

SEASON OF THE WITCH

Production Notes

SEASON OF THE WITCH

Synopsis

Oscar® winner Nicolas Cage (*National Treasure*, *Ghost Rider*) and Ron Perlman (*Hellboy*, *Hellboy II*, *Sons of Anarchy*) star in this supernatural action adventure about a heroic Crusader and his closest friend who return home after decades of fierce fighting, only to find their world destroyed by the Plague. The church elders, convinced that a girl accused of being a witch is responsible for the devastation, command the two to transport the strange girl to a remote monastery where monks will perform an ancient ritual to rid the land of her curse. They embark on a harrowing, action-filled journey that will test their strength and courage as they discover the girl's dark secret and find themselves battling a terrifyingly powerful force that will determine the fate of the world.

The years of brutal warfare in the name of God have stripped Behmen (Cage) of his taste for bloodshed—and his loyalty to the Church. Looking forward to a quiet retirement, Behmen and his comrade-in-arms Felson (Perlman) are bewildered to find their homeland deserted, unaware that Europe has been decimated by the Black Plague.

While searching for food and supplies at the Palace at Marburg, the two knights are apprehended and called before the local Cardinal (Christopher Lee) to explain their unscheduled return from the East. The dying Cardinal threatens the pair with prison for desertion, unless they agree to a dangerous mission. The Cardinal's dungeon holds a young woman (Claire Foy) accused of being a witch who brings the Plague with her. They can redeem themselves only by accompanying the girl to a distant abbey where she is to stand trial.

The girl's brutal mistreatment in prison and powerlessness against the accusations of church officials move Behman. Convinced she is merely a convenient scapegoat and fearing she will be condemned without a fair hearing, he agrees to escort her on the treacherous journey.

In addition to his loyal companion Felson, he is accompanied by a well-traveled con man who knows the countryside (Stephen Graham), an eager young man who aspires to knighthood (Robert Sheehan), a bitter knight who has lost his family to the Plague (Ulrich Thomsen) and a naïve priest (Stephen Campbell Moore).

The route is long and arduous, made even more challenging by increasingly disturbing events, and takes the group through uncharted territory, across sheer-walled gorges and deep

into wolf-infested forests. One by one his fellow travelers meet with misfortune, and the embattled Crusader finds himself facing his most terrifying adversary.

Season of the Witch stars Nicolas Cage (*National Treasure*, *Ghost Rider*), Ron Perlman (*Hellboy*, “Sons of Anarchy”), Stephen Campbell Moore (*The Bank Job*, *History Boys*), Claire Foy (“Going Postal,” “Little Dorrit”), Stephen Graham (“Boardwalk Empire,” *Public Enemies*), Ulrich Thomsen (*Centurion*, *The International*), Robert Sheehan (*Cherrybomb*) and Christopher Lee (*The Lord of the Rings*, *Alice in Wonderland*).

The film is directed by Dominic Sena (*Gone in Sixty Seconds*, *Swordfish*) from a screenplay by Bragi Schut (“Threshold”). Producers are Charles Roven (*The Dark Knight*, *Get Smart*) and Alex Gartner (*Get Smart*, *The Upside of Anger*). Director of photography is Amir Mokri (*Fast & Furious*, *Vantage Point*). Editors are Mark Helfrich (*X-Men: The Last Stand*, *Rush Hour 1, 2 & 3*) and Dan Zimmerman (*Predators*, *Max Payne*). Production designer is Uli Hanisch (*The International*, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*). Original music is by Atli Övarsson. Costume designer is Carlo Poggioli (*Miracle at St. Anna*, *Cold Mountain*). Executive producers are Ryan Kavanaugh (*Robin Hood*, *The Fighter*), Alan G. Glazer (*The International*, *Get Smart*), Steve Alexander (*Swimming with Sharks*), Tom Karnowski (*The Illusionist*, *Max Payne*), and Tucker Tooley (*McGruber*, *Dear John*).

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Producers Charles Roven and Alex Gartner of Atlas Entertainment have been responsible for bringing dozens of films to the screen, from high-finance crime capers (*The International*) and dystopian thrillers (*The Dark Knight*) to action comedies (*Get Smart*) and musical fantasies (*Idlewild*), but the script for ***Season of the Witch*** took them both by surprise.

The script arrived on the producers' desks with the built-in buzz that comes from winning one of the world's most prestigious writing competitions, the Nicholl Fellowship bestowed by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. Always on the lookout for an unusual story told in a unique way, the producers were hooked by the film's idea of an "all-hell-breaks-loose" supernatural action adventure played out against a painstakingly created 14th-century backdrop.

"Once we read it, we couldn't get it out of our heads," says Roven. "It's not just a period film. It's an action adventure that takes place in the period. The writer, Bragi Schut, peopled it with relatable, three-dimensional characters. So beyond its wonderful genre elements, there's more than enough meat on the bone to keep it interesting."

Gartner adds, "Chuck and I search out scripts with original premises. The combination of elements is what set this story apart for us. Calling it 'a supernatural thriller set in the 14th century' is saying it all in terms of the genre pitch, but there's so much more going on. It will terrify audiences, but because it has great characters, it feels completely real.

But ***Season of the Witch*** is no history lesson, notes Gartner. It's a rip-roaring adventure filled with bravura performances, exciting stunts and unforgettable vistas. "It's gorgeously realized, full of great action and downright scary," says Gartner. An extended shoot in a little traveled part of the Austrian Alps provided the film with breathtaking, untouched backdrops and created physical conditions for the filmmakers that mirrored the characters' difficult journey. "The extraordinarily scenic locations made it all worthwhile," says Gartner. "There are mountains, daunting gorges and beautiful fields leading up to great cliffs. It gave us a feeling of what the world must have been like back in the 14th century with huge, open spaces, and long distances where you see nothing but nature and impressive geography."

Experts in weaponry of the era and one of the world's top stunt coordinators collaborated on the film's battle scenes, which range from the Crusaders' epic siege of a Turkish citadel to gritty trench warfare and a startling confrontation in the soaring *scriptorium* (library) of a Romanesque abbey. Performers braved precarious drops of 200 feet or more to stage complex scenes involving teams of horses and painstakingly choreographed stunts, all in service to the story's ambitious scope.

After the months of physical training, onerous shooting conditions and an exhausting schedule, Nicolas Cage, who stars as Behman, is excited by the finished film's skillful mix of character study and genre thrills. "The movie is complicated and beautiful," he says. "Dominic Sena did a remarkable job conceiving and photographing a film as original and exciting as this one. When the movie comes to the climax, you're as surprised as the characters are by what you're seeing. I think it makes for a great ride."

Director Dominic Sena, best known for hard-edged contemporary films including *Gone in Sixty Seconds*, *Swordfish* and *Kalifornia*, brought an eye honed by years as a cinematographer to the film. "In his earlier films, Dom demonstrated a flair for telling a story both visually and through the characters," says Roven. "He brought a lot to the table in terms of both script enhancements and visual language."

As envisioned by Sena, ***Season of the Witch*** combines the authenticity of a historical epic with the drama and pacing of a contemporary supernatural action thriller, as it takes audiences into a dark and dangerous world where faith may be the only defense. The mix of intimate character-based drama and all-out genre thrills hooked Sena.

"This is about six people on a dangerous journey through rough territory, and we get to know the characters along the way," the director says. "The story is told on a very human scale, and it touches on issues of good and evil, of religion and redemption."

After more than 10 years in battle, Behmen, the weary ex-Crusader played by Nicolas Cage, has realized that the reasons he was sent to war are not what they appeared to be, but he finds returning home just as disheartening. "Behmen and his friend Felson think the worst is over," says Sena. Instead, they find themselves in the middle of an epidemic that has wiped out more than half of the population. When they finally come to the cardinal's palace, that's the first vestige of civilization they have encountered. Instead of a quiet retirement, they're enlisted to take on an overwhelming task."

Behmen and Felson, who left their mission without notice, are coerced into taking a girl believed to be a witch and the source of the Plague to a distant abbey where a ritual will be performed that will end the epidemic. "They're not sure she isn't being set-up," says Roven. "There was a lot of belief in witches and enchantment at the time, but the trials weren't exactly fair. When they discover that this so-called witch is just a young farm girl who looks like she's been grievously mistreated, they want to make sure that she gets a fair trial."

Schut, who also created the television series "Threshold," was inspired to write ***Season of the Witch*** after asking his father, a history buff, what he thought was the worst time to be alive on the planet. "He told me it was probably the 14th century, during the 'Black Death,'" Schut

recalls. “By some estimates, three-quarters of the population died in the most severely affected areas.”

As Schut researched the period, he also became fascinated by the Crusaders, “knights of God” who spent years in service of the Roman Catholic Church, battling to return control of the Holy Land to Christian hands—and fill the church’s coffers while doing it. He conceived a story about two weary warriors who return from the Middle East to find everything they know destroyed by a mysterious illness, a scenario that likely played out all over Europe.

“Europe was just coming out of the Dark Ages at this point,” Roven points out. “Most of the people lived in abject poverty and ignorance. When this disease came, they couldn’t figure out what was causing it or how, but entire communities were being completely wiped out. As has happened throughout history, when something couldn’t be explained, people became very superstitious. The cause of it was your neighbor, the farm girl down the street, the butcher, the innkeeper.”

“It takes place in a time when people believed that supernatural events were commonplace,” says Gartner. “And yet, it’s filled with relatable elements in terms of what is happening in our world. The characters are questioning things that many people question today.

“As a filmmaker, I always want the story to resonate with today’s audience,” says Roven. “A lot of things are going on in the world today that have shaken our foundation of beliefs. When we question our beliefs and we don’t have answers for things, we still have a tendency to look for scapegoats.”

ALL THE CARDINAL'S MEN

The filmmakers assembled an extraordinary international ensemble cast, headed up by Academy Award® winner Nicolas Cage as Behmen. “Nic Cage had a window of opportunity in his schedule and we jumped on it,” says producer Roven. “In my opinion, Nic is among the greatest actors of his generation. He’s constantly challenging himself. Nic can be an action hero in *National Treasure*, and he can also play the twin brothers in *Adaptation*. When he played an angel who falls in love and wants to become human on a film I produced called *City of Angels*, he invested that character with an ethereal quality. He has amazing range that allows him to transcend who he is and become the character.”

Reading the script, Cage was reminded of his childhood in Long Beach, California. A solitary kid with a vivid imagination, he dreamed of being a knight. “I’ve wanted to make a picture in this period for a long time,” says Cage. “I feel deeply connected to it. When I was five or six, my father built a wooden castle for me in our backyard. I would spend whole days in there, imagining the heroic exploits I would have. I was on my own in that castle, exploring my imagination, and I became interested in knights and dragons and the history of the time.

“I’ve also always wanted to make a movie that would allow me to experience beautiful, mountainous terrain,” adds Cage. “When I got this script and realized I would be in the Austrian Alps on a horse, I just wanted to get out there.”

His character is no run-of-the-mill Lancelot, living a life of jousting tournaments and fair maidens. “Behmen is a radical thinker for his time,” says Cage. “He’s a man who joined the Crusades believing he was doing the right thing, but got sick of the killing. While he’s in no way an atheist, he has decided to separate himself from the church. He has a very strong connection with God, but he has abandoned organized religion, which was heresy at the time. He could be burned at the stake for it.

“When he is asked to deliver the alleged witch to the abbey at Severak, he does it to ensure her a fair trial,” the actor continues. “And along the way, incredibly spooky things begin to happen.”

Cage’s engagement with the character and the time makes the story instantly accessible to a modern audience, says Gartner. “He really embraced the concept,” says the producer. “Nic is fantastic at bringing you into a story. He jumped in with both feet and was a complete joy to work with. He had great script and character ideas, plus he looks fantastic as Behmen. You’ve never seen Nic Cage like this before.”

The film reunited Cage with Dominic Sena, who had earlier directed the actor in *Gone in Sixty Seconds*. “Dominic was an enormous source of energy for us all,” says Cage. “He was completely committed to his work. Dom is incredibly visual, but at the same time, he has a sense of humor that keeps people happy and confident. One of his greatest tools is that he makes actors feel good about what they can do. He fortified us.”

Behmen’s comrade-in-arms, Felson, played by Ron Perlman, is a man of action, in contrast to Behmen’s more thoughtful approach to life. “If Felson hadn’t gone to war, he might have become a criminal,” says Cage. “Behmen is more of a philosopher but the two of them have bonded in a way that only people under fire, fighting for each other’s lives, can understand. Whatever either of them are going through, they’ll go through it together.”

Perlman lends a gruff, no nonsense earthiness to the character. “Felson has his own mythic, heroic quality, but he’s more a regular guy than Behmen,” says Roven. “He’s hardened and tough, big in stature, and also in heart. He’s a larger-than-life character who would follow his friend into the depths of hell if he had to.”

After seeing Perlman’s performance, Sena says he can’t imagine anyone else playing Felson. “He brings a great deal of dark humor to the character. He and Behmen have been to hell and back together, and bonded in an extraordinary way. With a word or a gesture, Ron can communicate that and make you smile.”

Referring to his character as “a rough dude who came from nothing,” Perlman explains, “He grew up on the street and has never gotten over the rush of taking life right to the edge. He became a warrior for the action. It doesn’t even matter which side he’s fighting for as long as he’s in it, which makes him the perfect foil for Behmen.”

He and Cage collaborated in the creation of a detailed history for their characters. “They needle one another, especially in high-tension situations, because that is what guys in a war do all the time,” says Perlman. “They’re constantly trying to keep it light, because if they dwelled on what is really going on around them, they would freeze in fear. Nic is a hard worker and very serious about building a foundation for his character. The smartest way for us to approach this was to sit down together and figure out a very specific back story for them.”

The actor found Sena’s combination of meticulous preparation and willingness to reconceive his ideas on the fly a thrilling way to work. “I love being over-prepared,” says Perlman. “I’m also willing to throw all the preparation out the window if somebody comes up with a remarkably good idea. Dom had an incredibly well-articulated idea of the movie he was making, what it was going to look like and what it was going to feel like, but if he saw something better during the course of shooting or rehearsing, he was willing to change his whole game

plan. He's such an accomplished shooter and he's so great at making beautiful images with the camera that whatever he comes up with is going to be compelling."

For the pivotal role of the Girl, as the young woman at the center of the drama is known, the filmmakers selected British newcomer Claire Foy. "We needed somebody who had the right sort of vulnerability," says Roven. "She had to be tough enough to fight back, but her toughness had to have a certain ambiguity to it. We want audiences to ask themselves whether she is lashing out in self-defense or because she really is a witch. Claire has a very chilling quality when she gets tough and yet she's sympathetic enough to make you to believe she's just an innocent."

The director and producer were completing casting for the film while in Hungary for preproduction. "We saw Claire's audition online," says Gartner. "We must have looked at twenty or thirty girls for the part. Dom and I agreed to meet for breakfast the next morning and discuss whom we liked and what the next step should be. I had put a big star next to Claire's name, because her audition was so extraordinary. The next day, as I was sitting in the dining room drinking my coffee, I suddenly heard a voice in my ear say, 'Claire Foy.' Dom had come to exactly the same conclusion I did. And he just went off to get his breakfast. Everybody involved in the project watched Claire's audition and knew she was the one."

The Girl has been wandering the countryside and the Plague has dogged her wherever she goes. "My character is sort of a Typhoid Mary," says Foy. "Everywhere she's been, the Plague has appeared. Therefore, she's a witch. It says a lot about how women were treated at the time.

"She's just a young girl and all these powerful men are accusing her of something horrific," Foy continues. "You never quite work her out, and I think that's important, because the men don't either. She's neither a femme fatale nor an innocent girl, but she is so intelligent that she's able to pit all the men against each other to get what she wants."

Although it was her first major film role, Foy impressed the seasoned performers around her. "Claire has this enormous instrument," Cage observes. "She's very talented, and incredibly well-trained. She is capable of getting to the truth of the character at the drop of a hat. There's a tremendous reality to everything she does."

Working with a cast so rich in experience was sometimes intimidating, Foy admits. "Nicolas Cage is a star," she says. "He's so enigmatic and shiny on screen. I wasn't necessarily nervous about meeting him, but I felt like it was his film and that if he didn't like me, I was bugged. But when I met him, he was such a lovely, funny man that I was instantly at ease.

“And Ron can’t go anywhere without being recognized as *Hell Boy*,” adds Foy. “But he’s so gracious about it and he’s hilarious. When you’re working with people who do their jobs so brilliantly, you sort of just get on with it.”

Reluctantly joining the expedition to Severak is Debelzaq, an unworldly Benedictine priest played by British actor Stephen Campbell Moore. “Until we saw Stephen, we had pictured Debelzaq as an older man,” says Sena. “We came to realize that with youth came a sense of naïveté that was appropriate for the character. In theory, he knows right from wrong, but he has no practical experience. He grows from a follower who believes blindly that the church always does what’s right into a man who can acknowledge the validity of Behmen’s questions.”

Assigned by the Cardinal to accompany Behmen and Felson, Debelzaq is meant to serve as their spiritual guide, but circumstances force him to take a more active role. “The Benedictines were quite an isolated community,” says Moore. “Because the world was seen as corrupt, they didn’t even want to receive news from the outside. Debelzaq learns that it’s much harder to hold on to your faith in the real world. It’s quite an interesting idea to put somebody as isolated as he is into the world and test his ideals.”

“Stephen is a fantastic actor,” says Roven, who worked with Moore on the 2008 movie, *The Bank Job*. “He completely embodies the passion and idealism of this priest’s task. His character is heading down a very narrow path, and suddenly he’s in an entirely different, dangerous environment, facing things he’s never faced before. He learns faith is considerably more challenging when confronting the unknown.”

Moore was intrigued by the complex web of relationships that grow and shift as the journey progresses. “The story itself is quite simple,” says Moore. “It is very much like a marshal handcuffed to a defendant and charged with taking him to court. It’s an adventure, it’s epic, and it is set in a world that gives credence to witchcraft and the supernatural, a world full of evil and dangers in that true, old sense.”

The travelers are being guided to the abbey by Hagamar, an itinerant swindler played by Steven Graham. “Hagamar is designed to be the scoundrel,” says Gartner. “He is always looking for an angle. Steven brings some comic relief to the film with his character. He’s naturally very charming and funny, and he uses that effectively to portray a man who wants to be anywhere but be on this journey.

“He’s a really impressive actor and quite entertaining to watch as his panic grows when he realizes what they’re up against,” adds the producer.

First seen in the stocks after his arrest by the Cardinal’s men, Hagamar makes a deal in return for his release. “He’s been a bit of a naughty lad,” says Graham. “I see him as a gypsy.

He goes from place to place selling religious relics and the like. He's basically an opportunist. Anything he can get, he'll take. We never purposely set out to make him funny, but I found the bits of humor within him. He doesn't really want to go along with them, because even though he's not a religious man, the Girl frightens him.

"It's a classic kind of old, epic tale about a group of people who go on a journey, and find out something about themselves," the actor says. "It has great action sequences and all the drama of an old biblical tale."

Danish actor Ulrich Thomsen plays Eckhart, a grieving knight who has lost his own family to the plague. "He's lost everything, and yet he doesn't look at the Girl as just an easy answer," says Roven. "He actually has a bit of sympathy for her. Like Behmen, he wants to make sure they're doing the right thing. I don't think he believes that she is a witch. He sees this pure innocent child and he starts to doubt the whole thing."

The film's epic nature appealed to Thomsen. "I liked the story and the history," he says. "In Denmark, we never do things like this. Our budgets tend to be much smaller and we make movies about families sitting around the dinner table. We all have a child inside who wants to play soldiers and knights, so this was so much fun for me to do."

"I am a fan of Dominic Sena's work, as well as Nicolas Cage and Ron Perlman," he adds. "It was an amazing opportunity for me to do something different."

Shortly after the start of their journey, the group reluctantly accepts one more member, an altar boy named Kay who is eager to prove his worth as a man. "Kay's real aim is to become a knight," says actor Robert Sheehan. "So he catches up with the party and volunteers his services, hoping to impress."

Sheehan captures the youthful idealism of the character, as well as the steely determination Kay discovers within himself during the ordeal. "We hit the bull's-eye with Robbie," says Gartner. "He has a boyish quality, yet he's tough enough to stand toe-to-toe with Ron Perlman in a swordfight. He infuses Kay with great earnestness, conviction and courage, and creates a character we believe can take on the responsibilities handed over to him by Behmen."

GOING BACK SEVEN CENTURIES

From the grand castle inhabited by the all-powerful cardinal to the ancient abbey that holds the key to the film's ultimate mystery, ***Season of the Witch*** is rich with painstakingly researched and reproduced images of life in the Middle Ages. It took a team featuring some of the world's top experts in production design, stunts, swordsmanship, horsemanship and more to provide the film's vivid settings and action sequences. "It's gritty and hard, like the age," says Roven. "But the visuals are incredibly striking and, in some ways, very beautiful."

To evoke the vast wilderness of 14th-century Europe, the filmmakers travelled to Austria and Hungary to find locations virtually untouched by the intervening centuries. "Hungary was our hub, but we spent time in Vienna and Salzburg as well," says director Dominic Sena. "The big forests, the monasteries and castles were mostly in Austria. We used a soundstage in Hungary to build the big set pieces, and there were quite a few."

The real locations that fed the atmosphere of the piece proved daunting for the cast and crew. The spectacular, gray and forbidding route to the abbey was almost as hard to shoot a film on as it would have been for the knights to travel. "For some locations, we had to drive five kilometers off the paved roads to the point where cars can go no further, and then hoof it on foot through the Austrian Alps in the dead of winter," says Gartner. "I've never in my life spent so much time in long underwear and goose down. The actors and the crew were absolutely extraordinary through cold, mud, rain and sudden changes in temperature and weather."

Production for ***Season of the Witch*** began in a remote region of the Totes Gebirge ("Dead Mountains") in Austria. The Austrian weather cooperated with the production until late November, when a howling wind ripped through the set followed closely by rain, snow and hail. Temperatures dipped below freezing during the two and a half weeks of December night shoots, including one evening when temperatures dropped to minus 18 degrees Celsius.

"We always knew the winter weather would make it grueling," says Sena. "But this is a dark story, not a ride through a beautiful green forest. The trees had to be dead and everything had to be barren to convey the right mood, so everybody just knuckled down."

No one in the company was immune to the power of the settings. "On the first day of shooting we were up there in the mountains," says Sena. "Nic looked out over the landscape and he said to me, 'Dom, look where we are. It's a privilege to be here.' He didn't go back to his trailer the whole day. He sat on a rock, looking out and saying, 'This is incredible.'"

In fact, Cage says he found the extreme conditions exhilarating. "I am a weather enthusiast," he says. "Any time there's a storm brewing, I get excited. That kind of dramatic

atmosphere helps infuse real emotion into the story. It only made me feel more connected to the material. Dom and I had a few laughs about it, because we were both thrilled by it.”

Perlman credits the hardworking crew with keeping him focused and ready to work. “I’ve never enjoyed fighting the elements,” he says. “The wardrobe folks were the real heroes. They were the ones running in with the blankets and the hot chocolate after we’d just gotten soaked and it was thirty-one degrees. Then we got to go back to our nice, warm trailers and everyone on the crew was still out in the weather.”

The filmmakers scouted locations all over Europe to find a historically accurate castle to serve as the Cardinal of Marburg’s residence. “We looked in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Germany,” says Roven. “We had pictures sent to us from Italy and Spain. I became a student of architecture because we were determined that the setting be authentic.”

Their diligence was rewarded when they discovered Kreuzenstein Castle, ideally situated on a hilltop about 20 kilometers northeast of Vienna. Built on a foundation that dates back at least to the year 1115, Kreuzenstein Castle sits surrounded by towers that allow panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. A fortress built to protect its inhabitants from invaders, it has high, thick walls, a drawbridge and an iron-studded entrance that evokes a long-forgotten way of life.

The castle and its keep were made into a suitable home for a powerful cardinal by Uli Hanisch, the film’s production designer. “My biggest joy is learning something new,” says Hanisch. “We started by simply going through history books. I became almost addicted to stuff from the period. The art always involved religious subjects. You find endless images of devils and demons fighting through the night, which were a big inspiration for us.”

Hanisch drew on the two predominant architectural styles of the era, Gothic and Romanesque, to create the contrasting environments for the worldly Cardinal and the cloistered monks of Severac. To convey the supreme and undisputed power of the Church, Hanisch decked the Cardinal’s private quarters in the ornate trappings of the soaring Gothic style. “It would have been the more lavish and more recent style,” the designer explains. “This cardinal is wealthy, he’s urbane, he’s on top of the world. To create the kind of emotion and power we wanted, we went over the top a little bit. We surrounded him with golden Gothic elements.”

Cardinal D’Ambroise, who has himself fallen victim to the Plague, has the knights brought to him as he lies in a grand bedchamber, surrounded by doctors wearing the bizarre beaked masks believed to ward off the Plague. “We built a huge bed that is more like a throne,” says Hanisch. “It’s like a room in itself with endless images of the demons and angels in battle adorning it. We built a huge fireplace with demons and saints painted on it. This dying cardinal

is melting away in his bed surrounded by his riches. It was our way of representing his whole world in one room.”

The Cardinal’s chamber is richly, but simply, furnished in keeping with common custom, says Hanisch. “At that time, one might have a table and a chair. The rest of the furniture was mainly boxes to contain goods. The Cardinal also has all kinds of brass and golden candelabras, chandeliers, and other things that would have been priceless at that time.”

The church official’s physical and moral corruption is reflected in the decay surrounding him. “We created the walls to look as if they have a skin disease,” says Hanisch. “The whole thing is completely rotten and almost falling in pieces.”

When the action moves to the monastery, the designer brought in more traditional Romanesque elements, typified by massive edifices with few windows and claustrophobic interiors. “The abbey and the monks are more old-fashioned,” says Hanisch. “They’re very serious about what they’re doing and not as wealthy.”

But the abbey contains its own cache of incredible wealth in the form of thousands of books. Without mechanized printing, bookmaking was a laborious art form, performed exclusively by monks. Every book was handwritten and often lavishly illustrated. It might take for a single person two years to copy one book.

“When we started to design our library, we needed to build a huge place to accommodate the battle that takes place there,” says Hanisch. “It had to have nooks and corners for people to hide in. Therefore, we needed a lot of shelves, and the books to fill them. I believe that we created over four thousand books for the library.”

With existing books both scarce and precious, Hanisch needed a way to replicate the originals quickly and efficiently. “We established a massive bookmaking factory,” he says. “It took 15 guys working almost day and night for a month to produce enough real books out of leather and paper, and then fake books out of fiberglass. They had to be painted and dusted and duplicated and molded. It was an enormous effort and they did an amazing job.”

Stunt coordinator Tom Struthers put the actors through intensive training to prepare them for physical action that encompasses fighting unseen enemies through trenches and plague-riddled villages and a brutal encounter with wolves in Wormwood Forest. Even Struthers, who has coordinated stunts on action-heavy films including *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Dark Knight* and *Terminator Salvation*, found the working conditions challenging.

“It was a very, very tough shoot,” he says. “It was very dangerous in a lot of respects. We were using locations that required us to be unusually mindful at all times. At one point we

were on a gorge with a 50 or 60-meter drop down the side of it, shooting a scene that required horses, a wagon, the actors and the whole crew. Everyone had to pull together to make it work.”

Struthers had just a few weeks to turn actors who had never been on horseback into expert riders. “It turned out Nic hadn’t even been on a pony as a child,” says Struthers. “He didn’t even know which side of the animal to mount from. In a very short amount of time, he went from knowing nothing to being able to canter and hand gallop alone in a field. It was a lot to learn and he took to it very well.”

Cage spent three weeks training in England with Camilla Naprous and her team, The Devil’s Horsemen, practicing everything from weaving around poles to simply riding quietly through forests. The actor trained for up to seven hours a day and, by all accounts, put his heart and soul into it. “As I learned, I grew to love the horse as a remarkable animal,” Cage says. “The relationship between man and horse is ancient and beautiful. It seems to be the most natural thing in the world. That connection turned out to be the most rewarding part of my experience on this movie.”

According to Naprous, finding the right horse for a rider is a bit like matchmaking. “All the horses have different personalities,” she says. “Nic’s horse, Dolly, is a little too intelligent for his own good. He does cheeky little things. El Greco, who was Ron’s horse, is a bit simpler. He cruises along with life.”

“El Greco was magnificent,” says Perlman. “When they said, ‘Roll camera!’ you could feel him saying, ‘Okay. What do you need me to do?’”

As well-trained as the horses were, Sena found them to be one of the film’s most difficult elements to coordinate. “We were working Andalusians, which are huge, difficult-to-control animals,” he says. “They were also pulling a one-and-a-half-ton wagon through rough terrain. The journey traverses remote forest, but we had to find paths that were big enough to support the wagon. No one anticipated what it was going to take to pull a 3,000-pound wagon through that environment.”

Also unanticipated was the problem of shooting dialogue as the wagon was pulled along. When it was attached to the team of six horses, the cart made too much noise for clear audio to be recorded. “I studied scenes in westerns and realized that they ride and then they stop to talk, and then they ride on,” notes Sena. “They don’t ride and talk at the same time very often and now I know why!

“We tried using electric cars that were supposed to be silent to pull the wagon, but they weren’t silent enough,” the director continues. “We ended up hooking a winch to it and attaching that to a truck two hundred yards away that pulled the wagon through the forest.”

To help design the complex, thrilling fight sequences, Struthers enlisted the expertise of Kevin McCurdy, a theater-trained fight director from the U.K. “I wanted to approach this a little bit differently,” he says. “Kevin’s job was to keep it true to the period and add a bit of drama, rather than just a good old hack and slash. We put the actors through intensive training, so when you see someone swinging a sword, it’s really them and that makes a difference.”

McCurdy designed a signature fighting style for each performer that developed organically from the actors’ natural movement. “My way of working is to put myself into the character and use the emotional state to create physical sense,” he says. “Before I even meet the actors, I’m generating trademarks for them. When I do meet with the actor, I watch them move before they ever get a sword in their hands. Then I cultivate and shape what comes naturally.

“Nic Cage is like a machine,” he continues. “He’s absolutely brilliant—very technical, very clean in his movements. Ron is very strong, very rounded in the shoulders and very grounded, so his fighting style came from there. Robert, who plays the young man who wants to be a knight, is fast and nippy. He’s a complete contrast to the others.”

The swords used in the film are based on actual European arms of the period, adapted especially for the individual characters by the film’s prop department, led by prop master Zoltan Szalkai. “Each weapon is a direct reflection of the warrior,” says Szalkai. “We copied 14th-century swords and put customized design elements on them. For example, Behmen has a very elegant, richly engraved long sword. It’s what was called a one-and-a-half-hand sword at the time, because you actually maneuver the sword with one hand, and support that hand with the other.

“Felson is a bigger, stronger man, so his sword is slightly shorter with a very thick, wide blade,” continues Szalkai. “It’s also engraved, but it’s much less elaborate. For Kay, we used a very simple sword, because he’s a newcomer to fighting.”

For a scene set in Wormwood Forest, where the party is attacked by a pack of wild wolves, the filmmakers relied on the expertise of Zoltan Horkai, one of the world’s foremost wilderness animal trainers. Horkai says he came to his unusual profession accidentally. “Ever I was about six years old, I really wanted to have wolves,” he says. “At that time, I would have been satisfied with one wolf. When I was old enough to be on my own, I got a wolf. A natural history filmmaker needed a shot of a wolf running in the forest and came to me. When people started asking him how he got the shot, he would say, ‘Well, there is this crazy guy in Hungary.’ Today I have two hundred animals, including bears, wolves, deer and wild boars.”

The production employed seven wolves, ranging in age from four to 15 years old, for 16 scenes. Each of Horkai's animals has a specific set of on-camera skills. "In this film, the director wanted to see the wolves howling, watching, standing and snarling," he explains. "The trick is choosing the right wolf for the required action. I've been living with these wolves for fifteen years now, and they are still mysterious. Every single day and every single shoot brings me something new, so we have to keep to strict safety requirements. We ask people not to bring food on the set for several days before. I want to make sure no one gets injured—animal or human."

Cage recalls working with a wolf off-leash, less than a foot away from his face. "I like animals, so I was about to put my hand up in a friendly way, and someone said, 'No, don't do that, he bites.' He bites? And his teeth are just inches away? OK, let's get this shot as quickly as possible! I'd like to fulfill my contract."

The filming of ***Season of the Witch*** took cast and crew on a real life adventure through real forests and mountain ranges, the director says. "None of us had done anything like it before. I've shot in Los Angeles for so long that I think I know every diner, every restaurant, every hill, every opulent mansion. Putting a camera on things I'd never seen before genuinely got my juices flowing.

"It was also the most grueling shoot I have ever been on," says Sena. "The pressure was on all of us. We didn't have the luxury of a lot of time and the physical conditions were incredibly taxing. But it was so rewarding. I've never felt as good after principal photography as I did about this picture."

ABOUT THE CAST

NICOLAS CAGE (Behmen) is an Academy Award winner and one of the most versatile actors of all time, equally known for his poignant portrayals in both drama and comedy. Most recently, Cage starred in the action comedy *Kick-Ass*, produced by Matthew Vaughn, and the family adventure *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, a film that marked Cage's seventh collaboration with producer Jerry Bruckheimer. He also played the title role in the critically acclaimed Werner Herzog crime drama *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans*, playing a drug and gambling-addicted detective in post-Katrina New Orleans.

Previously, Cage lent his voice to two animated features: the Jerry Bruckheimer-produced family adventure *G-Force* and the re-imagining of a manga classic, *Astro Boy*. Cage also starred in Alex Proyas' sci-fi thriller *Knowing* and the Pang brothers' *Bangkok Dangerous*, an action thriller.

His memorable performance as an alcoholic drinking himself to death in Mike Figgis' acclaimed drama *Leaving Las Vegas* earned Cage an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award® and Best Actor awards from the New York Film Critics Circle, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, the Chicago Film Critics and the National Board of Review. Cage further solidified his leading man status when he received Academy Award, Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild and British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) nominations for his dual role as twin brothers Charlie and Donald Kaufman in Spike Jonze's quirky comedy, *Adaptation*, which co-starred Meryl Streep and Chris Cooper.

In 2007, Cage starred in the worldwide box office success *National Treasure: Book of Secrets*. It marked Cage's fifth collaboration with producer Jerry Bruckheimer after *The Rock*, *Con Air*, *Gone in 60 Seconds* and the first *National Treasure*. He also portrayed Johnny Blaze in *Ghost Rider*, based on the Marvel comic book character of the same name, which was written and directed by Mark Steven Johnson. The film set a new record as the highest grossing film to open on a Presidents Day weekend.

Other recent credits include a pair of 2006 releases, Neil LaBute's *The Wicker Man* and Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center*, as well as Gore Verbinski's *The Weather Man* and Andrew Niccol's *Lord of War*, both in 2005. Cage was also heard as the voice of Zoc in the animated film *The Ant Bully*.

In the fall of 2002, Cage made his feature film directorial debut with *Sonny*. Cage cast an impressive group of actors, including Golden Globe winner James Franco, Mena Suvari, Brenda Blethyn and Harry Dean Stanton. The film was accepted at the 2002 Deauville Film Festival.

Cage's production company, Saturn Films, produced the 2002 drama *The Life of David Gale* and 2000's critically acclaimed *Shadow of a Vampire*.

Cage's many other films include *Next*, *Matchstick Men*, *Windtalkers*, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, *The Family Man*, *Bringing out the Dead*, *Eight Millimeter*, *Snake Eyes*, *City of Angels*, *Face/Off*, *Kiss of Death*, *Guarding Tess*, *It Could Happen to You*, *Red Rock West*, *Honeymoon in Vegas*, *Raising Arizona*, *Vampire's Kiss*, *Peggy Sue Got Married*, *Valley Girl*, *Racing with the Moon*, *The Cotton Club* and *Rumble Fish*.

It was Cage's portrayal of a tormented Vietnam vet in *Birdy* that first established him as a serious actor. Directed by Alan Parker, *Birdy* won the jury prize at Cannes. Cage then received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actor for his role as Cher's lover in *Moonstruck*. David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*, in which Cage starred opposite Laura Dern, won the Palme d'Or at the 1990 Cannes Film Festival.

Some of Cage's other honors include a 1993 Golden Globe nomination for his role in *Honeymoon in Vegas*, the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Montreal World Film Festival in 1996 and the first ever Distinguished Decade in Film Award at ShoWest in 2001. The prestigious American Cinematheque honored him in 2001.

Cage was raised in Long Beach, California, and lived there until his family moved to San Francisco when he was 12. Cage began acting at age 15 when he enrolled in San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater. He later moved to Los Angeles and while still a high school student, landed a role in the television film "The Best of Times." He made his feature film debut in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*.

RON PERLMAN (Felson) is an award-winning actor who has moved seamlessly between the worlds of film, television and theater for almost three decades. Having received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Minnesota, he returned to his native New York to begin his professional career in theater, delving into the works of contemporary dramatists like Pinter and Beckett as well as the classics of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Ibsen and Chekhov. Perlman recently made two trips back to Broadway in productions of "A Few Good Men" and "Bus Stop."

The actor's film career began in the early '80s with back-to-back films for director Jean-Jacques Annaud: *Quest for Fire*, for which he received a Canadian Academy Award nomination,

and *The Name of the Rose*, in the role of the hunchback Salvatore. Perlman resumed his unique collaboration with French directors by starring in Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro's award-winning fantasy *The City of Lost Children* and Jeunet's *Alien: Resurrection*, alongside Sigourney Weaver and Winona Ryder.

Other film work includes roles in studio ventures such as *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *Romeo is Bleeding*, *Fluke*, *The Adventures of Huck Finn*, *Sleepwalkers*, *Happy, Texas*, *Enemy at the Gates*, *Blade 2*, *Star Trek: Nemesis* and Guillermo Del Toro's *Hellboy*, in which he starred as the title character.

Independent film credits include *Cronos*, *The Last Supper*, *When the Bough Breaks*, *Frogs for Snakes*, *I Woke Up Early the Day I Died*, *Tinseltown* and the Oscar-winning short *Two Soldiers*.

Perlman's film career was interrupted by a three-year run on CBS' critically acclaimed drama "Beauty and the Beast," for which he received a Golden Globe for Best Actor along with two Emmy® nominations and three Viewers for Quality Television Awards.

Other television work includes HBO's "The Second Civil War," "Mr. Stitch," "The Adventures of Captain Zoom," the Rob Nilsson adaptation of Rod Serling's classic "A Town Has Turned to Dust" for the Sci-Fi Channel and "The Magnificent Seven." His most recent credits include Stephen King's mini-series "Desperation" for ABC, Larry Fessenden's indie thriller *The Last Winter*, *In The Name Of The King* with Jason Statham, a "Masters of Horror" episode directed by Jon Carpenter for Showtime, the independent feature *The Mutant Chronicles*, opposite Thomas Jane and John Malkovich, *I Sell The Dead*, opposite Dominic Monaghan, *Outlander* opposite Jim Caviezel and John Hurt, and *Bunraku* opposite Demi Moore, Josh Hartnett and Woody Harrelson. Ron also reprised his role in Guillermo del Toro's *Hellboy* sequel, *Hellboy 2: The Golden Army*.

Perlman recently wrapped the third season of the critically acclaimed FX series "Sons of Anarchy," in which he plays Clay, the president of a motorcycle gang.

STEPHEN CAMPBELL MOORE (Debelzaq) made his feature film debut as Adam, the main character in Stephen Fry's *Bright Young Things*, alongside Emily Mortimer. He subsequently appeared in *A Good Woman*, opposite Scarlett Johansson, *Sea Wolf*, with Sebastian Koch and Tim Roth and *The Bank Job*, also starring Jason Statham and Saffron Burrows.

Moore played Irwin in Alan Bennett's *The History Boys*, a film adaptation of the acclaimed play. He first played the role at The Royal National Theatre and subsequently on Broadway, under the direction of Nicholas Hytner.

Other theater credits include The Almeida's "Coriolanus" alongside Ralph Fiennes and the RSC's productions of "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Much Ado About Nothing" with directors Greg Doran and Michael Attenborough. His television credits for the BBC include "He Knew He Was Right," "Byron," "Rough Crossings" and "A Short Stay in Switzerland," with Julie Walters. He also starred as Edward in "Wallis and Edward" and appeared most recently in "Ben Hur."

CLAIRE FOY (The Girl) has recently finished filming "Upstairs Downstairs" for the BBC. In this hugely anticipated revival due for release this December Foy plays Lady Persephone and stars alongside a stellar cast including Aileen Atkins, Jean Marsh and Keeley Hawes. She spent the earlier part of this year in Israel where she was filming the highly anticipated four-part serial "Homeland," by the multi-award-winning writer-director Peter Kosminsky. Foy takes the lead role "Erin" in this topical British Channel 4 drama about the conflict in the Middle East, due for release early next year.

Foy has recently been seen on British television screens in the Sky 1 series "Going Postal," in which she played Adora Belle Dearheart. In this adaptation of Terry Pratchett's novel, Foy starred alongside David Suchet and Tamsin Greig.

Since graduating from the Oxford School of Drama in the summer of 2007, Foy made a name for herself in the title role of the critically acclaimed BBC adaptation "Little Dorrit," which won best mini-series at the 2009 Emmy Awards and has been nominated for best mini-series at this year's Golden Globes. Foy's performance also earned her a nomination in the best actress category at the 2009 RTS Television Awards. Foy starred opposite Matthew Macfadyen and Tom Courtenay in this compelling period drama based on Charles Dickens' classic novel.

Foy's other television credits include "Being Human" (BBC), in which she played the role of Julia, directed by Declan O'Dwyer. Foy also played the role of Chloe Webster in the popular BBC1 daytime series "Doctors."

She made her professional stage debut at the National Theatre in "DNA/The Miracle/Baby Girl," a trio of acts directed by Paul Miller.

STEPHEN GRAHAM (Hagamar) has the industry buzzing about his stunning performance in the lead role in *This is England*, Shane Meadows' BAFTA-winning film for Best Feature. In just the short time since Graham first gained attention in the U.S., he has already

worked with some of the best actors, directors and producers in the business. The actor is currently a series regular alongside Steve Buscemi in HBO's drama "Boardwalk Empire," playing a young Al Capone.

Graham's portrayal of Baby Face Nelson opposite Johnny Depp and Christian Bale in *Public Enemies* was a scene-stealer and he just booked a great role in *London Boulevard*, opposite Keira Knightley and Colin Farrell. He recently starred in the BBC miniseries "The Occupation," which was a huge hit in the U.K. His depiction of an alcoholic in Jimmy McGovern's "The Street" garnered rave reviews as well.

ULRICH THOMSEN (Eckhart) gained much attention in his groundbreaking performance in Thomas Vinterberg's *The Celebration*. Thomsen's performance as the eldest son in a family full of secrets earned him a European Film Award nomination for Best Actor. In 2004, he won the award for Best Actor at the San Sebastian International Film Festival for his performance in *Brothers*, opposite Connie Nielsen.

Other film credits include Ridley Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven*, with Orlando Bloom; the Danish film *The Inheritance*, for which he won the Danish Film Academy Award for Best Actor; the Fox feature *Hitman*, alongside Timothy Olyphant; the Ridley and Tony Scott-produced TNT miniseries "The Company"; Kathryn Bigelow's *The Weight of Water*, with Sean Penn; and Michael Apted's *The World is Not Enough*, with Pierce Brosnan. Most recently, Thomsen was seen in Tom Tykwer's *The International*, opposite Clive Owen and Naomi Watts, Michael Cuesta's *Tell Tale*, and Neil Marshall's *Centurion*.

ROBERT SHEEHAN (Kay) hails from Portlaoise, Ireland, and has been acting since childhood. He recently played B.J. in the highly successful *Red Riding* trilogy, based on David Peace's novels of the same name. Sheehan appeared in all three films, working alongside actors such as Sean Bean, Paddy Considine and Peter Mullan.

Sheehan's breakthrough role came in Aisling Walsh's acclaimed feature *Song for a Raggy Boy*. Since then, he has appeared in a number of pictures including *A Dublin Story*, *Ghostwood*, *An Creatur* and Martin Duffy's *Summer of the Flying Saucers*, in which he played the leading role. He plays the co-lead opposite Ben Barnes in Nick Hamm's forthcoming comedy *Killing Bono*.

Sheehan played the leading role of Luke opposite Rupert Grint, Kimberly Nixon and James Nesbitt in *Cherrybomb*, directed by Lisa Barros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn. It premiered to

considerable acclaim at the 2009 Berlin Film Festival and screened at the Dublin and Belfast Film festivals before going on to general release in 2010.

On television, Sheehan appeared in all 24 episodes of “Foreign Exchange” and all 13 episodes of “Young Blades.” More recently, he appeared in “The Clinic,” “Bel’s Boys” and Season 2 of Showtime’s “The Tudors.” Sheehan played series regular Addison Teller in “Rock Rivals” and also starred in “Bittersweet,” a two-part comedy drama directed by Declan Eames.

Sheehan most recently appeared in the leading role of Nathan in “Misfits,” the hit new dramedy produced for British television. He will next be seen on “Love Hate,” a miniseries featuring Aidan Gillen and directed by David Caffrey.

CHRISTOPHER LEE (Cardinal D’Ambroise) is the legendary actor recently seen as Willy Wonka’s dentist father in Tim Burton’s *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and as memorable villains in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones* as well as *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith*.

Before his supporting roles in these blockbusters, Lee starred in the critically acclaimed independent picture *Jinnah*, in which it was a great challenge for him to play the founder of a nation in front of its people, and the epic BBC miniseries “Gormenghast.” He was also seen in *Crimson Rivers II*, with Jean Réno, and the Tim Burton hits *Sleepy Hollow* and *Corpse Bride*.

In 2007, Lee provided the voice of Death in “The Color of Magic,” based on the Terry Pratchett novel, and appeared in *The Golden Compass*. The following year, he was seen in Stephen Poliakoff’s *Glorious 39*. He will next be seen in *The Resident*, with Hilary Swank and Jeffrey Dean Morgan.

The directors for whom Lee has worked include John Huston, Raoul Walsh, Joseph Losey, George Marshall, Orson Welles, Nicholas Ray, Michael Powell, Edward Molinaro, Jerome Savary, Billy Wilder, Steven Spielberg, Joe Dante, Peter Jackson, Tim Burton, John Landis, Alejandro Jodorowsky and Andrei Konchalovsky. He has appeared in more than 250 film and television productions, amongst which the best known are *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Dracula*, *The Mummy*, *The Wicker Man*, *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, both *The Three Musketeers* and *The Four Musketeers*, *The Man with the Golden Gun*, *1941*, *Airport ’77* and *Gremlins 2*.

Lee considers the most important point in his career to have been his appearance as the host of “Saturday Night Live” in 1978, alongside John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray, Gilda Radner, Laraine Newman and Jane Curtin. It is still the long-running series’ third-highest-rated show ever.

Lee has received awards for his contribution to the cinema from the United States, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Great Britain. He is a Commander of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the world's oldest such order. In 2001, he was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire, and in 2009 the Queen of England granted Lee his knighthood.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

DOMINIC SENA (Director) is a founder of Propaganda Films and the director of award-winning music videos, commercials and feature films. He began his career as a cameraman before making his feature film directorial debut in 1993 with the controversial thriller *Kalifornia*, starring Brad Pitt, David Duchovny and Juliette Lewis. The film won the International Film Critics Jury Prize at the 1993 Montreal Film Festival as well as top honors for its cinematography.

Renowned for his visually adventurous style, Sena has gone on to direct a number of films including the worldwide hit *Gone in 60 Seconds*, starring Nicolas Cage, Giovanni Ribisi and Angelina Jolie; *Swordfish*, starring John Travolta, Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Don Cheadle and Sam Shepard; and the 2009 action thriller *Whiteout*, starring Kate Beckinsale.

In addition to his film credits, Sena is a prolific director of music videos who has earned numerous awards for his work with such artists as Sting, David Bowie, Fleetwood Mac, Tina Turner, Bryan Adams and Steve Winwood. Sena's collaboration with Janet Jackson on a series of choreography-focused videos for her iconic "Rhythm Nation 1814" album release, including "Miss You Much," "The Pleasure Principle," "Come Back to Me" and "Rhythm Nation," earned him a Grammy Award® for Best Long Form Video.

In the world of television commercials, Sena has created memorable spots for clients such as Nike, Apple, Acura, IBM, Coke and Honda, among others. Three of Sena's spots helped earn Propaganda the Palme D'Or at the International Advertising Festival in Cannes. The Nike campaign garnered Sena a Gold Lion for Individual Achievement. His commercials also won top honors at New York's prestigious AICP Awards and were made a part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

BRAGI SCHUT JR. (Screenwriter) is a screenwriter and director who created the CBS sci-fi series "Threshold," starring Carla Gugino and Charles Dutton, and penned screenplays for the forthcoming features *The Last Voyage of the Demeter*, *Criminal Macabre*, *Submariner* and an as-yet untitled project for director Roland Emmerich.

Schut has directed three award-winning shorts including *Charlie Thistle*, which was an official selection at the Palm Springs Short Film Festival and won prizes at numerous festivals including Nantucket, Sedona, Rushes Soho Shorts, AOF and The Doorpost Film Project.

Schut was a 2003 winner of a Don and Gee Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting for ***Season of the Witch***. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Madison and was chosen to participate in the Writer's Guild Showrunner Training Program.

CHARLES ROVEN (Producer) Distinguished by almost three decades as a producer, Charles Roven is co-founder of Atlas Entertainment. Roven has developed a unique expertise in that he is comfortable producing tentpole films while never losing sight of his mission to make critically-acclaimed, independent films. He has built a reputation of creative collaboration and innovation, garnering international acclaim for his slate of films which have generated billions of dollars in revenues. In 2008, Charles Roven was honored with the ShoWest Producer of the Year award as well as Filmmaker of the Year at the Dubai International Film Festival, for his prolific contributions to the film industry.

Roven produced two of summer 2008's biggest films: Warner Bros. Studios' critically acclaimed *The Dark Knight* directed by Christopher Nolan and starring Christian Bale, Michael Caine, Heath Ledger, Gary Oldman, Aaron Eckhart, Maggie Gyllenhaal and Morgan Freeman, which broke box-office records around the world and grossed over a billion dollars worldwide; and the comedy blockbuster *Get Smart*, inspired by the hit TV show, directed by Pete Segal and starring Steve Carrel, Anne Hathaway, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Terence Stamp and Alan Arkin. Earlier in 2008, Roven also produced the Lionsgate Film *The Bank Job*, starring Jason Statham and Saffron Burrows and directed by Roger Donaldson, which opened number one in the UK box office and was one of the best reviewed movies of 2008. In February of 2009, Roven also released Tom Tykwer's *The International* for Columbia Pictures starring Clive Owen and Naomi Watts.

His distinguished credits include *Batman Begins*, the prequel to *The Dark Knight*, directed by Christopher Nolan, which had a worldwide gross of over \$370 million. Roven also produced Universal/HBO Films' musical *Idlewild*, starring Outkast's Andre Benjamin (Andre 3000) and Antwan Patton (Big Boi), and the Terry Gilliam directed *Brothers Grimm*, starring Matt Damon and Heath Ledger. Previously Roven produced the \$275-million-plus worldwide box-office hit *Scooby-Doo*, as well as the sequel, *Scooby Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed*.

Roven's success, however, has not just been limited to producing films. In 1989 with partner Robert Cavallo, Roven co-founded Roven/Cavallo Entertainment (RCE), predecessor to Atlas Entertainment, which in addition to film production, guided the trajectories of some of the largest names in music, including multi-Grammy-winning recording artists Green Day, Alanis Morissette, Seal, Weezer, Savage Garden, LeAnn Rimes, All American Rejects, and Paula Abdul. During this time, Roven produced films such as *Final Analysis*, Oscar-nominated *Twelve Monkeys*, *Fallen*, the \$200 million-grossing fantasy romance *City of Angels*, and the highly-acclaimed post-Gulf War tale *Three Kings*.

Roven is currently prepping *Triple Frontier*, which reunites *The Hurt Locker*'s Academy Award-winning duo, director Kathryn Bigelow and writer Mark Boal. Roven also reteams with Christopher Nolan serving as a producer on the highly anticipated Batman sequel, *The Dark Knight Rises*, set for release in July of 2012, and is also a producer on the Superman reboot film directed by Zack Snyder (*300*, *Watchmen*) based on a story written by David Goyer (*Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight*) and Christopher Nolan.

ALEX GARTNER (Producer) has worked in the entertainment industry for over a decade as a producer as well as senior executive at two major studios. Gartner joined Atlas Entertainment in 2004 as a producing partner with founder Charles Roven. Most recently, he produced 2008's comedy blockbuster *Get Smart*, inspired by the hit TV show and directed by Pete Segal with stars Steve Carell, Anne Hathaway and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. Gartner also produced the critically acclaimed dramedy *The Upside of Anger*, directed by Mike Binder and starring Joan Allen, Kevin Costner, Erika Christensen, Evan Rachel Wood, Alicia Witt and Keri Russell. Previously, he produced *Barbershop 2: Back in Business*, which starred Ice Cube and Cedric The Entertainer, and was executive producer on *Out of Time*, starring Denzel Washington.

As President of Production at MGM Studios, Gartner supervised the entire production slate, including such notable films as *Die Another Day*, *Barbershop*, *Legally Blonde* and *Heartbreakers*. After producing *Indecent Proposal* for Paramount in 1993, Gartner became executive vice president at Fox 2000, having started the division with President Laura Ziskin. There, he worked on such films as *Soul Food*, *Fight Club*, *Courage Under Fire* and Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line*.

RYAN KAVANAUGH (Executive Producer) is not just a successful producer, but also a highly regarded expert in film finance through his company Relativity Media, LLC. Relativity is a media and entertainment company engaged in creating, financing and distributing first class, studio-quality entertainment content and intellectual property across multiple platforms, as well as making strategic partnerships with, and opportunistic investments in, entertainment-related companies and assets.

Kavanaugh has created business and financial structures for a number of studios, production companies and producers, introducing more than \$10 billion in capital to these structures. Past structures/deals include arrangements for Sony, Universal, Warner Bros., Marvel and many others.

Kavanaugh has embraced philanthropy with the same vigor he brings to the entertainment industry. He is an active participant in more than 25 charities, including Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters, Firststar, Best Buddies, Habitat for Humanity and The Art of Elysium, for whom he currently serves as chairman of the board.

As a producer, Kavanaugh's credits include Jim Sheridan's *Brothers*, starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Tobey Maguire and Natalie Portman; Lasse Hallstrom's *Dear John*, starring Channing Tatum and Amanda Seyfried; and *The Spy Next Door*, starring Jackie Chan. Among his credits as executive producer are Rob Marshall's *Nine*, starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Nicole Kidman, Penelope Cruz, Marion Cotillard and Sofia Loren; and the upcoming *Immortals*, a film in the vein of *300*.

Other recent credits include *Mamma Mia*, *Bruno*, *Fast & Furious*, *Hancock*, *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*, *Step Brothers*, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, *Last House on the Left*, *The Unborn* and *The Strangers*.

Kavanaugh was recently honored with the 2009 Hollywood Producer of the Year Award at the 13th Annual Hollywood Awards Gala. *Variety* recently published a special issue honoring Kavanaugh as a Billion-Dollar Producer.

ALAN G. GLAZER (Executive Producer) got his start in the agent trainee program at the William Morris Agency before joining Roven Cavallo Productions/Atlas Entertainment in 1994. Today, as executive vice president at Atlas Entertainment, Glazer oversees all the company's business activities and physical production.

Glazer was an executive producer on Roger Donaldson's *The Bank Job*, starring Jason Statham and Saffron Burrows, and Tom Tykwer's *The International*, starring Clive Owen and Naomi Watts. He was a co-producer on the comedy blockbuster *Get Smart*, starring Steve Carell and Anne Hathaway.

Prior film credits as executive producer or co-producer include *Live!*, written and directed by Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Bill Guttentag and starring Eva Mendes; *Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed*, *Bulletproof Monk* and 2002's *Scooby-Doo*, which grossed more than \$275 million worldwide. Glazer was also an associate producer on *City of Angels*, starring Nicolas Cage and Meg Ryan. He produced the HBO special "Making Angels."

Glazer was associate producer on *Three Kings*, starring George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg and Ice Cube, and executive produced the HBO special "On the Set of *Three Kings*."

Glazer ventured into the documentary world as executive producer on “Hamster Factory,” a documentary about the making of Terry Gilliam’s *Twelve Monkeys*, and “Under the Bunker: On the Set of *Three Kings*.”

STEVE ALEXANDER (Executive Producer) spent ten years at CAA, where he represented many of the world’s leading actors including Heath Ledger, Jeff Bridges, Natalie Portman, Johnny Knoxville, Chow Yun-Fat, Billy Bob Thornton, Eddie Izzard, Peter Gallagher and Chad Michael Murray. Alexander began his career working for such Hollywood heavyweights as Joel Silver before becoming a producer himself. He most notably produced the cult hit *Swimming with Sharks*, starring Kevin Spacey and Frank Whaley. From there, Alexander joined CAA in 1997, signing a young Heath Ledger as one of his first clients.

Alexander joined Atlas Entertainment in July of 2008.

TOM KARNOWSKI (Executive Producer) is currently prepping *Man with the Iron Fist* in China for Strike Entertainment. Along with ***Season of the Witch***, he recently served as executive producer and unit production manager on the vigilante action film *Max Payne*, starring Mark Wahlberg, and the prehistoric epic *10,000 BC*, directed by Roland Emmerich.

Karnowski has also served as co-producer on the post-modern caper film *The Brother’s Bloom*, starring Rachel Weisz, Mark Ruffalo and Adrien Brody, and the acclaimed thriller *The Illusionist*, starring Edward Norton and Paul Giamatti. His credits as unit production manager include the action comedies *Shanghai Knights*, starring Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson, and *I Spy*, starring Eddie Murphy and Owen Wilson, as well as the war drama *Behind Enemy Lines*, starring Owen Wilson and Gene Hackman.

Karnowski’s earlier feature film career encompassed an extensive range of credits as producer, first assistant director, associate producer and production manager. In 1982, he received a Saturn Award nomination for best writing from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films for his first feature film credit, *The Sword and the Sorcerer*, which he co-wrote and co-produced.

TUCKER TOOLEY (Executive Producer) began his producing career in 1997 and over the course of the next decade, became a prolific and successful independent producer. Tabbed by *Fade In* magazine as one of their “Top 100 People of Hollywood,” Tooley is able to consistently produce commercial films, package A-list talent and deliver films on time and on budget.

In 1999, Tooley established the production shingle Newman/Tooley Films with then producing partner Vincent Newman. Over the next seven years, the duo produced a successful slate of both independent and studio movies, working with some of the top talent in Hollywood.

In 2006, Tooley served as CEO of Tooley Productions and produced *Shadowboxer*, starring Academy Award winner Helen Mirren and directed by Lee Daniels, as well as the critically acclaimed *Felon*, directed by Ric Roman Waugh.

After a decade of producing 12 feature films and television productions on his own, Tooley joined Ryan Kavanaugh's Relativity Media as president of production. Along with Kavanaugh, Tooley has built the company's "single picture" division into a full-fledged production company, developing, financing and producing eight to 10 films a year.

Tooley and his executive team currently oversee all of Relativity Media's upcoming single pictures including *Immortals*, an action adventure film from the producers of *300* and acclaimed director Tarsem Singh; *The Fighter*, directed by David O. Russell and starring Mark Wahlberg, Amy Adams and Christian Bale; Academy Award winner Steven Soderbergh's *Haywire*, starring Michael Douglas, and the 3-D action picture *Sanctum*, produced by James Cameron.

The most recent features overseen by Tooley were *Dear John*, directed by Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Lasse Hallstrom and starring Channing Tatum and Amanda Seyfried, and *The Spy Next Door*, starring Jackie Chan, George Lopez and Billy Ray Cyrus. Previous releases Rob Marshall's *Nine* and Jim Sheridan's *Brothers* were nominated for seven Golden Globe awards.

In 2009, Tooley received the Ischia Global Film Festival's Executive of the Year award.

AMIR MOKRI (Director of Photography) received his B.F.A. in mass communications from Emerson College in Boston and a M.F.A. from the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. He has served as director of photography on numerous television commercials and feature films since 1984. Film credits include *Fast & Furious*, *Vantage Point*, *National Treasure: Book of Secrets*, *Lord of War*, *Taking Lives*, *Bad Boys II*, *The Salton Sea*, *Don't Say a Word*, *Coyote Ugly*, *The Joy Luck Club* and many others. Mokri is currently prepping for the third installment of *Transformers*.

ULI HANISCH (Production Designer) was born in Nuremberg in 1967. Following his studies in visual communication in Dusseldorf, he worked as a graphic designer. In 1987, he

began a fruitful collaboration with Christoph Schlingensief by designing his films *Blackest Heart* (1990), *Terror 2000* (1992) and *United Trash* (1994).

As props master, set decorator and production designer, Hanisch oversaw a series of television movies and designed the feature films *00 Schneider – Jagd Auf Nihil Baxter* (1994) and *Praxis Dr. Hasenbein* (1996), both from the acclaimed comedic mind of Helge Schneider.

Hanisch also served as art director for German productions such as *Aimée & Jaguar* (1999) and *Schlaraffenland* (1999) and worked in the art departments on major European productions such as Peter Greenaway's *The Baby of Macon* (1992) and *Tykho Moon* (1995). Hanisch worked with director Tom Tykwer on *Winter Sleepers*, *The Princess and the Warrior*, *Heaven* and *The International*.

In 2000, Hanisch designed *The Experiment*, for which he was awarded the German Film Award for best production design. For his work on *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, he received the Bavarian Film Award, the German Film Award and the European Movie Award for best production design.

MARK HELFRICH (Editor) has edited the hit movies *X-Men: The Last Stand*, all three *Rush Hour* films, *Red Dragon*, *The Family Man*, *Money Talks*, *Predator*, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, *Scary Movie*, among many others. His feature film editorial credits have earned more than a billion dollars at the box office. His resume includes other editorial credits, among them the pilot episode of the Fox series "Prison Break" and the award-winning music video for Madonna's song, "Beautiful Stranger" from *Austin Powers*. In 2007 Mark made his feature film directorial debut with *Good Luck Chuck*. Mark has also directed episodes of "Prison Break" and "Bones." Mark currently lives in the Los Angeles area with his wife and two children.

DAN ZIMMERMAN (Editor) recently edited John Moore's action thriller *Max Payne*, starring Mark Wahlberg, and *The Omen*, also directed by Moore. He edited *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem*, for directors Greg and Colin Strause, and *Predators*, for director Nimrod Antal and producer Robert Rodriguez.

Zimmerman began his career under the tutelage of his father, esteemed editor Don Zimmerman, A.C.E. He served as assistant editor for director Tom Shadyac on *The Nutty Professor*, *Liar, Liar*, *Patch Adams* and *Dragonfly*; for director Dean Parisot on *Galaxy Quest* and *Fun with Dick and Jane*; and for director Shawn Levy on *Just Married*.

ATLI ÖRVARSSON (Composer) has made a name for himself as a composer and musician working in both film and television. He is a member of Remote Control Productions, a film music company run by Oscar-winning composer Hans Zimmer. His feature film credits as composer include the recent remake of *The Karate Kid* as well as *The Fourth Kind*, *The Code*, *Babylon A.D.* and *Vantage Point*. He has also worked on hit television shows such as “Six Degrees,” “Law & Order: Criminal Intent” and “NYPD Blue.”

In addition to his film and television credits as composer, Örvarsson has contributed in the musical department on box office smashes such as *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, *Iron Man*, *Angels & Demons* and *The Simpsons Movie*.

CARLO POGGIOLI (Costume Designer) studied stage and costume design at the Istituto D'Arte and The Accademia di Belle Arti in Naples. After graduation, he worked in Rome as assistant designer for some of the most important Italian costume designers, including Gabriella Pescucci, Piero Tosi and Maurizio Millenotti. Poggioli worked on such films as Jean-Jacques Annaud's *The Name of the Rose*, Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, Federico Fellini's *The Voice of the Moon*, Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence*, Franco Zeffirelli's *Sparrow* and others.

He also worked alongside Ann Roth as assistant on *The English Patient* and was associate costume designer on *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, both for director Anthony Minghella.

For the Opera Carlo, Poggioli worked with Liliana Cavani, Mauro Bolognini and Franco Zeffirelli. He designed the costumes for productions such as “Falstaff” (Teatro alla Scala Milano), directed by Ruggero Cappuccio and orchestra directed by Riccardo Muti; “Nina ossia la pazza per amore” (Teatro alla Scala Milano); and “Il ritorno di Don Calandrino” (Salzburg Opera Theatre).

Poggioli has enjoyed a long artistic partnership with Marco Gandini and created the costumes for Rossini's “La gazza” (Garsington Opera), Mascagni's “L'amico Fritz,” Puccini's “Gianni Schicchi” (Arena Di Verona) and Marco Tutino's “La Lupa” (Teatro Massimo di Palermo). He also worked on two plays directed by Luca Ronconi, O'Neill's “Strange Interlude” and Giraudoux's “La Folle de Chaillot.”

As a costume designer for television productions, Poggioli's credits include the miniseries “Jason and the Argonauts” and “The Mists of Avalon.” On the features side, his credits as costume designer include *Marquise*, for director Vera Belmont; *Cold Mountain*, directed by Anthony Minghella; *Van Helsing*, for director Steven Sommers; *Doom*, directed by

Andrzej Bartkowiak; *The Fine Art of Love: Mine Ha-Ha*, for director John Irvin; and *The Brothers Grimm*, directed by Terry Gilliam.

Poggioli's most recent film projects include *Silk*, directed by Francois Girard, for which he won a Genie Award and Jutra Award for Best Achievement in Costume Design; *Lecture 21*, directed by Alessandro Baricco; *Miracle at St. Anna*, directed by Spike Lee; and *Ninja Assassin*, directed by James McTeigue.