

Disney · PIXAR

# ELIO



*"This is Elio Solís of the planet Earth. I come in peace and I'm super excited to join you. I'm creative, hardworking... shredded. So, please come and get me. I'll be waiting!*

*OK, bye, love you!"*

*~ Elio*

## PRODUCTION NOTES

For centuries, people have called out to the universe looking for answers—in Disney and Pixar's original, all-new feature film "Elio," the universe calls back! The cosmic misadventure introduces Elio, a space fanatic with an active imagination and a huge alien obsession. "He's an unusual kid who's obsessed with getting abducted by aliens," says director Domee Shi. "He feels like a lot of us feel sometimes—lonely, unwanted, like no one understands us. Elio feels like there's nothing for him on Earth—he dreams of going to another world where he's accepted for who he is."

Adds director Madeline Sharafian, "He's so bright and very driven, but he puts that energy into trying to contact aliens rather than reaching out to people around him. He's even modified a ham radio to send signals to space, but what really gets the aliens' attention is the Voyager satellite—it's a real thing that's still out there."

On the satellite is what's known as the Golden Record—a veritable "message in a bottle" from children around the world. In "Elio," aliens receive the messages and make

contact. “Elio is instantly convinced it’s the real deal,” says Sharafian. “He hijacks the signal and is able to respond with an S.O.S. to the aliens.”

So, when Elio is beamed up to the Communiverse, an interplanetary organization with representatives from galaxies far and wide, he’s all in for the epic undertaking. Mistakenly identified as Earth’s leader, Elio must form new bonds with eccentric alien lifeforms, navigate a crisis of intergalactic proportions, and somehow discover who and where he is truly meant to be. “It’s a wish fulfilled,” says Shi. “He has the exact opposite reaction that anyone else might have after getting abducted by unknown beings from space. He’s elated. I feel like this movie really embodies that sense of wonder and imagination. It’s so exciting to see him finally going into space and seeing all of his dreams come true.”

According to producer Mary Alice Drumm, the film is rooted in research. “We met with Dr. Jill Tarter early on—she’s one of the founding members of the SETI Institute,” says Drumm. “[Tarter] is an astronomer who’s studied extraterrestrial intelligence. She taught us to think about space in a more expansive way that in turn made us feel more connected here. We’re all Earthlings. There’s a strong theme of connection in this story that really resonated with all of us.”

Directed by Madeline Sharafian (“Burrow” SparkShort), Domee Shi (“Bao” short, “Turning Red”) and Adrian Molina (co-screenwriter/co-director of “Coco”), and produced by Mary Alice Drumm, p.g.a. (associate producer of “Coco”), the film features the voices of Yonas Kibreab as Elio, Zoe Saldaña as Aunt Olga, Remy Edgerly as Glordon, Brandon Moon as Ambassador Helix, Brad Garrett as Lord Grigon, Jameela Jamil as Ambassador Questa and Shirley Henderson as Ooooo. The voice cast also includes Dylan Gilmer, Jake Getman, Matthias Schweighöfer, Atsuko Okatsuka, Ana de la Reguera, Naomi Watanabe, Brendan Hunt and Anissa Borrego. Featuring music by Rob Simonsen (“Deadpool & Wolverine,” “The Whale”), “Elio” releases in Cinemas June 20, 2025.

### **HUMANS, ALIEN AMBASSADORS AND ANGRY WARLORDS** **Cosmic Cast and Characters in “Elio” Promise to Excite and Delight**

Pixar Animation Studios’ animated films showcase stylistic points of view when it comes to characters. For “Elio,” however, artists had to go above and beyond—way above and way beyond—to create a cast of characters that includes both humans and multiple species of aliens. “A big part of our world on Earth takes place at a [coastal] military base,” says production designer Harley Jessup. “Everyone, except Elio, wears the same Air Force uniform—muted tan camouflage. Elio stands out in this monochromatic world. He’s quirky and colourful.”

Director Domee Shi explains that the subdued tone at the military base comes from their lead character. “We’re not saying that all military bases are cold and calculated,” says Shi. “There are many wonderful people who work on these bases. But from Elio’s POV he just feels so different. He’s a fish out of water, and we kept that top of mind as we were lighting and shooting his life on Earth—ensuring he felt like the odd boy out—like an alien on Earth. And then when he’s finally in space, we feel the switch from alien on Earth to being welcomed to this vibrant, warm world with open arms.”

Not that the aliens in the Communiverse all come with arms. Artists created dozens of alien species with an assortment of limbs, varying manners of moving and imaginative ways of expressing themselves. “It’s like the coolest club in the universe,” says Shi. “Leaders from planets near and far come together in this fascinating, layered place to share knowledge.”

Adds director Madeline Sharafian, “It’s an incredibly expansive space because each alien species needs a habitat that works for them. Aliens of all shapes, sizes and languages get to live together. It’s very aspirational.”

Filmmakers called on cast members representing locales around the world to help establish the pure vastness of the Communiverse and its inhabitants. “The aliens come from different planets with different ways of communicating—we really wanted to represent that,” says Shi.

Stylistically, filmmakers leaned into the fantastical nature of this new world—both on Earth and in space—they didn’t want a realistic feel. According to animation supervisor Jude Brownbill, the look of animation for “Elio” called for holding poses for a beat. “It’s a bit like the way 2D animators work with their drawings,” she says. “In 3D animation, the computer can interpolate those drawings perfectly—but we moved away from that a little to ensure we hold each pose a beat longer before moving to the next.”

Elio, of course, is the link between contrasting worlds where humans and aliens, young and old, peacemakers and warlords ultimately have more in common than anyone imagines.

#### WHO’S WHO IN “ELIO”



**ELIO SOLÍS** is an 11-year-old who doesn’t feel like he fits in on Earth. He loves his Aunt Olga, and he knows she loves him, too, but she doesn’t really get him. “Elio’s parents passed away when he was younger,” says producer Mary Alice Drumm. “He’s lonely. He sees this magnificence in space—the promise of life—and he puts all his energy into that. He really believes that’s where he’ll find true connection.”

Obsessed with space, Elio’s favourite pastime is trying to make contact with aliens. He desperately wants to get abducted, so he’s over the moon, literally, when he’s beamed up to a special place in space where planetary leaders convene. “I would probably be scared and nervous,” says Yonas Kibreab. “But he’s more than excited—he’s been trying to go to space for a long time.”

According to Kibreab, the Communiverse is easy to love. “It’s the most beautiful thing ever,” he says. “It’s very colourful and bright, and all of the aliens look super cool. I would love to go there—it’s an amazing community.”

Mistaken for the leader of Earth, Elio will do anything to prove his worth, even if it means spearheading negotiations with a slightly crazed space warrior. Of course, Elio is just a kid—but the aliens don’t know that.

Production designer Harley Jessup imagines Elio has long been planning his adventure. “He’s created capes and helmets along with detailed research charts relating to his obsession with space and his dream to be abducted,” says Jessup. “Elio is very colourful and while the story progresses, his costume evolves, becoming more heroic as Elio appears less like a little boy. His glittering space cape, designed by Maria Yi, is spectacular—a bold reflection of how Elio wants to be perceived in the Communiverse.”

Elio sports an eye patch throughout most of the film. Says Jessup, “It gives him a kind of pirate-warrior look when he first arrives at the Communiverse.”

Elio’s fascination with space manifests itself subtly when he reaches his ultimate destination. Says character supervisor Sajan Skaria, “His proportion changes slightly—he gets a little taller, almost as if he’s aged a little. It’s not really noticeable, but you get a sense the journey is changing him.”

**OLGA SOLÍS** is a brilliant Major in the Air Force, stationed at Montez Air Force Base. Well-respected and highly decorated, Olga had plans to pursue the astronaut program. But her career trajectory changed when her nephew, Elio, came to live with her following the loss of his parents. Olga’s pivot into parenthood was sudden and not without hiccups—Elio’s passion for space makes him hard to reach sometimes, but she loves him dearly. She wants more than anything for him to find his place in the world—as long as it’s on Earth.



“She’s a really captivating character,” says Sharafian. “She’s a military woman—very focused, very passionate. She always dreamed of becoming an astronaut—but these days, she wants nothing more than for Elio to stop looking to the stars and start living his life with her.”

Zoe Saldaña, who voices the character, understood Olga’s struggles. “Tía Olga, that’s what Elio calls her—‘tía’ means ‘aunt’ in Spanish—is trying to do the best that she can,” says Saldaña. “It hasn’t been easy for her—not only losing her brother and her sister-in-law, but also inheriting this child. She’s no longer just the aunt who does fun things on the weekend with Elio: now she’s the caretaker, now she’s the bad cop, now she’s the guardian, and she has to be responsible for all things Elio. And I don’t think she was ever prepared for that. She certainly is trying, but she’s falling short every day.”

“There’s something really strong in the beginning of the movie when you’re meeting these characters and they’re interacting with each other,” continues Saldaña. “There’s a moment when Elio feels really frustrated, so he starts speaking a language that he’s come up with on his own—it’s called ‘Elioese.’ Aunt Olga says, ‘I’m not going to speak Elioese with you.’ I think her whole arc is realizing that she has to stop resisting, and try to meet Elio where he is. She has to make peace with that. This is not something that he’s pretending to be or something that he’s making up. This is who he is.”

According to animation supervisor Jude Brownbill, Olga, who’s a career military person, has a demeanour that’s in stark contrast to Elio. “While Elio has a lot of energy, Olga is a bit more straight up and down in her posture,” says Brownbill. “She’s grounded and in control.”

**GUNTHER MELMAC** is a highly intelligent, oddball military contractor and leader of his own ham radio group, Masters of Ham. Melmac's bizarre theories about aliens inadvertently alienate him from the military team that supervises him. It would be crazy if he turned out to be right about everything.



“He’s a civilian contractor who hears a signal from outer space that he believes is of alien origin,” says story supervisor Brian Larsen. “He’s not only trying to decode it, he wants to reply to it. Elio, who sneaks into the room, sees his big chance.”

Brendan Hunt was called on to voice Gunther Melmac. “It was the thrill of a lifetime, truly,” he says. “I can’t wait to watch it with my toddler and see if and when he figures out that it’s Daddy’s voice he’s hearing.”

According to the actor, the key to bringing Melmac to life was to tap into his energy. “Every single thing Melmac does in his life has high stakes attached, so when things happen with real stakes, he’s pretty much through the roof,” Hunt says. My favourite part [of the recording process] was discovering that the setup for the voice actor as they record includes a waist-high rail to grab onto, allowing you to really thrash around if you like. That definitely helped give Melmac a little extra gas.”



**AMBASSADOR QUESTA** is leader of the planet Gom and one of the highest-ranking members of the Communiverse. A 15-foot-tall leafy sea dragon with a soothing voice, Questa is an optimist looking to discover the best in every lifeform she meets. Extremely intuitive, with the ability to read minds, Questa is all about intense eye contact and has no concept of personal space. Her keen intuition and empathy guide her in the most complex of Communiverse quandaries.

Says director Domee Shi, “She’s wise, regal, warm and kind with a nerdy scientific side and endless curiosity.”

According to character art director Matt Nolte, Questa’s design had to reflect her multifaceted personality. “The character is beautiful, powerful and almost intimidating,” he says. “She’s like a goddess—smart and authoritative. Yingzong Xin’s design is unique. It’s not traditional, which feels more alien.”

Adds character supervisor Sajan Skaria, “Questa’s blanket rig was tough because the sides would crash into each other—it would break easily in the computer. But once we successfully set it up, simulation played a big role in helping animation achieve beautiful, elegant shapes. And, fun fact, she doesn’t have a mouth—just a few tentacles in front of her face.”

Jameela Jamil was charged with infusing the character with sophistication and authority. “Her voice really elevated Questa to be this regal character,” says editor Anna Wolitzky.

“She’s empathic—she can key into what Elio’s feeling in a unique way. And I think her voice and her acting were really terrific in that regard. She gave us great options.”

According to the actress, the best part about voicing the character was watching the character come to life. “I have been a fan of Pixar from the very start and used to walk around their offices as a visitor, never imagining I would one day be a part of one of their productions,” says Jamil, who found a lot to like about the Ambassador. “Questa is a good leader because she is strong, without sacrificing her kindness and humility. She is curious, firm and incredibly dignified. She demonstrates her immense power elegantly and with warmth. I think she’s a great role model for Elio.”



Ooooo is an out-of-this-world liquid supercomputer designed to accommodate and assist species of all kinds who visit the Communiverse. Efficient and unflappable, Ooooo’s elaborate circuitry is an infinite energy source—there’s no question she can’t answer. Shirley Henderson provides the voice of the character.

“Ooooo is the most intelligent being in the entire Communiverse,” says director Madeline Sharafian. “She’s almost like a concierge. She’ll greet you when you arrive—do a full scan to make sure you’re ready to enter, then take you on a tour.”

The character represents the kind of collaboration that’s needed to bring something totally new to the big screen. Says production designer Harley Jessup, “Among the many early tests for Ooooo, effects artist Ferdi Scheepers showed the character animating as a simple computer wire frame. It’s a basic image in 3D, where all the models start as a mesh. We then began brainstorming, asking ‘what if that mesh were a network of little energy lines that were moving around?’ We could show that Ooooo was actually a computer whose thinking process was expressed through the movement within her network. Ooooo was the first alien to be modelled, and the animators took it much further, giving the character the ability to transform into any shape. Ooooo set the bar high for the rest of the aliens—we wanted all the ambassadors to each have a unique look that incorporated moving translucent surfaces.”

Technical artists at Pixar suggest that Ooooo is, in fact, nothing—though there’s more to it, of course. The way the character was created is a first for the studio. Says Chung Sanii, “For Ooooo, she is made up of code; there is no model, no singular shape defines her. You could argue that all computer animated models are that, because of course, code drives all of our films. In Ooooo’s case, however, it’s truer than ever. Everything animators see visually is actually a graphics shader on implicit shapes [shapes defined by equations versus points plotted in space] that is then drawing it to their screen.” [See box below for more information about the making of Ooooo.](#)

Animation supervisor Travis Hathaway describes the character as a group of shapes. “She’s a collection of spheres of Ooooo material,” he says. “In her base form, the spheres are arranged in a way that creates a trapezoidal appearance—almost like a cute little toaster. Animators have full control over the spheres—they can stretch her form until one gets far enough away that it pops off. We can turn her into a whole bunch

of different models, then collapse them into something really tiny, or stretch her into something that's very flat."

When it came to camera and layout, filmmakers had to exercise similar creativity. "I like the fact that Ooooo is so simple," says Derek Williams, director of photography (layout/camera). "We didn't really want to shoot from behind her because there isn't much to shoot over. It was a bit like working on a film like 'Finding Nemo'—we had to find charming compositions and different ways of staging her within a scene because she's basically just a face."

#### THE TECHNOLOGY OF OOOOO, ACCORDING TO VFX SUPERVISOR CLAUDIA CHUNG SANII

Any sci-fi film would need to invent some sort of fictional futuristic technology that portals characters through the universe, connects life from many planets, and makes believable the existence of a diverse alien community. The character Ooooo is the "liquid supercomputer" that runs this advanced technology in "Elio." For Ooooo to come alive on screen, Pixar artists have taken a decades-old technology, metaballs, and engineered it into a new innovative process, mixing the old with what was once unimaginable.

Ooooo is Pixar's first topology-free character rig. She is an arrangement of implicit shapes (she exists only in math equations) that blend together to give Pixar animators unprecedented flexibility and speed to achieve Ooooo's many functions and endearing performances, while maintaining a liquid, blobby shape. To add even more complexity, Ooooo has circuitry and glow flowing through her shapes in a continuous cohesive display—this is traditionally challenging when working with implicit surfaces.

Imagine playing with clay in real life. As you push and pull it into shapes, the clay automatically paints itself into a translucent sculpture complete with internal pulsing circuitry. This would be impossible in real life, but very much a reality in the Communiverse.

The best part? Ooooo's ability to be anything: a projection screen, a DVD player—animators even used her ability to break apart to showcase speed. And that's just the beginning, says Hathaway. "The tech is so new to us at Pixar, we haven't even scratched the surface of what it is capable of. I hope other shows will be able to use it so that Ooooo can live on."



**LORD GRIGON** is a fierce, boastful and violent alien warlord who rules the planet Hylurg. He desperately wants to become part of the Communiverse, and is furious when he's rejected. He'll stop at nothing to unleash his wrath on the Ambassadors who humiliated him, but he's about to meet his match in an 11-year-old human kid who's pretending to be the leader of Earth.

"Hylurgians are very proud warriors," says director Domee Shi. "They value their honour above everything. Grigon doesn't understand why he's not wanted—he's very sensitive and angry; he has a short fuse, and he's embarrassed. He's working through a lot."

According to character art director Matt Nolte, Grigon was a challenge for the artists. "At first he was an abstract idea we had to figure out," says Nolte. "He has several appendages, and his carapace needed to do a lot—it's equipped with alien technologies. It's like a giant multi-use pocket knife. At the same time, we needed to

make him graphically simple and based on shape, which we worked together to dial it all in.”

Jordan Rempel, director of photography (lighting), explains how lighting can help convey a character’s personality. “It’s important that the audience sees him as a very intimidating and scary character,” he says. “We lit him with as little light as possible—kept him in a mysterious silhouette.”

Brad Garrett voices the character. “He’s such a sweet guy,” says director Madeline Sharafian. “At the same time, he can bring this unreal level of menace to Grigon. It’s a really difficult needle to thread—getting low and scary while still sounding appealing. And if we need him to tap into his more sensitive side, Brad can take it there, too.”



**GLORDON** is the tenderhearted son of Grigon, the warlord ruler of the planet Hylurg. Gregarious and kind, the princeling is about to be installed in his fearsome battle armor and take his rightful place at his father’s side. Glordon says he’s excited about his future because that’s what he’s supposed to say and feel. But as Elio’s unexpected first friend—and surprise bargaining chip—Glordon might feel comfortable divulging his deepest secret to his new buddy.

“Glordon is what Elio really needs,” says Sharafian. “It’s not membership in this glittery, awesome space club—it’s an actual friend. And Elio will learn a lot about himself through this new friendship.”

According to producer Mary Alice Drumm, Glordon exemplifies the advantages of animation as a medium. “We wanted to make a world in space that nobody’s ever seen,” she says.<sup>4</sup> “When you think back to some of our favourite classic sci-fi favourites, you realize they were limited by the technology, and the aliens are just actors in suits. Human-like. Our aliens don’t have to be people in alien suits. We’re not limited in that way. We have aliens of all shapes and sizes. Glordon doesn’t have eyes—but his animation is so nuanced, you just fall in love with him.”

Chung Sanii points to an eight-legged micro animal measuring less than a millimetre. “Glordon is inspired by a tardigrade,” she says. “He’s a cross between a beluga whale and a seal—pudgy, with really thick skin and super adorable. It doesn’t matter that he has no eyes. The animators here could make a water bottle look cute.”

Remy Edgerly lends his charismatic voice to Glordon. “Remy is just a treasure,” says Drumm. “His was one of the first voices we heard. There was something funny and adorable about him.”

Edgerly, who was 8 years old when he learned he’d won the role, says he was surprised and really happy to join the Pixar family. “I relate to Glordon in that I’m very friendly like him,” says the actor. But, he adds, “I wouldn’t want to be abducted by aliens. They might not be as friendly as Glordon!”

Animation supervisor Jude Brownbill says Glordon’s voice was the key to his animation. “Remy’s line reads are so charming,” she says. “But the goal when Glordon is first introduced is for Elio to be afraid. Lighting, effects and score really set the stage—then

Glordon slowly encroaches on Elio with his mouth open showing all of his teeth. Then when we hear Remy’s voice—‘I’m Glordon!’—the whole mood shifts in an instant.”

Editor Steve Bloom says Edgerly embodied Glordon. “He’s one of those kids who’s very interested in how things work,” says Bloom. “When we recorded him, we’d get lots of questions: ‘What does the Communiverse run on?’ ‘Where, exactly, is it located?’ When we asked him how Glordon might cry since he doesn’t have eyes, Remy came up with a funny gargly sound.”

Character supervisor Sajan Skaria says Glordon was among the most challenging characters in the movie. “Glordon is a bit like a folded-up shrimp or caterpillar—sometimes he moves almost like a human,” he says. “He’s squishy, which made him super hard to do, but we built a robust rig that allowed him to open his mouth—with all his rows of teeth—and actually swallow Elio at one point. Props to the simulation department who gave Glordon the secondary jiggle—imagine a seal when it moves.”



**AMBASSADOR HELIX** of Falluvinum is one of the more ancient members of this intergalactic senate. He’s welcoming, effervescent and a lover of parties and words—most of all his own. Helix has seen it all, or so he thinks.

Story supervisor Brian Larsen says, “Ambassador Helix is one of the seminal leaders of this community—he’s been there for a long time. He’s very approachable and loves to have a good time. He’s a good example that a leader can be bubbly and jovial.”

“He’s one of my favourites—he’s so cute,” says Sharafian. “He’s a little pompous—our fancy Ambassador. He always has the Communiverse’s official drink—glorp—in hand. He’s been on the job for quite some time and can’t wait to take Elio under his wing.”

Brandon Moon lends his voice to Ambassador Helix.

**BRYCE** and **CALEB** are middle schoolers who are often in Elio’s orbit. While Bryce has good friend potential, he’s often led astray by the sometimes ill-mannered, occasionally mean Caleb, who’s hiding his own insecurities.



“Caleb is like that big brother bully,” says character art director Matt Nolte. “But I think Bryce has a good soul.”

Dylan Gilmer voices Bryce, while Jake Getman provides the voice of Caleb.



**AMBASSADOR TEGMEN** is the leader of the planet Tegmen. With a sharp look that mirrors a configuration of floating boulders, Tegmen is aptly blunt, rational and logical.

“Tegman is very dry,” says Larsen. “He’s an alien of few words—but unfiltered. He’s very pragmatic.”

German star Matthias Schweighöfer was called on to voice the rocky Ambassador. The actor will also voice the character for the German version of the film.

**AMBASSADOR TURAIS** is a fearful, high-strung space diplomat. He's the first to panic when things go awry.

"Turais is a great example of the varied characters artists designed for the Communiverse," says producer Mary Alice Drumm. "We challenged ourselves to try to lean away from bipedal, humanoid aliens and explore different shapes. Turais' singular eye and 'fish-wizard'-like shape make her one of our favourite aliens."



Lauded Mexican actress Ana de la Reguera lends her voice to Ambassador Turais.



**AMBASSADOR MIRA** is an empress from a distant alien planet. She is the most cunning of all the Ambassadors and, despite her sweet voice and adorable disposition, she will not hesitate to do whatever's necessary to protect the Communiverse.

"She's the sceptic," says Larsen. "She questions everything, which isn't a good thing when you're a kid pretending to be the leader of Earth."

Anissa Borrego provides the voice of Ambassador Mira.



**AMBASSADOR AUVA**, the bubbly and passionate leader of a peace-loving planet, created the Universal Users' Manual. She's all about positive vibes, so it's no surprise when she votes against Lord Grigon's inclusion in the Communiverse.

"With her ink-splat face, Auva doesn't emote easily," says Drumm. "So, she was a challenge."

Filmmakers called on actress Naomi Watanabe to voice Ambassador Auva. "Naomi has an infectious charm about her," says Drumm. "She brings a curiosity and wonder to Auva. They are both just so adorable. You understand why she's such a big star in Japan."

**AMBASSADOR NAOS** is a brilliant leader representing the most technologically advanced species in the cosmos. Her latest claim to fame is inventing the Communidisc, a device all Ambassadors use to control gravity, temperature and all known languages. "That's how Elio understands them and they understand Elio," says Larsen.



Friendly, curious and creative, Naos' consciousness was long-ago uploaded into a computerized exoskeleton.

Comedian Atsuko Okatsuka voices Ambassador Naos.

For the UK version of the film, pop-star and TV personality Aston Merrygold joins the voice cast. Aston voices the character of co-worker 'ASTON', who works with Aunt Olga (Zoe Saldaña) at Montez Air Force Base, where they find themselves hearing rumours of life outside Earth.



Speaking of his role Aston Merrygold says: “I’m so excited and beyond honoured to join the voice cast for the all-new original film *Elio* from the iconic Animation Studio. I mean who isn’t a Pixar fan? It means everything to me that my kids will be able to hear their Dad’s voice on the big screen!”

### FROM EARTHBOUND TO OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD Two Distinct Worlds Call for Creativity and Contrast

Designing and crafting the world for Disney and Pixar’s “Elio” felt in some ways like working on two different films. Says production designer Harley Jessup, “Early on, we knew that we would be designing two very distinct worlds. Earth was clearly based on authentic military research, while the Communiverse was grounded in the tiny details of nature, lending an organic order that I think the audience will recognize. Through that amazing macro-photographic research, we tried to look at space in a new way.”

For planet Earth, filmmakers set out to create an austere world, a place that audiences would understand a boy like Elio might yearn to escape. Says Jessup, “The military base is shown as acres of tarmac and Brutalist concrete buildings—very hard edged with a lot of repetition and rectangular symmetry.”

Graphics art director Kyle Jones worked with military consultants to craft the look. “We did everything from military patches to details within the headquarters, mission control and computer screens,” he says. “We tried to be authentic and work within a palette of colours including muted blues, browns and greys.”

According to Derek Williams, director of photography (layout/camera), the goal of shot composition and camera selections is to help convey the story from Elio’s point of view. “When we’re on Earth, we have to tap into how he’s feeling emotionally,” he says. “What is Elio dealing with? How can we show that visually with the camera? I wanted to explore keeping the camera very flat, conveying a feeling of loneliness.

“We also played with cantering Elio in frame,” Williams continues. “And one of the things I talked to the directors about was this idea of frame within a frame. We looked for opportunities to frame him within a hallway, within a doorway or window. It’s another way to give that feeling of being trapped.”

Jordan Rempel, director of photography (lighting), adds, “We tried to keep things pretty linear, even in the way we treated light and shadow, trying to keep things static. We wanted the light itself to come from the sun or from practical lights, bulbs.”

Olga, eager to offer Elio a change of scenery, enrolls him in Camp Carver, created for the children of military personnel. Though breathtaking, the redwood forest does little to convince Elio, who still dreams of getting beamed up to space. According to Jessup, the untamed wilderness provides an almost enchanted backdrop for Elio’s long-awaited

alien abduction. It's an unearthly transition from the rigid setting of the military base to the vibrant world known as the Communiverse. "The contrast is dramatic—the Communiverse is all curves and translucent surfaces," says Jessup. "We were inspired by photographs of tiny structures in nature, and we found that by just looking through the microscope, we'd be transported to an astonishing natural world very different from what audiences have come to expect. We were excited by everything from tiny mushrooms and fungus to crystals and microscopic sea creatures. We really wanted to create a fresh take on space."

Sets supervisor David Luoh says he's excited to share with audiences the epic breadth of their take on outer space. "I have a fondness for when we see the Communiverse as a whole, like when Elio first encounters that world," he says. "You can see the outer shell where the alien species grow their crops. Then we have four orbiting, twisting discs— each one hosting a different biome: aquatic, lush forest, icy tundra, and hot with lava. Nestled inside those discs, there's an inner paraboloid with skylines of central Communiverse infrastructure and a radiant core of light and energy, all with intricate, dynamic details sprinkled throughout."

Artists and technicians assembled a vibrant world with blink-and-you'll-miss-them details—from alienesque architecture to varying vegetation. "It's designed as a reflection of the aliens who came together to create it," says Luoh. "It's our version of the United Nations—species from across the galaxy coming together and forming a brilliant, cooperative interspecies society."

#### **ANATOMY OF AN ALIEN ABDUCTION**

##### **Elio's Long-Awaited Alien Abduction Presented Exciting Opportunities**

Elio desperately wants to be abducted by aliens—he attempts to make contact in every way he can imagine. "To Elio, it's more of a rescue than an abduction," says director Madeline Sharafian.

Filmmakers wanted to pay homage to sci-fi films, while putting their own touch on the abduction scene. The directors of photography, Derek Williams (layout/camera) and Jordan Rempel (lighting), came together to help create the look. "We kept coming back to those classic films like 'Close Encounters' and 'E.T.," says Williams. "We liked the idea of the suburban setting—a very ordinary environment in which to set this extraordinary story sequence."

While Williams sought to emulate the sci-fi feel with the cinematography, Rempel homed in on the lighting. "Everything leading up to the big moment featured a beautiful, but fairly muted colour palette," he says. "When the aliens first communicate with Olga in the control room, that's our first hint that a lot more colour is coming. When the ship arrives on the beach to abduct Elio, it blasts this crazy saturated green light. The ship is very bright with a lot of lights, unique lens flares that imagine what an alien light might do to an Earthly lens."

The spaceship, according to sets supervisor David Luoh, is origami-inspired.

For Williams, Elio's arrival in space marks a change in the character's perspective—so the camera and layout evolve. "Once he gets to space, all bets are off," says Williams. "We move away from centre framing, move the camera more—making it more dynamic.

It's really important to remember that this is a child experiencing a big world, so where is the camera relative to him? We try to keep it with him at his eye level."

Adds Rempel, "In the Communiverse, everything is moving around—things are pulsing. There's always movement in every frame. Sometimes it's literal movement—discs are orbiting, star fields shift and rotate—they're never static.

"We support that with the light on the characters," he continues. "There are different types of animated lights on the characters, whether they're pulsing subtly to give it keep-alive, or featuring textured light on the characters, keeping as much movement, dance and play as we possibly can to make it feel unique. It was really important to make sure that across every scene in space, they all feel very different. For example, when we go to the Hylurgian ship, we didn't want it to feel orange and red and dark throughout—we wanted to make sure every part of the ship felt very distinct, lighting-wise, so we start very orangey-red like you might expect with lava-type characters. And then we move into the greenish prison cell and the really colourful tunnels."

With an environment so rich—from the sets to the various alien species—lighting was an essential element to anchor the audience's view. "There's so much variety in the alien characters in terms of shape and colour and size, each one requires special attention in each scene to make them as appealing as possible," says Rempel. "We look at what's most important in each shot—that might mean suppressing a character that's too interesting or overwhelming—pushing and pulling those elements the story needs. When they're all interesting, it's so tempting to want to take it all in. We use light to direct the eye in those situations."

Graphics art director Kyle Jones ensured the graphics fit the vibrant look of the Communiverse. "We created a universal alien design language that we could use everywhere," he says, "from the magenta takeover on Olga's computers, which is a bit mysterious and unsettling, to hologram signage in space. We wanted to find a unique take on symbology that didn't look like anything that already exists but still feels recognizable as both a language and alien.

"The graphics in space are more organic with a softer shape language and a prismatic look with Ooooo energy that perhaps powers all their technology" adds Jones. "There's so much energy, you can feel it undulating in almost everything."

Jones worked with animation and effects team members to create the Universal Users' Manual—a dynamic document that knows everything about everything. "They built a wild rig and contraption," he says. "I worked with them to animate the alien language particles, and I designed the pages that Elio pulls out with symbols and moving illustrations."

## TUNING IN

### **Filmmakers Call on Composer Rob Simonsen to Craft Out-of-this-World Score**

Pixar Animation Studios creates worlds never-before imagined. Helping to bring those worlds to life every single time are composers like Rob Simonsen, who tap into their armories of instruments and sounds to create scores that transport audiences—in this case, to space.

Says director Madeline Sharafian, “Rob is a music nerd, so he has these odd electronic instruments in his workspace that make the strangest sounds. He was so excited to get the chance to use them in the score—and it really added to the effect we wanted.”

Adds director Domee Shi, “He brings such scope and scale to the movie—once we’re flying through the universe, it just sounds bigger. The music is just sweeping. His theme for the Communiverse is memorable and majestic. It’ll blow your hair back.”

Simonsen infused the score with depth from every angle. “It’s a heartfelt adventure through space and memory,” he says. “It’s also a meditation on signals—on how we reach out, and what it means when something reaches back.

“From early on, we were drawn to the idea of a signal, which is a simple pulse that opens the film,” Simonsen continues. “It’s the sound of humanity reaching out, asking if we’re alone. It’s the sound of Elio’s wondering if he’s alone. Loneliness is a big theme in this film. That concept became part of the DNA of the score. We created a theme tied to that signal, which becomes the sound of the response from the Communiverse—that we aren’t alone, that we’re part of something much bigger.”

**YES—THEY REALLY ARE WOODEN DOLLS**  
teenage engineering’s choir makes its feature-film debut in “elio”



The film’s extraordinary setting called for an extraordinary score that features unusual instrumentation and a choir of wooden dolls. Says executive producer Lindsey Collins, “This choir is amazing. They all have different names and each has a different voice, and you can get them to harmonize and sing. And the weirdest part of the whole thing is that Maddie Sharafian, one of our directors, told us her father is obsessed with them and owns four. They have really cool voices, and can sing choral pieces that Rob Simonsen composed. It really evokes a kind of alien choir.”

“We were looking for an otherworldly sound—something that sounded relatable, that echoed vocalizations, communication that humans could understand, but felt like it was from another world,” says Simonsen. “I came across these choir dolls and heard their sound. It was beautiful—electronic, but human. Each body is handcrafted. They have a robotic but organic sound at the same time. It felt like a perfect answer to what we were looking for.”

Swedish consumer electronics company teenage engineering is behind the choir, an ensemble of eight wooden dolls that come with a repertoire of choral classics—and, even better for Simonsen, they can perform original compositions. Each doll has its own characteristic vocal range—together, they can create quite a choral performance. “The concept of having wooden electronic characters perform in a world-class recording studio is fascinating,” says David Möllerstedt, vice president of teenage engineering. “It’s great to see a creative mind making good use of our tools.”

According to Möllerstedt, Simonsen reached out to the company when the choir’s unearthly sound struck him as a possibility for “Elio.” “He had a set of eight dolls and wanted to have as many as possible for his orchestra,” says Möllerstedt. “We were able to quickly get them two more sets to form a 24-piece doll choir. To make the recording work, we also had to supply a custom firmware to control the note distribution. Thankfully, a lot of the groundwork needed had already been done for an installation we did with the choir for the Art of Noise Exhibition at SFMOMA. Working closely with Rob’s team, we were able to get everything up and running in time for the recording session at the Sony Scoring Stage in Los Angeles. Our other instruments have been heavily used in movie scores and game audio, etc. For the choir, we did not expect to get this kind of exposure—we are constantly happily surprised with what people do with our products, so perhaps we should not be that shocked. We are looking forward to getting the full experience in a cinema when ‘Elio’ is released.”

According to Simonsen, the score focuses less on where Elio is—Earth or space—and more on the emotional needs of the story. The composer pushed the limits of creativity to accompany Elio on his mission. “There are a lot of moments using synths to create colourful arpeggios that function within the overall orchestration,” he says. “But we also take moments to feel large expanses with analogue synth washes and processed sounds from Buchla, Moogs and other synths. There was a lot of programming in it that

feels technical but also human. The washes are more about Elio's emotional landscape than literal outer space. Space itself gets treated more with orchestral sweep. The synths are used to reflect longing, memory and internal movement."

As the titular character, Elio received a special theme to spotlight his journey. "Elio's theme starts with a leap of a major 7th," says Simonsen. "It gives it this reaching quality, like he's looking for something just out of reach. It ties to memory, to family, to wonder. We used it throughout, sometimes in very subtle ways. It's one of those themes that hopefully grows in meaning the more it returns."

He created additional themes. "The Hylurgs have a kind of exaggerated war theme," he says. "It's aggressive and tribal, but there's a bit of humour to it. They're blinded by their own posturing, and the music reflects that without turning them into a joke. There are also smaller motifs for Elio's clone and for Glordon, his new best friend. Those are more playful, mostly done with synths. The Communiverse has a theme, too. It's simple, elemental. It functions almost as a response to Elio's theme, like a call and reply."

The score was recorded with an 85-piece orchestra at Sony. "We also recorded a 10-voice bass choir and a 24-doll 'celestial choir' using the teenage engineering vocal synths. That blend of acoustic and artificial helped shape a sound that felt emotional, strange and specific to the film."

While most scores feature some choir elements, Simonsen called on something truly unique for "Elio." "For the Communiverse, we used the teenage engineering choir dolls to give it an otherworldly quality—not quite human but still has this emotional quality," he says. "They're amazing little dolls. There's also a low male choir that reflects one of the more grounded, masculine forces in the story. Overall, it was about finding a sound world that felt unfamiliar and warm at the same time."

According to editor Anna Wolitzky, Simonsen's score hits all the right notes. "One of the things he is so incredibly good at is the emotion," she says. "He's really good at invoking all of our feelings."

Adds Simonsen, "There are moments of stillness where just a few notes hopefully land in the right place, and others where the orchestration opens up and takes us into something bigger. The final scene probably brings all of that together. It's cantered around Elio's theme, with a call back to the Communiverse signal. That moment feels like the full emotional arc coming into view. It's a great cinematic release."

## ABOUT THE VOICE CAST

**YONAS KIBREAB (voice of Elio)** is a talented 14-year-old actor from Los Angeles, Calif. Born and raised in L.A., Yonas discovered his passion for acting at just 8 years old.

Kibreab made his feature-film debut starring in the lead role of "Blood Moon," a Blumhouse TV horror movie. His growing list of credits includes a series-regular role in Disney's "Pretty Freekin Scary," a series-regular role in the second season of Netflix's Emmy®-nominated series "Sweet Tooth," and a recurring role in "Star Wars: Obi-Wan

Kenobi.” In addition to his on-screen success, Yonas has built an impressive career in voice-over acting. His credits include voicing the lead character Damian Wayne/Little Batman in the Emmy-nominated animated film “Merry Little Batman.” Yonas’ other credits in voice-over include series-regular roles in animated shows such as Disney Jr.’s “Pupstruction,” Apple TV+ “Slumberkins” and Warner Bros.’ “Bat Family.”

Beyond acting, Kibreab is a passionate musician who plays the piano and sings. In 2024 he released his first original song on Spotify.

When he’s not acting or making music, Kibreab stays active by running cross country, playing soccer and skating. His hobbies include watching movies, hanging out with friends and riding his bicycle.

**ZOE SALDAÑA (voice of Olga)** has steadily earned a reputation as one of the most versatile and respected powerhouses in the industry, with a remarkable career spanning more than 20 years as an actor and producer. As an Academy Award®-winning actress and the only actor in history to have starred in four films that have grossed over \$2 billion and the top three highest-grossing films of all time (“Avatar,” “Avatar: The Way of Water” and Marvel Studios’ “Avengers: Endgame”), Saldaña has remained constant in her passionate commitment to seeking compelling, indelible roles.

Most recently, Saldaña can be seen starring in Netflix’s award-winning Spanish-language musical crime comedy from Jacques Audiard, “Emilia Pérez.” The film premiered at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, where it took home the Jury Prize, with Saldaña receiving the best actress award alongside the female ensemble. Saldaña took home the coveted Academy Award® for best supporting actress at the 2025 Oscars® for her role as Rita in the film, in addition to winning Golden Globe®, Critics Choice, SAG and BAFTA awards for the same category. She could also be seen leading Marco Perego’s critically acclaimed short film “Dovecote,” which follows a woman’s final moments before her release from a seaside prison in Venice.

This year, Saldaña is also set to reprise her role of Neytiri in the third instalment of the Oscar®-winning “Avatar” franchise. Titled “Avatar: Fire and Ash,” the film is set to release on December 19, with two additional instalments to follow. In 2022, “Avatar: The Way of Water” shattered box-office records, including becoming the first pandemic-era film to reach \$2 billion at the global box office and securing its spot as the third-highest-grossing film of all time, following the first “Avatar” film from 2009, which remains the top of the list.

In 2024, she reprised her role as Joe McNamara for the second season of Taylor Sheridan’s undercover-CIA drama series for Paramount+, “Lioness,” where she leads a fantastic cast including Nicole Kidman and Morgan Freeman, as well as executive produces. Season one launched in July 2023 and became one of the most-watched global premieres on Paramount+, garnering nearly 6 million viewers combined on streaming and network television. The role has earned her a nomination for outstanding actress in a drama series at last year’s as well as the upcoming 2025 NAACP Image Awards. The same year, Saldaña lead and executive produced the independent film “The Absence of Eden,” which was directed by Marco Perego in his feature-film debut.

Past projects include Saldaña starring as trailblazing heroine Nyota Uhura in J.J. Abrams' hit "Star Trek" film franchise, beginning in 2009, and starring alongside Christian Bale, Casey Affleck and Woody Harrelson in Scott Cooper's 2013 crime thriller "Out of the Furnace." In 2014 she took on yet another iconic role with Gamora, the Marvel fan-favourite lethal alien assassin, in the blockbuster hit "Guardians of the Galaxy," reprising the role in the 2017 and 2023 sequels "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" and "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3," and again in the years to follow for "Avengers: Infinity War" and "Avengers: Endgame." In 2022 she starred opposite Ryan Reynolds, Jennifer Garner and Mark Ruffalo in Shawn Levy's "The Adam Project," which remains on Netflix's Top 10 most viewed films of all time. That same year, Saldaña led Netflix's limited series "From Scratch," based on Tembi Locke's best-selling memoir of the same name, which charted in Netflix's Top 10 in 84 countries. She also starred in 20th Century Studios' mystery-comedy "Amsterdam," directed by David O. Russell with an all-star ensemble including Christian Bale, John David Washington and Margot Robbie.

In a career that began with a breakout role in the 2000 film "Centre Stage," Saldaña's additional credits include "Crossroads," "Drumline," "Pirates of the Caribbean," "The Losers," "Takers," "Colombiana," the NBC miniseries "Rosemary's Baby," and the Academy Award®-nominated animated feature "Missing Link." She also lent her voice to the animated films "Book of Life" and "Vivo," as well as the Netflix limited series "Maya and the Three." She made her directorial debut in 2011 with the short film "Kaylien," part of the Glamour Reel Moments series.

Saldaña has taken a very active role as a producer, forming Cinestar Pictures along with her sisters Mariel and Cisely, with an eye toward reshaping the American storytelling landscape with a commitment to diverse, character-driven narratives that reflect the authentic fabric of contemporary society. Championing honest portrayals of women and a true depiction of today's America, Cinestar produces compelling, multicultural stories for a global audience. The company's first feature film was "The Honor List," from Lionsgate Studios, released in 2018. Since then, its projects have included the beloved hit family comedy series "The Gordita Chronicles" for Sony and HBO Max; the limited series "From Scratch" at Netflix with Hello Sunshine; two seasons of the Emmy®-nominated animal-kingdom docuseries "Mamas" for Roku Channel; "Meet Me in Paris," the first-ever unscripted romantic comedy feature, which quickly became the biggest Roku Original unscripted debut and the No. 1 reality title premiere in the history of the platform with the recently released second season, "Meet Me in Rome." Cinestar's work also includes the Disney+ series "Mpower," which spotlights several of the Marvel Cinematic Universe's most inspirational women heroes; the Taylor Sheridan-created spy-thriller series "Lioness" on Paramount+; the independent film "The Absence of Eden," directed by Marco Perego and starring Saldaña; as well as the upcoming action-survival film for Amazon Prime Video, "The Bluff," alongside the Russo Brothers. Cinestar also has projects in pre-production at Paramount, HBO, HBO Max, Disney+ and CBS.

In addition to her prolific acting and producing career, Saldaña founded BESE in 2018, a media company created to support and amplify the voices of the Latinx community by sharing real and untold stories of today's America. The spirit of BESE's mission extends to the partnership Saldaña launched with sportswear giant Adidas and Kohl's department store in 2020. The activewear athleisure collections, ranging in

sizes from XS to XXL, are meant to highlight, support and celebrate women of colour.

Saldaña received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2018 and was honoured with the Outstanding Achievement in Film Award by the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP) in 2017, for her impactful work to broaden representation of the Latinx community throughout Hollywood. She was recognized as one of TIME Magazine's Most Influential People of 2023.

Born in New Jersey and raised in Queens and in the Dominican Republic, Saldaña currently resides in Los Angeles with her husband and three sons.

**REMY EDGERLY (voice of Glordon)** was born and raised in Los Angeles. He has been a working actor since the age of 6, starting with commercials and quickly moving into the world of voice acting, voicing characters in animated shows like Disney Jr.'s "T.O.T.S.," Apple TV+'s "Pretzel and the Puppies," "Helluva Boss," Cartoon Network's "Summer Camp Island" and "Craig of the Creek," and many more.

He has also lent his voice to video games like "Kingdom Hearts III" and "Wattam" and animated features such as "Sing 2" and "Seal Team." He and his sister, Violet, enjoy creating projects together, from animated shorts to their own server on Minecraft.

Edgerly is an avid reader of science fiction, graphic novels, comics and manga, and loves playing video games once he's finished his school work. The son of a Venezuela-born mother, he is learning Spanish and one day hopes to be fluent. Other than that, he enjoys a good burger and fries (Burger Lounge being his favourite but In n Out will always do).

**BRAD GARRETT (voice of Lord Grigon)** is an Emmy®- and SAG Award®-winning actor, comedian and writer. He won three Emmys for his role as Robert Barone on the iconic television series "Everybody Loves Raymond" and received an Emmy nomination along with a Screen Actors Guild nomination for outstanding lead actor in a miniseries or movie for his portrayal of "The Great One" in the telefilm "Gleason."

Garrett most recently co-starred in the second season of ABC's "Not Dead Yet" and in the Apple TV+ series "High Desert," and guest starred in the Peacock series "Bupkis," following Pete Davidson's life. He starred in FX's "Fargo" (season 2) as well as in the Jim Carrey-produced Showtime series "I'm Dying Up Here" (season 2). He is also co-creator/executive producer with David E. Kelley on "Big Shot" (Disney+). In features, Garrett appeared in "Cha Cha Real Smooth" (Apple), directed by Cooper Raiff and starring Dakota Johnson, as well as "Wildflower" with Jean Smart and Dash Mihok, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. He also co-starred opposite Julianne Moore in "Gloria Bell" (A24), directed by Sebastián Lelio.

**JAMEELA JAMIL (voice of Ambassador Questa)** is a one-of-a-kind multi-hyphenate who works as an actress, writer, host and advocate. She was first seen on American television starring as Tahani in Mike Schur's Golden Globe®-nominated NBC sitcom

“The Good Place,” opposite Ted Danson and Kristen Bell. “The Good Place” went on to win Critics Choice Television, AFI, Peabody and Television Critics Association awards.

Jamil is the host of all three seasons of the TBS game show “The Misery Index” and served as one of the judges for three seasons of HBO Max’s hit competition show “Legendary.” In 2022 Jamil officially joined the Marvel Cinematic Universe, where she originated the first on-screen role of the Marvel villain Titania in the series “She Hulk: Attorney at Law,” currently streaming on Disney+. She also joined the cast of DC Comics’ animated feature film “DC League of Super-Pets,” voicing the role of Wonder Woman, as well as the “Star Trek” spinoff series “Star Trek: Prodigy,” voicing the role of Ensign Asencia, currently streaming on Paramount+.

In November 2022 Jamil joined the cast of comedy series “Pitch Perfect: Bumper in Berlin” in the role of up-and-coming pop star Gisela, currently streaming on Peacock. In 2024 Jamil guest-starred in “Poker Face,” a series created by Rian Johnson, which premiered on January 26, 2023, on Peacock. Jamil also launched “Bad Dates,” an original SmartLess Media podcast series she hosted and produced in partnership with Amazon Music and Wondery. The hilarious podcast debuted at No. 1 on the Apple Podcast Comedy Charts. In September 2023 Jamil starred as the story’s narrator in Netflix’s “Love at First Sight,” alongside Haley Lu Richardson and Ben Hardy.

Off-screen, Jamil is a powerful mental health activist. In 2018 she launched a movement and allyship platform called I Weigh—a platform and community of change makers who come together to share ideas, experiences and ultimately mobilize activism, exploring social issues that stem from mental health to climate change to the representation of marginalized groups. I Weigh publishes original content featuring interviews, editorial stories, BTS, mini docs, roundtable discussions, informational assets and more across Instagram, X and YouTube.

In April 2020 the “I Weigh with Jameela Jamil” podcast launched with Earwolf. In it, Jamil speaks to a variety of thought leaders, performers, activists, influencers and friends about their own experiences and stories with their mental health. With hilarious and vulnerable conversations, I Weigh amplifies and empowers diverse voices in an accessible way to celebrate progress, not perfection. The podcast has featured guests such as Gloria Steinem, Reese Witherspoon, Jane Fonda, Billy Porter, Demi Lovato, Tarana Burke and Alok Vaid-Menon to name a few.

**DYLAN GILMER (voice of Bryce)**, aka Young Dylan is a talented young actor and rapper. Gilmer was tapped by Tyler Perry himself to star in a Tyler Perry Studios/Nickelodeon collaboration, aptly titled “Young Dylan,” about a young rapper who moves in with his uncle and family with hilarious results. His show has been a tremendous success for Nickelodeon, receiving the largest ratings for a series premiere for the family network since 2017. “Young Dylan” the series is currently airing season 5. In addition to acting on the show, Gilmer penned the title song and writes other music for it. Currently, Young Dylan has two EPs, “Chosen” and “2nd to None,” and currently has a new single, “Mass Appeal,” which are available on all streaming platforms.

In 2021 Young Dylan appeared on the Kids’ Choice Awards and also was nominated for Favourite Male TV Star. Gilmer attended the KCOs again in 2024 and could be seen

walking the orange carpet. Gilmer has been working on his music and will be releasing some songs soon. He can be seen in a guest spot on Nickelodeon's "That Girl Lay Lay" as well. Gilmer was also a host on "The Kids Tonight Show," executive produced by Jimmy Fallon for Peacock. He can also now be seen as a host alongside Nate Burleson on Nickelodeon's "NFL Slimetime," a weekly football-highlights show. Gilmer is amazingly quick on his feet and professional. He "wowed the crowd" and the world and went viral for his post-game interview with Deebo Samuel after the Wildcard Game. He has been asked to work with various brands on campaigns. He has also voiced a role for a new series with more details to come. In his free time, Gilmer enjoys playing football, drawing, playing soccer and bike riding. He is represented by Artist Collective Entertainment and Rebel Creative Group.

**JAKE GETMAN (voice of Caleb)** is a prolific teen actor on the rise with over 60 credits and a versatile body of work spanning film, television, voiceover and commercials.

Getman booked his first professional acting role at age 6 and has continued to work steadily across genres. He is no stranger to the Disney family, with credits that include "Cheaper by the Dozen" on Disney+, "Just Roll with It" on Disney Channel, "American Dad!" on TBS & Hulu, "Cars 3 as told by LEGO Bricks" for Disney Consumer Products (with over 365+ million views on YouTube), and a voiceover role as Flounder from "The Little Mermaid" for a Disney project.

Getman's breakout role came as Ray Fitzroy on the Jules LeBlanc-led Brat TV series "A Girl Named Jo," where he played the younger brother of Addison Riecke's character. The series helped launch his early success with Gen Z audiences and influencer-driven streaming platforms.

Getman recently co-created, co-produced, and starred in "FLAGGED," a thriller/suspense ensemble short film made for the 2025 Easterseals Disability Film Challenge. The film's post-production sound was mixed at Waterman Sound Studio by owner Joe Schultz — a full-circle moment for Getman, who had previously recorded there for "Elio." Schultz generously donated his time and studio to support the project, spending nine hours with Getman, the film's editor and producer on the final sound mix.

Getman is currently featured in a national Apple commercial (Apple Intelligence – "Big Flex Son") and voices a character in the new streaming podcast "Montecito," now available on YouTube and all podcast platforms. He was also recently cast in a supporting role in "Rush Week," an upcoming independent horror feature in development.

Getman's past work includes a Lifetime Movie of the Week and multiple horror and thriller films, adding to a resume that balances commercial, mainstream, and independent projects.

Born in Los Angeles and raised in the Studio City area of the San Fernando Valley, Getman is an advocate for foster youth and those experiencing homelessness, drawing from his own early experiences in foster care. In 2019, he was one of the "Iron Man Kids" who presented Robert Downey Jr. with a Teen Choice Award — and was

surprised backstage when Downey serenaded him with “Happy Birthday,” a moment that later went viral on RDJ’s Instagram with over 3.6 million views.

Grimme-Preis award winner **MATTHIAS SCHWEIGHÖFER (voice of Ambassador Tegmen)** is one of Germany’s most successful actors and is quickly becoming an international phenomenon.

Schweighöfer was most recently seen in the film based on the incredible story of the R&B duo Milli Vanilli, “Girl You Know It’s True,” as singer and record producer Frank Farian. He was nominated in the best German actor category at the 2024 Jupiter Awards for his role in the film.

Schweighöfer was also recently seen in Christopher Nolan’s film “Oppenheimer,” Netflix’s “Family Switch” opposite Jennifer Garner, “Heart of Stone” opposite Gal Gadot and Jamie Dornan also for Netflix, and “The Swimmers” for director Sally El Hosaini.

A talented multi-hyphenate, Schweighöfer also discovered his love for being behind the camera and has gone on to direct multiple projects. In addition, he founded his production company, Pantaleon Film, with producing partner Dan Maag, which continues to be one of Germany’s preeminent production companies.

Born behind the Berlin wall, Schweighöfer has seen his last 10 films all reach No. 1 at the German box office. He is best known for his films “Der Geilste Tag,” “Der Nanny,” “100 Dinge” and “Vaterfreuden,” and his first English-speaking role and international film, “Valkyrie” alongside Tom Cruise and Kenneth Branagh.

Schweighöfer has continued working on international projects and produced, directed and starred in the first German-language Amazon Original Series, “You Are Wanted.” The series launched in over 200 countries and in 6 different languages. He also starred in and produced “Resistance” for IFC Films, which also stars Jesse Eisenberg, Ed Harris and Edgar Ramirez.

Schweighöfer directed, produced, and starred in “Army of Thieves,” the prequel to Zack Snyder’s “Army of the Dead,” in which he also starred in. “Army of the Dead” was viewed in over 72 million households and quickly became one of Netflix’s most viewed films of all time, and “Army of Thieves” became the No. 1 film on Netflix in 90-plus countries during its first week.

Upcoming, Schweighöfer will co-produce the film “The Life of Wishes,” alongside German director Erik Schmitt, based on Thomas Glavinic’s best-selling novel “Das Leben der Wünsche.”

Schweighöfer resides in Berlin.

**ANA DE LA REGUERA (voice of Ambassador Turais)** has been a constant presence in the top five Mexican films at the box office post-pandemic, with “Una Pequeña Confusión” (December 2024), co-starring Cristo Fernández and Juanpa Zurita, and the Netflix blockbuster “¡Que Viva México!” (2023).

De la Reguera created, stars in, writes and showruns the original comedy series “Ana” for Prime Video, which is based on her life and ran for three seasons. De la Reguera also starred in Zack Snyder’s “Army of the Dead” and “The Forever Purge,” the final instalment of the franchise for Universal. The actress joined the Netflix LATAM hit show “Ojitos de Huevo” for season 2 and appeared opposite Carla Gugino in the limited series “Leopard Skin” for Peacock.

De la Reguera will be seen in “Doce Lunas,” produced by Michel Franco, and “Elio” for Pixar. On television, she will guest star in “Papá Soltero” for VIX, and appear in the second season of “Mo” for Netflix. De la Reguera recently finished co-directing and starring in a feature film, details of which will be announced soon.

De la Reguera was previously a lead on the series “Goliath” for Prime Video, opposite Billy Bob Thornton. Her other television credits include “Twin Peaks,” “Narcos,” “Power,” “Eastbound and Down,” “The Blacklist” and “Capadocia.” On the big screen, she starred in “Nacho Libre” for Paramount Pictures alongside Jack Black, “Cop Out” for Warner Bros. with Bruce Willis, “Cowboys & Aliens” and “Everything, Everything” for MGM Studios.

De la Reguera has performed in plays opposite Demián Bichir, earning two awards from the Mexican Association of Theatre Journalists. She was also the face of Colgate Renewal in the U.S. for the Latin market in 2021 and collaborates with luxury brands such as Hublot, Fendi, Bulgari and Lancôme.

**ATSUKO OKATSUKA (voice of Ambassador Naos)** is a comedian and actress making waves across the globe with her one-of-a-kind humour, boundless energy, and infectious charm. Her highly anticipated second stand-up special, “Father”, is set to premiere in June on Hulu and internationally on Disney+. It follows the massive success of Okatsuka’s debut special “The Intruder” (HBO), which The New York Times called the “Best Debut Special of 2022” and Vulture and Variety named one of the “Best Specials of 2022.” Okatsuka’s unique style of comedy — blending joy with vulnerability and unforgettable storytelling — is captivating audiences worldwide.

Her 2024-2025 “Full Grown” tour was a massive success, selling out over 200 shows in more than 100 cities across 20+ countries. Okatsuka’s comedic antics continue to go viral, and clips from “The Intruder” have racked up over 100 million views. Her energy and humour earned her a spot on The Live List 2023 (in partnership with Paste Magazine, SARA Live, and The Black List). Whether it's her hilarious antics or her knack for being a trendsetter, Okatsuka’s impact is undeniable and widespread.

Outside of her stand-up career, Okatsuka is taking over Hollywood with roles in two films that debuted at the Tribeca Film Festival—“All That We Love” directed by Yen Tan and “Group Therapy” directed by Neil Berkely, produced by Kevin Hart’s Hartbeat Productions. She also wrapped filming “Outcome” (Apple+), a comedy featuring Jonah Hill and Keanu Reeves, and will make her Pixar debut in the upcoming film “Elio.”

Okatsuka’s viral moments are as legendary as her stand-up. From riding a Jeepney in the Philippines to starting the #DropChallenge that helped bring Beyoncé’s “Partition” back onto the charts, she’s a true queen of the internet. Her fans have even shown up

at her shows wearing wigs styled like her signature bowl cut — a testament to how deeply she connects with her audience.

Okatsuka is racking up awards and accolades. She took home a Gracie Award for Best Special in 2023 for “The Intruder” and was nominated for Best Comedian at the Wowie Awards. Variety named her one of the 10 Comics to Watch in 2022, and Vulture crowned her late-night debut on “The Late Late Show” with James Corden as a win.

On TV, she’s appeared in “History of the World Pt. II” (Hulu), “Room 104” (HBO), and “The Show Next Door with Randall Park” (ROKU+). She was recently featured on “This American Life” with Ira Glass, where she shared her inspiring immigrant story and talked about how she and her grandmother created the viral #DropChallenge together.

Okatsuka’s not just a comedy star — she’s a force of nature who’s teamed up with brands like Apple, Amazon Prime, Genesis, Priceline, Kind Bar, Secret Deodorant and Kikori Whiskey. And now, with “Father,” she joins the “Hularious” comedy family alongside Jim Gaffigan, Bill Burr, Roy Wood Jr. and Ilana Glazer.

Okatsuka is proof that humour has no borders. Whether on stage, in viral videos, or on screen, her distinctive bowl cut is hard to forget and will leave you wanting more.

**SHIRLEY HENDERSON (voice of Ooooo)** is a multi-award-winning actress, whose film and television career has made her a household name throughout the U.K. In 2023 Henderson was awarded an Outstanding Contribution by BAFTA Scotland for her contribution to film and TV.

Henderson was recently seen in Matt Winn’s “The Trouble With Jessica” alongside Rufus Sewell and Olivia Williams, for which she received a Scottish BAFTA for best actress in film nomination. Henderson can currently be seen on the big screen playing the iconic Jude in the Bridget Jones sequel “Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy.” She has recently finished filming “Summerwater” for C4 alongside Dougray Scott.

With a well-established film career spanning over two decades, she is perhaps most well known as Moaning Myrtle in the Harry Potter franchise and for her role as chardonnay-swilling sidekick Jude in the Bridget Jones franchise alongside Renée Zellweger. Henderson starred alongside James McAvoy in “Filth,” for which she was nominated for the BIFA’s best supporting actress award. She won multiple awards for her role in Juliet McKoen’s “Frozen.”

Henderson has a wealth of film credits, including Danny Boyle’s “Trainspotting,” Michael Winterbottom’s “Wonderland” and “24 Hour Party People,” Mike Leigh’s “Topsy-Turvy,” Shane Meadows’ “Once Upon a Time in the Midlands,” Lone Scherfig’s “Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself” and Jon S. Baird’s “Stan & Ollie,” to name but a few of the amazing filmmakers she has worked with. Henderson won over audiences in “Star Wars: Episode IX” in the fan-favourite role of Babu Frik. She played alongside Steve Coogan in “Greed,” which also saw her collaborate with Michael Winterbottom for the eighth time in her career.

Henderson has also starred in many television dramas, most notably the highly anticipated second series of Sally Wainwright's "Happy Valley" for the BBC. She won the Scottish BAFTA Award for best actress for Channel 4's "Southcliffe" and played the leading role in "The Taming of the Shrew" opposite Rufus Sewell for BBC. Henderson starred as the lead in "The House Across the Street," directed by Dominic Leclerc for Channel 5, and in 2025 starred in "Department Q" from Leftbank Pictures for Netflix. Henderson can also be seen starring in BBC's "The Nest" alongside Martin Compston as well as starring in the Mackenzie Crook remake of "Worzel Gummidge." In 2023 Henderson provided the voice for the Anzellans in the Disney+ TV series "The Mandalorian," created by Jon Favreau.

In 2018 Henderson returned to the stage, where she won an Olivier Award for leading actress in a musical for her critically acclaimed performance in Conor McPherson's "Girl from the North Country."

**NAOMI WATANABE (voice of Ambassador Auva)** is a global phenomenon with a ubiquitous presence across Japan. The multi-hyphenate successfully and simultaneously navigates the multiple facets of her career: comedian, actor, voice actor, model and fashion icon. Her star is rapidly rising, making her one of the most recognizable entertainers in all of Asia and quickly becoming one-to-watch in North America.

Watanabe made her debut as a comedian in Japan in 2007 and quickly gained notoriety through sketch comedy performances, and, most notably, her viral impersonation of Beyoncé, which garnered her the affectionate nickname the "The Japanese Beyoncé." She has since captivated audiences around the world with her viral performances and hilarious celebrity impressions, showcasing her talents as both a performer and a creator of original comedy.

The past few years have been monumental in Watanabe's career, following a move to New York City. In 2023, she produced and hosted the podcast "Naomi Takes America," in which she talked with Americans and made jokes and observations about the cultural differences and similarities between Japan and her new home. Later that year, she embarked on a seven-city tour, during which she took the show live, did a short stand-up set, and fielded questions throughout the show. The following year, she returned to the stage with "Stand Up with Naomi Watanabe" – a one-night-only special event at the Gramercy Theatre – that sold out both performances within an hour. Watanabe will be hosting a solo sketch comedy show in Japan.

Outside of her comedy, Watanabe has used her platform to become one of the most disruptive forces in the fashion and beauty space, by consistently shattering traditional industry standards through global partnerships and ambassadorships with top brands such as Adidas x Ivy Park, Gap, Marc Jacobs, Fendi and Hugo Boss, and her very own streetwear clothing line, Punyus.

Watanabe has been honoured as one of BBC's 100 Women in 2024 and was honoured with the Global Groundbreaker Award by Character Media at its 22nd Annual Unforgettable Gala. She has also been featured on Netflix's hit series "Queer Eye," in which she and Karamo gave tips on leading confident lives.

**BRENDAN HUNT (voice of Gunther Melmac)** is an award-winning actor, screenwriter and playwright living in Los Angeles, best known for co-creating the international hit Apple TV+ series “Ted Lasso” along with Jason Sudeikis, Joe Kelly and Bill Lawrence. He is also an ensemble member of the show, portraying Ted’s trusty assistant Coach Beard. In its first two seasons the show won consecutive Emmy® Awards for outstanding comedy series, a Peabody Award and many others.

A Chicago native and a veteran of sketch and improv comedy, Hunt had his first professional gig as performer and writer with Amsterdam’s notorious comedy theatre Boom Chicago, where he performed with Sudeikis, Seth Meyers, Jordan Peele, Ike Barinholtz, Amber Ruffin, Heather Anne Campbell and many more. His solo show about that experience, “Five Years in Amsterdam,” debuted at IO West in Los Angeles and went on to be performed at the Edinburgh Fringe, UCB LA, UCB NY, Second City etc., and the HBO U.S. Comedy Arts Festival.

In theatre, Hunt has twice been nominated for L.A. theatre’s Ovation Awards, winning one for best actor in a musical. His two plays, “Absolutely Filthy” and “The Art Couple,” both had sold-out L.A. runs, with the former winning best show at both the Hollywood Fringe Festival and the New York International Fringe Festival. His newest solo work, “The Movement You Need,” just completed a sold-out run at the Soho Playhouse in Manhattan and is eyeing a Broadway debut.

TV and film appearances include “Bless This Mess,” “Community,” “Parks and Recreation,” “Key and Peele” and the upcoming indie science fiction film “Terrestrial.”

His time in Amsterdam engendered in him a passion for the sport of football that would eventually prove to be life-changing, not only leading to “Ted Lasso” but also finding him as co-host of Apple News’ wildly successful World Cup podcast “After the Whistle” with NBC Sports’ Rebecca Lowe.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**MADLINE SHARAFIAN (Directed by)** joined Pixar Animation Studios as a story intern in 2013, and returned for a full-time position in May 2015 as a storyboard artist on the Academy Award®-winning film “Coco.” She also worked as a story lead on Pixar’s feature film “Onward.” Sharafian directed “Burrow,” the Academy Award-nominated short film that came out of Pixar’s SparkShorts program. “Burrow” released on Disney+ on December 25, 2020, along with Pixar’s Academy Award -winning feature film “Soul.”

Prior to Pixar, Sharafian worked at Cartoon Network as a storyboard artist and writer on the show “We Bare Bears.” She also created character designs for the pilot episode while she was attending CalArts.

**DOMEE SHI (Directed by)** began as a story intern at Pixar Animation Studios in June 2011, and was soon hired as a story artist on the Academy Award®-winning feature film “Inside Out.” Since then she has worked on the feature films “The Good Dinosaur,” “Incredibles 2” and the Academy Award-winning “Toy Story 4.” In 2015 she began

pitching ideas for short films, and soon was greenlit to write and direct “Bao,” which won the Academy Award for best animated short film. In her role as a creative VP, Shi is involved in key creative decision-making at the studio and consults on films in both development and production.

Shi made her feature film directorial debut with “Turning Red,” which was released on Disney+ on March 11, 2022, and was nominated for an Academy Award®.

Shi graduated from the animation program at Sheridan College, where she was fuelled by her love of anime/manga, Disney and Asian cinema influences that can be seen in her work to this day.

Shi was born in Chongqing, China, and resided in Toronto, Canada, for most of her life. She lives in Oakland, Calif., and notes that her love of animation is rivalled only by her love of cats.

**ADRIAN MOLINA (Directed by)** began at Pixar Animation Studios as a story intern in the summer of 2006. Since joining the studio full-time that fall, Molina has worked on the Academy Award®-winning feature films “Ratatouille” and “Toy Story 3,” and was a story artist on “Monsters University.” Molina served as the co-director and writer on “Coco,” released in November 2017. “Coco” earned a Golden Globe® for best animated feature film, and two Academy Awards for best animated film and best original song for “Remember Me.”

Prior to Pixar, Molina attended the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in character animation. Molina resides in the East Bay, Calif.

**MARY ALICE DRUMM (Produced by)** joined Pixar Animation Studios in 2009 as the associate producer of Pixar’s Academy Award®-winning feature film “Brave,” and continued on as associate producer on “The Good Dinosaur” and “Coco.”

In addition to her feature film work, Drumm has produced several Pixar CarsToons including “Bugged,” “Hiccups,” “Spinning,” and “Radiator Springs 500 ½.”

Prior to coming to Pixar, Drumm worked as digital producer on The Henson Company’s “Sid the Science Kid,” as a line producer on the feature film “Curious George,” and as an associate producer on Disney’s direct-to-video film “Cinderella II: Dreams Come True.”

Raised in Phoenix, Ariz., Drumm attended the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she studied media arts. Drumm lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**ROB SIMONSEN (Music by)** is a composer and solo artist, known for blending analogue synthesis and processed textures with orchestral colour and poignant melodies, crafting scores that feel both intimate and expansive.

His recent work also includes Darren Aronofsky’s Oscar®-nominated “The Whale”—

recognized by the Hollywood Music in Media Awards, the Society of Composers & Lyricists, and the Indiana Film Journalists Association—and Marvel Studios’ “Deadpool & Wolverine,” an HMMA sci-fi/fantasy nominee.

Earlier, Simonsen’s twin coming-of-age scores for “The Spectacular Now” and “The Way Way Back” earned a World Soundtrack Award “Discovery of the Year” nomination, and the International Film Music Critics Association has since recognized his work on “Nerve” and “Ghostbusters: Afterlife.”

Directors including Darren Aronofsky, Bennett Miller (“Foxcatcher”), Gavin O’Connor (“The Way Way Back”), Jason Reitman (“Ghostbusters: Afterlife”), Shawn Levy (“The Adam Project”) and the Duffer Brothers (“Stranger Things”) have turned to Simonsen for his distinctive emotional clarity. RogerEbert.com cited the “goosebumps” his music conjured in “The Way Way Back,” while Awards Radar called “The Whale” “my favourite film score of the year.”

Outside the screen, Simonsen explores narrative textures through his solo album, “Rêveries” (Sony Masterworks), and through The Echo Society’s sold-out interdisciplinary performances. He continues to illuminate character and story through sound that lingers after the final frame.