950s; as the film progresses, we see Agnes in separates that are more colorful and contemporary.

Before they began production, Turteltaub arranged various social events with Macdonald, Denman, Weiler and Abrams. The actors and the director took a cooking class together and went out for meals. Rather than have rehearsals, Turteltaub wanted them all to be able to talk about the film, characters and scenes while getting to know each other in comfortable circumstances. It made a difference, says Denman. “It would have been so much harder to meet everyone for the first time on the set. It’d be like ‘Say hello to each other ... okay, now become a family!’ Marc was smart enough to put those situations in place for us to spend time together and get to know each other in an organic way. And we all got along really well, immediately.”

The actors took advantage of the outdoor space in Yonkers. To Macdonald’s delight, they found lawn chairs at the location, which they’d set up in the front and gardens. “We were in heaven with those chairs. In director’s chairs, you’ve got to sit upright way up high. I’m quite short so I have to climb up a step to get into one. With a lawn chair, it’s much more sociable,” she laughs. “When we were done, I waved my family goodbye and went off to Manhattan to do my scenes with Irrfan.”

As singular as Agnes is, her story speaks to something universal. Says Saraf, “I think that idea of following your heart, of following your passion, and allowing yourself to be happy is something that will resonate with people.”

Says Macdonald, “Everybody’s got their special gift, I believe. And not everybody is fortunate enough to find it or to recognize as a gift. Because it’s a simple thing, jigsaw puzzling, it’s not like the theory of everything or something that’s going to change the world. But Agnes certainly changes a few lives in the time that we see her in the film. She changes everybody in her life and changes her life.”

## CAST BIOS

**KELLY MACDONALD**, a native of Glasgow, Scotland, is perhaps best known as Margaret Schroeder on “Boardwalk Empire,” the voice of Merida in BRAVE and for pivotal roles in work by some of the most influential filmmakers of our time – NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN by the Coen brothers, Robert Altman’s GOSFORD PARK and Danny Boyle’s TRAINSPOTTING.

Earlier this fall, Macdonald starred opposite Domhnall Gleeson and Margot Robbie in Simon Curtis’ GOODBYE CHRISTOPHER ROBIN, for which she received a British Independent Film Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress. Macdonald also starred in BBC One’s “The Child in Time” an adaptation of Ian McEwan’s award-winning 1987 novel, with Benedict Cumberbatch. The 90-minute drama will also air on PBS’ “Masterpiece” this spring.

Next fall, she plays Mrs. Hudson in the comedy HOLMES & WATSON with Will Ferrell, John C. Reilly, Hugh Laurie and Ralph Fiennes for director Etan Cohen and Columbia Pictures. On television (Sky in the UK) next year, Macdonald stars in “Urban Myths: Mick & Margaret,” a light hearted and touching look at the decades long ‘special relationship’ between Britain’s greatest rock star and the Queen’s sister. Macdonald is Princess Margaret; Jamie Campbell Bower is Mick Jagger.

Macdonald made her acting debut as Diane, Renton’s (Ewan McGregor) one-night stand in TRAINSPOTTING (1996) and revisited the part 20 years later in Boyle’s T2 TRAINSPOTTING. In 2001, she played Mary, the visiting servant who works for Maggie Smith’s countess in GOSFORD PARK (SAG, Critics Choice Awards for the ensemble). More recently, Macdonald garnered the London Critics Circle Award for British Supporting Actress, a BAFTA nomination and a SAG Award (ensemble) for her performance as Carla Jean Moss, wife to hunter Llewelyn Moss (Josh Brolin) in NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN.

In 2012, Macdonald gave voice to Merida, the tomboyish princess/heroine of BRAVE, Pixar’s first feature with a female protagonist. Set in the mystical Scottish Highlands, the fairy tale follows Merida’s adventures as she defies a sacred custom of the land and inadvertently brings turmoil to the kingdom. She reprises the role in next year’s RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET: WRECK-IT RALPH 2.

Macdonald’s screen credits also include Philippa Lowthorpe’s SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS, Bronwen Hughes’ THE JOURNEY IS THE DESTINATION, with Ben Schnetzer and Maria Bello, THE DECOY BRIDE, with Alice Eve and David Tennant, CHOKE with Sam Rockwell and Anjelica Huston (Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Prize for the ensemble cast), NANNY McPHEE with Emma Thompson, LASSIE with Peter O’Toole, ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN for Mehdi Charef and Emir Kusturica, John Crowley’s INTERMISSION, COUSIN BETTE with Jessica Lange, ELIZABETH with Cate Blanchett, STRICTLY SINATRA, Gregg Araki’s SPLENDOR, Phil Joanou’s ENTROPY, Mike Figgis’ THE LOSS OF SEXUAL INNOCENCE, Hugh Hudson’s MY LIFE SO FAR, STELLA DOES TRICKS and SOME VOICES, opposite Daniel Craig. For TWO FAMILY HOUSE, Macdonald received an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Female Lead.

Macdonald also made cameo appearances as Ravenclaw's ghost, The Grey Lady, in HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS: PART 2, Marc Forster's FINDING NEVERLAND (as Peter Pan), Michael Winterbottom's TRISTRAM SHANDY: A COCK AND BULL STORY and THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY.

For television, Macdonald most recently starred in an episode of the acclaimed anthology series "Black Mirror" (Channel 4/Netflix), entitled "Hated in the Nation." James Hawes directs. Macdonald garnered an Emmy Award for her performance as the title character opposite Bill Nighy in the HBO original film THE GIRL IN THE CAFÉ, directed by David Yates from a screenplay by Richard Curtis. In 2010, received a Golden Globe Award nomination and shared a 2011 and 2012 Screen Actors Guild Awards with the cast of "Boardwalk Empire," the critically acclaimed HBO series from creator Terence Winter and executive producer Martin Scorsese. Macdonald starred for all five seasons as the complicated Irish widow and mother who captured the attention of Nucky Thompson (Steve Buscemi), the undisputed ruler of Atlantic City during Prohibition.

Macdonald also played Erica Bana's radio station colleague in Ricky Gervais' SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS, which debuted on Netflix last spring. She also co-starred with Tim Roth and John Simm in SKELLIG for SKY and portrayed journalist Della Smith in the groundbreaking BBC mini-series "State of Play."

**IRRFAN KAHN** is one of India's most prominent and celebrated actors, he is now creating waves in the west as well with his acclaimed performances in films like THE LUNCHBOX, LIFE OF PI, SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE, A MIGHTY HEART *etc.*

In 2016, Khan worked with Ron Howard on Dan Brown's INFERNO, where he also worked alongside acting stalwarts Tom Hanks, Felicity Jones and Omar Sy. In 2015, Khan played the role of Simon Masrani in the box-office smash hit JURASSIC WORLD, which grossed over 1.6 billion dollars worldwide. Khan can also be seen in the Academy Award® winning film *Life of Pi* and he also essayed an integral character in Marc Webb's THE AMAZING SPIDERMAN. Khan was honored with a Screen Actors Guild Award for "Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture" for his performance in Danny Boyle's Academy Award® winning film, SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE.

His latest stint as Sajjan Fernandes in Bafta – Best foreign film nominated THE LUNCHBOX – won hearts not only in India but all over the world. He also won the Best Actor-National Award for his epic performance as and in PAAN SINGH TOMAR in 2013. It is an Indian biographical film based on the true story of the athlete Paan Singh Tomar. He also appeared in 2007's LIFE IN A METRO for which he received a Filmfare Award.

Previously, Khan starred in Wes Anderson's THE DARJEELING LIMITED opposite Owen Wilson, Adrien Brody, and Jason Schwartzman and in Michael Winterbottom's A MIGHTY HEART opposite Angelina Jolie. In 2006, Khan starred in Mira Nair's THE NAMESAKE for which he received an Independent Spirit Award nomination for his performance.

Khan gained international acclaim for his role in *THE WARRIOR*. A film circa feudal India in the State of Rajasthan, Khan plays Lafcadio, a fierce warrior who abandons his cruel and sadistic Lord who reigns terror on all and decides to put down his sword to seek peace in his village. In 2003, Khan starred in Indian born writer/director, Asvin Kumar's short film, *Road to Ladakh* which received warm reviews at international film festivals. Khan had also starred as the title role in *Maqbool*, the critically acclaimed adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, as well as the Bollywood film, *HAASIL*. Khan received Screen Weekly Award and Zee Cine Award nominations for his work on *Maqbool*, and a Screen Weekly Award, Zee Cine Award, and Filmfare Award for his role in *Haasil*. Additional credits include, *EK DOCTOR KI MAUTH*, *SUCH A LONG JOURNEY*, *ROG*, *ACID FACTORY*, *NEW YORK*, *PAAN SINGH TOMAR*, and *NEW YORK, I LOVE YOU*. With his start in television, Khan has starred in numerous series in India such as *Chanakya*, *Sara Jahan Hamara*, *Banegi Apni Baat*, *Chandrakanta*, *Star Bestsellers*, *Sparsh*, *Darr*, *Kahkashan*, *Mano Ya Na Mano*, and *Kyaa Kahein*. He also starred in the Golden Globe winning HBO series, *In Treatment*. In its third season, Irrfan plays Sunil, a recent widower and new immigrant from Calcutta who now lives with his son's family in Brooklyn and is struggling with his life in America.

Khan received a fellowship at National School for Drama and after graduating began acting in television and theater. Born in Jaipur, Khan is married to writer, Sutapa Sikdar. He currently splits his time between India and Los Angeles.

**DAVID DENMAN** is a SAG award-winning actor who is continually cited for his standout performances on television, screen and stage. After graduating from the famed Juilliard School, he made his feature debut opposite Gene Hackman and Keanu Reeves in the football comedy *THE REPLACEMENTS*. He recently starred in Michael Bay's Paramount feature *13 HOURS*, playing David 'Boon' Benton, one of the members of the security team who fought to defend the American embassy in Benghazi from terrorists. In 2017, Denman starred in Lionsgate's superhero film *POWER RANGERS* and Steven Soderbergh's heist thriller *LOGAN LUCKY*.

Denman's other feature credits include Joel Edgerton's directorial debut *THE GIFT*, opposite Jason Bateman and Rebecca Hall, *JOBS*, starring Ashton Kutcher, Jason Reitman's *MEN, WOMEN, & CHILDREN*, *AFTER EARTH*, directed by M. Night Shyamalan, *SHUTTER*, *SMART PEOPLE*, Disney's *OUT COLD*, the Tim Burton Oscar-nominated feature *BIG FISH* opposite Ewan McGregor, *WHEN A STRANGER CALLS*, *LET GO*, *FANBOYS*, *FAIR GAME*, *THE NINES*, *TAKE* and *THE SINGING DETECTIVE*. Denman made his big screen debut as the deaf tight end in the Warner Bros. football comedy *THE REPLACEMENTS*.

On the small screen, Denman recently starred on the supernatural Cinemax series *OUTCAST*, created by Robert Kirkman and Chris Black, and based on Kirkman's hit comic book series. He recently recurred on the CW series *ANGEL FROM HELL* and NBC's critically-acclaimed series *PARENTHOOD*. He is well-known for his role as 'Roy' on the Emmy Award-winning hit NBC series *THE OFFICE*. Denman also guest starred on the last season of the hit AMC series *MAD MEN* and appeared in the second season of HBO's universally-lauded *TRUE DETECTIVE*. Additionally, he starred on the FOX series *TRAFFIC LIGHT*.

Denman grew up all over Southern California, attending eight different schools along the way. After graduating from Fountain Valley High School, he attended the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco before receiving his B.F.A. from Juilliard.

**BUBBA WEILER** will next be seen in the ensemble thriller **THE RANGER**, produced by Larry Fessenden. Weiler also appeared in Drew Waters' 2016 feature **NEW WATER**, which was distributed by Broad Green Pictures.

On the small screen, Bubba has guest starred on shows including NBC's **CHICAGO PD/CHICAGO JUSTICE** crossover season finale, CBS All Access' **THE GOOD FIGHT**, NBC'S **THE MYSTERIES OF LAURA**, **THE SLAP** and CBS' **UNFORGETTABLE**.

A seasoned theater actor, Bubba was last seen as "Meeks" in the Classic Stage Company production of **DEAD POET'S SOCIETY** opposite Jason Sudekis and directed by John Doyle. His other notable credits include "Jem" in the Steppenwolf Production of **TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD**, "Francis" in the Vineyard Production of **THE BURNT PART BOYS**, "Tim" in the Playwrights Horizons production of **SCK BSTD**, "Peter" in the Goodman Theater production of **TALKING PICTURES** and "Jim" in the Goodman Theater production of **THE ACTOR**.

Bubba is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

**AUSTIN ABRAMS** is among Hollywood's young actors to watch, who at the age of 21 already has years of experience working on some of television's biggest shows including "The Walking Dead," "Shameless" and "Silicon Valley." Abrams was recently seen in the half-hour comedy "SMILF" alongside Connie Britton as her character's son Casey. "SMILF" premiered on Showtime in November 2017.

Austin has kept busy in the independent film world, booking three projects alone last year. Austin recently starred in the critically acclaimed comedy **BRAD STATUS**, co-starring opposite Ben Stiller who plays Abrams' father in the film. **BRAD'S STATUS** had its world premiere in September 2017 at the Toronto International Film Festival. He can also be seen in the 2017 indie films **WE DON'T BELONG HERE**, **TRAGEDY GIRLS** and **GRASS STAINS**. Additionally, in 2015 Austin starred opposite Nat Wolff and Cara Delevingne in the feature film **PAPER TOWNS**, based on John Green's best-selling book of the same name.

On the small screen, Austin has contributed to some of the most critically-acclaimed shows currently on television. He played the recurring character Ron in the fifth and sixth seasons of AMC's megahit series "The Walking Dead." Prior to his debut on "The Walking Dead," Austin

may have been best known for playing the hilarious smartass Todd Cooper on the MTV series “Inbetweeners.” Also had memorable turns on the HBO hit comedy “Silicon Valley,” as well as the acclaimed Showtime series “Shameless.”

**LIV HEWSON:** Born in Australia, Hewson first came to the attention of American audiences in Netflix’s dark comedy, *THE SANTA CLARITA DIET*, in which she stars as the smart-mouthed daughter of Tim Olyphant and “mombie,” Drew Barrymore. The show recently wrapped its second season and will air early next year.

This past March, she played opposite Zoey Deutch in Open Road’s supernatural thriller *BEFORE I FALL*, based on Lauren Oliver’s YA best-seller.

Even while breaking in the US, Hewson continues to garner attention in her native country; she joined the second season cast of the critically acclaimed BBC series *TOP OF THE LAKE* for director Jane Campion, and starred in the poignantly comedic short *LETS SEE HOW FAST THIS BABY WILL GO*, which garnered its director Julietta Boscolo the “Emerging Australian Filmmaker,” award at this year’s Melbourne International Film Festival.

## **FILMMAKER BIOS**

### **MARC TURTLETAUB (Director/Producer)**

Marc Turtletaub has been a producer for fourteen years through two production companies. In 2004, he co-founded Big Beach with Peter Saraf and has served as a producer on all of the company's films including the Academy Award-winning LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris. Turtletaub's other credits with Big Beach include the documentary LUCKY, directed by Jeffrey Blitz, Phillip Seymour Hoffman's directorial debut, JACK GOES BOATING, Sam Mendes' AWAY WE GO, Christine Jeffs' SUNSHINE CLEANING, John Crowley's IS ANYBODY THERE, Ramin Bahrani's CHOP SHOP, and Liev Schreiber's EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED. Big Beach's most recent releases are Jesse Peretz's OUR IDIOT BROTHER, Collin Trevorrow's SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED, Jordan Vogt-Roberts' THE KINGS OF SUMMER, and Jeff Nichols' LOVING. Prior to founding Big Beach, Turtletaub created Deep River Productions in 2000 with David Friendly.

### **OREN MOVERMAN (Writer)**

Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Oren Moverman is a cofounder of the newly established Sight Unseen Pictures, alongside Julia Lebedev and Eddie Vaisman, an independent production and financing company with offices in LA and NY. Moverman most recently wrote and directed THE DINNER starring Richard Gere, Laura Linney, Steve Coogan, Chloe Sevigny and Rebecca Hall. The Orchard-released film was an official selection at the Berlin Film Festival.

Moverman made his directorial feature debut with THE MESSENGER, co-written with Alessandro Camon and starring Ben Foster, Woody Harrelson, Jena Malone and Samantha Morton, which Oscilloscope released in 2009. THE MESSENGER premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and premiered internationally at the Berlin International Film Festival where it was awarded the Silver Bear for Best Screenplay, as well as the Peace Award. The film was also awarded the Gran Jury Prize from the Deauville Film Festival, and the International Critics Prize. Moverman received the Spotlight Award for Directorial Debut from the National Board of Review, and the film also received nominations for Best Screenplay and Best First Feature from the Independent Spirit Awards. The film was nominated for two Academy Awards - Moverman and Camon were nominated for Best Screenplay, and a Best Supporting Actor nomination for Woody Harrelson.

Following, Moverman directed RAMPART, a Millennium Entertainment release, which he co-wrote with novelist James Ellroy, starring Woody Harrelson, Sigourney Weaver, Robin Wright, and Brie Larson, and the IFC release, TIME OUT OF MIND, starring Richard Gere, Ben Vereen, Steve Buscemi and Jena Malone, which won The International Critics Award at the Toronto Film Festival.

As a writer, Moverman co-wrote Udi Aloni's JUNCTION 48, (The Orchard) winner of the Panorama Audience Award at the 2016 Berlin Film Festival and the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival International Award; Bill Pohlad's Brian Wilson biopic LOVE AND MERCY, (Roadside Attractions); Ira Sachs' MARRIED LIFE, (Sony Pictures Classics); Todd Haynes' Bob Dylan biopic I'M NOT THERE, (Weinstein Company) which earned an Oscar nomination for Cate



Blanchet; Bertha Bay-Sa Pen's FACE, (Indican) and Alison Maclean's JESUS' SON, (Lionsgate/Alliance Release).

As a producer, Moverman produced Joseph Cedar's NORMAN (Sony Pictures Classic) and Ido Fluk's THE TICKET (Shout! Factory), as well as serving as executive producer on JUNCTION 48, LOVE AND MERCY, and Anja Marquardt directorial debut SHE'S LOST CONTROL (Monument). He also produced the Sight Unseen film and Kent Jones' narrative feature debut, DIANE, executive produced by Martin Scorsese, and Guy Nattiv's SKIN.

At Sundance this year, Moverman had four films in competition at the festival — he produced Jennifer Fox's THE TALE, starring Laura Dern, Common and Ellen Burstyn, and Paul Dano's directorial debut WILDLIFE, based on the Richard Ford story, starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Carey Mulligan. Moverman also Executive Produced the Sight Unseen film from breakout director Reinaldo Marcus Green, MONSTERS AND MEN, and he also wrote PUZZLE, directed by Marc Turtletaub.

Upcoming for Sight Unseen, Moverman will produce Justin Simien's next feature, BAD HAIR, a satirical genre film about a woman with a possessed hair weave, Cory Finley's next feature, BAD EDUCATION, based on the true story of the largest public school embezzlement scandal in the U.S., and Moverman will write and direct SEA FOG, which Bong Joon Ho will also produce.

#### **WREN ARTHUR (Producer)**

Two-time Emmy winner, is a producing partner at Olive Productions, a New York City-based film and TV production company which she formed with Steve Buscemi and Stanley Tucci.

On the TV side, Olive has a POD deal with eOne, as well as a myriad of projects in development. These include great talent such as Oren Moverman, Morgan Neville, Justin Timberline, Ben Foster, Steve Zissis and Harpo.

On the feature side, a current release FINAL PORTRAIT, about the late artist Alberto Giacometti, written and directed by Stanley Tucci starring Geoffrey Rush and Armie Hammer.

Also to be released in March 2018 is SUBMISSION, written and directed by Richard Levine, starring Stanley Tucci and Addison Timlin, which will be distributed by Paladin.

Currently streaming is the documentary CHECK IT directed by Dana Flor and Toby Oppenheimer, as well as PAINT IT BLACK written and directed by Amber Tamblyn. PAINT IT BLACK is starring Janet McTeer and Alia Shaukat, and will land on Netflix in February 2018. MS. ARTHUR also produced films and TV with the legendary film director, Robert Altman including A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION and TANNER ON TANNER.

#### **GUY STODEL (Producer)**

Guy Stodel saw STAR WARS twenty-four times in the theater. Born in Israel and raised in South Africa, the son of a film producer and the grandson of a theater owner, Guy was naturally drawn to the entertainment industry.

Guy Stodel is a former Paramount Vantage head, New Line Cinema and Lionsgate executive, and Vendome Pictures President of Production turned producer with over twenty years' experience in the film, television, and new media space.

Guy has operated as a studio and acquisitions head, spearheading the North American division for a prolific foreign-based production / financing company, and co-founder of Rosto Inc. a film and tv production company, building a diverse slate of feature and TV projects in both the indie and more commercial studio space.

Guy's other producing credits including the remake of THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (2003), FRIDAY THE 13<sup>TH</sup> (2009), Michael Gondry's BE KIND REWIND featuring Jack Black, James Watkins' BASTILLE DAY aka THE TAKE featuring Idris Elba, and sci-fi thriller WHAT HAPPENED TO MONDAY, directed by Tommy Wirkola starring Noomi Rapace, Glenn Close and Willem Defoe.

As a former acquisitions executive, one of Guy's focus has been developing and producing feature and TV format remakes. Guy has built a diverse slate of feature and TV projects in both the indie and commercial studio spaces.

On the feature side, Guy's slate includes 25 KARAT, based on an elevated Spanish heist thriller adapted by Eric Garcia, THE TEARDOWN based on a hit Danish comedy adapted by Jordan Roter, SLEEP TIGHT based on a Spanish thriller adapted by Mikki Daughtry & Tobias Iaconis, and French thriller THE LAST DIAMOND, adapted for Sony Pictures.

On the TV side, Guy has set up several broadcast and cable projects, and is currently developing Danish format *Headhunter* for FX with 26 Keys / Noah Hawley (*Fargo*) producing, as well as the French Canadian format *The Invincibles* for Hulu.

Over the years Guy has worked with award winning directors and has extensive industry relationships in all film and television genres.

### **PETER SARAF (Producer)**

Peter Saraf co-founded Big Beach with Marc Turtletaub in 2004. Peter Saraf's producing credits include LOVING, 3 GENERATIONS, ME HIM HER, THE KINGS OF SUMMER, SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED, OUR IDIOT BROTHER, JACK GOES BOATING, SUNSHINE CLEANING, AWAY WE GO, IS ANYBODY THERE?, LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED, THE TRUTH ABOUT CHARLIE, ADAPTATION, Ulee's Gold and the feature documentaries MANDELA and THE AGRONOMIST. He has been nominated for Academy and Golden Globe Awards and has won multiple awards including the Spirit, Gotham, and PGA Awards. Peter is a VP of the PGA.

### **CHRISTOPHER NORR (Director of Photography)**

Cinematography literally runs in Christopher's blood. His father Carl Norr is an award-winning commercial D.P. who from a very early age engendered in his son a love for the beauty of the moving image. Conscious of also instilling a work ethic, Carl had Chris loading mags by his side

at the age of 13 and by the age of 18 Chris was getting paid to shoot short films. Christopher remains amazed that he makes a living doing what he loves.

His early experiences as a camera assistant landed him work on seminal films like Woody Allen's *Crimes and Misdemeanors* and Rob Reiner's *When Harry Met Sally*. During that time he also studied from the sidelines other directing greats like Sydney Pollack, Ron Howard, and Oliver Stone, and award-winning cinematographers such as Sven Nykvist, Giuseppe Rotunno, Bob Richardson, and Gordon Willis, but it wasn't long before he was at the center of the action, shooting numerous independent feature films, dozens of commercials and music videos himself and putting his learned skills to work. (Please see his resume or imdb page for a detailed list of projects.)

While Christopher is first and foremost a D.P., he continues to take advantage of all opportunities to learn more about the art form, which has included collaborations with Director Michel Gondry and D.P. Ellen Kuras on the visually experimental films *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* and *Be Kind Rewind* as well as operating on Martin Scorsese's *Rolling Stones Shine a Light* and Fran Lebowitz documentaries.

Brooklyn born and raised, Christopher still lives in the New York City borough with his family but travels frequently for both work and pleasure. Because his passion for capturing life in all its forms transcends the work place, he never leaves home without a still camera, his eyes always attuned to the kaleidoscope of subtle and not so subtle visual and graphic stories around him.

### **DUSTIN O'HALLORAN (Music)**

It's always tempting to draw conclusions as to why a musician feels drawn to a certain style or sound. In Dustin O'Halloran's case, one can't help but wonder whether it has something to do with a childhood spent in Phoenix, Arizona, one of America's most populated cities, yet one buried in the Sonoran Desert. Does this sparse yet vivid music reflect an early desire to escape from the hustle of urban life to the peace of the desolate wilderness? Or is it connected to Los Angeles, where he continued to grow up beneath clear blue skies in a thriving cultural metropolis? Perhaps, though, it's indicative of seven years spent living in the rural Emilia Romagna region of Northern Italy, where O'Halloran developed his idiosyncratic piano skills following time spent in the underappreciated but critically acclaimed band, *Devs*. Maybe, even, it's symptomatic of his current existence in Berlin, a city famed for its bohemian nightlife, but whose wide streets and plentiful parks offer a rarely celebrated tranquility that's unusual for a capital city. In all honesty, the answer's probably not important. What really matters is the music.

It's this music that has led O'Halloran to become known as one of the most significant figures in a scene that has variously – and perhaps misleadingly – become referred to as, among other things, 'neo-classical' or 'post-classical'. Neither are terms with which O'Halloran is comfortable: though he's worked predominantly with piano and strings in recent years, his collaboration with Adam Wiltzie (*Stars Of The Lid*) under the name *A Winged Victory For The Sullen* underlines his enthusiasm for other textures, and he's dabbled with electronica too, something he acknowledges is far from unlikely to happen again. Instead, O'Halloran would

prefer it if his music were simply labelled 'timeless', and a cursory listen to any of his work since the first Devics album suggests it's as accurate an epithet as one is likely to muster.

O'Halloran first received widespread recognition after Sofia Coppola invited him to contribute music to her award-winning MARIE ANTOINETTE. Amid the film's vibrant colors, and the admirably incongruous sounds of the new wave, post-punk and electronic acts who dominated the movie's soundtrack, O'Halloran's solo piano pieces provided welcome moments of eloquent stillness. He'd already been composing for a considerable time, though: in fact, it wasn't long after he'd begun to teach himself how to play piano at the age of seven – having been inspired by the sounds coming from the ballet lessons that his mother gave – that he started to perform his own work. Soon, the influence of the likes of Chopin, Arvo Pärt and Debussy was supplanted by a fondness for more esoteric acts – Cocteau Twins (whose Simon Raymonde would later sign him to his label, Bella Union), Gavin Bryars, Morton Feldman and Joy Division – and, by the time he was 19 or so, he was writing songs with Sara Lov, whom he met at Santa Monica College, where he was studying art.

Devics, whose hazy dream pop won them considerable plaudits, went on to record five albums. (Formally, they've never actually split up.) But, by the time their last release, *Push The Heart*, came out in 2006, O'Halloran already had two albums of solo piano pieces under his belt, written in the Italian farmhouse to which he'd relocated after the turn of the millennium. It was the first of these that attracted Coppola's attention – the second called largely upon work for the movie itself – but initially he'd been reluctant to release it, as he considered his compositions too naïve and his playing too unskilled. Arguably, however, it was their very Satie-esque simplicity that made them so haunting and earned them a place in the Bella Union catalogue, while the simultaneous emergence of other likeminded souls – including Jóhann Jóhannsson, Max Richter and Nils Frahm – helped establish a healthy musical environment in which he could flourish. Indeed, Frahm has regularly engineered recordings for O'Halloran, while Jóhannsson mixed 2011's *Lumiere*, his last studio album (released by UK independent label Fat Cat), and has a studio beside O'Halloran's.

Since the release of *Piano Solos Volumes 1* and *2* in 2004 and 2006, O'Halloran has gone on to score a number of films and TV shows. These include the Oscar and Golden Globe nominated LION which Dustin did in collaboration with Volker Bertelmann who he again worked along with for the recent score of THE CURRENT WAR, a historical film where Benedict Cumberbatch plays Thomas Edison.

Dustin has scored three full features films by Drake Doremus; BREATHE IN (starring Guy Pearce and Felicity Jones) and LIKE CRAZY, which won Sundance's Grand Jury Prize, as well as the sci-fi drama, EQUALS (starring Kristen Stewart, Nicholas Hoult and Guy Pearce), which he scored in collaboration with Sascha Ring of Apparatus. In 2015, O'Halloran scored the Indian drama UMRKA – which won the Audience Award at Sundance, and gave him his first opportunity to compose for a full string orchestra – as well as the comedy drama, *Transparent*, for which O'Halloran won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Main Title Theme Music. O'Halloran also released two further solo collections, including the live recording, *Vorleben* (2011), as well as winning further fans – and selling out prestigious seated theatres – with A Winged Victory For The Sullen, whose two albums (released by Erased Tapes in Europe and

Kranky in the USA) showcase O'Halloran's trademark, delicate melodies awash in his colleague Adam Wiltzie's ambient atmospherics. Their second album— *ATOMOS* (2014) — emerged from an irresistible invitation to work with Wayne McGregor, the Resident Choreographer of The Royal Ballet in London, and further emphasizes O'Halloran's eagerness to explore new musical realms. Dustin and Adam have also collaborated in scoring couple of films together *In the Shadow of Iris* (2016 – released on Erased Tapes as *Iris*) as well as the critically acclaimed *God's Own Country* (2017) as A Winged Victory for the Sullen.

Whatever his influences or inspirations, whether they be cultural or geographical, it's clear that O'Halloran's become a singularly serene presence in a world full of noise. A minimalist master of the intricate and the intimate, he's earned respect and admiration across the globe, and his work is more than deserving of – and increasingly associated with – the very accolade that he's always sought: timeless.

### **MIRREN GORDON-CROIZER (Costume Designer)**

Mirren Gordon-Croizer was born and raised in London, UK. On graduating with a BFA in Fashion and Photography from New York's Parsons School of Design, she began her career as a costume designer in film and television. Mirren's credits include Destin Cretton's recently released *THE GLASS CASTLE*; *UNICORN STORE* from first time director Brie Larson; *I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW* from director Reed Morano.

### **ROSHELLE BERLINER (Production Designer)**

ROSHELLE BERLINER began her career as the Production Designer on David Riker's *LA CIUDAD*, which found high praise in the festival and awards circuit including the SXSW Film Festival and the Independent Spirit Awards.

She has since designed a number of notable films and television series. Among her most television credits are, *HAPPY!* for Original Film and Syfy; *OZARK* for Netflix; *QUARRY* the 1972 period drama for HBO/Cinemax; *BELIEVE* from JJ Abrams and Alfonso Cuarón. Berliner's film credits include Lee Daniel's Academy Award Winning *PRECIOUS*; *GOD'S POCKET* for director John Slattery and producer Philip Seymour Hoffman; *THE DOMESTICS* for MGM; *PUZZLE* from director Marc Turtletaub; Written by Oren Moverman, based on Natalia Simirnoff's original story; Line produced by Eddie Rubin; Executive Produced by Natalia Simirnoff; Produced by Wren Arthur, Peter Saraf, Guy Stodel for Olive Productions.

Roshelle is a graduate of the Fine Arts Program at the prestigious Parsons School of Design.

### **BIG BEACH**

Founded in 2004 by Marc Turtletaub and Peter Saraf, Big Beach produces and finances independent films, television and theater. Since the company's founding Big Beach has produced over a dozen acclaimed independent films including Academy Award nominated *LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE*, *EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED* adapted from the novel by Jonathan Safran Foer, Colin Trevorrow's *SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED* and Jordan Vogt-Roberts *THE*

KINGS OF SUMMER. Most recently Big Beach produced the academy award nominated LOVING, directed by Jeff Nichols, starring Joel Edgerton and Ruth Negga and the upcoming 2018 Sundance Film Festival premieres PUZZLE, directed by Marc Turteltaub, starring Kelly Macdonald and Irrfan Khan and the animated feature based on Jack London's beloved best-selling novel WHITE FANG, directed by Alexandre Espigares and voiced by Rashida Jones, Nick Offerman and Paul Giamatti. Big Beach recently launched a television division run by Robin Schwartz who is currently overseeing production of showrunner Tanya Saracho's half hour Latinx drama, VIDA, for Starz.