

# LIONSGATE®



Lionsgate presents, in association with Participant, Kingdom Story Company, and Media Capital Technologies, a Lionsgate / Mandeville Films production, in association with 2DUX<sup>2</sup> Productions.

Rating: PG-13 for some strong violence, thematic material and language  
Genre: Drama, Family, Coming-of-age, Period  
Running Time: 2 hours  
U.S. Theatrical Release Date: October 4, 2024

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Hashtag: #BeBraveChooseKind #WhiteBirdMovie

Official Site: <https://whitebird.movie/>  
Publicity Materials: <https://www.lionsgatepublicity.com/theatrical/white-bird>  
Social Action Campaign: <https://participant.com/whitebird>

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### **Starring**

Ariella Glaser, Orlando Schwerdt, Bryce Gheisar, with Gillian Anderson, and Helen Mirren

### **Directed by**

Marc Forster

### **Screenplay by**

Mark Bomback

### **Based on the Book by**

R.J. Palacio

### **Produced by**

Todd Lieberman, p.g.a., David Hoberman, p.g.a., R.J. Palacio

### **Executive Producers**

Jeff Skoll, Robert Kessel, Kevin Downes, Jon Erwin, Andrew Erwin, Renée Wolfe, Alexander Young, Mark Bomback, Kevan Van Thompson, Christopher Woodrow, Connor DiGregorio

### **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

From the world of *Wonder*, which sparked a movement to “choose kind,” comes the inspirational next chapter: WHITE BIRD. Struggling to fit in at his new school after being expelled for his treatment of Auggie Pullman, Julian (Bryce Gheisar) is visited by his grandmother (Helen Mirren) and is transformed by the compassionate and heroic story of her attempts to escape Nazi-occupied France during WWII. From the director of *Finding Neverland*, WHITE BIRD reminds us to be brave and choose kind.

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### **TAGLINE**

Be Brave. Choose Kind.

### **ABOUT THE FILM**

WHITE BIRD is based on the critically-acclaimed, beloved graphic novel of the same name by R.J. Palacio, the author of *Wonder*. This fictional film is the creative companion piece drawn from the universe of the Lionsgate’s 2017 box office hit *Wonder*, starring Jacob Tremblay, Owen Wilson and Julia Roberts. For millions of readers and moviegoers, *Wonder* is the captivating, inspiring, and uplifting story of the power of kindness – how it can build bridges and change hearts. In WHITE BIRD, kindness even has the power to save lives, as Julian Albans, the bully who left Beecher Prep, is visited by his Grandmère from Paris and is transformed by her remarkable story of compassion and courage. As a girl in Nazi-occupied France during WWII, the young Grandmère goes into hiding with the help of a schoolmate, a young man who risks everything to give her the chance to survive. Together, they find beauty and love in the secret world of their own creation.

From Marc Forster, director of *Finding Neverland* and *Christopher Robin*, WHITE BIRD – just like its predecessor *Wonder* – is an emotional story about the ways that even in the most harrowing circumstances, empathy for others can make every difference in the world.

Mark Bomback (*War for the Planet of the Apes*) adapted Palacio’s novel for the screen and Mandeville Films’ David Hoberman and Todd Lieberman, who also produced *Wonder*, are producing WHITE BIRD along with Palacio. “David and I established a fantastic relationship with the author R.J. Palacio. She had mentioned this graphic novel [White Bird](#) to us and eventually showed us some of the artwork on it as she was

constructing it. When Lionsgate also got excited about the opportunity and eventually read the book, we all knew we had to make it," says Todd Lieberman.

Marc Forster came on to direct the project shortly after writer Mark Bomback submitted his first draft. "Marc and I had never met before, though it turned out we had some mutual friends, and I was frankly a bit nervous - as a screenwriter, you're always concerned that the director might not have the same film in their head as you do. But good luck just seemed to follow this project, as Marc and I couldn't have been in better sync creatively," says Bomback.

Renée Wolfe, Forster's partner in 2DUX<sup>2</sup>, serves as executive producer as does Mandeville Films' Alexander Young.

Elaborating on his creative process, Forster offers, "we like to choose stories that have the ability to raise consciousness in the world and *Wonder* definitely did that." As the graphic novel *White Bird* also offered Forster and Wolfe a similar opportunity, albeit on an even wider spectrum, they became deeply interested in further exploring Julian Albans' redemptive journey and bringing it to the screen.

Wolfe believes that Forster's inherent sense of empathy makes him the ideal director of a movie like *WHITE BIRD*. "There's a quiet stillness about him as a human being but he's watching and he's listening and he's observing. And how he takes that and translates it into a moving image and allows these still, magical spaces of the story to exist and unfold is something that this movie needed," she says.

Producer David Hoberman chimes in saying that "He's really gifted yet collaborative. That's a rare thing in our business. It's a great combination when someone is as talented as Marc, but also wants to hear what you are thinking and if you have ideas. It was a great collaboration that became a great friendship." Producer Todd Lieberman says, "Making an entire movie about kindness and strength of values, we needed someone like Marc to set the tone for everyone and luckily he was the perfect partner."

*WHITE BIRD* also reunites Forster with some of his key, behind-the-scenes collaborators from earlier films including cinematographer Matthias Königswieser (*Christopher Robin*), production designer Jennifer Williams (*Christopher Robin*), editor Matt Chessé, ACE (*Christopher Robin*, *World War Z*, *Quantum of Solace*), and three-time Academy Award<sup>®</sup>-winning costume designer Jenny Beavan (*Cruella*, 2021; *Mad Max: Fury Road*, 2015; *A Room with a View*, 1986). The composer is Thomas Newman (*1917*, *Spectre*), with casting by Kate Dowd, CDG.

Kingdom Story Company, who has been behind several faith-based Lionsgate hits, including *Jesus Revolution* and *Unsung Hero*, is teaming with the studio to leverage its reach to audiences in promoting *WHITE BIRD*. Kingdom Story Company is the premier destination for making films that ignite a "rush of hope," prioritizing faith, inspiration, and positive impact in storytelling.

The film stars Ariella Glaser, Orlando Schwerdt, Bryce Gheisar, with Gillian Anderson, and Helen Mirren, as well as Patsy Ferran, Ishai Golan, Jem Matthews, Stuart McQuarrie, Olivia Ross, Jo Stone-Fewings, amongst scores of other talented cast members.

*"It always takes courage to be kind, but in those days,  
such kindness could cost you everything."*

~ Grandmère

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

*WHITE BIRD* was shot primarily in Prague, Czech Republic during the early months of 2021 after approximately four months of pre-production.

Upon reassembling their core creative team on site, Forster and Wolfe immediately embarked upon discussions with director of photography Matthias Königswieser, production designer Jennifer Williams and costume designer Jenny Beavan regarding how the texture, look and feel of this story could be serviced by their work to illuminate character and story. "Good, thoughtful storytelling is about how you create a space that a character can inhabit naturally and how that space speaks to character. How do the costumes speak to character? How does the way that we shoot this and frame it and conceive of it spatially all speak to character? These are artistic conversations that we all spend months discussing and debating," elaborates Wolfe.

As the film takes place in both Nazi-occupied France during the Second World War as well as in contemporary New York City, one of the filmmakers' most pressing challenges was to painstakingly scour Prague and its environs for dozens of locations which could suitably double for both locales. Together with Czech locations manager Filip Doruska (*The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*), they found the ideal setting for the Beaumiers' modest home and barn on the property of the historic Stampach Mill, which dates back to 1780. Reconfiguring its existing two-story family residence as dictated by the actual geography, they designated the upstairs level as the Lafleurs' apartment and the downstairs level as that of the Beaumiers. As such, the Lafleurs would have an unobstructed view of the barn while the Beaumiers would be forced to sneak around the back of the barn in order to enter it without exposing the light source within.

Williams' team constructed the exterior of the barn on the Stampach site while its interior – where a majority of the film unfolds – was built on stage at Prague's legendary Barrandov Studios. She began by researching barns in the Norfolk and Sussex counties of her native England, as well as others in France, all the while paying particularly close attention to the stone, wood and other natural elements used. When she, Forster and other department heads began working together to conceive of the barn's ultimate design, all on board had to also consider how the interior spaces would be lit, how the magical realism scenes would be brought to life and, most importantly, whether a young girl could conceivably survive within the resulting structure. With all of these factors firmly in mind, they opted for a three-level, A-frame version with distinctive areas for each type of action. On the third or uppermost level, which the filmmakers referred to as "the nest," Sara creates her ersatz home and personal space. And from the tiny window there, she sees the beautiful white bird for the first of many times.

In regard to Königswieser's work Wolfe explains, "The lighting is very limited inside the barn because this is a place of sanctuary, a place where Sara would have to hide for two years, and not be able to be seen across the field at nighttime if she were to light a little candle or a light. So, we decided to make natural lighting that would come through the rooftop and translate into lighting that happens down inside the lower room in the barn. "Through the broken shingling and holes purposefully incorporated into the design of the barn's roof, Königswieser was able to introduce shadows, moonglow and more into Sara's world via his groundbreaking lighting design.

The film's art department also transformed parts of the well-preserved, medieval center of Kutna Hora, a UNESCO Heritage Site, into the French village of Aubervilliers aux Bois, including the exteriors of the Blum family's flat, Boulangerie Ballou, and the Cinema Mernuit where Julien first falls for Sara from afar. The interior of the latter was located at the Orechovka Cinema, one of the last classic cinemas in Prague. As its doors had already been closed for over twenty years, the filmmakers were luckily allowed to adapt its original art-décor interiors to suit their artistic needs and render it period-appropriate.

Other notable locations in the Czech Republic include stunning Grabstejn Castle -- reportedly first built atop its rocky ridge in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century – which was transformed into École Lafayette, and Brdy Forest which morphed into the mysterious Mernuit forest once the greens department trucked in and carpeted it with hundreds upon hundreds of midnight-blue-colored flowers for Sara and Julien's first kiss amidst the bluebells.

The location for the interior of the Albans' sophisticated NYC apartment was equally essential as Grandmère and Julian's scenes within bookend the film and serve as a powerful framing device for the flashbacks to Grandmère's (i.e., Sara's) earlier years. Sara Blum grows up to become a well-respected artist and painter – after all her visit to Julian coincides with a retrospective of her work at the Whitney Museum – so the art department was tasked with providing artwork throughout filming representative of her artistic development, from her earliest school renderings to her more sophisticated artwork in the barn and finally to the paintings of an artist being honored with such a prestigious retrospective. Some of the barn drawings, much to Forster's delight, were done by Ariella.

Just as Forster and director of photography Matthias Königswieser employed a combination of film and digital formats on *Christopher Robin*, they also opted for a similar hybrid aesthetic on *WHITE BIRD*. Here, they chose to shoot film for the natural exterior settings and digital for the darker interiors, namely that of the barn where Sara shelters for more than two years. Wolfe describes Königswieser as having achieved a "painterly quality" through his polished lighting and Palacio echoed this sentiment after having watched some of the dailies: "There are some scenes with Gillian Anderson and Ariella where she was brushing Ariella's hair, and I thought the lighting is so exquisite, the sun's coming in, it's just so beautiful. It was one of the most beautiful scenes because it's so intimate and so human and so warm. It felt like a Vermeer painting come to life, and I told Marc that."

Although Sara cannot physically leave the barn, she escapes its confines by harnessing the powers of her own uniquely vivid imagination. When she encourages Julien to join her in the front seat of the broken-down vehicle stored in the barn and pretend that they're on a magical journey, he's initially reluctant to play along with her. But soon they're visualizing incredible drives to faraway places, from Paris with its glorious

landmarks to an African veldt populated with leopards, hyenas and giraffes. With his own imagination finally untethered, he transports Sara to New York City and Broadway by ingeniously mounting a projector on the roof the truck, rigging it to the car battery, and projecting black-and-white celluloid images of Broadway onto the wall of the barn. Veteran visual effects supervisor Pierre Buffin generated these particular visuals and moved the vehicle from inside the barn to a separate VFX-dedicated green screen stage to film these elements with Ariella and Orlando while other departments were tasked with sourcing antique movie projectors and car batteries. Williams found those particular scenes so touching that “one could believe that she could live and exist for that length of time in that loneliness.”

“Marc likes reality and truth in the clothes. He prefers a subdued palette so the actors are very clear and not overwhelmed by their costume,” says costume designer Beavan. “The films I have made with him lend themselves to this approach - *Christopher Robin* and *WHITE BIRD*. Not without color but keeping it gentle.” she continues. “I think Marc is an amazing storyteller and that is what I enjoy doing - telling stories with clothes.”

“On this film, the casting has been absolutely stunning, both in England and in Prague. So, everybody who has come to me to be dressed, I always just think, ‘Oh gosh. You look right.’ So, it’s really been a joyous process, and it’s in the fitting and putting the clothes on the actor that you really know whether it’s going to work or not, and you work with them,” Beavan explains.

“It’s a wonderful story arc because she comes from a very reasonably well to do middle class family,” she says of Sara’s journey from a purely design perspective. “And then, of course, she has to go into hiding and she goes in literally in what she’s wearing, and the only other clothes she can get in those two years are what the wife, the mother of the boy whose helped her hide, can provide for her.” So, Beavan conceived of Sara’s barn costume as an ever-evolving, rough assemblage of whatever might have been on hand there along with the bits and pieces Vivienne could have brought in without arousing the suspicions of the Lafleurs or anyone else.

Anderson recalls that at her first costume fittings she loved every piece that Beavan had found for her character Vivienne. “It just worked perfectly, and a lot of them, they’re vintage pieces,” she lauds. “And you get such a great sense of the character through the tones and the colors and the textures that she’s chosen for all of them. There’s a suede jacket that Vivienne wears in a lot of scenes that, when I put it on, it automatically feels like her.”

While finalizing the Milice, Nazi and other military uniforms, Beavans’ relied heavily on the expertise of her Czech costume uniform supervisor Michal Chara (*Jojo Rabbit*, *The Courier*). “Michal is absolutely brilliant. And the other wonderful thing is he knows all these reenactors. So, they all come with incredible vehicles, and guns, and the skills, and all the knowledge of how to do it.”

Tracey Wells, the film’s vastly experienced hair and make-up designer, began the project with extensive research and by lovingly assembling mood boards for each character. Working closely with Forster during pre-production, they both agreed that her designs would be character-driven rather than period-driven. “We don’t have any big prosthetics on this film; we’ve worked it through paintwork, beautiful lighting, and through hair, and texture, and periods,” she explains.

For Sara, Wells’ designs needed to reflect both the passage of time and the development of her character at various life stages while establishing some connective tissue between the series of different actresses playing her throughout the film. The character appears in the film at ages 5 and 8, as a teenager in the barn over the course of two long years, as a young woman on her wedding day, as an adult and finally as Grandmère in her nineties.

“When you see her go to school, she’s very put-together, her hair looks very lovely, of the period. You can tell there’s a mother’s touch on the hair, she looks very groomed, she has little bows in her hair,” Wells says. She and Forster spoke at length about Sara losing sight of time once she’s been confined to the barn for an extended period time. With no mirrors available to her, they opted to come up with a few hairstyles that Ariella could pull off on her own by using available materials, for example, simply pulling her hair back and tying it up with a little piece of string.

Wells took a similar approach with Orlando and worked to express his character’s transition via her designs. “At the beginning, Tourteau sort of hides himself behind this little bang he has, and the hair looks very textured and natural, but as he progresses in his journey and becomes more confident in his love for Sara in the barn, we kind of morphed his look into something a little bit more confident, like the character has combed his own hair and pushed it back, and we can see his face more. So, I’ve loved seeing him developing that, for example,” she enthuses.

Anderson says of Wells' hair and make-up choices for her character, "She's just done a phenomenal job I think finding a look that is styled but it looks it was styled by a woman who works the land and who doesn't spend a lot of time on her own hair and appearance. She's a very grounded, un-vain wife and mother in rural France."

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During production, cast and crew often found themselves empathizing with Sara's prolonged confinement having all endured the effects of loneliness resulting from Covid-era isolation. Forster recalls, "I read the script during the first phase of Covid, and it had really gotten to me because it's the first time that I really understood emotionally what it means to not be able to leave a place and to be under lockdown." Says Forster.

After producer David Hoberman read the script, he says, "There was something about the story that I really responded to. It was heartfelt and dealt with humanity and themes of kindness."

Covid-related travel restrictions even barred author/producer Palacio from flying to Europe to visit the production in person. In an attempt to bridge the gap between them, Wolfe treated Palacio to an in-depth Zoom tour of Williams' expertly designed barn interior to visually share with her the primary space where Sara and Julien's relationship unfolds. Palacio later dialed in to join Forster for a Zoom tour of Cinema Mernuit's interiors during which she was able to congratulate the director, Ariella and Orlando on successfully wrapping principal photography on WHITE BIRD.

### **MORE ABOUT THE STORY**

As recounted by Grandmère (Academy Award® winner Helen Mirren, Best Actress, *The Queen*, 2006) to her troubled grandson Julian (Bryce Gheisar, here reprising his role from *Wonder*), her own idyllic, pre-war life as a young girl is shattered by the Nazi occupation of her village in Vichy France, and a boy she and her classmates once shunned becomes her savior and best friend.

Mirren elaborates on Julian's predicament: "as many young teenagers do, he's going through a difficult time when he can't quite find his place in the world and he's lashing out as a reaction to that." Adds Gheisar, "Julian in this film has changed in many ways since *Wonder*. He's realized that what he did was wrong, but he doesn't really understand why." By sharing her extraordinary tale of survival and her memories of the harrowing times she experienced at exactly his age, she hopes to help him understand that the world is a complicated and, sometimes, dark place. "But as Martin Luther King says, you have to find the light within yourself. Darkness will never drive out darkness. So that is the lesson that she is trying to teach him, simply through telling him her life story."

Ariella Glaser (*Radioactive*) takes on the role of Sara Blum, the young Grandmère as a child, while Orlando Schwerdt (*True History of the Kelly Gang*) is Julien "Tourteau" Beaumier, the classmate who, along with his parents, hides Sara at great personal risk. "The movie is called WHITE BIRD, and when I saw Ariella for the first time, I saw there's such a delicacy, such a gentleness. But at the same time, she's very strong," recalls Forster. He also saw the young actress as smart, capable and, possessing all of the traits necessary to authentically portray the multi-layered character of Sara.

For Glaser, WHITE BIRD communicates the same messages of kindness and compassion as *Wonder*, and it's Julian in the modern day who carries them forth. Recalling early conversations with Forster, she says "we talked about it being almost like a redemption story because at the end he chooses the right path." Schwerdt, having first read *Wonder* at age seven, touts himself as "an immediate R.J. Palacio fan" and "was just so thrilled to have the opportunity to bring the beautiful character of Julien to life - a character that I really, really loved in the *Wonder* universe."

Forster credits Schwerdt with the ability to metamorphose himself into anything he sets his mind to. "It's extraordinary working with both of them," he says of the young duo. "They both are so focused and disciplined and work so hard in their craft." Casting Ariella and Orlando as Sara and Julien was also based on the director wanting "the audience to fall in love with them, you want to go and transport them back to their first love, you want to experience this love, and you want to have actors who will be able to bring that love to life and make it believable."

As a young girl, Sara grows up in an upper middle-class, Jewish household with her vibrant, loving mom Rose (Olivia Ross), a mathematics teacher, and her gentle handsome father Max (Ishai Golan), a surgeon, in the quaint, picturesque French village of Aubervilliers-Aux-Bois. She happily attends École Lafayette where she and her best friends Mariann (Selma Kaymakci) and Sophie (Mia Kadlecova) alternately ignore or ridicule Julien or “Tourteau” (“The Crab”) for his ungainly, polio-afflicted movements. Despite his crutch and the cumbersome caliper he wears to walk, Julien finds solace and joy in running the projector at Cinema Mernuit on Saturday nights, where he often watches Sara enjoying herself in the audience.

When German soldiers suddenly arrive at École Lafayette to round up the Jewish schoolchildren in attendance, Pastor Luc (Stuart McQuarrie) and Sara’s teacher Mademoiselle Petitjean (Patsy Ferran) beseech her to flee the grounds and head for the woods with her fellow Jewish classmates. While the soldiers are in determined pursuit of Sara, it’s Julien who heroically steps up to whisk her to safety via the sewer routes snaking beneath the school’s subterranean levels. Familiar with the foul territory thanks to his father, a sewer worker, Julien calmly guides her through kilometers of knee-deep murk to the safety of his parents’ modest abode in rural Danneville. There he offers to hide her in the upper hayloft of their dilapidated stone barn but implores her to avoid the ever-watchful eyes of their upstairs neighbors the Lafleurs (Miroslav Taborsky as Monsieur Lafleur, Zuzana Hodkova as Madame Lafleur), an older couple who Jean-Paul suspects to be Nazi informants.

Two-time Emmy® Award winner Gillian Anderson (including Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series, *The X-Files*, 1997) steps into the role of Julien’s mother Vivienne Beaumier and British thespian Jo Stone-Fewings embodies Julien’s father Jean Paul Beaumier. Anderson’s first read of Bomback’s script resonated deeply with her. “I feel like, on the one hand, we’ve seen aspects of this story before in terms of the German occupation of France, and also the impact that that can have on communities for decades to come, but there’s something about the impact it has on these individuals and the choices that they make and the degree of compassion and kindness that they extend to each other, and at the risk of their own lives.”

Despite the harsh war rations and their own increasingly modest means, the Beaumiers selflessly supply Sara with shelter, blankets, food and water, and clean clothes – often Vivienne’s very own -- all the while promising to locate her missing parents. Season upon season, Sara remains hidden in the shadowy hayloft as the war rages on outside. And despite the constant sense of encroaching danger in Danneville, the Beaumiers’ kindness knows no bounds; Julien supplies Sara with colored pencils having remembered her love of drawing, while Vivienne even comes to the barn on occasion to wash her hair.

Stone-Fewings finds the story particularly resonant at this particular crux in history “because this is about isolation, which is something that we’re all experiencing at the moment.” He adds, “As much as it’s a film about empathy, and fortitude, it’s also about how do you live with yourself in isolation? Forster once heard tell of a Holocaust survivor who would instinctively wonder upon making a new acquaintance, ‘would this person have been kind-hearted enough to hide me?’ And in a sense, *WHITE BIRD* begs a similar question of each of us: ‘would we have been courageous enough to lend a hand?’”

Sara, a gifted artist from an early age, whiles away much of her time in the hayloft drawing in her cherished sketchbook or singing, her endless creativity always providing her with an inner sense of safety. Yet another thing sustains her as she loses track of the months and years: Julien’s nightly visits to the barn to reteach her the day’s school lessons and play cards. Slowly the barn becomes Sara’s entire world and Julien its very nexus. “It’s been incredible to do this film with Ariella. We approach the work differently and that has worked to our advantage as the characters of Julien and Sara learn to understand each other, while coming from very different backgrounds. Ariella brings a wonderful energy to every scene and it’s just such a delight to work with her.”

Sometimes the two of them clamber into the front seat of the barn’s rusty old car and go for imaginary drives to distant locales. Says Anderson of Sara and Julien’s special relationship, “they spend a huge amount of time together and some of that does play out in the fantasies they have riding in the car that’s in the garage and the projector that he sets up on the roof, which is just such a delightful idea and so romantic and magical. And so, he also brings her levity and laughter, and they have a lot of fun shared experiences as well, even though these are very, very dark times for all of them.”

Newcomer Jem Matthews plays Vincent, École Lafayette’s handsome, aimless bully who, along with his brash friends Jerome (Jordan Cramond) and Henri (Yelisey Kazakevich), has always tormented Julien. Says Matthews, “you see the way Vincent treats Julien in school progress throughout the story according to how much Vincent has been brainwashed into thinking that he’s not a human being.” Once Vincent is fully indoctrinated by the *Milice* (French Militia) and is assigned their signature black uniform and an automatic rifle, he’s even further emboldened -- and even rewarded -- for terrorizing Julien and Sara, along with any other Jews, members of the Resistance, or unfortunates who cross his

sightlines. After Sara's disappearance from the school, Vincent finds Julien in possession of one of Sara's personal belongings and he becomes more of a threat to their safety than ever before.

After Sara tells Julien of the white bird's visits, which she has begun to welcome as a supportive and almost divine presence, he hand-carves her a small wooden one as a birthday gift, which she goes on to treasure for the rest of her life. Forster sees her connection with the white bird as her connection with the rest of the world and ultimately with the love of her life. "This little white bird, in my opinion, always protects Sara."

### **AUDIENCE TAKEAWAYS**

Anderson describes the broader themes that thread throughout WHITE BIRD as "incredibly timely and indeed necessary for us as human beings to continue to be able to show up in our lives and extend ourselves toward communities and to the people that we care about and to those in need. It's one thing for people to even take on the idea of sheltering a refugee even though the act of doing that today would not mean a certain death. That is still something that people struggle with: extending themselves, opening up an extra bedroom or an extra room, it's a big ask. But to do that under the threat of death as well is a concept none of us can really, at least in this country, comprehend."

And Mirren hopes to see "audiences take away a sense of hope, a sense of belief in humanity. At the same time, a recognition of the dangers of certain kinds of attitudes and behavior. But most of all, hope."

### **ABOUT THE CAST**

British actress **ARIELLA GLASER (Sara Blum)** burst into the acting world at the age of 14 when she made her debut in Amazon's *Radioactive* with Anya Taylor-Joy and Rosamund Pike in 2019. Next up, she leads the Lionsgate blockbuster and Marc Foster directed WHITE BIRD, the sequel to Lionsgate's 2017 smash hit *Wonder*, opposite Gillian Anderson and Helen Mirren. The story follows Ariella's character Sara, as her story is told through her older eyes (Helen Mirren) about her time in Nazi-occupied France during WWII and her love and friendships she experienced as a young woman. Ariella is also currently attending university.

**ORLANDO SCHWERDT (Julien Beaumier)** is an exciting young actor from Melbourne, Australia. His film credits include *True History of the Kelly Gang* starring opposite Russell Crowe, Charlie Hunnam and Essie Davis and directed by Justin Kurzel, and *Children of the Corn*. Orlando also appeared on stage in the Australian productions of *School of Rock* and *Matilda the Musical*. Orlando plays piano and is an accomplished guitarist.

**BRYCE GHEISAR (Julian Albans)** is an American actor who next will be seen revisiting his role of "Julian" opposite Helen Mirren and Gillian Anderson in the upcoming film WHITE BIRD, a sequel to the Oscar nominated film *Wonder* and directed by Marc Forster. WHITE BIRD will have its US release on 4 October 2024. Bryce is well known for his leading roles as young Ethan in *A Dog's Purpose* and Julian in *Wonder* however Bryce also portrayed the Astronaut "Elliot Combs" in "The Astronauts" television series for Nickelodeon\Paramount.

Bryce was born on December 30, 2004, in Plano, Texas, into a family of three, made up of his parents, Todd and Nicole Gheisar, and his older brother, Blake. Bryce was a rising star in competitive gymnastics before he first discovered his love for acting. He currently resides in Texas but has filmed around North America.

Bryce, now 19 years old, started his acting career at age 8 and he landed his first role in 2015, in the short film *The Bus Stop* as "Elijah Gutnick." After he was enrolled in a local acting class, he was scouted and made his first theatrical appearance playing the leading role of young "Ethan," in *A Dog's Purpose*. That same year, he gained further recognition after filming *Wonder*, working alongside Jacob Tremblay, Millie Davis and Julia Roberts.

Prior to his first television roles, he was cast and directed by Clint Eastwood in his film, *The 15:17 Train To Paris*. Bryce can also be seen in the feature film *James The Second*, in which he plays the title character of "James.". In addition to his film work, Gheisar was a series lead in the Disney XD hybrid series *Walk The Prank*. Also, for Nickelodeon, Bryce's portrayal of "Luke McCoy" in their movie franchise "Are You Afraid Of The Dark" earned a nomination for Outstanding performance at The Kids Choice Awards.



Bryce has now branched out into directing. He recently directed the short film "THE NOISE" which had its premiere this year at The Beverly Hills Film Festival.

**GILLIAN ANDERSON (Vivienne Beaumier)** is an award-winning film, television, and theatre actress who has carefully curated decades-worth of iconic and impactful characters. Amongst an impressive collection of nominations, spanning from the mid-nineties to present day, Gillian has won 2 Primetime Emmy Awards, 2 Golden Globes, and 4 Screen Actors Guild Awards.

Gillian was last seen in the Emmy nominated Netflix film *Scoop*, in which she portrayed former BBC journalist Emily Maitlis, in a dramatization of her infamous Newsnight interview with Prince Andrew. Rufus Swell, Keeley Hawes, and Billie Piper also starred. Gillian will next appear in the film adaptation of Raynor Winn's bestselling memoir *The Salt Path*, with Jason Isaacs. It has also been announced that she has joined the cast of *Tron: Ares*, a return to the beloved sci-fi franchise, alongside Jared Leto, Jodie Turner-Smith, and Greta Lee. As well as this, she is set to star in *The Abandons*, alongside Lena Headey – an upcoming series from Netflix and the Sons of Anarchy creator Kurt Sutter. Gillian will play 'Constance,' the matriarch of the wealthy Van Ness family in the Wild West set action-drama.

She has most recently been announced to star in Channel 4's series *Trespases* – based on Louise Kennedy's novel, a forbidden love story, set against the backdrop of the Troubles.

This September will also see the release of *Want*, an anthology of letters from women around the world, to Gillian, disclosing their deepest and most honest sexual fantasies. Gillian curated and introduces the letters.

2023 was a year of exciting projects spanning film and television. At the start of the year, Gillian appeared alongside Christian Bale, Lucy Boynton, Timothy Spall, and Toby Jones in the Netflix murder/thriller, *The Pale Blue Eye*. Later in the year, she portrayed 'Vivienne' in *WHITE BIRD* opposite Helen Mirren. She also reprised her role as sex therapist 'Jean Milburn' in the fourth and final series of the hugely popular Netflix series, *Sex Education*.

Gillian's previous roles include her multiple award-winning role as Margaret Thatcher in the fourth series of *The Crown*. Starring alongside Olivia Coleman's Queen Elizabeth II, Helen Bonham Carter, Josh O'Connor, and Emma Corrin, Gillian took home a Primetime Emmy, Golden Globe, and Critics' Choice Award for her role as the former British Prime Minister.

Gillian is no stranger to donning the role of iconic historical figures, having also starred as Eleanor Roosevelt in the Paramount+ Drama series *The First Lady*. The anthology series delves into America's presidential past from the perspective of the country's First Ladies and also stars Viola Davis and Michelle Pfeiffer. Gillian's other television credits include her role as 'Joanna' in the second series of *The Great*, with Elle Fanning and Nicholas Hoult, which dramatizes the life of a young Catherine the Great, as well as her role as Miss Havisham in the BAFTA-winning series *Great Expectations*.

Her accolades and popularity have notably stemmed from Gillian's infamous portrayal of 'Special Agent Dana Scully' on the popular American sci-fi drama, *The X-Files*. She starred alongside David Duchovny from 1993 to 2002 in the TV series' initial run, and then again from 2016 to 2018. In the years between and the ones that follow, Gillian continues to portray fan-favorite characters.

Gillian has also received great recognition for her roles on stage. She earned her first Olivier nomination for *A Doll's House* where she played 'Nora Helmer'. She later received another Olivier nomination as well as a Best Actress win at the Evening Standard Theatre Awards for her role as Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In early 2019, Gillian played Margot Channing in Ivo van Hove's West End adaptation of *All About Eve*, sharing the stage with Lily James. Gillian has also starred in *What The Night Is For* at the Comedy Theatre and *The Sweetest Swing In Baseball* at the Royal Court.

In addition to her acting work, Gillian is an ambassador for multiple charities including War Child and Women for Women. She is also an accomplished writer with multiple published texts under her belt, including an upcoming novel called 'Dear Gillian' which is a compilation of anonymous letters that explore what women really think about sex. In 2023, Gillian has also launched a non-alcoholic, low-calorie, sparkling beverage line called G-Spot.

**HELEN MIRREN (Grandmère)** is one of the most well-known and respected actresses with an international career that spans stage, screen and television. She has won many awards for her powerful and versatile performances, most notably the Academy Award for the film *The*

Queen. Mirren's film career spans decades including the iconic *The Long Good Friday*, Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* and *Calendar Girls*. Mirren was nominated for an Academy Award twice for Best Supporting Actress in *The Madness Of King George* and *Gosford Park*. Recent releases include *The Duke* where she starred with Jim Broadbent, *Shazam! Fury Of The Gods*, the narrator on *BARBIE* and *Golda*, where she portrayed the famous Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir during the Yom Kippur war. She is currently filming *The Thursday Murder Club* leading a cast with Pierce Brosnan and Sir Ben Kingsley directed by Chris Columbus.

In television she is known for her role as DCI Jane Tennison in *Prime Suspect*. During the 'intermission' from *Prime Suspect* Mirren starred in a number of award-winning US TV productions including *Ayn Rand* and *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone*.

She won an Emmy award for Best Actress for her performance in *Elizabeth I* and as the lawyer Linda Kenney Baden in *Phil Spector* with Al Pacino, for which she won a SAG for Best Actress. She also starred in the title role of the epic *Catherine The Great* for SKY/HBO. Mirren's latest TV role is in *1923* where she stars with Harrison Ford in a prequel to *Yellowstone* for Paramount+ with a second series on the way.

Mirren has had a long and varied stage career first taking the lead in *Anthony and Cleopatra* at the National Youth Theatre and then working extensively in the theatre with the RSC and following with Peter Brook's theatre company. Most recently she reprised her role as Queen Elizabeth II on the West End stage and Broadway in *The Audience*, to acclaimed reviews and winning an Olivier Award and a Tony Award respectively for Best Actress. Mirren has received numerous awards throughout her career including the prestigious BAFTA Fellowship, the Chaplin Award from the Film Society at the Lincoln Center and the SAG Life Achievement Award.

Mirren is a L'Oreal Paris spokesperson representing them on a worldwide basis. Helen Mirren was appointed Dame of the British Empire in 2003.

### **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

With a versatile range of credits to his name, **Director MARC FORSTER** has evaded categorization, having helmed a slate of films of varying scale and genres for studios and independents alike, starring many of the industry's premier talent.

Forster's recent films include the box-office hit *A Man Called Otto*, starring Academy Award winner Tom Hanks, which he also produced through his company 2DUX<sup>2</sup> for Sony Pictures. He also directed Disney's live-action feature *Christopher Robin*, starring Ewan McGregor (of *Star Wars* fame) in the title role.

Forster's notable past projects include the Paramount tentpole hit *World War Z*, produced by and starring Brad Pitt; the 22nd James Bond installment *Quantum of Solace*, starring Daniel Craig for Columbia Pictures; and the visually driven love story *All I See Is You*, directed from his original screenplay and starring Blake Lively (*Café Society*) and Jason Clarke (*Zero Dark Thirty*).

Forster's upcoming film, *Whitebird*, for Lionsgate, stars Helen Mirren and Gillian Anderson and is set to be released on October 4th this year. 2DUX<sup>2</sup> also produced the film.

Forster is the co-founder and co-CEO of 2DUX<sup>2</sup>, an artist-driven transmedia content company focused on developing and producing storytelling across multiple platforms. His long-time collaborator and partner in this endeavor is co-founder and co-CEO Renée Wolfe. The company's credits include *A Man Called Otto*, *World War Z*, *Hand of God*, *All I See Is You*, and *Christopher Robin*. Forster's versatile filmmaking style is reflected throughout his body of work, including the Oscar nominated drama *Monster's Ball* with Halle Berry who won for Best Actress; and *Finding Neverland* starring Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet and Dustin Hoffman which received seven Oscar nominations, five Golden Globe nominations, and 11 BAFTA nominations.

Additionally, Forster's stirring drama *The Kite Runner* earned an Academy Award nomination, a Golden Globe nomination and two BAFTA nominations; and the imaginative comedy *Stranger Than Fiction*, starring Will Ferrell, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Dustin Hoffman, Emma Thompson and Queen Latifah, premiered at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival to critical and audience acclaim, and earned a Golden Globe nomination for Ferrell.

Born in Germany and raised in Switzerland, Forster came to the United States in 1990 to attend NYU Film School.

**Writer/Executive Producer MARK BOMBACK** is a New York-based screenwriter, producer and showrunner. Mark's feature screenwriting credits include *War for the Planet of the Apes*, *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, *Insurgent*, *The Wolverine*, *Total Recall*, *Unstoppable*, *Live Free or Die Hard*, *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, *Deception*, *Race to Witch Mountain*, and *Godsend*. Mark has worked as a "script doctor" on countless production rewrites for many tentpole studio films. He is currently adapting the best-selling novel *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* as a feature film for Paramount Studios. His most recent feature *WHITE BIRD* with Helen Mirren and directed by Marc Forster, will be released by Lionsgate. Mark has served as an executive producer on *WHITE BIRD*, *Fast X*, *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*, *War for the Planet of the Apes*, *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* and *Finding Tatanka*. For television, Mark was the creator, executive producer and writer of the Apple TV+ limited series *Defending Jacob*. He has advised at the Sundance Institute's New Frontier Story Lab, and taught screenwriting at his alma mater, Wesleyan University.

**Novelist/ Producer R.J. Palacio** is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Wonder*, which has sold over 16 million copies worldwide. The book's message inspired the Choose Kind movement and has been embraced by readers around the world, with the book published in over 55 languages. *Wonder* was made into a blockbuster movie starring Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson, and Jacob Tremblay. Palacio's other acclaimed books include *365 Days of Wonder*, *Auggie & Me*, the picture book *We're All Wonders*, and the graphic novel *White Bird*. Her most recent novel *Pony*, was an instant *New York Times* bestseller and named one of the best books of the year by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Palacio lives in Brooklyn with her husband, two sons, and two dogs.

**Producer DAVID HOBERMAN** is the founder of Hobie Films and founder of Mandeville Films and Television. He is one of the leading producers in the entertainment industry today. Mandeville Films is among the most profitable and respected production labels in the entertainment industry. Since its founding in 1995, Mandeville Films has produced feature films that have grossed more than four billion in domestic box-office receipts and their slate includes a wide variety of genres, anchored by character-driven stories with universal, often uplifting themes.

Hoberman's most recent movies include the Emmy winning, *Chip & Dale's Rescue Rangers* on Disney+, and Disney's live-action retelling of *Beauty And The Beast* which broke box office records and *Wonder*, based on R.J. Palacio's best-selling YA novel directed by Stephen Chbosky. The sequel to *Wonder*, entitled *WHITE BIRD*, directed by Marc Forster and starring Helen Mirren and Gillian Anderson, will be released by Lionsgate in 2023. Other notable films include the critically hailed Academy Award©-nominated feature *The Fighter*, *The Muppets*, *Muppets Most Wanted*, *Warm Bodies*, and *The Proposal*. Hoberman created the award-winning "Monk," a one-hour series for USA Network which aired for eight seasons.

Prior to forming Mandeville Films, Hoberman served as president of the Motion Picture Group of the Walt Disney Studios, where he was responsible for overseeing development and production for all feature films for Walt Disney Pictures, Touchstone and Hollywood Pictures. Hoberman was behind major blockbusters at the studio including *Pretty Woman*, *Father Of The Bride*, *What About Bob*, *Dead Poets Society*, *Ed Wood*, *Dangerous Minds*, *Ruthless People*, *Beaches*, *Three Men And A Baby* and *Honey, I Shrunk The Kids*. While an executive at Disney, Hoberman championed the first-ever full-length stop-motion animation feature, Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*.

**Producer TODD LIEBERMAN** is an Oscar® and Emmy® winning producer and founder of Hidden Pictures, a film and television production company telling premium stories with a focus on discoveries of self, of purpose, and of time and place. Hidden Pictures believes in the importance of sharing narratives that leave the audience with an uplifting sense of optimism to carry back into their lives. Lieberman is one of the leading producers in the entertainment industry today. In total, he has had eight movies open at #1 at the box office, and they have been nominated for 11 Academy Awards®, winning three.

Lieberman produced Disney's long-awaited, live-action retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*, starring Emma Watson as Belle and Dan Stevens as The Beast. The critically-hailed film, directed by Bill Condon, broke box office records worldwide and became the highest grossing PG-rated film in North America of all time. It also stars Emma Thompson, Kevin Kline, Josh Gad, Luke Evans, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Ian McKellan, Ewan McGregor, and Audra MacDonald. In 2018, *Beauty and the Beast* was nominated for two Academy Awards®: Costume Design and Production Design.

In May 2022, Lieberman released *Rescue Rangers* starring Andy Samberg and John Mulaney on Disney+, which won the Emmy® for Outstanding Television Movie. He recently produced *Hit & Run*, an action thriller series starring Lior Raz (Fauda) on Netflix, and *Shotgun*

*Wedding* for Amazon Prime starring Jennifer Lopez and Josh Duhamel (January 2023), which was the number one streaming release worldwide. He is in post-production on a documentary series for Amazon titled *Soul Power* about the American Basketball Association with Julius Erving and Common as Executive Producers.

Lieberman's other credits include *The Aeronauts*, based on the true story of balloon pilot Amelia Wren and scientist James Glaisher and their extraordinary and harrowing journey to discover the secrets of the skies; written by Jack Thorne, directed by Tom Harper and starring Academy Award® and Tony Award® winner Eddie Redmayne and Academy Award® nominee Felicity Jones. The film made its world premiere at the 2019 Telluride Film Festival, followed by a showing at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival and was released by Amazon Studios.

*Stronger*, the inspirational story of Boston Marathon survivor Jeff Bauman, directed by David Gordon Green and starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Tatiana Maslany, Miranda Richardson and Clancy Brown, made its world premiere at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival. It was released by Roadside Attractions.

*Wonder*, based on R.J. Palacio's best-selling YA novel, directed by Stephen Chbosky and starring Julia Roberts, Jason Tremblay, and Daveed Diggs, was released by Lionsgate in November of 2017. *Wonder* has grossed over \$304 million worldwide and was nominated for a 2018 Academy Award® in Makeup and Hair.

Other notable films include the critically hailed Academy Award®-nominated feature *The Fighter*, starring Mark Wahlberg, Christian Bale, Melissa Leo, and Amy Adams, and directed by David O. Russell. Produced for \$25 million, the film went on to gross almost \$130 million worldwide and earned a host of awards, including an Academy Award® nomination for Best Picture and Best Supporting Actor and Actress awards for Bale and Leo.

Lieberman also produced *The Muppets*, starring Jason Segel, Amy Adams and Walter, the newest Muppet. Directed by James Bobin, written by Segel and Nick Stoller, *The Muppets* was one of the best-reviewed films of 2011 and earned the Academy Award® for Best Song. Lieberman also produced the next "Muppet" installment, *Muppets Most Wanted*, and *Warm Bodies*, the genre-bending "zombie romance" based on Isaac Marion's novel. *Warm Bodies* starred Nicholas Hoult, John Malkovich, and Teresa Palmer, and was written and directed by Jonathan Levine for Summit/Lionsgate. Lieberman executive produced *Insurgent* and *Allegiant*, part of the *Divergent* movie series.

While producing under the Disney banner, Lieberman produced a string of hits, including the romantic comedy *The Proposal*, starring Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds. *The Proposal* became the highest grossing romantic comedy of 2009, earning over \$317 million worldwide. It was the People's Choice award winner for Best Comedy of the year.

Prior to the creation of his new company, Hidden Pictures, Lieberman produced under the Mandeville Films banner, which he continues to co-own. Before that, Lieberman acted as senior vice president for international finance and production company Hyde Park Entertainment, which produced and co-financed such films as *Anti-Trust*, *Bandits*, and *Moonlight Mile*.

Lieberman established himself at international sales and distribution giant Summit Entertainment, where he moved quickly up the ranks after pushing indie sensation *Memento* into production and acquiring the Universal box-office smash *American Pie*.

In 2001, Lieberman was named one of the "35 under 35" people to watch in the business by The Hollywood Reporter, which also ranked Lieberman among the 30 most powerful producers in Hollywood. He holds a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and is a 2022 recipient of the Penn Alumni of Merit Creative Spirit Award. Lieberman is a member of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences and a judge for the Academy's Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting. He is also a member of the Television Academy and a Producers Guild mentor, as well as an active member of the Los Angeles chapter of the Young Presidents' Organization. A Cleveland native, he is a 2018 recipient of the Key to the State of Ohio. Lieberman is an avid sports fan and consulting producer of the podcast INSIDE BASEBALL. He also serves on the board of Run 2 Remember Los Angeles, an annual half marathon and 10K that honors fallen First Responders and their families.

**Executive Producer KEVIN DOWNES** (Co-founder and CEO of Kingdom Story Company) has built an impressive career in producing, directing, acting, and writing, spanning over 30 years. As an actor, Downes played memorable roles in *Courageous*, *Moms' Night Out*, *I Can Only Imagine*, *American Underdog*, and more.

Kingdom Story Company is the premier destination for making films that ignite a rush of hope. In partnership with Lionsgate, Kingdom Story Company prioritizes faith, inspiration, and positive impact in storytelling. Their films have consistently opened in the top ten at the box office, earning the coveted A+ CinemaScore® rating six times, including the hit film *Jesus Revolution* in 2023.

Other notable films include *American Underdog*, *The Jesus Music*, *Johnny Cash: The Redemption Of An American Icon*, and *I Still Believe*, further solidifying the company's reputation for high-quality storytelling.

*Ordinary Angels* was released this past February, followed by *Unsung Hero* in April. *WHITE BIRD* hit theaters on October 4, 2024. Additionally, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* will be released on November 8, 2024. *The Unbreakable Boy* is set to release in 2025.

**Executive Producer ANDREW ERWIN** (Co-founder and Chief Creative Officer of Kingdom Story Company) began his career as a teenager working for ESPN as a camera operator in his hometown of Birmingham, Alabama. Erwin is renowned for his work in the music video industry, particularly within the Christian and country music genres. His portfolio includes directing and producing memorable music videos for prominent artists such as Casting Crowns ("Slow Fade"), Skillet ("Hero"), and Montgomery Gentry ("Some People Change"). Andrew's creative vision has also brought to life the compelling visuals for Alan Jackson's "Sissy's Song," Michael W. Smith's "Healing Rain," Switchfoot's "Dare You to Move," and The Almost's "Say This Sooner." His work is celebrated for its emotional depth and storytelling. His music video work ultimately led to feature films and the founding of Kingdom Story Company.

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Erwin also hosts "The Storytellers Podcast," soon to release its second season. The show delves into the heart of storytelling with fellow artists, exploring its transformative power through the lens of faith. From directors to actors, writers to musicians, and thought leaders to cultural icons, "The Storytellers" illuminates the divine spark that ignites creativity and shapes narratives that resonate with the soul. Guests have included Dennis Quaid, Roma Downey, Candace Cameron Bure, Patricia Heaton, DeVon Franklin, and more.

**Executive Producer RENÉE WOLFE** is a writer, producer and director who's most recently known for such award-winning films as *World War Z*, starring Brad Pitt and Mireille Enos, and *Christopher Robin* with Ewan McGregor. Renée is the co-CEO and co-founder of the production company, 2DUX<sup>2</sup>, which she shares with long-time partner and film director Marc Forster. They write and create under the moniker of Wolfe & Forster.

Renée studied film at NYU and the San Francisco Art Institute. Her earliest film experience was under the mentorship of Bernardo Bertolucci and Gordon Parks where she learned about the nuances of storytelling, framing, light and shadow from two great masters of filmmaking. Renée's directing work first came to the attention of film critics with her debut feature *Sueño* (John Leguizamo, Elizabeth Peña). The film was released by Sony in 2005 and although only a rough cut, was hailed by audiences as ahead of its time as it was a musical that featured an all-Latino cast. Kevin Thomas of the LA Times called *Sueño* a sweet-natured film, steeped in richly varied and seductive Latin music. The Hollywood Reporter wrote that it had a warm affection for its music and thoughtful performances from leads Leguizamo and Peña. *Sueño* was the opening night or closing ceremony film at numerous prestigious Latino film festivals including NY, Miami, SF and Morella.

Under Renée's leadership, 2DUX<sup>2</sup> has developed and produced TV, feature films and transmedia projects for wide and diverse audiences. The company has grossed over 730 million dollars in international box office revenue and the duo of Wolfe & Forster continue to grow their roster.

They currently have offices in Los Angeles and plan to expand into the UK.

Renée currently is finishing her novel, *The Hundredth Monkey*, a YA sci-fi about an unlikely pair of protagonists who must stop the world from losing its physicality. Additionally, she has completed scripts for the TV series, *Whisky Wars* and the period drama *The Reunion* as well as the futurist trans-human story, *H+*. Her upcoming feature films include the coming-of-age story set in India, *Maharaj* and the tent-pole sci-fi, *QT54*.

**Executive Producer ALEXANDER YOUNG** is the Senior Vice President of Feature Films at Mandeville Films and Television where he oversees the feature development slate. He's currently working on *Shotgun Wedding*, an action rom com for Lionsgate starring Jennifer Lopez and Josh Duhamel, directed by Jason Moore with a script penned by Mark Hammer. He's also serving as an Executive Producer on the Disney hybrid live-action/animated movie *Rescue Rangers*, directed by Akiva Schaffer and written by Dan Gregor and Doug Mand. Prior to these films in production, he produced the sci-fi-thriller *Extinction* starring Michael Pena, Lizzy Caplan, & Mike Coulter, directed by Ben Young; *Wonder* starring Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson, and Jacob Tremblay, directed by Stephen Chbosky; *Stronger* starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Tatiana Maslany, and Miranda Richardson, directed by David Gordon Green; and he also served as a Co-Producer on Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, which has grossed over \$1.2 billion at the worldwide box office.

Prior to Mandeville, Alex rose through the ranks from assistant to Vice President of Film and Television at Josephson Entertainment, Barry Josephson's production company. There he oversaw development of numerous projects including *Enchanted*, which starred Amy Adams and James Marsden, and earned over \$340 million worldwide. He also co-produced *Life as We Know It*, starring Katherine Heigl and Josh Duhamel, which grossed over \$105 million worldwide and the indie comedy *Someone Marry Barry*, directed by Rob Pearlstein. He started his career as an agent trainee at the William Morris Agency.

Alex is originally from New York and holds his B.A. from Tulane University.

**Director of Photography MATTHIAS KÖNIGSWEISER's** previous collaborations with director Marc Forster include the Amazon pilot *Hand of God*; Camerimage 2017 Best Cinematography Debut nominee *All I See Is You*, starring Blake Lively; and Walt Disney Studios' *Christopher Robin*. He was previously nominated for Best Cinematography Debut at Camerimage in 2014 for Saar Klein's *After the Fall*, which starred Wes Bentley and Jason Isaacs. Königswieser also served as Director of Photography and Executive Producer on Eddie Alcazar's 2018 film *Perfect*.

**Production Designer JENNIFER WILLIAMS** has worked with highly acclaimed filmmakers throughout her career. She teamed up with famed action director Michael Bay as a set decorator on *Pearl Harbor*, *Bad Boys 2*, *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* and *Transformers: Dark Side of the Moon*. She was awarded a BAFTA for her work on Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* and received a BAFTA nomination for Alan Parker's heart-breaking *Angela's Ashes*.

Her work spans various media markets, and she has been a long-standing designer for some of the industry's biggest commercial directors, including Joe Pytko.

Prior to *WHITE BIRD*, Jennifer also had the opportunity to collaborate with award-winning filmmaker Marc Forster as a decorator on his feature *World War Z*, starring Brad Pitt, and on his pilot *Hand of God* for Amazon. She went on to production design Forster's feature *All I See is You* starring Blake Lively and Jason Clarke, which premiered at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival. Jennifer collaborated with Forster again in 2018 as the production designer on Disney's *Christopher Robin* film led by Ewan McGregor in the title role, and she was nominated for her work by the British Film Designers Guild Awards.

She recently completed *The Postcard Killings* for director Danis Tanović, which stars Jeffrey Dean Morgan and Famke Janssen.

**Editor MATTHEW MATT CHESSE, ACE** is an American film editor, who proudly hails from the San Francisco Bay Area. Matt's formative years were spent in theater seats and green rooms. While attending San Francisco State University, he became an active earning member of the Bay Area film community. Beginning as a PA, he worked his way to LA, as assistant to commercial director Peter Kagan of Stiefel & Co., and later moved on to apprentice Academy Award®-winning editor Angus Wall.

His alliance with fledgling director Marc Forster led to his work on *Monster's Ball* and Halle Barry making Oscar® history as the first African-American Best Actress.

He continues to work principally with Marc Forster, with whom he has cut 12 feature films, including *Finding Neverland* -- for which Chessé was nominated for an Academy Award® for his editing, *Stranger Than Fiction*, *The Kite Runner*, *Quantum of Solace*, as well as *Christopher Robin* for Disney.

He has worked with other directors such as Gavin O'Connor (*Warrior*), Michael Hoffman (*Best of Me*), and most recently with music sensation Sia in her directorial debut, *Music*.

Three years ago, Chessé took a sabbatical from his busy career, to chair the Editing Discipline for the Conservatory of the American Film Institute/AFI, one of the top-rated film schools in the country. A big proponent of mentoring and teaching, Chessé relished the opportunity to put his craft and his knowledge under the microscope and redefine his passion for the process. Now having returned to his career full time, he plans to continue his relationship with the conservatory.

Matt is a proud member of both ACE-American Cinema Editors and AMPAS.

**Costume Designer JENNY BEAVAN** has been nominated for the Academy Award® for Best Costume Design twelve times, winning three awards for *A Room With A View* (1985), for which she shared an award with John Bright, *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), and *Cruella* (2021). She has also been nominated nine times for a BAFTA Award, winning four awards for *A Room With A View*, *Gosford Park* (2001), *Mad Max: Fury Road*, and *Cruella*. Beavan also received a Tony Award® nomination for Best Costume Design for the play *Private Lives*.

In the 1970s, she worked on set design for London theatrical productions. She joined the field of film costume design after obtaining an unpaid position to design garments for a small Merchant Ivory film, *Hullabaloo Over Georgie and Bonnie's Pictures*. This began her long relationship with Merchant Ivory Productions. She has frequently worked with costume designer John Bright, who runs the costume-rental house Cosprop, and credits him with educating her as she was starting out her career. She said she was helped by "just listening to him and learning from him, learning the history and the politics of clothing." Since then, the two have collaborated on more than ten films together and have shared six Oscar® nominations.

Beavan was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2017 New Year Honours for services to drama production. In June 2018, Beavan was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by Arts University Bournemouth alongside dancer Darcey Bussell, graphic designer Margaret Calvert OBE and director and screenwriter Edgar Wright.

**Composer THOMAS NEWMAN** is widely acclaimed as one of today's most prominent composers for film. He has composed music for more than 80 motion pictures and television series and has earned fifteen Academy Award® nominations, one Emmy® Award and six GRAMMY® Awards.

He is the youngest son of Alfred Newman (1900-1970), the longtime musical director of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox and the composer of scores for such films as *Wuthering Heights*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and *All About Eve*. As a child, Thomas pursued basic music and piano studies. However, it was not until after his father's death that the younger Newman, then age 14, felt charged with the desire to write. He later studied composition and orchestration at USC with Professor Frederick Lesemann and noted film composer David Raksin, and privately with composer George Tremblay. He completed his academic work at Yale University, studying with Jacob Druckman, Bruce MacCombie and Robert Moore. Newman also gratefully acknowledges the early influence of another prominent musician, the legendary Broadway composer Stephen Sondheim, who served as a great mentor and champion.

A turning point in Newman's career took place while he was working as a musical assistant on the 1984 film, *Reckless*, for which he soon was promoted to the position of composer. And so, at the age of 27, Newman successfully composed his first film score. Since then he has contributed distinctive and evocative scores to many acclaimed films, including *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *The Lost Boys*, *The Rapture*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *The Player*, *Scent of a Woman*, *Flesh and Bone*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Little Women*, *American Buffalo*, *The People Vs. Larry Flynt*, *Oscar and Lucinda*, *The Horse Whisperer*, *Meet Joe Black*, *American Beauty*, *The Green Mile*, *Erin Brockovich*, *In The Bedroom*, *Road to Perdition*, *Finding Nemo*, *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *Cinderella Man*, *Jarhead*, *Little Children*, *The Good German*, *Revolutionary Road*, *Wall-E*, *The Help*, *The Iron Lady*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *Skyfall*, *Spectre*, *Victoria & Abdul*, *The Highwaymen*, *Tolkien*, Steven Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies*, and the critically acclaimed *1917*. Newman also composed the music for HBO's acclaimed 6-hour miniseries *Angels in America* directed by Mike Nichols. He received an Emmy® Award for his theme for the HBO original series *Six Feet Under*.

Most recently, Newman scored Steven Soderbergh's *Let Them All Talk* and director John Lee Hancock's *Little Things*. His current and upcoming projects include director John Madden's *Operation Mincemeat*, and directors Carolin Reid and Channing Tatum's *Dog*.

In addition to his work in film and television, Newman has composed several works for the concert stage, including the symphonic work *Reach Forth Our Hands*, commissioned in 1996 by the Cleveland Orchestra to commemorate their city's bicentennial, as well as *At Ward's Ferry, Length 180 ft.*, a concerto for double bass and orchestra commissioned in 2001 by the Pittsburgh Symphony. His latest concert piece was a chamber work entitled *It Got Dark*, commissioned by the acclaimed Kronos Quartet in 2009. As part of a separate commission by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the work was expanded and adapted for symphony orchestra and string quartet and premiered at Walt Disney Concert Hall in December of 2009. In October 2014, Newman and musician Rick Cox released *35 Whirlpools Below Sound*, an evocative, contemporary collection of avant-garde electronic soundscapes which the two collaborators developed over a period of 25 years, and which constitutes a fascinating departure from Newman's work in film music. Newman was also commissioned by the prestigious Joffrey Ballet in Chicago to compose the score for a new ballet adaptation of the Steinbeck novel *Of Mice and Men*.

**Makeup & Hair Designer TRACEY WELLS** is a highly skilled makeup and hair designer with over 30 years of experience in the industry. Starting out at the National Theatre, she has since worked on a wide range of film and television productions, with upcoming credits including A24's *Tuesday* starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Marc Forster's *WHITE BIRD* for Lionsgate featuring Helen Mirren, Amblin's *Distant* with Anthony Ramos and Sony's highly anticipated *Gran Turismo*. Her attention to detail and passion for her craft have earned her a reputation as one of the most sought-after makeup and hair designers in the industry.

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**CREDITS**

Lionsgate Presents

In Association with Participant  
Kingdom Story Company  
and  
Media Capital Technologies

A  
Lionsgate / Mandeville Films  
Production

In Association with  
2DUX<sup>2</sup> Productions

A Film by  
Marc Forster

**WHITE BIRD**

Ariella Glaser  
Orlando Schwerdt  
Bryce Gheisar  
with Gillian Anderson  
and Helen Mirren

Patsy Ferran    Ishai Golan    Jem Matthews  
Stuart McQuarrie    Olivia Ross    Jo Stone-Fewings

Casting by  
Kate Dowd, CDG

Music by  
Thomas Newman

Costume Designer  
Jenny Beavan

Edited by  
Matt Chessé, ACE

Production Designer  
Jennifer Williams

Director of Photography  
Matthias Königswieser

Executive Producers  
Jeff Skoll  
Robert Kessel

Executive Producers

Kevin Downes  
Jon Erwin  
Andrew Erwin

Executive Producers

Renée Wolfe  
Alexander Young  
Mark Bomback

Executive Producers

Kevan Van Thompson  
Christopher Woodrow  
Connor DiGregorio

Produced by

David Hoberman, p.g.a.  
Todd Lieberman, p.g.a.

Produced by

R.J. Palacio

Based on the Book by

R.J. Palacio

Screenplay by

Mark Bomback

Directed by

Marc Forster