PIECES OF A WOMAN

Directed by Kornél Mundruczó

Starring Vanessa Kirby, Shia LaBeouf, Molly Parker, Sarah Snook, Iliza Shlesinger, Benny Safdie, Jimmie Falls, Ellen Burstyn

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

When an unfathomable tragedy befalls a young mother (Vanessa Kirby), she begins a year-long odyssey of mourning that touches her husband (Shia LaBeouf), her mother (Ellen Burstyn), and her midwife (Molly Parker). Director Kornél Mundruczó (White God, winner of the Prix Un Certain Regard Award, 2014) and partner/screenwriter Kata Wéber craft a deeply personal meditation and ultimately transcendent story of a woman learning to live alongside her loss.

SYNOPSIS

Martha and Sean Carson (Vanessa Kirby, Shia LaBeouf) are a Boston couple on the verge of parenthood whose lives change irrevocably during a home birth at the hands of a flustered midwife (Molly Parker), who faces charges of criminal negligence. Thus begins a year-long odyssey for Martha, who must navigate her grief while working through fractious relationships with her husband and her domineering mother (Ellen Burstyn), along with the publicly vilified midwife whom she must face in court. From director Kornél Mundruczó (White God, winner of the Prix Un Certain Regard Award, 2014), with artistic support from executive producer Martin Scorsese, and written by Kata Wéber, Mundruczó’s partner, comes a deeply personal, searing domestic aria in exquisite shades of grey and an ultimately transcendent story of a woman learning to live alongside her loss.

LONG SYNOPSIS

From director Kornél Mundruczó (White God, winner of the Prix Un Certain Regard Award, 2014) and partner/screenwriter Kata Wéber comes a deeply personal meditation and ultimately transcendent story of a woman learning to live alongside loss.

Martha (Vanessa Kirby) and Sean (Shia LeBeouf) are a Boston couple eagerly anticipating the arrival of their first child, a girl. Having planned for a home birth, Martha becomes concerned when she goes into labor only to learn that her midwife is assisting with another delivery and is unavailable. After a replacement, Eva, (Molly Parker) arrives instead, Martha chooses to place her trust in the woman who has both a calm demeanor and years of experience in her field. However, unexpected complications arise that put Martha’s baby in extreme distress. By the time paramedics arrive at the home she and Sean share, it’s too late. The infant is gone.

That unfathomable tragedy sends Martha on a year-long odyssey of mourning that touches her husband, her mother (Academy Award®-winner Ellen Burstyn), her sister and cousin (Iliza Shlesinger and Sarah Snook)—and the midwife. As Martha struggles to move through the world burdened by profound sorrow and a broken heart, she is greeted at every turn by societal pressures and familial expectations that she behave according to certain proscribed rituals. Yet
even though her interpersonal relationships begin to fray, Martha grieves in her own way, living her experience on her own terms and remaining true to herself.

An empathetic, elliptical tale beautifully told, PIECES OF A WOMAN examines the ways in which our darkest moments shape who we become and how radical acts of forgiveness can provide a true path toward peace.

Directed by Hungarian filmmaker Kornél Mundruczó from a script by partner/screenwriter Kata Wéber and executive produced by Martin Scorsese, PIECES OF A WOMAN stars Vanessa Kirby, Shia LeBeouf, Molly Parker, Sarah Snook, Iliza Shlesinger, Benny Safdie, Jimmie Fails and Ellen Burstyn. A BRON Studios production.

FILMMAKER STATEMENT

Is it possible to survive if you have lost the one you loved the most? Where do you turn when you have nowhere to seemingly turn to? My wife and I wanted to share one of our most personal experiences with audiences through a story of an unborn child, with the faith that art can be the best medicine for pain. Are we going to be the same after a tragedy as we always were? Could we have partners in the free fall of grief? One’s world can feel upside down and so difficult to orient to. With PIECES OF A WOMAN, we wanted to form an authentic story about tragedy and learning to live alongside that grief. Loss steps beyond the boundaries of understanding or control for all of us, but it comes with the ability to be reborn.

ABOUT THE FILM

The incredibly personal and profound story of one woman’s experiences in the aftermath of the heartbreaking death of her newborn daughter, PIECES OF A WOMAN began its journey to the screen nearly three years ago, when acclaimed Hungarian playwright and screenwriter Kata Wéber began to write emotional character sketches depicting conversations between a mother and her adult daughter that were shaped by grief. Those early scenes eventually grew to become a play, also titled PIECES OF A WOMAN, first produced for the Polish stage and directed by Wéber’s partner Kornél Mundruczó. The story was broken into two acts—a home birth that goes tragically awry, and a family dinner that explodes into confrontation and recriminations.

Although both Wéber and Mundruczó felt that the play stood on its own as a powerful piece of work, they also believed that the subject matter and the themes that it touched upon merited further exploration. “It felt like a bigger story—it could go further, it could go deeper,” Wéber says. “I wanted to spend some more time with this material, and I somehow wanted to feel not just the main characters, but the people around them, the whole family and society.”
Wéber, herself a mother (she and Mundruczó have one child together), began to read testimonies from women who had suffered miscarriages or whose infants had died, and she became drawn to the ways in which they dealt with loss. “I found all of those stories so captivating and so powerful,” she says. “Every one of them had a different way to grieve, and every one of them explained how isolated they felt. Everyone around you, they want you to move on. They want you to be the same person, but how could you ever be the same person? This question of perspective, this is what I wanted to talk about.”

Her own experiences also fed into the expanded narrative, though Wéber prefers not to elaborate on the specific circumstances of her personal loss, feeling that “real art is never supposed to be taken word-by-word because it can never be illustrative, only suggestive,” she says.

“With this story, I wanted to speak about the absence of an unborn child,” Wéber continues. “The isolation that they create around us, that the person we have the most real connection with is not present in this world, while their existence is indisputable. This is what my story is really about and in reality it is part of my story and through me also many women’s. I wanted to depict the emotional reality of this, to capture this without telling my experience as is. On the other hand, I do know what it feels like to admit you won’t get over losing someone, while you will also never be the same as you were before the tragedy.”

In creating Martha, she invested the character with some of her own traits: both women are the daughters of Holocaust survivors whose perspectives on coping with tragedy are unique and immutable. “Usually an artist talks about himself or herself in everything she or he makes, I think,” Wéber says. “I never had a tragic home birth, but I wanted to talk about my unborn child through this story and all the feelings around this baby. I also wanted to talk about being from a family that survived the Holocaust and having all those memories within the family, all those patterns. I wanted to explore how we process tragedies—how do we manage to survive?”

Having worked abroad as a playwright, Wéber decided to write her PIECES OF A WOMAN screenplay in English. Martha’s story, she felt, was at once singular and universal and would easily lend itself to cross-cultural translation. “Not all material has the capacity to work in a different culture,” she says. “But when I wrote the script, I showed it to some friends first in Germany and then in England, then in America—the reactions I got gave me the courage to continue.”

Mundruczó, who had read and responded to Wéber’s earliest drafts, also encouraged her to refine the screenplay, sensing the potential for another cinematic collaboration; the filmmakers had previously worked together on such celebrated projects as the Cannes Film Festival’s Un Certain Regard Award-winner White God, one of five films Mundruczó’s had screen at Cannes.
Mundruczó had been casting about for some time for a project that could serve as his English-language debut, leading to several false-starts in Hollywood. PIECES OF A WOMAN offered the director the sort of script he had been looking for—one that would allow him to bring his signature artistic sensibility to a challenging, emotional drama. “I don’t feel any disharmony between myself and this movie,” he says.

Similarly, when producer Ashley Levinson, who also serves as Chief Strategy Officer at BRON Studios, first encountered Wéber’s screenplay, she felt deeply moved, and she sensed in it the potential to bring to light the sort of important story that is rarely told on screen. “As a mother of a young child, I remained amazed by all the small things that must go right to have a healthy child—I remember being pregnant and doing everything possible to increase that likelihood,” Levinson says. “And when I read Martha’s story, I empathized with her and the many women I know that have experienced this kind of tragedy. It kept swirling in my head—it felt like a conversation that we should be having more with women and people that suffered loss to begin to heal.”

Levinson championed the project inside BRON and found her colleagues shared her enthusiasm about the creative opportunities afforded by the material. Soon, financing was in place, Kevin Turen (Arbitrage, Euphoria) had signed on to produce the project along with Levinson, and PIECES OF A WOMAN was on its way to the screen. “From the first moment I read Kata’s screenplay, I felt that it was a beautiful story comprised of complex and nuanced characters that deeply resonated with me,” offers Turen. “It struck a real emotional chord, and I knew instantly that this was a story that I wanted to be involved with telling.”

“I think it’s important to shed light on salient conversations that are often times very difficult to have, especially surrounding the aspect of loss,” Turen continues. “We all process and handle grief and trauma differently. There is also the notion of guilt and blame that can be assigned to oneself or to another party. These are all deep human emotions and part of the larger idea of just trying to contextualize a painful moment, and whether that may possibly bring some semblance of closure—whether it is specifically the unbearable loss of a child or it’s some other kind of emotionally painful circumstance, these feelings and sentiments are so universal.”

In depicting Martha’s experiences as she delivers her baby and then must find a way forward through her grief after the child’s death, PIECES OF A WOMAN required a gifted actress in its demanding lead role. When the script made its way to English actress Vanessa Kirby, best known to American audiences for her award-winning portrayal of Princess Margaret on the acclaimed drama The Crown, she immediately felt a connection to the character of Martha. She had been looking for a project that would challenge her for some time—with Wéber’s sensitive screenplay, she found exactly what she’d been seeking. “I read it in, like, an hour, and I realized
I just absolutely had to do it,” Kirby says. “I had been looking for a part that scared me. This completely terrified me, and that’s always a good sign.”

From the start, screenwriter Wéber felt that Kirby had an instinctual grasp on the role. “She was very open,” she says. “Reading the material, she was absolutely enthusiastic about it. For me, Martha is a real hero who dares to defy the expectations of those around her, and I think Vanessa represents this kind of person in real life, too. She reminds me a little bit of the movie stars of the Golden Age of Hollywood somehow. She’s so emotional with a deep inner life.”

Wéber shared with Kirby some of the research that had helped shape the screenplay, and Kirby also spent time with women who had lived through the same sort of tragic loss that Martha suffers in the film. “The more I spoke with them, the more I felt a duty to put something on screen that represented these women’s experiences,” Kirby says. “Really, the film is an ode to grief in a way and what a very individual and lonely experience grieving can be.”

Adds producer Levinson: “While developing the film, we researched the statistics surrounding still births, miscarriages and sudden infant death. It was astounding to read about how prevalent this is within families across the country and the world. Yet I don’t think we’ve addressed or supported how truly complicated this experience must be for families—how much responsibility the parents take, how disruptive it must feel for the individuals involved and what we can do to support healing.”

Critically acclaimed actor Shia LeBeouf joined the production as Martha’s partner Sean, a construction worker who is devoted to her and delighted at the prospect of welcoming their child into the world. Although their relationship begins in a place of mutual respect and love, the tragedy forever changes the trajectory of their romance.

“Sean’s character is one of the dearest to me,” Wéber says. “As an engineer who builds bridges, he is always on the lookout for meeting points. There is something metaphorical about this to me: someone whose passion is to build bridges, now has to destroy them. I wanted to portray a sensitive man who is locked out of his wife’s love during the grieving period for some incomprehensible reason. This shakes him up on many different levels because he is a troubled man who conquered a serious addiction when he met Martha. Sean—in a completely natural way—wears his grief on his sleeve. He would like to share it with others. In contrast to Martha, he mourns in a very classic way, meaning that after the anger and the denial he is able to come to some kind of acceptance.”

LeBeouf has established a well-earned reputation for unwavering commitment to the roles he accepts—when he agreed to play a supporting role in PIECES OF A WOMAN, Mundruczó knew the character of Sean would become a multi-faceted, compelling figure on screen. “It’s a very important role that needs a huge actor to make it alive and not just a secondary figure on the
side of Martha,” the filmmaker says. “What Shia can give to a role—his attention, his passion, his gut, his ideas—it is tremendous. The couple as well, Shia and Vanessa, is, in my opinion, a very sexy couple. I believed their love absolutely.”

Although Sean desperately wants to mourn their loss together, Martha is unable to offer him the solace he seeks. As she retreats further and further into herself, he looks elsewhere for affection and validation, sliding back into the grips of substance abuse after years of sobriety. The fleeting, tenuous nature of their relationship becomes evident—grief destroys their romance. “Sean can’t accept the absurdity of losing someone,” says Mundruczó. “His realization comes when he lets go of this search, which also requires him to adopt a self-destructive mentality. Shia represented this with such deeply spiritual complexity that is very rarely seen on screen.”

The other forceful presence in Martha’s life is her mother, Elizabeth, a wealthy widow and a Holocaust survivor who agrees with virtually none of the choices her daughter has made in her life so far; she strongly disapproves of Sean and of Martha’s decision to have their child at home, though she initially keeps her feelings to herself. In the wake of the tragedy, she becomes increasingly forceful, believing that Martha would recover from the loss of her daughter more quickly if she would only process the event in the way her mother believes is best.

“I love this mother,” Wéber says. “She’s a little bit monstrous. She’s very smart. You could say she’s a cold character, but at the same time, she has a knowledge of survival that she wants to pass on. She has good intentions, but for Martha, her actions are so cruel.” Adds Levinson: “The film touches on a cyclical trauma. Elizabeth experienced a horrendous start to her life in war and is determined to make sure that her children are strong enough to endure any challenges.”

The role went to Emmy, Tony and Academy Award®-winning actress Ellen Burstyn. “She’s a strong woman, and she has her conditioning and her opinions about things,” Burstyn says of the character. “She’s someone who has a clear vision of what’s right and what works and what’s good and wants that for her daughter and doesn’t understand her daughter’s choices.”

“To work with Ellen Burstyn is a huge gift,” says Mundruczó. “She symbolizes everything for me that is the best in American cinema. Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore is a classic movie for us. When we heard that she was interested in the movie, I couldn’t believe it.”

Burstyn offered up her New York home for the filmmakers and Kirby and LeBeouf to gather for several days to review the screenplay and to spend time exploring the scenes together in the late fall of 2019, about five weeks before shooting got underway. “My apartment was the kind of rehearsal space,” Burstyn says. “We talked about the characters a lot and argued about them and went through the birth-giving of the material that you do. It had its labor pains, but they’re very
creative artists, all of these people. So, there was a lot of wrangling, but all smart and sincere and artistically intended. It wasn’t ego. It was work. And it paid off in the end, I think.”

“It was amazing,” Kirby says of those preliminary rehearsals with Burstyn. “Shia and I are both huge fans of her and were completely in awe. She’s got a room with all her awards in it that Shia and I just couldn’t stop staring at. It was so intimidating. But she was so warm and lovely, and we all sat there and had tea and discussed it.”

Separately, Kirby and LeBeouf visited Boston together, finding where Martha and Sean might live and even purchasing items for the nursery their characters set up for the baby. “We did everything we could to make it as real as possible to help you believe what these people had because you don’t get much time with them before everything is lost,” Kirby says, adding, “It’s not really a story about the death of a baby. It’s the story of these two people that it happens to.”

With such respected actors in the key roles, a stellar supporting cast came together quickly: Molly Parker, an Emmy Award®-winner for her work on the political drama House of Cards, was cast as Eve, the midwife who delivers Martha’s baby, and Succession star Sarah Snook as Martha’s cousin, an attorney who pursues legal action against her for negligence at the behest of Martha’s mother. Iliza Shlesinger and actor and filmmaker Benny Safdie were cast as Martha’s sister and brother-in-law, with The Last Black Man in San Francisco writer and star Jimmie Fails in a small but key role as Max.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

PIECES OF A WOMAN was shot in Montreal, Québec, in December of 2019 and January of 2020. Remarkably, the shoot began with what is arguably the film’s most harrowing sequence: the home birth.

Filmmaker Mundruczó and cinematographer Benjamin Loeb, an Independent Spirit Award nominee for his work on the 2018 Nicolas Cage cult thriller Mandy, opted to shoot the extended, nearly 30-minute sequence all in one take. The wildly ambitious approach was designed to help the viewer more keenly feel the range of emotions Martha experiences during the delivery—her elation at the impending arrival of her child, her concern when the midwife she’s expecting can’t be present, the pain of the delivery itself and her abject fear as she grows increasingly terrified for the well-being of her baby. “You have to be with her in that moment,” Mundruczó says. “Her problem is our problem. I did not want any distance between her and the audience.”

Adds Loeb: “We wanted to make time relevant. We liked the idea of connecting the audience to something that’s happening right in front of them, not wanting to hide things and letting it be
exactly what it is. Also, we wanted to give the actors the freedom to use the space in whichever way they wanted.”

Both the director and the cinematographer rejected the idea of handheld camerawork for the sequence, feeling that the approach had been utilized far too many times on screen. Instead, Loeb chose to film the sequence using a Gimbal, which he operated himself—the equipment, though heavy, allowed him to follow the actors from room to room in the ground-floor Montreal apartment that doubled as Martha and Sean’s modest residence. “We found a way to do it that became less mechanical and more human,” Loeb says. “The camera, being spiritual, it was always a little bit below the actors—a perspective that could hypothetically resemble someone’s spirit that would move in a different way.”

Adds Kirby: “Benjamin’s camera was really following us on the journey, almost as if it was the spirit of the baby watching us. That was a really beautiful creative decision.”

For two days prior to shooting, Kirby, LeBeouf and Parker worked with Loeb and Mundruczó to physically block how the action would play out, but they collectively chose to forgo traditional rehearsals to better preserve the spirit of spontaneity for the camera. Kirby and Parker also spent time working with midwife consultant Elan McAllistar, who traveled to Montreal to serve as a consultant on the production.

When cameras finally rolled on the first day, the actors performed the delivery sequence in full three separate times. “It was one of the most challenging days of my life, but it was also one of the best ones I’ve ever had on set,” Kirby says. “You know that if one movement goes off, then you ruin the whole take, but we felt a lot of trust. We didn’t quite know what we were going to say necessarily. We didn’t quite know moment to moment what was going to happen. It was like doing a freeform play really, just going, ‘Ok, Action’ and let the birth happen. It was the most incredible experience.”

Mundruczó encouraged Kirby to give her all to the performance, assuring her that he would tell her if and when she needed to pull back. “I told her just to feel brave and to push the performance to the edge and believe in it,” he says. “What she’s creating there from her body out, it was amazing. I told her many times while we were shooting those scenes, ‘Vanessa, you’re not alone. There’s someone inside you. You are with someone.’ And you completely believe that she’s not alone. You see the unseen. And that’s huge.”

On the second day of the production, the actors and the filmmakers shot two additional takes before moving on. “We wrapped early, and Shia and I sat and drank tea and calmed down a bit,” Kirby says. “We knew something special had happened. From the inside, it was like the greatest pleasure of both our careers.”
The Martha who emerges from that experience is not the woman she was before—and she’s surrounded by well-meaning relatives and friends who cannot begin to comprehend the often-contradictory emotions she’s feeling at any given moment. Her psyche has been shattered into fragments, and even when they are someday pieced together again, they will form a different person. To suggest her sense of extreme dislocation, the filmmakers chose to compose the remainder of the film from moments of Martha’s life.

On Oct. 9, just three weeks after the delivery, she’s confronted in a market by one of her mother’s friends who assures her that she understands what Martha has been through and insists that the incident is the fault of the midwife. We learn, too, that the results of a criminal autopsy are inconclusive. Four weeks later, Nov. 7, Martha has decided to donate her baby’s body to science over the objections of her mother. We also see that Sean and Martha have grown distant. She does not have the capacity to recognize his pain; he can’t fathom the way she’s managed to internalize her own grief.

“I wanted to depict Sean as someone who tries to help and who has the best intentions and who is grieving the way in which you would expect,” Wéber says. “Then Martha has this very, very different view on losing the child, and therefore the gap between them is getting bigger and bigger. Of course, I could have made the choice that this tragedy brings them together again. I didn’t.”

These poignant passages feel like a visual diary, snapshots of Martha’s life that also help chronicle the dissolution of her relationship with Sean. Given the actors’ lived-in, naturalistic performances, Loeb says he and Mundruczó often sought to capture them in a way that felt like non-fiction filmmaking—though in terms of artistic references, they often looked to painters such as the Polish-French artist Balthus or British painter Lucian Freud. “We were put in a position of almost making it as a documentary where the acting and the story was always at the forefront,” Loeb says.

Offers Mundruczó: “After this huge intro, it became a question of how can I use fragmented storytelling to create as much suspense as possible, as much secrecy and as much silence—I wanted you to feel her connection to the lost one. It’s very difficult to create connections to something that is not visible in a movie. That was something we had to work on a lot, to give enough silent space for Martha to establish that connection, to help the audience feel that.”

Kirby was often called upon to portray Martha’s state of mind wordlessly, with aspects of the role verging on silent performance. She’s a witness to the actions of those around her but cannot engage with them—her wounds are simply too raw to expose. “I really had to get in the mindset of somebody who felt so fundamentally that they had failed at the one thing they were supposed
not to and literally cannot allow herself to feel that,” Kirby says. “I wanted to scream and let my feelings out, and instead I had to allow myself to not go there at all because she didn’t. It’s incredibly difficult to live that. You feel trapped and so incredibly alone.”

Adds Wéber: “Everyone around her is waiting for her to break down. This is your instinct—she should break down. I wanted to keep her together as long as possible, so in this sense, it works like a ticking clock. You feel something is coming. Also, because she is so silent in the movie, it adds to this element of wondering when is she going to break down.”

As Martha continues her largely interior journey toward acceptance, life moves on around her—by January, midwife Eve has been charged with negligence, misconduct and manslaughter. Martha’s mother, who views the trial as a means for the family to obtain closure, summons her daughters, their partners and her niece to a dinner at her home. From the start, tensions are high, and finally, emotion spills over as the matriarch demands Martha dig deep to find her inner strength and rise above the tragedy, insisting that she go to court to demand justice on behalf of her lost child.

Like the home birth sequence that opens the film, the nine-minute family dinner scene was shot all in one-take. “That was heavy,” Mundruczó says. “It was a big lesson for me in terms of how can you give the actors enough freedom yet keep everything on board cinematically. There’s such a fragile balance there. If you start to limit them, then it absolutely harms the performances, and without performances, there’s no movie. But at the same time, if you have just performances, and you have no cinematic approach and no higher meaning for something, then it’s senseless. Then it’s psychodrama. To shoot a scene like the family dinner scene, it was a hard balance. It needs a lot of attention and a lot of trust from both sides.”

Burstyn says she felt pressure to deliver Elizabeth’s monologue with perfect conviction. “It was a very tense, very difficult day—there’s no room for error with something like that” she recalls. “Then just before they shot my close-up, Vanessa said to me, ‘Make me go to court.’ It was a wonderful piece of direction because I did the scene and I came to the end, and I knew I hadn’t made her go to court so I kept on going. I don’t even know what I said. Whatever it is, it’s in the film. But I knew by the time I finished, I had made her go to court.”

“It was great because we both come from the theater, so we had so much to share,” Kirby says of Burstyn. “She’s such an inspiration of mine. And we would play with things. We would explore how we thought these two characters would speak to each other—what they have in common. I think they’re very, very similar. And when you have an extremely similar mother and daughter, those relationships are interesting to explore. I found that if they have similar energies, they’re more likely to be antagonistic and combative. And we loved doing that.”
In the end, Martha does go to court, but her presence doesn’t necessarily influence the proceedings in the way that her mother might have anticipated. Rather than helping to secure a conviction, she delivers an impassioned speech about compassion and forgiveness. At last, she shares a glimpse into the pain she’s been feeling over the preceding months and the perspective it’s afforded her. She has no interest in hollow revenge; she wants to find only peace and a path toward healing. That’s the lesson she’s determined she should take away from her child’s brief time in this world. The girl is gone, but not forgotten. She’ll be with Martha always. But no verdict or settlement could ever begin to make up for what she’s lost.

The courtroom speech, Wéber says, was the most difficult passage of dialogue to write for the film—though from the outset of writing PIECES OF A WOMAN, she knew that she wanted Martha to reject the idea of somehow being compensated for her tragedy. “It’s so important in every conflict not to look for compensation,” she says. “Compensation always evokes another conflict. Martha doesn’t want that. That is the seed of peace. Only true heroes can really mean that. People who within their tragedy are able to see from a distance, from another perspective, and say, I do not want revenge, I do not want compensation because I want to move on—this idea interested me from the beginning.”

Mundruczó and Loeb drew inspiration for how to shoot Martha’s courtroom speech from Robert Bresson’s landmark 1962 French film, The Trial of Joan of Arc, which is both spare and restrained. “We did not want it to feel too stagey, to be too Hollywood,” Mundruczó says. “Our idea was just like in music, to be very monotonic. She talks in a very simple language but very human language. Vanessa’s performance there is unbelievable. Everything is on the screen.”

Having the shoot conclude with that sequence, Kirby says, felt like a relief. “Her arc in the movie is really that she keeps it all in until she realizes that in the courtroom for the first time, she’s ready to speak about her experience,” Kirby says. “She says, ‘I understand that there are some things that you can’t replace, and that is part of my life and part of me. And if I can acknowledge and witness it, then that’s ok. It’s better to acknowledge and be with the truth of that than repress it and not want to face it.’”

Playing Martha, sharing her story with the world, having the chance to express one woman’s experience, Kirby says, completely changed her as an actor. “It was the most meaningful experience of my life career-wise so far,” she says. “Both Kata and I wanted to tell this story that hadn’t been told on screen before. The women I found in my research who had been through this, I owe them so much for what I was able to do in the film. I wanted to do right by them.”

Filmmaker Mundruczó hopes that audiences empathize with Martha, that they will share in her tragedy and find strength in her courage and her willingness to forgive. “I felt it would be great
to create something emotional and sharp at the same time,” he says. “What is important for me is the idea that you can find your own way through grief. We have to face these questions.”

Adds producer Turen: “Ultimately, I hope that by viewing this film, it sparks open dialogue between people and possibly even helps someone process emotional wounds that may have never fully healed. Often when someone is going through something traumatic, there is an element of feeling alone in the world. Hopefully, this sheds light on the fact that you aren’t alone, and there is no one way to grieve.”

During the process of making the film, Wéber and Mundruczó say that they each gained new insights into how the loss they experienced together changed them. “There are times when you truly lose the ground under your feet, and you can’t comprehend what happened,” says Mundruczó. “You try to search for answers. Most times, it doesn’t make any sense, and it drives you mad. This is when art provides the perfect platform to express the inexpressible. Art is rational, but also spiritual. Without the process we’ve gone through during making this film, we wouldn’t be who we are now.”

Offers Wéber: “I’m becoming more and more convinced that real artistic qualities are born from fear and frustration. To me this is a step, a weapon, a statement that helps me fight my demons. In this sense, I’m grateful to destiny that allowed this film to be made.”

What Wéber and Mundruczó have together achieved with PIECES OF A WOMAN is so remarkable that cinematic legend Martin Scorsese even agreed to sign on as an executive producer to lend his support to this critically important story. Mundruczó and Scorsese were connected through the film’s Academy Award®-winning composer Howard Shore, whom the Hungarian filmmaker had long admired. Scorsese viewed an early cut of the film and agreed to executive produce.

“Personally, this is a very important connection to me,” Mundruczó says. “It reassured me that personality and auteur cinema have a place in today’s industry. Faith is also a crucial metaphor in the film and that bridges can be built between eras and connect in the present.”

Says Scorsese: “PIECES OF A WOMAN for me was a deep and uniquely moving experience. I was emotionally invested in it from the first scene, and the experience only intensified as I watched, spellbound by the filmmaking and the work of a splendid cast that includes my old colleague Ellen Burstyn. You feel as if you’ve been dropped into the vortex of a family crisis and moral conflict with all its nuances, drawn out with care and compassion but without judgement. Kornél Mundruczó has a fluid, immersive style with the camera that makes it hard to look away, and impossible not to care.”
“It’s lucky to see a movie that takes you by surprise,” Scorsese continues. “It’s a privilege to help it find the wide audience it deserves.”

ABOUT THE CAST

VANESSA KIRBY (Martha) is a BAFTA-award winning actress who started her career in a series of hugely successful theater roles for director David Thacker. She first appeared as Ann in Arthur Miller’s All My Sons for which she received the BIZA Rising Star Award at the Manchester, followed by Henrik Ibsen’s Ghosts. Kirby went on to secure roles in the National Theatre’s Women Beware Women and the West Yorkshire Playhouse’s As You Like It. In 2011, her role in The Acid Test at the Royal Court Theatre received rave reviews.

Kirby made her TV debut in the BBC series The Hour alongside Ben Whishaw and Dominic West. She went on to play Estella in the BBC’s adaption of Great Expectations alongside Ray Winstone, Gillian Anderson and Douglas Booth. She played the lead role of Alice in Ridley Scott’s mini-series adaptation of Kate Mosse’s novel Labyrinth in 2012, and then went on to star in Charlie Countryman alongside Shia LeBeouf, Evan Rachel Wood and Mads Mikkelson. Later that year, Kirby appeared in Three Sisters at the Young Vic, earning rave reviews.

In 2013, Kirby appeared in Richard Curtis’ About Time alongside Domhnall Gleeson, Rachel McAdams and Bill Nighy. In 2014, she also starred in Queen and Country, the hilarious follow-up to John Boorman’s Hope and Glory starring Callum Turner and David Thewlis. In 2014, Kirby won the Best Supporting Actress award at the WhatsOnStage awards for her performance alongside Gillian Anderson and Ben Foster as Stella in A Streetcar Named Desire at The Young Vic.

In 2015, Kirby starred in the Wachowski siblings’ Jupiter Ascending alongside Mila Kunis, Channing Tatum and Eddie Redmayne, and Bone in Throat, which premiered at SXSW in March and also stars Ed Westwick, Tom Wilkinson and Neil Maskell. She starred in BBC2’s highly anticipated one-off drama The Dresser alongside Anthony Hopkins and Sir Ian McKellen. The two-hour drama was based on the play of the same name by Ronald Harwood and directed by Richard Eyre. She also appeared opposite Sean Bean in ITV’s The Frankenstein Chronicles, which tells the story of a fearless detective on the hunt for a crazed killer through the dark recesses of Regency London.

In 2016, Kirby played Yelena in Uncle Vanya at The Almeida Theatre alongside Jessica Brown Findlay, Tobias Menzies, Paul Rhys, Richard Lumsden, Hilton McRae and Ann Queensberry. She then reprised her role as Stella in A Streetcar Named Desire on Broadway. Kirby also starred
in science-fiction film *Kill Command* and in Thea Sharrock’s *Me Before You* alongside Emilia Clarke, Sam Claflin and Charles Dance.

In 2016 and 2017, Kirby starred as Princess Margaret in Netflix’s award-winning series *The Crown*. The first series explores the story of the British Royal family from 1947 to 1955 and Princess Margaret’s ill-fated engagement to Peter Townsend. The second series, set in the 1960s, examines Princess Margaret’s relationship and marriage to photographer Antony Armstrong-Jones (Lord Snowdon). Kirby’s performance as Princess Margaret earned her a Supporting Actress nomination at the British Academy Television Awards 2017, and again in 2018, where she won. Kirby was also nominated in the Supporting Actress Category at the Primetime Emmy Awards® in 2018.

She returned to the big screen in *Mission: Impossible—Fallout* alongside Tom Cruise, Henry Cavill and Rebecca Ferguson; the sixth installment of the film franchise was a box-office hit, pulling in more than $735 million globally. From June to September 2018, Kirby played the titular role in Carrie Cracknell’s *Julie* at London’s National Theatre.

In August 2019, Kirby starred in *Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw*, a spin-off from the *Fast & Furious* franchise; she played Hattie Shaw, an MI6 agent and the sister to Jason Statham’s mercenary character, Deckard Shaw. The cast also included Dwayne Johnson, Idris Elba and Helen Mirren. 2019 also saw Kirby complete filming on the independent film *The World to Come*, which tells the story of two women who forge a close connection despite their isolation in the mid-19th century American frontier. Directed by Mona Fastvold, the film also stars Casey Affleck and Katherine Waterston, and it will compete at this year’s Venice Film Festival in the main competition.

Kirby also completed filming *PIECES OF A WOMAN*, which will also premiere at the Venice Film Festival 2020 in the main competition. She is currently working on the next installment of the *Mission: Impossible* franchise, which is slated for release in 2021.

Kirby is a global ambassador for War Child, a charity that supports children from across the world who are affected by war and conflict.

**SHIA LABEOUF (Sean)** recently received rave reviews for his performance in *Honey Boy*, which premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. The film also marks Shia’s first feature length film as a screenwriter and reunited him with director, Alma Har’el (the two previously collaborated on the documentary, *LoveTrue*, which she directed, and he produced). LaBeouf portrays a law-breaking, alcohol-abusing father who tries to mend his tumultuous relationship with his son (Lucas Hedges & Noah Jupe) over the course of a decade. The film received a Special Jury Award for Vision and Craft at the festival.
LaBeouf can currently be seen in the crime drama, *The Tax Collector*, which was written and directed by David Ayer. In 2019, Shia starred in *The Peanut Butter Falcon* alongside Dakota Johnson, Bruce Dern and Zachary Gottsagen. The film, which follows a young man with Down syndrome who runs away to pursue his dream of becoming a professional wrestler, premiered at last year’s SXSW Film Festival. LaBeouf will next be seen in PIECES OF A WOMAN alongside Vanessa Kirby, directed by Kornél Mundruczó. The film will premiere at this year’s Venice Film Festival. He is also set to co-star in *Don’t Worry Darling* alongside Florence Pugh, Chris Pine and Oliva Wilde, who will also direct and produce the project.

In 2017, LaBeouf starred in the drama *Borg vs. McEnroe*, which shows the rivalry, friendship and personas of Björn Borg and John McEnroe and how they became international superstars, both within the athletic world and mainstream culture. It premiered to rave reviews at the Toronto Film Festival and critics heralded LaBeouf’s performance as “perfection,” “flawless” and “explosive.” Prior to that, he was seen in the critically acclaimed independent film *American Honey*, a coming-of-age drama about a gang of law-breaking teenagers chasing the American dream. His performance earned him a British Independent Film Award nomination for “Best Actor,” a London Critics’ Circle Film Award nomination for Supporting Actor of the Year and an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Supporting Male.

Prior to that, LaBeouf co-starred in the post-apocalyptic thriller *Man Down* alongside Gary Oldman, Jai Courtney and Kate Mara; the war drama *Fury*, directed by David Ayer with Brad Pitt and Logan Lerman; Lars von Trier’s drama, *Nymphomaniac: Vol. 1*, a film about a self-diagnosed nymphomaniac who recounts her erotic experiences; Lars von Trier’s *Nymphomaniac: Vol. 2*; and the suspense drama *Charlie Countryman*, opposite Evan Rachel Wood, Mads Mikkelsen and Melissa Leo.

LaBeouf starred in *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, which marked his third and final turn as the enterprising and heroic Sam Witwicky. From the original *Transformers* released in 2007 (which earned more than $700 million around the world in theatrical release and became the highest grossing DVD of the year) to the second installment in 2009, *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*, (which garnered global receipts upwards of $836 million,) Sam continued to find himself in the middle of a life-and-death struggle between warring robot legions on Earth.

Additional film credits include Robert Redford’s *The Company You Keep*, *Lawless* alongside Tom Hardy, Gary Oldman and Guy Pearce, Oliver Stone’s *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* opposite Michael Douglas, the fourth installment of Steven Spielberg’s “Indiana Jones” series, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, alongside Harrison Ford, D.J. Caruso’s *Eagle Eye*, the Anthony Minghella-scripted segment of *New York, I Love You*, a romantic anthology, the popular thriller *Disturbia*, the Academy Award®-nominated animated film *Surf's

In 2007, LaBeouf was named the Star of Tomorrow by the ShoWest convention of the National Association of Theater Owners, and in February 2008, he was awarded the BAFTA Orange Rising Star Award, which was voted for by the British public. In addition, he was nominated for four Teen Choice Awards for Transformers, winning the Breakout Male Award, the Teen Choice Award for Movie Actor in a Horror/Thriller for his performance in Disturbia as well as a Scream Award. In 2004, he was nominated for the Young Artists Award for Leading Young Actor in a Feature Film and the Breakthrough Male Performance at the MTV Movie Awards for his performance in Holes.

On television, LaBeouf garnered much praise from critics everywhere for his portrayal of Louis Stevens on the Disney Channel’s original series Even Stevens. In 2003, he earned a Daytime Emmy award for Outstanding Performer in a Children’s Series for his work on the highly-rated family show.

In addition to his work in front of the camera, LaBeouf also has directed several projects including music videos for Kid Cudi and Marilyn Manson.

MOLLY PARKER (Eva) received an Emmy Award® nomination for her role as House Whip Jackie Sharp in House of Cards. She stars as Maureen Robinson in the hit Netflix series Lost in Space, which is set to shoot its third and final season later this year. Recent films include Deadwood: The Movie for HBO where she reprised her role as Alma Garret, Josephine Decker’s Madeline’s Madeline, Erroll Morris’ Wormwood opposite Peter Sarsgaard, Stephen King’s 1922, Ewan McGregor’s American Pastoral and the upcoming films Words on Bathroom Walls opposite Charlie Plummer and Andy Garcia, Jockey opposite Clifton Collins Jr. and PIECES OF A WOMAN opposite Shia LaBeouf and Vanessa Kirby. She also wrote and directed the short film Bird, which premiered at multiple film festivals including Toronto and Telluride.

SARAH SNOOK (Suzanne) continues to establish herself as one of Hollywood’s most dynamic actresses. She is set to return as the scene-stealing Siobhan ‘Shiv’ Roy in Season 3 of HBO’s award-winning series Succession, for which she recently received her first Emmy Award® nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series. Most recently, she appeared in Brandon Trost’s comedy An American Pickle with Seth Rogen. HBO Max premiered the film on Aug. 6, 2020, which marked the first original film released by the new streaming service.
On television, she can next be seen in AMC’s anthology drama series *Soulmates* from Emmy®-winning writer Will Bridges and Brett Goldstein. The six-part series takes place 15 years in the future, and each episode will explore a new story, with Snook as the lead role of Nikki in the first episode. The series is slated to premiere Oct. 5, 2020 on AMC.

Previously, Snook starred as the lead in the 2015 Australian drama series *The Beautiful Lie*, which earned her a Logie Award nomination for Most Outstanding Actress as well as the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts nomination for Best Lead Actress in a Television Drama. This marked Snook’s second AACTA nomination in this category, which she previously won for her performance in the 2012 television movie *Sisters of War*. Her additional television credits include an episode of *Black Mirror, The Secret River, The Moodys, Redfern Now, Spirited, Blood Brothers, Packed to the Rafters, My Place* and *All Saints*.

On the big screen, Snook’s first major role in America was in Danny Boyle’s *Steve Jobs* alongside Michael Fassbender and Kate Winslet. She delivered her most notable film performance as the complex lead “Jane/John” alongside Ethan Hawke in the science-fiction thriller *Predestination*, for which she received the AACTA Award and the Film Critics Circle of Australia award for Best Actress.

Other film credits include supernatural horror film *Winchester* with Helen Mirren and Jason Clarke; *The Glass Castle* alongside Brie Larson; *Holding the Man* opposite Guy Pearce; *The Dressmaker* with Kate Winslet; *Brother’s Nest; Odd Ball; Jessabelle; These Final Hours; Not Suitable for Children*; and *Sleeping Beauty*.

Snook established herself in the world of theatre through her performances in *King Lear* with the State Theatre Company of South Australia; three productions for the Griffin Theatre Company including *Lovely/Ugly: Transformer, Crestfall* and *S27*; alongside Ralph Fiennes in *The Master Builder* at London’s Old Vic Theatre; and most recently, in *Saint Joan* for the Sydney Theatre Company, for which she won Best Female Actor in a Play at Australia’s 2019 Helpmann Awards.

Originally from Australia, she currently resides in New York City.

**ILIZA SHLESINGER (Anita)** is known for being one of today’s leading comedians with five Netflix specials and has recently branched out into acting having recently starred opposite Mark Wahlberg in the Netflix film *Spenser Confidential*. She will next be seen in the drama PIECES OF A WOMAN starring Shia Labeouf and Vanessa Kirby, which will screen as part of the 77th Venice International Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival in September 2020.
Shlesinger was previously seen in 2018’s *Instant Family*, starring Wahlberg and Rose Byrne. Her Netflix series *The Iliza Shlesinger Sketch Show* premiered April 1, and she recently guest hosted *Jimmy Kimmel Live*.

In March 2020, to encourage people to stay at home and flatten the curve, Shlesinger and her husband, chef and James Beard Award-nominated author Noah Galuten, launched *Don’t Panic Pantry*, a fun, follow-along at-home cooking show that broadcasts live via Iliza’s social media and includes easy-to-make recipes. The show recently surpassed 120 episodes and has been featured on *The Today Show*, *The Talk* and more.

In November 2019, she premiered her fifth Netflix stand up special *Unveiled*, which delves into her journey of getting married. Her past specials include *War Paint*, *Freezing Hot* and *Confirmed Kills*. Iliza’s last Netflix special, 2018’s *Elder Millennial*, is the subject of *Iliza Shlesinger: Over & Over*, her “fan-u-mentary” that is currently streaming and gives fans an inside look into what goes into the making of one of her specials.

In 2017, she released her first book *Girl Logic: The Genius and the Absurdity* (Hachette Book Group), a subversively funny collection of essays and observations on a confident woman’s approach to friendship, singleness and relationships. On her new podcast *AIA: Ask Iliza Anything* she offers up her unique perspective to listeners, answering their questions on virtually any topic. Past credits include *Truth & Iliza*, the limited-run talk show she hosted on Freeform, and *Forever 31*, a digital series she created and starred in for ABC Digital. She is the only female and youngest comedian to hold the title of NBC’s *Last Comic Standing*.

In 2019, she launched Christmas Mouth, a limited-edition fragrance she created for her fans and named after her recently departed dog Blanche. It quickly sold out with a portion of the pre-sale proceeds going to support Best Friends Animal Society.

**BENNY SAFDIE** (Chris) is an actor and director based in New York. He was last seen in A24’s film *Good Time* opposite Rob Pattinson, which he also co-directed, and which premiered to rave reviews at the Cannes Film Festival. He was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award as best supporting actor for his captivating performance as the younger, mentally handicapped brother to Pattinson’s character who serves as the catalyst for the film’s action.

**JIMMIE FAILS** (Max) made his feature debut as both an actor and writer in his critically acclaimed A24 film *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*, which premiered at Sundance 2019 and garnered two awards there. Fails co-wrote with his best friend and longtime collaborator, Joe Talbot, who directed with Plan B producing. It is a fable-like story based on Jimmie’s life and the gentrification of San Francisco. Fails and Talbot previously collaborated on the short
American Paradise, which premiered at 2017 Sundance and was a creative precursor to the feature.

In addition to PIECES OF A WOMAN, Fails will next star opposite David Oyelowo in Solitary, written and to be directed by Nate Parker.

ELLEN BURSTYN (Elizabeth) has had an illustrious 60 year acting career encompassing film, stage and television. In 1975, she became the third woman in history to win both a Tony Award and an Academy Award® in the same year for her work in Same Time, Next Year on Broadway and in the film Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore, for which she also received a Golden Globe nomination and a British Academy Award for Best Actress. She became a “triple crown winner” when she received her first Emmy® for a guest appearance on Law & Order: SVU (2009). She won her second Emmy® for her role in the miniseries Political Animals (2013). Additionally, she has received six Emmy® nominations and five Academy Award® nominations, including her nomination for Best Actress in The Exorcist (1973).

Her most recent films include The House of Tomorrow (2017), The Tale (2018), Nostalgia (2018), Welcome to Pine Grove! (2019), Lucy in the Sky (2019) and PIECES OF A WOMAN (2020). Her past work includes The Last Picture Show (1971, Golden Globe and Academy Award® nominations), Resurrection (1981) and Requiem for a Dream (2000, Golden Globe and Academy Award® nominations). In 2014, she was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame. She most recently starred in 33 Variations in Melbourne.

Burstyn is currently co-president of the Actors Studio alongside Al Pacino and Alec Baldwin. She holds four honorary doctorates and lectures throughout the country. In 2006, she became a national best-selling author with the publication of her memoir, Lessons in Becoming Myself.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

KORNEL MUNDRUCZO (Director) is a critically acclaimed, multi-award-winning Hungarian film director and the founder of Proton Cinema. His first film Pleasant Days (2002) was awarded the Silver Leopard in at the Locarno Film Festival. His following works all premiered at Cannes Film Festival: Johanna (2005 Un Certain Regard); Delta (2008 Official Competition) where it won the FIPRESCI prize; Tender Son (2010 Official Competition); White God (2014 Un Certain Regard) where it won the Prize Un Certain Regard; and Jupiter’s Moon (2017 Official Competition).

Mundruczó studied film and television at the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Hungary. PIECES OF A WOMAN is his first English-language film.
KATA WEBER (Screenwriter) began her career working in theatre, eventually becoming a screenwriter and playwright. Her theatre pieces have travelled all over the world with great success. While maintaining an active presence in the European theatre and opera scene, she also began collaborating with writer and director Kornél Mundruczó. Their work together has included White God (2014), which won the Prize Un Certain Regard and had a Spotlight section at the Sundance Film Festival, and Jupiter’s Moon (2017) was also In Competition as part of the Official Selection of the 70th Cannes Film Festival. PIECES OF A WOMAN (2020) is Wéber’s third original story and her first English-language piece brought to screen. She is a graduate of the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest.

ASHLEY LEVINSON (Producer) is an American film producer and the Chief Strategy Officer at BRON Studios. At BRON, Levinson is responsible for fostering filmmaker and industry relationships and identifying key corporate opportunities across BRON’s various subsidiaries, including BRON Studios, BRON Creative, BRON Digital, BRON Releasing and BRON Ventures. Prior to BRON, Levinson served as the Chief Operating Officer at Annapurna Pictures. She is also the co-founder of Little Lamb Productions, along with Sam Levinson and Kevin Turen, which created the HBO series Euphoria and the feature PIECES OF A WOMAN, directed by Kornél Mundruczó. She served as an executive producer on Jay Roach’s Bombshell (2019), co-executive producer on Lena Waithe’s Queen & Slim (2019) and co-executive producer on The Green Knight (2020), as well as producer for the upcoming film Malcolm & Marie.

AARON RYDER (Producer) is one of the brightest and most prolific producers working today. His work at FilmNation Entertainment includes such hits as Denis Villeneuve’s Academy Award®-winning science fiction epic Arrival, Jeff Nichols’s Mud and The Founder, directed by John Lee Hancock and starring Michael Keaton. He recently produced Lisa Joy’s feature directorial debut Reminiscence, The Good House for Amblin Pictures, and Greyhound, starring and written by Tom Hanks. Current films in different stages of production for Ryder include The Map of Tiny Perfect Things for Amazon Studios, and Misanthrope, starring Shailene Woodley. His past credits include Christopher Nolan’s Memento and The Prestige, The Mexican starring Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts, and Donnie Darko with Drew Barrymore and Jake Gyllenhaal.

KEVIN TUREN (Producer) most recently produced the A24 feature film Waves, which premiered at the Telluride Film Festival and was featured on National Board of Review as one of the ten best films of the year. He is an executive-producer of the Emmy Award®-nominated HBO series Euphoria starring Zendaya. Turen produced both Malcolm & Marie, written and directed by Sam Levinson and starring Zendaya and John David Washington, and the New Line Cinema release Those Who Wish Me Dead, written and directed by Taylor Sheridan and starring Angelina Jolie—both of which are currently in post-production. He’s the executive producer
of *Antlers* directed by Scott Cooper for Fox Searchlight. His additional producing credits include *99 Homes, The Birth of A Nation, Arbitrage, All Is Lost, Assassination Nation and Mediterranea*, which was written and directed by Jonas Carpignano and premiered in the International Critics’ Week at Cannes.

**JASON M. CLOTH (Executive Producer)** is the Founder and CEO of Creative Wealth Media (CWM), one of the most prolific production and financing entities in the film and television industry, with a slate that currently includes Apple’s TV+ Tom Hank’s WWII film *Greyhound*; Apple’s TV series starring Reese Witherspoon and Jennifer Aniston *The Morning Show*; and the upcoming film release *Candyman* (MGM Studios).

Cloth founded Creative Wealth Group of Companies in 1992 and partnered with a Toronto-based Merchant Bank to provide financing on more than 40 film and television productions. Cloth is also a Director of BRON Media Corp. Cloth joined BRON Studios in September 2014 in a key strategic financial and investor management role. He has executive produced more than 67 feature films with producer BRON Studios, along the way raising in excess of $750 million for the film industry.

His additional film credits include the acclaimed Denzel Washington-led film *Fences* (Paramount); the Joaquin Phoenix-led *Joker* (Warner Bros); the Charlize Theron-led *Bombshell* (Lionsgate); *Addams Family* (MGM Studios); *The Good Liar* (Warner Bros); and *Queen & Slim* (Universal). Cloth began his career in 1988 as a Fixed Income Economist for CIBC/Wood Gundy and holds a graduate degree in Economics.

**AARON L. GILBERT (Executive Producer)** is the Chairman and CEO of BRON, a company he co-founded with wife Brenda Gilbert in 2010. The British Columbia-based parent company BRON Media Corp., has global divisions that include BRON Studios, BRON Creative, BRON Animation, BRON Releasing, BRON Digital, BRON Life, and an affiliate media fund, BRON Ventures. Gilbert, a former music industry and finance executive, has produced or executive produced more than 100 productions, working alongside some of the industry’s most elite filmmakers and creators.

BRON’s roster of acclaimed releases includes Academy Award®-winning films such as *Bombshell, Roman J. Israel Esq., Fences* and the box-office record-breaking film *Joker*. The slate also includes Clint Eastwood’s *The Mule, Leave No Trace*, Lena Waithe and Melina Matsoukas’s *Queen & Slim, The Willoughbys, The Way Back* starring Ben Affleck, *Greyhound* starring Tom Hanks and Jason Reitman’s *The Front Runner* and *Tully*, among others.

BRON recently wrapped production on Måns Mårlind’s eight-episode series, *Shadowplay*, starring Taylor Kitsch and Michael C. Hall. Upcoming film releases include Barry Levinson’s
*Harry Haft*, starring Ben Foster; Taylor Sheridan’s *Those Who Wish Me Dead*, starring Angelina Jolie; David Lowery’s *The Green Knight*, starring Dev Patel; Nia DaCosta’s *Candyman*; the Aretha Franklin biography *Respect*, starring Jennifer Hudson; *Judas and the Black Messiah*, starring Daniel Kaluuya and LaKeith Stanfield, and the third collaboration with Jason Reitman on *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*.

Gilbert oversees the BRON group of companies while still playing an active role on the ground of many of the company’s productions. He is a member of the Canadian Academy, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences and the Producers Guild of America. Gilbert is originally from London, Ontario. For many years, he has divided his time between BRON offices in Los Angeles and Vancouver. The Company also has offices in New York, Toronto and London (UK).

**SAM LEVINSON (Executive Producer)** is a writer, producer and director known for his work on *The Wizard of Lies, Assassination Nation and Another Happy Day*. He is the son of actor, writer and director Barry Levinson, who also helped produce *The Wizard of Lies* and *Toys*. In 2011, he won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award for his debut directorial work on *Another Happy Day*.

Before he began producing and directing, Levinson appeared on the other side of the camera as an actor in films including *Toys, Bandits, What Just Happened* and *Stoic*. Levinson created the new HBO teen drama series *Euphoria* starring Zendaya. The series follows a group of high school students as they endure issues related to drug addiction, sex, trauma and violence in the age of social media. Levinson has struggled with some of these issues himself and therefore brings his past experiences to light through the storylines and characters portrayed in the series. *Euphoria* has been confirmed by HBO for Season 2.

Most recently, Levinson wrote, produced and directed the film *Malcolm & Marie*, which stars John David Washington and Zendaya. The picture was shot safely during the COVID-19 pandemic and made history by being the first to do so on the feature film side.

**STUART MANASHIL (Executive Producer)** is the founder of NOVO, a management and production company based in Los Angeles. Manashil represents writers, directors and producers from all over the world, including multiple Academy Award®-winners. Some of his clients include Kornél Mundruczó, Sam Levinson, Mike Flanagan, Damian Szifron, Aza Jacobs, Olivier Assayas, Alejandro Amenabar and the Dowdle Brothers. Manashil has produced and executive produced films including *PIECES OF A WOMAN*, as well as *French Exit, WASP Network* and *His House* for Netflix, in addition to *City of Lies*, among several others. He currently has *Misanthrope* in pre-production at FilmNation with Shailene Woodley starring, and *The Stranger* television show with Damian Szifron at MRC as well as an adaptation of *Irma Vep* for A24.
Before starting NOVO, Manashil was a partner at WME for three years and an agent at CAA for six years. He graduated summa cum laude from UCLA with a Master’s degree.

VIKTORIA PETRANYI (Executive Producer) graduated as a producer at the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest and has worked together with Kornél Mundruczó since then. They founded their production company, Proton Cinema, in 2003. In addition to making their own films, they provide production services to international productions, and Petrányi actively takes part in the education and mentoring of the next generation of Hungarian filmmakers. She has been working as a freelance producer since 1999, with dozens of Hungarian and international projects on her resume. Petrányi is exploring ways to bring Proton Cinema’s original content beyond the borders of her Hungarian homeland.

MARTIN SCORSESE (Executive Producer) is an Academy Award®-winning director and one of the most influential filmmakers working today. He has directed critically acclaimed, award-winning films including Mean Streets, Taxi Driver, Raging Bull, The Last Temptation of Christ, Goodfellas, Gangs of New York, The Aviator, The Departed—which won an Academy Award® for Best Director and Best Picture—Shutter Island and Hugo for which he received a Golden Globe® for Best Director. His 2013 film, The Wolf of Wall Street received DGA, BAFTA and Academy Award® nominations for best director, as well as a Golden Globe and Academy Award® nomination for Best Film. 2016 saw the release of Scorsese’s passion project, Silence, based on the acclaimed novel by Shusaku Endo. The Irishman was released in 2019 and received 10 Oscar® nominations.

Scorsese has directed numerous documentaries including the Peabody Award winning No Direction Home: Bob Dylan and Elia Kazan: A Letter to Elia; as well as Italianamerican, The Last Waltz, A Personal Journey with Martin Scorsese through American Movies, Il Mio Viaggio in Italia, Public Speaking, Shine a Light, and George Harrison: Living in the Material World, for which Scorsese received Emmy® Awards for Outstanding Directing for Nonfiction Programming and Outstanding Nonfiction Special. In 2010, Scorsese executive produced the HBO series Boardwalk Empire, winning an Emmy® and DGA Award for directing the pilot episode. In 2014, he co-directed The 50 Year Argument with his long time documentary editor, David Tedeschi. Scorsese directed the pilot episode of Vinyl for HBO in 2016, a series depicting the 1970s music scene in New York. In 2019, Netflix released Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese; the director’s second film about Dylan, this one focused on his legendary 1975 tour. Scorsese is currently in pre-production on Killers of the Flower Moon.

Scorsese is the founder and chair of The Film Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of motion picture history.
STEVEN THIBAULT (Executive Producer) is the COO of BRON Media Corp., and a partner in the company he’s helped steer since 2012. He oversees all corporate operations and production finance and is a key member of the management group. Thibault has helped grow BRON into an industry leader and has established preferred relationships with production unions and guilds across the globe. He is part of every financial closing for the company, including its corporate facilities with Comerica, its more than 40 single picture production/financing deals, and its slate of co-financing ventures with Warner Bros. and MGM.

Prior to BRON, he was an auditor with Ernst & Young working extensively with private and public studio clients in Canada and around the world. He currently serves as a board member of the Canadian Media Producer’s Association.

BENJAMIN LOEB (Director of Photography) is a Norwegian/Canadian cinematographer. In 2011, he graduated with a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design and has since been shooting features, music videos and commercials worldwide. His work has screened at festivals such as Cannes, Locarno, Sundance, Toronto, New York, Tribeca, London and the Chicago International Film Festival just to name a few. He’s received multiple awards as well as an Indie Spirit Awards nomination for his cinematography on Mandy. Loeb most recently photographed After Yang directed by Kogonada, produced by Cinereach and A24, as well as PIECES OF A WOMAN.

SYLVAIN LEMAITRE (Production Designer) is a Montreal-based production designer for films, commercials and music videos. He thrives on impossible challenges, designs unique universes and tells character-oriented stories with objects. Lemaitre’s feature film credits include the recent horror film The Lodge, which had its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival, and E.L. Katz’s Small Crimes for Netflix. He also designed the cult hit Turbo Kid, which premiered at both Sundance and SXSW and won more than 20 awards including Best Art Direction at Fantaspoa International Film Festival.

RACHEL DAINER-BEST (Costume Designer) is a New York-based costume designer working in film, theatre and commercials. Her credits include A24’s Waves and The Assistant, directed by Kitty Green, which premiered at the Telluride Film Festival last year. She designed the costumes for Neon’s Assassination Nation, directed by Sam Levinson, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2018, as well as Miles Joris-Peyrefittes’ drama Dreamland, which stars Margot Robbie and premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival last year.

Dainer-Best holds a B.A. in Art History from Brandeis University.

GEMMA HOFF (Hair and Makeup) started her career as a hairdresser in her home town of Hull, East Yorkshire, Northern England. After seven years, Hoff moved to London to work in the West End on numerous musicals and plays including The Audience with Helen Mirren and
**Blithe Spirit** starring Angela Lansbury. She also worked on the hair team for the 2012 London Olympic ceremonies directed by Danny Boyle.

Hoff’s film and TV credits include *The Imitation Game, Cinderella, Dad’s Army, Close to the Enemy, The Crown, Colette, Trust, Summer of Rockets, Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw* and *The Old Guard*. In addition to PIECES OF A WOMAN, Gemma has been the designer on *The World to Come* and is currently working on the BBC/Amazon production of *The Pursuit of Love* featuring Lily James and Dominic West.

**JESSICA KELLY (Casting Director)** has worked on such recent films as *Midsommar, Hereditary, Jackie, Otherhood, See You Yesterday, Don’t Think Twice, Demolition, John Wick: Chapter 2, John Wick, The Book of Henry, The Wolverine, Noah, The Other Woman, The Perks of Being a Wallflower, Southpaw, Labor Day, Young Adult, Precious* and *The Wrestler*. Her credits also include such independent features as *Nine Days, Luce, The Climb, Assassination Nation, Lizzie, Skate Kitchen, A Kid like Jake, Patti Cake$, The Incredible Jessica James, Amateur, As You Are, People Places Things, Obvious Child, Little Accidents, 2 Days in New York, Liberal Arts, Happythankyoumoreplease* and *Twelve*. In television, she’s cast series including *Euphoria, Ramy, Dietland, Taken, Madoff, Blindspot, The Blacklist, Person of Interest, Believe, Zero Hour, Pan Am and Mercy*.

In addition to PIECES OF A WOMAN, Kelly’s upcoming projects include *Dreamland* (Nicholas Jarecki), *Boogie* (Focus Features), *After Yang* (A24, Kogonada), *False Positive* (A24), *The Sky is Everywhere* (A24), *Boy 21* (Lionsgate) and *The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent* (Lionsgate).

**DAVID JANCSO (Editor)** is an incredibly-talented Hungarian film editor who has built a name for himself working alongside acclaimed directors Kornél Mundruczó and Brady Corbet.

Born into a filmmaking family, Jancsó is the son of renowned European film director Miklos Jancsó and one of Europe’s top film editors, Zsuzsanna Csakany. He was plucked out of film school at the age of 24 to work on his first feature, the award-winning *Delta*, directed by Mundruczó. Since, he has worked on features, television series and shorts, among them Jerzy Skolimowski’s *Essential Killing*, which won several awards at the 2010 Venice Film Festival, and István Szabó’s *The Door*, starring Helen Mirren.

Jancsó cut Corbet’s chilling *The Childhood of a Leader*, starring Robert Pattinson, and Mundruczó’s Palme d’Or-nominated film *Jupiter Moon*. Most recently, he edited Mona Fastvold’s *The World to Come*, starring Casey Affleck and Vanessa Kirby, in addition to PIECES OF A WOMAN.
HOWARD SHORE (Composer) is one of today’s premier composers whose music is performed in concert halls around the world by the most prestigious orchestras and is heard in cinemas across the globe.

Shore’s musical interpretation of J.R.R. Tolkien’s imaginative world of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, as portrayed in the films directed by Peter Jackson, have enthralled people of all generations for years. This work stands as his most acclaimed composition to date awarding him with three Academy Awards®, four Grammy Awards®, two Golden Globes as well as numerous critics and festival awards.

He is an officer of the Order of Canada, an Officier de l’ordre des Arts et des Lettres de la France and the recipient of Canada’s Governor General’s Performing Arts Award. The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures selected Shore for Career Achievement for Music Composition Award and the City of Vienna bestowed him with the Max Steiner Award.

Shore was one of the original creators of *Saturday Night Live* and served as music director from 1975-1980. At the same time, he began collaborating with David Cronenberg and has since scored 15 of the director’s films, including *The Fly, Crash and Naked Lunch*. He was awarded Canadian Screen Awards for *Maps to the Stars* for score and *Cosmopolis* for both score and song. His original scores to *A Dangerous Method, Eastern Promises* and *Dead Ringers* were each honored with a Genie Award.

Shore continues to distinguish himself with a wide range of projects, from Martin Scorsese’s *Hugo, The Departed, The Aviator* (for which he won his third Golden Globe Award) and *Gangs of New York* to *Ed Wood, Se7en, The Silence of the Lambs, Philadelphia, Mrs. Doubtfire* and the score for Tom McCarthy’s Academy Award®-winning film *Spotlight*. His recent score for François Girard’s film *The Song of Names* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2019 and won the Canadian Screen Awards for Best Score and Song. His score for Michel Hazanavicius’ film *Le Prince Oublié* premiered in France in February 2020.

Shore’s music has been performed in concerts throughout the world. In 2003, Shore conducted the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in the world premiere of *The Lord of the Rings Symphony* in Wellington. Since then, the *Symphony* and *The Lord of the Rings – Live to Projection* concerts have had more than 500 performances by the world’s most prestigious orchestras.

His opera, *The Fly* (2008), which premiered at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris and at Los Angeles Opera, recently completed a successful run in Germany at Theatre Trier. Other recent works include the piano concerto *Ruin and Memory* for Lang Lang (2010), the song cycle *A Palace Upon the Ruins* featuring mezzo-soprano Jennifer Johnson Cano (2014), a cello concerto
Mythic Gardens featuring Sophie Shao (2012), Fanfare for the Wanamaker Organ in Philadelphia (2008), Sea to Sea in celebration of Canada’s 150th anniversary of confederation (2017), and the song cycle L’Aube premiered in October 2017 performed by Susan Platts and commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. 2018 saw the premiere performance of Shore’s Latin Mass for the Hof Church in Lucerne, Switzerland. The Forest, a guitar concerto composed for Miloš and conducted by Alexander Shelley, premiered on May 1 & 2, 2019 for the National Arts Centre Orchestra.

PIECES OF A WOMAN

BRON

BRON STUDIOS
presents

A
LITTLE LAMB
production

in association with
CREATIVE WEALTH MEDIA

A Film by
KATA WEBER
and
KORNEL MUNDRUCZO

“PIECES OF A WOMAN”

VANESSA KIRBY
SHIA LaBEOUF
MOLLY PARKER
SARAH SNOOK
ILIZA SHLESINGER
BENNY SAFDIE
with JIMMIE FAILS
and ELLEN BURSTYN
Directed by
KORNEL MUNDRUCZO

Written by
KATA WEBER

Produced by
KEVIN TUREN, p.g.a.

Produced by
ASHLEY LEVINSON, p.g.a.

Produced by
AARON RYDER

Executive Producer
MARTIN SCORSESE

Executive Producers
SAM LEVINSON
STUART MANASHIL
VIKTORIA PETRANYI

Executive Producers
JASON CLOT
RICHARD McCONNELL
SURAJ MARABOYINA

Executive Producers
AARON L. GILBERT
STEVEN THIBAULT

Co-Producer
PAUL BARBEAU

Co-Executive Producers
ANDRIA SPRING
HARRISON KREISS
KATIA WASHINGTON
ADAM SOMER

Music by
HOWARD SHORE

Director of Photography
BENJAMIN LOEB, FNF

Editor
DAVID JANCSO H.S.E.

Supervising Sound Editor and Re-recording Mixer
CHRIS SCARABOSIO
Costume Designer
**RACHEL DAINER-BEST**

Casting
**JESSICA KELLY**

Music Supervisor
**JEN MALONE**

Line Producer
**PAUL BARBEAU**

Production Manager
**DANNY ROSSNER**

First Assistant Director
**MARC LAROSE**

Second Assistant Director
**LATIFA NAOURI**

Production Designer
**SYLVAIN LEMAITRE**

In Association With
**PROTON CINEMA**

**Cast**

Martha  VANESSA KIRBY
Sean  SHIA LaBEOUF
Elizabeth  ELLEN BURSTYN
Anita  ILIZA SHLESINGER
Chris  BENNY SAFDIE
Suzanne  SARAH SAFDIE
Eva  MOLLY PARKER
Photographer  STEVEN McCARTHY
Judge  TYRONE BENSKIN
Lane  FRANK SCHORPION
Court Clerk  HARRY STANDJOFSKI
Medical Examiner  DOMENIC DI ROSA
Max  JIMMIE FAILS
Little Girl  JULIETTE CASAGRANDE
Judith  GAYLE GARFINKLE
Linda  VANESSA SMYTHE
Peter  NICK WALKER
Robert  SEAN TUCKER
Tomb Maker  ALAIN DAHAN
Institute Official  JOELLE JEREMIE
Book Seller  NOEL BURTON
Singer  TIMOTHY KINGSBURY
Secretary  SONIA BÉRUBÉ
Employee # 1  ALEX DE LA CRUZ
Employee # 2  LETITIA BROOKES
Employee # 5  ERIC DAVIS
Employee # 6  OLIVIA LYLE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“B” Camera Operator</td>
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<td>MAXIME BOUTIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>“B” Camera First Assistant</td>
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<td>“A” Camera Second Assistant</td>
<td>MARIE-PIERRE GRATTON</td>
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<td>PATRICK BIRON</td>
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Daily Production Assistants
SACHA BRUNET-GUILBAULT
MATTHEW CAIN
ANOUCHKA-MAGDALENA CAROFF
SOPHIE DROLET
CHRISTINE-CLAIREE DEITA
DANY GANCE
CHLOÉ HOMONT
ANNE-SOPHIE LEBLANC
MIKE MICHEALSKI
SAMY NOUR
GABRIEL PAGÉ
ALEXANDRE PIERRE-LOUIS
NOÉMIE PROULX

Basecamp Operators
MARIE-LISE CHICOINE
MICHEL SAULE

Transport Coordinator
VINCENT LAFRANCE
Picture Car Coordinator
ANDREI VASILE
Set Runner
STEEVE DUBOIS
Cast Driver
YVES NANTEL
Drivers
CLAUDE CHAMPAGNE
ROBERT DÉCARIE
KRISTELLE GAGNÉ-OUTU
CAROLANE GOULET
JEAN MARTIN
SÉBASTIEN TANGUY

Medics
CYNTHIA BIBEAU
PHILIPPE PAULIN
LOUISE THÉRIAULT
GINETTE TRAVERSY

Craft Service
CHRISTIAN MARION
Cast Driver
PIERRE GAGNÉ
Craft Service Assistants
VÉRONIQUE GOSSELIN

Norway Unit
Production Services by
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ROLF PEDERSEN
Line Producer
MORTEN ARCHER BUGGE
First Assistant Director
JON ARE UNGHER
Production Assistant Coordinator
BENDIK SKARI
Extras Coordinator
AUGUST WITTERMANN
Focus Puller
MAI KRISTIN KRISTIANSEN
AC / DIT
THOMAS BJØRNSTAD
Key Grips
LASSE RØED
Grip Assistants
BOB AAS CARO
JØRGEN SVILAND
Gaffer
MARTIN HOLME NILSEN
Best Boy
SIMEN MOE MEHLUM
Sound Technician
LISA EMILIE ØVERJORDET
Props Master
LEVI GAWRON
Make-Up Artist
HELGE K. BODOGAARD
Costumes
METTE HAAKELAND
Security / Medic
CECILIE GREVE
Lab Facilities
ANETTE ELISABETH STORBERGET

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MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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DARRYL ISAACS

READY, WILLING & ABELL

Foley Artists

Audio Post Management

IT Manager

Walla Group

Remote Mix Services

Focusfox Studio

Sound Engineering Services

GÁBOR CSÁSZÁR

Music Produced and Orchestrated by

HOWARD SHORE

Conducted by
LUDWIG WICKI

Solo Piano by
HOLGER GROSCHOPP

Additional Piano Solos by
WOLFGANG KÖHLER

BENE APERDANNIER
Oboe Solos by MAXIMILIEN WERNER
Recorded by TOBIAS LEHMANN
Recorded at TELDEX STUDIO BERLIN
Mixed by SAM OKELL
Electronic Sound Development ALAN FREY
Music Preparation KYLE FEEHAN
Music Librarian BOBBIE LEE CROW III
Orchestra Contracting by MAX KNOTH
Music Coordinator TOM RUBBÜLDT, SCORING BERLIN
Title Design & Typography SATYA FUENTES
On-Set VFX Supervision WP&A
Visual Effects by ALCHEMY 24
VFX Producer JEAN-FRANÇOIS FERLAND
VFX Supervisor MARIE-CLAUDE LAFONTAINE
Senior Compositors LAMPION PICTURES
Compositors ANIKO VAJDA GRANICZ
3D Artist ISTVÁN VAJDA

"Untitled #3"
Written by Orri Pall Dyrason, Kjartan Sveinsson,
Jon Thor Birgisson, Georg Holm
Performed by Sigur Rós
Courtesy of Krunk Records / ADA UK
By arrangement with ADA Licensing,
a division of Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

“chill.”
Written by João Pedro Müller Bianchini
Performed by sakura Hz

“What If”
Written by Alexandra Berglof, Faris Badwan
Performed by Berg
Courtesy of Lyric House, LLC

“In a Sentimental Mood”
Written by Duke Ellington
Performed by Duke Ellington and John Coltrane
Courtesy of The Verve Music Group
Under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“In a Sentimental Mood”
Written by Duke Ellington
Performed by Duke Ellington and John Coltrane
Courtesy of The Verve Music Group
Under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“Gary’s Theme”
Written by Gary McFarland
Performed by Bill Evans Trio
Courtesy of Fantasy Records
A division of Concord

“Stranger in Paradise”
Written by Bob Wright, George Chet Forrest
Performed by The Four Aces featuring Al Alberts
Courtesy of Geffen Records
Under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“Seven Nation Army”
Written by Jack White

Assistant to Mr. Mundruczo VERONIKA GAL
Assistant to Ms. Levinson KATE CHANG
Cast Personal Assistants BRANDON GILBERT
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LITTLE LAMB
Partner  SAM LEVINSON
Partner  KEVIN TUREN
Partner  ASHLEY LEVINSON
Creative Executive  KYRA NOONAN
Producer  HARRISON KREISS

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Coordinator to Mr. Gilbert  BROOKE LINDLEY

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VP Digital Content & Strategy  ALISSA NORBY
Head of Digital  JASON CHEN
Director of Development  SOLOME WILLIAMS
Director of Finance  SUN JANG
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Creative Executive  JORDAN MOLDO
Production Finance Analyst  HOLLAND NINOW
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Junior Production Controller  TIA MILLER
Post Production Accountant  JENNIFER KIM
Post Production Accounting Clerk  TAMIE VEGA
Assistant to COO and EVP Production  SAM McGOLDRICK
Assistant to CBAO  MARIO GARCIA
Assistant to SVP Legal & Business Affairs  BEN LEONG
Assistant to SVP Business Affairs  ZOE LEVINE
Office Assistant  JOE BOUDREAU

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Partner  VIKTORIA PETRANYI
Head of Finance  ISTVAN HORVATH
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