



PRODUCTION NOTES

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 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. "There's a big misunderstanding between humans and sea monsters," says Jacob Tremblay, who lends his voice to Luca. "They all fear each other. Sea monsters strictly avoid the surface, and humans are eager to hunt down sea monsters and prove they exist."

Luca and Alberto embrace their new surroundings with one caveat top of mind: 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 story, set in the late 1950s-early 1960s, captures the magic and adventure of summertime. 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—slimy, creepy creatures aren't the director's storytelling sensibility. "Sea monsters are a metaphor, really, for feeling different or excluded," says Casarosa. "I love the sense that all of our characters in some way feel different or unusual. Luca and Alberto so passionately want to be part of this other world—but they fear they won't be accepted as they are. And yet, they love being sea monsters."

Adds Warren, "There's a lovely theme about wanting to be a part of something outside of our immediate families—wanting to experience cultures beyond our own. Luca discovers the power of exploring and celebrating another culture, while learning to honor and share his own."

Inspired by the creatures from 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 Paguro, Marco Barricelli as Giulia’s dad Massimo Marcovaldo, Jim Gaffigan as Luca’s dad Lorenzo Paguro, Gino La Monica and Giacomo Gianniotti as local fishermen, Sandy Martin as Grandma Paguro and Sacha Baron Cohen as Uncle Ugo.

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. The film is told from 13-year-old Luca’s perspective—a key to the storytelling that drives every decision, including camera, says director of photography David Bianchi. “It was really important for us to keep the camera in a very child-centric point of view,” he says. “Our motto was boom down, tilt up.”

According to character art director Deanna Marsigliese, who is a first-generation Italian Canadian, the look of the characters was inspired by many things, among them historical Italian photography, the “monstri marini” aka sea monsters of antique maps, the handmade quality of world folk art, the rich textures of scientific illustrations and, of course, the loose, playful quality of director Enrico Casarosa’s drawing style. “I wanted our designs to have an organic, textural quality – charmingly imperfect and playful, yet sophisticated,” says Marsigliese. “This is a story told from a child’s point of view, so it was important to reflect this in the characters’ designs as well. I took cues from children’s artwork and the directness with which they draw. You’ll notice a lot of strong, bold shapes and really fun proportions.”

Marsigliese adds that each character embodies a unique short-hand, paired with a hero feature—one that represents how the character engages with the world around them. “Luca is a circle with large, searching eyes,” she says. “Alberto is a bean with an over-active mouth. Giulia is a fiery triangle, led by a sharp nose. Strong, simple foundational shapes provide the perfect canvas for our fine details and rich textures.”



Animators embraced Casarosa's love of Japanese animation. "We were able to explore a different style that's less physically based and more playful, caricatured movement," says animation supervisor Michael Venturini. "For our characters on land, it's big, graphic poses and faster timing. That's a contrast to what we do in the water where you can't ever hold still. There's a little more poetry to the motion underwater, which is fun to watch."

BOLD & DECORATIVE: SEA MONSTERS

To create the look of the sea monsters, artists studied medieval depictions of sea monsters that appeared in the Carta Marina—a Renaissance map dating back to 1539—as well as sea-monster sculptures throughout Italy, seen on fountains and benches, and even mosaicked on the ground. "I really wanted these designs to be unique, a departure from their medieval depictions," says Marsigliese. "However, I also wanted to stay true to their decorative origins. You'll notice beautiful, irregular scale patterns—as if carved by hand. You'll see different kinds of facial fins, scalloped crests, sharp spines and webbing, and curlicues within the tails. And as our sea monsters age, these features only grow bigger and bolder. They're beautiful creatures, and combined with their iridescence and gorgeous colors, could pass for pieces of costume jewelry."

Adds color & shading art director Chia-Han Jennifer Chang, "On all of the sea creatures, we played with lots of patterns like scallops with their scales. They have a handmade quality. In terms of color, they represent the Mediterranean sea—the blues and turquoises—with an iridescent quality."

Chang says the sea-monster color palette is as bold and saturated as that of the human world, "but on the opposite side of the spectrum."

According to character supervisor Sajan Skaria, the sea monsters' hair paddles were complex. "It's the sea-monster version of hair," he says. "They're individually modeled and they move around."

Since the animation team had no reference footage of real sea monsters to help establish how Luca and his underwater family would move, they pulled reference footage of salt-water iguanas. "We looked at how their tails move when they swim," says animation supervisor Michael Venturini. "Iguanas use their tails in a left right pattern, not up and down like a dolphin, and their arms and legs drag behind while they swim."

The iguanas, however, didn't wear clothing, so filmmakers had to figure out how to dress the sea monsters in a way that fit their environment. According to simulation supervisor Henry Garcia, his team worked closely with the characters department to get it right. "The sea monsters make their clothing out of seaweed—so it's like woven kelp—with almost fringe-like bits all over that move as they float and swim," says Garcia. "We actually have to move it around, so there are a lot of wind fields and other methods to push and pull the 'cloth' to get that tidal sway you'd expect underwater. Nothing is ever static—everything is alive and moving, and it takes a lot of effort to make sure it feels right and isn't distracting."



JUST ADD WATER: TRANSFORMED

The ability to transform from sea monster to human not only opens the door to Luca's life-changing adventure—it serves as subtle explanation. "It's an adaptation—like camouflage," says director Enrico Casarosa. "It explains why sea monsters haven't been noticed in this world for centuries."

Filmmakers had to figure out how to showcase the incredible transformation from sea monster to human and back again in a fun and organic way. They were inspired by observing squids and octopuses and how they change the color of their skin. Given concept art and parameters driven by story, technical teams worked toward giving artists the flexibility to craft each transformation according to story needs—dictating details like the origin and speed of the transformation. The end result—developed through the collaboration of multiple teams, including art, tools and global technology, characters, effects, animation, simulation and lighting—is stylized, specific and seamless.

"We had to develop very specialized technology on this film to make that happen," says animation supervisor Michael Venturini. "Those shots, on a technical level, are complex, so we had to be really mindful of when we'd show the transformation."

Coordinating models were created and rigged for both versions of the character—sea monster and human—so each transformation could begin with one and end with the other. "In a way, it was building two main characters at the same time," says Skaria, who adds that the tail posed some challenges since it only appears on one version of the character.

According to character supervisor Beth Albright, the transformation had to be both physical and—at times—emotional. "Enrico really wanted the transformation to be something that's happening to the character, rather than a suit that slides on or off of them," she says. "It had to be internal—something that the character would react to—but nothing that felt creepy. We opted for a transformation that would ripple through the body."

Adds Skaria, "Once we realized that it comes from the inside of the body—it's not an external thing—everything came together. We started with the octopus reference and built on that. We were able to do it so that animators could see it happening in real time as they're animating."

Adds Venturini, "Animators had several controls. We could choose the direction of the transformation and the speed in which it happens. A character who's air drying would have a slower transformation, for example, than one falling into the water. We also have characters shake the water off like a dog, or partially transform—their feet are the only things in the water. We used the storytelling moment of the film to dictate what the transformation would look like."



Simulation supervisor Henry Garcia's team added special touches to amplify the event. "During transformation, the clothing has a little bit of magical wind inside it—it billows out to indicate to the audience that something big is happening. We do something similar with the hair and paddles—when the paddles come in or the hair grows out, we add a bit of a pop to it so there's movement there."

GIVING VOICE: RECORDING TALENT IN A NEW WORLD

Helping to bring all of the characters 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 sometimes from the closets in their homes. They were all so delightfully scrappy and willing to make it work during tricky circumstances."

CHARACTER ROSTER

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 first. "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 also 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."

Animation supervisor Michael Venturini says Luca's look reveals a big part of his personality. "He has very big, round eyes," he says. "Those eyes are very expressive—they take in the world."

Simulation supervisor Henry Garcia says Luca's hair—like all of the hair in the film—called for a more stylized approach. "I told every team member that came on our show to throw away all of that industry knowledge about how to make hair beautiful and start over."

Garcia says the approach to hair is consistent with the rest of the film's aesthetic—attention to detail in one area, while keeping it simple in others. "For Luca, we chose one specific detail—what we called his



croissant—his front curl that kind of bops around with a beautiful lyrical quality to it,” he says. “But if you look at the rest of his hair, there’s not a lot of motion there.”

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

Tremblay says he has a lot in common with his character. “I can get pretty nervous sometimes,” says the actor. “But, like Luca, I’m able to overcome that. I also have an amazing imagination like Luca. I relate to that a lot.”

According to director of photography David Bianchi, filmmakers kept top of mind the idea that the story is being told from Luca’s point of view. “The thousand-foot view is that this film is a portrait of a child that becomes more intimate as his confidence grows, ultimately getting us all really close to Luca as the third act evolves. We wanted to match the camera plan with Luca’s arc—objective and wide at first, then leaning in and getting closer as he meets Alberto and then Giulia.”

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.”

Screenwriter Jesse Andrews says Alberto’s boldness is exactly what Luca needs to get out of his comfort zone. “During development, Luca always had this anxious, naysaying voice in his head,” says Andrews. “He would get excited about something, but then talk himself out of it. So I realized that a friend like Alberto might see that, give the voice a random name—Bruno—and create the perfect way to quiet Luca’s fears: ‘Silenzio, Bruno!’”

Alberto’s boisterous personality is showcased in the character’s design. “He has a big chin and a large mouth,” says Venturini. “And while Luca sports a narrow stance with his arms at his side, Alberto has broad



shoulders, a wide stance and his chest out. We tilt his nose up to show his confidence, too. He struts when he walks.”

Jack Dylan Grazer provides the voice of Alberto. “There’s something playful about Jack,” says director Enrico 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.”

According to Grazer, his natural ability to portray Alberto is probably because he’s a lot like his character. “Alberto is fearless, funny, determined and eager to see what he’s capable of doing,” says Grazer. “I definitely have a lot in common with him—always trying to create something new, always finding the fun.”

The character not-so-coincidentally shares a name with Casarosa’s childhood best friend, with whom he spent summers on the coast of Italy. “I was around 12 when I met him,” says Casarosa. “I was a timid and shy kid, while Alberto was a bit of a troublemaker and an extrovert. The experience of having someone push me out of my comfort zone was something I really wanted to talk about.”

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.”

Artists were eager to showcase Giulia’s bold and passionate personality in her look. “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.”

Giulia’s attire—especially her pants, which filmmakers imagine were once her father’s—are quirky and original—like Giulia. But the size of the pants presented the simulation team with a challenge. A physics-based process, simulation adds the motion to hair, vegetation, flags and garments. But, according to simulation supervisor Henry Garcia, “Luca” leaned away from the real-life look a simulation pass can deliver. “This is a very different looking film,” says Garcia. “A simulator adds the folds and wrinkles and movement that you’d expect garments to have. But Giulia’s pants are so big and baggy—there would be a lot of movement and folds that don’t work with the style of the film.”



Filmmakers invested a lot of time and effort up front to adjust the simulation process and simplify the look of garments following a simulation pass. As a result, Giulia's pants have less movement, fewer folds and wrinkles, and a look that fits the look of the film.

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 wish we could hang out with her a little bit every day because she just embodies joy."

Berman happily infused the character with that joy. "Giulia is a really awkward, quirky, goofy and determined character," says Berman. "I relate to her because we're both pretty outgoing, we love to make new friends, and we like to learn new things and go on adventures."

"It's easy to get into her head," continues Berman. "I live in the excitement of the moment of voicing a character for Pixar. And all of that excitement just goes straight into my heart."

Showcasing how every department contributes to storytelling, Giulia's bold and joyful nature is reflected in the shot compositions. "When Giulia is introduced, she literally wedges herself between the boys and Ercole—separating the bully to screen right with the boys screen left," says director of photography David Bianchi, whose team is responsible for layout. "In fact, many of our compositions and blocking with Giulia involve her physically inserting herself in between the two boys—sometimes as a helper, sometimes as a wedge, which supports the developing story."

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 producer Andrea Warren. "Saverio is such a nice guy, but he knew how to access that self-obsessed jerk we've all encountered at some point in our lives—he really hammed it up."

Raimondo was particularly pleased to be working with a fellow Italian native. "Enrico Casarosa is an inspired director," he says. "When we were recording, he played all the other characters to help me do my best in



every scene. Being Italian has helped us to have the same references and suggestions. I hope the audience loves the summer magic of my beautiful country.”

According to color & shading art director Chia-Han Jennifer Chang, filmmakers imagined that Ercole comes from a wealthier family from this small town. “We represent that in color and shading,” she says. “Nobody else in town is wearing a dark blue palette with the contrasting magenta.”

Director of photography David Bianchi says that Ercole’s extreme confidence called for an adjustment to camera—mostly kept at a child’s eye level in “Luca.” “The camera looks down on Luca when Ercole enters, strengthening the notion that Ercole is the antagonist and a real roadblock,” says Bianchi.

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

Adds Rudolph, “I’ve definitely seen my mama bear come out when necessary with my children, so that was a pretty easy element of Daniela to relate to. When your children are pushing boundaries, you want to show them that you love them, but you’re serious. That can be an incredibly difficult balance, but one that every parent understands. Daniela has a very sweet, recurring mantra with Luca, saying, ‘You know I love you, right?’ I think that’s really important for her character because she is not embarrassed to show how strong she is, and she’s not embarrassed to show how much she loves her son.”

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.”



Character supervisor Beth Albright says the team created a unique rig for the character. “We took great care to craft the shoulder and upper arm, because it’s important in the way he moves,” she says. “Whether he’s sitting down, standing up or walking around—we want him to do it like someone with one arm.”

Broadway 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.

According to Barricelli, conveying Massimo’s contrasting qualities came naturally. “I grew up in a very Italian family where passions were high—as was the decibel level at times,” he says. “But the love was never in doubt. Hearts of gold were everywhere around me. I know these kinds of people.”

Barricelli, a graduate of Juilliard and former artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz among other classical accolades, says his history proved useful. “Having a background in acting Shakespeare is actually extremely useful for voice work,” says Barricelli. “Shakespeare, remember, wrote for an audience that was coming to the theater to *hear* a play, so the language had to fill in for whatever may be lacking visually on the Elizabethan stage. His words, his language, directed the actors and created the spectacle the audience experienced. So, getting a script from Pixar, so well written, and setting one’s imagination and voice to the words is, at least for me, very similar to working on a Shakespeare role.”

LORENZO PAGURO is Luca’s well-meaning but sometimes distracted dad. He’s not as tuned in to his son’s growing fascination with land monsters as his wife is. But Lorenzo loves Luca deeply—he’d even trek to the dangerous human world to find his wayward son if needed.

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.”

Adds Gaffigan, “From a parent’s point of view, it’s a story about giving up control—loving a child so much, you let them become who they want to become.”

But, continues Gaffigan, “Luca” is about a lot of things—from friendship to finding your own path and how that affects your friendships. “That’s what’s so amazing—it’ll hit different people in different ways. It really captures a childlike imagination and a love of learning.”

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."

Adds story lead McKenna Harris, "Luca's relationship with Grandma is very sweet. They are simpatico—partners in crime, but on the downlow. I think Grandma really sees Luca—possibly more than his mom and dad."

Sandy Martin voices Grandma Paguro. "I think Sandy really has the perfect voice and gruffness for Grandma," says producer Andrea Warren. "We always joked that Grandma had a lot of grunting in her lines—but there's also a sweetness between her and Luca. There's a little moment I love when he sneaks out a window—she knows it, but keeps it to herself and covers for him. She wants to see him grow by experience."

UNCLE UGO, perhaps Luca's strangest and most bizarre relative, emerges from the deepest part of the ocean to help Daniela and Lorenzo convince Luca of the dangers of the surface. Like Luca, Ugo once wondered about the world beyond the surface. But following a near-death encounter, he learned to steer clear, relocating to his deep-water home where it's pitch dark, bitterly cold and far, far away from the scary humans above the sea—just the way he likes it.

"Ugo has been living in the deep for so many years that he's completely lost all color," says director Enrico Casarosa. "He's become transparent—a sea monster angler fish of sorts. Luca's parents are threatening to send him to live with Ugo to keep their only son from the dangers of the surface, so Uncle Ugo represents the worst thing that could ever happen to Luca. He is rather creepy, waxing lyrical about the unbelievable pressure, darkness and floating carcass of the deep water."

Sacha Baron Cohen lends his voice to Uncle Ugo. Says editor Catherine Apple, "Sacha is an improviser. He wanted to try a bunch of approaches to see which one worked—his ability to change from one to the next was really wonderful. But it was hard to decide which way to go—and the scene got a little bigger once he recorded."

According to animation supervisor Michael Venturini, Uncle Ugo's deep-water digs are evident in his appearance. "He's lost much of his vision from living in the darkness," says Venturini. "His eyes don't really focus when he's talking to Luca. He's not very energetic in how he moves—he floats."

TOMMASO and GIACOMO are dedicated fishermen who find themselves in the middle of a heist of sorts, as various objects, including a phonograph, begin disappearing from their boat. But who is behind this thievery? Portorosso is a fishing town at its roots, and fishermen love to tell tales—especially about the supposed sea monster they saw early one morning before the sun came up.



Sea monster aside, the star of the show is easily the phonograph, says sets supervisor Chris Bernardi. “The team put a lot of love into it to make it feel of the time and place,” he says. “It’s really an old-fashioned notion that these fishermen are listening to an opera while they’re out on the water. It becomes a through line as we follow the phonograph to the bottom of the sea—and from there, all the way to Alberto’s hideout.”

Gino La Monica and Giacomo Gianniotti lend their voices to the old and young fishermen, respectively.

MACHIAVELLI is Giulia’s sweet-natured pet cat—sweet natured to humans, that is. When Machiavelli meets Luca and Alberto, he immediately senses there’s something fishy about them. And he loves the taste of fish.

“Machiavelli is the first character in the movie to sense—and eventually confirm—that Luca and Alberto are, in fact, sea monsters,” says story supervisor John Hoffman. “He causes some problems for them until they realize that the suspicious cat can be bribed.”

According to crowds technical supervisor J.D. Northrup, Machiavelli is not the only cat in the movie. Filmmakers observed during their research trips that fishing villages seem to draw cats—lots of them. “We kept getting notes throughout the film to add cats into shots,” says Northrup. “It almost became a joke, ‘Could we get some more cats?’”

CROWDS

The crowds team ventured beyond feline crowds characters, populating Portorosso—land and sea—with people, fish, sea monsters and birds. Says Northrup, “The story of crowds in this film is that Luca starts out in this sheltered, underwater existence where the water is murky—you can’t see very far—his world is closed. As we progress through the film, the horizon keeps opening up, so when you get above the water and into the village, we wanted to convey a feeling of freedom and opportunity. In many cases, we helped sell that by having other people or creatures populating those places.”

Like the rest of the film, the crowds characters were stylized—embracing an illustrator’s mentality. “Enrico [Casarosa] is deeply inspired by Japanese animation,” says crowds animation supervisor Lindsay Andrus. “The shaping of our character poses, as well as the timing of our animation, is driven by his personal style and influences. We hold poses for longer. There’s more design involved. It’s been really fun and liberating for the animators to get a chance to do something a little bit different and fresh.”

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

Filmmakers Venture to Italy to Soak Up Culture (And Eat Pasta);



Italian History and Japanese Artistry Provide Additional Inspiration

Filmmakers at Pixar Animation Studios embrace deep and diversified research in an effort to infuse each film with authenticity. Whether it's the cobwebs added to the corners of the antique store for "Toy Story 4," or the seasoned gum markings on the sidewalks of Manhattan for "Soul"—it all begins with research.

Director Enrico Casarosa grew up in Italy, and "Luca" was born largely of his own childhood memories. He wanted to introduce the production team to the aspects he most treasures, while allowing them to discover special characteristics themselves, so artists trekked to the Italian coastline as part of two research trips. "It was so important to go there to be able to portray the essence of the place," says Casarosa. "It's a very special place—the mountains and the sea, the big hills—it's a wonderfully specific place that we needed to experience together, both for teambuilding and for the layers of detail that we can add to our movie. It seems in these coastal towns, there's always a trattoria, a gelato shop, a wonderful bar where you can have coffee. It was really fun to be able to bring that feeling of specificity and Ligurian vibe to the background of our film.

"We went through many different towns," continues 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. They needed to try focaccia di formaggio di recco. They had to visit the right bakery in the right town."

Production designer Daniela Strijleva was happy to sample those 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 got 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."

Strijleva, who lived in Italy as a child, soaked it all up. "These people are unique—resilient. Some of the regions were so remote and inaccessible for so many centuries, there's a strength and resilience of the inhabitants of these towns that you still see today. They're all a little more reserved than some might think. The timelessness of this place and the people is really palpable."

According to the production designer, the research trips were invaluable. "It's one thing to look at the pictures of the Cinque Terre, and it's another thing to go and experience it," says Strijleva. "You see not just the color palette, but the way the sun hits the buildings and the water. The color of the Mediterranean



water—that blue—is so incredibly deep and gorgeous. It’s difficult to describe. When you dive under, it has these beautiful aqua tones that we absolutely had to capture. And then you go to the town and its warm tones—we really wanted to hit that difference. The buildings are in various shades of terra cotta, peach and yellow. We even studied the exact warm-toned reds of 1950s and 1960s Vespas.”

Director of photography Kim White was also among the filmmakers who went to Italy. White, who headed up the team of lighting artists, also paid careful attention to the color palette. “I had a sense of what Enrico wanted us to see in terms of stylizing the water and the look of the buildings,” says White. “I went to Italy with a long list of what I wanted to capture—photographs of the water at different times of day, the atmosphere at the coastline, the way the light looks between the buildings, and so on. I brought back a treasure trove of images that I was able to share with the lighters. It was extremely useful to gather my own reference.”

David Bianchi agrees. The director of photography in charge of camera and layout says he had three main take-aways. “One—there are no straight lines anywhere,” he says. “There are no roads, alleys, walkways or even buildings that have 90-degree angles. When we thought about how to stage a bike race, for example, we realized we’d never have straight shots.

“Two—as you travel along the coast by train, you find yourself in a dark tunnel, popping out of the darkness into the light in a beautiful, quaint, almost magical little seaside Italian village,” continues Bianchi. “To me, it was a great metaphor about transformation.

“The third thing I noticed was the sounds—ocean waves and church bells everywhere,” he adds. “No matter what you’re doing, there are constant reminders of where you are in the world.”

INSPIRED: ITALIAN HISTORY & JAPANESE ANIMATION

Filmmakers’ research included delving into 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, so they’d make up scary stories.”

Italian pop culture also provided valuable reference. “We looked at the Italian Golden Age in the 1950s and 1960s—cinema, music and design—there was something very lovely and timeless about that period,” says Casarosa. “I’ve always been a big fan of Italian cinema. It was really fun to study those old movies—share them with everyone.”

According to producer Andrea Warren, the team wanted to have a solid understanding of Italian history, inviting a professor from Berkeley to the studio. “This is a period film,” says Warren. “We wanted to capture



an honesty to the era, no matter how stylized we were making it. He drove home the simplicity of the time and place—basic clothing, kids running barefoot.”

While the Italian setting is clearly a nod to Casarosa’s roots, the look of the film—indeed, the director’s artistry as a whole—is also influenced by Japanese animation and woodblocks. “We knew we wanted to make something different using a few reference points,” he says. “Many came from 2D animation that I loved as a kid. I grew up in Italy but watched a lot of Japanese cartoons in the 1980s. Woodblock prints—beautiful simplifications of reflections, for example—are intriguing and appealing. They seem to inspire much of the Japanese animation and watercolors I admire—so we spent a lot of time looking at that.”

Adds Strijleva, “Enrico would draw these sinuous simple shapes of reflections in the water that looked like traditional woodblocks. 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.”

That approach extended throughout the production, including lighting, effects, layout and camera. Says director of photography David Bianchi, “We tried to incorporate 2D camera moves to underscore the hand-drawn essence of the film. It still feels like a CG film, but you can sense the hand of the artists touching it.”

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 Luca’s point of view. To that end, the Italian seaside setting conjures an immediate sense of wonder. Completing the magical transformative feeling of the main character’s escapism 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 grew up in Genoa, the capital of the Italian region of Liguria. “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 twenties, and as often happens, the more you’re away from your roots, the more you value those roots.”

According to color & shading art director Chia-Han Jennifer Chang, the palette of the setting was influenced by the era—but enhanced to reflect the unique point of view. “We wanted to capture the idea that it’s a



child's memory of that summer, so everything is way more vibrant—bigger and more saturated than reality," says Chang.

TIMELESS

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," says Casarosa. "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 wanted to learn more about this time in history, and I really loved the charming approach and sensitive storybook style Enrico developed in response."

THE MAGIC IS IN THE DETAILS

Filmmakers combined elements from their research trips with Casarosa's artistic influences and—in true Pixar style—anchored it all in the needs of the story. A closer look at details like the approach to water and the individual sets, showcases how it all comes together. "We wanted to bring a certain warmth, texture and handmade quality to the film," says Casarosa. "We want to capture the bright colors—the beautiful blues of the sea and the sky. We really amp up saturation in this movie. I love to bring an organic feel to the overall look—like a painting or a sketch—that's still immersive and very rich. We want to take people there."

Director of photography Kim White adds, "Enrico likes a lot of color, so we paid careful attention to the color in the final frames. In many sequences there was a fair amount of saturation in the lighting, but for some props we'd desaturate the lights on them to allow their local color to come through more. This was especially the case when the warm lighting would muddy the color of some of the cool props. Controlling the colors in the final frame this way helped the movie have more of a painterly feel. Also, the many of the colors of the props were carefully chosen to be indicative of the time period that the movie was set in and we wanted to let those speak up."

Artists utilized dappled light and what they called shadow fringe to add texture to shot compositions, and used lighting and color to showcase the summertime vibe, too. "Sometimes we would expose for the shadows and let the background get really bright and blown out," says White. "It helped us convey summer and heat."

DIVING IN

Luca's family lives in a modest underwater home where they farm kelp and herd goatfish. According to director of photography David Bianchi, filmmakers wanted to make this underwater world appealing—but not too appealing. "This is where we meet Luca and learn pretty quickly how much he thinks about life beyond



the surface," says Bianchi. "How do we make that location something that our protagonist would want to leave?"

Creating the water for any Pixar film is extremely collaborative—and major technical advances have been made over the years. But filmmakers couldn't just replicate the work done in films like "Finding Dory" or "Finding Nemo." "They take place in different parts of the world," says White. "The color of the water off the coast of Italy is specific to that place and we wanted to capture that authenticity and use it to help tell Luca's story.

"We went swimming while we were in Italy and recorded a lot of reference so we could get it right," White continues. "The density of the murk underwater we noticed and used to help build a feeling of isolation for Luca. Objects recede and soften quickly in that region as you get farther away from the camera. Also the color palette below water is more restrained than on the island or in town and we were able to use that palette to help Luca's underwater environment feel limited."

Luca's underwater home is modest to reflect the idea that they're farmers—and tucked away to underscore that they prefer to stay hidden from humans. Don Shank, sets art director, spearheaded the design of the Paguro home. "It entailed about a year and a half of trying every possible permutation of ways that underwater characters could live," he says. "We found that in Puglia, which is in the central part of Italy, there are houses built of dry-stacked stones called trullo. We tried to riff on those, adapting them to the underwater world. We liked the round shapes of the houses with conical roofs, so we played with that. We wanted the characters to be able to swim around naturally and not just move horizontally like humans, so we made it a split level."

Adds fellow sets art director Paul Abadilla, "The underwater world shape language is mostly round, curvy, and organic. For example, the way vegetation is dressed around the home is motivated by wavy water currents. We don't see rectilinear shapes until we go to Portorosso."

Beyond Luca's abode, says Abadilla, is the meadow, which plays an important role. "The underwater meadow is really the threshold for Luca," he says. "It symbolizes him living in two worlds. Anything beyond the meadow is unknown—forbidden. So it's like his last safe space – the rocky walls that encircle the open field of seagrass provide him a place to hide."

Building on that idea, Bianchi's team used only two wide-angle lenses for all underwater shots. But they still needed to convey motion in the shots, so they dove into the project—literally, creating the actual motion of the camera by tracking themselves in the Pixar pool. "We rented gear, built trackers, filmed ourselves and put it into the computer," he says. "Two lenses and a repetitive shot pattern give way to a completely different approach when Luca emerges from the water."



BREAKING THROUGH

While Luca's underwater world called for a restrained approach, the look of the sea from the surface is stylized and inspired—in part by Japanese woodblock prints, stylized animation and graphic novels. The end result targets specific areas for detail. It's not supposed to look photoreal because it's meant to be Luca's memory of the water versus actual water.

Visual effects supervisor David Ryu says the effects and lighting teams had to figure out how to coerce a water surface into the desired shapes. "We wanted to create a more illustrative picture," he says. "That boiled down to building layers of stylized water looks. The effects and lighting teams developed a technique that would allow artists to control the detail in a reflection, allowing for a simpler, more stylized look.

"We also wanted to incorporate the patterns we see in the ocean due to wind or underwater formations," Ryu continues. "A patch of turbulent water here and a band of calm there—artists can use those elements as a compositional tool. Our team developed a few recipes—choppy water that pushes triangular shapes, calm water with curved shapes. We could paint big swaths in the frame like brush strokes to compose an ocean pattern."

For "Luca," the water above the surface was so stylized, filmmakers ultimately created a look that Pixar had never done before. "It was a really involved process," says effects supervisor Jon Reisch. "We had to first find the look of the ocean, then decide how to push the stylization of the water when it interacted with characters and with splashes."

Adds Ryu, "We wanted to handcraft splashes that could be pasted on the simulated water surface."

The lighting team tackled the look of the reflections on the surface of the water as well. "We tried to capture the simplified and sinuous shapes of the reflections that we found in Japanese woodblock prints," says director of photography Kim White.

LOOKING UP

Much like the water, the color of the sky was important to filmmakers—both to convey the summertime setting and to help keep the movie colorful. "Even when we were exposing for the shadows we didn't wash out the sky since it was part of the style to keep rich color in it," says White.

Adds set extension supervisor Matthew Webb, whose team added volumetric clouds, "We needed to bring our A-game because Luca's never seen clouds before. When he first comes out of the water—after he panics—there is a nice moment with the wind going through the trees and the clouds slowly drifting."

Webb and his team had to find the look of clouds to best fit in the stylized world of "Luca." "Typically, a cloud has a range of colors on both the sunlit side and the shadow side," he says. "On the lit side, we



grouped those colors together. There's nuance and detail, but it's more graphic. We just used one color on the shadow side."

HOME WITH A VIEW

Once Alberto is able to coax Luca out of the water and demonstrate that he is not only safe but able to see a whole new world—the sun, the sky, birds—he shows off his hideout—a reclaimed old Roman tower that was long-ago abandoned. "It's falling apart," says sets supervisor Chris Bernardi. "The stairs are broken, so Alberto's built a ladder up to the one floor that still exists—barely."

Story lead McKenna Harris says, "It tells two stories: it hints at what might be a troubling backstory for Alberto, but on the other hand, it's every kid's dream to have a place of their own where imagination rules. We all want to hang out there. It's charming and, at the same time, a little rough around the edges."

"It's a classic kids' clubhouse—a place where everything is possible," adds screenwriter Mike Jones. "It's where you collect things and build grander, better things from that. In Alberto's case, he collects human artifacts—and of course they're going to build a Vespa, because that's the symbol of freedom and adventure to these boys. Alberto has probably been looking at this poster he found forever, hoping he would one day find a real Vespa, but then Luca comes along and looks around Alberto's hideout and says, 'Why don't we just build it?'"

Filmmakers wanted to ensure that the hideout felt like a teenager's room. "Alberto's hideout is a bit of a mess," says Bernardi. "He collects junk—a broken mandolin, a typewriter, lanterns, toasters, a hammer—and the space is pretty tight. We were challenged with figuring out how much stuff we could actually jam in there to make it look busy but not draw attention away from Luca and Alberto."

Graphics art director Josh Holtsclaw, whose team was behind the Vespa poster, tapped into his inner child to draw the image the boys create to prep for their homemade Vespa. "Enrico and I went back and forth to get it just right," says Holtsclaw. "It had to communicate an evolution of their friendship in only a few seconds of screen time, so it is heavily art directed even though it looks like a child's drawing."

Showcasing that growing bond was essential. For director of photography David Bianchi, those sequences in Alberto's hideout and beyond called for a specific approach to camera. "We let the camera become almost a sidekick to the boys during those early adventures," he says.

WELCOME TO PORTOROSSO

Although the town of Portorosso is entirely fictional, the feeling it conveys of the Italian Riviera is familiar—a nod to the Cinque Terre in Liguria, Italy, says sets supervisor Chris Bernardi. "The town itself really tells a story," he says. "These old stucco buildings that have been worked on and improved. There's a pescaria, a



gelateria and a foccaciaria. There's an old restaurant and a new one. The church is on the square near the cinema.

"It's a fishing town with nets and boats—the locals' relationship to the sea is important," continues Bernardi. "And there's a handcrafted charm to the whole thing. We exaggerate certain characteristics to get that look—both in the shape and color of things."

Sets art director Don Shank adds, "There's a patchwork quality to the real-life buildings in the Italian Riviera—it feels like a bunch of building blocks. If you looked at these villages from above, you'd see no right angles. It's all trapezoids, which became a guiding idea in the design of our town. Instead of arbitrarily tweaking angles to get a wonky look we developed these principles of lean, sag and twist so that the quirky angles were rooted in a history and aging of the structure."

As Luca's world opens up and his excitement rises, so too does the approach to production. Director of photography David Bianchi purposely reserved more dynamic camera moves for the sequences in Portorosso. "We don't have any crane movement or dollies until we get into town," he says.

Kim White, director of photography in charge of lighting, was fascinated with the narrow streets and alleyways. "I brought home from Italy pictures of the way the light fell between the buildings and bounced off of them," she says. "I wanted to capture the beautiful quality of the light in town and the interesting shadow compositions that I saw there."

Explains visual effects supervisor David Ryu, "Enrico really wanted us to inject color and texture into the edge of a shadow. It turned out to be pretty difficult because of the way we render now—shadows are just a byproduct of having something blocking the light. Our RenderMan team developed a technology that allowed us to detect those shadow edges and to be able to insert color and texture in just those areas. It's a pretty subtle effect and a good example of what we've peppered in to take the CG edge off."

Graphics art director Josh Holtsclaw ensured that the signage that appears throughout the town fits in with director Enrico Casarosa's stylized vision. "It's trickle-down inspiration," says Holtsclaw. "We look at the character design, the set design, and do graphic design that looks right in that world."

The trick, says Holtsclaw, is for the signage to complete the world—without being distracting. "The characters should have the highest contrast—the extreme value range—so that your eyes are drawn to Luca or Alberto when they're in the environment. For the set and graphic design, the contrast and values sit somewhere in the middle so they can recede while Luca comes forward."



Holtsclaw's team handles a wide range of elements—from space books and newspaper clippings, to the map of the race that appears on a pasta box. All signage in the film is in Italian, adding authenticity. "It's a subtle but constant reminder that we're in Italy," says Holtsclaw.

THE SKY IS LEAKING

For Disney and Pixar's 2019 feature "Toy Story 4," artists and technicians spent many hours developing the system behind the dramatic rain sequence at the beginning of the movie. But for "Luca," filmmakers wanted a different, less photoreal look. "We took all that great work and used it as a jumping-off point," says effects supervisor Jon Reisch. "For 'Luca,' the scale was different—our characters are human-sized. And Enrico's references suggested more of a two-dimensional look."

Since the ultimate look was not as physically based, the effects team had to figure out how to create a two-dimensional look in a three-dimensional system. "We had to rethink our approach—and use our tools to hit those stylized notes," says Reisch.

MAKING MUSIC

Composer Dan Romer Tapped to Create Stage-Setting Score

Ever since Randy Newman's memorable music in "Toy Story" more than 25 years ago, filmmakers at Pixar Animation Studios have embraced the power of music to help tell their stories. For Disney and Pixar's "Luca," director Enrico Casarosa turned to composer Dan Romer to help set the stage and convey the youthful point of view of the main character, Luca. "I've been a fan of Dan since his work on 'Beasts of the Southern Wild,'" says Casarosa. "I love his style—his accordion skills—and his ability to blend his style with the nuances of Italian music for this score."

As he developed the story in "Luca," Casarosa was inspired by the music from the Italian Golden Age. According to Romer, however, the director wasn't necessarily looking for era-specific music. "Enrico didn't want a score that felt like it was actually made in 1950s-'60s Italy," says Romer. "He wanted something that felt like more of a nod, or a memory, than something that felt historically accurate. He told me what he really wanted was a more Italian-sounding version of the style of music I already make, which was very exciting and freeing!"

The composer got game-ready with playlists of Italian music, compliments of Casarosa and a few Italian friends. "I listened to those playlists on loop for a while to get those harmonies and styles to feel second-nature," says Romer.



Romer leaned into those Italian sounds—infusing his signature accordion, as well as mandolin and nylon-string guitar. But with a cast of characters that includes sea monsters, he knew he'd have to change it up a little below the surface of the water. "The score is a bit dreamier under the sea, and less Italian," he says. "We didn't necessarily want the two worlds to feel completely different, we're always following Luca's heart, and the score is always meant to be from his point of view."

Indeed, Romer kept top of mind the idea that the story is Luca's story—brought to life through the friendships he makes with Alberto and Giulia. The score therefore includes special themes for each of the three friends. "Enrico and I spent a lot of time bouncing melodies back and forth between us, since we felt the score wanted to be extremely thematic," says Romer, who created themes for both characters and situations. "We wanted the three kids' themes to each have their own unique sound but feel close enough harmony-wise so that we could switch between them easily in a single piece of music. Since the kids are so interactive and their relationships are so colorful, we wanted to be able to have call and response between their themes in a way that felt seamless."

The composer especially liked working on the film's dream sequences where Luca soars to great heights—feeling the freedom he craves. "They called for the most lush instrumentation, and usually the most wild rhythms," he says. "These were also the moments that call and response between themes worked the best."

According to producer Andrea Warren, the music—which includes Romer's score as well as some licensed songs—is designed to enhance the storytelling. "The music is rooted in the emotion of the film," she says. "It really drives the feeling of this place. We wanted to transport the audience to this seaside escape from the very beginning, and Dan's score helps us do just that."



ABOUT THE VOICE CAST

JACOB TREMBLAY (voice of Luca Paguro) garnered international recognition for his breakout performance opposite Brie Larson in the critically acclaimed, Oscar®-nominated film "Room." Directed by Lenny Abrahamson, the film was adapted from the international best-selling book by author Emma Donoghue. Tremblay received the breakthrough performance award from the National Board of Review,



a Critics' Choice Award from the Broadcast Film Critics Association for best young actor and a nomination for outstanding performance by a male actor in a supporting role by the Screen Actors Guild, among other accolades, for his performance in the film.

Following "Room," Tremblay starred in Stephen Chbosky's box-office hit "Wonder," based on the New York Times best-selling novel by R.J. Palacio. Tremblay plays Auggie Pullman, a young boy born with facial differences, who begins at a mainstream school for the first time. Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson and Mandy Patinkin co-star in the film, which received critical acclaim around the world.

In 2019 Tremblay starred in Universal Pictures' "Good Boys," produced by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg and directed by Gene Stupnitsky. Tremblay stars opposite Keith L. Williams and Brady Noon as one of three sixth-grade boys who ditch school and embark on an epic journey, while carrying accidentally stolen drugs, being hunted by teenage girls and trying to make their way home in time for a long-awaited party. The film originally premiered at the 2019 SXSW Film Festival to critical acclaim and went on to be a box-office hit.

In September 2018 Tremblay starred in "The Predator" opposite Boyd Holbrook, Olivia Munn, Keegan-Michael Key and Sterling K. Brown. Shane Black directed the Twentieth Century Fox reboot of the sci-fi action franchise "Predator," which premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival just prior to its wide release.

That same month, Tremblay starred in Xavier Dolan's "The Death and Life of John F. Donovan," which also premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival. The film co-stars Kit Harington, Natalie Portman, Susan Sarandon and Kathy Bates, and follows an American movie star who finds his correspondence with an 11-year-old exposed, prompting assumptions that begin to destroy his life and career.

Tremblay began his career in 2010 when he was featured in several commercials. At 5 years old, Tremblay quickly transitioned to the big screen when he was cast in Raja Gosnell's "The Smurfs 2." In the film, Tremblay plays the young son of Neil Patrick Harris and Jayma Mays.

Additional film credits include Colin Trevorrow's "The Book of Henry" and the psychological thriller "Shut In," both opposite Naomi Watts; "Burn Your Maps," opposite Vera Farmiga; and a cameo in Mike Flanagan's recent film "Doctor Sleep."

On the small screen, Tremblay has appeared in an episode of Jordan Peele's reboot of "The Twilight Zone" for CBS All Access. He also voices the titular role of "Pete the Cat" in Amazon Prime's television adaptation of the New York Times best-selling children's books. He was also recently seen as a young Justin Bieber in the music video "Lonely," which has been seen over 98 million times on YouTube.



Next, Tremblay will star as the voice of Flounder in Disney's live-action film "The Little Mermaid" opposite Halle Bailey, Awkwafina and Melissa McCarthy.

JACK DYLAN GRAZER (voice of Alberto Scorfano) can currently be seen starring as the lead in Luca Guadagnino's new HBO series, "We Are Who We Are."

In addition, he stars opposite Rainn Wilson and Mena Suvari in the dramatic indie thriller "Don't Tell a Soul." The film follows two young thieving brothers (Fionn Whitehead, Grazer), with a cancer-stricken mother at home (Suvari), who match wits with a security guard (Wilson) trapped at the bottom of a forgotten cistern.

He is best known for starring as the asthma-afflicted Eddie in the horror films "It" and "It Chapter Two," for which he received an award for best on-screen team at the 2018 MTV Movie & TV Awards. His other credits include playing a younger version of Nic Sheff (Timothée Chalamet) in Amazon Studios' "Beautiful Boy" opposite Steve Carell and "Me Myself and I," as young Alex.

When Jack isn't busy filming, he spends time spreading awareness for STOMP Out Bullying, where he became the ambassador for the organization in 2019. He is an avid supporter of the Adderley School, where he formed the Jack Dylan Grazer Scholarship Fund for two underserved students each year.

In his spare time, he enjoys skateboarding, playing the flute, filming skits with friends, writing and hanging with friends.

Newcomer **EMMA BERMAN (voice of Giulia Marcovaldo)** got her start at the age of 8 when she landed her first job voicing toys for the educational toy company LeapFrog. Gaining attention from her voiceovers, Emma went on to lend her voice to more toys from Playmates Toys and Spin Master before appearing in educational media for Stanford Children's Hospital and print advertising for MasterCard/American Airlines. The 12-year-old actress is currently eagerly awaiting release of two projects that fans will love.

Currently residing in San Francisco, the seventh grader is active in the professional theater scene in the Bay Area. Most recently she has played Baby June in Bay Area Musicals' production of "Gypsy" and received rave reviews for her performance, including one critic saying, "Berman shows the benefit of wide experience for such a young actress, and might well be described as a prodigy" and another stating, "Emma Berman as the crackerjack younger June who might even steal this show." She also played Ivanka in 42nd Street Moon's production of "Once," which won best musical of the year at the Bay Area Theater Awards, and was part of the American Conservatory Theater's production of "A Christmas Carol" for two years.



As a young performer dedicated to her craft, Emma studies on an ongoing basis with acting coach Melinda Darlington-Bach and dialects coach Bettina Devin on her British and Italian accents, but the actress also speaks fluent Russian as she grew up in a bilingual household. Additionally Emma has trained in New York with A Class Act and Broadway Artists Alliance.

Outside of acting, Emma continues to live a fast-paced life, always keeping busy. She loves to draw, bake and race go-karts with her older brother and has been a regular at Sonoma Raceway over the last few years. In college, Emma wants to study to become a storyboard artist and director and hopes to one day work at Pixar. She is also a huge fan of the app Calm and would love to read books on tape for it, like two of her favorite actors, Mandy Moore and Kate Winslet.

SAVERIO RAIMONDO (voice of Ercole Visconti) is an Italian standup comedian, writer, actor and television host. His comedy special "Il Satiro Parlante" ("The Talking Satyr") is on Netflix.

MAYA RUDOLPH (voice of Daniela Paguro) is a two-time Emmy® Award-winning actress, who has established herself as a captivating, versatile performer across comedy, drama and music.

Rudolph is most widely known for her turn on NBC's "Saturday Night Live," where she was one of the show's regular players for over seven years, as well as her various television projects and film appearances. Since her debut on SNL in 2000, Rudolph's memorable portrayals included Oprah Winfrey, Kamala Harris, Whitney Houston, Donatella Versace and Beyoncé as well as such recurring sketches as "Wake Up Wakefield" and "Bronx Beat." In September 2020 Rudolph won an Emmy® Award in the category of outstanding guest actress in a comedy series for her portrayal of Kamala Harris on SNL.

She also stars in the film "The Mitchells vs. The Machines," an animated comedy Netflix released on April 30, 2021.

On the television front, Rudolph can currently be seen as a recurring guest star on NBC's "Saturday Night Live," portraying Vice President Kamala Harris. In addition, she continues to recur on multiple animated series. She can be seen starring in season 2 of the Fox animated series "Bless the Harts." Created by Emily Spivey, the show debuted in September 2019 and was very quickly renewed for a second season. Rudolph continues to voice the fan favorite Hormone Monstress on Netflix's animated comedy series "Big Mouth" alongside Nick Kroll, John Mulaney, Jordan Peele, Fred Armisen and Jenny Slate. Her performance earned her an Emmy® Award for outstanding character voice-over performance at the 2020 Emmys. She was recently seen on NBC's "The Good Place" as Judge, and her performance earned her 2018, 2019 and 2020 Emmy nominations for outstanding guest actress in a comedy series. Also, in 2020, Rudolph narrated the Hulu series "Eater's Guide to the World," which premiered on November 11.



Rudolph was recently seen in the film "Hubie Halloween," a Halloween comedy from director Steven Brill. She starred alongside Adam Sander. Netflix released the film in October 2020. Additionally, in 2020, Rudolph voiced the character Nanny in Netflix's animated film "The Willoughbys" alongside Terry Crews, Martin Short, Jane Krakowski and Sean Cullen. The animated film is based on Lois Lowry's popular book of the same name and was released on April 22, 2020.

In late 2018 Rudolph announced the formation of her production company, Animal Pictures, alongside her longtime friend Natasha Lyonne. The duo has signed a first-look deal with Amazon Studios to create and develop series projects for the Prime Video service. They are currently developing "The Hospital," a darkly comic animated series, and "Desert People," a comedy series about Iraqi immigrants. In 2020 Animal Pictures produced the Netflix comedy special "Sarah Cooper: Everything's Fine." Rudolph guest starred, wrote and produced the special that premiered on October 27, 2020.

In 2019 Rudolph was seen in Amy Poehler's film directorial debut for Netflix, "Wine Country," alongside Amy Poehler, Rachel Dratch, Ana Gasteyer, Paula Pell, Emily Spivey and Tina Fey. "Wine Country" was released in May 2019. Rudolph also lent her voice to a character in "The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part." Warner Bros. released the movie in February 2019. In 2018 Rudolph was seen in the Amazon series "Forever," which she also produced. Amazon released the series on September 14, 2018. She also starred in Ben Falcone's "Life of the Party" alongside Melissa McCarthy. Warner Bros. released the film on May 11, 2018. Additionally, Rudolph starred in STXfilms' "The Happytime Murders," directed by Brian Henson, opposite Melissa McCarthy and Elizabeth Banks. STXfilms released the animated feature on August 24, 2018. In 2017 Rudolph lent her voice to two animated films, "The Emoji Movie" and "The Nut Job 2: Nutty by Nature." She voiced the emoji Smiler in the former, which was released by Sony Pictures July 28, 2017. Rudolph returned to voice Precious in the latter, which was released by Open Road on August 11, 2017.



In Summer 2016 Rudolph starred in her variety show "Maya & Marty" alongside Martin Short. Executive producer Lorne Michaels and NBC produced alongside Maya and Martin. She also lent her voice to Sony Pictures' animated film "The Angry Birds Movie," released on May 20, 2016. Additionally, she appeared as Deborah in Akiva Schaffer and Jorma Taccone's "Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping." Universal released the film June 3, 2016. Also, in 2016, Rudolph starred alongside Danny Glover in Diego Luna's "Mr. Pig." The film tells the story of an elderly pig farmer and his estranged daughter, who go on a road trip from Southern California to the Jalisco region of West-Central Mexico. The film premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival. For her role in the film, Rudolph was nominated for a 2017 Ariel Award for best actress.

In 2015 Rudolph appeared in the hit comedy movie "Sisters" opposite Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. Released on December 18, 2015, by Universal Pictures and written by Paula Pell, the film featured Rudolph playing Brinda, the frenemy of Fey's character.

MARCO BARRICELLI (voice of Massimo Marcovaldo) is an actor and director with an extensive theater background. His screen credits include the TV series "The Book of Daniel" and "L.A. Law" along with the documentary "Holy Silence," and he has voiced characters in such video games as "Manhunt 2" and "The 11th Hour."

He appeared on Broadway in "Tamara," and in the 2004 off-Broadway staging of "Agamemnon." From 2008 to 2014, Barricelli served as artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz. He also served as Associate Artist (acting, directing and teaching) at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, and spent many seasons as an actor at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. His other theater credits include "Silence," with the Tokyo-based Theater Company Subaru, as well as productions at the Guthrie Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, the Old Globe Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Huntington Theatre Company, Missouri Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, San Jose Rep, Virginia Stage Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Portland Center Stage, Aquila Theatre Company, Kenyon Festival Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival and Illinois Shakespeare Festival, among many others.

Barricelli's directing credits include productions at Denver Center Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Utah Shakespeare Festival and Shakespeare Santa Cruz, among others. He is a recipient of a Fox Fellowship and both a Cherashore and an L.J. Skaggs research grant.

He has taught acting for two decades at various institutions, including the international school of theater Prima del Teatro in Tuscany, Italy; the Academy of Dramatic Art Silvio D'Amico National in Rome; and the UC San Diego MFA program. Along with having won many awards for acting and directing, he holds an honorary MFA degree from A.C.T. in San Francisco and is a graduate of the Juilliard School.



JIM GAFFIGAN (voice of Lorenzo Paguro) is a six-time GRAMMY®-nominated comedian, actor, writer, producer; two-time New York Times best-selling author; two-time Emmy®-winning top touring performer; and multi-platinum-selling recording artist. He is known around the world for his unique brand of humor, which largely revolves around his observations on life.

A top 10 comedian according to Forbes' 2019 comedy list, Gaffigan recently released his eighth standup special, "The Pale Tourist," on Amazon. He was also recently awarded for being the first comedian to reach one billion streams on Pandora.

Up next, Gaffigan will be seen as the lead in the sci-fi dramedy "Linoleum," and will star as Mr. Smee in Disney's "Peter Pan & Wendy," opposite Jude Law and Yara Shahidi.

On the silver screen, his many credits include "Three Kings," "Super Troopers" and "Super Troopers 2," and "Chappaquiddick." 2019 was Gaffigan's biggest year to date with an astonishing eight films releasing, three which premiered at that year's Sundance Film Festival, including "Troop Zero" with Viola Davis and Allison Janney, "Them That Follow" and "Light From Light"—with many festival goers calling Gaffigan the "King of Sundance."

Gaffigan also had two films recently in which he debuted as the lead: the comedic film "Being Frank" and "American Dreamer," a dark thriller, which was the grand finale of 2019 for Jim and features him as a rideshare driver who moonlights as a private driver for a drug dealer. Both films are now available for download.

Gaffigan can currently be seen opposite Ethan Hawke in IFC Films' "Tesla," as well as opposite Josh Hartnett in Saban Films' "Most Wanted."

In addition to two seasons of the critically acclaimed semi-autobiographical "The Jim Gaffigan Show," which he wrote and produced with his wife, Jeannie, and his widely popular standup comedy specials, Gaffigan has guest starred on many television comedies and dramas, ranging from "Portlandia" and "Bob's Burgers" to the HBO cult hit "Flight of the Conchords" to dramatic roles in "Law & Order."

Gaffigan regularly does humorous commentaries on "CBS Sunday Morning." In 2018, he served as master of ceremonies at the Al Smith Memorial Dinner. In 2015 Gaffigan had the great honor of performing for Pope Francis and over 1 million festival attendees at the Festival of Families in Philadelphia.

Gaffigan and his wife currently live in Manhattan with their five loud and expensive children. If you want to feel like you are part of the Gaffigan family, tune in to "Dinner with the Gaffigans," a YouTube series that started in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

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 begins streaming on Disney+ 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 Otter."

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 begins streaming on Disney+ 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.



PETE DOCTER (Executive Producer) is the Oscar®-winning director of "Soul," "Monsters, Inc.," "Up" and "Inside Out," and chief creative officer at Pixar Animation Studios.

Starting at Pixar in 1990 as the studio's third animator, Docter collaborated and helped develop the story and characters for "Toy Story," Pixar's first full-length animated feature film, for which he also was supervising animator. He served as a storyboard artist on "A Bug's Life" and wrote initial story treatments for both "Toy Story 2" and "WALL•E." Aside from directing his four films, Docter also executive produced "Monsters University" and the Academy Award®-winning "Brave."

Docter's interest in animation began at age 8 when he created his first flipbook. He studied character animation at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, Calif., where he produced a variety of short films, one of which won a Student Academy Award®. Those films have since been shown in animation festivals worldwide and are featured on the "Pixar Short Films Collection Volume 2." Upon joining Pixar, Docter animated and directed several commercials, and has been nominated for eight Academy Awards, including best animated feature winners "Up" and "Inside Out," and nominee "Monsters, Inc.," and best original screenplay for "Up," "Inside Out" and "WALL•E." In 2007, "Up" was also nominated for a best picture Oscar® by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

PETER SOHN (Executive Producer) joined Pixar Animation Studios in September 2000, and began working in both the art and story departments for the Academy Award®-winning "Finding Nemo." Sohn continued on to work on "The Incredibles" in the art, story, and animation departments. He focused on animating members of the Parr family and worked on many memorable scenes from the film. He also worked as a story artist on another Oscar® winner, the 2008 feature film, "WALL•E."

Sohn worked with producer Kevin Reher on the Pixar short "Partly Cloudy," which was also his directorial debut at Pixar. Sohn directed also directed the original feature "The Good Dinosaur," and is currently working on an unannounced project.

In addition to his contributions as a filmmaker, Sohn has lent his voice talents to Pixar's feature films. In "Ratatouille" he voiced the character of Emile, and in "Monsters University," he provided the voice of Scott "Squishy" Squibbles.

Prior to Pixar, Sohn worked at Warner Bros. with "Ratatouille" director Brad Bird on "The Iron Giant," as well as at Disney TV. He grew up in New York and attended California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts). He currently lives in the Bay Area.



KIRI HART (Executive Producer) joined Pixar Animation Studios as a creative consultant in January 2019. She was an executive producer and a creative consultant on Disney and Pixar's feature film "Soul." As executive producer, she contributes to story development, strategy, marketing, publishing and consumer products for the film. Hart also serves as a creative consultant on the film, ensuring the story and characters are an authentic reflection of the diverse world.

She has worked in the entertainment industry for 27 years as a story analyst, development executive, producer and writer. After starting her career in 1992 as an assistant in CAA's Literary Department and later at the Ladd Company, she moved to HBO Films as a creative executive developing a slate of original movies. She then spent 10 years as a screenwriter and television staff writer, writing projects for Universal, HBO, Showtime and NBC.

Prior to Pixar, Hart was the senior vice president of development at Lucasfilm for six years. She formed the Lucasfilm Story Group, and oversaw the creative development of all "Star Wars" content across film, animated television, publishing, gaming, immersive media and theme parks. While at Lucasfilm, Hart co-produced films "The Last Jedi," "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," and all four seasons of the award-winning animated television series "Star Wars Rebels."

Hart grew up in Los Angeles, Calif., and attended Stanford University. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Writers Guild of America. She resides in San Francisco, Calif.

JESSE ANDREWS (Story by/Screenplay by) is an award-winning screenwriter, novelist and former German youth hostel receptionist. His New York Times best-selling books include "Me and Earl and the Dying Girl" (2012), "The Haters" (2016) and "Munmun" (2018); reviewers have described them as "hilarious" (The New York Times), "truly hilarious" (Kirkus Reviews), "uproariously funny" (Booklist) and "probably the funniest book I have ever read" (The Guardian). He is the screenwriter of "Me and Earl and the Dying Girl" (2015), winner of the 2015 Sundance Film Festival's Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award, and co-screenwriter of Pixar's "Luca" (2021). Jesse is a graduate of Pittsburgh's Schenley High School and Harvard University and makes his home in Berkeley, Calif.

MIKE JONES (Screenplay by) has been a writer and story consultant to Pixar Animation Studios since June 2013, and joined the studio full-time in March 2017. He has served on the brain trusts of many Pixar films, including "Finding Dory," "Incredibles 2" and the Academy Award®-winning features "Inside Out," "Coco" and "Toy Story 4." He also serves on the story trusts of many SparkShorts, as well as features in early development. He most recently co-wrote Disney and Pixar's 2020 feature film "Soul."



As a senior story and creative artist, Jones works with the director to develop a story in its early stages. Together they explore characters and character arcs, with Jones writing various script drafts until it's cohesive. After early development, Jones continues to work with the production departments on the different versions of the reels by rewriting every sequence as needed, consulting on storyboards and advising on editorial assemblies.

Before joining Pixar, Jones was a working screenwriter for 20 years, writing scripts for nearly every major Hollywood studio. Prior to screenwriting, he served on the editorial staffs of Filmmaker Magazine, IndieWire and Variety.

Jones grew up in San Antonio, Texas, and attended NYU Film School. He lived in New York for 16 years before moving to Los Angeles. He resides in Northern California.

DAN ROMER (Music by) is an award-winning composer, songwriter and music producer based in Los Angeles. Romer's scores include Disney and Pixar's upcoming feature "Luca," which streams on Disney+ beginning June 18; four-time Oscar®-nominated "Beasts of the Southern Wild" (Searchlight), "Maniac" (Netflix), "The Good Doctor" (ABC), "Beasts of No Nation" (Netflix), "Atypical" (Netflix), "Skin" (A24), "Wendy" (Searchlight) and Emmy®-winning series "Ramy" (Hulu).

In 2018, Romer composed the music for Ubisoft's flagship video game "Far Cry 5." In addition to his scoring work, he produced several worldwide hit singles for numerous acclaimed artists, including A Great Big World and Christina Aguilera's GRAMMY®-winning "Say Something," and Shawn Mendes' "Treat You Better."