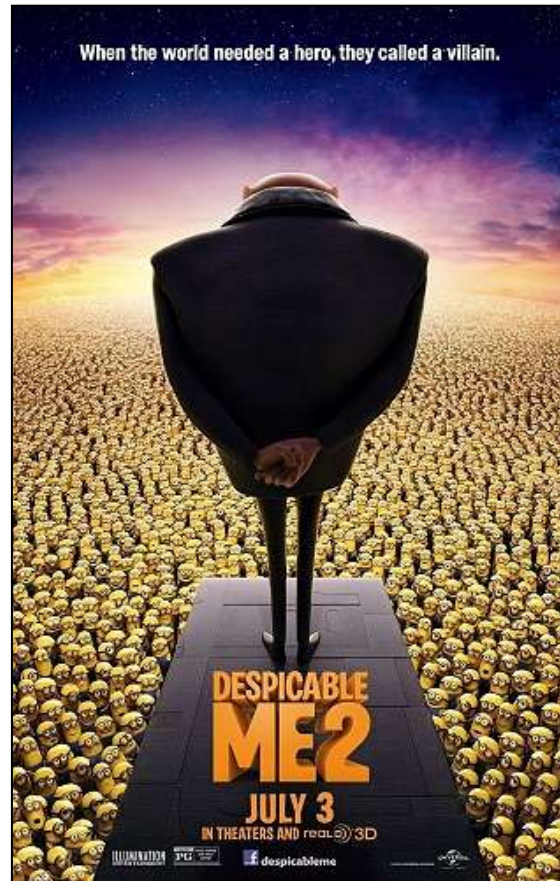


DESPICABLE ME 2

Production Notes



Release Date: July 2, 2013

Studio: Universal Pictures

Director: Chris Renaud, Pierre Coffin

Screenwriter: Cinco Paul, Ken Daurio

Starring: Steve Carell, Kristen Wiig, Miranda Cosgrove, Russell Brand, Steve Coogan, Ken Jeong, Benjamin Bratt

Genre: Adventure, Animation, Comedy

MPAA Rating: PG (for rude humor and mild action)

Official Website: Despicable.me

STUDIO SYNOPSIS: Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment's worldwide blockbuster, "Despicable Me," delighted audiences around the globe in 2010, grossing more than \$540 million and becoming the 10th-biggest animated motion picture in U.S. history. In Summer 2013, get ready for more minion madness in "Despicable Me 2." Chris Meledandri and his acclaimed filmmaking team create an all-new comedy animated adventure featuring the return of Gru (Steve Carell), the girls, the unpredictably hilarious minions... and a host of new and outrageously funny characters.

When the world needed a hero, they called a villain.

Synopsis

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INFORMATION

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CHRIS MELEDANDRI and his acclaimed filmmaking team create an all-new comedy adventure featuring the return of (former?) super-villain Gru (STEVE CARELL of *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, *Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who!*), his adorable girls, the unpredictably hilarious Minions...and a host of new and outrageously funny characters.

Now that the ever-entrepreneurial Gru has left behind a life of super crime to raise Margo (MIRANDA COSGROVE of television's *iCarly*), Edith (DANA GAIER of *Bullied*) and Agnes (ELSIE FISHER of television's *Masha and the Bear*), Gru, Dr. Nefario (RUSSELL BRAND of *Get Him to the Greek*, *Hop*) and the Minions have some free time on their hands.

But as he starts to adjust to his role as a suburban family man, an ultra-secret organization dedicated to fighting evil around the globe comes knocking. Now, it's up to Gru and his new partner, Lucy Wilde (KRISTEN WIIG of *Bridesmaids*, TV's *Saturday Night Live*), to discover who is responsible for a spectacular crime and bring him to justice. After all, it takes the world's greatest ex-villain to catch the one vying to take his place...

Joining the returning cast for *Despicable Me 2* are KEN JEONG (*The Hangover* trilogy, television's *Community*) as Floyd Eagle-san, proprietor of the local hair replacement club for men and key suspect in the most despicable crime to hit the globe since Gru departed the game; STEVE COOGAN (*Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, *Tropic Thunder*) as Silas Ramsbottom, Lucy's boss in the Anti-Villain League and a superspy whose surname offers an endless source of amusement to the Minions; MOISES ARIAS (*Hannah Montana*, *The Secret World of Arrietty*) as Antonio, the oh-so-suave object of Margo's girlhood affection (and Gru's supreme annoyance); and BENJAMIN BRATT (*Miss Congeniality*, *Snitch*) as Eduardo Perez, Antonio's father, owner of *Salsa & Salsa* restaurant, and the man who may or may not be the most macho super-villain who ever villained, *El Macho*.

Despicable Me 2 marks a reunion for the inaugural film's two directors— Oscar® nominee CHRIS RENAUD (Annie Award-winning short *No Time for Nuts*, *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*) & PIERRE COFFIN (upcoming *Minions*)— who brought the first adventure to vibrant and unexpected life.

The film is produced by Illumination CEO Chris Meledandri (Despicable Me, Hop, Dr. Seuss' The Lorax, Ice Age franchise), in his third collaboration with fellow producer JANET HEALY (Despicable Me, Hop, Shark Tale).

Leading the talented behind-the-scenes team is an accomplished crew, led by editor GREGORY PERLER (Despicable Me, Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit), as well as production designers YARROW CHENEY (Despicable Me, Dr. Seuss' The Lorax) and ERIC GUILLON (Despicable Me, Dr. Seuss' The Lorax). They are supported by the creator of the original songs and themes for Despicable Me 2, Grammy Award-winning artist and blockbuster music producer PHARRELL WILLIAMS. He is joined by HEITOR PEREIRA (Despicable Me, Beverly Hills Chihuahua), who returns to the series to compose the score.

The 3-D CGI film is written by CINCO PAUL & KEN DAURIO (Dr. Seuss' The Lorax, Despicable Me, Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who!).

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Life Post-Villainy: Despicable Me 2 Begins

In Despicable Me, we were introduced to our protagonist, super-villain Gru, who was given a monumental challenge when he encountered three orphan girls who unexpectedly changed his life. The arc of the relationship between Gru and Margo, Edith and Agnes was the heartbeat of this animated adventure, and remains an essential element in what has grown into a franchise.

As the filmmakers approached the story for Despicable Me 2, they felt that the ending of the first movie—Gru realizing how much he loved the girls— was truly a beginning for the characters. The formation of this unusual family, and how they will move forward, provided a rich and identifiable point of engagement for moviegoers across the globe who saw their unique families reflected in this animated one.

After Despicable Me's success, what became clear to the team was that the first film served as a launching pad. Illumination Entertainment CEO Chris Meledandri elaborates that it was the outpouring of support that ensured that there would be more tales of Gru and his family: "After Despicable Me's success, it was clear that we wanted to make another film. The storytelling process of determining what was going to happen in the next film was a natural evolution. I've never had an experience where a conversation about a sequel was as organic as it was with Despicable Me 2. The characters and relationships that had been formed suggested many different places that we could go with the story. But we knew that the underlying core was going to be about the evolution of this family. That was absolutely clear."

The creative team behind Despicable Me returns for Despicable Me 2 with a unified goal: to honor what worked so well in the first story, to amplify those elements through character and story, and deliver the combustible mixture of the sweet, the subversive and the unexpected that had such an impact on audiences. Meledandri acknowledges that this was no accident: "The team that made Despicable Me over a four-year period was nothing short of extraordinary. From our incredibly talented directors, Chris Renaud and Pierre Coffin; to our writers, Cinco Paul and Ken Daurio; to my producing partner, Janet Healy; and all of the animators, designers, storyboard artists, technical directors, sound mixers—there were hundreds of people who brought their talents together to realize this wonderful film. I am fortunate enough to have them back to make the sequel. The relationship

that was forged through the first film has translated into shorthand and a collaborative spirit on the second film that's extraordinary."

Healy reflects that this easy rapport among her colleagues made for a much more fluid process this time around: "Because *Despicable Me 2* represents a reunion of the same crew, we knew one another very well and how to complement one another's strengths. It made it much easier to revisit these characters in this world. This allowed us to think more about what their story would be this time because we didn't have to figure out the look of the picture or how bad Gru should be or the characters of the girls. It was all there for us to mine."

In *Despicable Me 2*, we pick up with Gru, the girls and the Minions, and we see what life for them looks like post-villainy. For Gru, there are practical questions that he has to answer: Is he capable of being a good father and leaving the exciting (not to mention lucrative) world of villainy behind? How will he provide for his daughters and continue to employ Dr. Nefario and the Minions now that the spoils of wickedness are in his past? Sums Meledandri: "For Gru, it's life after villainy, and now his primary responsibility is his family. He's trying to figure out how to support them and has started a cottage industry in his lab. He's retrofitted his lab to become a jam and jelly factory."

Still, Gru purists need fear not that our anti-hero has been watered down or lost his edge. It was crucial to the team that they kept many elements of the freeze-ray-trigger-happy, iron-maiden-housing misanthrope that we have grown to love.

Renaud explains the conundrum: "If Gru's not a super-villain, how does that feel? In the first film, we established his love of villainy. He wanted to steal the moon. He had these great big plans and wanted to prove himself to be the best villain, even if he wasn't. He had all these Minions, Dr. Nefario, this whole team, his lab. He was a gruff guy who loved that life. If he makes the decision to leave that behind because it's best for his family, how does he feel about that and what should he do next?"

The director is the first to admit that he didn't want to return to this world unless there was a logical story to tell about it. Says Renaud: "You're hoping, particularly if people respond well to the first film, that you've told the story that those characters were meant to tell. So we all felt strongly about rising up to this challenge and finding a new aspect of this family's story. How does the character of Gru evolve? How do the Minions evolve? What's a different way we can play with them? *Despicable Me 2* is about the extension of—or potential completion of—that family."

Screenwriters Cinco Paul and Ken Daurio came up with just the idea: Gru decides to convert his underground lair into a factory for a legitimate business venture: a signature line of homemade jellies and jams. There's just one big problem: the product is absolutely terrible, so this scheme quickly falls apart. Still, what's more troubling for Gru is that his longtime associate and resident mad scientist/inventor, Dr. Nefario, deeply misses the business of being evil and decides to leave Gru's employ. Now Gru has even fewer resources available to him. This weighs heavily on him and affects his ability to adequately care for his three girls and the hundreds of Minions who rely upon him.

As Gru struggles to adjust to his role as a suburban family man, an ultra-secret organization dedicated to fighting evil around the globe comes calling. The Anti-Villain League (AVL) offers Gru the opportunity to help it uncover the mastermind responsible for a spectacular heist we see unfold in the opening sequence of the film. After all, it becomes abundantly clear, who better than the

world's greatest ex-villain to catch the one who thinks he can take his mantle? It also doesn't hurt that they conduct their covert ops out of the world's coolest submarine.

Coffin explains a bit more about this super-secret organization's—one that's only interested in hunting you down if you're gunning to vaporize Mt. Fuji, melt the polar ice caps or, ahem, steal the moon—role in the plot: “If I can take the James Bond analogy, then the Anti-Villain League is MI-6. They're the good guys who have all the cool gadgets. The moral aspect of their work is, basically, ‘Oh, the world is in danger. We gotta save it!’ For them to call Gru is an effort. But they ultimately understand that there is no one better to recognize a bad guy than one of his kin.”

Energized by being back in the game (albeit on the other side of the law), Gru balances his new top-secret job with the realities of being a father. So what is new with the girls? Agnes is as adorable and innocent as ever, but also keenly feeling the absence of a mother in their very unconventional home. Edith thinks Gru is the coolest guy on Earth, and is secretly disappointed that his villainous lifestyle is over. For her part, Margo is at the age where she starts thinking about boys, a horrifying thought for Gru, and one that sits uncomfortably next to his own reluctance to date.

Meledandri shares that part of the secret to this story's success is that these four characters remind us of ourselves: “The core of the first film is this family unit, an unlikely one, but one made of disenfranchised characters who come together and form their own unique family. Even though they are dissimilar to any other family that we may know, so much of what Gru's experience—as well as Agnes, Edith and Margo's experience—is utterly relatable to us.”

When Gru goes undercover to seek out the identity of the most audacious super-villain currently being tracked by the AVL, he is partnered (against his will) with novice AVL agent Lucy Wilde, whose enthusiasm for her job is matched only by her outsize personality. For Gru, it's dislike at first sight. He hadn't counted on being assigned a partner, and everything about Lucy just rubs him the wrong way—at least at first.

As Gru and Lucy set up a stakeout within a cupcake shop at a local mall, he finds himself having to face a question he's avoided all of his life. Still feeling the sting of rejection in a childhood schoolyard, is Gru capable of an adult relationship—and maybe even love? Agnes isn't the only one secretly crossing her fingers that this will happen.

Meledandri appreciated that the writers dug even deeper into Gru's troubled past. After all, great super-villains aren't simply born; they're made. He offers up: “One of the things that we discover is that Gru has no social life and absolutely is resistant to even thinking about starting one. We trace this back to Gru as a young boy when he was about seven or eight. The response to his request of a girl was massive humiliation from all the kids on the schoolyard. He shut the door on ever experiencing that type of rejection again. However, his girls think the best thing for him is to get back into the dating scene.”

Coffin thinks that what set *Despicable Me* apart from many other films in the animated genre is the movie's embrace of deep human emotion, specifically love. He says: “We wanted to have the heart of the movie become an evolution of that. Gru's now alone to raise the girls, and the most logical next step for him is to find his loved one, his soul mate. And that would be Lucy.” Gru's not the only one who will be changed by Lucy's back-springing into his life. “Seeing Gru with the girls will spark something in Lucy. Plus, her admiration for all the deeds he's done in the past, like stealing the moon, will grow on her and make her fall in love.”

So just who is this elusive cad that Gru and Lucy are trying to find, one capable of using an enormous flying magnet ship to steal a secret research lab in the Arctic Circle? Gru grows convinced that a famous villain from the past—El Macho—is behind the heist that opens our film. But the AVL, run by Silas Ramsbottom, is much more skeptical. After all, El Macho supposedly died in a spectacularly macho way some years earlier. Trusting in his instincts, Gru is resolute in his belief that El Macho has adopted the guise of Eduardo Perez, the owner of Salsa & Salsa restaurant in the Paradise Mall.

As the story unfolds, Gru and Lucy pursue their investigation, and we discover that Eduardo, the loving, light-on-his feet father who ordered cupcakes for a Cinco de Mayo party, is actually the infamous El Macho. But what is El Macho's master plan, and what does it have to do with some of Gru's Minions being abducted?

Finding humor in an all-audience film is quite a tricky process. Naturally, the filmmakers didn't care to alienate either young children or adults with their artistic choices; they wanted something that was enjoyable for all ages. Meledandri shares: "That process happens organically because our wonderfully talented writers, Cinco Paul and Ken Daurio, and our directors, Chris Renaud and Pierre Coffin, make the film for themselves. They happen to be parents, but they are not trying to make the film for adults and they're not trying to make the film for kids. They're making the film so they find it engaging and entertaining."

With story, motivations, plot and characters set, Meledandri, Healy and the directors were off to the races for Despicable Me 2. So let's give you a guide to who's who in the world of Gru.

Krumpers and Shark Cowboys: Who's Despicable?

Now that Gru has (mostly) hung up his freeze ray and is in the business of making barely digestible jellies and jams, he's earned a few more friends (as well as his fair share of enemies). Below is a guide to the returning and new dastardly and delightful players who populate Gru's world:

Gru (Steve Carell), one of the world's greatest super-villains, has given up his despicable ways and is now on a quest to become the perfect dad. While juggling all that, he is recruited by a super-secret crime-fighting organization, which puts him in the unlikely position of having to work with the good guys to help save the world. Usually fearless, Gru is now coping with the challenges of his girls growing up and wanting desperately to ask a woman out on a date. Both of which cause him to totally freak out.

Lucy (Kristen Wiig) is a cunning secret agent who has teamed up with Gru to hunt down an extremely dangerous super-villain. She loves one-upping Gru with her quirky gadgets and has perfected her own form of martial arts by combining Jujitsu, Krav Maga, Aztec warfare and krumping. Unlike Gru, she has trouble containing her overabundance of joy and excitement, which tends to draw unwanted attention...especially when going under cover. She keeps pace with Gru, despite always looking stylish in her six-inch heels.

Margo (Miranda Cosgrove) is Gru's oldest daughter and the backbone of the family. She's the responsible one who looks out for her sisters and keeps the family together. However, now that she's growing up, she becomes preoccupied with texting her friends and starts noticing boys her age, which drives Gru crazy.

Edith (Dana Gaier), Gru's middle daughter, is an incredibly mischievous and sarcastic tomboy. She asks for forgiveness rather than permission. She is going through a ninja phase and is always looking for an opportunity to take part in Gru's secret-agent action. She loves to play pranks and cause trouble with Dr. Nefario's gadgets.

Agnes (Elsie Fisher) is Gru's youngest daughter and the heart of the family. She's obsessed with unicorns and anything fluffy. She's so adorable that her hugs can melt even the hardest super-villain's heart.

Dr. Nefario (Russell Brand) is Gru's trusted, slightly forgetful, and very, very old mad scientist. He's losing his hearing, which causes him to accidentally invent weapons with disastrously unintended consequences. With Gru busy being a dad, Dr. Nefario begins to long for the good-old days when they were focused on doing evil.

Gru's loyal yellow, gibberish-speaking Minions (Pierre Coffin and Chris Renaud) love causing mischief and mayhem almost as much as they love bananas. They are easily distracted and can be unpredictable, curious and subversively sweet. They are extremely competitive with each other. This can lead to sudden slap fights, but if someone from the outside tries to harm them or Gru's family, they become fiercely protective.

Evil Minions (Pierre Coffin and Chris Renaud) are the purple, crazy-haired and even more dim-witted versions of Gru's happy yellow Minions. They are indestructible, mindless eating machines that not only eat everything in your refrigerator, but they eat the refrigerator as well!

El Macho (Benjamin Bratt) is the most ruthless, dangerous, and as his name implies, macho villain there ever was. That is... until he died riding a shark into the mouth of an active volcano with 250 pounds of dynamite strapped to his chest. However, his body was never found, and all that was ever retrieved was a pile of singed chest hair.

Eduardo (Benjamin Bratt) is the extremely warm, charming and flirty owner of the popular Salsa & Salsa restaurant whose passionate Latin dancing causes women to swoon. He has a larger-than-life personality that is dwarfed only by the size of his waistline. But is Eduardo secretly the No. 1 supervillain on the AVL's most wanted list?

Antonio (Moises Arias) is Eduardo's cute, rebellious and confident son. He is a ladies' man just like his father, and when Margo sees him in the mall and their eyes lock...it's all over. He feels the same way about her and is willing to stand up to an overprotective Gru to get closer to the girl he loves.

Floyd (Ken Jeong) is one of the shop owners at the local mall where Gru and Lucy work secretly undercover. Floyd runs the Eagle Hair Club for Men and has the perfect suggestion for how to make Gru more attractive to the ladies who are, ahem, lining up to date him. Beneath his outlandish exterior, Floyd may or may not have a very dark side.

Species unknown, possibly a cross between a pit bull and a piranha with the attitude to match, Kyle is Gru's guard dog. When he first met the girls, all he could think about was trying to eat them. Now, he can't imagine his life without their tucking him into bed every night.

**Family Evolution:
Casting Comic Talent**

What attracted Steve Carell to the role of the curmudgeonly, oddly-accented super-villain with a heart of gold was that *Despicable Me* offered something for children and adults alike. He reflects upon why he chose to voice Gru, a character who finds that raising children is not all sunshine and lollipops: “I’m a parent with two little kids, and I identified with the story in the first film because it was honest in its depiction. Having kids completely changes a person’s life, in all the best ways.”

When the first movie was released to worldwide acclaim, Carell was thrilled that audiences wholly embraced the tale he so loved upon first read. He enjoyed bringing Gru’s idiosyncrasies to life, noting: “Kids could relate and enjoy the humor; parents related to what kids bring to the equation. In that sense, it’s universal. But it was also funny, exciting and silly at times.”

Whereas so many animated films are designed as a delivery mechanism for pratfalls and go for the cheap joke, the first adventure surprised many with its mix of heart and humor. Notes Carell: “These films are animated but very human. *Despicable Me* and *Despicable Me 2* are smart, funny and heartfelt without being cloying or overly sentimental. They tug the heart strings just enough without going too far. The writers did such a great job creating something special and unique.”

As the characters in this nontraditional family evolved, so did Carell’s perception of them. E.g., the performer identified with Gru’s struggle to let Margo begin to grow up and go out on a date with Antonio. He explains: “One of Gru’s daughters starts to enter the dating scene, and that is an enormous transition for him, as it is for most dads. When they see their daughters maturing and becoming interested in boys, suddenly they’re not the apple of their daughter’s eyes. There is, I wouldn’t even say a ‘jealousy’ but there is a tension that comes about between a father and a potential suitor.”

Meledandri commends that there would be no series without the stellar performance work of Carell. He gives: “From the early days of the first film, Steve has been a creative partner in the making of *Despicable Me*. We were so drawn to him for this role because we wanted an actor who brought empathy in his voice and performance. Not only was Gru a villain, but he is grouchy and acerbic and edgy. Yet, we knew that in order for the film to work that audiences needed to like him. Steve has helped to forge this and define the character. There has been tremendous writing in response to many of his instincts about how Gru should evolve and the specific definition of his personality.”

When last we met Gru, the only thing about him that was unchanged was his dark wardrobe. Gru was not only adjusting to life post super-villainy, he was balancing his time as new father to three young girls and the last thing he thought he’d have time for is a burgeoning romance. But that’s exactly what he finds when he meets Special Agent Lucy Wilde, the AVL’s most energetic operative. While they’re both focused upon solving a case and finding a super-villain who could put the entire world in peril, they find an unexpected, but not altogether unwelcome, romance.

The comedienne who brings life to Lucy is the same actor who played a pivotal role in *Despicable Me*. The producers and directors were so delighted by Kristen Wiig’s work as Southern belle Miss Hattie, the acerbic orphanage matron in the first film, that they asked her back to play the female lead in this chapter. Wiig explains how her participation in the project came about: “I was so happy that I was able to be in both films, and when I heard that they wanted me to play a different character in the second one, I was beyond thrilled that they would give me the opportunity.”

As was Carell, Wiig was a bit taken aback by the global success of *Despicable Me*. She relays: “The first film was unexpected, and I loved that the lead character is this horrible villain. Still, it’s a sweet, funny story with great music about this awkward guy opening his heart and finding himself,

as well as a family. It has a great message and has a lot of action and comedy.” Discussing this chapter, she offers: “People want to see where it left off. At the end of the first film, you wonder how it’s going to work with this new family. Now, you see them as a unit and you see them evolve. *Despicable Me 2* is funny and has lots of action, and it’s a smart, sweet story.”

While the actress is known as the woman of a thousand faces and voices on *Saturday Night Live*—as well as from a film career that skyrocketed with the release of *Bridesmaids* (which she also co-wrote)—Wiig admits there is a freedom to vocalizing animation. She says: “Physically you can be doing anything with your face or body because it isn’t about how you look. The scripted lines and the story were so smart that you could just have fun with it.”

Her filmmaking team was thrilled with her vocal work for the quirky heroine who immediately bests Gru upon first matchup. Provides Meledandri: “Lucy is one of the most surprising and distinctive female characters that I have seen in an animated film. She is incredibly self-directed, and though she may look a bit nutty, she is actually quite powerful when it comes to getting her way. I can’t imagine anybody other than Kristen Wiig portraying her. Lucy is unlike any Kristen character I’ve seen before, and when you watch her in the film, you realize that the animators and our directors were taking great inspiration from the voice track that she provided.”

The producer appreciated the arc that Paul and Daurio created for Gru and Lucy. He says: “A wonderful thing happens through the course of the movie. As Gru begins to realize that he actually likes his new partner, and these are feelings that sneak up on him, the audience’s response is moving in sync with Gru’s response. The chemistry of Steve’s and Kristen’s performances is undeniable.”

Now that the girls are over the issues that they had with Gru in the first film, they are firmly ensconced in their lives together. In turn, the same three actresses return to these definitive roles. Shares Renaud: “We have the same terrific young ladies playing Agnes, Edith and Margo: Elsie Fisher, Dana Gaier and Miranda Cosgrove. What’s fun is that the girls have gotten a little older and a bit more mature. Agnes, of course, is still cute, and Edith is still acting out a bit. Through half the this film, she’s dressed as a ninja, which is one of those weird, fun things that kids do...and that’s fair enough. Margo is discovering boys, and seeing Gru’s reaction to that, as the father of a daughter myself, is one of the more fun elements to experience.”

Portraying Gru’s eldest, Margo, is actress Miranda Cosgrove, known for her starring role in Nickelodeon’s long-running juggernaut hit *iCarly*. On her return to the series, Cosgrove provides: “I was excited to make *Despicable Me 2* because I had so much fun making the first movie.” She catches us up on her character, one whose own desire to find love mirrors Gru’s: “Margo has grown up a bit, and she definitely sees Gru more as her dad. You can tell that they’re a family now. And it’s also cool because she has her first love interest; that was fun playing those scenes because Margo is completely enamored with this guy. I just tried to remember my first crush when I was in elementary school.”

Cosgrove concurs with Wiig about what makes the series unique: “One of my favorite things about *Despicable Me*, even though it’s this crazy fantasy world, is that there are also a lot of relatable things, like dating. There’s a character for everyone to relate to. When my Dad went to see the first movie, he loved Gru and the idea of getting to be the hero. Then there are characters for the younger kids, like the three girls who are all very different.”

Middle sister Edith is once again played by Dana Gaier, a young actress who is quick to admit that she and her on-screen character are not so dissimilar. Laughs Gaier: “Edith and I have some similar-

ities. We both definitely like to make trouble, and we both like to tease our sisters. I have an older sister, and I can't say that there's a time when I don't want to make fun of her a little bit. It's the sibling love."

While Margo is the overprotective big sister who is falling in love for the first time and Agnes is the doe-eyed baby of the family, Edith remains on constant vigilance. Says Gaier: "Edith's fearlessness makes her a good role model. Kids should admire the fact that she's not afraid to face situations head-on. I started the first film in the sixth grade, and every time I came in and did a recording session and learned more about the films, I just fell more in love with the story and with the character of Edith."

Last, but certainly not least is Agnes, voiced with unequivocal joy by young Elsie Fisher. Though she was only four when she began providing vocals for the character, the infectious Fisher almost stole the film out from under Gru and the Minions ("It's so fluffy!"). Perhaps most succinctly, Fisher describes the experience of watching her animated self on the big screen: "When I saw the movie in the theater, it was amazing. I felt like I was watching myself in a mirror."

With a penchant for hugs and adorable non sequiturs, Agnes is a fierce loyalist. She captured the hearts of the Minions the minute they made her a favorite toy out of a toilet scrub brush, and she will fight for her family to stay together. Explains Fisher: "Agnes is a sweet girl, and she's always going to be Daddy's Girl. She has different personalities: Sometimes she's crazy, then sweet, and then sometimes she's just adorable. Agnes is like me because we're always changing our emotions, depending on where we are. Sometimes we're sassy, and sometimes we're funny and adorable and crazy."

When it came to drawing from personal experience to unleash her inner yeller—while on the run from evil Minions—Fisher admits that it wasn't too difficult to get into character. For one rough scene, she drew from a scary memory. The young actress shares: "I have a dog, Allie, and one time she almost got ran over, so I cried and screamed. Out of that, I remembered for *Despicable Me* that I might have to scream, so I screamed really, really loud. And then, I just practiced and practiced and I got louder and scarier and screamier."

Gru's family wouldn't be complete without the doddering, delightful Dr. Nefario, who is just as hard of hearing as ever in the series' new chapter. Once again, comedian Russell Brand brings his signature wit and humor to the role of the scientific brains behind Gru's ambitious schemes. Nefario, tired of making foul-tasting jams and jellies, longs for the days when it was just villainy, villainy, villainy. When he makes his abrupt (well, as abrupt as Nefario can go anywhere) departure, Gru, the girls and especially the Minions mourn the absence of the senior member of their family. But don't count out Nefario's ability to accidentally drag a certain single parent back into his schemes.

Joining our returning voice talent are two seasoned comics, one young actor who has been stealing scenes on television and a multitalented performer who has effortlessly straddled the worlds of film and TV since his career began.

Best known for his role as the duplicitous—and occasionally back from the dead—gangster Mr. Chow in *The Hangover* series, Ken Jeong comes aboard the series as Floyd Eagle-san. The AVL has its eyes on Floyd as the most likely suspect in a recent super-crime spree, but Gru is quite certain that this owner of a hair club for follicly challenged gentlemen is innocent of any crimes. Floyd

is more comfortable disseminating bad hair wisdom than he is cooking up schemes for global domination.

A celebrated comic actor from across the pond, Steve Coogan, appears as Silas Ramsbottom, the very British boss of Lucy at the AVL who recruits Gru because of the former super-villain's reputation in the field. Meledandri was glad that the actor was willing to join the team: "Steve's vocal abilities are just outstanding. He has such a rich voice and brings an incredibly dry sense of humor to the character. It's not possible for this man to utter a line that doesn't sing the minute he says it."

While 21-year-old performer Moises Arias is most well-known for his work as Rico on the smash television series *Hannah Montana*, he has done voice work on films from *Astro Boy* to *The Secret World of Arrietty*. In *Despicable Me 2*, Arias plays Antonio, the just-as-light-on-his-feet dancing son of Eduardo Perez and supreme flirt who wants to steal Margo's heart. Coffin shares that Antonio ratchets up the tension in Gru's household: "Having a daughter who is falling in love with a boy makes a father very nervous, obviously. And so how would you react? You would want to react like Gru does: You'd want to freeze ray him."

For the pivotal double role of Eduardo Perez and El Macho, the filmmakers were fortunate to land the multitalented Benjamin Bratt. The uber-charming owner of the Salsa & Salsa restaurant at the mall, Eduardo possibly might be hiding a big secret that will not only affect Gru forever, but the Minions as well. Meledandri introduces us to the character: "El Macho died in the most macho way possible, which was riding on the back of a shark with dynamite strapped to his chest—into the mouth of an active volcano. Gru is absolutely certain that Eduardo is this nefarious figure from the past."

Fortunately for the production, Bratt was familiar with *Despicable Me* and has two children who were big fans of the first film. Meledandri reflects: "Benjamin is a fantastic actor and has a wonderfully expressive voice. The combination of his passion for the role and his incredible acting chops ignited our conviction that he would fully embody this character."

The directors appreciated the range that Bratt offered in his dual roles as Eduardo and El Macho. Offers Renaud: "Benjamin would have this big bravado, and then he would talk like this. He had this great range in his vocal abilities, and it really invigorated his entire performance. Even though Eduardo is a heavy guy, he's very light on his feet. There is a twinkle in him that emanates from Benjamin's vocal performance."

Coffin also commends the nuances of Bratt's performance: "Ultimately, when Eduardo switches around and we discover that he's this evil character, Benjamin changes his voice ever so slightly just to bring that level of menace that you didn't see coming. To hear that voice coming out of this design that we have—a short guy who used to be very strong but let himself go—is fun and offers a great contrast."

Discussing his decision to join the series, Bratt reflects: "I was intrigued by the idea of playing a character that fit right into Gru's universe, a larger-than-life persona that was expansive in every way imaginable. And what an outrageously fantastic opportunity it was to play someone so outsized in his passions and his appetites, a spectacularly macho man who is as dangerous as he is tender. The film is hysterically funny, and part of the humor comes from the fact that Eduardo/El Macho possesses an irresistible exuberance, a zest for life, love, and even evil, that is often comical in its zeal."

For the performer, playing two roles was quite invigorating. As Eduardo, he could be charming and gregarious in his vocals. As El Macho, he became truly menacing. Bratt continues: “Both the fun and the challenge in doing the voice for this character was finding the balance between his charm and his menace. Of course, we wanted to mine the humor from the lines but also root them in a real place. I think the key was to play him as a man who truly relishes all aspects of his life—whether it’s raising a son, running a restaurant or planning a takeover of the world.”

Joining *Despicable Me 2* in supporting roles are *Saturday Night Live*’s NASIM PEDRAD as Jillian, the nosy next-door neighbor who won’t leave Gru be until he agrees to go out with Shannon (played by *30 Rock*’s KRISTEN SCHAAL), a bottle blonde who is as obsessed with fitness as she is with plastic surgery.

You Must Wear a Scarf: Visual Style and Character Design

Many aren’t aware, but the look and design of *Despicable Me* was inspired by the work of artists Charles Addams and Edward Gorey in a style the crew came to call “suburban gothic.” One of *Despicable Me 2*’s production designers, Eric Guillon, served as art director on the last film alongside his fellow production designer from this film, Yarrow Cheney. For the sequel, they’ve honored the work of Addams and Gorey, while allowing for a unique take that blends gothic with bright, visual designs.

Once again, Paris-based animation powerhouse Illumination Mac Guff served as the company responsible for executing the creations of *Despicable Me 2*. The French production house embraces the country’s tradition of unique animation and carefully navigated the pipeline to develop the film. Compliments Healy: “What I see is an animation team that’s benefitted from French culture in a very unique way. There are amazing schools that turn out wonderful animators every year— people who model and can make all the texturing beautiful, as well as artists who know how to light and composite, as well as do the effects so well.”

Coffin sums up the team’s approach to this filmmaking process: “Our motto, in terms of character and animation, is that in the five first seconds of the movie, you’ve got to forget that it’s an animated movie. You have to understand what each character is feeling. The design informs the voice; the voice informs the design.” He appreciates the collaboration, noting: “It’s always about how can we plus the movie? How can we make it better, funnier, more emotional?”

In terms of returning character design, of course we know what Gru, Nefario, the girls and the Minions look like. But with the addition of Paul and Daurio’s latest creation, Lucy, the animators were allowed to dovetail her look into this established world, while making Lucy stand out as a heroine new to this world. Healy walks us through the team’s inspiration: “Eric Guillon came up with a wonderful character design that contrasted to Gru. Lucy has a lot of style; she’s tall and thin with red hair.” And just like Gru, she needed some neckwear. “Everybody who is designed by anybody in France has to have a scarf. It makes it a little bit harder to animate, but it’s totally worth it.”

The French animators were often inspired by the visual comedy style of cinema icons Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Jacques Tati, as well as recent movement masters such as Rowan Atkinson and Peter Sellers in *The Pink Panther* films. France native Coffin reflects on the animators’ inspiration: “It’s part of the culture. Being brought up with these movies, as well as comics and graphic novels, must have an influence on how this movie looks because everyone who’s worked on the film is a very creative person.”

Coffin discusses an example of this style, in which scenes are played out in an elongated manner: “When Lucy tries to get poor, tazed Gru in the trunk of a car, we play it long. We could have cut it short: She’d put him in the trunk and be done with it. But we really pulled it and made it feel like it was painful and humiliating for Gru to get into that trunk, which is great for Gru’s character because he’s supposed to be this superior guy, but he’s not.”

For Renaud, the Paris-based animation house was the perfect place to meld inspirations from all over the globe. He offers: “The city Gru lives in has water towers like the ones that were in Brooklyn when I lived there after college. Meanwhile, the door handles in the center of the doors are ones like those you find in Paris. It’s a great fusion of cultures that support each other and help make the design of the film better overall.”

This willingness to find inspiration anywhere permeated the production. Adds Renaud: “We always try to find an answer to a design question that isn’t expected or cliché. The visual development team and the art team have put together something unique, and that comes from a few different sources. Yarrow Cheney, along with Eric Guillon—who has done a lot of the visual development art—have been able to create a unique world. Some of the character designers that worked with us on the first film and then have carried over to the second film have created looks that are still distinct.”

As an example, the design for El Macho began with an unlikely source of inspiration. Offers Renaud: “We thought of things like El Santos, who is a famous wrestler character, and started with El Macho, sort of in his prime—muscular and dressed in a mask and cape. As the story evolved, we realized what we would be better served if the guy wasn’t in top shape anymore and Gru only thought he recognized him.”

Whether in Ramsbottom’s dandy clothes or the doorknobs on the homes of Gru’s fellow denizens, the design of *Despicable Me 2* remains quite memorable. Offers Meledandri: “I never cease to be amazed at the incredible detail that our team in Paris can realize on film, especially when it comes to fabrics and surfaces. The experience of watching a film that is clearly not real, but one that is filled with characters who are dressed in detailed clothes that convey a sense of reality, is amazing. That combination of the animated world combined with the realism of detail is just extraordinary.”

The directors acknowledge that there was a fine line between designing the world of Gru and the one in which they lived. As form follows function, Renaud laughs that he drew several aspects of the former super-villain’s family life from his own, especially Gru’s turn as Gruzinkerbelle at Agnes’ birthday party (when the actual fairy princess was a no-show). The director laughs: “We talked about how Gru could show that commitment and how far he’ll go to make her princess birthday a special one. Usually, frankly, it’s my wife that forces me to do it, but I’ve been a shark, Darth Vader and a pink character for my daughter that I forget the name of. It’s based on those common parental things, or maybe it’s just common to me.”

Coffin offers that the design created by their team was married to the voice work of the actors. Indeed, the design informs the voice, and the voice informs the design: “It’s almost like magic, because when you have, for example, Gru delivering a line, we can tweak not only the line itself, but the animation—such as the body movement of Gru so that he means something other than what he’s saying. Obviously, that’s an actor’s dream, and all the animators are basically actors.”

France to Les États-Unis: Illumination Entertainment at Work

As Illumination Entertainment is headquartered in Santa Monica, California, and Illumination Mac Guff is housed in Paris, the production was indeed a global one. Renaud believes that being in Paris and in L.A. gave the team the best of both worlds: “In France, the animation education system is second to none, and the animators, artists and talent who are educated here are the best. There’s also a cultural love of animation filmmaking and comics that is not so easy to find anywhere in the world. And from the American side, we’re getting an experienced level of filmmaking and animated features—particularly in global release animated features—that isn’t present in many other countries.”

Healy expounds upon the logic: “One of the things that Chris Meledandri thought should be a tenet of Illumination was for artists to work where they lived. We were lucky to establish the pipeline and the company at a time when telecommunications was facile. You could use iChat and Skype for conversing across time zones. But our story artists, our visual development artists and our colorists are from all over the world; they don’t have to be site specific. That’s been a wonderful part of being able to grow key talent. When we founded Illumination Mac Guff, which evolved from Mac Guff Ligne in Paris, it was this company that had been here for almost 30 years but had a strong technical foundation.”

She gives us a look inside the process: “What we find is that from the script page to storyboarding to cutting and then to animation, everything changes. Everyone contributes. It gets better, and it sometimes gets more elaborate as the artists touch it. So we’re constantly seeing how that fits into the context of the whole movie. Every 10 or 12 weeks, we step back and look at the entire movie to see it as an audience would see it. Still, we work on it in increments. From the time a scene is looking good in storyboards and has been cut to scratch voices, to the time it gets recorded and into animation—and through the 14 departments of computer graphics that it needs to—many months go by.”

Although *Despicable Me* offered brilliant visuals, the filmmakers were in the unique situation of being able to up their game. Says Coffin: “*Despicable Me 2* is such a step forward technically. Illumination Mac Guff revamped everything in terms of pipeline, particularly in terms of rendering, which is so intricate. It’s looking so good because we’re now using radiosity, which is a system in which color bounces from everywhere, one used in special effects as opposed to animated features. It brought something to the level of details that we didn’t have in the first one.”

Healy elaborates that the fact that Illumination Mac Guff wasn’t starting from scratch allowed the team to perfect the character designs. She discusses one of her favorite examples: “Because we had some time between the two films, we could change the model of Margo. There’s something I noticed that probably not a lot of people will. The new Margo is so expressive; there are scenes where I watched the animation of Margo and I love her because she has such great acting and is so relatable in this movie.”

Poulet Tika Masala: Good Minions Gone Bad

Originally imagined as yellow, pill-shaped henchmen who aided Gru as he did his dastardly deeds, Gru’s Minions evolved over the course of *Despicable Me 2* into some of the movie’s biggest scene stealers. As the characters progressed in storyboarding, in design and in the script, the filmmakers saw the power of their potential and wove them further into the story. Meledandri discusses their evolution: “Minions are going to continue to be surprising and disarming. As wonderful as the Min-

ions are and as beloved as they are in the first movie, one of the qualities that defines them is the unexpected.

“The closest I’ve ever seen to this would be the reaction between audiences and Scrat from *Ice Age*,” he continues. “Yet our experience with Scrat was that because it was a defined character with a defined goal, there wasn’t the opportunity for the breath of exploration. The Minions are nonverbal characters, and their entire creation was borne out of the visual process. They’re characters that aren’t defined by a script but they’re defined by the visual exploration, which enables them to communicate across every culture because they are not specific to any one culture.”

Coffin recalls the evolution of the Minions into the iconic characters that we know and love: “Chris Renaud and I said, ‘Well, these guys in the script were described as thugs, an army of big muscular guys.’ We just couldn’t have Gru as an underdog being followed by this Orc-like army, so we asked Eric to find some simple looking characters so we could have plenty of them. He came up with the idea of pills with goggles on. In terms of graphic design, that was very appealing.”

When initial vocalizations for Gru’s henchmen weren’t working, Coffin stepped up to the plate and tried them out himself. He recounts: “I used to do a lot of commercials and TV series and temped in my voice just for pacing reasons. I told Chris Meledandri, ‘Let me make a test. It won’t be an official one; it’s just to show whoever is going to design the voice a way to go.’ So I did this voice in a couple of minutes, and when I asked Chris to listen to it, he said, ‘Well, you’re going to be the voice of the Minions.’ So, these words pop out, and I have them speak Indian, French, English, Spanish and Italian. I mix up all these ridiculous sounding words just because they sound good, not because they necessarily mean something.”

Coffin’s off-the-cuff vocals evidently hit the mark, because the characters took off and audiences absolutely fell in love with them. Renaud continues with his fellow director’s story: “Their language sounds silly, but when you believe that they’re actually communicating that’s what makes it funnier. What’s great about the Minion language, while it is gibberish, it sounds real because Pierre puts in words from many languages and does the lion’s share of the Minion recordings. There are a lot of food references. For example, “poulet tiki masala” is French for the Indian chicken dish. Pierre and I cut together the scene in which one of the Minions is at the speaker box. I’m the voice of the evil Minions on one side of the speaker box, and Pierre says the bizarre password. And then when the Minion goes, ‘bla-bla- bla, raspberry sound,’ that’s me.”

Healy offers that what makes the Minions so crucial is that the hundreds of characters not only provide a sense of scale to Gru’s world, they offer much needed humor. She sums: “There’s something about their design that is just wonderful. With the simple yellow shape, the big eyes, the goggles and the little kid overalls, they’re just so expressive. It’s the collaboration and the union of these directors with their voices and the funny character design that evolved in the first movie that makes the Minions wonderful characters that are universally appealing.”

She acknowledges that having on-site voice talent in both films often proved useful: “Because the directors voice the Minions, and we’ve got them right here, it’s not a big deal to bring them in and say, ‘We need new lines for the Minions. Chris and Pierre work very closely together after all these years of collaborating. When you get them in a room and they start to work off of one another with situations that the Minions could be in, the result is bigger than the sum of the parts.’”

As El Macho needs an army of his own to make his dastardly plans come to fruition, he enlists a mad scientist’s help in creating the wild-haired, evil- by-design, purple Minions. After all, what bad

guy wouldn't want hundreds of unstoppable creatures that will serve his wildest ambitions? Says Meledandri: "Once Gru has accepted this assignment from the Anti-Villain League, we begin to notice that the Minions are disappearing in interesting ways. They're being swept right up off of his front porch or tempted out into the street by an ice cream truck. All of these things are simply traps that have been set. Ultimately, what we discover is that the very plot that Gru is trying to crack now involves the capturing of the Minions and the transformation of them into a force for evil."

Renaud provided much of the vocals for the indestructible, purple Minions who don't know what to eat, so they eat everything. Once again, these zombie-like cousins to our favorite characters were imagined by Guillon. According to Coffin: "The idea was to make Minions look dumber...so that came from their big underbite. They have big teeth, and they're menacing but also funny just because they're round and pointy and not at all regular."

Renaud shares an interesting story on the inspiration for the evil Minions: "There is a great classic Looney Tunes cartoon where Tweety Bird drinks a Jekyll-and-Hyde formula and becomes a big hairy monster. The idea of something cute becoming something monstrous is an appealing thought. We always laugh because the Minions, although they're Minions that work for a bad guy, are not really evil at all. They're the cutest little harmless things you could ever find. So, for the evil Minions, we changed the color of their little outfits to purple. What color is more evil than that?"

His producer concurs on the color selection. Adds Healy: "With their wild hairstyles and their big teeth, they are the antithesis of the cute yellow Minions. As you know, purple and yellow are on opposite sides of the color spectrum. While the good Minions are mostly bald, these guys are really hairy. They twitch and are actually a little bit scary...but in a fun way."

Strap on the Sharks: Filming in 3D

Despicable Me was not only the first film from Illumination Entertainment, it was also the producers' and directors' entrance into the world of 3D. It was never the team's intention to create 3D moments just for 3D's sake, but rather to further immerse the audience into the world of Gru, the girls and the Minions. Naturally, writers Paul and Daurio looked for opportunities as they crafted their script, but only when it made logical sense. And when you write a story that has the most macho villain of all time dropping into a volcano with a shark strapped to him, 3D immersion is a logical side effect.

Meledandri believes that Despicable Me 2 lends itself quite well to the medium of 3D: "Chris and Pierre love sequences that have scale. We saw it in the first film with everything from the attempt to steal a pyramid to the wonderful roller coaster ride in Super Silly Fun Land to stealing the moon. As filmmakers who are students of the James Bond movies, they love these large, exciting sequences. Once again, in the sequel, they return to that terrain with a massive sequence set in the Arctic Circle at the opening of the film. We go underwater to find the Anti-Villain League—which has as its headquarters an incredible submarine that travels underwater—to a final sequence that takes us to a level unlike anything we've seen before."

The reason that the film lends itself to 3D is not only the scope and scale of the set pieces, but because of worldwide audiences' fascination with the best use of the medium. Relates Healy: "One of the things that was important to Chris Meledandri when we started looking to create Despicable Me was to be able to have a global sensibility. He realized very early on that we're not just making movies for the domestic marketplace, we're making movies for audiences worldwide."

While Gru was building rockets that flew to the moon in *Despicable Me*, he has some stiff competition from his partner at the AVL in this film. Renaud walks us through a few of the Guillon-designed gadgets that Lucy has on her missions, all of which lend themselves to audience immersion. Indeed, you feel like you're on the three-dimensional trip with her. He says: "What we wanted to do with Lucy as an agent of the Anti-Villain League, was push the kind of gadgets that you would see in the Bond films, but make them even bigger than life. She's got an amazing purse that's a real bag of tricks, with a mini flamethrower and a lipstick taser. Lucy's purse can actually become a hand glider. She's got spray to identify any laser-beam alarm triggers—so she's always ready—and a bracelet that can shoot an epoxy that can stop an attacking chicken, should that come up. She can also shoot moose tranquilizer darts."

As the production designers crafted audience involvement opportunities, they relied on their inner little boys to imagine the possibilities. Coffin laughs: "Eric is possibly the most childish of us all. He wants those designs to become so true that he puts all of his soul into them. When the script informed us that we needed a car, then we tweaked it and asked ourselves, 'Wouldn't it be cool to have that small car change into an airplane or a submarine?'"

Still Having a Bad, Bad Day: Music of *Despicable Me 2*

Grammy Award-winning artist Pharrell Williams has written and produced for blockbuster musical artists around the globe. With *Despicable Me*, the artist tried his hand at composing the score—alongside returning composer Heitor Pereira—as well as creating original songs and themes for a film. Williams reflects on conversations with Meledandri, Renaud and Coffin: "We had extensive conversations about music and what they were feeling and what they really wanted, and it was a more soulful sound this time—something that was right in the world of the late-'60s, early-'70s." The longtime fan of animation poured his creative energy into the project, and the team was thrilled with the results.

Meledandri discusses the work of the two men: "The music for the first film was distinctive and defined the character of the movie. It was borne out of collaboration between Pharrell and Heitor. It was clear that was a relationship that we wanted to continue for the second film. That process of scoring is something that happens in a parallel to the making of the film, and as we created the musical landscape for the sequel, they've done work that is outstanding."

Williams wrote three new songs for *Despicable Me 2*, as well as reprised several of his songs from the first film. In addition, Pereira has created new themes for characters such as El Macho and Lucy that weave in beautifully with themes for Gru and the girls from the first adventure. Pereira recalls: "This sequel brings some very dynamic additions to Gru's world and with them a lot of new emotions for him to handle. I find that music can help us experience how deep and subtle those feelings can be. For example, Gru's search for love, as it reveals itself to him through the movie, required a very careful handling of his interactions with Lucy and her melodies. And the villain, El Macho? He's a crazy villain! He's different and a very colorful addition to the storytelling, so I had to make sure we didn't miss the chance to capture his wide personality in the music. Of course, overall, it was important to maintain the balance of the first movie to a degree. This is Gru's story, and therefore these new themes and colors had to play a counterpoint to his experience."

Renaud was adamant that they not simply redo the first film's score. He explains: "The new songs from Pharrell are full of fun, but it's a tough process. We sit down with Pharrell and say, 'Hey, write a great song,' and he does. It takes several iterations, but when we go back to him and say,

‘Could it be a little more like this?’ he will always say, ‘You know what? I’ll try again.’ He and Heitor are so dedicated to getting it right; it’s incredible to be able to work with them.”

For *Despicable Me 2*, Williams created the songs “Happy” and “Just a Cloud Away” to complement the reprise of one of his songs from the first film, “Fun Fun Fun.” Williams says: “I’m very proud of ‘Happy.’ It’s a song that came to me when I was thinking about Gru with his family and his elation. I just felt like it had been so long since I heard anyone being so festive and celebratory. I thought, ‘Let me take advantage of this moment. Let’s make people happy again.’”

Williams also wrote “Scream,” which is performed by CeeLo Green. Audiences will find a good deal of upbeat numbers on the soundtrack with “Don’t Stop the Party,” performed by PitBull; Bob Marley’s “Jamming,” performed by Ali Dee; “Where Them Girls At?” performed by David Guetta, featuring Nicki Minaj and Flo Rida. Finally, what self-respecting super-villain would call himself “El Macho” without the sound of “Echa Pa’lla (Manos Pa’rriba),” performed by Pitbull and featuring Papayo, and Ali Dee’s “Cielito Lindo” inspiring him to woo the ladies who frequent Salsa & Salsa.

Music was apparently infectious to other members on set. When the filmmakers needed Agnes to carry a tune, Elsie Fisher was always up for the challenge. When asked about her inspiration, she thinks hard: “Songs just comes to my mind; you don’t have to think about it for too long when you’re making up a song.”

Universal Pictures Presents A Chris Meledandri Production: Steve Carell in *Despicable Me 2*, starring Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Miranda Cosgrove, Russell Brand, Steve Coogan, Ken Jeong, Moises Arias, Dana Gaier, Elsie Fisher. The original songs and themes are by Pharrell Williams; the score is by Heitor Pereira. *Despicable Me 2*’s editor is Gregory Perler ace; the production designers are Yarrow Cheney, Eric Guillon. The 3-D CGI film is written by Cinco Paul & Ken Daurio. The film is produced by Chris Meledandri, Janet Healy, and it is directed by Chris Renaud, Pierre Coffin. © 2013 Universal Studios. www.despicable.me

About the Cast

STEVE CARELL (Gru) is one of the most sought-after actors in Hollywood. First gaining recognition for his contributions as a correspondent on Comedy Central's Primetime Emmy Award-winning *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*, he has successfully moved into primetime TV and above-the-title status in the film world with equal aplomb. Carell's endeavors and successes in acting, writing and producing provided an organic segue to the creation of his own production company, Carousel Productions, with *Crazy, Stupid, Love*, marking the first feature film released under its banner. Carousel recently produced *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone*.

Carell's first lead in a feature, *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, which he co-wrote with director Judd Apatow, opened at No. 1, where it remained for two straight weekends. The surprise hit of 2005 went on to gross more than \$175 million worldwide and had No. 1 openings in 12 countries. The success of the film has continued, as it has also generated more than \$100 million in DVD sales in North America alone. The film was honored with an AFI Award as one of the 10 Best Movies of the Year by the American Film Institute and took home the Best Comedy Movie honor at the 11th annual Critics' Choice Awards. The film also earned Carell and Apatow a co-nomination for Best Original Screenplay by the Writers Guild of America.

As part of an ensemble, Carell starred in *Little Miss Sunshine*, which earned an Academy Award® nomination for Best Picture in 2006, and garnered the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture. In 2008, Carell starred as Maxwell Smart in *Get Smart*, opposite Anne Hathaway and Alan Arkin. The film grossed more than \$230 million worldwide.

In 2010, Carell starred in the comedy *Dinner for Schmucks* with Paul Rudd. He also voiced the lead in the animated comedy *Despicable Me*, playing a super villain who finds his plans to steal the moon put on hold when three orphan girls adopt him as their dad. The film saw phenomenal worldwide success, garnering more than \$540 million at the box office. He starred with Tina Fey in the romantic comedy *Date Night*, which earned more than \$150 million worldwide. His recent film credits include the 2012 romantic drama *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World*; the comedy drama *Hope Springs*, alongside Meryl Streep and Tommy Lee Jones; the upcoming comedy *The Way, Way Back*, which premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival; and, most recently, as the title character in *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone*.

Carell's previous film credits include *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*, *Bruce Almighty*, *Bewitched* and *Dan in Real Life*.

Carell concluded a seven-season run in the Americanized adaptation of Ricky Gervais' acclaimed British TV series *The Office*, earning six Primetime Emmy Award nominations for Best Actor in a Comedy Series and three, as a producer, for Best Comedy Series. In 2006, Carell earned a Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series--Musical or Comedy, followed by five more nominations for his work on the series. In 2007 and 2008, the cast shared the SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series.

Among Carell's upcoming projects is the feature drama *Foxcatcher*, which just wrapped production. Based on the true-life story of John duPont, who killed Olympic wrestler David Schultz, the film is directed by Bennett Miller and also stars Channing Tatum and Mark Ruffalo.

Carell will also star in the long-awaited *Anchorman: The Legend Continues*, which reunites him with writer/director Adam McKay, along with Will Ferrell and the rest of the Action 4 news team.

KRISTEN WIIG (*Lucy*) finished her seventh and final season as a cast member on NBC's revered show *Saturday Night Live* in May 2012. For her work on the show, Wiig received four Primetime Emmy nominations for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series, playing such memorable characters as the excitable Target clerk, Lawrence Welk singer Doonese, the hilarious one-upper Penelope, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Suze Orman, among others.

Wiig is currently in production on 20th Century Fox's upcoming comedy *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, in which she stars opposite Ben Stiller. The film, a remake of the 1947 Danny Kaye movie based on the James Thurber short story, centers on a timid magazine photo manager, played by Stiller, who daydreams of exciting adventures, only to find himself in an adventure of his own when he goes in search of a missing negative. Wiig plays his co-worker and the woman of his fantasies. The film will be released on December 25, 2013.

Later this year, Wiig will begin production on the independent drama *The Comedian*, co-starring Robert DeNiro and directed by Sean Penn.

Last summer, Wiig completed production in New York City on the independent film *Girl Most Likely*, directed by Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini (*American Splendor*). Wiig stars as Imogene and is also an executive producer on the film. *Girl Most Likely* is the story of a moderately successful New York playwright who stages a fake suicide attempt to win back her ex-boyfriend, only to end up being forced into the custody of her gambling-addict mother. The film debuted as Imogene at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival.

Wiig appeared in the 2012 Roadside Attractions film *Friends With Kids*, written and directed by Jennifer Westfeldt. Wiig co-starred in the film opposite Westfeldt, Jon Hamm, Adam Scott, Edward Burns and Maya Rudolph. The film, which screened at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival, was released by Roadside Attractions on March 9, 2012.

In 2011, Wiig starred in the critically acclaimed summer breakout film *Bridesmaids*, which she co-wrote with Annie Mumolo. *Bridesmaids* was released on May 13, 2011, by Universal Pictures and is currently the top "R"-rated female comedy of all time. Directed by Paul Feig and produced by Judd Apatow, *Bridesmaids* has become Apatow's highest-grossing production. Wiig and Mumolo were nominated for an Academy Award®, a Writers Guild of America Award and a BAFTA for Best Original Screenplay for their work on the film. Wiig was also nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture--Comedy or Musical. The film has also received significant awards recognition, including a Golden Globe nomination for Best Motion Picture--Comedy or Musical and a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

Wiig captured the audience's attention with universal high praise as Katherine Heigl's passive-aggressive boss in Apatow's smash-hit comedy *Knocked Up*. Her additional film credits include Universal's comedy *Paul*; *All Good Things*, with Ryan Gosling and Kirsten Dunst; Universal's animated feature *Despicable Me*, with Steve Carell and Jason Segel; Universal's *MacGruber*; DreamWorks Animation's *How to Train Your Dragon*, with Gerard Butler and Jay Baruchel; Mike Judge's *Extract*, with Jason Bateman, Ben Affleck and Mila Kunis; Drew Barrymore's directorial debut *Whip It*, which starred Ellen Page; Greg Mottola's *Adventureland*, with Ryan Reynolds, Kristen Stewart and Jesse Eisenberg; David Koepp's *Ghost Town*, with Ricky Gervais; and Jake Kasdan's *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story*, another Apatow-produced film in which she starred opposite John C. Reilly. Wiig has also guest-starred on the Primetime Emmy Award-winning NBC series *30 Rock* and guest-starred on the HBO series *Bored to Death* and *Flight of the Conchords*.

Wiig is currently starring in Cartoon Network's reboot of *The Looney Tunes Show*, supplying the voice of Bugs Bunny's gal pal, Lola Bunny.

A native of Rochester, New York, Wiig worked as a main company member of the Los Angeles-based improv and sketch-comedy troupe *The Groundlings*. As a *Groundlings* alumna, she is among the ranks of such SNL cast mates as Maya Rudolph, Will Ferrell, Phil Hartman and Jon Lovitz.

Wiig currently resides in New York City.

BENJAMIN BRATT's (*Eduardo/El Macho*) diverse career has successfully spanned film and television for more than 20 years. In 2010, Bratt won the Maverick Spirit Award at the Cinequest Film Festival for his work as producer and star of the indie hit *La Mission*, based in San Francisco. Written and directed by his brother Peter Bratt, the locally produced film garnered much critical praise and went on to receive a nomination for Outstanding Independent Motion Picture at the 2011 NAACP Image Awards, a GLAAD Media Award nomination for Outstanding Film--Limited Re-

lease and four Imagen Foundation Award nominations, including two wins for Best Actor--Feature Film (Bratt) and Best Supporting Actor--Feature Film (Jeremy Ray Valdez).

Bratt's distinguished film career includes the critically acclaimed films *Pinero*, for which he was lauded for his striking, haunting and career-defining performance as the poet/playwright/actor Miguel Pinero; Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic*, which won four Academy Awards® and a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture; and *The Woodsman*, a film festival and critical favorite, which starred Kevin Bacon.

Bratt's upcoming films include *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2*, in which he voices the character of Manny, and *The Lesser Blessed*, which premiered at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival. Most recently, Bratt appeared in *Snitch*, alongside Dwayne Johnson.

Television audiences perhaps best recognize Bratt from his Primetime Emmy-nominated role as Detective Rey Curtis on NBC's long-running drama *Law & Order*. He also starred in and produced the A&E drama series *The Cleaner*. His portrayal of extreme interventionist William Banks garnered him the 2009 Alma Award for Best Actor in Television--Drama. Recently, Bratt starred in ABC's drama *Private Practice* and landed a recurring role as Gloria's (Sofia Vergara) ne'er-do-well ex-husband Javier on ABC's smash-hit *Modern Family*.

A veteran of more than 25 films, Bratt's work includes Curtis Hanson's *The River Wild*, opposite Meryl Streep; Taylor Hackford's *Blood In, Blood Out*; *Clear and Present Danger*, opposite Harrison Ford; the beloved comedy *Miss Congeniality*, with Sandra Bullock; and the theatrical adaptation of the acclaimed novel "Love in the Time of Cholera," with Javier Bardem.

A San Francisco native, Bratt is a proud alumnus of American Conservatory Theater's Advanced Training Program, where he received an honorary MFA in 2008.

Bratt currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife and their two children.

MIRANDA COSGROVE (Margo) is one of Hollywood's hottest young stars. She has been cast in the NBC pilot *Girlfriend in a Coma*, in which she'll star opposite Christina Ricci. She will play Evie, whose mother, Karen (Ricci), has just woken up from a coma after 17 years. Nurse Jackie's Liz Brixius wrote the script and *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit's* Dick Wolf will produce.

Cosgrove was most recently seen on the Primetime Emmy-nominated Nickelodeon show *iCarly*. The show ranked as the No. 1 live-action series on television with kids ages 2-11 and was the network's top show among kids ages 6-11 and tweens ages 9-14 before its series finale in December 2012. The "iSaved Your Life" episode is Nickelodeon's most-watched show ever. Cosgrove starred in the title role (Carly Shay) as a teenager who lives with her 20-something brother/guardian and produces webcasts from a makeshift loft studio with her two best friends.

iCarly was a domestic and international success, winning the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Award (KCA) for Favorite TV Show, in the U.S., Australia, Latin America and Germany. From 2009-2012, Cosgrove received KCA nominations for Favorite Television Actress and Teen Choice Award nominations for Choice TV Actress. She won the Nickelodeon U.K. Star of the Year Award in 2010. She received nominations for Favorite International TV Star for the 2008 Australian KCAs and for Favorite Female TV Star for the 2008 U.K. KCAs.

iCarly was nominated for a Creative Arts Emmy Award in 2009 and 2010, a Teen Choice Award from 2009-2011 and a People's Choice Award in 2010; it also won KCAs from 2009-2012. In addition, the series garnered a Television Critics Association Award nomination for Outstanding Achievement in Youth Programming and a BAFTA Children's Award nomination.

Cosgrove also guest-starred as a troubled pop star in a November 2010 episode of the Primetime Emmy-nominated CBS show *The Good Wife*, opposite Julianna Margulies.

On the big screen, Cosgrove lent her voice to the character Margo in Universal Pictures' 2010 summer blockbuster animated feature *Despicable Me*, with co-stars Steve Carell and Jason Segel. The film has grossed more than \$540 million worldwide and was nominated for a 2011 Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Film, a People's Choice Award for Favorite Family Movie and a 2011 BAFTA for Best Animated Film. She received rave reviews for her work in *School of Rock* as Summer Hathaway, the overachieving preppy manager of Jack Black's rock band. Her other film credits include *Yours, Mine & Ours* and *Keeping Up With the Steins*. Her theater credits include *Back Again* with the Orison Professional Theater Group.

Cosgrove's first solo album, "Sparks Fly," debuted at No. 8 on the Billboard 200 chart in April 2010. The first single, "Kissin' U," which she co-wrote with influential producer Dr. Luke, is officially certified RIAA Gold, with more than 500,000 singles sold. Her five-song EP "High Maintenance" was released in March 2011. She recorded four original songs for the first iCarly soundtrack and also recorded original songs for the second iCarly soundtrack, which was released in 2012. Cosgrove was nominated for a 2010 Teen Choice Award for Choice Music: Breakout Female Artist.

Cosgrove got her big break when she landed the highly sought-after role of Megan Parker on Nickelodeon's megahit *Drake & Josh*. She played the deceptively sweet, mischievous little sister whose scene-stealing role led to her own show, iCarly. She appeared in *Merry Christmas, Drake & Josh* on Nickelodeon in 2008. Her voice-over credits include *Here Comes Peter Cottontail: The Movie* as Munch the mouse and *What's New, Scooby-Doo?* as Miranda Wright.

In April 2011, Cosgrove was honored as the Best Role Model in a Digital Age at the Common Sense Media Awards, alongside former President Bill Clinton. She is also one of the faces of Neutrogena, following Gabrielle Union, Hayden Panettiere, Susie Castillo, Jennifer Garner, Diane Lane and Emma Roberts.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Cosgrove currently lives there and attends the University of Southern California.

In 2008, **RUSSELL BRAND (Dr. Nefario)** shot to fame in the U.S. when he was seen as the rocker Aldous Snow in the Judd Apatow-produced comedy *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. Since then, the British star has become an international success.

Brand can currently be seen in FX Network's *Brand X With Russell Brand*, an unscripted late-night series that he also produces under his production banner, Branded Films. The show is taped in front of a live studio audience and features Brand's take on current events, pop culture and politics as well as celebrity interviews. The show entered its second season in February 2013 with an expansion to a live, full-hour format.

Brand can soon be seen in Diablo Cody's directorial debut, Mandate Pictures' Paradise, also starring Julianne Hough and Octavia Spencer. The film is slated for release in 2013. He is currently in development to star in and produce Warner Bros.' The President Stole My Girlfriend, which his Branded Films partner, Nik Linnen, will also produce. The film will be Branded Films' first feature film project.

Brand is also in preproduction on Paramount Pictures' The Hauntrepreneur, which is being produced by Michael Bay.

Brand's past film credits include Rock of Ages, Arthur, Illumination Entertainment/Universal Pictures' Hop, Get Him to the Greek, Disney's Bedtime Stories and Miramax's The Tempest.

Also an acclaimed author, Brand has written two books: "My Booky Wook: A Memoir of Sex, Drugs, and Stand-Up," which was on The New York Times' best-seller list for five weeks in a row, and its follow-up "Booky Wook 2: This Time It's Personal."

Brand hosted the 2012 MTV Movie Awards and hosted the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs). He hosted the MTV VMAs again in 2009 and garnered the biggest VMA audience since 2004, with nearly nine million viewers.

Brand began his career as a stand-up comedian and rose to fame in the U.K. in 2006 as the presenter of Big Brother spin-off Big Brother's Big Mouth. In 2006, he launched his first nationwide tour, Shame, which was released on DVD as Russell Brand: Live. In 2007, he launched his second nationwide tour, Russell Brand: Only Joking, which was released on DVD as Russell Brand: Doing Life. In 2009, he brought his stand-up comedy tour, Russell Brand: Scandalous, to the United States.

Brand currently splits his time between New York and Los Angeles.

STEVE COOGAN (Silas Ramsbottom) was born and raised in Manchester, U.K., where he trained as an actor at the Manchester Polytechnic School of Theatre.

In 1992, he won the Perrier Comedy Award for his show, Steve Coogan in Character With John Thomson, at which he launched his character Paul Calf. He went on to write and perform in Paul Calf's Video Diary, for which he won a BAFTA.

While working on radio, Coogan created his character Alan Partridge, which he transferred to TV on the shows Knowing Me, Knowing You and I Am Alan Partridge. The character won him Best Male Comedy Performer, Best TV Comedy Personality and Best TV Sitcom at the British Comedy Awards.

In addition to his acting career, in 2002 Coogan set up Baby Cow Productions with Henry Normal, producing several award-winning programs, including Marion and Geoff, Human Remains, The Mighty Boosh, Gavin & Stacey, Sensitive Skin, Dr. Terrible's House of Horrible and Cruise of the Gods.

Coogan won his fourth BAFTA TV Award in 2011 for his comedy performance in Michael Winterbottom's The Trip. He has recently starred in Winterbottom's latest feature film, The Look of Love, and is currently shooting as the lead in Stephen Frears' Philomena alongside Judi Dench.

KEN JEONG (Floyd), known for his scene-stealing abilities, has established himself as the go-to character actor for today's hit comedies. In June of 2009, Jeong appeared as the Asian mobster Mr. Chow in the sleeper-hit comedy *The Hangover*, which starred Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms and Zach Galifianakis. The film was the highest-grossing "R"-rated comedy to date with more than \$467 million worldwide, only to be trumped by *The Hangover Part II*, which grossed \$581 million worldwide.

Since his feature film debut as the doctor in *Knocked Up* in 2007, Jeong has gone on to portray a number of memorable roles in a series of successful comedies. Directed, written and produced by Judd Apatow, *Knocked Up* grossed \$219 million worldwide. In 2008, Jeong's first major role was the villain, King Argotron, in *Role Models*, opposite Paul Rudd, Seann William Scott and Christopher Mintz-Plasse. The film went on to gross more than \$90 million worldwide. In the same year, Jeong played bit parts in two other major comedies, *Pineapple Express* and *Step Brothers*.

Jeong's career path started off on a different course. He earned his undergraduate degree at Duke University and went on to attain his medical degree at the University of North Carolina. Jeong completed his internal medicine residency in New Orleans all while developing his comedy. In 1995, Jeong won the Big Easy Laugh-Off. The competition, which was judged by former NBC President Brandon Tartikoff and Improv founder Budd Friedman, turned out to be his big break as Tartikoff and Friedman urged Jeong to head to Los Angeles.

Once in L.A., Jeong began performing regularly at the Hollywood Improv and Laugh Factory, and was seen on a number of television shows including *The Office*, *Entourage* and *MADtv*. It wasn't until his pivotal role as Dr. Kuni in *Knocked Up* that Jeong solidified himself as a feature film comedian. In 2006, Jeong and fellow comedian Mike O'Connell left a mark on YouTube as Million Dollar Strong, a spoof rap duo. Since the video's posting, it has garnered more than one million views and Jeong and O'Connell have been tapped by MTV Films to write and star in the film version.

Jeong is a series regular on *Community*, which premiered its fourth season in February. On the show, which features Joel McHale and Chevy Chase, Jeong plays the role of the angry former Spanish teacher, Ben Chang.

Jeong recently teamed up again with Michael Bay for the action flick *Pain & Gain*, which was released on April 26, 2013. The film also starred Dwayne Johnson and Mark Wahlberg. Jeong can also be seen in the highly anticipated *Hangover Part III*, released on May 24.

Other credits for Jeong include *Zookeeper*, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, *The Goods: Live Hard. Sell Hard.* and *All About Steve*. He has appeared in numerous Stand Up To Cancer PSAs and hosted the 2011 Billboard Music Awards.

Jeong currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife and twin daughters.

After hearing that she resembles Dakota Fanning throughout the first five years of her life, ELSIE FISHER (Agnes) decided she wanted to be an actress. With her parents' blessing, she took the plunge and, in the very first month of her career, was cast in *Despicable Me*. Since doing the film, Fisher has made appearances in several national commercials and on the television shows *Medium*, *Mike & Molly* and *Raising Hope*. She also lent her voice to the animated series *Masha and the Bear*.

DANA GAIER (Edith) is a 15-year-old, 10th-grade honors student from New Jersey whose distinct voice returns this summer to the big screen as she reprises the role of Edith in *Despicable Me 2*. *Despicable Me*, which premiered in July 2010, was Gaier's feature film debut.

Gaier's voice as Edith can be heard as a part of the *Despicable Me* ride *Minion Mayhem*, which opened at Universal Orlando Resort in July 2012. She appeared on the *Today* show to promote the launch.

The role of Edith almost didn't happen. Gaier was asked to audition for *Despicable Me* in November 2008, but she was unable to because she was away on her school camping trip. Upon her return, she learned from her agent that the auditions were still being held and that she should come into the office to record. She auditioned and, in December 2008, she flew out to L.A. and landed the part of Edith. She has loved voicing this role and watching her character come to life. Gaier is amazed by the directors, the writers and the cast (which includes some of her favorite actors).

Gaier has always loved all aspects of performing since the time she was one year old, picked up a play guitar and started singing the Backstreet Boys' "I Want it That Way" for a room full of friends and family. At age five, Gaier was "entertaining" people in a restaurant and a talent manager handed her business card to Gaier's mother. At that time, Gaier's mom decided it wasn't the right time for her daughter to expand her interests beyond the local level. At age eight, Gaier was asked to open and close her school's talent show with a rendition of Aretha Franklin's "Respect." Gaier has great comedic timing and a terrific sense of humor, and has often been compared to Punky Brewster.

Gaier is no stranger to the stage. At an audition for *Seussical the Musical* in 2008, Gaier won the male role of JoJo over the boys. Gaier performed at the 2009 Perry Awards (New Jersey's theater equivalent to the Tonys) ceremony reprising her role as JoJo. More recent stage roles include Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Serena in *Legally Blonde: the Musical*, Carmen Diaz in *Fame--The Musical* and Minnie Fay in *Hello, Dolly!* Gaier made national television appearances on Nickelodeon's *Me TV* and NBC's *30 Rock*.

Gaier is also a guitar player and singer/songwriter. She has written and recorded several songs, including "Without You" and "Take Control." Gaier is inspired by some of today's biggest pop stars, including Christina Aguilera, Lady Gaga, Demi Lovato and P!nk, all of whom send messages of individuality and anti-bullying through their music.

At the end of the day, Gaier is just your average teen. She was president at her elementary school and vice-president at her middle school. She has won awards in forensic competitions. She played field hockey and lacrosse in high school and enjoys playing soccer, basketball and softball. In addition to her hobbies, Gaier volunteers in the community by playing bingo with seniors in nursing homes and participating in soup kitchens.

Gaier is an anti-bullying/anti-girl drama advocate. She hosts her own website, *Got Your Back* (www.gyourb.org), that provides resources and information and encourages preteens and young adults to share their advice and experiences. More information can be found at Twitter: @DanaGaier, www.danagaier.com. In 2012, Gaier was featured in the MTV/ Firecracker Film collaborative documentary *Bullied*. Playing her guitar and singing her original song "Take Control."

Gaier believes her character Edith in *Despicable Me* is a strong-willed, tough girl with a big heart underneath who might serve to influence young girls in a positive way.

MOISES ARIAS (Antonio) is poised for a breakout year in 2013, with three diverse roles in highly anticipated films. He will first be seen in CBS Films' *The Kings of Summer* (formerly known as *Toy's House*), which premiered to rave reviews at the Sundance Film Festival in January. The film, which has received comparisons to the classic *Stand By Me* and breakout hit *Superbad*, opened in theaters on June 14. In November, Arias will be seen opposite Asa Butterfield and Harrison Ford in Summit Entertainment's sci-fi adventure *Ender's Game* based on the Orson Scott Card novel. The film, directed by Gavin Hood (*X-Men Origins: Wolverine*), follows an unusually gifted child who is sent to an advanced military school to prepare for a future alien invasion.

Arias, who made his feature film debut with a supporting role opposite Jack Black in Paramount Picture's *Nacho Libre*, recently lent his voice to the animated feature *The Secret World of Arrietty*. His other film credits include: Universal Studios Home Entertainment's *Beethoven's Big Break*; Lionsgate's *The Perfect Game*; Disney Channel's *Dadnapped*, opposite fellow *Hannah Montana* cast members Emily Osment and Jason Earles; *Hannah Montana: The Movie*; and the animated feature *Astro Boy* with Nicolas Cage.

Initially joining Disney Channel's hit series *Hannah Montana* in a recurring role, Arias' character Rico became an instant fan favorite and he was upgraded to a series regular. His other television credits include guest-starring roles on *Everybody Hates Chris*, *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody* and *Wizards of Waverly Place*.

Shortly after he was born in New York, NY, Arias and his family moved to Atlanta, Georgia. In Atlanta, he and his younger brother, Mateo, began taking classes at a local acting school. The school brought the Arias' to Los Angeles in January 2005 to compete in International Models & Talent's acting and modeling competition. Shortly after they relocated to Los Angeles, Arias booked a national Burger King commercial and made his professional stage debut at the Mark Taper Forum in the world premiere of Culture Clash's critically acclaimed production *Water and Power*.

He continues to divide his time between Atlanta and Los Angeles with his parents, Monica and Caesar, and Mateo.

About the Filmmakers

Having worked for Marvel and DC Comics from 1994 to 2000, **CHRIS RENAUD (Directed by)** comes from a background in comic art. From there, he moved to production design at Shadow Projects and Big Big Productions, where he oversaw all aspects of the animation process, including character development, creating concept storyboards and managing teams of digital modelers and artists.

He progressed to Blue Sky Studios/20th Century Fox Animation, where he worked as a story artist on a number of feature animation projects, including *Robots*, *Ice Age: The Meltdown* and *Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who!*. His role was to translate the screen story into the visual language of cinema, inventing and staging both dramatic and comedic action.

In 2007, Renaud conceived, wrote and storyboarded the animated short *No Time for Nuts*, overseeing every creative aspect of production, including design, layout, lighting, rendering, music composition and sound design. *No Time for Nuts* was nominated for an Academy Award® and went on to win the animation industry's Annie Award for Best Short.

From 2008 to 2010, Renaud directed, alongside Pierre Coffin, Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment's animated hit *Despicable Me*, the 10th highest-grossing film in the U.S. domestic box office in 2010. For their work, they received an Annie Award nomination for Directing in an Animated Feature Production. He also directed *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*, which had the highest three-day opening for an animated film in 2012 (\$70.2 million) and also had the eighth-highest domestic opening for an animated film of all time.

Renaud is currently executive producing *Minions*, an original animated film starring Oscar® winner Sandra Bullock and Jon Hamm, which will be released on December 19, 2014.

PIERRE COFFIN (Directed by) studied cinema at the Paris-Sorbonne University between 1985 and 1988. While engaged in his military service, he withdrew in order to sit for the Gobelins entrance exam. He succeeded and followed the 2D course from 1990 to 1993. Coffin then moved to England and worked for one year as a junior animator at Amblimation, Steven Spielberg's animation studio. Back in France, he worked as a freelance CG artist for the National Center of Pedagogical Documentation, helping to create various educational programs for French television.

In 1996, Coffin began working at Ex Machina, the leading animation company at the time. He became lead animator, then head of animation, and worked on short films including *Flying Fish* and *Tobby Who Aimed for the Stars*. But it was with his short film *Pings* (1997) that his style was recognized. Shortly thereafter, he co-directed, with Soandsau, a commercial for *Pastille Vichy*.

He joined Wanda Productions as an animation director and then Passion Pictures, which works hand in hand with Mac Guff Ligne on all its CG commercials. While there, he worked on several commercials, as well as a miniseries for BBC 1 (part of *The Lenny Henry Show*) called *Polar Bears*. Recognized as the "animal-commercial director," Coffin is famous for commercials including "Dede" (for the *Francaise des Jeux*, the largest French lottery), *Caisse d'Epargne* (a leading French bank) and, recently, *Oasis*.

In 2007, Coffin directed a seven-minute teaser for his feature film *Bones Story* (Les Films d'Antoine/Mac Guff Ligne). He also directed *Pat et Stanley*, which was awarded the Special Prize for a TV Series at France's 2009 Annecy International Animation Festival.

From 2008 to 2010, Coffin directed, with Chris Renaud, Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment's animated hit *Despicable Me*, the 10th highest-grossing film in the U.S. domestic box office in 2010. For their work, they received an Annie Award nomination for Directing in an Animated Feature Production. Coffin also directed the Annie Award-winning 3D ride *Despicable Me Minion Mayhem*, which opened at Universal Orlando Resort in July 2012.

He is currently in production directing *Minions*, an original animated film starring Oscar® winner Sandra Bullock and Jon Hamm, which will be released on December 19, 2014.

CHRIS MELEDANDRI (Produced by) is the founder and CEO of Illumination Entertainment, which has an exclusive financing and distribution partnership with Universal Pictures. In July 2010, Illumination released its first film under this agreement, *Despicable Me*, which starred Steve Carell and earned more than \$540 million worldwide.

In April 2011, Illumination released *Hop*, which starred Russell Brand and James Marsden and became the No. 1 film in North America for two consecutive weeks. Illumination followed this up in March 2012, when it released its next fully animated feature film, *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*, which had the highest three-day opening for an animated film that year (\$70.2 million) and also had the eighth-highest domestic opening for an animated film of all time. *The Lorax* continued the successful collaboration between Meledandri and Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel's widow, Audrey Geisel. .

Meledandri is currently in production on *Minions*, an original animated film starring Oscar® winner Sandra Bullock and Jon Hamm, which will be released on December 19, 2014, as well as an untitled project that will be released on July 3, 2015.

Meledandri was previously an executive at 20th Century Fox for 13 years. While there, he became founding president of 20th Century Fox Animation, which he headed for eight years, amassing more than \$2 billion in global box-office revenue.

During his tenure, he helped 20th Century Fox become a major player in the world of animated feature films and in 1998, he led 20th Century Fox's acquisition of fledgling visual effects/commercial house Blue Sky Studios, which he built into a successful producer of animated features. He oversaw the creative and business operations of Blue Sky Studios, now 20th Century Fox's wholly owned CGI studio. While at the studio, Meledandri supervised and/or executive produced movies including *Ice Age*, *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, *Robots*, *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, *The Simpsons Movie* and *Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who!*.

Before joining 20th Century Fox, Meledandri was president of Dawn Steel Pictures at Walt Disney Pictures, where he served as an executive producer of *Cool Runnings*.

JANET HEALY (Produced by) started her career in live-action films with such great directors as Stanley Kramer, Hal Ashby and Sam Peckinpah. She worked with Steven Spielberg on *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *1941*, serving as associate producer on the latter. She then joined George Lucas' premier visual effects company, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), as a co-head of production.

At ILM, Healy produced some of the era's most groundbreaking visual effects work, including the Academy Award®-winning visual effects for *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *Jurassic Park*. While producing the digital character work for *Casper*, Healy fell in love with character animation. She joined Walt Disney Feature Animation as the head of digital production and oversaw work on the

films Tarzan, Dinosaur and Mulan. She moved to DreamWorks Animation to serve as head of production for several years and, while there, produced Shark Tale.

In 2008, Healy joined Chris Meledandri as he was beginning his new venture, Illumination Entertainment, for Universal Pictures. Along with Meledandri and John Cohen, Healy produced Despicable Me, for which they received a Producers Guild of America Award nomination for Outstanding Producer of Animated Theatrical Motion Pictures. She also produced Dr. Seuss' The Lorax with Meledandri and has begun production on two more films for Illumination: Minions, which will be released on December 19, 2014, as well as an untitled project that will be released on July 3, 2015.

From original and triumphant 3D animation movies to adventurous live-action movies, Hollywood screenwriter **CINCO PAUL** (Written by) is used to seeing his work come to life with one smash hit after another. For Despicable Me 2, Paul reteamed with his writing partner, Ken Daurio, to bring audiences their unique vision of the film's characters. Along with Daurio, he wrote the surprise blockbuster Despicable Me, which has made more than \$540 million worldwide.

Paul and his writing partner, Ken Daurio, are the hot Hollywood screenwriting team who also penned the highly successful screenplays based on the beloved Dr. Seuss children's books "The Lorax" and "Horton Hears a Who!," in collaboration with Chris Meledandri, the founder and CEO of Illumination Entertainment. Paul and Daurio had the distinct honor of being handpicked by Audrey Geisel (the widow of Theodor Seuss Geisel) to write the Horton Hears a Who! and Dr. Seuss' The Lorax film projects on behalf of the estate of Dr. Seuss. Paul also wrote the lyrics for Dr. Seuss' The Lorax, for which he, along with John Powell, received an Annie Award nomination in 2013.

Paul and Daurio are known throughout the entertainment industry for their unique pitching style, often singing their pitches to high-level studio executives. For the Disney film College Road Trip, they belted out the '80s tune "Double Dutch Bus," complete with harmony and melody. An estimated 90 percent of their pitches in the last nine years have involved musical performances.

Paul met Daurio while working on a church musical, and they bonded immediately. In 1999, they sold their first screenplay, Special; later, they turned it into a short film that went on to play the festival circuit due to its dark comedic story line. Next came the 2001 cult classic Bubble Boy, which starred Jake Gyllenhaal as Jimmy Livingston (a boy without an immune system), a twisted take on the John Travolta television movie The Boy in the Plastic Bubble. Paul also recently turned Bubble Boy into a full-length musical, for which he wrote the music and lyrics. His other film credits include Disney's megahit The Santa Clause 2.

Paul studied at Yale University, where he graduated summa cum laude with a degree in English. Upon moving to Los Angeles, he received his MFA in screenwriting from the University of Southern California, winning a fellowship grant to pay for his second year.

From original and triumphant 3D animation movies to adventurous live-action movies, Hollywood screenwriter **KEN DAURIO** (Written by) is used to seeing his work come to life with one smash hit after another. For Despicable Me 2, Daurio reteamed with his writing partner, Cinco Paul, to bring audiences their unique vision of the film's characters. Daurio and Paul wrote the box-office smash Despicable Me, which grossed more than \$540 million worldwide.

Daurio and Paul are the hot Hollywood screenwriting team who also penned the highly successful screenplays based on the beloved Dr. Seuss' children's books "The Lorax" and "Horton Hears a

Who!," in collaboration with Chris Meledandri, the founder and CEO of Illumination Entertainment. Daurio and Paul had the distinct honor of being handpicked by Audrey Geisel (the widow of Theodor Seuss Geisel) to write the Horton Hears a Who! and Dr. Seuss' The Lorax film projects on behalf of the estate of Dr. Seuss.

Daurio and Paul are known throughout the entertainment industry for their unique pitching style, often singing their pitches to high-level studio executives. For the Disney film College Road Trip, they belted out the '80s tune "Double Dutch Bus," complete with harmony and melody. An estimated 90 percent of their pitches in the last nine years have involved musical performances.

Daurio met Paul while working on a church musical and they bonded immediately. In 1999, they sold their first screenplay, Special, which they later turned into a short film that played the festival circuit due to its dark comedic story line. Next came the 2001 cult classic Bubble Boy, which starred Jake Gyllenhaal as Jimmy Livingston (a boy without an immune system), a twisted take on the John Travolta television movie The Boy in the Plastic Bubble.

Upon graduating from high school, Daurio began directing music videos for up-and-coming bands like Blink-182, AFI and Jimmy Eat World. More than 100 music videos later, he teamed up with Paul to write his first feature script. Daurio and Paul are now one of Hollywood's most sought-after screenwriting teams.

YARROW CHENEY (Production Designer) attended the California Institute of the Arts from 1992 to 1995, before beginning his career as a character animator at Turner Feature Animation/Warner Bros. Feature Animation on Cats Don't Dance, Quest for Camelot and The Iron Giant.

In 1999, he won a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Main Title Design for his opening title sequence to Sony's Dilbert series. Cheney went on to production design Sony Pictures Imageworks' Academy Award®-winning theatrical short The ChubbChubbs! and Universal Pictures' Curious George.

In 2006, he directed, produced, edited and production designed The Very First Noel holiday special.

In 2008, Cheney joined Illumination Entertainment and has served as production designer on Despicable Me and Dr. Seuss' The Lorax. He is currently directing a Minion short titled Puppy.

ERIC GUILLON (Production Designer) previously art directed Illumination Entertainment's box-office hits Despicable Me and Dr. Seuss' The Lorax. For his work on Despicable Me, Guillon received an Annie Award nomination for Production Design in an Animated Feature Production. For his work on Dr. Seuss' The Lorax, he, Colin Stimpson and Yarrow Cheney received an Annie Award nomination for Character Design in an Animated Feature Production.

GREGORY PERLER, ACE (Editor) is a film editor who has lived and worked in Los Angeles for more than 20 years. A New York University film school graduate, he moved to Los Angeles in 1990 when he was hired as an assistant editor on Disney's Beauty and the Beast (the first of only three animated films to be nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Picture). He was promoted to associate editor during this production.

Perler's previous feature-animation credits include Despicable Me, A Goofy Movie, Tarzan, the Oscar®-nominated Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius and the Oscar®-winning Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit. His live-action credits include 102 Dalmatians, Enchanted, Hannah

Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert and two telefilms based on the classic "Eloise" children's books. In 2011, Perler shared an American Cinema Editors Eddie Award nomination for *Despicable Me* with Pam Ziegenhagen.

Perler was an editor on the first season of the highly rated USA Network series *Royal Pains* and Illumination Entertainment's hit live-action hybrid film *Hop*.

HEITOR PEREIRA (Score by) discovered composing film music in a unique way. He had been brought in as a songwriter for the film *As Good As It Gets*, but soon found that his melodies and arrangements were a perfect fit to film scores. He made such an impression on producer James L. Brooks that in Brooks' next film, 2001's *Riding in Cars With Boys*, Pereira was co-composer. Since then, he has collaborated on a number of projects and has composed music, written songs or played various instruments on the scores of *I Am Sam*, *Madagascar*, *The Pledge*, *Shrek 2*, *Mission: Impossible II*, *The Rundown*, *Black Hawk Down*, *Spy Kids: All the Time in the World*, *August Rush*, *Spanglish*, *Something's Gotta Give*, *Man on Fire*, *Domino*, *Unstoppable*, *The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3* and *The Dark Knight*.

Pereira's original film scores include *The Smurfs*, *Despicable Me*, Nancy Meyer's *It's Complicated*, *A Little Bit of Heaven*, *From Prada to Nada*, *The Canyon*, *Curious George*, *Curious George 2: Follow That Monkey!*, Disney's hit *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*, *Beverly Hills Chihuahua 3: Viva La Fiesta!*, the documentary *Running the Sahara*, the John Singleton-produced *Illegal Tender*, *Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights* and Robert Towne's *Ask the Dust*. He has been the recipient of four ASCAP awards for *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*, *It's Complicated*, *Despicable Me* and *The Smurfs*.

Pereira's reputation for being able to bring his unique sensibility to film scores comes from his solid foundation of craftsmanship. Soon after completing his conservatory studies, he began playing guitar with some of Brazil's leading artists and went on to entertain millions as the guitarist for *Simply Red*. He has released three solo albums of his own music, and has either arranged music for, or played with, such artists as Sergio Mendes, Alejandro Sanz, Caetano Veloso, Ivan Lins, Jack Johnson, The Chieftains, Bryan Adams, Elton John, Willie Nelson, Shania Twain, Seal, Nelly Furtado and many others. It came as no surprise that in 2005, Pereira won a Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocalist for his collaboration with Sting and Chris Botti.

Most recently, Pereira produced, co-wrote and performed on Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter Melody Gardot's latest and critically acclaimed album "The Absence."

Pereira lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two children.

"I don't have a signature sound," **PHARRELL WILLIAMS (Original Songs and Themes by)** says. "I would call it a signature execution." While certainly popular, with more than 100 million copies of his productions sold, Williams isn't a pop star. He's a modern artist. No matter what he's working on, whether it's a beat for one of the signees to his new label, *i am OTHER*, or a design for his apparel lines *Billionaire Boys Club* and *ICECREAM*, it feels like an invention and looks like the future. Williams has designed limited-edition jewelry and accessories for luxury goods brand *Louis Vuitton*, collaborated with French designers *Domeau & Peres* on chair designs that were featured in the Paris gallery *Galerie Perrotin*, and partnered with Tokyo-born artist *Takashi Murakami* and jewelry house *Jacob & Co.* to create a sculpture that was shown at *Art Basel* in Switzerland.

Each effort boasts an unmistakable and instantly recognizable style. Fellow innovators recognize this trait, and it's why they seek him out. Williams has made music with Justin Timberlake, Daft Punk and The Hives, and re-

inspired established vets like Madonna, Snoop Dogg and the Rolling Stones. Over the years, he and his production partner, Chad Hugo, have been credited with a certain sound that marked a great leap forward for pop music at the end of the millennium. What Williams actually does is more of a constant. "I think that's my gift," he says. "The ability to say, 'You know what? This would sound better behind purple. That would sound great in polka dots. You would sound great over something spicy.'"

For Williams, each endeavor is another platform for his unique creative expression, something he has been obsessed with ever since getting his start in music as a seventh grader at Old Donation Center, a school for young overachievers located in Williams' hometown of Virginia Beach, followed by playing in the school band at Princess Anne High School. A drummer and keyboardist, Williams was discovered performing with Hugo at a high school talent show by new jack swing architect Teddy Riley, who signed the pair as The Neptunes shortly after they graduated.

Williams' musical style emerged publicly on a single verse on the classic Wreckx-N-Effect single, "Rump Shaker," and since then there have been a dozen tracks that are also considered undeniable classics: Nelly's "Hot in Herre," Jay-Z's "I Just Wanna Love U (Give it 2 Me)," Britney Spears' "I'm A Slave 4 U," Kelis' "Milkshake," Ol' Dirty Bastard's "Got Your Money," and Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot." If these songs were baseball players, they'd all have retired numbers. In 2010, Billboard selected The Neptunes as its "Producer of the Decade," and the industry has honored Williams with four Grammy Awards (including 2004's "Producer of the Year--Non-Classical") and ASCAP's prestigious Golden Note Award in 2012. But a futurist isn't allowed to look back for too long, no matter how established he's become. Early in Williams' career, Interscope Geffen A&M chairman Jimmy Iovine told Entertainment Weekly: "Pharrell has such a vision for every aspect of culture. He's the modern kid: he lives rock, hip-hop, R&B, he can do it all."

In many ways, Williams is still that modern kid, whether he's on the cutting edge (like with the four albums he's released with the alternative rock/hip-hop band N*E*R*D*) or at the height of the mainstream (he was a music supervisor for the 2012 Academy Awards®). He is constantly gazing ahead and supporting newcomers with similar vision and drive. Williams' latest undertaking is i am OTHER, a multimedia creative collective that serves as an umbrella for all of his endeavors, including a record label and a dedicated YouTube channel featuring original programming such as the shows The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl, Nardwuar the Human Serviette and Stereotypes. The site's manifesto--as Williams explains on his website www.iamOTHER.com-- "celebrates the people who push society forward. The thinkers. The innovators. The outcasts" because "history has proven that it's the rule breakers who have the power to change the world."

In addition to his music and digital interests, the environmentally minded Williams is a partner in the NYC-based textile firm Bionic Yarn, which creates sustainable fabrics made from recycled plastic bottles for such brands as Gap, Timberland, Cole Haan and Nike. He is also the founder of the nonprofit From One Hand To Another (FOHTA)--a resource center in Virginia Beach that provides kids in the community with alternative educational tools than those found in the school system. "Imagine how many kids would be able to do what I've done, even supersede what I've done if we line the stars up for them," he says.

As he enters his third decade as one of our truly great contemporary artists, Williams isn't slowing down. "One of the joys of working in the business that I do is I get to explore textures all the time," he says. "It's almost like being in the fashion industry. We work with so many different materials, and I do the same when it comes to music. I'm constantly on the hunt for a new instrument or a new sound--not sound as in body of work, but literally, new instrumentation sounds. That is my business." Williams' touch, which relies on instinct and vision rather than any formal training or cynical formula, has changed the texture and color of popular culture.