

the Family Stone

THE FAMILY STONE is a comic story about the annual holiday gathering of a New England family, the Stones. The eldest son brings his girlfriend home to meet his parents, brothers and sisters. The bohemian Stones greet their visitor – a high-powered, controlling New Yorker – with a mix of awkwardness, confusion and hostility. Before the holiday is over, relationships will unravel while new ones are formed, secrets will be revealed, and the family Stone will come together through its extraordinary capacity for love.

Sybil Stone (DIANE KEATON) is the strong-willed matriarch who is at the heart of the Stone family, an outspoken woman who wants only the best for her five children. Strikingly beautiful, her face now reflects a recent note of brittleness or fatigue, suggesting that perhaps Sybil carries a secret.

“I was drawn instantly to the character of Sybil because of the many layers to her personality,” says Diane Keaton. “This role allowed me to explore so many – often conflicting – emotions. It was fun playing the character who maintains a semblance of order within the chaos that prevails in her household. Sybil is the glue that holds the family together.”

Sybil and her family are not pleased with the arrival of eldest son Everett’s girlfriend, Meredith Morton (SARAH JESSICA PARKER). Meredith is an immaculately composed, contemporary New York City-based career woman whose tailored suits,

upswept hair and subtle makeup speak volumes about her personality, making an indelible impression on both friends and strangers. When she meets the Stones, the results are chaotic and unforgettable.

“Meredith is different from most of the characters I’ve played,” says Sarah Jessica Parker. “She’s controlling, rigid and tightly wound. She’s also intractable and inflexible, and when she finds herself out of her element at the Stone house, she turns into a wreck of a person.

“Meredith tries very hard to relate to the quirky members of her boyfriend’s family, and she works hard to join in their conversations,” Parker continues. “But she simply does not understand the ‘room’ she is trying to become a part of, so she doesn’t realize when she should stop talking. When she tries to dig herself out of these awkward moments, she only makes matters worse.”

After her initial trial by fire with the Stones, Meredith enlists the help of her younger sister, Julie Morton (CLAIRE DANES). Julie, who works at a foundation awarding grants to artists, isn’t nearly as tightly wound as Meredith.

“Julie is not under the same pressure that Meredith is experiencing,” says Claire Danes. “She’s just there to provide moral support. She arrives when her sister’s life is in a state of chaos, and the Stone family – quite eccentric in the first place – seems to be unraveling, and Julie is initially disoriented.”

Danes calls attention to the film’s delicate balance of comedy and drama, saying that it challenged the cast to walk a fine line between the two styles.

“I found working on the film an exhilarating experience, because it forced me as an actor to be as honest as possible,” she explains. “You can’t hide behind a comic or dramatic acting approach, because you would never be able to create and sustain the wide spectrum of dynamic moments throughout the film.”

Julie enters the “lions’ den” with much more ease than her sister, but Julie’s visit ultimately leads to further complications, especially for Everett Stone (DERMOT MULRONEY). Everett is a successful executive in Manhattan whose charm comes from the fact that he seems to be utterly unaware of the effect his attractiveness and easy-going nature has on others.

“Playing Everett was a challenge because he starts out very button-downed and straight-laced, but by the end of the story he returns to his real personality,” explains Dermot Mulroney. “Deep down in his heart, Everett isn’t the over-achieving, submissive ‘suit’ we see at the start of the film; he is really like the rest of the Stone family: loose and kind of Bohemian, with a fondness for free-flowing candid conversation and the laughter that often results.”

Everett’s brother, Ben Stone (LUKE WILSON), seems to have strayed the furthest from his family’s New England roots. A film editor living on the West Coast, Ben’s unpredictable, sometimes mischievous nature is reflected in the ultra-casual clothes he wears.

“Compared to his siblings, Ben is a looser character,” says Wilson. “He’s the free spirit of the family who lives in California, and he doesn’t have a girlfriend. Ben provides a dramatic contrast to his straight-and-narrow brother Everett.”

Ben’s and Everett’s sister, Amy Stone (RACHEL McADAMS), is the passionate, outspoken and youngest member of the family. She bears her luminous natural beauty with an aggressive indifference – and with a near open hostility toward Meredith.

“I was drawn to the dramatic arc that Amy goes through, which eventually brings her full circle,” says Rachel McAdams. “Amy sees herself as honest, not mean, and expresses that uncensored candor in her sardonic wit.

“Amy instantly rejects Meredith as unsuitable for her brother, because Meredith represents a whole way of living – fashionable yuppie success – that Amy has worked hard to reject,” McAdams continues. “Eventually, she comes to realize that she would reject anyone who was brought into the family from outside, because outside is about change. Amy wants everything to stay the same.”

The family patriarch, Kelly Stone (CRAIG T. NELSON), is a college professor in his sixties who is still an impressive figure. Kelly has an obvious love for his family that drives his every move.

“I was attracted to this character because Kelly appears to be the traditional titular head of the Stone household, but it is Sybil who really dominates the family,” says Craig T. Nelson. “Despite his low-key personality, Kelly’s calming yet offbeat influence on each of his five children is obvious.”

Elizabeth Reaser plays another Stone sibling, Susannah, and Ty Giordano portrays Thad Stone, the youngest son, who is both deaf and gay. Giordano is a deaf actor who, like his on-screen character, reads lips and speaks, in addition to signing. Brian White plays Thad's partner, Patrick.

"This is not a story centering on a deaf character," Writer-Director Thomas Bezucha explains. "Thad just happens to be deaf. With a deaf member in the family, it is natural that the Stones would be proficient at sign language." (Bezucha recruited the services of a sign language teacher who worked closely with each actor in the instruction of American Sign Language – ASL – during rehearsals and throughout production. The language is well-suited to films, because it is so visual.)

"The Stones, and Meredith and Julie, are people you could meet in real life," says Producer Michael London, whose credits include the much-honored pictures "Sideways," "Thirteen" and "The House of Sand and Fog." "They can be shortsighted and even kind of nasty to each other. But these flaws make the characters feel real."

THE FAMILY STONE is set during Christmas, in a small college town, because the holidays resonate for families like no other time of the year. "Our story unfolds during a holiday when you are supposed to be giving, hospitable and on your best behavior," says London. "But when it comes to Meredith, the Stones can't seem to get in the spirit of the holiday."

The Stone household is characterized by its absence of traditional social boundaries. They routinely discuss everything from smoking pot to the loss of virginity. No subject is taboo – especially the topic of Meredith Morton.

From the movie's opening scene – in which an impeccably-tailored Meredith is in a New York department store, barking out orders into her cell phone to an office subordinate while Christmas shopping with Everett Stone – the audience recognizes Meredith as the quintessential tightly wound, "Type A" Manhattan career woman. Her stylish designer spike-heeled pumps could not be more out of place when she arrives at the Stone's cozy, comfortable and well-worn home.

A clash of cultures is inevitable and swift; soon Meredith realizes the contempt with which she is perceived, so she moves out of the Stone house and into a local inn. Despite efforts by Everett's brother Ben to console her, Meredith asks her sister Julie to

join her for emotional support. Julie's arrival – and its unexpected effect on Everett – turns the family Stone upside-down.

“The Stones are just being who they are,” says Bezucha. “They prejudge Meredith because she's different from them. They are bohemian and open; she seems closed-off and corporate. They rally together against Meredith. No matter how she behaves, it annoys them. But they are decent people and eventually things begin to mesh.

“Anybody who has a family will be able to relate to this story,” Bezucha adds. “Audiences may see themselves as one or more of the characters.

To create these characters, Bezucha drew upon his own background. The son of a college professor, he grew up in Amherst, Massachusetts. But Bezucha says the film is not autobiographical. “The story is not about my family, but it is definitely about my people,” he notes. “I grew up among academics on the East Coast.”

As Bezucha finalized the script, he and London pursued Oscar®-winner Diane Keaton to play Stone family matriarch Sybil. The filmmakers knew that Keaton's range and versatility were well suited to the story's seamless blend of comedy and drama. There was a bonus: “Our thinking at the time was that, if Diane Keaton played Sybil, we would have an anchor for our story and a magnet for other strong actors,” says London. (Cast members cited the opportunity to work with Keaton as a significant attraction to the project.)

Soon after reading Bezucha's script, Keaton joined *THE FAMILY STONE*.

“Diane Keaton is an icon,” says Michael London. “This role required a lot from her – it's a difficult acting challenge. Diane's performance is at the core of this film, propelling the story and the characters around her.”

With Keaton committed to the project, the filmmakers' casting wish list became a reality, as A-list actors agreed to join what was fast becoming an impressive ensemble cast.

In New York, Bezucha met with Sarah Jessica Parker, who was winding up production on her hit HBO series, “Sex and the City.” Parker had turned down numerous film roles because of their similarity to her series character, Carrie Bradshaw. “I was willing to wait until a special part came around,” says Parker. “*THE FAMILY STONE* felt like something different, so I grabbed the opportunity to play Meredith.”

In rapid succession, the filmmakers were able to lock in the rest of the starring cast, including Dermot Mulroney, Claire Danes, Rachel McAdams, Luke Wilson and Craig T. Nelson.

“The actors all told us the same thing when they joined the film,” says Bezucha. “They wanted to be in this movie because they loved the script and were passionate about making the film. Their attitude felt simple and pure, and that’s why all of the elements of the project began to fall into place.”

The actors met during a pre-production rehearsal period in Los Angeles, a luxury not afforded to most feature films. “Thomas knew from the very beginning that getting the actors to interact as a family was going to be very important in making the movie work,” says Sarah Jessica Parker. “During rehearsals, he had the entire cast playing charades, which actually occurs in one sequence of the film. The rehearsals felt like we had left work and were transported home, a place where that playful type of comfort level exists.”

As the cast came together, Bezucha and London assembled a crew of talented behind-the-scenes artists. Bezucha, who prior to beginning his film career, worked at Ralph Lauren, designing the look of the brand in the retailer’s stores worldwide, had a clear vision for the world of THE FAMILY STONE. His hand-picked team made the story come to life with the meticulous attention to detail that Bezucha envisioned.

Director of Photography Jonathan Brown, who early in his career had worked with the renowned cinematographers Conrad Hall and Vittorio Storaro, brought his unique talents to the project.

Production Designer Jane Ann Stewart, who collaborated with director Alexander Payne on “Sideways” (produced by Michael London), “About Schmidt,” “Election” and “Citizen Ruth,” is known for creating spaces that look as though real people lived in them – a talent essential to the look of THE FAMILY STONE.

Food and eating are integral elements of THE FAMILY STONE, as the Stones are often seen snacking or preparing food, culminating in an ambitious Christmas Eve feast. This climactic sequence was shot using an imposing array of traditional – and edible – holiday fare, with the entire cast seated at the Stone’s dining room table.

Characteristic of his attention to detail, Bezucha recruited renowned chef Valerie Aikman-Smith for the distinctly non-traditional assignment as food stylist.

Bezucha wanted the film's exterior scenes shot at outdoor locations appropriate to the story's setting. Accordingly, he scheduled the most physically demanding and logistically challenging portion of the shooting schedule at the beginning of production, with the company shooting for ten days on two different East Coast locations. A crippling blizzard welcomed the production.

“Actually, we were lucky that a massive snowstorm rolled in the evening of the first day of production,” recalls Michael London. “The storms helped these scenes look like picture-postcards. So the storm was a blessing, albeit one with a drawback. After the blizzard passed through, it left freezing temperatures in its wake. As a result, the cast and especially the crew were faced with incredibly cold – and difficult – working conditions.”

Madison, New Jersey stood in for the story's unnamed New England college town. The art department gave the small community an extensive makeover, hanging endless strings of Christmas lights, creating elaborate shop window displays, and erecting an enormous, meticulously decorated Christmas tree in the middle of the town's Main Street.

“Between the contributions of Production Designer Jane Ann Stewart and her crew, and the snow, Madison ended up looking like the epitome of a quaint east coast village at Christmas, something right out of a storybook,” says Executive Producer Jennifer Ogden. “New England has a sense and feel that is unique. You can't put snow on palm trees in Los Angeles and expect an audience to accept it. We were fortunate to have the real thing for our setting.”

The filmmakers then moved to Greenwich, Connecticut, where they had located a house to be used for exterior sequences at the Stone residence. The aging but comfortable residence benefited from the second blizzard to hit the production. The storm provided a stunning snowy landscape that captured the look described in Bezucha's screenplay. The art department brought Greenwich back to Hollywood, in the form of a sweeping 180-degree photo of the striking exterior surroundings. The photo was blown

up to provide a 140-foot long backdrop panorama used when shooting the interior scenes at the Stone house inside a studio soundstage.

The combination of the exterior locations photographed on the East Coast and the matching interior sequences shot on sets in Los Angeles were brought together seamlessly in post-production.

Upon returning to Los Angeles, the filmmakers “cheated” a few New York locations. The film’s opening scene (in which Meredith and Everett are Christmas shopping) was shot at the Beverly Hills retail outlet of the Manhattan-based Barney’s Department Store. This location presented logistical challenges, because the production had to be out of the store by the start of business at 10AM.

Two-thirds of the film is set inside the Stone family residence. Most of the Los Angeles shooting schedule took place on local soundstages, where the filmmakers built the Stone home interiors. Bezucha drew on his design experience to enhance these studio sets with his characteristic focus on detail.

“To me, the house is the last actor in this film,” says Bezucha. “For over 30 years, Sybil and Kelly Stone raised five kids in this home, and I wanted it to convey a lived-in quality. New England is filled with these weathered homes.” Stewart says she wanted the house to feel like “you can hear the creaks in it.”

Stewart says the Stone domicile reflects the tastes of matriarch Sybil, reflecting her Yankee liberal sensibilities and no-nonsense personality. At the same time, Stewart wanted to convey the presence of a man in the house.

“Kelly and Sybil don’t have a lot of money on his professor’s salary, so they had to improvise when furnishing their home,” says Stewart. “They tend to hold on to things until they fall apart. They don’t redecorate on a regular basis.”

Bezucha and Stewart wanted the set to establish what life was like in the Stone household, with each room reflecting the personality of its occupant(s). For example, Amy lives in the attic because of her rebellious nature. Everett’s room is tidy; his framed Most Valuable Player of 1982 award suggests a room frozen in time. These touches are all part of Bezucha’s intent to create a nuanced and realistic world.

The time and care lavished on the production design and sets proved to be enormously rewarding to everyone who had worked on the film. Diane Keaton's reaction to the Stone house set, had the cast and crew laughing all day.

"This is fabulous," she enthused. "But I wouldn't live here if you paid me."

Like the house, the clothes have a history. Bezucha was as hands-on in the creation of the costumes as he was in the design of the sets for the Stone's home.

Despite its holiday setting, the filmmakers wanted to avoid the obvious traditional reds and greens that are commonly associated with Christmas. Instead, they selected a muted color palette for the set, backgrounds and costumes.

"Thomas showed me some photographs of Victorian Christmas cards that had a warm, burnished, golden ruddy feeling to them," recalls Costume Designer Shay Cunliffe. "He wanted no blue tones in the film's wardrobe, which surprised me because it meant I couldn't put a pair of blue jeans on any of the actors. I ended up fitting Luke Wilson – whose character Ben cried out for blue jeans – in corduroy pants.

"It was exciting to work with Diane Keaton, Sarah Jessica Parker, Claire Danes and Rachel McAdams, who all have a great sense of style," Cunliffe continues. "I worked closely with each actress to find a look that felt like her character. The end result is that they didn't feel like they were wearing costumes."

Sarah Jessica Parker told Cunliffe that she wanted her wardrobe to be organic to Meredith's personality. Cunliffe suggested that Parker wear fashions from designer Narciso Rodriguez, a master of exquisite, minimal tailoring. Parker, who knew Rodriguez, agreed.

Shay Cunliffe's research for Diane Keaton's character, Sybil, led her to study the photographs of a variety of prominent strong women in contemporary culture, including writer Susan Sontag, sculptor Bridget Riley and artist Louise Bourgeois. The common thread was that none were recognized for the details of their clothes, but rather for their iconoclastic, free-thinking strength.

"Sybil as a synthesis of those great women writers and artists of the past," says Cunliffe. "She always is true to her sense of style, which remains the same whether she is gardening or attending a cocktail party."

THE FAMILY STONE takes place over three days, during one of which Sybil wears a bathrobe. After looking through the selection of robes from Cunliffe, Keaton impulsively pulled a Beacon bathrobe out of her own closet. Although Cunliffe was wary of how this large, well-worn robe would look on camera, she acknowledged that – solely on the basis of Keaton’s unique style – the actress made it look “fabulously Sybil.” They later added to Sybil’s wardrobe a pair of Keaton’s ragged pajama bottoms, slippers, socks and her husband’s cardigan sweater, achieving an appearance that suggested layers of comfort.

Bringing these elements together was a labor of love for Writer-Director Thomas Bezucha, Producer Michael London, and the film’s cast and crew. As they put the finishing touches on THE FAMILY STONE, Bezucha and London took time out to reflect on the film.

“THE FAMILY STONE is about love and being human,” says Bezucha. “It is really difficult to fall in love. And people tend to do stupid things when they are around a closed environment like their family. Those are the people who know us best and love us most, yet they are also the ones who hurt us the most. This movie explores those complex intra-familial connections.”

“It becomes clear while watching these characters, that they are striving to accept each other, and to love each other,” adds Michael London. “They are searching to find something within each other.”

“Ultimately, I want to entertain audiences,” concludes Thomas Bezucha. “I hope audiences find it funny because they recognize themselves in this eclectic collection of often impulsive and spontaneous characters. It’s possible to find humor in virtually any situation.”

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

THOMAS BEZUCHA (Director, Writer) grew up in Amherst, Massachusetts, a New England academic community much like that depicted in THE FAMILY STONE. He attended the Otis Parsons School of Design in New York where he studied fashion.

Prior to embarking on his filmmaking career, Bezucha served as Vice President of Creative Services for COACH, where he helped reshape the company’s brand and image.

Before that, he spent eight years with POLO/Ralph Lauren, where, as Senior Director of Creative Services, he set visual direction for interiors, windows and store design worldwide.

Bezucha's first feature film, "Big Eden," was a festival favorite in 2000, winning over 15 festival awards and receiving a GLAAD nomination upon its theatrical release. Bezucha was selected by Variety as one of its "10 Screenwriters to Watch" in 2000 for "Big Eden" and its unusual take on small town life in rural Montana.

MICHAEL LONDON (Producer) received an Academy-Award nomination and Golden Globe and Independent Spirit Awards for Fox Searchlight Pictures' "Sideways." London began his work on "Sideways" in 1998 after reading the then-unpublished novel of the same name by Rex Pickett. In 1999 the book attracted the attention of writer-director Alexander Payne, who had just completed "Election." But it was four years before Payne's schedule would allow him to begin shooting the project.

In the meantime, London produced two of 2003's most acclaimed films: "Thirteen," released by Fox Searchlight, and "The House of Sand and Fog." London found "Thirteen," which Catherine Hardwicke co-wrote with Nikki Reed, and nurtured the uncompromising mother-daughter story of sex, drugs and adolescent angst, which became one of 2004's most honored independent films. The film won the Sundance Film Festival Director's Award, and earned many other accolades, including an Oscar nomination for Holly Hunter and Golden Globe nominations for Hunter and Evan Rachel Wood. London was nominated (with Catherine Hardwicke) for an Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature.

"The House of Sand and Fog," writer/director Vadim Perelman's adaptation of Andrew Dubus' novel of the same name, won the National Board of Review Award for Best Debut Director, and its many other honors include three Oscar nominations and a Golden Globe nomination. London earned a second Independent Spirit Award nomination (with Vadim Perelman) for Best First Feature.

London, who has an overall producing deal with Paramount Pictures, also produced "Forty Days and Forty Nights," starring Josh Hartnett, and "The Guru."

London was executive vice president of production at Twentieth Century Fox. He

began his career as a reporter and pop music critic for the *Los Angeles Times* in the 1980s.

JENNIFER OGDEN (Executive Producer), an Emmy-winning film and television producer, began her career in her hometown of Natchez, Mississippi.

Ogden's longtime passion for the performing arts led her to Millsaps College, where she studied speech and theatre before being accepted to the prestigious Neighborhood Playhouse School of Theatre's two-year intensive acting course, in New York City.

While landing roles in off-Broadway theatre and television commercials, Ogden continued in work on film productions, including "Annie Hall," "Manhattan," and "Hair."

Ogden then began a ten-year association with filmmaker Sidney Lumet and his producing partner, Burt Harris. Ogden was Production Coordinator on "Just Tell Me What You Want" and "Prince of the City," Production Manager on "Death Trap" and "The Verdict," Associate Producer of "Garbo Talks," and Executive Producer on "Family Business."

Other film credits include "How Stella Got Her Groove Back," "Prelude To a Kiss," "Manhattan Project," "Suspect," and "Gilda Radner Live."

Ogden also spent four years at Twentieth Century Fox as a vice president in its film division.

Ogden won an Emmy as the Supervising Producer on "Tuesdays with Morrie," based on the best-selling novel; the film received a Humanitas Award, Directors Guild and Screen Actors Guild Award, and Emmy Awards for Best Actor, Best Performance in a Supporting Role, and Best Picture.

JONATHAN BROWN (Director of Photography) was Cinematographer on "The Pink Panther" (2006), "Cheaper by the Dozen" and "Without a Paddle." Other film credits include "House Hunting," "Just Married," "The Third Wheel," "Big Fat Liar," "Backroads" and "Pros and Cons." He has also worked on several commercials.

Brown began his movie career as a Steadicam operator on the films “Mumford,” “A Civil Action,” “Apt Pupil,” “Slums of Beverly Hills,” “Bulworth,” “Gattaca,” “Sling Blade,” and many others. The indispensable Steadicam was invented in the early ‘70s by Brown’s father, Garrett Brown, and it forever expanded the limits of cinematic motion.

Working with the renowned cinematographers Conrad Hall and Vittorio Storaro helped shaped Brown’s passion for visual story telling, and inspired him to explore the relationship between light, shadow, and emotion on the screen.

JANE ANN STEWART (Production Designer) collaborated with director Alexander Payne on his films “Sideways,” “About Schmidt,” “Election,” and “Citizen Ruth.” Stewart’s talents were also showcased in director Allison Anders’ “Gas, Food, Lodging” and “Mi Vida Loca.” Other film credits include “Breast Men,” “Candyman,” and “Bickford Smecklers Cool Ideas.”

A native of Texas, Stewart attended school in Paris at the Sorbonne, U.S.I.U in San Diego and London, and the Oakland Art Institute. She graduated Berkeley with a B.A. in Fine Arts.

JEFFREY FORD (Editor) began his editing career as an assistant working on the films “Little Odessa,” “Assassins,” and “As Good As It Gets.” He was Editor on “The Yards,” “One Hour Photo” and “Shattered Glass.”

Ford attended the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television.

SHAY CUNLIFFE (Costume Designer) trained at the University of Bristol in England, and she began her design career in the New York theatre.

Her first job as Costume Designer was on “Mrs. Soffel” starring Diane Keaton and Mel Gibson. Shay later worked with Gibson on his directorial debut, “The Man Without A Face.”

Cunliffe has collaborated with other noted filmmakers such as John Sayles (“Lone Star,” “Limbo,” “Silver City”), Gary Sinise (“Of Mice And Men,” “Miles From Home”), Taylor Hackford (“Dolores Claiborne,” Bound By Honor”), Rob Reiner (“The Story of

Us,” “Alex and Emma”), Steve Zaillian (“A Civil Action”), Michael Apted (“Enough”), Brad Silberling (“City of Angels”) and David Mamet (“Spartan”). Her most recent project was “Spanglish,” directed by James L. Brooks.

Cunliffe tapped into her musical theatre roots when she teamed with Rob Marshall on the television movie version of “Annie.” Her work on “Annie” was honored with a Costume Designers Guild Award and an Emmy nomination.

She returned to England to work on the coming-of-debutante-age fairy tale, “What a Girl Wants,” directed by Dennie Gordon.

ABOUT THE CAST

CLAIRE DANES (Julie Morton) stars in Anand Tucker's “Shopgirl” opposite Steve Martin and Jason Schwartzman. Martin wrote the screenplay based on his novella about a woman (Danes) who sells gloves and other accessories at Neiman-Marcus. Feeling useless in her job and unfulfilled by a romantic relationship, she is bowled over when a rich, divorced older man (Martin) enters her life.

Danes starred in Richard Eyre's acclaimed drama "Stage Beauty" opposite Billy Crudup. "Stage Beauty" was produced by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal and Hardy Justice.

Danes starred opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger and Nick Stahl in the box-office hit "Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines" for director Jonathan Mostow. Danes played Kate Brewster, the love interest of John Connor (Stahl). Danes starred opposite Susan Sarandon, Jeff Goldblum, Ryan Phillippe and Kieran Culkin in Burr Steer's critically acclaimed independent film "Igby Goes Down." She appeared in Stephen Daldry's Academy Award winning drama, "The Hours" opposite Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman, Julianne Moore, Allison Janney, Ed Harris and Toni Collette.

Danes earned critical acclaim for her performances in Gillian Armstrong's "Little Women" as 'Beth' opposite Winona Ryder, Susan Sarandon, and Kirsten Dunst; and in Baz Luhrman's "William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet," where she starred as 'Juliet' opposite Leonardo DiCaprio's 'Romeo.'

Danes first caught critics' and audiences' attention in Ed Zwick and Marshall Herskovitz's acclaimed series, "My So Called Life." Danes earned an Emmy nomination and a Golden Globe Award for her role as Angela Chase.

Danes' other film credits include "Brokedown Palace," "The Mod Squad," "Les Miserable," "Polish Wedding," "The Rainmaker," "U Turn," "To Gillian On Her 37th Birthday," "How to Make an American Quilt," "I Love You, I Love You Not," and "Home For The Holidays."

DIANE KEATON (Sybil Stone), since her screen debut in "Lovers and Other Strangers," has been a versatile actress, director and producer. She has appeared in over twenty-five movie classics, including "The Godfather" trilogy; "Looking for Mr. Goodbar"; "Annie Hall," for which she received a best actress Academy Award; and the smash hits "Father of the Bride" and "The First Wives Club."

Keaton also received Academy Award nominations for her role in the film "Reds" and for her poignant performance in "Marvin's Room."

She earned praise as a director, beginning with her work on "Heaven" and culminating with the critically acclaimed "Unstrung Heroes."

Last year, Keaton won a Golden Globe Award for her performance in "Something's Gotta Give," written and directed by Nancy Meyers, also starring, Jack Nicholson.

As a producer, Keaton is proud to have worked with Gus Van Sant on his critically acclaimed film "Elephant," which won the Palm d'Or at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival. She starred in and executive produced the Lifetime channel television movie "On Thin Ice," which dealt with a mother's methamphetamine addiction, for which Keaton won a Prism Award for her performance. Keaton directed and executive produced the TV pilot "Pasadena" for Fox Television, which aired fall 2004. She also directed and co-starred in "Hanging Up," with Meg Ryan, Lisa Kudrow and Walter Matthau, and she starred in "The Other Sister," directed by Garry Marshall.

Keaton recently edited a book, for Lookout and Powerhouse books, showcasing her collection of amateur clown paintings, entitled Clown Paintings.

RACHEL McADAMS (Amy Stone), several years ago, was living in Canada trying to launch her acting career. Practically overnight, she captured the attention of Hollywood, landing the starring role in a major studio comedy, “The Hot Chick,” released in 2002.

McAdams landed the female lead opposite Ryan Gosling in “The Notebook.” The film was directed by Nick Cassavettes and also starred Gena Rowlands, Sam Shepard, Joan Allen, James Garner, and James Marsden. Based on the best-selling Nicholas Sparks novel of the same name, “The Notebook” is about a young man and young woman who are reunited after World War II. The story of the couple is told in flashbacks by an elderly man (Garner) to the love of his life (Rowlands), who is reading their love story from a cherished notebook.

McAdams starred opposite Lindsay Lohan in “Mean Girls,” written by “Saturday Night Live’s” Tina Fey, produced by Lorne Michaels, and directed by Mark Waters (Freaky Friday).

McAdams stars in “The Wedding Crashers,” which became one of 2005’s biggest hits. Her next project was “Red Eye,” a thriller directed by Wes Craven. “Red Eye” is about a woman (McAdams) who is held captive on an airplane by a stranger (Cillian Murphy) who threatens to kill her family unless she helps him arrange the assassination of a powerful politician.

Other projects include “Perfect Pie,” for which McAdams was nominated for a Genie Award (Canada’s equivalent of an Academy Award), and “Slings and Arrows,” for which McAdams received a Gemini award (Canada’s equivalent of an Emmy) in 2004.

Born in Canada, McAdams was raised in a small town just outside Toronto. At the age of four, she took up figure skating and skated competitively throughout high school. McAdams always knew she wanted to be an actress, but she found it difficult to pursue her dream in a town without a community theater. When she was 13, a summer theater camp came to town and she was soon performing in productions of Shakespeare.

McAdams graduated with honors with a BFA degree in Theater from York University, where she appeared in numerous student films and stage productions.

DERMOT MULRONEY (Everett Stone) is in production on “Griffin and Phoenix,” in which he stars opposite Amanda Peet. The film, written and directed by Ed Stone, is a poignantly funny love story about two people who face a seemingly insurmountable obstacle that may stand between them and a last chance at love.

Mulroney stars with Diane Lane in the romantic comedy “Must Love Dogs.” He starred opposite Debra Messing in the romantic comedy “The Wedding Date,” and with Josh Lucas and Jamie Bell in director David Gordon Green’s “Undertow.”

Mulroney appeared in Alexander Payne’s “About Schmidt,” and in “The Safety of Objects,” an ensemble film adapted from the A.M. Homes novel of the same name.

His credits also include “My Best Friend’s Wedding,” “Lovely and Amazing,” “Trixie,” “Goodbye Lover,” “Where the Money Is,” “Trigger Effect,” “Kansas City,” “Copycat,” “Living in Oblivion” and “How To Make An American Quilt.”

Mulroney’s earlier work includes “Longtime Companion,” “Where the Day Takes You,” “Samantha,” “Staying Together,” “The Thing Called Love,” “Young Guns,” “Point of No Return,” “Bad Girls,” “Sunset” and “Career Opportunities.”

For television, Mulroney appeared in a multi-episode guest-starring role on “Friends,” the HBO film “Long Gone,” the four hour drama “Family Pictures,” the film “The Heart of Justice”; the movie-of-the-week “Daddy”; “Unconquered,” in which he starred as football and track star Richard Flowers; “Sin of Innocence”; and the ABC After School Special, “Toma-The Drug Knot.”

CRAIG T. NELSON (Kelly Stone) is an actor, writer, director and producer. Last year, audiences got to “hear” a new side of Nelson: he voiced ‘Bob Paar,’ or as the character was known in his superhero days, ‘Mr. Incredible,’ in the Oscar winning animated hit “The Incredibles.”

Nelson starred as ‘Jack Mannion’ in the series “The District,” a drama inspired by the experiences of real-life police crime fighter Jack Maple. “The District” aired for four seasons, 2000-2004. Nelson was Co-Executive Producer and directed several episodes of “The District.”

In 1997, Nelson completed his eighth and final season on “Coach,” starring as ‘Hayden Fox.’ He directed numerous episodes and received three Emmy nominations –

in 1990, 1991 and 1992 – for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series. He won an Emmy for the 1991-1992 season, and he received four Golden Globe nominations for the series.

Nelson made his Broadway debut as ‘Nat Miller’ in Eugene O’Neill’s "Ah, Wilderness!" at the Vivian Beaumont Theater/Lincoln Center, in the spring of 1998. The show played to rave reviews during its limited run.

Nelson began his career as a writer/performer on the “Lohman and Barkley Show,” and he won a Los Angeles Emmy Award for the show. He also wrote for “The Alan King Special” and “The Tim Conway Show.”

He guest starred on “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” and on “Private Benjamin.” Nelson starred in the critically acclaimed series “Call to Glory” and directed its final episode.

Nelson’s television movies include Showtime’s award winning “Dirty Pictures,” a true story based on the nation’s first obscenity trial involving a museum and its director, who was put on trial for exhibiting the controversial Robert Mapplethorpe photographs. It won the 2000 Golden Globe for Miniseries or Movie Made for Television.

Nelson starred in the television film “Ride with the Wind,” a story of hope, discovery and recovery that Nelson scripted. Nelson also was Executive Producer under the banner of his Family Tree Productions, in association with Hearst Entertainment.

Craig T. Nelson/Family Tree Productions acquired the rights to several projects, including that of the life and times of five-time land speed record holder Craig Breedlove. Nelson will write the screenplay and executive produce. The feature project will focus on Breedlove's achievements during the 1960s.

Other feature film acting credits include “The Skulls,” “All Over Again,” “Devil’s Advocate,” “Ghosts of Mississippi,” "I'm Not Rappaport," "Poltergeist" and "Poltergeist II: The Other Side," "Action Jackson," "The Killing Fields," "Silkwood" and "The Osterman Weekend.”

Nelson became enthralled with the art of auto racing when he participated in the 1991 Toyota Pro Celebrity Grand Prix. He formed Screaming Eagles Racing Enterprise in 1992. The team was disbanded in 1998.

In 1999, Nelson was a guest driver with Paul Gentilozzi's Rocket Racing Sports Trans Am team. He drove a Corvette in the 100 BF Goodrich Tires Trans-Am Series Race at Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach, and in the Tenneco Detroit Grand Prix.

SARAH JESSICA PARKER (Meredith Morton) won an Emmy award for Best Actress for her role as 'Carrie Bradshaw' on the hit HBO series "Sex and the City." She was also awarded a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004, and she won a Screen Actors Guild Award in 2001. Parker received a total of five Emmy nominations for her work on the series, which received the Golden Globe Award for Outstanding Comedy Series three years in a row, in 2000, 2001, and 2002, and she was honored with an Emmy for Outstanding Comedy Series in 2001. Parker was also an Executive Producer on the show.

Parker stars in the upcoming romantic comedy "Failure to Launch," opposite Matthew McConaughey. Future projects also include the comedy "Slammer," to be directed by Adam Shankman, in which Parker will play a pushy publicist who's wrongly imprisoned on the charge she took fashion freebies meant for clients and turned them over to knockoff artists for mass production. Parker will also star in and produce "Spinning Into Butter," an independent adaptation of Rebecca Gilman's play. Stage director Mark Brokaw is making his feature debut and Norman Twain and Lou Pitt will produce with Parker.

Parker's notable film credits include "State and Main," "Dudley Do-Right" "Til There Was You," "Mars Attacks," "Extreme Measures," "If Lucy Fell," "The First Wives Club," "Substance of Fire," in which she recreated her off-Broadway role from the Jon Robin Baitz play, "Miami Rhapsody," "Ed Wood," "Hocus Pocus," "Striking Distance," "Honeymoon in Vegas" – and her breakthrough role as 'SanDeE*' in "L.A. Story" opposite Steve Martin.

Parker's early motion picture credits include "Flight of the Navigator," "Girls Just Want To Have Fun," "Footloose," "First Born," "Somewhere Tomorrow" and "Rich Kids."

Parker first gained recognition for her work in the popular television series "Square Pegs," which continues to air in syndication. Her other television credits

include the film "In the Interest of the Children," "The Ryan White Story," "Dadah is Death, the critically hailed "A Year in the Life" series and mini-series, "Twist of Fate" and "The Room Upstairs."

On stage, Parker starred in David Lindsay-Abaire's s quirky comedy "Wonder of the World" at New York's Manhattan Theater Club, for which she received a Drama Desk nomination. She performed in a successful run in the Tony nominated Broadway production of "Once Upon a Mattress."

Earlier, she starred with Matthew Broderick in "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," and she starred in A.R. Gurney's "Sylvia," which had a sold out run in New York's Manhattan Theater Club. She appeared on Broadway in "The Innocents," directed by Harold Pinter, co-starring Claire Bloom. She also appeared in the Off-Broadway play "By Strouse," and as the title role in a Broadway production of "Annie."

She earned rave reviews for her work in the Off-Broadway production of "The Heidi Chronicles," plus "Wrestlers," and the Ensemble Studio Theater's One Act Marathon of "April Snow."

Born in Nelsonville, Ohio and raised in Cincinnati, Parker appeared in her first television special, "The Little Match Girl," at age eight. She studied ballet with the Cincinnati Ballet and American Ballet Theater, and sang with the Metropolitan Opera.

Parker is the National Ambassador for the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. In 1995, she received the American Civil Liberties Union Award.

LUKE WILSON (Ben Stone) made his directorial and writing debut with the romantic comedy "The Wendell Baker Story," in which he stars. The film also features Owen Wilson, Eva Mendes, Will Ferrell, Eddie Griffin, Harry Dean Stanton, Seymour Cassel and Kris Kristofferson. His oldest brother, Andrew Wilson, co-directed the film with Luke.

Wilson made his acting debut in the critically acclaimed independent film "Bottle Rocket." The film was written and directed by Wes Anderson and co-written by Luke's brother, Owen, who also co-starred. Following "Bottle Rocket," Luke Wilson went on to

appear in various cameo and supporting roles before winning lead roles in "Dog Park" and in "Home Fries."

Wilson re-teamed with Owen Wilson and Wes Anderson for 1998's "Rushmore," which appeared on many critics' top ten lists, and then in Anderson's "The Royal Tenenbaums," in which Wilson appeared with an all-star cast that included Gene Hackman, Anjelica Huston, Gwyneth Paltrow, Ben Stiller, and Bill Murray. In 2003, Wilson co-starred with Vince Vaughn and Will Ferrell in the hit comedy "Old School." Other recent film credits include "Alex & Emma" and "Masked & Anonymous."

Wilson starred in the hit comedy, "Blue Streak," and in "Committed," which was nominated for a Grand Jury Prize at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival. He appeared in the smash hit "Charlie's Angels" (and its sequel, "Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle"), and he starred opposite Reese Witherspoon in "Legally Blonde" (and its sequel, "Legally Blonde: Red, White and Blue").

His other upcoming films include a comedy for Twentieth Century Fox, "Idiocracy," and "Mini's First Time," in which he stars opposite Alec Baldwin, Carrie-Anne Moss and Jeff Goldblum. Wilson is currently in production on "Hoot," and he will next star in the Regency Enterprises comedy "Super Ex," opposite Uma Thurman.

©2005 Twentieth Century Fox. All rights reserved. Property of Fox.
Permission is hereby granted to newspapers and periodicals to reproduce this
text in articles publicizing the distribution of the Motion Picture.
All other use is strictly prohibited, including sale, duplication, or other transfers of this material.
This press kit, in whole or in part, must not be leased, sold, or given away