

Cyrano

Preliminary Production Notes

Cyrano

Table of Contents

I. Synopsis	page 3
II. Director's Statement	page 4
III. Together for Life and Love	page 6
IV. The de Bergerac Line	page 11
V. Autumn and After in Italy	page 12
VI. Setting the Scenes	page 17
VII. Voices in Words and Music	page 22
VIII. A Love Letter, to Love	page 32
IX. About the Cast	page 34
X. About the Filmmakers	page 40
XI. Main Credits	page 50

Cyrano

Synopsis

In the tradition of the classic MGM movies that celebrate romance lyrically and visually, award-winning director Joe Wright (*Darkest Hour*, *Anna Karenina*, *Atonement*, *Pride & Prejudice*) orchestrates a gifted ensemble of actors performing the big-screen epic love story **Cyrano**. This bold new adaptation, scripted by Erica Schmidt and filmed on stunning Italian locales, reimagines the timeless tale of wit, courage, and love. The score and songs are from The National's Bryce and Aaron Dessner, and Matt Berninger and Carin Besser. In the title role, Peter Dinklage (Emmy Award winner for *Game of Thrones*) makes the iconic character his own.

Cyrano de Bergerac (played by Mr. Dinklage) is a man ahead of his time. Dazzling one and all whether with ferocious wordplay at a verbal joust or with brilliant swordplay in a duel, the hale and hearty Cyrano exults in gallantry and is always up for a challenge. Except, that is, in matters of the heart; only there does what his friend and fellow soldier of the revered King's Guard, Le Bret (Bashir Salahuddin of *A Simple Favor*), refers to as Cyrano's "unique physique" inhibit him.

He has yet to declare his feelings for — and to — the luminous Roxanne (Haley Bennett of *Hillbilly Elegy*); a lover of literature and a fierce intellect, Roxanne has been a devoted friend to Cyrano since their hometown days. He has secretly been in love with her for his entire adult life, but also convinced that his appearance renders him unworthy of her love. From her own perspective, Roxanne seeks to manifest both true romance and a self-determined future; in her overbearing wealthy suitor, the powerful Duke De Guiche (Ben Mendelsohn of *Captain Marvel*), she can see neither.

Then, once Roxanne locks eyes with newly arrived King's Guard recruit Christian (Kelvin Harrison Jr. of *The Trial of the Chicago 7*), it is love at first sight. Christian is dashing yet conflicted, bright yet in need of guidance. Roxanne pleads with Cyrano to promise her that he will watch over and protect Christian. Cyrano does so, and encourages Christian to woo Roxanne with love letters — instantly finding that Christian will need to avail himself of Cyrano's own heartfelt writing skills. In so doing, Cyrano will at last be able to express his true feelings to Roxanne, albeit through someone else; caught in a cached love triangle, Cyrano finds his conundrum at once vexingly funny and wistfully bittersweet. Yet he selflessly gives of himself to inspire Christian and empower Roxanne towards each other, even as once-distant drums of war grow louder. Together and apart they will all experience the heights of happiness, the depths of despair, and destinies beyond what they each might have envisioned for themselves — as a symphony of emotions envelops moviegoers with words, music, and beauty in **Cyrano**.

Cyrano

Director's Statement

We'd been in national lockdown for nearly four months when, on the 28th of June 2020, I received the latest draft of a film with music, which I'd been developing for over two years, called **Cyrano**. Later that day I called Eric Fellner at Working Title and said, "It's ready. We have to do this now."

I had a clear idea of how to make the film. I knew where and how and what it would look like. I knew what it was about. I could see it. I was very excited. We would create our own bubble on the island of Sicily. The first three acts of the five-act structure would be shot in a late-17th-Century Baroque town called Noto. We would use every nook and cranny of that incredible place and if it wasn't there we wouldn't shoot it. The film would be a fantasy of a period, somewhere between 1640 and 1712. The costumes would be modern interpretations of period dresses, as much Alexander McQueen as they were Jean-Antoine Watteau. The camera would have a sense of freedom, a fluidity much less formal than any of my recent work. The film would be anarchic, an irreverent celebration of life and a love letter to love. We would transport our audience to a place where life was beautiful again. And then we would hard-cut to Mount Etna, a live volcano, and shoot the war sequence at 16,000 ft. above sea level (certainly the most practically challenging choice of my career). Finally, the last act of the film would be reduced to an almost minimalist style, as simple as, "I love you." A kind of heaven.

I also knew how it would sound. All the singing would be live. It would be intimate, we should hear their breathing, the tiny imperfections that would break our hearts. There would be no fanfare before a song. The actors, without a breath, would move seamlessly from speech to song and back again. Music has always been an enormous part of my life and art; now I would give it full rein.

Needless to say, Eric thought me crazy. No one would finance this now. No one was making anything. The world was shut down. And so began the craziest production of my career.

But in times of crisis we, as storytellers, have a responsibility to gather our community, large or small, around the proverbial campfire and try to help them heal. We do this by using the power of our imaginations to tell stories of emotional truth. To offer them light when the world feels impenetrably dark. To offer a place to connect to their emotions and a conduit to express them. A place of beauty, perhaps beauty in an ugly world. A place without cynicism or irony. A place of love and compassion.

I have always loved drama. All my films have asked the same central question, “How do I connect with others and why do I so often fail to do so?” Drama, to me, is an attempt to connect with others whilst at the same time an expression of the difficulty in doing so.

On that June day in 2020, as we sat in isolation, it seemed to me that what we needed most was simple human connection. **Cyrano** had to be made. All three of the film’s central characters are attempting connection and failing to do so. All three are in love but feel unworthy of the love they seek. Their sense of self gets in their way. And yet the attempt is all.

May you find the one you love, and may you tell them so.

— Joe Wright

Cyrano

Together for Life and Love

The world, as everyone knew it, had changed by mid-March 2020. Communities and countries, neighborhoods and nations — millions of people came together with unprecedented purpose and force to combat a global pandemic. Storytellers wrestled with how, or if, to sustain a creative pace. Through it all, people were by necessity isolated from even those closest to their hearts.

Film director Joe Wright felt that the time had come to make a celebration of life and love. For, he had a meaningful story that he wanted to tell — and a classic story to re-tell, in an invigorating new way. If he could unite a cast and crew, then the process of making a movie would in and of itself be life-affirming; the finished film would be a gift to moviegoers receiving it together with the world in a stronger state.

For the past couple of years Wright had remained intent on making his next movie a new film version of Cyrano de Bergerac, the timeless tale of wit, courage, and love; Edmond Rostand's play is one of the most famous, and enduring, explorations of romance ever told. Erica Schmidt had adapted and directed a new musical theater version of the piece, which was staged in different productions in the U.S.

He had first made the acquaintance of the legendary character in the last major movie adaptation, 1990's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Wright reflects, "I saw it when I was an anxiety-riddled adolescent and the story, about feeling unworthy of love, had a profound effect on me.

"But I couldn't see making a new version because I could never see past 'the nose.'" The original play's specification of Cyrano having a prominent proboscis had always been adhered to in the decades since, whether on stage or on-screen — until a few years ago.

When Wright went to see Schmidt's staging at "the Goodspeed theater in Connecticut and saw Peter Dinklage play Cyrano opposite Haley Bennett as Roxanne, I was incredibly moved.

"I think with any other version there was the feeling that the actor — however convincing — can at the end of the day sit in the makeup chair and pull the big nose off of his face. Pete brought an inherent truth and honesty to Cyrano that I found deeply affecting."

Wright, "immediately taken," envisioned a joyful and tuneful expansion of Schmidt's production into a movie that would also rediscover "the raw and real heart of the play, about how people connect."

Schmidt's staging of her new version was the culmination of years of theatrical development. She recounts that Michael Gennaro, then at The Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey, "had

commissioned me to adapt Cyrano de Bergerac into a musical in 2005. I always loved Rostand's play — its story, its epic sweep, the world of the piece — and [the character of] Roxanne spoke to me. Also, Cyrano is 'catfishing' Roxanne [with love letters written under another name] and that made me want to take a new look at it. The ending of the play, its tragedy, was my way in.

"So when Michael asked me what I wanted to work on that was at the top of my list."

Even before Dinklage came to the role, Schmidt had re-conceived the piece's long-held notions. She recounts, "In my stage version, it was always a Cyrano without a big nose. Typically with [stagings of] the Rostand play, you have a very accomplished and usually very handsome actor wearing a very large fake nose, talking about how horrible his nose is. I wanted to get at something real, underneath; an insecurity that the character alone feels.

"I felt that there is a universal truth in that, how we all do this to ourselves and to the ones we love; we all have 'the nose' that we imagine the other person hates — or the thing that we blame for our not being loved or not being seen or not being understood."

Ready with her approach to the material, she "wrote it at that time but I didn't have a composer that fit what I wanted, which was for it to be 'through-composed' and scored like a film."

Nearly a decade later, Schmidt heard from Gennaro, who "had moved to Goodspeed and asked me to take it out of the desk drawer. That's when I became obsessed by working with The National" on the song score.

Members of the celebrated music group did join her project; Schmidt was given access to "a dead letters box" of unreleased music from The National to ascertain which direction she wanted the songs for her show to go in as she revised the play's script. The music was composed by brothers Bryce and Aaron Dessner, and the lyrics were written by husband and wife Matt Berninger and Carin Besser; the text of the completed songs, including individual track names, went onto the pages of Schmidt's play adaptation.

Another breakthrough came that same year, in 2016, when Schmidt "first heard Pete 'cold-read' the play aloud. I knew instantly that his innate deflective humor — protective, defensive, skeptical — and reflexive self-loathing and mistrust was dead right for the character of Cyrano.

"Pete knew Cyrano before he played him — and, he'd never read or seen any version of the piece before."

"Well, I wormed my way in there, didn't I?" laughs Dinklage, who is married to Schmidt. "Erica had been working on it for quite some time. I lingered on the periphery; then, when I heard the music that had been written I said, 'Can I do a reading?' But it's not like Erica wrote it for me; sometimes people think nepotism, with spouses, and this didn't start off that way at all.

“You often hear great music in a makeup trailer, and in the early days of [filming the television series] *Game of Thrones* I heard this song “Terrible Love” by The National. I knew I would love this band, and I ravenously consumed everything they had put out from that day on.”

Dinklage realized that his own instrument, namely his voice, would be elemental. “Fortunately, I have a similar baritone register as Matt,” he reflects. “He has one of the greatest voices in rock, and I found I could sing these tunes. My trick was not to imitate him, because when you’re in the shower you imitate your favorite singers a lot; I wanted to make the songs my own.”

Two years of theater workshops followed, with Schmidt directing participating actors including Dinklage and Haley Bennett in those settings as well as at Goodspeed.

Music may have been the entry point but Dinklage and Schmidt continued to work at quantifying Cyrano himself. She notes, “On stage, I left it to the audience’s assumptions — and Matt and Carin’s lyrics — to address the character’s insecurities without ever overtly addressing Peter’s size. He’s [played it] very raw and real, and not flouncy at all.”

After seeing the show in 2018, Wright phoned Schmidt “and said he wanted to make a film adaptation starring Peter and Haley, with him directing it and me writing the screenplay.

“I hadn’t worked in movies at all, and I didn’t think this would actually ever happen.” Yet the path from stage to screen would prove to be swifter than anticipated, in more ways than one.

Conversations with Wright continued, and Schmidt began working on the film script “between theater projects” which included another staging of her production; the movie development continued apace so that **Cyrano** would, as promised, be Wright’s next project as director.

Dinklage feels that “film is a director’s art form, and the ones that Joe has made have a romantic thread running through them; they’re cinematic, but he also puts a lot of the theatrical [element] into his movies. He fell in love with our show about love.

“All the letter-writing that is done in the story is basically no different than the texting that is done these days; everybody’s a Cyrano now, wanting to present themselves on the internet and on dating sites as a version of who they are. They read a profile and then meet the person and are disappointed; or, there’s no discovery if you know everything about a person from online. Those are the correlations between today and this piece, which is around hundreds of years later for a reason; it’s relevant because it deals with love, and loss. Whether you’re a teenager and it’s the most heartbreaking thing you have ever felt or think you will ever feel, or you’re older with whatever angle you’re coming to love from, everyone can understand.”

As Wright embedded himself more and more with the story’s love triangle, he deepened his own interpretation of the story. He notes, “I felt that I identified with all three of them and that [the

characters of] Christian and Cyrano are two sides of the same man, and that Roxanne is questing for something perfect.”

Schmidt adds, “Joe felt that, for the film version, Cyrano needed to talk about his size or the audience wouldn’t understand what he was insecure about; it’s now addressed overtly,” including when Cyrano’s friend and fellow soldier Le Bret refers to the stature as his “unique physique.”

By 2020, “we were really working on it in earnest,” says Schmidt. Given that one of the story’s eternal and universal themes is seizing the day because tomorrow is uncertain, the motivation became; if not now, when?

Wright reached out to core collaborators from the majority of his movies. These were the artisans with whom he had been through all iterations of challenges on previous films, from impossible-made-possible wartime sequences to last-minute actor replacements to full-on recalibrating of an entire production shooting concept.

“Joe phoned me,” remembers production designer Sarah Greenwood, whose prior collaborations with Wright have brought her multiple Academy Award nominations. “He said, ‘Let’s go to Italy and shoot **Cyrano**.’ Two years prior, I had shown him a picture of a location in Italy and he had said when we got the movie made then we would make it there.”

Also central to the plan to make the movie was having the stars of Schmidt’s stage production return; Dinklage would take on the iconic title role of Cyrano, opposite Bennett in the famous female role of Roxanne, on-screen.

In addition to the songs’ titles and lyrics being included in Schmidt’s screenplay — as they had been in her stage version’s text — the song score was made readily available for a listen to those who were considering participating. Newly composed for **Cyrano** by the Dessners with lyrics by Berninger and Besser, “Every Letter” was integrated as an original song to be sung on-screen by the lead characters.

“Anyone who heard the songs wanted to be part of the movie,” says producer Guy Heeley, another longtime creative collaborator of Wright’s.

While a few other projects with music were also planning to be up and running — movies and streaming/television programs — **Cyrano** would prove to be the only one convening a cast and crew for filming in Europe. “A band coming together from all over the world,” as Heeley references it with regard to the music component.

Wright and Bennett had been based with their family in the UK for the months since the COVID pandemic struck. Feeling strongly that he and his most trusted colleagues needed to be communicating not only over videoconferencing but also in person, Wright invited key

collaborators to the UK — while observing necessary safety, travel, and quarantine protocols for all concerned including family members.

So it was that cinematographer Seamus McGarvey, Oscar-nominated for his work on Wright's *Atonement* and *Anna Karenina*, gladly reunited with his longtime friend and colleague for "a very pleasurable time, to sit down over a cup of tea. We spent a week together solidly storyboarding the whole film and talking about each scene."

The "kitchen cabinet" discussions allowed Wright and McGarvey "to address the visuals of **Cyrano**. With Sarah, we talked about the color palette of the film; the genesis of our movies together comes from Joe's collaboration with Sarah."

Greenwood was also a houseguest, and "the first music [from the project] I heard was sung by Haley. It was breathtaking."

Working Title Films, Europe's leading film production company, has made multiple movies with Wright beginning with his first feature, 2005's multi-Academy Award-nominated *Pride & Prejudice*. Working Title producers Tim Bevan and Eric Fellner, themselves Academy Award-nominated for Wright's *Atonement* and *Darkest Hour*, were steadfast in supporting their director's vision for **Cyrano** — including his drive to make the movie that very fall; Fellner found himself making extended-travel plans for the first time in months.

Aaron and Brenda Gilbert's Bron Studios, a top financier of movies and backer of filmmakers, has for a decade strengthened alliances with the major studios in Hollywood. Most recently, Bron has teamed on project after project with the resurgent MGM; **Cyrano** could be counted on to be among the most ambitious of these.

Coming into play, and inspiring all concerned, was MGM's storied history as a haven for classic movies; **Cyrano** would now be embodying and resuming a great big-screen tradition, that of MGM movies where romance was expressed through both song and scope. Back in 1974, MGM's musical-numbers compilation film *That's Entertainment!* had announced itself with the advertising line "Boy. Do we need it now." — which became an apt sentiment for the converging **Cyrano** collective. So it was that MGM Motion Picture Group chairman Michael De Luca and president Pamela Abdy committed to make **Cyrano**, and the studio's recently hired president of physical production Michele Imperato became a key point person in coordinating the Italy shoot with Heeley and Working Title.

Italy, initially one of the countries hardest-hit by the pandemic, had instituted testing and visitor policies that were helping it ably emerge from a traumatic period. Even so, travelers around Italy were largely themselves from elsewhere in Italy; the arrival of the **Cyrano** troupe would send a message beyond Italy — and to the global film industry — that recovery with moviemaking was not only possible but also feasible.

On-camera musical director Mark Aspinall reflects, “My entire background is in theater, and that entire industry had come to a standstill. After months working in my home studio, when I was given the opportunity to go work with people again...I felt really lucky.”

As the October 2020 start date of filming was solidified, Heeley notes that “we all wore masks; we all were doing COVID testing. We were a group of 350 Italian, British, American, Belgian, Danish, French, German, Canadian, and Australian crew and cast. I’m proud at how we all came together to tell this story.

“Joe Wright was leading us through an extraordinary journey.”

The de Bergerac Line

Peter Dinklage, one of this generation’s favorite actors and the entertainment industry’s favored actors, incarnates an iconic character on the big screen with **Cyrano** after having performed the role in stage productions adapted and directed by the movie’s screenwriter Erica Schmidt. In taking first chair with the new movie, he takes his place among a lineage of Cyrano de Bergerac that dates back nearly 400 years in principle and nearly 125 years in practice — beginning, as did Dinklage’s exploration of the character, with live theater.

Edmond Rostand’s Cyrano de Bergerac, announced as “A Heroic Comedy in Five Acts,” was first staged in late 1897 and swiftly published in 1898; it is set over 200 years earlier, in the mid-17th century, and takes at least some inspiration from a real-life French writer named [Savinien de] Cyrano de Bergerac.

Yet for Rostand (1868-1918), the work was of its time in that he dedicated it to one of the era’s premier actors, Benoît-Constant Coquelin (1841-1909). The French actor starred onstage as Cyrano in Paris, London, and the U.S. — including on Broadway in New York City alongside another of the era’s premier thespians, Sarah Bernhardt, as Cyrano’s adored Roxanne. Before his death, Coquelin reportedly became the first on-screen Cyrano; he performed one scene from the play that was filmed and could be projected with a separate phonograph sound recording as accompaniment. Rostand’s dedication to Coquelin reads, “It was to the soul of Cyrano that I intended to dedicate this poem. But since that soul has been reborn in you, Coquelin, it is to you that I dedicate it.”

Schmidt admires how Rostand was “deliberately trying for a nostalgic romanticism harkening back to when France was, in his opinion, at its best. There’s a beautiful escapism about that.”

In the 100-plus years since the play debuted, screenwriters and playwrights have written adaptations, updates, homages, and borrowings of the Cyrano character — or sometimes concentrating on the core concept of giving voice to another person in the name of true love.

Dating back to the Rostand era, countless actors have trod the boards as Cyrano onstage; and a host of actors have played Cyrano in television and film productions. Prominent among the latter was Gérard Depardieu, who received an Academy Award nomination as Best Actor for *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1990), directed by Jean-Paul Rappeneau.

But it was midway through the 20th century when one actor set the benchmark for Cyrano interpretations; José Ferrer starred on Broadway in 1946-1947 in the play, which he also produced, winning a Tony Award for his performance. He reprised the role for a television broadcast, and in a Broadway revival which he also directed; and then effected a hat trick by starring in the 1950 film version, produced by Stanley Kramer and directed by Michael Gordon. Ferrer's performance in the movie brought him the Academy Award for Best Actor.

Dinklage now follows a comparable path to Ferrer by deepening his own interpretation, of the life force that is Cyrano, from the live stage in to the movie theater. He is also in good (stage) company with another celebrated actor who — like Dinklage — performed the role with a musical component; the 1973 stage production *Cyrano*, which shares the Rostand source material but not any music or songs with Schmidt's productions, brought star Christopher Plummer the Tony Award for Best Actor.

Bashir Salahuddin, who acts in ***Cyrano*** as Cyrano's friend and fellow soldier Le Bret, feels that Dinklage's interpretation of Cyrano "is going to blow the audience away. People think they know everything he has in his arsenal, but they will be surprised."

Cinematographer Seamus McGarvey states, "Cyrano is heroic. He is a great intellect and a wordsmith. Peter Dinklage has that aura about him; he is a fantastic presence."

Director Joe Wright says, "Pete can play vulnerability, but on ***Cyrano*** it was about getting him to a place where he felt comfortable in the more bravado moments.

"It was a great honor to support him through the process of starring as a romantic lead."

Autumn and After in Italy

The location in Italy that production designer Sarah Greenwood had touted to director Joe Wright back in 2018 was the town of Noto, on the island of Sicily in the south of Italy. She remembers, "I was in Sicily scouting for a different job and we went to Noto for its cannoli, which had come recommended. The cannoli was wonderful, and here was this amazing baroque place.

"In Noto, when the sun sets, you've got this absolutely stunning pink hue. It's as if you're in a fantasy town, yet it's completely real and beautiful."

Set decorator Katie Spencer, whose multiple Academy Award nominations have all been in tandem with Greenwood for their work together, was on board from the first to reunite with her for Wright. Acclimating herself to the setting(s), Spencer found that “with a place as exquisite as Noto, you have to know when not to put too much into it; sometimes you don’t put anything in at all.

“All the work that we’ve done together for Joe shows depth and detail — and the openness to be collaborative, which is always the experience with Sarah.”

Greenwood muses, “Because we have a shorthand and trust together, we’re always pushing ourselves and our team — and our budget — beyond the limits.”

As the production began prep work in and around Noto, Spencer found that “we all fell in love with Sicily and its rawness, its splendor. Because of the global pandemic, the streets were emptied and I felt like we were in the Italy of years ago.

“A lot of people said, ‘You’re absolutely mad to do this;’ a movie with music and fight sequences, in the time of COVID.”

Producer Guy Heeley emphasizes, “We protected each other from COVID. That dominated the production process from start to finish in terms of testing, and of when and how people could travel.”

At the same time, life had gone on for the Noto residents who sheltered in place and now welcomed the cast and crew. “Businesses and restaurants were closed — but it seemed important to the people here to know their neighbors, to know everybody in their neighborhood,” remarks Bashir Salahuddin, who plays King’s Guard captain Le Bret. Upon arrival, he was immediately struck by “the cobblestoned alleyways and the streets that are so narrow; I felt we should all be on Vespa bikes, but somehow our transportation team got trucks around...

“The ancient architecture is beautiful. I would be in a room and realize that somebody else had been there before, 200 or 300 years ago, looking at the same stonework.”

Director of photography Seamus McGarvey adds that “the color of the stones in Noto was part of how the locations were guiding us. I live in Italy, so it was a joy to be working in this beautiful country.

“Joe is such a visual director, so we always have a great collaboration. The first conversations we have are very much a democracy of ideas; there is communication from the very outset among all the departments.”

Ideas were exchanged among Wright, McGarvey, Greenwood and Spencer — and these longtime collaborators' new creative partners; Academy Award-winning makeup designer Alessandro Bertolazzi (of *Suicide Squad*), hair designer Siân Miller (*Eternals*), and Academy Award-nominated costume designer Massimo Cantini Parrini (*Pinocchio*) all joined the filmmaking collective. "These are discussions that happen together about the time periods of the movie, and the visuals and textures," says McGarvey. "Sicily led Massimo and Sarah into particular hues, and certainly affected my photography as well."

Miller remembers being "absolutely thrilled when I got the call to do **Cyrano**. To me, Joe Wright is a great director and somebody who I have always admired. I loved Erica Schmidt's script; her concept of putting this famous poetic story into a context with music and songs was very exciting — and it's all about what love means."

Comparably, Bertolazzi was struck how "it's a story of love without boundaries; after I read the script I was even more enthusiastic about the project.

"I found great chemistry on **Cyrano**. Massimo's work is stunning. It's a big thing being in a place like Noto, where it seems like you've traveled into the past; that inspired and influenced my work on this film."

Unit production manager Guido Cerasuolo states, "Sarah Greenwood's idea for Noto to be at the center of the filming meant that making a movie with music there would be challenging. What was unique was, Joe Wright asked that we try to work off the usual track and go for extraordinary places that offered something; we know that the story is a masterpiece, but Joe wanted it to feel fresh.

"Within a week, we had found maybe 90 percent of the locations that you will see in the movie. The people of Noto, and its mayor, gave us all the necessary flexibility." Additionally, many a Noto resident found work on **Cyrano** as an extra.

Another Noto resident found shelter — with screenwriter Erica Schmidt and lead actor Peter Dinklage, who "adopted a homeless puppy that was a month old and living under a bush on our road [where we were staying]," says Schmidt. After getting the dog clinical care the couple named her Roxanne (after the story's main female character) and, after production was completed, brought her back home to the U.S. to live with other stray dogs they have taken in.

Other natural resources of Noto ranged from edifices to sunlight. The 18th-century Palazzo Castelluccio, now owned and restored by filmmaker Jean-Louis Remilleux, offered "the right combination of home and palace," says Cerasuolo. "The restoration was done with personal taste, something that other palaces do not have any more because either they haven't been restored or they have been restored more like a hotel or museum."

“Jean-Louis allowed us in, and that was where we filmed Roxanne [played by Haley Bennett] at home in her apartment,” notes Greenwood.

Even when a nearby town beckoned with what appeared to be an ideal street for Roxanne’s residence, the avenue of Trigona in Noto was ready for its close-ups.

The one no-go was, ironically, a pre-existing theater space. Greenwood explains, “There is a very beautiful venue in Noto that is based on an 18th-century theater — built a century later — but it felt too constraining; Joe didn’t feel it could get raucous enough!”

Wright elaborates, “What I was desperate to get was the sense of the joy of a large group of people being together in a shared experience; I missed it, and I knew we all missed it.”

Bennett reveals, “Our production was innovative by putting together basically a theater company. This was not only being concerned about COVID, or being clever about costs; like a theater troupe does, you use the same background performers singing and dancing in different scenes.”

The on-screen theater was built open-air from the ground up in a local courtyard, and the sequence was filmed in November. The production named the venue The Nicolaci, in honor of a local family.

Other Noto landmarks that did make it into **Cyrano** included the nearly 300-year-old San Francesco cathedral, which is the Church of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Not far from Noto is Siracusa; the English translation of the latter is Syracuse, which centuries later became the name of a city in New York State. Siracusa has a landmark fort, Castello Maniace — which translates to Maniace Castle — that became the **Cyrano** garrison where soldiers of the King’s Guard bunk and train. Greenwood notes, “It has been there since the 10th century and the last embellishments were probably Napoleonic-era. It has grandeur and weightiness; there is still that beautiful color of the stone in Noto, but there it presents a different mood.”

Although not entirely shot in sequence from scene to scene, **Cyrano** was filmed with its three distinct settings self-contained in both the shooting and storytelling order. The 11-week shooting schedule was mapped out to shift from Noto into other areas of Sicily; the garrison is the first of several locations that cinematically dramatizes the progression of the main characters in the story. “This becomes a very dramatic contrast,” comments Cerasuolo. “We go from the baroque and golden main part of the movie to a darker place later.”

The concept was for the color scheme to have faded to black, once wartime dispatches the characters onto a No-Man’s-Land battlefield. The production decamped to Mount Etna, Sicily’s very own active volcano, and its perimeter. Spencer marvels, “Mount Etna is raw and beautiful,

stark and stunning. We first built what we called the hero camp, Cyrano's regiment, right at the top; our fantastic dressing team pitched tents on lava rocks."

Having made it all the way to late 2020, the 300-strong cast and crew were by now well-prepared to film what would be the most physically intense scenes. "Bits of our hearts were in Sicily," says Greenwood. "It had been a tough shoot, but everybody was ready."

Nature, however, had other plans. "We got chased down the mountain," reports Greenwood. "Down from the top, to the middle, to the bottom."

The relentless pursuants? "So much rain and snow that we had to move our sets down the slopes," sighs producer Guy Heeley. While the volcano's ash-and-fumes component had been taken into account in pre-planning and indeed for the denuded color scheme, the excessive precipitation was wholly unexpected. "We were assured that you don't get snow up there, maybe [months later] in February, and surely it's going to all be fine," says Wright, still incredulous at the memory. "One week before we were about to start shooting, the heaviest snowfall in 20 years came down."

Heeley recounts, "We had such torrential rain that we had to move the unit to our weather-cover location, which was down in the valley. Then it froze so much — with a windchill of minus 15 degrees — that we couldn't access the road, so we had to get special trucks in to get the unit out. Sets were washed away, sets were covered in snow."

Not to be outshone, the volcano erupted and the snow was soon commingled with soot. Wright says, "It was almost as if Etna herself was trying to buck us off. But we prevailed!"

"Our dressing team had to dig everything out," says Spencer. "Tents has rotted, some things were gone. The camp had to be re-done further down — although we were still high up — and this was while making your own paths to even get in there, forging the way to shoot."

Greenwood notes, "In our eyes, we had such a strong statement with the visual of the black for the camp and the battlefield. The concept of the black had to turn to white and then to gray, and Joe and Seamus had to embrace it."

"We ran with it," adds McGarvey. "The low winter light was just extraordinary, where normally it can be unforgiving."

Unprecedented weather notwithstanding, actor Kelvin Harrison Jr. (cast as Christian) states that "Mount Etna was the best [location] of the shoot for me, with its views — and our snowball fights, where I was able to work on my throw...We were all living and dining together; it truly felt like an adventure."

“Our extras were amazing through all of it,” states Heeley. “And our actors played — and sang — their scenes incredibly. As we gathered on the final day there, we felt blessed.”

“It’s going to be so moving,” says Spencer of the wartime sequences.

Setting the Scenes

“Everyone loves a Joe Wright period piece,” offers actor Kelvin Harrison Jr., who plays Christian in **Cyrano**. As on past movies, however, the director had early on honed in on what would lift and spark his collaborators past the constraints of “a period film.”

Hair designer Siân Miller reports that Wright “wanted **Cyrano** to have a ‘yesteryear’ quality so it wasn’t absolutely pinned to a certain date. This is not a documentary. We were going to cherry-pick from different eras, drawing inspiration from a wider spectrum.”

This approach would not be unlike how Edmond Rostand’s original play, while written and first staged at the end of the 19th century, was set over 200 years prior and as such idealized the past.

Set decorator Katie Spencer elaborates, “On **Cyrano** we took certain elements and pushing them a bit. We don’t say where we are [geographically, in the story], or the particular date.”

“An anachronistic quality?” ponders production designer Sarah Greenwood, before re-assessing that “as the movie came to life, it was *synchronistic*.”

Cinematographer Seamus McGarvey notes that the director “filters all the ideas that we come up with to make it undeniably a Joe Wright film.”

Spencer notes, “Research, for me, means delving into the characters. There are books for ‘the right chair’ or ‘the right blouse,’ and those are great to read too. We also have to be like magpies; ‘oh, that doesn’t work there but will be good at some point’ when you pull from things you’ve seen before.

“What’s wonderful about **Cyrano** was how much we were able to use them! Ages ago, I was in the National Coach Museum in Lisbon and I thought, ‘I’ve never seen a carriage like that.’ We managed to adapt one of those for this movie.”

Going beyond her overview of the entire ensemble in her capacity as hair designer Miller personally tended, as hair stylist, to all sides of the main love triangle; Peter Dinklage, Haley Bennett, and Harrison. Taking the overarching view, she explains that “Joe spoke to me about the artist [Jean-] Antoine Watteau, and how his [18th-century] works were a big inspiration for the look and feel of characters.”

Inspiration continued to come from diverse eras and creations. One day on location, stunt coordinator Franco Salamon (from MGM's James Bond movies) was coordinating a dancing couple in tandem with choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's (on his third film with Wright) steps. Salamon recalls, "One of the two men had to [be rigged to] fly with my wiring. Joe told me that he would like to try to replicate a painting by [20th-century artist Marc] Chagall. I looked up the painting, got excited because I had never tried this before, and we did it!"

Makeup designer Alessandro Bertolazzi opines, "We tried to do more of the *possible* reality. In many movies there is contamination with 'the reality' of a period; it can't be exact. If you're looking for visuals on the 18th century, you have paintings; it's not fake, but, does the painting represent the reality of that time?"

"Stanley Kubrick's film *Barry Lyndon* did a great job, and that became my biggest inspiration for **Cyrano**. Wearing makeup and a wig was a status symbol, even when in the house, for men. For the bourgeoisie, the aristocrats, white on the face — like plaster — was prevalent, possibly to hide skin problems." So it is that the audience first encounters the rich and arrogant Duke De Guiche, played by Ben Mendelsohn, presenting this visage to Roxanne in particular and society as a whole.

While the living space for Roxanne was already set within the Palazzo Castelluccio, Greenwood and Spencer saw potential for visual and thematic embellishments. "From the house's restoration, one room had this beautiful blue silk on its walls," remembers Greenwood. "We extended that same woven silk into other rooms. Katie made the best bed in the world for Roxanne — based on a fairy tale!"

Spencer confirms, "It's done so it's as if Roxanne is in The Princess and the Pea; this ginormous bed has eight or nine mattresses. We had a carved, sculpted headboard which we then flossed blue; with the woven silk, Roxanne is in a completely enveloping environment that she comes out of like a butterfly. Haley [who plays Roxanne] does exquisite movements; she thought the bedroom should look like a teenager's messy room, so we kept it chaotic with clothes everywhere."

Greenwood notes, "The room remains very beautiful but where once her family had money and the whole palazzo, now she has ended up with one apartment [within it]."

Spencer elaborates, "Roxanne's desk actually belonged to Palazzo Castelluccio, and it is a unique and beautiful baroque desk. The idea is that Roxanne's parents have died and she has to sell off furniture; to pay the bills, she will sell another chair — but she loves writing and reading, so the desk remains. If I could have taken one piece home from **Cyrano** I'd probably have taken that desk."

Aside from its affecting characters, Cyrano de Bergerac is best-known for its swooning yet farcical central sequence set on and near Roxanne's balcony. "Like the one in Romeo and Juliet, it has iconic status," says Greenwood. "But we didn't want an over-romanticized view of it; although Palazzo Castelluccio is grand, we show how the balcony is at a back entrance onto a courtyard. Joe felt the arch there worked brilliantly, as he had ideas for how the scene would play."

Dinklage offers, "The balcony scene has to manifest almost screwball comedy, with Cyrano and Christian scrambling as it's 'bromantic' between them — to offset the unabashed romanticism."

"It's one of the most famous scenes in world theater, so I felt a certain amount of pressure to get that one right," Wright remembers.

Accordingly, the shooting schedule was planned to allow two full days for its filming. Harrison quips, "Joe told us that it was the most famous scene — every day...We didn't try to force it one way or the other; we would give the physical comedy, then look at the realistic aspect with Roxanne.

"My favorite moments were watching Peter lose himself in the poetry and in Cyrano's love for Roxanne; the longing in his eyes...he was locked in, and it crushed me."

Bennett notes, "It's an exciting scene for an actor to play, finding the love and the humor and the pain. Cyrano and Christian are deceiving Roxanne, but is she hearing what she wants to hear and believing what she wants to believe?"

Wright confirms, "I wanted to dig into the subtext of what's going on within it. But I would hope that the audience never feels the heavy lifting."

This crucial setting became "not so much of a [set] dress, more of a build," recalls Spencer. "New railings were built. What was important was to have Roxanne on it with nothing [else] there; we did put on some small plants and within them placed very delicate wildflowers and rosemary. We also place rosemary with her later in the story."

The latter was but one example of how the story's progression, and its principals' deeply personal trajectories, were kept in mind by the filmmakers for how the actors would live in not only the moment but also the settings. "It was about tying in things from one set to another set, through the characters and their journey," explains Spencer.

Greenwood adds, "The environments that people live in tell a story very quickly."

Storytelling is central to the story in that the letter-writing by Cyrano increases the emotional as well as the fateful stakes for the characters and for the audience. Spencer relays, "Haley Bennett gave us inspiration; she said that when Roxanne receives a letter it's like going on a date. With

our wonderful graphics department, we made what we called 'unfolding love letters,' bearing in mind what Haley or Peter could do with them.

"When Cyrano is writing his first letters for Christian [to Roxanne], it's at his desk at the garrison. We knew there had to be distinguishing detail; what sort of quills would he have? We made him a black raven quill, because, he's the man; and we made special pencils and a traveling kit. At the garrison, his desk is precise. Then, up on the mountain [battlefield], he has very little. Later, he is sitting on the floor and we wanted it to feel that all he has is the paper he spends his money on — a big change from when we first met him."

Early on in the story, the looming spectre of deployment for the King's Guard regiment is compartmentalized by several of the characters; the regiment's status and pride is present throughout the region and acknowledged by the populace. Baker/poet Ragueneau (played by Peter Wight) supports the troops, represented in his establishment with gingerbread soldiers. Spencer notes, "We made these to look like our actors playing the military, with the same 'uniform.' We did it ourselves, with all that dough, and it took a while to get right; some of them at the beginning looked a bit like the Michelin Man..."

"After seeing that through there we continued baking for the theater, where there is also a beer cart, which we did with tin and put lights around, and a whole concession of oranges" which Bennett avails herself of.

As for the theater itself, Spencer marvels that "Sarah built an amazing set. We put in a follow spot [as lighting in the theater]; even though a follow spot technically would not be around, that was part of our not being too bound up by 'normal period.' I also loved having chandeliers going up and down, and the painting on the benches."

Greenwood adds that "with the work our phenomenal painters in Italy did, the framework looks like it has mouldings but it is actually flat. Joe wanted people all over it, and called it a climbing frame."

Whether climbing or fighting, preparedness was all for Salamon and his stunt team. "We had to always be ready for the moment," he states. "The stuntmen trained a lot, in a gym and on my own farm where we would adjust and invent. I've never done a movie like this; dancing, fencing, fighting, music — all together!"

Harrison's note from Wright was that when in action his character of Christian "not be as refined as Cyrano; he's more of a fighter than a fencer." Even so, months of fencing training for the actor were necessary, including continuing drills and routines with a fencing coach once production had begun.

By contrast, the mandate for Cyrano was relayed by Salamon as being "for the fight scenes, we wanted the sensation that he is a man without fear and absolutely exemplary with a sword.

Peter is a good fencer; he's so powerful. We tried to do something different, and I'm happy with the results."

Cyrano buckles and swashes with zeal through what Salamon calls "the 10-man fight that is so complicated, everyone had to jump precisely — and fall within a 160-centimeter space so we can see the fight choreography." The sequence places a thrusting and parrying Dinklage front and center for an extended, no-cuts take that recalls an action scene Wright pulled off in *Hanna* — with the added challenges of navigating swords and cobblestones.

On **Cyrano**, the set piece promised something of a rush for the lead character and actor and also the director. For, as Wright enthuses, "I love swashbuckling movies like *The Three Musketeers*; they have always appealed to my imagination."

Dinklage muses, "As an audience member, I adore seeing those uninterrupted takes. As an actor, being a part of one allows you more control to live through an experience; it's so physical, and it's not something that can 'clean up later' [in editing]."

Although the scene has been central to the *Cyrano* narrative since the original play, this rendition and expansion necessitated more pre-planning than prior iterations. Dinklage went into training in the UK well before continuing preparation in Sicily "because you have to get it down without even thinking — like muscle memory. I would go to sleep at night thinking about the entire sequence in my head. On the day [of shooting], you can't be learning it.

"But this was great fun, and with our stunt guys doing their work nobody got hurt. We shot all night and did it probably about 15 times; we stopped when the sun rose."

"It's a great slingshot into the rest of the movie," notes McGarvey. As director of photography, he strove to keep the camera "in a kind of dance around *Cyrano*. The impetus and momentum within his character spin the camera.

"The way we photograph *Cyrano*, particularly for his first appearance in the theater, is keeping the camera low and he comes up in the frame. He has heroic stature, and we convey that with the angles."

Actor Bashir Salahuddin, who plays soldier captain Le Bret, found that "the shooting style was very fluid, and the camera had a lot of freedom. There was a lot of movement; we weren't on a soundstage, we were somewhere that you feel part of."

As ever, McGarvey's rapport with Wright was simpatico. The cinematographer offers, "Joe is so adroit and adept with the camera because the rhythm of the film is in his head."

McGarvey elaborates that the story progression, carefully cultivated with the other departments to enhance the actors' performances, led he and Wright to decide that "the first part of **Cyrano**

would be shot so as to diffuse the image, and so we went to an Old Faithful that we have used a few times before: Christian Dior #10 Denier stockings. These work very well when we're shooting large format with Leica lenses; those lenses are inherently very sharp, so we are taking the edge off to create more romance.

"Then, when we get to war everything is crisp and contrasting; we shoot the lenses for what they are. Near the end of the movie, we add back just a little bit of diffusion to carry us forward and there is a slightly different approach to the camera; while the rest of the film saw fluidity, now things are more anchored."

Film editor Valerio Bonelli, on his fourth consecutive project with Wright, worked with the director to slow the rhythm of select scenes to bring the audience closer to the characters' deepest contemplations; whether with spoken or sung dialogue, moments in-between are vital.

Spencer feels that **Cyrano** "has come together in every way, from the camera work to the costumes to the design to the direction and the acting."

Harrison beams, "Our movie has date-night vibes: musical numbers, cool fights, beautiful gowns, letters falling from the sky, sexiness, and songs that will get stuck in your head!"

Voices in Words and Music

The troupe of actors who converged to make **Cyrano** came for what promised to be a unique and joyful interpretation of a classic work, as well as a robust and inclusive affirmation of the story's universal resonance.

Whether having performed the Edmond Rostand play prior or having been part of Erica Schmidt's stage adaptations, cast members had to be open to the completely new experience of retelling the enduring story as a movie with music.

The longest history with the material belonged to actor Bashir Salahuddin, who was already well-acquainted with the character he is portraying. "Le Bret was the first part I ever had lines with," he reveals. "When I started acting, I had his part in our high school play. Getting the opportunity to play Le Bret in **Cyrano** was, perhaps, divine intervention."

Actors who have a history with director Joe Wright were also invited to join the cast on location in Italy. Peter Wight had been in Wright's breakout first feature, *Pride & Prejudice*; and Ben Mendelsohn had costarred in the director's biggest box office hit, *Darkest Hour*. Going back farther was Mark Benton; two decades prior, he had been in the UK miniseries *Nature Boy*, directed by Wright. Benton recounts, "Joe called, and I was really excited to hear from him. He said, 'Would you like to play Montfleury?' I'd have said yes even without knowing the part."

With Peter Dinklage and Haley Bennett having performed together in Schmidt's theater workshops and then on stage as, respectively, Cyrano and Roxanne, they possessed what Salahuddin saw as "a sharpened approach to the material, strengthened by virtue of having done it already."

Bennett comments that "Cyrano de Bergerac can be read as an allegory about inner and outer beauty; the story is about how we all have something, whether physical or not, that we are afraid makes us unlovable.

"In her interpretation, Erica has looked at Roxanne in way where Roxanne feels like a real individual; **Cyrano** feels quite modern in that Roxanne doesn't want to just marry or get pretty letters that woo her."

Ultimately, Bennett sought to carry forward the characterization so that her "Roxanne has personality unlike other ones, and plays an interesting counterpoint to Pete's Cyrano. They're two characters who are both hungry for challenges, to go against the grain and be anti-establishment. So you want these two to come together, and to love each other."

Salahuddin marvels, "Haley has a real screen presence, and with her superb nuances the audience is going to fall in love with Roxanne and understand why Cyrano loves her; Roxanne is fierce and is not afraid, and Le Bret is rooting for Cyrano to have the relationship with her."

Wright and Bennett built on how Schmidt's scripting had layered in more agency for the character of Roxanne than in previous versions. Schmidt had advanced the idea that Cyrano and Roxanne "are both deceiving themselves, as well as each other." They now honed in on the twinned question of, as Wright poses it, "is she aware that Cyrano is in love with her, and of her own feelings towards Cyrano?"

Bennett confirms, "For the film, Joe wanted to experiment with the idea — very subtly — that perhaps Roxanne does know Cyrano loves her, but she maybe doesn't want to ruin their friendship.

"Roxanne knows she doesn't want to marry the Duke De Guiche because he looks at her as an object; she doesn't want to follow, and be behind, a man but rather be an equal."

Wright adds, "I felt that we should respect Roxanne's intelligence, and that she have a wit to her. This was exciting to us.

"It was about making sure that Roxanne had choices and that she be seen to be making choices, thereby empowering her — and getting the audience to understand this."

Schmidt notes that, traditionally, audiences and creative talents alike "have struggled with the idea that Roxanne can't be smart if she doesn't see the truth about the letters. But she has

desires, including to believe in this narrative that she has crafted in her own head. I think you have that on the one hand and on the other that she is a strong woman — and that both things are possible at the same time.”

A crucial sequence where Roxanne gives voice to anticipating and attempting to counter the imminent arrival of the Duke De Guiche shows “the duality of her choices,” notes Bennett. “I loved playing that scene; it’s very alive, as Roxanne has to think on her feet.”

While Roxanne may be experiencing “poverty — and as an orphaned woman in that era, she is at the mercy of patriarchal forces — she has expression and creativity; she wants to be an author, not only in writing but of her life. Joe, Erica, and I did not want this Roxanne to be a one-dimensional romantic ideal,” offers Bennett.

Schmidt remarks, “Roxanne almost resents the words ‘I love you’ because it has been said so many times [to her]; she wants it said in a different way.”

Cyrano carries forth the original play’s introduction of Cyrano being heard before he is seen, and Dinklage took it from there with regard to the character’s voice leading into the characterization as a whole. The actor comments that the character’s gift of gab is delivered “with a basso voice as an instrument and a weapon, both those things and then some. It’s something that Cyrano hides behind; his voice, and his wit.”

“He’s an intelligent, charismatic, witty man; men are jealous of him and women adore him. The person that has a problem with Cyrano is — himself, and that’s the heart of the piece. In **Cyrano**, the songs show the true emotions of what the characters are feeling.”

Dinklage’s status as Bennett’s scene partner — past and present — led the two actors to refine their characters’ delicate balancing act further during production. Bennett reveals, “Something that sparked for me was Cyrano and Roxanne’s communication by what’s in between the words and how they could have a tactility, expressing so much in a gesture like me taking his hand. Or when I look away, trying to evade his stare. Or for him to turn his back to me, and what his face was saying. There is an unspoken tension with their friendship and their potential love — if they were both to allow it to happen.”

Since Cyrano and Roxanne themselves have a pre-existing history together before the story progresses, “I was so glad that Haley and I were able to do the theater piece before doing the film,” comments Dinklage. “We knew each other; that’s always so helpful and inherently makes everything easier, which is why people work with the same directors again or the same actors. You know the rhythms of the other person, like a dance partner.

“Since we knew the piece, we knew what would make a scene better for the both of us. Yet when it came time to film, things would be different; in close-ups, you can do a lot *less*. Sometimes Joe would fill scenes, that were originally written for just Haley and I, with extras.

For his part, Salahuddin drew on memories beyond those of earlier playing Le Bret. He reflects, "I had a friend who, like Cyrano, was somebody effervescent and wonderful but who — in some areas — had self-doubt; I was able to relate very strongly to where my character is friends with someone who is incredible and world-beating but is also afraid of being judged."

Of his part, captain of the King's Guard, Salahuddin sees the character as "the kind of person who people divulge their secrets to, because he's good to talk to with a sense of humor. But Le Bret is strict with his troops because he has seen death and knows what it takes to keep soldiers alive. He is best friends with Cyrano, and in his own way Le Bret himself probably has some outsider sentiments; they have been through war together and have a friendship forged by shared insights. Cyrano is more of a rebel and has earned that ability because he is superior, particularly when it comes to soldiering; Le Bret understands this, and Cyrano knows he does, so they can talk to each other truthfully.

"I had done a couple of military-themed films before **Cyrano**; and in my life, I've been in situations where I'm the point person in a conflict and have to make the tough decisions. So these are shoes that I have walked in."

In off-camera conversations, Dinklage and Salahuddin found that they had both done theater dating back to high school. Salahuddin remarks, "When you do theater, you get to enjoy performances more closely than even the audience — and I had that experience on this movie. It was a treat for me to watch Peter work and to see what he brought every day to **Cyrano**."

"Joe was the captain of our ship; he is somebody who understands not only what lens you use on which scene but also what's needed to properly tie the characters into the scene."

Wright had determined the third part of the love triangle, the character of King's Guard recruit Christian, to be "not stupid; he is innocent, guileless. I feel like the role of Christian has been got wrong, and underestimated, quite a lot; I believe in Christian. When he is confronted with someone he is attracted to, he becomes completely inarticulate — and, boy, do I know that feeling!

"In Joe's film," comments Schmidt, "I really feel for Christian. To my mind, the character is a fighter and an honest young man; he just has no 'game' with the ladies — and when he sees a beautiful woman, he freezes up. I think that's true, and relatable.

"Christian is not 'book-smart.' He has been educated through the military, having had a military father. So, the idea of writing poetry and using big words? That's not his thing; that's Cyrano's and Roxanne's thing."

Wright muses, "I think all three characters are somehow in the wrong body and are fighting against the body they've been born into while being in love in one form or another; this was a journey to go on with Peter Dinklage, Haley Bennett, and Kelvin Harrison Jr."

Schmidt adds, "I'm hoping that people will understand where all three characters are coming from; all each of them wants is love."

Further bolstering the **Cyrano** triangle while deepening long-held perspectives on the individuals within it is Harrison as Christian. The actor is praised by Wright as having "an amazing, open heart — naturally, and very much on-screen. He is filled with wonder at the world, and that was exactly what I wanted brought to the role of Christian."

Harrison read the screenplay without knowing which part he was being considered for. Having read the original Rostand play he responded right away to Schmidt's adaptation, calling it "made for cinema, so that a younger generation can appreciate the Cyrano story instead of [seeing it as] 'another period piece'" and explore core questions such as "What fear prevents us from having the things we want the most, and believing we are deserving of love?"

Mindful of the story's continuing dramatic viability, he reflects, "I've lived life and made choices that have taught me not to live in fear when it comes to love and comes to the people you really care about; hiding is a scary thing that we have all done."

Harrison entered into extensive discussions with Wright before accepting the part, including "losing the language that Christian is 'ignorant, dumb,' and grounding Christian with the back story about his father. He has a beautiful innocence, as a new guy in town, and a trust that he gives everyone; but trust should be earned, and Christian loses his innocence. Outside factors play into his naivete; there are experiences that he hasn't yet had." To redouble inspiration for the latter qualities, Harrison and Wright re-watched a favorite film — the classic *Being There*, starring Peter Sellers, "to find, in a movie and performance we loved, different notes than just being 'a simple man.'"

So it is, elaborates Wright, that "Christian is not 'book-smart.' He has been educated through the military, having had a military father. The idea of writing poetry and using big words? Well, that's not his thing; that's Cyrano's and Roxanne's thing.

"Christian comes to this very cosmopolitan city and he is blown away; he wants to be involved in everything, to meet people. He is a gorgeous human being and he is also brave; the first thing he says [to Roxanne] is 'I love you,' and it's something he knows to be true. How wonderful he is shows not just in the relationship between him and Roxanne but, importantly, in the relationship between him and Cyrano; I think they come to love each other."

Harrison laughs, "Christian is always trying to play catch-up with Cyrano. It's very much an older brother/younger brother situation; 'I look up to you, I'll do anything!' Cyrano can poke fun at

things and hurt Christian's feelings, or Cyrano can compliment him and Christian lights up. One of my favorite moments in **Cyrano** is when Cyrano says 'I apologize' and Christian says 'Thank you.'

"Cyrano and Christian basically have what the other wants so there is some malice yet they do make a safe space, and I think Pete and I understood that together — and in real life he was such a support; to this day, Pete offers me a listening ear and advice."

Dinklage acknowledges, "I can't say enough about Kelvin; every scene I had with him was heartfelt. He's one of the kindest, gentlest souls — and an insanely talented actor."

"He has the hardest role, really; a lot of people misunderstand Christian on the page. But he's the character who gets at the truth of things."

"Kelvin is such a dynamic actor," adds Bennett. "From experience, I know that it's difficult to play parts which could be viewed as shallow. As Kelvin collaborated with Joe, where this character landed is different than past Christians; he comes so far, and he has the courage to allow himself to be seen."

Wright blocked out the staging of key scenes between Roxanne and Christian carefully; once actors Bennett and Harrison arrived on the set, varying gradations of playing a scene were explored in rehearsal discussions. "We would talk with Joe and decide what the temperature was, changing and evolving," remembers Harrison. "It was a matter of putting life into the blocking, and trying to understand the love being expressed in the scene; because both of them have secrets and needs, do either Roxanne or Christian ever really know what the other is thinking? Haley and I always did a bunch of takes."

Being familiar with the source material, Salahuddin was impressed with the project's (re)take on another character — the Duke De Guiche. "In other incarnations, the character is more cowardly and sniveling," he reflects. "Ben Mendelsohn is a damn delight as a human being, and a formidable actor; he brings complexity to this character. He's given a vibrant, unsettling performance so you can't easily place the character in the 'bad guy' category. Joe and Ben would confer on what the character is based in for the moment."

Although the Duke De Guiche is an antagonist towards Cyrano, early on in **Cyrano** the protagonist himself initiates a face-off with someone arguably even more vexing to him — an actor, Montfleury. For, Cyrano has taken personal and aesthetic offense at the state of Montfleury's art and therefore has no compunction about calling him out at the latter's place of work.

"Montfleury is popular, but arrogant," concedes Benton of his character. "He is very declamatory in his style of acting and — much like debates in theater now — Cyrano is advocating another way of acting. Before the movie begins Cyrano has written Montfleury a letter saying, stop acting

and get off the stage. Montfleury has ignored him, and what happens next is comedic but also interesting to me because it's hard on my character.

"As an actor, Peter gives you a lot to work with; off-camera, he's a real pleasure to get to know."

Benton was able to get a handle on Montfleury because clothes made the man. He reports, "Joe sent me a picture of what [costume designer] Massimo [Cantini Parrini] was going for, and they took it to another level; the hat and everything was handmade, and it's got bells on. I was laughing so hard when I put the outfit on; it's always great to dress up, and this helped me get into character.

"We filmed my first entrance around 3:00 in the morning, me walking on stage and there being all these extras in the theater. I found I had to bring it down a bit, because with Alessandro's [Bertolazzi] makeup even the smallest movement was massive!"

Movements both *en masse* and individualistic were closely monitored by Wright's trusted choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, particularly for the song sequences. While some are more solitary, embodying the private journeys that drive the story, others are charged with the crowds excitement that only movies can effect so memorably.

Schmidt found that one of her favorite sequences combined both Cherkaoui and Bertolazzi's aesthetics, on the Ragueneau's bakery set where "it was wonderful to see the crew covered in flour, watching the actors covered in flour rehearse 'the flour ballet!'"

Production designer Sarah Greenwood calls Cherkaoui "a genius. At the Siracusa garrison, we were in this tricky triangular space and he got amazing dancing going, bringing the space and the people in Massimo's costumes to life."

Bennett points out, "Within our troupe, Sidi Larbi would be choreographing 50 people playing 150 roles!"

On-camera musical director Mark Aspinall notes that while the ethos-setting song "Someone to Say" is being sung and/or reprised, "we see all these different couples dancing: young and old, heterosexual, homosexual, different races — just a celebration of love. What a wonderful way to tell this story."

As for how to *sing* the story, Wright wanted the song renditions to be done live; while this is not without precedent in cinematic history, neither is it commonplace. "I wanted to create a sense of intimacy with the songs," the director notes. The characters this way would be "not 'singing out' to an audience, but expressing themselves."

Aspinall clarifies that this entailed "playing the music live on the set and recording the actors singing live on the set; I'd [already] been on projects where we've done it.

“The usual way has been to record the actors singing in the studio [before filming]. But what you can find is, you get to the shoot and they have developed their characters and come to understand them a lot more; they’ve been with the other actors and there are different energies, so they might have new ideas and creativity. If it’s set in stone from the studio recording, then there is no room to create. What’s great about recording everything live is that there is freedom for actors to respond within that precise moment in time; with myself playing piano on set, I in turn am able to respond to what they provide. If the music needs to shape and stretch around what the actor wants to do, we’re able to.”

Ultimately, Aspinall feels that today’s “technology is able to ensure that whatever gets created in the moment is fully supported, and I feel that this yields much richer performances from the actors with warmth and romance. The great sound team on **Cyrano** worked very closely with all of us in the music department.”

Cueing up the more naturalistic singing and recording styles, the screenplay as written had not only stage directions for the characters’ activities accompanying the songs but also full titles and lyrics — including for the new original “Every Letter” — as a through progression within a given scene. “They’re hand in hand,” states Dinklage.

While music has always been a vital part of Wright’s movies, the on-camera element would now be considerable. Yet, as Wright remarks, “It felt like a very natural fit; I didn’t necessarily feel that I had to adapt myself to the musical form, which flowed out of what I was already doing. This was exciting to me; I didn’t really see any separation between the songs and the rest of the movie. I had always thought of the aural life of **Cyrano** as being one thing; dialogue, sound effects, and music create a deeper and broader aural world.”

Cinematographer Seamus McGarvey applauds the aesthetic that informed the presentation from its inception. He says, “I’ve worked on other projects where it’s, suddenly song-and-dance number, getting separated from the drama. On **Cyrano**, it’s totally integrated and so much the better.

“The songs and dances didn’t affect how we shot the movie. It’s fun to weave the dialogue into singing, since we’re recording live; this integrates it for the actors’ performances as well.”

Wright adds, “There’s no great announcement that a song is about to begin, or finish. I wanted a very fluid experience of dialogue leading into singing and then out again.”

Dinklage remarks that the approach was meant to counter the sensation of when “it feels so strange when you get to ‘the singing part.’ We’re embracing it. The songs are woven beautifully into the story; they are propelling the narrative forward, especially in **Cyrano**’s case because the lyrics rise up to meet him — or sometimes he rises up to meet them.”

Although already experienced in performing songs live on stage and for scenes in movies, Bennett went into training for the approach of singing live in a movie scene. She prepared for the shoot with “Mary Hammond, who is a world-class vocal coach. Mary taught me so much about how to sing with expression and sing with nuance.”

Once the cameras rolled, Bennett sensed that “this wasn’t necessarily about belting it out or hitting notes. There was a freedom to be natural and to express what the character was going through that moved the story forward; I found I could get my intentions for Roxanne across and be living what she was living. It was quite liberating.”

“It was like play, or pretend, and a fun way to tell this story,” enthuses Harrison, who already had experience singing on-screen. “The tricky part was putting our own personalities into the songs while also being true to the period and to the music that Aaron and Bryce Dessner wrote. But we went for it!”

Dinklage notes that, paradoxically, there were times when “you didn’t have to sing to the rafters; you could sing very quietly since the camera was right in front of you.”

Acknowledging the French lineage of *Cyrano de Bergerac* in citing the lead actor’s vocal prowess, stunt coordinator Franco Salamon intones, “Peter Dinklage is a good *chansonnier*.”

Musing on movies with music that had inspired him well before making **Cyrano**, Wright reveals that “one movie I am quite passionate about is [Oscar-winning director] Bob Fosse’s *Cabaret*, which I don’t think of as being ‘a musical,’ and I am also a big fan of Lars von Trier’s *Dancer in the Dark*.”

Since the songs in **Cyrano** all come from members of a Grammy Award-winning group that has made its musical mark in album after album, getting to hear these performed live was an added bonus for those on the production. Hair designer Siân Miller says, “Before I opened the script the front cover listed their involvement, and I was already a big fan of what they have done — thrilling songs.”

“I’ve always been a fan,” seconds makeup designer Alessandro Bertolazzi. “I would say that **Cyrano** is not so much a movie musical as it is a movie with music — beautiful music!”

“They were a joy to work with,” affirms Wright of his music and lyrics collaborators.

Salahuddin points out that “sometimes when people write music for important works of literature, there can be pomposity. But these songs are catchy; I think that people are going to walk out of the movie theater singing the **Cyrano** songs, that the music will stay with them.”

Set decorator Katie Spencer adds, “They were so good that people were listening to them *after* work. But hearing the music first and reading the script with the lyrics written down helped influence what we were doing.”

While the new original song “Every Letter” became the linchpin of a key sequence, not all of the songs from the stagings made it into the movie version. On those which did, Dinklage reports that composers “Bryce and Aaron Dessner made alterations.” Additionally, even once filming was underway Matt Berninger and Carin Besser put in all-nighters further refining the lyrics; one would work while the other slept, and vice versa. The extra effort further validated the **Cyrano** inspiration to have the songs played, performed, and recorded live.

“That felt great because we got to re-interpret the music for the film,” enthuses Bennett; dating back to workshop days, she had “been living with versions of the [pre-existing] songs for years, in workshop and then the stage production. For this ‘last pass,’ if you will, they knew my voice well!”

Schmidt states, “I think the songs sound fantastic in the film, more personal and richer than night to night on stage.”

Aspinall offers, “The music feels modern, organic, and new. The meeting of [the composers and lyricists’] aesthetic with the baroque costuming and settings juxtaposes two forces. When the characters sing, with the visuals of statues and steps in the widening shots of the architecture, you will feel the majesty.”

Benton comments, “The first time I heard the song score I thought that these beautiful songs take the story to another place, and take it up another level.”

Salahuddin muses that “every character sings about themselves — while they all have something to hide.”

Among all the songs, Aspinall feels that the new addition “‘Every Letter’ stands out. It is sensual, it fizzes, and it’s sexy. In the song, you hear the internal monologues of Cyrano, Roxanne, and Christian as they overlap and converge so we’re exploring them all further.”

Hard-pressed to pick a favorite highlight with music from among many, Harrison admits to being partial to the soldiers’ “Someone to Say” reprise, “a big number where I get carried.”

Dinklage’s favorite tracks in **Cyrano** are ones which “I don’t sing: ‘Close My Eyes’ — and Kelvin’s singing voice is extraordinary — and ‘Wherever I Fall.’ I was always so moved by those two.”

Of the latter, Schmidt recalls how she and lyricist Berninger had reviewed the “history of songs written for the military. I find ‘Wherever I Fall’ so beautiful.”

Set against the battlefield, “Wherever I Fall” is initially a song for three individuals. These three characters are not the main **Cyrano** trio but, rather, soldiers in the King’s Guard. The three men take turns with verses of the song before the song itself transports this section of the film, and the story as a whole, to a turning point. They are not unlike the venerable music-storytelling tradition of a chorus...

...while, in a cinematic tradition, each member of the trio can be recognized as a notable artist in their own right; the principal performers of “Wherever I Fall” are, respectively, Glen Hansard, Sam Amidon, and Scott Folan. With a **Cyrano** doff-of-the-hat to a previous movie with music, filmgoers will well remember Hansard from his starring role in the beloved movie *Once*, on which he shared the Academy Award for Best Original Song (“Falling Slowly”). Amidon, who has collaborated with Hansard prior, is a singer-musician. Folan, the junior member of this trio, is an actor and singer-songwriter.

Aspinall praises them as having “three amazing voices who make it feel so real when you see and hear them perform on our authentic location.

“It was a real honor, after six months of not being able to work with other performers and feel their energy, to stand with so many talented singers and hear dozens of people sing together.”

A Love Letter to Love

“I wasn’t expecting how much humor there would be in **Cyrano**,” notes set decorator Katie Spencer. “But just as segues into the songs are part of our piece, the humor comes out of what is an emotional story — one which can make you cry.”

“The dynamic among the triumvirate of our Cyrano, Roxanne, and Christian makes this a powerful and passionate story,” adds production designer Sarah Greenwood.

Actor Kelvin Harrison Jr. remarks, “We write about or talk about love, but actions speak louder than words. For where we’re at in the world right now, **Cyrano** has a message that is still true today.”

“**Cyrano** immerses audience members in a luscious and transporting experience, an epic love story,” says actress Haley Bennett. “It’s also a relatable story about people — with flaws — who want to be seen and be heard.”

Expounding on the latter impulses, screenwriter Erica Schmidt believes that “singing about love and heartache with big romantic yearning continues to feel relevant as the world continues to change.”

"Nothing's changed about love," reminds actor Peter Dinklage. "Love might get you into trouble, but it should always be your guide. **Cyrano** is trying to tell you that what is love but honesty, being honest with someone; you owe them that if you really love them."

Director Joe Wright hopes that audiences living in a world altered by a pandemic respond to his cast and crew's conveying the story's "joy, kindness and tenderness — and deep emotional truths that are handed down from generation to generation.

"I hope that the viewer will receive my love through this movie, and I tried to make a movie that is devoid of cynicism or irony. **Cyrano** is a love letter to love."

Cyrano

About the Cast

PETER DINKLAGE (Cyrano)

A constant force in the acting world, and one of the most consistently acclaimed actors of his generation, Peter Dinklage first redefined the conception of a leading man in the 2003 movie *The Station Agent*. Tom McCarthy's film world-premiered at the Sundance Film Festival where it won the Audience Award, and went on to become a breakout independent hit; Mr. Dinklage's performance alongside Patricia Clarkson and Bobby Cannavale brought him Screen Actors Guild and Independent Spirit Award nominations, among other accolades.

He memorably portrayed Tyrion Lannister in the global phenomenon *Game of Thrones*; starring in the epic television series from its 2011 premiere through its 2019 finale, he won four Emmy Awards and a Screen Actors Guild Award, among other honors.

He has also won a Screen Actors Guild Award, with his fellow actors from the ensemble, in the Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture category for Martin McDonagh's *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*.

Mr. Dinklage's other notable film work has included Reed Morano's *I Think We're Alone Now*, opposite Elle Fanning, which he also produced and which won the Special Jury Prize for Excellence in Filmmaking at the Sundance Film Festival; Tom DiCillo's cult classic *Living in Oblivion*; J Blakeson's *I Care A Lot*; the all-star *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, directed by Bryan Singer; both the UK and the U.S. iterations of the farce *Death at a Funeral*, directed respectively by Frank Oz and Neil LaBute; voiceover work as pirate Captain Gutt in the *Ice Age* universe; Sidney Lumet's *Find Me Guilty*; Jon Avnet's *Three Christs*; and Mark Palansky's *Rememory*, with Anton Yelchin.

He starred as actor Hervé Villechaize in, and executive-produced, Sacha Gervasi's telefilm *My Dinner with Hervé*; in the latter capacity he received Emmy, Producers Guild of America, and Critics Choice Awards nominations with the producing team. Mr. Dinklage and David Ginsberg founded the production company Estuary Films in 2016.

Mr. Dinklage's extensive theater credits include *A Month in the Country*, for the Classic Stage Company; *Things We Want*, with The New Group, for which he received a Drama League Award nomination; the world premiere of *Knickerbocker*, at the Williamstown Theatre Festival; and the title roles in *Richard III*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *Cyrano* (with the latter adapted and directed by **Cyrano** screenwriter Erica Schmidt, and starring Haley Bennett of **Cyrano**).

HALEY BENNETT (Roxanne)

Haley Bennett has established herself as one of the film industry's most dynamic actresses, with performances both natural and striking.

She was named Best Actress at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival for her startling performance, opposite Austin Stowell, in Carlo Mirabella-Davis' *Swallow*, which Ms. Bennett also executive-produced; the drama subsequently played the 2019 Deauville Film Festival, where it was awarded the Prix spécial. *Swallow* also received two Gotham Award nominations.

Previously, she starred in several Hollywood hits including *The Girl on the Train*, directed by Tate Taylor, with Emily Blunt; and Antoine Fuqua's *The Equalizer* and *The Magnificent Seven*, both alongside Denzel Washington.

After making a memorable movie debut starring and singing in Marc Lawrence's *Music and Lyrics*, opposite Drew Barrymore and Hugh Grant, Ms. Bennett's other films have included Ron Howard's *Hillbilly Elegy*, which was nominated for two Academy Awards; David Frankel's fan favorite *Marley & Me*; Jason Hall's *Thank You for Your Service*; Antonio Campos' *The Devil All the Time*; Gideon Raff's *The Red Sea Diving Resort*; Gregg Araki's *Kaboom*; Phedon Papamichael's *Arcadia Lost*; and Warren Beatty's *Rules Don't Apply*. Additionally, she has starred in a number of short films, including Shekhar Kapur's *Passage*, with Lily Cole and Julia Stiles, which screened at the Venice International Film Festival.

She had previously starred as Roxanne in *Cyrano* at the Goodspeed Opera House's Terris Theatre, which marked her stage debut; Erica Schmidt's production teamed Ms. Bennett with actor Peter Dinklage and writer Erica Schmidt, both of whom the actress was reunited with on ***Cyrano***.

KELVIN HARRISON Jr. (Christian)

Exploring a wide range of characterizations, Kelvin Harrison Jr. is capturing audiences' attention in a variety of mediums.

He was most recently seen portraying Chairman Fred Hampton in Aaron Sorkin's *The Trial of the Chicago 7*; Mr. Harrison shared with his fellow actors from the ensemble the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture, and the film was nominated for six Academy Awards including Best Picture. He will soon be seen opposite Emmy Award winner Zendaya, on the new season of Sam Levinson's groundbreaking television series *Euphoria*.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Mr. Harrison grew up surrounded by the great influence of music; his family of musicians encouraged him at an early age, and he learned to play the piano and trumpet. After studying jazz instrumental at the prestigious New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, he discovered a further passion for performing, and pursued it in local theater and musicals, before enrolling at the University of New Orleans to study film.

His subsequent career as actor has had key turning points. After small roles in films including Gavin Hood's *Ender's Game*, he costarred in Nate Parker's *The Birth of a Nation* and Dee Rees' *Mudbound*, which was nominated for four Academy Awards. He landed a starring role in Trey Edward Shults' *It Comes at Night*, for which Mr. Harrison receive a Gotham Award nomination as Breakthrough Actor. Then, at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival he was showcased in not one but three much-discussed independent features. These were Anthony Mandler's *Monster*, with Jennifer Hudson and Jeffrey Wright; Sam Levinson's *Assassination Nation*; and Reinaldo Marcus Green's *Monsters and Men*.

His films in recent years have also included Nijla Mumin's *Jinn*; Justin Kelly's *JT LeRoy*; Stella Meghie's *The Photograph*, with Issa Rae and LaKeith Stanfield; Nisha Ganatra's *The High Note*, opposite Dakota Johnson and Tracee Ellis Ross; the acclaimed *Waves*, reteaming him with writer/director Trey Edward Shults; and, alongside Naomi Watts, Alistair Banks Griffin's *The Wolf Hour* and Julius Onah's *Luce*. For his performance as the title character in the latter movie, Mr. Harrison received Independent Spirit and Black Reel Award nominations.

After portraying musician Teddy Greene on the first season of the television series *Godfather of Harlem*, Mr. Harrison is again combining his musical and acting talents by starring as an icon, B. B. King, in Baz Luhrmann's upcoming movie about Elvis Presley.

BEN MENDELSON (De Guiche)

Ben Mendelsohn is a critically acclaimed actor, and the winner of an Emmy Award for his performance in the streaming series *Bloodline*; over the course of three seasons, the show also brought him Golden Globe and Critics Choice Award nominations, among other kudos.

His performance in David Michôd's globally praised movie *Animal Kingdom*, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival, garnered Mr. Mendelsohn top film honors in his native Australia: the AFI Award and the IF Award, both for Best Actor. His performance in David Mackenzie's *Starred Up* brought him the British Independent Film Award for Best Supporting Actor.

He is reunited on **Cyrano** with director Joe Wright after starring for the latter as King George VI in the multi-Academy Award-winning *Darkest Hour*, which brought him a nomination for Australia's AACTA Award. Among Mr. Mendelsohn's many other screen credits in a long career are Nicole Holofcener's *The Land of Steady Habits*; Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises*; Steven Spielberg's *Ready Player One*; Ridley Scott's *Exodus: Gods and Kings*; Gareth Edwards'

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story; Derek Cianfrance's *The Place Beyond the Pines*, with Ryan Gosling; Mr. Gosling's directorial debut *Lost River*; Andrew Dominik's *Killing Them Softly*; Rachel Ward's feature directorial debut *Beautiful Kate*, alongside Rachel Griffiths, for which he was again an AFI Award nominee; David Caesar's *Prime Mover*; Alex Proyas' *Knowing*; Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*; John Maclean's *Slow West*; David Michôd's *The Rover* and *The King*; Shannon Murphy's *Babyteeth*, for which he won an AACTA Award and was nominated for a London Critics Circle Film Award; Benedict Andrews' *Una*, with Rooney Mara in David Harrower's adaptation of the latter's play *Blackbird*; and, opposite Ryan Reynolds, Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck's *Mississippi Grind*, for which he was a Best Male Lead nominee at the Independent Spirit Awards.

After having starred as well as been producer on the popular television limited series *The Outsider*, Mr. Mendelsohn is currently at work on the streaming series *Secret Invasion*. In the latter, he reprises the role of Talos, whom he first incarnated in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) for Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck's celebrated blockbuster movie *Captain Marvel*.

BASHIR SALAHUDDIN (Le Bret)

One of the industry's busiest multi-hyphenate talents, Bashir Salahuddin continues to find success as actor, writer and producer — often wearing different hats on the same project.

As actor, he next is in the long-awaited *Top Gun: Maverick* with Tom Cruise, directed by Joseph Kosinski. He recently starred as part of the real-life United States Infantry Regiment, all African-American, in *The 24th*, directed and co-written by Academy Award winner Kevin Willmott.

Among Mr. Salahuddin's previous films are Paul Feig's *A Simple Favor*, opposite Anna Kendrick; Noah Baumbach's *Marriage Story*; Nash Edgerton's *Gringo*, alongside David Oyelowo; and Jonathan Levine's *Snatched*.

He stars in the television series *South Side*, which he co-created as well as is a writer and executive producer on in his capacity as its showrunner. About to return for its second season, the comedy is set and filmed in his native Chicago, on the South Side where he was born. Also about to return for its second season is Mr. Salahuddin's second current television series, the sketch-comedy/variety show *Sherman's Showcase*, which he co-created; he stars in the title role and is a writer and executive producer on the program. His performance was Critics Choice Award-nominated; he and the other writers shared an NAACP Image Award nomination.

Earlier in his career, he was an Emmy Award and Writers Guild of America Award nominee as part of the writing team on late-night television's hit *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*. Later a writer and consulting producer on the comedy series *The Last O.G.*, he was again a WGA nominee with his fellow writers from the comedy/variety show *Maya & Marty*.

Also for television as actor, he recurred on *Single Parents*, opposite Kimrie Lewis, as well as on *Arrested Development* and *Superstore*. Mr. Salahuddin's guest arc throughout the second season of the award-winning series *Looking* was followed by his return for the telefilm finale, directed by Andrew Haigh, reuniting the cast and characters.

He was featured on all three seasons of the beloved streaming series *GLOW*, and twice shared with his fellow actors from the show Screen Actors Guild Award nominations for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series.

MONICA DOLAN (Marie)

Monica Dolan is a BAFTA and Olivier Award-winning actor and writer whose career spans film, television, and stage.

She won her BAFTA Award for portraying real-life serial killer Rosemary West in the telefilm *Appropriate Adult*, starring with Emily Watson and Dominic West for director Julian Jarrold. Ms. Dolan was again a BAFTA nominee for her work in the miniseries *A Very English Scandal*, starring with Hugh Grant and Ben Whishaw for director Stephen Frears.

Her other key television credits include performing "The Shrine" for writer Alan Bennett's *Talking Heads*, directed by Nicholas Hytner; the "Smithereens" episode of writer Charlie Brooker's *Black Mirror*, directed by James Hawes; *The Witness for the Prosecution*, again for director Julian Jarrold; *The Casual Vacancy*, directed by Jonny Campbell; and starring on the hit BBC comedy series *W1A*.

Ms. Dolan won her Olivier Award for starring in Ivo van Hove's staging of *All About Eve* as Karen (the role originated in the classic film by Celeste Holm), which was subsequently streamed into cinemas via National Theatre Live. Her other notable stage work includes reprising her "The Shrine" performance from writer Alan Bennett's *Talking Heads* series at The Bridge; Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' critically acclaimed *Appropriate*, directed by Ola Ince at the Donmar Warehouse; and, in both the UK and the U.S., Trevor Nunn's staging of *King Lear* starring Ian McKellen. She wrote and starred in the award-winning play *The B*Easts*, which transferred to London following a hit run at the Edinburgh Festival.

Her other movies include Simon Stone's *The Dig*, opposite Ralph Fiennes; Gavin Hood's *Eye in the Sky*, with Helen Mirren and Alan Rickman, and *Official Secrets*, with Keira Knightley and Mr. Fiennes; Simon Bird's *Days of the Bagnold Summer*; Peter Mackie Burns' *Rialto*; Carol Morley's *The Falling*; and Matthew Warchus' *Pride*.

MARK BENTON (Montfleury)

Mark Benton is reunited with Joe Wright on **Cyrano** after first acting for the director on the UK miniseries *Nature Boy*.

Mr. Benton, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), is a familiar face to audiences for his performances on screens both large and small as well as on stages across the UK. His theater work includes National Theatre stagings of *Invisible Friends*, directed by Alan Ayckbourn, and *Devil's Disciple*, directed by Christopher Morahan; Sam Mendes' productions of *Richard III*, with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and *The Front Page*, at the Donmar Warehouse; *Hobson's Choice*, in the title role, directed by Nadia Fall at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre; *Glengarry Glen Ross*, directed by Sam Yates, on tour in the UK; and, starring as Edna, the national tour of *Hairspray* directed by Jack O'Brien.

He starred in the title role of the BBC radio series *Mr. Blue Sky*, which ran for two seasons. His television appearances include starring on other such hit shows as *Catterick*, *Early Doors*, *Waterloo Road*, and *Land Girls*; a regular role on the fourth season of *The Syndicate*; the telefilm *The Second Coming*, directed by Adrian Shergold and written by Russell T. Davies; and a featured role on the recent first season of the instant cult favorite *The Nevers*. Currently, he stars as the latter sleuth on *Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators*, which will soon return for a fourth season.

Mr. Benton's movie work includes starring in writer/director Mike Leigh's *Career Girls* and the multi-Academy Award-winning *Topsy-Turvy*; Anthony Minghella's *Breaking and Entering*; Terry Gilliam's *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*; Dexter Fletcher's *Eddie the Eagle*; and in the fan favorite *Anna and the Apocalypse*, directed by John McPhail, as Anna's (Ella Hunt) father.

PETER WIGHT (Ragueneau)

Peter Wight previously starred for **Cyrano** director Joe Wright in the latter's award-winning first two feature films, *Pride & Prejudice* and *Atonement*; and the miniseries *Charles II: The Power & The Passion* (a.k.a. *The Last King*),

Cinema buffs know him best for his movies with director Mike Leigh, including *Vera Drake*, opposite Imelda Staunton; *Secrets & Lies*; *Naked*; *Mr. Turner*; the telefilm *Meantime*; and *Another Year*, alongside Lesley Manville, for which Mr. Wight received a London Critics Circle Film Award nomination. Among his many other films are Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel*; Edgar Wright's *Hot Fuzz*; Terry Jones' *Personal Services*; Peter Cattaneo's *Lucky Break*; Norman Jewison's *The Statement*; Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg's Oscar-nominated *Kon-Tiki*; and Charles Sturridge's *Lassie* and *FairyTale: A True Story*.

His television work includes the miniseries *A Confession*, directed by Paul Andrew Williams; starring on both seasons of *The Paradise*; guest-starring on *The Crown*; and series regular roles on *Out of the Blue* and *Early Doors*.

Mr. Wight's numerous theater credits include *Uncle Vanya* and *The Birthday Party*, at the Harold Pinter Theatre, as well as *Hamlet* with the Almeida Theatre Company there; *Waiting for Godot*, at the National Theatre; Patrick Marber's play *The Red Lion*, at the National; *Trelawny of the Wells*, at the Donmar Warehouse; and, in both the UK and NYC on Broadway, Ian Rickson's Royal Court Theatre production of *The Seagull*.

About the Filmmakers

JOE WRIGHT (Director)

Across two decades, Joe Wright has become one of the premier directors making great moviegoing memories for audiences.

He began his career in television, winning a BAFTA Award in the Best Drama Serial category for the BBC miniseries *Charles II: The Power & The Passion* (a.k.a. *The Last King*). He directed two other acclaimed miniseries, *Nature Boy* (for BBC) and *Bodily Harm* (for Channel 4).

Upon his segue way into motion pictures, Mr. Wright would soon win a second BAFTA Award, for [the Carl Foreman Award for the] Most Promising Newcomer; his feature directorial debut was the Working Title Films production of *Pride & Prejudice*. The adaptation of Jane Austen's beloved novel was a worldwide box office hit, garnering five additional BAFTA nominations as well as four Academy Award nominations including Best Actress (Keira Knightley).

He immediately reunited with Working Title and Keira Knightley for another global success that thrilled and moved critics and filmgoers alike, the epic *Atonement*. Based on Ian McEwan's revered novel, the film was nominated for 14 BAFTA Awards, winning Best Film and Best Production Design (Sarah Greenwood and Katie Spencer); nominated for seven Golden Globe Awards, winning Best Motion Picture [Drama] and Best Original Score (Dario Marianelli); and nominated for seven Academy Awards including Best Picture, winning Best Original Score.

Mr. Wright directed *Atonement* Academy Award nominee Saoirse Ronan in the title role of the action thriller *Hanna*, which was a sleeper hit at the box office. Then, a classic novel by Leo Tolstoy became his third celebrated movie with Working Title and Keira Knightley; *Anna Karenina* received six BAFTA and four Academy Award nominations, winning Best Costume Design (Jacqueline Durran) at both ceremonies. He and Working Title reteamed for their most popular project when he directed Gary Oldman to an Academy Award win for Best Actor as Winston Churchill, in *Darkest Hour*. Mr. Oldman's other wins included Screen Actors Guild and

BAFTA Awards; *Darkest Hour* received an additional five Academy Award and eight BAFTA Award nominations, winning for Best Makeup and Hair (Ivana Primorac, Kazu Hiro, David Malinowski and Lucy Sibbick).

His other films as director include the biographical drama *The Soloist*, starring Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey Jr.; the fantasy *Pan*; and the thriller *The Woman in the Window*, starring Amy Adams and Gary Oldman. Mr. Wright directed the “Nosedive” episode of the streaming series *Black Mirror*, written by Rashida Jones and starring Bryce Dallas Howard, which received Emmy and BAFTA Award nominations for Best Cinematography (Seamus McGarvey).

TIM BEVAN and ERIC FELLNER/Working Title Films (Producers)

Eric Fellner is the Co-Chairman of Working Title Films with partner Tim Bevan. Together they have made more than 100 films that have grossed over \$8.5 billion worldwide. Their films have won 14 Academy Awards (for Joe Wright’s *Darkest Hour*, Tom Hooper’s *The Danish Girl*, James Marsh’s *The Theory of Everything*, Tom Hooper’s *Les Misérables*, Joe Wright’s *Anna Karenina*, Tim Robbins’ *Dead Man Walking*, Joel and Ethan Coen’s *Fargo*, Shekhar Kapur’s *Elizabeth* and *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*, and Joe Wright’s *Atonement*); and 40 BAFTA Awards, 8 Golden Globes, and numerous prestigious prizes at the Cannes and Berlin International Film Festivals. Working Title’s stage musical production of *Billy Elliot*, directed by Stephen Daldry and with music by Elton John, has toured globally including the West End, Broadway, and Australia; has won 5 Laurence Olivier Awards and 11 Tonys; and received many other accolades over the 15 years it has run.

Messrs. Fellner and Bevan have been honoured with the Producers Guild of America’s David O. Selznick Achievement Award in Theatrical Motion Pictures, the PGA’s highest honour for motion picture producers. They have been accorded two of the highest film awards given to British filmmakers; the Michael Balcon Award for Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema, at the Orange British Academy Film [BAFTA] Awards, and the Alexander Walker Film Award at the Evening Standard British Film Awards. They have also both been honored with CBEs (Commanders of the Order of the British Empire).

Some of the company’s commercial and critical hits include *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Sid & Nancy*, *The Interpreter*, *About a Boy*, *Notting Hill*, *Elizabeth*, *Fargo*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Bean*, *High Fidelity*, *Johnny English*, *Billy Elliot*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, *A Serious Man*, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, *Love Actually*, *Shaun of the Dead*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Nanny McPhee*, *United 93*, *Mr. Bean’s Holiday*, *Hot Fuzz*, *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*, *Burn After Reading*, *Frost/Nixon*, *Atonement*, *Senna*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *Contraband*, *Anna Karenina*, *Les Misérables*, *About Time*, *Rush*, *Everest*, *Legend*, *The Danish Girl*, *Hail Caesar!*, *Bridget Jones’s Baby*, *Victoria & Abdul*, *Baby Driver*, *Darkest Hour*, *Rebecca*, and *Emma*.

Working Title's upcoming slate includes Edgar Wright's *Last Night in Soho* starring Anya Taylor-Joy, Thomasin McKenzie, and Matt Smith; *Matilda*, directed by Matthew Warchus with music by Tim Minchin and starring Emma Thompson, Lashana Lynch, and Stephen Graham; and *Catherine, Called Birdy*, directed by Lena Dunham and starring Bella Ramsey, Billie Piper, and Andrew Scott. On the TV side, *We Are Lady Parts*, directed by Nida Manzoor, aired this summer on Channel 4 in the UK and Peacock in the U.S.

Amongst other leading British producers, Messrs. Fellner and Bevan are founders of the London Screen Academy (LSA) in Islington. LSA is a free sixth form academy for students who have a passion for film and television and the stories they tell.

GUY HEELEY (Producer)

Guy Heeley's career as producer continues to encompass both cinema and television.

Mr. Heeley worked prior as one of the UK's top assistant directors (ADs), and was first AD on such breakout films as Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It Like Beckham*, Simon Curtis' *My Week with Marilyn*, and Phyllida Lloyd's *The Iron Lady*, starring Academy Award winner Meryl Streep.

He was a BAFTA Award nominee as producer, for Working Title and BBC, of the acclaimed television miniseries *London Spy*; created and written by Tom Rob Smith, the show was directed by Jakob Verbruggen. In addition to its Best Miniseries nod, lead actor Ben Whishaw also received a BAFTA Award nomination.

Mr. Heeley produced the COVID-19-lockdown-set *Together*, directed by Stephen Daldry from a Dennis Kelly script and starring James McAvoy and Sharon Horgan; and writer/director Dominic Savage's *The Escape* and writer/director Jessica Swale's *Summerland*, both starring Gemma Arterton. He was executive producer on Mick Jackson's *Denial*, with a screenplay by David Hare and starring Rachel Weisz and Timothy Spall; and on Oliver Parker's *Swimming with Men*, starring Rob Brydon.

He is producer of the soon-to-be-released *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain*, co-written and directed by Will Sharpe and starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Claire Foy.

His creative partnership with **Cyrano** director Joe Wright began when he was first assistant director on the latter's feature directorial debut *Pride & Prejudice*; he encored in that capacity on *Hanna*. Continuing their collaborations under the auspices of the production company Shoebox Films, Mr. Heeley produced writer/director Steven Knight's *Redemption*, starring Jason Statham; and Mr. Knight's award-winning *Locke*, which was a memorable showcase for lead actor Tom Hardy and which won the British Independent Film Award for Best Screenplay.

ERICA SCHMIDT (Screenplay)

Erica Schmidt is a playwright, screenwriter, and theatre director. In 2001 she was honored with the Princess Grace Award, given by the foundation of the same name.

She directed her adaptation *Cyrano*, collaborating with members of the band The National, at the Goodspeed Opera House and off-Broadway at The New Group. She directed her adaptation *Mac Beth* at Seattle Rep and off-Broadway at the Lucille Lortel Theatre and HTP, receiving Drama Desk Award nominations for Outstanding Direction and Outstanding Revival as well as a Lucille Lortel Award nomination; *Mac Beth* has since been published by DPS.

For The New Group Ms. Schmidt wrote and directed *All the Fine Boys*, which has been published by Samuel French. Also off-Broadway, she adapted and directed *Debbie Does Dallas* for The Araca Group. Among her other stage directorial credits are *Richard 2*, starring Robert Sean Leonard, at The Old Globe; *A Month in the Country*, starring Taylor Schilling and Peter Dinklage, at the Classic Stage Company; *Rent*, in Tokyo; *Trust*, with The Play Company, for which she received a Callaway Award nomination; *As You Like It*, at the New York Shakespeare Festival's Public Theater; and *chashama*, at the New York International Fringe Festival, where she received the Best Direction award.

She co-created, co-wrote, and directed the play *Humor Abuse*. The show was staged at and with the Mark Taper Forum Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theatre, Seattle Rep, and Manhattan Theatre Club; the latter production brought her a Lucille Lortel Award.

Ms. Schmidt's first produced screenplay is ***Cyrano***; she is currently writing the screenplay for *Rumplestiltskin*, at Sony Pictures.

BRYCE DESSNER & AARON DESSNER (Music)

Twin brothers Aaron and Bryce Dessner are vital forces of new music, including but not limited to being members of the celebrated band The National.

The National's record albums to date have been *The National*, *Sad Songs for Dirty Lovers*, *Alligator*, *Boxer*, *High Violet*, *Trouble Will Find Me*, *Sleep Well Beast* (which earned the group their first Grammy), and *I Am Easy to Find*.

Bryce has developed an increasingly high-profile presence in the worlds of both classical and film score composition. His film score credits include Alejandro González Iñárritu's multi-Academy Award-winning *The Revenant* and Fernando Meirelles' Oscar-nominated *The Two Popes*, for which Bryce won the prestigious World Soundtrack Discovery of The Year Award. He is regularly commissioned to write for leading ensembles, from Orchestre de Paris and the Czech

Philharmonic to the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He won a Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music in 2015, for his album *Doublespeak* with Chicago-based ensemble eighth blackbird. Most recently, his album *Tenebre* — recorded with the renowned German string orchestra Ensemble Resonanz — won both an Opus Klassik award in Germany and a Diapason d’Or in France. Bryce’s orchestrations can be heard on the latest albums of Paul Simon, Bon Iver, and Taylor Swift.

Aaron began producing outside projects almost a decade ago, developing an ability to connect with artists from disparate genres, like Sharon Van Etten’s breakthrough album *Tramp*; the delicate craftsmanship of Irish artist Lisa Hannigan; and the haunting gothic blues of singer-songwriter Adia Victoria. Aaron has become most widely known for his production and songwriting work on Taylor Swift’s albums *Folklore* and *Evermore*, also orchestrated by Bryce Dessner; *Folklore* took home the top Album of the Year Award at the 2020 Grammys. With Bon Iver’s Justin Vernon, Aaron plays in the band Big Red Machine.

Bryce and Aaron have co-scored several films together as well, including the upcoming *C’mon C’mon*, starring Joaquin Phoenix for director Mike Mills and A24. With their friend and collaborator Justin Vernon (of Bon Iver), among other musicians, they launched the 37d03d (PEOPLE) collective in 2016 to produce multi-artist events and operate an independent record label — all with the goal of supporting and encouraging spontaneous collaboration.

MATT BERNINGER & CARIN BESSER (Lyrics)

Matt Berninger is the frontman and lyricist for the Grammy Award-winning indie rock band The National. His first solo album, *Serpentine Prison*, was produced by the legendary Booker T. Jones and released in October 2020. In addition to his work in music, Matt produced and appears in the documentary *Mistaken for Strangers*, which is about his relationship with his younger brother Tom and which opened the 2013 Tribeca Film Festival. He has also written and performed songs for the television series *Game of Thrones* and *Bob’s Burgers*. Matt is married to Carin Besser.

Carin Besser is a writer and editor, and is married to Matt. They collaborated alongside guitarist Mike Brewer on the song “Walking on a String,” performed by Phoebe Bridgers and Matt in *Between Two Ferns: The Movie*. Carin has written lyrics for The National since the band’s 2007 album *Boxer*, and she co-produced and co-edited the documentary *Mistaken for Strangers*. In 2016, Matt and Carin helped create 7-inches for Planned Parenthood, a curated series of records featuring music, comedy, spoken word, and visual art released in support of Planned Parenthood of America.

SEAMUS MCGARVEY, ASC, BSC (Director of Photography)

Seamus McGarvey has twice been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Cinematography; the nominations came for two prior collaborations with **Cyrano** director Joe Wright, *Atonement* and *Anna Karenina*. The projects also brought him American Society of Cinematographers (ASC)

and British Society of Cinematographers (BSC) Award nominations; he won the latter prize for *Anna Karenina*. *Atonement* additionally garnered him an Evening Standard British Film Award, and he won an Irish Film and Television Award (IFTA) for both works.

He received BAFTA Award nominations for the above-mentioned films, as well as for his cinematography on Tom Ford's *Nocturnal Animals* — for which he won his second BSC Award and received an IFTA Award and a Critics Choice Award nomination — and on the “Nosedive” episode of *Black Mirror*, directed by Joe Wright. Additionally, “Nosedive” brought Mr. McGarvey an Emmy Award nomination.

Mr. McGarvey was born in Armagh, Northern Ireland. He began his career as a stills photographer before attending film school in London. After graduation, he began shooting short films and documentaries. He photographed and/or directed over 100 music videos, for such artists as Paul McCartney, The Rolling Stones, U2, PJ Harvey, Coldplay, Robbie Williams, and Dusty Springfield.

His first feature as cinematographer was Michael Winterbottom's *Butterfly Kiss*, starring Amanda Plummer and Saskia Reeves. In the late 1990s, he commenced an extensive collaboration with multimedia artist and film director Sam Taylor-Johnson, working with her on installations, photographs, and filmed works including the experimental three-screen-projection *Atlantic* (which was nominated for the Turner Prize). He would later be the cinematographer on her short film *Love You More* as well as her features *Nowhere Boy* and *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

His many other works as cinematographer include Michael Gracey's *The Greatest Showman*, for which he was again an IFTA Award winner; Drew Goddard's *Bad Times at the El Royale*, for which he was again a BSC Award nominee; Joss Whedon's *The Avengers* and the first two episodes of the latter's epic television series *The Avengers*; Stephen Daldry's *The Hours*, for which he received an Evening Standard British Film Award; Stephen Frears' *High Fidelity*; Lynne Ramsay's *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, for which he won an IFTA Award; Michael Apted's *Enigma*; Mike Nichols' telefilm *Wit*; Gary Winick's *Charlotte's Web*; Alan Rickman's *The Winter Guest*; Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center*; Breck Eisner's *Sahara*, for which he won an IFTA Award; Tim Roth's *The War Zone*; also for **Cyrano** director Joe Wright, *The Soloist* and *Pan*; and, upcoming, Paul King's *Wonka*.

In 2004, Mr. McGarvey was awarded the Royal Photographic Society's prestigious Lumière medal for contributions to the art of cinematography.

SARAH GREENWOOD (Production Designer)

Sarah Greenwood has been nominated six times for the Academy Award for Best Production Design. These nods came for **Cyrano** director Joe Wright's films *Pride & Prejudice*, *Atonement*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Darkest Hour*; for Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes*; and for Bill Condon's

Beauty and the Beast. All of the aforementioned were in creative partnership with **Cyrano** set decorator Katie Spencer, nominated each time with Ms. Greenwood.

Beauty and the Beast and *Darkest Hour* also brought her BAFTA and Art Directors Guild Award nominations, both concurrently. *Anna Karenina* additionally brought her a BAFTA Award nomination; and a Critics Choice Award, an Art Directors Guild Award (which followed her one for *Sherlock Holmes*), a European Film Award, an Evening Standard British Film Award, and a Hollywood Film Award for Production Designer of the Year, among other honors. She had previously received the latter for *Atonement*, which additionally brought her an Evening Standard British Film Award and a BAFTA Award.

Born in England, Ms. Greenwood graduated with a BA from the Wimbledon School of Art and began her career designing for the stage. Segueing to the filmed medium(s), she went on to work at the BBC. There she became a senior designer, working on the establishing series of *Later...with Jools Holland* and many other drama, music and arts programs in setting their visuals. Her first BAFTA Award nomination came for the BBC miniseries *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, directed by Mike Barker, for which she won a Royal Television Society Award.

Her second BAFTA Award nomination came for the BBC miniseries *Charles II: The Power & The Passion* (a.k.a. *The Last King*), directed by Joe Wright. Her other collaborations with the **Cyrano** director over the years have included the miniseries *Nature Boy* and *Bodily Harm*; and the films *Hanna* and *The Soloist*.

Ms. Greenwood's films as production designer also include Robert Bierman's *A Merry War*, which marked her first feature work; Sandra Goldbacher's *The Governess*; David Kane's *This Year's Love* and *Born Romantic*; Tom Vaughan's *Starter for 10*; Bharat Nalluri's *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*, starring Frances McDormand and Amy Adams; Susanna White's *Our Kind of Traitor*; and, once more for Guy Ritchie and company, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*.

She was recently a British Film Designers Guild Award nominee for Ben Wheatley's *Rebecca*, which also earned her a BAFTA Award nomination. Ms. Greenwood's next project as production designer is the globally anticipated movie musical version of *Wicked*, directed by Jon M. Chu.

KATIE SPENCER (Set Designer)

As set decorator, Katie Spencer first collaborated with **Cyrano** director Joe Wright and production designer Sarah Greenwood in their respective capacities on the 2003 BAFTA Award-winning miniseries *Charles II: The Power & The Passion* (a.k.a. *The Last King*), and has since played a defining role in crafting the looks for seven of his feature films now including **Cyrano**. In creative partnership with Ms. Greenwood, Ms. Spencer has been nominated six times for the Academy Award for Best Production Design. These nods came for Mr. Wright's *Pride & Prejudice*, *Atonement*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Darkest Hour*; for Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes*; and for Bill Condon's *Beauty and the Beast*.

Beauty and the Beast and *Darkest Hour* also brought her BAFTA and Art Directors Guild Award nominations — all in the same year. *Anna Karenina* additionally brought her a BAFTA Award nomination; and a Critics Choice Award, an Art Directors Guild Award (which followed her one for *Sherlock Holmes*), a European Film Award, an Evening Standard British Film Award, and a Hollywood Film Award for Production Designer of the Year, among other honors. Ms. Spencer had previously received the latter for *Atonement*, which additionally brought her an Evening Standard British Film Award and a BAFTA Award.

Ms. Spencer began her career at the BBC in the 1990s and began working with Ms. Greenwood as set decorator on television productions including Patrick Marber's *After Miss Julie*. Her other collaborations with Ms. Greenwood over the years have included Mr. Wright's films *Hanna* and *The Soloist*.

Among her other films as set decorator have been Sandra Goldbacher's *The Governess*; David Kane's *This Year's Love* and *Born Romantic*; Tom Vaughan's *Starter for 10*, starring James McAvoy, Rebecca Hall, and Alice Eve; Bharat Nalluri's *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*; Susanna White's *Our Kind of Traitor*; and, encoring for Guy Ritchie and the troupe, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*.

Ms. Spencer was recently a British Film Designers Guild Award nominee for Ben Wheatley's *Rebecca*, for which she was also a BAFTA Award nominee.

VALERIO BONELLI (Film Editor)

Cyrano is film editor Valerio Bonelli's fourth collaboration with director Joe Wright; their other ventures together have been the "Nosedive" episode of *Black Mirror*, *The Woman in the Window*, and the multi-Academy Award-winning *Darkest Hour*. The latter brought Mr. Bonelli an honor in his native Italy: the Capri, Hollywood International Film Festival's award for Best Film Editing.

He has also notably worked several times with director Stephen Frears, as editor of *The Program*, starring Ben Foster as Lance Armstrong; *Florence Foster Jenkins*, starring Oscar-nominated Meryl Streep in the title role; and *Philomena*, which was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Actress (Judi Dench).

Mr. Bonelli was co-editor on another Best Picture Oscar nominee, Ridley Scott's *The Martian*, after having worked in the editorial department on three of the director's previous films including Best Picture Academy Award winner *Gladiator*.

Among the other features that he has edited are Steven Knight's *Redemption*, also for **Cyrano** producer Guy Heeley; Chiwetel Ejiofor's *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*; Gurinder Chadha's

Viceroy's House; Sharon Maguire's *Incendary*, starring Michelle Williams; Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant's *Cemetery Junction*; Mabrouk El Mechri's *The Cold Light of Day*; and Jordan Scott's *Cracks*, which showcased future stars Juno Temple, Imogen Poots, and María Valverde.

At the 2015 Tribeca Film Festival, Mr. Bonelli was given the jury's Best Editing in a Documentary Feature award for his work on *Palio*, which explores the titular annual horse race in Siena, Italy. *Palio* was directed by Cosima Spender, for whom he has edited several documentaries as well as the narrative short film *The Drink*.

MASSIMO CANTINI PARRINI (Costume Designer)

Massimo Cantini Parrini was recently an Academy Award and Costume Designers Guild Award nominee for his costume design of Matteo Garrone's *Pinocchio*. Other films that he and the director have made together include *Tale of Tales* and *Dogman*.

He is the only costume designer to have won three consecutive David di Donatello Awards, Italy's Oscars equivalent, among his five to date; he has won for *Pinocchio*, *Tale of Tales*, Edoardo De Angelis' *Indivisible*, Roberta Torre's *Riccardo Goes to Hell* (a.k.a. *Bloody Richard*) and Susanna Nicchiarelli's *Miss Marx*. Additionally, he was nominated for *Dogman*, which also earned him a European Film Award.

Mr. Parrini's career has spanned over two decades and across Europe with internationally renowned filmmakers. He began his career studying under the iconic Piero Tosi, who was the first costume designer to receive an honorary Academy Award. His first feature film found him working alongside another lauded costume designer, Gabriella Pescucci, on Bille August's *Les Misérables*. He would continue to collaborate with Ms. Pescucci on such films as Michael Hoffman's *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, Stephen Sommers' *Van Helsing*, and Tim Burton's *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*.

His features as costume designer have included Claire McCarthy's *Ophelia*, starring Daisy Ridley, Naomi Watts, and Clive Owen; and Paolo Virzì's *The Leisure Seeker*, starring Donald Sutherland and Helen Mirren.

ALESSANDRO BERTOLAZZI (Makeup Designer)

Alessandro Bertolazzi won an Academy Award, with his fellow makeup and hair styling artisans, for David Ayer's worldwide hit *Suicide Squad*, starring Will Smith and Margot Robbie. His work on the movie as makeup and hair designer also brought him the Santa Barbara International Film Festival's Artisan Award and a Hollywood Makeup Artist and Hair Stylist Guild Award, among other accolades.

Other movies on which he was also both makeup and hair designer have included Marc Forster's *Christopher Robin*, one of several collaborations with star Ewan McGregor; Gina Prince-Bythewood's *The Old Guard*; David Leitch's *Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw*; Werner Herzog's *Queen of the Desert*; and David Michôd's *War Machine* and *The King*. Additionally, he was makeup and hair designer on the first season of the fan-favorite streaming series *Sense8*.

At home in both art cinema and big-budget blockbusters, Mr. Bertolazzi's career spans over three decades. For his work as makeup and hair stylist on J.A. Bayona's *The Impossible*, one of several collaborations with Academy Award nominee Naomi Watts, he shared a Goya Award (Spain's Oscars equivalent) nomination; as makeup and hair designer on Angelo Longoni's *Caravaggio*, he received dual David di Donatello (Italy's Oscars equivalent) nominations.

His features as makeup designer also include David Ayer's *Bright*; Claire McCarthy's *Ophelia*; and Matteo Garrone's award-winning *Gomorra*. He has been makeup artist on such films as Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel* and *Biutiful*; Ryan Murphy's *Eat Pray Love*, Sam Mendes' Academy Award-winning *Skyfall* and Terrence Malick's *To the Wonder*, all reuniting him with Javier Bardem of *Biutiful*; Ron Howard's *Angels & Demons*; Tom Tykwer's *Heaven*; and Sergio Castellitto's *Twice Born*, starring Penélope Cruz.

Mr. Bertolazzi has been the makeup department head on such films as Saverio Costanzo's *The Solitude of Prime Numbers*, starring Alba Rohrwacher; and worked on several movies with Monica Bellucci, including two directed by Giuseppe Tornatore.

SIÂN MILLER (Hair Designer)

Siân Miller trained at the famed Vidal Sassoon school in London and the London College of Fashion. The art school background coupled with her hair and makeup styling skills has led her to a career with a varied portfolio around the world, from the Far East to the U.S.

Ms. Miller was both key hair stylist and key makeup artist on two of the most anticipated films of 2021: Wes Anderson's all-star *The French Dispatch*, which world-premiered at the Cannes International Film Festival, and Chloé Zhao's epic Marvel tale *Eternals*. She has previously worked in the dual capacities on such other major films as Paul Greengrass' *Jason Bourne*; Ron Howard's *Inferno*; J.A. Bayona's *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*; and Björn Runge's *The Wife*, starring Jonathan Pryce and Academy Award nominee Glenn Close.

Her early work in UK television included being makeup designer on the entire run of the hit BBC series *This Life*, which was the breakout showcase for actors including Daniela Nardini, Andrew Lincoln, and Jack Davenport. Ms. Miller was part of the BAFTA Award-nominated hair and makeup team on the acclaimed telefilm *Housewife, 49*, directed by Gavin Millar.

Cyrano

Main Credits

Metro Goldwyn Mayer presents in association with Bron Creative a Working Title production. A Joe Wright Film. **Cyrano**. Peter Dinklage, Haley Bennett, Kelvin Harrison Jr., Ben Mendelsohn, Bashir Salahuddin, Monica Dolan. Casting Director, Nina Gold. Co-Producer, Cass Marks. Choreography by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Music Supervisor, Becky Bentham. Music by Bryce Dessner & Aaron Dessner. Costume Designer, Massimo Cantini Parrini. Film Editor, Valerio Bonelli. Production Designer, Sarah Greenwood. Director of Photography, Seamus McGarvey, ASC, BSC. Executive Producers, Aaron L. Gilbert, Jason Cloth. Executive Producers, Matt Berninger, Carin Besser, Aaron Dessner, Bryce Dessner. Executive Producers, Erica Schmidt, Sarah-Jane Robinson, Sheeraz Shah, Lucas Webb. Based on the stage musical adapted and directed by Erica Schmidt from Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand, Music by Aaron & Bryce Dessner, Lyrics by Matt Berninger & Carin Besser. Screenplay by Erica Schmidt. Produced by Tim Bevan, Eric Fellner, Guy Heeley. Directed by Joe Wright.