

Mongrel Media
Presents

THE HOMESMAN

A film by Tommy Lee Jones
(120 min., USA, 2014)
Language: English

Distribution



1028 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6J 1H6
Tel: 416-516-9775 Fax: 416-516-0651
E-mail: info@mongrelmedia.com
www.mongrelmedia.com

Publicity

Bonne Smith
Star PR
Tel: 416-488-4436
Fax: 416-488-8438
E-mail: starpr@sympatico.ca

High res stills may be downloaded from <http://www.mongrelmedia.com/>

THE HOMESMAN

When three women living on the edge of the American frontier are driven mad by harsh pioneer life, the task of saving them falls to the pious, independent-minded Mary Bee Cuddy (Hilary Swank). Transporting the women by covered wagon to Iowa, she soon realizes just how daunting the journey will be, and employs a low-life drifter, George Briggs (Tommy Lee Jones), to join her. The unlikely pair and the three women (Grace Gummer, Miranda Otto, Sonja Richter) head east, where a waiting minister and his wife (Meryl Streep) have offered to take the women in. But the group first must traverse the harsh Nebraska Territories marked by stark beauty, psychological peril and constant threat.

The Homesman stars Academy Award®-winners Tommy Lee Jones (*No Country for Old Men*, *The Fugitive*) and Hilary Swank (*Million Dollar Baby*, *Boys Don't Cry*), with a supporting cast featuring Grace Gummer (*Frances Ha*, *Margin Call*), Miranda Otto (*War of the Worlds*, "Rake"), Sonja Richter (*The Keeper of Lost Causes*, *Cecilie*), Academy Award-nominees John Lithgow (*Terms of Endearment*, *This is 40*) and Hailee Steinfeld (*True Grit*, *Ender's Game*), James Spader (*Lincoln*, "The Blacklist") and Academy Award-winner Meryl Streep (*The Iron Lady*, *August: Osage County*).

The film is directed by Tommy Lee Jones and produced by Peter Brant (*Pollack*, *Basquiat*), Brian Kennedy (*The Great Gilly Hopkins*) and Luc Besson (*Lucy*, *The Fifth Element*). The screenplay was written by Jones, Kieran Fitzgerald (*The Ballad of Esequiel Hernández*) and Wesley A. Oliver (*The Company Men*, *No Country for Old Men*), based on the novel by Glendon Swarthout (*The Shootist*).

Original music is by Marco Beltrami (*The Hurt Locker*, *3:10 to Yuma*). Director of photography is Rodrigo Prieto (*Babel*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*), Editor is Roberto Silvi (*Tombstone*, *Twister*). Production designer is Merideth Boswell (*The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, *In the Electric Mist*). Costume designer is Lahly Poore (*Titanic*, *50 to 1*).

Executive producers are Michael Fitzgerald (*The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, *The Pledge*), G. Hughes Abell, Deborah Dobson Bach (*In the Electric Mist*, *Color Me Kubrick*), Richard Romero (*In the Garden of Elah*, *The Hitcher*) and Jones.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Published in 1988, Glendon Swarthout's award-winning novel, *The Homesman*, is a heartfelt and harrowing tale set in the newly created Nebraska Territories. The story of the oft-forgotten frontierswomen without whom America's Westward Expansion would never have been possible, it is an emotional portrait of the resilient and resourceful pioneers of the American frontier, set against the seemingly endless horizon of the Great Plains.

"It's 1855," says director, co-writer and star of *The Homesman*, Tommy Lee Jones. "Three women who have been driven insane by the hardships of life on the American frontier are being transported in a wagon across Nebraska by another intrepid woman. It was important for me to explore the female condition in the mid-nineteenth century American West because I think it's the origin of the female condition today."

The project was brought to Jones' attention by executive producer Michael Fitzgerald, with whom he had collaborated on his first directorial effort, *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*. "I've known Tommy for a long time," Fitzgerald says. "I hold him in a very high regard as an actor and a director, and I'm constantly in awe of his capacity to do both jobs."

Looking for a new project to pitch to his old friend, Fitzgerald asked Sam Shepard, the writer and actor, if he knew of anything that would be suitable. "He immediately came up with this project," says Fitzgerald. "It was something that he himself wanted to do for some years, but he'd never been able to get the rights. I agreed that it would be absolutely perfect for Tommy."

Optioned years earlier by the late actor and filmmaker Paul Newman, *The Homesman* had never made it to the screen, unlike several of Swarthout's earlier works, including the western *The Shootist* (John Wayne's final film,) the contemporary coming-of-age story *Bless the Beasts & Children*, and the classic spring-break romp *Where the Boys Are*. Although the action takes place in the western half of the United States, the filmmakers are hesitant to classify *The Homesman* as a western.

"I don't know how you define the term western," says Jones. "I have the impression that a western is a movie that has horses in it and big hats and that takes place in the 19th century on the west side of the Mississippi river, although I've read critics who are bold

enough to call a science-fiction movie a western. It's a term that people use so often that I don't think it has much meaning anymore."

Producer Michael Fitzgerald observes that the setting of *The Homesman* is not the West traditionally seen in American films. "It's earlier on, in the 1850s, whereas most westerns take place in the 1880s and '90s. In fact, this is about life on the early frontier of the Midwest, so I wouldn't call it a western, even though there are certain things that it shares with that genre, like horses, wagons and guns. But more importantly *The Homesman* is really about the way in which we can be transformed. What does it take to make a decent person? That's the theme that moved me the most."

When Jones teamed up with screenwriters Wesley Oliver and Kieran Fitzgerald to create the screenplay, he was shooting *Hope Springs* with Meryl Streep, who would become one of his co-stars in *The Homesman*. "In between their scenes, we would work on *The Homesman*," recalls Oliver. "Tommy would do a scene with Meryl, come across the street, work with us, go back across the street and jump 150 years forward in time into a contemporary romantic comedy. It was a remarkable achievement on his part to be able to do that and I think being around the excitement of a film already in production energized our writing process."

The first draft was completed in an astonishing five days, the writers say. "We worked from early in the morning till late in the evening with almost no interruption," according to Kieran Fitzgerald. "It was the most productive time ever."

The next step was to fill in the backstories of the three women that Mary Bee must escort across hostile territory: "That was in some ways the most challenging part of the writing," says Oliver. "In the novel, Glendon Swarthout sometimes shows results without describing the steps it took to get there. So we had to imagine background moments. We had to try to piece together in more detail what happened to these women."

The writers began creating detailed flashbacks, or "memory hits," as Jones refers to them. "That gave us a chance to get inside their minds and write a lot of scenes along the way," says Oliver. "It helped clarify for us the lives they lived, the hardships they went through, and the kinds of events that would have led them to break down."

"Each of the women broke down for a distinct and different reason," adds Fitzgerald. "That distinguished one character from another and stayed true to real-life events."

One of the elements that make the film unusual is that it views frontier life primarily from Mary Bee's vantage point. "We tried to take a woman's point of view for the story," says Oliver. "We started that process by reviewing images of women on the frontier. Tommy had a book with a number of really wonderful photographs of pioneers and settlers in the 19th century. Many of those images became part of the cinematic vocabulary we used once we started writing."

"The image of Mary Bee pumping water at the well in front of her house came from those images," adds Kieran Fitzgerald. "The photographs of those pioneer women really inspired the movie."

The resulting film is both historically accurate and relevant to today's world. "Times have changed and customs have changed," says Fitzgerald. "The characters in the movie have less access to healthcare and nutrition than we do, as well as to material comforts, but I think the human condition is the same. People have always suffered and they continue to suffer for various reasons. This is a look at the suffering of those people at that time in American history, which is something we have not had the occasion to explore honestly before."

Oliver adds that the emotional and psychological isolation and alienation on display in *The Homesman* still loom over our modern world. "The digital age is rife with stories of people more desperate to connect than ever despite, or perhaps because of, the facility of communication today. Mary Bee's story is very much about trying to find a connection that will sustain her soul."

PEOPLE OF THE PLAINS

A 19-year-old mother loses her three children to diphtheria in a matter of days. An immigrant woman watches her mother die and is forced to leave her body on the frozen plain to be eaten by scavengers. A hardworking farmer's wife, devastated by the failure of her cattle and crops, murders her newborn baby. When each of them becomes unable to handle reality, no man in their isolated prairie hamlet will step forward to escort the women across the Nebraska Territory to safe haven in Iowa. Only Mary Bee Cuddy, a single woman with a successful homestead of her own, volunteers to make the journey.

To the list of indelibly drawn, unconventional heroines created by Hilary Swank, a two-time Oscar® winner for her work in *Boys Don't Cry* and *Million Dollar Baby*, we can now add Mary Bee—indomitable, resourceful and “plain as an old tin pail,” in the words of her neighbors.

“It’s wonderful to work with Hilary Swank,” says Tommy Lee Jones. “She read the script very rapidly and understood it almost instantly. She was always prepared and very creative. She was ready to go at the beginning of every single day. It’s a joy to know Hilary and a greater joy to work with her.”

The Homesman's moving story of fortitude and courage resonated with Swank, particularly in its depiction of the simplicity and beauty of deep human connection. “This script was impeccably written. Sometimes when I read a script there some things missing, but here, it was all on the page.”

Mary Bee has prospered where others go mad because of her resilience and her faith, according to Swank. “She is not afraid to say what’s on her mind, which is often simply, ‘Don’t do unto others what you don’t want others to do unto you.’ What I love about Mary Bee is that she always tries to do the right thing.”

Transporting three highly unstable passengers from Nebraska to Iowa, Mary Bee runs up against a string of hardships including frightening encounters with Native American warriors, incursions by other settlers, unpredictable late spring weather and acute loneliness.

She volunteers to go out of simple human compassion, notes Swank. “Mary Bee had a wonderful, loving mother who was a great mentor,” says the actress. “Seeing these women struggle reminds her of that relationship. In a way, it is a kind of a healing for her because by helping these women, she’s helping herself. Living in such isolation, at least 20 miles from

her nearest neighbor, allows her to empathize with the struggle these women have had. She also understands the insensitivity that they have endured from the men they are around, because she has experienced it herself.”

But *The Homesman* is not just Mary Bee’s story, says Swank. “It’s about the spirit of the people in this tiny Midwestern town who live a very simple life and are there to help one another. It’s actually heartrending to witness. The words and the music within the scenes just got richer and richer as the shoot went on.”

For Swank, the difficult physical conditions of the shoot were a constant reminder of the travails faced by early settlers. “When you work the whole day outside in the snow, in the rain, in the wind and the sun, you realize that the weather changes pretty much hourly in the spring,” she says. “At the end of the day, I got to go home to a bed, a hot bath and warm food. You think of these characters: day in, day out, for weeks crossing that prairie, never having the advantage of getting out of the elements. That gave me the foundation for the physical experience.”

Faced with the treacherous and lonely ordeal of escorting three madwomen to safety, the stalwart and devout Mary Bee knows she will never be able to complete the journey by herself, so she enlists the help of an unlikely and untrustworthy ally, a grimy scoundrel going by the name of George Briggs. Classically mismatched companions, the forthright spinster and the inveterate schemer learn as much as about themselves as they do about each other during their weeks on the trail.

“It is a great pairing,” says Swank. “You have this woman who is all strength and compassion and then there’s Briggs, who shares a lot of those qualities, but not on his sleeve. He has quite a humorous side and says many things that make me laugh. The respect the two forge through the journey is really beautiful. One of my favorite scenes is when Mary Bee wakes Briggs up and asks him what he is going to do after they get to Iowa. It is a very heartfelt and emotionally rich scene between the two characters.”

Tommy Lee Jones added playing George Briggs to his already demanding roles as director and writer. “Working with Tommy and seeing his nuanced performance is something I will never forget,” says Swank. “I don’t know if I can fully express my respect for him. He has a way of getting across to each member of his crew and to his actors exactly what he needs for them to bring to the film and to the story. He always knew just what to say to me. I am sure that his decades of acting make him the brilliant director that he is. I

was exhausted at the end of the shoot just acting, and he was writing, producing, directing and starring—that blows my mind.”

Jones was able to find a curious nobility in Briggs. “He is a fearless man, a claim jumper, an army deserter and an independent man of rather low character,” says Jones. “But he is also the only one willing to help a woman who believes she can get across Nebraska in a wagon with three insane women as passengers. He knows, even if she doesn’t, that she would never be able to make it on her own. The truth is, he agrees to help her out only because she rescues him from a very dangerous situation, and so he is indebted to her.”

George Briggs and Mary Bee Cuddy are an original and unlikely team, and much of the pleasure of the film is watching them bump heads as they learn each other’s value. “They sure don’t like each other at the beginning of the story,” Jones says. “But they learn that they can rely on each other, depend on one another—until somehow they finally begin to understand each another.”

Jones was able to put together a top-flight supporting cast for the film, including John Lithgow as a small town minister, Tim Blake Nelson as a treacherous pioneer and James Spader, who makes a brief but unforgettable appearance as Aloysius Duffy, a heartless frontier entrepreneur. “Spader is a very fine movie actor and he’s very good company,” says Jones. “He’s a congenial man and we always had a lot of fun, whether working or playing. Happily the character he brings to the screen has nothing to do with the real James Spader.”

Hailee Steinfeld, an Academy Award nominee for her role in *True Grit*, returns to the frontier as a young woman making her own way in the world. “Hailee is a complete actor, skilled beyond her years,” says Jones. “She has a small part in this film, but a very important one. She plays it perfectly—very simple and very direct to the material. She is able to observe and play in a way that made perfect sense to the narrative.”

To play Altha Carter, the minister’s wife whose offer to take the three lost women under her wing prompts Mary Bee and George’s arduous journey, Jones turned to his former co-star Meryl Streep, who turns in a finely wrought cameo. “Meryl Streep needs no praise,” says Jones. “She’s got plenty of it. She’s one of the finest movie actors in the history of cinema and I’m very happy to call her a friend.”

BIG SKY COUNTRY

Tommy Lee Jones approached the technical aspects of *The Homesman* by drawing on influences as diverse as 20th-century minimalist master, Donald Judd; a self-taught frontier photographer, and the big sky and wide-open vistas of northeastern New Mexico, uncovering uncommon beauty in the vast, seemingly blank expanses of the plains.

“Northeastern New Mexico stands in very well for Nebraska,” Jones says. “That was critical because the landscape itself is a very important character in our movie. My vision of the film was minimalist because of the landscape, which mostly consists of a line that divides heaven and earth. The line is usually straight, which creates an emotional environment as much as a natural one.”

Jones worked with an accomplished creative team that includes production designer Merideth Boswell, cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto, costume designer Lahly Poore and composer Marco Beltrami. “If you want to recreate 1850s Nebraska, you start by hiring a superb production designer, a superb property master, a superb composer and a superb costume designer,” says Michael Fitzgerald. “You let them do all the research and then you say yes to a lot of what they come up with.”

The Homesman is Boswell’s seventh film with Jones and she says she knows his priorities well. “Tommy is smart and tough, which can make him intimidating, because he knows what he wants,” says Bosworth. “The first thing he told me was not to do anything wrong, which was fine because we’re really in synch. I know him well enough to know that his aesthetic is specific and austere, so we didn’t have to talk a lot.”

Jones’ confidence in her ability to bring his vision to life is obvious. “Merideth is the best production designer I’ve ever met,” says the director. “She designed the simplest of things, like a wagon rolling across 19th-century Nebraska. When we put a lens on it, it was always beautiful as well as very functional.”

To Bosworth, Jones’ reference to minimalism meant that he wanted to emphasize sparseness, both in the natural settings and the manmade elements. “He talked to me about the geometry of emotion,” she says. “Think about the way a lone figure standing in an empty field evokes something specific. Early on he showed me a piece by the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei—a two-foot tall teahouse made of tea sitting on a field of tea. It’s an icon of a house. You can see it reflected in Mary Bee’s home and barn.”

Bosworth and Jones also looked to the photographs of Solomon Butcher, who spent 40 years documenting the solitary settlements and primitive sod huts of Great Plains settlers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. “The research was gut-punching,” says Bosworth. “They had so little and they often shed the few possessions they had on the way. One image that particularly touched me was of a woman who had hung a plain wooden box next to her sod hut, hoping a songbird would nest there.”

The photographs were instrumental in creating the specifically Midwestern setting for the story. “This is not about gunslingers and cowboys,” says Bosworth. “It’s the story of what really happened to women on the frontier and the courage it took to survive there.”

Costumer Lahly Poore took that aesthetic and infused it into the well-worn garb of Mary Bee and her neighbors. “Her costumes are perfectly appropriate and specific to 1855,” says Jones. “She achieved beautiful work with a small budget”.

But it wasn’t just Poore’s knowledge of the era that won her the job, says Bosworth. “She is one of the real talents working in costume design today. We spoke with a number of people who were extremely well-versed in the period details, but she came in and talked about the costumes in terms of the characters. That nailed it.”

During the five-week journey from Mary Bee’s homestead outside the small town of Loop to the gentler geography of Iowa, subtle changes take shape. “We planned a shooting schedule that served the geography of the travel,” says Bosworth. “It doesn’t always look the same. The terrain changes to serve the story from open to claustrophobic.”

In the film’s final scenes, Historic Westville, Georgia, stands in for Iowa. A “living museum,” Westville is made up of authentic buildings from the 1850s that were transported to a site near Lumpkin, Georgia, and reassembled. “The move to Georgia was effortless,” says Michael Fitzgerald. “We did it in a day and a half—we brought most of the animals, the horses, the mules, the wagons, the camera equipment, the grip equipment. So everything was moved 2,000 miles in a day and a half.”

Westville proved an oasis for the film crew after the rigors of New Mexico. “Everyone immediately relaxed after the dusty blankness,” says Bosworth. “Even the wagons, which we had built by an Amish concern, seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. In New Mexico, it was so dry and cold that the wood would shrink. Once we got it to Georgia, it seemed to blossom again.”

The weather during the shoot was a challenge on many levels. “The spring in New Mexico is notorious for wind and extremely changeable weather,” says Fitzgerald. “We contended with everything you can contend with. That was very, very good for the visuals, but a complication for everything else.”

For cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto, that meant he and his crew had to operate the cameras while wearing goggles and protective gear. “The dust that blew up got in our eyes and into the cameras. We had to make sure the lights and cameras stayed in place. There was extreme cold and the unpredictable snow flurries meant constant changes, so we had to be very flexible and nimble. It was a struggle, but we just embraced it.”

Initially Jones and Prieto considered shooting *The Homesman* in black and white, but after much conversation and extensive testing, they chose to go with color. “Eventually we decided that the subtleties of color in the landscape were important,” says Prieto. “It emphasizes the austere beauty of the early American setting to offset what is in many ways a harrowing story.”

They also debated the advantages of digital versus film and decided to use a combination. “Ultimately it came down to texture,” says Prieto. “We had intended to use digital, but the image was too pristine. Tommy responded to the texture of film because he wanted the audience to settle into the visual language of the classic western, which we felt was associated with film grain, and then come to recognize that the story is something quite unusual. It was only for the low-light, nighttime scenes that we used digital—the Sony F-55—and simulated the grain in post.”

Jones insisted on the same minimalist aesthetic for the cinematography that he had for the production design. “Every shot is designed to emphasize the immensity of the landscape,” Prieto explains. “We are working with just horizon and sky, land and wagon. Tommy referenced the placement of the horizon by deliberately placing the sky in relation to the ground. We always shot the wagon flat on, so it was just a box and a line, which helped make the composition complex and full.”

Jones’ instructions to composer Marco Beltrami were typically succinct. “He told me to be creative and find an authentic source of inspiration for the music,” says Beltrami. “That period was a spare time in American music. The themes we developed drew on the simple folk tunes of the time and are orchestrated to reflect the austere nature of the landscapes and lives of the characters.”

Beltrami wanted to evoke the loneliness and desolation the homesteaders lived with daily. “These women are driven insane by the life that surrounds them,” he says. “The ever-present wind on the plains seemed like a manifestation of that solitude and was a source of inspiration for me.”

In order to create that feeling, Beltrami and his partner Buck Sanders created what they call a wind piano. “We explored many different ways to capture the sound we were looking for,” says Beltrami. “The wind piano was one of the most effective. It is an ordinary piano that we put up on the hill by my studio in Malibu. The piano wires were attached to water tanks 175 feet up a hill that would resonate when the wind blew through. It was like we were drawing out the essence of the wind. That became a signature sound in the score.”

Usually, Beltrami says, he prefers to work in his studio, where controlled conditions create a warm beautiful sound. “But that would have worked against the sense of the movie,” he explains. “So we recorded a small ensemble of strings and percussion outside. There were no walls for the sound to bounce off. The sound is very dissipated. It was difficult to work that way, but the environmental noises bring the right feel.”

Beltrami and Jones are admirers of the work of audio archivist Tony Schwartz and borrowed his technique of using the natural noise of the environment to build musical compositions. “The landscape itself contains harmonic elements and we used that as inspiration,” he says. “We worked with simple pieces of wood hit together or rattles as well as traditional orchestral instruments.”

Working with Jones was a singular and inspiring experience for the composer. “He is open to experimentation and really creative work, and he is extremely collaborative.”

Bosworth agrees, adding, “People often say that their latest movie was one from the heart. Well, this was the best experience I could ever hope for. It was the hardest shoot I’ve ever been on. We had to rebuild the hotel set in 60-mile-an-hour winds. It was so cold that paint froze in the cans overnight. I drove 211 miles to the set every day. It was brutal, but Tommy was enthusiastic from beginning to end, and that made us all want to work.

“So often you enjoy either the process or the product,” she continues. “When I saw the finished picture, I was so emotional. When we were on the set, everyone could see something special was happening. I didn’t want it to end.”

ABOUT THE CAST

TOMMY LEE JONES (George Briggs, Director and Writer) is an Oscar winner who made his feature film debut in *Love Story* and since then has built a career spanning four decades. Most recently, he portrayed Thaddeus Stevens in Steven Spielberg's historical drama *Lincoln*. For this performance, Jones won the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award for Best Supporting Actor and received Best Supporting Actor nominations for the Academy Award, BAFTA Award, Golden Globe Award® and Critics' Choice Award.

In 1994 Jones won both the Oscar and Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of the uncompromising U.S. Marshal Sam Gerard in the highly successful action-thriller *The Fugitive*. Three years earlier, Jones received his first Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Clay Shaw in Oliver Stone's *JFK*. In 2007 Jones starred in the critically acclaimed drama *In the Valley of Elah*, for which he received an Oscar nomination for Best Actor.

In 2005 Jones starred in the *Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, which he also directed and produced. The film debuted in competition at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival, garnering Jones the award for Best Actor and screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga the prize for Best Screenplay. The film was also nominated for the Palme d'Or. Subsequently, it received four Independent Spirit Award nominations (Best Feature, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography and Best Supporting Male).

Other film credits include *The Eyes of Laura Mars*, *Coal Miner's Daughter* (for which Jones received his first Golden Globe nomination), *Stormy Monday*, *The Package*, *Under Siege*, *Heaven and Earth*, *The Client*, *Natural Born Killers*, *Blue Sky*, *Cobb*, *Batman Forever*, the *Men in Black* trilogy, *U.S. Marshals*, *Double Jeopardy*, *Rules of Engagement*, *Space Cowboys*, *The Hunted*, *The Missing*, *A Prairie Home Companion*, *In the Electric Mist*, *The Company Men*, *Captain America: The First Avenger*, *Hope Springs*, *The Emperor* and *The Family*.

HILARY SWANK (Mary Bee Cuddy and Producer) is a versatile artist with a wide range of projects spanning her more than twenty years in the entertainment industry.

After beginning her professional acting career as a teenager, Swank quickly rose through breakout roles and has gone on to work with such leading filmmakers and actors including Kathy Bates, Robert De Niro, Brian De Palma, Clint Eastwood, Morgan Freeman,

Tom Hooper, Tommy Lee Jones, Richard LaGravenese, Gary Marshall, Mira Nair, Christopher Nolan, Philip Noyce, Al Pacino and Sam Raimi.

Swank's upcoming films this fall include *You're Not You*, which she stars in as well as produces with Molly Smith through their production company 2S Films.

Swank had been working for nearly a decade as an actress in film and television when her breakout role as Brandon Teena in the 1999 drama *Boys Don't Cry* earned her an Academy Award® for Best Actress. Her much lauded performance also earned her a Golden Globe Award, a Critics' Choice Award, as well as New York Film Critics, Los Angeles Film Critics, Chicago Film Critics, and National Society of Film Critics Awards in the same category. Additionally, the National Board of Review recognized Swank's work with the Breakthrough Performance of the Year Award, and she earned BAFTA and Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award® nominations.

In 2005, Swank won her second Academy Award® for her starring role opposite Clint Eastwood in his Oscar®-winning Best Picture *Million Dollar Baby*. In addition, she won her second Golden Globe Award and a SAG Award®, as well as the National Society of Film Critics and Critics' Choice Awards for Best Actress. That same year, she also earned Golden Globe and SAG Award® nominations for her starring role in HBO's *Iron Jawed Angels*, about the American women's suffrage movement.

Other credits include starring in and executive producing three films: *Conviction*, based on the true story of Betty Anne Waters, a single mother who worked tirelessly to become a lawyer to exonerate her wrongly accused brother, which Swank received a SAG Award® nomination; Mira Nair's *Amelia*, the story of the legendary aviatrix; and *Freedom Writers*, directed by Richard LaGravenese based on the inspiring story of teacher Erin Grumell and her "at-risk" class at Woodrow Wilson High School.

Additional acting credits include Christopher Nolan's *Insomnia*, opposite Al Pacino; Richard LaGravenese's romantic drama *P.S. I Love You*, opposite Gerard Butler and Kathy Bates; Philip Noyce's inspiring *Mary and Martha*, opposite Brenda Blethyn; Brian De Palma's *The Black Dahlia*, with Aaron Eckhart and Scarlett Johansson; the historical drama, *The Affair of the Necklace*; Sam Raimi's suspense thriller, *The Gift*; Jon Amiel's space adventure, *The Core*; Stephen Hopkins' thriller *The Reaping*, produced by Joel Silver; and Gary Marshall's ensemble *New Year's Eve*, opposite Robert De Niro.

Swank also served as a producer on the romantic comedy *Something Borrowed*, the first film under the banner of her production company with Molly Smith, 2S Films.

In addition to her talents and work within the film industry, Swank recently expanded her reach in the philanthropy world with the launch of her own charity, The Hilaroo Foundation. Through her efforts, the foundation will bring youth, who have been given up on, and animals, who have been abandoned, together to help heal one another through Rescue, Rehabilitation, Animal Adoption and Responsibility Training.

MIRANDA OTTO (Theoline Belknap) has been seen in both international blockbusters and acclaimed independent films. She recently starred on television as Maddy Deane opposite Greg Kinnear in the dramedy “Rake.” She starred opposite Aaron Eckhart in *I, Frankenstein*, writer/director Stuart Beattie’s film adaptation of the classic tale.

Otto made her first major film appearance in 1986, playing the title role in Clytie Jessop’s *Emma’s War*. Other early credits include *The Thin Red Line*, directed by Terrence Malick, and *What Lies Beneath*, from Robert Zemeckis.

In 1999 Otto was cast as Éowyn in Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy. For *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, she shared in a SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture. Other notable credits include Steven Spielberg’s *War of the Worlds* and John Moore’s *Flight of the Phoenix*.

GRACE GUMMER (Arabella Sours) was recently seen in Noah Baumbach’s *Frances Ha*, recurred on the series “Smash” and wrapped a seven-episode arc on HBO’s “The Newsroom.” Her latest TV credits include “Extant” and “American Horror Story.”

Gummer made her stage debut in Kristjan Thor’s Off Broadway project “The Sexual Neuroses of Our Parents.” After starring in the TeenNick series “Gigantic,” Gummer completed her run as Hero in “Much Ado About Nothing” at the Kirk Douglas Theater in Los Angeles. She debuted on Broadway as Chloë Coverly in Tom Stoppard’s “Arcadia.” For her performance, Gummer won a Theatre World Award.

Most recently Gummer starred opposite John Lithgow in Daniel Sullivan’s “The Columnist,” on Broadway.

SONJA RICHTER (Gro Svendsen) is a Danish actress best known for her performance in the 2002 film *Open Hearts*, directed by Susanne Bier. She has been nominated four times for the Danish Academy Award and four times for the Danish Critics' Association Award. In 2007 she was honored with the highest cultural distinction in Denmark, "The Danish Crown Prince Couple's Award" for her work in film, theater and television.

At the 54th Berlin International Film Festival in 2004, Richter was one of 10 young European actors presented with the Shooting Stars Award. In 2007 Richter won the Nymph d'Or Award for Outstanding Actress at the 47th Monte Carlo Television Festival. This award honored her performance in the Danish television series "Performances."

Subsequently, Richter has starred in a number of films produced in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Germany, along with significant work in theater and television.

HAILEE STEINFELD (Tabitha Hutchinson) is a young actress on the rise who emerged as a breakout star with her Academy Award-nominated performance in the Coen brothers' *True Grit*, opposite Jeff Bridges. Steinfeld was recently seen in *3 Days to Kill*, alongside Kevin Costner. She also starred opposite Douglas Booth in William Shakespeare's classic *Romeo & Juliet* and appeared in the sci-fi action adventure *Ender's Game* opposite Harrison Ford, Ben Kingsley and Asa Butterfield.

MERYL STREEP (Altha Carter) has portrayed an astonishing array of characters in a 30-year career that has cut its own unique path through American theater, film and television. She recently received her 18th Academy Award nomination for *August: Osage County*, breaking her own record for total nominations. Previously, she won her third Academy Award for *The Iron Lady* and was also honored with a Golden Globe and a BAFTA.

Streep is a longtime supporter of human rights and environmental organizations, with a special interest in issues of equality. She has lent her efforts to such advocacy groups as Mothers and Others, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Equality Now, Women for Women International, Partners in Health, The National Women's History Museum and Women in the World. She is a member of the Academy of Arts and Letters and has been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Film Institute. Streep is also a

recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors and President Obama presented her with the 2010 National Medal of the Arts.

JOHN LITHGOW (Reverend Alfred Dowd) is a highly versatile and acclaimed actor who has appeared in more than 30 films. He was most recently seen in *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, the political comedy *The Campaign* and Judd Apatow's *This Is 40*. On the small screen, he won his second Golden Globe and fifth Emmy Award® for his turn as the Trinity Killer in a 12-episode arc on Showtime's long-running series "Dexter."

Lithgow's roots are in the theater. In 1973 he won a Tony Award® three weeks after his Broadway debut in David Storey's "The Changing Room." Since then, he has appeared on Broadway 20 more times, earning another Tony (and four more Tony nominations), four Drama Desk Awards and induction into the Theater Hall of Fame.

In the early 1980s Lithgow began to make a major mark in films. He was nominated for Oscars in back-to-back years for *The World According to Garp* and *Terms of Endearment*. His subsequent credits include *All That Jazz*, *Blow Out*, *Twilight Zone: The Movie*, *Footloose*, 2010, *Buckaroo Banzai*, *Harry and the Hendersons*, *Memphis Belle*, *Raising Cain*, *Ricochet*, *Cliffhanger*, *Orange County*, *Shrek*, *Kinsey* and a flashy cameo in *Dreamgirls*.

For his work on television, Lithgow has been nominated for 11 Emmy Awards. He has won five of them, one for an episode of "Amazing Stories" and three for what is perhaps his most celebrated creation, the loopy alien High Commander Dick Solomon, on the hit NBC comedy series "3rd Rock from the Sun." In that show's six-year run, Lithgow also won the Golden Globe, two SAG Awards, The American Comedy Award and, when it finally went off the air, a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

JAMES SPADER (Aloysius Duffy) stars as Raymond "Red" Reddington on NBC's action thriller "The Blacklist." Previously, he starred in Steven Spielberg's historical drama *Lincoln*.

Additional film credits include Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies and videotape*, for which Spader received the Best Actor Award at the Cannes Film Festival; David Cronenberg's *Crash*, which received the Special Jury Prize at Cannes; and Steven Shainberg's *Secretary*, which won the Independent Spirit Award for Best Feature. His other film credits include *2 Days in the Valley*, *Wolf* and *Less Than Zero*.

On stage, Spader notably starred on Broadway in David Mamet's "Race" in 2010.

From 2004-08, Spader won three Emmy Awards for his role as Alan Shore on "The Practice" and "Boston Legal," making him the only actor to win consecutive Emmys playing the same character on two different series.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MICHAEL FITZGERALD (Producer) counts among his credits *Color Me Kubrick*, starring John Malkovich, and *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, directed by and starring Tommy Lee Jones. The latter film won the Best Actor award for Tommy Lee Jones and the Best Screenplay prize for Guillermo Arriaga at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival. In 2008 he produced *In the Electric Mist*, directed by Bertrand Tavernier. More recently was the dramedy *Closer to the Moon*, written and directed by Nae Caranfil.

Fitzgerald was born in New York City, raised in Italy and educated in Ireland. After graduating from Harvard University he began his film career as a screenwriter in Rome. In 1979 he produced and co-wrote John Huston's *Wise Blood*, a celebrated film adaptation of Flannery O'Connor's tale. His second film with Huston, *Under the Volcano*, was nominated for two Academy Awards: Best Actor (Albert Finney) and Best Original Score (Alex North). He then produced *Mister Johnson* for Bruce Beresford and *Blue Danube Waltz* for Miklós Jancsó. A producing partnership with actor/director Sean Penn culminated in their critically acclaimed production *The Pledge*, starring Jack Nicholson.

PETER BRANT (Producer) is an entrepreneur, manufacturing executive, publisher, philanthropist, sportsman, art collector and film producer whose eclectic mix of personal interests and commercial ventures have resulted in achievements in business, philanthropy and the arts.

Brant is the chairman and chief executive officer of White Birch Paper, which remains among the largest newsprint manufacturers in North America and operates four pulp and paper mills in Canada and the United States. He also heads Brant Publications, Inc., a magazine publishing concern he co-founded in 1984. Among the company's titles are *Antiques*, *Art in America* and *MODERN* as well as *Interview*, the iconic publication created by Andy Warhol.

Brant's interest in art also led him into film producing. He was executive producer of *Basquiat* in 1986, *Pollock* in 2000 and *Andy Warhol: A Documentary* in 2006 (winner of an Emmy and a Peabody Award).

As his primary philanthropic focus, he established The Brant Foundation, Inc. and the Brant Foundation Art Study Center to promote education and appreciation of contemporary art and design.

BRIAN KENNEDY (Producer) is a Scottish entrepreneur with a portfolio of businesses in various sectors ranging from renewables and manufacturing to commercial property and professional sports. He also founded the charitable trust BKT, for underprivileged children.

LUC BESSON (Producer) is one of the world's most successful triple threats as writer, director and producer. Most recently, Besson wrote and directed the sci-fi action film *Lucy*, starring Scarlett Johansson. Previously, he wrote *3 Days to Kill*, starring Kevin Costner, and directed *The Lady*, starring Michelle Yeoh in the role of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

Besson began his career in cinema in 1977, working a number of assistant director positions in France and the United States. He gradually positioned himself as one of the few French directors and producers with an international scope. In 1983 he directed his first feature film, *The Last Battle*, which earned him recognition at the Avoriaz Film Festival.

Two years later he directed *Subway*, starring Isabelle Adjani and Christopher Lambert. The industry rewarded him with three César Awards and Besson's unique visual style was clearly established.

Building on his success, he undertook the direction of *The Big Blue*. Though poorly received at the Cannes Film Festival, the film gained 10 million admissions and went on to become a veritable social phenomenon. Despite an unfavorable critical climate, both *La Femme Nikita* (1990) and *Leon: The Professional* (1994) were publicly acclaimed, solidly establishing Besson's popularity in France and earning him an international reputation.

Between the making of these two films, he directed *Atlantis* (1991), a documentary aimed at raising awareness about the beauty of nature and the need to protect the environment.

In 1995 Besson launched into directing the bold sci-fi epic *The Fifth Element*. The film became one of the biggest box-office hits of any French film released in the United States. In 1998 Besson took home a César Award for Best Director and the following year he

directed his version of *Joan of Arc, The Messenger*, earning another César nomination for Best Director.

In 2000 Besson was named president of the jury for the 53rd Cannes Film Festival, becoming the youngest jury president in the history of the festival.

He devoted most of the next five years to producing. Since Besson formed EuropaCorp 10 years ago, the studio has become one of the major players in the European film industry.

In 2005 Besson returned to directing with *Angel-A* and the following year helmed his first animated picture, *Arthur and the Invisibles* (adapted from his own book). Up next were sequels *Arthur and the Revenge of Maltazard* (2009) and *Arthur 3: The War of the Two Worlds*.

In 2010 Besson adapted a series of graphic novels with *The Extraordinary Adventures of Adele Blanc-Sec*, with Louise Bourgoin starring in the title role.

Throughout his directing career, Besson has amassed a number of music videos to his credit including works for Serge Gainsbourg and Mylène Farmer. He has also directed commercials for internationally renowned brands.

Also a top screenwriter, Besson has written more than 20 scripts including the *Taxi* series and the recent *Taken 2*, which laid claim to being the biggest box-office hit of any French film released in the United States.

RODRIGO PRIETO A.S.C., A.M.C. (Director of Photography) was nominated for an Academy Award, a BAFTA Award and an American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) Award for his work on the Ang Lee drama *Brokeback Mountain*. His cinematography was cited as the year's best by the Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association, the Florida Film Critics Circle and the Chicago Film Critics Association.

More recently Prieto worked with Ben Affleck to make the political thriller *Argo*, which won the 2013 Oscar for Best Picture. Shortly thereafter director Martin Scorsese asked Prieto to shoot his film *The Wolf of Wall Street*, starring Leonardo Di Caprio. Principal photography was completed in New York in February 2013 and the film went on to earn five Oscar nominations.

After completing *Argo* Prieto directed his first short film, *Likeness*. Starring Elle Fanning, the short dealt with eating disorders. Since its debut at the Tribeca Film Festival

Likeness has generated intense interest online, going viral shortly after hitting YouTube in December 2013.

Born in Mexico City in 1965, Prieto is the son of a Mexican father and an American mother from Montana. He studied at the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC) in Mexico City, where he focused on cinematography. Prieto began his career shooting television commercials at the age of 22, moving into features with *Un Instante Para Morir* in 1992. He built a reputation for meticulous attention to visual and dramatic detail with such films as *Sobrenatural*, which garnered him an Ariel Award in 1996 (Mexico's Academy Award) and Carlos Carrera's *Un Embrujo (Under a Spell)*, which won another Ariel Award and took the Concha de Plata for best cinematography at the San Sebastián Film Festival.

Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Amores perros* (2000) brought Prieto to the attention of the world film community. His work on the feature garnered Prieto several honors including a third Ariel Award and the Golden Frog Award at the Camerimage International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography.

Subsequent credits as cinematographer include Julie Taymor's *Frida*, for which he was an ASC Award nominee; Curtis Hanson's *8 Mile*, starring Eminem; Spike Lee's *25th Hour*, with Edward Norton; Cameron Crowe's *We Bought a Zoo*, with Matt Damon and Scarlett Johansson; and Alejandro González Iñárritu's award winner *21 Grams*, starring Sean Penn.

Prieto has collaborated with director Oliver Stone on three occasions. In 2003 they went to Cuba to shoot *Comandante*, a documentary on Fidel Castro. They then went to the Middle East to film a documentary on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *Persona Non Grata*. Their next project together was the historical epic *Alexander*, for which Prieto was honored with another Silver Frog Award.

In 2006 Prieto and Iñárritu were reunited for *Babel*, which earned the cinematographer his second consecutive BAFTA Award nomination. After this he traveled to Hong Kong and Shanghai with Ang Lee to shoot *Lust, Caution*, which earned a Golden Osella award for Best Cinematography at the Venice Film Festival and was also nominated for an Independent Spirit Award in 2008. He then shot *State of Play* for director Kevin Macdonald and went to Madrid to collaborate with Pedro Almodóvar on *Broken Embraces*, starring Penélope Cruz. From there Prieto went to Barcelona to join forces once again with Iñárritu for *Biutiful*, marking their fourth film together.

Towards the end of 2009 Prieto worked once again with Oliver Stone for *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*. He then shifted gears to the Great Depression and collaborated with director Francis Lawrence on the drama *Water for Elephants*.

Prieto currently lives in Los Angeles with his wife Monica and daughters Maria Fernanda and Ximena.

MERIDETH BOSWELL (Production Designer) is one of the best in her field. Her collaboration with Ron Howard and Michael Corenblith produced two Academy Award nominations for Best Art Direction (*Apollo 13* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*).

Her next project is the musical biopic *I Saw the Light*, directed by Marc Abraham and starring Tom Hiddleston as Hank Williams. The film begins preproduction in the fall of 2014.

Boswell grew up in Bryant, Arkansas, and graduated from the University of Arkansas with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in art. After doing graduate work in photography and sculpture at Louisiana State University, she moved to New Orleans and began art directing European and national commercials. Eventually she became a set decorator for feature films, collaborating with filmmakers such as Oliver Stone, Barry Levinson, Tom Hanks and Tommy Lee Jones.

Boswell's first assignment as production designer came on Ron Howard's big-budget period Western *The Missing*. Her other production design credits include *In the Electric Mist*, for one of France's most esteemed directors, Bertrand Tavernier, as well as two critically acclaimed projects directed by Tommy Lee Jones: *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* and HBO's "The Sunset Limited."

In addition to working on films and her own artwork, Boswell has also been an interior designer for clients in Arkansas, Los Angeles, New York City and France. Her client list includes Ron and Cheryl Howard, Imagine Entertainment, Beacon Pictures, Tom Hanks, John Tyson and Philippe and Corinne Bideau.

After 15 years in Los Angeles, Boswell divides her time between Fayetteville, Arkansas, and New York City. She is represented by Ann Murtha of the Murtha Agency in Los Angeles.

MARCO BELTRAMI (Composer) is an award-winning composer whose résumé includes films ranging from epic drama to dark comedy and horror. He has worked with some of the most recognizable names in the industry including Kathryn Bigelow, James Mangold, Robert Rodriguez, Luc Besson, David Goyer, Bertrand Tavernier, Alex Proyas, Jonathan Mostow, Roland Joffé, Len Wiseman, Jodie Foster, David E. Kelley and Tommy Lee Jones.

Most recently, Beltrami scored *Snowpiercer*, starring Chris Evans, created the nail-biting score to *World War Z* and worked on the AMC spy thriller “Turn.” Other recent projects include *The Wolverine*, *Trouble with the Curve*, *The Sessions*, *A Good Day to Die Hard* and *Warm Bodies*.

Up next for Beltrami are *The Giver*, starring Meryl Streep and Jeff Bridges, and *The Drop*, starring Tom Hardy.

The composer established an early reputation as a genre innovator with his non-traditional horror scores for the *Scream* franchise. Beltrami’s musical palette has since expanded to virtually all film genres and he has two Academy Award nominations for Best Score: one for *3:10 to Yuma*, starring Russell Crowe and Christian Bale, and one for Best Picture winner *The Hurt Locker*, starring Jeremy Renner. In 2011 Beltrami won a Golden Satellite Award (Best Film Score of the Year) for *Soul Surfer*.

Previously, Beltrami worked with actor and filmmaker Tommy Lee Jones on “The Sunset Limited” and *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*. Additional film credits include *Live Free or Die Hard*, *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, *I, Robot*, *The Woman in Black*, *The Thing* and *Deadfall*.

Upon completing his undergraduate studies at Brown University, Beltrami entered the Yale School of Music on a scholarship. His pursuit of music composition then led him to Venice for a period of study with the Italian master Luigi Nono and then finally to Los Angeles to undertake a fellowship with Academy Award-winning composer Jerry Goldsmith.

Shortly after arriving in Los Angeles, Beltrami landed Wes Craven’s *Scream*. After *Scream*, he went on to compose the critically acclaimed score for Guillermo Del Toro’s *Mimic*. This was the first of several collaborations with Del Toro, including *Hellboy* and *Don’t Be Afraid of the Dark*.