

GREATEST DAYS

A FILM BY COKY GIEDROYC

PRODUCTION NOTES

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

GREATEST DAYS is the feel-good and universal story of love and friendship featuring the hit songs of Take That and adapted from the smash stage show by the writer of Calendar Girls. We follow five best friends who have the night of their lives seeing their favourite boy band in concert. Twenty-five years later their lives have changed in many different ways as they reunite for one more epic show by their beloved band, to relight their friendship and discover that maybe their greatest days are ahead of them.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Featuring the hit songs of British pop icons Take That and adapted from the smash stage show by the writer of Calendar Girls, *Greatest Days* is an epic movie musical that marries the heartfelt story of a group of women who grew up loving a boyband with a series of fantastical song and dance sequences that take us from 1930s MGM-style musicals to Magic Mike-style modern moves, set to the songs of one of the UK's most successful and loved musical acts.

Growing up in Clitheroe in Lancashire in 1993, 16-year-old Rachel (Lara McDonnell) and her gang of four best friends – Debbie (Jessie Mae Alonzo), Claire (Carragon Guest), Zoe (Nandi Hudson) and Heather (Eliza Dobson) – idolise the boyband they tune in religiously every week to watch on *Top Of The Pops*.

In times of trouble, Rachel even summons the Boys – played by Aaron Bryan, Dalvin Sol, Joshua Jung, Mark Samaras and Mervin Noronha – from her imagination and into her reality. And when the Boys appear, the world around the girls comes alive, magical realism turning their mundane surroundings into glorious musical numbers, all choreographed to brilliantly reimagined new versions of Take That's biggest songs, including Never Forget, Back For Good, Shine, Rule The World, Greatest Days and many more.

After a life-changing event sees the young girls go their separate ways, they reunite 25 years later, when Rachel (played in this other timeline by Aisling Bea) wins a local radio competition to see the boys on their reunion tour in Greece. Inviting the older Claire (Jayde Adams), Zoe (Amaka Okafor) and Heather (Alice Lowe) along for the ride, Rachel and her old pals' journey to the Greek capital of Athens on a vibrant and hilarious musical odyssey that will see them get into scrapes, face up to old demons, and discover that their greatest days may yet be ahead of them.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Rachel is a nurse living a regular life with her partner Jeff. But when she wins four tickets to the reunion gig of the boyband she and her friends were obsessed with as kids, everything changes.

Flashing back to 1993, 16-year-old Rachel and pals tune into the group each week on *Top Of The Pops*. But for Rachel, the boys in the band don't *just* exist on her TV. When she needs their music to help her, she can summon the boys from her imagination, bringing them spilling into the real world in spectacular song and dance numbers, set to new versions of classic Take That tracks.

Whether it's in the kitchen making beans on toast or on her way to school, whenever the boys appear, Rachel's life explodes in colour and music. The mundane becomes magical.

In this timeline, Rachel and her friends are all that being sixteen *should* be: carefree, making up dance moves, having fun. On the way back from seeing their boyband live for the first time ever at Manchester Apollo, Rachel summons the boys to reappear, turning the number 47 bus into a pumping fantasy disco.

In the present day, however, we learn these friends have all gone very separate ways, and very much apart and the magic very much missing from their lives. When Jeff asks Rachel to marry him, she says no – for the sixth time. Later, wondering whether she should invite her estranged friends to the concert in Athens, the boys appear to Rachel for the first time in ages. Can they help her find the courage to face the past?

Back in 1993 on the night of the concert, the girls are thrown off the bus and take a shortcut over the rocks behind their hometown. Debbie gives them all wristbands from the gig, making them swear to never take them off. Rachel asks Debbie to walk her home. All seems fine. A perfect end to a memorable night...

When modern-day Rachel finally contacts the gang, they meet at the airport for the first time in 20 years. Zoe works at a university now, Heather is a fashion designer, and Claire is still at her mum's old shop. As Rachel buckles under the awkwardness of this reunion the boys come to her emotional rescue via a huge Busby Berkley number that decks out the women in 1930s ballgowns, the airport staff in top hats and tails.

Arriving in Athens, the ladies down the old homemade cocktails they once drank as teenagers and explore. At a sculpture in the middle of the city statues of Greek gods come alive with music as extraordinary stories start to emerge about the girls' lives. Suddenly the sculpture is revealed to in fact be a fountain and the old friends are drenched, having fun like sixteen-year-olds, until the police come to arrest them.

Acting sixteen starts wear thin. On their way to the concert, old resentments start to surface. Arriving to find the concert over and the venue empty, tensions erupt. Finally, we discover what drove these old friends apart. "It's my fault," Rachel says. "I asked her to walk me home." We flash back to the fateful aftermath of the Apollo gig. Debbie, seconds after walking

Rachel home, is hit by a runaway stolen car. In a second, Rachel's best friend, the lynchpin of the whole gang, is gone.

At her funeral, as the boys sing A Million Love Songs in Rachel's mind, she tells the congregation how she always thought her best friend would one day be her bridesmaid.

Around Athens, the adult women are revisited by their younger selves for magical duets of Back For Good, reconnecting with the girls they once were. The adults return home to their lives but have all been revitalised by the trip and its reconnections. Zoe suddenly enrols at a University, Claire becomes a diving coach, and Heather takes her daughter to meet her mother for the first time and rebuilds a massive bridge. Rachel even asks Jeff to marry her.

Unbeknown to Rachel, the friends then reach out to each other and turn up unannounced as Rachel's bridesmaids. Rachel sings her vows to Jeff. Up on the rocks, the gang touch wristbands. As if summoned, young Debbie appears, singing Rule The World, to say a goodbye to her old friends.

The bridal party hits town - familiar faces from both timelines join in a massive carnival of joy, scored to Never Forget. Rachel looks around, takes it all in. Her greatest days - ALL their greatest days - suddenly seem to be ahead.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Greatest Days is a movie about many things. It's a movie about life, love and loss; how the mates and memories we make as teenagers will stay with us always, somewhere deep inside. "It's a love letter to friendship," is how its director, Coky Giedroyc, describes it in a nutshell.

It's also a movie about music. Specifically, the power that songs have to transport us, wherever and whenever we are in our lives, back to the moment we first heard them. The moment we first *felt* them. A movie that reminds us to never lose sight of the person we were in that moment, and the person we could maybe still become.

What *Greatest Days* is *not*, as its leading lady Aisling Bea is keen to point out, is a movie about Take That, despite the fact that it also happens to be a musical based on their classic tracks. "People keep saying this is a Take That movie, but it's not about Take That," Bea says. "To be absolutely clear: I, spoiler alert, do not play Gary Barlow in the origin story of Take That."

The man in question couldn't be happier with the results, though. "Everyone on this production has done a beautiful job," Barlow says of the finished film. "The direction, the cinematography, the acting, all of it. It's fantastic. Picture amplifies music, just as music amplifies picture. When those two stars align, you've got something so special. I can't fault it."

It's testament to Take That, the British pop legends who have sold over 14 million albums in a career that, over 33 years, has featured 28 top 40 singles and eight Brit awards amongst a host of other accolades, that they never wanted this film to be about them. Instead, they insisted it be about the people they say are ultimately responsible for their myriad successes – their fans.

"That was always important to us," says Mark Owen, who along with Barlow and their fellow bandmate Howard Donald has worked closely with this production as it has reimagined their music for cinema audiences. "It was only right that this story would turn the spotlight on the fans. Without them, we wouldn't be here."

That the film is now complete, having been put on hold by the pandemic for two long years when it had been on the brink of shooting, is also something the band doesn't take for granted. "That it's finally here is so satisfying," Donald says. "It's surreal that a film is being made with our music, but it really makes me smile. This film is a massive feelgood experience."

Greatest Days is also something unique, a musical that will appeal not just to fans of Take That but to anyone who ever loved any band. In other words, *everyone*.

"*Greatest Days* is not another jukebox musical about a band," says its producer, Danny Perkins. "It's about an audience's *relationship* with a band. We've seen a lot of films about the journey of what it means to be a rock star. What's interesting here is what Take That wanted to say with their film. That they wanted to turn the lens on their audience."

It was that angle that first drew Giedroyc to the production. Fresh off shooting *How To Build A Girl*, her acclaimed adaptation of the novel by Caitlin Moran, the director had been looking for her next challenge. And in *Greatest Days* she found not just a chance to return to the musical arena she had always loved (Giedroyc co-directed *The Sound Of Music Live* with Richard Valentine in 2015), but to tell a story that also resonated with her personally.

"*Greatest Days* is a movie basically for anybody who loved their friends when they were growing up, and anybody who loved a band. So, we've all been there," Giedroyc says. "And that universality is so important. Sometimes in a musical, you'll find that the songs can lift you into another state that perhaps the story isn't doing. But here everything is at that high bar. We've got a story that works without the songs as well. The songs and the dance numbers just lift it."

That story focuses on five teenage girls, Rachel, Debbie, Claire, Zoe and Heather – played by Lara McDonnell, Jessie Mae Alonzo, Carragon Guest, Nandi Hudson and Eliza Dobson respectively – living in the north of England in 1993 and bonded by their collective adoration of the hot young boyband they tune into religiously each week on *Top Of The Pops*.

"The film is about these five girls," says its writer, Tim Firth, who also wrote the stage show – *The Band* – on which *Greatest Days* is based. "These five fantastic, brilliant, dangerous, odd girls, who sometimes don't get on but who are the very best of friends, who are blown apart by an event that splits up their friendship group when they're 16."

Torn apart by what happens, the girls go their separate ways, not seeing each other for nearly 30 years. When we meet them again, now in the modern day, they are living very different lives. Rachel is now played by Aisling Bea (*This Way Up*, *Home Sweet Home Alone*), Claire by Jayde Adams (*Alma's Not Normal*, *The Outlaws*), Zoe by Amaka Okafor (*The Sandman*, *Upon The Edge*) and Heather by Alice Lowe (*Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*, *Prevenge*).

"And these women come back together because one of them – Rachel – enters a competition on a local radio station to fly to Athens to see a reunion tour of that band they were all massively into when they were teenagers," says Firth. "In all that time they've not met, have not seen what they've become. And suddenly there they are,

meeting at the airport to go on this trip. A trip on which they will rediscover each other and be forced to address why they have not been friends for that intervening period."

There will be revelations, tears, hilarious drunken escapades, and a lot of laying ghosts to rest. "But, also, a rediscovered joy as they suddenly explode into this *new* friendship," Firth smiles. "The situation needs them, as women of 40, to listen to and, in fact, be revisited by the versions of themselves at 16, to allow themselves to move on. In a way, it's a time travel musical."

That idea, Perkins says, of the transportive quality of music, its ability to flash you back to another moment or place in time, is not only what gives *Greatest Days* a set-up that feels fresh, but also provides it with its key musical mechanic. In both the story's timelines, whenever Rachel needs their emotional support, she is able to summon up the members of their beloved boyband in her imagination.

"The band in this are almost like a dancing Greek chorus," is how Firth describes these five fantastical young men. "They represent all bands, all music, from thrash metal to disco. These guys are there to say, 'This is what music *means*.' If you're 16 and upset about something and you need those band members, those songs, to comfort you, then music can do that. In our story, Rachel has always used the band to shield her, emotionally. In times of trouble, she'll say, 'Come on, boys…' and the band will close around her like an emotional airbag."

In *Greatest Days*' teenage story strand, the boys – played in both timelines by accomplished, charismatic dancers Aaron Bryan, Dalvin Cory, Joshua Jung, Mark Samaras and Mervin Noronha – appear to Rachel often. But the longer her life has gone on, she's needed them less and less. At least, that is, until Rachel's old friends re-enter her life, bringing all those feelings, and the boys, flooding back.

"The boys will always be Rachel's support system," says Bea. "She may not have needed them as much lately as she did before, but when she does need them, they are always there for her. Even when sometimes she wishes they weren't!"

When he was writing *Greatest Days*, Firth always kept a central image at the forefront of his mind. It was of the young Rachel making breakfast in her kitchen, with all the chaos of her family crashing about around her.

"Those boys are what music means to Rachel, but they're also more important than that," Firth says. "In this story, these boys will actually stop to put two teaspoons of sugar on her Weetabix or help her make beans on toast. They're like a Jiminy Cricket, a safety net. And when she's 40, she discovers they're still there, that she's still summoning them. They're this magical presence, but they're also facilitators – they come her rescue."

In the film, whenever the boys do arrive on screen, its musical elements kick in and this touching comedy-drama becomes something else entirely, transformed by magic realism into an all-singing, all-dancing musical epic packed with vibrant colours, thrilling choreography and stunning costumes.

"When I read the script," laughs costume designer Sian Jenkins, "I realised it was like doing *two* films – The Drama and The Musical." Her department has made multiple costume changes for no less than three different groups of characters: the young girls, their older selves, and an on-screen boyband whose 12 different looks playfully echo many classic Take That outfits from back in the day. "Oh yes," Jenkins confirms. "There are leather hotpants."

THE TAKE THAT STORY EVOLVES

The seed for *Greatest Days* was first sown around the end of 2017, when Take That sat down with Danny Perkins and fellow producer Damian Jones, in London.

The band were all living in different parts of Europe at the time but had agreed to the meeting intrigued by the possibility that the dream they'd shared for over 15 years – of having a movie based on their music – might finally have found some people who knew how to make that happen.

Perkins had been collaborating with Universal Music Group, who work closely with Take That, on a number of other projects, and found himself in a conversation that would shape the next six years of his life.

"UMG had invested in the Take That stage show, but it hadn't opened at that point," Perkins says. "We were invited to go up to Manchester to see a workshop of it, with me and a couple of colleagues and 300 female Take That fans, who were very excited to see it, in the audience."

It's fair to say everyone that day was blown away. "This was the stage show in its earliest form, remember," Perkins says. "And we were sat there amongst an audience that laughed at all the right points and sang at all the right points and cried at all the right points. And then they were up and dancing in the aisles at the end. There was something about this story and its connection with the music, and the fact that this audience could see themselves and their own story on stage, that just *worked*. We thought, 'There is *absolutely* a film in this.'"

Ask Take That for their memories of the first time they saw the stage show and you'll hear similar stories. The three of them had known Tim Firth for years, Firth having been a close friend of Gary Barlow's ever since the pair met backstage at classic BBC show *Pebble Mill At One's* 'A Song For Christmas' competition when Firth was 19 and Barlow was 15. (They bonded when they discovered they were both from the same home town, Frodsham, in Cheshire).

"When we first watched the stage show [at the run-through], it brought out so many emotions for us," says Howard Donald. "We watched these actors at this little rehearsal studio in London and it really made me choke. I had tears coming down my face. I'm quite an emotional person anyway, but when we saw the music along with the acting, it brought out a new life in those songs. It made us see the songs in a completely different light."

For Firth, the reaction of the band to, well, *The Band*, was a vindication of his creative impulses. But that's not to say he hadn't been nervous about them first seeing it. "There

was very clearly a point at which they could have said no," Firth says. "Ultimately, it's their call, it's their songs, it's the legacy of their music. But they just sat there and said, 'Wow.' We'd used their songs in a way they just hadn't expected."

Firth vividly recalls the three bandmates sitting there, slightly dumbfounded. "I think because they'd been presuming, like everybody else at that time was presuming, that if you were going to write a musical about Take That, it would be a biopic," Firth says. "From the first moment, when somebody came on stage and it wasn't them but a woman approaching 40, talking about not what it was like to be on the stage but to be in the audience, the whole thing shifted."

As a songwriter himself, Firth, who has been behind such huge stage hits as *Calendar Girls The Musical* and the Olivier Award-winning Madness musical *Our House*, appreciates the delight you can feel seeing your work interpreted by different artists, in different ways.

"I think and hope there's always a thrill in seeing your songs used in a different way," he says. "For people to come along and say, 'Right, there's a song that you only thought was going to be on radio or performed by you in arenas. But we're going to use it in a different way…'"

Firth smiles, warming to his theme. "And then they say, 'You're not going to sing it, by the way. Oh, and also, what you thought was the verse is now going to be the chorus. We're going to throw it up in the air and it's going to come down a mosaic and it's going to help us tell this *other* story.' You can imagine that's quite a thing. You hope it's quite a magical thing. But they weren't prepared for it."

If watching Take That watch the show was everything Firth hoped it would be, it didn't entirely surprise him. "They sat there a bit jaw-dropped and tearful," Firth says. "But they also felt that this musical was a way of giving something back to their fans, who I know mean so much to them. They felt it was a great way for a story to acknowledge what it means to be a fan."

With *Greatest Days*, that opportunity to give something back to the fans has been magnified tenfold, the power and scale and scope of film meaning that what was once a story confined to the four walls of a theatre can expand exponentially.

"The challenge for anything coming from stage to screen is how you can build it out, how you can take it bigger," Perkins says. "There was the kernel of something so great and emotional [in the stage show] that we knew we could build out in a cinematic way. Musicals are complicated. They're not straightforward films to make. It was a gamble in that we knew we had to do something ambitious, especially when it came to the musical numbers."

And so began a process that saw Perkins and his fellow producers, Jane Hooks and Kate Solomon, soak in as much information and first-hand experience as they could about the band, travelling to watch their stage show with different sets of fans around the country. From the Odyssey tour at the O2 to Cardiff's Millennium Stadium, where Take That played in front of a raucous crowd of 60,000, they saw up close what makes them, and their audience click.

Joining them on this reconnaissance tour was Coky Giedroyc, who the band had met in Los Angeles just after the director had completed *How To Build A Girl*. "That film", Perkins adds, "with its mix of charm, humour, down-to-earth characters and escapist flights of fancy, was the perfect calling card" for the kind of film they all knew *Greatest Days* could become.

Thus began a journey that Owen describes as "really special and magical, insane, terrifying and beautiful all at the same time". A journey that has ended up in a movie that has delighted its makers, and those whose music inspired it in the first place.

CASTING TWIN TIMELINES

While it's the music of Take That that gives *Greatest Days* its rhythm, it is the character of Rachel who gives it its heart. "She is," says Coky Giedroyc, "the beginning, the middle and the end of it."

When we first meet Rachel in the film, it is the present-day version of the character, played by the brilliant Aisling Bea (*This Way Up*, *Home Sweet Home Alone*). A paediatric nurse with fully formed commitment issues – her boyfriend Jeff, played by Marc Wootton (*High & Dry*, the *Nativity* series), has asked her to marry him, unsuccessfully, six times already – Rachel still loves music, torturing the children on her ward with her favourite '90s tracks on the radio, but has lost touch with the teenager she used to be.

With her life in a comfortable stasis, this Rachel hasn't felt the need to call forth her beloved boys from her imagination in years. But when she wins the four tickets to go and see the band at their reunion gig in Athens, all her memories of the period she first fell in love with them return. And we flash back to that teenage Rachel, dancing away in her bedroom to the band's new video on *Top Of The Pops*, their poster in pride of place above her bed.

This version of Rachel is played by Lara McDonnell, the young Irish actress who broke big in a small but standout role in Kenneth Branagh's *Belfast* in 2021. Bea had loved the film at the time, enjoying watching her good friends Jamie Dornan and Caitriona Balfe "be the closest to themselves that I'd seen them be in anything". But she was blown away, "by this girl who was doing this little shoplifting scene, bullying her cousin," Bea says.

"Straight away," Bea remembers, "I was like, 'I want to write something for her because she's brilliant. Her timing is excellent.'" She would get her chance with *Greatest Days*, in which Bea both stars and has worked on the script. "This film was the perfect opportunity," she says.

Bea describes working with McDonnell as a peer-to-peer experience. "Because I'm a big child and she's quite an adult figure and so professional, as well as being an exceptional actor," Bea says. The older actress even estimates that her younger counterpart will working "until she's at least 90" because of her love of the craft and her dedication to authenticity.

"I'll give you an example," Bea says. "I've got very blue eyes and Lara has got brown eyes. And Karen, the make-up designer, was like, 'We *need* blue eyes.' I said, 'If she has to wear lenses, I wouldn't do that.' But Lara just put them in straight away. I probably wouldn't be that dedicated. I'd be like, 'Yeah, I'll just explain it through a line

in the script.' You know: 'Hey, remember the time I had that eye disease that changed my eye colour?'"

The teenage Rachel, McDonnell says, has a vibrant imagination. "I love that her way of comforting herself is that she literally imagines a boyband everywhere she goes," McDonnell smiles. "*So* imaginative." But for all her flights of fancy, Rachel also finds herself sometimes acting as the peacekeeper in a group of five girls who always find time to bicker.

"I think she takes on that peacekeeper role because of all the turbulence she has going on at home," McDonnell says of Rachel and her little brother living with parents on the brink of divorce. "When she's with her friends, she likes to keep the peace because she likes to be happy. That's why her and Debbie are such good friends, because Debbie is this constant ray of joy and life."

Of Rachel's four friends, Debbie (played by Jessie Mae Alonzo) is definitely her best – not that she would admit it to keen diver Claire (Carragon Guest), school brainiac Zoe (Nandi Hudson) or amateur clothes designer and jumble sale enthusiast Heather (Eliza Dobson). Still, the chemistry between all five is indelible on screen, helped by a pre-production period that saw them all form bonds that they say will last a lifetime off-screen, too.

"The girls and I have become really, really close on this whirlwind of a journey," McDonnell says. "In the month together in rehearsals, we'd do everything together. We'd wake up, get in the car together, go to work together, spend a whole day together, go home together. And making this film has been such an intimate thing to do. We've had to be so vulnerable with each other, so you get to know each other really quickly. I love them all so very much."

Even though McDonnell and Bea are heading up two different timelines of Rachel's life, there have nevertheless been numerous crossovers in days on set, not least during the making of one of *Greatest Days* most beautiful and original magic realism sequences, in which the younger versions of all the characters pay a much-needed visit to their older versions in Athens.

That sequence, set to classic Take That track Patience, sees the older versions of the characters separated in the Greek capital. Claire, who still works in the local shop her mum had when the girls were young, is now played by Jayde Adams. Zoe is working in Bath university and is played by Amaka Okafor. And Heather, played by Alice Lowe, has turned her teenage hobby of turning second-hand clothes into brand new outfits into a globetrotting career as a fashion designer. All of them, though, have lost sight of the free-spirited girls they once were.

“The young girls in our film, in our story, they are immortal. They feel like they own the world. They're *luminous*,” says Giedroyc. “And the message of the film is: don't forget that. Actually, that person is still inside you. You know, it doesn't go. You *shouldn’t* let it go.”

Giedroyc says Bea is perfect in the role of Rachel, not just because of what she brings to the role but because of the people she is on screen to represent. “She is the person the audience will empathise with, relate to, understand. This character is completely down-to-earth and unselfish in a non-showy way. She doesn't pull focus. She's salt of the earth, like every single woman I met at the Take That gigs we went to. She’s had stuff happen in her life and has repressed a lot of it. And what we do in the film is dance – literally dance – between Rachel's story now and her memories of being young, when she felt like she owned the world.”

Tim Firth says that the difference between the two Rachels is Debbie. One of them had her by her side, the other one doesn’t. “The story of Rachel is the story of a girl who was very much the sidekick to a much shinier, brighter, more vibrant force, who was Debbie,” Firth says.

“And, at the age of 40, Rachel finds that suddenly *she* is the one who's got to move into that seat. She's got to be the driver, the one who brings everybody together. She's got to do what Debbie did and what Debbie would have wanted to do. In doing that, she finds that she *does* have that spark. As a sidekick, maybe it wasn’t there. But Debbie knew it. What you're seeing in this movie is the sidekick gradually taking centre stage.”

It's one hell of an arc and, in Aisling Bea, the production has found one hell of a talent to play it. “Aisling is so brilliant and she’s so funny – she’s basically perfect for this role. And she is so, *so* lovely in it,” says producer Kate Solomon.

Bea’s performance is as moving as it is hilarious. “The teenage Rachel and the one of today are very different. When she wins these tickets, in a competition she’s entered without really thinking, it’s like a whoosh of demons, things she hasn't dealt with, brought forward,” she says.

“And it's funny how universal things are for a certain age group,” Bea continues. “Coming into your thirties there's an element of suddenly getting nostalgic for all that, almost like getting into your thirties gives you time to process school and who you are. You tend to look at your peers, your parents, everyone with a lot more empathy. When you look back at your parents at that age, you think, ‘I'm their age now, and I'm still an idiot.’ It makes you re-evaluate and wrestle with who you were, and who your friends were.”

For the whole cast of *Greatest Days*, it has been a long journey. Bea remembers a conversation with Jayde Adams – one of the first people attached to the project – from over three years ago. "Jayde is a long-time friend of mine," Bea says. "We're both stand-ups and I've known her for over a decade. I remember her texting me going, 'Oh, mate, I'm doing a Take That movie. Can you believe it?' I was like, 'Oh my God, I wish I bloody wrote that.' And then they approached me about playing Rachel and I said yes and also came on as script editor."

The two old friends well remember the complications of casting the younger versions of their characters. "When they were casting young Rachel, they wanted some pictures of me as a teenager. I was like, 'Oh, no, I didn't look anything like me [then].' I had bleached blonde hair," Bea laughs. "It's funny. That was the period in the nineties when you just wanted to look like an LA girl. Me and Jayde were talking about the fact that back then we were *dosed* in fake tan. Like, we used to stand beside oak or mahogany doors and you wouldn't be able to see us."

For the younger versions of all the characters, though, *Greatest Days* has been a blast. Eliza Dobson and Carragon Guest chuckle when they recall the first time all the younger actors met their older on-screen counterparts. "We all stood around pointing at each other saying, 'Wow. You've got my eyes…' It was so funny," Dobson laughs.

Over the course of filming, all the younger actors say they have learned so much from the likes of Bea, Okafor, Adams and Lowe. Even if the latter really could use a little help when it comes to technology.

"My older version is Alice Lowe and she is so lovely and so helpful," Dobson says. "I mean, she's a mother of two children under five right now. She brought them to set to look after them, so she was being a mum while she was being an actress. It's amazing. The only bad thing about Alice is that she's got an old Nokia, so I can never get in touch with her. Alice, get an iPhone, please!"

The generational differences aren't all one-way traffic either, Bea recalling the perils of going out for some drinks after shooting together. "The young ones would be dressed really nineties-ish, wearing stuff I'd have worn 20 years ago because it's all back in fashion," Bea laughs. "I remember my aunt refusing to wear bellbottoms because we were, when I was their age. And it's the same thing. Except, now it's like, 'Oh no, I'm the older one out there now.'"

These, however, are but small sacrifices in the grand scheme of an experience that saw Bea get to work with not just her old pal Jayde Adams, but one of her true comedy idols, Alice Lowe, and, in Amaka Okafor, a woman with "an emotional intelligence so deep" that she would have chats so profound that she reckons they could possibly change the world.

"You can *act* chemistry, but that can be very draining, having to fake it," Bea says. "But with these guys, every time I saw their faces on set, I was never faking our friendship. I feel like I won the lottery with them, truly."

SHOOTING THE CAMEO

“We talked to Take That about having a cameo in the film. And we talked to them about all the different locations that we were going to film in,” laughs Danny Perkins. “And, obviously, when Athens was mentioned, that was where they wanted to do their cameo.”

With Tim Firth and Coky Giedroyc coming up with an appropriate new scene in the script, Gary Barlow flew into Athens from Australia, Mark Owen from Los Angeles, and Howard Donald from his home in the UK. They landed on the afternoon of May 18, 2022. They wrapped at 3am the next day. “And do you know what?” Mark Owen says. “It was worth every minute.”

The occasion was also significant as it proved to be the first time in a long time that the three members of Take That had even stood in a room together. There had been Zooms and emails and phone calls, of course. But an extended break made even more extended by an unexpected pandemic meant that Athens became the setting for not just the boyband in the movie’s reunion, but that of the band who had inspired it.

“Athens was that first time together again,” Owen says. “As a band, we have been going through a similar period as we did [before]. We've had a break. We finished the Greatest Hits tour, which was like our 30th anniversary, and then we all sort of went our separate ways and had some time away from each other. So, Athens was funny because although I'd seen everybody individually, it was the first time we’d all been in a room together for probably three years. So it was a bit of a reunion for us, too. When you first walk into a room, you're a bit like, ‘How’s this going to go?’ And this film has definitely brought us back together.”

Gary Barlow smiles at the memory. “I can tell you exactly what happens when we haven't seen each other for a while – we all start laughing. I don't know what it is. We just always start laughing. Then we catch up for a bit, see what everyone's been up to – you know, kids, wives, gigs, all that. And then inevitably Howard will put the football on if there's a game on and we'll watch bit of footie,” Barlow says. “It’s just Take That – good times only.”

Before the band headed down to the location for their cameo, they made sure to hang out with the five guys playing their spiritual on-screen alter-egos in the film: Aaron Bryan, Dalvin Cory, Joshua Jung, Mark Samaras and Mervin Noronha. All of whom cite that hotel suite meet as one of the most surreal moments in their entire *Greatest Days* journey.

All five of the guys playing Rachel's imaginary boyband are pumped to be a part of something so seismic. Something that has plucked them from their different dancing disciplines – from commercial to TV shows to ballet – and, crucially, moved them from their previously supporting roles to slap-bang centre-stage. From being what they call "behind the artist" dancers to becoming the artist themselves.

"It's not that I wasn't appreciated in those previous roles, but I was at the back," says Samaras. "And I knew I could do more. I would call my mum: 'I'm just in the background. You can't really see me.' And my mum was always like, 'Mark, you are going to do something amazing. I can feel it.' When I got this job, I called my mum and sisters, and they were all crying and screaming."

Make no mistake, these were coveted roles. "Especially for the dance industry," Jung says. "These opportunities don't come along often. This is probably unheard of, for five boys from the dance industry to have such a lead role in a feature film." Little wonder over 500 auditioned, to be whittled down to just 15 for the final audition.

The boys say that the secret to their success at that final hurdle was their decision to work together. With the 15 remaining boys split into three groups of five on the day, where the other two groups performed more as two sets of five individuals, Bryan, Cory, Jung, Samaras and Noronha had made sure to choreograph a routine that played to *all* of their strengths, that gave them all the chance to shine, but would see them function as a singular entity, a true unit.

"We performed last on that day," Jung says. "And when we walked off, there was sort of a feeling in the room that was like, 'Wow. That was it.' I'm getting goosebumps just thinking about it now."

There have been darker days since, not least when lockdown struck and the five spent endless nights awake fretting that by the time it would eventually be possible for the film to move forward, the production might be looking to recast. "I'm not going to lie," Bryan says. "There were so many moments when I was like, 'You've just got to accept this is not going to happen.'" They needn't have worried.

The difficulty level of the *Greatest Days* dance sequences did mean the odd cracked rib along the way, but the biggest health scare for any of the group came before cameras were even rolling, when Bryan had to have his appendix removed under a month before shooting began. Thankfully, a rejigged schedule and an "amazing" physio got him back to full fitness just in time.

Ask anyone on this production about these five young men and all you'll get are glowing notes. "I love my boys," says Lara McDonnell. "I don't want to boost their egos too much, but they are incredible. I feel like every one of them was born to be in a boyband – a nice boyband, specifically. The girls and I have observed on set that

literally any time the boys do anything, even if they're just stopping and talking, it looks like it could be an album cover. It's ridiculous. But they're also the loveliest guys you will ever meet and are so ridiculously talented."

Most telling, says Firth, is that their chemistry isn't just for the cameras. "What I loved when I was on set is that they stay as a five," Firth says. "They go to the canteen as a five, they chill out as a five. And that's vital because the chemistry between them is vital to their presence as a band. Otherwise, they're just five dancers. And that's not what this is about. This story is about three different bands. It's about the band, the boys, the band of young girls, and the band of older girls. And the boys have got to be as tight in their own way as those women are in theirs."

As for the film itself, the boys couldn't be prouder. Not just of what it is but what it represents. "It's insane seeing it on screen," says Noronha. "Crazy, absolutely insane. You never really see an Indian guy in a boy band, in a film like this. My parents are over the moon." All five of them say that *Greatest Days* has been an experience they will, well, never forget.

For Mark Owen, what he remembers most when he met the band – and all the cast and crew – out there in Athens, was the look in their eyes. "I could see in their eyes that they'd been on a journey," Owen says. "I could see that they were near the end of their journey. And I could see that it had been quite an emotional journey for all of them. And I also saw a lot of love. That's what I got from Athens. I felt a lot of love."

Before heading to set for their cameo, Take That went to the costume department, for the outfits designer Sian Jenkins had created for them based on the mood boards they'd approved. "They play a group of buskers on a train," Jenkins says. "We didn't want them to be traditional Greek buskers but to still have a slightly 'music video' feel." It's fair to say she hit her target.

For all three, being out there on set in Athens was a significant moment. "We realise the importance of the art of storytelling," Barlow says, "so being part of it, seeing the passion of everyone involved, is so inspiring."

"We kind of play ourselves in the movie. And it's cute and it looks great. We were delighted, but we wanted to be directed a bit more. You know, it was, 'Coky, Coky! Am I doing this properly? Do I need to act more?'" Barlow laughs. "She was like, 'No, just be yourself…'"

Take That completed their cameo in a couple of hours, then hopped on a plane to the Cannes Film Festival, where they were excited to introduce a *Greatest Days* sizzle reel that would go down a storm with international buyers. For the band, the Cannes visit was another surreal step in the process of making this film.

CHOREOGRAPHING MAGIC REALISM

Greatest Days is a movie with a series of song and dance sequences at serious scale. From Athens to airports, Olympic swimming pools to picturesque period English high streets, the film has brought massive musical life to multiple locations.

"It's a hugely ambitious project," says Danny Perkins. "Whether it's dancing, singing, swimming, Olympic-level divers, it's been wonderful seeing how Coky [Giedroyc] has managed to pull all of that together and deliver."

For Tim Firth, the step up in scope has seen the possibilities of this story explode into new life. Scenes have been able to truly fly. "In *Greatest Days*, when the boys appear, it means there's magic in the room, which allows you – almost *demands* you – to move into magical world," the writer says.

"And in the film, that's an incredible shift. When the boys appear, we see a world that's like the real world, but the colours become brighter, and the sounds become sharper – it *moves*. It's like when you're walking down a street with music in your ears, and everything becomes slightly magical and movie-like. And now, we *are* making a movie. So now, you've now got to make the *movie* movie-like."

What Coky Giedroyc has achieved with the musical sequences in *Greatest Days* has to be seen to be believed. But the director says she couldn't have done any of it without the man she calls her "genius" choreographer, Drew McOnie. "He *is* a genius," Giedroyc says. "I saw a production of his *Jesus Christ Superstar* when it opened in London six times, and this is before I even knew I was doing this film. I was stalking the guy, basically."

Her obsession has paid dividends. "Drew has got a way of capturing *exactly* what we wanted in the film," Giedroyc says, "which is the natural and real married with a flight of fancy and magic. And he does it so fast and effortlessly. I can say, 'That section isn't quite working. Can we have everything happen, like, three feet further forward?' And he does it within *moments*. He also never imposes anything. I've heard about movies, musical movies, where the choreographer comes in and hands something to the director as a *fait accompli*. And that's it. But with Drew, it's all about collaboration."

The Olivier Award-winning choreographer is, according to Eliza Dobson, essentially operating on another level. "Jessie [Mae Alonzo] and Carragon [Guest] both come from musical theatre backgrounds, where Drew is, like, *God*," Dobson says. "My sister also does musical theatre. So, when I found out it was Drew who was the choreographer, I called my sister. I told her it was Drew McOnie and she just went, 'You're *lying*!'"

McOnie, the creative talisman behind such huge stage productions as *King Kong* on Broadway, Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom* in the West End, and the aforementioned *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which has travelled all the way from Regent's Park to North America, is making his film debut with *Greatest Days* – and he's loved the experience.

"It was really important to me when approaching a movie that had the gift of Take That's incredible music to try and find a balance where we weren't just creating a kind of a museum piece," McOnie says. "You know, if you want to have those moments, you're never going to do better than just YouTubing Take That. What I wanted to try to capture was giving audiences the feeling that they were seeing these songs for the *first time* again."

There are nods in the choreography, naturally, to some classic Take That routines from way back when. "But in order to be able to deliver that familiar embrace *and* that wide-eyed wow factor meant trying to create a hybrid, a bringing together of the nineties and the modern day, and delivering that through choreography," McOnie says.

"A lot of the prep time was spent immersing ourselves in the history of Take That, in their style and what they did to that generation of people – how they changed them. And, of course, it's a very fine line for somebody like me to dig into the research but not become so overwhelmed by it that I became terrified by the challenge," the choreographer says.

"Walking that line throughout has made sure that their identity and spirit were at the centre of what we were doing. And yet it meant we were able to be brave enough to be a little bit radical and think about it in a slightly new way."

McOnie's artistic manifesto, Giedroyc says, is what will ensure *Greatest Days* will appeal to audiences of all ages. Just as the director has personally seen how quickly Take That's music can seduce new fans – Giedroyc tells a story of taking her daughter to see them in Cardiff in the run-up to shooting, and her daughter becoming "an instant convert" – like McOnie she understands that *Greatest Days* needs to celebrate the past but also move things forward.

"These songs are absolutely at the centre of all our vision, focus and motion, but the freedom to be able to deliver that to a new generation has been a gift," McOnie says. "The music of Take That is deeply bound into the identity of this film; the optimism, the aspiration, the empathy, the sensuality, and the physicality that drives like blood through the course of it. While the film isn't about them, it is about that feeling of when you heard that music for the first time and how that impacted your life. What it did to your senses, what it did to your body."

Whether it's lavish, Busby Berkley, MGM-style, big band numbers in ballgowns on airport runways to intimate, Magic Mike-style grinds in leather trousers on Manchester buses, McOnie's choreography in *Greatest Days* is exhilarating, joyous, liberating and playful.

"Coky has this brilliant sense when she's talking about magic realism," McOnie says. "For us in the film, it's not just about fireworks and razzmatazz – though there are plenty of both. It's about rooting those spectacular moments in the truth of the central characters."

Giedroyc agrees. "In our film, magic is just a whisker away from reality, so suddenly everyone will be doing all these amazing formations and dances, and then suddenly they're gone, and nobody bats an eyelid. It's not that we're *not* doing a musical. It's more that these song and dance routines just kind of creep in, unexpectedly. But, as you get to know Rachel, you know she's going to experience these moments whenever she needs them."

Aisling Bea admits to a certain amount of pre-shoot nerves but seems to have conquered them as the project has progressed. "I do see myself predominantly as a dancer in this," Bea deadpans. "I don't think that the cameramen or the other dancers, the rest of the cast or the audience will think of it like that. But I do like to think of myself as a dancer, not a human."

After all, in some ways, Rachel is the role she was born to play. Bea remembers wistfully being a kid in Kildare, long afternoons spent dancing around outside the local drama school, waiting for her "long suffering" mother to come and pick her up.

"When we were doing the dancing scenes on this, it felt a little bit like what five-year-old me who wanted to be an actor thought that acting was: loads of wigs and giant costumes and people dancing around," Bea says.

Perhaps the most Hollywood moment on *Greatest Days* was that classic MGM-style sequence that shot on the tarmac of Stansted airport in April 2022. "We were on a live working airport, so we'd be trying to do a take and suddenly Ryanair flight 213 from Dublin would land in behind your head," Bea remembers.

"It was quite full-on, with wigs and lipstick and wind and these amazing 1930s ballgowns – for which costume designer Sian Jenkins "pulled on the peaches and silvers of the era" – and sound issues and playback and dancers having to hold," Bea says. "But the dancers were amazing. These were the moments, after all the weeks of rehearsals, that were their moments to shine."

The younger Rachel, Lara McDonnell, has a favourite dance routine, too. But hers is somewhat less 1930s. It's when Rachel and her friends see the band perform at the

Manchester Apollo (the venue that was Take That's biggest early gig in the real world) and miss the last train home.

Stranded and penniless, they persuade the local bus driver to run them home. Halfway there, in one of young Rachel's more intense fantasy imaginings, the boys appear to her decked out in some decidedly distinctive outfits. "We look like strippers, basically," laughs Josh Jung.

"That was my greatest day on *Greatest Days*," McDonnell says. "When we shot Relight My Fire on the bus. To be on that bus doing the dance that we'd been rehearsing and talking about for so many months was magical. The girls and I were so excited to do it because we got to watch the boys in their element, and they are so ridiculously talented. It was insane at first. But then it was such a joy. We just got to watch the boys. What more could you want?"

Like Bea, McDonnell isn't a trained dancer. "The other girls are really good dancers," McDonnell says. "I just clung to them in the dance sequences." But because of the kind of environment McOnie fostered, they didn't have to be.

Along with his long-time associate choreographer, Ebony Molina, McOnie has been able to establish a workspace like that because it's precisely the kind of feeling that the *Greatest Days* production has always sought to engender. In the same way that the music of Take That has always been a celebration of inclusivity, so should these dance sequences follow suit.

"That's not to say that the dance sequences aren't spectacular, because they are," McOnie says. "But what's special about this movie is that it celebrates the beauty in normality. This idea of magic realism is making *reality* magic. What this isn't saying is, 'Hey, here's a truckload of dancers that have been training since they were six years old. Now be impressed.'"

Instead, McOnie's hope is this: "It's that, by the time we get to the end of this film, even though you'll have been impressed by the skill of these five lads, we will all also have learnt that maybe we too have magic within us – that we too are all able to dance. This film is a celebration of all of us, a celebration of normal, the glory in the average. My job is part choreographer, part cheerleader, pulling things out of people that they didn't think they were able to do."

REIMAGINING THE MUSIC

"The thing about Take That songs," Coky Giedroyc says, "is that whether they're anthems and big bangers, or some of the tiniest, gentlest ballads, they're all so redemptive and full of joy. We found, as we were working on the script with Tim [Firth], that every single song perfectly underscores an emotional moment in the story. It's extraordinary."

That, Giedroyc says, is not just what makes the music of Take That so enduring but so *versatile*. Over the course of *Greatest Days*, as part of a process of reimagining their music for a different medium, the production has pulled their classic songs apart, to see what's inside them. To understand what makes them tick.

"A lot of times," Drew McOnie says of other pieces of music he's worked with, "you can get inside a track and realise that, really, what made that track was more the musical production of it, as opposed to the song itself. That absolutely *cannot* be said of Take That's music."

What that has meant for *Greatest Days* is twofold. "What our composers have been able to do with the music, to make it work better within the rhythms of our story, is to maybe add more beats to a song to make it better for the dance routine or put more emotion into it so it works with a certain sequence," says Danny Perkins. "We've also stripped some of the songs right back. And what we've found throughout with these songs is that they're so powerful they can wear change and deliver every emotion we need for Rachel's journey."

What that means for audiences, Kate Solomon says, is simple. "Some musicals just go from song to song to song. In this, the music feeds and bleeds into the story, accelerating it down the path to the end. By the end, everyone will be out of their seats, dancing."

For Rachel herself, aka Aisling Bea, it was also important that the music in *Greatest Days* didn't fall into any stereotypical genre pitfalls. "It's not like we're singing a lot of the songs, but part of our chats creatively was to make sure that we did sing in bits and pieces, so it wasn't just men singing at us. It was making sure these women had a voice within the songs as well."

Perkins says that when the composers of *Greatest Days* first got to see an assembly of the film, it made them cry. "So, we clearly hit our beats on set," the producer notes with a smile.

On set and overseeing the *Greatest Days* soundscape is James A. Taylor. The music supervisor had worked with Giedroyc before, as a rehearsal pianist on *The Sound Of*

Music Live in 2015, and in the period in between has been involved with everything from The Beatles (*Yesterday* in 2019) to Disney (*Pinocchio* in 2022). He is next working as music supervisor on *Wonka*, Paul King's prequel story of the chocolate factory legend.

On *Greatest Days*, Taylor's role was to oversee the daily song and dance of a set. Literally. "In the same way that a director of photography would look after the lights and cameras, anything musical that happens on set is my responsibility," Taylor says.

Whether that was ensuring the cameras were synched with the music, that the footage being achieved would deliver what Giedroyc would need come the edit, or even just making sure that the actors knew their words, Taylor had to have his eyes and ears everywhere.

"If an actor sees me walking towards them on set, they know something's coming, that maybe they've forgotten a note or something," Taylor laughs. "If I'm walking towards them, it's like, 'Oh, here he comes…'"

Taylor appreciates the appeal of musicals more than most. "Pure escapism," he says. "People made memories the first time they heard these songs, and they'll make new memories when they watch this film." But he's also acutely aware of the trap that some can fall into.

"It sounds obvious, but with a musical, you have to make sure that the songs really work with what's happening on screen," Taylor says. "Otherwise, you just end up with a film that's also got an album playing in the middle of it. That's not all linked together."

Not so *Greatest Days*, which Taylor maintains evolved over time until it found its perfect groove. "The example that's sticking in my mind is Patience," he says. "That song went through so many discussions. 'Does Aisling's character sing it? Does Mark's character sing it? Is it a duet?' It was everyone together who came up with the version that we have in the film, which is that Aisling starts it and then everyone joins in. It was an organic process. We knew the songs, but how they happened or who was singing them developed over time."

Taylor has many favourite memories from the set, many of them from huge set-pieces featuring over 200 extras, new arrangements, and a full orchestra. But if there's one that maybe sits with him the most, it's the one that features just one voice and a piano, piercing a profound silence.

"With A Million Love Songs," Taylor says, "the version from 30 years ago is very different to the version we've got now. That scene is incredibly powerful, and we stripped everything back to just a solo. No vocal acrobatics, no saxophone, just the bare bones. And it changed the emotion. It's still a love song in the context of the film, but it's not a romantic love song. It's a special moment in the film. Gary [Barlow] loves it."

Bea particularly understands that feeling of familiarity now, having listened to all of Take That's songs "at least 150 times in a row" during the making of *Greatest Days*. "I have to say, the one thing that I think everyone agrees with on this job is that we should all be sick of Take That songs by now, but they're just not getting old," she says. "I just can't understand it. I can't look at my face twice in the mirror. I'm like, 'Oh, you again...' But I can listen to Shine repeatedly."

Responsible for recreating these new versions of those classic Take That tracks – sometimes with granular notes coming in from the band themselves – were Nick Foster and Oli Julian, the composers and arrangers who also wrote the *Greatest Days* score, knitting together the entire musical language of the film.

Fresh off the back of an intense final week of orchestral sessions, big band sessions, drum sessions, percussion sections and gospel choir sessions – some featuring up to 50 people at a time – at London's AIR Studios, the pair should by all rights be exhausted. "But when you're working with some of the best musicians in the world, it's such a rush," Foster smiles.

It was Oli Julian who had signed onto the project first, having worked with Giedroyc on *How To Build A Girl*. But it didn't take much for him to persuade Foster to join him. "I think he texted me: 'Take That musical?' And I was straight on the phone," Foster laughs.

Julian had wanted Foster on board because of his reputation in pop production. The fact that in Foster's "previous life," as he refers to it, as a record producer he had worked with Gary Barlow was the icing on the cake.

"It had been quite a long while since I'd seen Gary," Foster says. "I'm a composer for film and TV now and our lives move on. But when we did our first song on this, which was Pray, we sent it out to everyone to have a listen. And he sent back this lovely email going, 'YES.' He was so enthusiastic and so welcoming. He welcomed us into the process."

Julian too has been bowled over by what he calls Barlow's "infectious enthusiasm" and the trust the band has put in him and Foster. "I was pleasantly surprised by how much freedom we had to try things out and do what felt right in terms of production and instrumentation," he says. "We were building on what had already been achieved with the stage musical, trying to make it as cinematic as possible. We wanted to make this *musically widescreen*."

Both Foster and Julian stress that although your favourite Take That songs are most likely all present and correct in *Greatest Days*, they're not there just to please the fanbase. "The songs have been chosen because of what they achieve narratively

and naturally, not just as needle-drops where suddenly everyone is singing," Foster says. "All these songs are in here because they move the story on. None of them are superfluous."
The cast recorded many of their vocals ahead of the shoot, at a makeshift studio at the production's base in Wembley, and recorded final versions in post, back at AIR. Foster and Julian have been mightily impressed by what they've heard, too. "We've got some proper vocal talent in this," Julian says, before adding that the five guys playing the boyband in the film could genuinely form one of their own, should they fancy it.

If the pressure of reimagining some of the most beloved pop songs of the past three decades is weighing on Foster and Julian, it doesn't show. But maybe that is in part down to the working relationship they have with the people who first recorded them.

"It's been great chatting to Gary and Mark and Howard about which aspects of the songs are really important to them, and what *they* think make these songs great," Julian says. "And we have of course incorporated all of that into the arrangements we've done. They've played these songs to millions of people, over three decades. They've stood there on stage, so they know what it is about their songs that works for the audience and why."

Julian gives an example. "In Pray, there's a string line that Mark [Owen] absolutely loved, and it was missing in our original demo version. So, of course, when we recorded the orchestra, the strings played that big line, and now it would be so missing if it wasn't there."

The two music composers and arrangers also insist on namechecking Ryan Carline, and his part in all this. "Ryan works with the band and has mixed some of our biggest songs. He helped Take That with the Greatest Hits album a couple of years ago, where they revisited all their songs. So, they've been through the same process, to some extent, that we were going through. They've been in and seen what makes these songs tick and what needs to be preserved about them. So Ryan has been really useful helping us get to the answers," Julian notes.

As big Take That fans themselves, though, Foster and Julian's goal wasn't only to do these great songs justice for the many people who already love them, but also to introduce them to brand new audiences.

"We were very conscious that we didn't want to throw away stuff that was fantastic. You know, none of this needed fixing!" Foster laughs. "They are brilliant songs. They stand the test of time. But we also wanted to bring them to a new audience. There might be people watching this film who weren't around when Relight My Fire or Never Forget were first out. And it's high time these songs got another moment in the sun."

When you go to see Take That live, Perkins says, at some point in their set they'll ask the crowd if they've seen them live before. There is always a big cheer. "But then they'll ask the crowd if it's anyone's first time at the concert. And they *also* get a reasonably big cheer," Perkins says.

"What we can conclude from that," the producer says, "is that they're bringing new people to their music all the time. What they're finding is that it's generational, there is a second generation of Take That fans who are having a great time with these songs. And those people might not be aware quite how *many* great Take That songs there are. That's exciting for them, to think that this film could show that."

What's also exciting for all three members of Take That is how the process of making *Greatest Days* has revitalised their relationship with their own music. "Watching the film is a proper tear-jerker for me," Howard Donald says, "because it brings a new light to the songs. It completely changes the way I feel about what great songs we actually wrote. When you hear an orchestra on a song and you see it in the film, you see the emotions of it."

You could even say that *Greatest Days* has served as something of a 360-degree catalyst for the band when it comes to the tracks they had previously thought they knew inside and out.

All three insist that the first time they saw an early cut of the film was a moment that will stick with them forever. "It was so emotional," Donald says. "I was nervous going into the screening but was very happy when I came out. They've really, really got something."

For Owen, what resonated in ways he hadn't quite expected was how the events on screen would mirror what the band went through themselves. As he sat there in the screening room, personal memories quite literally came flooding back.

Barlow felt the same, *Greatest Days* transporting him back to different times in the blink of an eye. "And that's really not like me. As a person, I'm always very much about moving forward. I've been a devil for that," Barlow says.

"So, it's a journey we're all on together, whether we like it or not. These songs take me back. You remember who you were and how you were feeling, through that piece of music. I can stand on stage tomorrow night and sing these things and I'm 19 again, for sure. That's what music is and why it's so brilliant – it's like time travel."

THE MESSAGE OF GREATEST DAYS

Aisling Bea has a confession. "As a kid, I came into the pop world more when Boyzone took off," she says. "I'm not trying to start beef or anything, but it would be remiss of me to not say that I wasn't a Boyzone fan originally."

When, on February 13, 1996, Take That split up, Bea was oblivious. "I grew up in a single-parent family in the middle of nowhere. We didn't have *Top Of The Pops* because we only had Irish channels," she says. "So I didn't know who Take That were until one day I came into school and the bigger girls were crying. I couldn't understand what was going on, but I kind of faked it, like, 'Oh no, Take That have broken up!' But I didn't know what it meant."

That boyband bombshell aside, making *Greatest Days* has done for Bea what it has done for pretty much everyone on this production – and will do, its makers hope, for audiences everywhere. And that is to make people take a moment to remember what really matters.

"For all of us it's been an emotional journey because you're watching very vividly on screen two versions of one person," says Kate Solomon. "You're seeing the 16-year-old version where anything is possible, and all these roads and possibilities are there. And then you're seeing the version at 40 who has chosen different paths. I think the joy of this is that it doesn't matter which path you took in life, you can still reconnect to where you came from, who you were."

If there's a lesson that *Greatest Days* most wants you to take away from it, Solomon says that perhaps it's that "we should all be a little bit more irresponsible and let go and have fun in the way we did when we were 16. To live more in the moment."

This story, Coky Giedroyc maintains, isn't just about old friends re-finding a love they've lost. "It's about the power a band has to connect you to when you were a teenager," the director says. "When we're 16, everything is developing, growing. I've seen it with my own kids – they sort of start to fill their skin. And you're so emotional. *So* emotional. Your hormones are raging. Everything matters *a million percent*. And you hear a song that chimes with your mood or your feelings or aspirations or yearnings, and it just *sticks*. Those are the songs that are still in your head all those years later."

It's not about Take That, the band. It's not even about their songs specifically. "It's about music. About the power of music at one time in your life to absorb everything at that time. Your loves, your losses, your quarrels. What built you?" says Tim Firth.

"I look back at the kids I was at school with and think, 'We went through quite a lot together.' In our own small ways, when it comes to your school friends, you fought a lot

of big battles and you stood on a lot of hills and went through a lot of tunnels with those guys," the writer says. "Your school years are like dog years – each one is worth about seven. When I see those people again, I don't see them as people I knew 30 years ago. I see them as old comrades."

For the old comrades from one of the biggest British bands of all time, *Greatest Days* isn't just a film either, it's a moment. "A beautiful moment as well," Gary Barlow says. "One of those moments where you sit there and go, 'Wow, this is really, *really* special.' How many people get to see a movie made with the songs they've made over their lifetime?"

Barlow smiles. "We've made these songs, but they are being celebrated in this movie in a brilliantly new, innovative way. Like Coky says, this film is a love letter to friendship. Think about that for a second. That's pretty powerful." Friendship, Barlow says, means everything.

And that, says its writer, has always been precisely the point. "The story of these five female characters in *Greatest Days*," Firth says, "is a bit like what happened to Take That, and what could happen to all of us. How you hope that the past comes to rescue your future."

The film is called *Greatest Days* as a reminder to us all that what once gave us joy can still help us to find it. "I really believe that we've got a lot to learn from our younger selves," Firth says.

"When we become adults, we become more considered in our judgements. Sometimes we learn fear. What we sometimes need to remember is how we dealt with life when we were 16, that the brio and brashness that we now look back on slightly scornfully, perhaps, maybe isn't worthy of our scorn all the time."

Every time the makers of *Greatest Days* screen the film, they say, the feedback they get is the same; people telling them that they're now going to get in touch with old pals they haven't seen for a while, maybe dig out some old photos and play some old tunes for old time's sake. "If this film can bring people together then we've done our job," says Danny Perkins.

But for all the nostalgia, Bea says that the movie also has a lot to say about not just looking back but moving forward. "I think that *Greatest Days* is a lovely title because we look back with this heady, rose-tinted view of our childhood. And as you get older, you're like, 'Oh my God, my lens was so only from one point of view.' Suddenly that can release you. You realise that maybe your greatest days are still ahead of you."

This is a film about the past and the future and how the two intertwine. It's about the power of music and friendship and the people who have changed the way we think

about the world. But mainly, Lara McDonnell says, it's about having fun. "The biggest thing I want," she says, "is that when people watch this film, they have as much fun as we did when we were making it."

"I just it hope it can be a celebration and that it makes people happy and brings back good memories, maybe emotional with a tear or two but I hope it brings people happiness" Donald says.

"It's a tricky one," Barlow says, "because you can sit on stage and go [he puts on a cheesy voice]: 'You know, you guys, you mean so much to us...' But even though you mean it, it still sounds insincere in a way. So we've been wanting to do something to say thank you, something that shines a light on people who have supported us, something that our audience can watch and see themselves."

He says that *Greatest Days* feels like a line in the sand. "A representation of all the work we've done for 30 years, all in a beautifully told story. It's going to be in this body of work for people to watch forever. It just feels brilliant to be a part of it."

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

AISLING BEA - Rachel

Aisling's brilliant 5-star BAFTA winning series *This Way Up* that she wrote, produced and starred in has recently aired on Channel 4 in the UK and on HULU in the US. Aisling can be seen as a lead in the fantastic Netflix Original series, *Living with Yourself* alongside Paul Rudd. Bea can also be seen starring alongside Sam Claflin and Eleanor Tomlinson in new Netflix feature film LOVE. WEDDING. REPEAT. Aisling has recently been seen in *Quiz* by James Graham, who adapted the story for ITV and AMC from his Olivier-nominated play of the same title. She took a starring role last year opposite Rob Delaney in the hugely popular Disney remake of HOME ALONE, HOME SWEET HOME ALONE and was recently seen taking the guest lead in the global phenomena that is *Doctor Who,* in their New Years Eve Special episode. She has just completed filming as the lead in upcoming feature AND MRS. Other acting credits include roles in BBC drama *Hard Sun* from Luther creator Neil Cross, the acclaimed BBC drama series *The Fall* with Jamie Dornan and Gillian Anderson, E4's show *Gap Year*, Sky 1's *Trollied*, ITV series *Delivery Man*, Sharon Horgan's show *Dead Boss* and Channel 4's *The Damned*.

In 2011 she became the first woman in 20 years to win the prestigious 'So You Think You're Funny?' competition for new stand-ups. Just a year later, her debut solo show at the Edinburgh Fringe, 'C'est La Bea' sold out its entire run, received five-star reviews across the board and she was nominated for the 'Foster's Best Newcomer Award' (formerly 'The Perrier Award'.) Her second show 'Plan Bea' had extra shows added due to high praise and demand. In 2014 Aisling won a British Comedy Award for Best Female Stand-Up on TV. Aisling can currently be seen starring in *The Comedy Line Up* - Netflix's 15-minute comedy specials, which is available to stream globally.

Aisling has appeared on almost every TV panel show in the UK and in 2016 became the first ever female team captain of long running show *8 Out Of 10 Cats* with Jimmy Carr. She was part of the 2017 cast of hit show *Taskmaster* and is a regular on shows like *Qi* (BBC1), *8 Out of Ten Cats Does Countdown* (Ch4), *James Corden's A League of Their Own* (Sky), *The Big Fat Quiz of Everything* (Ch4), *The Last Leg* (Ch4), *Live At The Apollo* (BBC1), *Russell Howard's Good News* (BBC3) and *The Jonathan Ross Show* (ITV). Aisling was a celebrity baker on *Great British Bake Off Celebrity Stand Up To Cancer Special* 2018.

ALICE LOWE - Heather

Award winning actor, director and screenwriter Alice Lowe made her directorial debut with PREVENGE, a pitch-black feminist horror, also starring whilst seven months pregnant. Before this she wrote and starred in the multi award winning cult caravanning comedy SIGHTSEERS. She is currently in post-production for her second BFI backed directorial venture, reincarnation romcom TIMESTALKER, starring Alice, Nick Frost, Jacob Anderson, Aneurin Barnard and Tanya Reynolds, due out in 2023. Alice has appeared in numerous dramas and comedies, *Black Mirror,* HOT FUZZ, cult comedy *Garth Marenghi`s Darkplace,* and more recently, THE ALMOND AND THE SEAHORSE, with Charlotte Gainsbourg and Rebel Wilson. She also relished the role of villain in Netflix`s forthcoming *Lockwood & Co*.

JAYDE ADAMS - Claire

Jayde Adams is an actor, writer, presenter and comedian. Star of *Strictly 2022* and BAFTA winning *Alma's Not Normal* she'll be taking her latest show, 'Men, I Can Save You', on tour across the UK from March. Her series, which she's created, produced and stars in, *Ruby Speaking*, will be released on ITVX in 2023. Over 156 million people watched a clip from her Amazon Prime Special, she's previously sold out 3 UK tours and Dawn French once said "she's the 3rd funniest woman in the world. Fact".

AMAKA OKAFOR - Zoe

Amaka has been building a brilliant body of screen work over the past few years, with several exciting projects coming up.

Amaka most recently wrapped filming one of the four leading roles in *Bodies*, opposite Stephen Graham and Shira Haas. *Bodies* is an incredible eight-part series from Moonage Pictures for Netflix, adapted from Si Spencer's UK crime thriller graphic novel, in which four different detectives try to solve murders in different time periods in London.

In addition to GREATEST DAYS, other recent screen work includes BBC drama, *The Responder*, as a series regular opposite Martin Freeman; ITV drama *Grace* alongside John Simm; and smash hit BBC drama *The Split* as new regular Chloe, alongside Stephen Mangan and Nicola Walker, from writer Abi Morgan. She also filmed Leo Leigh's SWEET SUE for BBC Films and the ITV three-part thriller *Des*, alongside David Tennant and Daniel Mays.

Amaka has also built a fantastic reputation in the UK after an incredible range of standout theatre. Working with some of our finest Directors and dramaturges including Rob Icke, Lyndsey Turner and Rufus Norris.

Last year, Amaka starred in Dennis Kelly's incredible two-hander 'After The End', directed by Lyndsey Turner at Theatre Royal Stratford East, to fantastic reviews. Other credits on stage include 'Nora: A Doll's House', Stef Smith's bold new adaptation of Ibsen's 'A Doll's House' at the Young Vic. The world premiere of Florian Zeller's 'The Son' with Laurie Kynston, Amanda Abbington and John Light, directed by Michael Longhurst - the show transferred from a sell-out run at the Kiln theatre for a limited run at the Duke of York's theatre. And a brilliant turn in David Hare's latest play at the National Theatre, 'I'm Not Running', opposite Sian Brooke and Joshua Maguire.

MARC WOOTTON - Jeff

Marc Wootton is a multi-award-winning actor and comedian who created, wrote and starred in *My New Best Friend* (Ch4) *High Spirits With Shirley Ghostman* (BBC), *LA LA Land* (Showtime) and *High & Dry* (Ch4). He has also starred in I*nside Number 9, Gavin & Stacey, Arthur Christmas, Drunk History, Nighty Night* and *Way To Go* and originated the much loved character of MR. POPPY for the NATIVITY! film franchise. More recently, he teamed up with Sacha Baron Cohen on hidden camera action-comedy GOOSEBERRY (Comedy Central & Lionsgate). Marc is currently filming opposite Noel Fielding in period comedy STAND & DELIVER (Apple TV +) and is developing an exciting new project GURU with Blumhouse Productions. His theatre credits include 'The Same Deep Water As Me' (Donmar, Dir. John Crowley), 'Season's Greetings' (NT, Dir. Marianne Elliott), 'Bull' (Young Vic), 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (RSC) and Shirley Ghostman's 'Spooktacular' (National Tour).

LARA McDONNELL - Young Rachel

Lara McDonnell is an Irish actress known for her work across film, theatre and television. Her feature credits include Academy Award winning BELFAST written and directed by Kenneth Branagh for Focus Features, ARTEMIS FOWL, also directed by Kenneth Branagh, for Disney, THE DELINQUENT SEASON directed by Mark O'Rowe for Parallel Films and LOVE, ROSIE directed by Christian Ditter for Canyon Creek/Constantin Films. TV includes Netflix series *The Last Bus*, *The Holiday* for Chalkboard TV, *To Walk Invisible,* written and directed by Sally Wainwright for BBC and *Ballistic* for Automatik Entertainment/New Regency. Lara's stage work includes the title role in 'Matilda' for the RSC in the West End.

JESSIE MAE ALONZO - Debbie

Jessie trained at Nottingham TV workshop. Her breakout role was starring with Kit Connor and Ben Whishaw in offbeat independent film LITTLE JOE. Her roles have followed on television in *Newark Newark* and *Get Even*. Jessie will next be seen playing a regular role in *The F**k It Bucket,* a series created by Ripley Parker and produced by Leftbank.

CARRAGON GUEST - Young Claire

Carragon Guest was trained at The Urdang Academy, during which time she participated in a production of Fame as Grace 'Lambchops' Lamb and 'When They Go Low' as Louise. She was also in a production of 'Aladdin' at Rotherham Civic in the role of Princess. GREATEST DAYS marks her screen debut in which she appears as Young Claire.

NANDI HUDSON - Young Zoe

Nandi began her professional career aged 10, appearing in various commercials. As well as playing Young Zoe in feature film GREATEST DAYS she can be seen as Lorna in hit TV drama *Mayflies* (Synchronicity Films for BBC One).

She appeared as young Gwendoline (older Gwendoline is played by Nathalie Emmanuel) in Netflix feature ARMY OF THIEVES (Film United) and in BBC One drama *The Nest* as Michelle, playing opposite Mirren Mack. Nandi can also be seen in short film UNDERS (London Film School) playing the role of Lisa.

ELIZA DOBSON - Young Heather

Eliza Dobson born in Stockton in the Northeast of England, she has had a love for the arts all her life and sang in competitions and performed in plays from a young age. Her first professional role was at the age of twelve, she appeared in 'Grow Up Grandad' in her hometown and then toured the UK.

Eliza attended the prestigious BRIT school from the age of sixteen, upon leaving she decided to pursue training for her love of music and gained a place at BIMM at the O2 on the Popular Music Performance - Vocals course. In 2021, Eliza released her first single Mr Unavailable on all streaming platforms. It was whilst at BIMM that Eliza auditioned for GREATEST DAYS and was cast in the role as Heather in her feature film debut.

AARON BRYAN - Boyband

Multi-talented actor, Aaron Bryan, makes his big screen, lead role debut in 2023 in the much-anticipated GREATEST DAYS.

A lifelong performer, Aaron graduated from training as the first recipient of the Dancers Inc. 3 year Scholarship. His first feature film was an ensemble Disneys 'The Little Mermaid' also set for release in 2023. He's completed 3 U.K Tours with the shows, 'Beauty & The Beast' 'Remembering Fred' and 'Rip it up'.

As creative, he was Co-choreographer of the MTV EMA's in 2022. He also contributed choreography and appeared in the prestigious Commonwealth Games in 2022. He choreographed the TV commercial 'Go Romana - Get The Drama' for Pizza Express. TV: The Greatest Dancer (BBC1) Mabel - The Brit Awards (2020) Strictly Come Dancing (2020). Starstruck. The Masked Singer (ITV)

JOSHUA JUNG - Boyband

Joshua hails from Oxfordshire. After seven years of intensive training in Martial Arts, Joshua received his coveted Black belt. He built on his considerable movement skills and began his dance career in a hip-hop troupe, Urban Strides* whom he toured with around different UK Arenas as part of 'The Young Voices Show'.

Joshua went on to study for three years at Performers College in Essex. After graduation, he began his professional career in commercial dance. He's performed with Brit Award Winner, Mabel @ The Brit Awards 2020. He has also appeared on BBCs 'The Greatest Dancer' & ITV's 'Britain's Got Talent' Highlights of 2019 saw him perform with former Spice Girl, Emma Bunton, at The Royal Albert Hall and join the original cast of 'Stardust - The Musical'. In 2022 he joined the UK National tour with Emma Bunton once again.

In 2022 he filmed the new movie GREATEST DAYS as one of the roles in the fictional boyband performing the songbook of Take That, due for worldwide release in 2023!

DALVIN CORY - Boyband

Swiss born Dalvin Cory began his career Breakdancing at the age of 12, training in his hometown and later in Zurich @ The Academy of Performing Arts at the age of 18. In 2019 he was fortunate to be cast in 'The X Factor', Italy. He has continued in primetime TV ever since, including 'The Masked Dancer' series 1 (ITV) 'Starstruck' (ITV) 'Queen of the Universe' (Paramount) and 'I Can See Your Voice' for (BBC1) with Creative Director: Elizabeth Honan.

His big break is in the British feature film GREATEST DAYS where he plays one of the roles in the fictional boyband to the songbook of British Supergroup, Take That.

MARK SAMARAS - Boyband

Mark started dancing at the age of 9 at Janice Marshall Stage School, before also joining Scottish Ballet Junior Associates. At the age of 11 he began training vocationally at The Dance School of Scotland till the age of 16. He moved down to London at that age and studied for 3 years at Central School of Ballet, where he had the opportunity to work with Crystal Pite and perform in "Polaris" at Sadlers Wells. Mark graduated from Central School of Ballet in 2016. Mark has worked for Ballet Ireland,

performing in ‘Nutcracker’ and ‘Giselle’ before joining Matthew Bourne’s New Adventures, where he performed in ‘Cinderella’ and ‘Romeo and Juliet’, and most recently ‘Swan Lake’ which concluded its tour on Broadway. In 2022, Mark played a boyband member in the upcoming feature film ‘GREATEST DAYS which is to be released in 2023. Mark is currently playing ‘Mike’ in the Original London Cast of “Newsies”.

MERVIN NORONHA - Boyband

Mervin is an actor who originally began his interest in performing arts with dancing and singing whilst growing up in the Midlands, before training at the Urdang Academy in London. He is excited to make his first principal role appearance in the new upcoming film GREATEST DAYS. His previous film credits include WHAT’S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Mervin has also worked in theatre featuring in the West End production of WONDERVILLE, Regents Park Open Air Theatre’s ANTIGONE and Leicester Curve’s THE WIZARD OF OZ, and he really loves the opportunity to story-tell in any art form.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

COKY GIEDROYC - Director

Coky Giedroyc is a British, critically acclaimed film and television director who, in 2021, won best drama series Bafta for SAVE ME TOO - a thriller made for Sky TV written by and starring Lennie James and Stephen Graham. She directed HOW TO BUILD A GIRL - a film based on the semi-autobiographical book by Caitlin Moran and starring Beanie Feldstein which won the International Critics Award at the Toronto Film Festival in 2019 and was released summer 2020.

With a background in documentaries, pop promos and arts programmes, Coky went on to direct her first film STELLA DOES TRICKS which was produced by the BFI and starred Kelly Macdonald.

In 2016, she was awarded a BAFTA for best director for THE SOUND OF MUSIC LIVE, starring Kara Tointon and Alexander Armstrong.

Coky set up the award-winning drama THE HOUR, written by Abi Morgan and starring Dominic West, Ben Wishaw and Romola Garai for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe and an Emmy. She was nominated for both an International Emmy and a BAFTA for the BBC Drama, THE VIRGIN QUEEN, starring Anne Marie Duff and Tom Hardy. She directed OLIVER TWIST and WUTHERING HEIGHTS, both of which also starred Hardy with Timothy Spall, Sophie Okonedo, Andrew Lincoln.

Other credits include the four-part BBC1 series WHAT REMAINS, written by Tony Basgallop, SPIES OF WARSAW, an adaptation of Alan Furst's novel and NATIVITY, a co-production with Canadian CBC starring Tatiana Maslany. Her work in the US has included: THE KILLING, PENNY DREADFUL, with Eva Green and Rory Kinnear, Veena Sud's SEVEN SECONDS and GYPSY, starring Naomi Watts and Billy Crudup.

She was most recently celebrated for her work on HARLOTS, written by Moira Buffini for BBC 2 and Hulu, with Sam Morton and Lesley Manville in the leading roles. Coky was on the board of Directors UK for four years, heavily involved in the Women's Working group and is a mentor to young film makers who are struggling to gain opportunities in the film and TV industries and she also mentors ex-prisoners starting out in higher education.

TIM FIRTH - Writer

Tim Firth is best known for the films CALENDAR GIRLS and KINKY BOOTS, and his work for theatre including the Olivier award winning musical 'Our House'. His musical 'This Is My Family' won the UK Theatre award and his most recent, 'Now Is Good', was nominated for the same award in 2022.

Tim's stage play 'Calendar Girls' won the Whatsonstage best comedy and an Olivier nomination, as did 'Calendar Girls The Musical' which he co-wrote with Gary Barlow. Alan Ayckbourn commissioned and directed many of Tim's early playing including 'Neville's Island' which was nominated for an Olivier and is still produced worldwide. Last year saw an all-female version, 'Sheila's Island', tour the UK. Tim's work for television includes the RTS award winning *Preston Front* and the BAFTA-winning children's series *The Rottentrolls.*
He lives and works in the Northwest of England.

DANNY PERKINS - Producer

Danny Perkins has more than two decades of experience in the international film business. Spanning across all facets of the industry from development, production and IP acquisition to marketing and distribution in all of its forms.

He co-founded UK indie Optimum Releasing in 1999, which was acquired by Vivendi-owned Studiocanal in 2006. He assumed the role of UK CEO for the company in 2010 and departed in 2018 to form new venture Elysian Film Group.

In early 2020 Perkins established Elysian Film Group Distribution with the backing of the world's leading talent and entertainment group Creative Artists Agency.

Throughout his career, Perkins has overseen the production and distribution of critical and box office hits such as *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, Paddington 1 & 2, Legend, Macbeth, Early Man* and the *Shaun The Sheep Movie*.

His taste in local fare led to the acquisition and distribution of UK breakthrough hits such as *This Is England, In The Loop, Four Lions, Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa* and *The Imitation Game*.

Perkins has also a proven track record for supporting the very best of U.S. independent production and talent with significant awards traction across titles such as *Carol, Manchester By The Sea, Room, Hell Or High Water, The Wrestler* and *The Hurt Locker.*

He has long been an advocate for world cinema, having acquired and distributed prestigious titles such as *Amores Perros, Pan's Labyrinth, Spirited Away, Persepolis* and *A Prophet* to name a few.

Perkins has built a legacy across both companies for nurturing emerging and established filmmaking talent:

Optimum backed writer-director Paul King's first feature *Bunny and The Bull* and continued their collaboration through to the *Paddington* franchise. Filmmaking talent such as Ben Wheatley, Idris Elba, Rian Johnson, Paddy Considine, James Marsh, Ron Howard, Guillermo del Toro, Jacques Audiard, Kathryn Bigelow, Todd Haynes, Chris Morris, Shane Meadows, Alejandro G. Iñárritu, Tomas Alfredson, Garth Jennings, Philippa Lowthorpe, Marjane Satrapi, Joe Cornish, Lynne Ramsay, Juan Antonio Bayona and Hayao Miyazaki have all enjoyed a collaborative relationship with both Optimum and Studiocanal UK, under Perkins' creativity, guidance and leadership.

During his tenure, Optimum/Studiocanal have generated £470m ($650m) at the UK box office and received 114 BAFTA Nominations and 24 Wins. Films that Perkins is credited on have earned £175m ($260m) at the UK box office and $1.1bn worldwide.

In his time at Studiocanal he developed strong personal relationships with all of the major UK production companies including Working Title Films, Heyday Films, Aardman, Blueprint Pictures, See-Saw Films, Warp Films and Big Talk Productions.

A board member of Creative England, Perkins has delivered the keynote speech at the UK Film Production Finance Market and spoken at the BSAC conference, NFTS and BFI.

KATE SOLOMON - Producer

Kate is an esteemed producer and writer whose Oscar® and BAFTA nominated films include collaborations with Paul Greengrass, Stephen Frears, Brian Helgeland, and José Padilha. Kate specialises in true-life stories. She began her career in documentaries directing and producing for Channel 4, BBC and PBS. In 2005 she moved into features, and for the next six years worked with director Paul Greengrass. Their collaborations included the Oscar® nominated UNITED 93, about the fourth hijacked plane on 9/11, and GREEN ZONE, set against the Iraq war, starring Matt Damon. Kate's subsequent producing credits include Stephen Frears' Lance Armstrong film THE PROGRAM starring Ben Foster; Brian Helgeland's LEGEND starring Tom Hardy as both Kray twins; and José Padilha's 7 DAYS IN ENTEBBE about the 1976 hijacking, starring Rosamund Pike and Daniel Bruhl. She is currently in post-production on LEE with Kate Winslet.

MIKE ELEY, BSC - Director of Photography

From a career that began with high-profile documentaries around the globe, Mike Eley followed an unconventional path to narrative features by serving as the cameraman of documentary-style segments for films such as NOTTING HILL and LOVE ACTUALLY. But it was esteemed director Ken Loach who helped launch Eley into narrative filmmaking by hiring him to work on THE NAVIGATORS. Eley's talent for combining the spontaneity of documentaries with narrative storytelling was perhaps best exemplified in the riveting docudrama TOUCHING THE VOID, which earned a British Independent Film Award for Best Technical Achievement. Eley has collaborated multiple times with director Susanna White, notably on BBC's *Jane Eyre*, for which he received both an Emmy nomination and the RTS Award for Best Cinematography. For the HBO film GREY GARDENS he earned his second Emmy nomination. He later re-teamed with White for both the feature film NANNY MCPHEE RETURNS, starring Emma Thompson, and the HBO production of *Parade's End*, which garnered Eley his third Emmy nomination.

Fifteen years after his brief stint as the documentary cameraman on NOTTING HILL, Eley was reunited with director Roger Michell, only now as Director of Photography of THE LOST HONOR OF CHRISTOPHER JEFFRIES, which earned him both BAFTA and RTS Awards for Best Cinematography. The two enjoyed further collaborations with MY COUSIN RACHEL, starring Rachel Weisz, BLACKBIRD, starring Kate Winslet and Susan Sarandon, and what would become Michell's final narrative film, THE DUKE, starring Jim Broadbent and Helen Mirren. Other recent works include the Nick Hornsby series *State of the Union*, directed by Stephen Frears for Sundance TV, and two films for Netflix—Simon Stone's THE DIG, starring Ralph Fiennes, Carey Mulligan and Lily James, and the upcoming THE BEAUTIFUL GAME for director Thea Sharrock (ME BEFORE YOU).

SIAN JENKINS - Costume Designer

Since graduating from the Welsh College of Music and Drama Sian Jenkins has worked on many films, tv shows, plus commercials and theatre productions. Her film credits include GREATEST DAYS, HAVOC, GOOD LUCK LEO GRANDE, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPEN, SHE WILL, DREAM HORSE, ETERNAL BEAUTY, GOD'S OWN COUNTRY, THE LIGHTHOUSE, JUST JIM, THE FALLING and BRONSON. Her TV credits include *Too Close*, Channel 4's *Pure, Requiem, Snatch, Thirteen, Love Me* and *Homework*. Awards - Bafta Cymru - Costume Design 2020 (Eternal Beauty), Bafta Cymru - Costume Design 2018 (Requiem).

KAREN HARTLEY – Hair and make-up designer

Karen Hartley has worked on many films, highlights include THE DUKE, THE COURIER, PERSUASION, THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD and ON CHESIL BEACH. Her TV work includes ADULT MATERIAL, PATRICK MELROSE and THE HOLLOW CROWN.

Hartley has been nominated for two Emmy awards (CRANFORD and LITLLE DORRIT), three BAFTA awards (ANY HUMAN HEART, LITTLE DORRIT and CHARLES II), plus a BIFA nomination for THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD.

JAMES A. TAYLOR - Music Supervisor

Born in Wales, James started his musical training at a young age taking piano, cello and voice lessons. Subsequently, James continued studying music to degree level, graduating with a BMus in Music & Sound Recording (Tonmeister) at the University of Surrey.
After several years working in theatre, James moved into the film world, working on the music team of films including Beauty and The Beast, Aladdin, Cats, Yesterday, Jingle Jangle & Pinocchio.

Most recently, James has worked as Music Supervisor of Greatest Days, and Wonka.

DREW MCONIE - Choreographer

Drew is one of Britain's most sought-after director and choreographers. He is the Artistic Director of The McOnie Company and a proud Associate Artist at The Old Vic theatre, London and Birmingham RepTheatre. Drew won the Olivier Award for Best Theatre Choreography for *In the Heights* in 2016 and he was nominated for the same award in 2017 for the ground-breaking production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre.

Theatre credits as director/choreographer include *King Kong* (The Broadway theatre, Broadway), *Strictly Ballroom* (Piccadilly Theatre, London's West End/Toronto/West Yorkshire Playhouse), *On the Town* (Olivier Award Nomination for Best Musical Revival 2018 – Regent's Park), *The Wild Party* (The Other Palace), *Torch Song* (The Turbine Theatre London)

Theatre credits as a choreographer include: *Carousel* (Regents Park- London), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Olivier Award Nomination for Best Theatre Choreography 2017 – Regents Park and American National Tour), *In the Heights* (Olivier Award Winner for Best Theatre Choreography, Winner of the Off West End Theatre Award for Best Choreography-Southwark Playhouse and Kings Cross Theatre), *The Lorax* (Old Vic), *Hairspray*(BroadwayWorld Award Winner for Best Choreography-UK Tour), *Bugsy Malone* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Oklahoma!* (National Tour), *Kinky Boots* (Malmo Opera), *The Sound of Music* (Curve Theatre Leicester), *Chicago* (Curve Theatre Leicester), *West Side Story*(NYMT), *British Style* (Collaboration with Matthew Bourne at Buckingham Palace- BBC), *Laurel and Hardy* (The Watermill), *James and the Giant Peach* (National Tour), *13* (Directed by Jason Robert Brown- West End), *Tommy* (European Tour), *Spring*

Awakening (German Premier- Frankfurt), *The Full Monty* (German Premier-,Frankfurt), *Kes* (Liverpool Playhouse & UK Tour).

For the McOnie Company: *Jekyll and Hyde* (BroadwayWorld Award Winner for Outstanding Achievement in Dance – Old Vic Theatre), *DRUNK!* (Curve Theatre Leicester/ The Bridewell Theatre London) which led to him being nominated for the 'Emerging Artist Award' at the National Dance Awards, *Making Midnight* (Jermyn Street Theatre/ Latitude Festival), *Slaughter* (Audience Choice Award Winner- The Place Prize) and *Be Mine!* (Robin Howard Theatre).

Additional Ballets include *Merlin* (Northern Ballet National Tour), *Monochrome Suite* (Sadlers Wells), *The Old Man Of Lochnagar* (Sadlers Wells and Hackney Empire), *Little Red Riding Hood* (Wimbledon Theatre), *To You* (Sadlers Wells).

Film credits include *Greatest Days* Movie produced by Danny Perkins and Kate Solomon, *Me Before You* (Directed by Thea Sharrock) and *Recordare: Days of Remembrance* (pre-selected for the Cannes & Berlin Film Festival).

CREDITS

In memory of
VASILIS DINOPOULOS and IAN TRACEY

Line Producer	CLAUDIA CIMMINO
First Assistant Director	BEN QUIRK
Script Supervisor	NON HUGHES
Financial Controller	ROB SEAGER
Production Manager	ALEX MOLDEN
Production Supervisor	DANIELE ALFANO
Second Unit Director	CHARLIE PARHAM
Script Editor	AISLING BEA
Supervising Art Director	JOHN REID

Set Decorator	CELIA DE LA HEY
First Assistant Editor	SCOTT CLEMENTS

Cast

Rachel	AISLING BEA
Claire	JAYDE ADAMS
Heather	ALICE LOWE
Zoe	AMAKA OKAFOR
Young Rachel	LARA McDONNELL
Debbie	JESSIE MAE ALONZO
Young Heather	ELIZA DOBSON
Young Claire	CARRAGON GUEST
Young Zoe	NANDI HUDSON
Jeff	MARC WOOTTON

The Boys

Aaron	AARON BRYAN
Joshua	JOSHUA JUNG
Mervin	MERVIN NORONHA
Mark	MARK SAMARAS
Dalvin	DALVIN CORY

In order of appearance

Ward Nurse Emma	LIZZIE MUNCEY
Child Patient Naima	AVIELLA BURCH
Child Patient Connor	SERGIO IANDOLO
Compassionate Nurse Kim	LINDA JOHN-PIERRE
Child Patient Freya	JONI DRIVER
Porter Tony	DEREK EZENAGU
Child Patient Maisie	ANNIE BISSEX
Young Ryan	GEORGE COBELL
Rachel's Dad	BARRY O'CONNOR
Rachel's Mum	HANNAH JAMES-SCOTT
Fred the Dog	BARNEY
Zoe's Mum	CHLOE OKORA
Zoe's Brother Riz	AARON J. FOURE
Zoe's Brother Kal	LEON OLATOKUMBO WAHAB
Claire's Mum	EMMA AMOS
Slimy Stallholder Pete	TOM SHAW
Irate Motorist Vic	ADRIAN HOOD
Caravan Salesman Mark	ZIGGY HEATH
Heather's Mum Irene	LINDSAY BENNETT-THOMPSON
Diving Adjudicators	AFIA KHATUN
	KEVIN CONCANNON
Pool Attendant Niall	OLIVER DRACUP-NICHOLLS

Jumble Sale Mrs Lomas	ALISON FITZJOHN
Debbie's Dad	ERMAR ALEXANDER
Security Guy Pete	JACK ROLF
Bus Driver Ken and Crystal	TOM RASMUSSEN
Truculent Model Roberto	FRANCESCO RUGGIERO
Hair Stylist Alexandra	LENO MYRDINI
Heather's Assistant Phoebe	GOGO PAPAIOANNOU
Passport Checker Stuart	MATTHEW McNULTY
Taxi Driver Basil	PARIS THOMOPOULOS
Orthodox Priests	CHRISTOS SFIATKOS
	LOUKAS BOTSIS
Singing Woman Thalia	MARIA GRAMPSA
Passing Model Cassandra	PERSEFONI ASLANOGLOU
Passing Model Abby	MELINA NATSIOS
Jogger Felipe	IASONAS MANDILAS
Jogger Flavian	KONSTANTINOS PANTZAVELIS
Skateboarder Leo	APOLLONAS SARRIS
Skateboarder Stavros	TSAGKALIDIS ALEXANDROS
Skateboarder Amira	MARIA GEORGIOU
Couple on Bench Peter and Ella	YORGOS KISSANDRAKIS
	ALEXANDRA PAPADOPOULOU
Coffee Drinking Thaddeus	ALEXANDROS MOUTAFIS
Street Seller Maria	ELENI TSEFALA
Stylish Couple Vassilis and Daphne	DIMITRIS TSILINIKOS
	CALLIOPI IOANNIDOU
Angry Scooter Guy Adrianu	CHRISTOS KOURTALAS
Man in Crowd Adras	THOMAS GOULOPOULOS
Angry Policeman Kristos	PANAGIOTIS KOURTESIS
Singing Police Chief Piotr	DIMITRIS KARATZIAS
Heather's Daughter Eliana	DESSY DIMITROVA
Heathers Ex Katarina	ELENA MENGRELI
Student Greeter Jenna	GEORGIA MAY FIRTH
Adult Ryan	EMMET BYRNE

The Train Buskers
GARY BARLOW
HOWARD DONALD
MARK OWEN

Dancers
NICOLE ALPHONCE · CRAIG ARMSTRONG · NORMA ATALLAH · WILLIAM ATKINSON
DAWN BUCKLAND · IVAN DE FREITAS · MOMAR DIAGNE · SHARON GOMEZ
GLENN GRAHAM · TIM HODGES · STEVIE HUTCHINSON · KATE IVORY JORDAN
MATTHEW KOON · GREIG MATTHEWS · LINDSAY MCALLISTER · AYDEN MORGAN
LIAM MOWER · EMILY ANN POTTER · LISA RITCHIE · SAM SALTER · JORDI CALPE SERRATS
TINOVIMBANASHE SIBANDA · DAWNITA SMITH · ALEXANDER THOMAS
KATIE WEBB · DAISY WEST · MAX WESTWELL · CARRIE WILLIS · CHARLOTTE WILMOTT

Stunt Coordinator	JAMES GROGAN
Rachel Driving Double	CATHERINE PECK
Motorbike Rider Double	JAMIE KARITZIS
Ken/Bus Driver Stunt Double	LLOYD BASS
Debbie Stunt Double	NADIA HANSELL
Joy Rider	JOSEPH GROGAN
Associate Choreographer	EBONY MOLINA
Dance Captain	GEMMA PAYNE
Dancers' Casting Director	WILL BURTON
Associate Producer	JASMIN KIRNER
A Camera Operator/Steadicam Operator	WILL LYTE
A Cam First Assistant Camera	LISA COTTINGTON
A Cam Second Assistant Camera	LAURA BOOTH
B Cam First Assistant Camera	LUKE JEFFERSON
B Cam Second Assistant Camera	NICK MILLIGAN
Camera Trainee	FLORENCE CATHERINE GILBERTSON
Underwater Camera Operator	DAN TRAVERS
Digital Imaging Technician	NURIA PEREZ
Video Playback	JAY WESTON
DIT & Video Trainee	MARC MALILAY
Production Coordinators	ROB ALLOTT
	JACQUELINE RUMENS
Travel & Accommodation Coordinator	MEGAN BROOKS
Key Production Assistant	WILL BASHFORD
Production Assistant	ALEXANDRA LILY THOMAS
Assistant to the Producers	SOPHIE MOULTON
Assistant to Coky Giedroyć	ISRA AHMED
Second Assistant Directors	MICHAEL WILLIAMS
	NOEL CORBALLY
	STEVE CRABTREE
Floor Second Assistant Director	GLEN CARROLL
Dance Second Assistant Director	TANYA ROSEN
Crowd Second Assistant Director	SCOTT CLAYDON
Base PA	JORDAN McCLYMONT

Set PAs	AMY GERMAIN
	JESS SIMMONDS
	MARIA STAMATAKOS
Runner Stand-ins	ABBIE CLAYTON
	JESSICA BERGBY
Crowd PAs	ANTJE MANGEANT
	GEORGIA CUNNINGHAM
	MADELINE COLE
Set PA Dailies	CALLUM HAMSHERE
	HARRY CULVERHOUSE
	RICHARD LEWIN
First Assistant Sound	LEE JAMES
Second Assistant Sound	JULIAN BALE
Sound Trainee	SARA EVE MORRIS
Art Director	ANDREA STERN
Standby Art Director	ROBERT HAYNES
Graphic Designer	KATIE BUCKLEY
Assistant Graphic Designer	INDIA PAPARESTIS-STACEY
Art Department Assistants	ROSA DAVIES
	PERSEPHONE REID PEARSON
Set Dresser	CHIARA BOVE MAKIEDO
Action Prop Buyer	DELIA O'BRIEN
Production Buyer	HEATHER VARLEY
Assistant Buyer	JIM CHARLES
Petty Cash Buyer	OLIVIA WRAY
Prop Master	JONNIE GREENHAM
Storeman	KELVIN BILLING
Location Storeman	STEPHEN HUNT
Chargehand Props	RONNIE TOOTILL
	PATRICK DUNNE
Dressing Props	MICHAEL BARDLE
	JAMIE HARRINGTON
	MATT LINE
	PAUL BETTS
	ELLIOT KING
	TERRY HARRINGTON
Props Standbys	JAMES DONOVAN
	DAN JOHNSON
Assistant Costume Designer	GRACE CLARK
Costume Supervisor	CARRIE WALLBANK
Truck/Wardrobe Master	KEN LANG
Principal Costume Standbys	LAURA MILLS
	MAIREAD HARRIS

Costume Buyers	MARIEM BEY
	JASMIN KNOX
	EMILY DAVIDSON
	CHARLOTTE WHITE
Crowd Costume Supervisor	VICKY TWYMAN
Crowd Costume Standby	AFIA KHATUN
Costume Maker	VERITY FINNEY-GREEN
Junior Costume Maker	LUCY LORAINE
Workroom Makers	TANYA AANDERAA
	JENNA BARNES
	THEA ALYS HALLERON
Junior Costume Assistant	ELIN STEELE
Costume Trainees	FAITH HUCKLESBY
	ELENA ROMERO
Workroom Trainees	LUCILLE RUSSING
	SIONA TORLEY
	ANASTASIA CROSSLEY
Costume Breakdown Trainee	ELLEN COLLINGS
Principal Costume Daily	KATE STIRLING
Crowd Costume Dailies	HELEN RODGERS
	MADELEINE EDIS
Crowd Costume Junior Daily	LAURA HOLLINGSHEAD
Hair and Make-up Supervisor	CARLA VICENZINO
Make-up Artists	RICK STRICKLAND
	CHRISTINE VIDLER
	EMMA RIGBY
	CAT LEGG
Make-up Artist (Athens)	LARA PRENTICE
Key Prosthetic Artist	ASHRA KELLY-BLUE
Prosthetics Made by	RED GIRL
Make-up Trainee	LILY ROGERS
Make-up Artist Dailies	CLARE PETERSON-OSTLER
	EMMA WILLIAMS
Key Grip	WARWICK DRUCKER
B Camera Grip	DAN ROBINSON
Grip Trainee	JAMES LYALL
Libra Technician	JAMIE TOCHER
Gaffer	MARTIN TAYLOR
Best Boy	HUW GARRATT
Electricians	MILO COSEMANS
	ELLA ROBINSON
	ALEC DUFF
Genny Operator	ADRIAN ATKINSON
Electrician Dailies	JAMES PELHAM
	SANTIAGO TURO-LELSIE

	JOSIE RAFTER
Electrical Trainee Dailies	IAN BLACKBURN
	AUXANE VERDIER
Rigging Gaffer	ROB COLLINS
Electrical Rigger/Daily Chargehand	JOE SMITH
Lighting Electrician	JOE FRIEL
Lighting Desk Operator	SEB WILLIAMS
Standby Rigger	RYAN RAMSAY
Rigging Electrician Daily	MATTHEW HAGUE
Supervising Location Manager	DAVE HALSTEAD
Unit Manager	STEVE COLE
Assistant Location Manager	ROSS ISAAC
Location Manager (Clitheroe)	DEAN SHORT
Assistant Location Manager (Clitheroe)	JOSH FAUX
Location Assistants	TOM SUMNER
	EDDIE TYSON-BROWN
Location Assistant (Clitheroe)	BETH ELLSMORE
Production Accountant	YVETTE MURPHY
Payroll Accountant	SOFIA BOFFA
Cashier	EDYTA KORZENIOWSKA
Casting Associates	MATT SHEPPARD
	OLIVIA BRITTAIN
Casting Assistants	MONICA SIYANGA
	ELLIE ISHERWOOD
	AURORA CAUSIN
	SOPHIE AIKEN
Young Persons Search Assistants	LILY BRADSHAW
	TILA SAMPAIO DIOGO
Supporting Artist Agencies	SALLY KING CASTING
	EXTRA PEOPLE
Additional Assistant Editor	STEVE MERCER
Legal Delivery Coordinator	ALEXANDRA MONTGOMERY
Post Production Assistant	SOPHIE MOULTON
Post Production Services by	LIPSYNC POST
Senior Post Producer	BEVERLEY HORNE
Facility Director	LISA JORDAN
Post Producer	LORRAINE DRYDEN
Colourist	JAMIE WELSH
Head of DI	JAMES CLARKE
DI Coordinator	ELIZABETH NEWSHAM

Senior DI Editor	WILL CHETWYND
DI Assistants	STACEY SANDFORD
	CARLTON HOOPER
	OSCAR PERILLO
Head of Technical Support	RICK WHITE
Technical Operators	JESSE EMBURY
	DANIEL WHITWORTH
Visual Effects by	LIPSYNC POST
Visual Effects Supervisor	GAVIN DIGBY
Visual Effects Senior Producer	BONITA NICHOLS
Visual Effects Operations Manager	ALASDAIR MacCUISH
Visual Effects Production Coordinator	JONI ANDREOU
Visual Effects Bidding Producer	JAN HOGEVOLD
2D Supervisor	JEREMY HEY
2D Artists	MATT HAVILLE
	MYFANWY HARRIS
	TAMSIE THOMAS
	OWEN REVELL
Visual Effects Editor	ROBERT JEWELL
Junior Visual Effects Editor	ELLEN BARNES
Pipeline TD	JESSE SPIELMAN
Systems Administrators	BARRY ZUBEL
	LUKE HAMILTON
Visual Effects Accountants	DONNA ROMERO
	DOMINIKA ZAWISLAK
Sound by	LIPSYNC POST
Re-recording Mixers	ROB HUGHES
	MARK LANGLAY-SMITH
Supervising Sound Editor	BRIAN GILLIGAN
Supervising Dialogue Editor	PETE GATES
Dialogue Editor	LAURA MacGREGOR
ADR Supervisor	KALLIS SHAMARIS
ADR Recordists	NEVAN BROTHERS
	TOM STRINGER
	YANTI WINDRICH
	ROISIN KING
Foley Mixer	SIMON TRUNDLE
Foley Artists	PAUL HANKS
	JOE MORLEY
Foley Recorded at	UNIVERSAL SOUND
Additional Mixing Stage	POINT1POST
Re-recording Mixer	ADAM DANIEL
ADR Coordinator	SABIRA STANISAVLJEVIC
ADR Studio, Manchester	80 HERTZ STUDIOS

ADR Mixer	GEORGE ATKINS
ADR Loop Group	PHOEBE SCHOLFIELD, SYNC OR SWIM
Graphics by	LIPSYNC DESIGN
Head of Design	HOWARD WATKINS
Designers	XANTHE BODINGTON
	TOM BURKE
Design Coordinator	CALUM MARTINEAU
Unit Publicist	ZOE FLOWER
Unit Stills Photography	ALEX BAILEY
	ROB BAKER ASHTON
	KERRY BROWN
Behind-the-Scenes Documentary & EPK Production	NEMO & RWD FILMS
Executive Producers	MARK DINNING & BEN PADFIELD
Director	STUART HACKSHAW
Lead Editor	PHIL LANE
Producers	CIARAN BANNON & PHOEBE HAINES
Post Production Facilities	RWD STUDIOS
Unit Medic	CHRIS HALL
Health & Safety Advisors	JHA SAFTEY
Health & Safety Officer (London)	MICK HURRELL
Covid Supervisor	ADAM REED
Covid Coordinator	TAMAS CSIZMAZIA
Construction Managers	DAVE REED at FREEFORM
	PAT DAVIES at MANTA RAY
Standby Carpenter	SIMON SPARSIS
Transport Captain	ERKAN COGALAN

Unit Drivers

METIN GENC • KEV GREGAN • MUSA UYSAL • RONALD MARCHANT
DENIS CIPA • RAZI ASAD • DANIEL NIK • YUSUF AKDENIZ • MARIO SKENDAJ

Minibus Drivers	CARL LYNE
	LES KNIGHT
Facilities Captain	KEVIN OATES
Animal Handler	KIM GASKELL, BIRDS & ANIMALS UK
Caterers	FILL YOUR BOOTS CATERING
Head Chef	WAYNE BRIERS
Chefs	DARREN ROWANBERRY
	JASON MITCHELL
	DANNIS NEWMAN

Craft Services	CARLETTO'S COFFEE
	CARLO BOFFA

SECOND UNIT

Second Unit First Assistant Director	FREDDIE HALL
Second Unit Director of Photography	LORENA PAGES
Second Unit First Assistant Camera	MURAT AKYILDIZ
Second Unit Second Assistant Camera	JOE SALKEY
Second Unit Third Assistant Director	HANNAH BANNISTER
Second Unit Sound	DAVID MITCHELL
Second Unit Boom Operator	BEN COLLINSON
Second Unit Digital Imaging Technician	CURTIS ASHLEY
Second Unit Grip	CRAIG SHIELS
Drove Services provided by	BEE ARIAL
Drone Pilot	MAURO BELLANOVA

GREECE UNIT

Line Producer	DANAE SPATHARA
Production Manager	SPYROS APOSTOLATOS
Focus Puller B	GIANNIS ROZEAS
Second Assistant Camera A	PEGGY ZOUTI
Second Assistant Camera B	ARGYRIS PAPATHEODOROU
	DIMITRIS DERMOUSIS
Video Assist	KOSTAS KATRIOS
Camera Trainees	KOSTAS ALOUPOGIANNIS
	CHRISTOS VASAKAKIS
Digital Imaging Technician Assistant	LEONIDAS PAPAFOTIOU
Digital Imaging Technician Trainee	KOSTAS HALIOTIS
Production Coordinator	MARIANA BITSIOU
Production Manager Assistants	CHRYSA KOUTRAKOU
	CHRISTOS KYRIAKOPOULOS
Production Coordinator Assistant	LAZAROS GOUNARIDIS
Set Manager	GIORGOS KARORIS

Production Assistants

VAGGELIS KIOUMOURTZIS · SPYROS KARANASIOS · KONSTANTINOS PANAGIOTOPOULOS
CHRISTINA PAPANASTASOPOULOU · DIMITRIS PARASKEVOPOULOS

Production Trainee	SAVINA SPYROPOULOU
Assistant to Coky Giedroyć	YIANNIS IASONIDIS
Production Accountant	CHRISTINA LOUKA
Cost Control	NIKOS MICHAILIDES
Cost Control Assistant	ANASTASIA ANDRITSOPOULOU
Heretic Accounting	THELXI KALIAKOUDA
First Assistant Director	CHRISTOS HOULIARAS
Second Assistant Director	ANNA SYROU
Third Assistant Director	GEORGE KORAKIANITIS
Set PAs	VICKY KARKOULA
	KITTY KENTEZI
	CHRISTINA PENTERIDOU

Boom Operator	TASOS SELIMOS
Sound Trainee	THOMAS STERGIOPOULOS
Art Director	DIMITRIS ZIAKAS
Art Director Assistant	DIMITRIS LAGOPOULOS
Set Decorator	CHRISTINE VLACHOS
Buyers	EFTHIMIS SOUKAS
	GIORGOS LABIRIS
Action Props Buyer	PANAGIOTIS TZIATZIAS

Dressers

GIORGOS KARABINIS · EMMANOUELA MASTORA · APOSTOLIS DIMAKOPOULOS
FANIS NIZAMIS · PANAGIOTIS SKORDOS

Dresser/Buyer	SPYROS PAPATHEODOROU
Standby Props Assistants/Standby Dressers	IOANNA MANTZOROU
	DIMITRIS PAFILIS
Standby Props Assistant	HARA KOLAITI
Vehicle Handler	THANASIS LAGOS
Costume Supervisor	DESPOINA CHIMONA
Principal Standbys Costume	MARITA PASSARI
	CHRISTINA RAFTOPOULOU
Costume Maker	PERSA DOVA
Costume Dailies	ELENA PAPAMICHAEL
	ATHENA DRAKOULARAKOU
	STEVI PACHI
	NATASSA DIMITRIOU
Make-up/Hair Artist	KATIA KOUROUPOU
Hair Assistants	AGGELIKI BALODIMOU
	CHRYSOSTOMOS HAMALIDIS
	KIKI KARADAGLI
	KATERINA FILIPPIDI

Prosthetics Statues

HARA VASILEIADI · EFI TSIMPI · PANOS KONDYLIS
KIKA KOUPARANI · SOFIA VOULALA · ARIS VEREMIS

Key Grip	VAKIS GRYLLIS
Grip Assistant A	SPYROS CHRISTOFORATOS
Grip Assistant B	KOSTAS KAGIOULIS
Grip Trainee	AKIS DOULKERIDIS
Best Boy	VAGELIS ROUSSIS

Electricians

SPIROS AGGELOPOULOS · STELIOS LEPIDAKIS · GIORGOS ATHANASSOPOULOS
STAVROS PAPADOPOULOS · MILTIADIS STOLI · MARKOS KOUKOR · LOUKAS GEORGIOU
PANAGIOTIS KAGIOULIS · STELIOS MELIS

Location Managers	VASILIS DINOPOULOS
	ARIS MALEAS
Location Coordinator	ANDRIANA GYMNOPOULOU
Assistant Location Manager	CHRISTOS LOUPIS
Location PA	PANTELIS ZOIDIS
Unit Managers	MICHALIS KYRIMIS
	THANASIS SCHINOCHORITIS

Unit Driver	DIMITRIS KOUTROPOULOS

Unit Runners

IOANNIS DEDEGKIKAS · XHULJANO CAUSHI · KLAUDIO SINA
KLAJDI LLUPI · IOANNIS STRATAKIS

Casting Director, Greece	YORGOS TSIANTOULAS
Casting Director Assistant, Greece	MICHALIS GOUMAS
Stunt Coordinator	SOTIRIS KRANIOTIS
Stunt Coordinator Assistant	ALEX ANASTASOPOULOS
Assistant Covid Supervisor	IOANNA MILATHIANAKI

On Set Medics

STELLA TAKOU · PAVLOS VIDALIS · NANTIA PANAGIOTOPOULOU
VICKY GIOGLI · EVAGGELIA LEGAKI

Head Marshal	ORESTIS STILOS
Lifeguard	SOTIRIS KOULIS
Catering Manager	VASILIS NIKAS
Transport Coordinator	ARTEMIS KAROTSERI
Transport Assistant	ANGELIKI DIMA
Camera Van Drivers	VAGGELIS KONTOUZOGLOU
	VASSILIS GIANOUSOPOULOS
	LAMBROS KONTZOS
Sound Van Driver	CHRISTOS GALANIS
Wardrobe Van Driver	PETROS TRAKADAS
Grip Van Driver	GIORGOS PERLENGAS

Drivers

GEORGOS KERASOVITIS-KANONIS · GEORGOS REMOUNDOS · PANAGIOTIS PORFIRIADIS
VASILIS KOSKINAS · PANAGIOTIS SGARTSOS · PETROS NIARCHOS · LEONIDAS MAKARIDIS
PETROS KOUVOUSIS · GRIGORIS LIVIERATOS · GIANNIS DIAMANTIDIS · ANTONIS VOURLIAS
GEORGE LAPIDAKIS · KOSTAS PATRAS · ANTONIS KIRMIZAKIS · GIORGOS DEMESTICHAS
GEORGOS MOURKOGIANNIS · VASILIS APOSTOLOU

SECOND UNIT GREECE

2nd Unit Script Supervisor	REBECCA VARNALI
2nd Unit Focus Pullers	GIORGOS METAXAS
	CHRISTOS POLYCHRONOPOULOS
2nd Unit Assistant Camera	GIORGOS ATHANASSOPOULOS
	GEORGE TALIANIS
2nd Unit Assistant Camera B	VAGGELIS KOLOKITHAS
Drone	TASOS FYTROS
2nd Unit Sound	GIANNIS ZERVAKOS
2nd Unit Boom/Sound	PANAGIOTIS PAPAPORFYRIOU
2nd Unit Sound	PANAGIOTIS PAPAGIANNOPOULOS
2nd Unit Boom	THANOS PETROU
	GIORGOS BIBIKOS
2nd Unit Grip	NEKTARIOS SOLIDAKIS
2nd Unit Grip Assistants	KOSTAS TSITOURAS
	NIKOLAS ADAMAKIS
Low Loader	SOLON GIANNOUTSOS
Crane Operator	STEFANOS TSIGAS

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY UNIT

First Assistant Director JUDE CAMPBELL
Location Manager MARK GRIMWADE
Assistant Location Manager CHRIS ROUSE

For ELYSIAN FILM GROUP

Head of Acquisition and Development JED BENEDICT
Head of Distribution NICK McKAY
Technical Services LOUISE REPKA
Legal Services STEPHEN MURPHY

For GREATEST DAYS LIMITED

Accounts NEIL JACKSON
Accounts Assistant GEMMA LLOYD

For LIPSYNC PRODUCTIONS

Head of Development SIRE RAMOS
Development Producer PETER VAUGHAN
Executive Producer ANDREW BOSWELL
Legal Services SARAH WELLS and JOSEPH DOUGHTY of HANSEL HENSON LIMITED

For ZURICH AVENUE

GIAN MARCO ETTISBERGER
TORI JIMENEZ
Legal Services for Zurich Avenue provided by JAMES KAY and JESSICA HUDSON of SHERIDANS

For HEAD GEAR FILMS

NATALIE COLEMAN
ORLANDO FIGG
DENIS BARRY
SAMANTHA ALLWINTON
Legal Services for Head Gear Films NICKI PARFITT, SEAN KIA and SHAY KENNEDY of LEE & THOMPSON LLP

For MERCURY STUDIOS

MARC ROBINSON
ALICE WEBB
DAVID SHARPE
ADAM BARKER

Production Financing provided by COMERICA BANK
TODD STEINER, DAVID SHAVER and BENJAMIN GREEN
Legal Counsel to Comerica Bank
BARRY BABOK, MARC NEIMAN and JOHN MITCHELL MORRIS of BABOK & ROBINSON, LLP
CHRIS HANSON, MIRI NAE and SZERÉNA NEMES of WIGGIN LLP
ANTHONY POULOPOULOS and KONSTANTINOS ROPPAS of READ SMITH LLP

Production Legal Services provided by	DAVID WHITEHEAD, BEATRICE RAESIDE and GRÁINNE McKENNA, WIGGIN LLP
Production Insurance provided by	MEDIA INSURANCE BROKERS
Insurance Broker	JOHN O' SULLIVAN
Production Auditing	SHIPLEYS LLP
Production Banking Services	COUTTS & CO
Collection Agent Services by	FREEWAY CAM B.V.
Completion Guarantor	FILM FINANCES, INC. PETER LA TERRIERE KATRINA STAGNER HELEN DE WINTER
Camera Equipment	ARRI RENTAL
Lighting Equipment	MBS EQUIPMENT CO.
Digital Dailies Lab	HARBOR PICTURE COMPANY
Playback and Motion Graphics	REVOLVER AV
Editorial Equipment	HIREWORKS
Payroll Services	MONEYPENNY
Production Travel Services	SCALLYWAG TRAVEL
Production Trailers	ON-SET LOCATION SERVICES
Spotting List and Disability Access	SAPEX SCRIPTS
Clearances & Neg Checking	JEVA FILMS
Clearance Coordinator, Jeva Films	KATIE HODGKIN
Product Placement	ELEVEN
Concierge Services	JOY MONTGOMERY, ON-SCREEN JM LONDON
Images supplied by	iSTOCK by GETTY IMAGES

Cabbage Patch Kids © Original Appalachian Artworks Inc. Used with permission.

Music Editor	BRADLEY FARMER
On Set Playback/Protools Operator	JAKE ELLIOTT
Music Consultant	CHRIS MA
Assistant to Music Supervisor	TOMMY MORGAN
Songs Arranged and Produced by	OLI JULIAN & NICK FOSTER
Score Assistants & Additional Production	BEN BURROWS ETHAN JEFFREY PADDY FLETCHER
Score Orchestrated by	SAM THOMPSON
Songs Orchestrated by	BEN FOSTER SAM THOMPSON
Conducted by	BEN FOSTER SAM THOMPSON

Score Recorded & Mixed by	FIONA CRUICKSHANK at AIR STUDIOS, LONDON and the MIX SHOP, LONDON
Digital Recordists	ALEX FERGUSON REBECCA HORDERN
Assistant Engineer	BEN CREASEY
Additional Recording by	DAN COX at URCHIN STUDIOS, LONDON
Librarian	GILES THORNTON
Rehearsal Scores	TOM KINSELLA
Orchestration Assistants	SAMUEL READ AMY SUMMERS

ORCHESTRA

Orchestral Contractor	AMY STEWART for ISOBEL GRIFFITHS LTD
Orchestra Leader	TOM PIGOTT-SMITH

Violins

TOM PIGOTT-SMITH · MAX BAILLIE · RAKHI SINGH · MAGNUS JOHNSTON · CIARAN McCABE
BRIDGET O'DONNELL · THOMAS GOULD · MARTYN JACKSON · NATALIA BONNER
PATRICK SAVAGE · EOS COUNSELL · OLI LANGFORD · EVERTON NELSON · JENNY SACHA
KATHY GOWERS · RICHARD GEORGE · NINA FOSTER · CHARLIE BROWN

Violas

BRUCE WHITE · RACHEL ROBSON · TRIONA MILNE
LAURIE ANDERSON · KATE MUSKER · EOIN SCHMIDT-MARTIN

Cellos

VICKY MATTHEWS · TIM LOWE ·ASHOK KLOUDA
CHRIS WORSEY · IAN BURDGE

Double Bassists	CHRIS LAURENCE · STACEY WATTON
Solo Trumpet, Flugelhorn & Cornet	TOM REES-ROBERTS

Trumpets

TOM REES-ROBERTS · TOM WALSH · LOUIS DOWDESWELL · JAMES DAVISON
KATE MOORE · DANIEL NEWELL

French Horns

RICHARD WATKINS · MARTIN OWEN · BEN HULME

Tenor Trombones

ANDY WOOD · ALISTAIR WHITE · TREVOR MIRES · ED TARRANT · ROBBIE HARVEY

Bass Trombones	MARK FROST · BARRY CLEMENTS
Alto Saxophone	HOWARD McGILL
Tenor Saxophones	TOM RICHARDS · GRAEME BLEVINS
Baritone Saxophones	PHIL TODD · DAVE BISHOP · CLAIRE McINERNEY
Drum Kit	ELLIOTT HENSHAW
Piano	STEVE HOLNESS
Upright Bass	RORY DEMPSEY
Percussion	JOBY BURGESS
Harp	CAMILLA PAY

Choir	MEMBERS OF THE SOUL SANCTUARY GOSPEL CHOIR
Boy Soloists	MORGAN WILTSHIRE PAUL ANGELO ANINAG
Additional Vocals	ALEXIS CONSTANTINOU

ELENI GAGOUSHI
KONSTANTINOS SOTIRIOU

SONGS

"NEVER FORGET"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow
Mixed by Ryan Carline at Future Studios, London
Orchestrated by Ben Foster
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd

"PRAY"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow
Mixed by Ryan Carline at Future Studios, London
Orchestrated by Ben Foster
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd

"COULD IT BE MAGIC"
Words and Music by Adrienne Anderson & Barry Manilow Mixed by Ryan Carline at Future Studios, London
Orchestrated by Sam Thompson
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
On behalf of Universal Music - Careers

"SAID IT ALL"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow, Howard Donald, Jason Orange, Mark Owen & Stephen Robson
Mixed by Fiona Cruickshank at Air Studios, London
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd

"PROMISES"
Music & Lyrics by Gary Barlow & Graham Stack
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Concord Copyrights London Ltd

"IT ONLY TAKES A MINUTE"
Music & Lyrics by Dennis Lamber & Brian Potter
Published by Universal/MCA Music Ltd
on behalf of Songs of Universal, Inc.

"ONCE YOU'VE TASTED LOVE"
Music & Lyrics by Gary Barlow
Published by
Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd

"BABE"
Music & Lyrics by Gary Barlow
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd

"RELIGHT MY FIRE"
Words and Music by Dan Hartman
Mixed by Ryan Carline at Future Studios, London
Orchestrated by Ben Foster
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd

"THE GARDEN"
Words and Music by
Gary Barlow, Howard Donald, Jason Orange & Mark Owen Mixed by Fiona Cruickshank at Air Studios, London
Orchestrated by Sam Thompson
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd

"SHINE"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow, Howard Donald, Jason Orange, Mark Owen & Stephen Robson
Mixed by Fiona Cruickshank at Air Studios, London
Orchestrated by Ben Foster
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd
Domino Songs Ltd

"GREATEST DAY"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow, Howard Donald, Jason Orange & Mark Owen
Mixed by Rupert Coulson at Air Studios, London
Orchestrated by Sam Thompson
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd

"THE FLOOD"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow, Howard Donald, Jason Orange, Mark Owen & Robert Williams
Mixed by Fiona Cruickshank at Air Studios, London
Orchestrated by Sam Thompson
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
Universal Music Publishing Ltd on behalf of Farrell Music Ltd

"A MILLION LOVE SONGS"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow
Mixed by Fiona Cruickshank at Air Studios, London
Orchestrated by Sam Thompson
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd

BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd

"BACK FOR GOOD"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow
Mixed by Ryan Carline at Future Studios, London
Orchestrated by Sam Thompson
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd

"PATIENCE"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow, Howard Donald,
Jason Orange, Mark Owen & John Shanks
Mixed by Fiona Cruickshank at Air Studios, London
Orchestrated by Sam Thompson
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd

"RULE THE WORLD"
Words and Music by Gary Barlow, Howard Donald,
Jason Orange & Mark Owen
Mixed by Fiona Cruickshank at Air Studios, London
Orchestrated by Sam Thompson
Published by Sony Music Publishing Greece Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd

"TOTP - GET OUT OF THAT (AND THIS)"
- 2003 REMIX
Composed by Tony Gibber
Published by Concord Media Music
(p) BBC (Licensed courtesy of BBC Studios)

"GREATEST DAY"
ROBIN SCHULZ REWORK
Performed by Take That, featuring Calum Scott
Words and Music by Gary Barlow, Howard Donald, Jason Orange & Mark Owen
Published by Sony/ATV Music Publishing UK Ltd
Universal Music Publishing MGB Ltd
BMG Rights Management (UK) Ltd
Licensed courtesy of Universal Music Group

Soundtrack released by EMI RECORDS

Film Score published by
GLOBE SOUNDTRACK & SCORE, a division of UNIVERSAL MUSIC OPERATIONS LIMITED

With thanks to
REVD. ANDY FROUD at ST. MARY'S CLITHEROE · THE CLITHEROE MARKET STALL HOLDERS
CLITHEROE COUNCIL · ST THOMAS' HOSPITAL
THERESA SANDERSON · TRACY SMITH · BRISTOL COSTUME SERVICES
MIKO GIEDROYĆ and MEMBERS OF THE SOUL SANCTUARY GOSPEL CHOIR
SCOTT PRICE and THE CARDINAL VAUGHAN MEMORIAL SCHOOL
FRED LONGWORTH HIGH SCHOOL BRASS BAND
ATHENS FILM OFFICE, STATHIS KALOGEROPOULOS
HELLENIC MINISTRY of CULTURE and SPORTS · GREEK FILM CENTRE
ATHENS MUNICIPAL POLICE · ATHENS and EPIDAURUS FESTIVAL
KATERINA EVANGELATOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE ATHENS EPIDAURUS FESTIVAL
GIANNIS ZARGANIS, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF THE ATHENS EPIDAURUS FESTIVAL
MUNICIPALITY of ATHENS, MARIA ANDRIOU & VASILIKI LEKKA

The Director would like to thank
TOM BOWYER · CAZ BOWYER · ROSIE BOWYER · ZIGGY HEATH · JESSICA BROWN FINDLAY
SONNY AND JUDE · ROSY GIEDROYĆ · MIKO, KASIA AND MEL · JESSICA SYKES · RUPERT STONEHILL

The Producers would like to thank

NOOR ALI · NEIL BHATT · ANNA BAKES · ADAM BARKER · ALAN BRODIE · RYAN CARLINE
CHRIS DEMPSEY · DAVID FROST · CORNELIA GANTNER · FREDY GANTNER · KIM GAVIN
MIGUEL GONZALEZ · KARIN GUTZWILLER · REBEKAH HAYES · CLEO JONES
DAVID JOSEPH · ANNE & BEAT KASPER-MAYER · DIANA LODDERHOSE · ANNIE MEETEN
HOLLY MITCHELL · MINDY OLIVER · CBA PERKINS · MARY PERKINS · JOHN PIEDOT
EMMA POWELL · ROLAND ROFFLER · DAVID SHARPE · AVA VEZZANI · KEVIN WEAVER
SIMONE WIETLISBACH · URS WIETLISBACH · ARCHIE WOLLASTON · ROSIE WOLLASTON

This motion picture is protected under the laws of the United Kingdom and other countries and its unauthorised duplication, distribution or exhibition may result in civil liability and criminal prosecution.

The events, characters and firms depicted in this motion picture are fictitious, any similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual firms is purely coincidental.

Filmed on location in the UNITED KINGDOM and GREECE.

International Sales UPGRADE PRODUCTIONS

The film was created with the support of the
NATIONAL CENTRE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION - EKOME in Greece.

National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication

UK Government
This production was made possible by the support of HM Treasury & DCMS' Film and TV Production Restart Scheme.

Developed in association with
STUDIOCANAL

Developed in association with
IPR. VC



LIPSYNC







The copyright in the sound recordings of the film score is owned by
GLOBE SOUNDTRACK & SCORE, a division of UNIVERSAL MUSIC OPERATIONS LIMITED

© 2023 GREATEST DAYS LIMITED
All rights reserved.