



ADVANCE

Disney and Pixar's original feature film "Luca" is a fun and heartwarming story about friendship, stepping out of your comfort zone and two teenage sea monsters who experience a life-changing summer. "This movie is about the friendships that change us," says director Enrico Casarosa. "It's a love letter to the summers of our youth—those formative years when you're finding yourself."

Adds producer Andrea Warren, "It's a magical coming-of-age-story. It's about remembering the people who shaped us along the way."

Set in a beautiful seaside town on the Italian Riviera, "Luca" is a story about one boy experiencing an unforgettable summer filled with gelato, pasta and endless scooter rides. Luca shares these adventures with his newfound best friend, Alberto, but all the fun is threatened by a deeply-held secret: they are both sea monsters from another world just below the water's surface.

"Luca is a shy, polite, introverted, rule-following kid who has a secret desire to see the world and learn all he can," says screenwriter Jesse Andrews. "But he's been told his whole life that sea monsters should never go above the surface of the water where all the interesting stuff seems to be happening."

So it's no surprise that Luca harbors a secret fascination with all things human. His curiosity is especially sparked when he discovers items that have floated down from the surface. "Luca knows nothing of the surface," says screenwriter Mike Jones. "So these items are glimpses of another world—as if it were an object of an extraterrestrial landing on Earth. He's a young imaginative kid, so when he meets Alberto—who has actual knowledge of these objects—it's incredibly intriguing to Luca."

Indeed, Alberto, a fellow sea monster, has ventured beyond the surface, making him the subject of intense respect as far as Luca is concerned—at least once he gets over the shock of it all. Because, it turns out, sea monsters have the ability to blend in with humans. "Alberto literally drags Luca out of the water and we



discover that these sea monsters have the magical ability to transform into human form when they're dry," says Casarosa. "Our inspiration was sea life like octopuses that are able to camouflage and change the way they look."

The result? Carte blanche to roam the land where humans dwell. And while Luca quite enjoys this freedom, he realizes that the danger his family has warned him about is not entirely unfounded. Their adventure has unlimited potential—as long as they stay dry. "If they get rained on or splashed, their secret could be revealed," says Jones.

Their sense of adventure—risks aside—is symbolized in large part by an image of a Vespa scooter that hangs in Alberto's hideout. "It represents escape, freedom, friendship and the promise of exploring the amazing world around them," says Andrews.

The Italian seaside setting was created in a stunning painterly style Casarosa championed, and stems from his childhood. "I had the luck to grow up in Genoa—a port city on the Italian Riviera," he says. "It's a very specific coast because it's really steep—the mountains rise up from the ocean. The towns are stuck in time—they're so picturesque. I always imagined them like little monsters coming out of the water."

Hence sea monsters—though, to be fair, the underwater creatures in "Luca" are not exactly scary. Inspired by the creatures they found in old maps dating back to the Renaissance, as well as scientific illustrations of fish from the region and Japanese dragons and serpents, artists created sea monsters that were believable, appealing and, importantly, expressive—because the story revolves around a burgeoning friendship between Luca and Alberto. "Their friendship brings out the best in Luca and gives him the confidence to spread his wings and take more risks," says executive producer Kiri Hart. "It's an absolutely lovely, heartwarming story about friendship and how our friends can unlock certain parts of us, giving us the opportunity to discover something about ourselves."

The voice cast features Jacob Tremblay as Luca Paguro, Jack Dylan Grazer as Alberto Scorfano, Emma Berman as Giulia Marcovaldo, Saverio Raimondo as town bully Ercole Visconti, Maya Rudolph as Luca's mom Daniela, Marco Barricelli as Giulia's dad Massimo, Jim Gaffigan as Luca's dad Lorenzo, and Sandy Martin as Luca's grandma.

From Pixar Animation Studios, "Luca" is directed by Academy Award® nominee Enrico Casarosa ("La Luna") and produced by Andrea Warren ("Lava," "Cars 3"). Executive producers are Pete Docter, Peter Sohn and Kiri Hart, and associate producer is William Reusch. The story is by Casarosa, Jesse Andrews and Simon Stephenson; Andrews and Mike Jones penned the screenplay. With a score by award-winning composer Dan Romer ("Beasts of the Southern Wild," "Superman and Lois"), "Luca" streams on Disney+ beginning June 18, 2021.



SEA MONSTERS, BULLIES AND FISHERMEN "Luca" Introduces New Original Characters

Disney and Pixar's "Luca" introduces a charming cast of characters that includes humans, sea monsters and sea monsters who look human when they're out of the water. Helping to bring them to life is a roster of voice talent whose adventurous spirit shines through the unique and colorful characters.

According to producer Andrea Warren, "Luca" called for a new approach when it came to recording. "It was an amazing, sometimes bizarre experience," she says. "We recorded everyone from their homes—and mostly from the closets in their homes. They were all so delightfully scrappy and willing to make it work during tricky circumstances."

Following are the key characters featured in "Luca."

LUCA PAGURO is a bright and inventive 13-year-old sea monster with endless curiosity—especially when it comes to the mysterious world above the sea. Although he's been warned his whole life that the human world is a dangerous place, he longs for something beyond his quiet farm life where he herds goatfish day after day. So when another sea monster with actual experience above the surface takes Luca under his fin, his eyes open up to a whole world of possibilities.

"He's never been to the surface," says director Enrico Casarosa. "When we meet him, he's beginning to feel that his world is a little too small for him. He starts to follow his nose a bit, venturing farther and farther from the underwater meadow where he takes care of the goatfish. Once a rule-follower, suddenly Luca is checking out an object that fell off a boat. That's how he meets Alberto."

According to production designer Daniela Strijleva, it took a year to design the character because they wanted to get to know him. "Enrico always wanted Luca to be a bit of an introvert and someone who was curious, but it took us a bit longer to figure out that Luca is a dreamer," she says. "He has a strong imagination and a really evolved inner life. That's when the character came to life for me."

Jacob Tremblay lends his voice to Luca. "There's an earnestness about him," says Casarosa. "He's a master at playing anxious and polite—someone who's timid and wants to please. He's an amazing actor."

ALBERTO SCORFANO is an independent, free-spirited teenage sea monster with unbridled enthusiasm for the human world. Expressive and gregarious, he is all about having fun, so inviting a fellow sea monster to hang out above the surface is a no brainer for Alberto. Besides, Luca is the perfect audience for Alberto's vast—albeit questionable—knowledge of all things human.



"I love characters who are so confident and, at the same time, so wrong," says screenwriter Mike Jones. "I think Alberto has a really deep sense of imagination and perhaps it's so powerful, it becomes the truth to him. His knowledge isn't always accurate, but it comes from an honest place."

According to story supervisor John Hoffman, Alberto's bravado is the perfect counter to Luca's hesitation. "If they were at a party, Luca would be the wallflower in the corner taking it all in," he says. "Alberto would be the guy on the roof jumping into the pool."

Jack Dylan Grazer provides the voice of Alberto. "There's something playful about Jack," says Casarosa. "He's the perfect troublemaker—a wonderful improviser. There's something so off-the-cuff in the way he acts, he's an amazing talent."

GIULIA MARCOVALDO is an outgoing and charming adventurer with a love of books and learning. She only spends summers in Portorosso, so she hasn't cultivated many friendships, which makes her an easy target of the town bully. But when two new kids show up who clearly need an ally, Giulia is more than happy to oblige—especially when they agree to team up with her in a local race she desperately wants to win.

"She is full of fire and very eager to defend these two strange boys from the town bully," says executive producer Kiri Hart. "Giulia is a very special character. She's certain about what she believes and she's bold in asserting those beliefs. She's also funny and lively—she has so much passion for finding out how the world works, she becomes a catalyst for Luca."

"We wanted her to look a little like Massimo, her father," says production designer Daniela Strijleva. "Her design—with her crazy red hair, crooked nose and giant fisherman's pants—reflects her strong will and sense of independence."

Following an extensive search, newcomer Emma Berman was called on to help bring Giulia to life. "Emma is such a cheerful, lively, giggly person," says producer Andrea Warren. "We'd all joke that we wished we could hang out with her a little bit every day because she just embodies joy."

ERCOLE VISCONTI is the bully of the small Italian town of Portorosso and repeat champion of the town's Portorosso Cup race. He's a Vespa-owning, pompadoured blowhard who believes that everyone loves him and enjoys watching him eat sandwiches. He has two worshipful followers, Ciccio and Guido, who accompany him everywhere, ready to do his bidding.



"Ercole was a lot of fun to write because he's a narcissist," says screenwriter Jesse Andrews. "But like most narcissists, he's incredibly insecure. He doesn't want anyone else stealing attention from him. He's a small fish who thinks he's a huge fish because the pond isn't very big."

Italian comedian Saverio Raimondo provides the voice of Ercole. "He really knew how to play that character," says Warren. He knew how to access that self-obsessed jerk we've all encountered at some point in our lives—he really hammed it up."

DANIELA PAGURO is Luca's loving mother who's determined to keep her son safe. She regularly warns Luca of the dangers beyond the sea and the land monsters who live there. Daniela is no pushover: If she thinks Luca is breaking her number-one rule—don't go near the surface—she'll go to great lengths to stop him.

"Luca's mom comes off as overbearing, but she just cares about her son a great deal," says story supervisor John Hoffman.

Maya Rudolph lends her voice to Daniela. "As a mother myself, I really wanted to make sure that Daniela's harshness was balanced with equal amounts of warmth," says Warren. "When we first talked to Maya about the role, she really related to the multiple roles that Daniela plays as a mother."

MASSIMO MARCOVALDO, Giulia's dad, is an imposing, tattooed, one-armed fisherman of few words. Luca and Alberto can't help but be intimidated by his formidable size and skill with a knife, but Massimo has a soft heart, especially for his daughter.

"While Luca's parents take Luca's curiosity for granted, Massimo wants Giulia to fly," says screenwriter Mike Jones. "And he leads by example. He was born with one arm, but he's capable of doing everything—he's not defined by it."

Theater actor Marco Barricelli provides the voice of Massimo. "He has that baritone booming voice that really can be used to intimidate," says producer Andrea Warren.

LORENZO PAGURO is Luca's well-meaning, but sometimes distracted dad who's very passionate about his hobby of raising prize-winning crabs.

Jim Gaffigan lends his voice to Lorenzo. "He's somebody who understands the role of a father," says Warren. "Jim has five kids and it's something he talks about a lot in his standup, podcasts and all of his work. He really embraced the role. And he and Maya Rudolph really brought a fun energy to Luca's parents."



GRANDMA PAGURO and Luca have an understanding. She sees the spark in her grandson’s eye, his longing for more, and celebrates it—albeit secretly. Grandma knows that breaking a rule or two is part of growing up, and she’s a little too happy to look the other way if Luca’s rebellious side should emerge. What his parents don’t know probably won’t kill them.

“Luca’s grandmother understands his desire to see the world,” says Andrews. “It’s possible she’s ventured beyond the sea a time or two in her day—sometimes that sense of adventure can skip a generation.”

Sandy Martin voices Grandma Paguro.

ITALY, SUMMERTIME AND SEA MONSTERS Filmmakers Create Stunning, Stylized Setting

Director Enrico Casarosa decided early on in the production that the film should feel as if it were from the point of view of 13-year-old Luca. To that end, the Italian seaside setting conjures an immediate sense of wonder. Completing the magical transformative feeling of escape director Enrico Casarosa envisioned is the carefree idea of summertime, a truly nostalgic era and a stunning painterly style. “The artist’s hand is something I think a lot about,” says Casarosa. “We try to bring some of that warmth and imperfection to the computer animation. And our story takes you to a place that’s fantastic, but also inspired by where I grew up.”

Casarosa, of course, grew up in Italy—specifically in Genoa. “I spent my summers in smaller towns along the coast,” he says. “The Cinque Terre is really close to where I grew up. These five little towns are lovely—stuck in time, really, because they’re so small. They’ve retained that old, seasoned look—so wonderful and picturesque. I moved to the U.S. in my 20s, and as often happens, the more you’re away from your roots, the more you value those roots.”

RESEARCH TRIPS

To soak up some of the characteristics Casarosa hoped to infuse into the film, members of the “Luca” production team trekked to the Italian coastline as part of two research trips. “We went through many different towns,” says the director. “You really need to go and feel the textures, the light, water, the age, the flavors. Food became a huge thing to try.”

Production designer Daniela Strijleva was happy to sample the local flavors. “The first thing we did was join Enrico’s parents for dinner,” she says. “Not only did we get to enjoy the food and study Italy, we also get to bond as a team and think about the creative process together.”



"We visited the places Enrico went as a child," Strijleva continues. "We watched him climb a 30-foot rock and dive in—realizing after the shock of it that he'd been doing it since he was a child. That extra layer of experiencing his memories and nostalgia really underscores his love of the place. And of course meeting people from the region—fishermen, locals—gave us so much to work with."

Adds Casarosa, "There are a lot of characters. These little towns have the usual suspects: there's the poet, the fishermen and the gossips."

TIMELESS SETTING

According to the director, the film is roughly set in the late 1950s, early 1960s—though the end goal is creating a timeless look. Filmmakers immersed themselves in Italian culture of the era to help capture the look they wanted. "I always felt there was something very lovely about the Italian Golden Age—the '50s and '60s. The cinema and the music of that time is iconic and special."

Production designer Daniela Strijleva agrees. "It's such an evocative, beautiful, romantic and timeless period," she says. "It was so well suited to this story, too. I not only wanted to learn more about this time in history, but I was also attracted to the charming approach and sensitive storybook style Enrico developed in response."

INSPIRATION

Other sources of inspiration include Italian myths, legends and lore—from tales of dragons to the story of a bell-ringing octopus that saved a village from a band of pirates. "Some of these tales were actually made up by fishermen," says Casarosa. "They'd find a great fishing spot and they didn't want anyone to take it over."

The look of the film—indeed Casarosa's artistry as a whole—is influenced by Japanese animation and artistry, specifically Japanese wood blocks. "Enrico would draw these sinuous simple shapes of reflections in the water that looked like traditional wood blocks," says Strijleva. "With that in mind, we were challenged with simplifying the look of a 3D film, which was super fun to do—hitting a certain level of caricature that's true to Enrico's style. It's very expressive and lyrical."





ENRICO CASAROSA (Director/Story By) joined Pixar Animation Studios in January 2002. He began as a story artist on "Cars" before moving on to work on the Academy Award®-winning feature films "Ratatouille" and "Up." He made his directorial debut with the Academy Award®-nominated short film "La Luna," which screened theatrically with "Brave" in 2012. He then went on to work on "The Good Dinosaur" and the Academy Award®-winning feature "Coco." Casarosa then turned his sights to his own feature film, and is currently directing Disney and Pixar's "Luca," which is set to release on June 18, 2021.

Casarosa found early influences in Japanese animation and grew up watching Japanese television series in Italy. Born and raised in Genoa, Casarosa moved to New York City in his twenties to study animation at the School of Visual Arts and Illustration at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Before coming to Pixar, Casarosa worked as a storyboard artist at Blue Sky Studios on "Ice Age" and "Robots." He also worked as a background designer and storyboard artist for a number of Disney Channel television series, including "101 Dalmatians" and "PB&J Otters."

Casarosa lives in Berkeley, Calif., with his wife, daughter and three chickens.

ANDREA WARREN (Producer) joined Pixar Animation Studios in 1998 as a marketing production assistant on "A Bug's Life." She moved on to be an art department coordinator for the Academy Award®-winning feature "Monsters, Inc.," and served as a digital painter for the Academy Award-winning feature "Finding Nemo." Warren accepted her first management role on the Golden Globe®-winning feature film "Cars" as the art department manager. Next, Warren served as production manager of the Academy Award-winning features "WALL•E" and "Brave." She made her producing debut with the short film "LAVA," and went on to co-produce the feature film "Cars 3." She is currently the producer on Disney and Pixar's upcoming feature "Luca," which opens on June 18, 2021.

Prior to Pixar, Warren interned on the Walt Disney Pictures feature "James and the Giant Peach," and was a web editor for JavaSoft.

Warren attended Westmont College, a liberal arts college in Santa Barbara. She grew up loving the art of storytelling in Sioux Falls, S.D., and drew early inspiration from "Babar" books, "The Muppets" and "Star Wars."

Warren lives in Alameda, Calif., with her husband and two children.

DANIELA STRIJLEVA (Production Designer) joined Pixar Animation Studios in 2008. She has worked on



several projects including the Academy Award®-winning features "Toy Story 3," "Coco" and "Toy Story 4." She also worked on "Monsters University," "The Good Dinosaur" and "Onward," in addition to several short films, including Academy Award® nominees "La Luna" and "Day and Night." Strijleva is currently the production designer on Disney and Pixar's upcoming feature film "Luca," which is set to release on June 18, 2021.

As a production designer, Strijleva oversees a team of artists and designers in creating the visuals for the film based on the director's vision. The art that she manages touches all aspects of the production, beginning with the characters and their stories to the environments, graphics, effects, lighting and color design. Strijleva collaborates with her technical counterparts in the final execution and translation of these ideas to the screen.

Prior to Pixar, Strijleva was part of the Canadian animation industry, working in 2D animation for TV commercials and at the National Film Board of Canada.

Spending her early childhood in Bulgaria, Strijleva moved with her family to Montreal, Canada, and was an avid film lover from an early age. She went on to study classical animation at Sheridan College in Toronto before moving to the United States.

MIKE VENTURINI (Animation Supervisor) joined Pixar Animation Studios in 2000 as an animator on "Monsters, Inc.," and has since contributed to many of Pixar's Academy Award®-winning features, including "Finding Nemo" and "The Incredibles." He worked as a directing animator for Academy Award®-winning films "Up" and "Ratatouille," and acted as the supervising animator on the Academy Award®-winning films "Toy Story 3" and "Coco." He also contributed as an animator on a number of films, including "Incredibles 2," "Toy Story 4" and "Onward." Venturini is currently the animation supervisor on Disney and Pixar's upcoming feature film "Luca," which opens on June 18, 2021.

Prior to coming to Pixar, Venturini was a 2D animator at Warner Bros. where he worked on a variety of films, including "Space Jam," "The Iron Giant" and "Osmosis Jones." He also spent some time at DreamWorks working on "Road to El Dorado."

Venturini grew up in Paso Robles, Calif., and graduated from Vancouver School of Animation (VanArts) in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in 1995. He lives in Lafayette, Calif., with his wife and three children.

BETH ALBRIGHT (Character Supervisor) joined Pixar Animation Studios in January 2009. She has worked on several projects as a character shading and groom technical director, including "Monsters University," "Finding Dory" and "Incredibles 2." She also worked on the Academy Award®-winning features "Toy Story 3," "Brave" and "Coco." Albright was recently the visual effects supervisor on the SparkShorts film "Wind,"



which is now streaming on Disney+. She is currently the character supervisor alongside Sajan Skaria on Disney and Pixar's upcoming feature film "Luca," which opens June 18, 2021.

As a character supervisor, Albright manages the characters team comprised of modelers, riggers, shaders, and groomers, who work together to fulfill the director's vision for each character. Working closely with the art department, Albright helps to realize their designs and bring the characters to life. Collaborating with the animation department, she ensures each character has the ability to perform in a wide array of actions that support the artistic performance for the film. Albright partners with the lighting and simulation teams to help evolve both the technical and artistic intention of the art department's vision into final film frames.

Prior to Pixar, Albright worked for a 2D animation company for 10 years as a color stylist and assistant art director on films including "Space Jam," "101 Dalmatians II," "The Fox and the Hound II" and the award-winning short film "The Indescribable Nth."

Albright grew up in Columbus, Ohio. She attended the University of Notre Dame where she received a BFA in 1998, and the Ohio State University where she earned an MFA in 2009.

Albright resides in Oakland, Calif.

SAJAN SKARIA (Character Supervisor) joined Pixar Animation Studios in 2001 as a technical director on "Finding Nemo." He has since worked on several features including the Academy Award®-winning films "Ratatouille," "Wall•E," "Toy Story 3," "Inside Out" and "Toy Story 4," as well as Golden Globe®-winning "Cars" and Golden Globe-nominated "Cars 2." Skaria is currently the character supervisor alongside Beth Albright on Disney and Pixar's upcoming feature film "Luca," which opens on June 18, 2021.

As a character supervisor, Skaria manages the characters team comprised of modelers, riggers, shaders, tailors and groomers, and supports the director's vision for each character's development. His team collaborates with the artists and animators at Pixar to craft and develop an appealing and iconic cast of characters.

Raised in Kerala, India, Skaria surrounded himself with Disney animation, Tintin and Asterix comics, focusing on the lines and brush strokes that brought characters to life on the page. Skaria served as a software engineer at Siemens in Bangalore, India, before moving to the United States in 1998. He earned a graduate's degree from Texas A&M before joining Pixar.

Skaria resides in Bay Farm Island in Alameda, Calif.



JON REISCH (Effects Supervisor) joined Pixar Animation Studios in September 2004 during the production of Golden Globe®-winning feature “Cars.” Early in his career, Reisch contributed to effects development and shot work on Academy Award®-winning features “Ratatouille” and “Up,” and Golden Globe®-nominated “Cars 2.” Reisch then served as the effects supervisor on the feature films “Monsters University,” “The Good Dinosaur” and “Cars 3,” and also lead effects on the Academy Award®-winning short film “Bao” that played before “Incredibles 2.” Reisch is currently the effects supervisor for Disney and Pixar’s upcoming film “Luca,” which opens June 18, 2021.

As effects supervisor, Reisch works closely with director, production designer and the director of photography for lighting to help craft the visual language of the effects in the film. Part of the challenge for his team on “Luca” was embracing the wonderful hand-crafted feel of the film and supporting that aesthetic and storytelling with each of their effects elements. With more than 800 effects shots on “Luca,” Reisch also worked closely with visual effects supervisor, the Pixar Tools team, the RenderMan team, and Disney Research to ensure that his effects team had the technology and pipeline necessary to deliver stylized effects across the entire film. Reisch also provides daily artistic and technical direction for his team throughout the course of shot production.

Reisch has received three Visual Effects Society Awards and two nominations, both for his individual contributions on “Ratatouille” and “Up,” and as part of the filmmaking team representing “The Good Dinosaur,” which won outstanding visual effects in an animated feature film in 2016. Reisch was previously nominated for the same award as part of the “Monsters University” and “Cars 3” teams. ASIFA/Hollywood also recognized Reisch and his effects team on “The Good Dinosaur” with an Annie Award in 2016. He was previously nominated for an Annie Award for his work on “Ratatouille,” “Cars 2” and “Cars 3.”

Attending Texas A&M University, Reisch graduated Summa Cum Laude with a bachelor’s degree in environmental design, and continued his education in the visualization sciences graduate program. Reisch resides in Walnut Creek, Calif., with his wife Angelique and their two children Rose and Dylan.