

# ZATHURA

An intergalactic world of wonder is waiting just outside your front door in Columbia Pictures' heart-racing sci-fi family film *Zathura: A Space Adventure*.

*Zathura: A Space Adventure* is the story of two squabbling brothers who are propelled into deepest, darkest space while playing a mysterious game they discovered in the basement of their old house.

Now, they must overcome their differences and work together to complete the game or they will be trapped in outer space forever.

## SYNOPSIS

After their father (**Tim Robbins**) leaves for work, leaving them in the care of their older sister (**Kristen Stewart**), six year-old Danny (**Jonah Bobo**) and ten-year old Walter (**Josh Hutcherson**) either get on each other's nerves or are totally bored.

When their bickering escalates and Walter starts chasing him, Danny hides in a dumbwaiter. But Walter surprises him, and in retaliation, lowers Danny into their dark, scary basement, where he discovers an old tattered metal board game, "Zathura." After trying unsuccessfully to get his brother to play the game with him, Danny starts to play on his own.

From his first move, Danny realizes this is no ordinary board game. His spaceship marker moves by itself and when it lands on a space, a card is ejected, which reads: "Meteor shower, take evasive action." The house is immediately pummeled from above by hot, molten meteors.

When Danny and Walter look up through the gaping hole in their roof, they discover, to their horror, that they have been propelled into deepest, darkest outer space.

And they are not alone.

So begins an exhilarating, sometimes frightening, but always unpredictable adventure. Danny and Walter realize that unless they finish the game they'll be trapped in outer space forever. With every turn, they confront one incredible obstacle after another: They accidentally put their sister Lisa into a deep cryonic sleep, are chased by a crazed, malfunctioning six-foot robot, rescue a stranded astronaut (**Dax Shepard**) and are besieged by lizard-like, carnivorous creatures called Zorgons.

With the help of the astronaut, Danny and Walter begin to put their petty fraternal differences aside, work together to overcome the obstacles they encounter and attempt to finish the game so they can go home.

But all their efforts may be in vain when they face their biggest challenge of all — a battle against an intense gravitational pull into the void of the dark planet Zathura.

Columbia Pictures Presents A Radar Pictures/Teitler Film/Michael De Luca Production *Zathura: A Space Adventure* starring Josh Hutcherson, Jonah Bobo, Dax Shepard, Kristen Stewart and Oscar® winner Tim Robbins. The film is directed by Jon Favreau from a screenplay by David Koepp & John Kamps based on the book by Chris Van Allsburg. The film is produced by William Teitler, Scott Kroopf and Michael De Luca. The executive producers are Ted Field and Louis D'Esposito. The co-producer is Peter Billingsley. The director of photography is Guillermo Navarro, ASC. The production designer is J. Michael Riva. The film editor is Dan Lebental. The costume designer is Laura Jean Shannon. The special effects are by Sony Pictures Imageworks, Inc. The visual effects supervisor is Joe Bauer. The special Robot and Zorgon effects are by Stan Winston Studio. The music is composed by John Debney.

## BLAST OFF!

Prolific children's book writer, Chris Van Allsburg (Jumanji, The Polar Express), and his partner, producer William Teitler, initially showed the general idea for *Zathura: A Space Adventure* to Columbia Pictures just after he conceived the book.

"We brought it to Amy Pascal, Matt Tolmach and Amy Baer and they flipped. They absolutely loved it," recalls Teitler. "Once Chris finished writing the book, the screenwriters David Koepp & John Kamps read it and felt they had a very clear vision of how it should be adapted it to the screen."

"*Jumanji* took seven years from the first time we optioned it to the time it actually got released," Teitler continues. "*Zathura* went so much faster because everyone immediately recognized what a great concept it was for a movie."

The challenge of adapting Zathura to the screen was the exact opposite of most literary works, which have to be compressed to accommodate a running time of about two hours. Van Allsburg's books follow a time-honored format for children's literature: Each book is extremely concise, 32 pages long with 14 illustrations. It makes an excellent blueprint for expansion into a full-length motion picture, giving the screenwriters a clear outline, while also allowing them a great deal of creative latitude in expanding on the source material.

"When I first read the script, I was immediately taken by how sincere the depiction of the characters was," comments Favreau. "David (Koepp) and John (Kamps) preserved a great deal of the emotion and imagery of Chris' book."

Producer Mike De Luca agrees, adding, “It’s a wonderful screenplay. It expands on the book’s themes and turns it into an exciting, breathless adventure built around the story of these two bickering brothers.”

There were several reasons Favreau chose *Zathura: A Space Adventure* as the follow-up project to his recent holiday hit, *Elf*. He was he looking for a film that would be a technical challenge, but one that still enabled him to tell a rousing, spirited story with a meaningful message at its core. “I wanted *Zathura* to work first and foremost on a visceral level,” says Favreau, “very much in the way Steven Spielberg’s early Amblin movies did. Films like *E.T.* and *Close Encounters* and George Lucas’ *Star Wars* movies are the kind of sci-fi stories I grew up loving and that’s something I was eager to explore with this film. I also thought it would be fun to work with special effects, miniatures, robots, computer graphics — areas I haven’t had a chance to play with in the past. After working on *Elf* and having a small taste of that kind of filmmaking, *Zathura* seemed to be the next logical step for me to challenge myself and grow as a filmmaker.”

Another reason for taking on *Zathura: A Space Adventure* was more personal, Favreau continues. “I have two children now, I watch a lot of movies that are geared towards kids and this one really appealed to my sensibility. As a filmmaker, a big part of your job is to put energy into getting a message out into the world that you believe in. I like stories that offer hope and films that have responsible themes. When you’re making a movie for young people, there should be a little aspirin in the applesauce. There should be a nice message at the core.”

For Teitler, one of the rewards of being a producer, he says, is hearing that a director like Favreau, who was coming off a huge hit like *Elf*, was interested in taking on his project as his next directorial assignment. “As a producer, you work really hard on a project, because you love it,” says Teitler. “Part of the process is

getting a strong director attached who feels as passionately about it as you do. When we heard that Jon really wanted to do the movie, it was like ‘Yes!’”

Since Favreau had worked as an independent filmmaker for years, Teitler and his fellow producer De Luca sensed that he would bring a different perspective to the material. “While I’m too old to say I grew up on the Amblin movies from the ‘80s, such as *Back To The Future*, *E.T.*, *Gremlins* and *Goonies*, they had enough adventure in them to please the whole family,” says De Luca. “In *Zathura*, Jon retained that kind of wholesomeness while at the same time bringing his own special brand of irreverence to the project that makes it interesting for adults.”

Adds Teitler: “We all know that Jon has this great instinct for comedy. But he also has a great feel for the emotional heart of the story. The script already had a lot of heart and as Jon continued to develop it with the writers and the actors, he found all the emotional and comedic moments that exist in the midst of the action and adventure.”

Favreau agrees that his preparation as an actor and independent filmmaker was useful in helping him recognize that the emotional connection between the characters was a great way to move the story along. “I’m good at understanding the relationship between people,” says the director. “My background as a writer and as an actor helps me create a situation where I can work with the actors to achieve something that’s true and real. And the more real the situations — even in an extraordinary set of circumstances like a house in space — the more you can ground this story in reality. That helps the audience relate and experience the adventure along with the characters.”

Once the script was ready, the arduous task of casting began. The filmmakers knew that they needed two extraordinary young actors to pull off the roles of the two central characters, Walter and Danny. “We had to find kids who would make

you believe in this incredible flight of fancy,” says De Luca. “So the casting was a critical, critical part of the process.”

Though they are brothers, Walter and Danny have strongly divergent personalities, mentions Teitler. “Walter, the older boy, doesn't really hate his younger brother, but won't give him the time of day. Still, Danny looks up to his older brother and really wants his attention and respect.”

“I wanted young actors who could improvise and react in an honest way to the circumstances,” says Favreau. “I didn't want kids who were just going to hit their marks and scream when the monster arrived. They had to be able to expand on what was written and find the reality in it. When you're entrusting an entire film to two young boys, you have to find the very best actors out there.”

The search was far-reaching and comprehensive, covering five cities across the U.S. and live auditions with more than 500 young boys for each of the two roles. In addition, casting director Avy Kaufman received tapes from across the country and Canada.

But it was in New York City that the production found their two leading men. Twelve-year-old, Kentucky-based Josh Hutcherson was cast as Walter, the older brother who is annoyed by his younger attention-seeking sibling and reacts with predictable irritation. “Josh is as good an actor as any I've ever worked with,” says Favreau. “He came in after we had seen hundreds of other kids his age and it was like getting to drive a Ferrari after having only been behind the wheel of Volkswagens. He was able to incorporate even the most subtle direction.”

Favreau was no less impressed by his other choice, seven-year-old New York-born Jonah Bobo, who was cast as Danny. “Jonah is pretty new to acting,” the director states, “but he already has a presence and a core of honesty. You can teach acting, but presence and honesty cannot be taught.”

Before signing the two young actors, Favreau made sure that both they and their parents were aware of what lay ahead. Not only would they be called on to act, but they would need to possess the physical stamina to handle the rigors of a long and complicated three-month shooting schedule. Their time on the set would be spent in harnesses, swinging from wires, running from robots and Zorgon creatures, as well as being tossed around on sets that tilted and shook.

“I wanted to make sure that everyone was aware that there would be real stuff chasing the boys, that dust would be flying, wood shattering and fires on the set,” Favreau says.

For Hutcherson, the realism was exactly what made appearing in *Zathura: A Space Adventure* worthwhile. “It was pretty easy on the set because there really were Zorgons there chasing you,” he says. “There were real explosions and meteor showers. Because everything was so real, it was easy to get into character.”

Following her highly praised performance as Jodie Foster’s daughter in David Fincher’s suspense thriller, *Panic Room*, 14-year-old Kristen Stewart took on her first comedic role in *Zathura: A Space Adventure* as Lisa, the boys’ older sister. “It was unlike any other role I’ve ever played,” says Stewart. “Teen angst is kind of my genre right now, so it was great to get a chance to do comedy.”

In addition, Stewart also had to establish a believable relationship with the young actors who would be playing her kid brothers. “I have an older brother, so I’m not really used to dealing with smaller children,” she confesses. “When you’re so used to being the younger sister, being bossed around and doing everything for your older brother, it’s an interesting swap to be the one in charge. And I have to say, I kind of liked it,” she laughs.

Favreau acknowledges that Stewart was not anything like the character he'd originally envisioned when he first read the script. But once she read for the part, he quickly changed his mind. "She was just so luminous," recalls Favreau, "and so very talented as an actor. She was so wonderful, that you just couldn't take your eyes off of her. I knew she had to play Lisa."

The role of the astronaut called for an actor who could not only bring humor to the character, but also demonstrate a serious, heroic quality when he has to help the boys out of their predicament. Favreau, himself an improv-trained actor, turned to Groundlings alum Dax Shepard for the job.

Shepard, a product of the highly respected comedy troupe The Groundlings and a relative newcomer to films, was a little nervous about taking on the responsibility of being a hero. "I was scared," Shepard admits. "I do comedy, so I'm comfortable with that. But being a hero, looking into the camera and saying, 'This way,' and 'Follow me,' I wasn't so sure about. Fortunately, Jon was able to put me at ease. He told me that a hero doesn't have to be Tom Cruise conquering the world. Since I think that Tom Cruise conquering the world is the definition of a hero, I'm lucky that Jon is a little more flexible in his interpretation," he laughs.

Favreau had wanted Oscar® winner Tim Robbins for the role of the family's dedicated, if somewhat distracted father right from the start, and was thrilled when he agreed. "Tim was our first choice," the director recalls. "He's got a family, so I think the film was appealing to him. And when he does comedy, he always brings a lot of heart and soul to it."

The overall quality of the script and the specific family dynamics it addresses were important factors in Robbins' decision. He recognized that although the film was first and foremost a space adventure, it was also about the journey the family goes on — one that leads to better understanding among them.



“For the fantasy to work, it has to come out of a believable situation,” comments Robbins. “There have to be issues like in any great family movie. There has to be a path the family must take to discover, to evolve, to change. The first 20 pages of the script are really about problems and what's going on at home.”

“This is a story about how the boys come to grips with their competitive natures,” says De Luca, “and how they eventually team up and work to get themselves back home. I think all of that plays real, which allows you to buy into the fantasy elements. Part of casting Tim was an effort to maintain that verisimilitude, that reality quotient, where you feel like it's a family struggling with real issues.”

Another reason that Robbins responded so positively to the script was its universality in regards to children and their imaginations. “In your imagination you're always going other places, but you're still in your house,” according to Robbins, “imagining everything from cowboys and Indians to soldiers to space adventures. But all of that is done from the safety of your own home. In *Zathura*, the idea that a house travels through space taps into a common childhood fantasy, which gives it a universal quality. It's something that almost every kid has fantasized about. We've all gone through this journey at some point in our house, in our living room, in our mind. This adventure actually takes them out there, and I think that's really cool.”

## **SPACE SHIPS, ROBOTS AND ZORGONS, OH MY!**

To create the film's robots and Zorgons, Favreau called upon multiple Oscar® winner Stan Winston. With more than 40 years of experience and a treasure trove of memorable screen creatures from the dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* to the title character of *Edward Scissorhands*, Winston claims, “*Zathura* had everything I always say is most important about any motion picture: First and foremost is a good script. I read the script and loved it. It was a chance to do something

special and it was fun family fare. Secondly, is the importance of the director. And Jon Favreau is one of the most imaginative directors I've ever worked with. He's come up with some exciting concepts and ideas. Not only is he a fan of new technology, but also of the kind of work we're known for here at the studio."

Crucial to the success of a film of this scale is mutual understanding and a shared philosophy among all of the participants. The filmmakers and Winston, along with the various department heads Jon G. Belyeu (special effects), Joe Bauer (visual effects) and J. Michael Riva (production designer) all shared a similar viewpoint. Everyone agreed that whenever possible, the creatures and other sci-fi elements should be real. After further discussions and meetings, the production outlined specifically which elements would be real, which would be added later using computer generated images (CGI) and which would utilize miniatures.

"We storyboarded a great deal," remembers Favreau. "We built models. We went back and forth and had meeting after meeting about how each shot in each scene was going to be shot."

According to Favreau, "We used digital effects here and there to help move the story along and help smooth out the rough edges. But at its core, we wanted the main set pieces to be based in the real world, in a practical environment. It feels more realistic to people of my generation who grew up before digital effects were so pervasive. To me, movies with too many digital effects look a bit like a video game."

Co-producer Peter Billingsley agrees that the inventiveness of digital effects has its place, but in a limited way. "It's pretty amazing what you can do with CGI," he explains. "But at the end of the day, you don't always connect with what you're seeing in CGI, because your brain can sometimes register it as fake and the movements don't seem completely real. In this film, anytime there's an explosion,

it's real. Anytime something is set on fire, it's really on fire. We've burned things, we've blown things up, we've pulled off roofs and walls and shot at miniatures. Jon has used a very smart combination of old and new technologies to create a very inspired and nostalgic look for the movie.”

“Jon (Favreau) wanted to do as much in camera as we could,” asserts special-effects supervisor Jon G. Belyeu. “He wanted it up front and personal, so it seemed physically possible. In the real world, things have a real look. In the digital world, if you see it for too long, it doesn't have the saturation, the depth and the quality of what we're doing in camera.”

Adds Winston: “I embrace the (CGI) technology, but I like to use it so that it is magic. I always say that if you can do it live, do it live. When you can't, do it digitally.”

Favreau's vision was consistent throughout, whether it was for live action or any of the film's various other elements. He wanted the film to reflect and pay homage to some of the most innovative and meaningful films and art of the past. “If you look at the robot,” he explains, “It's very derivative of early sci-fi. And the Zorgons remind me a lot of Frank Frazetta's paintings from the John Carter Of Mars serial books. We screened a lot of movies, like *Forbidden Planet* and other early sci-fi classics.”

Production designer Riva also cites the animated *Iron Giant* as an inspiration. “Jon and I both loved that film very much,” he says. “But again, we did not want to repeat that, so we approached it differently. Ours was originally drawn in storyboards by a wonderful artist, Eric Ramsey.”

All these influences were incorporated into the concepts and designs that Riva and his art department produced. With the plans in hand, Winston and his group moved ahead to bring the robots and Zorgons to life. Heading the team for

Winston Studios was Shane P. Mahan, makeup and animatronic supervisor, who along with his crew, went to work taking the sketches of the robot and interpreting them from a mechanical standpoint.

“The inspiration for the robots really came from Jon’s wanting to capture the golden age of Hollywood horror films,” recalls Mahan. “For instance, Jon was really taken with Ray Harryhausen’s animated characters. It’s an era that I love as well. So it was fun for me to create something with that retro feel.”

“When the broad concept of the robot was done,” Mahan continues, “we changed some angles under J. Michael Riva’s supervision. There was a bit of back and forth between the design and the practical aspects of making the robotics actually work.”

Ultimately, several versions of the robot were needed to create the one character. The “baby-bot” is the smallest, measuring 10 inches high. It’s the toy-sized robot that Danny and Walter first see after Walter pulls a card that reads ‘Your robot is defective.’ At first, the robot looks innocent, hardly big enough to cause any damage. But then it begins to grow. To accomplish this, a second version of the robot was built, the “grow-bot.” This version was constructed with parts and pieces that pop out and extend until the robot stands an ominous six feet, eight inches tall with a shoulder width of five feet. The grown up robot brandishes a retractable saw blade and has jet packs attached to its feet and back. This version is rod-puppeteered and radio controlled. The rods were kept at a minimum so that there were as few to remove in post-production as possible.

The third and fourth versions of the robot were full-sized puppets. One was a complete robot that was puppeteered with rods by Winston’s puppeteers, who made the character move and come alive. The other full-sized puppet was built to fit a person inside and was aptly called the “performer-bot.”

For the scenes during which the robot chases Walter and needs to move throughout the house, performer John Alexander was inside the suit making it come to life. “John Alexander’s job is to wear uncomfortable things and create a performance,” comments Winston. “And he’s one of the best at it.”

To protect the performer and to make the robot more manageable and flexible, it was made primarily of fiberglass, which was kept as thin as possible. The metal pieces were reduced to the bare minimum. Inside the suit, the performer wore a complete body harness to help equally distribute the weight of the suit so that his whole body bore the heavy load, not just his shoulders or legs.

The “performer-bot” was a clear example of how the various departments coordinated their efforts to successfully create each element. The suit consisted of the robot’s head and torso as well as its feet. Alexander’s legs, covered in black tights that don’t reflect light, were exposed during shooting. In post-production, the human legs were removed and replaced by CGI robot legs at Sony Pictures Imageworks. Similarly, the arms were digitally added on. Or if they were attached during shooting, the rods holding them up were later digitally removed.

After the “performer-bot’s” movements were recorded, visual effects supervisor Joe Bauer and visual effects producer Joseph B. Conmy IV, both of whom worked with Favreau on *Elf*, utilized motion control to create a “clean plate,” which was used for removing those parts of the performer not covered by the suit pieces. Those areas were then replaced by the CGI robot parts.

In preparing and planning each shot, Bauer coordinated with the pre-visualization group Pixel Liberation Front (PLF), who initially worked with storyboards and blueprints provided by the art department. In the computer, PLF created exact replicas of each set and the motion control units that worked them. “This allowed us to create accurate models of the motion control rigs,” explains Bauer, “so we

knew that the shots we wanted could be achieved. Favreau and director of photography Guillermo Navarro reviewed the material, made any changes, and then we took it all apart. We decided in advance which ones we could actually shoot on set and which needed to be shot off the set.”

Bauer continues, “We were using motion control, which is a computerized way of controlling the camera and repeating what the camera does. So if we had a camera that was panning with the “performer-bot,” then we’d replay the camera move without the actor and have just the background. This gave us the matching piece we needed to erase the parts of the actor we didn’t want to see. A mid-step of creating the shot would be just the torso or the head and the feet of the robot crossing the room, but no connecting pieces. Then Imageworks would create computer graphics to fill it in.”

Visual effects producer Conmy adds, “After we’d do a take, we’d then repeat the camera move exactly. The computer recorded it and repeated it, so that you had a clean plate. So if, for instance, you have the performer's legs visible, they are blocking a portion of the set behind him and we have to paint that part of the set back in. Because the robot's legs aren't the same width and scale and placement as human legs, we had to have that background plate in order to recreate it.”

Preparing for the shots required hours of tests. “During pre-production, we did a series of tests,” recalls Conmy. “We shot the man in the suit as he ran and walked through the set. Then we added CGI arms and legs, just to see how they integrated with the motions of the puppeteer Jon had envisioned. Stan Winston Studios conducted these tests and we were happy to find out that it all worked.”

By having an experienced and skilled performer inside the suit, Favreau was able to get the movements and action he desired. In addition, he was able to elicit reactions from the cast as they faced a charging, menacing 6 foot, 8 inch mechanical creature. “When you're working with two kids, as we primarily are in

this movie,” says Favreau, “it’s nice to have something real for them to react to and not just a blank green screen. The gait and the weight of the robot’s body movement made it come alive and was really menacing for them.”

When the robot was required to crash through a doorway or into the fireplace, the “bam-bot” was put into motion. Whereas the performer robot was designed with lighter weight materials, the “bam-bot” was sturdily built to serve as a battering ram. It was made with a combination of materials including heavy fiberglass, urethane, epoxy resin and steel armature.

To create the robot’s spectacular crash into the fireplace – jet pack ablaze as pieces of the fireplace shatter and scatter around him — the visual effects, production, construction and special effects crews all had to work together to achieve the desired effect.

“In order to get the robot to go through the fireplace,” explains Belyeu, “the first thing we had to do was build a very specific fireplace that would allow us to do that. It needed to be constructed in a way that it would come apart without destroying the entire set in the process. The bricks were made of a substance we call pyracell, a very soft form of plaster-like material. Construction used it in conjunction with balsa wood to make the set look as if it was built of masonry and real lumber. Actually, it was soft all the way through.

“Then my crew came in,” Belyeu continues. “We loaded it with high explosives, set up a track, mounted the robot on the track and used high-pressure air cylinders to move the robot from its start mark through the fireplace. The high explosives allowed us to create an element of energy that wouldn’t necessarily be there. Then, with the way the sets were constructed, we could jam the robot right through it. At the point of impact, the explosives were ignited so that it looked as if the robot created the damage.”

Through careful planning, each scene was pieced together in post-production by matching up all the various elements. “The robot and the camera were controlled by a computer,” according to Belyeu. “As we did each pass, everything was in the same place, at the same time, every time. We could run a pass with the children charging through the doorway, take the kids away, do exactly the same camera move and then set off the explosives. Then we could start over and run the robot through. When all of this is put together, we’ve got the interaction of the explosives, we’ve got the kids and the robot in the same shot and no one has been placed in jeopardy.”

Special effects technician Chris Burton spent more than three months building the robot’s rocket pack. The prep time was necessary to create a pack that shoots real fire reaching temperatures of 1,500 degrees, as well as to allow for enough time to test every aspect of the apparatus. Only by fully testing the device was the effects team assured there would be no dangerous or costly surprises and they would be fully prepared when it came time to fire it up on the set.

Another carefully tested effects-driven scene occurs when The Astronaut first arrives at the house. Floating through space, he appears upside-down at the front door. Stuntman Mike Justus was fitted with a swivel harness with a yoke and rigged to the end of a Zeus crane for this spectacular entrance, which enabled him to gently float into the scene and rotate 180 degrees into an upright position.

Burton created a second jet pack for the astronaut’s arrival, one that emitted CO<sub>2</sub> instead of fire. Since the weight of the astronaut’s flight suit was already more than enough for Justus to handle, the 25-pound jet pack was attached to a flying rig arm and only appeared to be on the astronaut’s back.



The marauding aliens, the Zorgons, were not fully realized when the Stan Winston Studio team went to work, though Riva says Favreau did come up with the initial version of the creatures.

“Actually, Jon is an accomplished sketch artist,” says Riva. “I’d never admit this to him, but he’s actually a better sketch artist than I am. Anyway, he did a little drawing early on of what he wanted the Zorgons to look like — a kind of cross between a crocodile and an iguana with a little of Steven Spielberg’s T-Rex thrown in. I still have the sketch in my office – it contains a lot of the flavor of the final product.”

Winston and Mahan took the initial drawing and embellished on it until they achieved the final look. Favreau made it clear he wanted a performer in the suit with his head exposed — though it would later be digitally removed. “When you look at the Zorgons in the final film,” comments Riva, “you will be a little fooled by it and you’ll wonder where the puppeteer’s head is hidden. For a moment, you’ll think maybe the head is way out in the front, but after a moment you realize it couldn’t be there because anatomy doesn’t work that way. If we have people guessing like that, even for a brief moment, then we’ve done our job. We’ve fooled them.”

Following Favreau’s instructions, Mahan made a maquette (a small sculpture which, in this case, was made over a man’s form). This visual sample enabled everyone to see — and agree — ahead of time on every detail. “The Zorgons wear armor, have swords and fly spaceships,” notes Mahan, “and they come in at the latter part of the film when it becomes a bit scary. So it was a fine line of not being too scary for a comedy adventure film and yet not too silly either. We had to strike a good balance.”

The process of creating each of the four Zorgons was slow and methodical. Once the molds were agreed upon and completed, foam was injected into the

mold. After it set, the arduous and slow task of burning off the excess at each of the seams began. The artists patched the seams with a soldering device, adding dark lines over the green background. Using foam-rubber patches, the artisans reshaped these areas. This was followed by a layer of paint with a rubber cement element, which matched the components of the foam itself to produce a realistic-looking reptilian skin that could move and stretch. As with the robots, the Zorgons were designed and built to appear alive and expressive.

“Our philosophy at the Stan Winston Studio is always that creatures are not just effects. They are characters and part of the acting ensemble of the film,” says Mahan. “Their eyes blink, their nostrils move. We carefully worked out all the subtle movements that might register with an audience that they're alive. There is also muscle movement under the skin, interesting brow movement. It's all expressed in an interesting way.”

In addition, the Zorgons are covered in armor made of a lightweight polyurethane flexible foam mixed with metallic pigments that were brushed into the molds. To control the intensity of the color, the powder was added a little at a time using Q-tips.

As with the robots, the Zorgons were designed to accommodate a performer inside the suit, with only a human head protruding out of what is essentially the middle of the Zorgon's back. The weight of the creature was in front and behind the performer, which created a precarious balance. “Because it's an extremity of head and neck that comes out of a man's chest and a tail that comes out of the other side, getting the balance for the suit performer was challenging,” says Mahan. “They could have been too heavy to operate. We had to design it in a way that it had to work, since the Zorgons actually walk up stairs and move quickly.”

The suit weighed about 100 pounds and in many scenes, external rods were attached so that four puppeteers could help maneuver the creature around the set. The performer wore a blue-screen cap, which allowed the Imageworks visual effects team to easily erase his head. Winston points out, "It's low-tech, high art. What we've created for *Zathura* are images that would look like they required the most intricate machines in the world and the most advanced animation that anybody's ever seen. You'll truly be seeing things you've never seen before."

The last component created by the Winston Studios team was "frozen Lisa." Kristen Stewart's character, Lisa, is frozen, a direct result of one of the turns in the game. For five turns, Lisa remains frozen in time with her hand extended as if she was about to test the water in her shower.

The mannequin had to be an exact replica of the young actress, a painstaking process that began by making a full body scan and several molds of Stewart. (The final product is a combination of various resins). As if sitting for an artist, Stewart had to stand, side by side, with her sculpted double to allow every detail of her body to be meticulously duplicated. "It was a grueling process," Stewart recalls. "We started out with a body scan for my body type and then I had to go in and get molded. First, they did my head. Making a mold of your head is a bit like being born. You can look inside it and there's your face. After all the molding, I had to come back so they could paint me. I stood next to well, 'me'... and they painted 'me.' They're amazing artists and it took weeks. It was a major trip!"

## SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL

Since *Zathura: A Space Adventure* takes place in one location, the house had to be as visually interesting and integral to the film as any of the characters. This was a major challenge for Riva who worked closely with the filmmakers to select just the right style and look for the house. After much discussion, they decided to

go with a classic California Craftsman-style home. “We didn't want the audience to feel trapped in a house for the whole movie,” says Favreau. “So we decided to make it as interesting to look at as we could, something so spectacular that when it comes apart in the course of the film, you really feel like it's a tragedy that this beautifully restored Craftsman-style house is being destroyed.”

“The house also had to represent the character of the father,” adds Riva. “We actually made a point of adjusting the script to suggest that Dad really loved the style, so that as it gets blown up and beaten up, it's a great opportunity to make the audience cringe with every attack. You want the audience to say, ‘Ooh, this is Dad's house – he's going to be really pissed off.’”

The filmmakers also wanted the house to stand out against the coldness of deep space and the metallic materials used for the spaceship. The Craftsman style lent itself perfectly to that end and Riva was also able to fashion a welcoming interior. “The idea was to create a hospitable environment, using warm tones and colors with lots of wood,” explains Riva, “in direct counterpoint to the coldness of space — a womb-like environment that the characters could all survive in. As that got destroyed, like an island being swallowed up by the high tide, the world they inhabited became smaller and smaller, as if the life-giving sustenance of the house, which protects them from oblivion, was diminishing. We just loved the contrast in the colors to suggest that.”

Once the concept, style and color for the house were decided on, blueprints for the sets were drawn up. As with the robots and the Zorgons, the filmmakers wanted as much physical action to take place on the set as possible, so the house was constructed in three parts, two of them above mechanical devices that could move the entire set to simulate reactions to action in the film — shaking, jolting, tilting and being pummeled by meteors and harpoons. Accomplishing this feat required close interaction between all the departments. “We had almost four and a half months of pre-production,” recalls Riva. “At first I

remember thinking that for a movie with only one house and a spaceship, why would I need so much time? Our physical production executive Gary Martin looked at me and said, 'Believe me, you're going to need it.' And boy, was he right."

As he got more deeply involved with the project, Riva realized that building multiple houses and matching one set to another would require meticulous planning. "Apart from the challenge of making the set look interesting enough to sustain two hours of viewing, we also had to match it from shot to shot to shot to shot," he says. "There are no breaks between scenes. They're continually going from the living room to the kitchen to the den and back to the living room. Each set had to look the same as things went through various stages of destruction. It was a big, big job."

The movement of the sets dictated the use of a variety of materials, some to keep the house from falling apart and others to make it fall apart in a specific way when needed. "We had to build the rooms in different ways," continues Riva. "First, we'd build it real, so it could shake on this giant shaker platform without falling apart. Then we went back and rebuilt it with certain breakaway pieces — mostly using balsa wood — so it would fall apart. Often, it needed to be photographed exploding without any big dust clouds that might obscure the visual effects. We needed it to fall away or we'd cable it out and let the visual effects take over. Everything we built had to come apart, which was very challenging."

Production began on Stage 30 on the Sony lot in Culver City, which was divided into two parts. Stage 30 held two versions of the house's first floor – the shaker set and the gimbal set. On one half of the stage there was a 32-foot deep pit originally constructed to house the pool for Esther Williams' films. The depth of the pit coupled with the 50 ft. height of the ceiling made it the perfect spot for the

gimbal set. The other half of the stage accommodated the entire main floor of the house built atop a shaker mechanism.

Built in sections measuring 12 feet by 12 feet and then moved to Stage 30, the shaker set was assembled on a 64-foot by 64-foot platform. The set and platform were built to vibrate, lifting up onto 16 air bearings and floating approximately three inches off the ground. Using center weights attached to its sides, the entire platform and set could be shaken with varying degrees of intensity. All the movements, including rolls, jolts and vibrations, could be adjusted to move up and down or side to side.

The second set on Stage 30 represented a smaller portion of the house's first floor. Set atop a huge gimbal, it was positioned in the pit at a height of 12 feet below the 50-foot ceiling, providing plenty of space for the huge platform to tip from side to side. Utilized primarily to create the illusion that the boys and everything in the house were being dragged by the gravitational pull of the planet Tsouris 3, the set was built in three sections. Designed like a flight simulator and constructed by special effects foreman Mark Noel, the gimbal was made to be as user friendly as possible to facilitate match-up and repeat shots. Noel utilized the Cooper System, a camera motion control system, which was interfaced with a Waldo (or a baby motion base). By setting up the movements in miniature, the large motion base could mimic them with the simple touch of a joystick.

The special effects department worked in conjunction with construction to make sure that the two rooms and hallway earmarked for this set would fit on the platform. Since there were strict weight limitations, some of the house was manufactured out of cardboard and plastic.

The safety of the cast and crew was always a priority, but it became even more important on sets that moved, particularly on the gimbal, which could tilt up to 44 degrees. The maximum weight restriction of 40,000 pounds also limited the

number of people and equipment that could be on set at any given time. The task of ensuring everyone's safety fell to stunt coordinator Tom Harper. While the grip department made sure the equipment was properly tied down, Harper and his stunt men properly harnessed and wired the actors. "We had our actors on wires," recalls Harper. "As they were grabbing onto interior parts of the house, the boys were basically flying in mid-air. Books were flying off the shelves right next to them and furniture was sliding down across the floors as the house tilted. Our job was to coordinate everyone so that it all got done safely."

Hutcherson and Bobo were each fitted with three separate, yet integral safety devices: A form-fitting vest, a flying hip-harness and a bungee-type harness. They rehearsed for many hours with the stunt team to become familiar and comfortable with the newfound sensation of flying. As the process continued, Harper realized how fortunate he was that the young boys were so willing, enthusiastic and athletic, which enabled them to complete 99 percent of their own stunts.

Getting to do many of his stunts "was one of the best parts about doing this movie," says Hutcherson. "I got ejected through a roof, sucked into a black hole, I dodged meteors and got chased by robots. It was all just a blast."

Bobo compares the experience of working on the gimbal set to various carnival rides. He recalls with the enthusiasm only a seven-year-old can muster, "It was really, really fun. It was just like a tipping rollercoaster or one of those rides like the Sea Dragon, except it goes down, not up. It was really cool."

Stage 25 at Sony held three additional sets – the upstairs bedrooms, the basement and the interior of the foreboding Zorgon spaceship. The spaceship's interior design stood out in stark contrast to the soft wood and warm colors of the Craftsman-style house. Its cavernous, cold, metal interior created a perfectly ominous backdrop for the scenes in which the giant structure attaches itself to

the house and young Danny must go in to retrieve the all-important Zathura game.

Riva and Favreau drew on their love of vintage toys as inspiration for the spaceship. “I had a tin toy in my office that was shaped like a zeppelin,” recalls Riva. “I took it apart one day and inside was this wonderful shape that we used as our departure point for the spaceship. We took it down to a level that is just nuts and bolts and metal and rust and fire. I think that that made it much more frightening, much more like a dark hole or that dark space under your bed or in the closet. We added a conveyor belt in the middle of the spaceship that was mechanical and dangerous.”

To bring the exteriors of Riva’s spaceship and house design to life, the filmmakers and visual effects team used a combination of miniatures and computer-generated models. “We built a one-tenth-scale miniature of the Zorgon ship,” explains Conmy. “It was about seven feet long and had working thrusters and cannons. We shot it in motion-control on a green-screen stage to composite into a CGI starfield-scape. We built a computer-generated model as well. That enabled us to choose which worked best, depending on how close it was to the lens and the amount of detail you needed to see, as well as how it interacted with the outer space shots and the other ships in the shots.”

## ZATHURA: THE GAME

From the outset, Favreau said he didn’t want the Zathura game to be anything like a typical board game. “I had this vision of a really cool vintage wind-up tin toy, like some sort of post-war Japanese pressed tin mass-produced game,” he says.

“Since Jon talked about a wind-up game right from the beginning, we fell into this groove of a tin, stamped metal toy,” comments Riva. “Since we both grew up



with these toys, the design of the game took on this slightly '50s retro feel to which we then added some modern elements and design.”

As with the house, the game was an integral element of the story and the filmmakers treated it like it was a character in the film. “The game itself had to be interesting and exciting to look at,” says Favreau. “In this movie, the game wasn’t just a spirit. It seemed to have a consciousness of its own and dictated everything that happened. So we wanted to put a lot of character in the game. We wanted it to be something that would be very intriguing to a young kid like Danny if he found it.”

Working closely with Riva and his design team — in particular illustrator Phil Saunders — Favreau and Riva arrived at the final design for the game. Following each turn of the key, the spaceship marker moved along the track. A card would then pop out from a slot on which clues were written.

Taking the game from concept to reality was the task of property master Russell Bobbitt, who worked diligently to find the final dimensions and the appropriate materials. After several tests with various metals, it became clear that although the final product needed to look metallic, metal itself was too brittle and would crack during production. So Bobbitt decided to use a thin, pliable plastic. A model of the game was made. Holes were drilled into the mold and a thin sheet of plastic was laid over it. The plastic was heated and then essentially “vacuumed” or sucked over the model. This created an airtight covering over the model, which was then painted and aged until the desired tin metal look was achieved. Though three games were produced, each of them measuring approximately 18 inches by 22 inches by 3 inches, only one had the mechanical capabilities to make all the parts and pieces move. By running a cable from the game to a computer off-camera, Bobbitt was able to control the movement of the pieces during the scenes in which the boys were playing the game.

## ABOUT THE CAST

**JOSH HUTCHERSON** (Walter) has, at the age of 12, already worked with many of Hollywood's greatest actors and directors. He co-starred in *Kicking & Screaming* with Will Ferrell and Robert Duvall and is the star of *Little Manhattan*.

In addition, Hutcherson shared duties with Tom Hanks as the character of "Hero Boy" in Robert Zemeckis' groundbreaking *The Polar Express*. He recently completed Barry Sonnenfeld's comedy *RV* starring as Robin Williams' son. Columbia Pictures will release the film in 2006.

Hutcherson's television credits include the TNT telepic "Wilder Days," with Peter Falk, the Animal Planet feature "Miracle Dogs" and guest appearances in NBC's "ER," Lifetime's "The Division" and ABC's "Line of Fire."

**JONAH BOBO** (Danny) is a New York City native. Although he's just eight years old, he can already be seen and heard in a variety of productions. Bobo was most recently seen as Zach in the feature film *Around the Bend*, which also starred Christopher Walken, Michael Caine, and Josh Lucas. For the last two years you could have seen him at the Sundance Film Festival, where he played Shamus Noblet in *Strangers with Candy* (2005), and starred as Sam Zaidman opposite Mary Louise Parker in *The Best Thief in the World* (2004).

Bobo's voice is familiar to many households with kids because he is the voice of Austin on the Nickelodeon series "Backyardigans." You will soon be able to hear him as the voice of Tod in the upcoming "Fox and the Hound Two."

Bobo loves good 'ol rock' n roll music, enjoys playing the piano, and is a huge baseball fan (rooting for both the New York Mets and the New York Yankees).

**DAX SHEPARD** (The Astronaut) found himself in the spotlight due to MTV's wildly popular celebrity-prank series "PUNK'D" created by Ashton Kutcher, which quickly became the highest-rated program on cable. Shepard recently starred in Paramount's *Without a Paddle* with Seth Green and Matthew Lillard, *Idiocracy* with Luke Wilson and Maya Rudolph and the upcoming comedy *You are Going to Prison*.

In the breakout role as "himself" on "PUNK'D," Shepard enjoyed showcasing his acting skills and comedic training, which were honed during the time he spent studying improv at The Groundlings. After moving to Los Angeles from his native Michigan in 1995, Shepard began studying anthropology at UCLA. Upon receiving a degree, he decided to further pursue his passion for comedy.

Shepard's other film credits include *Cheaper By the Dozen* and *Hairshirt*.

Shepard currently resides in Los Angeles.

**KRISTEN STEWART** (Lisa) first came to the attention of worldwide audiences for her outstanding performance opposite Jodie Foster in *Panic Room*. She will next be seen in the lead role of the untitled Pang Brothers movie and opposite Meg Ryan and Adam Brody in writer/director Jonathan Kasden's *In the Land of Women*.

Recently, Stewart starred in "Speak," (Showtime), which garnered critical praise when it premiered at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, and opposite Diane Lane in *Fierce People* directed by Griffin Dunne, which premiered at the 2005 Tribeca Film Festival.

Stewart's additional film credits include *Catch That Kid*, *Undertow*, *Cold Creek Manor* and *The Safety of Objects*.

Stewart resides in Los Angeles.

**TIM ROBBINS** (Dad) made his acting debut in 1972 at the Theatre for the New City in New York City. After graduating from UCLA, he made his professional debut on television's "St. Elsewhere" the same year he co-founded The Actor's Gang.

In the critically acclaimed 2003 film *Mystic River*, directed by Clint Eastwood, Robbins was honored with an Academy Award® for Best Supporting Actor, as well as a Golden Globe Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award and a Broadcast Film Critics Society Award. He has since starred in Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* and Steven Spielberg's *War of the Worlds*.

In 1992, Robbins received critical acclaim for his portrayal of the amoral studio chief in Robert Altman's *The Player*, a performance that earned him the Best Actor Award at the Cannes Film Festival and the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in a Musical or Comedy. That same year, his starring performance in *Bob Roberts* (which he also directed) also earned him a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actor.

Other notable acting performances include *The Shawshank Redemption* for which Robbins received a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination for Best Actor, Robert Altman's *Short Cuts* giving Robbins his second Golden Globe Award, Tony Bill's *Five Corners*, the Coen Brothers' *The Hudsucker Proxy*, Adrian Lyne's *Jacob's Ladder*, Ron Shelton's *Bull Durham* and Michel Gondry's *Human Nature*.

As a filmmaker, Robbins recently completed a film version of his play *Embedded Live: A Film*. The film, which was accepted to the 2004 Venice Film Festival, takes a speculative look at the war in Iraq and the accuracy of the media's reporting as a result of embedding journalists. *Embedded Live* has been available on DVD through Netflix and Cinema Libre and aired on the Sundance

Channel this past summer. Robbins also wrote, directed and produced *Cradle Will Rock*, which debuted to a standing ovation at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival. The film, which chronicles the real-life drama behind the Orson Welles production of Mark Blitzstein's 1930's musical, won the National Board of Review Award for Special Achievement in Filmmaking and won Best Film and Best Director at the Barcelona Film Festival.

Robbins recently completed filming the apartheid drama *Hot Stuff* directed by Phillip Noyce in South Africa.

Robbins also wrote, directed and produced the highly-acclaimed film, *Dead Man Walking*, adapted from the book by Sister Helen Prejean. Robbins received the Best Screenplay Award from the Austin Film Festival for his script and an Academy Award® nomination for Best Director along with four awards at the Berlin Film Festival, the Humanitas award and the Christopher award. The film also earned a nomination for Best Actor for Sean Penn as well as the Academy Award® for Best Actress for Susan Sarandon.

Robbins made his directing and screenwriting debut with the award-winning political satire, *Bob Roberts*, a "mockumentary" about a dubious right-wing candidate's race for the Senate. Robbins also starred in and co-wrote the songs for the film, which was nominated for a Golden Globe award and received the Best Film, Best Director and Best Actor Award at the Boston Film Festival, as well as Best Film at The Tokyo International Festival.

Robbins also executive-produced *The Typewriter, the Rifle and the Movie Camera*, a documentary about filmmaker Sam Fuller, which won the 1996 Cable ACE Award for Best Documentary.

In 2002, Robbins performed in "The Guys," a play about a fire captain who lost eight of his men on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Robbins performed with Swoosie Kurtz at

the Flea Theater in New York and at Lincoln Center with Susan Sarandon. The play was then performed at the Actor's Gang Theater in Los Angeles with Helen Hunt and at the Edinburgh Festival and the Abbey Theatre in Dublin with Susan Sarandon.

In 1982, Robbins co-founded the Actors' Gang, the highly acclaimed and respected Los Angeles theater ensemble dedicated to the production of original and provocative theatre. He is currently its Artistic Director. The Actors' Gang has received more than 100 awards including Dramalogue, L.A Weekly and Ovation awards, as well as the prestigious Margaret Hartford Award for "continued excellence." Robbins himself was honored with the LA Weekly Award for his direction of the Gang's debut production, a midnight performance of "Ubu Roi," and earned a nomination for Best Director from the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle for the group's production of Brecht's "The Good Woman of Szechuan."

The Actor's Gang debuted his play "Embedded" at the New York Public Theater and other recent productions include "Mephisto," "The Seagull," "Exonerated," "Algazam" and "Orlando." The Actor's Gang has also developed educational outreach programs in the arts with local schools.

Roberts lives in New York City with his family.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**JON FAVREAU** (Director) is a true multi-hyphenate. After establishing himself as an actor and writer of considerable talent with the acclaimed hipster comedy, *Swingers*, he has continued to challenge himself with a variety of eclectic projects. Most recently, Favreau directed the acclaimed holiday smash hit *Elf* starring Will Ferrell for New Line Films.

Favreau made his feature film directorial debut with *Made*, a script he wrote and starred in opposite Vince Vaughn and Sean “Puffy” Combs for Artisan Entertainment.

Favreau was most recently seen opposite Kirsten Dunst and Paul Bettany in *Wimbledon*, in Columbia Pictures’ *Something’s Gotta Give* for director Nancy Meyers and Mark Steven Johnson’s *Daredevil* with Ben Affleck. He also starred in a career-defining turn portraying legendary heavyweight champion, Rocky Marciano, in the MGM biopic *Marciano*. Favreau's other feature film credits include *Love and Sex* opposite Famke Janssen, *The Replacements* with Keanu Reeves, *Very Bad Things* opposite Christian Slater and Cameron Diaz, and *Deep Impact* with Robert Duvall, Morgan Freeman, and Vanessa Redgrave. Favreau will be seen in the upcoming romantic comedy *The Break-Up* with Vince Vaughan and Jennifer Aniston.

Favreau's television credits include a recurring role on the popular NBC situation comedy “Friends” and a special appearance on HBO's critically acclaimed “The Sopranos” playing himself. Favreau can also add the title of “showrunner” to his multi-hyphenate list of credits as the creator, producer and host of the Emmy-nominated IFC series “Dinner for Five.”

**DAVID KOEPP** (Screenplay by) has written and directed the films *Secret Window*, *Stir of Echoes*, *The Trigger Effect* and *Suspicious*. He wrote or co-wrote the films *War of the Worlds*, *Spider-Man®*, *Panic Room*, *Snake Eyes*, *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, *Mission: Impossible*, *The Paper*, *Jurassic Park*, *Carlito’s Way*, *Death Becomes Her*, *Bad Influence* and *Apartment Zero*.

**JOHN KAMPS** (Screenplay by) is a native of Genesee Depot, Wisconsin and graduated in 1987 from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in English Literature.

Kamps' most recent credit is the 1997 film *The Borrowers* starring John Goodman. He also has a story credit for *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie*.

**CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG** (Based on the book by) was born and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and, to the shock of his millions of fans, almost did not become an illustrator at all. He attended the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor with the vague idea of pursuing a law degree, but after a freshman course in drawing he decided to study sculpture. In 1972, he moved to Providence, Rhode Island for a graduate degree in sculpture at the Rhode Island School of Design. Shortly after he received his degree, Van Allsburg began to show his sculptures in New York City galleries, where their surreal imaginativeness quickly won him a reputation as an artist to watch. He didn't begin drawing until his teaching commitments at RISD and a cold studio too far across town kept him from his sculpture.

To his wife, Lisa, and other friends, Van Allsburg's pictures showed a strong narrative style that they thought would translate well into illustrations for a book. Houghton Mifflin thought so too, and quickly signed Van Allsburg to his first book deal. Houghton Mifflin has published 15 of Van Allsburg's books — from his Caldecott Honor Award–winning first book, *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi*, to his recent space adventure, *Zathura*.

The success of Van Allsburg's *Jumanji* and *The Polar Express* is also phenomenal. Both received Caldecott Awards, *Jumanji* was made into a movie in 1996, and *The Polar Express* starring Tom Hanks and directed by Robert Zemeckis, was released last November. Among his other books, *The Widow's Broom* and *The Sweetest Fig* have also been optioned for the movies.

Over the course of his stellar career, Van Allsburg's books have never failed to fascinate the intellect, pique the senses and emphasize the power of imagination.



Each one showcases his unfettered imagination, "a place where an ordinary world of comfort and regularity meets a world of fantasy, magic, and sometimes even menace."

Van Allsburg lives in Providence, Rhode Island with his wife, Lisa, and their two daughters, Sophie and Anna.

**WILLIAM TEITLER** (Producer) most recently produced *The Polar Express* starring Tom Hanks and directed by Robert Zemeckis, based on the Caldecott Award-winning book by Chris Van Allsburg. He followed it with the Fred Schepisi's miniseries for HBO, "Empire Falls," starring Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Ed Harris, Helen Hunt, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Robin Wright Penn based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book by Richard Russo. "Empire Falls" received 10 Emmy nominations.

Teitler will next produce another Van Allsburg adaptation, *The Widow's Broom*.

Other producing credits include *How to Deal* starring Mandy Moore based on the book by Sarah Dessen, *Tuck Everlasting* starring Ben Kingsley, Sissy Spacek, William Hurt and Alexis Bledel, based on the award-winning book by Natalie Babbitt, *The Hurricane* starring Denzel Washington, which garnered Golden Globe and Academy Award® nominations for Mr. Washington; *Jumanji* starring Robin Williams and Bonnie Hunt based on a Van Allsburg book, *Looking for Richard* directed by and starring Al Pacino which received the DGA Award for Best Documentary Feature, *Mr. Holland's Opus* starring Richard Dreyfuss who received an Academy Award® nomination, *Picture Perfect* starring Jennifer Aniston and Kevin Bacon and *Unforgettable* starring Ray Liotta and Linda Fiorentino, directed by John Dahl.

Teitler's other television credits include the Cable Ace Award-winning series "Tales from the Crypt" for HBO and "Two-Fisted Tales" for Fox, as well as "Tales from the Darkside" and "Moment of Fear" for Laurel/LBS.

Teitler and Van Allsburg are producing partners in Golden Mean Productions. They are developing a diverse slate of projects including adaptations of Van Allsburg's classic books, including The Sweetest Fig. Other projects include *What Maisie Knew*, a contemporary adaptation of the Henry James novel by Nancy Doyne and Carroll Cartwright, and *My Year of Meats* based on the novel by Ruth Ozeki.

Teitler graduated from Williams College. He lives in New York City with his wife and two daughters.

**SCOTT KROOPF** (Producer) is president of the Motion Picture Group at Intermedia. Intermedia is currently financing and producing, with C2, *Basic Instinct 2: Risk Addiction* directed by Michael Caton-Jones starring Sharon Stone, David Morrissey and Charlotte Rampling, which Columbia Pictures will release domestically in 2006. They are also co-financing, with Columbia Pictures, *RV* directed by Barry Sonnenfeld and starring Robin Williams, which will also be released in 2006. Intermedia has produced and co-financed such successful films as *Terminator 3*, *Adaptation*, *The Quiet American*, *National Security*, *The Wedding Planner*, *Iris* and *Sliding Doors*.

Most recently, Kroopf produced the worldwide hit *The Last Samurai* directed by Ed Zwick and starring Tom Cruise, as well *Son of the Mask*, *The Chronicles of Riddick* and Merchant-Ivory's *Le Divorce* starring Kate Hudson and Naomi Watts. Kroopf also supervised Michael Bay's remake of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Prior to joining Intermedia, Kroopf was president and COO of Radar Pictures, which he formed in 1998 with Ted Field. At Radar, Kroopf had assembled a slate of over 25 active projects embracing a wide range of styles and featuring some of

the finest filmmakers working today. Kroopf and Fields built Radar on the foundation of the former Interscope Communications, where Kroopf produced and supervised more than 50 films in 14 years, including *Jumanji*, *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey*, *Pitch Black*, *Runaway Bride*, *Very Bad Things*, *Gridlock'd*, *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, *Cocktail*, *Three Men and a Baby* and *Outrageous Fortune*. At Interscope, Kroopf started as an in-house producer and development executive and eventually became President of the company.

Before joining Interscope, Kroopf was executive in charge of production for Embassy Pictures from 1982 to 1985, where he was involved in the development and production of *Stand by Me*, *The Sure Thing* and *A Chorus Line*. He began his motion picture production career at Robe-Ackerman, a commercial/television/documentary production company.

**MICHAEL DE LUCA** (Producer) founded Michael De Luca Productions in March 2004 and the company currently has a development and production agreement with Columbia Pictures.

A former production chief for such film companies as Dreamworks and New Line Cinema, De Luca is focusing his production company on developing appropriately budgeted, provocative, specialized films with visionary filmmakers, and pop culture, mainstream genre films with franchise potential. Besides *Zathura: A Space Adventure*, he has also produced Columbia Pictures' upcoming *Ghost Rider* starring Nicolas Cage and directed by Mark Steven Johnson.

Prior to forming Michael De Luca Productions, De Luca served as DreamWorks' Head of Production. At DreamWorks, he oversaw the day-to-day operations of the live-action division and the production of such films as Todd Phillips' *Old School* and Adam McKay and Will Ferrell's hit comedy *Anchorman*, as well as *Head of State* and *Win A Date With Tad Hamilton!*

He previously spent seven years as President and COO of New Line Productions. During his tenure, he created the highly successful *Friday*, *Blade*, *Austin Powers* and *Rush Hour* franchises. He championed such groundbreaking sleeper hits as *Seven*, *Wag the Dog*, *Pleasantville*, and *Boogie Nights*, and launched the directing careers of Jay Roach, Brett Ratner, Gary Ross, Alan and Albert Hughes, F. Gary Gray and the Farrelly brothers, among others.

**TED FIELD** (Executive Producer) owns Los Angeles-based film production company, Radar Pictures, formerly Interscope Communications. Beginning in 1982, as Chairman of Interscope, Field served as Producer or Executive Producer on more than 50 major theatrical motion pictures generating cumulative worldwide box office gross receipts of over \$3 billion. These films include *The Last Samurai* starring Tom Cruise, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Runaway Bride*, *Jumanji*, *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*, *Three Men and a Baby*, *Cocktail*, *Bird on a Wire*, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* and *Outrageous Fortune*.

In 1990, Field and partner Jimmy Iovine created Interscope Records. One of the most innovative labels in the music business, Interscope Records has achieved platinum-selling success with artists such as Eminem, No Doubt, Dr. Dre, Snoop Doggy Dogg, The Wallflowers, Smash Mouth, BLACKstreet, 2Pac, Nine Inch Nails, Bush, 4 Non Blondes, etc. In 1999, Universal's acquisition of Polygram resulted in an Interscope-led record group, headed by Field and Iovine, which included such venerable labels as Geffen and A&M. Field sold Interscope Records to Universal in 2001 and became Chairman of online music company ARTISTdirect, Inc. and launched a new record label, ARTISTdirect Records, with a diverse roster including hip-hop, rap, alternative and rock artists.

Born Frederick Woodruff Field, Field grew up in Chicago, Illinois and Anchorage, Alaska. At 21, he permanently settled in Southern California.

Until 1984, Field was a co-owner of Field Enterprises, Inc. a media conglomerate that owned numerous television stations and the Chicago Sun Times newspaper, as well as Cabot, Cabot and Forbes, a large real estate company. The company also acquired Panavision Incorporated from Warner Communications, Inc. Panavision was ultimately sold in 1987. In addition, Field has been an investor in partnerships formed for the purpose of acquiring control of public corporations, among which was the acquisition of Crown Zellerbach Corporation.

Field's extensive philanthropic work includes support for organizations ranging from American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR), the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association, The Sundance Institute, The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Rainforest Foundation, The Los Angeles Music Center and the Rape Treatment Center.

**LOUIS D'ESPOSITO** (Executive Producer) most recently executive produced the 2003 hit film *S.W.A.T.* starring Samuel L. Jackson and Colin Farrell. Prior to that, D'Esposito served as first assistant director on dozens of films including *Sweet Home Alabama*, *Stuart Little 2*, *The Glass House*, *Hollow Man*, *Blast from the Past*, *I Still Know What You Did Last Summer*, *The Shadow*, *Demolition Man*, *Hero*, *Basic Instinct*, *Once Around*, *The Freshman*, and *Major League*.

D'Esposito began his career as a second assistant director on films including *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *A Chorus Line* and *The Cotton Club*.

Born in New York City, D'Esposito currently lives in Los Angeles.

**PETER BILLINGSLEY** (Co-Producer) has been a member of the Hollywood community since he was a child and has achieved success and accolades both behind the scenes and in front of the camera. The highly successful child actor turned producer recently received an Emmy Award nomination as co-executive

producer on the critically acclaimed show “Dinner For Five, With Jon Favreau” for its fourth season.

Billingsley is currently serving as executive producer on the romantic comedy *The Break-Up*. Vince Vaughn and Jennifer Aniston star in the unconventional love story that begins where most romantic comedies end: After boy and girl have met, fallen for each other and moved into their newly-purchased condo, only to find their happily-ever-after cut short when the couple’s conflicting lifestyles drive each other crazy.

Billingsley also served as co-producer on *Made* starring Jon Favreau and Vince Vaughn. On the small screen he has produced television for FX, Fox and Comedy Central.

Growing up in the public eye, Billingsley began his acting career at the age of three in some of the 1970s most memorable television commercials. After appearing on numerous television shows and films during his youth, the Emmy Award-nominated actor delivered a performance for the ages in the beloved holiday film, *A Christmas Story*. Playing humorist Jean Shepherd’s youthful alter-ego “Ralphie,” Billingsley’s repeated requests for a genuine Red Ryder B-B gun quickly catapulted him to instant stardom and the classic modern-day Christmas tale has since become a pop-culture staple.

Born in New York City, Billingsley currently resides in Los Angeles.

**GUILLERMO NAVARRO, ASC** (Director of Photography) has collaborated with Guillermo del Toro for more than a decade. They first worked together on the award-winning *Cronos* and more recently on *The Devil's Backbone* and *Hellboy*.

Navarro has shot a wide array of feature films including Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown* and Robert Rodriguez's *Desperado* and *From Dusk Till Dawn*. He also shot *Four Rooms* for both Rodriguez and Tarantino. Other film credits

include *Spy Kids*, *Broken Silence*, *Spawn*, *Imagining Argentina*, *Stuart Little* and *The Long Kiss Goodnight*. Navarro's television credits include the National Geographic special "The Lost Kingdom of the Maya," for which he received an Emmy nomination and TNT's "The Cisco Kid" directed by Luis Valdez.

**J. MICHAEL RIVA** (Production Designer) is an Academy Award® nominee for his designs on *The Color Purple*. He also designed *Charlie's Angels* and *Charlie's Angels®: Full Throttle* as well as Ivan Reitman's *Evolution*. Riva has doubled as the production designer and second unit director on *A Few Good Men*, *Radio Flyer*, *Scrooged* and *Goonies*. Other memorable production design credits include *Dave*, *Six Days Seven Nights*, *Congo*, *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*, *Lethal Weapon*, *Lethal Weapon 2*, *Lethal Weapon 4*, *Ordinary People*, *Bad Boys* and *Brubaker*.

Among his television credits is the Emmy Award-winning telefilm "Tuesdays with Morrie" and "The 74th Academy Awards," for which he received an Emmy nomination.

**DAN LEBENTAL'S** (Editor) most recent credits include *The Woods* and Jon Favreau's holiday hit *Elf*. Other film credits include *From Hell*, *Happy Campers*, *Where the Money Is*, *American Pimp*, *Very Bad Things*, *Deceiver*, *Dead Presidents* and *The Lounge People*.

**STAN WINSTON** (Creature Designer) has been responsible for the creation of more memorable film character icons than anyone since Lon Chaney. A multiple Academy Award® winner, Winston is the world's foremost creator of creatures, the common denominator linking some of cinema's most innovative and accomplished character designs. From *The Terminator* and the extra-terrestrial monstrosities of *Aliens*, to the amazing dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* and the fanciful *Edward Scissorhands*, Winston has garnered a record number of awards for his achievements. He has won four Academy Awards® and has been nominated for 10. He has also claimed three British Academy of Film and

Television Arts Awards, two Emmys and numerous other industry awards.

Winston earned his first Oscar® nomination for creating robotic-looking makeup for *Heartbeeps* in 1981, the first year that makeup effects were recognized as an official category. He received Oscar® nominations for *Aliens*, *Predator*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Jurassic Park*, *Batman Returns*, *The Lost World* and, most recently, *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*. He won his first Oscar® for *Aliens*, and also picked up a BAFTA Award. He won two Academy Awards® for *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, for Best Makeup and Best Visual Effects and a second BAFTA Award for Best Achievement in Visual Effects. Winston won his fourth Oscar® for fashioning the live-action dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park*.

Winston moved to Hollywood in 1969 to become an actor. While waiting for his big break he wanted to avoid the typical day jobs of parking cars or waiting tables. Like Lon Chaney, Winston saw makeup design as a powerful actor's tool for creating characters. He became a makeup apprentice at Disney Studios, which eventually led to his first Emmy, in 1972, for the television movie "Gargoyles." He followed that with five more Emmy nominations, between 1973 and 1979. For Winston, the "day job" quickly evolved into an impressive career. He smoothly segued into feature films and has been making movie history ever since, working with such talents as James Cameron, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Joel Silver, Tim Burton, Tom Cruise and Steven Spielberg, to name just a few.

Recent releases featuring Winston's work include *Big Fish* for Tim Burton, Rob Schmidt's *Wrong Turn*, which Winston also produced, Jonathan Mostow's *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, Joe Johnston's *Jurassic Park 3* and Steven Spielberg's *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (which earned Stan his tenth Oscar® nomination). Winston and the artisans at his studio's most recent credit is Spielberg's *War of the Worlds*, which was released this past summer.



Among Winston's television credits are "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" and "Roots." He has taken part in several commercials as well, including the AFLAC insurance ads featuring the famous duck, "Geoffrey" the giraffe for Toys R Us, Coca-Cola's "King Kong" spot and the successful Budweiser series, featuring the "Budweiser Frogs" and their comic "Louie & Frank" lizard counterparts. As a director, Winston helmed *Pumpkinhead*, for which he won a "Best First Time Director" award at the Paris Film Festival and a nomination for a Saturn Award as "Best Director." He also directed *The Adventures of a Gnome Named Gnorm* and Michael Jackson's *Ghosts*, set to the music of Jackson's song "Too Bad," for which he combined his creativity and talents in creature design and special effects for a frightening and entertaining combination of film, music and dance.

Winston currently runs his own production company to develop, direct and produce feature films. In summer 2003, Stan Winston Productions was responsible for the feature film *Wrong Turn*. Debuting in the fall of 2001 was "Creature Features" – a series of five original world-premiere movies that were broadcast on the Cinemax and HBO cable networks. Produced by Winston, Lou Arkoff and Colleen Camp, these films are updated versions of Sam Arkoff's classics 1950s horror and sci-fi movies.

The Stan Winston Studio in Los Angeles continues to break new ground in the areas of design, makeup and creature effects. Embracing the technology of CGI, Winston was a founding partner of the successful computer effects company Digital Domain in the mid-1990s. He recently formed a new division of his studio called SW Digital, which will enable his team of creators to expand the possibilities in developing realistic characters – bringing together the best of the live-action and CG worlds. Some of SW Digital's most recent work is showcased in *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, *Garfield*, and *The Cat in the Hat*.

In 2001, he formed Stan Winston Creatures – a new company featuring toys and comic books, introducing never-before-seen characters from the minds of the artists at the Stan Winston Studio.

Outside of work, Winston enjoys spending time with his family, exercising at the in-studio gym he built for his employees, playing with his "big toys" (his Harley Davidson motorcycles and sports cars) and supporting various charities including Free Arts for Abused Children. Winston has been recognized for his community contributions by the County of Los Angeles, and he holds two Honorary Doctorates of Humanities. The first was from the nation's largest art school: the Savannah College of Art and Design, the second, from the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, for his contributions to the art community. Winston received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, only the second artist in the field of Visual Effects to do so. Most recently, he has devoted his creativity and sponsorship in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on the most realistic artificially-intelligent robot to date.

**JOE BAUER** (Visual Effects Supervisor) has previously served as visual effects supervisor on *Blade: Trinity*, *Elf*, *Final Destination 2*, *Frailty*, *The Thirteenth Floor*, *Simon Birch*, *Knock Off* and *Double Team*.

**SONY PICTURES IMAGEWORKS, INC.** (Special Effects by) is an Academy Award®-winning, state-of-the-art visual effects and character animation company dedicated to the art and artistry of digital production and character creation. The company has been recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences with Oscars® for its work on *Spider-Man®2* and the CG animated short film *The ChubbChubbs!*, and nominations for *Spider-Man®*, *Hollow Man*, *Stuart Little* and *Starship Troopers*. Imageworks continues to raise the level in the visual effects and character animation businesses, becoming a major force in the industry by providing leading-edge technology to its world-class artists. Imageworks is now in production with the first two feature films from Sony

Pictures Animation, *Open Season* and *Surf's Up*. Also in production and upcoming are *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio*, *Monster House*, *Ghost Rider* and *Spider-Man® 3*.

**LAURA JEAN SHANNON's** (Costume Designer) most recent feature film credits include David Goyer's *Blade: Trinity*, the box-office hit *Elf*, also directed by Jon Favreau, and Woody Allen's *Anything Else*.

The innovative designer has also created the costumes for a number of distinctive independent features, including Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem For a Dream*, Rose Troche's *The Safety Of Objects*, Favreau's *Made*, Lodge Kerrigan's *Claire Dolan* and Bob Gosse's *Niagara Niagara*, among others.

Shannon began her film career in 1991 as a costume production assistant on *Scent of a Woman*. She quickly ascended through the ranks, working on mainstream and independent features, including *Carlito's Way*, *The Myth of Fingerprints* and *The Object of My Affection*. Shannon earned her first costume design credit for 1995's *Drop Dead Rock*.

She lives in New York City with her beloved dog Hunter.

**JOHN DEBNEY** (Music) is one of Hollywood's most sought-after composers. With over 50 feature films to his credit, his unique ability to create memorable work across a variety of genres, as well as his reputation for being remarkably collaborative, has made him the first choice of top-level producers and directors.

Debney received critical acclaim for his Oscar®-nominated score to Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, one of the top ten box office grossing films of all time. His other recent credits include Revolution Studios' *Christmas with the Kranks*

directed by Joe Roth, Jon Favreau's *Elf*, Tom Shadyac's *Bruce Almighty* and Gary Marshall's *Raising Helen*.

Debney's other credits include *Duma*, *The Pacifier*, *Lucky 13*, *The Scorpion King*, *The Princess Diaries* and its sequel *Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement*, Robert Rodriguez's family hits *Spy Kids* and *Spy Kids 2*, the animated *Jimmy Neutron* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*.

The son of producer Louis Debney, he earned his B.A. degree in Music Composition from the California Institute of Arts in 1979. After college, Debney worked with television composing legend Mike Post and Hanna Barbera composer Hoyt S. Curtin. He went on to score diverse television projects including "Star Trek: The Next Generation," "A Pup Named Scooby-Doo" and "Sea Quest DSV," the latter winning him an Emmy for "Best Main Title." In the early 1990's, Debney began to score independent film projects and in 1993, he secured his first major studio feature *Hocus Pocus* starring Bette Midler.

Debney's next project will be the animated film, *Chicken Little*.

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