

FINAL PRODUCTION NOTES
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The
LAST SONG



IN CINEMAS 1ST APRIL 2010

RUNNING TIME: 107 MINS

The LAST SONG

“There are a lot of themes in “The Last Song.” You’ve got faith, forgiveness, family—if you get it just right, these are themes that touch viewers, because they recognize them in their own lives.”

~ Nicholas Sparks

Based on best-selling novelist NICHOLAS SPARKS’ (“A Walk to Remember,” “The Notebook”) latest novel, “The Last Song” is set in a small Southern beach town where an estranged father (GREG KINNEAR) gets a chance to spend the summer with his reluctant teenage daughter (MILEY CYRUS), who’d rather be home in New York. He tries to reconnect with her through the only thing they have in common—music—in a story of family, friendship, secrets and salvation, along with first loves and second chances.

“The Last Song” is Sparks’ 15th published book. Though several of his previous titles have been adapted to film, including “The Notebook,” “Message in a Bottle” and “Nights in Rodanthe,” “The Last Song” is the first to make it to the big screen within the first year of publication. It’s also the first for which he has written the screenplay.

The film stars MILEY CYRUS (“Hannah Montana”) as Veronica “Ronnie” Miller, GREG KINNEAR (“Little Miss Sunshine,” “Invincible,” “Baby Mama”) as Steve Miller, KELLY PRESTON (“Jerry Maguire,” “Addicted to Love,” “The Cat in the Hat”) as Kim Miller, and newcomer LIAM HEMSWORTH (“Knowing”) as Will Blakelee. The cast also includes BOBBY COLEMAN (“Friends with Money,” “Martian Child”), HALLOCK BEALS (“Letters from Iwo Jima”), NICK LASHAWAY (“The 40-Year-Old Virgin”), CARLY CHAIKIN (“The Consultants”), NICK SEARCY (“The Ugly Truth”), and KATE VERNON (“Battlestar Galactica: The Plan”).

Directed by JULIE ANNE ROBINSON (“Weeds,” “Big Love,” BBC pilot “Viva Blackpool”) in her feature film debut, “The Last Song” is produced by JENNIFER GIBGOT (“17 Again,” “Step Up”) and ADAM SHANKMAN (“17 Again,” “Step Up”), and executive produced by TISH CYRUS. Co-producer is DARA WEINTRAUB (“Pineapple Express,” “Superbad”). The screenplay is written by Nicholas Sparks (“The Notebook,” “Nights in Rodanthe”) & JEFF VAN WIE. Director of photography is JOHN LINDLEY (“Legion,” “Imagine That,” “Pleasantville,” “You’ve Got Mail”) and editor is NANCY RICHARDSON (“Twilight,” “Step Up”). AARON ZIGMAN (“The Ugly Truth,” “My Sister’s Keeper”) is the composer. Production designer is NELSON COATES (“The Proposal,”

“Antwone Fisher,” “Runaway Jury”) and costumes are by LOUISE FROGLEY (“The Men Who Stare at Goats,” “Quantum of Solace,” “Good Night, and Good Luck,” “Syriana”).

From Touchstone Pictures, “The Last Song” is rated PG and hits theaters on March 31, 2010.

A TALE OF FAMILY, FRIENDSHIP, SECRETS AND SALVATION **Best-Selling Novelist Nicholas Sparks Hits a High Note in Latest Endeavor**

Writer Nicholas Sparks became a literary superstar in 1996 when overwhelming word of mouth made his novel, “The Notebook,” a publishing phenomenon. Sparks’ inspirational stories about the extraordinary lives and loves of ordinary people have won a worldwide audience, and his latest novel “The Last Song,” is no exception, debuting at No. 1 on both the *New York Times* and *USA Today* best-seller lists.

Sparks’ deep, sometimes funny and always affecting books have become the basis for a powerful movie franchise. His bittersweet love stories have inspired box-office hits and critical favorites that include “Message in a Bottle,” starring Kevin Costner and Robin Wright Penn; “A Walk to Remember,” starring Mandy Moore; “The Notebook” starring Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams; “Nights in Rodanthe,” starring Richard Gere and Diane Lane; and most recently, “Dear John,” starring Amanda Seyfried and Channing Tatum. A film adaptation of his novel “The Lucky One” is scheduled for release in 2011.

As “The Last Song” heads for the big screen, it marks the beginning of a new chapter in Sparks’ career. The author’s 15th published book is also his first screenplay.

At its heart, “The Last Song” is a poignant journey for a father and daughter who have lost touch with each other and are struggling to find a way back. At the same time, it explores the uncharted territory of young love, as the emotionally closed off Ronnie begins to let down her guard with a boy she meets during summer vacation.

Greg Kinnear, who plays Steve Miller, Ronnie’s father, says Sparks deals with the joy and challenges of maintaining family bonds head on. “I read the script and I was so touched by it,” he says. “Nicholas Sparks has an incredible sensitivity towards families. He’s written an interesting story about people who at the onset seem to have very little chance of connecting. In the end, not everything is tied up in a perfect bow—which is a lot like real life.”

Like his previous work, “The Last Song” is a love story, says Sparks, “but it’s not a romance novel,” he cautions. “This is not a dreamy fantasy. It is about real love on a number of levels—the love between a parent and child, young love blooming for the first time, the fondness and caring between mature adults.”

For director Julie Anne Robinson, who has earned a trio of BAFTA and Golden Globe® nominations for her work on British television, the film’s simple story reflects the writer’s profound understanding of human emotions. “It reminds me of classic films like ‘Splendor in the Grass,’” says Robinson. “‘THE LAST SONG’ is about forgiveness and redemption, about people who were once separated being brought together, and it’s about love. It’s about the fragility of human relationships and also how those fragile bonds, once broken, can be mended.”

The film’s uplifting themes reflect the author’s personal outlook on life. “There are a lot of themes in ‘THE LAST SONG,’” Sparks says. “You’ve got faith, forgiveness,

family—if you get it just right, these are themes that touch viewers, because they recognize them in their own lives.”

Sparks traces the beginnings of “The Last Song” to a conversation he had with producer Jennifer Gibgot, who was looking for a project that would allow teen star Miley Cyrus to showcase her dramatic abilities. “I had just finished writing ‘The Lucky One,’” he remembers. “And I was making a decision about what I was going to write next. I try to vary the ages of the characters and their dilemmas to keep the work fresh and interesting for me, as well as for the readers. I’d recently written a couple of novels with characters who were anywhere from 20 to 50 years old, so I was leaning toward writing about a teenage character, which I hadn’t done since ‘A Walk to Remember.’”

As he began formulating his next step, Gibgot called. “She asked if I had anything sitting around that that Miley Cyrus might like,” Sparks says. “Well, I didn’t have anything sitting around. I’m not that prolific. But she told me Miley loved ‘A Walk to Remember,’ so I really put some thought into it and took five or six weeks to develop this story.”

Sparks presented the producers with a fun, yet emotionally driven father-daughter story. “Both the screenplay and the novel were written with Miley very much in mind,” he says. “But I write to write a great story and I had to balance those things. The finished product is definitely not a Hannah Montana movie. It’s an ensemble piece with a talented cast that will appeal to audiences of all ages. Ronnie is a really compelling female character going through things that a lot of teenagers are going through. She’s forced to really grow and mature through the course of the film.”

Cyrus was thrilled to tackle her first dramatic role in a film by Nicholas Sparks. She says that “A Walk to Remember” and “The Notebook” had a huge impact on her life. “His work has great, positive messages,” notes the young actress. “To me, the best thing is that kids love it, but it’s also mature enough to appeal to adults. It’s unusual to find that kind of balance.”

Sparks collaborated with longtime friend Jeff Van Wie to write the screenplay. “We’ve known each other since college—more than 25 years,” says Sparks. “Jeff is very successful in the business world, but he always dreamed of writing a screenplay. When Jennifer asked if I would be willing to do a script, I thought Jeff and I could do it together. We had written together before, so we knew we could work well together. Even though he lives in the Northeast and I live in the South, we had phones, we had email and we talked endlessly every evening.”

The result, according to Kelly Preston, who plays Ronnie’s mother, Kim, is “heartbreaking and life affirming at the same time.” “Nick’s work has so much depth,” the actress continues. “He writes about simple things that happen in real life, about finding the beauty in small moments. Nicholas has a beautiful way of looking at the human condition that allows him to write in the head of a 17-year-old as well as he can any adult.”

FINDING THE RIGHT DIRECTION **Julie Anne Robinson Sets the Tone**

For producer Adam Shankman, the privilege of translating novelist Nicholas Sparks’ work to the screen comes with a great sense of responsibility. “We are interpreting his work and he has nothing but giant mega-hit books,” says Shankman.

“This is a big emotional story that reminds us that there is something bigger than us out there. It reminds us that love comes in a lot of different forms, that forgiveness is important for our own personal growth. I have a history with Nick, after directing ‘A Walk to Remember,’ which was a really good experience for all of us, so I feel accountable.”

Once Sparks began writing the story, the film began to gather momentum rapidly and it was critical to find a director who could handle the emotional and logistical complexity of the story. “It came together very quickly,” says Jennifer Gibgot, “because there was such excitement and enthusiasm from Miley and the studio to make the movie. Nick decided he had to write the script before the novel and we began looking for a director while he wrote the novel.”

The producers selected Julie Anne Robinson, an accomplished director in Britain. “Julie Anne had done a film for the BBC called ‘Come Down the Mountain,’” says Gibgot. “It was about a young man who has a brother with Down syndrome. She got unbelievable performances out of a group of young actors. We knew Julie Anne could offer inspired support and guidance to all of the actors and help Miley transition from comic roles into this dramatic one.

“Her passion for the actors was obvious on set,” Gibgot continues. “She eats, drinks and sleeps their performances. She was so specific and thorough in what she needed from the cast for every scene.”

Shankman, who describes Robinson as an “actor’s director,” notes that she learned from some of the most acclaimed filmmakers of our time, including Stephen Daldry, who guided Kate Winslet to an Oscar® in “The Reader,” and Sam Mendes, who did the same for Kevin Spacey in “American Beauty.” “She has great energy. When she watches, she stands and rocks, as if she’s in the performance with the actor.”

Each actor is a unique artist in Robinson’s eyes, and she adapts her directing style accordingly as she discovers how each one works best. “With Greg Kinnear, I had a lot of long conversations with him in advance,” she explains. “We talked a lot about the script and the character because he is quite a cerebral actor. But I would never rehearse with the young actors, even if I had all the time in the world. They can get bored and tired and the magic can be lost very quickly. I think what they give you instinctively is often right on the money.”

Robinson likes to work up close and personal with her actors, eschewing the on-set monitor for many shots. “I need to see what’s on the faces of the actors,” Robinson says. “The monitors are so grainy and pixilated, I can’t see their eyes to see if they mean it on a very basic level. When I feel the actors are inhabiting the emotions and really going deep, it excites me. I get thrilled if I can’t see the artifice. It also becomes a quicker process, because if the actors have a question or if I have a note, I’m right there.”

The film’s story is both universal and intensely personal to Robinson. “Everyone I talk to about ‘The Last Song’ relates to some aspect of it,” she says. “My response to the material was greatly affected by the fact that I’m a parent. You see parents making mistakes in this film. When you are a child, you expect your parents to be perfect and when you’re a parent, you realize you are just a person and you do make mistakes. That strand of the story really resonated with me and I think everyone will understand and relate to it.”

The film, says Robinson, is a realization of the vision she brought into her initial meetings with the producers. “It was the best creative experience of my life. And I’ve

had a lot of creative experiences that I've really enjoyed. The people involved with this process made it uniquely wonderful. They let me do my thing, which was great."

MAKING "THE LAST SONG" SING

Miley Cyrus Tackles Her First Dramatic Performance while Greg Kinnear Delivers Signature Style

Navigating the emotional highs and lows of Nicholas Sparks' nuanced script was a challenge for even the most experienced actors in the cast. "It's a simple story, but the actors have to go on huge journeys emotionally," says Robinson. "Nick Sparks has a profound understanding of human emotions. He's laid it all out for them to go through the whole range of emotional experiences on screen."

Robinson was not familiar with her leading lady's previous work when she signed on to direct "The Last Song," but she was quickly won over by Cyrus' natural talent and charisma. "She has this amazing star quality," says the director. "She just glows, and when she walks on the set, everybody knows it. Sometimes I cannot believe she's 16 years old. She's got a tremendous range."

Cyrus' enthusiasm and commitment impressed everyone on the set. "Miley is a dream," says producer Jennifer Gibgot. "She is such a consummate professional, you forget how young she is. Her dedication, energy and kindness are extraordinary. Miley always kept the atmosphere on set light, but she was very committed to being present as an actor. With so many things to focus on, including an upcoming tour, her music and the TV show, the fact that she was so keenly focused on this movie was really impressive."

The young actress says she's grateful to have had so much support from Robinson during a challenging shoot. "If you don't really bond with the director, I think it comes across on screen," says Cyrus. "Julie Anne was so much fun. She went above and beyond to create a bond. It was important to me that she had confidence in me."

Cyrus says the predicament her character faces in the film rang true for her. "When her parents separated, she made some bad choices. But she starts to find her way to being a happier person through faith and love and friendship. Those are the most important ingredients to happiness and they are things in life that we sometimes overlook.

"I love music and I love entertaining," adds the teen star. "It makes me so sad to think of not doing this. So it makes me sad that someone with the talent that Ronnie has would deliberately cut herself off from it. Living without music in my life would be like having no air to breathe, and for Ronnie, it's much the same thing. She gives it up to prove a point to her dad and, really, she's just cheating herself."

The role required Cyrus to expand her musical horizons by learning piano, which she says she picked up quickly. "Maybe it was easier because I already play guitar," says Cyrus, who plans to continue her piano studies. "I learned not just how to play a song but how to play it like a classically trained musician, the way to sit, the way you look when you're at the piano, the posture, the fingering. It's a lot more discipline than just casual playing. The learning experiences are a part of my job I really love. So many people dream of learning something like this and I'm getting this experience along with making a movie."

The actress hopes this will be the first in a series of roles that allow her to stretch and grow. "I think it's really important to look for roles that are challenging," says Cyrus.

“This came up at a crazy time. I had a tour, I was working on the show; I thought it might be impossible to fit this in, but it all fell into place. It was perfect, because that’s what this movie’s about—things coming together so beautifully against all odds.”

During the production, many of the cast members developed close friendships. Cyrus and Greg Kinnear, who plays her father, found an instant bond. “Greg is a lot like my dad in real life,” says Cyrus. “He’s very mellow, but he’s very funny and everyone just seems to fall in love with him. He was kind of like a father figure to me while I was in Savannah, because my dad wasn’t in Georgia with me. We would sit down on the porch and just talk about what was going on. We had a great relationship that I think came across on screen.”

Kinnear was impressed by his young co-star’s work on the film. “This role asks a lot of Miley,” he says. “It’s full of complex emotions. She did really well. Miley has a great heart and she’s a real pro. I admire that. She takes it seriously, but at the same time, she keeps the environment charged with a lot of fun and a lot of energy. She’s an incredibly impressive 16-year-old.”

The actor, who was nominated for a Best Supporting Actor Oscar® for his role in “As Good as It Gets,” plays Steve Miller, a concert pianist who left his family to concentrate on a career that didn’t pan out the way he hoped. Steve is now trying to reconnect with his two children before it’s too late. “Steve wants to reunite with his kids and get to know them again,” says Kinnear. “There are a lot of things that are unknown at the start of this movie, and they’re revealed over the course of the summer.”

The actor’s light touch was essential to keeping the character grounded in reality, say the filmmakers. “Greg’s performance in ‘Little Miss Sunshine’ is one of my favorites,” says Gibgot. “He so beautifully and effortlessly lent that very uptight character some humor. Steve is somewhat of a tortured father and Ronnie doesn’t make it easy for him. But Greg has the ability to bring some levity to a very serious role.”

The commitment he made to the role of Steve stayed with Robinson. “Greg is so detailed,” she says. “I’ve worked with a lot of really great actors and Greg is definitely one of them. He cared so deeply about every aspect of his character, he would phone me up over the weekend with questions about a scene. He was Steve all day every day.”

The Miller family’s fractured dynamic struck a chord with Kinnear. “I was touched by the difficulty of trying to make permanent connections in a family that’s had a seismic rift in its infrastructure,” says Kinnear. “The parents are split up for reasons we don’t explore, but it seems like no one is necessarily at fault. But, as always, kids have taken the hit and in this case, the oldest daughter, Ronnie, is in that vulnerable stage where anger and hostility can be a real outlet. She’s mad as hell and she’s not going to take it anymore. My character is trying to repair that and resuscitate a sense of family.”

But Steve has a secret that he’s keeping from his family. “He’s trying to protect them, but until they have that information, there’s no way for this family to move forward,” says Kinnear. “I think Nicholas Sparks has a wonderful way with secrets. It’s dealt with very effectively.”

The father of three daughters, Kinnear is acutely sensitive to the challenges that come with the territory. “Father-daughter relationships are particularly complicated,” he says. “Steve’s relationship with his daughter is strained, to put it nicely, but he’s trying. He’s swimming upstream, because she’s full of salt and vinegar and has a lot of

preconceived ideas about her father. Some aren't entirely true, and that will be discovered."

In addition, Steve is tormented by the belief that he is responsible for the destruction of a local church. As penance, he is trying to rebuild the structure's stained-glass window. Kinnear studied with a local craftsman to learn the ins and outs of making stained glass. "It was amazing to learn about," says Kinnear. "You think of stained glass and wonder how do they possibly do that? It seems like some crazy science that nobody could ever master. But there's a simplicity to it that is great. You need to know exactly what you're doing and it takes years of time and effort and skill to master it, but I ended up feeling like it's a climbable mountain."

Kinnear's preparation of the role also included taking piano lessons. "I would say I could fake the piano before," says Kinnear. "But when you're training to be a concert pianist, the fake tinkering skills are the first thing that have to go. I had to start all over again and work with an instructor. I think I'm officially hooked on the ivories now."

His newly honed musical skills allowed him to entertain the crew on set with his covers of classic Journey songs. "It was my way of motivating the crew," he says. "All I had to do was threaten to play and they went to work."

Like Cyrus, Liam Hemsworth is entering a new phase in his career with "The Last Song." A budding star in his native Australia, Hemsworth is starting over as an actor in Los Angeles. Landing the role of Will Blakelee for his first major role in an American film was a huge leap for the young actor.

"Liam has fantastic charisma on screen and he's got great energy," says director Julie Anne Robinson. "He reminds me of one of those old-time movie stars, like Gary Cooper. He has a laconic nature and is very relaxed on camera, but there's a lot going on behind the eyes."

Like many of Sparks' characters, Will has secrets of his own that are weighing him down. "He's charming and charismatic on the surface," says Hemsworth. "But his secrets are getting in his way. He acts the part of a cheerful, popular guy, when in reality he's not happy at all. When he meets Ronnie, he finds someone equally confused who has lost something important. As the summer goes on, they help each other grow as people. She doesn't make it easy for him, but in the end, she's worth it."

His role in "The Last Song" required Hemsworth to pick up several new skills in a hurry. For one, the young actor had to be certified in scuba diving before the shoot. After growing up surfing and free diving in Australia, Hemsworth certainly had no fear of the water. But the rigorous training program was harder than he expected. "We had three days to get certified, and we spent every day in a 20-foot tank in North Carolina, basically for the whole day. At the same time we'd have two or three hours in the classroom every day to learn all the rules. It was a lot harder than I thought it would be. It sounds easy—you know, just put a mask on and you go under water. But there's a lot more to it than that."

In addition, Hemsworth, who had never played volleyball, had to learn enough to be convincing as a player with college-scholarship potential. "When I auditioned they asked me if I could play volleyball and I said, 'No, but I'll learn.' The volleyball coach was a really good player; I think he played in the Olympics. We played twice a week, two hours at a time, and that was the longest two hours of my life. Hallock [Beals] and I were basically saying nothing for that two hours except for yup, okay, uh huh, yup, and the coach would just tell us how bad we were. It was excruciating!"

Kelly Preston, who plays Ronnie and Jonah's mother, Kim, is a Nicholas Sparks fan who was drawn to the writer's inspirational themes. "It's such a beautiful love story," Preston says. "And so well written. I love Nicholas Sparks as a writer. His books and movies are very truthful. I think he must have a very rich life, because he is so in tune with how people deal with each other and resolve things in their lives. I hope this movie brings people a few moments of happiness—and maybe a few tears.

"Nick's work has so much depth," Preston continues. "He writes about simple things that happen in real life, about finding the beauty in small moments. Nicholas has a beautiful way of looking at the human condition that allows him to write in the head of a 17-year-old as well as he can any adult."

Preston says she had a personal motivation for accepting the role. "Miley asked me to play her mom in it—how could I say no? I've known Miley for a few years and I adore her. She's smart, she's funny, she's so talented, and she's every bit as great an actress as she is a singer and performer. She's got great depth. It's an honor to play her mom."

Preston has equally complimentary things to say about the rest of her on-screen family, Greg Kinnear and Bobby Coleman. "Greg is an effortless actor," she notes. "We developed a very relaxed relationship. It was easy to play scenes with him, because he's such a wonderful actor. And Bobby Coleman is a little firecracker. He's so full of energy. I did a very sweet scene where he's saying goodbye to his dad, and it's heartbreaking. He's young, but he's got some chops!"

Coleman, who is 12, plays Ronnie's brother Jonah. "We probably auditioned hundreds of kids before we found Bobby," says Robinson. "I kept saying, 'I don't want a Hollywood child.' I wanted someone quirky and charming, but not in an obvious way. You need to care about Jonah the way Ronnie does. Bobby is a loveable boy and a unique person and that communicates itself on screen. He was the only one we auditioned who made us laugh and tore our hearts out as well. That's something all of the actors had to be able to do."

The youngster discusses his role with the aplomb of a much older actor. "What I really liked about this movie is the way Nicholas Sparks talks about how you need faith and love and family," he says. "At the beginning of the movie, that was the problem with our family. We didn't have enough faith in each other to believe that we weren't trying to hurt each other. We didn't have love and we wouldn't call each other friends.

"Jonah is a happy, excited kid who lives life with joy," he adds. "He likes to talk to his dad and tell him the thoughts he has, and he likes to play and fly kites."

One of Coleman's favorite moviemaking perks is learning what he calls "awesome new things." Since Jonah is helping his father with the stained glass project, Coleman also got a tutorial in the craft.

"I always imagined a big furnace or a big blowtorch melting it together," he says. "But you start out with a piece of paper. You draw what you want to do. Then you get the glass you want to cut and use it just like tracing paper. You cut the glass with this blade and it makes this little scratch. Then you just tap it and it snaps in half. You make puzzle pieces out of the glass, and mold lead strips around the pieces to fit them together. You solder the joints of the lead strips, and there it is. You have a stained-glass window!"

As the youngest cast members, Coleman and Cyrus engaged in some on- and off-set high jinks together. “I’m usually the youngest one on the set,” says Cyrus. “It was nice to be able to be the big sister for once.”

Coleman believes the fun they had off-set made them closer when they were in character. “It definitely created a brother-and-sister bond, because when we’re doing pranks, we’re doing things brothers and sisters would do.”

“The whole experience was awesome,” sums up Coleman. “I loved Savannah. It’s not like California where it’s like the state flower is concrete. In Savannah, there are plants and trees and fish and alligators. It’s so pretty.”

The film features a number of other up-and-coming young actors as the friends and “frenemies” that surround Will and Ronnie. Hallock Beals plays Will’s best friend and volleyball teammate, Scott Thomas. “I probably played a couple of times on the beach as a kid,” says Beals. “When they asked me at the screen test if I had played volleyball, I told them I grew up playing it. Of course they found out the truth when we had our first practice.”

Luckily, Beals had Hemsworth at his side as he learned. “I couldn’t ask for a better partner to go through it all with than Liam,” he says. “We worked out at the gym and practiced volleyball every day.”

Nick Lashaway landed the role of neighborhood bad boy Marcus, a flamboyant risk-taker with a unique and eye-catching hobby. “He rules the waves of Tybee and gets what he wants when he wants it,” says Lashaway. “He’s kind of a vagabond. He probably drinks too much, gets into trouble and doesn’t care. When Ronnie comes to town, he wants her, but she has no interest. And he doesn’t like it.”

When Nicholas Sparks created the character, he wanted Marcus to have a signature quirk. After seeing several mesmerizing videos of people juggling fireballs on YouTube, Sparks decided to work the sport into his script—which meant Lashaway had to learn to do it.

“First, I had to learn how to juggle,” Lashaway says. “I practiced in Los Angeles for a month or two before production. Then we worked with special fireballs—they had a little bit of lighter fluid on them and the flame was manageable. We wore special gloves soaked with fire retardant. I definitely felt ready, but the night we finally did the scene, the flames were really high. The balls were completely engulfed and hard to see. I meant to do all these cool moves with them, but it was all I could do just to catch them!”

Encouraging Marcus’ antics and enabling his bad behavior is his girlfriend Blaze, played by Carly Chaikin. When Ronnie arrives on Tybee, Blaze thinks she’s found a kindred spirit in the punked-out, rebellious teen. What she finds out is that in Ronnie she has a true friend, one who has her back—even when Blaze betrays Ronnie.

“Blaze is a tortured soul with a heart of gold,” says Chaikin. “It takes her friendship with Ronnie to get her back to that heart-of-gold part. She’s in a very unhealthy relationship with Marcus when Ronnie meets her. She believes that is all she has in the world, so she’ll do anything to hang on to that.

“What I love about the character is that, with Ronnie’s help, she finds a way back,” Chaikin says. “Ronnie is the only person who encourages Blaze to change and make the right choices for herself and, finally, Blaze is able to step up, to regain her strength and courage. I love the range of what Blaze goes through from beginning to end.”

TYBEE ISLAND: ONE OF GEORGIA'S BEST-KEPT SECRETS **An Old-Fashioned Vacation Spot Provides the Perfect Backdrop**

The filmmakers selected tiny Tybee Island, off the coast of Georgia, as the setting for "The Last Song." Tybee boasts three miles of pristine beaches and an old-fashioned pier, as well as a string of funky shops hawking beachwear and beer amid theme restaurants, bars and quaint clapboard cottages. With a population of just under 4,000 people, its homespun charm and low-key atmosphere make the island a vacation destination for nearby Savannah residents, as well as visitors from across the world.

Director Julie Anne Robinson fell in love with Tybee at first sight. "It's an old-fashioned community where people leave their doors unlocked," she says. "You can walk everywhere. You don't find many places like Tybee anymore. It has a unique atmosphere of lushness and richness that I have never seen anywhere else. It's a bit like a tropical island, which a girl like Ronnie would ultimately find irresistible."

Production designer Nelson Coates and his team were dispatched to find a house that represented the essence of Tybee Island. "There were a lot of conversations about the emotional journey of the characters and how their surroundings would reflect that," says Robinson. "For Steve's house, we wanted it to feel like it had been neglected. That wasn't exactly how we found it, but there was no other place like it on the island. It was built in 1911 and bits had been added to it over the years, which made it seem full of character. But it was a well-loved house and we wanted it to be less so. We had to age it and make the paint look like it had been battered by years of neglect."

Coates transformed both the façade and the interior of the house to reflect its fictional owner's state of mind, as well as to allow more convenient, flexible access for the camera crew. "I wanted to convey the sense that this has been there for many, many years," says Coates. "In Steve's house, as in the whole movie, we felt it was important to get the real feel of living on the beach, rather than an idealized resort look. It's comfortable and worn, like it's been there for years. Because the house really is old, there was an authentic atmosphere of age to it. It was very simple and organic, with wood walls instead of sheetrock or cutesy shell wallpaper."

The outside of the house had been updated with stark white trim, black shutters and vinyl screens. The production team softened and aged the building's appearance, and added more authentic-looking screens over the front porch that could be manipulated or taken out to accommodate camera positions. To make space for Steve's stained glass workshop, they moved some of the living space onto the porch, which also allowed the director to set more scenes against the beach background.

Some of the movie's crucial scenes take place on a sand dune outside the house, where Ronnie finds and protects a nest of sea turtle eggs. "There were a lot of dunes nearby, but none of them worked for us," says Coates. "We needed a location that was close to the house. Plus, the dunes are protected and we needed to be careful we didn't disturb them."

So the filmmakers got permission from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to build their own dunes. "We brought in sand and plant material from approved sources," Coates says. "We re-vegetated several bald dunes and created our own 'hero' dune in exactly the location we wanted, so we could get views of the house and water without encroaching on protected land. The Department of Natural

Resources was so pleased with our work, they let us leave the dunes and the grasses on the site.”

A few miles down the road and a world away from Steve’s quiet beach house, Coates designed a colorful and crowded site for the local carnival and the volleyball tournament. Tybee itself provided loads of local color, as area restaurants and shops set up booths offering ice cream, snow cones and T-shirts as background.

In deciding on the exterior color themes, Coates says he wanted to stay away from hues audiences might associate with “Hannah Montana.” “So we avoided pinks, and electric or neon colors. We used a lot of orange and green, and, at the volleyball tournament, added some blue. We put up lights and banners down the length of the pier to highlight the beautiful sunsets, since many of our scenes happened at ‘magic hour.’”

Because no churches matching the description of the one in the script—with its prominent stained-glass window—existed on Tybee, Coates and his team found a perfect corner lot a few blocks away from the beach on which to build it. The intention, according to Coates, was to create a church that served the story, but also looked like it belonged in this well-established neighborhood.

“We wanted it to feel beachy and be typical of the southeastern United States,” he says. “It was a matter of putting together elements that helped tell the story. To ensure a sense of history, I drew from a lot of turn-of-the-century churches and put up a sign that said it was founded in 1908. I pulled references from about 35 different wood clapboard structures. It couldn’t have any brick, because we ultimately had to burn it.

“We added very simple Gothic windows that immediately said ‘church,’ and irregular shingling that I’d seen in a small church in South Carolina,” Coates continues. “The building was raised off the ground on brick piers, which they do in the South in areas that flood.”

The designer kept the interior of the church very spare, creating an understated, organic look. The stained glass above the altar is the pivotal visual element. The inspiration for the design came from old wood blocks and etchings depicting the stone being rolled away from the tomb of Jesus as angels look on, underscoring Sparks’ themes of hope and resurrection.

“I spent about 60 hours designing the window,” says Coates. “Then I had to figure out how to get it fabricated fast, because stained glass is so labor intensive. I approached a friend who’s done this for me in the past in Los Angeles. I did a blowup drawing of the full-sized window and she started shopping for glass. She’d email me photos of the glass with sun coming through and we’d choose the sections we wanted to use. To do this long distance was quite challenging, especially because one of the processes to make stained-glass faces and hands is to paint with multiple colors and then fire each color separately, so no matter what I drew on paper, it was up to the artist to choose the elements of color for each firing.”

Coates and his art department had only 11 weeks to scout and prep for the movie, so designing, building and completing the church and the window happened at lightning speed.

“All told, the church was standing in its semi-burned first version four and a half weeks from the minute we broke ground,” he says. “We filmed the window eight weeks after the design was complete.”

For the lavish wedding scene set at the Blakelee mansion, Will’s family home, the filmmakers left Tybee and secured hard-to-get permission to use the Wormsloe

State Historic Site near Savannah. At the end of a long mud and gravel road lined by ancient live oaks laden with Spanish moss is a magnificent colonial estate built by Noble Jones, one of Georgia's first English settlers. Coates only had to add slight embellishments, including a fountain, some greenery, a piano and the trappings of an extravagant wedding, to complete the picture.

The earthy, soft-edged look that Coates developed for the film influenced wardrobe as well. As Ronnie becomes more comfortable in her own skin, her clothing evolves as well. The urban punk look she cultivates at the beginning of the movie gives way to a wardrobe in keeping with her new outlook. "Julie Anne and I definitely wanted the costumes to reflect the progression of Ronnie's character," says Jennifer Gibgot. "What we see on the outside says a lot about how she has changed on the inside. Louise Frogley, our costume designer, definitely got that. Through the course of the movie, Ronnie loses some of the edge to her. As she falls in love with Will and begins to forgive her father, her clothes become softer and more feminine."

Robinson and director of photography John Lindley used Tybee Island's soft afternoon and evening light for several scenes. "John and I wanted to convey a sense of naturalism," says Robinson. "We wanted the performances to underscore the universal qualities of what our characters are feeling. To do that, we tried to use unexpected angles, and keep it as fresh and light as possible so the actors wouldn't feel hemmed in."

Robinson and Lindley made extensive use of crane and wide shots to photograph the vibrant beach festival and volleyball tournament, as well as the wide expanse of Tybee's beach. The technique was also used to highlight the characters' emotional vulnerability.

"On an artistic level, we wanted to give it a scale to counterpoint the emotional aspects of the story," the director says. "The use of the big shots allowed us to put one or two characters in the context of this environment so the audience can see how vulnerable that person feels. For instance, there's one shot where Jonah has just gotten some very bad news and he's in the foreground of a very wide shot, with Ronnie and Will in the background. You're up close to this boy's pain. Somebody once said you should be able to tell the story of the movie with the sound off and that's what I tried to do."

One of the trickiest aspects for Robinson was finding a way to direct the baby loggerhead turtles that play such a pivotal part in Ronnie's rebirth and redemption. Ronnie spends much of her summer protecting a turtle nest from raccoons, until the eggs hatch and the newborn turtles make their way to the sea. Planning to add in computer-generated turtles in postproduction, the filmmakers and cast originally shot this sequence using only their imaginations and advice from a turtle expert and the visual effects team.

"We sat on the dune above where the turtles would hatch, but nothing was there," says Bobby Coleman. "We had to imagine where they might be and pretend to follow them along and not crush them. I made an invisible line in my head as to where I had to go. It was really fun but then we had the real turtles come and that was so much cooler!"

In the end, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources provided 26 hatchlings for the faux turtle nest. On cue, the tiny turtles waddled down the sand towards the water and swam out to sea.

SOUNDTRACK FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER
**Red-Hot Sounds by Miley Cyrus, Maroon 5,
The Ravonettes and One Republic**

The soundtrack for “The Last Song” features songs by some of today’s most popular musical stars, including two original songs performed by Miley Cyrus: “When I Look At You,” written and produced by Grammy Award®-winning producer John Shanks and co-written by Nashville songwriter Hillary Lindsey, plus “I Hope You Find It,” written by Jeffrey Steele and Steven Robson.

The first song, which has become the film’s signature tune, was originally intended to go on Miley Cyrus’ next album. “‘When I Look At You’ was originally going to go on my next record, which I was working on while I was filming in Savannah,” says Cyrus. “But when we realized it describes this entire movie, we had a composer come in and make a piano piece for me to be able to play. It’s in the movie when Ronnie reveals to Will that she plays the piano. It was perfect for that scene because it is a love song, but it’s also about God, about family, about love—it’s kind of what this movie is all about.” The music video was directed by Adam Shankman.

The soundtrack for “The Last Song” is a Hollywood Records digital release and will be available on March 23, 2010. It features songs by One Republic, VHS or Beta, Eskimo Joe, Miley Cyrus, The Paper Raincoat, Ra Ra Riot, Jose Gonzales, Iron & Wine, Alpha Rev, Edwin McCain, Allstar Weekend, Valora, The Ravonettes and Aaron Zigman.

Tracks include:

- Tyrant - One Republic
- Bring On The Comets - VHS or Beta
- Setting Sun - Eskimo Joe
- When I Look At You - Miley Cyrus
- Brooklyn Blurs - The Paper Raincoat
- Can You Tell - Ra Ra Riot
- Down The Line - Jose Gonzales
- Each Coming Night - Iron & Wine
- I Hope You Find It - Miley Cyrus
- New Morning - Alpha Rev
- Broke Down Hearted Wonderland - Edwin McCain
- A Different Side Of Me - Allstar Weekend
- No Matter What - Valora
- Heart Of Stone - The Ravonettes
- Steve’s Theme (score) - Aaron Zigman

Website:	TheLastSongMovie.com
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ABOUT THE CAST

MILEY CYRUS (Ronnie Miller) stars in the hit Disney Channel series “Hannah Montana,” which is currently in its fourth season. She also starred in the feature film “Hannah Montana: The Movie,” which topped the box office its opening weekend; was the voice of Penny in “Bolt”; and broke box-office records with her 3D film “Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert Tour.”

Cyrus is a multiplatinum recording artist and is the youngest ever recording artist with four number-one albums in less than three years. She recently released “The Time of our Lives,” which features the number-one hit, “Party in the USA.” She is also the best-selling author of “Miles to Go,” her first book that shares her inspiring story, spanning from her Southern roots in Tennessee to the excitement of her record-setting triumphs in television, music and film. In addition, Cyrus and designer Max Azria of apparel house BCBGMAXAZRIAGROUP, Inc. have teamed up to create Miley Cyrus & Max Azria, a new apparel line exclusive to Walmart.

Cyrus recently partnered with Youth Service America and founded Get Ur Good On (www.geturgoodon.org), an online network of youth supporting each other in their mission to do “good” in their communities. She is also involved with numerous charities including City of Hope, Make-A-Wish Foundation and the American Red Cross, among others.

Academy Award®-nominated actor **GREG KINNEAR (Steve Miller)** continues to build upon his already impressive resume with roles in the most diverse of projects. His latest film work includes starring roles in the comedies “Baby Mama,” opposite Tina Fey, and “Ghost Town,” with Ricky Gervais, as well as the drama “Flash of Genius,” with Lauren Graham.

In “Little Miss Sunshine,” the critically acclaimed hit of the 2006 Sundance Film Festival, Kinnear plays a struggling motivational coach who leads his family on an eventful road trip so that his seven-year-old daughter can realize her dream of competing in a beauty pageant. Lauded by critics nationwide, “Little Miss Sunshine” went on to receive several Academy Award nominations and Film Independent’s Spirit Awards, while Kinnear, along with Steve Carell, Alan Arkin, Abigail Breslin, Paul Dano and Toni Collette, won the Screen Actors Guild Award® for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

Kinnear segued from beauty pageants to the gridiron to star opposite Mark Wahlberg in the film “Invincible,” the real-life tale of Vince Papale, a 30-year-old bartender who goes to an open tryout of the Philadelphia Eagles organized by new coach Dick Vermeil (Kinnear). He then starred in Richard Linklater’s “Fast Food Nation,” based on the best-selling book by Eric Schlosser.

In 1997, Kinnear starred alongside Jack Nicholson in James L. Brooks’ Oscar®-nominated “As Good as It Gets,” and he received his own Academy Award® nomination for his portrayal of Nicholson’s neighbor Simon. Kinnear also received Golden Globe® and Screen Actors Guild Award® nominations for the performance, and he was named Best Supporting Actor by the National Board of Review.

Kinnear made his feature film debut in director Sydney Pollack’s remake of “Sabrina,” starring opposite Harrison Ford and Julia Ormond. His performance prompted the trade organization of movie theater owners to name him ShoWest’s Male

Star of Tomorrow. Following his Oscar®-nominated performance in “As Good as It Gets,” he co-starred in Nora Ephron’s hit romantic comedy “You’ve Got Mail” with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, and in Mike Nichols’ “What Planet Are You From?” with Garry Shandling and Annette Bening.

Kinnear’s other credits include “The Matador” with Pierce Brosnan, and the critically acclaimed biopic of actor Bob Crane, “Auto Focus,” for director Paul Schrader. Kinnear voiced the character Ratchet for the animated film “Robots,” and he has also starred in “We Were Soldiers” with Mel Gibson; HBO’s “Dinner with Friends” for Norman Jewison; the Farrelly brothers’ comedy “Stuck on You” with Matt Damon; Sam Raimi’s supernatural thriller “The Gift,” alongside Cate Blanchett and Katie Holmes; and director Neil LaBute’s black comedy “Nurse Betty” opposite Renée Zellweger, Morgan Freeman and Chris Rock.

Born in Logansport, Indiana, Kinnear grew up around the world as his family followed his State Department father to locations including Washington, D.C., Beirut, Lebanon, and Athens, Greece. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and three daughters.

A talented and captivating performer, **KELLY PRESTON (Kim Miller)** has performed in a broad range of motion pictures, portraying roles in such diverse films as “Jerry Maguire,” “Citizen Ruth” and “For Love of the Game.” Her dynamic and compelling performances have proven her to be one of the most sought-after actors of our generation.

Preston was born and raised in Hawaii. As a result of her father’s position with an agricultural firm, the family moved first to Iraq for one year and then to Australia for two years. It was while she was a teenager in Hawaii that Preston appeared in television commercials and began to develop an interest in an acting career.

She graduated from Punahou High School in Hawaii, along with fellow alumni, President Barack Obama. She then relocated to Los Angeles and enrolled in the University of Southern California where she studied drama and theater. She ultimately transferred to the University of California at Los Angeles and decided to commit to pursue acting seriously. She would soon win her very first audition.

Preston was last seen in the comedy “Old Dogs,” starring alongside her husband John Travolta, their daughter Ella Bleu in her film debut, and Robin Williams. The film, directed by Walt Becker, is the story of two friends and business partners who find their lives turned upside down when strange circumstances lead them to being placed in the care of seven-year-old twins. “Old Dogs” was released on November 25, 2009.

She recently wrapped production on “Casino Jack” alongside Kevin Spacey. The film is based on the true story of a “hot shot” Washington DC lobbyist Jack Abramoff and his protégé, who both go down hard as their schemes to peddle influence lead to corruption and murder. Preston plays the role of Pam Abramoff.

In 2008, Preston was seen on a four-episode arc on the hit NBC show “Medium.” Preston played the role of Meghan Doyle, an attractive venture capitalist who likes what she sees when she teams with Joe Dubois (Jake Weber), and this ultimately creates tension in his marriage.

Preston’s most recent projects include the HBO pilot “Suburban Shootout,” directed by Barry Sonnenfeld (“Men in Black,” “Pushing Daisies”), and the Lifetime Original Movie “The Tenth Circle” with Ron Eldard. Based on *The New York Times* best-

selling novel by Jodi Picoult, "The Tenth Circle" is a powerful account of an American family and a story that probes the unbreakable bond between parent and child. Preston can also be seen in the Fox thriller "Death Sentence" with Kevin Bacon, directed by James Wan.

She made her feature film debut with a well-received role in the hit motion picture "Twins," opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito. She has also starred in the Academy Award®-nominated short "Little Surprises," directed by Jeff Goldblum.

Preston appeared to rave reviews opposite Tom Cruise in the number one box office smash hit "Jerry Maguire." The Tri-Star picture was written and directed by Cameron Crowe. She also starred opposite Kevin Costner in "For Love of the Game," directed by Sam Raimi. She was also seen in a pivotal role in the critically acclaimed motion picture "Citizen Ruth" for Miramax. In addition, Preston starred with Kurt Russell in "Sky High" as Josie Jetstream, "The Cat in the Hat" alongside Mike Meyers, the dark comedy "Eulogy" with Ray Romano and Debra Winger, "Addicted to Love" co-starring Meg Ryan and Matthew Broderick, and the comedy "Nothing to Lose" opposite Tim Robbins and Martin Lawrence.

Preston also starred in the feature film comedy "The Holy Man," with Eddie Murphy and Jeff Goldblum, "Jack Frost" opposite Michael Keaton for Warner Brothers, "Daddy and Them" directed by Billy Bob Thornton, "View from the Top" with Gwyneth Paltrow and Christina Applegate, and the Warner Bros. film "What a Girl Wants" opposite Amanda Bynes and Colin Firth.

Previous films of **LIAM HEMSWORTH (Will Blakelee)** include the box-office hit "Knowing," starring Nicolas Cage, and a starring role in the thriller "Triangle." He began his career in television in his native country of Australia. His TV credits include "Neighbours," "Home and Away" and "McLeod's Daughters." He voiced the role of Marcus in the television series "The Elephant Princess."

BOBBY COLEMAN (Jonah Miller) has been on film sets since birth, learning from his older sister, actress Holliston Coleman, and at age 6 he decided to give it a try himself. He promptly landed multiple national commercials and went on to guest-star in such TV series as "Knight Rider," "In Plain Sight," "Medium" and others, with a recurring role on the NBC sci-fi series "Surface" and as part of the lead family in William H. Macy's pilot, "Family Man."

Coleman's film appearances include "Friends with Money" and "Must Love Dogs" and lead roles in "Glass House: The Good Mother" and "Take." He also starred opposite John Cusack in the title role of the feature film "Martian Child," where he played an emotionally disturbed foster child who believes he is (and may be) from Mars. Upcoming are "Robosapien," an adventure from the producer of "Spiderman," "X-Men" and "Ironman," in which Coleman co-stars with his sister Holliston; and the coming-of-age film "Snowmen" with Ray Liotta and Christopher Lloyd.

HALLOCK BEALS (Scott Thomas) moved to Los Angeles in late 2005, earning the attention of two Academy Award® winners by working with Alan Ball on "True Blood" and Clint Eastwood in his Oscar Award®-winning "Letters from Iwo Jima." He has also appeared in the Young Playwright's Festival alongside Tiffani Thiessen, Dee Wallace, Mark Arnold and Garrett Brown, to name a few. When not working in front of

the camera or on stage, Hallock can be found practicing his craft at the esteemed Beverly Hills Playhouse.

NICK LASHAWAY (Marcus) began appearing in commercials when he was 7 years old. His credits include “My Soul to Take,” “The 40-Year-Old Virgin,” “Bag Boy” and “American Fork.” He has also appeared on several popular TV shows including “The X Files,” “8 Simple Rules...for Dating My Teenage Daughter,” “MADtv” and “The Weird Al Show.”

CARLY CHAIKIN (Blaze) makes her cinema debut in “The Last Song.” She has also appeared in the independent comedy “The Consultants.”

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JULIE ANNE ROBINSON (Director) is a BAFTA- and Golden Globe®-nominated television director. In British television, her credits include the critically acclaimed BBC pilot “Viva Blackpool,” as well as the BAFTA-nominated television movie “Coming Down the Mountain.”

In American television, she’s directed the ABC pilots “Girls on the Bus” and “The Middle,” starring Patricia Heaton. Her television credits also include a variety of television episodes including “Grey’s Anatomy,” “Pushing Daisies,” “Weeds” and “Big Love.” Robinson will next direct “The Last Summer of You and Me,” the film adaptation of the Ann Brashares novel.

The works of **NICHOLAS SPARKS (Screenplay by/Based on the Novel by)** are among the most successful franchises in Hollywood. His 15 novels have all been domestic and international best sellers, selling more than 55 million copies in over 32 languages. His latest novel, “The Last Song,” debuted at No.1 on both the *New York Times* and *USA Today* best-seller lists. Five of these have been turned into movies to date, including some of the most successful box-office hits of the past decade, such as “The Notebook,” “Message in a Bottle” and the recent “Dear John,” which debuted at No. 1 when it was released in February 2010. Sparks’ first four movies averaged a domestic box-office gross per film of \$56 million, with another \$100 million in DVD sales.

Sparks began writing novels while recovering from a track injury at the University of Notre Dame, where he earned a degree in business finance and graduated with honors in 1988. Although his first two novels were never published, he continued to pursue a writing career after graduation. But after being rejected by several publishers and also law school, he experimented with a variety of unrelated job fields, trying to find his passion.

He received his first break in 1990 when he collaborated on a book with Olympic Gold Medalist Billy Mills. It was published by Feather Publishing before being picked up by Random House. Though it received scant publicity, sales topped 50,000 copies in the first year of release.

While selling pharmaceuticals in North Carolina, he wrote “The Notebook,” to which Warner Books bought the rights three years later. It spent 56 weeks on the *New*

York Times hardcover best-seller list and another 54 weeks on the paperback list, eventually selling more than 10 million copies.

Unsure that he could repeat this success, Sparks continued selling pharmaceuticals until he was confident that his next book, "Message in a Bottle," would be a hit. Sparks published a string of novels during the next decade including "A Walk to Remember" (1999), "The Rescue" (2000), "A Bend in the Road" (2001), "Nights in Rodanthe" (2002), "The Guardian" (2003), "The Wedding" (2003), "Three Weeks with My Brother" (2004), "True Believer" (2005) and "At First Sight" (2005), which were published by Warner Books.

"Message in a Bottle" was the first of his books to be made into a movie, which became a box-office hit in 1999. It was followed by "A Walk to Remember" (2002), "The Notebook" (2004) and "Nights in Rodanthe" (2008).

The film rights to "True Believer" and "At First Sight" have been sold, and "The Lucky One" is in development for an anticipated 2012 release. Sparks has also written the screenplay for "The Guardian," which has not yet been offered for sale.

After graduation from the University of Notre Dame, **JEFF VAN WIE (Screenplay by)** began a career in information technology that lasted 23 years. But this career never was his passion and in 1993 he started writing screenplays and studying the art of film. In 2006, Jeff decided to take a sabbatical and focus on screenwriting. He pitched a script idea to Nicholas Sparks. Sparks loved the idea and the two collaborated to write an inspirational story about an inner city schoolboy who uses his legs and lungs to free him from his dangerous surroundings. "One Square Mile" represented their first collaboration until Sparks was approached by Disney to write "The Last Song." Van Wie is now a full-time writer and member of the WGA-East. He is repped by UTA and is currently working on a third collaboration with Sparks.

ADAM SHANKMAN (Producer) is a multi-faceted filmmaker who has enjoyed success as a director, producer and choreographer. He served as co-producer and lead choreographer of the 2010 Oscar® telecast. Shankman's recent films include the box-office hits "17 Again," starring Zac Efron, which he produced; "Bedtime Stories," starring Adam Sandler and Keri Russell, which he directed; and the upcoming "Step Up 3-D." He's also served as a judge on "So You Think You Can Dance."

In July 2007, Shankman's "Hairspray," the feature film adaptation of the Tony® Award-winning Broadway musical, opened to rave reviews. It received three Golden Globe® nominations including Best Picture—Musical or Comedy. In addition, the film's remarkable cast, including John Travolta, Queen Latifah, Michelle Pfeiffer, Christopher Walken, Zac Efron and Nikki Blonsky, won a Critics' Choice Award for Best Acting Ensemble.

As a producer, Shankman and his sister, Jennifer Gibgot, are partnered in Offspring Entertainment, which currently has a wide range of projects in various stages of production and development. Under the Offspring banner, Shankman previously produced "Step Up," directed by his co-choreographer Anne Fletcher; its successful sequel, "Step Up 2: The Streets," helmed by Jon M. Chu; and the thriller "Premonition," starring Sandra Bullock.

Shankman began his directing career in 2001 with his debut feature, "The Wedding Planner," starring Jennifer Lopez and Matthew McConaughey. The next year,

he directed the romantic drama “A Walk to Remember,” starring Mandy Moore and Shane West. Shankman followed with the 2003 comedy “Bringing Down the House,” starring Steve Martin and Queen Latifah, which was number one at the box office for three consecutive weeks. In 2005, he directed the action comedy “The Pacifier,” starring Vin Diesel, and the family comedy “Cheaper by the Dozen 2,” starring Steve Martin and Bonnie Hunt.

Prior to launching his directing and producing career, Shankman was one of the entertainment industry’s premiere dance and physical comedy choreographers, putting his creative stamp on many well-known comedies, dramas, thrillers and animated films. His projects include “The Addams Family,” “Casper,” “Inspector Gadget,” “Anastasia,” “George of the Jungle,” “Boogie Nights,” “Miami Rhapsody” and “The Flintstones,” for which he was nominated for a Bob Fosse Award. Shankman won a Bob Fosse Award for his commercial work with Simon West. At age 24, Shankman teamed up with influential video director Julian Temple as a music video choreographer. One of his first videos as choreographer was Whitney Houston’s “I’m Your Baby Tonight.” In addition, he has choreographed videos for the B-52s, Barry White, Aaron Neville, Chic and Stevie Wonder.

A native of Los Angeles, Shankman developed a love for the theater at an early age. Following high school, he moved to New York and attended Juilliard. After five years as an actor and dancer on the stages of New York and regional theater, he moved back to Los Angeles and began dancing in music videos for such artists as Paula Abdul and Janet Jackson. He also performed at the 1989 Academy Awards®.

JENNIFER GIBGOT (Producer) began her producing career in 1995 running Tapestry Films. During her eight-year tenure there, she set up numerous projects and produced such successful films as “She’s All That” and “The Wedding Planner,” starring Jennifer Lopez and Matthew McConaughey. Gibgot hired her brother, Adam Shankman, who was already an established choreographer, to helm “The Wedding Planner,” which launched his directing career. She collaborated with him recently on “17 Again,” “Bedtime Stories” and the upcoming “Step Up 3-D.”

In 2003, Gibgot and Shankman formed Offspring Entertainment and signed a first-look deal at Disney. Gibgot went on to serve as an executive producer on the Shankman-directed films “The Pacifier,” starring Vin Diesel, and the family comedy “Cheaper by the Dozen 2,” starring Steve Martin and Bonnie Hunt. In addition, Gibgot and Shankman teamed to produce the dance movie hit “Step Up” and its even more successful sequel, “Step Up 2: The Streets.”

Under the Offspring banner, Gibgot and Shankman executive produced the 2007 smash hit musical “Hairspray,” starring John Travolta, Queen Latifah, Michelle Pfeiffer, Christopher Walken, Zac Efron and Nikki Blonsky. “Hairspray” received several honors, including a Golden Globe® nomination for Best Picture—Musical or Comedy.

TISH CYRUS (Executive Producer) marks her executive producer debut with “The Last Song.” Cyrus’ Hope Town Entertainment has a production deal with Disney.

During a feature film career spanning over two decades, **JOHN LINDLEY (Cinematographer)** has established longstanding creative collaborations, which include multiple features he has shot for such directors as Nora Ephron (“Michael,” “You’ve Got

Mail," "Lucky Numbers" and "Bewitched"), Jonathan Kaplan ("Immediate Family" and the telefilms "The Gentleman Bandit" and "Girls of the White Orchid"), Phil Alden Robinson (the Academy Award®-nominated "Field of Dreams," "Sneakers," "The Sum of All Fears" and "In the Mood"), Joseph Ruben ("The Stepfather," "Sleeping with the Enemy," "The Good Son," "Money Train" and "True Believer") and Charles Shyer ("Father of the Bride" and "I Love Trouble"). Lindley's work on Gary Ross' "Pleasantville," which he shot in black and white and in color, brought him acclaim as well as award nominations. Other films include "Imagine That," "Reservation Road," "Mr. Brooks," "Catch and Release" and the upcoming thriller "Legion," starring Paul Bettany and Dennis Quaid.

After studying his craft at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, the native New Yorker began his career in documentaries, for the BBC and US television. Lindley's early credits include the TV series "Nurse," starring Michael Learned, and Emile Ardolino's Academy Award®-winning documentary feature, "He Makes Me Feel Like Dancin,'" about choreographer Jacques d'Amboise. Lindley's other feature credits as cinematographer include Laurie Anderson's "Home of the Brave," Wes Craven's "The Serpent and the Rainbow," Jon Amiel's "The Core" and Jeff Nathanson's "The Last Shot." He also shot music videos, notably the Talking Heads' "Road to Nowhere," now in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection. His commercial work includes the award-winning FedEx "Desert Island" spot.

A native of San Diego, **AARON ZIGMAN (Composer)** began training as a classical pianist at age six with his mother, a pianist and harpist. While in his third year at UCLA, Zigman signed a four-year songwriting contract with publishing giant Almo Irving and began writing, producing, arranging and orchestrating for many of the top major artists in the record industry. He was one of four songwriters on their staff and under their aegis; he penned songs for Carly Simon and TV's "Fame," and co-wrote with David Lasley, Jerry Knight and Steve Cropper.

In 1983 at the age of 20, he began studying with his renowned cousin George Bassman, a noted MGM composer who orchestrated for the "Wizard of Oz" and wrote the music for the films "Marty" and "The Postman Always Rings Twice." He penned the Tommy Dorsey classic "Getting Sentimental Over You," was the musical arranger for Lena Horne and Benny Goodman, and orchestrated for the legendary Andre Kostelanetz.

Then in the mid-1980s, Zigman broke in as a studio musician, working with producers Don Was, Gary Katz, Steely Dan and Stewart Levine. He started to get a name for himself as a producer/writer and soon wrote a big hit in pop music called "Crush On You," which was a top-chart record for a group called The Jets. He then worked for Clive Davis and produced and arranged for Aretha Franklin and Natalie Cole. He wrote, arranged and produced songs for many of the top singers and artists in the industry, including Ray Charles, Sting, Phil Collins, Dionne Warwick, Bozz Skaggs, Tina Turner, Seal, Carly Simon, the Pointer Sisters, Huey Lewis, Jennifer Holliday, Patty LaBelle, Chicago, Natalie Cole and Christina Aguilera.

In the 1990s, Zigman entered the film industry; his work was featured on film soundtracks for "Mulan," "What's Love Got to Do with It," "Bird Cage," "License to Kill," "Caddyshack" and "Pocahontas."

Although his list of pop accomplishments was formidable, creating orchestral music was still Zigman's primary focus. It was inevitable that Zigman's lifelong devotion to classical music would eventually lead him to the film scoring stage. His big break came in 2000 when film director Nick Cassavetes went to hear Zigman's classical 35-minute symphonic tone poem "Rabin" which was performed by the L.A. Jewish Symphony. The work was composed in memory of Yitzhak Rabin, the late prime minister of the State of Israel. Cassavetes was very moved and asked Zigman to score Denzel Washington's movie "John Q."

Zigman followed this with the major box-office success "The Notebook," his soundtrack for which has sold a record number of albums.

NELSON COATES (Production Designer) recently designed the hit romantic comedy "The Proposal," starring Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds, and the biopic "The Express: The Ernie Davis Story," directed by Gary Fleder, starring Dennis Quaid and Rob Brown. Other production design credits include "Thick as Thieves," "Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead," also for director Gary Fleder, "Murder at 1600," "Kiss the Girls," "Stir of Echoes," "Don't Say A Word," "Frailty," "Antwone Fisher," "Runaway Jury" and "School for Scoundrels."

Coates' television credits include the USA Network telefilm "Murderous Vision," HBO's "Cast a Deadly Spell," and the ABC miniseries "The Stand," for which he was nominated for an Emmy® for Outstanding Individual Achievement in Art Direction for a Miniseries or Special. Coates also designed the FOX series "John Doe" and "Johnny Zero" as well as ABC's "October Road."

Coates collaborated with producer Adam Shankman on the short "Prop 8: The Musical," which ran on FunnyOrDie.com.

LOUISE FROGLEY (Costume Designer) designed the costumes for the upcoming "The Men Who Stare at Goats," directed by Grant Heslov, starring George Clooney, Ewan McGregor, Jeff Bridges and Kevin Spacey. She also designed the wardrobe for George Clooney's "Leatherheads," "Good Night, and Good Luck," for which she received a Costume Designers Guild Award nomination for Excellence in Costume Design for a Period Film. She received another nomination from the Guild in the Contemporary Film category for her work on Stephen Gaghan's "Syriana," which starred Clooney. Frogley also designed the costumes for Steven Soderbergh's "Ocean's Thirteen" and "The Good German," starring Clooney and Cate Blanchett. She previously worked with Soderbergh on "The Limey" and "Traffic," earning a Costume Designers Guild Award nomination for Excellence in Costume Design for a Contemporary Film for the latter. She also designed the costumes for Soderbergh's "Che," a biographical drama about Ernesto Che Guevara, and created the wardrobe for Marc Forster's Bond film, "Quantum of Solace." Following "The Last Song," Frogley immediately began work on Robert Redford's "The Conspirator."

Frogley began her career in London and Paris as a costume designer and decorator for various commercial companies, including Ridley Scott Associate's (RSA) group of young directors such as Ridley and Tony Scott and Hugh Hudson. Her first movie assignment was as the assistant designer on Hugh Hudson's Academy Award®-winning "Chariots of Fire." Frogley has since designed costumes for more than 30 movies, including Neil Jordan's "Mona Lisa," Ron Shelton's "Bull Durham," as well as

“Executive Decision,” “U.S. Marshalls,” “Spy Game,” “Man on Fire” and “Constantine.”

NANCY RICHARDSON (Editor) edited “Step Up” and three films by Catherine Hardwicke—“Twilight,” “Lords of Dogtown” and “Thirteen.”

Richardson is a graduate of U.C. Berkeley and received her MFA from UCLA’s graduate film department. Since then, she has edited a number of films, including three for director Charles Burnett: “To Sleep with Anger,” “Selma, Lord, Selma” and “Annihilation of Fish.” She has also worked with director Gregory Nava three times, on “Mi Familia,” “Selena” and “Why Do Fools Fall in Love.” Richardson also edited the directorial debut of Maya Angelou, “Down in the Delta,” and “Hendrix,” directed by Leon Ichaso, for which she received an Emmy nomination. Additional film credits include “Stand and Deliver,” “Roadside Prophets” and “White Man’s Burden.”

Richardson is a member of American Cinema Editors and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She has served on the Editors Guild Board of Directors for the last four years and was just re-elected for another term. She is a professor at the UCLA School of Film, Television and Digital Media, where she is head of post-production.

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