

THE CITY OF YOUR FINAL DESTINATION

A MERCHANT IVORY FILM

Rating: PG
Run Time: 118 minutes

Distributed in Australia by

POTENTIAL
F • I • L • M • S

Publicity contact:
Coreen Haddad, Potential Films
(03 9328 5000 – coreen@potentialfilms.com)

Sydney Publicist:
Linda Airey, L.A. Publicity
(02 9819 6982 – la.publicity@bigpond.com)

Press kit and stills available at
www.potentialfilms.com.au

AUSTRALIAN RELEASE DATE – OCTOBER 14 2010

SYNOPSIS

Based on the novel by Peter Cameron, **JAMES IVORY'S *THE CITY OF YOUR FINAL DESTINATION*** stars Academy Award winner **ANTHONY HOPKINS**, three-time Academy Award nominee **LAURA LINNEY** and **CHARLOTTE GAINSBURG**.

28-year-old Kansas University doctoral student Omar Razaghi has been awarded a grant to write the biography of Latin American writer Jules Gund. When Gund's estate unexpectedly denies Omar authorisation, Omar is urged by his girlfriend to travel to Uruguay and petition the executor to change their minds.

The Gund "family," living together on the author's isolated and decaying estate, includes Gund's widow, his mistress, her young daughter, Gund's brother, and his partner. Omar's unannounced arrival upsets their fragile co-existence and causes all to question their own circumstances, which in turn leads Omar himself to question to what degree, if any; he has been the author of his own existence up until now.

ABOUT THE FILM

The City of Your Final Destination will be director James Ivory's 24th collaboration with two-time Academy Award-winning screenwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Based on the novel by Peter Cameron, the film stars Academy Award winner Anthony Hopkins, three-time Academy Award nominee Laura Linney, Hiroyuki Sanada (*The Last Samurai*, Merchant Ivory's *The White Countess*), Charlotte Gainsbourg (*The Science of Sleep*, *The Golden Door*), Alexandra Maria Lara (*Downfall*), Academy Award winner Norma Aleandro, and Omar Metwally (*Munich*). Filming the movie is six-time Goya-winning Spanish cinematographer Javier Aguirresarobe (*Talk to Her*, *The Others*, *The Sea Inside*, and Woody Allen's *Vicki Christina Barcelona*). The movie will also feature costume design and production design by longtime Merchant Ivory collaborators Carol Ramsey and Andrew Sanders, respectively; and a score by Academy Award winner Jorge Drexler.

Based on the novel of the same name by Peter Cameron, the protagonist of *The City of Your Final Destination* is Omar Razaghi (Omar Metwally), an Iranian-born graduate student at the University of Colorado, whose financial aid for a fellowship is contingent on writing an authorized biography of the deceased Latin American author Jules Gund. Shortly into the first semester of the fellowship, Gund's estate unexpectedly denies Omar authorization. Omar's aggressively supportive girlfriend Deirdre urges him to travel to Uruguay and petition the executor to change their minds.

Omar follows this advice and is instantly received into a hornet's nest of intrigues and idiosyncrasies. The Gund "family," living together on the author's isolated and decaying estate, includes Gund's widow, Caroline (Laura Linney); his mistress, Arden (Charlotte Gainsbourg); Arden's young daughter, Portia; Gund's brother, Adam (Anthony Hopkins), and Adam's partner, Pete (Hiroyuki Sanada). Omar's unannounced arrival upsets their fragile co-existence and causes all to question their own circumstances, which in turn leads Omar himself to question to what degree, if any, he has been the author of his own existence up until now.

The City of Your Final Destination is a finely-tuned comedy of modern manners from which emerges that rarest of things: a film romance that is actually romantic; it is, to quote *The New York Times* review of Cameron's novel, a "pungent, airy, grave, and transporting commedia dell'arte [that] subtly, affectingly, erotically traces the beginning, the hesitations, the advances of a love affair."

How we fall in love, how we find a home, and how we come to know, or change, ourselves are all questions that *The City of Your Final Destination* deftly explores in this warm and engaging work.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JAMES IVORY (Director)

James Ivory was born in Berkeley, California. After attending the University of Oregon, where he majored in Architecture and Fine Arts, he received his Master's degree in Film from the University of Southern California. His first film, which he wrote, photographed and produced, was *Venice: Theme and Variations*, a half-hour documentary made as his thesis for his Master's degree. The New York Times named Ivory's evocation of the city in 1957 as one of the ten best non-theatrical films of the year.

An easy rapport with India was evidenced in Ivory's second film *The Sword and the Flute*, based entirely on Indian miniature paintings in American collections. Its success led to a grant by the Asia Society of New York to make *The Delhi Way*, a film about the Indian capital city. In 1961, Ivory teamed up with Ismail Merchant to form Merchant Ivory Productions. Their first theatrical feature was *The Householder*, based on an early novel by Ruth Praver Jhabvala, who also wrote the screenplay. Since then, Ivory's feature and television filmmaking career has taken him to Great Britain, France, Italy, back to India several times, to China, to South America and to the United States.

The many theatrical films that Ivory has made for Merchant Ivory Productions include the classic *Shakespeare Wallah*; three Henry James productions, *The Europeans*, *The Bostonians*, and *The Golden Bowl*; *Heat and Dust*, from a novel by Ruth Praver Jhabvala, and *A Room With A View*, *Maurice*, and *Howards End* from novels by E. M. Forster. *A Room With A View* was nominated for eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director, and won for Jhabvala's adaptation of Forster's novel, Best Costume, and Best Production Design. *A Room With A View* was also voted Best Film of 1986 by the Critic's Circle Film Section of Great Britain, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) and the National Board of Review in the United States. The film also received the Donatello Prize for Best Foreign Language Picture and Best Director in Italy. Ivory's next film, *Maurice*, received a Silver Lion Award for Best Director at the Venice Film Festival as well as Best Film Score for Richard Robbins and Best Actor Awards for co-stars James Wilby and Hugh Grant.

After *Maurice*, James Ivory returned to the United States to film *Slaves of New York*, based on the best-seller by Tama Janowitz starring Bernadette Peters, and *Mr. & Mrs. Bridge*, starring Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, which Ruth Praver Jhabvala adapted from the novels *Mr. Bridge* and *Mrs. Bridge* by Evan S. Connell. This film received an Oscar nomination for Best Actress (Joanne Woodward), and Best Screenplay award from the New York Film Critics Circle.

Ivory's next project was *Howards End*, based on the E.M. Forster novel. *Howards End* was nominated for nine Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director, and won for Best Actress (Emma Thompson), Best Screenplay Adaptation (Ruth Praver Jhabvala), and Best Art Direction/Set Direction (Luciana Arrighi/Ian Whittaker). The film also won Best Picture at the BAFTA Awards, as well as awards for Best Picture, Best Actress (Emma Thompson) and Best Director (James Ivory) from the National Board of Review, and Best Actress from the New York film critics.

The Remains of the Day followed *Howards End*. It reunited Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson in the starring roles of the butler Stevens and his housekeeper Miss Kenton. This film, too, received eight Oscar nominations including Best Picture and Best Director and was chosen "Film of the Year" by the British Film Critics Society. *Jefferson in Paris*, starring Nick Nolte, Greta Scacchi, Thandie Newton, and Simon Callow, was Ivory's next project and was released in 1995. During that same year, the Directors Guild of America awarded the D.W. Griffith Lifetime Achievement award, its highest honor, to Ivory for his body of work. *Surviving Picasso*, starring Anthony Hopkins as Picasso, Natascha McElhone as Francoise Gilot and Julianne Moore as Dora Maar, followed *Jefferson in Paris* in 1996. His next film, *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, starring Kris Kristofferson, Barbara Hershey and Leelee Sobieski was filmed in Paris and

released in 1998. *The Golden Bowl*, starring Nick Nolte, Uma Thurman and Anjelica Huston, was released in 2001. The film reunited many of the artists and technicians of Ivory's earlier films such as composer Richard Robbins, cinematographer Tony Pierce-Roberts and costume designer John Bright. Ivory's long time collaborator, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, wrote the screenplay of *The Golden Bowl*. In 2001, James Ivory, Ismail Merchant and Ruth Praver Jhabvala received the Fellowship of the British Academy of Film and Television, one of the highest awards in film.

In 2003 Merchant Ivory Productions released *Le Divorce*, through Fox Searchlight from the best-selling novel by Diane Johnson. It was adapted for the screen by James Ivory and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, and starred Kate Hudson, Naomi Watts, Glenn Close, Stockard Channing, Matthew Modine, Sam Waterston, Thierry Lhermitte, Stephen Fry, Bebe Neuwirth, and Leslie Caron. Ivory's previous film (and his final collaboration with the late Ismail Merchant) was 2005's *The White Countess*, based on an original screenplay by Kazuo Ishiguro, and was shot in Shanghai, China and starring Ralph Fiennes and the late Natasha Richardson, as well as Vanessa Redgrave and Lynn Redgrave.

PETER CAMERON (Novelist)

Peter Cameron is the author of five novels and three collections of short stories. He has published fiction in *The New Yorker*, *Rolling Stone* and several volumes of the annual O. Henry collection of Best Short Stories. His first novel, *Leap Year*, was written as a serial novel for the New York City magazine *7 Days*, appearing a chapter each week during the year of 1988. This was followed by *The Weekend* in 1994 (which was made into a film produced by Granada and starring Gena Rowlands, Brooke Shields, Jared Harris and Deborah Kara Unger in 1999), *Andorra* in 1997, *The City of Your Final Destination* in 2001, and *Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You* in 2007. *The City of Your Final Destination* was a finalist for both the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Award. *Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You* won the Ferro-Grumley Prize in 2008.

Richard Eder concluded his rave *New York Times* review of *The City of Your Final Destination* by exclaiming, "Yet, as in a film -- and what a film! -- other elements are intrinsic: settings (the tempered languor of the northern Uruguyan countryside and the harshness of Kansas), pace and rhythm (those jump-cut encounters), lighting and even costumes..." *The Los Angeles Times* review declared that *The City of Your Final Destination* read like "a cross between a West End Edwardian play . . . and a Merchant-Ivory production."

In addition to fiction, Cameron has written screenplays for *Andorra* (a USA-French co-production with Ovie Entertainment Amazing Digital Studios) and *Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You* (Jean Vigo Productions, Italy). His first play, "A Thing of the Past" was read at Lincoln Center Theater. The reading featured Marian Seldes and Estelle Parsons and was directed by Craig Lucas. Cameron has taught fiction writing at Yale, Columbia, and Sarah Lawrence College. He lives in New York City, and is working on a new novel, *The End of My Life in New York*, which FSG will publish in 2010.

MERCHANT IVORY PRODUCTIONS LTD. - HISTORY

From *Shakespeare Wallah*, the bittersweet tale of a wandering theatrical company in India, which established the company's reputation in 1965, to the richly detailed comic masterpiece *A Room With A View* in 1986, and the poignant Oscar-winning film *Howards End* in 1992, Merchant Ivory has provided audiences around the world with thoughtful and beautifully crafted features, documentaries, and shorts.

Merchant Ivory's films have been praised for their visual beauty, their mature and intelligent themes, and the shrewd casting and fine acting from which they derive their unique power.

Merchant Ivory actually began as a collaboration of three remarkable people from three vastly different cultures: The late Ismail Merchant, the producer, born in India; Ruth Praver Jhabvala, the screenwriter, born in Germany and educated in England; and James Ivory, the director, born in the United States.

The diversity of Merchant Ivory's cultural roots is evident in the range of locations in which their movies have been shot: Delhi, Bombay, and Benares; London, Paris, and Florence; New York, New England, and Texas. They capture a vital sense of place and often lyrical feeling for widely varying periods and landscapes, from Paris in the 1920s and Edwardian London, to nineteenth-century America and British India, and Shanghai on the eve of the Japanese invasion.

The scope of their subjects is as broad as their range of locations. They have explored India's past and present in such features as *The Householder*, *Bombay Talkie*, and *The Autobiography of a Princess*. Clashing cultures feature in *Shakespeare Wallah*, *Heat and Dust* (official selection, Cannes 1983), *Savages* (selected for Quinzaine des Realisateurs, 1972), and *anom* (official selection Cannes, 1979). The conflicts and anomie of a modern urban life are explored in *Quartet* (Cannes winner, 1981, Best Actress for Isabelle Adjani), *Roseland*, and *Slaves of New York*; and the struggle for self-discovery is evoked in *The Bostonians* (selected for Quinzaine des Realisateurs, 1984), *A Room With A View*, and *Maurice* (both selected for the Venice Film Festival).

The Golden Bowl, Merchant Ivory's thirty-sixth film, starred Nick Nolte, Uma Thurman and Anjelica Huston, and was adapted from the celebrated novel by Henry James. Set in England and Italy at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, it tells the story of two marriages entangled in a complex, almost incestuous relationship. In 2003 Merchant Ivory released *Le Divorce*, adapted by James Ivory in collaboration with Ruth Praver Jhabvala from the novel by Diane Johnson. A witty and emotional story set in contemporary Paris about two American sisters (Kate Hudson and Naomi Watts), it takes them through a series of adventures amongst their wily French in-laws as they struggle to resolve Watts' messy divorce and Hudson's heady love affair with a much older man.

In 2005 Merchant Ivory released *The White Countess*, directed by James Ivory from an original script by Kazuo Ishiguro, starring Ralph Fiennes, Natasha Richardson and Vanessa and Lynn Redgrave. *The White Countess* is the first Western film to be shot entirely on location in China, with a largely local crew, thus continuing Merchant Ivory's exploration of new environments and the differing methods of modern film-making.

CAST LIST

Anthony Hopkins – Adam Gund

Laura Linney - Caroline Gund

Charlotte Gainsbourg - Arden Langdon

Omar Metwally - Omar Razaghi

HiroYuki Sanada - Pete

Alexandra Maria Lara - Deirdre

Norma Aleandro - Mrs. Van Euwen

Ambar Mallman – Portia

Norma Argentina – Alma

Luciano Suardi – Doctor Pereira

CAST BIOS

ANTHONY HOPKINS (Adam)

Anthony Hopkins received an Academy Award for his performance in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), and was subsequently nominated in the same category for his performances in Merchant Ivory's *The Remains of the Day* (1993) and Oliver Stone's *Nixon* (1995). He received the Best Actor Award by the British Academy of Film & Television Arts for *The Remains of the Day*. In 1993, he starred in Richard Attenborough's *Shadowlands* with Debra Winger, winning numerous critics awards in the U.S. and Britain. In 1998, he was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor for his performance in *Amistad*.

In 2001, Hopkins starred in the sequel to *Silence of the Lambs*, *Hannibal*, in which he starred with Julianne Moore. Directed by Ridley Scott, the blockbuster film grossed over \$100 million domestically. He also recorded the narration for the 2000 holiday season's hit film *Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas*.

In 1998, he starred in *Meet Joe Black*, directed by Martin Brest and *Instinct*, directed by Jon Turteltaub, and in *Titus*, Julie Taymor's film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* with Jessica Lange.

In 1992 he appeared in James Ivory's *Howards End* and Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* before starring in Edward Zwick's *Legends of the Fall* and Alan Parker's *The Road to Wellville*. He made his directorial debut in 1995 with *August*, an adaptation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, for which he composed the musical score and also played Vanya. He starred in the title role in Merchant Ivory's *Surviving Picasso*, his third feature with the company, and with Alec Baldwin in *The Edge*, a dramatic adventure written by David Mamet and directed by Lee Tamahori. *The Mask of Zorro*, directed by Martin Campbell and co-starring Antonio Banderas and Catherine Zeta-Jones, was released in July 1998, and *Amistad*, directed by Steven Spielberg, was released in December 1997.

After starring as Captain Bligh in *The Bounty* (1984), he returned to England and the National Theatre in David Hare's *Pravda*, for which he received the British Theatre Association's Best Actor Award and The Observer Award for Outstanding achievement at the 1985 Laurence Olivier Awards. During this time at the National he starred in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and *King Lear*.

Hopkins also appeared in the feature adaptation of Stephen King's *Hearts In Atlantis* for director Scott Hicks, the action comedy *Bad Company*, co-starring Chris Rock, and the box-office hit prequel to *Silence of the Lambs*, *Red Dragon*, co-starring Ed Norton, Ralph Fiennes and Emily Watkins. He also starred in Miramax Films' adaptation of the Phillip Roth novel *The Human Stain*, opposite Nicole Kidman and directed by Robert Benton.

He also starred in Miramax Films' *Proof*, opposite Gwyneth Paltrow; *The World's Fastest Indian*, for director Roger Donaldson; *All The King's Men* for director Steven Zallian, co-starring Sean Penn, Jude Law, and Kate Winslet; and the crime thriller *Fracture*, opposite Ryan Gosling. He wrote, directed and composed the score for his debut independent feature film *Slipstream*, which premiered at the 2007 *Sundance Film Festival*, and was most recently seen in Robert Zemeckis's adaptation of *Beowulf*, for Paramount Pictures.

Hopkins' recent films include *The Wolfman* and Woody Allen's *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger*.

LAURA LINNEY (Caroline)

The year of 2008 was a year to remember for Laura Linney. She received an Academy Award nomination in the lead actress category for her role in the box office hit, *The Savages*, opposite Phillip Seymour Hoffman and also starred in the critically acclaimed HBO miniseries *John Adams*, for which she won an Emmy Award, a SAG Award and a Golden Globe. Additionally, Laura wrapped filming on the James Ivory film, *The City of Your Final Destination*, opposite Anthony Hopkins and *Sympathy for Delicious*, with Orlando Bloom and Mark Ruffalo. She can next be seen in the Richard Eyre directed, *The Other Man* with Liam Neeson and Antonio Banderas.

Laura's additional credits include Kenneth Lonergan's *You Can Count On Me* for which she was nominated for an Oscar, a Screen Actors Guild Award, a Golden Globe Award and an Independent Spirit Award. She received the award for Best Actress from the New York Film Critics Circle and the National Society of Film Critics for her work in that film. She received Golden Globe and Independent Spirit Award nominations for her work in *The Squid and the Whale*. In 2004, she starred in *Kinsey*, opposite Liam Neeson and directed by Bill Condon, for which she was nominated for an Oscar, a Golden Globe and a Screen Actors Guild Award. In addition, she won the award for Best Supporting Actress by the National Board of Review for her work in *Kinsey*. In 2003, Laura appeared in the ensemble romantic comedy *Love Actually*, written and directed by Richard Curtis. She was also seen that year in *Mystic River*, directed by Clint Eastwood. Laura was nominated for Best Supporting Actress in a Drama by The British Academy of Film and Television Arts for *Mystic River*. Her other credits include *Congo*, *Absolute Power*, directed by Clint Eastwood, *Primal Fear* opposite Richard Gere and directed by Gregory Hoblit, *The Truman Show* opposite Jim Carrey, *The House of Mirth*, *Lorenzo's Oil*, *Dave*, *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, *A Simple Twist of Fate*, *The Mothman Prophecies*, *The Life of David Gale*, *PS*, *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*, *Breach*, *Man of the Year*, *Driving Lessons*, *Jindabyne*, *The Hottest State* and *The Nanny Diaries*.

Laura returned to television in 2004 on the NBC comedy *Frasier*. She appeared in four episodes as Dr. Frasier Crane's love interest, Charlotte. For this role, Laura won a 2004 Emmy Award for Best Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series. She previously won an Emmy for Outstanding Lead Actress for Showtime's *Wild Iris* opposite Gena Rowlands. Additional television appearances include the lead role of Mary Ann Singleton in PBS's *Tales of the City* based on the novels by Armistead Maupin, a role which she reprised in *More Tales of the City* for Showtime. Laura was also seen opposite Joanne Woodward in the Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation of *Blind Spot* and opposite Steven Weber in *Love Letters* directed by Stanley Donen.

Linney is a graduate of Juilliard. In 2008, Laura starred in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Christopher Hampton's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* with Ben Daniels. She was nominated for a Tony for her performance in Richard Eyre's *The Crucible*, opposite Liam Neeson. In 2004, Laura starred in Donald Margulies' Broadway staging of *Sight Unseen*, the same play she did 12 years before. For her role as Patricia she received a Tony nomination as well as nominations from the Drama League, the Drama Desk Club and the Outer Critic Circle for Outstanding Actress in a play. Her additional theatre credits include roles in the Broadway presentations of *Six Degrees of Separation*; *The Seagull*; *Hedda Gabler*, for which she won a 1994 Calloway Award; Phillip Barry's *Holiday*, opposite Tony Goldwyn; *Honour*, *Sight Unseen*, for which she earned a Theatre World Award and a Drama Desk nomination; and John Guare's *Landscape of the Body* at the Yale Repertory Theatre.

CHARLOTTE GAINSBOURG (Arden)

One of the most compelling French actresses of her generation, Charlotte Gainsbourg initially made her screen name parlaying wayward adolescence into an understated art form. Tall, long-necked, and elegantly gawky, Gainsbourg first impressed critics and audiences with her portrayal of the naive but rebellious protagonist of *L'Effrontée* (1985), earning a César for Most Promising Young Actress.

The daughter of French singer/songwriter/occasional actor and director Serge Gainsbourg and English actress Jane Birkin, Gainsbourg was born into substantial celebrity in London on July 22, 1971. She made her film debut playing Catherine Deneuve's daughter in the 1984 *Paroles et Musique*. That same year, she courted notoriety when she starred alongside her ever-irascible father in his controversial *Lemon Incest* music video, which featured the two cuddling on a bed surrounded by feathers. More salubrious attention came the young actress' way the following year, when she earned a César for her performance in Claude Miller's *L'Effrontée*.

After another stint acting alongside her father in his poorly received *Charlotte Forever* (1986), Gainsbourg again collaborated with director Miller for *La Petite Voleuse* (1988), portraying a sullen teenager experimenting with sex and various illegal pursuits. She reprised her rebellious teen role for *Merci La Vie* (1991), a black comedy that cast her and Anouk Grinberg as two young women on a rampage against men and just about whomever else crosses their path. Gainsbourg got an opportunity to broaden her range with Jacques Doillon's *Amoureuse* (1992), an ensemble piece about a group of young women who come together to discuss life and love, and her uncle Andrew Birkin's *The Cement Garden* (1994), a drama about extreme familial dysfunction that was the actress' first English language outing.

Gainsbourg made her second English film in 1996, starring as the eponymous heroine of Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Although the film, which also starred William Hurt, received very mixed reviews, it did succeed in introducing Gainsbourg to a wider international audience. She further enhanced her good reputation when she won her second César -- this time for Best Supporting Actress -- in 2000 for her work in *La Bûche* (1999), a comedy that cast her as an ambitious businesswoman who takes up with a mysterious man lodging at her father's house. Extremely well received roles in Alejandro González Iñárritu's 2003 film *21 Grams* and more recently Michel Gondry's *The Science of Sleep* have further established her international name as one of France's most sought after actresses.

OMAR METWALLY (Omar)

Omar Metwally made his film debut in Steven Spielberg's *Munich* as Ali, the young Palestinian who engages Avner (Eric Bana) in political and philosophical debate. Since then he has been seen in *Rendition*, Gavin Hood's political thriller about the CIA practice of "extraordinary rendition," starring opposite Reese Witherspoon and Jake Gyllenhaal. Omar received the 2008 Chopard Trophy for his work in *Rendition*, presented to him at the Cannes Film Festival. He has also completed filming *Amsterdam* with Marisa Tomei, directed by theater auteur Ivo Van Hove. Omar has made numerous television appearances, and has worked on stages in New York and across America. In 2004 he received a Tony Award nomination for Best Actor in a Featured Role for his work in the play *Sixteen Wounded* on Broadway.

Omar was born in New York and raised in California. He trained at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco.

HIROYUKI SANADA (Pete)

Hiroyuki Sanada has impressed international audiences with his versatility in such acclaimed films as *The Last Samurai*, with Tom Cruise, Yoji Yamada's 2004 Oscar-nominated film *The Twilight Samurai* and *Sharaku*, an official selection at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival. Sanada also starred in the original Japanese version of the modern horror-classic *The Ring*.

Most recently, Sanada was seen in *Speed Racer*, directed by Larry Wachowski and Andy Wachowski for Warner Bros. He was also seen in the science fiction adventure film *Sunshine*, directed by Danny Boyle, opposite Cillian Murphy, Chris Evans and Michelle Yeoh, and in *Rush Hour 3* as the lead villain, opposite Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker. Previously, he starred in Chen Kaige's epic fantasy romance *The Promise*, a role which required him to learn Mandarin phonetically, and in 2005 made his English language film debut in the Merchant Ivory film *The White Countess*, opposite Ralph Fiennes and Natasha Richardson.

Also an internationally celebrated stage actor, Sanada starred as Romeo in an acclaimed Japanese production of *Romeo & Juliet*, after which he starred as the title character in an acclaimed production of *Hamlet*. On the London stage, he starred as the Fool, alongside Nigel Hawthorne, in the Royal Shakespeare Company's millennium production of *King Lear*, for which he was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) by Queen Elizabeth II.

ALEXANDRA MARIA LARA (Deirdre)

Alexandra Maria Lara is a Romanian born, German trained actress who is the daughter of Valentin Platareanu, a one-time leading screen and stage actor in Romania. Even from a young age, Lara was fascinated with acting, always accompanying her father to the cinema, theatre, and acting classes. In 1983, a family move to Germany led her to Berlin's French Lycee where she joined the drama group. Lara showed talent and maturity beyond her age, and as a teenager she was already playing supporting and lead roles in various television dramas: *Mensch, Pia!* (1996), *Der Tunnel* (2001) and *Bubi-Scholz-Story* (2001).

In 1997, Lara enrolled in *Theaterwerkstatt Charlottenburg*, a drama school in Berlin which was co-founded by her father. There she further refined her natural talent while also continuing to pursue work in German television and film. Her first film role came in 1999 in *Fisimatenten next to Maximilian Schell*. More roles in German films soon followed: *Crazy* (2000) and *Naked* (2001) which was in competition at the 2002 *Venice Film Festival*.

Fluent in Romanian, French, German, and English, Lara soon began to take roles in international productions. The first came in 2001 when she played the Countess Marie Walewska in *Napoleon*, co-starring with Christian Clavier, Gerard Depardieu and Isabella Rossellini. Then in 2002, she worked alongside Sam Neill and Keira Knightley in *Doctor Zhivago*.

Lara's blend of innocence and fresh-faced talent landed her the role of Traudl Junge, Hitler's secretary in the Oscar Nominated film *The Downfall* (2004). Playing opposite Bruno Ganz and a cast full of other notable actors, Lara showed the world she belonged among their ranks. Her emotive eyes and natural beauty served as a necessary contrast to the film's horrors and gave the picture an unexpected layer of human detail. For her performance, Lara was honored with the *Golden Camera Actress of the Year 2004* and a *Bambi Award 2005*. After the success of *The Downfall*, Lara worked on two celebrated German films: *Vom Suchen und Finden der Liebe* (2004) by Helmut Dietl and *Der Fischer und seine Frau* (2004) by Doris Dörrie.

In addition to Coppola's *Youth Without Youth* (2007), Lara continues to explore opportunities in international film productions: Oliver Parker's *I Hate My Job* (2007) and Anton Corbijn's *Control* (2007) and James Ivory's *The City of your final Destination* (2007) while also remaining loyal to German Cinema, Anno Saul's *Wo ist Fred?* (2006).

More recently she can be seen in Stephen Daldry's *The Reader* (2008) and will soon be on screen in *L'Affaire Farewell*, directed by Christian Carion. She has also just finished filming Ali Mostafa's *City of Life* in Dubai.

NORMA ALEANDRO (Mrs. Van Euwen)

Representing the third generation of her family to work in the theater, versatile talent Norma Aleandro began acting with her parents as a child and matured into one of Argentina's most distinguished thespians. A playwright and director as well as a performer, she fled her homeland for fear of persecution at the hands of its military junta, spending many years in exile first in Uruguay and later Spain before her 1983 return. The dark-haired actress with a slightly pinched face and expressively limpid brown eyes gained international recognition for her superb portrait of a typical middle-class Argentine woman who discovers her life is a lie in the politically-themed *La Historia Oficial/The Official Story* (1985). Aleandro crafted a heartbreaking portrayal of an average wife who comes to suspect that her beloved adopted daughter is the child of a political prisoner. In a role specifically tailored for her, she triumphed both personally and artistically, earning Best Actress honors at Cannes and from the New York Film Critics Circle. Set in 1983 as the junta was disintegrating, *The Official Story* was the first film to examine the fallen regime's responsibility for disappearances, tortures, murders and stolen babies, making a political statement in the midst of a crackling good story that deservedly snared the Academy Award as Best Foreign Film, although the expected nomination for Aleandro's gut-wrenching work failed to materialize.

KEY CREW BIOS

JAVIER AGUIRRESAROBÉ (Cinematographer)

Long time master of Spanish cinema, cinematographer Javier Aguirresarobe first gained international acclaim with *Secrets of the Heart* which was selected by American Cinematographer as one of the top 50 films since 1970 for Photography. Already with 7 Goya nominations for Best Cinematography, including 3 wins, Aguirresarobe's acclaim was further enhanced with Nicole Kidman's atmospheric thriller *The Others* directed by Alejandro Amenabar, for which he won his fourth Goya. He has since worked on major American and International features such as Almodovar's *Talk to Her* gaining his ninth Goya nomination, Amenabar's *The Sea Inside* which won the Oscar for Best Foreign Film and Aguirresarobe's fifth Goya, John Hillcoat's soon to be released *The Road* based on the novel by Cormac McCarthy, and Woody Allen's *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*. In its review of Milos Forman's *Goya's Ghosts*, Variety described Aguirresarobe as a "masterly painter of light, far and away the most exciting visual aspect of any movie to come out of Spain in the last decade." *The City of Your Final Destination* marks his first collaboration with director James Ivory and Merchant Ivory Productions.

JORGE DREXLER (Composer)

Jorge Drexler is a Uruguayan musician. In 2004 Drexler won wide acclaim after becoming the first composer ever to win an Academy Award with a song in Spanish. He won for composing the song *Al Otro Lado del Río* from the film *The Motorcycle Diaries*. In the last few years he has also achieved 3 Grammy nominations, 4 Latin Grammy Nominations, as well as 2 Spanish Academy of Music Awards for Best Record of the years 2007 and 2008.

Artists as prestigious as Ana Belén, Víctor Manuel, Neneh Cherry, Pablo Milanés, Ketama, Miguel Ríos, David Broza, Rosario Flores, Omara Portuondo, Lorenzo Jovanotti, María Rita, Paulinho Moska, Jaime Roos, Adriana Varela and Bajofondo Tango Club have all recorded Jorge Drexler songs on their own albums.

While recognised with many distinctions over his career, it was not until 2005 that Drexler achieved popular success, winning the Oscar for his song *Al otro lado del río* (featured on the *Eco* album) from the film *The Motorcycle Diaries*. This was the first ever song performed in Spanish to win the Oscar.

In 2007 he won the Best Album of the Year of the Spanish Music Academy for his latest album *Doce segundos de oscuridad*, which was also nominated for the Latin Grammy Awards and the North American Grammy Awards.

He has just released his ninth record *CARA B*, recorded live during his November 2007 tour of seven Catalan cities, that has already won Best Pop Album of the Year of the Spanish Music Academy, and got a Grammy Nomination as well as a Latin Grammy Nomination.

Furthermore, the film director Manel Hueriga has made a film about the CARA B tour that will be released by the end of 2008.

Drexler's songs have also been featured in advertisements (Renfe, Knorr, ONCE, etc.), while in cinema, apart from *The Motorcycle Diaries*, Drexler's songs and instrumental music, have been used on several films such as *No sos vos, soy yo/It's not you, it's me*, *Retrato de mujer con hombre al fondo*, *Las razones de mis amigos*, *Antigua vida mía*, *Spoils of war*, *Cándida* and *El nido vacío*.

For *The City of Your Final Destination* he has written two songs, *El museo de las distancias rotas* and *La bruma del ayer*.

MERCHANT IVORY PRODUCTIONS FILMOGRAPHY

VENICE: THEME AND VARIATIONS

1957, 28 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: James Ivory

THE SWORD AND THE FLUTE

1959, 22 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: James Ivory

THE CREATION OF WOMAN

1960, 14 Minutes

Director: Charles Schwep. Producer: Ismail Merchant.

THE HOUSEHOLDER

1963, 101 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: U.P. Journalist Awards (India) for Best Director, Best Actor (Shashi Kapoor), and Best Picture Mademoiselle Magazine Award (New York) for Best Actress (Leela Naidu)

THE DELHI WAY

1964, 50 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: James Ivory

SHAKESPEARE WALLAH

1965, 120 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: Academy du Cinema Award (France) for Best Picture, Silver Bear (Berlin Film Festival) for Best Actress (Madhur Jaffrey)

THE GURU

1969, 112 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: Scholastic Magazine (USA) for Best Picture

BOMBAY TALKIE

1970, 105 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

ADVENTURES OF A BROWN MAN IN SEARCH OF CIVILIZATION

1972, 54 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

SAVAGES

1972, 106 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Selected for Quinzaine Des Realisateurs, Cannes

HELEN, QUEEN OF THE NAUTCH GIRLS

1971, 31 Minutes

Director: Anthony Korner. Producer: Ismail Merchant

MAHATMA AND THE MAD BOY

1972, 27 Minutes

Director: Ismail Merchant. Producer: Ismail Merchant

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A PRINCESS

1975, 59 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

THE WILD PARTY

1976, 100 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

SWEET SOUNDS

1976, 29 Minutes

Director: Richard Robbins. Producer: Ismail Merchant

ROSELAND

1977, 104 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

HULLABALOO OVER GEORGIE AND BONNIE'S PICTURES

1978, 83 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

THE EUROPEANS

1979, 89 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: Academy Nomination for Best Costume; Main Competition Cannes Film Festival

JANE AUSTEN IN MANHATTAN

1980, 111 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

QUARTET

1981, 101 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: Cannes Film Festival, Best Actress (Isabelle Adjani), Evening Standard British Film Award

Best Actress (Maggie Smith)

THE COURTESANS OF BOMBAY

1983, 73 Minutes

Director: Ismail Merchant. Producer: Ismail Merchant

HEAT AND DUST

1983, 130 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Award for Best Screenplay, British National Critics Circle Award for Best Screenplay, Cannes official selection Main Competition

THE BOSTONIANS

1984, 122 Minutes, Colour

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: Academy Awards Nomination for Best Actress (Vanessa Redgrave), Academy Awards Nomination for Best Costume Design. Selected for Quinzaine Des Realisateurs, Cannes.

MR & MRS BRIDGE

1984, 125 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: New York Critics Awards for Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Actress (Joanne Woodward)

Academy Award nomination for Best Actress; official selection Venice Film Festival

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

1986, 117 Minutes, Technicolor

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: Eight Academy Award nominations including Best Picture; Academy Awards (Oscars) for Best Screenplay Adaptation, Best Art Direction, and Best Costume Design.

Critics Circle Great Britain for Best Film of 1986

British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Awards for Best Film of 1986, Best Music Score, Best Actress (Maggie Smith), and Best Actor (Denholm Elliott) British Film Institute Award Donatello Prize (Italy) for Best Director, Best Foreign Language Film, National Board of Review Best Picture

MAURICE

1987, 135 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: Venice Film Festival-Winner of Silver Lion for Best Director, Best Actor (shared by James Wilby and Hugh Grant), and Best Music, Richard Robbins.

THE PERFECT MURDER

1987, 93 Minutes

Director: Zafar Hai. Producer: Ismail Merchant

THE DECEIVERS

1988, 113 Minutes

Director: Nicholas Meyer. Producer: Ismail Merchant

SLAVES OF NEW YORK

1989, 124 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant/ Gary Hendler

THE BALLAD OF THE SAD CAFÉ

1991, 100 Minutes

Director: Simon Callow. Producer: Ismail Merchant

HOWARDS END

1992, 143 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Awards: Nine Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture; Academy Awards (Oscars) for Production Designer, for Screenplay, and Best Actress (Emma Thompson)

British Academy of Film and Television Arts (B.A.F.T.A.) award for Best Picture; Evening Standard Award for Best Director; National Board of Review, Best Picture, Best Actress.

THE REMAINS OF THE DAY

1993, 134 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant/ Mike Nichols/ John Calley

Awards: Eight Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture.

British Academy of Film and Television Arts (B.A.F.T.A.) for Best Actor (Anthony Hopkins).

British Film Critics Association, Film of the Year.

IN CUSTODY

1994, 126 Minutes

Director: Ismail Merchant. Producer: Ismail Merchant/ Wahid Chowhan

Awards: Government of India National Award for Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Costume, and Best Production Design

STREET MUSICIANS OF BOMBAY

1991, 52 Minutes

Director: Richard Robbins. Producer: Ismail Merchant

JEFFERSON IN PARIS

1995, 139 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Official Selection, Main Competition, Cannes Film Festival

FEAST OF JULY

1995, 119 Minutes

Director: Christopher Menaul. Producer: Ismail Merchant

THE PROPRIETOR

1996, 113 Minutes

Director: Ismail Merchant Producer: Humbert Balsan / Donald Rosenfeld

SURVIVING PICASSO

1996, 125 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant / David Wolper

Awards: Mar Del Platt-Film Festival-Argentina

A SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER NEVER CRIES

1998, 125 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Official selection Venice Film Festival

COTTON MARY

1999, 120 Minutes

Director: Ismail Merchant. Producer: Ismail Merchant

THE GOLDEN BOWL

2000, 130 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Official Selection Cannes Film Festival Competition

THE MYSTIC MASSEUR

2001, 117 Minutes

Director: Ismail Merchant. Producers: Richard Hawley / Nayeem Hafizka

MERCI DOCTEUR REY

2001, 92 Minutes

Director: Andrew Litvack. Producers: Nathalie Gastaldo / Rahila Bootwala

LE DIVORCE

2002, 116 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Official Selection: Venice Film Festival

HEIGHTS

2004, 93 Minutes

Director: Chris Terrio. Producer: Ismail Merchant

Official Selection Sundance Festival

THE WHITE COUNTESS

2005, 115 Minutes

Director: James Ivory. Producer: Ismail Merchant

THE CITY OF YOUR FINAL DESTINATION

2007, TBC

Director: James Ivory. Producers: Paul Bradley / Pierre Proner