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Patti Cake\$

FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES PRESENTS AN ASSOCIATION OF ARTISTS PRODUCTION A DEPARTMENT OF MOTION PICTURES "PATTI CAKE\$"
DANIELLE MACDONALD BRIDGET EVERETT SIDDHARTH DHANANJAY MAMMOUNDOU ATHIE WASS STEVENS CASTING JESSICA KELLY REBECCA DEARLY CO-PRODUCED BY JONATHAN MONTEPARÉ COSTUME DESIGNER MUYARDO BELLIZZI MONTAGE BRAD TURNER
EDITORS MEREDITH LIPPINCOTT MUSIC BY FEDERICO CESCA PRODUCTION DESIGNER LOUISE SANT'ANNA PRODUCTION OFFICE SOPHIE MAS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JOSH PENN JONATHAN BROWMAN LON MOLNAR FERNANDO FRAGA BILL BENJENSON
PRODUCED BY MICHAEL COTTWOLD NOAH STAHL RODRIGO TEIXEIRA DAN JAWEY DANIELA TAPLIN LUNDBERG CHRIS COLUMBUS WRITTEN BY DANIELA TAPLIN PRODUCED BY JEREMY JASPER
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VENUS FILM VERLENDE EN VERBODEN
VEILIG EN SNEL

PATTI CAKE\$

Een film van Jeremy Jasper

De 23-jarige Patricia Dombrowski, ook wel bekend als Patti Cake\$ of Killa P, woont in een vervallen stadje in New Jersey. Ze droomt van een carrière als succesvolle rapper, maar ze is gewoontjes en wordt door de rappers op straat uitgelachen. Thuis zit ze vast tussen haar liefhebbende, invalide oma en haar verbitterde moeder. Daarom werkt ze keihard om extra geld te verdienen en grijpt ze elke kans aan om haar muziek naar buiten te brengen. Met de hulp van haar beste vriend Jheri, de mysterieuze muzikant Basterd én haar oma, gaat ze de pestkoppen, onbetaalde rekeningen en on vervulde dromen te lijf!

PATTI CAKE\$ is het speelfilmdebuut van de Amerikaanse regisseur Jeremy Jasper. Met een cameo voor de legendarische MC Lyte, die de weg vrij maakte voor een hele generatie vrouwelijke rappers. De film werd geselecteerd voor de Quinzaine des Réalisateurs van het Cannes Filmfestival en genomineerd voor de Grand Jury Prize op het Sundance Filmfestival

Cinéart zal deze film in samenwerking met FOX Searchlight uitbrengen in de Benelux.



Speelduur: 108 min. - Land: USA - Jaar: 2017 - Genre: Drama

Release datum bioscoop: 31 augustus 2017

Distributie: Cinéart Nederland in samenwerking met FOX searchlight



Voor meer informatie over de film:

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Jeremy Jasper – writer/director/music

Jeremy Jasper is a writer, director, and composer born and bred in North Jersey. He co-directed VMA-nominated videos for Florence + The Machine and Selena Gomez, and his direction for the “Target Kaleidoscopic Fashion Spectacular” won a Cannes Golden Lion, TED Prize, and was inducted into MoMA’s permanent collection. *PATTI CAKE\$*, which went through the Sundance Screenwriters and Directors Labs, is Jasper’s debut feature film; a lifelong music freak, also wrote all of the movie’s original songs.

“Rapping is her secret super power, which we see when her fantasy life is up there on screen.”

- *Jeremy Jasper*



Filmography

2017 *PATTI CAKE\$*
2015 *OUTLAWS* (Short)
2012 *GLAMOURIETY* (Short)
2011 *Selena Gomez & the Scene: Love You Like a Love Song* (Video short)
2010 *Florence + the Machine: Dog Days Are Over, Version 2* (Video short)

Production notes

Patricia Dombrowski, a.k.a. Patti Cake\$, a.k.a. Killa P. (Danielle Macdonald), has had it with life in her rundown New Jersey hometown. At 23, she is ready to hit the road and make a play for the kind of musical immortality that her idol rap god O-Z enjoys. But plain and plus-sized Patti is stuck at home with her wheelchair-bound grandmother (Cathy Moriarty) and bitter, boozy mother (Bridget Everett). When she gets caught up in a parking-lot freestyle battle and easily demolishes the competition, the thrill of victory makes escape from a lifetime of tending bar and cleaning up other people’s messes seem possible — and Patti will do whatever it takes to grab onto her dream. With the help of her best friend Jheri (Siddharth Dhananjay), mysterious musician Basterd (Mamoudou Athie) and her loving Nana, she leads a charge against the army of haters, unpaid bills and broken dreams that are holding her back. An origin story for an imaginary hip-hop heroine who deserves to exist, *PATTI CAKE\$* deftly straddles the line between fantasy and reality — just like Patti herself.

One of the most anticipated movies at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, *PATTI CAKE\$* has its roots in writer and director Jeremy Jasper’s post-college years, a time when he was living in his parents’ home, helping to care for an ailing grandparent and scraping by on a series of demoralizing food-service gigs. His own sense that life was speeding past him informs the story of Patti Cake\$, an aspiring rapper trapped in a small New Jersey town filled with the low-end shopping centers, fast food restaurants, and highway on-ramps that stand between her and her dreams of big-city stardom. Patti, Jasper says, is a contemporary, female version of his younger self. “Growing up in New Jersey, I had this Springsteen-esque angst to get out,” he explains. “Patti could be my sister. In the film, she is going through what I was going through when I was 23. I took those experiences and combined them with my lifelong obsession with rap music and my admiration for the big, tough, strong women that raised me and created what I think is a larger-than-life Jersey Girl who is not quite like anyone you’ve ever met. I wanted to create a tribute to the women in my life as well as Jersey.”

Danielle’s character is also conjured from the teenage girls who played basketball for Jasper’s dad, a legendarily successful high school coach. “They could kick the boys’ asses on the court,” he says. “They

were larger than life and there was something subversive about it. I thought an overweight, white girl from suburban Jersey went against the norms of what a hip-hop artist could be. That was really interesting to me.”

Patti is living with her mother Barb, who drinks too much and leaves Patti with too much responsibility for her ailing Nana, as well as keeping the family afloat financially. “They’re stuck in this house together and Patti really wants to leave but she can’t,” explains Jasper. “She hangs out with her best friend, Jheri, who’s her biggest fan and hype man. She wants to rap and he is an R&B crooner. They dream their lives away.”

Patti’s rich inner life is depicted in hallucinatory sequences that turn classic hip-hop tropes into surreal dreams. Jasper admits to his own musical aspirations as founder of the indie band The Fever. “I dreamed of meeting Bob Dylan every night,” he says. “We’d be hanging out and playing music together and he would mumble some sort of wisdom to me. Then I would wake up and be living in my parents’ basement.”

But hip hop was Jasper’s first musical love. At nine years old, he heard his first Run-DMC track and was hooked. He began writing his own raps with a friend and performing at local talent shows. “In some ways, this movie was an excuse for me to write rap music again,” he says. “I didn’t have an outlet for that for years until the idea of Patricia Dombrowski blossomed in my brain. Then I thought, Ah! I have all this material. I can actually channel it into something.”

For Jasper, the appeal of rap is its ability to transform limitations into assets. “Rappers take the crappy circumstances of their lives and make them mythological,” explains the filmmaker. “Places like Queensbridge or Compton or Lodi, New Jersey, become bold and colorful and interesting, instead of drab and mundane. Through the rhymes, artists show different sides of their personalities — in Patti’s case, her sense of humor, her bravery and her balls.”

Jasper’s interest in filmmaking was sparked by friend and fellow Wesleyan alumnus Benh Zeitlin, who made the arthouse hit BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD. With Zeitlin’s encouragement, Jasper banged out the first draft of his first screenplay in 19 feverish days and submitted it to the prestigious Sundance Screenwriters Lab. To his surprise, he was selected to work with mentors including Quentin Tarantino and Joan Tewkesbury, and his script began to take shape, relying less on fantasy and more on character development.

“The project really took off when we went to the Sundance Lab,” says producer Michael Gottwald. A member of Department of Motion Pictures along with producers Dan Janvey and Noah Stahl, they have a history that involve field organizing and digital work on the 2008 and 2012 Obama campaigns, and running the Court 13 collective with Zeitlin. The group has been making movies together since 2007. “The character of Patti changed a great deal. She went from very broad and jokey to something much more personal and intimate. She became someone you could really root for. It’s a classic story, but at the same time, you haven’t seen it before, certainly not told this way.” After completing the script, Jasper was one of eight filmmakers invited to participate in the month-long Sundance Institute Directors Lab, where he would rehearse, shoot, and edit key scenes under the guidance of seasoned filmmakers.

Producer Noah Stahl describes PATTI CAKE\$ as a musical, a drama, an underdog tale and a coming-of-age story all rolled into one. “The movie has some really emotional aspects to it, but it’s also got a lot of levity, fun, some weirdness and really colorful characters,” he observes. “It’s a little bit difficult to fit it into a box, which is one of the things that we were most excited about.”

JERSEY GIRLS AND BOYS

To play the one-of-a-kind title role, the filmmakers knew they needed to find an actress with a particular look and the ability to bring the character's vulnerability and grit to the screen. "Patti is rock-hard on the outside and she curses like a sailor, but, underneath it all, she's just protecting herself," Jasper adds. "She really has a poet's sensitivity. She has something to express that her situation is preventing her from sharing."

The director knew he was not looking for a typical starlet or for anyone the audience might be familiar with. "I had a very clear idea of who she was," says Jasper. "There aren't a lot of films that put a spotlight on someone like Patti. She might figure in as the funny best friend or some kind of comic relief, but here she carries the picture."

With the Sundance Institute Directors Lab approaching quickly, producer Stahl had an idea. He remembered an actress he had seen in a small role in Zal Batmanglij and Brit Marling's corporate-espionage thriller *THE EAST*, and suggested Jasper meet with her. On paper, Danielle Macdonald was not an obvious contender. First of all, she's Australian and had never attempted a New Jersey accent before. Perhaps more importantly, she had no musical experience at all.

But Jasper says he knew instantly she was the right actress for the role. "I didn't know if she could act," the director recalls. "I didn't know if she could rap. But that was the face that had been in my head the entire time. She looked like a young girl, but she also had this toughness to her. I knew that I wanted to watch that face."

No one could have been more doubtful about the casting than Macdonald herself. "I read the script and thought, what on earth makes them think I can do this?" she says. "It was just so different from anything I'd ever done. It's so different from who I am, but it sounded terrifying and really cool. I went to Utah for the Labs and we were able to figure out the character and hone the script. It was one of the most incredible experiences of my life."

Burdened at home with the care of her ill Nana and caustic mother Barb, cruelly mocked by the locals and burdened with far too much responsibility at a young age, Patti could easily give up her dreams and become another lost soul, but she refuses. "The movie is about an unlikely heroine who is just trying to navigate life," Macdonald says. "It's a coming-of-age story about following your dreams, finding your passion and inner confidence, and not stopping when people tell you no. Patti feels like she has something to say. It's not easy to do and she gets beaten down in every possible way. But that just forces her to be true to herself. She has to dig deep into her anger and despair and passion to make it real."

Selecting an Australian actress with no rapping experience as a blue-collar New Jersey hip-hop queen was not the only unusual choice Jasper made. To cast Patti's confidante and partner-in-crime Jheri, a young pharmacist by day and R&B crooner after hours, the filmmaker stumbled upon videos by "Dhananjay the First" on WorldStarHipHop, on which aspiring performers can post their own videos. In those videos he watched a South Asian college student remixing R&B classics like Destiny's Child's "Say My Name," dressed in do-rags and oversized jerseys, smoking Newports and counting wads of cash. It seemed like Jheri already existed.

Jasper tracked down the performer, whose full name is Siddharth Dhananjay, at Grinnell College in Iowa. He and his friends had been making spoof rap videos as a lark. "We would take the beat, write our own lyrics to them and make these crazy videos," Dhananjay says. "We were just doing it for fun, and then I got an email one day from Michael Gottwald asking if I wanted to be a part of this movie." Dhananjay is actually very much like Jheri, says Jasper. "His performance feels sincere. There's a genuine joy to how they both experience life and it's infectious."

Dhananjay, too, was astonished by the similarities between Jheri and the hip-hop alter ego he had created for himself in the homemade videos. “We came up with the idea separately, but it’s like they share the same soul,” he marvels. “Jheri is the more realistic, human side of my ridiculous character. That was interesting for me. I knew how to be this crazy, flamboyant, big character, but having to find the person behind all that was really fun.”

Under all his bluster, Jheri is really a sweetheart, the actor says. “He’s just a normal kid who works at a drugstore, but he has these crazy dreams of doing something bigger, better, and more fun with his life. And he loves Patti. He’s her best friend, but he’s also her life coach and her No. 1 fan. He thinks Patti Cake\$ is the most badass chick of all time. She’s the sweetest girl with her friends, but watch out if you’re her enemy. She’s larger than life, and she’s got so much heart. People fall in love with her when they watch her on screen.”

Patti’s dreams of becoming a global superstar come one step closer to reality when she and Jheri meet punk rocker Basterd the Anti-Christ playing at the local VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Hall. “Basterd is the classic suburban Goth kid,” says Jasper. “He wants to take down the government, doesn’t want anything to do with his parents and lives in a shack in the woods cut off from society. He also has a sophisticated recording set-up stashed there. Basterd is the only person Patti has ever met who seems like a genuine artist. He’s obviously wearing a mask and a costume, but there’s something poetic about him.”

Casting directors Jessica Kelly and Rebecca Dealy brought in Mamoudou Athie to meet with Jasper about the role. A Yale-trained actor, he seemed the antithesis of the character to the director. “He was clearly really sharp, but he is so different from Basterd when you meet him,” says Jasper. “He was very preppy and I just didn’t see it. But he brought real depth and authenticity to a far-out character. He’s an actor with a capital A and we were so lucky to get him.”

Athie says he had his doubts about the project when he was asked to audition. “I read the sides and saw he was referring to himself as the Anti-Christ,” he recalls. “I thought, no thank you. I don’t want to put that into the world. But when I read it, I saw that was not all the part was. He is actually one of the most interesting characters I’ve played.”



Estranged from his family, Basterd lives alone and has been making music by himself until he meets Patti and Jheri. "He loves music; he loves creating," says Athie. "Basterd is a very sensitive soul. I thought of him as kind of an open wound. He needs to protect himself from a world he finds brutal." Patti seems to be the first person he has let into his life in a while. "I think they recognize something in each other," Athie says. "It's the pain that they go through just living. Patti's situation is really awful, but she handles it like a champ. They're also both really, really committed to this dream they have of making music."

With few lines, Athie manages to communicate all of that emotion with just his presence, says Stahl. "His performance is a physical expression of his character as opposed to a lot of words. Mamoudou is the kind of actor that can make you wonder what's going on inside his head when he's saying nothing."

Gottwald agrees: "There was kind of a stillness and sturdiness to his performance. It's a nice balance with Siddharth, who had never really acted before, so he's a lot rawer. Mamoudou was a kind of anchor for him."

Patti's mother Barb is an intimidating force both physically and emotionally and she had to be played by someone who could hold her own with Macdonald, says Jasper. "I was looking for an actress for whom balls-to-the-wall performance comes naturally, who pushes boundaries and has a tongue as razor-edged as Patti's," says Jasper. "And like Patti, I didn't want to see her played by anyone the audience was familiar with. I wanted someone who looked like the women that I grew up around. I just happened to see Bridget Everett performing on 'Inside Amy Schumer', and I immediately said, that's Barb. She had the musicality and the physicality I was looking for. She is a big, sexy woman with a sense of both darkness and beauty. But I didn't know if she had the acting ability for such a demanding role."

Everett, a singer and comedian notorious for her fearless and uninhibited original performances, has been a favorite on the New York cabaret scene for years, but this would be her first dramatic role. "Jeremy said he was looking for an unruly sex bomb with a voice of an angel," remembers Everett. "I was afraid it would take some dramatic muscle that I didn't think I had, but I went to the Sundance Lab anyway."

Barb had her own rock 'n' roll dreams that were put on hold when she became pregnant with Patti. "The biggest difference between Patti and her mother is that Patti still has hunger and hope," according to Jasper. "There's something tragic about Barb. She was part of the late '80s hair-metal scene in Jersey, like Bon Jovi and Skid Row. The glamour and the glory she was chasing are similar to what rappers celebrate: flashy cars, scantily clad women, money and debauchery. But her expiration date has passed and she wasn't able to achieve her dreams. Barb was a really attractive woman with a lot of swagger and strut when she was younger, but the years of drinking and self-destructive behavior have taken that away. For Patti to even have aspirations of making music is enough to throw Barb into a jealous tailspin, but they also share so much. They escape through music."

Everett poignantly captures Barb's pain and disappointment, as well as the thrill she still gets from singing, even if the venue is a shabby bar and her band is a karaoke machine. "I love stories that are about big dreams," says Everett. "I related to Barb. She always wanted to be a rock star, but then she got knocked up, so now she spends a lot of her time in bars, drinking, singing karaoke and sleeping with the wrong men. Most of my life has been struggling to achieve my dream, so I understand feeling trapped and lonely and desperate. I felt like I wanted to take care of her somehow."

Patti's grandmother brought her up and provided the affection and attention her own mother was unable to give. "Nana is the classic adoring grandmother, but she's hard as nails," the director says. "She's got a voice like sandpaper, drinks and smokes too much, and now she's laid up in her La-Z-Boy with a broken hip, watching court shows all day and taking too many Percocets. She couldn't really care less about hip hop or the music world. She likes Dirty Limericks and Virginia Slims, but she provides the emotional stability in Patti's life."

When Jasper approached veteran actress Cathy Moriarty (RAGING BULL, THE DOUBLE) to play the role, he was apprehensive about her possible reaction. "She's a very glamorous, beautiful woman," he points out. "I didn't know if she would let us age her 20 years and push her around in a wheelchair. But I had just worked with her on a short film and I knew she would bring so much humor and rawness to the character."

Fortunately, Moriarty loved the script and was not going to let vanity keep her from playing a juicy part like Nana. "I was actually flattered he thought I could pull this off," the actress says. "To me, the story is about the three women and how they grow together, grow apart and what happens to them in their lives."

The film also contains small gems of supporting performances, including McCaul Lombardi who says he had always dreamed of playing a rapper and got his wish when he landed the role of Danny Bagadella, the swaggering townie Patti is futilely crushing on. Sahr Ngaujah, best known for playing Fela Kuti in the five-year run of "Fela!" on Broadway, plays Patti's idol, hip-hop impresario O-Z, with quiet authority. And Nick Sandow, known to "Orange is the New Black" fans as prison warden Joe Caputo, plays Danielle's catering boss.

The filmmakers cast real-life rappers including the legendary MC Lyte, who paved the way for a generation of female MC's, as the fairy-godmother-like character of DJ French Tips. Rising New York hip-hop artist Kirk Knight, and Anthony Ramos, best known for playing both John Laurens and Philip Hamilton in the original Broadway cast of "Hamilton," play rapper Nomad and his producer, Swisha, respectively. The part of strip club-owner Benzo was written for rap star Action Bronson's sidekick Big Body Bes. Other area rappers, including Bishop Nehru and Aaron Rose, appear or contribute songs to the soundtrack, and O-Z protégé Yung Nurple is played by renowned rapper and writer Skyler "Skyzoo" Taylor, who also served as Macdonald's movement coach.

STRAIGHT OUT OF JERSEY

PATTI CAKE\$ is one of a long line of creative souls who grew up on the wrong side of the Hudson River longing for the buzz of the big city, a tradition that includes musicians from Bruce Springsteen and Patti Smith to Frank Sinatra and rapper Fetty Wap. Recreating New Jersey's unique sense of place with authentic details was extremely important to the director, who even took his cast and crew on a guided tour of his old stomping grounds.

"Understanding the specifics of the setting is essential to the story, even though the characters and their emotional journey are universal," Jasper says. "I wanted them to experience it first hand, so they would see how much more New Jersey is than just a national punch line or a backdrop for mob politics that often shows up on screen. Making the film allowed all of us to see these everyday people and places, all the things I wanted to run from as a kid, as something beautiful and valuable." Multiple locations, grueling hours, weather issues and crowds of background players to be wrangled complicated the ambitious shooting schedule, according to producer Noah Stahl. "There are a lot of scenes and a lot of different settings, which means a lot of details to manage," he says. "Almost every day we had a new location, from a quintessential New Jersey diner to the small town VFW hall, as well

as a strip club, an abandoned shack, a cemetery and even a mansion in Alpine. Jeremy was meticulous about everything, which allowed us to pack each day to the fullest.”

Director of photography Federico Cesca prioritized making Patti’s New Jersey colorful, alive and filled with dynamic energy. Excited by the potential for visual experimentation in the fantasy sequences, he helped conceive the film’s opening scene, a dreamlike tableau bathed in psychedelic green light, as Patti imagines what her life will be like once she escapes the narrow confines of her hometown and becomes superstar Killa P.

“For the look of the film, I wanted two separate worlds,” says Jasper. “Patti’s day-to-day existence has a raw, almost vérité documentary style. I wanted it to feel like we were experiencing Patti’s life through her eyes. When we go into her fantasy life, things are much flashier and more colorful and perhaps elegant. Fede stayed open and adventurous. The crew was always hungry for some new breakthrough: a fresh camera angle or a weird wash of color. We experimented constantly and there was genuine joy in the process.”

Production designer Meredith Lippincott surprised the director at their first meeting by producing a collection of imagery that drew upon the same sources he was using. To his delight, she had found ways to convey both the joy and the pathos of Patti’s existence through locations, sets and props. It was her team that located the “Patti Wagon,” the ancient Caddy she tools around in. (The car stayed in character through the shoot, repeatedly breaking down and amassing some \$800 worth of parking tickets.) They built Basterd’s cluttered shack in the woods from the ground up, tricking it out with everything from old volumes of Shakespeare and Gray’s Anatomy to some of Jasper’s own heavy metal records and a mound of old tube TVs and — then perfectly punctured the exterior walls to allow light to stream in for the high-energy music-making scenes.

To create the look of Patti’s gritty working-class life and her soaring fantasies of fame and fortune, Lippincott drew on influences as far-ranging as classic Roman sculpture and rap album covers and posters.

“Her reality is unglamorous in the extreme,” says the production designer. “Her home pulls a lot from Crewdson, who is known for his journalistic depictions of American suburbia. Jeremy gave me candid family snapshots to use as well. We kept in mind that there are three generations of women in this house, so it includes items that are a little antiquated.”

Juxtaposed with that hyper-real environment, Patti’s fantasies are set in a streamlined, elevated world that reinforces the broad divide between her everyday life and her ambition. Elements of brilliant green — a color not used in the rest of the film — are a direct reference to Dorothy’s trip over the rainbow. “There are very stylized elements in every set,” says Lippincott. “But everything comes from a solid realistic core.”

Costume designer Miyako Bellizzi dressed each of the characters with a unique style that offers clues to their personality. A pair of Timberland boots gave Macdonald a new way to carry herself and a greater understanding of Patti. Basterd’s all-black skinny-jean ensembles spoke volumes about the character. And the designer went all out establishing a signature look for O-Z that any aspiring superstar would covet.

Patti’s dream-world wardrobe is an amped-up version of her real clothing, according to Bellizzi. “Finding her character through wardrobe was the most fun part of the job for me,” she says. “We tried to stay as realistic as possible and shopped in places Patti could actually afford. I went to thrift shops all over New Jersey, as well as Penney’s and Sears. A lot of her clothes have a sort of ’90s feeling because she’s immersed in the rap world of that time.”

Bellizzi says both she and Jasper are themselves influenced by '90s hip hop. "Wu Tang Clan, Method Man, that kind of thing, so getting Jehri's costumes right was important to me. His style is probably the most like my own. We made do-rags to match all his outfits and he has the best vintage items. And we got pretty far out with O-Z's jewelry. He has some custom-made items like his pendant and that great grill."

In one of the film's most memorable fantasy sequences, Patti reclines in a bathtub decked out as a mermaid in a music video. "That was a bit of a feat," Bellizzi says. "I really wanted the body of the tail to be shiny and three dimensional, so we tried a few different tactics to achieve that. We went with a gold sequin fabric for the body and a gold lamé with boning for the tail. For the body, we added dimension by spray-painting scales in black to create shadows. Then, because real metal catches the light best on film, I cut out metal sequins and then sewed them on one by one."



MAKING THE MUSIC

While working with his designers in pre-production, Jasper was also writing and recording the film's original music, compiling an entire album's worth of songs. Some of the beats had been in his head for years, and some lyrics were written when he was Patti's age, but as the script and the character developed, he was constantly making changes.

"It's a massive task to record a whole album in the course of six weeks, while you're also trying meet with your department heads, go over costume choices and finalize production design," says producer Michael Gottwald.

Jasper continued to rewrite lyrics even during the shoot, inspired by new things Macdonald was discovering in the character. "Jeremy was reworking as Danielle was learning," says Stahl. "They were both working at such a high level. It put a smile on my face to watch them."

By then, Macdonald had spent over two years finding Patti's voice. She had moved to the East Coast to prepare for filming and began working with renowned dialect coach Tim Monich, who helped her nail

down her Jersey accent and attitude. Rapper Skyzoo served as her hip-hop coach, helping her polish her rhyming, while she and Jasper experimented until they found a voice that was distinctly Patti.

"I don't know if I was more worried about the accent or the rapping," says Macdonald. "I think melding them together was the real challenge. I just kept practicing and hoping that the film would get made. It almost became my whole world."

During that time, the director gave the actress a cover song each week to work on, which she would record for him. She was rough around the edges at first, he says, but her dedication proved that she was ready to go for it. "Danielle was really freaked out about rapping. But I preferred casting an actress who could be trained — like you would for the role of an athlete in a sports movie — to a rapper who hadn't acted before and might not be able to find the emotional depth required. We started really simple like Salt-N-Pepa and by the end she was doing the Control verse by Kendrick Lamar. She got better and better and better and better. She approached it like it was Shakespeare and it became second nature."

Being in character made the musical numbers easier for Macdonald. "That helped me find the confidence to be able to rap in front of people who really are rappers," she confides. "And being with the other members of PBNJ made me feel much more relaxed. Sidd especially has the attitude that it's all good. He brought out a whole other side of me."

Seeing the movie for the first time, Macdonald was apprehensive about a performance that included so many new challenges. "I hate watching myself on screen, so I was hiding in the back somewhere," she admits. "But I left feeling completely uplifted. It was so hopeful. This movie inspires you to take chances and not be deterred by people who tell you not to try because you might fail. Everyone feels like they can't do something, but you won't know for sure until you do it anyway."

BACK TO THE START

PATTI CAKE\$ returned to Park City, Utah for this year's Sundance Film Festival, where it was one of the most buzzed-about features and was in competition for the Grand Jury Prize. Jasper says that as gratifying as that experience was, he is even more excited about having the picture seen by a broad audience. "Having Fox Searchlight pick it up is a dream come true for me. They've put out some of my favorite movies of all time. I want this movie to go out to small towns across the country and have all the Pattis out there actually see themselves up on the screen."

Jasper says he thinks of PATTI CAKE\$ as a big juicy love letter to his home state, his family and the creative spirit. "It's a two-hour valentine to both hip-hop music and the big-mouthed, big-bodied Jersey women who raised me. It's an emotional call to arms for open hearted, music-obsessed dreamers who give zero f's. It's a film about aching to get out, but being anchored by the weight of reality. It's about the importance of finding a surrogate family of misfits to make music with if that's what you need. It's about all those things and more."

Cast

Patti Cake\$	DANIELLE MACDONALD
Barb	BRIDGET EVERETT
Jheri	SIDDHARTH DHANANJAY
Basterd	MAMOUDOU ATHIE
O-Z	SAHR NGAUJAH
Danny	McCAUL LOMBARDI
Nickel	WASS STEVENS
Joe Puppy	RAY IANNICELLI
DJ French Tips	MC LYTE
Nana	CATHY MORIARTY

Crew

Written & directed by	GEREMY JASPER
Produced by	MICHAEL GOTTWALD NOAH STAHL RODRIGO TEIXEIRA DAN JANVEY DANIELA TAPLIN LUNDBERG CHRIS COLUMBUS
Executive producers	LOURENÇO SANT'ANNA SOPHIE MAS ELEANOR COLUMBUS JOSH PENN JONATHAN BRONFMAN LON MOLNAR FERNANDO FRAIHA BILL BENENSON
Co-producer	JONATHAN MONTEPARE
Original songs by	GEREMY JASPER
Music by	GEREMY JASPER and JASON BINNICK
Edited by	BRAD TURNER
Production designer	MEREDITH LIPPINCOTT
Costume designer	MIYAKO BELLIZZI
Casting directors	JESSICA KELLY REBECCA DEALY
Music supervisor	JOE RUDGE

ABOUT THE CAST

DANIELLE MACDONALD (PATTI CAKE\$)

The Australian-born actress **DANIELLE MACDONALD (Patti Cake\$)** moved to Los Angeles to appear in Rachel Weisz's short film *THE THIEF*, in which she was featured alongside Joel Edgerton and Rosemarie DeWitt. She made her feature debut in Zal Batmanglij's *THE EAST*, which premiered at Sundance in 2013 and starred Brit Marling, Ellen Page and Alexander Skarsgård.

Danielle was featured in Clark Gregg's *TRUST ME* and was the lead in Amy Berg's *EVERY SECRET THING*, which co-starred Dakota Fanning, Diane Lane, and Elizabeth Banks. She has also made guest appearances on shows including "Glee", "Pretty Little Liars", "2 Broke Girls", "The Middle", and most recently, "American Horror Story: Roanoke"



How would you describe Patti?

Patti is someone that is trying to figure out who she is. In many ways, *PATTI CAKE\$* is a coming of age story. She is tough, but insecure, and she is incredibly loving, and is just trying to work out relationships in her life, her passions and how she will get to where she wants to go while remaining true to herself.

How did you come to be cast in *PATTI CAKE\$*?

I never had an audition back home in Australia. I had an agent back there who was great, but I never found an opportunity to work there. I knew that there would be more opportunities in the US, so I came out to the States to do some casting director workshops. This was to learn about how the process of auditioning is different in America, and not really to do with acting. One of the casting directors said that he thought that I should stay out in the US. He introduced me to my now managers, and they got me an audition. It was my first audition, and it was for a show, and that was how I got my visa to stay working in the USA. It was really incredible. Unfortunately, my visa came too late for me to actually do the show, but it allowed me to start from scratch out in the USA. I worked, did auditions, did more work until I got my SAG [Screen Actors Guild] card, and then you work up from there.

Jeremy then asked me to come to the Sundance Labs after he had seen me in a film. We started working on PATTI CAKE\$ there and began to work out who this character was together. I fell in love with the role, even though she is so different to me and also this is a character that I had never imagined being able to do. But that is the fun part of acting - finding different sides to you that you never knew exist and finding a new character and a whole new story of life.

Being a Sundance project you got to have the opportunity to really workshop this character, and develop it alongside the director. How did you find that experience?

The Sundance Labs are really cool, they are an amazing thing for writers and directors. Everyone who was there really wanted to be there, and everyone there is a volunteer. Everyone was really present, and we would have breakfast, lunch and dinner together in the same hall. You would meet and connect with people, and it is incredible being in this place with so many like-minded people. As an actor, you get to workshop a script and that is such a rare opportunity, you don't get to do that very often. It gave me the confidence to think that I could do this role. If I hadn't had this opportunity it would have been so much harder to wrap my head around the role. It is never that easy when you are playing someone who is so radically different to you and you really want to put the time and effort in.

As well as having to learn to rap for the role, you had the additional challenge of having to learn to do so with a New Jersey accent, how did you find that?

It is not an easy accent to learn, it is somewhere between an Australian and an American accent. I have to figure out accents with where they feel in my mouth. With my Australian accent it is very open, American is very forward, and New Jersey is in the middle. You just have to practice and practice until it feels comfortable and you get that placement.

I learned how to rap, and then the accent, and then I had to combine the two. In order to learn to rap, what I would do is listen to the song, slow it down, and gradually learn it. I found that I actually liked the fast songs better, I think that is because I have a quick mouth. I found with the slower songs there is so much time to fill, and you need a cool voice, with a cool tone to fill it. I didn't feel that I had a cool voice which didn't help with nerves.

Early you mentioned how long this film was in pre-production. In that time the 15 songs that feature in the film had to be recorded - how was that?

The funny thing was Jeremy was re-writing all the songs throughout the production. We would film Monday to Friday, we would finish at about 7am on Saturday morning realistically, so we would sleep all day Saturday and have the night off. Then on Sundays, which was also meant to be a day off, was when Jeremy and I would work through the songs for the coming week. I actually liked it because I like being busy. It was an interesting schedule with the songs.

On those Sundays, it could be the first time that I had seen the song, but that was what all the preparation in pre-production was for. You deal with it as it goes, and some songs are easier than others. It was always hard. There is a rap battle in the film and that couldn't be pre-recorded so that was a little tougher. There was also a scene where Jheri [Siddharth Dhananjay] is tapping out a beat on the bonnet of the car and that was live. Basically, any of the songs without a backing track were live, and that was more terrifying because there was no back up at all. Then there are songs like PB&J where it starts live and then goes into the montage and was pre-recorded.

What was it like working with Bridget Everett and Cathy Moriarty who play your on-screen mom and Nana, and what was it like building that family?

We still have a group chat on our phones between the three of us, we became that close. I met Bridget at the Labs, so we knew each other pretty much two years before we started shooting the film. We did these big dramatic scenes together at the Lab, and I saw her as this big dramatic actor.

Then a few months later she was coming out to LA to do a show, and I asked if I could come along to one – my mouth dropped when I went, I had no idea. She is so different to how she was at Sundance, I loved it and I was with a friend at the show who just kept turning around saying, “She’s a queen, she’s a queen!” I found out that I had this group of friends in LA who love her, and she has a massive following in the gay community. I have seen her show four times, and I will be going again as soon as I can – I think that she is amazing.

It was really cool getting to see this whole other side to her. If she was in town she would come out with me in LA, and if I was in New York we would hang out together. It was great having this foundation before filming. It was really comfortable working together because we didn’t have any boundaries and that was really helpful.

I met Cathy a week before shooting and I was on crutches at the time because I had an accident in New York. I had a panic attack on the way to the hospital because I was convinced that I had broken my ankle and I was sure that it was going to mess up production. My dad was with me at the time, and I was at the hospital, and I kept repeating to the doctor, “It can’t be broken, it just can’t be broken.” Fortunately, it was just a sprain. So, the first time I met Cathy, there I was on crutches. I hobbled up to her, and she gave me this giant hug – she is instant family. I couldn’t help but think of her as my real grandma, even though she is younger than my mum in real life.

With both of them they were so generous and giving that it makes them really easy to work with, so I was very lucky.

What do you make of the mother-daughter relationship between Barb and Patti?

In terms of Barb, she is mean to Patti, but as the film goes on you discover that there is real love there. She gave up on her dreams for Patti, and that was a great act of love. Admittedly, there is some resentment there, but there is a lot more love that runs deeper. Patti’s understanding of Barb helps her to understand who she is as a mother. They find their own connection in their own dysfunctional way.

What was it like working with Siddharth Dhananjay and Mamoudou Athie, who play Jheri and Basterd?

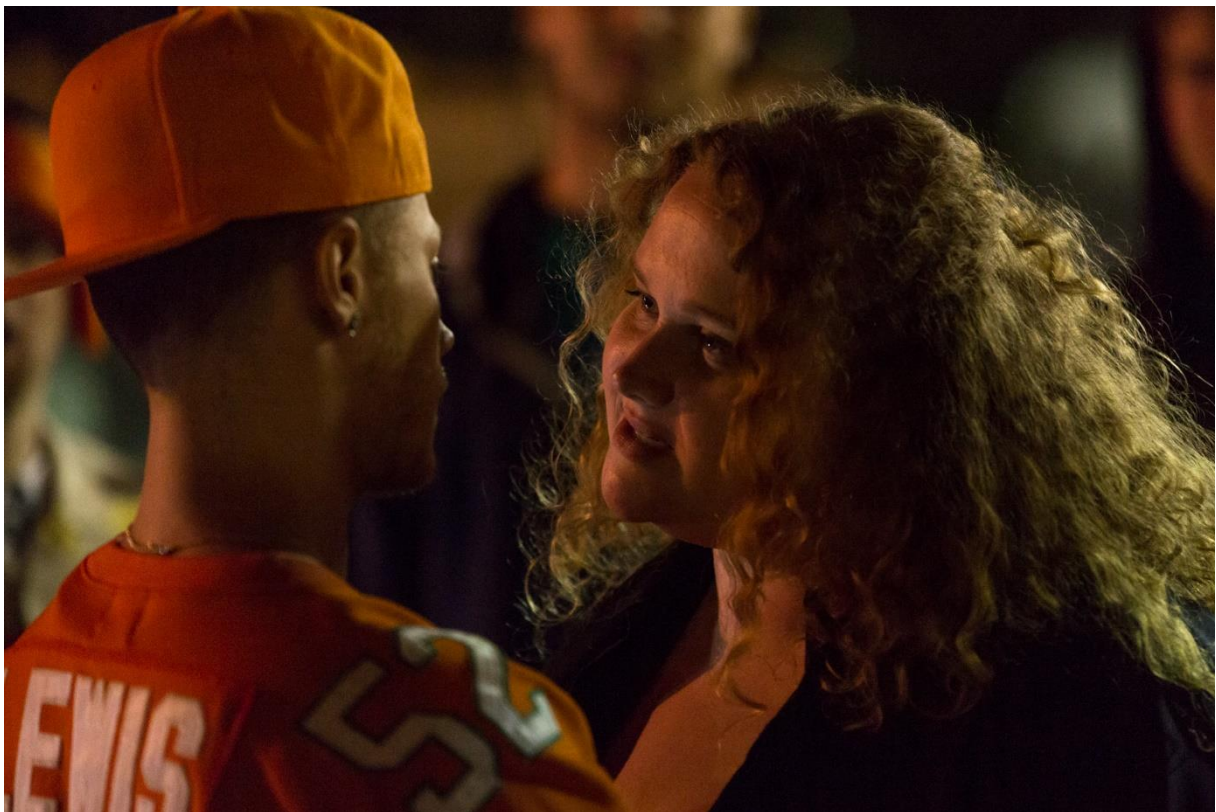
It was incredible because we are all really different. We have very different backgrounds and are from four different countries, and places. We all have different family backgrounds. We even all have different acting backgrounds – Mamoudou is a Yale graduate, has done a lot of theatre and can sing. Sid had never acted but knew music really well. Whereas I had no musical background, but had film and TV background. We were all very different and we all gelled in this amazing way. I think this is what the movie shows so well – the reality these days is that people who come from different places, different backgrounds, different genders, sexualities, and ethnicities will be friends – that is how it is nowadays, that is a good thing. This is how society works now and it is normal. I don’t think this film is making a statement, it is just showing the reality.

In one scene, you have to get up and perform at a gig in front of a large crowd. What was that scene like to do?

When I found that there would be a couple of hundred people and I would have to rap in front of them there were a few stress tears. I gave myself a pep talk to pull myself together, pretty much like how Patti has to in the film – it was a real case of life imitating art there. I got on the stage and start doing my thing, and there is a moment where someone hits me with a bottle right in my face so I had to zone into that. Then Bridget comes in so I just clocked eyes with her and that connection was what got us through the scene.

This film is full of emotional highs and lows. How did you find this experience for your first title role in a feature film?

There was this one scene in the film that actually got cut because it was a little too on the nose. I remember going to shoot that scene and Jeremy [Jasper] turned around to me and told me how this was Patti's rock bottom moment. It was 5am, we had been working crazy hours, and it was the end of the second week. After we wrapped the scene I just started hysterically crying and everyone went silent, and started checking the gate. Then they came up and told me it was all good, and I just walk off crying. I went outside, and got to my changing room and that is exactly what I needed then. I find after those big emotional scenes I need to be alone for a bit, then I come back out ready to go again. I don't exactly know how it is I shake off those emotions. Some days you end on this incredible high and you ride it out, but on the days where it is negative emotions you have to shake it off as quickly as possible.



CATHY MORIARTY (NANA)

CATHY MORIARTY (Nana) made her feature film acting debut at the age of seventeen in Martin Scorsese's *RAGING BULL* opposite Robert De Niro. Her portrayal of the wife of legendary boxer Jake LaMotta earned her a BAFTA nomination, two Golden Globe nominations, and ultimately a Best Supporting Actress Academy Award® nomination.

A native New Yorker, Moriarty was born in the Bronx, raised in Westchester, graduated early from high school and immediately began her acting career. She followed up her *RAGING BULL* performance with well-known, critically acclaimed roles in feature films such as *KINDERGARTEN COP*, *SOAPDISH*, *THE MAMBO KINGS*, *MATINEE*, *ANOTHER STAKEOUT*, and Steven Spielberg's *CASPER*. Cathy received a Comedy Award nomination for her role in *SOAPDISH* with Robert Downey, Jr. and has appeared in more than seventy other feature and short films throughout her almost 40 year acting career.

Films from many other genres that Moriarty has starred in while working with some of the most respected talent in Hollywood include *NEIGHBORS*, *WHITE OF THE EYE*, *THE GUN IN BETTY LOU'S*

HANDBAG, Robert Downey, Sr.'s HUGO POOL, Miramax Films COPLAND (again with De Niro), A BROTHER'S KISS with Rosie Perez, Sony Pictures Classics' DREAM WITH THE FISHES, and Timothy Hutton's DIGGING TO CHINA. She starred in THE BOUNTY HUNTER with Jennifer Aniston, and prior to that in 2002 she worked again with Robert De Niro in the Warner Bros. feature ANALYZE THAT from director Harold Ramis which also starred Billy Crystal who Moriarty had worked with before in the film FORGET PARIS. Others include BUT I'M A CHEERLEADER with Natasha Leon, the remake of GLORIA in which she starred with Sharon Stone and George C. Scott, Antonio Banderas' CRAZY IN ALABAMA with Melanie Griffith, as well as THE PRINCE OF CENTRAL PARK with Kathleen Turner and Harvey Keitel.

A favorite among Moriarty's younger fans was Fox Home Video's CASPER MEETS WENDY in which she starred in the role of the accessible good witch Gert where she teamed up with Teri Garr and Shelley Duvall, and along with that audiences of all ages enjoyed hearing her distinct deep voice as Ruby The Junkyard Dog in Disney Home Video's LADY AND THE TRAMP II, SCAMP'S ADVENTURE.

In between all of her very busy film work Moriarty decided to jump into television. In 1995 she co-starred with Andrew Dice Clay in the CBS' "Bless This House." She followed that up with a role in "Séance," an episode of HBO's "Tales from the Crypt" from which she earned an ACE Award.

Moriarty's first outstanding performance on the NBC hit crime drama series "Law & Order" in 2001 led the producers to invite her back many times to appear in guest starring roles on "Law & Order: Criminal Intent," and the very popular "Law & Order: SVU" which still airs today.

Married in the summer of 1999, Moriarty resides in New York with her husband Joseph Gentile, their sixteen-year-old twins Joseph John and Catherine Patricia, and fifteen-year-old daughter Annabella Rose.

How would you describe your character Nana?

She's a bit like me. I think that she has been through hell and back. Nothing surprises Nana, she rocks with the best. She is a caring loving woman, but I think that she finds it hard to show emotion. She is a stern woman. I love Nana as a character, I was delighted when Jeremy asked me to play her. I was actually working on something different with Jeremy when he asked me if I wanted to play her and that was how we met. I don't look this glam in the film, and I don't know if that is good or bad. When he sent me the script, tears rolled down my face as I was reading the script – I fell completely head over heels with Nana.

You mentioned that Jeremy and you met before PATTI CAKE\$, what was it you were working on?

He was making a short film with David Beckham, Harvey Keitel and Katherine Waterston, and I had a little part in it. We met in Mexico, and it was a video for Belstaff. It was a lovely project. I had known Harvey since I was in my 20s, I played his wife (I think) in Copland, and we keep in touch. Katherine Waterston was a rising talent, even though everyone knows who she is now. Then there was David Beckham who was the kindest man I've met. Jeremy asked to do the short, I took a couple of my kids with me and played this waitress. This little fifteen minute short won Jeremy a load of awards, and after that he sent me the PATTI CAKE\$ script, and said "tell me what you think of Nana". Everyone had gone to sleep, and it was about 1am, and I thought that I would give it a read. Jeremy asked me a few days later if I liked it. I turned around to him and said, "No... I loved it." I said that I would do it.

This was Jeremy's first feature film. How did you feel about working with him as a director?

Jeremy has an old soul, it is like he has been around forever. I am friends with his mother, and me and Louis are like besties. I never questioned him, everyone has their first something or other. I have always been known as the Queen of Independents, because many moons ago someone took a chance on me. They didn't have to believe in me, I didn't have to get the part, but they did believe in me and they did give me the part. I have always tried to return the favour throughout my career. I would give a director the same respect whether it's their first movie or their fiftieth.

He is a very natural director, and he's so eclectic and visual. You knew what he was doing at all times. He's like the next Scorsese, the guy is so talented it is scary.

It is a very different role for you, because audiences typically associate you with more glamour roles. Was that part of the attraction?

It is different to roles that I have played before. It's great, I would like to say that it took me hours and hours to get Nana's look, but it was pop a grey wig on and we were done in twenty minutes. I should stick to the story of it taking hours to make me look like her.

At the core of PATTI CAKE\$ there is this story of three women from three generations of women. How was it building this family unit both in front of and behind the camera?

On different days, there would be my time with either Bridget (Everett) or Danny (Danielle Macdonald). I felt that I was more of a mother to Danny, who plays Patti, than a grandmother – even in real life, I have a tendency to be protective, it's like with my own kids. These three women are all the same in a way, although none of them would ever admit that. We are all so similar. But the talent of these two other women is exceptional, and it was a real pleasure to work with them.

But there were also the others, including Mamoudou (Athie), who I called my 'Method Man' because of his formal acting background at Yale University, and Sid (Siddharth Dhananjay) who I called, 'Mr Natural', were also brilliant. Bridget and I are probably exactly the same person, except she is the one with all the talent. She's a rock star. To see her in this light, and not being the comedian and being funny, and seeing her in a dramatic role is great. She really has this great set of lungs on her. She has a Barbra Streisand quality to her. Danielle, as we all know, is going to be the next big thing in Hollywood, for which she has every right. Don't forget that this project started in Sundance, with Sid and Danielle, and I just waltzed in and got the easy part.

The film is a blend of comedy and drama, but it is laugh-out-loud hilarious at times. How was it balancing the comedy in the drama as an actor?

I think that PATTI CAKE\$ is funny because it is real. I think that it is a touching story, but it is because of the cast that Jeremy brought together that made it even more so. It really brought everyone to life.

What would you say PATTI CAKE\$ is about at its core?

It's a story about everyday life. Rarely do we see films about the realities of everyday life, because why would you make a film about it? I would argue that everyday life is actually pretty interesting and important. I think that it is about people's feelings, emotions and dreams and Jeremy captured that. I think really it is a story of getting out of Dodge, always believing that the story that the grass is always greener somewhere else.

Jeremy wrote this vicariously, exploring his own youth when he wanted to be a rapper. Now, Jeremy definitely is rapper material, but he's his own thing. He's a Jersey boy, like me. The rest are from all over the place, and Danielle, who's from Australia, does an amazing job of the accent. It was so funny on set, because every day we showed up, heart and soul, because this was a story and a project that we all believed in. We certainly didn't show up for the pay check. It's a reflection on life itself – it teaches you to never give up on your dreams. Just because you are from Jersey, or wherever, you should never give up on your dreams.

You have long term acting experience, did you find yourself giving advice to the younger members of the cast for whom it is only their first or second main role in a feature film?

I've been around a long time. In a way, I think I learned more from them than they did from me – I am not sure whether that is a good or a bad thing. They had a dedication and a naturalness to their performances. Put it this way, I'm sure it wasn't easy pushing me around in a wheelchair – it isn't like I weigh fifty-pounds. I didn't have the easiness they have when I was their age. I started out when I was very young, seventeen or eighteen, when I did Raging Bull. I mean back then I had no clue, so I thought, 'Give a shit, I'm just going to do this.' If I had to do over what I did then I would never have

done it because I would be too scared to do it. I know too much about life now and it wouldn't work out for me.

I'm still not scared of rejection, hell this industry is all about rejection. If you can't handle rejection you are in the wrong business. I always tried to look at things the other way around and thought that I was being considered for something not rejected from it. That's just me though, being weird. There is something of that in this movie, she might just be some chick from Jersey, but she has just as much chance of being noticed as anyone else.

What have you noticed that has changed for you, and what you observed in younger actors between when you did Raging Bull and PATTI CAKE\$?

It was a completely different time. I got my technical experience on Raging Bull, but I knew nothing at the time and I just faked it, I am still doing that. I didn't have a clue. You would think that you would have some experience to pass down to young actors but they are so frigging smart these days. The brood is smart. On this film, we were all really close and there was a naturalness. We all ate together, there was no going to separate trailers or anything like that. We all laughed and cried together. Danielle had her twenty-fifth birthday with us on set, which - and here's a story - was also the same day that she did her first love scene of her career. We got her Chanel perfume and a shed load of cupcakes. It was a joyful experience. It has been a year since we finished the film, and we still speak. We had a rare kind of camaraderie, and while we don't speak every day, we are all still in touch, dropping each other texts every month or so.

Do you think that the same opportunities exist for actors now compared to when you were starting out?

I think that there is a place in this world for everybody. I would say that if you don't act on the opportunities that are presented to you, and you don't try, you will never know. I have been known to step back and disappear for a couple of years. I have been around a long time, and one of the biggest struggles was finding representation because of this habit of stepping out of the industry for a few years. If you have the drive and the talent inside you then you have to make the steps to make it happen.

The way you describe working on this film makes it sound like a very different experience of filming than you have experienced before. Is there anything else you have starred in that is comparable to PATTI CAKE\$?

This was a totally different experience for me. There was an amazing energy on this film, and every day that you went to work you were going because you really wanted to. I cared so much about the person I was playing. I wanted to see my onscreen daughter make it, I wanted to see my onscreen granddaughter make it, I was that close to it. It was actually a very odd, even weird experience for me. I think it was the writing, but I think that it was also something to do with what all of us were like as people. I think certain people are attracted to each other in life. You don't have much room in your heart for projects like this, and this one was very important to me.

You talked about Jeremy's script, and the quality of the story and the writing, but I wondered did you detour from the script and improvise at all?

We had a term on set for improvising when Jeremy would turn around and say, "Cathy, you can have a 'free one'," which was when I was allowed to say whatever I wanted to. Jeremy knew me, and I think that a lot of what he wrote was actually with me in mind.

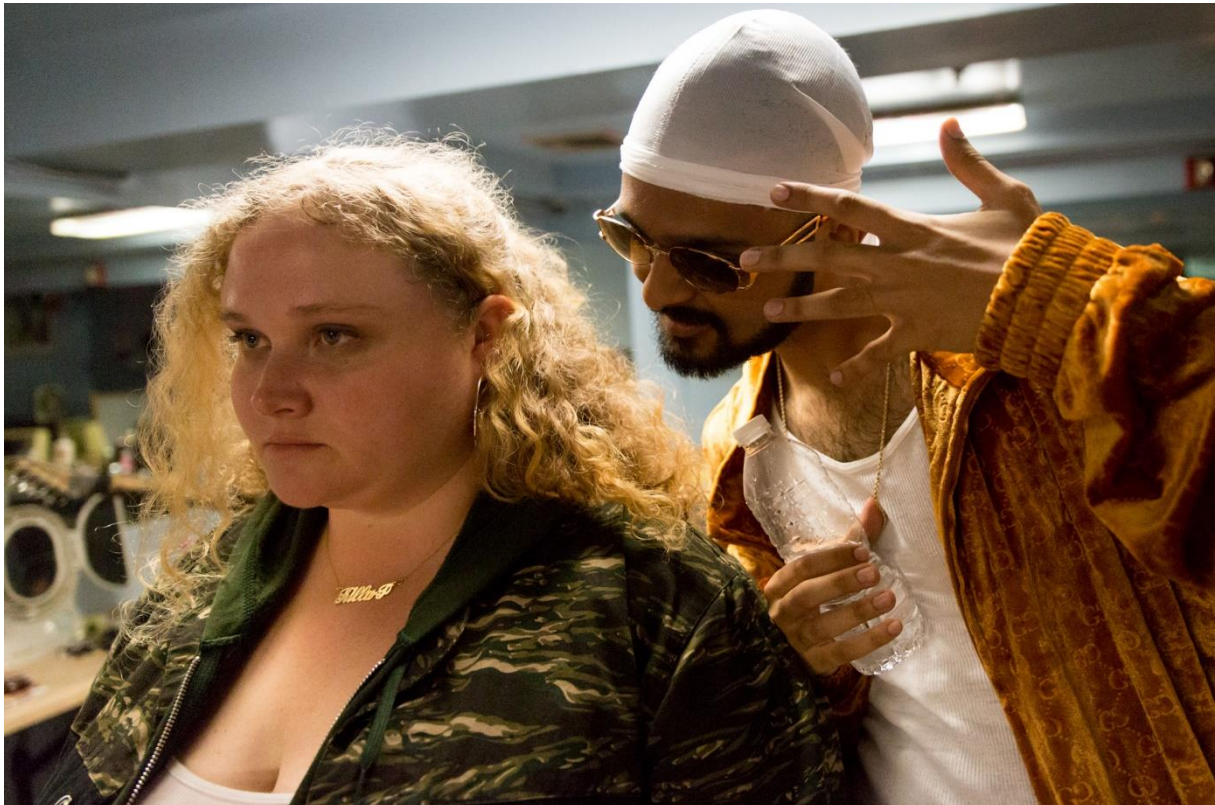
The film has a wide array of musical genres ranging from hip-hop to glam rock. What music do you listen to? What's your jam?

I'm old (as my kids tell me every day). I cannot get into the car with my sixteen-year old son anymore because I don't like their music. Me and my husband, who I have been with so long it is scary, raised our kids on music. We both have an eclectic taste in music, and I can handle some rap but I don't like

all of it. I'm more of a Billy Joel, The Beatles, and Pink Floyd type of gal, a bit of an old-time rocker. I try to understand today's music and I don't, but I do try. The only music I was never into was heavy metal, I don't know why, I think it was a little too noisy. I know enough about rap now that I can request a certain song, I know who Kanye and Drake are. I am actually a huge Eminem fan, I think he's all that and a bag of chips. My kids think it's funny.

SIDDHARTH (SID) DHANANJAY (JHERI)

Director Jeremy Jasper discovered **SIDDHARTH (SID) DHANANJAY (Jheri)** on WorldstarHipHop, where he parodied rap videos under the pseudonym 'Dhananjay the First'. The film is his first since graduating college. Sid was born in India, raised in Indonesia, and currently resides in New York.



Jeremy discovered you via World Star Hip Hop. Tell me about your background on there and how you came to meet Jeremy.

My friends and I used to make spoof rap videos, and we started doing them for our college film festivals. One of my friends put it up online and there was a good reception to it and people seemed to like it. We thought, "well we're are going to have to keep making it". Jeremy watched one on World Star and the character that I play in these music videos was like the character he had written for Patti Cake\$ and so he reached out.

I went to school to study philosophy and economics, nothing to do with acting. I didn't know what I was going to do. I interned at ad agencies, and I didn't really know what I was doing. This came through, and basically, I was hoping that it would work out. I got an email right around the time that I was graduating college from one of the producers, Michael [Gottwald], who told me that he was involved in *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, and that his team were making a new movie and asked if I wanted to be a part of it. I was like, "Where do I sign?"

I had to send them a tape and they liked it and flew me out to Sundance for Labs. I was there for a week, and it was there that I met Jeremy [Jasper] and Danielle [Macdonald]. Usually when they get

actors to go to the Labs it is actors who are free to work during this stage of the production, but they don't usually end up in the movie. I was like, "Well, we will see what happens".

The problem was I'm not American, and I have an Indian passport so I was having visa issues. I was already on a student visa, so I was coming back and forth from India and at times New York. My dad works in Jakarta, and all my family are there, but all my friends are in southern India. I was going between these places hoping that it all works out. Then two years later there was the green light and it was a go.

What was Jeremy like to work with as a director?

Because this is my first film it is hard for me to compare, so I was picking it all up as I went along. I am a huge cinephile, and I read a lot about it, and that was how I knew, at least initially as an outsider, what it is like. Jeremy had this interesting way of working, which was making it work as it happened. Things were happening in front of your eyes, which I found really cool. This meant that during scenes we could contribute, and say whether something sounded natural or not. It was less about Jeremy telling us what to do, like "deliver this line now" – it was more organic than that. I learned a lot working on this movie. I think I was actually really annoying on set, because I was constantly getting in the way of people as they were working, and I kept asking questions.

You are Patti's best friend in the film, how did you and Danielle work on building that onscreen relationship?

I met Danielle at the Labs, and we became friends. I live with her now, while I am still trying to sort out my situation. We really played well off each other because for me the music came naturally, and I love going into the studio and doing the music, whereas for her it was the acting. But she was so scared to go into the studio and start rapping. I tried as much as I could to help her – like sending her videos to watch, or tracks to listen to, and say stuff about how she should carry herself. She had her own rapping coach to help her with that aspect of her performance. When it came to acting, I had never done it before and she was really good at helping me out.

Cathy Moriarty who plays Nana, is an actress who has been working for a number of years, did you get any advice from her?

As soon as she realised that this was my first movie she took me under her wing, and said, "Don't worry I will take care of you." She is the best, she walks into the room and she is a great presence. There was nothing about learning how to act, it was much more about being a friend, and helping me out where possible.

How did you find the acting process?

My acting portfolio is my videos and that's it. I was so ready to try it, and when I did it I felt it was really natural. I have never had anything in my life that felt as natural as acting. I haven't had a job where I have felt that it was fun and I wanted to keep doing it. I caught the bug, and I just want to keep doing it.

In the film, you and Patti form a trio when you meet Basterd, played by Mamoudou Athie, how did that change the dynamic for you?

It's funny because our off-screen relationship mirrored the film. Danielle and I were this little team, and before filming we rehearsed together, just Danielle and I. Jeremy turned around one day and said that Mamoudou would be coming in to meet us. Our initial reaction was, "Who is this Mamoudou guy, trying to join the family?" He is very much an actor and he is very method. He would come to set in character and do his scenes and then stay in character. I thought initially that he was kind of a drag, and didn't get him. Then I met him properly at Sundance and I realised he is actually the sweetest most fun lovely guy, and we really got on.

Did you get to have any say on the songs and could you make creative contributions to the music in the film?

That was the great thing about Jeremy, he would change things, even a day before the shoot. I found it really exciting and he was always trying to push the boundaries, which was great for me musically. Jeremy knew that he was coming at the music from a slightly more old-school mentality, and he knew that I was more tuned into what was going on now. He gave me the freedom to play. For instance he would give me a base line and ask me to try some stuff out and see what happens. Then we would work on it together. For me, that was really important and fulfilling.

I think that when the movie comes out, some people might talk about Jeremy being a white man trying to do rap music. For me coming into the movie, I needed to know that he was coming to this music from a good place, and as soon as I met with him I knew that it was. When you talk to Jeremy and you see what is happening, you know this is an authentic story, and also that it is Jeremy, and the music that you see is reflective of Jeremy. This movie isn't about music as such, it uses music for the journey these characters are on.

Who are your favourite rappers?

It's always a tough question to answer but I would say: Lil' Wayne, 50 Cent, Jay-Z – I don't know though, it's a hard one.

This movie focuses on everyday people, with real dreams, but these aren't characters that we see on screen very often, and the actors on this project aren't conventional Hollywood actors. Was this part of the attraction to the project?

I think that Jeremy was really careful to make sure that the characters on screen are never caricatures, or that the drama ends up being a farce. For me, it was easy to do the rapper outer shell, but that is just that, the outer shell. I knew that I had to make Jheri human, and not be a sidekick, but a best friend, and make it personal. I think being a person from a minority background in a film can be hard. I didn't want to be a token Indian in the film. People know they want it at the moment, and there is a trend in America at the moment for Indian actors. I think it will be interesting for me after PATTI CAKE\$ to see if I can help shape that space in the industry in some way.

The great thing about PATTI CAKE\$ is that it has given me this wonderful opportunity to play a character like Jheri and it's a great place to be starting from as an actor. I think there is an instinct now in the industry to show more diversity, but it isn't enough. You can count on one hand how many Indian actors there are currently working in the US. If you were to ask someone who isn't as tuned in and get them to name an Indian actor, they can probably at best only name Aziz Ansari. Like any actor I want to play characters that have a love interest, or a whatever, and I happen to be brown. It is slowly happening.

What roles would you like to play in the future?

After coming off PATTI CAKE\$ I think a lot of people will naturally see me in a multi-cam sitcom as the funny Indian guy. I know I don't want to do that, but I am also unsure about exactly what it is I do want to do. I have a feeling that it will be more traditionally dramatic roles, not just to show people I can do it, but to prove to myself that I can.

BRIDGET EVERETT (BARB)

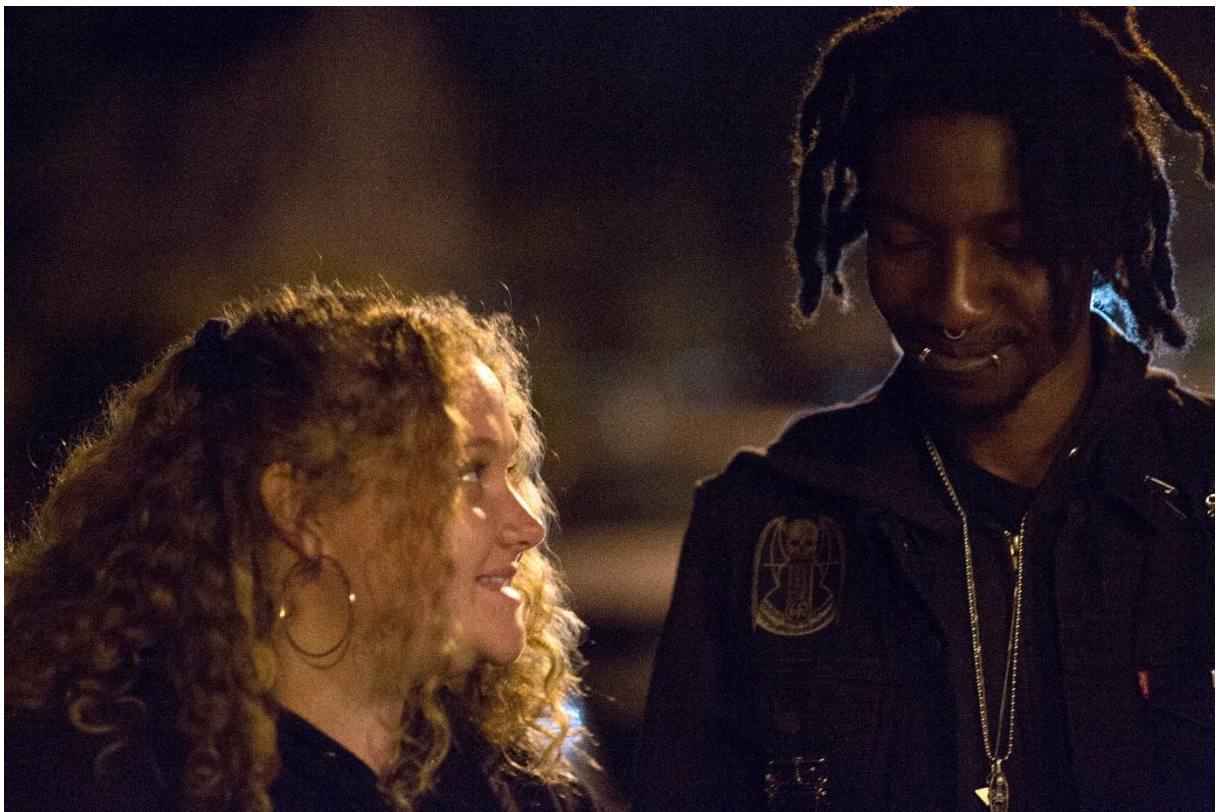
BRIDGET EVERETT (Barb) is a world-renowned cabaret artist. She was named "the most exciting performer in New York City" on the cover of the Village Voice, and called "raw and riotous" by The New York Times. Everett and her band, The Tender Moments, perform regularly to sold-out theaters and have welcomed special guests as varied as Fred Armisen, Flea, and Patti LuPone. Their album, POUND IT, is available on iTunes.

Everett has headlined her own major multi-city US tour, and has taken comedy festivals all over the world by storm including The Oddball Comedy Festival, The Melbourne International Comedy Festival, The Latitude Festival, Montreal's Just For Laughs, Bonnaroo, Outside Lands, Tenacious D's Festival Supreme, and The San Francisco Sketchfest. Last summer she spent two weeks headlining the famed Soho Theater in London.

Her film, theater and television credits include "Inside Amy Schumer," "Two Broke Girls," "Sex and the City", TRAINWRECK, "Girls" and the off-Broadway smash Rock Bottom. Her live television special "Bridget Everett – Gynecological Wonder" premiered on Comedy Central, and she can also be seen featured on the hit Netflix show "Lady Dynamite". She is the star of the upcoming films LITTLE EVIL, FUN MOM DINNER and the Sundance hit PATTI CAKE\$. She is the co-creator, co-writer and star of the new Amazon series "Love You More", premiering this fall.

MAMOUDOU ATHIE (BASTERD)

MAMOUDOU ATHIE (Basterd) will play opposite Brie Larson in her directorial debut, UNICORN STORE. Additionally, Mamoudou can be seen on Baz Luhrmann's "The Get Down" on Netflix in the sought-after role of 'Grandmaster Flash,' and he recently starred in the NBC comedy pilot "Me & Mean Margaret" opposite Stockard Channing. He will appear in THE CIRCLE, based on Dave Eggers' novel of the same name, alongside Emma Watson and Tom Hanks. Athie made his stage debut earlier this year opposite Diane Lane and Tony Shalhoub in The Mystery of Love and Sex at the Lincoln Center Theater, for which he received critical praise. Athie is a recent graduate of the Yale School of Drama.



MC LYTE (DJ FRENCH TIPS)

Hip-hop pioneer, music icon, actress, inspirational speaker, and entrepreneur all describe one of the most prolific and well-respected female artists of all time: **MC LYTE (DJ French Tips)**.

In the world of music, Lyte was the first solo female artist to release a full album and the first female hip-hop artist to be nominated for a Grammy (Best Rap Single, "Ruffneck"). Since 1988's "Lyte as a Rock", she has chalked up several other firsts: first African American female to serve as the President of the LA chapter of the Recording Academy, first rap artist to perform at Carnegie Hall, first female rapper to perform at the White House, and the first and only female rapper to release a full length album in her forties (2015's "Legend").

A veteran of film and television, MC Lyte first appeared off-Broadway in 1991 in the play Club Twelve alongside Wyclef Jean and Lauryn Hill. She continued with appearances on series such as NBC's "In the House", CBS' "The District", and Fox's "Get Real" before becoming a favorite on UPN's primetime hit sitcom "Half & Half" playing the recurring role of Kai, a hard but fair record company president. Lyte has also co-starred in several films including PLAYAS BALL (with Logan's Elise Neal), Lionsgate's CIVIL BRAND with Mos Def, and THE DEMPSEY SISTERS with Lynn Whitfield. 2017 is set to be one of her biggest years yet, with upcoming roles in BET's anthology series "Tales" (from Executive Producer Irv Gotti), and in USA's "Queen of the South".

Lyte has also lent her distinctive voice to campaigns for major brands including Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Nike, GM, Nissan, and AT&T, and to the BET Awards, acting as announcer for the past eight years.

As her enterprise continues to expand, she and business partner Lynn Richardson have several projects in various stages of production, including a miniseries based on Lyte's incredible life story, currently in development with L. Plummer Media. Nearly 30 years after breaking onto the scene at just 17 years old, MC Lyte is still a charismatic and commanding creative force.

ABOUT THE CREW

Originally from Richmond, Virginia, **MICHAEL GOTTWALD (Produced By)** worked on the presidential campaign of Barack Obama in 2008, before moving to New Orleans to work with Court 13 to make BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD. Following another stint on the Obama campaign of 2012, he's since produced three films with the documentary filmmakers the Ross Brothers (TCHOUPITOULAS, WESTERN, and CONTEMPORARY COLOR), episodes of the series "High Maintenance," and Michael Tully's PING PONG SUMMER. In the works since 2013, Jeremy Jasper's feature debut PATTI CAKE\$ is the first narrative feature of Court 13's new production company affiliate the Department of Motion Pictures. His favorite Springsteen album is "Darkness on the Edge of Town" and his favorite New Jersey rest area is the Walt Whitman.

NOAH STAHL (Produced By) joined Court 13 in 2013 after working for documentary directors Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, as associate producer on CELESTE & JESSE FOREVER starring Rashida Jones and Andy Samberg, and as a development executive for producer Scott Rudin. In 2015, he co-produced Laurie Anderson's essay film HEART OF A DOG and Bill and Turner Ross's Sundance award-winning documentary, WESTERN; produced NEW ORLEANS HERE & NOW, a documentary series about the 10-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, for Time Inc.; and production managed episodes of "High Maintenance" for Vimeo. PATTI CAKE\$ is the first narrative feature of Court 13 affiliate the Department of Motion Pictures, and Stahl's first feature film as producer.

RODRIGO TEIXEIRA (Produced By) is one of Brazil's top movie producers, having founded RT Features in 2005. RT Features is an innovative production company that focuses on developing, producing and financing high quality content ranging from original projects to acquisitions, for both film and television. The company has had a banner year with 10 films on its slate, including two of the most anticipated films of the year premiering to critical acclaim at the Sundance Film Festival: Luca

Guadagnino's *CALL ME BY YOUR NAME* starring Armie Hammer, which was acquired by Sony Pictures Classics, and Jeremy Jasper's *PATTI CAKE\$*, which was acquired by Fox Searchlight. *PATTI CAKE\$* will close the Director's Fortnight section of the 2017 Cannes Film Festival and will be released in the U.S. on July 7th.

Teixeira won an Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature for Robert Egger's *THE WITCH*, which was distributed by A24. He is currently in pre-production on the sci-fi film *AD ASTRA*, which he has been developing with director James Gray and will star Brad Pitt, and recently announced Olivier Assayas' next film, *WASP NETWORK*.

Since launching RT Features, Teixeira has produced, co-produced and financed a remarkable slate of feature films including: Ira Sachs' critically acclaimed *LOVE IS STRANGE* for Sony Pictures Classics and *LITTLE MEN*; James Schamus' *INDIGNATION*; Noah Baumbach's *Frances Ha* and *Mistress America* for Fox Searchlight; Kelly Reichardt's *NIGHT MOVES*; and Gaspar Noé's *LOVE*. Other feature projects include Teddy Williams' lauded *THE HUMAN SURGE*; Dominga Sotomayor's *LATE TO DIE YOUNG*; and Karim Aïnouz's *THE INVISIBLE LIFE OF EURIDICE GUSMAO*. TV credits include "The Hypnotist" for HBO Latin America, which will begin season two this year.

Dedicated to working with talented young directors since its inception, Teixeira formed a joint venture with Martin Scorsese's Sikelia Productions which aims to produce films from emerging filmmakers worldwide. Their first project, Jonas Carpignano's *A CIAMBRA*, will premiere in Directors' Fortnight at the 2017 Cannes International Film Festival.

Teixeira started his career in the financial market, followed by a shift into development and finance for up-and-coming authors in Brazil, where he found his passion for development of the written word.

DAN JANVEY (Produced by) is a producer with the Department of Motion Pictures, a film production company based out of New Orleans, Louisiana, and sibling of Court 13. His past credits include *BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD*, *HEART OF A DOG*, *CONTEMPORARY COLOR*, and *BRIMSTONE & GLORY*. Dan has been nominated for an Academy Award, won the Indian Paintbrush Sundance Producing Prize, and is an alumnus of the Sundance Producing Labs. He resides in Los Angeles, California.

DANIELA TAPLIN LUNDBERG (Produced by) is founder of the recently launched Stay Gold Features, a New-York based finance and production company. She has produced over 25 features including the recent Sundance hit, *PATTI CAKE\$*, Cary Fukunaga's African child soldier film *BEASTS OF NO NATION*, Michael Showalter's *HELLO, MY NAME IS DORIS* starring Sally Field, and Lisa Cholodenko's *THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT*.

Lundberg is a member of AMPAS and YPO and sits on the board of the Signature Theater in New York City. She is a graduate of Princeton University and lives in Westport, CT with her husband Ted and her three children, Rosie, Bea and Walt.

For over twenty-five years, Academy Award® nominated filmmaker **CHRIS COLUMBUS (Produced by)** has written, directed and produced some of the industry's most successful box-office hits, establishing him as a major force in contemporary Hollywood. Along with being a prominent figure in film, Columbus is also a New York Times best-selling author. His novel, *House of Secrets*, the first iteration of an epic new fantasy series, was published in April 2013 to rave reviews and quickly rose to the top of the charts.

Columbus and his daughter, Eleanor Columbus, launched Maiden Voyage Productions in 2014. The duo's first film, Sara Colangelo's *LITTLE ACCIDENTS* starring Elizabeth Banks, premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and was released by Amplify in January 2015. They followed up with Robert Eggers' *THE WITCH*, which premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival to rave reviews. Also in 2015, Maiden Voyage produced Jonas Carpignano's *MEDITERRENEA*, a feature based on the Venice Film Festival short *A Chjana*, that premiered at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival. In 2016 they released Sian Heder's *TALLULAH* starring Ellen Page, Allison Janey, and Zachary Quinto.

In 2011, Columbus released the blockbuster hit *THE HELP* starring Emma Stone, Bryce Dallas Howard, Allison Janney, Sissy Spacek, Jessica Chastain and Viola Davis under his 1492 Pictures banner. At the 84th Academy Awards®, *THE HELP* garnered four nominations, including two for Best Supporting Actress and one for Best Picture. Octavia Spencer won the award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her portrayal of the character Minny Jackson.

Columbus is the masterful filmmaker behind several of the most revered and successful literary adaptations of the *Harry Potter* series. As the director of *HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE*, the first picture based on J.K. Rowling's monumentally successful book series, Columbus delivered a film that was equally satiating to both readers and fans, while capturing the essence of the beloved characters. He cast newcomers Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Rupert Grint in the leading roles, demonstrating his facility for nurturing and cultivating young talent. The film triumphed at the box office and Columbus followed the film as director and producer of *HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS* in 2002, and as producer of the third film of the series, *HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN*, in 2005.

Columbus produced the highly successful family/adventure comedy *NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM* and its two sequels, *NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN* and *NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: SECRET OF THE TOMB*. Other film credits include: the 2005 screen adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway musical, *RENT*; *STPMOM*, starring Julia Roberts and Susan Sarandon; *NINE MONTHS* with Hugh Grant and Julianne Moore; *MRS. DOUBTFIRE* starring Robin Williams and Sally Field; *ONLY THE LONELY* based on his original screenplay; as well as the classic hits *HOME ALONE* and *HOME ALONE 2: LOST IN NEW YORK*.

In Hollywood, Columbus first gained prominence by writing several original scripts produced by Steven Spielberg, including the back-to-back hits *GREMLINS* and *THE GOONIES* both of which became decade-defining films that intertwined high notes of offbeat, edgy, often outrageous humor against more classic adventure-thriller backdrops. These screenwriting achievements led Columbus to direct his first feature, *ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING*, starring Elisabeth Shue.

Growing up outside Youngstown, Ohio, Columbus originally aspired to be a commercial artist, spending years studying art and interested in drawing for comics. He eventually made the connection between comic books and movie storyboards and graduated from NYU's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts where he sold his first script, *Jocks*.

JASON BINNICK (Music By) is a frequent musical collaborator of Jeremy Jasper's who has worked on several of his previous projects, including his short film *OUTLAWS*. *PATTI CAKE\$* is his first narrative feature score.

Binnick studied composition and arrangement at Wesleyan University. He spent the subsequent years in Brooklyn as a musical director, writing and performing music for theater, and recording and touring as a bassist - most notably with The Flesh and Botanica (who's last album was the soundtrack to a celebrated German theater production of *The Master and Margarita*). It was during these rock and roll days that he and Jasper played in a band together and started a recording project that ultimately laid the groundwork for the *PATTI CAKE\$* music production process.

His other film scores include *FIT TO PRINT*, *NORMAN PINSKI COME HOME*, and *MISSED CONNECTIONS*.

FEDERICO CESCO (Director of Photography) studied music and architecture before receiving a MFA from NYU. He was awarded the 2014 ARRI-CSC Volker Bahnemann Award for his outstanding cinematography as a student. His films have been screened at numerous film festivals including Venice, Cannes, Locarno, Berlin and Sundance, where his first feature film, *CRONIES*, premiered in 2015. His last two feature films, *PATTI CAKE\$* and *ROXANNE*, *ROXANNE* were screened as part of the 2017 Sundance US dramatic competition.

BRAD TURNER (Editor) is a New York-based editor, and a partner in SeeThink Films, a Brooklyn-based production company. His eight feature credits include DARKON, winner of the 2006 SXSW Audience Award for documentaries, KING KELLY, winner of the Puchon International Film Festival's Jury Choice Award in 2012, and GOAT, which was purchased by Paramount at Sundance 2016. He has cut music videos for TV on the Radio, Wolfmother, and others, in addition to hundreds of internationally broadcast commercials, which have won a smattering of awards. Brad holds a Film Studies degree from Columbia University.

MEREDITH LIPPINCOTT (Production Designer) recently worked as production designer on PIMP starring Keke Palmer, THE BOY DOWNSTAIRS starring Zosia Mamet and the short film APPROACHING A BREAKTHROUGH starring Kieran Culkin. Past design credits include DON'T WORRY BABY, THE MISSING GIRL, and the Comedy Central digital series NEW TIMERS. Her films have premiered at Sundance Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, and Tribeca Film Festival. Lippincott received a BA in Production Design at New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study.

MIYAKO BELLIZZI (Costume Designer) is a fashion stylist/costume designer who lives and works in New York City. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, CA, she moved to NYC in 2007 and graduated from FIT with a Bachelor's of Science in Advertising and Marketing in 2011. Over the years, she's worked for various publications such as VICE, NY Times, Details, Ladygunn and Dazed Digital. After working as a Fashion Editor at Vice, she left to pursue her interest in film. She balances her time between fashion styling, film costume design, 35mm photography and dice chains. She has recently worked on films such as, AS YOU ARE, PATTI CAKE\$ and GOOD TIME.

JOE RUDGE (Music Supervisor) is an established music supervisor based in Brooklyn, NY best known for his work on the feature films ROOM, BLUE VALENTINE & BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD. An experienced licensing professional and music fanatic, he works with film, TV, commercial, and multimedia directors to enhance the moving image with sound.

Recent music supervision highlights include the upcoming Amazon Studios feature film THE BIG SICK, directed by Michael Showalter and produced by Judd Apatow. Also in the pipeline is the much anticipated Grateful Dead documentary LONG STRANGE TRIP, also released through Amazon Studio and the Sundance 2017 breakout hit PATTI CAKE\$ which will be released by Fox Searchlight.

