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OSCAR® WINNAAR
JULIANNE MOORE

OSCAR® GENOMINEERDE
PAUL GIAMATTI

THE DEBUT

GESCHREVEN EN GEREGISSEERD DOOR
JESSE EISENBERG

cinéart

PERSMAP

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Comedy - 2026 - VS - 105 minuten
Bioscooprelease: 10 december 2026

Meer informatie: Cineart.nl/films/the-debut
Download persmaterialen: Cineart.nl/pers/the-debut

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Synopsis

THE DEBUT is een muzikale komedie, geschreven en geregisseerd door Jesse Eisenberg (A REAL PAIN, THE SOCIAL NETWORK), met hoofdrollen voor Julianne Moore (THE ROOM NEXT DOOR) en Paul Giamatti (THE HOLDOVERS). Wat kan er gebeuren als een onopvallende huisvrouw zich aan het amateurtoneel waagt?

Wanneer Mona Friedman (Julianne Moore) een rol krijgt in een amateurtheaterproductie, verandert ze van een verlegen, onopvallende huisvrouw in een gedreven 'method actor'. Ze is tot alles bereid om de artistieke integriteit van haar bescheiden rol te beschermen – zelfs als dat betekent dat ze de strijd aan moet gaan met de dominante regisseur (Paul Giamatti) van het stuk.

THE DEBUT is een productie van A24 en is, na A REAL PAIN, de derde film van Jesse Eisenberg als schrijver en regisseur. De film ging in première tijdens het Telluride Filmfestival en werd geselecteerd voor het Toronto International Filmfestival. 'Julianne Moore and Paul Giamatti are dynamite together in Jesse Eisenberg's entertainingly offbeat theater comedy' – The Hollywood Reporter.





ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Jesse Eisenberg is an Academy Award® nominated actor and an acclaimed playwright and author.

Eisenberg's film credits include ROGER DODGER, THE SQUID AND THE WHALE, ADVENTURELAND, ZOMBIELAND, THE SOCIAL NETWORK, NOW YOU SEE ME, THE DOUBLE, NIGHT MOVES, THE END OF THE TOUR, AMERICAN ULTRA, LOUDER THAN BOMBS, BATMAN V. SUPERMAN, NOW YOU SEE ME 2, CAFÉ SOCIETY, JUSTICE LEAGUE, THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT, THE ART OF SELF DEFENSE, ZOMBIELAND: DOUBLE TAP, RESISTANCE, VIVARIUM, WILD INDIAN, MANODROME, SASQUATCH SUNSET, and the most recent NOW YOU SEE ME: NOW YOU DON'T.

On the small screen, Eisenberg was last seen playing the titular character of 'Toby Fleishman' in the FX limited series FLEISHMAN IS IN TROUBLE based on Taffy Brodesser-Akner's best-selling novel of the same name.

Eisenberg made his directorial debut with A24's WHEN YOU FINISH SAVING THE WORLD, which premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival to glowing reviews and screened as a part of Critics Week at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. The film is based on the Audible Original of the same name, both of which were written by Eisenberg.

Eisenberg's second directorial effort, A REAL PAIN, had its world premiere at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award, and was released theatrically by Searchlight Pictures later that year. The film received widespread critical acclaim, particularly for Eisenberg's screenplay, for which he won the BAFTA Award for Best Original Screenplay and was nominated in the same category at the 97th Annual Academy® Awards. The film was also named as one of the top ten films of 2024 by the American Film Institute and the National Board of Review.

Eisenberg will next direct A24's THE DEBUT, starring Julianne Moore and Paul Giamatti. Eisenberg wrote and directed the film, while also contributing original music and appearing as a member of the cast.

Eisenberg has written four plays, including "The Spoils," which had a box-office record-breaking run-on the West End. He also wrote and starred alongside Vanessa Redgrave in his play "The Revisionist," and "Asuncion." His play, "Happy Talk" starring Susan Sarandon and Marin Ireland opened April 2019 at the Signature Theater in New York.

Born in New York, Eisenberg is a frequent contributor to The New Yorker, the author of the collection, Bream Gives Me Hiccups from Grove Press and the Audible Original When You Finish Saving the World, which won "Best Original Work" at the 2021 Audie Awards.

PRODUCTION NOTES

About the Production

Hoping to escape her quiet, invisible life as a New Jersey homemaker, Mona Friedman (Julianne Moore) tries out for the local community theater musical NOSY NEIGHBORS. So begins a wild comical journey in which Mona tumbles down a rabbit hole of unleashed creativity — blowing up her whole identity. As sweet, shy Mona dives into the depths of unhinged obsession to win over a tyrant director, played by Paul Giamatti, Jesse Eisenberg's third feature film becomes a funny, stirring, darkly surreal portrait of a woman discovering the powerful artist within.

With rich and riveting performances from a cast led by Moore and Giamatti, along with Bernadette Peters, Halle Bailey, and a host of Broadway stars in front of and behind the camera, THE DEBUT turns the making of an amateur play into an imaginative fever dream. The film marks Eisenberg's third collaboration with producers Emma Stone, Dave McCary and Ali Herting at the production company Fruit Tree.

"THE DEBUT is an experience that grows more and more absurd," says Eisenberg, who not only wrote, directed and performs in THE DEBUT, but created from scratch the musicalwithin-the-film, NOSY NEIGHBORS. "The story begins with an empty nester who feels no one sees her. She has practically disappeared as a human being. But by devoting herself to this silly, unimportant local musical, she becomes a monstrous force — ready to sacrifice everything."

"In THE DEBUT, Jesse writes about this idea that we all have our little obsessions that bring us joy, and while a small musical like NOSY NEIGHBORS can seem irrelevant to what's going on in the larger world, it's about so much more," says Moore. "We all have so much feeling, desire, love and talent inside. Mona, in the middle of her life, goes looking for these things, and what she finds changes everything."

A Charming Musical Inside a Frenzied Odyssey

Eisenberg has always had a gift for making the uncomfortable comical and illuminating. Those qualities thread through his varied work as an actor, playwright, fiction writer and filmmaker. But with THE DEBUT, Eisenberg leaps into a new mode, taking a sharp turn out of wry realism into his most off-kilter and emotional work yet.

As Eisenberg turns the staging of a light-hearted local musical into a life-quest where the stakes keep frantically mounting, he plunges into the thin cracks between life and art, identity and performance. What starts as an audition-gonewrong becomes one woman's passage to finding an inner world she's never known.

Pulsating with Eisenberg's lifelong love of theater, the film joins a distinctive roster of back-stage movies about putting on plays. From THE PRODUCERS, OPENING NIGHT and ALL THAT JAZZ to MOULIN ROUGE!, WAITING FOR GUFFMAN and BIRDMAN, theater has made for mesmerizing cinema, mirroring the chaos of human relationships and opening a space where our cravings for high drama receive free rein.

Eisenberg was ready to jettison the everyday when he began writing the script. He was still in Poland, shooting what would become his acclaimed road-trip comedy A REAL PAIN. But in the midst of that movie's true-life ethical quandaries, he felt an urge to break out.

He knew that he wanted to write something more heightened, more of a postmodern fable. And he had in mind the voice of an unusual character inspired by an improvisational moment from Julianne Moore, with whom he had sparked a potent creative rapport in his directorial debut, WHEN YOU FINISH SAVING THE WORLD.

"When I started thinking about Mona Friedman, I went back to something Julianne did on my first feature in a scene whereher character really has to open up," says Eisenberg. "She was playing a very guarded character, but in the one scene where she was meant to open up, she started speaking with a Southern-belle affectation. I couldn't believe the voice she created — it was so captivating and correct for the scene, but not in any way that I had imagined."

Moore transformed similarly into Friedman, an openhearted, almost childlike middle-aged mom who has never peered into her own depths when she shows up to audition — entirely unqualified — for a musical entitled NOSY NEIGHBORS.

Eisenberg's writing intensified when he had wide-eyed, ingenuous Mona collide with the imperious, egocentric director Jerry, a small-town Svengali who takes on this niche theater production as if it were the most important pursuit in the world.

The writer-director wrote Mona as a literal ingenue, an innocent who is naive not just to the ways of theater but to the very notion of exploring other selves. Her all-consuming swan dive into the acting process takes her into the borderlands of artistic excess, exposing her to the joy of finding misfit communities and unleashing the power of performing the self you wish to be.

It also sparked some of the most surrealistic — and most personal — writing of Eisenberg's career. Though Mona wouldn't know Strasberg from Adam, Eisenberg came to realize the character was serving as a cracked looking glass into his own path as an actor.

"I grew up doing community theater in New Jersey in the '90s and it was a world I found to be both refuge and escape," Eisenberg explains. "I didn't have many friends, so it was my lifeline to something better — something outside myself. Theater gave me this mixture of incredible, enlivening terror while being the one place I truly felt part of a family."

Eisenberg did not initially set THE DEBUT in '90s New Jersey. "Only later did we happen to find the perfect vintage theater in central New Jersey," explains Eisenberg. "This is Mona's story of transformation, but at some point, I realized my sense of humor and life experiences were being filtered through her. I discovered I'd been writing about my own childhood."

Pushed by Jerry's high expectations, Mona pursues the role of New York building superintendent Miss Danielle with all the intensity of a possessed Streep or De Niro. Deep into her preparation, she checks into a dark, sleazy motel and assumes the lifestyle of a bad-ass superintendent unafraid to plunge the most fearsome toilet. And then, ironically, the onceshy Mona becomes every director's worst nightmare: a self-centered monster, who demands changes to the show to suit her character. She starts calling the cast by their character names and changing her dialogue. In short, Mona Goes Method.

"Mona feels so unseen in the real world that it makes her completely open to all the beauty and magic of this theater world," says Eisenberg, "But it also makes her vulnerable to an almost cult-like relationship with Jerry, the play's director."

Mona and Jerry's fraught dynamic plays out like a send-up of the classic tension between ruthless mentor and gungho apprentice yearning to be validated. One of Eisenberg's favorite scenes in THE DEBUT occurs during Mona's first rehearsal, when Jerry hectors her mercilessly — perhaps to the upstart's gain. For Eisenberg, this brought back memories from his own awkward education.

"In acting school, we called it a breakdown scene, where the acting teacher starts provoking you by asking you questions and throwing things at you until you end up screaming and crying on stage," recalls Eisenberg. "It was considered a rite of passage, and you were applauded if you broke down. Isaw that moment as the start of Mona's descent into a whole other world."



THE INGENUE: JULIANNE MOORE ON MONA

From the first words Eisenberg put on the page, THE DEBUT's premise hinged on whether Julianne Moore would take the role. "I knew I would not, and could not, do this movie without Julianne — I had to just proceed, hoping she would accept," says Eisenberg. "Only Julianne could take Mona from total naivete to animalist aggression while propelling her forward into someone more grounded and self-actualized."

Eisenberg's gamble paid off. The five-time Academy Award® nominee (and winner for her gripping performance of a midlife mind in disarray in STILL ALICE) accepted the part and brought all the moment-to-moment inventiveness the director anticipated.

"We were all grabbing each other by the monitor with glee on the first day of shooting because Julianne's acting was so funny, emotional and raw," recalls Eisenberg.

In one of her most fearless and whimsical performances, Moore takes Mona through an epic arc of discovery and change, from a woman afraid to take up any space at all to an electrifying diva on a radical search for the truth.

"Julianne has impeccable comic timing, but the reason she's so funny is the way she commits to her characters to such an extreme degree," Eisenberg explains. "Some of the stuff she does as Mona is bizarre, including her almost infantile nature and old-timey way of speaking at the beginning of the story. But Julianne understood Mona as a woman who fears doing anything remotely out of line. When Mona finally breaks out of that, Julianne unleashes a savage force."

Moore was smitten right away by the script's stacked layers and playful language. "All of Jesse's intellect, imagination andverbal ability were on display and the language was at once expressive, humane and humorous," Moore recalls. "While I was reading it, I had to stand up and walk around because I couldn't sit still. Jesse went somewhere as a writer that felt so exciting and new."

Moore has had a penchant throughout her career for making ordinary women incandescent. Part of what made Mona so intriguing to the performer is that she is a woman discovering how to make that transformation within herself.

"I like playing regular people searching for something to care about in their lives," Moore reflects. "Mona feels invisible until she finds this world that matters to her — in which, even more importantly, she starts to matter to others. She finds a community, and inside that, she finds the sense of purpose she needs."

While there have been many complex portraits of actors on the downslope of their careers, Moore cherished Mona as the opposite — a late bloomer who rises above. "She might be middle-aged, but the beauty of Mona is that in her own mind she is just beginning," says Moore. "She becomes this sponge for everything she learns on NOSY NEIGHBORS."

Indeed, Mona soaks up Jerry's advice like a directive from the heavens. At home, her husband, Howard (BETTER CALL SAUL's Patrick Fabian), barely notices her while Jerry hangs on her every word, wanting everything from her. "After years of feeling like no one pays attention to her, Jerry pays inordinate attention to her," reflects Moore. "It's a transformative experience."

To prepare for the role, Moore homed in on Mona's patterns of speech, which shift with her growing confidence. "Jesse wanted a kind of vocal lightness to Mona from the start that captures her sweetness while also indicating how she's constrained by that," explains Moore. "When she becomes Miss Danielle,Mona unleashes a new voice. It's a change that's both physical and emotional, but also highly vocal."

Paradoxically, Moore had to strip herself of the seasoned actor she is in order to fully inhabit Mona — a process that thrilled and energized her. "It was really fun because I reached back to all the things that were the toughest for me when I was starting out, the things all actors struggle with," says Moore. "How your body and voice have to work together, how not to be selfconscious. Mona doesn't understand volume and stakes when she's starting out — the words just fall out."

Adds Eisenberg: "We might perceive this as bad acting on Mona's part, but I don't think Julianne ever saw it that way, which is why it works. She approached Mona as a woman so sheltered and riddled with shyness, and so unfamiliar with this world, that she doesn't even know what acting is."

As Mona journeys deeper into the craft, teetering towards the edge of sanity, she grapples with some of the biggest conundrums of living an artful life: How much should you give of yourself? Where do you draw the line between commitment and self-indulgence? How do you not lose your head?

Deftly weaving comedy into these questions, Moore also had to find the courage to perform a show-stopping musical number as Miss Danielle. Though she sang briefly in the movie adaptation of DEAR EVAN HANSEN, Moore in THE DEBUT found herself having to sing as a character portraying another character. “I had to sing in front of legendary Broadway performers who have the voices of angels,” Moore laughs. “And I was singing as Mona does, knowing other people are counting on you. Everyone was so positive and supportive.”

THE DEBUT marks the first pairing of Moore and Paul Giamatti, who once met by accident in a Long Island shop but had never crossed paths as actors. “Paul has an unusual ability to take upthe expansive space of a self-important man and do it in such a funny way,” says Moore. “At the same time, he lets you see the gravitas and humanity of Jerry, and why NOSY NEIGHBORS matters to him. He’s not a blowhard — he’s tough because he’s passionate. It was a joy creating these roles together.”

For Giamatti, the partnership with Moore stands out in a career of working with some of the world’s finest actors. “She’s one of the very best I’ve worked with and I loved every minute — once she gets going, you forget you’re acting,” says Giamatti. “She’s also devastatingly funny, undercutting emotional moments with sly humor.”

THE SVENGALI DIRECTOR: PAUL GIAMATTI ON JERRY

While Eisenberg always saw Moore as Mona, NOSY NEIGHBORS' puffed-up stage director was more elusive. Always at the ready with cutting retorts and back-handed compliments, but with an impishly striving energy, Jerry was not an easy nut to crack.

"Jerry is a type of director we all know who can be terribly manipulative and authoritarian," says Eisenberg. "But what I love about this character is how it all comes out of a kind of hidden sorrow, a long-lost wish that he could be on the stage himself in a starring role."

Eisenberg was exhilarated to cast Giamatti, the two-time Academy Award® nominee who can shapeshift in endless ways, moving from the hapless modern men of SIDEWAYS and THE HOLDOVERS to a half-Klingon pirate in STAR TREK: ACADEMY.

"Paul imbued Jerry with all this deep regret just under the surface — he has that singular comic voice where he can be as heart-wrenching as he is funny," says Eisenberg. "Even when Jerry is screaming at Mona, he lets you see that there's something tender inside that he's fighting against."

Giamatti felt an immediate pull towards the character while reading the script. "The idea of a small-time Svengali in New Jersey was very funny to me," says the Emmy® Award–winning Giamatti. "Jerry is the king of a very small and not-so-relevant world, but a king nonetheless."



To prepare for the role, the actor keyed into Jerry's melancholy as much as his mania — the deep-down fear that he might let his actors down. "Jerry presents a grand figure but he doesn't give that much away and I think that's because he doesn't see himself as an all-that-impressive guy," says Giamatti. "There's a long tradition of directors who show contempt for actors — Hitchcock famously called them cattle. In Jerry's case, his disdain is masking raw envy."

Watching Mona take her first blissful taste of creative power is covetous for Jerry, who can do little but observe it all from his jaded perch. Whatever personal kick he gets out of Mona's blossoming skill is soon overtaken by his horror that he may have created an acting monster capable of destroying everything in her path.

"Jerry ends up in a very humorous struggle with Mona," says Giamatti. "He thinks he is fostering her talent, but she escapes from his grip, and loses control of the situation."

Giamatti looked at a number of stage directors as inspiration while exploring Jerry's high-handed mannerisms. "I thought about the great Broadway director Hal Prince because I resemble him slightly with the beard — he certainly influenced Jerry's costumes," admits Giamatti. "There's a bit of Bob Fosse, Stanley Kubrick and some directors I've worked with in there. One thing Jesse and I talked about was giving Jerry a detached, opaque quality, which quite a few directors seem to cultivate."

While Giamatti hints at Jerry's underlying but suppressed fondness for his actors, the actor did not shy from his gleeful willingness to humiliate them. "Jerry comes into rehearsalswith that alpha-male thing of being nice and then busting everyone's ass to show who the leader is," says Giamatti. "It's comical but also begs the question of how much people will put themselves through in creative fields. Mona puts herself through such crazy stuff that even Jerry can't believe how far she goes."

The most poignant element of Jerry is how much of himself he invests in NOSY NEIGHBORS even knowing his outsize efforts will have little impact beyond the New Jersey town hosting the production, something Giamatti felt came through in Eisenberg's writing.

"This small-town play is no big deal in any larger sense of the world — nobody cares, and Jerry knows this, but there's something wonderful about how much he cares," Giamatti reflects. "Jesse is poking fun at community theater while affectionately capturing the old-school wonder of putting on a show with limited means and building a family out of that. It's a tough racket these days — but people devote themselves to community theater as deeply as anything."

A STAR-STUDDED SUPPORTING CAST

Surrounding Moore and Giamatti in THE DEBUT is a decorated cast whose collective musical and theatrical chops know few bounds. Struck by the comedy of having big Broadway stars portray amateur actors, Eisenberg wrote personal letters to many of his heroes asking them to join the ensemble.

Mona's journey is set in motion when lauded Broadway veteran Serena Cherry declines the role of Miss Danielle following a powerhouse audition in the film's opening scene. Eisenberg felt especially lucky in casting Bernadette Peters, the grande dame of American musical theater. A seven-time Tony® nominee and two-time winner, Peters' powerhouse voice and captivating presence have lit up the Great White Way for decades.

"I wasn't thinking about somebody famous while writing Serena but when we started casting, I realized it would be fun and helpful to have a big cameo set the tone," says Eisenberg. "I almost couldn't believe that Bernadette Peters would sing this amateur song that I wrote. Her huge presence in those first few moments casts a shadow over everything to come and raises the stakes sky-high for Mona when she steps into her shoes."

If Serena Cherry is the untouchable star, Halle Bailey's wideeyed and winsome Steph evokes the grounded family spirit of the backstage theater world. As Mona's first friend on the production, Steph is an anchor of calm and compassion, even as Mona descends into frenzy. Bailey began her career in the pop music world as part of the musical duo Chloe X Halle with her sister, emerging as a major star in the role of underwater princess Ariel in the live-action version of THE LITTLE MERMAID.

"I wanted Halle as Steph because she has this amazing pureness to her — when I first met her, I couldn't believe how earnest and gentle she was, but also very funny," says Eisenberg. "She has the warmth and lightness of an angel on earth, and we needed that for Steph because Mona has to feel like she's found a new family."

Ensemble members include rising star Havana Rose Liu (HER PRIVATE HELL) as "Twisty"; the Tony®-winning Bonnie Milligan (KIMBERLY AKIMBO) as "Trish"; Tony® nominee Lilli Cooper (TOOTSIE) as "Sasha"; Tony® nominee Colton Ryan (NEW YORK, NEW YORK) as "Zachary"; 30 ROCK STAR Maulik Pancholy as a priest; and two-time Tony® nominee K. Todd Freeman (BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER) as NOSY NEIGHBORS' musical director "Marty".

The film's sprawling roster of Broadway stars in small roles includes the Tony®-nominated musical-theater veteran Craig Bierko (GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY), playing Steve, the family friend who hates musicals; Eisenberg's favorite playwright, Pulitzer Prize-winner Stephen Adly Guirgis (BETWEEN RIVERSIDE AND CRAZY), who plays the hapless tenant Mona deceives in order to get inside his bathroom; and nine-time Tony® nominee Danny Burstein (MARJORIE PRIME), who plays the man who asks Mona for his dog back.

"When you make a movie in New York, you have the luxury — and also the responsibility — to hire great theater actors," comments Eisenberg. "It was a wonderful boost to the film to have all these stars from Broadway come in so generously and enthusiastically. It allowed us to have fun with overqualified actors portraying an amateur ensemble."

Eisenberg himself took on the singing-and-dancing role of Todd, a tenant with a backed-up toilet. "I realized if I could play just a little in this world, it would allow me to fulfill a lifelong dream," confesses Eisenberg. "I tailored the role to my limited singing and dancing skills and got all the thrills of performing with the best and brightest in theater without the pressure of having to be as great as they are."

THE SONG-AND-DANCE OF IT ALL

The stage musical within THE DEBUT, the fictional yet familiarseeming NOSY NEIGHBORS, is a feel-good story of striving souls and erupting romances inside the melting pot of a New York City apartment building. Eisenberg set out to write the book and score of the film's musical with a combination of serious intent and affectionate satire, paying tribute to recognizable Broadway tropes.

"I wanted to pay homage to the art form I love more than any other," says Eisenberg. "But I also wanted to acknowledge that the Broadway musical at times can be a bit silly."

NOSY NEIGHBORS sprung to life like one of those regional stage stalwarts that always seems to be in repertory somewhere. "It's entirely plausible that this musical might exist outside the world of the movie," says Giamatti. "It's convincing and cheesy in all the right ways. Indeed, Jesse got it so rightthat you could see someone mounting a production of it down the road."

During the writing of the songs for the musical, Eisenberg was keenly aware that he was layering one world inside of another. Fittingly, the narrative of NOSY NEIGHBORS refracts Mona's internal struggles — in the centerpiece song "Girl From 4F, Boy From 46D," Mona's cue is Won't you notice me?

"She yearns to be noticed in her life," says Eisenberg. "That line was important because it reflects what Mona is going through in her loveless marriage."

Though Eisenberg has been writing songs all his life, he had a blast with the playfully thematic lyrics he composed for NOSY NEIGHBORS. As with any show, he knew the biggest challenge would be turning his words and music into a stage-worthy spectacle. Everything changed when he landed as a key collaborator one of Broadway's most celebrated choreographers, Andy Blankenbuehler, a three-time Tony® winner for IN THE HEIGHTS, HAMILTON and BANDSTAND.

"Andy choreographed these numbers in ways I could never even have imagined," says Eisenberg. "He has an acute funny bone as well, honoring musical theater while letting in a touch of winking mockery at the same time. He took the musical to a higher level."

Later in the process, Eisenberg delighted in hearing the comical tunes he penned blossom into complex harmonies during the extensive orchestration and recording phase. His collaborators included Tony® winner Bill Sherman (HAMILTON) as executive music producer, Cian McCarthy (BOOK OF MORMON) as orchestrator, and Steve Gizicki (A COMPLETE UNKNOWN, LA LA LAND) as music supervisor.

"Despite being a rabid musical theater fan my entire life, I can't say I fully understood what an orchestrator does — but now I know," Eisenberg laughs. "You give them a little ditty, theymagically come back with a lush 20-piece orchestra, and a show-stopper is born. Our musical team brought so much love to honoring the medium, while also highlighting the comical side of the Broadway musical."

For the film's score, Eisenberg reunited with composer Emile Mosseri, a close collaborator who understood both the warmth and the desperation running through Mona's story. Mosseri built the score out of themes from NOSY NEIGHBORS, reshaping the musical's bright, theatrical melodies into something stranger and more unsettling.

"Emile and I loved the idea that the songs from NOSY NEIGHBORS could keep echoing through Mona's inner life," says Eisenberg. "As she gets pulled deeper into the role, those familiar melodies become more distorted, dreamlike and surreal. The score lets the musical seep out of the theater and into the rest of the movie."

MONA'S MANY WORLDS

Comically heightened and emotionally raw, veering from funny to dreamlike to melancholic, the imagery on display in THE DEBUT flows for much of the film through Mona's destabilized and subjective point of view. Only in the final act does the camera pull back for an outside perspective on Mona's metamorphosis.

"I wanted to push things more cinematically than in my previous films — everything is slightly out of step with the real world," says Eisenberg. "I wanted the whole movie to feel out of time and inside Mona's state of mind."

To create this mood of mounting disorder and transformation, Eisenberg worked closely with director of photography Drew Daniels, who shot Sean Baker's Academy Award®–winning ANORA. "Drew really understood the tone of the material — the rubric for most of the shooting style asked the question, What is Mona feeling?" says Eisenberg. "When we finally arrive atopening night, that point of view switches. Suddenly it's about how the audience is viewing Mona."

One subtle influence on the visual style was the musical emotionalism of Lars von Trier's DANCER IN THE DARK. "When I saw that movie in high school, it was life-changing for me," says Eisenberg. "I felt like I knew Björk's character — a woman who saves herself whenever the world gets too scary by fantasizing that she's in a musical."

Eisenberg also took inspiration from a film he starred in, Richard Ayoade's THE DOUBLE, a modern take on the Dostoevsky classic about a man confronted by his doppelgänger. "Richard created a timeless, displaced world that felt so much like a dream, and that unreality made my acting so much freer," says Eisenberg. "I wanted a similar feel for THE DEBUT, something bespoke, eerie and comic, but in its own way very emotional."

Expressionism became the mother of invention in his third directorial effort — the opposite of his previous project, the critically acclaimed travelogue A REAL PAIN. "In that movie I'd been limited to shooting naturalistic vistas but here we would play with stylized images and long zooms inside a very askew world," says Eisenberg. "I found it incredibly liberating."

When Mona moves into the lurid flophouse motel during her intense rehearsal phase, living on cheap liquor and bananas, Daniels shot THE DEBUT like an anguished film noir. "Drew used harsh lighting that hit Julianne's face directly, and confrontationally," says Eisenberg. "We kept the theater world more natural while Mona's nocturnal life offstage becomes increasingly scary and unnatural."

A major breakthrough came when the production found its central location, the vintage 1920s, 1,300-seat vaudeville-style Brook Arts Center in Bound Brook, New Jersey. The historic building's old-school features, including red brick, a lightbulbed marquee, domed ceiling and dramatic backstage nooks and crannies, telegraphed a lost world barely staying afloat.

Production designer Anne Ross, known for the indelible textures of her work with Sofia Coppola, turned the theater into an enveloping oasis. Then she developed each of Mona's disparate worlds — her sterile suburban home, the edge-oftown flea trap that becomes her escape hatch, the stranger's bathroom that is her proving ground — transforming Mona from dullness and darkness into Miss Danielle.

"I worked with Anne as an actor on THE SQUID AND THE WHALE and admired her process," says Eisenberg. "She's almost academic in her approach to production design, intellectually driven while possessing great taste. She can also be very inventive on a limited budget."

Vital to the theatrical atmosphere on display in THE DEBUT are costumes designed by Stacey Battat, who collaborated with Moore on STILL ALICE. "When your lead actor trusts the costume designer, that's something to heed in a movie where the costumes are so pronounced," says Eisenberg. "Mona starts off sweet and suburban in cheerful scarves, only to find herself covered in grime and squalor in a stolenboiler suit when she moves to the motel. The costumes do so much storytelling, because Mona looks

Adds Moore: "I loved all the costumes Stacey created for the cast — they're each precise and layered, signifying who the characters are while adding to the sense of comedy, and even danger, coursing through THE DEBUT. Stacey understands through her designs all the ways a character needs to change."

Through tests with makeup artist Susan Reilly LeHane and hair stylist Nicole Bridgeford, Moore helped come up with Mona's final stage appearance for the opening-night premiere of NOSY NEIGHBORS — a dark, spiky, "bitten by showbiz" shag cut that riffs on past icons of the Broadway stage.

"When Mona scorches her hair and eyebrows while going too deep into Miss Danielle it marks a point of no return, and we knew she had to look different after that," says Moore. "I had the idea she might chop off her hair and pay homage to all those pixie-haired musical greats like Liza Minnelli, Patti LuPone, and Chita Rivera. If you love musical theater, you'll get what Mona is going for."

After the central New Jersey shoot wrapped, Eisenberg headed to the editing room with Robert Nassau, his editor on A REAL PAIN. "Rob was perfect for this because he's great with comedic pacing but he also studied art cinema in Prague, so his personal taste leans a little off-center," says Eisenberg. "We cut unsentimentally, focusing on forward momentum and keeping the story immersed in Mona's point of view, until the switch at the end."

In the final frames of THE DEBUT, art simply becomes everyday life, and Mona's transformation into a woman newly electrified by a lifelong passion is one that can resonate with anyone.

"By setting THE DEBUT in the theater world, Jesse lays bare a lot of universal human behavior that's all very relatable," says Giamatti. "It's a world where emotions lie right on the surface, and everyone is jockeying for status, but also vying to be loved."

"It's a story of triumph," says Moore. "Mona is never going to play the lead but that doesn't matter — she's found the thing that's going to make the rest of her life joyful. For her, to have a voice and be part of this theatrical community, it means everything."

THE CAST

Julianne Moore

Julianne Moore is an Academy Award® , Emmy® , Golden Globe® and BAFTA–winning actor celebrated for her wide-ranging performances across film and television. Known for her acclaimed roles in STILL ALICE, FAR FROM HEAVEN, THE HOURS, THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT, and BOOGIE NIGHTS, she has built a career defined by versatility and depth. Moore is the first American woman to receive top acting honors at the Berlin, Venice, and Cannes film festivals, cementing her status as one of the most respected performers of her generation.

Recent credits include Todd Haynes' MAY DECEMBER — which earned her a Golden Globe® nomination— Apple TV's ECHO VALLEY, Pedro Almodovar's THE ROOM NEXT DOOR, Netflix's limited series SIRENS, and the historical miniseries MARY & GEORGE. Coming up, Moore will star in Jesse Eisenberg's A24 musical comedy THE DEBUT.

Beyond the screen, Moore is a New York Times bestselling children's author of the Freckleface Strawberry series and the founding chair of Everytown for Gun Safety's Creative Council, where she advocates for ending gun violence in America. With over 70 films to her name, Moore continues to deliver work that resonates with audiences worldwide.

Paul Giamatti

One of the most versatile actors of his generation, Giamatti can next be seen starring opposite Julianne Moore in Jesse Eisenberg's feature film THE DEBUT as well as in Tom McCarthy's feature THE STATEMENT, opposite Paul Rudd. He will also be onstage later this summer, starring alongside Tatiana Maslany and John Turturro in RHINO at American Repertory Theater.

Giamatti previously starred in Focus Features' heartwarming period drama THE HOLDOVERS. His moving performance was met with praise from critics and audiences alike, receiving the Golden Globe® Award for Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy, the Critics Choice Award and the National Board of Review Award for Best Actor and The Palm Springs International Film Festival "Icon Award." Giamatti was also nominated for the SAG, BAFTA and Academy Award® for Best Actor. Giamatti also starred in the second season of HBO Europe's hit Spanish-horror series 30 COINS as well as in the final season of the Showtime hit BILLIONS, for which he has been nominated for a Broadcast Film Critics Association Award and a Critics Choice Award for Best Actor in a Drama Series over the course of the series.

Paul Giamatti (cont.)

Previous television credits include Season 7 of Netflix's BLACK MIRROR, which earned him a 2026 Golden Globe® nomination for Best Actor in a Limited Series, Paramount+ series STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY and HBO's TOO BIG TO FAIL, which earned Giamatti his third SAG Award as well as an Emmy® and a Golden Globe® nomination in 2011. In 2008, Giamatti won Emmy®, SAG, and Golden Globe® awards for Best Actor in a Miniseries for his portrayal of the title character in HBO's seven-part, Emmy Award®-winning miniseries JOHN ADAMS.

Giamatti's selected film credits include DOWNTON ABBEY: THE GRAND FINALE, the five-time Oscar® winner SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, Alexander Payne's Academy Award®-winning dramedy SIDEWAYS, which earned Giamatti Golden Globe® and SAG Award nominations, and the Academy Award®-nominated BARNEY'S VERSION in 2011, which earned him the Golden Globe® for Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy. In 2006, his performance in Ron Howard's CINDERELLA MAN earned him his first SAG Award and a Critics Choice Awards for Best Supporting Actor, as well as Oscar® and Golden Globe® nominations in the same category.

Halle Bailey

Halle Bailey is a Grammy-nominated singer, songwriter and actress whose career has spanned music, film and television. As one half of the acclaimed sister duo Chloe x Halle, Bailey rose to prominence with her distinctive vocals and artistry, earning five Grammy Award nominations and establishing herself as one of her generation's most recognizable young voices. Bailey made history with her starring role as "Ariel" in Disney's live-action THE LITTLE MERMAID, bringing a new generation to the beloved character and earning worldwide recognition for both her performance and vocals. She later starred as "Young Nettie" in THE COLOR PURPLE and has continued to expand her career as a leading actress. In 2026, Bailey starred in the romantic comedy YOU, ME & TUSCANY, which received a theatrical release, marking another milestone in her growing film career and showcasing a new side of her as a romantic-comedy lead. As a solo artist, Bailey made her debut with the single "Angel," which earned her a Grammy Award nomination, marking her first Grammy recognition as a solo artist. She has since continued to develop her own sound and artistic identity, releasing music that explores love, womanhood, motherhood, vulnerability and self-discovery. Beyond entertainment, Bailey is a mother and entrepreneur, using her platform to celebrate creativity, self-love and the many dimensions of womanhood. Her work as both an With an evolving body of work across music and film, Bailey continues to build a career defined by versatility, heart and meaningful storytelling.

Jesse Eisenberg

Jesse Eisenberg is an Academy Award® nominated actor and an acclaimed playwright and author.

Eisenberg's film credits include ROGER DODGER, THE SQUID AND THE WHALE, ADVENTURELAND, ZOMBIELAND, THE SOCIAL NETWORK, NOW YOU SEE ME, THE DOUBLE, NIGHT MOVES, THE END OF THE TOUR, AMERICAN ULTRA, LOUDER THAN BOMBS, BATMAN V. SUPERMAN, NOW YOU SEE ME 2, CAFÉ SOCIETY, JUSTICE LEAGUE, THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT, THE ART OF SELF DEFENSE, ZOMBIELAND: DOUBLE TAP, RESISTANCE, VIVARIUM, WILD INDIAN, MANODROME, SASQUATCH SUNSET, and the most recent NOW YOU SEE ME: NOW YOU DON'T.

On the small screen, Eisenberg was last seen playing the titular character of 'Toby Fleishman' in the FX limited series FLEISHMAN IS IN TROUBLE based on Taffy Brodesser-Akner's best-selling novel of the same name.

Eisenberg made his directorial debut with A24's WHEN YOU FINISH SAVING THE WORLD, which premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival to glowing reviews and screened as a part of Critics Week at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. The film is based on the Audible Original of the same name, both of which were written by Eisenberg.

Eisenberg's second directorial effort, A REAL PAIN, had its world premiere at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award, and was released theatrically by Searchlight Pictures later that year. The film received widespread critical acclaim, particularly for Eisenberg's screenplay, for which he won the BAFTA Award for Best Original Screenplay and was nominated in the same category at the 97th Annual Academy® Awards. The film was also named as one of the top ten films of 2024 by the American Film Institute and the National Board of Review.

Eisenberg will next direct A24's THE DEBUT, starring Julianne Moore and Paul Giamatti. Eisenberg wrote and directed the film, while also contributing original music and appearing as a member of the cast.

Eisenberg has written four plays, including "The Spoils," which had a box-office record-breaking run-on the West End. He also wrote and starred alongside Vanessa Redgrave in his play "The Revisionist," and "Asuncion." His play, "Happy Talk" starring Susan Sarandon and Marin Ireland opened April 2019 at the Signature Theater in New York.

Born in New York, Eisenberg is a frequent contributor to The New Yorker, the author of the collection, Bream Gives Me Hiccups from Grove Press and the Audible Original When You Finish Saving the World, which won "Best Original Work" at the 2021 Audie Awards.

Cara Buono

Emmy®-nominated actress Cara Buono co-stars as Cassie in Jesse Eisenberg's THE DEBUT, alongside Julianne Moore, Paul Giamatti, Halle Bailey and Eisenberg. Buono is best known for her five-season role as Karen Wheeler on Netflix's STRANGER THINGS. In the fifth and final season, Karen's expanded role brought the longtime fan-favorite character to the forefront, turning her into one of the season's breakout figures and bringing Buono renewed attention from audiences and critics.

She received an Emmy® nomination for her performance as "Dr. Faye Miller" on MAD MEN and played "Kelli Moltisanti" in the final season of THE SOPRANOS. She also starred opposite "Elle Fanning" in Hulu's THE GIRL FROM PLAINVILLE and will next appear in Hulu's SOUTHERN BASTARDS, opposite Kevin Bacon and Tim McGraw, reuniting her with director Reinaldo Marcus Green after appearing in his first feature, the Sundance drama MONSTERS AND MEN. Her film credits also include LET ME IN, directed by Matt Reeves; Ang Lee' HULK; Nisha Ganatra's debut, CHUTNEY POPCORN; and Noah Baumbach's debut, KICKING AND SCREAMING.

Born and raised in the Bronx, Buono began pursuing acting after discovering open auditions in the Show Business trade paper. Despite being told early on that her Bronx accent, childhood stutter and even "looking too Italian"could limit her prospects, she continued working professionally while still a teenager.
She graduated from LaGuardia High School and Columbia University, completing her degree in Political Science and English Literature in three years and a summer while working as an actress and largely supporting herself.

While at Columbia, Buono trained as a rape crisis counselor with the Crime Victims Treatment Center, where she has continued volunteering for more than three decades. In 2026, The Creative Coalition honored her with its Humanitarian Award in recognition of her longstanding advocacy and service.

Craig Bierko

Forthcoming.

Eldar Isgandarov

Eldar will soon be seen in a slew of upcoming films including Cannes-hit CLUB KID directed by Jordan Firstman that A24 will be distributing, Jesse Eisenberg/A24's THE DEBUT opposite Julianne Moore and Paul Giamatti, and Molly Gordon/A24's PEAKED opposite Emma Mackey and Molly.

Additionally, he is set to star in Grant Singer's next film, REENACTMENT, alongside Benicio Del Toro, Cameron Diaz, and Ana De Armas for Black Label.

Bernadette Peters

Throughout her illustrious career, Bernadette Peters has dazzled audiences and critics with her performances on stage, film and television, in concert and on recordings. She has garnered numerous accolades including three Tony® Awards, a Golden Globe®, three Emmy® and four Grammy Award nominations and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

One of Broadway's most critically acclaimed performers, Bernadette recently starred in the highly successful run of Cameron Mackintosh's production of STEPHEN SONDHEIM'S OLD FRIENDS, celebrating the life and work of Stephen Sondheim. The production first premiered in London where she made her West End debut before transferring to Los Angeles ahead of its extended Broadway run in spring 2025.

Other Broadway credits include HELLO, DOLLY!; FOLLIES; A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC and GYPSY where she garnered both Tony® and Drama Desk Award nominations. She also starred in City Center's Encores! production A BED AND A CHAIR: A NEW YORK LOVE AFFAIR featuring the music of Stephen Sondheim and orchestrations by Wynton Marsalis.

Peters garnered both the Tony® and Drama Desk Award for her performance in Andrew Lloyd Webber's SONG AND DANCE. She also won a Tony® for her performance in the revival of Irving Berlin's ANNIE GET YOUR GUN. She received Tony® nominations for her outstanding performances on Broadway in Neil Simon's THE GOODBYE GIRL, Stephen Sondheim's Pulitzer Prize-winning musical SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE, the Jerry Herman/Gower Champion ode to the movies, MACK AND MABEL, and the Leonard Bernstein/Comden and Green musical ON THE TOWN. Peters also earned a Drama Desk nomination for her unforgettable portrayal of the Witch in Stephen Sondheim's INTO THE WOODS.

Bernadette Peters (cont.)

Bernadette also enjoys a career which boasts an impressive list of television credits, most recently HIGH DESERT and ZOEY'S EXTRAORDINARY PLAYLIST (Emmy® nomination). The popular series was made into a made-for-TV holiday movie, ZOEY'S EXTRAORDINARY CHRISTMAS for The Roku Channel. Other TV appearances include, KATY KEENE; THE GOOD FIGHT; MOZART IN THE JUNGLE; SMASH; GREY'S ANATOMY; UGLY BETTY and ALLY MCBEAL (Emmy® nomination) to name a few.

In addition to starring in the Lifetime TV movie LIVING PROOF, Peters has lit up the silver screen in over 30 films throughout her distinguished career. She received a Golden Globe® Award for her memorable performance in PENNIES FROM HEAVEN. Other film credits include THE JERK, THE LONGEST YARD, SILENT MOVIE, ANNIE, PINK CADILLAC, SLAVES OF NEW YORK, Woody Allen's ALICE, IMPROMPTU, IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY, COMING UP ROSES, THE BROKEN HEARTS GALLERY and a surprise appearance in the popular Jonathan Larson biopic, TICK, TICK...BOOM!

Later this year she will be seen in two feature films, LAST TRAIN TO FORTUNE and THE DEBUT, both of which will receive theatrical releases.

Bernadette has recorded six solo albums, including the Grammy-nominated I'LL BE YOUR BABY TONIGHT, SONDHEIM, ETC.: BERNADETTE PETERS LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL and BERNADETTE PETERS LOVES RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN, in addition to numerous original Broadway cast recordings.

Peters devotes her time and talents to numerous events that benefit Broadway Cares/ Equity Fights AIDS. Her "pet project," Broadway Barks, co-founded with Mary Tyler Moore, is an annual, star-studded dog and cat adoption event that benefits shelter animals in the New York City and tri-state area. In 2023, while in London, Bernadette introduced West End Woofs, a sister to Broadway Barks. The event, co-hosted with Elaine Paige, is the first of its kind in the UK that fostered a spirit of community among animal shelters and rescue groups.

The American Theater Wing honored her efforts and awarded her with the Isabelle Stevenson Tony® Award, which recognizes an individual from the theatre community who has made a substantial contribution of volunteered time and effort on behalf of one or more humanitarian, social service or charitable organizations, regardless of whether such organizations relate to the theatre.

She is a New York Times best-selling author who has penned three children's books: Broadway Barks, Stella is a Star accompanied by original songs and Stella and Charlie: Friends Forever. All of her proceeds from the sale of these books benefit both animal charities.

THE CREW

Jesse Eisenberg - Director/Writer

Extended biography can be found on pages 4-5 and page 22.

Ali Herting - Producer

Forthcoming.

Dave McCary - Producer

Dave McCary is a writer, director and producer, and the co-founder of the production company FRUIT TREE alongside his partner, Emma Stone. Through FRUIT TREE, he has produced critically acclaimed films and television series including Jesse Eisenberg's A REAL PAIN, Julio Torres' PROBLEMISTA, Jane Schoenbrun's I SAW THE TV GLOW, Nathan Fielder and Benny Safdie's Showtime series THE CURSE and Margaret Brown's Emmy®-nominated HBO documentary miniseries THE YOGURT SHOP MURDERS.

Dave began his career as a writer and director at SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE for five seasons, and is a founding member of the comedy group GOOD NEIGHBOR. Dave made his feature directorial debut with the Sundance hit BRIGSBY BEAR, produced by Lord & Miller and The Lonely Island. Currently, Dave is directing and producing the upcoming Universal feature THE CATCH starring Emma Stone and Chris Pine.

Emma Stone - Producer

Two-time Academy Award®–winning actress and producer Emma Stone has claimed her role as one of Hollywood's most versatile and sought-after creatives working today, having captivated the industry's attention with her award-winning work in many of the most notable films of the past decade.

Stone most recently starred in Focus Features's BUGONIA, which she also produced under her Fruit Tree banner. Marking her fifth collaboration with Yorgos Lanthimos, BUGONIA had a limited release on October 24, 2025, followed by a wide release on October 31, 2025. The film received significant awards recognition, with Stone earning Academy Award® nominations for Best Actress and Best Picture as a producer, marking her seventh Academy Award® nomination and establishing her as the youngest woman in Oscars® history to reach this milestone.

Emma Stone - Producer (cont.)

In the summer of 2025, she co-starred in A24's film EDDINGTON. Written and directed by Ari Aster, the contemporary Western also stars Joaquin Phoenix, Pedro Pascal, Luke Grimes, and Austin Butler. The film premiered on May 16, 2025, at the Cannes Film Festival and was released theatrically on July 18, 2025.

In summer 2024, Stone starred in Searchlight's Yorgos Lanthimos film KINDS OF KINDNESS, opposite Jesse Plemons, Willem Dafoe, Margaret Qualley and Joe Alwyn. The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival and was released theatrically on June 28, 2024.

In December 2023, Stone starred in and produced Yorgos Lanthimos' critically acclaimed POOR THINGS, which was released in theaters on December 8, 2023. POOR THINGS tells the story of "Bella Baxter" (Stone), a young woman brought back to life by an eccentric but brilliant scientist. Stone starred opposite Willem Dafoe, Mark Ruffalo, Ramy Youssef and Jerrod Carmichael. The film premiered at the 2023 Venice Film Festival to rave reviews and went on to win the Golden Lion Award at the festival. Stone won the 2024 Academy Award® for Lead Actress on behalf of her role in the film. She also won the 2024 Golden Globe® for Best Actress – Motion Picture Musical or Comedy and POOR THINGS won for Best Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy. She won the Critics Choice Award for Best Actress and the BAFTA Award for Leading Actress for her role and was honored with the Desert Palm Achievement Award – Actress at the 2024 Palm Springs International Film Festival. Stone and POOR THINGS also earned SAG nominations in addition to the film receiving a total of 11 Academy Award® nominations, including Best Picture. With Stone's Academy Award® nomination for Lead Actress and the films' Best Picture nomination, she is only the second female ever to be nominated as both an Actress and Producer in the same year, the first being Frances McDormand for 2021's NOMADLAND.

In November 2023, Stone starred in and produced Showtime and A24's THE CURSE, a genre-defying series that explores how an alleged curse disturbs the relationship of a newly married couple as they try to conceive a child while co-starring on their problematic new HGTV show. Stone also served as an executive producer of the series, alongside Dave McCary and Ali Herting, under their Fruit Tree banner. The series premiered at the 2023 New York Film Festival and aired on Showtime and Paramount+ on November 10, 2023. Stone received a 2024 Golden Globe® nomination for Best Actress in a Television Series – Drama for her role in the series.

Emma Stone - Producer (cont.)

In 2020, Stone launched the production company Fruit Tree with Dave McCary and Ali Herting. Fruit Tree has a first-look TV deal with Fremantle to develop and produce projects across scripted, documentary and unscripted formats, having previously had a two-year, first-look TV deal with A24. In 2024, Fruit Tree signed a first-look film deal with Universal Pictures. Under Fruit Tree, Stone has produced Jesse Eisenberg's directorial debut, WHEN YOU FINISH SAVING THE WORLD, which was released on January 20, 2023, PROBLEMISTA, which premiered at the 2023 South by Southwest Film Festival on March 13, 2023, and was released on March 1, 2024, THE CURSE along with Nathan Fielder and Josh and Benny Safdie, Julio Torres' FANTASMAS, which was released on June 7, 2024, and won a 2025 Peabody Award in Entertainment, Jane Schoenbrun's critically acclaimed I SAW THE TV GLOW, which premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and released on May 3, 2024, receiving Gotham Awards and Independent Spirit Awards nominations, and Jesse Eisenberg's critically acclaimed film A REAL PAIN, which premiered at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and released on November 8, 2024. A REAL PAIN was named as one of the top ten films of 2024 by both the American Film Institute and the National Board of Review as well as received Academy Award®, BAFTA Awards, SAG Awards, Critic's Choice Awards, Golden Globe® Awards, Gotham Awards, and Independent Film Awards nominations. Stone has most recently produced HBO's THE YOGURT SHOP MURDERS, which was released on August 3, 2025, and received an Emmy® nomination for Outstanding Documentary Or Nonfiction Series, as well as Focus Feature's BUGONIA, which was released on October 31, 2025. Fruit Tree continues to develop and produce projects across both film and television in collaboration with leading studios and creatives, most recently announcing a new slate of projects currently in development, including upcoming films with A24 and Universal Pictures. Next in the pipeline for Fruit Tree is musical comedy THE DEBUT, co-produced by Stone, directed by Jesse Eisenberg.

In 2018, Stone was seen in Yorgos Lanthimos' THE FAVOURITE for Fox Searchlight alongside Rachel Weisz, Olivia Colman and Nicholas Hoult. Her performance earned her several nominations, including an Academy Award®, Golden Globe® Award, Screen Actors Guild Award and British Academy of Film and Television Award. THE FAVOURITE, nominated for 10 Academy Awards® , follows the political machinations behind the scenes during the reign of Queen Anne, the last monarch of the House of Stuarts.

In 2016, Stone won the Academy Award® for Best Actress for her role in Damien Chazelle's LA LA LAND. She was also recognized with the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role, Golden Globe® for Best Actress in a Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy, British Academy Film Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role and Best Actress at the Venice Film Festival for her work in the film. She was honored along with co-star Ryan Gosling with the Santa Barbara Film Festival's Outstanding Performers of the Year and the Palm Springs International Film Festival's "Vanguard Award" with Gosling and Chazelle.

Emma Stone - Producer (cont.)

In summer 2021, Stone starred in Disney+'s CRUELLA in the titular role of "Cruella de Vil." The film tells the story behind the 101 DALMATIANS villain and sheds light on what led her to become the iconic puppy-terrorizer we first saw in the 1961 original. Emma Thompson co-stars in the film, which was released on May 28, 2021. Stone received a Golden Globe® nomination in the category Best Actress in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy for her role in the film. Following its successful launch, a sequel is in the works with Stone attached to reprise her role as "Cruella."

In winter 2020, Stone starred in the sequel to DreamWorks Animation's THE CROODS alongside Ryan Reynolds, Nicolas Cage and Peter Dinklage. THE CROODS: A NEW AGE was released on November 25, 2020. The film became a huge box office success despite the pandemic and went on to be nominated for the Golden Globe® Award for Best Motion Picture — Animated.

In fall 2019, Stone starred in ZOMBIELAND: DOUBLE TAP opposite Woody Harrelson, Jesse Eisenberg and Abigail Breslin. The film was a sequel to Ruben Fleischer's 2009 adventure-comedy classic. The film was released on October 18, 2019, by Columbia Pictures.

In fall 2018, Stone both starred in and executive produced the Netflix series MANIAC opposite Jonah Hill. Directed by Cary Fukunaga, this dark comedy follows Stone and Hill as patients in an institution, both disconnected from reality. The series, which is based on a Norwegian series, marks Stone's regular TV debut as well as her first production credit. MANIAC earned Stone a Producers Guild Award Nomination as well as a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Limited Series.

In 2017, Stone starred as "Billie Jean King" in Fox Searchlight's BATTLE OF THE SEXES, opposite Steve Carell's "Bobby Riggs." Directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris, the film told the story of when former tennis champ Riggs faced off against King in a highly publicized exhibition match. Stone was nominated for a Golden Globe® for Best Actress in a Motion Picture — Motion Picture Musical or Comedy for her performance.

Stone's additional film credits include Fox Searchlight's critically acclaimed film BIRDMAN which won the award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture at the SAG Awards, Best Film at the Independent Spirit Awards, and Best Picture at the Academy Awards®. Her performance landed her an Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actress as well as a Golden Globe®, SAG and Independent Spirit nomination.

Emma Stone - Producer (cont.)

She has also appeared in Woody Allen's IRRATIONAL MAN; Cameron Crowe's film ALOHA; Woody Allen's MAGIC IN THE MOONLIGHT; the superhero franchise THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN in which she starred in the first two films; the Oscar®nominated animated film THE CROODS for DreamWorks Animation; the period drama GANGSTER SQUAD; EASY A, which earned her a Golden Globe® nomination and an MTV Movie Award for Best Comedic Performance; the award-winning drama THE HELP; the romantic comedy CRAZY, STUPID, LOVE.; Screen Gems' FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS; the independent drama PAPER MAN; the Twentieth Century Fox animated comedy MARMADUKE; Columbia Picture's hit comedy ZOMBIELAND; the Warner Brothers romantic comedy GHOSTS OF GIRLFRIENDS PAST; the Columbia Pictures/ Happy Madison hit comedy THE HOUSE BUNNY; Twentieth Century Fox's THE ROCKER; and the Judd Apatow comedy SUPERBAD.

Stone is currently the face of Louis Vuitton and serves as an ambassador for the luxury brand.

Drew Daniels - Director of Photography

Drew Daniels is a cinematographer, father, and friend to many.

Anne Ross - Production Designer

Anne Ross most recently designed Jesse Eisenberg's THE DEBUT. Previously, Ross worked with Sofia Coppola on her film ON THE ROCKS for A24/Apple, starring Bill Murray and Rashida Jones. Ross has collaborated with Coppola on several films, including THE BEGUILED, starring Nicole Kidman, Kirsten Dunst, Elle Fanning and Colin Farrell; the Bill Murray holiday special for Netflix, A VERY MURRAY CHRISTMAS; THE BLING RING, starring Emma Watson; SOMEWHERE, starring Elle Fanning; and the critically acclaimed film LOST IN TRANSLATION, which garnered Ross an Art Directors Guild Award nomination.

Ross also designed Gus Van Sant's RESTLESS, and collaborated with Noah Baumbach on his THE SQUID AND THE WHALE and MARGOT AT THE WEDDING. In addition, Ross designed Natalie Portman's short film, EVE; Jim Taylor's short THE LOST CAUSE; and music videos for such artists as R.E.M., The Strokes and Air.

She has also designed commercials for high profile brands including H&M, Dior, Calvin Klein, Ikea and Adidas; her spot for Citibank won an Emmy® Award for Outstanding Commercial.

Anne is currently designing Dave McCary's THE CATCH, produced by Fruit Tree.

Robert Nassau - Editing

In addition to THE DEBUT, films edited by Robert Nassau, ACE, include A REAL PAIN (directed by Jesse Eisenberg); THE BIG SICK (directed by Michael Showalter); and HELLO, MY NAME IS DORIS (Showalter). Television series include WET HOT AMERICAN SUMMER (Netflix); THE OTHER TWO (HBO Max); and CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL (Adult Swim). His projects have been nominated for ACE Eddie, Oscar®, Emmy®, BAFTA, Golden Globe®, Critics Choice and Independent Spirit Awards. He has jumped out of airplanes a couple of times in an attempt to overcome a fear of heights.

Stacey Battat - Costume Designer

Stacey Battat designed the costumes for Jesse Eisenberg's THE DEBUT, which premieres at the Toronto International Film Festival in September and stars Julianne Moore. This marks Battat's fifth time working with Moore, a partnership that includes 2018's GLORIA BELL (directed by Oscar® winner Sebastián Lelio) as well as STILL ALICE, for which Moore received an Academy Award® for Best Actress. Battat recently completed work on Scott Cooper's upcoming drama TIME OUT, starring Adam Sandler.

A native of New York, Battat is perhaps best known for her collaborations with writer/director Sofia Coppola, including the 2023 period piece PRISCILLA, about the courtship of Priscilla Presley and Elvis, and the 2017 Civil War–era drama THE BEGUILED, starring Nicole Kidman and Kirsten Dunst.

Early in her career, Battat worked for designer Marc Jacobs. She segued to working as a fashion stylist full-time, amassing a portfolio of work with such illustrious photographers as Dusan Reljin, Annie Leibovitz, and Brigitte Lacombe, while contributing to Vanity Fair, Vogue, W and other publications.

Her career as a costume designer began with writer/director Zoe Cassavetes's independent feature BROKEN ENGLISH, starring Parker Posey.

She attended New York City's famed Fashion Institute of Technology, and is a graduate of the Hunter College School of Social Work.

Emile Mosseri - Music

Emile Mosseri is an Oscar®- and Grammy-Award-nominated composer, songwriter and musician based in Los Angeles. He is known for his song-based approach to crafting emotionally stirring film scores and his career as a recording artist and songwriter.

Emile's compositions for MINARI (2020), THE LAST BLACK MAN IN SAN FRANCISCO (2019) and KAJILLIONAIRE (2020) established him as a distinctive voice in contemporary film music. As a solo artist, he has released two studio albums and has collaborated with Angel Olsen, Sam Gendel, The Haxan Cloak and more.

Douglas Aibel - Casting

Douglas Aibel has cast over 100 films for such directors as Wes Anderson, James Gray, Maggie Gyllenhaal, M. Night Shyamalan, Noah Baumbach, Marielle Heller, Kenneth Lonergan and Ramin Bahrani. Notable film credits include JAY KELLY, THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS, MANCHESTER BY THE SEA, MARRIAGE STORY, MY OLD ASS, MOONRISE KINGDOM, SPLIT, DEAD MAN WALKING, TWO LOVERS, FRANCES HA, KINSEY, FRESH, UNBREAKABLE and THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL, and such television credits as SUCCESSION (HBO), SERVANT (Apple), THE STAIRCASE (HBO Max), and MOZART IN THE JUNGLE (Amazon).

A native of New York, Battat is perhaps best known for her collaborations with writer/director Sofia Coppola, including the 2023 period piece PRISCILLA, about the courtship of Priscilla Presley and Elvis, and the 2017 Civil War–era drama THE BEGUILED, starring Nicole Kidman and Kirsten Dunst.

Early in her career, Battat worked for designer Marc Jacobs. She segued to working as a fashion stylist full-time, amassing a portfolio of work with such illustrious photographers as Dusan Reljin, Annie Leibovitz, and Brigitte Lacombe, while contributing to Vanity Fair, Vogue, W and other publications.

CAST (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Mona	Julianne Moore
Jerry	Paul Giamatti
Stef	Halle Bailey
Serena Cherry	Bernadette Peters
Marty	Ken Todd Freeman
Piotr	Eldar Isgandarov
Sybil	Susan Blommaert
Zachary	Colton Ryan
Trish	Bonnie Milligan
Todd	Jesse Eisenberg
Shauna	Lilli Cooper
Priest (Eli)	Maulik Pancholy
Craig	Jared Loftin
Jane	Megumi Nakamura
Twisty	Havana Rose Liu
Howard	Patrick Fabian
Matty	Jonah Diamand
Maya	Becca Suskauer
Cassie	Cara Buono
Steve	Craig Bierko
Auditioning Woman 1	Ana Yi Puig

Auditioning Woman 2	Allegra Leguizamo
Teenager	Ked Merwin
Dog Woman	Nikka Graff Lanzarone
Tenant	Stephen Adly Guirgis
Manny	Frank Pando
Motel Man	Andy Grotelueschen
Motel Plumber	Daniel Stewart Sherman
Grocery Man	Christopher Fitzgerald
Child Testimonial	Banner Eisenberg
Female Testimonial	Judy Rosenblatt
Male Testimonial	Danny McCarthy

CREW

Directed by	Jesse Eisenberg
Written by	Jesse Eisenberg
Produced by	Emma Stone Dave McCary Ali Herting Jesse Eisenberg
Executive Producers	Michael Bloom Ian Stratford Ryan Heller Jasmine Daghighian Jennifer Booth Kevin Kelly
Director of Photography	Drew Daniels
Production Designer	Anne Ross
Editing by	Robert Nassau
Costume Design by	Stacey Battat
Music by	Emile Mosseri
Sound mixer	Dimitri Kouri
Casting by	Douglas Aibel