

Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*

***IMPORTANT: Please refer to the film using the full title only ***
KAHLIL GIBRAN'S THE PROPHET

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On the fictional island of Orphalese, a mischievous, eight-year-old girl, Almitra, meets Mustafa, a political prisoner under house arrest. From this chance encounter, an unlikely friendship is born. But on this fateful day that they meet, Mustafa is told by the authorities that he is finally being released—and guards immediately escort him towards the ship that will take him back to his own country.

Along the way, Mustafa shares his wisdom and poems with the people of Orphalese, while Almitra secretly follows him. At each stop, she imagines breathtaking visual sequences that accompany his words. When Almitra realizes, however, that the authorities have a very dark surprise in store for Mustafa, she must do everything possible to help him.

Synopsis Short

Inspired by the beloved classic, *Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet* is a richly-animated tale of an unlikely friendship between a young, mischievous girl and an imprisoned poet. Interwoven with Gibran's lyrical and inspiring words on the true nature of love, work, freedom and marriage, the film is written and directed by Roger Allers with stunning "chapters" from a host of award-winning and renowned international artists and musicians including Tomm Moore, Michal Socha, Joan Gratz, Nina Paley, Joann Sfar, Bill Plympton, Mohammed Saeed Harib and Paul and Gaeton Brizzi.

Featuring the voices of Liam Neeson, Salma Hayek-Pinault, Quvenzhané Wallis, John Krasinski, Frank Langella and Alfred Molina, *Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet* boasts a score composed by Gabriel Yared, with additional music by songwriters Damien Rice, Glen Hansard and Lisa Hannigan. Grammy-winning cellist Yo-Yo Ma contributes to the score.

Producers are Salma Hayek-Pinault, Clark Peterson, José Tamez and Ron Senkowski. Executive producers are Steve Hanson, François Pinault, Jeff Skoll, Jonathan King, Julia Lebedev, Leonid Lebedev, Naël Nasr, Haytham Nasr, Jean Riachi, Julien Khabbaz and William Nix.

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is co-financing along with Participant Media, MyGroup Lebanon, FFA Private Bank, Financière Pinault and Code Red Productions.

Synopsis Long

Inspired by the beloved classic, *Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet* is a richly animated tale of an unlikely friendship between a young, mischievous girl and an imprisoned poet. Featuring the voices of Liam Neeson, Salma Hayek-Pinault, Quvenzhané Wallis, John Krasinski, Frank Langella and Alfred Molina, *Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet* blends a charming adventure tale with vignettes based on Gibran's inspiring writings on love, work, children, freedom and marriage, each stunningly brought to life by a different renowned international animation artist.

ALMITRA (Quvenzhané Wallis), the unruly young daughter of beautiful housekeeper KAMILA (Salma Hayek-Pinault), has refused to speak in the two years since the death of her father. Gifted with a soaring imagination, Almitra follows her mother to work one day on the fictional island of Orphalese and discovers a kindred spirit in gentle political prisoner MUSTAFA (Liam Neeson).

Held under house arrest for seven years by a regime that views his writings as subversive, Mustafa learns he'll soon be set free by the ill-tempered SERGEANT (Alfred Molina), who announces he'll be escorting Mustafa to the island seaport where a ship awaits to return him to his native land.

So begins a life-changing journey for Almitra. Along with Kamila, Sergeant and the kindly guard HALIM (John Krasinski), she joins Mustafa on a trip that includes stop-overs at a wedding feast, a village marketplace and an outdoor cafe. Along the way, Mustafa captivates villagers with insights in the form of spectacular dream-like visions. But the road to liberation takes a treacherous

turn when the authoritarian PASHA (Frank Langella) demands that Mustafa denounce his own writings in exchange for his freedom.

Kablil Gibran's The Prophet features the voices of Liam Neeson (*Schindler's List*, *Taken*), Salma Hayek-Pinault (*Frida*, *Puss In Boots*), Quvenzhané Wallis (*Annie*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*), Alfred Molina (*Spider-Man 2*), John Krasinski ("The Office," *Promised Land*) and Frank Langella (*Frost/Nixon*).

Roger Allers (*The Lion King*) wrote and directed the narrative sections for *Kablil Gibran's The Prophet*. Directors for segments excerpted from Gibran's writings include Tomm Moore (*The Secret of Kells*), "On Love"; Michal Socha (*The Pillars of the Earth*), "On Freedom"; Joan Gratz (*Lost and Found*, *Kubla Khan*), "On Work"; Nina Paley (*Sita Sings the Blues*), "On Children"; Joann Sfar (*The Rabbi's Cat* and *Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life*), "On Marriage"; Bill Plympton (*In Your Face*, *Guard Dog*, *Push Comes to Shove*), "On Eating and Drinking"; Mohammed Saeed Harib (*Freej*), "On Good and Evil"; and Paul and Gaëtan Brizzi (*Tarzan*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*), "On Death."

Producers are Salma Hayek-Pinault, Clark Peterson, José Tamez and Ron Senkowski. Executive producers are Steve Hanson, François Pinault, Jeff Skoll, Jonathan King, Julia Lebedev, Leonid Lebedev, Naël Nasr, Haytham Nasr, Jean Riachi, Julien Khabbaz and William Nix.

The score was composed by Gabriel Yared (*The English Patient*, *Cold Mountain*), with additional music by songwriters Damien Rice (*Closer*), Glen Hansard (*Once*) and Lisa Hannigan (Mercury Music Prize-nominated *See Saw*). The score features cello solos by Grammy[®]-winning cellist Yo-Yo Ma.

Kablil Gibran's The Prophet is co-produced by the Gibran National Committee. Doha Film Institute (DFI) is co-financing along with Participant Media, MyGroup Lebanon, FFA Private Bank, Financière Pinault and Code Red Productions.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Kablil Gibran's The Prophet's journey to the big screen began more than a decade ago when executive producer Steve Hanson embarked on an eight-year quest to license the rights to the Lebanese author's timeless bestseller. The beloved book, which has been translated into 40 languages, has sold over 100 million copies and has never been out of print since it was first published in 1923.

Producer Clark Peterson, who previously produced gritty crime dramas including Charlize Theron's *Monster* and Woody Harrelson's police-corruption thriller *Rampart*, says the filmmakers realized early on that the book's timeless lyricism could best be captured through animation. "We believe animation is, in a way, the closest cinematic form to poetry," he explains.

The film was originally conceived as an anthology of animated shorts. But when actress and filmmaker Salma Hayek-Pinault signed on to the production, the project began to grow in scope.

Hayek-Pinault, who is part Lebanese, had been introduced to the *The Prophet* by her paternal grandfather. "I love the book and I thought it was an opportunity to do an homage to this half of me. It's my love letter to Lebanon." Coming on board as a producer, Hayek-Pinault championed a unique narrative framework that would tie together individual "chapters" drawn from Gibran's masterwork.

"I wanted to make the film bigger and more special," she says. "I proposed that we have a main story to go along with the poems so we could make the movie more accessible and more open to families. Then we started looking for somebody who could find the glue to bring all these elements together."

To create that overarching framework, the producers turned to acclaimed writer-director Roger Allers, best known for his work on some of Disney's most successful animated features. After writing *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*, Allers directed Disney's blockbuster *Lion King* and earned a Tony Award® nomination for scripting the long-running Broadway musical version of the film.

"It was my dream and hope that Roger Allers would be involved in the film," says Hayek-Pinault. "I have a child, so I was aware of all the animators that do mainstream movies and for me, *The Lion King* is one of the best ever."

Allers, who first fell in love with Gibran's writings as a college student, says he jumped at the opportunity. "I wasn't about to let this one get away from me," he laughs.

In reconfiguring *The Prophet* as a feature film, Allers faced one major dilemma. "The biggest challenge was that Gibran's book really has no narrative," he says. "It's chapter after chapter of poetry and philosophy. In fact, *The Prophet* barely has a story at all. I had three elements to build from: A man's been waiting for a ship for years. He goes and talks to people. He gets on the ship. That's the whole story."

Early on, Allers devised a personality and backstory for the central character of Mustafa. "I had to look into who this guy was," he says. "Why is he staying there? I researched Gibran and used bits of his past. I also used other writings of Gibran as a way of creating a little tension in the story points."

In the spirit of his Disney fables, Allers also introduced a fantastical flavor to the storyline. "One of my first ideas was to have a seagull character who would give us the opportunity to see the world from a different point of view," he says.

Characters Drawn From Life

To ground Gibran's soaring philosophical insights in the daily realities of life on a Mediterranean island, Allers populated the film with characters based on people he'd met while living on the Greek island of Crete in his 20s. "The burly café owner is very much like someone I observed when I spent a year living in Crete after college," Allers says. "The tweedy date seller with the giant moustache, he's the kind of person you might see in a market or on the street. They all come from observation; they're all pulled from life."

A Painterly Look

Honoring *The Prophet*'s lyrical tone, Allers chose to present the story in a 2D animation style that would visually complement Gibran's elegant language. That meant steering clear of the jokey, ironic tone and frenetic pacing typical of many of today's animated features. "*Kablil Gibran's The Prophet* is not like other animation projects where you start out with the idea of something very light and entertaining," the director explains. "Gibran's book delves into all the big issues of life. It talks about love and death and having children and working. In order to do justice to his work, this couldn't be a silly movie."

Allers brought in New Machine Studios and Danish art director Bjarne Hansen to craft the sumptuous landscape and village settings featured in *Kablil Gibran's The Prophet's* framing narrative. "I found out about Bjarne from his blog, which posts these beautiful little watercolors or snow scenes that he does every year for Christmas cards," Allers recalls. "There's no snow in *Kablil Gibran's The Prophet*, but there was something about the freshness and simplicity of Bjarne's work. I wanted to feel as if the pigment is splashed on the paper. Bjarne had that kind of approach, so together we worked to find out how to describe this island, this town, this special kind of brilliant light that you find in the Mediterranean."

Hansen used a set of customized Photoshop brushes to create a warm, tactile texture for the film's backgrounds. "The story's set in Northern Africa or Southern Europe so the film needed to

have a warm palette and a light feel,” he says. “We wanted a style of drawing that was gestural and showed more details.”

Hansen, who previously served as art director on Best Animated Feature Oscar® nominee *The Illusionist*, adds, “We created this watercolor feel in order to suggest rather than to actually show. I think it’s nice to have something to look at that is not rendered all over the place but has the quality of a drawing. That’s what I was trying to get.”

Working on the animation elements with Bardel Entertainment, Allers devised an unusual production pipeline: characters were first prototyped as computer-generated 3D models, then “flattened” into the final 2D images seen on screen. “Movements and details sometimes vanished along the way,” Allers notes. “You could see in the CG modeling there’d be cheek action happening but when you flattened it out, the cheek would disappear. But we had a great bunch of 2D animators who came in to pull things back in and make the shapes and wrinkles. It was an interesting collaboration.”

The animators had rarely if ever taken on material with the kind of dramatic heft found in *Kahlil Gibran’s The Prophet*, but Allers says they rose to the challenge presented by the film’s contemplative themes. “Many of the animators had a background in television, which is very action-oriented and very broad comedy,” he notes. “For this film we needed them to take on very serious human drama. They really dove into the challenge of expressing subtle emotions and animating these serious scenes.”

Bringing the Poetry to Life

Allers and Hansen hewed to a uniform animation style for *Kahlil Gibran’s The Prophet’s* episodic adventures but entrusted an all-star roster of international animators to interpret eight separate poems as free-standing “chapters.” Visionary filmmakers from France, Poland, Ireland, the United Arab Emirates and the United States produced a dazzling range of selections to illustrate Gibran’s text. “I hoped that we would get animators from different countries around the world,” Hayek-Pinault says. “Our deal with the directors was that they were going to be completely free in style and interpretation. They coordinated with Roger but they all had their own visions. We celebrated what each of these directors would bring into the project.”

Polish animator Michal Socha, for example, created the film’s “On Freedom” sequence. “Among the different kinds of freedom that Gibran talks about, I decided to focus on civil liberties, which I thought was the most important,” says Socha. “The idea for me came from nature. When I saw birds up on the branch, I thought about the idea of ‘Free as a bird.’”

Socha says he spent about a year perfecting the “On Freedom” segment. First, he labored for six months designing the storyboard and animatics, then the production required another six months. “I painted each image frame by frame. That was a lot of work but I’m very happy with the final result.”

Oscar-nominated animator Bill Plympton used an entirely different technique to create his evocative “On Eating and Drinking” segment. “It’s basically just colored pencil on bond paper, which I know is very retro but I find it to be fast and beautiful.”

Plympton, a Cannes Film Festival Jury Prize winner for his experimental film *Push Comes to Shove*, says he chose “Eating and Drinking” as his theme because “I loved the concept that the food we eat eventually eats us, that you grow something and then we die and our bodies become food for other people, so I had a lot of fun animating that idea.”

Plympton, who used European paintings from the 18th and 19th centuries as models for the hard-working farmers depicted in his sequence, found considerable inspiration in the source material. “There’s a lot of smart stuff and I can see why the book’s never gone out of print,” he says.

“Certainly now whenever I pass a field of corn or grain, I think differently about where it comes from and where it’s going and that whole process of eating and drinking.”

Lending Voice to the “Prophet”

Although each of the animators brings his or her own unique interpretation and visual style to the film’s different sections, there is a powerful unifying thread connecting the dramatic scenes with the recitations of Gibran’s poems: the voice of Oscar-nominated actor Liam Neeson.

“We needed somebody who had a soulful voice that would sound wise but at the same time full of hope,” says Hayek-Pinault. “A lot of people who have the training to recite poetry overdo it. Liam knows how to deliver poetry but without having it sound heavy and preachy. I cannot think of a better voice.”

Working with Neeson in the recording studio turned out to be a revelation for Allers. “Liam came completely prepared,” he says. “We recorded the dialogue for the dramatic scenes in one day and the second day it was all poems. With the timbre, the pitch and the resonance of his speaking voice, he made the poetry that flows through the movie clear and nuanced, so the ideas are really there for you to understand.”

The Oscar-nominated actor invests Gibran’s verse with hypnotic allure while portraying political prisoner Mustafa as a gentle seer who refuses to be intimidated by political brute force. “I was familiar with Gibran’s poetry from a fairly early age,” says Neeson, who prepared mainly by immersing himself in the source material. “It was just a matter of spending time rereading The Prophet, ingesting it, and then trying not to get in the way. I wanted to let Gibran’s words speak for themselves and not color them too much or act out the poems. I wanted to be a vessel for the words to come through.”

In dramatizing Mustafa’s status as a political prisoner, Neeson says he drew inspiration from Chinese activist artist Ai Weiwei. Like Mustafa, Weiwei has been confined to house arrest for producing artworks considered subversive by his country’s ruling regime. “Weiwei immediately sprang to my mind as being the same kind of prophet as this Mustafa character,” Neeson says. “He’s a thorn in the side of the Chinese authorities. I’d been recently reading about Weiwei and this extraordinary artwork he does, which highlights issues in China and around the world. He reminded me of the power of poetry and the power of artists to engage and potentially change society.”

After Neeson recorded Gibran’s poems, he got a chance to experience the full effect of his voice-over combined with animation. After seeing an excerpt of the film, he says, “It looked very beguiling. It reminded me of the magical realism of the late Spanish-language novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez.”

Neeson believes audiences could come away from *Kablil Gibran’s The Prophet* with a renewed appreciation for poetry. “I hope they will get into Gibran’s work. And maybe by doing that, it will encourage them to buy some more poetry and investigate more poets. Poetry is an extraordinary art form in the way it speaks—and always will speak—to us.”

The Spirited Salma Hayek-Pinault

In addition to her duties as a producer, Hayek-Pinault enlivened the mother-daughter relationship at the heart of *Kablil Gibran’s The Prophet* by providing the voice of the widowed mother Kamila, who works as a housekeeper for Mustafa. “Salma brings so much energy to the recording sessions, she really gives her whole self to it and the performance pops off the screen,” says Allers. “But Salma’s not just an actress of the high and the loud. The scenes with the daughter were tender and quiet and intimate. Of course Salma has a daughter herself, so she was able to bring a lot of personal experience to the performance.”

“Kamila is a single mother who loved her husband and has a problem child,” Hayek-Pinault explains. “She cannot communicate with Almitra and it breaks her heart because her daughter has shut down. Kamila’s a hard-working, heartbroken mother and I think many moms around the world will identify with this.”

While her involvement in a film based on Gibran’s writings provided Hayek-Pinault with an opportunity to connect with her Lebanese heritage, she is quick to point out that the film’s setting is intentionally left ambiguous. “It was important for me that the film didn’t have a time or space and that it is a place that anybody could claim as their own. The film doesn’t have a nationality or a religion. We had people from all over the world working on it, from the financing, to the actors to the directors.”

Hayek-Pinault hopes *Kablil Gibran’s The Prophet* will transport audiences to a land where bold, beautiful truths hold sway. “The idea is to bring back the sense of naiveté in the animation but in a beautiful artistic form,” she says. “Once we get comfortable with this place, the island of Orphalese, then we let the mind of the child take us into outrageous places so we can be surprised over and over and over.”

True to the spirit of Gibran’s writings, Hayek-Pinault harbors a simple ambition for audiences. “I hope the film lifts their spirit and reminds them of the things we all know but often forget,” she says. “And I hope it puts a smile in their hearts.”

ABOUT THE CAST

LIAM NEESON (Mustafa) is an award-winning actor who has been internationally recognized for his work in both major studio blockbusters and acclaimed independent features. Most recently, he appeared in Jaume Collet-Serra’s thriller *Non-Stop*, the hit comedy *Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues* and Paul Haggis’ romantic drama *Third Person*. Neeson also lent his voice to the animated films *The Nut Job*, directed by Peter Lepeniotis; *The Lego Movie*, directed by Phil Lord; and *Khumba*, directed by Anthony Silverston. Previously, he provided the voice of Aslan the Lion in all three *Chronicles of Narnia* films.

Among his upcoming projects are Collet-Serra’s crime-drama *Run All Night*, Seth MacFarlane’s comedy *A Million Ways to Die in the West*, Scott Frank’s thriller *A Walk Among the Tombstones* and the much-anticipated actioner *Taken 3*.

Previously, Neeson was honored for his depictions of three very different real-life figures. Neeson received Academy Award[®], Golden Globe[®] and BAFTA Award nominations for his performance as Oskar Schindler in Steven Spielberg’s 1993 Oscar[®]-winning drama *Schindler’s List* (Best Picture). Three years later, he played the title role in Neil Jordan’s biopic *Michael Collins*, earning another Golden Globe nomination. His impassioned portrayal of the Irish Republican hero was recognized with an Evening Standard British Film Award and the 1996 Venice Film Festival’s Volpi Cup.

In 2004 Neeson starred as controversial sex researcher Alfred Kinsey in Bill Condon’s *Kinsey*, for which he won a Los Angeles Film Critics Award, garnered his third Golden Globe nomination and was also an Independent Spirit Award nominee.

In 2012 Neeson reprised his role as unstoppable CIA operative Bryan Mills in *Taken 2*, the successful follow-up to the 2008 hit. He also starred in Peter Berg’s actioner *Battleship*, played Zeus in two *Clash of the Titans* movies and starred in Joe Carnahan’s survival thriller *The Grey*, which topped the box office in its opening weekend.

Other recent film credits also include Jaume Collet-Serra’s thriller *Unknown*, Paul Haggis’ thriller *The Next Three Days*, action-comedy *The A-Team* and two indies, *After:Life* and Atom Egoyan’s

Chloe. He also briefly reprised his role from *Batman Begins* in Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises*.

2009 saw the debut of *Five Minutes of Heaven*, which received rave reviews at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival. The previous year, he teamed up with Laura Linney in Richard Eyre's *The Other Man*.

Previously, Neeson starred in David Von Ancken's revenge drama *Seraphim Falls*, opposite Pierce Brosnan; Ridley Scott's Crusades epic *Kingdom of Heaven*, alongside Orlando Bloom; Richard Curtis' romantic comedy *Love Actually*, with Hugh Grant, Emma Thompson and Keira Knightley; Kathryn Bigelow's *K-11: The Widowmaker*, opposite Harrison Ford; Michael Canton-Jones' historical action film *Rob Roy*, co-starring Jessica Lange and Tim Roth; Sam Raimi's proto-superhero film *Darkman*, with Frances McDormand; Peter Yates' courtroom drama *Suspect*, with Dennis Quaid and Cher; Roland Joffe's drama *The Mission*, co-starring Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons.

Additional film credits include *Gun Shy*, *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*, *The Haunting*, *Les Misérables*, *Duet for One*, *A Prayer for the Dying*, *The Good Mother*, *Crossing the Line*, *Shining Through*, *Under Suspicion*, *Husbands and Wives*, *Ethan Frome*, *Nell*, *Before and After*.

An accomplished stage actor, Neeson made his Broadway debut in 1993 with a Tony Award®-nominated performance in Roundabout Theatre's revival of Eugene O'Neill's 1921 drama "Anna Christie," co-starring Natasha Richardson. He was also seen at the Lincoln Center Festival in "Eh Joe," directed by Atom Egoyan. Neeson returned to Broadway in 2002, co-starring with his friend Laura Linney in Arthur Miller's classic "The Crucible" and receiving a Tony nomination. Neeson played Oscar Wilde in David Hare's "The Judas Kiss," which opened in London's West End and subsequently on Broadway.

The Irish-born actor had originally sought a career as a teacher after attending Queens University, Belfast, and majoring in physics, computer science and math. Neeson set teaching aside and in 1976 joined the prestigious Lyric Players Theatre in Belfast, making his professional acting debut in Joseph Plunkett's "The Risen People."

After two years with the Lyric Players, he joined the famed Abbey Theatre in Dublin, national theater of Ireland. Neeson appeared in the Abbey Theatre Festival's production of Brian Friel's "Translations" and a production of Sean O'Casey's "The Plough and the Stars" for the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, England, where he received a Best Actor Award.

In 1980 director John Boorman spotted Neeson playing Lennie in John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" and cast him in the epic Arthurian saga *Excalibur*. Following this motion-picture debut, Neeson appeared in Dino De Laurentiis' remake of *The Bounty* (1984), directed by Roger Donaldson and co-starring Mel Gibson and Anthony Hopkins, followed by the critically acclaimed *Lamb* (1986), for which Neeson received an Evening Standard Drama Award nomination for his haunting portrayal of a priest tormented by doubts about his faith.

SALMA HAYEK-PINAULT (Kamila, Producer) is an Academy Award nominee who has proven herself as a prolific actress, producer and director, in both film and television. Her performance in the title role in Julie Taymor's *Frida* earned Hayek-Pinault multiple Best Actress nominations including Academy Award, Golden Globe, SAG Award and BAFTA.

Hayek-Pinault has three upcoming films scheduled for release. *How to Make Love Like an Englishman* pairs Hayek-Pinault with Pierce Brosnan and her co-star from Joe Lynch's *Everly*, Jennifer Blanc.

This summer Hayek-Pinault will be filming *The Septembers of Shiraz* alongside Adrien Brody and *Tale of Tales*, with director Matteo Garrone. She will also voice the part of Teresa Taco in Seth Rogen's upcoming animated feature *Sausage Party*, about a sausage's journey through the grocery store to get back on shelves for the Fourth of July weekend.

Most recently, Hayek-Pinault reprised her role as Adam Sandler's wife in *Grown-Ups 2*, starring alongside Chris Rock, Kevin James, David Spade and Maya Rudolph. She also starred in Oliver Stone's *Savages*, opposite Blake Lively, John Travolta and Benicio del Toro. She also appeared in *Here Comes the Boom*, with Kevin James.

Previously, Hayek-Pinault starred in Todd Robinson's *Lonely Hearts*, opposite John Travolta and James Gandolfini; Robert Towne's *Ask the Dust*, alongside Colin Farrell and Idina Menzel; Luc Besson's *Bandidas*, opposite Penelope Cruz; Brett Ratner's *After the Sunset*, with Pierce Brosnan; Mike Figgis' *Hotel* and *Timecode*; Kevin Smith's *Dogma*, opposite Ben Affleck and Matt Damon; as well as Robert Rodriguez's *From Dusk Till Dawn*, *Desperado* and *Once Upon a Time in Mexico*.

Hayek-Pinault's other film credits include Alex de la Iglesia's *La Chispa de la Vida*, Mathieu Demy's *Americano*, Chris Miller's *Puss in Boots*, Dennis Dugan's *Grown Ups* and Paul Weitz's *The Vampire's Assistant*.

On television, Hayek-Pinault memorably guest-starred on NBC's critically acclaimed comedy "30 Rock." Hayek-Pinault won an Emmy Award[®] for her directorial debut "The Maldonado Miracle," which she also produced. The film, which starred Peter Fonda, Mare Winningham and Ruben Blades, premiered at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival and later aired on Showtime. She has directed music videos for both Prince and Jada Pinkett.

Since 2006, Hayek-Pinault and her producing partner Jose Tamez have been developing, producing and acquiring mainstream projects that either draw on Latin themes or feature Latin talent, both in front of and behind the camera. She served as the executive producer on ABC's award-winning comedy "Ugly Betty," starring America Ferrera and based on the enormously successful Colombian series "Yo Soy Betty, La Fea."

In 2001 Hayek-Pinault starred in and co-produced Showtime's "In the Time of the Butterflies," for which she received a Broadcast Film Critics Association's Award nomination. Also produced by Hayek-Pinault's Ventanarosa Productions was the Mexican feature *No One Writes to the Colonel*, directed by Arturo Ripstein and based on the novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. *No One Writes to the Colonel* was selected to screen in official competition at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival.

Born and raised in Coatzacoalcos, Mexico, Hayek-Pinault studied international relations in college in Mexico. Her early film credits include *Midaq Alley*, based on a novel by Nobel Prize recipient Naguib Mahfouz.

Hayek-Pinault has dedicated much of her time to social activism. She served as spokesperson for the Pampers/UNICEF partnership worldwide, with the goal of slowing the spread of life-threatening maternal and neonatal tetanus. She also served as the spokesperson for the Avon Foundation's *Speak Out Against Domestic Violence* program, which focuses on domestic violence education, awareness and prevention, as well as support for victims.

In 2005 Hayek-Pinault spoke before the U.S. Senate, encouraging its members to extend the Violence Against Women Act. In January 2006 the legislation was passed, ensuring that \$3.9 billion will be allocated to thousands of domestic violence crises and intervention agencies throughout the U.S. Hayek-Pinault visited the Arctic Circle for the celebration of Earth Day 2005, in an effort to bring attention to the dangers that global warming poses to the Inuit people and the rest of the world.

In November 2005 Hayek-Pinault and Julianne Moore co-hosted the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Oslo, which honored Nobel laureate Mohamed ElBaradei and the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency. She was also part of Global Green, Youth Aids and the One campaign launched by singer and activist Bono.

In 2013 Hayek-Pinault, alongside Beyonce and Gucci's creative director Frida Giannini, co-founded Chime for Change, an organization dedicated to improving the education, health and welfare of women and girls around the world.

ALFRED MOLINA (Sergeant) is an accomplished London-born actor whose diverse and distinguished gallery of performances have led to a lengthy and triumphant career in film, television and the stage. At the 2013 Sundance Film Festival Molina was honored by the Creative Coalition with their Spotlight Award for his work in independent film. In 2002 Molina starred opposite Oscar-nominee Salma Hayek-Pinaut in *Frida*, Julie Taymor's docudrama about the life of Frida Kahlo. His turn as the hedonistic Mexican artist Diego Rivera earned rave reviews and Best Supporting Actor nominations for the British Academy Award (BAFTA), the Screen Actors Guild Award, the Broadcast Film Critics prize and the Chicago Film Critics Association Award.

The actor is currently shooting "The Matador" for the newly launched El Rey network, which is slated to air in June. He recently completed Ira Sachs' *Love Is Strange*, opposite John Lithgow. The film premiered at Sundance and will be released later in the year by Sony Classics. Earlier this year Molina starred opposite Jessica Biel in Francesca Gregorini's *The Truth About Emanuel*.

Molina recently starred in the TNT series "Monday Mornings" for writer/producer David E. Kelley. He was also seen in *Swelter*, for filmmaker Keith Parmer, *We'll Never Have Paris*, for director Simon Helberg, co-starring Zachary Quinto and Maggie Grace; *Prince of Persia*, opposite Jake Gyllenhaal; *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, with Nicolas Cage; and *Abduction*, starring Taylor Lautner and Sigourney Weaver, directed by John Singleton.

Molina shared in his third SAG Best Ensemble Cast Award nomination for Lasse Hallström's whimsical, Oscar-nominated romantic comedy *Chocolat* and was reunited with Hallström for *The Hoax*, starring Richard Gere. Molina also turned heads as the villainous Otto Octavius, aka Dr. Octopus, in Sam Raimi's blockbuster sequel *Spider-Man 2*.

Additional film credits include Lone Scherfig's *An Education*, Roger Donaldson's *Species*, Jon Amiel's *The Man Who Knew Too Little*, Bernard Rose's *Anna Karenina*, Woody Allen's *Celebrity*, Stanley Tucci's *The Impostors*, James Mangold's *Identity*, Jim Jarmusch's *Coffee and Cigarettes*, Ron Howard's *The Da Vinci Code*, Isabel Coixet's *My Life Without Me*, Eric Till's *Luther*, Sebastian Cordero's *Crónicas*, Kenneth Branagh's *As You Like It*, François Girard's *Silk*, Harald Zwart's *The Pink Panther 2*, John Irvin's *The Moon and the Stars*, Lynn Roth's *The Little Traitor* and Julie Taymor's *The Tempest*.

Molina's recent work for the small screen includes NBC's "Law & Order: Los Angeles," for producer Dick Wolf; the BBC comedy "Roger & Val Have Just Got In," opposite Dawn French; NBC's "Harry's Law," starring Kathy Bates; Lifetime's "Return to Zero," with Minnie Driver; and HBO's "The Normal Heart," opposite Mark Ruffalo and Julia Roberts.

Previously, Molina starred in two comedies for CBS. He played a washed-up writer sought out by his estranged daughter in "Bram and Alice" (2002), and played Jimmy Stiles in "Ladies' Man," a show on which he also served as a producer. His other television work includes the acclaimed 1983 miniseries "Reilly: Ace of Spies," "Miami Vice," the BBC telefilm "Revolutionary Witness," Granada TV's "El C.I.D.," the BBC miniseries "Ashenden" (based on Peter Mayles' bestseller *A Year in Provence*), the Hallmark Channel's "Joan of Arc" (as narrator), the TNT miniseries "The Company," NBC's "Law & Order: Special Victim's Unit" and USA Network's "Monk."

Despite his thriving film and television career, Molina has never wandered far from the stage for long. The experienced thespian gave a much-praised performance as Petruchio in "Taming of the Shrew" (1985) and earned an Olivier nomination for his work in the British production of David Mamet's "Speed the Plow." In his Broadway debut as the good-natured Yvan in Yasmina Reza's "Art" (1998, starring with Alan Alda and Victor Garber), Molina collected the first of his two Tony Award nominations (for Best Actor in a Dramatic Play). He made his Broadway debut as the Irish chatterbox Frank Sweeney in Brian Friel's play "Molly Sweeney" (1995-96), and most recently

triumphed as Tevye in the 2004 revival of “Fiddler on the Roof,” for which he earned his second Tony nod (Best Actor in a Musical).

In 2006 Molina completed a run at the Mark Taper Forum of “The Cherry Orchard,” opposite Annette Bening. He also starred in the highly celebrated Donmar Warehouse production of “Red,” which opened on Broadway in April 2010 and for which he received a Tony nomination. Two years later he starred in “Red” at The Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles.

Following Molina’s education at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, he quickly gained membership in England’s prestigious Royal Shakespeare Company, where he performed both in classics like “Troilus and Cressida” and new original works like “Frozen Assets” and “Dingo.” In 1979, he won acclaim (and a Plays and Players Award as Most Promising New Actor) as “The Maniac” in “Accidental Death of an Anarchist” at London’s Half Moon Theatre.

Two years later, Molina found himself on the big screen making his American debut in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. In Stephen Frears’ 1987 drama, *Prick Up Your Ears*, Molina won great notices for his portrait of a vengeful, murderous Kenneth Halliwell, playwright Joe Orton’s gay lover.

Molina’s career continued to soar in the following decade, with roles as an unhappy upper-class husband in Mike Newell’s *Enchanted April*, the joyous painter Titorelli in David Jones’ 1993 adaptation of Kafka’s novel *The Trial*, and a duplicitous Persian spouse in *Not Without My Daughter*. He played the small but pivotal role of a crazed drug dealer in Paul Thomas Anderson’s Oscar-nominated epic *Boogie Nights* (1997) and rejoined Anderson for the ensemble drama *Magnolia* (1999), collecting SAG Award nominations for both as part of the films’ ensemble casts.

Molina continued to display his ability to embody a variety of nationalities, playing a Cuban immigrant in Mira Nair’s *The Perez Family* (1995) and a Greek-American lawyer in Barbet Schroeder’s drama *Before and After* (1996).

FRANK LANGELLA (Pasha) has long been considered one of America’s greatest stage and film actors. His career is a model of quality and longevity, excelling in range, power and versatility. Langella was recently seen in the award-winning Sundance sensation *Robot & Frank*, which garnered excellent reviews from the critics and public alike.

In 2014 Langella stars in no less than six films: *Draft Day*, alongside Kevin Costner and Denis Leary; Olivier Dahan’s *Grace of Monaco*, with Nicole Kidman; *Parts Per Billion*, opposite Gena Rowlands; *5 to 7*, alongside Glenn Close; and *Muppets Most Wanted*, with Miss Piggy and Kermit the Frog.

Langella was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2003. He has been honored with well over two-dozen acting nominations and wins including Tonys, Oscars, Emmys, Golden Globes, Cable ACE Awards, Obies and various critics’ awards.

In 2007 Langella earned an Independent Spirit Award nomination for his starring role in *Starting Out in the Evening*. For his portrayal of disgraced former president Richard Nixon in *Frost/Nixon* (2008), Ron Howard’s big-screen adaptation of the Broadway play, Langella was honored with an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor as well as Golden Globe and SAG nominations.

Previously, he played William S. Paley in George Clooney’s historical docudrama *Good Night, and Good Luck* (2005), and then *Daily Planet* editor Perry White in the 2006 *Superman Returns*, opposite Brandon Routh and Kate Bosworth. Langella was also seen in Oliver Stone’s *Wall Street 2: Money Never Sleeps*.

On the small screen, he was most recently seen in HBO’s “Muhammad Ali’s Greatest Fight,” opposite Christopher Plummer, directed by Stephen Frears.

In 2011 he starred on Broadway in Terence Rattigan’s “Man and Boy,” earning him his 6th Tony nomination. Langella recently returned to the stage in the title role of King Lear at the

Chichester Shakespeare Festival in England and then at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York.

Langella made his film debut in 1970 in *Diary of a Mad Housewife*, and later that year in the iconic Mel Brooks comedy *The Twelve Chairs*. He made his Broadway debut in 1974 in Edward Albee's "Seascape," earning him the first of his three Tony awards.

In 1977 Langella starred in the title role of a Broadway revival of "Dracula," and his performance turned the production into an unexpected hit. He reprised his role for John Badham's *Dracula*, which hit theaters in 1979.

While remaining a frequent and distinguished presence in the New York theatrical community, in the 1990s Langella scored a breakthrough screen role in Ivan Reitman's comedy *Dave*, followed by Adrian Lyne's *Lolita* and Roman Polanski's *The Ninth Gate*.

The actor has continued to work constantly on Broadway, winning his second Tony for "Fortune's Fool" in 2003 and his third for "Frost/Nixon" in 2007.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KAHLIL GIBRAN (Author) is celebrated in Lebanon as a literary hero and is believed to be the third-best-selling poet of all time, behind Shakespeare and Laozi. Gibran is best known in the English-speaking world for his 1923 book *The Prophet*, an inspirational series of 26 philosophical essays written in poetic English prose. Since it was first published in 1923, *The Prophet* has never been out of print. Having been translated into more than 40 languages, it was one of the bestselling books of the twentieth century in the United States.

Gibran was born in the town of Bsharri in the north of modern-day Lebanon (then part of Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate, Ottoman Empire). As a young man, he immigrated with his family to the United States, where he studied art and began his literary career, writing in both English and Arabic. In the Arab world, Gibran is regarded as a literary and political rebel. His romantic style was at the heart of a renaissance in modern Arabic literature (especially prose poetry), breaking away from the classical school.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ROGER ALLERS (Director) made his feature-film directing debut with *The Lion King*, following a prolific two-decade career in the animation medium that included everything from character design and animation to storyboarding.

He was instrumental in shaping the structure and dialogue for the six Disney animated features made before *The Lion King*, serving as head of story on *Oliver and Company* and *Beauty and the Beast* while also contributing to *The Little Mermaid*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, *The Rescuers Down Under* and *Aladdin* in a "senior story" capacity.

Born in New York and raised in Scottsdale, Arizona, Allers became hooked on animation when he saw Disney's *Peter Pan* at the impressionable age of 5. After earning his degree in fine arts at Arizona State University, he spent two years traveling and living in Europe, where he met his wife.

In 1973 Allers moved to Boston, where he began working with Lisberger Studios animating and designing for children's educational programs and commercials. Relocating with the studio to Los Angeles, Allers provided story, character and animation for *Animalympics* and story development for the first film to feature computer animation, *Tron*.

In 1980 Allers lived in Toronto, working on *Rock and Rule* for animation studio Nelvana. Following that, he and his family lived in Tokyo while he did story development for Tokyo Movie Shinsha's *Little Nemo in Slumberland*.

After a period of travel from Japan to Nepal, Allers and his family returned to Los Angeles and began his career at Walt Disney Feature Animation. This era of his life concluded with his

adapting the screenplay for the Broadway musical “The Lion King” with his writing partner Irene Mecchi, for which they were nominated for a Tony Award in 1998. He also directed the animated short *The Little Match Girl*, based on the Hans Christian Andersen tale and set to the music of Borodin. It was nominated for an Academy Award in 2006.

After Disney, Allers directed *Open Season* for Sony Animation and with Irene Mecchi wrote and directed “Beatrice’s Goat,” a musical play for a charity whose aim is to end world hunger, the Heifer Foundation.

TOMM MOORE (*On Love, Director*) is the co-founder, producer and creative director for Cartoon Saloon. His first feature film *The Secret of Kells* was Oscar-nominated for Best Animated Feature. He is currently developing another, *The Song of the Sea*.

In 1999 Moore and Paul Young formed Cartoon Saloon while studying animation at Ballyfermot College, Dublin. In the course of the company’s history, he has worked as director, art director, storyboarder, animator and illustrator on a range of projects from commercials to service work for feature films, TV series and shorts.

Early in his life, Moore was a member of the secret crime-fighting group “the living shadows” but failed miserably as a master of stealth, which led to a lifelong love of comic books and animation.

“Love possesses not nor would it be possessed.”

JOAN GRATZ (*On Work, Director*) is an accomplished director, artist and animator who pioneered the animation technique known as claypainting. Working with bits of clay she blends colors and etches fine lines to create a seamless flow of images. Gratz’s most recent short film, *Puffer Girl*, moves into the digital realm by incorporating into her claypainting elements of photography, Photoshop and After Effects.

In Gratz’s *Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase*, images of the human face are transformed to communicate the graphic style and emotional content of key artworks of the 20th century, thus creating an animated history of art. The short won an Academy Award in 1992.

Gratz developed her animated painting while she was an architecture student, and then shifted from paint to clay while working with Will Vinton Studios from 1977 to 1987. During that time her work included design and animation for Academy Award nominees *Return to Oz*, *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Creation*.

Since establishing her own studio, Gratzfilm, in 1987, she has received many honors for her work on independent shorts and commercials. She won a Clio for Coca-Cola, a Bronze Lion at Cannes for Knorr Recipe Sauces, and First Prize at the London International Film Festival for United Airlines. Gratz is represented by LAIKA/house for commercial work.

Gratz travels extensively and has served on juries at international animation festivals in Zagreb, Croatia 1994; Hiroshima, Japan 2002; Castelli Animati, Italy 2003; Seoul, Korea 2004; Hangzhou, China 2006; and Changzhou, China 2008. Most recently she taught claypainting to animation students in Tehran, Iran.

“Work is love made visible.”

NINA PALEY (*On Children, Director*) is a highly acclaimed animator, cartoonist and director. In 2004 Paley began production on *Sita Sings the Blues*, which is projected to be a 72-minute feature. Since then she has completed 20 minutes of animation that comprise six musical chapters. Portions of this much-anticipated film have screened around the world and one chapter won an Excellence in Design Award at ASIFA-East's 2005 festival.

In 1988 Paley left her hometown of Urbana, Illinois, for Santa Cruz, California, and "Nina's Adventures," her semi-autobiographical, often experimental, not-quite-underground alternative weekly comic strip, first appeared in the *Santa Cruz Comic News* and soon spread to the *L.A. Reader*, *Comic Relief Magazine*, *The Funny Times* and *The San Francisco Examiner*. She also created alternative comic books for Dark Horse Comics and various shorter pieces were published in anthologies. Her weeklies were published in the paperback collections *Depression Is Fun* and *Nina's Adventures*, also appearing in the large Japanese artist volume *Jarebong*.

Her mainstream daily comic strip "Fluffy" enjoyed a modest run in about 40 mainstream newspapers worldwide. After two years Paley entered the more challenging medium of animation. Her first short film *Law Is...* was lensed in one week with a vintage Super-8 camera, using stop-motion clay puppets and a cardboard. It was screened in San Francisco numerous times, with musical accompaniment by Nik Phelps and the Sprocket Ensemble. She made three more shorts in 1998: *Cancer* (drawing and scratching on 35mm), *I Heart My Cat* (16 mm stop-motion) and *Follow Your Bliss* (traditional pencil and ink on paper). These films screened at many festivals worldwide and *I Heart My Cat* won the Olympia Film Festival's Audience Choice prize in 1999.

In 1999 Paley made the world's first completely camera-less IMAX film, *Pandorama* using more than \$20,000 in Kodak and CFI Labs' in-kind donations. 35mm prints circulated at major festivals worldwide in 2000 and 2001 including Paris, Bilbao, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ottawa and Berlin. The single 70mm (IMAX) print enjoyed a year-long run as a short feature in Berlin's Cinestar IMAX theater but also played at special events and symposia at La Geode, Paris; the California Science Center, Los Angeles; and IMAX theaters in Frankfurt and San Francisco.

Paley then received a grant from the Film Arts Foundation to produce *Fetch!* (2001), a short film incorporating optical illusions. The film took three years to produce but *Fetch!* has played at countless film festivals internationally and is especially popular at children's festivals such as Chicago International Children's Film Festival, BAM Kid's Film Festival and Northwest Childish Film Festival. A jury of children awarded it First Prize at the Nisan, Germany, KinderFest.

Next, Paley began work on a controversial series about overpopulation and the environment. The centerpiece of this trilogy, which she refers to as her "Fertility Cycle," was *The Stork* (2002), in which a serene natural landscape is bombed by bundles of joy. The film won first prize at the EarthVision Environmental Film Festival and an unsolicited invitation to Sundance in 2003.

After relocating to Brooklyn, New York, Paley began teaching animation at Parsons School of Design and made her next film, *Trial By Fire* (2003). The film claimed Second Place in competition at the 2004 ASIFA-East Animation Festival and screened in festivals in San Francisco, Latvia and Red Bank.

"You are the bows from which your children as living arrows
are sent forth"

BILL PLYMPTON (*On Eating and Drinking, Director*) earned a 1988 Oscar nomination for Best Animated Short with *Your Face*, on which the voice of singer Maureen

McElheron was eerily decelerated to sound more masculine and combined with a fantastically contorting visage.

After a string of highly successful short films (*One of Those Days*, *How to Kiss*, *25 Ways to Quit Smoking* and *Plymptoons*), Plympton began thinking about making a feature film. What came to be called *The Tune* was financed entirely by the animator himself. Sections of the feature were released as short films to help generate funds for production. These include *The Wiseman* and *Push Comes to Shove*, the latter of which won the 1991 Prix du Jury at the Cannes Film Festival. When completed, *The Tune* also made the rounds of the film festivals, garnering the prestigious Houston WorldFest Gold Jury Special Award as well as a Spirit Award nomination for Best Film Score. It was distributed nationally by October Films.

Born in Portland, Oregon, to Don (now a retired banker) and Wilda Plympton, he grew up in a large family of three girls and three boys. For the six children it was often far too wet to play outside. Plympton credits Oregon's rainy climate for nurturing his drawing skills and imagination.

In 1964 Plympton graduated from Oregon City High School, where he participated in the art club. He went on to Portland State University, where he edited the yearbook and was a member of the film society, creating posters for them. It was here that he picked up his obsession with film and first attempted animation.

To avoid the Vietnam War, Plympton served in the National Guard from 1967 to 1972. In 1968 he moved to New York City and began a year of study at the School of Visual Arts. Making the Big Apple his home, Plympton served 15 years as an illustrator and cartoonist. Between toting his portfolio and catching cheap matinees, he designed the magazines *Cineaste*, *Filmmakers Newsletter* and *Film Society Review*. His illustrations have graced the pages of *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, *House Beautiful*, *The Village Voice*, *Screw* and *Vanity Fair*. His cartoons appeared in such magazines as *Viva*, *Penthouse*, *Rolling Stone*, *National Lampoon* and *Glamour*. In 1975 he began "Plympton," a political cartoon strip that ran in *The Soho Weekly News*. By 1981 it was syndicated in more than 20 papers.

After the success of *Your Face*, Plympton became a hot name in the commercial business and began doing spots for such clients as Trivial Pursuit, NutraSweet, Taco Bell, AT&T, Nike, GEICO, United Airlines and Mercedes-Benz. His work also started appearing with more and more frequency on MTV and in the increasingly popular touring animation festivals.

After personally drawing and coloring 30,000 cels for *The Tune*, Plympton moved to live-action. *J. Lyle*, his first live-action feature, was a wacky, surreal comedy about a sleazy lawyer who meets a magical talking dog that changes his life. After a successful run on the festival circuit, *J. Lyle* was released in theaters around the country. Like *The Tune*, *J. Lyle* was financed entirely by the animator himself.

Plympton's second live-action feature, *Guns on the Clackamas*, was a behind-the-scenes look at an imaginary disastrous Western. In 1996 Plympton followed *Mala Noche* writer Walt Curtis around his Portland hometown to record him reading his poetry. The result was *Walt Curtis: The Peckerneck Poet*, an outrageous performance film that hit the festival circuit in 1997 and stunned audiences.

In 1998 Plympton returned to animation with *I Married a Strange Person!* the heartwarming story of a newlywed couple on their wedding night. The film was released by Lionsgate to good box-office numbers and still plays today on cable TV. Up next was another animated feature, *Mutant Aliens*. The story of a stranded astronaut returning to Earth after 20 years in space, the film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, won the Grand Prix in Annecy 2001 and was released in theaters in 2002. It has played all over the world to huge audiences.

Plympton's next animated feature was *Hair High*, a gothic '50s high-school comedy that starred the voice talents of Sarah Silverman, Dermot Mulroney and David and Keith Carradine. The film was completed in 2004 and released theatrically.

Bill's short film *Guard Dog* was a hit at film festivals and netted Plympton a second Oscar nomination in 2005. Two equally successful sequels soon followed, *Guide Dog* in 2006 and *Hot Dog* in 2008. His next feature film, *Idiots and Angels* (2008), was a much darker and more mysterious film than his previous comedies and featured the music of Tom Waits, Moby and Pink Martini.

"And when you crush an apple with your teeth, say to it in your heart.
Your seeds shall live in my body.
And the buds of your tomorrow shall blossom in my heart."

PAUL & GAETAN BRIZZI (*On Death, Directors*) are twin brothers and highly respected animators. In partnership with Mick Jagger's Jagged Films, they produced *Ruby Tuesday*, an animated feature that tells the Faustian tale of a single mother searching for happiness in New York. The film featured a number of classic Rolling Stones songs.

The Ministry of French Culture has honored the Brizzi brothers with the title of "Knights of the Arts," a prestigious honor that France bestows on its best artists every year.

The brothers were born into an Italian family in 1951 yet raised in Paris, where they studied at the Ecole nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs. They brought together their passions for fine art and cinema when they decided to become animation directors.

In 1974 *UN*, their first short film, was acclaimed by the critics and perceived as a revelation of the genre by the press. Winners of the Ministry of French Culture's prestigious "Prix de Rome" in 1976, the brothers were invited to reside in Rome for two years at the Villa Medici. There, they directed *Fracture*, their second short film and winner of several awards at European festivals of animation.

Their third short was nominated for a French César Award (the equivalent of the American Oscar). The Brizzi brothers then founded their own animation production studio and operated it until 1984, while continuing to pursue their personal art.

The Brizzis reputation encouraged Roman Polanski to contract them to draw the storyboards for his film *Pirates*. The twins then directed their first feature, *Astérix et la surprise de César*, an adaptation of the beloved French comic book by Albert Uderzo. In 1988, they launched Brizzi Films and produced animated television shows.

They sold their studio to Disney and in 1994 moved to Los Angeles to work at the Walt Disney Feature Animation Studio. There, they directed sequences of *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Roy Disney, Walt's nephew, trusted the brothers' sense for the grandiose and hired them to direct the final sequence of *Fantasia 2000*. Backed by Igor Stravinsky's music for "The Firebird Suite," the Brizzis told the tale of a forest destroyed by a volcano and then reborn from the ashes. The press unanimously acclaimed the piece for its poetic qualities.

In 2001 the filmmakers left Disney to concentrate on their personal projects as well as their paintings. Their first challenge was illustrating an epic work of art, "Orlando Furioso" by Ludovico Ariosto. The poem's 46 acts became 46 pencil drawings and were shown for the first time at the Italian Institute of Culture in Los Angeles. In 2004 the exhibit moved to Lugano, Switzerland, and then Florence, Italy, the following year.

"For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea
are one."

MICHAL SOCHA (*On Freedom, Director*) is a filmmaker, graphic designer, animator and illustrator who has directed, written and produced a number of short films. *Chick*, an ironic study of infatuation and male-female relations, was nominated for two awards at the 2009 Annecy International Animated Film Festival, winning for Best Original Music. The film also screened at international film festivals, including Ottawa, Cracow, BuSho, Animania and Art Directors Club of Europe.

Socha is now focusing on the short-film space as well as directing commercials and other commissioned work. He is the co-owner of animation and post-production studio BrosFX.

The filmmaker's unique and compelling style has captured the imagination of audiences worldwide. His animated shorts "Stone" (2006), "Icarus" (2007) and "Concert" (2007) won awards at film festivals around the world.

Socha was also the main title designer and animator on the eight-part Starz miniseries "The Pillars of the Earth," starring Ian McShane, Matthew Macfadyen, Eddie Redmayne and Hayley Atwell.

Socha was born and raised in Warsaw, Poland, where he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts.

"For you can only be free when you no longer speak of freedom as a goal."

JOANN SFAR (*On Marriage, Director*) is an award-winning comic-book creator, artist, novelist and film director. Wildly prolific, Sfar is considered one of the most important artists of the new wave of Franco-Belgian comics. He has written a number of successful graphic novels, including *The Rabbi's Cat*. He also wrote, directed and produced the 2011 film adaptation (an animated short), which received numerous award nominations and won the César Award for Best Animated Film, as well as a Special Jury Prize at the Taormina International Film Festival.

Sfar wrote and directed the feature film *Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life* (2010), a biopic about the illustrious French songwriter and singer Serge Gainsbourg. The film, which draws on Sfar's abilities as a comic-book artist through its extensive use of fantasy artwork, animation and puppetry, netted Sfar a César for Best First Film.

Previously, he wrote and directed the four-minute animated short *Thomas Fersen: Hyacinthe*, which screened at the 2006 Annecy International Animated Film Festival and won the award for Best Music Video.

As a producer, Sfar shared in a César nomination (Best Animated Film) for the feature *Aya of Yop City* (2013).

Sfar has won numerous awards for his work in the graphic-novel field and his creations include *Klezmer: Tales of the Wild East*, *Vampire Loves*, *Sardine in Outer Space*, *The Professor's Daughter*, *Little Vampire*, *Dungeon* and *The Little Prince*.

Sfar was born in Nice, Alpes-Maritimes, France.

"Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls."

MOHAMMED SAEED HARIB (*On Good and Evil, Director*) is a successful animator, writer, producer and director. In 2006 he created “Freej,” an animated series airing on Dubai TV that revolved around four elderly Emirati women who try to tackle social issues in the economically booming United Arab Emirates. Production required the talents of more than 500 people working in two countries.

Most recently, Harib directed “Freej Folklore,” a large-scale Arabic theatrical production. The show, which dealt with Arabic history, culture and traditions, was very popular in the United Arab Emirates and is now on tour.

Harib was the recipient of the Majid Bin Mohammed Youth Media Award in 2011 and the International Dubai Film Festival’s Muhr Award in 2007. In 2008 *CEO Middle East* magazine honored him with the title of “Young CEO of the Year” and from 2008 to 2012 he appeared on *Arabian Business* magazine’s list of “The World’s Most Influential Arabs.”

Harib was born in Dubai and graduated from Boston’s Northeastern University with a degree in general arts and animation. He is believed to be the first 3D animator to hail from the Middle East.

“For what is evil but good tortured by its own hunger and thirst?”

GABRIEL YARED (Composer) is a three-time Oscar nominee who gained international recognition with his score for Anthony Minghella’s *The English Patient* (1996), winning an Academy Award, a Golden Globe and a Grammy Award®. He has won or been nominated for a host of international awards including Golden Globes, Emmys and BAFTA Awards.

Yared is always on the trail of a musical ideal and remains open to all kinds of music. Since 1980 he has devoted most of his time to composing original scores for the movies (more than 70 to date). In the course of his career he has worked with filmmakers such as Robert Altman, Jean-Luc Godard, Jean-Jacques Annaud, Angelina Jolie, Mira Nair, Paul Schrader, Richard Curtis and Neil LaBute.

Notable film credits include *The Lives of Others*, *1408*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *Cold Mountain*, *Romero*, *Camille Claudel* and *Vincent & Theo*.

Yared was born in Lebanon in 1949 and lived there for the first 18 years of his life. From ages 4 to 14, he attended a Jesuit boarding school in Beirut and alongside his studies, he learned music on his own. Thanks to the musical library of the Jesuits, he was able to practice on the school organ and read the repertoire. Yared became determined to learn the techniques of musical composition and thus notes and music theory became as natural to him as the alphabet. Although later Yared benefited from a more academic education, he remains at heart a fervent self-taught musician.

YO-YO MA (Special Performance By) has built a multi-faceted career that is a testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences, and to his personal desire for artistic growth and renewal. Whether performing new or familiar works from the cello repertoire, coming together with colleagues for chamber music or exploring cultures and musical forms outside the Western classical tradition, Ma strives to find connections that stimulate the imagination.

Ma’s discography of over 90 albums (including more than 17 Grammy Award winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests. He has made several successful recordings that defy categorization, among them “Hush” with Bobby McFerrin, “Appalachia Waltz” and “Appalachian

Journey” with Mark O’Connor and Edgar Meyer, and two Grammy-winning tributes to the music of Brazil, “Obrigado Brazil” and “Obrigado Brazil – Live in Concert.”

Recent recordings include Mendelssohn Trios with Emanuel Ax and Itzhak Perlman, and “The Goat Rodeo Sessions,” with Edgar Meyer, Chris Thile and Stuart Duncan, which received the 2013 Grammy for Best Folk Album. Across this full range of releases, Ma remains one of the best-selling recording artists in the classical field. All of his recent albums have quickly entered the *Billboard* chart of classical best sellers, remaining in the Top 15 for extended periods and often with as many as four titles simultaneously on the list. In 2009 Sony Classical released a box set of more than 90 albums to commemorate Ma’s 30 years as a Sony recording artist.

Ma maintains a balance between his engagements as soloist with orchestras throughout the world and his recital and chamber music activities. He draws inspiration from a wide circle of collaborators, creating programs with such artists as Emanuel Ax, Daniel Barenboim, Christoph Eschenbach, Kayhan Kalhor, Ton Koopman, Bobby McFerrin, Edgar Meyer, Mark Morris, Riccardo Muti, Mark O’Connor, Kathryn Stott, Michael Tilson Thomas, Wu Man, Wu Tong, Damian Woetzel and David Zinman.

Over the years Ma has received numerous awards, including the Avery Fisher Prize (1978), the Glenn Gould Prize (1999), the National Medal of the Arts (2001), the Dan David Prize (2006), the Sonning Prize (2006), the World Economic Forum’s Crystal Award (2008), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2010), the Polar Music Prize (2012) and the Vilcek Prize in Contemporary Music (2013). In 2011 Ma was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors.

In 1998 Ma established the Silk Road Project, a nonprofit arts and educational organization that takes its inspiration from the historic Silk Road trading routes as a modern metaphor for multicultural and interdisciplinary exchange. Under his artistic direction, the Silk Road Project presents performances by the acclaimed Silk Road Ensemble, engages in cross-cultural exchanges and residencies, leads workshops for students, and partners with leading cultural institutions to create educational materials and programs.

The project’s ongoing affiliation with Harvard University has made it possible to broaden and enhance educational programming. With ongoing partnerships with arts and educational organizations in New York City, it continues to expand Silk Road Connect, a multidisciplinary educational initiative for middle-school students in the city’s public schools. Developing new music is also a central undertaking of the Silk Road Project, which has been involved in commissioning and performing more than 60 new musical and multimedia works from composers and arrangers around the world.

As the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Judson and Joyce Green creative consultant, Ma is partnering with Maestro Riccardo Muti to provide collaborative musical leadership and guidance on innovative program development for The Institute for Learning, Access and Training at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and for Chicago Symphony artistic initiatives.

Ma’s work focuses on the transformative power music can have in individuals’ lives, and on increasing the number and variety of opportunities audiences have to experience music in their communities. Ma and the Institute have created the Citizen Musician Initiative (www.citizenmusician.org), a movement that calls on all musicians, music lovers, music teachers and institutions to use the art form to bridge gulfs between people and to create and inspire a sense of community.

Ma is strongly committed to educational programs that not only bring young audiences into contact with music but also allow them to participate in its creation. While touring, he takes time whenever possible to conduct master classes as well as more informal programs for students—musicians and non-musicians alike. At the same time, he continues to develop new concert programs for family audiences—for instance helping to inaugurate the family series at Carnegie Hall.

In each of these undertakings, he works to connect music to students' daily surroundings and activities with the goal of making music and creativity a vital part of children's lives from an early age. He has also reached young audiences through appearances on "Arthur," "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" and "Sesame Street."

Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and soon came with his family to New York, where he spent most of his formative years. Later, his principal teacher was Leonard Rose at the Juilliard School. He sought out a traditional liberal arts education to expand upon his conservatory training, graduating from Harvard University in 1976.

Appointed a Culture Connect Ambassador by the U.S. State Department in 2002, Ma has met with, trained and mentored thousands of students worldwide in countries including Lithuania, Korea, Lebanon, Azerbaijan and China. Ma serves as a U.N. Messenger of Peace and is a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. He has performed for eight American presidents, most recently at the invitation of President Obama on the occasion of the 56th Inaugural Ceremony.

Ma and his wife have two children. He plays two instruments: a 1733 Montagnana cello from Venice and the 1712 Davidoff Stradivarius.

LISA HANNIGAN (Additional Music) Lisa Hannigan, is an Irish singer, songwriter, and musician. She began her musical career as a member of Damien Rice's band. Since beginning her solo career in 2007 she has released two albums: "Sea Sew" and "Passenger."

Her music has received critical praise, airplay and award nominations both in her native Ireland and the United States, including a nomination for the prestigious Mercury Prize.

In 2013 Hannigan contributed vocals to the soundtrack for Alfonso Cuarón's film *Gravity*.

GLEN HANSARD (Additional Music) is an Oscar-winning songwriter, actor and vocalist. He is also the guitarist for Irish group The Frames and half of the folk-rock duo The Swell Season, with Czech singer and multi-instrumentalist Markéta Irglová.

As an actor, Hansard appeared in Alan Parker's BAFTA-winning film *The Commitments* (1991) but is best known for his starring role in John Carney's *Once*, which earned him a number of major awards and nominations including the Academy Award for Best Original Song ("Falling Slowly"). In the film, a musical drama, Hansard played a Dublin busker opposite Swell Season partner Irglová, who played an immigrant street vendor. The film made its American premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in 2007, winning the World Cinema Audience Award.

Hansard's music has been featured on the soundtracks of numerous films and TV series including *The Hunger Games*, *Feast of Love*, *The Cake Eaters*, *The Odd Life of Timothy Green* and *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone*.

Hansard quit school at age 13 to begin busking on the streets of Dublin. He formed The Frames in 1990 and the band immediately became staples of the Irish music scene. After attending the New York Film Academy School of Acting, Hansard played guitar player Outspan Foster in *The Commitments*. In 2003 he presented the television program "Other Voices: Songs from a Room," which showcased Irish music talent.

DAMIEN RICE (Additional Music) is an Irish singer-songwriter, musician and record producer who plays guitar, piano, clarinet and percussion. Rice's songs have appeared in films such as *In Good Company*, *Closer*, *Dear Frankie*, *Stay*, *Shrek the Third* and numerous television series, including "ER," "True Blood," "Bones" and "So You Think You Can Dance."

His debut album “O” reached No. 8 on the U.K. charts, won the Shortlist Music Prize (modeled after the British Mercury Prize) and generated three top-30 singles in the U.K. His first single, “The Blowers Daughter,” went Top 20 and helped Rice’s ensuing tour become a success. The album, “O,” went platinum in Ireland and appeared on many critics’ “Best of the Year” lists.

Rice has also made musical contributions to charitable projects such as the Songs for Tibet, Freedom Campaign and the Enough Project.

Raised in Celbridge, County Kildare, Ireland, Rice began his musical career as a member of the 1990s rock group Juniper. After leaving the band he worked as a farmer in Tuscany and busked throughout Europe. In 2001 he returned to Ireland and re-launched his musical career as a solo artist. Rice released his second album, “9,” in 2006 and remains one of the most-played artists on BBC Radio 2.

BJARNE HANSEN (Art Director) headed the art department on Sylvain Chomet’s animated feature *The Illusionist* (2010), an Oscar nominee for Best Animated Feature. He is currently the production designer for the animated series “Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu.” Hansen previously worked as head of backgrounds on another award-nominated animated film, *Asterix and the Vikings*, which premiered in France in 2006.

Hansen graduated from the Kolding School of Design in 1991. He began freelancing in illustration for magazines, commercials and books, and then was a background painter on the feature *Quest for Camelot*. His experience also includes pre-production work on the television series “Troll Tales” and “Benjamin Blümchen” as well as several TV specials.

Hansen has worked as a colorist for DC Comics and illustrated a story by Morten Remar, “Redningsaktion Europa.”