

**"LAST HOLIDAY"**  
**Production Information**

Georgia Byrd (Queen Latifah) lives a small life tucked inside big dreams. A shy cookware salesperson for a department store, she handles knives and skillets with the flair of a master chef. But when a misdiagnosis leads Georgia to believe her days are numbered, she decides that if she has to go, she's going to go with a bang – and embarks on a dream holiday vacation to a grand resort in Europe. There, thinking she has nothing to lose, Georgia undergoes a metamorphosis... and her transformation affects everyone around her. Georgia's newly uninhibited personality shakes up staff and guests alike, including a venerated chef (Gerard Depardieu) as well as her retail magnate boss (Timothy Hutton), who becomes convinced she's a rival intent on sabotaging his business plans. From snowy slopes to spectacular spas, delectable dinners to midnight balls, Georgia is going to live a lifetime of fun in just a few weeks...

Paramount Pictures presents an ImaGemoVers/Laurence Mark production, a Wayne Wang film, "Last Holiday." Directed by Wayne Wang from a screenplay by Jeffrey Price & Peter S. Seaman based upon a screenplay by J. B. Priestley, the film is produced by Laurence Mark and Jack Rapke. Executive producers are Robert Zemeckis, Steve Starkey, Richard Vane, Peter S. Seaman, and Jeffrey Price. The film stars Queen Latifah, LL Cool J, Timothy Hutton, Gerard Depardieu, Alicia Witt, and Giancarlo Esposito.

"Last Holiday" will be distributed by Paramount Pictures. Paramount Pictures is part of the entertainment operations of Viacom Inc., one of the world's largest entertainment media companies and a leader in the production, promotion and distribution of entertainment, news, sports and music.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“Georgia Byrd has always bent over backwards for everyone else – she’s felt like her proper place was at the end of the line,” says Queen Latifah, who plays the lead in the new comedy from Paramount Pictures, “Last Holiday.” “Now, for the first time in her life, at what she *thinks* is the end of her life, Georgia’s going to do something strictly for herself. She’s going to live like a queen.”

Confident and relaxed when in the kitchen, awkward and uncertain when not, Georgia sings in the church choir, always softly, and observes the world safely from the sidelines. When, after a misdiagnosis, she’s told her number’s up, Georgia decides she hasn’t a moment to lose and begins to make up for lost time. Cashing in her savings, Georgia heads for the beautiful Grandhotel Pupp in the central European resort village of Karlovy Vary, intent on going out with a bang...

“When she thinks she’s going to die, Georgia is unafraid to put herself in jeopardy,” says producer Jack Rapke. “She’s base-jumping off bridges, snowboarding down steep mountains... people are in awe. They are transformed by her.”

“To be sure, this movie is meant to be funny, but hopefully, it’s more than that,” says producer Laurence Mark. “You can really root for this character – getting behind what she’s up to and becoming emotionally involved with her. What Georgia is saying is: ‘Life is a banquet – don’t be afraid to eat up.’”

Says director Wayne Wang, “When Georgia is told – mistakenly – that she has but a few weeks to live, she gives up all the protective shields she’s built around herself. Feeling invulnerable, she embraces the challenges and excitement life provides when you are willing to surrender your fears.”

LL Cool J co-stars as Queen Latifah's co-worker, Sean Matthews, who also struggles to find the things in life that truly motivate him. When Georgia takes off on her adventure, it inspires Sean as well. "She just disappears," says LL Cool J, "and then he hears this crazy news about the things that are going on with her."

In the movie, Georgia loves to spend time in the kitchen and her transformation is evidenced there. Once a reserved cook who didn't dare to taste her non-dietetic culinary creations, she now learns to put everything on the line and enjoy the food that makes life worth living. The story gave Latifah the opportunity to work with some of the biggest celebrity chefs in the business; Emeril Lagasse and other Food Network cooks were the geniuses behind the film's sumptuous meals. Latifah even learned how to make Emeril's Chicken Tchoupitoulas!

Queen Latifah says that the comedy taps into a basic human emotion. "Try to imagine how you would feel if you were told that you only had a few weeks left. All the dreams, all the desires, all the things you wanted to do and thoughts you wanted to express... and now you're told that your time is up. Where do you begin?"

Screenwriters Jeffrey Price and Peter S. Seaman began with the 1950 classic starring Alec Guinness. After Mark and Rapke signed on to produce, Queen Latifah took an interest in the project.

Finding the right director to juggle the humor and the drama of the story was a crucial decision that early on pointed in a clear direction, according to Mark. The producer, who had previously worked with Wayne Wang on "Anywhere But Here," says Wang is "one of the few directors who can artfully balance comedy and emotion. He knows how to draw performances from actors, and humor from context and characters."

Rapke concurs, “Wayne fully understood the tone of the material and the characters, and saw that underneath the comedy and the wonderful presence of Latifah is a poignant story with substantial themes. He knew how to get at the heart of the movie.”

Known for juxtaposing high concept studio fare like “Maid in Manhattan” with personal stories such as “Eat a Bowl of Tea” and “Smoke,” Wang was drawn to the project because of its examination of the unexpected twists and turns of everyday life.

“I’ve always been fascinated by the idea of living for the moment, as if every single day counts,” he says. “It’s something I’ve attempted to explore both in my work and personal life – probably with equal amounts of success and failure.”

“It’s a fascinating concept that applies to every single human being: How do you live life to the fullest? How do you make the most of the time you’re given?” says producer Laurence Mark.

Wang suggests that perhaps life’s single greatest challenge is to be responsible to your future without neglecting the opportunities of the present.

“At the time I was given the script I had recently lost my father, who was a cautious man, to an accident,” Wang says. “It reminded me of how many situations we encounter each day that are uncontrollable, despite our precautions, and inspired me to want to explore the idea of the preciousness of life and the unpredictability of fate.”

## **ABOUT THE CHARACTERS**

Queen Latifah takes on the lead role, a part that allows her to play against type as a meek, churchgoing lady who makes an incredible transformation that also affects everyone around her.

“Queen Latifah can convey an irresistible warmth and humanity in addition to the brash comedic persona that audiences know,” says screenwriter Jeffrey Price. “With Queen in the role, we were able to fully develop a character arc that allows us to see both sides – the introverted person she starts out as and the outgoing woman she becomes.”

Latifah’s stature as a comedic actress has grown since garnering an Academy Award® nomination for her turn as Mama Morton in “Chicago” and her starring role in the box-office hit “Bringing Down the House.” She says she was drawn to “Last Holiday” by the challenge it presented to her.

“This was the chance to get into the bones of someone very different from me,” she notes. “Most of the characters I’ve played are vocal and outgoing and this was a chance to embody someone who is meek and unaccustomed to speaking her mind. Georgia became one of my favorite characters because she’s so decent and inspiring.”

Still, the actress says that she does, in fact, have a shy side. “Latifah means ‘delicate and sensitive,’” she notes. “I just indulged that side of myself a little more than I usually do.”

Latifah says that, like her character, she is thrilled when new opportunities present themselves. “I learned how to snowboard for this project, which is one of the things I love about the job – the chance to do new things,” says Latifah. “I’m an active person – I ride motorcycles, I’ve snowmobiled and skied... I like to embrace the adventure of life, which helps me in translating that attitude to my character.”

“At the beginning of the movie, Latifah plays a character completely different from the way I’ve always imagined her,” says the director, Wayne Wang. “Georgia starts out emotionally handicapped, someone who can’t really speak her mind. Latifah really dug deep and came through with those scenes as the character deals with her own emotions about dying.”

LL Cool J, who has known Latifah for many years, takes on the role of Sean, Georgia’s co-worker and the object of a crush. For that part of the role, Latifah was able to call back old feelings. “He’s a very handsome guy and I sort of had a crush on him when I was growing up,” Latifah admits, “so I just recall how I felt when I had his poster on my wall.”

“Really? I didn’t know that,” LL Cool J responds with surprise when told of Latifah’s childhood infatuation. “We’ve known each other a long time, and playing scenes with her has been wonderful. She’s such a smart young woman. She’s taught me a few things.”

“We needed someone who could establish a presence and a chemistry with Queen Latifah,” says Laurence Mark. “LL Cool J fit the bill perfectly. He’s known Latifah for a long time and their connection and affection for each other is apparent.”

Says Rapke, “We looked at a lot of people for that role, but loved Cool J because, like Latifah, we were casting him against type. You would never think of him as shy or lacking in confidence. His chemistry with Latifah is spectacular.”

Calling the role his “homage to the working man,” LL Cool J was indeed interested in the role because it was so unlike any other he had played.

“I met with Wayne and we had a nice conversation about where we could go with this role and what I wanted to do with it,” he says. “I was excited to play someone who isn’t doing something heroic or action-oriented. He’s just a

regular Joe with limited life experiences. People like Sean can be overlooked because they're quiet and don't draw attention to themselves. You know, not everyone is super-confident. Not everyone is super-sharp. Not everyone has the boldness to approach someone they're interested in. But shyness is endearing. It shows decency, humility.

"The two of them fall in love in an innocent manner -- there's nothing calculating or manipulative about it, no hidden agendas," continues LL Cool J. "I think, in general, relationships that happen slowly, organically, tend to be healthier and last longer."

For the role of Didier, the brilliant, volatile, mischievous, seasoned chef at the Grandhotel Pupp, the producers turned to a larger-than-life actor who could embody all facets of the character: Gerard Depardieu. The French icon is now in self-professed semi-retirement, and "Last Holiday" could very well represent his last American film role.

"From the very beginning of our discussions about the character of Didier, we always said, 'Let's see if we can get someone like Depardieu,'" says Jack Rapke. "Then we said, 'Well, why don't we just see if we can get Depardieu?'"

The role held a natural appeal to the venerated French actor, restaurateur and vintner. "I have a passion for food," he says. "When someone asks me how I am, I say, 'Great, I just had a wonderful steak.' This role for me is like a wonderful steak."

Says Wayne Wang, "During pre-production I read an article in the *New York Times Magazine* about Depardieu's restaurant and his knowledge of cuisine. I was excited that he would be bringing such joy and enthusiasm to the movie."

Laurence Mark adds, "Chef Didier is in many ways the mentor of the film, a guiding figure who comforts and inspires Georgia."

Georgia's and Sean's boss is Matthew Kragen, a would-be Donald Trump who wants to have it all. A man who's lost sight of what really counts in life, Kragen is constantly seeking out bigger and bigger deals and not worrying about whom he might be stepping on along the way.

The search for someone with the acting chops to play a narcissistic antagonist who's not entirely unsympathetic led filmmakers to Timothy Hutton, whom Wayne Wang has admired and followed since his Oscar® winning performance in "Ordinary People."

"Tim can offer such a range of interpretations of scenes, from quiet and controlled to over-the-top outrageous," remarks Wang. "He creates a great palette to work with and has the ability to make a somewhat villainous character appealing and identifiable, even when he's doing something unsavory."

Says Hutton, "Kragen is a control freak. If anything changes ever so slightly, it throws him completely out of whack. He's a fun character to play."

According to Latifah, Hutton was well-suited to play the one-upping Kragen. "Tim Hutton is crazy, a nut. He really doesn't need a stuntman," she adds. "He'll do all of these dangerous moves on his own, if you let him. You got to grab him and say, 'We don't want you to jump off the mountain this time.'"

## **ABOUT THE FOOD**

In "Last Holiday," Georgia dreams of one day owning her own restaurant, but lacks the self-confidence to see her dreams become a reality. When she arrives in Europe, she meets the world-renowned Chef Didier, who is impressed with her taste for food and lust for life.

A food lover, director Wayne Wang has dealt lovingly with the culinary arts previously in such films as "Eat a Bowl of Tea" and "Dim Sum" and with

this project wanted to take the preparation and presentation of food to an even higher level.

“I wanted to make a bigger meal of the food in this film, so to speak,” says Wang. “We met with Susan Stockton at the Food Network in New York; I stressed a desire for fresh ingredients and for the food to look organic and rustic. I really liked the idea of a French chef working in Central Europe during the winter – a man who has to be very creative in preparing dishes as he doesn’t have access to all the produce he might have in Paris.”

Wang toured the Food Network’s studios in New York and began coordinating with Stockton the enormous variety and number of meals that would need to be prepared.

“We do several live shows daily in the studio, plus location work across the country, so we are well-trained and prepared for this kind of thing,” says Stockton. “All of our cooks are also food stylists – they know how to make food look good on camera.”

Seven Food Network chefs assisted in the preparation of the film food in New Orleans, which required making numerous servings of the same dish, explains prop master Douglas Fox, who coordinated the effort. “The chefs had to have several options available each day, just in case the shooting order changed. In addition, we never knew how many takes would be needed to complete the scene. If the actor took a bite of the food, and then we shot another take, we had to have a fresh dish available. We tried to be prepared for as many as 10 takes, which meant having 10 versions of each dish.”

New Orleans is familiar territory for the Food Network, thanks to Emeril Lagasse’s popular show, which airs on the network and has its executive offices and recipe developers headquartered in the Crescent City. The participation of

the famed Emeril, who has three restaurants in New Orleans, was a boon for the filmmakers.

Emeril recalls spending “a marathon day with Queen Latifah a few years ago during the shooting of an episode of ‘Who Wants to Be A Millionaire’ and falling in love with her passion and spirit. We had a terrific time together, so I was happy to lend a hand to the film. And I appreciated that the production was taking food preparation seriously.”

Early in the film, Georgia is seen watching and cooking along with a televised episode of an Emeril show in which he’s preparing a dish of his own creation, Chicken Tchoupitoulas. Emeril taped the program specifically for the film, and provided his cooking facility for Queen Latifah to practice making the dish during pre-production.

Says Susan Stockton, “Queen Latifah made Chicken Tchoupitoulas several times with our staff and did extremely well in the kitchen. She has good knife skills; she learns quickly and retains the knowledge.”

Several crewmembers were on hand to sample Latifah’s efforts, which met with unanimous approval. The large pans were empty within minutes. “I must have done all right,” Latifah laughs.

Georgia prepares such classic New Orleans dishes as jambalaya, pork chops and savory bread pudding. When she gets to Europe, as Georgia tastes the culinary creations of Chef Didier, her options become even more expansive...

### *Georgia’s Dinner Menu*

- Warm lobster salad in potato nest with leeks and caviar
- Cassoulet plated for one – gratineed with whole leg of duck on top
- Risotto Barolo with winter vegetables and truffles

- Beef goulash with assorted wild mushrooms and broad egg noodles with caraway
- Rouget, citrus beurre blanc with capers and roasted heirloom potatoes
- Roast free-range quail with brioche-currant stuffing
- Lamb shanks served on soft polenta with blood-orange relish

And, for dessert...profiteroles with caramel, chocolate soufflé, fruit tartlets, and bombeé flambé (Baked Alaska set aflame with rum).

Depardieu was personally involved in preparations for these lavish dinner scenes. Food Network advisor Susan Stockton flew to Paris to meet the actor at his restaurant, La Fontaine, where, over a three-hour dinner, they discussed the menus his character would create.

“Gerard is a chef with his own ideas, so I wanted to make sure he was simpatico with what we had in mind,” she recalls. “I didn’t want him to arrive on set and say, ‘Oh, I would never prepare lamb shanks that way.’ The first thing we did was check out his kitchen, which is what chefs always want to do. For dinner, he cooked us suckling pig on a spit. He was excited because he had just come back from a trip to the coast to get fish and oysters and had bought his own grapes for his wines.”

Says Depardieu, “Chefs in big hotels often have to work with a set menu, but Didier creates his own, working with whatever fresh ingredients he finds. He never repeats the same things.”

Stockton had already been in discussions for weeks with director Wang, who sent her a stream of emails and tear sheets from magazines depicting rustic food images. The foodies were then left to realize the director’s vision.

“There’s a dark wood table in the restaurant we call the food plateau, heaped with fish, wild greens, roasts, cheeses, fruit, wooden bowls,” she says. “It’s representative of the winter feasts common to the culture for centuries, and an example of how Wayne wanted to fill the screen with food.”

Stockton and her two key chefs, Jay Brooks and Krista Ruane, scouted the Hotel Pupp kitchen for three days and assembled a staff of 15 local chefs to assist in the procuring of ingredients and food preparation. They managed to get half their produce from the Czech Republic, the other half from France.

Rather than go to Europe with a menu in mind, Stockton’s crew strived for authenticity, planning a menu based on ingredients that the local chefs would use. “We asked the local chefs, ‘What’s your cream like? Where do you get good lamb?’” explains Stockton.

Stockton and her team were pleasantly surprised at the enormous size of the Pupp’s kitchen, which enabled them to work alongside the hotel cooking staff, which must prepare meals for guests of the hotel and its two restaurants.

“New York kitchens are small; every possible foot of expensive real estate is devoted to the dining area,” she says. “The Pupp’s kitchen is huge – not uncommon in these centuries-old European hotels because the chefs cooked over open fire and needed high ceilings for ventilation. The roominess allows great interaction with the hotel’s regular cooks. They’re learning things from us, we’re learning from them.”

One scene requires the preparation of 50 Baked Alaskas and an assortment of fish. “You always have to be aware of any food allergies among the cast, as they actually eat the food, sometimes take after take after take,” says Stockton.

To ensure the food looks fresh and piping hot from the kitchen, Wang gave the kitchen several minutes' warning before takes and completed insert shots of the food even before shooting the establishing shots of the scene.

Says Wayne Wang, "I'm from the Bay Area, where chefs such as Alice Waters and Judy Rogers practice a school of natural cooking. Don't use too much sauce or too many spices and really try to bring out the fresh tastes of the food. That's what we're trying to represent in the film."

### **ABOUT THE LOCATIONS, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND COSTUMES**

Production on "Last Holiday" began in New Orleans, which became a second home to many in the production. The city's working-class neighborhoods (which, unfortunately, became well-known around the world after the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina) provide a backdrop for the early part of the film as the home of the frugal Georgia.

"The residents of New Orleans were the best, the absolute best," says producer Jack Rapke. "We were their guests and they treated us with their famous hospitality. Our entire production was aided by the people of that fine city – we're all pulling for them now."

"We steered away from the classical images of New Orleans, such as the Garden District, and are showing another side of the city," says director of photography Geoffrey Simpson. "We depicted Georgia's world as small and austere by framing shots in a way that makes the rooms feel cloistered."

"The wonderful tradition of cuisine, the Southern Baptist church community, and the overall aesthetic of New Orleans served us well on an artistic level," says executive producer Richard Vane.

Wayne Wang, who also directed “Because of Winn-Dixie” in New Orleans, says, “There is something about the south and the black community in New Orleans that is very soulful and real. Faith and church are vital, almost organic, to the community, which plays perfectly to Georgia’s character.”

This is exemplified in one memorable scene: when Georgia laments her ill fortune to God in the form of a spiritual. Filmed at the First Street United Methodist Church, the sequence involves some 200 extras, a five-piece band, and the outstanding 18-member choir from the New Orleans Ebenezer Baptist Church, seen in the Oscar® nominated film “Ray.”

LL Cool J also garnered considerable attention in New Orleans, drawing dozens of fans to shooting locations at a shopping mall and a hospital, where 10 female employees patiently waited for a chance to say hello. He made the rounds at the end of the day, sending some squealing nurses into near cardiac arrest. “It’s all about spreading the love,” he says. “Get love, give love.”

From New Orleans, the production moved to Europe, where the expansive landscapes provided a dramatic contrast with New Orleans. “Shooting Georgia Byrd, this quiet gal from New Orleans, at the top of this huge expanse, with these magic skies and incredible views, is one of the most rewarding visuals I’ve ever had the opportunity to shoot,” says Simpson.

That contrast is also evident in the costume changes. A woman whose frugality is reflected in her wardrobe in New Orleans, Georgia “becomes a peacock” in Europe, in the words of costume designer Daniel Orlandi.

For Georgia’s big meal scene, Orlandi dressed Latifah in a stunning red chiffon dress and Chopard diamond necklace. Orlandi says the necklace “framed her face beautifully without overpowering it. It was a stunning piece of jewelry that moved in ways costume jewelry doesn’t.” (Also not moving: the

beefy security guard from Chopard, who stayed glued to Queen Latifah's side whenever the necklace was brought out.)

Orlandi dressed Latifah in a green jersey jacket for the film's second dinner scene and chose a beaded tux for the New Year's Eve party.

Four different formal-dress evening scenes take place in the film, requiring Orlandi to fit 1,000 costumes: evening gowns, ball gowns, tuxedos and tails. All the clothing was purchased in Los Angeles and New Orleans and tailored individually in Karlovy Vary and Prague.

"We found beautiful extras and made them chic and stylish," says Orlandi. "They ooze glamour. This is where the pretty people come to spend the holidays."

### **WELCOME TO THE GRANDHOTEL PUPP**

The stately Grandhotel Pupp – yes, a real hotel (with 228 rooms), which began construction in 1701 – is one of the venerated hotels of Central Europe and home to the annual Karlovy Vary Film Festival. Over the centuries it has hosted such luminaries as Peter the Great, Bach, Beethoven, Goethe, and numerous crowned princes of Europe. Renovated in 1893 and again in 2004, it served as lodging and location for six weeks of filming.

Says Richard Vane, "We searched for a gorgeous hotel in the Czech Republic where Georgia would walk in and go, 'Wow.' January and February are low season and the Pupp was undergoing some renovations, so we were able to make arrangements to basically take over the hotel. My favorite part of the deal is that the travel time for the crew is the two minutes it takes them to get from whatever floor they're on to the lobby."

The hotel's ballrooms and suites provide large, impressive backdrops for filmmakers to create the magical, other-worldly feel Georgia experiences during her stay. Holiday lights and decorations add to the luster.

"Georgia arrives from New Orleans, where everything felt tightly enclosed, to this fabulous hotel with huge ceilings and golden angels hanging above chandeliers," says director of photography Geoffrey Simpson. "Suddenly there's all this fabulous space. We had snow almost every day in Karlovy Vary, even on the morning we shot Georgia arriving at the airport. It creates such an immediate, wonderful contrast with the New Orleans section of the film."

Producer Jack Rapke says the hotel's picturesque location was perfect for the film. "I've never seen so many people asking the still photographer to take their pictures, everyone wanting these gorgeous mountains in the background," he says. "These are the pictures you hang on your wall. The beauty of this site will stay with us all forever."

### **ABOUT THE CAST**

**QUEEN LATIFAH** (Georgia Byrd) received rave reviews, an Oscar® nomination for Best Supporting Actress, a Golden Globe nomination and a SAG Award nomination for her portrayal as Mama Morton in Miramax's "Chicago." Following that, she starred in Disney's box office hit "Bringing Down the House," on which she also acted as executive producer through her company, Flavor Unit Entertainment. She most recently starred in and produced the "Barbershop" spin-off "Beauty Shop." Along with the 2004 comedy "Taxi," her other films include "Set It Off," "Living Out Loud," "Brown Sugar," "Bone Collector" and "Jungle Fever," her film debut.

Her career in films was launched by the success of her first television series, "Living Single," now in syndication.

Latifah teamed with Grammy Award-winning producer Arif Mardin as well as Ron Farin to release her first vocal album, *Queen Latifah – The Dana Owens Album*, which has sold over a million copies and received a Grammy nomination. The New Jersey native burst onto the scene through rap with her groundbreaking 1989 debut *All Hail the Queen*, which set the visual and contextual standard for female rappers. She has earned three Grammy nominations as well as a Grammy Award for Best Solo Rap Performance in 1994.

A performer, label president, author and entrepreneur, Queen Latifah has blossomed into a one-woman entertainment conglomerate. She formed, with manager Sha-Kim Compere, Flavor Unit Entertainment, which produced last fall's comedy "The Cookout" and the above-mentioned "Beauty Shop."

She also serves as co-chair for the Lancelot H. Owens Scholarship Foundation, Inc. Established by her mother, Rita Owens, to perpetuate the memory of a loving son and brother, the foundation provides scholarships to students who excel scholastically, but are limited in financial resources.

**LL COOL J** (Sean Matthews) starred in 2003 with Colin Farrell and Samuel Jackson in the hit action film "S.W.A.T." Named ShoWest's 2003 "Male Star of Tomorrow," he was recently seen in "Mindhunters," re-teaming with director Renny Harlin, and will next be seen in the drama thriller "Edison" starring Morgan Freeman, Kevin Spacey, and Justin Timberlake. He also recently shot Green Street Films' "Slow Burn," opposite Ray Liotta and Taye Diggs.

Smith's other film credits include "Deliver Us from Eva," "Rollerball," "Kingdom Come," "Charlie's Angels," "Any Given Sunday," "In Too Deep,"

“Deep Blue Sea” (for which he contributed two songs to the soundtrack), “Halloween - H2O” and “Toys.”

LL Cool J began his career as a hugely successful rap artist, emerging in 1984 as the flagship artist for Def Jam Records. A two-time Grammy Award winner with ten consecutive platinum albums, his latest effort, *DEFinition*, was released last summer.

In 2002 LL wrote the children’s book, And the Winner Is..., part of Scholastic’s series of books and CD’s by rap stars called Hip Kid Hop. It tells the story of a young basketball player who learns the importance on winning and losing gracefully. He also penned a 1997 autobiography I Make My Own Rules, and launched the record label Rock the Bells.

LL Cool J currently lives in New York with his wife and four children.

**TIMOTHY HUTTON** (Kragen) was seen last year in “Kinsey,” a film about the controversial sex researcher, and “Secret Window,” the mystery thriller starring Johnny Depp. He will soon appear in two films at the Sundance Film Festival: “Stephanie Daley,” written and directed by Hilary Brougher, and “Off the Black,” directed by James Ponsoldt.

After winning an Academy Award® and a Golden Globe Award for “Ordinary People,” Hutton went on to star in such films as “Taps” (earning a second Golden Globe nomination), “Daniel,” “The Falcon & the Snowman,” “Q&A,” “The General’s Daughter,” “French Kiss” and “The Sunshine State.” His feature film directorial debut, “Digging to China,” which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, starred Kevin Bacon and Mary Stuart Masterson, and introduced Evan Rachel Wood.

Hutton produced and starred in “Mr. And Mrs. Loving” and played the title role in the acclaimed “Aldrich Ames: Traitor Within,” both for Showtime.

Also for television he starred in, produced, and directed several popular "Nero Wolfe" adaptations for A&E.

As a member of New York's Circle Repertory Company, Hutton originated the lead role in Broadway's "Prelude to A Kiss," and starred in "Babylon Gardens" with Mary Louise Parker. In Los Angeles he appeared opposite Henry Fonda in the stage production of "The Oldest Living Graduate," later broadcast live on NBC. He currently serves as president of the Players Club, the oldest theatrical club in America, founded by Edwin Booth and Mark Twain.

**GERARD DEPARDIEU** (Chef Didier) has been a leading actor for three decades, sprinkling occasional American films into a body of work that has been comprised mostly in his native France. He made his U.S. film debut in 1990 in the romantic comedy "Green Card" opposite Andie McDowell. That same year he earned an Academy Award nomination for his performance in "Cyrano de Bergerac." Of his more than 150 films, the most noted include "The Last Metro," "The Return of Martin Guerre," "1492," "The Possessed," "My Father, the Hero," "Danton," "A Pure Formality," "Germinal," "1900," "The Last Woman," "Get Out Your Handkerchiefs," "Going Places," "The Woman Next Door" and "The Others."

**ALICIA WITT** (Ms. Burns) starred opposite Hugh Grant and Sandra Bullock in the Warner Bros.' romantic comedy "Two Weeks Notice" and co-stars in the just-released "The Upside of Anger" starring Kevin Costner and Joan Allen. A classically trained pianist, she put her musical skills to use in the romantic comedy "Playing Mona Lisa," earning Best Actress honors at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival. Her other film credits include "Urban Legend," John

Waters' "Cecil B. DeMented," "Mr. Holland's Opus" opposite Richard Dreyfuss, "Bodies, Rest and Motion," "Bongwater," "Four Rooms" and 1994's "Fun," a critically acclaimed drama of two disturbed girls whose boredom leads them to commit murder, which earned Witt a Special Jury Recognition Award at Sundance.

Witt made her screen debut as Alia in David Lynch's adaptation of Frank Herbert's acclaimed sci-fi novel, "Dune." After earning her high school diploma, she relocated from Connecticut to Los Angeles at age 14, and was cast again by Lynch in the role of Gersten Hayward in his Emmy winning series "Twin Peaks." The director selected her once again for his HBO trilogy, "Hotel Room," in which Witt portrayed a young woman with multiple personality disorder.

Witt starred for four seasons as the moody daughter, Zoey, in the CBS sitcom "Cybill," and has made guest appearances on such shows as "The Sopranos" and "Ally McBeal." She appears later this year in the German-produced miniseries "The Ring."

**GIANCARLO ESPOSITO** (Senator Dillings) is best-known for his award-winning performance in "The Usual Suspects" and his roles in several Spike Lee movies, including "Do the Right Thing," "School Daze," "Mo Better Blues" and "Malcom X." He received an Independent Spirit Award as Best Actor for his performance in "Fresh" and was featured in Wayne Wang's acclaimed indie "Smoke."

Among Esposito's other numerous credits are "Ali," "Benders," "Amos & Andrew," "Bob Roberts," "King of New York" and "The Cotton Club." He played in one season of "Homicide: Life on the Streets" in 1998, and reprised his detective role in the series' MOW in 2000. Born in Copenhagen, Denmark, Esposito moved with his family to several destinations before settling in

Manhattan when he was six. He made his Broadway debut a scant four years later in "Maggie Flynn."

**MICHAEL NOURI** (Congressman Stewart) has balanced his acting career with roles in films and on the stage, including several major Broadway successes.

His recent big screen performances have come in "The Terminal" starring Tom Hanks and directed by Steven Spielberg, and "Finding Forrester" starring Sean Connery, while early in his career he was cast in such hits as "Goodbye, Columbus" and "Flashdance." His most noted television credits include the series "Gangster Chronicles," in which he played Lucky Luciano, "Bay City Blues," and "Love and War."

Born in Washington, D.C., Nouri studied acting at Emerson College in Boston. He made his Broadway debut in "40 Carats," leading to his casting in an 18-month role opposite Julie Andrews in the Broadway hit "Victor, Victoria." His other noted stage plays include "Cannes, Cannes" and "Camille Claudel." He trained with Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler, and has lived in Los Angeles since 1985.

### **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

Director **WAYNE WANG** is a key figure in the development of independent filmmaking, alternating major Hollywood studio films such as "The Joy Luck Club" with smaller, independent work like "Smoke." Continuing to work in the two different worlds, Wang directed an independent digital film, "The Center of the World," with Molly Parker and Peter Sarsgaard, followed by Sony/Revolution's hit comedy "Maid in Manhattan" with Jennifer Lopez. His

most recent effort, "Because of Winn-Dixie," based on the children's novel by Kate DiCamillo, opened to solid reviews and box-office in February.

Born in Hong Kong where his family had fled from China after the Communist take-over in 1949, Wang graduated from Wah Yan Jesuit High School, then came to the United States at 18 to study painting and film at California College of the Arts and Crafts in Oakland. His first feature film was a graduate student project, "A Man, A Woman, a Killer," co-directed with Rick Schmidt. Returning to Hong Kong with a master's degree, Wang went to work at the public broadcasting outlet R.T.H.K. (Radio and Television Hong Kong), which had become a launching pad for a whole group of young film school-trained directors who were creating what came to be known as the "Hong Kong New Wave." While there, Wang directed several episodes of the landmark realistic drama series "Below the Lion Rock," about the daily lives of ordinary Hong Kong citizens.

Frustrated by the cramped creative atmosphere and bureaucracy of the Crown Colony, he returned to the U.S. and began social work in San Francisco's Chinatown.

His experiences there with new Asian immigrants inspired Wang's second feature film, the critically acclaimed "Chan is Missing," which used an enigmatic thriller plot as a vehicle to explore social conflicts and political divisions in the neighborhood. Made in 16mm black & white, for just \$27,000, produced, directed, written and edited by Wang, "Chan is Missing" was a decade ahead of the recent wave of "micro-budget" successes like "El Mariachi" and "Clerks."

Wang's third feature, "Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart," had its world premiere in the Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival and received a British Academy Award nomination as Best Foreign Film. Seeking a dramatic change of pace in both tone and subject matter, he then directed the all-Anglo

thriller "Slamdance," a neo-noir melodrama starring Tom Hulce, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and Virginia Madsen.

New York's Chinatown was both the setting and subject of Wang's next film "Eat a Bowl of Tea," a period drama set in the 1940s and starring Wang's wife, Cora Miao, and Russell Wong. This was followed by "Life is Cheap...But Toilet Paper is Expensive," a gangster comedy filmed in Hong Kong.

Next came his first Hollywood feature, "The Joy Luck Club," based on the best-selling novel by Amy Tan, then "Smoke," based on novelist Paul Auster's original screenplay, and starring Harvey Keitel, William Hurt and Forrest Whitaker. The film won the Silver Bear Award at the Berlin Film Festival and was nominated for France's Cesar Award for Best Foreign Film. Wang and Auster also co-directed "Blue in the Face," a second story employing many of the same actors and settings as "Smoke."

In 1997 Wang directed "Chinese Box," a romance set in Hong Kong starring Jeremy Irons and Gong Li, about the return of Hong Kong to China. The next year, he directed "Anywhere But Here," starring Susan Sarandon and Natalie Portman, which tells the story of a flamboyant mother who, in search of the good life, moves with her daughter to Los Angeles. His most recent release is "Maid in Manhattan," starring Jennifer Lopez and Ralph Fiennes. His most recently completed film is "Because of Winn-Dixie," which was released in January 2005.

Screenwriters and executive producers **JEFFREY PRICE & PETER S. SEAMAN** wrote the screenplays for "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?," "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" and the upcoming "Shrek 3." Their other credits include "Wild, Wild West" and "Doc Hollywood."

Seaman, a Harvard English major, and Price, a University of Illinois grad, met while working in advertising at Leo Burnett in Chicago, where they handled accounts featuring such animated characters as “Tony the Tiger” and the “Snap, Crackle and Pop” trio. Having independently quit their jobs to pursue screenwriting, they later re-teamed in Los Angeles, eventually landing an assignment to write and direct a 1989 episode of “Tales from the Crypt” entitled “For Cryin’ Out Loud.”

Producer **LAURENCE MARK** received an Academy Award® nomination for producing “Jerry Maguire,” starring Tom Cruise and directed by Cameron Crowe, and he executive produced “As Good As It Gets,” starring Jack Nicholson, Helen Hunt and Greg Kinnear and directed by James L. Brooks, which was also nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Picture. Mark most recently produced the international hit “I, Robot,” starring Will Smith and directed by Alex Proyas, and he is going into production at the beginning of 2006 on “Dreamgirls,” starring Jamie Foxx, Eddie Murphy and Beyoncé Knowles, and written and directed by Bill Condon.

He has also produced “Riding in Cars With Boys,” starring Drew Barrymore and Steve Zahn and directed by Penny Marshall; “Finding Forrester,” starring Sean Connery and directed by Gus Van Sant; “Hanging Up,” starring Meg Ryan, Diane Keaton and Lisa Kudrow and directed by Keaton; “Anywhere But Here,” starring Susan Sarandon and Natalie Portman and directed by Wayne Wang; “The Object of My Affection,” starring Jennifer Aniston, Paul Rudd and Nigel Hawthorne and directed by Nicholas Hytner; and “Romy and Michele’s High School Reunion,” starring Mira Sorvino and Lisa Kudrow and directed by David Mirkin.

Laurence Mark Productions is headquartered at the Sony Studios with a long-term production arrangement with Columbia Pictures. As producer or executive producer, Mark's other credits include Bob Rafelson's "Black Widow," Mike Nichols' "Working Girl," Nick Hytner's "Center Stage," Susan Seidelman's "Cookie" and Herbert Ross' "True Colors," as well as "Sister Act 2," "The Adventures of Huck Finn," "Simon Birch" and "Bicentennial Man."

For television, Mark was executive producer of "These Old Broads," starring Shirley MacLaine, Debbie Reynolds, Joan Collins and Elizabeth Taylor, and "Kiss My Act," starring Camryn Manheim and Dabney Coleman, as well as "Sweet Bird of Youth," starring Elizabeth Taylor and directed by Nicolas Roeg, and "Oliver Twist," starring Richard Dreyfuss and Elijah Wood and directed by Tony Bill.

Mark began his career as an executive trainee at United Artists after graduating from Wesleyan University and from New York University with a master's degree in cinema. After working as a producer's assistant on a number of films ("Lenny," "Smile"), he held several key publicity and marketing posts in New York and Los Angeles at Paramount Pictures, culminating in his being appointed Vice President of West Coast Marketing for that studio.

Moving into production, he then worked as Vice President of Production at Paramount before joining Twentieth Century Fox as Executive Vice President of Production. At those studios, he was closely involved with the development and production of such films as "Terms of Endearment," "Trading Places," "Staying Alive," "Falling in Love," "The Fly" and "Broadcast News."

Producer **JACK RAPKE** was a highly successful agent at Creative Artists Agency (CAA) before joining director Robert Zemeckis and producer Steve Starkey in 1998 to create ImageMovers, a company that specializes in the

production of theatrical motion pictures. ImageMovers's first feature, "Cast Away," was directed by Zemeckis and starred Tom Hanks. The company then produced Zemeckis' thriller "What Lies Beneath," starring Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer, as well as Ridley Scott's "Matchstick Men," starring Nicolas Cage and Sam Rockwell. Most recently, Imagemovers produced "The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio," starring Julianne Moore and Woody Harrelson, directed by Jane Anderson, and "Monster House."

Rapke also recently served as executive producer of the holiday hit "The Polar Express." With Zemeckis and Starkey, he is currently producing the upcoming film "Beowulf," a co-production between Paramount Pictures and Warner Bros.

A graduate of the NYU film school, Rapke moved to Los Angeles in 1975 and started working in the mailroom of the William Morris Agency. Four years later, he joined CAA and began his seventeen-year association with the company. During his seven-year tenure as co-chairman of CAA's motion picture department, Rapke was instrumental in building production companies around his high-profile client list which included Robert Zemeckis, Jerry Bruckheimer, Ridley Scott, Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, Michael Mann, Harold Ramis, Michael Bay, Terry Gilliam, Bob Gale, Bo Goldman, Steve Kloves, Howard Franklin, Scott Frank, Robert Kamen, John Hughes, Joel Schumacher, Martin Brest, Chris Columbus and Ezra Sacks.

Executive Producer **ROBERT ZEMECKIS** won an Academy Award®, a Golden Globe and a Director's Guild of American Award for Best Director for the hugely successful "Forrest Gump." The film's numerous honors also included Oscars® for Best Actor (Tom Hanks) and Best Picture. Zemeckis re-teamed with Hanks on the contemporary drama "Cast Away," the filming of

which was split into two sections, book-ending production on “What Lies Beneath.” Zemeckis and Hanks served as producers on “Cast Away,” along with Steve Starkey and Jack Rapke.

Earlier in his career, Zemeckis co-wrote (with Bob Gale) and directed “Back to the Future,” which was the top-grossing release of 1985, and for which Zemeckis shared Oscar® and Golden Globe nominations for Best Original Screenplay. He then went on to helm “Back to the Future, Part II” and “Part III,” completing one of the most successful film franchises ever.

In addition, he directed and produced “Contact,” starring Jodie Foster, based on the best-selling novel by Carl Sagan; and the macabre comedy hit “Death Becomes Her,” starring Meryl Streep, Goldie Hawn and Bruce Willis. He also wrote and directed the box office smash “Who Framed Roger Rabbit?,” cleverly blending live action and animation; directed the romantic adventure hit “Romancing the Stone,” pairing Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner; and co-wrote (with Bob Gale) and directed the comedies “Used Cars” and “I Wanna Hold Your Hand.”

Zemeckis also produced “House on Haunted Hill,” and executive produced such films as “The Frighteners,” “The Public Eye,” and “Trespass,” which he also co-wrote with Bob Gale. He and Gale previously wrote “1941,” which began Zemeckis’ association with Steven Spielberg.

For the small screen, Zemeckis has directed several projects, including the Showtime feature-length documentary “The Pursuit of Happiness,” which explored the effect of drugs and alcohol on 20<sup>th</sup> century society. His additional television credits include episodes of Spielberg’s “Amazing Stories” and HBO’s “Tales From the Crypt.”

In 1998, Zemeckis, Steve Starkey and Jack Rapke partnered to form the film and television production company ImageMovers. “What Lies Beneath”

was the first film to be released under the ImageMovers banner, followed by “Cast Away,” which opened to critical and audience acclaim in the fall of 2000, and “Matchstick Men.”

In March 2001, the USC School of Cinema-Television celebrated the opening of the Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts. This state-of-the-art center is the country’s first and only fully digital training center and houses the latest in non-linear production and post-production equipment as well as stages, a 50-seat screening room and USC student-run television station, Trojan Vision.

In 2004, Zemeckis produced and directed the motion capture film “The Polar Express,” starring Tom Hanks. Most recently, he brought the true-life story of “The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio,” starring Julianne Moore and Woody Harrelson, to the big screen.

Today, Zemeckis is currently producing and directing his second motion capture film, “Beowulf,” which will also be produced by Rapke and Starkey. The feature, which stars Anthony Hopkins, Angelina Jolie, Ray Winstone and Robin Wright Penn, is based on one of the oldest surviving pieces of Anglo-Saxon literature, written sometime before the 10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Executive Producer **STEVE STARKEY** earned an Academy Award® as one of the producers of Best Picture-winner “Forrest Gump.” The film, directed by Robert Zemeckis and starring Tom Hanks, became one of the highest grossing movies of all time and collected six Oscars®, including Best Director and Best Actor, as well as a Golden Globe Award, the National Board of Review’s highest honor in 1994, two People’s Choice Awards, the Producers Guild Golden Laurel Award and Best Picture BAFTA nomination.

Starkey produced the just-released big screen adaptation of Chris Van Allsburg’s popular children’s book, “The Polar Express,” which stars Tom Hanks

and is directed by Bob Zemeckis and, most recently, "The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio," directed by Jane Anderson, and "Monster House," directed by Gil Kenan. He is currently producing "Beowulf," a co-production between Paramount Pictures and Warner Bros., with Zemeckis and Jack Rapke.

In 1998, Starkey, along with Zemeckis and Rapke, formed *ImageMovers*, and re-teamed with Zemeckis and Tom Hanks on the epic drama "Cast Away" and produced the psychological thriller "What Lies Beneath" starring Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer, also directed by Zemeckis.

Starkey's professional association with Zemeckis began in 1986 when he was associate producer on the innovative feature "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" and went on to serve as associate producer on the second and third installments of the "Back to the Future" trilogy. Their collaboration continued as Starkey and Zemeckis produced the black comedy "Death Becomes Her," followed by "Forrest Gump" and "Contact." Starkey also co-produced the feature comedy farce "Noises Off" and produced the Showtime feature-length documentary "The Pursuit of Happiness," exploring drug and alcohol addiction, which was directed and executive produced by Robert Zemeckis.

Early in his career, Starkey worked with George Lucas at Lucasfilm, Ltd., where he became an assistant film editor on "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi." He later edited documentary films for Steven Spielberg's *Amblin' Entertainment*, was associate producer of Spielberg's "Amazing Stories" television anthology series and was executive producer on the 1993 CBS series "Johnny Bago."

Executive Producer **RICHARD VANE** has served as executive producer and/or line producer on such films as "How to Lose A Guy in 10 Days,"

“Without A Paddle,” “Rat Race,” “Beautiful,” “Jingle All the Way,” “The Phantom,” and “Home Alone 2.”

His credits as producer include “Baby’s Day Out,” “Dennis the Menace,” “Arachnophobia” and “Harry and the Henderson.” He co-produced “Snow Falling On Cedars,” “Always” and “The Boy Who Could Fly.”

Director of Photography **GEOFFREY SIMPSON, ACS**, whose most recent credit is “Under the Tuscan Sun,” is two-time Australian Film Institute winner for Best Achievement in Cinematography for his work on “Oscar and Lucinda” and “Shine.”

A native of Adelaide, Australia, Simpson’s other films include “Paradise Found,” “Black and White,” “Glitter,” “Life,” “Some Mother’s Son,” “Little Women,” “The War,” “Mr. Wonderful,” “Last Days of Chez Nous,” “Fried Green Tomatoes,” “Till There Was You” and “Green Card.”

Production Designer **WILLIAM ARNOLD** has designed sets for such films as “The Last Shot,” “Confidence,” “Punch-Drunk Love,” “Slackers,” “Magnolia,” “Mo’ Money,” “Shopgirl” and “In Good Company.” His work will next be seen in “American Dreamz.”

Arnold studied theater at the University of Rhode Island, and after graduation began doing production work in regional theater. He moved to Chicago in the 1980s and became involved in the city’s burgeoning movie production, working in various art department capacities on such films as “Color of Money,” “Men Don’t Leave” and “Child’s Play.” He relocated to Los Angeles in 1994, leading to assignments as art director on “L.A. Confidential,” “Primal Fear,” “The Bridges of Madison County” and “With Honor,” and then as supervising art director on “Pleasantville” and “Snow Falling On Cedars.”

Editor **DEIRDRE SLEVIN** worked previously with director Wayne Wang on the recently released "Because of Winn-Dixie" and "Maid in Manhattan." She edited Susan Seidelman's "Gaudy Afternoon," a European financed film made in Spain, and was associate editor on "K-Pax." Her credits as first assistant editor include "The Perfect You," "Blue Moon" and "A Map Of The World." She gained earlier experience working on "Stepmom," "The Siege," "Practical Magic" and "Copland." She recently edited the independent film "Water."

Costume Designer **DANIEL ORLANDI** has credits that include "The Alamo," "My Boss's Daughter," "Down With Love," "Kangaroo Jack," "Phone Booth," "Meet the Parents," "Flawless," "The Fan," "Quick," and "Cinderella Man." His work will next be seen in the highly anticipated adaptation of the best-selling Dan Brown novel, "The Da Vinci Code."

A native of Bergen County, New Jersey, Orlandi studied theater at Carnegie Mellon University. He began working in regional theater on the East Coast before moving to Los Angeles in the early 1980s, where he entered the film industry as an assistant to a costume designer.

**GEORGE FENTON** (music) has composed music for a wide variety of motion pictures, receiving Academy Award® nominations for his work on "The Fisher King," "Dangerous Liaisons," "Cry Freedom," and "Gandhi." He is a four-time collaborator with directors Nora Ephron ("Bewitched," "You've Got Mail," "Lucky Numbers," and "Mixed Nuts") and Andy Tennant ("Hitch," "Sweet Home Alabama," "Ever After," and "Anna and the King").

His other film credits include "Stage Beauty," "Summer Catch," "Bread and Roses," "Living Out Loud," "Mary Reilly," "The Madness of King George,"

"Ladybird, Ladybird," "Shadowlands," "Born Yesterday," "Groundhog Day,"  
"Hero," "Final Analysis," "White Palace," "Imagining Argentina," "Memphis  
Belle," "We're No Angels," "A Handful of Dust," "High Spirits," "84 Charing  
Cross Road," "White of the Eye," "The Company of Wolves," and "The Object of  
My Affection."