ADVERTISEMENT



AFI AWARDS 2024

HONORING A YEAR OF EXCELLENCE

AFI MOTION PICTURES OF THE YEAR



















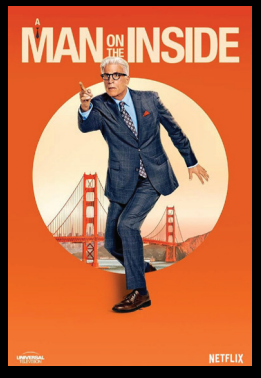


AFI TELEVISION PROGRAMS OF THE YEAR





















AFI SPECIAL AWARD



#AFIAwards

AFI.com

SPONSOR

FIJI® WATER

VARIETY

Photographs by
ALEXI
LUBOMIRSKI

ACTORS on ACTORS

ARIANA GRANDE

—

PAUL MESCAL

"THRILLING & GRIPPING"

ROLLING STONE

"IRRESISTIBLE *and* EVOCATIVE"
COLLIDER

"★★★★★
SPECTACULAR"
THE TELEGRAPH

"Superb and
SPELLBINDING"
THE PLAYLIST

"Jodie Foster gives a
POWERHOUSE PERFORMANCE"
THE CUT

"Kali Reis is
A REVELATION"
THE BOSTON GLOBE

"Jodie Foster is
BRILLIANT"
NPR

"Kali Reis gives
A MESMERIZING PERFORMANCE"
SLANT MAGAZINE

"★★★★★
EXHILARATING"
BBC

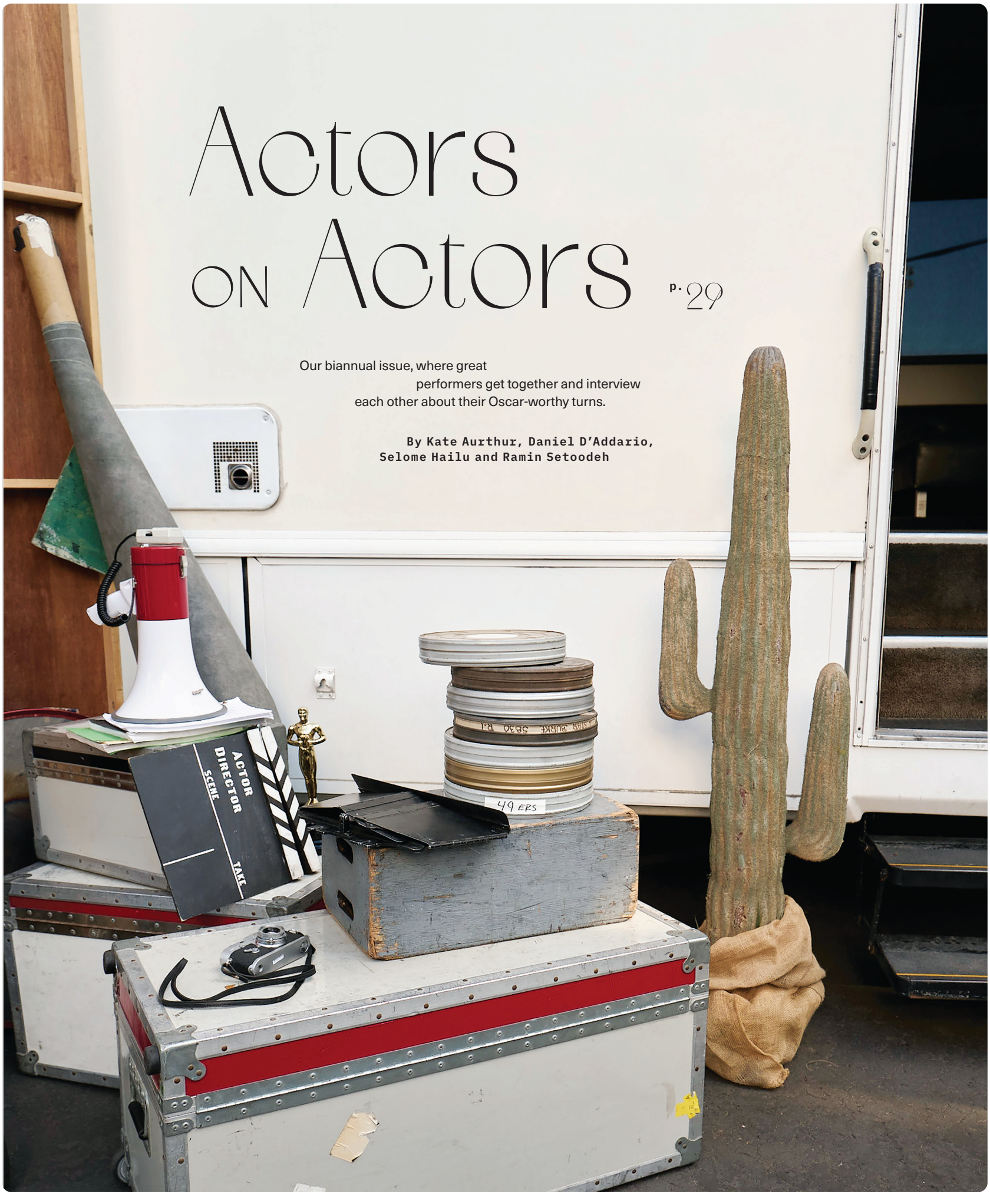


HBO ORIGINAL

TRUE DETECTIVE
NIGHT COUNTRY

max

contents



Actors on Actors

p. 29

Our biannual issue, where great performers get together and interview each other about their Oscar-worthy turns.

By Kate Aurthur, Daniel D'Addario, Selome Hailu and Ramin Setoodeh

Cover photograph by Alexi Lubomirski

Production: Emily Ullrich; Lighting Director: Max Bernetz; Set Direction: Gille Mills

MARQUEE

11 **The End of the Megadeal?**
J.J. Abrams looks to re-up his Warner Bros. contract at a time when belt tightening is all the rage in Hollywood.

EXPOSURE

26 **Top of the Charts**
Charli xcx, Jack Antonoff and Lainey Wilson were among the honorees at *Variety*'s annual Hitmakers event.

AWARDS CIRCUIT

85 **Well Noted**
The best new artist Grammy race offers up intriguing contenders vying for the trophy, while old favorites could surprise in other categories.

FOCUS

99 **Giving Back**
Songwriter-producer David Foster, our Philanthropist of the Year, has been helping families and charities for decades.

REVIEWS

136 **Ballad of a Thin Man**
Timothée Chalamet transfixes as a young Bob Dylan in James Mangold's scruffy drama.

DEPARTMENTS

6 **Editors' Letter**
The success of our biannual Actors on Actors issue is a testament to the enduring power of movies.

138 **The Original**
Without Marlon Brando, there would be no Al Pacino, Daniel Day-Lewis or Robert De Niro.





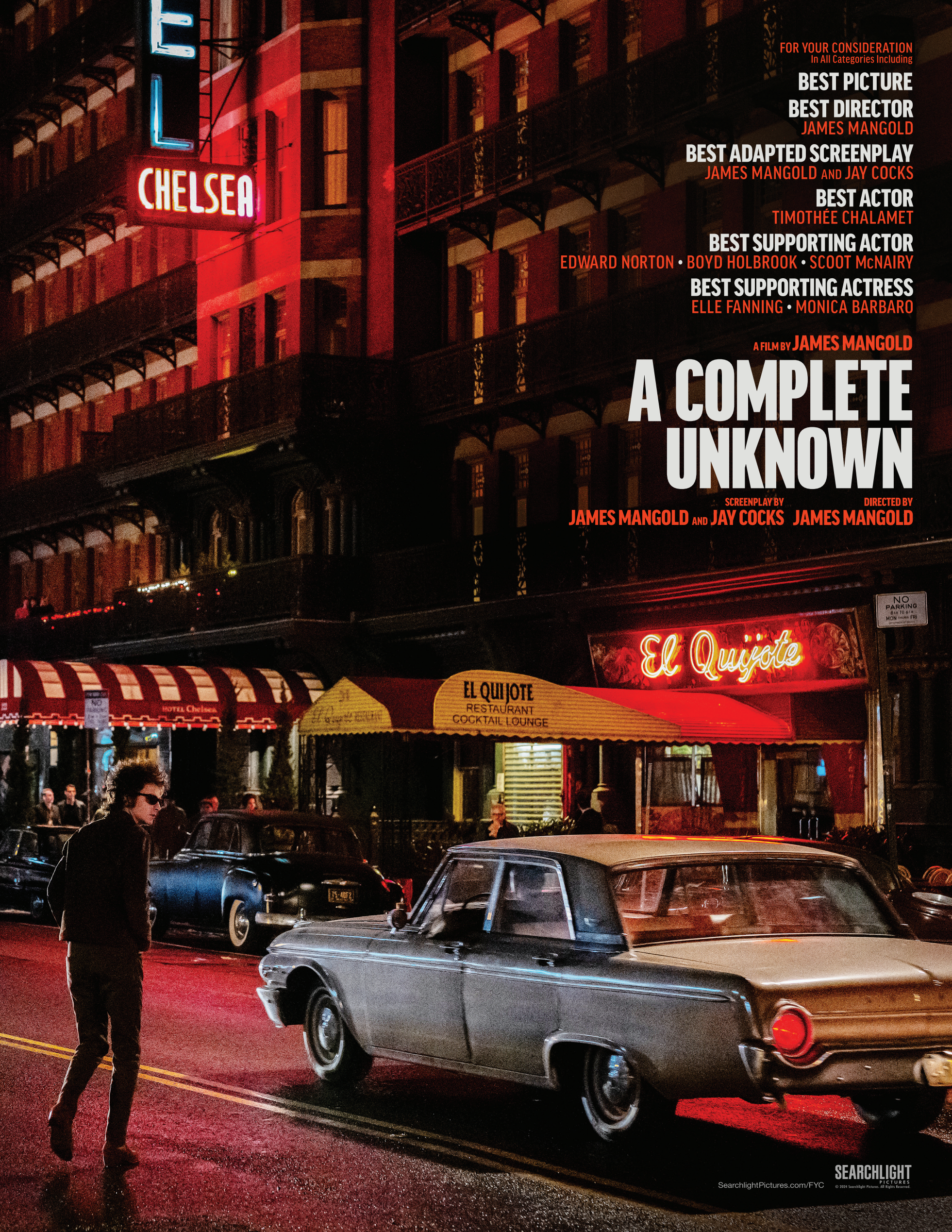






Clockwise from top: "Coraline"; Demi Moore in "The Substance"; Doechii; Taron Egerton in "Carry-On"; Jude Law and Haley Joel Osment in "A.I. Artificial Intelligence"

Coraline: Everett Collection; The Substance: Universal Studios; Doechii: Taylor Hill/Getty Images; Carry-On: Netflix; A.I. Artificial Intelligence: Everett Collection



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
In All Categories Including

BEST PICTURE

BEST DIRECTOR
JAMES MANGOLD

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
JAMES MANGOLD AND JAY COCKS

BEST ACTOR
TIMOTHÉE CHALAMET

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
EDWARD NORTON • BOYD HOLBROOK • SCOOT McNAIRY

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
ELLE FANNING • MONICA BARBARO

A FILM BY JAMES MANGOLD

A COMPLETE UNKNOWN

SCREENPLAY BY
JAMES MANGOLD AND JAY COCKS

DIRECTED BY
JAMES MANGOLD

SearchlightPictures.com/FYC

SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

© 2024 Searchlight Pictures. All Rights Reserved.



It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

We're off to the races. Awards season 2025 kicked off on Monday with the Golden Globe nominations. And in a year without a clear frontrunner (so far), it was a good morning for a smattering of films: "Emilia Pérez" led the pack with 10 nominations — the most ever for a movie musical — followed by "The Brutalist," with seven mentions, making it the most-nominated drama. "Wicked," already the biggest Broadway adaptation of all time with more than $300 million at the domestic box office, scored four, including mentions for its stars Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande.

Erivo and Grande — along with Zoe Saldaña and Selena Gomez of "Emilia Pérez" and Adrien Brody of "The Brutalist" — are among the nominees featured in this week's Actors on Actors issue. The only thing this diverse set of thespians have in common is that, to borrow a song title from "Wicked," they have proven "popular." And this, in turn, is our most popular franchise: Our team has spent the past few months curating the best performances of the year for our annual issue. We're proud to say this may be our strongest lineup yet, with 10 cover stars (including Angelina Jolie, Zendaya and Paul Mescal) and 12 conversations.

We love that Actors on Actors has become a print and digital phenomenon; it's a testament to the enduring power of movies. Yes, multiplexes have taken a hit in the past few years from COVID and the writers and actors strikes, but the box office data from recent days — and the runaway success of "Moana 2," "Wicked" and "Gladiator II" — shows that nothing can replace the theatrical experience.

We pay tribute to the "Wicked"- "Gladiator II" double feature in one of our marquee conversations. Mescal told Grande, his "Glicked" counterpart, about how it felt for him, as an avid lover of movies, to witness "Barbenheimer" unfold last year. "I remember watching that from afar being like, 'This is so brilliant for our industry,'" Mescal says, "'because both films couldn't have been more opposite.' Just to see the appetite that people had to go to the theater." It was a rebuke, he says, to those "that kind of doubt the health of the film industry, that people want to go into a dark room and see these stories." It's a fitting sentiment as we enter our favorite time of year. Happy awards season to all!





CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Cynthia Littleton Ramin Setoodeh

Littleton: Photograph by Dan Doperalski; Setoodeh: Photograph by Alexi Lubomirski

★★★★★
"POIGNANT AND IRREVERENT."
Ed Potton, THE TIMES

★★★★★
Mick LaSalle, San Francisco Chronicle

★★★★★
"ONE OF THE YEAR'S BEST FILMS."
Cary Darling, HOUSTON CHRONICLE

"A TOUCHING, BEAUTIFULLY ACTED, LAUGH-LACED DRAMA...
The movie is a knockout—I can't wait to see it again."
Manohla Dargis, The New York Times

"Not only has a real filmmaker emerged with 'A Real Pain,' with both the sensitivity and boldness that could launch a career, but Eisenberg has never let himself be this exposed as a performer...
THE MOVIE GLOWS WITH EMBERS OF RECOGNITION AND DEEPEST COMPASSION."
Joshua Rothkopf, Los Angeles Times

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
In All Categories Including

BEST PICTURE

BEST DIRECTOR Jesse Eisenberg **BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY** Jesse Eisenberg
BEST ACTOR Jesse Eisenberg **BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR** Kieran Culkin

SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

A REAL PAIN

WINNER Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award U.S. Dramatic sundance 2024
WINNER SCAD Savannah Film Festival Virtuoso Award Kieran Culkin 2024
WINNER Newport Beach Film Fest 25th Audience Award Best Comedy 2024
OFFICIAL SELECTION New York Film Festival 62 2024
OFFICIAL SELECTION Telluride Film Festival 2024
OFFICIAL SELECTION BFI London Film Festival 2024
OFFICIAL SELECTION AFI FEST 2024



© 2024 Searchlight Pictures.

SearchlightPictures.com/FYC

STARZ®

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

"POWERFUL STORIES... PACKED WITH SOLID PERFORMANCES"
THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"A TRULY ENGROSSING AND MEMORABLE SPOTLIGHT OF THE FEMALE EXPERIENCE"
AWARDS BUZZ

"EXPLORES FEMALE DESIRE ON TELEVISION LIKE NEVER BEFORE"
HARPER'S BAZAAR

"ONE OF THE YEAR'S BEST TELEVISION PERFORMANCES"
[BETTY GILPIN]
ROGER EBERT

three women

Three Women © 2023 Showtime Networks Inc. All rights reserved. Starz and related channels and service marks are the property of Starz Entertainment, LLC.

STARZ®

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



"STARZ'S CULTURAL PHENOMENON"
HUFFPOST

"ACTION-PACKED CRIME DRAMA"
USA TODAY

"LEGENDARY"
USA TODAY

"A CAREER-DEFINING PART FOR RAINEY JR."
GQ

POWER BOOK II: GHOST

Power Book II: Ghost © MMXXIII Lions Gate Television Inc. All rights reserved. Artwork © Starz Entertainment, LLC. Starz and related channels and service marks are the property of Starz Entertainment, LLC.

kudos

TO ALL OUR NOMINEES AND WINNERS AT THE NATIONAL ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT JOURNALISM AWARDS

winners

Jem Aswad
SOFT NEWS, MUSIC/ARTS RELATED, ONLINE

Michael Buckner, Haley Kluge, Jennifer Dorn
NEWS PHOTO

Pamela Chelin
CELEBRITY FEATURE, ONLINE

Clayton Davis
COMMENTARY ANALYSIS/TREND, TV, ONLINE

Dan Doperalski, Jennifer Dorn, Haley Kluge
PORTRAIT PHOTO, TV/FILM

Owen Gleiberman
OBITUARY/IN APPRECIATION, FILM PERSONALITIES, PRINT/ONLINE

Brent Lang
DIVERSITY IN THE TV/FILM INDUSTRY, PRINT

Tatiana Siegel
BUSINESS, TV/STREAMING, PRINT/ONLINE

Tatiana Siegel
ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY/ARTS INVESTIGATIVE, PRINT/ONLINE

Katcy Stephan
FILM INDUSTRY FEATURE, UNDER 1,000 WORDS, PRINT

Chris Willman
PRINT JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Chris Willman
FILM CRITIC, UNDER 1,000 WORDS

Chris Willman
ACTION PHOTO

Chris Willman
COMMENTARY ANALYSIS/TREND, MUSIC, PRINT

VARIETY

There's a reason we're #1

marquee



Desiree Navarro/WireImage/Getty Images

Bad Robot Bellwether

J.J. Abrams' scaled-back deal to re-up with Warner Bros. is the surest sign that Hollywood's mega-payday moment is over

By Tatiana Siegel

→ Back in June 2019, J.J. Abrams struck a massive overall deal that would keep him in the fold of Warner Bros., his home studio since 2006. The five-year pact, pegged at $500 million at the time, had a unique structure that allowed Abrams to draw from a significant pool of money to sign other writers to overall deals. That positioned the multi-hyphenate behind "Felicity" and "Lost" as not just a content creator but a mogul whose Bad Robot production company would incubate the next generation of storytellers, with Abrams and his wife, Katie McGrath, overseeing the stable.

Five and a half years later, Warner Bros. doesn't have much to show for all the coin that it showered on Abrams, even as the value of the deal dropped by half because Bad Robot failed to reach the fi-





Dick Wolf, Shonda Rhimes and Ryan Murphy are at the top of the shrinking ranks of writer-producers with nine-figure deals.

nancial and output benchmarks that would have triggered the full $500 million. With less leverage than it had in 2019, Abrams' team has quietly closed a more modest production pact with the studio that sources say will cover film and TV. It's a signal to agents and managers around town that the era of the nine-figure writer-producer mega-deal has peaked. (Bad Robot and Warner Bros. declined comment.)

If the plan was to fashion Abrams into a cross between Bob Iger and Rembrandt, it didn't quite work out. Bad Robot spent about $50 million of Warners' money setting satellite deals with writer-producers like Angela Robinson, Dustin Thomason, Jessie Nelson and LaToya Morgan that yielded little. The goal was to turn Bad Robot into a mini studio with autonomy within Warners.

"The CEO thing whiffed," says one top dealmaker. "But this was overall-deal heyday time."

In 2022, HBO Max put the brakes on Robinson's "Madame X" series, which was based on the immortal DC character. Last year, the streamer opted not to move forward with Thomason's "Overlook," a spinoff of Stephen King's "The Shining." Nelson's "Little Voice," a music-heavy ode to 20-something ennui that was produced by Warner Bros. TV and released by Apple TV+, lasted one season before being canceled in 2021. And Morgan's "Duster" has endured a long journey to the screen. The FBI drama was given a straight-to-series green light at HBO Max in 2020 and is finally set to debut on Max in 2025. Sources say Morgan was paid $10 million-plus for eight episodes.

"The squeeze is on, and the economy is really putting a new spotlight on extravagance," says Stephen Galloway, dean of Chapman University's Dodge College of Film and Media Arts. "This is now a meat-and-potatoes economy. It was always a luxury business, and now everybody is feeling the pinch. You're looking at the layoffs, the fracturing of some of these big companies, the debt load they've taken on. We're not in a recession, but we are in a recession economy."

With his new deal, Abrams is no longer at the top of the shrinking ranks of writer-producers with nine-figure deals. Agents familiar with Hollywood's pecking order say Dick Wolf is king, thanks to the sheer tonnage of his "Law & Order," "FBI" and "Chicago" franchises across NBC and CBS. He's followed by Ryan Murphy (Disney, "American Horror Story"), Shonda Rhimes (Netflix, "Bridgerton"), Dan Fogelman (Disney, "Only Murders in the Building"), Taylor Sheridan (Paramount, "Yellowstone") and Greg Berlanti (Warner Bros., "The Flash"). Berlanti has two years left on his $120 million pact and likely will face a still-inhospitable climate when the time comes to negotiate. Some, like comedy kingpin Chuck Lorre, have more complicated deals that may eclipse those of the mega-earners due to back-end compensation terms for shows that perform well.

If volume is key for the writer-producer, the once-prolific Abrams hit a block at just the wrong time. On the TV front, HBO Max scrapped Bad Robot's "Constantine" series based on the DC property. On the big screen, plenty of hype surrounded an Abrams-produced Black Superman film with a script by Ta-Nehisi Coates. That project is technically still alive but has seen no forward movement since early 2023. Instead, Warner Bros.-DC has the James Gunn-directed "Superman" reboot hitting theaters on July 11. Abrams did produce the upcoming Anne Hathaway '80s-set "Flowervale Street." Though the $85 million thriller, which bows on March 13, may include dinosaurs, it isn't the kind of tentpole WarnerMedia brass had in mind back in 2019.

Even if Abrams' output had fared better, he would still be at the mercy of the marketplace. COVID and the twin labor strikes of 2023 wreaked havoc on the industry, shuttering or stalling productions and decimating the bottom line for legacy studios. More than a year after SAG-AFTRA reached an agreement with the studios, production has yet to return to normal. That has sent CEOs including Warner Bros. Discovery's David Zaslav looking for gristle to trim.

"The focus on downsizing at studios means having another look at these generous talent deals," says Jason Squire, professor emeritus at USC School of Cinematic Arts and host of "The Movie Business Podcast." "Warner Bros. Discovery — and other studios too — have a lot of pressure from stockholders and the board to reduce their debt, and talent [costs] is one way to do it."

But if there was one unmistakable sign that a new day was dawning, it was that HBO pulled the plug on Abrams' $200 million-plus series "Demimonde" in 2022 due to budgetary concerns. The Warner Bros. Television-produced sci-fi drama was then shopped to the deep-pocketed streamers. There were no takers.

Says one veteran producer: "The Bad Robot deal was a massive coronation of J.J. He basically was a working screenwriter who Hollywood helped [turn] into the next Steven Spielberg. But the question is, what did Warner Bros. get out of that deal?"

"The economy is putting a new spotlight on extravagance. This is now a meat-and-potatoes economy. It was always a luxury business, and now everybody is feeling the pinch."
Stephen Galloway, dean, Chapman University's Dodge College of Film and Media Arts

From left: Stephane Cardinale/Getty Images; John Nacion/Variety; Stephen Lovekin/Variety

"A STUNNING, EMOTIONALLY SATISFYING ADVENTURE TALE" VARIETY

"EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS ROBUST AND VERY ENJOYABLE RETELLING OF DUMAS CLASSIC IS EPIC IN SCALE" SCREENDAILY

"A SUMPTUOUS AND THRILLING VERSION OF CLASSIC REVENGE TALE FEELS NEW ALL OVER AGAIN" DEADLINE

DIMITRI RASSAM AND JÉRÔME SEYDOUX PRESENT



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
2024 OFFICIAL SELECTION
OUT OF COMPETITION

THE AMERICAN FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL
AMERICAN STUDENTS AWARD 2024

100%

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

A FILM BY
MATTHIEU DELAPORTE AND ALEXANDRE DE LA PATELLIÈRE

CHAPTER 2
Mediawan

IN THEATERS DECEMBER 20

PATHÉ

In With the Old

Popular rereleases like 'Interstellar' seem like easy money for studios. So why aren't there more of them?

By Ethan Shanfeld and Adam B. Vary

At 10:41 a.m. on Dec. 6, outside the Lincoln Square AMC Theatres in New York City, a middle-aged woman stopped in front of a man holding a sign that read: "2 FREE TICKETS INTERSTELLAR NOW."

"Right now?" she said.

"Right now!" he replied before revealing a hidden cost on the back of the sign: "1 HUG."

She happily paid his price for the rare commodity: a matinee seat for a film that came out a decade ago. In secondary markets online, tickets to Christopher Nolan's 2014 space epic had been listed for as much as $215, after all 166 Imax screens sold out for the duration of the rerelease. Last weekend, "Interstellar" pulled in $4.57 million domestically, more than any new movie, and, at $27,500, a higher per-screen average than top grossers "Moana 2" and "Wicked."

The accomplishment is the latest example of how legacy films have swung back in fashion at the cinemas, as studios look to leverage their library titles and exhibitors face a post-pandemic, post-strike Hollywood with fewer tentpole outings per year. Separate from small repertory runs in boutique theaters (often comprising just one or two showings), at least 27 legacy films were rereleased in 2024 into more than 100 domestic theaters — in many cases, more than 1,000 — grossing more than $90 million total.

Chief among them: Laika's 2009 stop-motion animated film "Coraline," which grossed a stunning $33.6 million when it was put back in cinemas in August through Fathom Events. A joint venture of AMC, Regal and Cinemark, Fathom has specialized in targeted repertory releases since 2005. "Coraline," its top grosser ever, caps a winning streak for the company, which took in $74 million from its 2024 legacy rereleases — an increase of 311% from 2022.

"It's very, very good business," says Fathom CEO Ray Nutt. "We want butts in seats." The rest of the industry is noticing: The week that "Coraline" opened, Nutt met with various studio execs, and he says they kept asking their repertory department heads, "Why aren't we doing that with our films?"

It's a good question: If studios can dust off library titles for a bag of cash every few months, why aren't there even *more* rereleases?

"It's harder than it looks to drive an audience," says one distribution head. Anniversaries can be the easiest built-in marketing tool, but even more crucial is giving audiences a reason to trek to theaters beyond just the chance to see the film. That can mean releasing "Interstellar" only in Imax, remastering "Coraline" in 3D or adapting the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy to the seat-shaking 4DX technology.

"All of our content has a little bit extra than just watching it on TV at home," Nutt says.

However, the record-setting rerelease of "Coraline" — which made $75.3 million domestically in its original run — required a sustained effort over several years. Laika marketing chief David Burke says that after his team cultivated an online fandom for the film with special content, "we began to gather around the idea that there was a demand to see 'Coraline' on the big screen, particularly from fans who may have discovered it on home media." A small "Coraline" rerelease in 2022 grossed $805,000 over one day; the following year, another revival earned $7.1 million over four days. The audience, in other words, was there, and while Burke declines to cite a specific number, he says the studio's marketing costs to marshal the title's much larger release this year was in the "low seven figures."

A24 encountered a similar effect in 2023 when it brought back the Talking Heads concert film "Stop Making Sense," which collected more than $5 million domestically, eclipsing its original box office run. According to the studio, 60% percent of the audience wasn't born when the movie debuted in 1984, and 75% was seeing it in a theater for the first time.

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that there is a demand for these films throughout the calendar," says Exhibitor Relations analyst Jeff Bock. While the 2025 release calendar has recovered from the strike-induced decline, "there are still some weekends that could use a boost," he says. "Moviegoers want to see films outside of their home. That is the future bloodline of the industry."

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that there is a demand for these films throughout the calendar."
Jeff Bock, Exhibitor Relations



Imax and Paramount extended the rerelease of "Interstellar" after the initial run sold out.

Everett Collection

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION IN ALL CATEGORIES INCLUDING

BEST ACTRESS
DEMI MOORE

2 FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS
NOMINATIONS INCLUDING
BEST FEATURE BEST LEAD PERFORMANCE DEMI MOORE

★★★★

“DEMI MOORE BRILLIANTLY SEIZES THE ROLE OF HER LIFETIME”

ABC NEWS

“IF MOORE’S EXTRAORDINARY, BEST-OF-CAREER PERFORMANCE DOESN’T KICK OFF A FULL DEMI-AISSANCE, THERE IS NO GOD”

ROLLING STONE

“DEMI MOORE IS BLOODY OSCAR®-WORTHY”

VARIETY

★★★★

“DEMI MOORE GIVES THE MOST FEARLESS AND EXPOSED PERFORMANCE OF HER CAREER”

THE GUARDIAN

THE SUBSTANCE

A FILM BY
CORALIE FARGEAT

MUBI



Reality Bites

Gen X execs swept up in industry layoffs can make career pivots with the right attitude and flexibility

By Cynthia Littleton

After two years of massive layoffs and the promise of more consolidation to come in media and entertainment in 2025, the mood is bleak among executives of a certain age.

The pink-slip bloodbath has hit hard on Gen X veterans in the middle-management ranks of networks, studios, talent agencies and PR firms. And it's come at a time when the entire industry is wrestling with the impact of systemic change — goodbye, cable; hello, streaming — and the most disruptive technology since the advent of talking pictures: generative AI.

Amid all the tumult, however, there is enormous opportunity for professional growth for those with experience, connections and savvy in how to apply those skills in new arenas.

"People are very unnerved about whether there can be another chapter. People get very emotionally locked up when they feel vulnerable. And yet if you don't feel vulnerable when you're growing up in the business, you wouldn't be able to achieve what you've achieved," says Rich Ross, a former top executive at Disney, Discovery and Nickelodeon.

Moreover, those who have highly specialized skills — research, analytics, marketing, finance — can find themselves in demand as consultants and contract workers from the same companies that have gutted their teams through layoffs.

"There's so much need because there's been so much disruption," says Liz Huszarik, a 30-year veteran of Warner Bros. who recently launched the research shingle Maverix Insights & Strategies with two fellow WB alums. "They've all cut their teams, but they still have the same workload. They can bring in our company at a fraction of the cost."

For many who reached the highest rungs of Hollywood's biggest companies, the most humbling thing to accept is the loss of the perks that come with working for a network or studio.

Ross was pushed out of his role as Discovery's top programming executive in 2018, in a restructuring that followed Discovery's acquisition of Scripps Networks Interactive. He remembers feeling conspicuous the first few times he stood in line to get into a screening in Los Angeles — after years of being a VIP ushered in to a reserved front-row seat. Experiencing how the other half lives was eye-opening and informative.

"At first, it's jarring," Ross says. "But it also reminds me why I do what I do. Because you have an opportunity to be among people and have a conversation about 'What have you seen lately?' and 'What did you think of it?'"

Huszarik, who ended her tenure at Warner Bros. as executive VP overseeing research for the studio, emphasizes that launching a business doesn't happen overnight. It is a commitment that takes mental and financial preparation. And the blow of losing your job in a mass layoff takes an emotional toll.

"It took the wind out of my sails when I was shown the door," Huszarik says. "I loved everything about working for Warner Bros. and all the people I worked with."

She considered seeking another research post. "But as I thought about it I was like, 'Screw it, I'm not going back to corporate. I'm going to bet on me.' If I'm going to worry about making budget, I'm going to worry about it for me," she says.

Ross now splits his time between homes in Los Angeles and Milan with his husband, former Disney marketing executive Adam Sanderson. The decision to put down roots in Milan has opened up doors for Ross, as a producer and as a mentor to executives and creatives on both sides of the Atlantic.

"I'm like the Dora the Explorer of this time of life," Ross says.

The biggest factor that helps executives of a certain age — particularly the Gen Xers rounding the corner on their mid-50s and early 60s — is a willingness to embrace significant lifestyle changes.

"I've seen a lot of people who took the approach of sitting there waiting for something to happen. If you do that, there will not be anything," Ross counsels. "So let's talk about what options you have, whether it's geographically moving to a new place or trying something new from a creative standpoint. Don't think at 60 or 63 you are finished — unless you like to play golf every day."

Illustration by Cheyne Gateley


FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
BEST ACTOR
CALEB LANDRY JONES
"AN ELECTRIFYING CALEB LANDRY JONES"
The New York Times
DOGMAN
A FILM BY LUC BESSON
OWN IT NOW ON DIGITAL & BLU-RAY
ALSO AVAILABLE ON DEMAND

Structural Integrity

Felicity Jones, star of 'The Brutalist,' an epic story about a visionary architect, tours a divisive London monument

By Alex Ritman





Adrien Brody and Felicity Jones star in Brady Corbet's electrifying drama.

→ "There's a real honesty and integrity to it all," says Felicity Jones, looking out across a sea of concrete. "You can really see the correspondence between the psyche coming out of the Second World War and the architecture."

The British actress is taking in the view at the Barbican, perhaps London's most famous Brutalist construction and a labyrinthine maze of monolithic blocks and walkways connecting residential units, public spaces and one of the capital's best-known cultural hubs. It's a delightfully contrived location to discuss her latest film, "The Brutalist," and one she thoroughly approves of. "This is such a good idea," she says. "And perfect conditions!" (A bright blue sky offers a picturesque backdrop for all the towering gray.)

Brady Corbet's electrifying drama about a Holocaust survivor and Brutalist architect in post-war America — which A24 releases on Dec. 20 — has been captivating critics since it bowed in Venice. Jones may not appear until after the 215-minute film's unorthodox halfway point, but her performance has thrust the 41-year-old into the awards conversation, alongside co-stars Adrien Brody and Guy Pearce. A Golden Globes nomination has already been earned.

Jones says Corbet and his writing partner Mona Fastvold approached her about playing Erzsébet Tóth, the wheelchair-using force-of-nature wife of Brody's László Tóth, two years before production started in 2023 in Budapest.

"I couldn't put the script down," she says. "I just loved the intelligence and thought the ideology of the film was intriguing, this idea of fleeing fascism and falling straight into the arms of capitalism."

Ironically, the geometric slabs she's stopped at to admire are a cluster of the Barbican's residences, built to be rented out by the council but now privately owned and notoriously expensive. Like the Tóths, she notes, they too have fallen into the arms of capitalism. "But they're such a special, unique place to live."

A decade separates "The Brutalist" from Jones' breakout film "The Theory of Everything."

"Ten years exactly — it's so strange," she says. Jones' portrayal of Stephen Hawking's wife Jane in the love story-meets-biopic put her on Hollywood's radar, leading to an Oscar nomination and studio roles.

But more than just critical acclaim and an agreeably round number links the two features.

Both see Jones playing supporting spouses to troubled geniuses. Yet both "go beyond the labels of simply being wife or mother," she says. "Like many of the parts I'm drawn to, they have an element of defiance."

In "Theory," Jane Hawking was a young woman in the early throes of her life and career, much like Jones at the time. For "The Brutalist," she needed the experiences she's amassed since to play a brilliant woman whose life has been swept up in history's tide. "Having had my own family has given me the resources and the power to do this role," she says. (Jones has two children, ages 2 and 4, with her director husband Charles Guard — she's "in the swamp" in terms of parenting, she says.)

Among the leading roles that came in quick-fire fashion after "Theory" was the (also) defiant Jyn Erso in 2016's "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story." Following in the rebellious footsteps of her co-star Diego Luna (whose prequel series "Andor" she hasn't yet managed to watch — blame the kids), it's a universe she'd happily return to. "There's unfinished business there," she says, now parked on a bench after a few too many false turns and dead ends (stories have been written about getting lost in The Barbican).

Far more concrete are the projects Jones has coming up, including "Train Dreams" alongside Joel Edgerton (originally set to play Brody's role in "The Brutalist," coincidentally) and the Christmas comedy "Oh. What. Fun." Her production company Piecrust is on board a graphic-novel adaptation, "100 Nights of Hero," and is developing a TV series in which she'll play the head of a family-owned Formula One team.

But right now, Jones is embracing the growing appreciation for a film she's passionate about.

"There's an appetite for an event, and it feels like with 'The Brutalist,' that's what it is," she says. "It's an American epic — for everyone. And very much a piece of pure cinema."

The Brutalist: A24; Jones: Franco Origlia/Getty Images



2024

Congratulations to Variety's 2024 Philanthropist of the Year
David Foster

And to the Wasserman clients & executives recognized by Variety this year:

Hitmakers Crossover Award **LAUFEY** • Hitmakers Triple Threat Award **RAYE**
Young Hollywood Impact Report **FLO, LAUFEY** • In-House Legal Elite **SCOTT LINDLEY**
New Leaders **KIELY MOSIMAN**



Congratulations to our 67th Annual GRAMMY Awards nominees!

A. G. Cook • Aoife O'Donovan • Arooj Aftab • Baby Keem
Cage The Elephant • Chappell Roan • Childish Gambino • Cimafunk • Cody Fry
David Guetta • Davido • Disclosure • Four Tet • Fred again.. • Future • GloRilla
Iron & Wine • John Legend • Judas Priest • Kaytranada • Kehlani • Kendrick Lamar
Knocked Loose • Lake Street Dive • Lojay • Madi Diaz • Maggie Rose • Mark Knopfler
Mark Ronson • Noah Kahan • RAYE • Ryan Beatty • Sarah Jarosz
Sierra Ferrell • Skrillex • SZA • Taj Mahal • Tank and the Bangas • Zedd

And to the Brillstein clients & manager recognized by Variety this year:



Comedy Impact Report **JIM GAFFIGAN, NIKKI GLASER, MARTIN SHORT, ALEX MURRAY**
L.A. Women's Impact Report **OLIVIA COOKE**

TEAMWASS.COM

WASSERMAN MUSIC

brillstein entertainment partners
A WASSERMAN Company

@WASSERMANMUSIC



Final Approach

Netflix thriller 'Carry-On' brings back memories of vintage over the-top airplane disaster movies

By Marc Malkin

→ Welcome aboard! Netflix's bonkers new action thriller "Carry-On" is landing on the streamer Dec. 13 — just in time for holiday travel.

Taron Egerton stars as a hapless TSA agent roped into a plot to take down a plane on Christmas Eve. "It's a movie, and it should certainly not make people feel existentially afraid at Christmas," Egerton says. "Rather, it's kind of cathartically imagining how nasty things could get in a worst-case scenario."

With that in mind, *Variety* heads to the departure gate for a look at our favorite over-the-top, um, in-flight movies.



Airplane! 1980
FLIGHT Los Angeles to Chicago
FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS In this spoof of disaster flicks (including 1957's "Zero Hour!" and 1974's "Airport 1975"), all hell breaks loose when almost all on board, including the pilot, suffer food poisoning from the in-flight fish dinner. Ted Striker (Robert Hays), an ex-fighter pilot with a severe drinking problem, is enlisted to land the plane.
FUN FACT David Letterman, Chevy Chase and Barry Manilow were considered for the role of Ted.



Die Hard 2 1990
AIRPORT Dulles International, Washington, D.C.
FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS Terrorists take over the air traffic control system on Christmas Eve, and John McClane (Bruce Willis) must stop them before jets circling overheard — his wife is a passenger on one — run out of fuel. McClane even fights a bad guy on the wing of a plane about to take off.
FUN FACT McClane is seen using a Pacific Bell payphone in the airport to try to call his wife. Problem is, Pacific Bell was a California phone company.



Air Force One 1997
DESTINATION Moscow to the U.S.
FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS When President Marshall (Harrison Ford) finds his plane hijacked by Russian terrorists, he helps save passengers — some escaping via parachute! — as deadly chaos ensues over the Caspian Sea.
FUN FACT A novelization of the film described Marshall as "a moderate-Republican version of Bill Clinton, minus the womanizing reputation, and without a hint of personal or professional scandal."



Snakes on a Plane 2006
FLIGHT Hawaii to Los Angeles
FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS When venomous snakes are let loose on a jet, an FBI agent (Samuel L. Jackson) comes to the rescue, uttering the line, "Enough is enough — I have had it with these motherfucking snakes on this motherfucking plane!"
FUN FACT At one point, the movie title was changed to "Pacific Air Flight 121," but Jackson insisted it remain "Snakes on a Plane." "That's the only reason I took the job — I read the title," the actor said.

Everett Collection (4)

"VISIONARY"

SCREENDAILY

"DENIS VILLENEUVE'S *DUNE: PART TWO* IS A **BOLD** AND **ASTONISHING** PIECE OF FILMMAKING."

The Telegraph



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION IN ALL CATEGORIES INCLUDING

BEST PICTURE

BEST DIRECTOR

DENIS VILLENEUVE

DUNE

PART TWO

LEGENDARY

For screenings and special content please visit www.wbawards.com

WARNER BROS. PICTURES

WINNER • BEST PICTURE
GOLDEN LION Venice Film Festival
4 EUROPEAN FILM AWARD NOMINATIONS
BEST PICTURE
BEST EUROPEAN DIRECTOR Pedro Almodóvar
BEST ACTRESS Tilda Swinton
BEST SCREENPLAY Pedro Almodóvar



"It's deeply satisfying to watch Moore and Swinton dig into such nuanced, complicated characters and see two of the finest screen performers play off each other with such persuasive, plaintive intimacy."
-Manohla Dargis, THE NEW YORK TIMES



"Another Almodóvar masterpiece. Swinton and Moore are a flawless duo in soulful, sophisticated portrait."
-Ryan McQuade, AWARDS WATCH



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION IN ALL CATEGORIES INCLUDING
BEST PICTURE
Producers, Agustín Almodóvar, Esther García
BEST ACTRESS
Julianne Moore
BEST ACTRESS
Tilda Swinton
THE ROOM NEXT DOOR
a film by PEDRO ALMODÓVAR
SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Awards Circuit

By Clayton Davis



Wild and Crazy Oscar Season

Critics and industry groups are starting to weighing in. But it's still anyone's game

The Oscars playoffs are in full swing. All the glitz, glamour and chaos kicked off with the Gotham Awards, which set the tone for what promises to be an unpredictable and heated race. The New York ceremony delivered the first shock of the season when A24's dark dramedy "A Different Man," starring Sebastian Stan, overtook presumptive favorite "Anora" to land the top prize.

A day later, the New York Film Critics Circle added to the drama by naming Brady Corbet's historical epic "The Brutalist" best film. Then "The Brutalist" was nearly shut out of the Independent Spirit Awards the next morning. That's where "Anora" led the nomination tally alongside the spring indie sleeper "I Saw the TV Glow."

Meanwhile, the National Board of Review threw its weight behind Universal's undeniably popular "Wicked," giving an extra prize to Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande. Acting honors also were bestowed on Daniel Craig's work in the cerebral drama "Queer" and Nicole Kidman's turn as a CEO engaged in a dangerous affair in "Babygirl." All this highlights the growing tension between box office dominance and indie cachet.

The weekend brought more twists when the Los Angeles Film Critics Association crowned "Anora" its top winner, a move that left Oscar pundits buzzing. To cap it all off, the Golden Globes unveiled their best of 2024: "Emilia Pérez" led with a record-breaking tally, signaling its strength among the new international voters.

But what does it all mean?

If you've been anywhere near social media, you've seen the hot takes: "It's over! 'The Brutalist' is winning Best Picture!" or "'Emilia Pérez' hasn't shown up anywhere. It's dead in the water."

Here's a reality check: Critics aren't Oscar voters.

History has shown that an early awards-season sweep doesn't guarantee Oscar glory. Take Guillermo del Toro's "The Shape of Water" in 2017. At this point in the season, the romantic fantasy about a woman who falls in love with a fish hadn't made a splash. It went on to win best picture at the Oscars.

The lesson? Awards season is long, and momentum shifts constantly. What seems inevitable in December can unravel by February when ballots are in hand.

Studios are flooding the industry with screenings, Q&As and mixers, especially for contenders that have yet to be released — such as James Mangold's Bob Dylan biopic "A Complete Unknown" with Timothée Chalamet and Robert Eggers' horror flick "Nosferatu" with Lily-Rose Depp.

The truth is, many industry voters are just beginning to catch up. A veteran member of the Academy's Producers Branch admits to *Variety*, "I've seen four movies this year."

Which ones? "Inside Out 2," "Gladiator II," "Joker: Folie à Deux" and "Dune: Part Two" — all sequels.

The member adds, "I've heard a lot about some great movies. I'm dying to see 'Brutalist,' Pedro [Almodóvar's] film and the Dylan one. But you can't get to everything."

This lag in viewing underscores the importance of campaigns. The hope is that word-of-mouth hits like "The Brutalist" and "Anora" can stay top of mind and other hopefuls, like "Conclave" and "Emilia Pérez," can start making some noise.

As the season unfolds, one thing is certain: Anything can happen.

As we celebrate our anniversary, we thank our wonderful clients, colleagues, friends, attorneys, paralegals and staff.

DEL SHAW MOONVES TANAKA FINKELSTEIN LEZCANO BOBB & DANG

delshaw.com

DEL
SHAW
MOONVES
TANAKA
FINKELSTEIN
LEZCANO
BOBB
& DANG

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

LAINEY WILSON

BEST COUNTRY ALBUM

WHIRLWIND

Produced by Grammy® Winner Jay Joyce

"a tough-but-tender persona — a romantic survivor with cowgirl cred, carried by a voice that can convey ache and mettle in equal measure."

The New York Times

"Everything about her is a breath of fresh air"

VARIETY

"The best release of her career"

THE TENNESSEAN



BBR MUSIC GROUP BBR BMG

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

JELLY ROLL

"I AM NOT OKAY"

BEST COUNTRY SOLO PERFORMANCE

BEST COUNTRY SONG



BMG

republic records

STONEY CREEK

exposure

Edited by Marc Malkin


Lauren Spencer-Smith

Hitmakers

Nya West, Hollywood DEC.7

Against a "Brat" green background, **Charli xcx** accepted the Hitmaker of the Year award while also praising several other artists present, including **Raye** and **Caroline Polachek**. Charli noted that the definition of "hit" is in the eye of the beholder. She said the Velvet Underground's seminal 1967 debut album sold only 30,000 copies on its initial release. "This record is one of the most influential and groundbreaking records of our time," she said. "It's the apex of fine art and dirty culture, colliding high and low, poetry meets drugs, earnest and arrogant." Producer **Jack Antonoff** was recognized for a decade of success by frequent collaborator **Lana Del Rey**. **Olivia Rodrigo** presented the Producer of the Year award to **Daniel Nigro**, who credited Rodrigo and **Chappell Roan** for his big year on the charts. **Benson Boone**, **Doechii** and **Laufey** were some of the fresh talent feted at the event. "I don't think I'm your average musician. I did not grow up doing music. I found my voice about five years ago," Boone said. "This is a wild industry, and I'm happy to be a part of it."


Raye and Lana Del Rey


Charli xcx


Young Miko


Amy Allen and Caroline Polachek


Doechii


Reba McEntire and Lainey Wilson


Laufey

Clockwise, from top left: Gilbert Flores/Variety; Christopher Polk/Variety; Rodin Eckenroth/Variety/Getty Images (2); Joe Scarnici/Variety/Getty iamges; Michael Buckner/Variety; Gilbert Flores/Variety; Christopher Polk/Variety



Olivia Rodrigo and *Variety*'s Jem Aswad


Rachel Sennott



Flavor Flav and Quavo


Jack Antonoff


Benson Boone and Dasha

ONE OF THE TOP 5 INTERNATIONAL FILMS
NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW

"WALTER SALLES DIRECTS FERNANDA TORRES IN A STANDOUT PERFORMANCE. HER MAGNIFICENT, INTRICATELY LAYERED PERFORMANCE DRIVES THE PICTURE."
-Wendy Ide, SCREEN DAILY

"FERNANDA TORRES IS UTTERLY FANTASTIC."
-Chase Hutchinson, THE WRAP

"FERNANDA TORRES, GIVES THE KIND OF PERFORMANCE DESTINED TO BE HAILED AS ONE OF HER CAREER'S GREATEST."
-Nicholas Bell, ION CINEMA



WINNER ACTRESS AWARD CRITICS CHOICE ASSOCIATION
WINNER BEST SCREENPLAY VENICE FILM FESTIVAL
WINNER AUDIENCE AWARD MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL
New York Film Festival 62
WINNER AUDIENCE AWARD MIAMI FILM FESTIVAL
WINNER AUDIENCE AWARD VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
tiff. toronto international film festival OFFICIAL SELECTION

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BEST PICTURE
BEST ACTRESS
Fernanda Torres

I'M STILL HERE

Directed by WALTER SALLES

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS™
©2024 SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT INC.

Clockwise, from top right: Joe Scarnici/Variety/Getty Images; Michael Buckner/Variety; Christopher Polk/Variety; Michael Buckner/Variety; Joe Scarnici/Variety/Getty Images











VARIETY

Actors ON Actors



TUNE IN JANUARY 9
8 PM PT

PBS SoCal

**ON PBS STATIONS NATIONALLY,
CHECK YOUR LOCAL LISTINGS**

ALSO STREAMING ON THE FREE PBS APP

ADDITIONAL CONVERSATIONS
AVAILABLE NOW ON VARIETY.COM













PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXI LUBOMIRSKI

ACTORS on ACTORS

2024

There's no place like home — and, during awards season, home base is Actors on Actors.

For three days in November, our studio is the only place where you'll find each of the most exciting stars on the campaign trail, whether they arrived from ancient Rome or from Oz. Taking part in this celebration of the best movie performances of the year has become a rite of passage for Oscar contenders — no wonder that "Wicked's" Ariana Grande admitted to "Gladiator II's" Paul Mescal that she was nervous before the cameras rolled.

There was plenty of that: Selena Gomez ("Emilia Pérez") had calmed the butterflies by typing up a detailed list of questions for Saoirse Ronan ("Blitz" and "The Outrun"). Mikey Madison ("Anora") brought her questions in a bound notebook, though she wasn't prepared for the most memorable discovery of her conversation with Pamela Anderson ("The Last Showgirl") — a sidebar about Anderson's home pickling operation.

There's a serendipity to Actors on Actors that keeps it fresh 21 seasons in; nowhere else can stars speak as freely to a peer. Some conversations are reunions, like Zoe Saldaña ("Emilia Pérez") and Kate Winslet ("Lee") coming together after sharing the screen in the "Avatar" franchise; others represent the forging of a new connection. Colman Domingo ("Sing Sing") and Kieran Culkin ("A Real Pain") have traveled in the same circles for years as stars of prestige HBO series, but their sit-down was so spontaneously hilarious, they had our entire crew in stitches.

We know this series will continue to engross our readers and viewers around the world. After reading these conversations in print, watch the videos on YouTube and make sure to tune in to our "Actors on Actors" TV show on PBS SoCal on Jan. 9, 2025, from 8 to 10 p.m. PT.

Production: Emily Ullrich; Lighting Director: Max Bernetz; Set Direction: Gille Mills

We Live in Time

Andrew GARFIELD & Ryan REYNOLDS

Deadpool & Wolverine

BY DANIEL D'ADDARIO

30



R

Ryan Reynolds lit the summer box office on fire this year with "Deadpool & Wolverine," the third feature film centered on his subversive, pansexual goofball superhero — and the first of them to be produced by Disney after its acquisition of 20th Century Fox. (Deadpool's bad attitude remains intact, but Reynolds says there's one joke Deadpool couldn't say — more on that later.) For this year's Actors on Actors, Reynolds matched wits with another erstwhile superhero, Andrew Garfield, who returned to web-slinging alongside fellow Spideys Tom Holland and Tobey Maguire in 2021's "Spider-Man: No Way Home." This year, Garfield reasserted his dramatic chops playing opposite Florence Pugh in "We Live in Time," a delicate drama about the relationship between two romantic partners over years of ups and downs.

RYAN REYNOLDS: Are you asking first, or am I?

ANDREW GARFIELD: It must be hard for you, in terms of anyone taking anything you say too seriously, ever. For the people that weren't privy to our private conversation earlier, you said some very sincere things to me, and I was wavering. I don't want to laugh at something that's not meant to be laughed at.

REYNOLDS: No, but it's OK to laugh. I would never think, when I'm away from cameras and lights, to ever put on a show; even if I'm feeling crazy on the inside, I will be quiet and reserved and straight down the middle. What would you say your operating system is? What's the thing you push against?

GARFIELD: I find it hard to describe. I think I'm a generally hopeful, positive person. I'm always looking for warmth and love and kindness in every room I'm in, or every piece of art I'm engaging with. That's probably related to my mother, because she was this pure angelic love energy — that's my baseline. So what did your mother do to you?

REYNOLDS: It was my dad, Andrew — thank you for bringing that up. Does anyone have a crude sock puppet that I can use to explain this? My relationship with my father was very complicated. I come from a middle-class, blue-collar home, and my dad was of that generation where he was Clint Eastwood. Simple grunts is how he communicated.

GARFIELD: Gotcha.

REYNOLDS: People tell themselves stories, and we have some responsibility as we grow older to question that a little bit. I've done that a bit more in the last five years; I didn't know myself until I was probably 40-ish. I ask that question often: "Was my dad as challenging as I like to think? Or am I romanticizing that to pave over all these other things with whatever the drug is." The story is not true; nobody's black and white like that.

GARFIELD: But the wound is real. There's an old idea that I really like: We come into this world already wounded. And one of two of our parents knows exactly how to crack open that wound. And it's part of the destiny of each individual person to have that very specific wound cracked open so that we can actually live into our gifts.

REYNOLDS: I have four kids, and I really need to start working on those wounds. The 5-year-old? No weak spot at all. In your work in "We Live in Time," there's so much humanity — you chose this story, you felt compelled to tell it. What is it about the interconnected relationship with Florence Pugh's character that made you go, "Yeah, I have to."

GARFIELD: I've been initiated recently into a new visceral understanding of how fucking short this visit is on this planet, in this body. And I feel this crazy new urgency. I had a different kind of urgency in my 20s and my 30s, I think, which was, as you kind of referenced earlier, kind of patching over — trying to deal with the wounded-ness. Now, it's an urgency of living life as fully and vitally ... I only want to do the things that speak to my soul. Culturally, right now, there's so much numbness and lack of awareness of how life matters and that we all have a soul.

REYNOLDS: Your interactions with Florence's character and how much room you left for her was this radical act of generosity that you don't see in films too much, because we're very troubled by nuance. Sometimes as studios tend to drag the consumer down toward the bottom line by their wallet, sometimes we leave all the other shit behind. And what I appreciated so much with the film, your performance, and A24, who obviously makes pretty special films, was that there was room for that.

GARFIELD: Thank you for everything you just said.

I want to jump on something you said: I watched "Deadpool & Wolverine" last night.

REYNOLDS: You watched it on your Apple Watch, didn't you? That's how I watched "We Live in Time," and I'm telling you, it's really fucking hard to hold your attention.

GARFIELD: Can you let me go somewhere? As soon as it started, I was like, "There's no way they allowed him to do all of this. How the fuck ...?" You're the head writer on this film. But I don't know anyone else who's doing it, in terms of peeling back the onion of the self-awareness and meta-ness and also retaining a heart and providing a genuine service to fans while also kind of mocking. The layers of self-mockery are kind of impossible to decipher.

REYNOLDS: Yeah.

GARFIELD: I'm wondering how you got to the place of having the audacity to write in such a fourth-, fifth-, sixth-, seventh-, eighth-wall-breaking kind of vibe, and then how did you convince everyone that it would work?

REYNOLDS: I look at authorship and control, or however you want to frame it, as trust. Part of my job ... well, I have several parts of the job. One, I have to convince the studio, who's making a significant investment in mine and Shawn Levy's ability to land the plane on a dime. And our job is to return that investment. And that really is a big construct of this business.

GARFIELD: You mean making the money back?

REYNOLDS: Well, yeah. I've spent a long time doing work and roles that were incredibly fulfilling and nuanced and different and unexpected and charactery and movies that were received really well by critics, but not audiences. I thought, "Well, if I want to continue to do this, I have to figure out how to work both sides of the room and make sure that part of my job is choosing work that will beget more of this experience that I love."

GARFIELD: Was that, would you say, a practical consideration as well?

REYNOLDS: When I had no power — and I say "no power" very loosely, because someone in my position has —





"One of the first photos of me as a 3-year-old is in a Spider-Man costume that my mother made. And I'm like, 'Oh my God, this character, it means so fucking much to me."

ANDREW GARFIELD

GARFIELD: We're white guys.
REYNOLDS: Yeah, exactly, so I say that with a grain of salt. But what I mean is, I would be on big movies, and I knew the stakes, but I had absolutely no input into what happens. And when you have a point of view, and it can't be expressed ...
GARFIELD: ... it's like you're a monkey rattling a cage.
REYNOLDS: Yeah. It's a terrible feeling. And when you do try to express the point of view and you say something that feels reasonable, like "Let's stop spending on spectacle and let's spend on character" or "Why are we putting all the money in special effects when we could just write?," and that's dismissed ... If that happens a couple of times, you go, "I own the bomb." If I'm going to bomb, I want to be the architect of my own demise. I don't want to be a passenger on someone else's nosediving jet plane.
GARFIELD: What does the future hold for the franchise?
REYNOLDS: I don't know. Honestly, my feeling is that the character works very well in two ways. One is scarcity and surprise. So it had been six years since the last one, and part of the reason is that it swallows my whole life. I have four kids, and I don't ever want to be an absentee [dad]. I kind of die inside when I see their faces and they do a sports thing or something and I missed it. I don't know what the future of "Deadpool" will be, but I do know that we made the movie to be a complete experience instead of a commercial for another one.
GARFIELD: So good.
REYNOLDS: I love how you did this in "Spider-Man: No Way Home": You're weaving DNA strands of a cultural conversation along with the narrative of the movie. You guys did it in such a way that I burst into tears. One of the best feelings I've ever had is sitting in Hall H at Comic-Con and watching Wesley Snipes cross the frame and people are crying. They realize in an instant that they desperately missed this person, but they didn't know they missed him.
GARFIELD: Totally.
REYNOLDS: I think it's OK to appreciate the spectrum of our business: You make movies like "We Live in Time," intimate character pieces, and then you also do these movies that have this collective effervescence in a movie theater. The way you moved people in both of those movies is fascinating and singular to you. You and only you were put on Earth to do those.
GARFIELD: It was just very gratifying. It's like you're invited to a party and then the party ends slightly prematurely. I've got to reckon with being disinvited to this party. And that's when the work happens, right? That's when you start to really deal with your own stuff.
REYNOLDS: It's primal.
GARFIELD: I'm so grateful for it, in retrospect. And even during, I was like, "Yeah, this is soul work." One of the first photos of me as a 3-year-old is in a Spider-Man costume that my mother made out of felt. And I'm like, "Oh my God, this person, this character, it means so fucking much to me."
REYNOLDS: In all seriousness, you did sort of steal the movie.
GARFIELD: Oh, shut up.
REYNOLDS: And if I were Tom, I'd be angry.
GARFIELD: Cut that out!
REYNOLDS: Tom Stoppard.
GARFIELD: I'll ask about Hugh [Jackman]. You guys have a very close friendship.
REYNOLDS: Seventeen years. I love him. He's just one of the best men I know.
GARFIELD: Was he immediately excited, or did it take some convincing?
REYNOLDS: Disney and Marvel, they were so supportive from the jump. I think I had one line that Bob Iger wanted out of the movie, and we took it out.
GARFIELD: Which was?
REYNOLDS: I'll never repeat it. I promised I wouldn't.
GARFIELD: Dude, you're a man of your word. That's beautiful.
REYNOLDS: They were incredible partners. It was meant to be, because the first pitch I had for Marvel and Kevin Feige five years ago was a Deadpool-Wolverine movie in the "Rashomon" style, which is his perspective, then mine, then an objective.
GARFIELD: Cool, cool.
REYNOLDS: And they said no. So then I pitched the most idiotic movies. One was a Sundance movie I pitched them — no special effects, no conflict. And then I pitched one where it's a two-hander with me and the hunter who shot Bambi's mom. Their answer was "We don't touch Bambi, Ryan."
GARFIELD: It's weird that you're the first person to have pitched this.
REYNOLDS: So it was like a year and a half of tap dancing until Hugh called and said, "I want to come back and do this."

I don't know if you found this in "We Live in Time," but there's an element of, you have to have the confidence to fake it till you make it. Life isn't a TED Talk; it's winging it.
GARFIELD: I remember I was in rehearsals for "Angels in America," and it was week two or three of an 11-week process. Tony Kushner comes to visit us in London. I'm friendly with Tony through Mike Nichols, and we've been very excited about doing this together for a long time and for me to play this part. And he's going to sit through for our first rough run-through. We do it, and I'm like, "We got through that!" And I look at Tony. He can't look at me.
REYNOLDS: No!
GARFIELD: He literally cannot make eye contact with me. And I was literally like, "How do I not survive this?"
REYNOLDS: Because it's a spectrum of humanity. We all have those moments of extraordinary extremes.
GARFIELD: Totally. And I stood by the edge of the Thames and I'm like, "Oh, hello, old friend. Well, OK. So we have two choices, I guess. We either throw ourselves into the river or go to the next rehearsal. I guess I'll just go and rehearse again and live in that shame."
REYNOLDS: You see it in the work. You will sit in that stew of uncertainty you feel. It's what I try to get across to my kids. I try to say, "You can't be great at something unless you're willing to suck at it."

BY
KATE
AURTHUR

Emilia Pérez

Zoe SALDAÑA

& Kate WINSLET

Lee



Z



Zoe Saldaña and Kate Winslet connect easily, as colleagues who haven't seen each other in a while often do: They worked together on James Cameron's "Avatar: The Way of Water," which was released in 2022, and will also appear in next year's third film, "Fire and Ash." Saldaña had created the role of Neytiri in the first "Avatar" in 2009, and Winslet — a Cameron veteran, of course, from "Titanic" — joined the ensemble as the character Ronal, a shaman and warrior.

Winslet recalls the warm environment Cameron established during the films' rehearsal period, and "that sense of collaboration and willingness to share and listen and to invite ideas." Saldaña agrees, and says, "It's crazy what you can do when you're given an unlimited amount of resources to put a character together. It's the most rewarding process."

Speaking about Cameron and the Na'vi, who in the "Avatar" movies are the embattled native people of Pandora, she adds: "It's so beautiful how he totally gave us free agency to build the Na'vi people from scratch with him." Not that there wasn't competition on set — addressing Winslet, Saldaña says with a laugh: "You have to be in the room every time he talks about you. He's like, 'Well, Kate can hold her breath for seven minutes.' And he goes, 'Sigourney came in second with almost six minutes. Zoe *allegedly* says that she did it for five.' And I'm like, 'I did it for five!'"

Their two films this year, Winslet's "Lee" and Saldaña's "Emilia Pérez," are quite different from Cameron's otherworldly blockbusters. In "Lee," Winslet plays war photographer Lee Miller, who determinedly broke down gender barriers to shoot harrowing images during World War II. In "Emilia Pérez," Saldaña stars as Rita, an attorney in Mexico who becomes enmeshed with Emilia (Karla Sofía Gascón), first to help with her gender transition and then to guide her through making amends for the sins she committed as the leader of a drug cartel — all in an opera format.

The two old friends, in other words, have a lot to discuss.

KATE WINSLET: When I was told that I was going to be speaking with you today, my heart just jumped for joy. Not only because I'm so excited to talk to you about your movie, but because you are just radiance and light, and it's such a joy to have proper time with you — which we probably will never get to have again!

ZOE SALDAÑA: I feel the same about you. I saw "Lee" — I was deeply moved. I was very emotional. There's something really rewarding about discovering women who throughout history have affected the fabric of life for the better. And Lee Miller is someone that I was asking myself, how is it that I don't know about her? Thank you for telling her story. But how did this all come together?

WINSLET: Thank you for saying that, because the reason I wanted to tell Lee's story was precisely because of what you just identified: You didn't know who she was. So many people don't know that those photographs they may have seen connected to the conflict of World War II and the Nazi regime, so many people have never connected the dots and realized that actually it was a middle-aged woman who took those images.

She had been a model in her life for a brief period in her 20s. She had been defined that way — defined through the male gaze — often described alongside her love life. And it just drove me crazy, because her life was so much beyond that.

SALDAÑA: Absolutely.

WINSLET: We are trying to live our lives as women, redefining femininity to mean resilience and power and courage and compassion. And that to me is who Lee was. I'd been to an exhibition of hers in

the early 2000s in Edinburgh, and then years later, some friends of mine called me who work in an auction house, and they said, "This table was the kitchen table in the home of [Lee's] family." They know how much I love to cook and appreciate family mealtimes. And Lee was a great cook, and she would cook all these wonderful meals, and they would have these wonderful times around this table. I bought this table.

SALDAÑA: Oh, wow.

WINSLET: I sat down at the table, and I thought, "Why hasn't anyone made a movie about Lee Miller?"

SALDAÑA: How long ago was that?

WINSLET: That was in 2015. This was the first time that I have actively really produced something right from the very beginning, finding the writers, really crafting the story — because Lee lived so many lives throughout her life. But this particular decade was when she went to war as a flawed, middle-aged woman, and paid a huge emotional price for the things that she witnessed.

We had a female director on "Lee," Ellen Kuras, who has been a much-revered cinematographer her whole life. I did "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" with her years ago, in 2003. And when it came to the point of "The script is ready; let's go out to directors," I just suddenly realized it can't be a man. It can't be a man! I was so immersed in Lee's world, having finely tuned and constructed this story in terms of the screenplay and that 10 years that we cover. I spoke to Ellen — I knew that she had moved into directing television, but I also knew that she hadn't directed her first feature yet. And I thought, "OK, girly, it's time. Come with me."

But let me ask you about this extraordinary movie, "Emilia Pérez," in which you play Rita. I had deliberately not read anything knowing I was coming to speak to you. And so the second you open your mouth and your beautiful singing voice comes out, I'm like, "Yes! She's done a musical!" I just was so excited because, of course, I have heard you sing on set, on "Avatar" — one of the things you do hovering around the dressing room block. How did the project come to you?

SALDAÑA: I wish I could say that it was through a table that I bought on auction.

WINSLET: No! You don't! Because then you'd be telling the table story over and over again. Tell me.

SALDAÑA: It was through my agents. But I have to say that it's through the power of manifestation. I've always been a little bit cynical about the relationship that we have with the universe, and yet the universe has always been talking to me directly whenever I've sought direct advice and guidance. And these films, "Avatar," "Star Trek," "Guardians of the Galaxy," they gave me so much. But as they became super successful and became machines and worldwide phenomenons, all that was happening while I was also getting married and starting my family. So there was very little time for me to ...

WINSLET: ... be an artist.

SALDAÑA: ... start stretching my muscles again and challenge myself. You find yourself just full of frustration, and you don't know where to put it. I had a conversation with my agents, and we wrote down a list of great directors — a very small list. They called me up and they said, "Jacques Audiard is casting for his next movie, and it's going to be in Spanish, and it's an opera and it takes place in Mexico, and we really do believe there's a part that is just perfect for you."

Your self-sabotage comes up. Immediately, it's like, "Oh, wait, wait, wait. You're not Mexican. Oh, wait, wait, wait. You can't sing, you can't dance, you can't do this." And I was like, "Well, but I want to meet him. I just want to have a conversation with him." And we had a Zoom, and it was such a great connection that I had with Jacques.

WINSLET: He's a brilliant director. My God. The deeper you dig and the more layers of the onion that you peel away. And to turn that into opera, it was extraordinary to me.

SALDAÑA: It was beautiful. It was brilliant. And those are words that I don't like to use that much in what we do, but I do believe that Jacques' decision to make this a musical, to make this operatic, was brilliant in the sense that these women needed to have these breaths of song and dance in order for you to really get to feel them and get to know them. I love the fact that he wasn't afraid of how complex they were, and these are women with really damaged lives — very fragile, very desperate. And yet they were deserving of love. They were deserving of freedom of their journey. And I hadn't seen that in a long time.

WINSLET: But the combination, as well, of fragility and vulnerability in the face of fear and phenomenal courage — that kind of "OK, fuck you, world! I can do this, and I can do it by myself." It kind of made me think, "OK, hang on a second. Rita and Lee, quite similar in that sense of just 'I'm not going to be deterred by that thing or that thing or that thing. I'm going to go after the thing I believe in.'" And it's so true to now! But all framed in this fantastic, almost at times heist-style opera. I loved it so much.



BY
DANIEL
D'ADDARIO

Queer

Daniel CRAIG & Josh O'CONNOR

Challengers





The director Luca Guadagnino has an eye for leading men. This past year, Guadagnino put Josh O'Connor through a complicated game of sex, betrayal and tennis in "Challengers," written by Justin Kuritzkes. And the director took Daniel Craig on a journey through the emotional depths of "Queer," based on William Burroughs' short novel. O'Connor and Craig, both known for playing iconic Brits — the first as Prince Charles in "The Crown," the other in the five most recent James Bond movies — spent this past summer working on the next installment in Netflix's "Knives Out" franchise, "Wake Up Dead Man," which will stream on the platform next year.

DANIEL CRAIG: Where did you first meet Luca Guadagnino?
JOSH O'CONNOR: I met him at his favorite hotel in London.
CRAIG: Claridge's?
O'CONNOR: Claridge's. I got a text from our friend Jonathan Anderson saying, "Do you want to come for lunch? I'm with Luca Guadagnino." I was out and about in London, and I cycled to Claridge's — I don't know what went on in my head, but I forgot that I was meeting with Jonathan Anderson and Luca Guadagnino.
CRAIG: That's not like you. You're normally so together. I met him at a party — incredibly briefly, easily 10 years ago, if not more than that — in Rome, in one of those apartments that overlooks the Colosseum. Luca introduced himself, and I pretended to know who he was.
O'CONNOR: Was "Queer" the first discussion about working together?
CRAIG: Yes, it was. My agent, Bryan Lourd, had been talking with Luca about this. Luca says that he didn't think I would do it. Little did he know: I think I might just have said yes to anything. So you met him at Claridge's. You kept in touch.
O'CONNOR: Yeah. The "Challengers" thing was quite weird, because I was living in New York with no friends. I've spoken to you about this before.
CRAIG: You've droned on about it.
O'CONNOR: If only I'd known you then. You'd have hated it. But then my agent set me up on a friend date with Justin. At that point, Justin was writing his plays. He had a YouTube channel.
CRAIG: What's it called?
O'CONNOR: I can't remember. I'll find it for you. It's mad.
CRAIG: Justin's Japes.
O'CONNOR: We can spitball a few more off-camera. But he'd written this feature film script, and he sent it to me. I read it, and he said, "Which of the characters do you like?" At this point Luca wasn't involved. I said neither. They're both brilliant tennis players — I just didn't see myself in either of them. But I said it's brilliant and good luck to them.
CRAIG: What about the tennis stuff? You thought that'd be easy?
O'CONNOR: You'll know this because we're both British actors who trained in drama school. And when you do drama school, you know that thing where you say ...
CRAIG: ... I can do anything. Speak French and horse ride.
O'CONNOR: Anything. I once had an audition for a play, and I needed to know how to play an instrument. I tried to learn the harmonica in a day. I didn't get the part, obviously. So tennis? I was like, yeah, no problem. But at that point, I'd never worked with a trainer or been in a gym for very long for my entire life. Every day, we were doing two, three hours of training and two, three hours of tennis. And I was wrecked.
CRAIG: Did you kind of enjoy it?
O'CONNOR: I loved it. I had the time of my life and didn't keep it up.
CRAIG: When I first started doing the Bonds ... Listen, I used to go to the gym a lot. But in my 30s, I abused my body more than I prob-

ably should have done. All of a sudden, I get this part [in "Casino Royale"], and I'm like, oh, I've really got to get fit for this. I did the whole thing. But at the end of the movie, I'd been doing it for so long that I stopped. And then another Bond movie comes up, and you go, oh, I've got to get fit again. That cycle, I had to break. I just started keeping fit regularly, so I didn't stop for long periods of time. It's really fucking boring talking about working out.

O'CONNOR: I told you when I saw it: I thought "Queer" was a total masterpiece. It feels so different to the work you've done recently. Was that a conscious decision?

CRAIG: I don't think it was conscious. You've worked with Luca: There's an atmosphere he creates on a set, which is one of brilliant chaos, but also absolute focus. It's Italian. It's Sicilian. Which, for a tight-arsed Englishman, is very liberating. It doesn't mean that he's not absolutely laser-focused on everything. And the character just felt so multifaceted, multilayered. He's got a gun on his hip and walks around a macho guy, but he's Burroughs. I threw the kitchen sink at it.

O'CONNOR: He feels deeply insecure, and yet the way he walks around is completely confident.

CRAIG: But that makes so much sense to me. That's the artifice of masculinity.

O'CONNOR: The cool thing about Luca is, he's not afraid to take some source material and stretch it out and make it into something through his eyes.

CRAIG: Obviously, I love the end of ["Challengers"]. I love where it goes to: All of that setup, and you get to the moment. Which is what Luca's about — he wants to hit the moment of love. And you see a love between the two guys that trumps everything around it. I'm just a sucker for it. What else is there?

O'CONNOR: I think that's what was going on in this film: Yes, there's the tennis backdrop, but the desire these three people had for each other that's torn apart … and there's an invisible magnet that's dragging them back together. That was definitely a Luca component that was bubbling underneath.

CRAIG: The scene in the hotel room, where they don't have sex with each other, is the biggest cock tease in movie history.

O'CONNOR: The reality is that those intimacy scenes are the least sexy scenes you can do. I feel far more vulnerable doing an emotional scene.

CRAIG: The sex is the least interesting thing in the scene. You have to play the truth of it the best you can. The only thing that's going on is in the heads of these people; if you can't see that, then the scene is just gratuitous. What are they doing there? What's affecting them? All of these things. You owe it to a sex scene to have all those things in. Otherwise, it's an excuse to get people naked.

O'CONNOR: The reason they're there is to serve the story.

CRAIG: Did you laugh?

O'CONNOR: Me and Mike [Faist] got the giggles because we're both kissing Zendaya, and gradually we end up kissing each other. She's just backed out and she's watching. We had this moment of kissing for a while, and then opening our eyes and seeing that it's just us — that did make us giggle.

CRAIG: This summer we did "Wake Up Dead Man."

O'CONNOR: I've never experienced anything like it on a film set. We were all in each other's pockets for three months. Particularly you and me. Most of the time you and me.

CRAIG: Like it or not.

O'CONNOR: The trailers! That's the best trailer I've ever had in my life. It's better than my flat in London. And I spent a lot of time knocking on your door.

CRAIG: "Don't say anything. It's Josh. Just hide behind the sofa."

O'CONNOR: One other question I wanted to ask is about those movies and how they're seen. Because they've been so successful in theaters. Does that bother you?

CRAIG: The first one was such a surprise, and it was a fully released film. It made lots of money and things. And, listen, I'm not knocking where it's gone to and where it is. But it saddens me that there isn't more of a theatrical moment for these movies. These movies seem to have a cross-generational appeal. And the idea that families go and see that movie just fills me with massive joy. It's not just a niche movie we're doing here — it's for everybody. And the fact is, to have a collective experience in the cinema, blah, blah, blah. I know everybody says this, but it's the truth.

O'CONNOR: It is.

CRAIG: I'm glad people see it in their homes. I'm glad people watch it together in their homes and have fun doing it. That's absolutely great. But there's nothing quite like going to the cinema. Laughing in a cinema is the best thing in the world.







Angelina JOLIE

Maria

&

Cynthia ERIVO

Wicked

BY KATE AURTHUR



At the Tony Awards in June, the past and future of "Wicked" were in the spotlight, with Idina Menzel and Cynthia Erivo — the Elphabas of stage and screen, respectively — presenting the night's best new musical award to "The Outsiders." One of those statuettes went to Angelina Jolie, who, with her daughter Vivienne, was among the producers of the Broadway adaptation of S.E. Hinton's classic 1967 novel. "I know how excited everybody was that you presented the Tony," Jolie says to Erivo during their Actors on Actors conversation, calling Erivo's part in the ceremony "the cherry on top, that it would be from you." Excitement from team "Outsiders" certainly makes sense: For playing Celie in the 2015 Broadway revival of the musical "The Color Purple," Erivo won a Tony, a Grammy and an Emmy, putting her, in one swoop, just an Oscar short of vaunted EGOT status.

Today, though, Jolie and Erivo have gathered not to discuss Broadway, but to delve into their recent film roles. Jolie's "Maria" begins on the day of opera diva Maria Callas' death, then rewinds to her final days — with flashbacks to her career triumphs, heartbreaks and childhood of trauma. Jolie could relate to Maria, having "lost my voice," she says, speaking metaphorically, and then adding, "Maybe when I lost my mother, maybe when someone hurt me." To master the role in the Pablo Larraín film, therefore, Jolie trained for seven months, and "it was like a therapy."

To get inside Elphaba's skin for "Wicked," each day Erivo had to undergo a green transformation that would take, she says, up to four hours, which was on top of taking care of her vocal cords afterward. "It doesn't matter how accomplished a singer you are. You have to find the time to repair," Erivo says.

At the end of their talk, the two performers set their eyes toward the future. "I hope we get to work together," Jolie says. "Let's find something!"

CYNTHIA ERIVO: When I watched "Maria," I wanted to find out what brought you to the project.

ANGELINA JOLIE: Well, I had wanted to work with Pablo Larraín for a long time. I think he's a wonderful director that is very thoughtful about his subject and his work. And he's very sensitive to behavior in actors, but also able to shoot a film — and you sometimes sacrifice one for the other. He called me about "Maria," and I said, "You have to give me a few days." I knew of her a little bit, but I watched a lot of her work. Then I also watched a lot of her interviews.

What got me the most was, towards the end of her life, there was a lot of cruelty, and she was very unsupported. I knew that the whole team wanted to approach it with love and respect for her, so I thought we'd try.

ERIVO: I didn't realize that there was that much cruelty. There's a particular scene where she comes out of the opera house after singing, and [an aggressive] photographer's there. I felt so heartbroken for her, as someone who's just trying to find her feet again.

JOLIE: I'm sure you understand her even in ways I don't, as singing has been a part of your life since you were little. And you're so unbelievably talented. It's a lifetime commitment; it's all the work that's not seen and not understood. And in many ways you were born very talented. But really for me to now understand what it takes ... I have *so*, so much respect for you and your work.

ERIVO: Thank you.

JOLIE: In moments like that with Maria, she gave so much of her life, and then when she wasn't able to perform at that level, there wasn't a sympathy or a support for what she was as an older woman. There was only as if she just disappointed people for not being able to deliver. And cruelty.

I have so many thoughts and questions for you. For someone to be such an accomplished Broadway performer, to then have the camera this close, how is that adjustment to sing that way?

ERIVO: With Broadway, you have to perform to the back of the house. You want them to see everything, you want them to be able to read the emotions, so you have to send it out. When on camera, Jon Chu, our director, took us off track. There were no tracks; we just agreed to sing live on set.

JOLIE: That's extraordinary.

ERIVO: When we were doing a song like "For Good" [for "Wicked: Part Two"], there'd be silence in my ears, and he'd say, "You start, and the pianist will come in." We could even include all the breaks in the voice; if it turns into a whisper, then it turns into a whisper, and then you can build from there. That was really the joy of being able to do all of that on set, because you could really connect in the moment, change your mind in the moment.

Will you talk about all of the work that you had done to sing? Because, yes, I've been doing it my whole life, so for me it's like skin, second nature. But to have to learn a new form of singing, because opera is its own form — one, how brave. What gave you the bravery to do it? And two, what was the process like for you to feel comfortable enough to sing in that way?

JOLIE: Thank you. I was terrified. But I think it's a gift as an artist — and I know you felt this going into your film as well — when you're just not sure you're able to do it. You're not sure you're good enough. The task, the challenge, is set, and you feel small. It's a gift for an artist. So I felt that. Pablo knows opera, was going since he was a little boy, loves the art form, takes it very seriously.

"I was terrified. But I think it's a gift as an artist when you're just not sure you're able to do it. You're not sure you're good enough."

ANGELINA JOLIE





"This business is hard, and this business is very hard when you're a Black girl who's singing."

CYNTHIA ERIVO

So he made sure I had the right teachers, Italian classes, opera singing, body breathing.

People keep quoting me because I made, not the mistake — I admitted it was like a therapy. But it really is. Because I didn't realize the practice of it and the learning of it is one thing, but it was finding my voice and letting my voice out that was *really* hard for me. And I was *really* emotional about it.

I didn't know how much I had lost my voice. Maybe when I lost my mother, maybe when someone hurt me — whatever it was, the different things that had made it smaller and locked it away. So finding it and letting it come out was very emotional, and such a feeling that I wish for everybody to have. I wish everybody could know what you feel when you sing at the top of your beautiful voice, and you know what can come out of your body. And it's not just what you can do for an audience or how you tell a story, it's that you can *make that sound*. Maria said something — she said she doesn't like to hear records, because they're perfect.

ERIVO: Yeah, I remember that.

JOLIE: And there's a truth to that. For Broadway, it's not a film — every night's different. Every moment's different. There's a danger, there's a surprise, there's a life. I feel that you were able to keep that. When I watched this work that you did in "Wicked," it's bigger than life, but it felt very honest. Your work was just exquisite and humble, and I felt somehow you just pulled me in past all of that.

ERIVO: Thank you very much for saying that.

With "Maria," in her everyday life, there's this wonderful fearless way of she never feels sorry for herself ...

JOLIE: Thank you for noticing that.

ERIVO: ... *ever*. I think that's what breaks your heart, because she's fighting still. We don't get that very often in our women characters, in these bigger-than-life women. We want them to falter a little.

JOLIE: They're a good woman if they're apologizing. Or if they're breaking. Maria didn't have a mother that loved her and told her that she was enough as she was, so both of our characters come from this being alone since they were little and feeling a little different for very different reasons.

ERIVO: And never expecting that anyone would give ...

JOLIE: ... love.

ERIVO: There's this wonderful comparison of understanding the loneliness that they both have to experience. Because of that, they somehow have a really big capacity to love. So when it comes to them, they're really open to it.

JOLIE: Yes. I think it's true for a lot of strong women. There's an idea that we don't want care and kindness and softness and love, and it is so much the opposite.

ERIVO: Can I ask, how long were you filming this piece?

JOLIE: I was in training for about seven months, and then we filmed ... maybe it was three months?

ERIVO: Wow.

JOLIE: Yeah. And we sang live on set.

ERIVO: There is something quite thrilling about getting to do that on a set.

JOLIE: For you, I'm sure it's thrilling because you know how good your voice is. For me, more terrifying than thrilling. When I first sang, I asked it to be the tiniest room. Like, "whoever needs to be here, please close the doors." By the end, I got used to making big sound in a room full of many, many people. But, yeah, there's quite a feeling.

ERIVO: You said that you were terrified. Do you think that feeling is eased now?

JOLIE: I feel so many emotions when it comes to this piece, because I had someone in my life say that I couldn't sing. They didn't even say, "You couldn't sing." I was singing something little, and they laughed a little bit at me. And it really locked me. I don't think I would've ever tried had this not come; I would've just lived my whole life never finding my voice. So, yes, I went from being very terrified to being very grateful.

I can't not talk about some of the joy of this film that you've made. I remember taking my daughter — a few of my children, but my one daughter — who, when she watched "Defying Gravity," I remember that moment. Because as a mom, we want art to have an influence. I felt that feeling of "Oh, she needs this — she's feeling this desire to know that there's endless possibility and something within her she hasn't discovered yet." This was how I was feeling about it in that moment. I loved seeing it live. I loved, *loved* when it came at the end of this film. That particular song or what it means to you — singing it — anything that you can share?

ERIVO: There was this huge responsibility, because it's such a well-known song. And people know it; people love it. I really wanted to *mean* it. The physical work of it was hard, because I'm in a harness: I'm flying and I'm singing at the same time — so many things are happening. That was new for me, to figure out how my body, my brain, my voice, would all come together to work as one. I felt really proud of being able to figure that physical, practical side of it.

But I think in order to get to a point where I could rule the words, I really thought of all of the journey of getting to that moment. Not just in the making of this particular project, but the journey I've taken to get to here: being at drama school at 20, putting myself through, finishing at 23, not getting jobs and not really being seen and not really feeling accepted — feeling very odd, very different. And having to figure out how to make my own way through this, because this business is hard, and this business is very hard when you're a Black girl who's singing.

I also knew that there are so many people who want to feel seen, who want to know that it's possible to exceed people's expectations of them and exceed your own expectations. Even in that moment, I wanted to exceed my own expectations of what I could do. There's this other thing that's playing in my head, like, "There are so many people on this set right now, also, who have been waiting for this moment in this film and this project, and we've all worked towards this one part." It's how we finished shooting; it was the last thing we shot.

JOLIE: Oh, was it?

ERIVO: I just had to channel several different things: Little Cynthia, who didn't know she could do this. Big Cynthia, who wanted to make everyone proud and herself proud. I wanted it to feel like the complete package that it was servicing — not just my desires, but the desires of everyone who'd actually come together to make this thing happen. And I love singing. So to be able to take on that and honor the women who've had to sing at eight shows a week and to understand what it feels like to have to do that too, I was so ready to do it. I was so ready to "OK, let's do this."

JOLIE: Oh, that must've been an extraordinary day on set.

Adrien BRODY & Tilda SWINTON

The Brutalist — *The Room Next Door*

Adrien Brody and Tilda Swinton both confront themes of life and death in their movies this year. In "The Brutalist," Brady Corbet's ambitious "great man" tale, Brody's László Tóth, an architect and an immigrant to the U.S. from Hungary in the years after the Holocaust, seeks to make a structure that will express his worldview and define his legacy. And in "The Room Next Door," Pedro Almodóvar's first English-language feature, Swinton's Martha Hunt, a terminally ill former war correspondent, contemplates suicide. The two have also worked together several times in Wes Anderson films.

TILDA SWINTON: You know that in my house you are described as my tiny child because you actually are my tiny child in "The Grand Budapest Hotel." I'm your mother — your ancient mother.

ADRIEN BRODY: You did bring me to life.

SWINTON: And what a child you've become. "The Brutalist": many congratulations. It's a really monumental piece of work and apparently came in under $10 million. I'm sorry to be vulgar and talk about money, but to make a properly cinematic, epic piece of work like that is a huge achievement. And for you to hold it the way that you do is beautiful.

BRODY: It feels very masterful. Brady is a very young man; he's in his 30s.

SWINTON: There's an innate proposal that you give us at the very beginning — the suffering of this man — and that just carries us all the way through the film. How did you root yourself, knowing that you were going to have to go all the way carrying that suffering?

BRODY: He has this vision — to leave behind some lasting work that speaks to the traumas of the past — that holds that. Finding and connecting to the suffering of others is ... I don't want to say it's easy, because it's not, but there's so much [suffering] at our disposal. There's too much of it.

SWINTON: I think it's a good thing to find it easy. That's what compassion is, and empathy. A large part of our work is to be able to feel easy about stepping into any experience, particularly suffering.

BRODY: I also witnessed my mother. My mother is a Hungarian immigrant; she fled Budapest in 1956 with her parents, my grandparents, and I witnessed how hard it was for them in that journey, and how they were outsiders and foreign and how language and accents prevented assimilation in a way. It's very personal to me; I wish my grandparents were around.

SWINTON: But your mother has seen it, and she must be reverberating.

BRODY: This film that you did with Pedro — I think about mortality, now, in a way that I never thought about. As we get older, I think not about death but about life — what I want to do with my time here and who I want to spend that time with.

SWINTON: These are all wise reflections.

BRODY: They come with age and experience. But when you embody someone, like you did, who is forced to come to terms with their demise and take action, I'm curious how that felt for you, and what that process is like.

SWINTON: I've had the opportunity and the privilege, several times in my life, to be in the position of Ingrid, the woman who Julianne Moore plays in the film, who is the friend who is asked to be the witness, who is asked to be the companion, who's asked to be in the room next door.

I've learned from the Marthas in my life, not only how I might in the future have wanted to play Martha, but my own attitude to my own death. It's been an enlightenment for me. And so to have the opportunity to step into those shoes and be the person in the hot seat — to be the person who is mortally ill and very clear that she wants to live right up until the final whistle — was a really extraordinary opportunity, because I've seen so many people in my life at very close quarters take that step into embracing their own mortality.

BRODY: I feel lingering aspects of characters live on with me. Do you feel that way?

SWINTON: I feel satisfied that I have been able to play in a film that I feel so connected to. It's a very personal homage to all the Marthas that I've sat with. What Pedro was asking for was me to really bring myself to it and my own responses. As you know, since I am your aged mother, very often I'm goofing around with wigs and teeth and funny faces. But this was really about an absolute authentic response. I'm not a war correspondent. I'm also happy to say that currently I'm not aware of being terminally ill. But beyond that, Martha and I, we're pretty close.

> "As we get older, I think not about death but about life — what do I want to do with my time here?"
>
> **ADRIEN BRODY**

BY
DANIEL
D'ADDARIO





BY
SELOME
HAILU

Sing
Sing

Colman DOMINGO & Kieran CULKIN

A Real
Pain

Colman Domingo and Kieran Culkin take opposite approaches to their work. Domingo researches every role and sets his alarm for several hours before he's due on set, which Culkin teases him about. "If I have a 5 a.m. pickup, you know when I wake up?" Culkin says. "5 a.m." But, as they learn here, their hearts as performers are very much alike. Domingo is one of only a few professional actors in "Sing Sing"; largely, his castmates are formerly incarcerated men who play themselves in a story about an in-prison theater program. He plays their leader, whose self-assured demeanor falls apart as he tries and fails to get his wrongful murder conviction overturned. In "A Real Pain," Culkin stars as the troubled, childlike Benji, who goes on a Holocaust tour with his cousin, David (writer-director Jesse Eisenberg). As they travel through their late grandmother's native Poland, David becomes overwhelmed with worry about Benji's constant emotional outbursts. Here, the two actors compare notes on their morning routines, the joys of having (and not having) children — and the annoying ways some of their fellow thespians describe their profession.

KIERAN CULKIN: You started in the circus?
COLMAN DOMINGO: I did. I was just trying to get a gig, because I'd only taken a couple acting classes.
CULKIN: Did you find any of it helpful? The acting classes? Some people go, "I need to listen to everything my teacher says as if it's the gospel." And it's not.
DOMINGO: Some things don't work. But one of my first teachers told me, "I'm going to give you some tools, and you can use them, but you also want to expand your toolbox." Anything I do, it's always like the first time I'm doing it. I don't wanna do anything the same way. I don't have a method.
CULKIN: The moment you start doing that, you're like, "I've become complacent, and now I'm bored and I don't want to do this anymore." That's why I like auditioning. Whenever I haven't auditioned, I'm like, "You might not like this at all. You just did this because some producer said, 'You gotta give it to this guy.' But if I've auditioned, then at least you know what you're expecting. On "A Real Pain," Jesse Eisenberg hadn't seen "Succession." He cast me without auditioning me or seeing me in anything, ever. And he thinks this is totally normal. He's like, "I met you before." We met twice in passing. That is not how you cast someone.
DOMINGO: Listen, I've passed you a couple of times. I got a sense of you very quickly. Just the way you make eye contact. You're a bit of a ... how can I say it?
CULKIN: Maniac. Psychopath. Bipolar.
DOMINGO: I would actually say you're a very dangerous actor. And that's the kind of actor I like. Your work is beautiful in "A Real Pain." Like, "I'm not sure if I like him or not. Is he a bit of a narcissist?" But then there's something about him that's so honest.
CULKIN: Benji, I don't think he thinks at all before he does anything. So I made a point not to plan. I would literally be walking to set asking Jesse what scene we're doing, which would give him a panic attack. He's like, "You have a page-long speech!" I'm like, "I learn lines fast. Let's find out what the scene is by doing it."
DOMINGO: Are you aware of where cameras are?
CULKIN: Vaguely, but that's none of my business. On "Succession," the cameras were always somewhere beyond. You lean on the person that you're with. I'm sure you're used to that too. "Sing Sing" — one of the best ensembles I've seen in years, decades, possibly ever. And most of these people had never been on camera. That is such a feat.
DOMINGO: Greg Kwedar, our director, invited everyone to bring what they had and didn't judge whatever it was. I was shooting "The Color Purple" right before and doing pickups for "Rustin" right after, so I literally had 18 days. I had to go in there a bit more raw, in a way I was uncomfortable with. I like to prepare a lot. This was the first time I was like, "Oh no, I have to not know exactly what's happening." But it made sense for this film, because here I am, working with guys who have lived experience. There can't be any polish. I have to lean into *them* where *they* are.



CULKIN: Clarence Maclin is brilliant.
DOMINGO: He's beautiful, isn't he? There's one take, my favorite of the film, when he has me cornered in a tight space, and I offer him the word "beloved." Then he just walked away. I'm like, "No, no, he's got to really let that word work on him." So I leaned into my director like, "Could he just hang in there with it?" And he did. I have to give it to Greg Kwedar. He rarely wanted to call "cut." Everyone wants to cut so quickly. I'm like, "Yo, give me a little bit. There's more. There's always more."
CULKIN: Sometimes, on "Succession," we would just shoot the shit. With the actors playing siblings, we were filling in gaps of what's happening between scenes. It made the thing feel a little more full.
DOMINGO: Who was one of your favorite scene partners?
CULKIN: Sarah Snook. You're not supposed to have favorites; I have a favorite. There would be times, just for fun, I would take her line, and then give her a little side-eye. And then the scene would go on, and when it was my line, she would take mine and go, "Got you, bitch." Right before we were about to finish shooting, she goes, "Are you ready to cry? No one's ever going to cast the two of us in anything. We're never going to work together again." I just bawled. When you're on a show like that, and we play brother-sister, people will always make that comparison. So she's probably right.
DOMINGO: Do you still see each other a lot though?
CULKIN: She lives in Australia, so it's hard to keep up. I'm not the best with the phone thing. I always relied on the fact that there was going to be another season. But she's my son's godmother and one of my favorite people in the world.
DOMINGO: I know a lot of people, but when it comes to the people that are close to me, it's really small. Do you have a small group of people, or is it pretty large?
CULKIN: My wife and my two kids. That's it.
DOMINGO: What do you like about being a father?
CULKIN: Absolutely everything except dinner time. I love everything else. It feels like nothing else matters. I'm a dad now, and my only role in life is that. That's real life. All this is lovely, but I'm just trying to get home. Do you ever want kids?
DOMINGO: I wanted kids in my 20s. Now, I have a lot of really good furniture. Where do you go to unwind from all of it?
CULKIN: I don't.
DOMINGO: I'm not going to try to be a psychologist, but I think you need some time for yourself. What time do you wake up in the morning?
CULKIN: I don't think I've ever woken up at the same time.
DOMINGO: I woke up at 4:30 this morning. Because I need a good two to three hours just for me before I do all this stuff.
CULKIN: You're nuts. Do you do that on set?
DOMINGO: No matter what character. A hero, a villain, you name it — I need time for myself.
CULKIN: I got a good question. Is there any note a director has ever given you, where you're like, "I can take this with me for all things"?
DOMINGO: George C. Wolfe broke my shit down on "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom." He said, "You've been directing, right? I can tell, because you know exactly the way the scene should be." I said, "That's good, right?" And he said, "Yeah, but I'm missing the discovery in the moment. I want to watch, behind your eyes, you taking in information, and it's shifting you. Because you cannot recycle vulnerability." He was taking me back to 21-year-old Colman, who was a bit more wild-eyed and feeling my way through.
CULKIN: I object to when actors call themselves "storytellers." I don't really like that. Sorry, Jeremy [Strong]. I don't think *I'm* telling the story. Jesse Eisenberg was really good at making sure everyone was involved, but he wrote it. He's telling the story. We're all helping him. So that note you got — if you're aware of the story you're trying to tell, and you're trying to tell the story in the scene, that's not really your job.
DOMINGO: We're not storytellers. We're servants of the story.
CULKIN: Let's fucking work together, man.
DOMINGO: I'd like that. You have a sparkle in your eye, man.
CULKIN: I'm not dead inside yet.
DOMINGO: You're alive.



"I'm a dad now, and my only role in life is that. That's real life. All this is lovely, but I'm just trying to get home."

KIERAN CULKIN

Ariana GRANDE &

Wicked

BY
RAMIN
SETOODEH



Paul MESCAL

Gladiator II

57





Ariana Grande travels with a furry companion; no, not Toto, but close. The Grammy-winning pop singer — and, thanks to her film "Wicked," newly minted movie star — shows up at our shoot hours early, ready to make friends as she meanders around the coffee station with her beagle-Chihuahua mix, Toulouse, in her arms. As time passes, Grande begins to seem like just another member of the crew, chatting eagerly with anyone she sees. Eventually, she decides to take Toulouse to the patio. "We're just looking for some sunshine," she trills.

It's almost a surprise that she can't generate her own. This year, Grande fulfilled a lifelong dream by taking on the role of Galinda — the perma-cheerful mean girl who turns out to have a heart of gold, and is destined to become Glinda the Good Witch. Jon M. Chu's adaptation of the smash Broadway musical about goings-on in the land of Oz has launched Grande, with her co-star Cynthia Erivo (playing Elphaba, the future Wicked Witch of the West), into the heart of Oscar season.

To get there, though, Grande first had to battle a gladiator. "Wicked" and "Gladiator II" came out on the same day, in a showdown that recalled "Barbenheimer." This time, too, the irresistible pink film beat out the R-rated drama, but both movies also boosted each other, and helped rescue the winter box office. The success of "Gladiator II" owes a great deal to the easygoing charm of Paul Mescal. Playing Roman warrior Lucius, the Irish actor levels up from recent indie darlings "All of Us Strangers" and "Aftersun."

Mescal is as casual and unaffected as Grande as he strolls around our studio, at one point popping into close friend Saoirse Ronan's photo shoot just to say hi. And both stars take their films' rivalry as an opportunity for some theater-kid fun. Echoing the term fans coined for their unlikely double feature, both Mescal and Grande, during their conversation, exclaim, "We are 'Glicked!'"

ARIANA GRANDE: I watched "Gladiator" last night. It's unbelievable. And you're spectacular.

PAUL MESCAL: Thank you very, very much. I saw "Wicked" about three weeks ago in New York. Best place to see it. It goes without saying — I just think you're extraordinarily brilliant in the film. What can't you do?

GRANDE: Oh gosh, no. I mean, coming from you — I've seen you sing on YouTube.

MESCAL: We're starting there?

GRANDE: I have to start there, because I'm a musical theater nerd, and I saw you sing in "Les Miz."

MESCAL: Yeah. With the dodgy mutton chops.

GRANDE: No, I'm very excited because I also know that you're doing "Merrily We Roll Along," and that's really cool.

MESCAL: I definitely share the musical theater bug. Where did your love for musical theater begin?

GRANDE: I don't know. I mean, it was just something that spoke to me. I was a child, and I would sit there watching "The Wizard of Oz" and study Judy Garland, and I just remember it being such an escape. I loved the storytelling and seeing my first Broadway show.

MESCAL: What was that?

GRANDE: It was "Beauty and the Beast." I just remember loving it so much. When did you fall in love with acting?

MESCAL: When I did "Phantom of the Opera." I was 16. I was in transition year, which is like two years before finishing school. And I remember being wheeled out on this fake organ and fucking not having a clue how to play the organ. I have this theory: My parents met onstage doing "Pirates of Penzance."

GRANDE: Oh, my goodness.

MESCAL: So I have this weird thing that somewhere in my blood, or in my heart or head, that the act of being onstage feels like an important place.

GRANDE: That's so sweet. Parents met doing "Pirates of Penzance"?

MESCAL: Yeah. Dad was the pirate king, and my mum was one of the maids.

GRANDE: That's the best thing I've ever heard.

MESCAL: Thank God for that production, because I wouldn't be here.

GRANDE: I feel like our movies are strangely similar.

MESCAL: Do you?

GRANDE: I know that sounds absolutely absurd, but I really do feel like they are, because there are strong themes of evil versus good and dictatorship.

MESCAL: Yeah, absolutely.

GRANDE: They feel thematically intertwined.

MESCAL: And also, not to sell the whole "Glicked" thing, but in terms of a double feature —thematically similar, but then also totally different meals.

GRANDE: We're really selling each other's films quite well.

MESCAL: Yeah, exactly. I think so. What was your start point with "Wicked"?

GRANDE: I was hunting Marc Platt down for an audition. As soon as I found out that it might be happening, I told my team, "Be on high alert, please. And I know this has to be earned. So when they start seeing people, can I please go in? I'll do anything." And I worked really hard with a vocal coach and an acting coach to get ready, because Glinda's vocal track is very different than what I usually sing.

MESCAL: What's the differences?

GRANDE: It's very operatic and very classical sort of coloratura, which is different from doing a falsetto and whistle tones. It's a totally different placement in the voice. I wanted to sound authentic in singing opera, and I started two months before my first audition.

But how did "Gladiator" come into your life? Obviously, they just called you and begged you to do it?

MESCAL: I wish that was the case. I met Doug Wick and Lucy Fisher. Doug was the producer on the first "Gladiator." I met them at Sunset Tower, and that was the first instance that I knew "Gladiator II" was getting made. Then it went quiet for a little while. I was like, "They've gone to somebody else."

Then I got a message from my agent being like, "Ridley Scott wants to Zoom." At that point, I was like, "This is fucking great!" We spoke for half an hour. We spoke for 10 minutes about the film, 10 minutes about his dog and 10 minutes about the sport that I played growing up. In your head, you're like, "Of course there's going to be camera tests, auditions," but there just wasn't any of those things.

GRANDE: Was that the real sword from the original movie?
MESCAL: Yeah.
GRANDE: I wanted to know so badly. I feel like that must be a very commonly asked question, but I had to ask.
MESCAL: Oh, I'm as much of a fan of "Gladiator" lore as anybody else. It was a weird position to be in when you're a fan but also having to shoulder some big responsibility about what the next iteration of it is.
GRANDE: That pressure is a very specific thing.
MESCAL: But I feel like the pressure is related to both films. I want to go back briefly to the audition process. What was that like?
GRANDE: I mean, it was really insane. It was a three-and-a-half-month period of time.
MESCAL: Where did you find the time to do that?
GRANDE: I was filming "The Voice," so I was going from my vocal coach to my acting coach to doing the live shows. I was so nervous about my voice being in good shape because my audition was the next day. And I was on set doing "The Voice," and I asked them to cut the air conditioning. They keep it really cold to keep the live audience awake. I had to sing opera the next day. I had to sing "No One Mourns the Wicked," and people started to notice. I was like, "It's my fault."
MESCAL: The AC's broken!
GRANDE: I was like, "I'm so sorry!" That was my first audition, and then I had a callback where I had to do some scenes and more songs.
MESCAL: Was this with Cynthia Erivo?
GRANDE: Not yet. We never chemistry read together. It was three rounds for me, and I read with two different actresses. I stayed for three and a half hours the final day, and I had cried so much. We did "Popular," "Defying Gravity," "For Good." And I left my lashes on the mirror, because I left everything else in the room.
MESCAL: How long did it take for you to find out?
GRANDE: Oh gosh. It was another three, four weeks of waiting after that, and it felt like seven years.
MESCAL: Whoa. That's rough.
GRANDE: It felt really long. I just kind of trusted that I had done the work. And I love "Wicked," and I just wanted it to be beautiful, even if it wasn't mine.
MESCAL: It's a really hard thing to step into something that people adore, but also to be yourself and Cynthia at the absolute center of it.
GRANDE: Cynthia is just an absolute brilliant gift of a human being. I think we tried to keep the pressure out of the room, obviously, as much as possible.
MESCAL: I'm watching you guys in the press tour. You're obviously in love with each other.
GRANDE: Insufferable. Yes. We're horrible. It's bad. How old were you when you first saw "Gladiator"?
MESCAL: Well, the film came out when I was 4. So my parents didn't let me see it. And then I watched it with my dad when I was 13 and just loved it.
GRANDE: In "Gladiator" and "Wicked," we both have these massive sets, these massive fight scenes or dance numbers. I don't mean fight scenes in "Wicked." Maybe next one.
MESCAL: Oh, really?
GRANDE: Maybe, we'll see. I have so many questions about the stunt coordinating and the rehearsing of the choreography. You did everything yourself?
MESCAL: As much as I could. Because the way Ridley shoots, he's shooting eight cameras. So you're not typically able to get a stunt double in. While he's on your close-up, he's also on your back, so you can't really do a swap. How long did you guys work together before you actually got in front of the camera?
GRANDE: We had a pretty long rehearsal process. We had rehearsal tracks that we recorded in the studio.
MESCAL: I've heard about this. You and Cynthia went into the studio yourself?
GRANDE: Yeah. It was fun to get there and lay down the songs. We did sing everything live on set. But I remember the first day I got there, I really wanted to wear Glinda's shoes right away, just because it helps find the body and the physicality.
MESCAL: Totally.
GRANDE: We rehearsed for three and a half months before we got anything on camera.
MESCAL: Wow.
GRANDE: There were many different versions of "Dancing Through Life."
MESCAL: That's an amazing sequence. Take me through this, please.
GRANDE: Very scary. Very big thing. It's a big wheel of death, and it's kind of really insane. I don't know. It felt very scary to watch. I'm nervous in general, so just standing there, watching, I was in awe.
MESCAL: That's interesting, because your performance doesn't feel like it has any of that whatsoever.
GRANDE: The nerves? Do you get nervous?
MESCAL: Yeah, absolutely.
GRANDE: How did you feel the first time you wore your costume, and did you get any training in it? How much do you think it helps you?
MESCAL: I initially decided when I'd first been cast — which was very naive — I was like, "I'm just going to go for normal 'Gladiator.' The way my body is is the way my body is." And then I was like, "That's not the film we're making." So I went into the gym, but I hadn't tried on the costumes yet, and when I put the costumes on, I was like, "This is miles away from anything I've ever done."

I didn't recognize the way my body was in the clothes that I was wearing, and that created a distance from who you feel like the world expects you to be as a performer. That got me excited. And then we had some dodgy wig fittings, and I'm not a fan of a wig.
GRANDE: I need to see them. What were they like?
MESCAL: They were big. I just don't have a head for wigs. But seeing myself in the costume, it was one of the moments where I was like, "I'm doing 'Gladiator II,' and I'm this thing." And then, of course, putting on Maximus' breastplate is pretty insane.
GRANDE: I screamed. I squealed.
MESCAL: You squealed?
GRANDE: Yeah, I was with my best friend, Doug, and we were watching together. We both squealed.
MESCAL: Internally, I was squealing.
GRANDE: A very iconic moment.
MESCAL: What about you?
GRANDE: Paul Tazewell, our incredible costume designer, he is so immersed in this world. Every single detail, there's a reason. And my bubble dress, he was consumed with the question of "How do I make it seem like it's floating?"
MESCAL: How does that work?
GRANDE: I had my corset, and then they had snaps. There were 16 different layers that got snapped on. I know it sounds ridiculous, but it feels really lightweight and just kind of like a bubble itself. My favorite thing about that costume is just how light it is compared to what happens to her when she's wearing it. It feels like the perfect representation of what Glinda's magic is — which is her ability to take darkness and figure out how to make it light.
MESCAL: It's a beautifully designed film. How do you find running around the world with the film?
GRANDE: Oh, I think it's fun. I mean we've had the same press tour.
MESCAL: Because we are "Glicked."
GRANDE: We are "Glicked." Have any of the responses in the theater at the screenings really surprised you?
MESCAL: I've only seen it once with a big audience.
GRANDE: Cynthia and I have seen it 108,000 times at this point.
MESCAL: I saw it in London, sitting beside Ridley at the premiere. Any bits that he'd like, he'd be, like, just elbowing me. I was like, "This is the coolest."
GRANDE: That has to be the best thing ever.





BY
DANIEL
D'ADDARIO

The Last Showgirl

Pamela ANDERSON

& Mikey MADISON

Anora

M



Mikey Madison, who got her start on the FX series "Better Things," is among the discoveries of Oscar season with Sean Baker's "Anora." As the title character — a Russian American stripper in Brooklyn who allows herself to fall for a client — she is alternately hard-edged and sentimental. Who better to pair her with than a star who worked similar magic this year? Pamela Anderson, in Gia Coppola's "The Last Showgirl," plays a Vegas stage performer who, like Anora, dreams of human connection. Anderson, like Madison, began her career on television, with "Baywatch." In recent years, with the release of a memoir and a documentary about her life, Anderson has been having a renaissance, and Madison, who showed up with a notebook full of questions, was understandably awed.

MIKEY MADISON: How do you feel right now? I felt a little nervous when they called "action."

PAMELA ANDERSON: Me too — how do you start a conversation about all of this? You must be excited your film is doing so well.

MADISON: I've been dreaming my entire career as an actress to be in the place that I am right now. Some of it doesn't feel real at times.

ANDERSON: When did you start acting?

MADISON: I started acting when I was about 15. "Better Things" lasted for five seasons over the course of seven years. That was my introduction to everything — I really knew nothing about acting. Over those seven years, I was able to dip my feet into the water.

ANDERSON: You don't really know sometimes when you start the process. I was always very curious about the craft of acting, but I didn't have to apply myself when I was running around in a bathing suit on "Baywatch." I was curious about it — I would be sitting on the floor of Samuel French, reading Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill plays. I didn't know how to get from there to there, but I just had this dream. I always kept it a secret that I could be more than I was doing.

Gia could see the hunger in me as a woman who wanted to express herself; I attribute a lot to her for having that vision. I always tell her, "You saved my life." Because I would have hated to never get my chance to do something that was meaningful to me. I see that in you too. You worked with Quentin Tarantino, one of my favorite filmmakers, and Sean Baker too. Did you see the script for "Anora"? Did you audition?

MADISON: Sean had seen a horror film that I did — "Scream." He went opening weekend. He was already thinking about the plot for "Anora," and he cast me in it just from the film. It was the easiest casting process I've ever had to go through. I've never had to not audition for something before. I had gotten into this pocket of playing very antagonistic characters; I really wanted to play a leading role, and I'm grateful Sean gave me that opportunity.

When did you first read your script?

ANDERSON: I was in my garden at home on Vancouver Island, making pickles.

MADISON: Pickles?

ANDERSON: Really! Pickles. Pickles and jam — I just love my garden. I'm obsessed.

MADISON: Do you grow your own cucumbers?

ANDERSON: I grow my own cucumbers. I went home to remember who I was. That's when I started taking the makeup off and getting my hands dirty. I didn't really have representation at the time, but Gia tried to find me through an old agent, and he passed on the movie. Gia didn't take no for an answer; she found my son Brandon, and Brandon brought me the script, and I read it on my little vegetable farm. I knew the whole movie like a play before I got to Las Vegas.

What was the process like for you?

MADISON: It was a character that felt so far away from home in every single way. It was very intimidating at first; how do I empathize with her? I was like, I just need to start small. I did quite a

bit of pole training. I did this stripper boot camp where I was taught how to give lap dances, how to twerk. And I would know everything about her — what cigarettes she smokes, what her school life was like.

ANDERSON: You have to do the work. When I saw "Anora," I just wanted to grab you out of there and hug you. I've had friends in that industry as well, and I could really relate to it. It was so emotional. Did you have an intimacy coordinator? That's the big thing these days, right?

MADISON: For our film, it was a choice that I made; the filmmakers offered me, if I wanted, an intimacy coordinator. Mark Eydelshteyn, who plays Ivan, and I decided it would be best to just keep it small. My character is a sex worker, and I had seen Sean's films and know his dedication to authenticity. I was ready for it. As an actress, I approached it as a job.

I wanted to ask about your preparation for "The Last Showgirl."

ANDERSON: I was able to bring a lot of my own personal experience, my long life of dealing with beauty and glamour and aging and reassessing life choices. I got to bring my whole life into this role.

I think the past shouldn't dictate your future. But looking back, I was always creating characters. And I feel like I know I've created a few Halloween costumes. But a lot of the things I went through, I didn't realize my kids were going through them at the same time. Being a working mom and being in this entertainment world and having your mom be sexualized in some way — I didn't realize how difficult it was.

So I'm not ashamed of my life. I'm not ashamed of the choices that I made, even though maybe in hindsight I would've done things differently. But you need life experience to know that you would've done that differently.

MADISON: I don't think there's anything to be ashamed about. This incredible, amazing life you had made you the person that you are, and that's why you were able to give the performance you were able to give.

ANDERSON: I'm trying to tell myself that too. And I feel like now I have the freedom to focus on things instead of worrying about a relationship or my family. My kids are grown. I'm free. Now I can play again.

MADISON: The life that we live, it makes us better actors.

ANDERSON: I worked with Greg Butler, who was a choreographer when I played Roxie on Broadway. I got to see the backstage banter where people are worried about what they're going to make for dinner and then they hear their cue and, boom, they're onstage. And there's a whole choreography when it comes to these costumes. They're 50 to 80 pounds sometimes. These headdresses — Bob Mackie pieces that hadn't left the building in 30 years.

MADISON: They're Bob Mackie designs?

ANDERSON: They're Bob Mackie designs. They have so much history in them. The showgirl is the iconic image of Las Vegas, and I wanted to keep that nostalgic innocence, that joyful optimism. And to create the chemistry between the young girls, I had dinners at my house. We were all cooking vegetable soup — doing all sorts of bonding things, because we shot the movie in 18 days.

MADISON: You really feel that rich history between you and each of the characters in the film. That's a testament to all the internal work that you did.

ANDERSON: You have to dive in headfirst. I'm sure you had to too. Do you know any Russian? Tough language.

MADISON: My grandmother, it was one of the languages she spoke, but it wasn't passed on to my father. So I was starting from scratch. I never wanted it to sound perfect. I always wanted there to be some Americanized version of Russian, because I didn't want her to fit in; she's always on the outside looking in. I would fall asleep listening to 10 hours of Russian speaking on YouTube and just cram in as much Duolingo as possible.

ANDERSON: I lived in France for a while, and I learned a lot of French, but I was always afraid to speak. Even if you learn the language and can understand a conversation, you're still shy to speak it — that really came across.

MADISON: What were the most challenging parts of playing your character?

ANDERSON: I haven't had a lot of experience in this industry. I mean, I have in my own way, but not something like this, that was so important to me. I really wanted to pour my heart and soul into it, and I wanted to keep my focus for the entire project. I feel like it's just the tip of the iceberg; I'm really excited about doing more. I want to do more movies, but I'm going to still make pickles.

MADISON: Thank God.

ANDERSON: I will send you some. Beets, pickles, beans — whatever you want.



Harris DICKINSON

Babygirl, *Blitz*

&

Drew STARKEY

Queer

"I'm finding out we're the same person — long-lost cousins," Drew Starkey says to Harris Dickinson. Though the two have just met, at 31 and 28, they are indeed in the same unusual position: Both play the love interests of far more seasoned movie stars. Starkey was best known for Netflix's teen drama "Outer Banks" before stepping into Luca Guadagnino's surreal love story "Queer" as a quiet veteran who's passionately pursued by a tenderhearted heroin addict (Daniel Craig) in 1950s Mexico City. And, directed by Halina Reijn, "Babygirl" imagines Dickinson as the intern of a prominent CEO played by Nicole Kidman. In both films, questions arise about which lover really holds the power. In real life, Starkey and Dickinson are finding their power, still reflecting on their school-play roots and learning to deal with the anxiety that comes with each new script.

BY
SELOME
HAILU

HARRIS DICKINSON: I'm a bit full up. I had a lot of pancakes this morning.

DREW STARKEY: You're a pancake guy?

DICKINSON: I was this morning. You're from North Carolina?

STARKEY: Yeah, in a rural area. But strangely, I was surrounded by art growing up. How did you start?

DICKINSON: My mum was figuring out child care during summer, and there was a local drama school. We did "Grease." All of the boys played Danny, and all of the girls played Sandy. How did you get into it?

STARKEY: Just being in school plays. And then I went to college, and — [*He looks at the table beside him.*] Someone left their gum on the table.

DICKINSON: Someone very famous, probably.

STARKEY: I wonder who was in here last.

DICKINSON: Put that on eBay. You could pay off that college tuition.

STARKEY: But I went to college, like, "I want to take an acting class. It's fun." And a professor was like, "I think you could do this."

DICKINSON: I was in the Marine Cadets for years as a kid, and even they were like, "Do you want to play the victim that we do our medical training on?" Then an acting teacher said, "Don't join the military. You can probably be an actor."

STARKEY: You're a director as well, though?

DICKINSON: I've always wanted to direct, but it feels like two very different sides of me. When I'm acting, I need to be guided. I succumb to whatever world I step into.

STARKEY: Talking about guidance and submission, tell me about "Babygirl."

DICKINSON: The script got sent to me, and I was like, "I don't know if I can do this." You tend to go to that place of "I don't think I'm right" — to protect yourself, maybe. But Halina and I had a really long chat, and I knew that Nicole was on board, which was intimidating.

STARKEY: You and Nicole do such a good job of finding the humor in it. There's something childlike about it.

DICKINSON: Nicole and I didn't have a ton of time together. To not fully understand each other — there was an element of mystery between us that was helpful.

STARKEY: I didn't meet Daniel until a month before we shot in Rome, at Cinecittà.

DICKINSON: Where was the rest of it? Actually in the jungle?

STARKEY: No, the jungle was in a back lot. Dude, Luca was like, "I want *these* plants," and they brought in thousands of pounds of dirt and built a jungle. Luca was very specific about how he wanted the world to feel. He sent visual references. Some photography; these paintings by Francis Bacon. With Daniel and I, there wasn't a lot of conversation about the dirty word — "chemistry" — between us. It was just going for it. My heart was racing on the first day.

DICKINSON: Did you ask him about James Bond?

STARKEY: He just started talking about it. I got a lot of insider trading on that. It was really strange, because I'm watching this beautifully crafted, prepared performance, but also free of all inhibitions. I'm like, "What is he tapped into? Fuck! Let me lock back in."

DICKINSON: I love the ayahuasca sequence. How long did it take?

STARKEY: It was over the course of a night, but the rehearsals for the dance, that was months. I'm terrible at it.

DICKINSON: I love to dance, quite frankly, Drew.

STARKEY: I know this about you. Many mutual friends, they all say, "Harris, he's a dancer."

DICKINSON: Daniel's a good dancer, isn't he? I've seen him at the clubs.

STARKEY: He can move his body.

DICKINSON: You have to really fall a few times. There's a tendency, which I'm trying to work on, like, "I'll just try and do it safe." And then, "All right. I'm going to just be an idiot for a second." Nicole's like that. She'll just try it.

STARKEY: Daniel's the same way. They take the lead. You have permission to make a fool of yourself.





Blitz, The Outrun

Saoirse Sele

Emilia Pérez

BY
DANIEL
D'ADDARIO



RONAN & naGOMEZ

Plenty of our Actors on Actors subjects did their homework this time around — but Selena Gomez may win the prize for most prepared. As she sat down, the "Emilia Pérez" performer clutched a phone on which she had pages of questions she intended to ask Saoirse Ronan, star of "Blitz" and "The Outrun." Both films provided Gomez material. In "The Outrun," Ronan is at the center of the frame as a woman recovering from alcohol addiction; in "Blitz," she plays the supporting role of a mother trying to reunite with her young son in bombed-out World War II London. Gomez herself is in the supporting actress race with Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Pérez," in which she plays a young mother who seeks answers and independence after her spouse (played by Karla Sofía Gascón) mysteriously disappears.

SELENA GOMEZ: This is my first time, everybody.
SAOIRSE RONAN: I can tell, because you've got all your notes. Now I'm getting nervous: "Oh, God, I should have made notes."
GOMEZ: No, no. If I'm to be honest, you have a much more interesting acting career than I do.
RONAN: You've come very prepared. Are you quite studious when it comes to your prep for work?
GOMEZ: When it's something I really love and care about, I tend to want to immerse myself in it completely. For "Emilia Pérez," that was an entirely different language for me. I should be fluent [in Spanish], and I was when I was younger.
RONAN: Did you do a lot of prep with a language coach, or were you just starting to speak with family again?
GOMEZ: It was really interesting. We all had to have our own coach, because Zoe Saldaña is from the Dominican Republic, Karla Sofía Gascón is from Spain, and I'm from Texas, but my family is in Mexico.
RONAN: When you told your family that you'd been cast, and that you were going to speak Spanish and immerse yourself in it, what was their reaction?
GOMEZ: They're extremely proud. And I couldn't be happier to honor that part of me and my culture. Singing in Spanish, too, was really beautiful, because the words are so powerful. And in Spanish, everything sounds romantic.
RONAN: Now I'm scared to know what you're going to ask *me*.
GOMEZ: It's all very good, I promise. I saw "Blitz" and "The Outrun," and the one I connected with the most would have to be "The Outrun."
RONAN: That means a lot. I'm incredibly proud of both films, but "The Outrun" was something that I built from the ground up with my partner. I was producing it for three years before we actually made the thing.
GOMEZ: Oh, that's like your baby.
RONAN: The reason I wanted to do it is because, like everyone, I've been affected by addiction. I've watched loved ones suffer from alcoholism; it was this monster in the corner of the room that I hadn't dealt with. I was finally ready to crack that open, so there was a lot of raw emotion and finding the best way to use that.
GOMEZ: My favorite moment is when you go back to the times that your character would use; it showed the journey really well. Personally, I've been in recovery for things in my life, and it just felt very true. It made me very emotional, but it was so beautiful. Do you have to recover from any sort of rawness that you show, or is it just quite natural and then you can come out of it?
RONAN: I can come out of it. But there are moments that will catch you off guard that you'll feel very affected by. There's a moment in "The Outrun" where Paapa Essiedu, who plays my boyfriend, is pouring wine down the sink, and it's been a horrific night that I've just completely ruined for him. Physically and emotionally, it's quite violent and chaotic. I don't know if you've ever read "The Body Keeps the Score," but it's all about how you can hold on to trauma like that in your body. I'd been on the receiving end of that as well, but suddenly I was the cause of it. That was incredibly upsetting. That was one of the only times, ever, where I felt like I just needed a minute.

The reason why I love to act and I love to perform is that any of these wounds that you've got or emotions that you've got ready to go, you channel them into the performance. And if they're all sort of coming out of you unfiltered for a two-minute take and you feel like you've really allowed the floodgates to open, then by the end of the day you're knackered, but you're sort of cleansed from it, almost. You know what I mean?
GOMEZ: That's true.
RONAN: With "Emilia Pérez," were there ever moments where you couldn't shake it off?
GOMEZ: To be honest, not with this one, because I related to the lyrics — this being trapped, if you will. My character, Jessi, is trapped in her own world, and she's had everything that she's wanted. And then she loses her partner and rediscovers herself and wants to find love and have a new life. I found that to be very therapeutic.

How did you approach the essence of these characters? Especially in these films, with how different they are?
RONAN: It's such a hard thing to dissect. We've been doing this since we were so young. And you're developing this discipline before you're really aware of what you're doing, which I feel really grateful for! There was this lack of inhibition when I was introduced to the world of acting for the first time. I was so protective over Elliott [Heffernan], who's the lead in "Blitz."
GOMEZ: This was his first film.

"My mom had me when she was 16. I do feel like we grew up together. I am so grateful that we were there for each other. It felt very 'Gilmore Girls.'"

SELENA GOMEZ





"I've watched loved ones suffer from alcoholism; it was this monster in the corner of the room that I hadn't dealt with."

SAOIRSE RONAN

RONAN: He was 9 years old when he made it. There's just this sort of blind faith that kids have. The older you get, there's more to carry; there's more awareness of what can go wrong, or how much responsibility you've got on your shoulders.

GOMEZ: It was your first time playing a mother, no?

RONAN: Elliott reminded me it wasn't my first time. He was like, "Remember, you played the mother to King James I and VI in 'Mary Queen of Scots,' Saoirse," which, correct — I did. But this was the first time that I was actively playing a mother. I'd never done that before.

GOMEZ: How'd that feel?

RONAN: It was good. I had to figure out what my version of that was, because I'm not a mom yet, but I'm very close to my mother. I wanted to hold on to the awareness that Rita, my character in "Blitz," is still very young. Hers is this teenage pregnancy, and she's essentially growing up with this little boy. As much as I wanted there to be a maternal element to her character, I still wanted it to feel like they were companions and friends.

GOMEZ: That's really special. My mom had me when she was 16. I do feel that we grew up together, and that's a different perspective than someone who would wait until they're older to have a child. I am so grateful that we were there for each other. It felt very "Gilmore Girls."

RONAN: Was she with you when you were working?

GOMEZ: My mom was fantastic. She would never put me in a room by myself; she was very aware of things that I didn't know. For example, if I had to go to a premiere and I was 16, she'd say, "You can't go to the after-party. You can have fun, and then you're going to go home." Little things that helped my sanity, if you will.

I got to play a mom in "Emilia Pérez," and it was very sweet. However, I was intimidated. There is something about children that is fearless, and I appreciate that so much, and I miss it a little.

RONAN: Whenever I'm with kids, it reminds me of how much I love what I do. But it's also this melancholy that starts to sink in. You're like, "Oh, I'm never going to have that again."

GOMEZ: That's fair. I've felt that many times.

You play a lot of historical characters in different eras. How do you get into those roles, and those eras?

RONAN: With anything that's set in the past, as much as you want to expose yourself to the culture and the zeitgeist of the time, you then need to forget about it. You know what I mean? You need to become aware of it and expose yourself to it and educate yourself in it, but I've always wanted to play them as if you could relate to them now. The more we learn about Mary, Queen of Scots, she was a young lassie who was kind of in over her head and just wanted to hang out with her friends and had 10 dogs because she was a queen. How many singers do you know, or how many actors do you know, that are exactly the same? They're in this bizarre world from such an early age, and they're like, "OK, I can have whatever I want."

GOMEZ: So dangerous.

RONAN: The gorgeous, brilliant, perfect, amazing Greta Gerwig gave you guys a joint award at the Cannes Film Festival. How was that experience? How was it to be with Greta? Just talk to me about that.

GOMEZ: I think you can tell, now that we've hung out, that I'm still a bit awkward. So I never like to bother people. Ariana [Grande] was in the other room, and I was like, "I'd love to go say hi, but I don't want to bother her," because I know how life can be. I think that can step in the way of me getting to know people, and that's something I should work on a little bit.

RONAN: But talk about the experience of getting the award.

GOMEZ: We all got to celebrate that together, and we were all talking about where we're going to put our award and just how proud we were to be a part of it. We just didn't expect it.

RONAN: And where did you put the award?

GOMEZ: I actually have it above my fireplace.

RONAN: Nice. Front and center. I'm interested to know what your experience was like with Jacques.

GOMEZ: I've never wanted to be the center of attention, so I love working with filmmakers that make it feel collaborative. Jacques was like a little kid. He would get so excited when we'd do something right, and he would let us know — even though I couldn't understand him half the time. I was appreciative.

RONAN: Did he speak in French the entire time?

GOMEZ: It was such a weird experience. We had translators; we had coaches; we had Jacques' interpreter. French, English, Spanish — it was the wildest combination, but he pulled it off.

RONAN: If you don't necessarily like to be the center of attention — when it comes to acting, do you want to take the lead yourself? If the right role came along, would you want to do that?

GOMEZ: I think so. I'm just a bit nervous. I have been acting and singing my whole life, but this is all a new experience for me. I'm really proud of the choices I've made, because I go for the parts that scare me a little. That's the rush I crave.

RONAN: There's this other persona you have as a musician, but whenever I've seen you in an acting role, I've always been impressed by how you've gone the other way. You haven't gone down the route that people expected. With "Emilia Pérez," you have that solo, and it's so dirty and sexy and raw. She's broken and messed up. She's a mother and trying to do her best, but she also wants to go out and have a good time. You can see there's a want there to show people what you've got.

GOMEZ: That means a lot to me. I love storytelling, and my music career is separate. However, I don't see that being a forever thing.

RONAN: Music?

GOMEZ: I'll always have music in my life because my partner's a musician, and I love having moments to do it for fun. It can be a little vulnerable when you're putting yourself out there versus escaping into a character.

You do some singing in "Blitz" — how was that?

RONAN: It is the most vulnerable feeling to get up on a stage — even if it's a makeshift stage in a fake munitions factory — and perform for people. The idea of singing in front of people has always been really exposing. I don't think people realize how special it is to have that extra je ne sais quoi that makes you unique and special.

GOMEZ: I definitely think my strong suit is probably acting. But one thing I'm proud of in music is being able to tell a story — my favorite songs are mostly ballads, and they're very transparent and honest. But I think I might be a little too old for the pop-star life. I'm genuinely so happy to just be in this new era of my life, because in a lot of ways, it's just the beginning.



BY
KATE
AURTHUR

Nightbitch

Amy ADAMS & Demi MOORE

The Substance

When Demi Moore tells Amy Adams that "there is such incredible diversity" in Adams' choice of roles, Adams learns just how difficult it is to avoid accidentally quoting from one of Moore's beloved past films. "I realized what I almost said to you, and then I was really embarrassed," Adams says. "I almost said, 'Ditto.'"

"Ditto," of course, is a citation from 1990's "Ghost" — a code word for the enduring love between Moore's Molly and Patrick Swayze's Sam after Sam is murdered. "I cried harder in 'Ghost' than I had cried in any movie up to that point in my life," Adams adds. "You can say ditto!" Moore says.

Their films this year similarly go to great pains — literally! — to tell confrontational, feminist stories about women's rage. In "Nightbitch," directed by Marielle Heller, Adams' character, Mother, faces each day of loving tedium at home with her toddler, Son, and then may or may not begin transforming into a dog. In "The Substance," directed by Coralie Fargeat, Elisabeth Sparkle (Moore) is an actress on the wrong side of 50 who takes extreme measures to preserve her youth — as in, after injecting the mysterious titular drug, she births the body of Sue (Margaret Qualley), a perfect younger version of herself.

In this conversation, Moore and Adams go deep on their performances, from a scene in which Moore's Elisabeth wipes makeup off her face again and again in an act of self-abnegation to the time Adams' Mother discovers that she's perhaps … growing a tail?!

AMY ADAMS: I saw "The Substance." As always, you're amazing. Amazing. When you read the script, was it like you totally were there?

DEMI MOORE: Thank you. On the page, I could see that this was such a unique, interesting way of exploring this subject matter, which was, I felt, really important. And the way in which she was wanting to tell it was such an out-of-the-box exploration, taking us with the whole idea of body horror. I thought it was so relatable. But the thing that hooked me in the most was the violence that we can have against ourselves. The way in which we can dissect, criticize — and also, just looking at it from an actor's perspective, doing something where there was very little dialogue.

ADAMS: It took me a while into the movie to recognize how alone you were, and how so much of the storytelling was just on your experience. It was so powerful, and I so deeply resonated with that idea of self-critical …

MOORE: Oh, the self-sabotage. Obviously, I feel very different than who she is. She has no friends, no family, no other reflections outside of that external validation. But I feel like I could relate to it from a slightly objective place — but having really been in it, ironically, much more when I was younger. The script, I was blown away from the moment the back opens up and another entity comes out.

ADAMS: So cool! The body-horror aspect of it was interesting, because I was warned, right? But I, of course, love that stuff.

MOORE: The interesting part was stepping into something that was really also stripping myself down — really knowing that this was a depth of vulnerability and rawness that I don't know if I've ever had a chance to step into. Which makes me think about having watched you in "Nightbitch," which I feel like equally goes to such a raw, vulnerable, untethered kind of space, in which you were once again brilliant.

ADAMS: Thank you.

MOORE: What was it like to also be working with a child and animals on top of it all?

ADAMS: It's a set of 3-year-old twins. I mean, I definitely had very active co-stars. My set was the loudest, with three or four people, and either dog trainers or parents. You can only do so much preparation in cases like that, and then the rest of it has to be so flexible. It really forced me into being present in each moment.

So much of what went into the relationship with the boy was developed not only by me, but by Marielle Heller and Scoot



McNairy [who plays Husband] and the entire crew, because we had to create an environment that didn't happen just between action and cut. We were always in conversation, always in relationship in between takes, always in play. There wasn't a lot of downtime really. It was really about creating a relationship so when we started rolling, it was just a continuation. Their parents were so great. They gave us so much trust. I spent a lot of time on set with them and really just built up a friendship and a relationship. They called me "movie mama."

MOORE: Movie mama! It was very relatable in that sense of losing oneself, particularly when your priority shifts so completely where it's entirely with somebody else in the No. 1 position.

ADAMS: Also, she had a really unique narrative, and she gets to believe or actually turns into a dog, and sort of be in touch with an ancestral rage.

MOORE: By the way, that is the question! Did she really become a dog?

ADAMS: I believe that *she* believes. That is the question! But I love how both of our films also deal with surrealism and mysticism, and these elements of rage.

MOORE: Women in general, there is a sense of it not being OK to be angry. Not that anybody's saying we can't be, but that it's been in a way the collective consciousness of like, "Oh, that's not attractive."

ADAMS: You've raised daughters, and I've had to really work on being like, "Oh my gosh, you're such a good ... No, don't say it. You're a good *person*, and I'm really proud of you." Instead of ...

MOORE: "You're a good girl."

ADAMS: Because there was something about that that I recognized I was paralyzed by for parts of my life. I remember watching you and thinking, "That's what it is to be a woman."

MOORE: Oh!

ADAMS: No, because you were strong, and you were authoritative. You always felt like you owned your own identity.

I do want to know, because I've done prosthetics work, but I've never done anything to the extent of what you did. And the way that you were able to physically embody those prosthetics so they became a part of you — what was that like?

MOORE: It's definitely an easier read on paper than sitting there. Anywhere from six to nine and a half hours in the chair. I mean, I can get quite Zen and still, but it is a lot to then have to go out. I had to very quickly figure out what is the body? What is the language of this aspect of this person? Because it was grounded in reality, but not: I am in this aged, degraded body, but I can tear down a hallway. But more hardcore was 15 takes of wiping my face off.

ADAMS: I was watching it with my husband, and he was gasping at different parts of the body horror, which didn't bother me. *That* bothered me. I was like, "She's going to hurt herself." It was so violent.

MOORE: But such an important piece. That was this moment that she almost could have stepped out of the self-imposed prison. And it's also a moment that is the most anchored in, I think, our own humanness. I don't know about you, but I've been in front of that mirror trying to make something a little better, only to make it worse. Where no amount of trying to change it on the outside is going to repair the wound that's on the inside. But such a strange experience that I'm playing off my own reflection, which you have also.

ADAMS: Yeah, I do that a couple of times, where I'm pulling my hair and examining my face. I love that Marielle Heller approached it with such a sense of humor, and it was something that we both agreed was funny.

MOORE: I mean, the tuft in the back — I was dying.

ADAMS: She's like, "All right, OK — I think I want to go with it." It's that radical acceptance, and I think that's something the character starts to have for herself. That was something that I had a great time practicing on that film, this idea of radical acceptance.



MOORE: It's just going, "I am who I am." That message, I think, we share in both of these films, which is finding the love of self in whatever moment we're in. I remember getting to a point with my middle daughter, Scout, and her saying, "I want to quit focusing on all that I'm not when I could be celebrating all that I am."

ADAMS: Oh my gosh, I love that.

MOORE: I have to say, I felt like, "Ooh, I've done a good job!"

"That message we share in both of these films is finding the love of self in whatever moment we're in."

DEMI MOORE


Nicole
KIDMAN
&
ZENDAYA
Babygirl
Challengers,
Dune: Part Two

BY
SELOME
HAILU

B

Between Luca Guadagnino's tennis-centric love triangle "Challengers" and playing Chani opposite Timothée Chalamet's Paul in Denis Villeneuve's "Dune: Part Two," Zendaya owned 2024. Just ask Nicole Kidman, who makes a point of telling the 28-year-old actor that she paid money to see both films in theaters. "One I saw at midnight — I was really jet-lagged — and I was riveted," Kidman says. "I'm a Dunie!"

Zendaya's current position in Hollywood isn't unlike that of a young Kidman, who had already worked with Tony Scott, Gus Van Sant and Jane Campion when she was that age. But Kidman, now 57, has learned a lot since then, and as they talk, she delves into her role in the A24 psychosexual drama "Babygirl" while also taking Zendaya through her playbook for building an imaginative and risky — but emotionally regulated — career.

First, though, Kidman is dying to hear how the "Dune" team managed to make the sci-fi world feel so lived in. "Denis did this beautiful, sweeping shot of the sunrise, looking out at the dunes," Zendaya tells her about Chani's first kiss with Paul. "And I tell you, nothing changed about that shot. That's not special effects. It was so gorgeous and unreal. I was like, 'This is our planet.'"

NICOLE KIDMAN: As an actor, you get to see the world, and you're not just visiting as a tourist. You're working with crews, with people in those places, so you really become a part of it. If you're working with the same crew over and over, it's almost like telepathy starts to happen between everybody.

ZENDAYA: Do you feel like you found that when you were doing "Babygirl"? Because that's such an intimate experience, and you have to feel so safe. You have to feel protected.

KIDMAN: Yeah. The cinematographer and camera operator is a huge part of that. We're all in this; it's not just the actors. Before you know it, you're all in the room together, but you're not aware of where everybody is. It was very loose. Our director, Halina Reijn, created a very warm environment, but it was also exploratory. You may be sitting in this chair, and then suddenly the scene is on the floor. You can come in with this plan, but the plan is not going to help you, really. Listening and responding, as we do in life, is the best way to get something special. And you can tell. *You're* listening right now.

ZENDAYA: You can tell if someone's thinking about what they're going to say or what they're going to do with their hand. I've caught myself doing that, when you dissociate mid-take. Or you start thinking, "Why did I just do that with my eye? That was a really weird choice." I got asked a lot about the three-way kiss scene in ["Challengers"], and I was like, "Really, it's a four-, five-, six-, seven-, eight-, nine-way kiss," because there's so many people. There's a camera coming at us at a certain time. I know that when I go from Mike [Faist] to Josh [O'Connor], when the camera comes in, I gotta move back. There's so many things at play.

When you pick projects, are you focused on the story, or do you think about filmmakers you want to work with? Is it different every time?

KIDMAN: Yeah. You?

ZENDAYA: It's different every time. I was sent the ["Challengers"] script by Amy Pascal. I actually did a mock table read at my agent's house, because everybody knows I'm bad at reading scripts — I get sidetracked. It's hard to keep my attention on one thing. I just loved it. It was heartbreaking, but also funny, but sexy, but around sports — but not really about sports. And she was a female character that felt very unapologetic. It wasn't like the injury made her this way; she just is who she is. And then we sent it to [Guadagnino]. Our first Zoom call, I was so nervous. I was like, "Maybe he doesn't want to work with me! What if he [doesn't] even like me?" But he just had such a deep understanding of these characters. It's case by case for me. Sometimes it's the director; sometimes it's the project.

KIDMAN: Sometimes it's just the idea. Even if it's not realized, I'm willing to jump off the cliff and try, knowing that it may splat. But you can't be frightened of the splat. My journey through the life I want to live is experimental. I want to learn, discover, grow and change. I want to be changed. Change me. Take me to a place that's different. As long as we go in sort of obsessed, then something's going to come out of it. Because I love obsession.

ZENDAYA: With —?

KIDMAN: With other people. I like us all being completely obsessed. And seeking. And trying.

ZENDAYA: Every time you start a new project, it's a risk.

KIDMAN: Except it wasn't for "Babygirl." As soon as I heard it was called "Babygirl," I'm like, "Yeah. I want to be the babygirl." And so much of it is the chemistry. [Reijn] was like, "What about Harris Dickinson?"

ZENDAYA: Sometimes the stars just align. All the right pieces start falling into place.

KIDMAN: And you like the people. We're having such good conversations, just like we'd be having around a dinner table. The intimacy, and the ability to share your deepest, darkest secrets. I'm addicted to that.

ZENDAYA: Let's skip all the small talk. Let's go there.

KIDMAN: Who *are* you? What is this world? What's happened to you? I would go and sit with Halina on the floor. How I start is always "Can we sit on the floor and talk?" And she would have some physicalities that she would suggest, and she's very free with her body, which is great. Give me some things that are not my initial instincts, and then I can adapt. I'm like a sponge. That's what I see acting as. You're a porous creature.

ZENDAYA: Taking it in.

> "As long as we go in sort of obsessed, then something's going to come out of it. Because I love obsession."
>
> **NICOLE KIDMAN**





"We're supposed to do another season. I've only done two, but it feels like five. One season of 'Euphoria' is like, 'Phew!' "

ZENDAYA

KIDMAN: And then it comes out of you in a different way.
ZENDAYA: I am very self-critical, but being on sets is the only place that I feel spontaneous and free. I don't have to worry about the consequences of these actions. It's not my life. I can watch myself back because I don't see it as me. It's another person we're creating.
KIDMAN: I don't watch the monitor.
ZENDAYA: Freaks you out?
KIDMAN: I don't like to break where I am. It's almost a trance. If the director's speaking off camera, I can hear it, but I wouldn't come out of character — people are like, "She's a little crazy." I don't like the monitor. But someone like Baz Luhrmann loves you to look. If you make me, I will, but my preference is not to.
ZENDAYA: I can kind of divorce myself from it, because to an extent, it's not mine. It is the director's as well. You have to have a level of trust. Luca [shoots] one, two takes. He doesn't like to shoot a lot.
KIDMAN: That's like Halina. Well, we didn't have a lot of money either. We were like, "Quick! We gotta!" I love when you can go, "You feel confident? Let's go. Take me there."
ZENDAYA: You mentioned Baz Luhrmann. "Moulin Rouge!" is one of my favorite movies of all time. I could sing the whole soundtrack right now if you needed me to.
KIDMAN: Please! Come on!
ZENDAYA: When I did "Greatest Showman," I kept referencing it so many times.
KIDMAN: Baz was so formative for me. I'd always done these weird films, but I was in my head going, "Gosh, I'm never going to get to do the great love story." Suddenly, "Moulin Rouge!" came, and I'm like, "A *musical* love story? I can't do this." Because I don't feel confident with the voice. Then he slowly built me up.

Tell me about "Euphoria." And Rue. Come on, spill the tea.
ZENDAYA: Well, I started in TV as a kid. I did sitcoms.
KIDMAN: Oh, I know. I have a 13-year-old and a 16-year-old, so we've grown up with you.
ZENDAYA: Oh, so sorry about that.
KIDMAN: We're obsessed. This is the highlight for me. I get to go home and go, "Look, Sunday and Faith: Zendaya!"
ZENDAYA: Well, shoutout to your kids. Your mom's cool. Do your homework.
KIDMAN: I've made it!
ZENDAYA: Anyway, you get so used to a character. It feels like a skin that you just slip on. Rue just falls into me. I'm not thinking about it so much. It's just like, "Oh, she's here now."
KIDMAN: It's so intense. Do you stagger out of that experience?
ZENDAYA: Yes and no. While it was emotionally and physically draining, it was so rewarding. I was so proud of it. It connected with people.
KIDMAN: Are you doing more? You've done two.
ZENDAYA: We're supposed to do another season. I've only done two, but it feels like five. One season of "Euphoria" is like, "Phew!"
KIDMAN: It's really taxing going through all of those emotions. Your [body] doesn't ...
ZENDAYA: ... know that it's fake.
KIDMAN: No. So you're putting yourself through the trauma. On "Babygirl," there were parts that are now not in the film that we shot that gave me — it was exhausting, but it was also just emotionally disturbing. The same when I was doing "Big Little Lies." That was disturbing to my body and my psyche, because I couldn't tell what was real and what wasn't. I would have real bruises all over my back and body.
ZENDAYA: I still have my Rue scars.
KIDMAN: My brain would say, "Hold on. You're hurt." So I've done things where they clean my chakras and pray and get out the sage. Honestly, I'll take whatever so I can step into the next place free, and not scarred or damaged or wounded. Which sounds like I'm batshit crazy, but I'm not. Even just a massage, where suddenly you get a beautiful touch. That's healing, and we have to heal. I'm still learning not to sacrifice my body for the sake of the art, because part of me wants to. Having to value who I am, it's a journey. But you seem very stable.
ZENDAYA: *Seem* — no, I'm kidding.
KIDMAN: You've got a great system around you. Like having your dog here.
ZENDAYA: That's my emotional support.
KIDMAN: I always say, if you need to keep your blankie till you're 85, you keep your blankie. There's no medal for giving that up.
ZENDAYA: I'm still learning, but I do know that I like to have fun on my job. I don't want to be miserable just because the character's miserable. On "Euphoria," we'd have really, really tough days. I'm like, "OK, gotta go cry and knock down a door real quick," and then I'll come back like, "Hey, Cheesecake Factory? What are we getting for lunch?" I try my best to leave them at work and go home and live my life and be a person.
KIDMAN: I go home and I have a family, which is such a good balance, because you have to be present and not carrying it all. When people say, "Can you have a baby and still do the acting?" Yes, you can. It's almost better, because you can't indulge yourself. But at the same time, the work does penetrate my dreams or my sleep.
ZENDAYA: That does happen. The subconscious, I can't control.
KIDMAN: Also, I just am a huge believer in working. Get in there. If you get offered a job, overthinking and going, "Well, is it good enough?" — so many actors don't have a choice. Just jump in and do it. You never know where it's going to lead. And every job does produce something else.
ZENDAYA: Keeping that part of yourself alive.
KIDMAN: Stay grateful. Stay open and excited about the opportunities.
ZENDAYA: Do you prefer TV or film?
KIDMAN: I like it all. I like stage as well.
ZENDAYA: I haven't done that yet. I'm so nervous.
KIDMAN: Come on! It's nerve-racking, yes, but I think you'd be wonderful.
ZENDAYA: We talked about trying not to take it home with you, and I feel like delivering every day to a live audience, that's a lot of energy coming at you. Sometimes multiple times a day. It is such an emotionally demanding thing to do.
KIDMAN: But you're in there together. And the energy of the people who have paid to come, who want to be taken on an experience, that is incredibly invigorating. Come on!
ZENDAYA: I know. I know. I've got to rip the Band-Aid off. Maybe one day I'll do it. I'll stop chickening out. One day, hopefully, we can work together. We can have fun and explore.
KIDMAN: And then go, "What are you having for lunch?"
ZENDAYA: Exactly.
KIDMAN: Thanks, baby.

"June Carter Cash is a bad-ass bitch"
KACEY MUSGRAVES

"Moves a viewer to tears"
NEW YORK TIMES

"A lovingly crafted richly detailed rendering of a life well lived"
VOGUE

JUNE

The Story of June Carter Cash

For Your GRAMMY® Consideration

Best Music Film

Paramount+ FYC | SANDBOX | SONY MUSIC VISION

awards circuit





Carpenter: Scott Dudelson/Getty Images/Coachella; Boone: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images

Loaded Competition The best new artist category is packed with blockbuster hitmakers and riches from niches

By Chris Willman

In some years, the Grammys have to slum a little bit to fill out eight slots in the best new artist category. This is not one of those years. It's an embarrassment of riches, and of niches, too, as far as the very different corners from which they come in arriving at Music's Biggest Night Feb. 2.

Five of the eight artists have had huge hits, with Shaboozey, Chappell Roan, Sabrina Carpenter, Benson Boone and Teddy Swims all having seen their stars (and chart numbers) rise so high that it seems almost impossible to think they became household names only within the last year. Doechii has nearly achieved that same level of recognition, even if the budding rap princess is still awaiting her first queenly top 10 appointment. That leaves Raye and Khruangbin as the "cred" candidates who got in on sheer respect ... and although Khruangbin may always be more of a cult band (not that there's anything wrong with that), Raye stands a very good chance of becoming as big a star in the states as she is in her native Britain.

Sabrina Carpenter, left, and Benson Boone are two of the hitmakers in the best new artist race.

Here's a quick look at the Grammys' fresh-faced contenders — or fresh-ish, since some of them have actually been around a few years — and why they're lending this year's best new artist race such unusual sizzle.

• Benson Boone

The Washington state native really had a chance to own the year, at least as artists on the balladeer side of things go, by peaking early with his "Beautiful Things" breakout single, which was released in January, ahead of his April debut album. Did we say peaked? Plateaued is more like it — the unquenchably popular tune managed to be a top 10 mainstay in the Hot 100 all year long and until the first







week of December, in fact, when it finally got kicked out by a glut of Kendrick and Christmas songs. "Beautiful Things" may have somehow missed getting nommed for record or song of the year, but when a lot of America looks back on '24, they'll remember this as "our song."

• Sabrina Carpenter

Carpenter is one of those artists who stretches the Recording Academy's definition of "new"; as the Grammys go, she's basically this year's Shelby Lynne, making it into the category on her sixth (!!) album, a decade after her first single. But other comparisons to Lynne may be harder to draw, since unlike that long-aborning critical favorite, Carpenter has become an utter chartbuster in the year of her belated recognition. "Espresso," "Please Please Please" and "Taste" made it to Nos. 3, 1 and 2 on the Hot 100, respectively ... which doesn't even begin to speak to just how much she dominated the middle of 2024 as a personality, post-Coachella and pre- her own arena headlining tour. Combine ribald humor, glaring sex appeal and a smart mouth and you've got someone who would be a clear shoo-in in a less competitive year ... and who stands a chance of winning record or song of the year even if she misses out on new artist.

Raye, left, competes against Doechii, top right, and Khruangbin, below right, for the best new artist Grammy.

• Doechii

The chart stats do not really tell the tale on Doechii. She hasn't even released her official debut album yet, so the fact that she's made it into the category without a proper full-length says something about how much her peers believe in her. "What Is it (Block Boy)" peaked at No. 29 as her highest-charting Hot 100 single to date. But its top 10 status on the R&B/hip-hop chart is likely just the beginning of a career that could see her elevated to the ranks of the Megans, if not Minajes, of the world, if the Grammys' hopes are not misplaced.

• Khruangbin

Like Carpenter, this Texas trio is not so much a new kid on the block as a chip off the old block ... as in, they, just like her, released their first album in 2015. No one is going to begrudge a group this talented, and especially this wildly eclectic, a belated moment in the Grammy sun. Their globe-spanning influences range from old-school Thai funk to Peruvian cumbia, and their collaborators from rootsy soul singer Leon Bridges to Vieux Farka Touré. Do they have a shot at winning? Not one in the world. But even having them nominated here restores some faith in the Grammys being able to break out of popularity-contest mode for an elevating surprise.

• Raye

We made a prediction last year that Raye would get a best new artist nomination and were shocked when she didn't get in then. So this is one of those cases where we're glad that the rules allow for a certain number of re-submissions, because few artists could be more deserving for Grammy recognition. In Britain, she couldn't be any bigger, while here, she has fallen more into "your favorite singer's favorite singer" territory. She's also up for songwriter of the year, oddly, since the overseers of that category didn't think her notoriety as a recording artist outranked the contributions she's made to others' hits. The world could be her oyster

Raye: Luke Dyson; Doechii: Paras Griffin/Getty Images; Khruangbin: Douglas Mason/Getty Images

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION

PLATOON

REVOLUCIÓN DIAMANTINA

GABRIELA ORTIZ

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL
MARÍA DUEÑAS



BEST CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL COMPOSITION / BEST ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE
BEST CLASSICAL COMPENDIUM / BEST ENGINEERED ALBUM, CLASSICAL



whether she focuses on being a rapper, an R&B singer or an orchestral frontwoman — fortunately, she's great at all three.

Chappell Roan

This is hers to lose, isn't it? Well, possibly not, with juggernauts as juggernaut-y as Carpenter and Shaboozey in the picture. But it'd be hard to argue that Roan's ascension wasn't one of the top music stories of the year. With producer/co-writer Daniel Nigro (who worked magic with Olivia Rodrigo) proving that he was no one-freshwoman-wonder, Roan's 2023 "The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess" belatedly became the debut album of 2024. And she managed the rare feat of having a non-album track, "Good Luck, Babe!," scale the Hot 100 even as the album it was not on rose through the Billboard 200. A million think pieces have or will be written on how she represents a wave of Sapphic pop, and/or is already a queen among princesses, but none of it would be possible without the greatest number of hooks this side of a sea fishing boat.

Teddy Swims, above left, Chappell Roan, below left, and Shaboozey, below right, round out the diverse best new artist race.

It'd be hard to argue that Chappell Roan's ascension wasn't one of the top music stories of the year.

Shaboozey

For a few weeks, the world knew him as the guy who had not one but two featured appearances onBeyoncé's "Cowboy Carter" quasi-country album. But the reason he was on there was because Bey's team got an advance listen to his record … so who was capitalizing on who? A Black man riding a country song all the way to being able to claim the biggest single of the year in any genre … well, that's just a slightly familiar story, given Lil Nas X's history. And yet Shaboozey did it while also being completely accepted by the country mainstream without losing the affection of a greater populace that couldn't have cared less about genre. Nashville and seemingly the entire U.S. are in agreement: He's a keeper.

Teddy Swims

There are so many years that can go by with someone being called "the music industry's best-kept secret" before the secret either gets let out or dissipates into history and mystery for good. Fortunately, there was finally a reward for all the faith that had been placed in Swims by, well, pretty much anyone who'd ever heard him open his mouth for 10 seconds or more. Even with a single as obvious as "Lose Control" (produced and co-written by Julian Bunetta), nothing came fast — Swims set a record for the male artist whose song took the most weeks to rise to No. 1. Once it did, his celebrity was set for life, as the world is not going to want to lose access to a voice that could dominate pop, country or really any place where grit and soul are welcome.





Swims: Gareth Cattermole/MTV/Getty Images; Roan: Luxxienne; Shaboozey: Daniel Prakopcyk

RAYE

GRAMMY Awards®

For Your Consideration:

Best New Artist
Songwriter Of The Year, Non-Classical
Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical





Dynamic Duo Common and Pete Rock fill the Grammy-nominated 'Auditorium' with heart and soul

By Steven J. Horowitz

Pete Rock, left, and Common collaborated on "The Auditorium Vol. 1," nominated for two Grammys.

On "This Man," a sunset-evoking song on "The Auditorium Vol. 1," Common raps, "Whether Grammy or Oscar, I keep the same posture." He's referring to the awards he's amassed over his decades-long career, and how they're merely accolades that acknowledge his talents but don't define them.

But after the album, produced entirely by hip-hop legend Pete Rock, got nominated for a pair of 2025 Grammys, his stance has shifted — if only a bit. "This is an incredible feeling. I'm overwhelmed," says Common, who's currently shooting Season 3 of the Apple TV+ show "Silo" in London. "I feel like it's one of those things where you're like, man, we really are Grammy-nominated for this album in categories with Kendrick Lamar and Eminem and J. Cole. My posture is even stronger now."

Common and Rock have stood tall in the hip-hop community since they debuted in the 1990s, the former as an intellect whose raps interrogated heady subjects like romance and faith, and the latter as an architect of New York City's gritty-meets-soulful sound. Together, they've been nominated in two Grammy categories for their first collaborative set: best rap album and best rap performance for "When the Sun Shines Again" featuring De La Soul's Posdnuos. It's a milestone that's not lost on the two veterans, who first worked together back in 1996 on Common's "The Bitch in Yoo," a track that came amid a fierce lyrical battle between him and Ice Cube.

"It's a new audience out there that's hungry for good hip-hop music," says Rock of the project's warm reception. "The work that we did for this album was extraordinary. I feel like I accomplished a goal I had set in mind to mix into today's society with what I used to do in the '90s, and it kind of worked out."

The duo had connected a few times over the decades — on "The Bitch in Yoo," and two years later on Rock's "Verbal Murder 2" — but "The Auditorium" came together after years of mutual respect crossing the right lines. Amid the pandemic, Common was sent a few Rock beats by musician Karriem Riggins (Kanye West, Erykah Badu), which prompted him to reach out to Rock for more. They set to work on the album casually, with Rock eliciting feedback on the Aretha Franklin- and Curtis Mayfield-sampling songs that would make the final cut.

What resulted was an album that plays like a love letter to the artform of hip-hop — pure instrumentals, smart bars — that the two have respectively refined throughout the decades. Across a lush backbone of polished beats with a rich soul, Common pontificates about the concept of destiny ("So Many People") and pays homage to the tapestry of influences that they both share ("Dreamin'"). The maturity of the record speaks to the growth that comes with age and wisdom — both are in their 50s — and the nagging discourse that hip-hop is a young person's sport.

"I'm not trying to rap and say everything that a 25-year-old should say, and there's nothing the matter with what they're saying, but why at my age try to be that?" says Common. "I think you get the love letter to hip-hop in the truth and evolution of who we are as people and artists, and our love for this."

Following an early autumn tour, both musicians are soaking up the success of extending a legacy that continues to grow, with a potential sequel set for 2025. "It makes me feel wonderful that we're still out here doing what we're doing, and it just fills my passion for music and things I like to do when I'm home making music," says Rock. "To see younger people loving this music and singing Common's lyrics and we're watching the fans sing our songs in the audience while we're performing on stage — that to me is mind-blowing."

"It's a new audience out there that's hungry for good hip-hop music. The work that we did for this album was extraordinary."
Pete Rock

Monaris

FOR YOUR GRAMMY® CONSIDERATION



ALISSIA

PRODUCER OF THE YEAR,
NON-CLASSICAL



JULIAN BUNETTA

RECORD OF THE YEAR
"*ESPRESSO*" WITH
SABRINA CARPENTER

splice
splice.com

Dark Horses Bruising and politically astute, Idles is back at the Grammys

By Jem Aswad

Britain's Idles is a loud rock band whose aggressive music and politically leaning lyrics can be downright menacing, but it's balanced with a positivity, particularly at their explosive concerts, which would seem at odds with their sound if it didn't somehow mesh with it so well. During shows, frontman Joe Talbot speaks warmly and gratefully to the crowd between songs. And then as the band roars into another tune, the audience invariably erupts into a fierce mosh pit, often as not with one or more bandmember joining in (while still playing).

The contrast becomes even more dramatic when Talbot is asked about the inspiration for the group's sixth album, which they're scheduled to begin recording next month.

"It's always love," he replies. "The reason I started the band is because I want to feel part of something much greater than myself. Seeking something better for everyone around you, not just yourself — that's what love is; that's what empathy is. It's not my job to complain about how crap our government is, and I'm not saying, 'Chin up, man, it'll be all right.' I'm saying 'You're not alone.' And people who feel they are not alone are less scared, and less likely to turn to the quick fix of right-wing politics, and are more likely to listen to other people's opinions."

Idles has been nominated for four Grammys, including two for its most recent album, "Tangk." Yet awards seem almost antithetical to the group's stance.

"You shouldn't ask another person for validation you should be able to just believe in yourself," Talbot says. "But we have entered into a conversation of validation by making something and putting it out into the world — which is the Grammy conversation. It's not something you root for or beg for — you work for it. So I understand how lucky I am and I'm very grateful to be here, and to be part of that conversation is beautiful. But to need validation from the award itself would be toxic."



Alissia, above, is only the ninth woman to score a non-classical producer of the year Grammy nom; Idles, below, is set to record their sixth album.



Discovery Channel Producer Alissia credits her success with her hunt for knowledge

By Thania Garcia

Since Alissia began uploading bass covers on YouTube 13 years ago, she's gone from a Berklee College grad to a Grammy-nominated producer for Mary J. Blige, Anderson .Paak and Bootsy Collins, to name just a few. Her goal has remained the same: "There's always more to learn," she says. "It's that hunger for knowledge that has brought me to some incredible places and people."

Nominated for non-classical producer of the year Grammy, Alissia is the ninth woman in the show's 65-year history to contend for the award, and this year she's up against Dan Nigro, Mustard, Ian Fitchuck and D'Mile in a category where a woman has never won.

"This nomination is so much bigger than me," she says. And there's more: Prince, Nile Rodgers and Quincy Jones all reached out to her via social media after seeing her performance videos online. "I grew up enamored by [Jones'] string arrangements, and when I finally did get to meet him in person for the first time, I didn't prepare anything. I almost knew we would hit it off," she says."The first question he asked me was, 'What's your sign?'"

A self-proclaimed "music nerd," Alissia began her career as an artist and fronted her own band. She produced and released her own EP — though she winces at the mention of it today — composed entirely of funk music inspired by Motown's greatest hits. "I hadn't lived enough musically to sign to a label," she says. "They wanted to control what I wore, who I worked with and what style of music I was making. I wasn't ready."

Good things come to those who wait, and Alissia will release a debut album with a long list of features she carefully avoids spoiling.

"I've been making some of the most incredible music I've ever made," she says. "I'm not singing on it myself, but there's certainly surprises in store."

Benveniste: Caleb & Gladys; Idles: Daniel Topete



Photograph:Emily Dorio

2024 Grammy Performance with Joni Mitchell • 2024 Oscars Performance with Andrea Bocelli • 2024 Gershwin Prize Performance honoring Elton John & Bernie Taupin • 2023 Americana Awards Instrumentalists of the Year • 2025 Debut Album, Produced by Brandi Carlile & Shooter Jennings

SistaStrings.com

Management:
Tracy Gershon

MAC
MARCIE ALLEN CONSULTING
MACCONSULTINGCO.COM





The Golden Globes Race Is On A look at the nominees in some of the highest-profile categories

By Todd Gilchrist, Carole Horst, Jenelle Riley and Michael Schneider

FILM ROUNDUP

• Best Motion Picture — Drama

In "The Brutalist," Brady Corbet folds great performances and mesmerizing production design into his sweeping portrait of fictional Hungarian-Jewish architect László Tóth. RaMell Ross' "Nickel Boys" uniquely translates Colson Whitehead's eponymous novel into a vivid, harrowing first-person account of the bond between two young Black men detained at a Jim Crow-era reform school. And "September 5" dramatizes the 1972 Olympic hostage crisis from the perspective of a news organization covering the unprecedented event. Denis Villenueve's "Dune: Part Two" focuses on Paul Atreides as he wages war against the treacherous House Harkonnen. And in "Conclave," director Edward Berger delivers a star-studded adaptation of Robert Harris' thriller about a papal enclave. Finally, James Mangold's "A Complete Unknown" offers a snapshot of the tumultuous early days of singer-songwriter Bob Dylan's career.

• Best Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy

Calling some of these films comedies undersells their complexity: the chaotic energy of Sean Baker's "Anora," for example, disguises a deeper sadness for its protagonist's transactional view of relationships. Similarly, "A Real Pain" dances on a razor's edge of "funcomfortable," chronicling a pilgrimage to Poland by two estranged Jewish cousins. And "Challengers" manages to capture both a complex love triangle and the irresistible energy of competition at the highest levels of athletics. Meanwhile, Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Pérez," based his opera of the same name, is as inventive as Jon M. Chu's adaptation of the acclaimed stage musical "Wicked" is operatic. But the category's exhilarating outlier is Coralie Fargeat's gruesome, sublime body-horror opus "The Substance," which transforms a 50-year-old woman's attempt to reclaim her youth into Grand Guignol spectacle.

Angelina Jolie scored a nom for "Maria," above left, while Adrien Brody was recognized for his work in "The Brutalist," above right.

• Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Motion Picture — Drama

It's a showdown between Oscar winners and newcomers. In the former, there's Angelina Jolie channeling ill-fated opera icon Maria Callas in "Maria," Nicole Kidman as a CEO involved with a younger subordinate in "Babygirl," Tilda Swinton as a woman planning her own death in "The Room Next Door" and Kate Winslet as a WWII journalist in "Lee." They will face off against first-time nominee Pamela Anderson, who is enjoying a career revival — ironically, for playing a fading star — in "The Last Showgirl" and Fernanda Torres as activist and lawyer Eunice Paiva in "I'm Still Here." Globes voters have long loved Kidman (this marks her 17th nomination) and Winslet (this marks her 14th nomination and she's also up on the TV side for "The Regime" this year.)

• Best Performance by a Male Actor in a Motion Picture — Drama

Timothée Chalamet stars as Bob Dylan in "A Complete Unknown," Sebastian Stan shows the early years of Donald Trump in "The Apprentice," Colman Domingo is a wrongly incarcerated man in "Sing Sing" and Daniel Craig plays author William Burroughs in the semi-biographical "Queer." The other nominees include Adrien Brody as an immigrant architect in "The Brutalist" and Ralph Fiennes as a cardinal tasked with choosing a new pope in "Conclave." Fiennes has been considered a frontrunner all season, but Chalamet has just hit the race. They clearly love Stan, who is also nominated for "A Different Man," and Domingo, though

Maria: Pablo Larrain/Netflix; The Brutalist: A24

the lack of further support for "Sing Sing" is concerning. On the other hand, Brody has the critical edge so far but voters could also reward Craig for going against type.

• Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy

On the newcomers side: Karla Sofía Gascón as a former drug lord who undergoes gender reassignment in "Emilia Pérez" and Mikey Madison as a sex worker in "Anora." Zendaya lands her first film nomination as the tennis pro in "Challengers," and Demi Moore, as a fading star in "The Substance," lands her first Globe nod in the film category since 1990's "Ghost." They will face off against Amy Adams as a woman turning into a dog in "Nightbitch" and Cynthia Erivo as a not-so-wicked witch in "Wicked." Two-time Globe winner Adams is adored by the group, but Madison has the lead with critics' prizes. Still, it's hard to deny Zendaya's star power, the debut of Gascón or the love for Moore's comeback. But then there is Erivo and "Wicked," which is undeniable in its success.

• Best Performance by a Male Actor in a Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy

Globes opted for actual comedies this year for some of their nominations. Jesse Eisenberg is travelling with his cousin in "A Real Pain," Hugh Grant plays a sinister man encountered by two Mormon missionaries in "Heretic," Gabriel LaBelle stars as Lorne Michaels in "Saturday Night," Jesse Plemons takes on a triptych of roles in "Kinds of Kindness," Glen Powell is a man pretending to be a contract killer in "Hit Man" and Sebastian Stan is a playwright cured of a rare facial disfigurement in "A Different Man." The category feels wide open. They could recognize the rising star power of Powell, the continued solid work of Plemons or the breakthrough of LaBelle. They clearly love Stan, and Eisenberg earns points for also writing and directing this film. And Grant plays deliciously against type — the sort of twist they love to reward.

• Best Motion Picture — Non-English Language

"Emilia Pérez" is also nominated for comedy/musical, but it's up against "Wicked," so voters may want to award Jacques Audiard's bold story here. "All We Imagine as Light" is gaining traction while voters may want to back exiled Iranian helmer Mohammad Rasulouf's "Seed of the Sacred Fig." "The Girl With the Needle" "I'm Still Here" and "Vermiglio" round out the strong category.

TV ROUNDUP

What "The Bear" backlash? The debate over the hit FX series' genre confusion (is it a drama competing in comedy categories?) didn't seem to have an impact at the Golden Globes this year — nor did the conventional wisdom that the show had hit a few creative bumps in Season 3.

At least when it came to the 2025 Golden Globe nominations, "The Bear" still had bite — earning five nods, the most of any series, including best TV musical or comedy. The series is the incumbent winner in that category, but surprisingly lost the outstanding comedy Emmy in September to HBO/Max's "Hacks" (which is also back in the running here, after winning in 2022 and earning a nod in 2023, but missing Globes eligibility last year).

Also in the comedy field once again are ABC's "Abbott Elementary" and Hulu's "Only Murders in the Building," while newcomer "Nobody Wants This" (Netflix) might play spoiler in the field. A surprise was Netflix's "The Gentlemen," which didn't pick up any other nods yet landed a plum nomination here. That might be a function of the power of Netflix, which didn't have one of the top three TV series nominated (besides "The Bear," those were "Only Murders" and FX's "Shōgun," with four each), and yet dominated the overall TV tally thanks to the breadth of its showings. Netflix's 23 noms — far above HBO/Max (14) and FX (10) — included three noms for "Nobody Wants This," as well as drama "The Diplomat" and limited series contenders "Baby Reindeer," "Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story" and "Ripley."

That limited/anthology/TV movie field boasts perhaps the strongest category of the Globes competition, as every series nominee has three nods. Besides those Netflix entries, that includes Apple TV+'s "Disclaimer," and both "The Penguin" and "True Detective: Night Country" from HBO/Max. If the Emmys were any indicator, "Baby Reindeer" may be the frontrunner. But if Globes voters are looking to award a newer entry, "Disclaimer," "Monsters" or "The Penguin" could be in play.

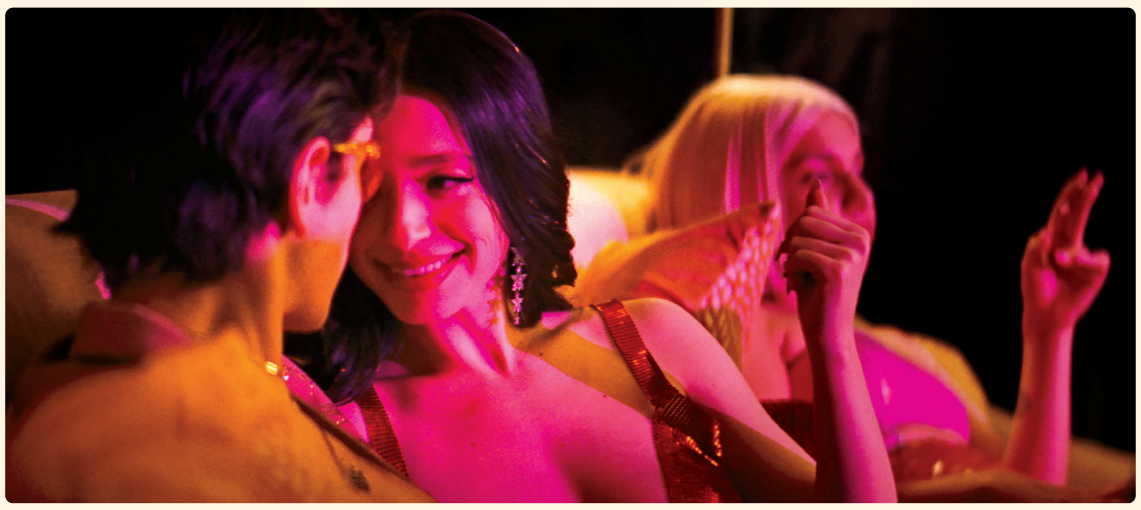
Drama, meanwhile, may be the most competitive of the TV races. "The Diplomat" is the only nominee from last year eligible to return, but previous nominee "Squid Game" is back. Otherwise, it's new series in the Globes drama competish: Peacock's "The Day of the Jackal," Prime Video's "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," Apple TV+'s "Slow Horses" and Emmy-winner "Shōgun."

You might say the Golden Globes' TV competition is shaping up to be a "Bear" of a year.



Gilles Mingasson/Disney

ABC's "Abbott Elementary" was the only broadcast series to receive a nomination in drama or comedy/musical.





The Critics Speak Films vying at the CCA's annual gala: From 'Anora' to 'Wicked'

By Jenelle Riley

In January 1999, the Critics Choice Awards presented "Saving Private Ryan" with its top prize of best picture. The film's director, Steven Spielberg, took the stage and proclaimed of the organization, "This group is here to stay." Never doubt the master, as 25 years later, the awards show is set to celebrate three decades with the 30th Annual Critics Choice Awards live on E! on Jan. 12.

Both "Anora" and "Wicked" received high marks from critics.

In a time when awards shows seem to be floundering, the Critics Choice Assn. appears to be flourishing; A-list stars regularly show up for the ceremony, and its record at predicting future Oscar winners is fairly on point. The show also generates lots of buzz and memorable moments.

Joey Berlin, CEO of the Critics Choice Assn., has served as executive producer on every Critics Choice Awards broadcast since its inception with the film awards in 1995 (TV awards began in 2011) and has a few favorites. That includes 2010's ceremony, "when Sandra Bullock and Meryl Streep sealed their tie with a memorable kiss after first looking like they were going to wrestle for the best actress trophy." And just this January, there was "the tearful acceptance speech Harrison Ford made after his Lifetime Achievement Award presentation."

What will happen this year? With film nominations being announced Dec. 12, we take a look at what to expect and who's calling the shots.

Who are the voters?

According to Berlin, the awards are determined by the 575 voting members of the CCA; there are another 100 non-voting members. "It is a remarkably diverse and inclusive group who qualify to vote by reaching a large audience on a regular basis with their coverage of new films and/or television," notes Berlin. In short, it's a group "of leading film and television critics and entertainment reporters — people whose job it is to keep up with a continuous tidal wave of new shows and movies and help audiences find the good stuff."

Unique categories

While the film categories encompass the usual suspects — picture, director, actors — they also stand out with a few different races. In addition to honoring an acting ensemble, they have a category specifically for best young actor/actress and one for best comedy. Like the Oscars, they have 10 best picture nominees, but their other races are open to six nominees — sometimes more.

With more contenders and a smaller voting pool, this can occasionally lead to ties — which has provided some wonderful moments. In addition to the Bullock/Streep showdown, there was the year Glenn Close and Lady Gaga tied for best actress. And in 2003, there were only three nominees, and two of them — Jack Nicholson and Daniel Day-Lewis —tied. But the third nominee, Robin Williams, still got on stage at the insistence of Nicholson and ended up doing a spot-on imitation of him.

The nominees

Overall, the Critics Choice Awards is a good sign for Oscar hopefuls. Earlier this year, nine of the 10 movies nominated for best picture at the CCAs went on to repeat at

Anora: Neon; Wicked: Universal Studios

the Oscars — with "Zone of Interest" ultimately landing a nod over "Saltburn"; "Oppenheimer" and Christopher Nolan were named best picture and director — a feat they repeated at the Oscars; and three of the four acting winners also matched up with the Academy Awards.

Generally expected to make the cut for best picture are a wide swath of films. That includes musicals ("Wicked," "Emilia Pérez") and sequels to previous awards-friendly films ("Gladiator II," "Dune: Part Two") along with true stories ("Sing Sing," "Nickel Boys," "September 5," "A Complete Unknown") and what feel like good, old-fashioned epics ("Blitz," "The Brutalist," "Conclave").

But with critics voting, there could also be room for more intimate (and independent) movies — Sean Baker's "Anora" seems a lock for some major awards, while Jesse Eisenberg's "A Real Pain" is also a popular pick. Critics also love Mike Leigh's "Hard Truths." Even movies that might seem outside the Oscar voter comfort zone like "Babygirl," "The Substance" or "The Room Next Door" could surprise.

Critics are also more likely to consider films not in the English language, which could be great news for Walter Salles' "I'm Not Here" and its acclaimed lead actress, Fernanda Torres. Germany's "The Seed of the Sacred Fig" and India's "All We Imagine as Light" both are gaining awards season traction.

The new guard

Only a handful of the actors tipped for nominations are returning winners, including Nicole Kidman in "Babygirl," Angelina Jolie in "Maria," Adrien Brody in "The Brutalist" and Denzel Washington in "Gladiator II." And there's sure to be many previous nominees in the race — Amy Adams in "Nightbitch," Marianne Jean-Baptiste in "Hard Truths," Colman Domingo in "Sing Sing," Timothée Chalamet in "A Complete Unknown," Cynthia Erivo in "Wicked," Ralph Fiennes and Stanley Tucci in "Conclave," Felicity Jones in "The Brutalist," June Squibb in "Thelma," Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor in "Nickel Boys," Saoirse Ronan in both "The Outrun" and "Blitz" and Edward Norton in "AComplete Unknown."

But what's surprising is how many first-time nominees could make up the roster. That includes actors from "Anora" (Mikey Madison, Yura Borisov), "Didi" (Joan Chen), "Queer" (Daniel Craig), "Wicked"(Ariana Grande and Jonathan Bailey), "Emilia Pérez" (Karla Sofia Gascón, Zoe Saldaña and Selena Gomez) "Conclave" (Isabella Rossellini), "The Piano Lesson"(Danielle Deadwyler), "September 5" (Leonie Benesch, John Magaro and Peter Sarsgaard), "Sing Sing" (Clarence Maclin) and "A Complete Unknown" (Monica Barbaro.)

It includes a pair of "Succession" brothers potentially facing off in best supporting actor — Kieran Culkin in "A Real Pain" and Jeremy Strong in "The Apprentice." The contenders also includes actors who have never been nominated before, such as Guy Pearce ("The Brutalist") and Hugh Grant ("Heretic"). And the critics could choose to recognize the underrated talents of such stars as Demi Moore in "The Substance" and Pamela Anderson in "The Last Showgirl."









Clockwise from top left: "The Outrun," "Babygirl," "Sing Sing," "I'm Still Here"

The Outrun: Sony Pictures; Babygirl/Sing Sing: A24 (2); I'm Still Here: Sony Pictures

David Foster, Thank you for your commitment to making a positive impact.

AEG
PRESENTS

focus

A Legacy of Giving *Variety* honors David Foster as Entertainment Philanthropist of the Year for his decades of generosity

By Steven Gaydos

When David Foster created his philanthropic David Foster Foundation nearly 40 years ago, the venture to support the medical needs of Canadian families wasn't the byproduct of a music mogul enjoying international fame and fortune. Quite the contrary.

In the mid-'80s, Foster was already known inside the music industry as one of pop music's top session players, and the Canadian emigre's reputation as a first-



Jesse Grant/Variety

David Foster has helped raise millions for research into diseases while his foundation has helped families with the cost of pediatric transplants.

rate record producer was growing at a rapid pace.

Foster had worked with top pop acts from Kenny Loggins and Kenny Rogers to Boz Skaggs, Joni Mitchell and Chicago, and had already scored Hollywood hit films such "The Secret of My Success" and "St. Elmo's Fire."

But the legend of David Foster really took hold years after the Foundation had already begun providing essential medical services, when his work with Whitney Houston on the history-making "The Bodyguard" soundtrack album as well as his monumental smash hits for major artists from Celine Dion to Andrea Bocelli began changing the history of contemporary music.

Having first encountered David when I was a struggling songwriter back in the late 1970s, in the days before his superstardom when he was known in the Hollywood recording scene as the guy whose keyboards could help turn a so-so song into a polished pop record, I can attest to the man's professionalism, charisma and passion for making music.

I didn't know about his passion for saving lives, but it's no surprise to me to learn that only a few years after he graced our recording session, he was already applying his unstoppable energy and creativity to work that was light years beyond the wizardry he brought to the recording studio.

Foster's genius combined with his compassion gave birth to a philanthropy that is as beautiful as the greatest songs he's brought to life. For anyone who's been listening to music for the past half-century, you'll know that's as beautiful as it gets!



Vintage David Foster, right, at a DFF charity softball game.

Answering a Call for Help Foster has brough hope to countless children with diabetes

By Barbara Davis and Dana Davis



David Foster, right, with singer Luke K. at the 38th Carousel of Hope Ball held at the Beverly Hilton in 2024.

David Foster has made a remarkable impact on the Carousel of Hope Ball and the Children's Diabetes Foundation over the past 28 years.

Since 1996, when he joined the Carousel of Hope family as music director, his unique approach to music and performance, and the presentation of many of the world's top entertainers, has brought a personal touch to the event, engaging the audience in a way that makes them feel like an integral part of the show. Foster's talent for creating memorable and heartwarming experiences elevated the event from a traditional charity gala to a celebration honoring those with type 1 diabetes and the heroes that support them. It was made even more special as it coincided with the foundation's founder and his good friend Barbara Davis' birthday.

The media response to the performers at the Carousel of Hope Ball has been overwhelmingly positive, consistently recognizing it as a premier charity event. The presence of luminaries such as Clive Davis and Quincy Jones as music chairmen, along with show producer George Schlatter, created an atmosphere of star power that rivals even the top entertainment industry awards shows.

With David Foster's contribution, the Children's Diabetes Foundation and the Barbara Davis Center for Diabetes have significantly raised their profiles. Increased visibility has translated into greater funding for critical research and exceptional medical care, enabling the center and its foundation to provide phenomenal support for those with type 1 diabetes and their families.

At the heart of this success is Barbara Davis and the late Marvin Davis, along with their daughter Dana Davis, now the executive director of the Children's Diabetes Foundation. Their dedication to the cause has helped position the Barbara Davis Center for Diabetes as a leader in the type 1 diabetes community, providing cutting-edge diabetes research and state-of-the-art care no matter one's ability to pay.

The combination of Foster's musical magic and the Davis family's unwavering commitment to ensuring a brighter future for countless type 1 patients and their families has created a lasting legacy that continues to make a difference in the lives of so many.

Carousel of Hope: Jesse Grant/Variety

Congratulations David!

We are so proud to celebrate you as **Philanthropist of the Year**

—with heartfelt gratitude from all of the Foundation families, staff, and board members

Together, we are making a difference

The David Foster Foundation

To find our more about David's Foundation, please visit

davidfosterfoundation.com



From the Heart The Foundation focuses on critically ill kids and their needs

By Kathy A. McDonald

The man behind decades of hits is on a mission to help families. Producer, composer and songwriter David Foster advocates for a higher purpose: to support the families of critically ill children and highlight the call for organ donors.

The hitmaker and 16-time Grammy award winner is a mainstay of Hollywood fundraisers. For decades, he's been a go-to host and producer of an estimated 400 live musical performances at memorable charity galas. Foster's been involved with the Carousel of Hope Ball for 25 years, raising funds for the Children's Diabetes Foundation. And on a recent November night, he helped net $14.8 million for the David Foster Foundation, which financially assists families of children awaiting life-saving organ transplants.

His involvement with aiding vulnerable children and their families began serendipitously 38 years ago. Foster answered his mother's request to visit a sick little girl from his hometown on Canada's Vancouver Island. That visit to UCLA's hospital changed his life. The young patient was awaiting a liver transplant, then considered an experimental operation in Canada.

"I'm thinking she's going to want to go to Disneyland but instead she said, 'I just want to see my sister,' who she hadn't seen for a couple of months," he recalls. It was easy enough for him to make the reunion happen; the surprise was the profound impact. Foster explains, "When the two sisters met in the hospital, it was just magic for me, and I was like. 'Wow, this is what I'm supposed to do: help families and kids that are needing organ transplants.'"

Since that initial grant, Foster and other donors, through the David Foster Foundation, have aided more than 1,500 families, covering the myriad of expenses families incur beyond medical care, from medical transport to housing to sibling care. "We're the one bright spot in a family's absolute worst day," he says. A child's transplant — and the time waiting for a donor match — often takes a financial toll on the families involved. "This is a real niche no one else was covering," Foster says.

To raise funds, Foster has hosted more than 100 fundraisers over the decades, and persuaded friends and colleagues to participate. He credits major talent such as Celine Dion, Kenny G., John Travolta and most recently Andrea Bocelli and Michael Bublé for stepping up. "I'm really proud of the work," Foster says. Over time, the Foundation has built up a group of 300 or so core donors, complementing corporate donations and seven-figure gift-giving board members. "They all come and contribute, and we're so grateful to all of them," he says.

When he first launched the nonprofit, he was able to get to know every family that benefited. These days, Foster can't meet every patient, although he's had several memorable reunions, including a November meet-up with two girls who both had heart transplants. Many of the illnesses are heart-tugging; some are heartbreaking, says Foster. In 2022, the organization supported 20% of Canadian families whose child received a liver, kidney, heart or lung transplant. These transplants save lives as a body's essential functions are restored, when no alternative or effective treatment exists.

According to organdonor.gov and statistics compiled by the Health Resources & Services Administration, in the U.S., more than 103,000 patients are on the organ transplant list and 17 people — including children — die each day waiting for a transplant. In Canada, where the David Foster Foundation operates, more than 4,000 people are on the waiting list.

Medical advances mean that organ transplants have become more effective. "We wish that more people were organ donors and that's one of our mandates: trying to spread the word. I think the statistic in Canada is that only 14% of the population is an organ donor, which is low," says Foster.

One person's bequest can help save eight lives and potentially enhance 75 others



David Foster enjoys times with Callum, who received a liver transplant with the help of DFF.

Courtesy of David Foster Foundation

Congratulations to our dear friend

DAVID FOSTER

VARIETY'S 2024
PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR

Much Love,

CHERYL&HAIM
SABAN

"I'm not looking for a pat on the back. I want people to realize that it's a real thing for me — it's not just my name — and we're really helping people." David Foster



David Foster Foundation 2016 Humanitarian Build presented homes to two deserving families.

through organ and tissue donation, Foster points out. "What a great gift," he says of this potential legacy. He understands, "It's a horrible thing to have to think about but if everybody was an organ donor this problem would almost be solved." Misconceptions still abound about the process, Foster finds. Tissue match and timing are critical as is communicating consent to one's family. "You have to talk to your family and let them really know what your wishes are," he reminds.

Advances in the field are constant. Foster cites the successful clinical trials that regenerate liver cells to the eventual 3D printing of organs. "It will be just phenomenal," he predicts. He's up on these scientific breakthroughs because of his genuine involvement in the David Foster Foundation's activities, which intensifies around events. Monthly board meetings are scheduled; an annual in-person meeting is required by Canadian regulations. "Every board member brings their own unique thing," he explains of the mix of high-powered advocates that includes doctors, lawyers and economists.

Foster stays in touch with the Foundation's chief executive officer Mike Cahill via frequent calls. "I'm not looking for a pat on the back," Foster says of his involvement. Ultimately, he hopes people understand that he's "in the weeds" with the organization's efforts. "I want people to realize that it's a real thing for me — it's not just my name — and we're really helping people," he explains.

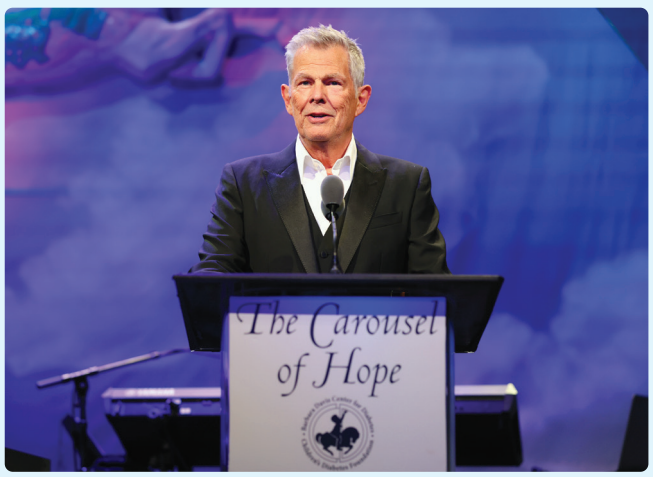
He's amazed by the ability of parents coping with the unthinkable — a sick child in need of a transplant. "I can't help but think that it's softened me in some way, and then of course, you think about your own children and how they are," he finds.

Foster has learned much about transplant family dynamics too. "When we get together with the families, I spend my time with the siblings because they are the ones that sort of get pushed to the side, not for any unkind reason; it's just the way it is, because all the attention goes to the sick child," he says. To address this issue, the Foundation has taken on a bigger role with siblings, from offering the family a day out at Disneyland, for instance, or a day out at a football game, subsidizing fun activities for a family break.

Giving back is a fundamental aspect of Foster's life. He takes a low-key approach while the causes he's involved with take center stage. He's put annual shows together for Augie's Quest for ALS in Newport Beach, raising funds for ALS research. "That's something I'll continue to do for as long as they need it," he says. He's produced benefit concerts for the Charlotte and Gwyneth Gray Foundation, which raises funds for research on the rare neurogenerative disorder Batten disease. "It's impossible to say no to Barbara Davis," he says of his 25 years of shows for the bi-annual Carousel of Hope Ball to raise money for juvenile diabetes

He was also behind the scenes for more than a decade at Phoenix's Celebrity Fight Night, an annual fundraiser for the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute. "Muhammad Ali was a big draw," Foster says of the events, which brought out Rod Stewart, Celine Dion and Andrea Bocelli and many more to perform over the years while raising funds for research into the debilitating illness.

Foster is also proud that his daughters, Sara and Erin Foster — co-creators of Netflix's hit "Nobody Wants This" — are also giving back, donating to the David Foster Foundation and participating in events. Although his name is featured, there's a hard-working team and equally committed supporters behind the scenes. Foster says, "I'm indebted to everybody. Honestly."



David Foster addresses the crowd during the 2024 Carousel of Hope Ball.

Dominican Republic: Live Different; Carousel of Hope Ball: Joe Scarnici/Getty Images

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LIFELONG FRIEND,



David Foster

Philanthropist of the Year

With a heart as extraordinary as your talent, we thank you, David, for all the good you've done and continue to do. Through your work, you've supported thousands of type 1 diabetes patients and their families at the Barbara Davis Center for Diabetes. The gift of your friendship has made you not only Philanthropist of the Year.... to us, you are the Philanthropist of a Lifetime.

With much love and admiration,
Barbara Davis, Dana Davis, and
the Children's Diabetes Foundation

Connect with us:

@CDFdiabetes

@childrensdiabetesfoundation

ChildrensDiabetesFoundation.org

The Children's Diabetes Foundation is the fundraising arm of the Barbara Davis Center for Diabetes.



Coming Attractions Broadway is calling ... and David Foster is answering

By Jon Burlingame

David Foster, composer-producer-songwriter extraordinaire, never stops. "I am a workaholic," he confesses, "and I move around a lot."

Foster and his wife, singer-actress Katharine McPhee, will tour during December and January, with multiple dates scheduled for California, New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. "Kat and I started touring together four or five years ago," he says. "It's a nice little show and we talk about our lives and how we got together.

"For the longest time, I was in the studio just pounding out music," he adds. "The artists got to go and enjoy our work and get feedback from a live audience, while I just kept staying in the studio and doing more records. So it was great to finally get out there and perform these songs with Kat."

They play and sing many of the hits that Foster wrote or produced for such superstars as Whitney Houston, Celine Dion, Chicago and Michael Bublé. Audiences, he says, "are happy to hear the songs and see the connection."

Foster also produced two of the songs on Jennifer Hudson's new Christmas album: a big-band-infused "Winter Wonderland" and a lush strings-and-piano version of "The Christmas Song."

"That was a lot of fun," he says. "I really haven't made a record in 10 years, and it took a lot for somebody to talk me out of retirement. It's a great record."

His highest profile project for 2025 is "Boop! The Musical," slated to open April 5 at New York's Broadhurst Theatre. Ten years in the making, it's a musical-comedy adaptation of Dave Fleischer's 1930s cartoon character Betty Boop that earned unanimous rave reviews for its Chicago tryout a year ago.

Foster wrote the music, Susan Birkenhead ("Jelly's Last Jam") the lyrics, Bob Martin ("The Drowsy Chaperone") the book. Newcomer Jasmine Amy Rogers plays Betty Boop in what several noted was a star-making turn.

The critics outdid themselves with superlatives. "Spectacular songs and a winning star in Jasmine Amy Rogers," "highly polished musical ... lush score by David Foster," "visually stunning and aurally pleasing," "a fun and whimsical production ... universal appeal, heartwarming characters," "starry performance by Rogers with an exuberant score by David Foster" were just some of the plaudits the show received last December.

In those vintage black-and-white cartoons, Betty was famously voiced by Mae Questel ("boop-oop-a-doop!"). The musical opens in that grayscale Jazz Age world but through her grandfather's time-traveling invention she finds herself in colorful, contemporary New York (illustrated by the show-stopping "Where I Wanna Be" number at the end of Act I).

Foster says the offer for "Boop" came along when he decided to stop producing records. "But I didn't want to stop working. [Producer] Bill Haber asked me, and of course I said yes. It sounded like a good challenge because, for Broadway, you don't have to write a hit song; you just have to write a good song. And I still felt capable of writing a good song. In fact, we just had a Zoom yesterday, and I have to write a new song. It's a moving target, as you probably know."

Tony winner Jerry Mitchell ("Kinky Boots") is both director and choreographer. Foster says, "He's all about dance, all about theater. He's about big, bright and bold. He's really brought Betty to life.

"It's a really fun ride," he adds. "There's so much stuff going on in the world, and a lot of what's on Broadway is kind of heavy and message-driven. So I think we'll find a good place for this. The audience is ready, and I think people are really going to enjoy it."

Foster expects to be back in New York for rehearsals by February, as previews begin March 11. The New York Times reported that the show is being capitalized for $26 million.

David Foster wrote the music for "Boop! The Musical," which is headed to Broadway after getting raves in Chicago.

"For Broadway, you don't have to write a hit song; you just have to write a good song. And I still felt capable of writing a good song."
David Foster

Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman

Clive Davis
Chief Creative Officer

SONY MUSIC

Dear David:

Philanthropist of the year! Well, David, you fully deserve this wonderful 'honor'. You endlessly share your heart, your artists, your records, your songs and your precious time to benefit all of mankind.

I send you my warmest congratulations and love,
Clive

But the ever-busy Foster isn't stopping there. In addition to "Boop!," there is an additional stage show in development.

"I'm working on another musical with a wonderful songwriter named AnnMarie Milazzo," he reports. It's called "Lucky Us," based on the bestselling 2014 novel by Amy Bloom.

"It's a period piece, set in the 1930s and '40s," explains Foster, "quite different for me." Milazzo was Tony-nominated for her orchestrations on "Once on This Island"; she was also credited with vocal design for "A Beautiful Noise," "Almost Famous" and "Finding Neverland," among others. Book writer James Magruder is another Broadway veteran ("Triumph of Love," the revival of "Guys and Dolls," the Go-Go's musical "Head Over Heels").

Bloom's book is ripe for dramatization. It's the story of teenage half-sisters Eva and Iris, who crisscross America in search of fame and fortune, from dull Ohio to decadent Hollywood and back to New York, where jazz clubs beckon. Bloom even borrows classic jazz tunes for her chapter titles, a hint as to where Foster's song score may go stylistically.

Five-time Tony-nominated Michael Greif ("Rent," "Grey Gardens," "Dear Evan Hansen" and others) is set to direct. Foster says they've already done a lengthy developmental reading; there is no word on casting yet.

"We're doing another reading in March, so it's rolling along and shows promise of going a lot faster than 'Boop.' Maybe because I know what I'm doing," he quips.

Foster already has 16 Grammys, three Oscar nominations and an Emmy on his mantel ... and given these promising shows, could there be a Tony in his future as well?



David Foster, right, with Sophie, a heart transplant recipient in Toronto's SickKids Hospital.

David Foster and Katharine McPhee, below, perform at the DreamFest International Music Festival in July.

One Family's Journey How the David Foster Foundation transforms lives

By Kathy A. McDonald



While pregnant, Tamara Rae Fisher received overwhelming news after an ultrasound — her baby girl would need a heart transplant to survive. Twenty years later, her daughter Evanne is studying early childhood education and thriving, due to advances in pediatric medicine. The Canadian family's everyday costs were generously covered by the David Foster Foundation throughout her daughter's medical procedures.

Fisher's grandmother was the person who advised her to contact the David Foster Foundation immediately after learning the ultrasound results. At the time, transplants in Canada were only done at a pediatric teaching hospital in Toronto called SickKids, the Hospital for Sick Children — 2,100 miles from their home in Victoria, B.C.

"In reality, there was no way as a single mom I was going to uplift my life and move to Toronto for an undetermined amount of time; it just didn't seem plausible," she recalls. However, the David Foster Foundation leadership stepped in and assured her it could happen. "They made it like, 'Well, of course, you're going to do everything you can because we'll do everything we can to support you,' " she explains.

The Foundation helped her rent an apartment and with funds for food and winter clothes when she moved to Toronto, where baby Evanne was born and then placed on a list for a pediatric heart transplant. She remembers the David Foster Foundation's unequivocal assistance and was told, " 'We will be taking care of you, just go and focus on what needs to be focused on,' which was delivering a baby and getting her a heart transplant," Fisher says.

Many years later, it was determined that Evanne would need a second transplant. Fisher immediately reached out to the David Foster Foundation. "I knew once again that they would take care of me and my daughter and anything that we needed, so that the focus could be on my then 8-year-old to get a heart to survive," she says.

Today, both she and her daughter are registered organ donors. Evanne consented to share her story so that others can understand the life-saving gift of organ donorship.

Toronto SickKids: Suzanne Teresa; Foster/McPhee: Joseph Okpako/Getty Images

CONGRATULATIONS

DAVID FOSTER

VARIETY'S 2024

Philanthropist of the Year

TONY FERNANDES

AirAsia



A Lifeline for Families The David Foster Foundation has brought aid and peace of mind to many for nearly 40 years

By Kathy A. McDonald

"Every case is individual, and every funding request is taken separately," explains Honorary Colonel (HCol) Michael Ravenhill, chief executive officer of the David Foster Foundation, a 34-year veteran of the organization, which was founded in 1986.

To date, the nonprofit has aided 1,500 families providing funds from $500 to $100,000. Some grants are a one-time gift; some families have received aid for 18 years as multiple transplants were required. "Each scenario is specific to the person," Ravenhill notes. "We are the one light in a dark world for them."

Transplant teams at pediatric hospitals have social workers who direct families encountering financial hardship to the foundation. Expenses frequently double overnight as patients, along with one or more adult caregivers, must move far from home to a new location for care. "They are focused so much on the child and ignore their bills; we come alongside them to relive financial distress," Ravenhill explains. "Without the David Foster Foundation's help, 85% of the families would end in bankruptcy or divorce, if they don't step in," adds the exec.

Here's how the foundation has helped some families:

"The needs vary from family to family, but [the David Foster Foundation] always makes sure that they do whatever they can to help you lessen your burden," says Tamara Rae Fisher, whose daughter Evanne required two heart transplants and medical airlift transport along with support during two decades of follow-up visits and extensive testing.

After Liorah was born, it soon became apparent that she had a serious liver condition and would need a liver transplant. Her family moved to Montreal for care, and the Foundation supported the family's expenses including rent, food, parking, car payments, insurance and daycare for their other child. Her mother credits the foundation with "easing their suffering."

Kolt's family went through a roller coaster of emotions while overseeing his condition. It was determined during infancy that he needed a heart transplant; at 11 weeks, he received one. The David Foster Foundation supported the family financially so his parents could be at his side while Kolt persevered through multiple surgeries and eventually went home.

"Each scenario is specific to the person. We are the one light in a dark world for them."
Michael Ravenhill

Upcoming Events:
Save the dates notices have already gone out for the 39th anniversary of the David Foster Foundation fundraising gala on Sept. 19-21, 2025. There will be a weekend of activities and musical performances with David Foster (and friends) Friday, Sept.19 and Saturday, Sept. 20 at the JW Marriott the Rosseau Muskoka Resort & Spa, north of Toronto. Weekend packages are now available.

The 40th Anniversary fundraising event, predicted to be the last big event, per Ravenhill, will go back to where the Foundation originated in Victoria, B.C., Canada.

David Foster surrounded by DFF recipients in Winnipeg, Canada

Suzanne Teresa

We are deeply honored to join in congratulating our dear friend,
David Foster,
on being named Variety's 2024 Philanthropist of the Year.

For over half a century, David has not only composed the soundtrack of our lives but has also been a guiding light in philanthropy. His unwavering dedication to uplifting others—whether through the power of music or through initiatives that provide hope and healing—has touched countless lives around the world.

David, your passion, generosity, and tireless efforts have created a lasting impact, and the lives you have changed stand as a testament to the depth of your compassion. The harmony you've crafted between creativity and kindness is a gift that inspires us all.

May your legacy continue to shine brightly,
a beacon of hope for generations to come.

With heartfelt love, admiration, and profound respect,
Iris and Michael Smith
and Family



CONGRATULATIONS TO

DAVID FOSTER

VARIETY'S
PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR

We applaud your relentless dedication to support as many causes as you do.
You are a true force for good in the world and an inspiration to us all.

MARC JOHNSTON



CONGRATULATIONS
DAVID

ON THIS WELL-DESERVED HONOR



A brilliant songwriter and producer, and friend, but your exceptional talent goes far beyond music.

Your endless generosity, support, and humanitarian efforts have inspired me and millions of others to embrace the importance of giving back.

MICHAEL BUBLÉ


augiesquest.org
CURE ALS
AUGIE'S QUEST
David
Foster
2024 Variety *Philanthropist* of the year
Thank you for being a self-proclaimed "Augie-lifer"
and for making a difference in the ALS community.
With love, Augie's Quest to Cure ALS


TO OUR
DEAR FRIEND
DAVID,
Your kindness and generosity is inspiring to us all! Congratulations on this incredible honor. There is no one more deserving than you!
Love,
PIA, CARMEN, & THE OSA FAMILY
OSA

CONGRATULATIONS

DAVID FOSTER

VARIETY'S 2024
PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR



CONGRATULATIONS
FROM YOUR
PEERMUSIC FAMILY!

VARIETY

peermusic
the global independent

Black Market Creative



Congratulates!

David Foster

on the honor of being named

Variety's
Philanthropist of the Year

With gratitude for all that you do,
we applaud you!!!
Leigh, Sandy & Tony

VARIETY | AMAZON MGM STUDIOS

present

A Jennifer Lopez Career Retrospective



Selena
Thursday 12.12 7:00pm
Register Here
Variety.com/SelenaScreening

Out of Sight
Friday 12.13 7:00pm
Register Here
Variety.com/OutofSightScreening

Hustlers
Saturday 12.14 4:00pm
Register Here
Variety.com/HustlersScreening

Golden Boy Makes Good Celebrating Jude Law's storied and versatile career

By Guy Lodge



In the ranks of actors piqued by Chris Rock at the Oscars, Will Smith has probably forever claimed first place. But 20 years ago, Jude Law took more of a stiff-upper-lip approach to some undue mockery from the comedian. "If you want Tom Cruise and all you can get is Jude Law, wait! It's not the same thing," cracked Rock in his opening monologue at the 2005 Academy Awards. "Who is Jude Law? Why is he in every movie I have seen the last four years?" Later in the ceremony, presenter Sean Penn came earnestly to Law's defense: "I did want to answer our host's question about who Jude Law is. He's one of our finest actors."

In subsequent interviews, Law admitted to feeling hurt by Rock's remarks. He was, after all, already a two-time Oscar nominee at that point, for "The Talented Mr. Ripley" and "Cold Mountain." He had racked up credits with Steven Spielberg, Clint Eastwood and Martin Scorsese. What more could he do to prove himself?

Two decades on, Law can probably afford to laugh off the memory, for Penn's words have aged somewhat better than Rock's. And on Dec. 12, the actor will receive one of Hollywood's highest honors — a star on the Walk of Fame. Now on the other side of 50, the British star is still among the best, most hard-working thespians in the business, having aged into a versatile, vanity-free character-actor groove that suits him well. There's little throughline between his most recent big-screen roles — as a careworn anti-fascist FBI agent in Justin Kurzel's "The Order," as an intrepid German survivalist in Ron Howard's "Eden," as a boorish, abusive Henry VIII in Karim Aïnouz's "Firebrand" — beyond his unwavering actorly commitment and onscreen intensity.

Law in "Firebrand" is particularly transformative. Laden with oozing prosthetic wounds and adopting a stooped, gammy gait as the notorious wife-killing monarch, he's scarcely recognizable as the gleaming Adonis undone by his own enviable perfection in "The Talented Mr. Ripley." Or, indeed, the gleaming Adonis who undid Stephen Fry's Oscar Wilde in the 1997 biopic "Wilde," or the gleaming Adonis whose genes Ethan Hawke steals in "Gattaca." No standard-issue heartthrob, Law began his career as a veritable emblem of intimidating, unattainable, sometimes self-sabotaging male beauty.

That can be a tricky position to age from in a surface-oriented industry, but Law has always shown a willingness to subvert and interrogate his onscreen image. He was literally too handsome to be real in his witty, poignant turn as an android sex worker in Spielberg's sci-fi Pinocchio riff "A.I. Artificial Intelligence," while he sent up his Golden Boy persona to brutally emasculated effect in David O. Russell's chaotic satire "I Heart Huckabees."

Law can play a straightforward dreamboat to perfectly charming effect too (see Nancy Meyers' "The Holiday" and Charles Shyer's "Alfie") but the more self-searching the character, the more alert and intriguing his performance. Lately, he's balanced mainstream franchise duty — the "Fantastic Beasts" series, "Captain Marvel," and now heading up the Disney+ "Star Wars: Skeleton Crew" spinoff — with more unpredictable tonal pivots.

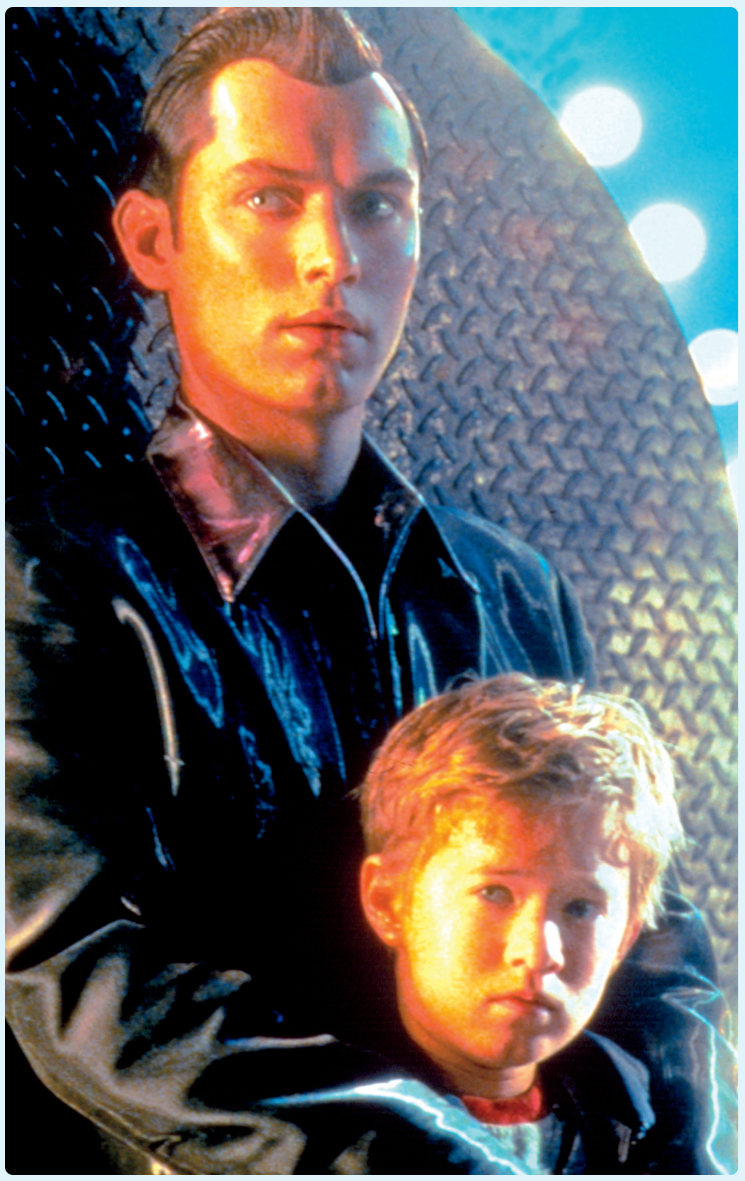
But it was as a wealthy London family man concealing a world of class insecurity and self-delusion in Sean Durkin's 2020 psychodrama "The Nest" that Law gave his greatest, most intricately folded performance to date: an enactment of alpha masculinity humbled by cold reality that brought all the eras of the actor's career together in one shattering, surprising whole.

Who is Jude Law, you ask? We're still finding out.

Tipsheet

WHAT Jude Law receives a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame
WHEN Dec. 12, 11:30 a.m.
WHERE 6840 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood
WEB walkoffame.com

Gareth Cattermole/Getty Images







Law and Order From 'Spy' to 'The Holiday,' the British actor's 10 best performances

By Jenelle Riley

Early in his career, it was easy to cast Jude Law as the epitome of desire — his Hollywood debut, 1997's "Gattaca," cast him as a man literally genetically engineered to perfection. That same year saw two films, "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil" and "Wilde," in which protagonists were driven to ruin by their lust for Law's characters.

But Law always brought a complexity and tinge of tragedy to these roles, and he soon found A-list directors lining up to work with him. The result is a unique career not restricted by genre or medium, encompassing unexpected choices just when you thought you had him figured out. Here's a look at 10 of the actor's best performances on film.

• Dom Hemingway 2013

Richard Shepard's black comedy/crime drama isn't for everyone, as it's purposefully abrasive and asks you to spend 93 minutes with a whole series of unsavory characters. But Law is completely committed from the opening (filthy) line to the character of Dom, a safecracker who spent 12 years in prison after refusing to sell out his boss. Violence and mayhem abound (along with the threat of castration), but Law seems to be having a blast with a no-holds-barred turn you can't take your eyes off.

• Spy 2015

Like every British actor before him, Law was at one time rumored to be in the running to play James Bond — though he denies he was ever offered the role. While we never got to see him hold 007's martini, the action-comedy gives us something better: Law as Bradley Fine, a suave superagent who is also totally oblivious to the fact his partner Susan Cooper (Melissa McCarthy) is madly in love with him. An early scene finds Bradley giving Susan a velvet box — a token of his appreciation — only to reveal the ugliest cupcake necklace known to man. "It's a crazy cupcake!" Fine chortles, bugging out his eyes and holding up his hands like claws. It's somehow seductive and hilarious all at once.

• The Order 2024

You can feel the weight of the world on the shoulders of FBI agent Terry Husk, who led the investigation of a neo-Nazi group called the Order. Though events took place in 1983, the film could not feel timelier as Husk is determined to stop the rise of white supremacy before it becomes a socially acceptable norm. Husk is haunted by his own demons. He's estranged from his wife and family and carries the burden of years of difficult cases — and the emotional scars are etched all over Law's face. Husk gets off to a slow start; there are times you'll wonder if he's actually up for the job. But that's the fascinating part; it's a touching performance in a genre that tends to glorify such characters.

• A.I.: Artificial Intelligence 2001

Law was already known as more than a pretty face when Steven Spielberg cast him as "Gigolo Joe," a "male pleasure Mecha" a.k.a. sex robot in this ambitious sci-fi parable set in a futuristic society. Joe is an expert at seduction, a charmer who can look people right in the eye and lie convincingly. Everything about Joe is smooth and graceful, from his artificial skin to the cap of hair that seems to lock into place like a Lego. When Joe begins caretaking an 11-year-old Mecha child named David (Haley Joel Osment), his commitment is both deeply human and determinedly robotic.

Clockwise from left: "AI: Artificial Intelligence," "Don Hemingway," "The Order"

A.I.: Warner Bros/Everett Collection; Dom Hemingway: Fox Searchlight/Everett Collection; The Order: Vertical Entertainment/Everett Collection

Julian Belfrage Associates are
delighted to congratulate their client

JUDE LAW

On receiving his

Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

and

For his decades of wonderful work

Julian Belfrage Associates, 3rd Floor, 9 Argyll Street, London, W1F 7TG

CONGRATULATIONS TO

JUDE LAW

ON YOUR WELL-DESERVED
STAR ON THE

HOLLYWOOD WALK *of* FAME

IT HAS BEEN OUR HONOR AND
PRIVILEGE TO BE A PART OF YOUR
TEAM ALL THESE YEARS

Much love from Karl
and all your friends at the firm

JACKOWAY AUSTEN TYERMAN WERTHEIMER MANDELBAUM MORRIS
BERNSTEIN TRATTNER AUERBACH HYNICK JAIME LEVINE SAMPLE & KLEIN

The Nest 2020
Though nothing overtly supernatural occurs in Sean Durkin's moody marital drama, there is something dark and unsettling about it. (There is also an old country manor, a dead animal and children acting out, so one can be forgiven for expecting a literal ghost story.) Instead, Law and Carrie Coon play Rory and Allison O'Hara, the heads of a family that uproot its New York life to follow Rory's dreams to the U.K. No one does surface charm better than Law, and as the film goes on, both Allison and the audience begin to discover how dishonest Rory has been about their fortunes. It never stops him from spinning new promises or possibilities — and his desperation is what truly haunts the story.

The Young Pope 2016
The New Pope 2020
Though it launched countless memes, Paolo Sorrentino's big, bold and nasty series never got the proper attention it deserved. Perhaps the image of a Coke-swilling, narcissistic leader drunk with absolute power who surprisingly ascends on the highest title in his domain hit a bit too close to home in early 2017 when the first series premiered in the states on HBO. Still, Law's performance as the titular Pope Pius XIII is mesmerizing — even when he spends the majority of the second series, the 2020 follow-up, "The New Pope," in a coma. Despicable and malevolent, Law understands the key to all bullies: they believe they are the victims.

Road to Perdition 2002
Shortly after directors Spielberg and Anthony Minghella cast Law as the model of male perfection in "A.I." and "The Talented Mr. Ripley," respectively, the actor decided to upend expectations by playing Harlen Maguire, a Depression-era freelance killer. Designed to evoke a rodent, Law is seen early on hunched over a cup of coffee with sickly pale skin and a deeply unsettling grin full of rotting teeth. (Apparently even Law hated his look and wore a hat to disguise his thinned hairline whenever he wasn't shooting.) Everything about him is cruel and unpleasant. It's not just his physical appearance — it's the determined and dispassionate way Maguire goes about executing his subjects and the clear fascination he displays watching them expire.

Vox Lux 2013
Law likely had plenty of personal experience to draw on for his role as the manipulative talent manager to Natalie Portman's pop star in Brady Corbet's underrated gem. But as a sleazy opportunist who just might be the literal devil, the actor wanted to avoid the typical tropes and cliches. So he drew inspiration from both real-life producer Robert Evans and Ben Gazzara's character in "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie," a desperate man trying to maintain a façade of charm. Law shows the appeal of selling one's soul for fame and fortune, but also nails the seedy underbelly.

The Talented Mr. Ripley 1999
Playing the rich and charming Dickie Greenleaf in his first collaboration with Minghella, it's understandable why Tom Ripley (Matt Damon) is awestruck. But Law makes the character more than just a louche playboy, showing his genuine affection for his girlfriend Marge (Gwyneth Paltrow) and glimpses into a more complicated man under his (admittedly very appealing) surface. It earned Law his first Oscar nomination — his second would come from reteaming with Minghella on 2004's "Cold Mountain" — and proved the buzz around the rising star had been warranted.

The Holiday 2006
Those who look down on romantic comedies as somehow a lesser genre be damned. Nancy Meyers' "The Holiday" features Law at his very best in full movie star mode but also down-to-earth and relatable as Graham, a widowed father who hooks up with the woman vacationing in his sister's house (an excellent Cameron Diaz). Law had resisted doing an all-out rom-com (the closest he came was "Alfie" in 2004), but after two Oscar nominations and some ambitious but flawed projects ("Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow," "All the King's Men"), the actor signed on for this unabashedlly frothy and romantic film. It was a role that intimidated him because he wasn't hiding behind an accent or a character look, but he pulls it off flawlessly, and his chemistry with Diaz is undeniable. Graham's declaration of love ranks up there with the best grand gestures. Law makes it looks easy, but the genre is one of the hardest to do well, and he's a large reason the film has become a new holiday classic.

Clockwise from top left: "The Talented Mr. Ripley," "The Holiday," "Road to Perdition"







The Talented Mr. Ripley: Miramax/Everett Collection; The Holiday: Columbia Pictures/Everett Collection; Road to Perdition: DreamWorks/Everett Collection

CAA

congratulates our client



JUDE LAW

on receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

Shared representation with Julian Belfrage Associates

JUDE

CONGRATULATIONS
on your hugely-deserved star on the

HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME

We are thrilled and proud
to work alongside you.

Your team at

RIFF RAFF ENTERTAINMENT



RIFFRAFF
entertainment

AGC
studios



Stuart Ford and AGC Studios congratulate our friend and partner

Jude Law

on his well-deserved star on

the Hollywood Walk of Fame

THE ORDER

EDEN



The Del Shaw Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein Lezcano Bobb & Dang staffers celebrate the firm's anniversary and guide its future.

Legal Ground Breakers: Del Shaw Moonves celebrates 35 years of inclusion and representing the underrepresented

By Todd Longwell

In many ways, the founders of what is today known as Del Shaw Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein Lezcano Bobb & Dang were like any other ambitious young attorneys when they launched the firm back in 1989.

"There's always an inclination to want to start your own business and be the captains of your ship, the makers of your own destiny," says Nina Shaw, who was one of the original partners, alongside founder emeritus Ernie Del and current partner Jean Tanaka. "And we wanted to be within the group of boutique firms that even then were preeminent in the talent representation business."

But there was also another goal in mind. Too often, Shaw found that she was the only woman or person of color — never mind Black woman — in the room. So it was baked into the firm's DNA that it would represent the underrepresented, in its staff and its clients, as well as in the larger legal and entertainment communities.

Today, Del Shaw's staff is 62.5% women and 57.5% people of color, and the firm has a long history of cutting game-changing deals for a diverse roster of clients that includes Cedric the Entertainer, Ayo Edebiri, Paul Reiser, Lena Waithe, Warner Bros. TV Group chair and CEO Channing Dungey, FX Networks chairman John Landgraf, Oscar-winner Lupita Nyong'o, filmmakers Reggie Rock Bythewood and Gina Prince-Bythewood, and model and TV personality Chrissy Tiegen and her husband, musician and EGOT club member John Legend.

Partner Gordon Bobb says that when he joined Del Shaw as an associate in 2000, he noticed how much they differed from his previous employers, who, while not hostile to him as a Black man, placed little importance on diversity.

"I think what was realized at the inception of the firm back in 1989 — and that Hollywood only came to realize within the last four years— is that, if you include more perspectives, you can actually service people a little better," says Bobb.

Courtesy of Rocco Ceselin

Ground Control Business Management

congratulates

Del Shaw Moonves
Tanaka Finkelstein Lezcano
Bobb & Dang

We celebrate you all individually and collectively
on your 35th Anniversary.

Your commitment to each other and
to your clients shines through.

From everyone at

GROUND CONTROL
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT



Early in her career, Nina Shaw did work for Norman Lear's shingle, which produced hit series "The Jeffersons."

Shaw's perspective was formed as a child growing up in Harlem, where she was an avid fan of the arts, regularly taking in everything from movies and theater to museums, ballet and Leonard Bernstein at Lincoln Center. "If it was free and happening in New York, my mother was going to make sure we saw it," she says.

At the same time, Shaw was already fixated on law, as evidenced by the "Future Lawyer" caption under her senior high school yearbook photo. After earning her JD from Columbia Law School in 1979, she moved west to work in the home office of the venerable L.A.-based international firm O'Melveny & Myers, where she did work for clients such as Norman Lear's Tandem/T.A.T. Prods., renowned for its pioneering progressive and diverse sitcoms, and which at the time was making such shows "The Jeffersons." In 1981, she moved to the boutique firm Dern, Mason, Swerdlow and Floum, and made partner five years later. It was there that she landed the first big client she could call her own, Robert Guillaume, star of the hit sitcom "Benson," whom she signed after bonding with his then-wife.

Del Shaw launched when a group of attorneys broke off from that firm to establish their own practice dedicated to transactional entertainment law — it was originally known as Del, Rubel, Shaw, Mason & Derin.

"Not many people understood Ernie Del's desire to be in business with me when he could have been in business with a go-getter guy at one of the other boutique firms," says Shaw. "But he was so shocked and surprised that people would even suggest to him that this wasn't the best thing for him."

CONGRATULATIONS!
DEL SHAW MOONVES TANAKA FINKELSTEIN LEZCANO BOBB & DANG
ON YOUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY
FROM YOUR FAMILY AT V10 ENTERTAINMENT

Vin Di Bona PRODUCTIONS
FISHBOWL WORLDWIDE MEDIA
VENTURE 10 studio group

V10 entertainment

Everett Collection

TO EVERYONE AT

DEL, SHAW, MOONVES, TANAKA,
FINKELSTEIN, LEZCANO, BOBB & DANG

I took out a full-page ad to show how much I appreciate
the best legal team in the business.
(Plus all those names wouldn't fit on half a page).

Seriously, the smartest thing I did in my career was join up
with Jon Moonves and this company on day one.

Honest, trustworthy and diligent. You're the best.

congrats on
35 YEARS

RAY ROMANO

PS. I know it's cheaper, but black and white
was a creative choice!

Shaw landed a few other high-profile clients in those early days, such as James Earl Jones, but most of her roster additions were up-and-comers making artistic and commercial breakthroughs, like writer/director/actress Kasi Lemmons, director F. Gary Gray and former clients Jamie Foxx and Ice Cube.

"I would meet people early in their career, which, quite frankly, was the only way I was getting these clients because I wasn't connected," says Shaw. "I didn't have agents and managers who were saying, 'You need to go with her' or a senior person who was passing down a practice to me. For the most part, I was having to put myself out there and make these relationships myself."

One of the big fish she was able to reel in was Laurence Fishburne, who signed on with Shaw as he was hitting a career high with his Oscar-nominated turn as Ike Turner in the Tina Turner biopic "What's Love Got to Do with It" (1993).

"I was attracted to her first as a professional who came with the highest recommendation from my manager [Helen Sugland]," says Fishburne of Shaw. "But being an African American woman, it goes without saying she would understand what the challenges are."



Shaw signed Laurence Fishburne on the heels of his Oscar nom for "What's Love Got to Do With It," which co-star Angela Bassett also earned.

"But being an African American woman, it goes without saying [Nina Shaw] would understand what the challenges are."
Laurence Fishburne

Del Shaw also expanded its roster of attorneys with additions including Jonathan Moonves, who was an Atlanta-based litigator specializing in the airline industry when he joined the firm in 1991.

"I had a really large verdict representing an airline against its executives and was asking myself, 'Is this what I want to do for the rest of my life?'" recalls Moonves. "I had known Ernie Del for years. He had always said, 'You should come out here with me. I like your style. I like the way you deal with things.' So I said, 'All right, let's start talking seriously about it.'"

One of Moonves' oldest clients is Ray Romano, who signed on shortly after landing his breakout sitcom "Everybody Loves Raymond" in 1996.

"I want to be upfront and honest with everybody I deal with, and I expect the

pocket.watch®
celebrates Del Shaw Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein Lezcano Bobb & Dang's 35th Anniversary!
CONGRATULATIONS!

Buena Vista Pictures/Everett Collection

celebrating the true
POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Del Shaw Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein Lezcano Bobb & Dang

Congratulations on 35 extraordinary years of impact and accomplishment in entertainment!

It's been a blessing to have shared 32 of those years with you by my side.

Special gratitude to the incomparable

NINA SHAW

A powerhouse and a cherished friend — whose presence and partnership have been invaluable.

Gratefully,

YVETTE LEE BOWSER

same from people who deal with me, so if I felt for a second that I was dealing with someone who didn't live up to that, I would depart," says Romano, who regularly socializes with Moonves as a golfing partner and poker buddy.

Moonves' integrity was tested when he renegotiated Romano's contract with CBS, which at the time was run by the attorney's brother, Leslie Moonves.

"People were thinking I might hurt myself by having the guy negotiate for me with a member of his family, but it was just the opposite," says Romano, who inked a then-record $1.8 million per episode deal for "Raymond" in 2003.

While the entertainment industry is often described as a "business of relationships," all the golf rounds and poker nights wouldn't mean much — nor would Del Shaw's much-touted diversity — if the firm didn't produce outstanding results for its clients.

Ethan Cohan recalls an incident not long after he joined Del Shaw as an associate in 2014, following a stint as VP of business affairs and production for chef Gordon Ramsay's production company One Potato Two Potato.

"A partner asked me to do something and I thought, 'This is easy,'" recalls Cohan. "They took a look at my work and when they gave it back to me, it was covered in red [ink with comments and changes]. All of a sudden, I realized the level of the work here is very high."

Today, Cohan is a partner heading up Del Shaw's unscripted and nonfiction entertainment practice group, which has a client roster that includes Vox Media Studios, Mike Jackson's and Legend's Get Lifted, Teigen's Huntley Prods., Vin Di Bona Prods., Ample Entertainment, the Media Pro Studio, Pocket Watch and Soledad O'Brien Prods. It also works on the nonfiction efforts of the firm's multi-hyphenate clients like Nick Cannon.

Recently, Del Shaw has been expanding its nonfiction footprint in the sports world through such clients as the NFL, Major

Jonathan Moonves' client Ray Romano in "Everybody Loves Raymond"



35

Del, Shaw, Moonves, Tanaka,
Finkelstein, Lezcano, Bobb & Dang

congratulations on
35 YEARS
of excellent service

with special thanks to Ernie, Abel and Loan for 20 years of representation.

nigel lythgoe

CBS/Everett Collection

Congratulations

DEL SHAW MOONVES TANKA FINKLESTEIN LEZCANO BOBB & DANG

ON YOUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY

CHEERS,

LAURENCE FISHBURNE HELEN SUGLAND

CINEMA GYPSY PRODUCTIONS AND
LANDMARK ARTIST MANAGEMENT

Congratulations

Del Shaw Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein Lezcano Bobb & Dang on 35 remarkable years of leadership, innovation, and legal expertise in the entertainment industry.

35 years

Here's to the next 35 years of trailblazing achievements and unwavering dedication!

With gratitude and admiration,

Malcolm D. Lee

blackmaled PRODUCTIONS





Filmmaker Gina Prince-Bythewood and Nina Shaw

League Soccer, PGA Tour-affiliated Pro Shop and Box to Box Films, which provide synergy with the firm's athlete clients, both active and retired (including current Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Russell Wilson), who might be interested in working as hosts or commentators or getting involved in other media ventures.

The nonfiction group handles legal matters from development to delivery and all aspects of day-to-day production in between, including negotiating executive, talent and distribution deals and determining whether an aspect of a reality show would break the law.

"We say it should be as if we're sitting in the office next to you," says Cohan, who is also active in LGBTQ+ causes. "So call us, text us, throw rocks at our windows. We're available 24-7."

As much as the firm strives for perfection in-house, its attorneys are careful to temper their killer instinct at the negotiating table.

"We have to advocate as strongly as possible for the clients and get them the abso-



Courtesy of Del Shaw Moonves

lute best deal," says partner Abel Lezcano, a first-generation Cuban American, raised in Iowa. "But we have to balance it all with the totality of their career and everything that's going on — the relationship with the studio, the picture, the director and, if it's on the unscripted side, the subject."

That calm, measured attitude proved invaluable when a suit was filed against Quinta Brunson and ABC, alleging that her series "Abbott Elementary" was "a veritable knock-off" of a New York City schoolteacher's script. Brunson was unnerved at first.

"I was like, 'What the hell?!'" recalls Brunson. "But [Shaw and partner Lily Tillers] were able to say, 'Don't worry, we know this isn't true. It's going to be OK. We got this.'"

They were proven correct: A judge dismissed the lawsuit in March.

For showrunners Michelle and Robert King ("The Good Wife"), one of the best perks of being a Del Shaw client is being able to use Moonves as a technical consultant.

"We oftentimes do legal shows, and Jon will take our calls when we have a question," says Michelle King. "If he doesn't have the answer, he'll put us together with someone else."

Concurs Leczano, "The way we work as a firm is it's truly all for one, one for all. We all drop into different clients' lives when we have a particular relationship or skill set."

At the end of the day, one of the best things about being with a firm that's been around for 35 years — for both the clients and the employees — is the deep institutional wisdom that resides within its walls. Collectively, the attorneys have experienced decades of changes in the industry, both technological and institutional — from the rise of VHS in the early days of Shaw's career to the cable explosion in the 1990s to the streaming revolution and AI — and grappled with the shifts in contract language and career strategies those changes wrought.

"We really do share our expertise and support each other, and I think that was just a tremendous learning experience for me as a young attorney," says Tillers, who joined the firm in 2011. "And now, as a partner, I've been able to do that with our associates, who I learn from, too, because they come from different perspectives and are able to connect with a lot of our clients in different ways."



Anita Hill, left, Quinta Brunson, center, and Nina Shaw at the 2023 CAA pre-Oscar party

Venable Congratulates

Del Shaw Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein Lezcano Bobb & Dang

on Its 35th Anniversary



We are proud to join *Variety* in celebrating our friends at Del Shaw Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein Lezcano Bobb & Dang's 35-year commitment to providing members of the entertainment industry with excellent representation and in wishing them the best in their next 35 years!

VENABLE LLP

CA | CO | DC | DE | FL | IL | MD | NY | VA

David E. Fink, Esq.
2049 Century Park East, Los Angeles, CA | Attorney advertising

24-1044

Randy Shropshire/Getty Images/CAA

reviews



Timothée Chalamet plays a young Bob Dylan just entering the New York folk scene.

FILM / OWEN GLEIBERMAN

Tangled Up in Bob

Timothée Chalamet delivers a transformative performance in James Mangold's freewheeling — and entrancing — early Dylan biopic

A Complete Unknown

Director James Mangold

Screenplay James Mangold, Jay Cocks

Cast Timothée Chalamet, Edward Norton, Elle Fanning, Monica Barbaro

Distributor Searchlight Pictures

→ In one of the many incandescent, finely layered scenes that make up "A Complete Unknown," James Mangold's entrancingly offbeat drama about the early years of Bob Dylan, we watch Dylan (Timothée Chalamet) and Joan Baez (Monica Barbaro), who've been involved musically and romantically, perform a duet at the Newport Folk Festival in 1964. They're singing Dylan's "It Ain't Me Babe," and the way their voices blend creates a sound so pure it feels sunlit. Mangold lets the song roll on in its entirety, as he does with many of the songs in "A Complete Unknown," so that they literally become the story the movie is telling.

This number is like a shimmering dream, but part of that is the drama that's unfolding beneath. Baez, at this point, has had it with Dylan. He's a moody, self-absorbed celebrity folk hipster poet, always placing himself at the center of things (yet somehow always looking like he's too cool

Searchlight Pictures

to be there). And since Joan, with that piercing soprano, is a fierce customer, famous in her own right, she's done with being treated like Dylan's accessory. The song they're singing expresses how they feel about each other ("It ain't me, babe/ It ain't me you're looking for, babe"). Yet they invest it with such passion that it *sounds* like a romance. Folk music is rooted in a devotion to the world, but at that moment what Dylan and Baez are singing about is a devotion to the self: the new world that's coming. That's why the scene makes your heart burst and your head spin at the same time.

"A Complete Unknown" is a drama of scruffy naturalism, with a plot that doesn't so much unfold as lope right along with its legendary, curly-haired, sunglass-wearing coffee-house troubadour hero. Yet the feel — the effect — is that of a musical. Each new song is like a dramatic episode, whether it's Dylan performing "Masters of War" in the Gaslight Cafe just after the Cuban missile crisis or trying out "The Times They Are A-Changin'" at Newport, where the audience, by the end, sings along as if it were a song they always knew.

Chalamet plays Dylan with a frog in his throat and an ornery sly quietude that's so authentic it disarms and then floors you. He wanders from cramped bohemian apartments to recording studios to concert stages to chic parties, always returning to the colorful squalor of Greenwich Village (played by a not-very-convincing Jersey City). He slides into liaisons, then slides out of them. But that's because the music he writes is his one eternal lover. "A Complete Unknown" digs into the elemental power of what Dylan created during this period, tossing off songs for the ages as if he'd pulled them *out* of the ages. That the Dylan we see can be kind of a jerk is part of the film's power. It's ruthlessly honest about what an obsessive artist is really like.

We meet him in 1961, when he's a 19-year-old kid hitchhiking from Minnesota. He gets dropped off in New York City and immediately heads for the hospital in New Jersey where Woody Guthrie (Scoot McNairy) is lying in bed, unable to speak due to the ravages of Huntington's disease. Guthrie's buddy Pete Seeger (Edward Norton) is visiting him, and Bob is in awe. It's Guthrie's lilting everyman-drawl music that forged the template for what he does.

As Dylan takes out his guitar and plays "Song to Woody," something happens I wouldn't hesitate to call magical. Chalamet, singing in a nasal and slightly clenched voice, his tone as rock-steady as his gaze, sings out the lyrics as if they were an incantation ... and at that moment, he *becomes* Bob Dylan. The voice, the hardscrabble directness, the spiritual harshness that melts into something lyrical — it's all there.

"A Complete Unknown" is a drama of scruffy naturalism, with a plot that doesn't so much unfold as lope right along with its troubadour hero.

Chalamet's Bob doesn't say much; he tends to speak in gnomic five-word sentences. But that's because, in his mind, he has already cut through the malarkey that is human communication. He doesn't have much use for it. He's plugged into something more timeless. And Chalamet rises to the challenge of capturing the prickly charisma of Dylan's inchoate, anti-matter, read-between-the-lines personality. It's a transfixing performance that's true to Dylan and, just as important, true to the logic of movies. We stare at this young mystery man, who lights up a room when he sings, and we want to know what makes him tick.

The script, by Mangold and Jay Cocks, is engineered so that all the points a conventional biopic would cover are there: the way Dylan captivated early-'60s Village audiences; his push-pull bond with Baez and the gentler connection he forms with Elle Fanning's political-minded Sylvie (the film's version of Suze Rotolo); the deal he strikes with the cunning manager Albert Grossman (Dan Fogler); and his camaraderie with Johnny Cash (Boyd Holbrook), who fuels Dylan's bad-boy impulses, and with the banjo-wielding Seeger, played with spot-on whimsicality by Norton as a twinkly-eyed, truly *folksy* activist utopian saint.

Dylan sees what's coming that Seeger can't: the swooning self-infatuation of the new pop audience. The story "A Complete Unknown" tells is how Dylan moves away from the "purity" of folk because his music starts to open up to a richer, bolder, more majestic purity: the need to reflect back the world he sees around him.

And that's why he goes electric. This transformation was covered in Martin Scorsese' great 2005 documentary "No Direction Home." But "A Complete Unknown," tethered to Chalamet's haunting performance — now hooded, now open, now despairing, now powered by rebel vibes — captures something the documentary didn't: the anguish in Dylan's heart, and the toll it took on him personally. To make this change in his music, and in the world, he needed to do more than confront an audience of screaming betrayed fans at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival. He had to stare down the cosmic forces that were telling him no and replace doubt with faith. That's what Dylan's music always was: the sound of belief lighting up the darkness. Watching "A Complete Unknown," his journey into the light becomes ours.



Chalamet's Dylan has a frog in his throat and a sly quietude.

Searchlight Pictures

The Contender

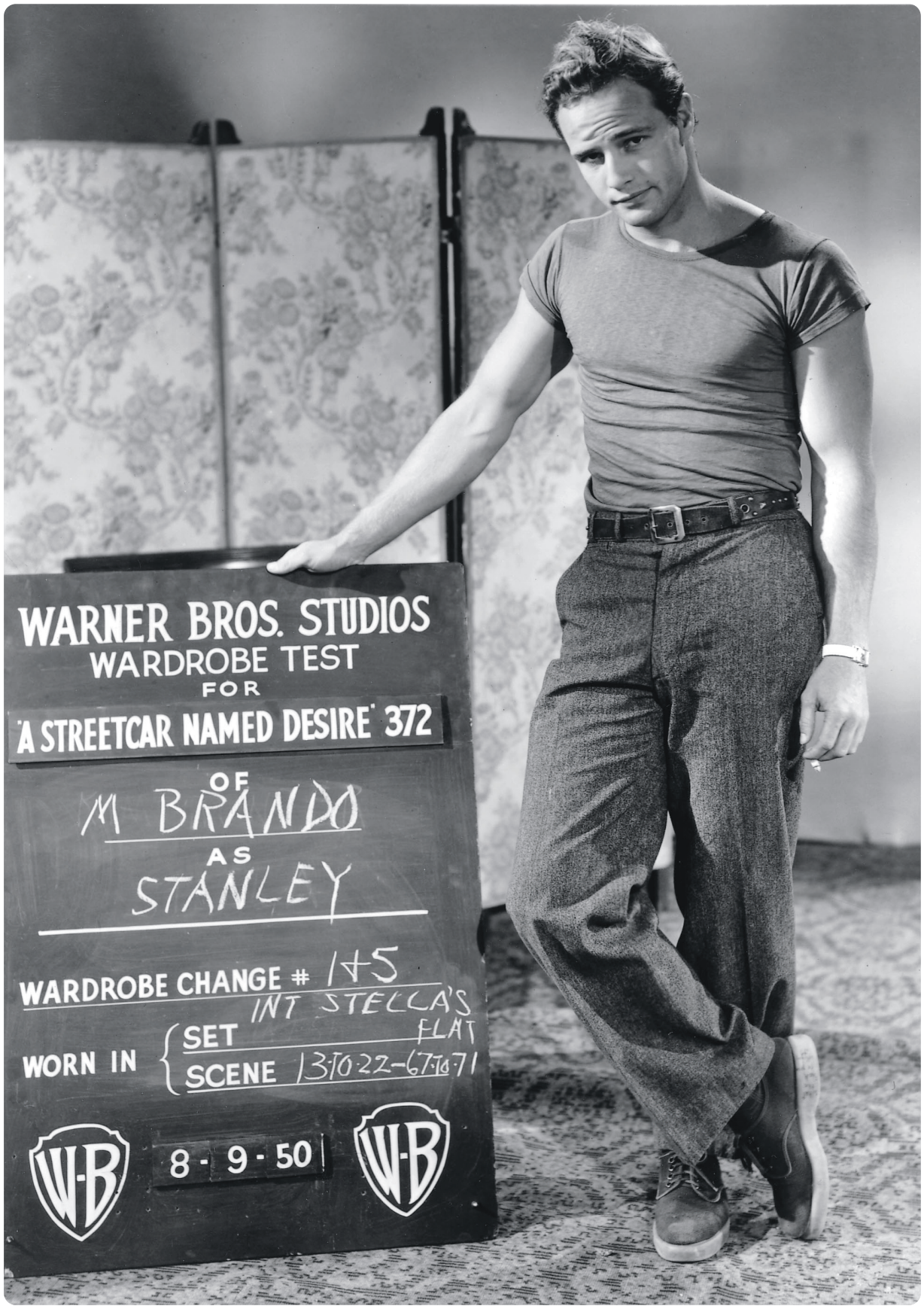
→ "He gave us our freedom." That's Jack Nicholson on Marlon Brando's seismic impact on acting. And he's not exaggerating. Because without Brando, there'd be no De Niro, no Penn, no Day-Lewis and definitely no Nicholson.

When Brando appeared on-screen in 1951's "A Streetcar Named Desire" wearing a ripped T-shirt soaked in sweat, and howling "Stella," he redefined what it meant to be a leading man. He introduced the Method — techniques that encourage actors to fully immerse themselves in roles — into the mainstream of movies.

Before Brando, screen actors like Cary Grant or James Stewart radiated either cosmopolitan sophistication or homespun decency. And once they developed a persona audiences enjoyed, they tailored their roles to fit it, giving variations on the same performance. Brando's feral intensity inspired the actors of his and subsequent generations. It pushed them to go to punishing extremes — gaining and losing weight, extracting teeth, speaking in accents on and off set — to transform into characters who were often far removed from themselves.

In the initial glow of stardom, Brando delivered a string of mesmerizing turns. He played a rebellious biker in "The Wild One," a sensitive dockworker in "On the Waterfront" and a passionate revolutionary in "Viva Zapata!" After a fallow period, he reemerged in the 1970s, playing an enigmatic Mafia don in "The Godfather," alongside Al Pacino, James Caan and Robert Duvall, who were his acting acolytes. Like their mentor, they'd soon reimagine movie stardom.

— Brent Lang



Marlon Brando at Warner Bros. Studios in 1950

Silver Screen Collection/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Variety, VOL. 366, NO. 7 (USPS 146-820, ISSN 0011-5509) is published weekly, except the last week of February, the third week of March, the second week of April, the last week of June, the first and third weeks of July, the last week of August, the last week of September and the last week of December, with 26 special issues: Jan. (3), Feb. (2), April (1), May (4), June (6), July (1), August (5), December (4) by Variety Media LLC, 11175 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025, a division of Penske Business Media. Periodicals postage paid at Los Angeles, CA and at other mailing offices. Postmaster send address changes to: Variety, P.O. Box 15759, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5759. Canada Post International Publications Mail Product (Canadian Distribution) Publications Mail Agreement No. 40043404. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: RCS International Box 697 STN A, Windsor, Ontario N9A 6N4. Sales agreement No. 0607525. Variety ©2024 by Variety Media, LLC. Variety and the Flying V logo are trademarks of Penske Business Media. Printed in the U.S.A.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12 AT 11:30AM PST



TM



The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce is Pleased to Recognize Jude Law

The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce invites you to watch our Walk of Fame ceremonies live from anywhere in the world exclusively on walkoffame.com. Your front row seat awaits you!

HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME

WALKOFFAME.COM

HOLLYWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

www.hollywoodchamber.net

Vision of Asia, Ocean of Cinema



30 Years ANNIVERSARY

BUSAN International Film Festival

17-26 September **2025**