

Disney+

# BETTER NATE THAN EVER

## Production Notes

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Disney's "Better Nate Than Ever" is a feel-good comedy adventure with showstopping musical numbers.

In "Better Nate Than Ever," 13-year-old Nate Foster has big Broadway dreams. There's only one problem — he can't even land a part in the school play. But when his parents leave town, Nate and his best friend Libby sneak off to the Big Apple for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to prove everyone wrong. A chance encounter with Nate's long-lost Aunt Heidi turns his journey upside-down, and together they must learn that life's greatest adventures are only as big as your dreams. Based on the award-winning novel.

"Better Nate Than Ever" stars Aria Brooks ("All That," "Saved in the City"), Joshua Bassett ("High School Musical: The Musical: The Series"), Michelle Federer ("New Amsterdam," "The Defenders") introducing Rueby Wood as Nate, with Norbert Leo Butz ("Debris," "Fosse/Verdon") and Lisa Kudrow ("Friends," "Housebroken"). Based upon the debut novel by Tim Federle, the film was written for the screen by and directed by Tim Federle ("High School Musical: The Musical: The Series") in his feature film directing debut. Marc Platt ("La La Land," "Cruella") and Adam Siegel ("Oslo," "Thunderforce") served as the film's producers, with Tim Federle and Pamela Thur ("Hustlers," "Marry Me") as its executive producers.

Shot on locations throughout New York, "Better Nate Than Ever" will stream exclusively on Disney+ beginning April 1, 2022.

### ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

First published in 2013, "Better Nate Than Ever" was director Federle's first novel for middle graders, inspired by his time as a theater-loving kid in Pittsburgh. The book was the first in an award-winning trilogy hailed as "a wonderful evocation of what it's like to be a theater kid" by Lin-Manuel Miranda in The New York Times. Federle began his career as a dancer on Broadway ("The Little Mermaid," "Billy Elliot," "Gypsy"), where he returned to co-write the adaptation of "Tuck Everlasting" for the stage. He won the Humanitas Prize for co-writing the Oscar®-nominated Best Animated Feature "Ferdinand," and his artistic journey expanded into television in 2019 as the executive producer and creator of "High School Musical: The Musical: The Series." Certified fresh on Rotten Tomatoes, the series helped launch Disney+, won the GLAAD Award, and is currently in its third season of production. Now, making his directorial debut for his own screen adaptation of "Better Nate Than Ever," Federle sees his

accomplishments as a validation of his own young life as a Nate-in-waiting for something to happen.

“Sometimes when you're young,” Federle said, “you think you have to change yourself to fit in at the right cafeteria table. And I think like the journey of adulthood is about realizing you don't have to change yourself. Sometimes you actually just have to change the people around you who can understand who you are. When you get enough people with similar passions and interests together, you've got this club and you no longer have to apologize. You can actually create.”

It may be easier for some people to make fun of things than to actually *make* things. Nate's journey reaches its first peak when he realizes he needs to put himself out there, even if it means that he could be cut from the audition or made fun of, but to try anyway. That act of bravery is not just an act of confidence, not in Federle's own estimation.

“Bravery is in fact being afraid,” the filmmaker continued, “but passionately trying your best anyway. This film is about the journey to finding yourself. Sometimes literally it's about getting on a bus and going to a city that accepts you. It's also about the inner journey of not just accepting the truth about yourself and what you love and who you love but celebrating that it's not just acceptance but also worth celebrating.”

The popularity of Nate Foster as a literary character touched a nerve with readers of all ages due to his ability to live out loud with what he's passionate about. For this vivid 13-year-old, that's the theater, which is not always popular in many hometowns.

“There's a Nate in every middle school in America,” said producer Adam Siegel. That's one of the things that I hooked into. Nate doesn't fit in, and underneath, he's struggling with who he is. Hopefully watching Nate's journey makes the journey for everyone out there who's like him a little bit brighter.”

Federle said he takes very seriously the idea of mentoring the next generation. He credits his own history of champions when he was a theater kid in Pittsburgh, those who said to him that “he could actually do this. You don't have to just love musicals. You can be in them and make them.” With the encouragement of his parents and mentors, Federle, too, got on an overnight Greyhound bus to New York.

“I hoped that New York would accept me,” Federle smiled, “and it did. I think this movie is a celebration of those people who lead the way for the next generation and those places that we escaped to in order to find ourselves.”

Added Siegel, “‘Better Nate Than Ever’ is a love letter to New York City. It's a place of people who were all just kids from somewhere who came to New York to achieve their dreams.”

### **And Introducing Rueby Wood as Nate: Casting a New Star**

Finding the screen Nate was a journey almost as involved as the character's comic adventures in New York City. For the filmmakers, they knew they needed to find a Ferris Bueller-type. Wood would be one of the first people to audition for the role of Nate, singing a song from the long-running musical “Wicked.”

“He was so unapologetically himself,” Federle recalled. “He did not have a single movie or TV credit, but I saw in him that theater kid who could take a note, put himself out there, sing

really loud and really high and crack and still keep going, which is what this character is. I think the risk of casting a total unknown in the starring role is that he's a total unknown in the starring role. You can't bank on a box office star. You can't turn to somebody who has starred in a million movies. You always at the last minute have to take that risk."

Federle thought of the people who had taken a chance on him over the course of his career. Whether it was the dance teacher who said, "You're a boy who likes to dance, I'm going to give you free dance classes" or the first person who found something of note in 'Better Nate than Ever' when it was just a Microsoft Word document. They saw the potential of the character, which turned into a novel.

"I felt that same way with Rueby," Federle continued. "That was my responsibility to guide him and also get out of his way. It also meant he had like six and seven callbacks. He would always come back in, and he was totally off book, and he took direction easily. One of the most exciting things you can do in this business as a gatekeeper is take down the gates and open them and let the next generation run through. He's not just running through, he's dancing through. I think he's going to inspire a lot of little Rueby Woods out there."

Recalled Siegel, "There was such a sweetness and such a light to him and just a sense of wonder. Watching Rueby go on this journey is probably a lot like watching Nate go on this journey."

Hailing from "the middle of the woods and nowhere," but really upstate New York in a town just north of Syracuse, Rueby Wood was 14 years old when production begin on "Better Nate Than Ever." He connected instantly with the reality that both he and Nate are theater kids, sharing a love for theater and performing. And that their talents were discovered by accident if you will. But Rueby's journey began with an email sent by his agent.

"We want you to audition for this," Wood said. "I had like two scenes and a song. For my song, I sang 'The Wizard and I' from 'Wicked.' After that, we waited for a little while, and I got a call back. They sent me another scene and I sang another song. There were just more and more callbacks. There were so many, it was such a long time, but it was worth it because here we are."

Wood had been performing since the age of six, but it was not until he landed the lead role of Charlie in a community theater production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" that he seriously considered the idea of performing professionally as an actor. Years later, Wood still sees his landing the lead role of Charlie as a "miracle," but one that sparked a love for theater and, after his experience of shooting the film, of being in New York. More, he discovered a life lesson many theater-people have taken to heart for generations.

"Broadway is really a place where anything can happen," Wood said. "Anything is possible. You can walk into that theater, and you can sit in the audience and watch the magic unfold or you can be on the stage and still watch that magic unfold just from a different perspective. I loved it in New York. I'm just learning all of the differences in between theater and movie making. When we filmed in Times Square and when we filmed outside, it was so spontaneous because anything could happen. Anybody could walk by! It was real. It was a whole lot of fun. I think my takeaway is going to be that you can make a family anywhere that you go. It's so important to do that."

## **Aria Brooks as Libby, Nate's BFF**

If anyone can match Nate's outsize personality, it is the unconditional spark and love that is his best friend forever, Libby. She always has an encouraging word but also an often-devastating one-liner of truth. It is Libby who inspires Nate to take the chance of sneaking off to New York to audition for a big Broadway show. When it came time to cast the role, director Federle was impressed with the Atlanta-born Brooks, who was also the first actress to be seen for the role.

"She has irreplaceable comic timing," says Federle. "She and Rueby auditioned together on Zoom since we could not get them in the same room. When they arrived on set the first day, they became instant best friends. We saw lots of talented kids, but she was the one Libby who really had a wry world-weariness mixed with the vulnerability of being 13."

Siegel said, "When we saw Aria Brooks, we were done. We said that young lady is a star, and if we don't have her today, somebody else will have her tomorrow. And she just was Libby through and through. And I'm not saying Aria is Libby. I'm saying when the minute she read, she took on this character in such a real way. It was exactly the way Tim envisioned the character."

Known for her work on the Nickelodeon sketch comedy TV series, "All That," Brooks continues to nurture an impressive roster of credits, including a role in the Oscar®-nominated drama "Harriet" and the recent Netflix series "Heartstrings," inspired by the music of Dolly Parton. Federle was impressed with Brooks's confidence, and by her having just released an EP of her own music and written a screenplay.

"She represents the best of this generation that doesn't wait for permission to create," Federle continued. "They just create. That's really exciting to witness. She was a very easy person to cast."

Born into a musical family herself, Brooks found her way to the role of Libby by recognizing their similarities. She was drawn to the character's strong personality and her use of wit to cope with a less than stellar homelife of being a child of divorced parents.

Brooks said, "My background is theater, but Broadway hasn't necessarily been my dream. Both of my parents teach performing arts, so I've always been around music and the arts. I liked the acting and singing aspect of it. When I turned 10, I wanted to do on-camera acting and also sing and dance, too."

The teen star was thrilled to be able to contribute to Libby's big statement number at the end of the film. Songwriter Tara Stinson saw an Instagram post of Brooks and was inspired to write a song.

Recalled Brooks, "Tim wanted to get my connection to the song and make sure I was singing it from the heart and seeing it from a place that I understood. Right before we were in the studio, they told me to bring a picture of my sisters and sing it to them so you can really attach to the emotion. He made sure we could relate to it and feel it and connect to our characters."

### **Disney+ Star Joshua Bassett as Nate's Older Bro Anthony**

Branching out Nate's family life, director Federle looked no further than Joshua Bassett to take on the role of Foster family jock Anthony. Bassett, who currently stars in Federle's "High School Musical: The Musical: The Series" on Disney+, was the first person Federle cast in the hit series. Viewing him as a good luck actor, he wanted to infuse "Better Nate Than Ever" with the same nuance, truth and naturalism for the film. For Bassett, seeing Federle outside of the context of the television series was inspiring.

"We have a good relationship," Bassett said, "and being able to work with him outside of the series has been so wonderful, especially seeing him step into his power as a director. I remember specifically when we were shooting some of this stuff in Nate and Anthony's house and I texted Tim, after we were done filming. I was like, "Tim, can you believe it? We're in New York filming a movie that you wrote that you're directing, like what, like pinch me! This is a crazy thing!" And I think if you had told ten-year-old me that I would be in New York, shooting a film, that I had a role in and an actual speaking part, I would not believe you. This is just an absolute dream."

Bassett believes "Better Nate Than Ever" has an important message. He said, "What really resonated with me is the idea that if, where you currently are, the people around you can't see you for who you are or you don't feel like you can be your authentic self, there are other places out there for you where you can be yourself."

### **and Lisa Kudrow as Aunt Heidi**

Nate's unique qualities are not the result of some interstellar magic. It's in his blood. His Aunt Heidi, who fell out of the family's grace when she failed to show up to younger sister Sherrie's wedding, despite her being maid of honor, is a struggling New York actor who makes ends meet by catering Bar Mitzvahs. So Heidi's reasons for not showing up at her sister's wedding is something only other theater people would understand: she had a call back for a role in a Broadway show that would be her debut. It was her dream moment, but things didn't go as planned. She landed the role, but the show closed early, and her career failed to materialize.

Despite years of estrangement and the hard knocks that followed, Heidi sees an opportunity at reconnecting with her family when the surprise arrival of Nate energizes her life in an unexpected way. For Nate, she's a beacon of what is possible, not impossible. Heidi is more than the "cool aunt," but the role required someone who could infuse her colorful personality with nuance and humanity. Welcome Emmy®-winning television icon Lisa Kudrow to the company.

Lisa Kudrow was the dream aunt," Federle smiled. "Of course, I grew up as so many of us did as a huge fan of "Friends" and "The Comeback". It made me obsessed with TV writing. They say never meet your heroes, but when you do, and they're even better than you imagine, then it's like the greatest payoff. She has brought such instant idiosyncrasy, heart, humanity, and beauty to this role."

Kudrow found herself engaged by Federle's script, particularly with Nate's commitment to who he is as person. He accepted himself unconditionally, even when his outside world

seems to wonder what he's all about. It struck a note of happiness for the accomplished star as well as relatability as she maneuvered through her now storied career.

Kudrow said, "There's a lot of rejection in this business, and I would just focus on the people that I knew thought that I was okay, and that really got me through. I see that with Nate and Libby and their relationship. Nate does that for himself. For Heidi, she hasn't had her family around and that kind of support is what you would hope to get from your family. But I did, my family was very supportive."

With the film's multiple working parts of human comedy, drama, music, and dance, Kudrow was impressed by how Rueby and pivoted with such abandon, even with the demands of rehearsals and on-site schooling, as well as the production demands.

"While they're setting up," Kudrow continued, "Rueby has 20 minutes of school. It's unbelievable how much energy he has, how much concentration and focus. I hope I had that at some point, but I don't think I ever did though. He and Aria are really remarkable, and it's really motivating too."

Brought back to New York for the project, Kudrow enjoyed the process thanks to Federle's leadership and innate sense of ensuring that the experience should be fun for everyone.

"It's a really nurturing set," Kudrow said. "Maybe that's because there are young people on it. That's not always the case. I think the biggest thing is Tim, yes, he wrote the novel, wrote the script, and he's directing. But he's really clear on what he needs and what options he needs. It's really nice to just trust when he says, 'I've got it.' He knows exactly what he's doing and what he wants."

### **In Addition**

"Better Nate Than Ever" also features some notable Broadway luminaries: real-life married couple Michelle Federer ("New Amsterdam," "The Defenders") and two-time Tony Award® winner Norbert Leo Butz ("Dirty Rotten Scoundrels," "Catch Me If You Can"), who first met when they were both in the original cast of "Wicked," who play Nate's parents; two-time Tony® nominee Brooks Ashmanskas ("The Prom," "Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me"), Tony® winner Priscilla Lopez ("A Day In Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine," "A Chorus Line"), Krystina Alabado ("Mean Girls," "American Psycho") and Kayla Davion ("Tina: The Tina Turner Musical," "King Kong").

Leading the film's creative team are director of photography Declan Quinn, ASC, ISC ("Hamilton"), production designer Jane Musky ("Marry Me"), film editor Katharine McQuerrey ("Naked Singularity"), musical score composer Gabriel Mann ("High School Musical: The Musical: The Series"), music supervisor Jordan Carroll ("Godfather of Harlem"), costume designer Joshua J. Marsh ("When You Finish Saving the World") and choreographer Zach Woodlee ("High School Musical: the Musical: the Series").

For Tim Federle, taking on the reins as director of the film is the culmination of a journey that began with his watching so many adventure movies. Whether it was classic Spielberg or modern romps like "Adventures in Babysitting," he understood the power of entertainment that is designed to be enjoyed by the whole family. More, he wants the audience to champion

Nate in the way you would any other action hero as a needed presence on the pop culture landscape.

"I grew up in the era of those great sleep-over films that you could watch with your parents," Federle said. "They would laugh at stuff that you didn't get, and you'd laugh at stuff that they thought was for kids, but it was something for everybody. I hope what the audience gets is that this is a real family movie night with something for everybody. We're not used to seeing Nate as the star. He's the type of character and the type of kid who usually is the sidekick. He's telling the jokes on the side, and he gets two or three scenes. All kinds of kids deserve all kinds of heroes. There is hope for a generation of kids who see themselves through this character who dares to put himself out there. Sometimes you just have to step out of line and sing a song."

Federle was closely involved in all aspects of music in "Better Nate Than Ever." Having established a tight working relationship with composer Gabriel Mann on "High School Musical: The Musical: The Series," he selected Mann to do the score for the film. Although Mann had composed for many television series and TV films, including "A Million Little Things" and "Modern Family," "Better Nate Than Ever" is his first major studio feature film.

Among the songs featured in "Better Nate Than Ever" are the originals "Big Time" and "No One Gets Left Behind," performed by Rueby Wood, and "About to Go AWF," performed by Aria Brooks and Rueby Wood. In addition, the classic "On Broadway" is performed by Rueby Wood and Lucky Chops in the film, and musical comedy fans will certainly recognize such favorites as "Let It Go" from "Frozen," "Defying Gravity" from "Wicked" and "Corner of the Sky" from "Pippin."

## ABOUT THE CAST

**ARIA BROOKS (Libby)** was destined for a career in entertainment. Born in Atlanta Georgia as the daughter of two Performing Arts educators, she began singing and dancing at a young age. Soon, she could be seen showcasing her talents in local musical theatre productions. At the tender age of 10, Aria made the decision to pursue acting as a career path and shifted her focus to TV and film projects.

At 15, Aria is quickly establishing herself as a powerhouse in the industry. She was seen on the big screen with a pivotal role in the award-winning film "Harriet." She played Anger, the niece of Harriet Tubman, who is part of the group she comes back to save. The all-star cast also includes Cynthia Erivo, Jennifer Nettles, and Leslie Odom Jr.

Aria also brought her talent to television with a guest-starring role as Nola in the anthology series "Dolly Parton's Heartstrings." Each installment tells an inspirational story based on the singer's song catalog. In Aria's episode, her character has a dog that reminds Dolly of her childhood furry companion, Crackerjack. The show is streaming now on Netflix. Other onscreen credits include "Saved in the City" and "Nocturnal" just to name a few.

Aria's breakout role came when she landed a spot as the newest series regular cast member on Nickelodeon's "All That," a reboot of the classic 90's comedy series. Known as the

network's version of "Saturday Night Live," the hit show allowed Aria to hone her comedic talent alongside original cast member Kel Mitchell, who also serves as an Executive Producer.

When she is not acting, Aria is making a name for herself as a recording artist. She recently released her debut EP "castles pt. 1 and 2" under the moniker ARIA. It is available now on all streaming platforms. Aria is also an accomplished writer who has penned her own short film as well as a television series that explore the ups and downs of friendship.

Outside of acting, Aria loves to keep busy. In her spare time, she enjoys baking, doing crafts, filmmaking, making TikTok videos, and recording content for her YouTube audience. She and her family are also passionate supporters of the Kilgore Music Foundation, founded by famed saxophonist Ryan Kilgore, that aims to mentor, teach and inspire children to be lifelong musicians.

**JOSHUA BASSETT** can currently be seen playing the lead role of Ricky in "High School Musical: The Musical: The Series," a reinvented take on the two-time Emmy® Award-winning "High School Musical" franchise, for Disney+, which has earned him two Kid's Choice Award nominations for Favorite Male TV Star. In addition to acting, playing and singing in the series Bassett also co-wrote one of the first season's original songs, "Just for A Moment." The second Season of the series just premiered on May 14<sup>th</sup> which featured another original song, "The Perfect Gift," written by Bassett for the new season.

Additionally, Bassett released his first single, "Common Sense," in April 2020 after signing with Warner Records. Bassett's single "Lie Lie Lie" debuted at No. 33 on the Billboard Emerging Artists chart and opened at No. 25 on Billboard's Bubbling Under Hot 100 chart. In early 2021, he unveiled his self-titled debut EP. He recently released a trio of singles "Set Me Free," "Secret" and "Crisis" on in December 2021 which have amassed millions of streams and views across platforms.

Bassett's other television credits include Disney Channel's "Stuck in the Middle," "Lethal Weapon," "Game Shakers" and guest starring arcs on "Dirty John" and ABC's "Grey's Anatomy."

Born in Oceanside, California, the 20 year-old actor, singer-songwriter and multi-talented musician started his career in theater and has landed nearly a dozen lead roles in local productions including Apostle James in "Godspell," The Cat in the Hat in "Seussical," Peter Pan in "Peter Pan," Kurt von Trapp in "The Sound of Music" and Charlie in "Willy Wonka."

In his downtime, Bassett enjoys writing music, playing his guitar and piano and watching as many films as possible.

INSTAGRAM: @joshuatbassett

**MICHELLE FEDERER (Sherrie)** originated the role of Nessarose in the Broadway company of "Wicked." Other New York theatre credits include: "Three Days of Rain" (Broadway), "A Man of No Importance" (Lincoln Center), "Anon" (The Atlantic) and "Boys Life" (2<sup>nd</sup> Stage). Her most recent TV work can be seen on the first 3 seasons of "New Amsterdam" (NBC), "Archive 81," "Hit and Run" and "The Defenders" (Netflix). Michelle has also appeared in several films including "Rachel Getting Married" and "Kinsey." She is married to Norbert Leo Butz.



**RUEBY WOOD (Nate)** is a 15-year-old actor, singer and dancer.

Rueby starred as Charlie in the first national Broadway tour of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" (2018-2019). Rueby's background includes community and regional theater in and around Central NY, where his roles include Michael Banks in "Mary Poppins" (Syracuse Stage, 2016-2017). Additionally, Rueby's credits include voice work in a variety of digital media. In his free time, Rueby likes to write and edit short films.

**NORBERT LEO BUTZ (Rex Foster)** is a two-time Tony Award® winner for Best Actor in a Musical and is one of only nine actors ever to have won the award twice as lead actor. He first won for his work in "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" and won again for his work in "Catch Me If You Can." He was additionally nominated for Tonys® for his work in "Thou Shalt Not" and "My Fair Lady." The star of 11 Broadway shows, he is also a five-time Drama Desk nominee and two-time winner, among other stage accolades.

On television, Butz will next be seen starring on Hulu's "The Girl From Plainville" and has previously starred on David Zabel and Ridley Scott's "Mercy Street" on PBS, "Bloodline" on Netflix, as Paddy Chayefsky on "Fosse/Verdon" for F/X and "Debris" for NBC.

Films include Sean Penn's "Flag Day," Peter Hedges' "Dan In Real Life," Sony's "Higher Ground," opposite and directed by Vera Farmiga, Craig Zisk's "The English Teacher," "Better Living Through Chemistry," opposite Sam Rockwell and 2020 Sundance pic "Luce," directed by Julius Onah.

He received a BFA from Webster University and an MFA from Alabama Shakespeare Theatre.

Emmy Award®-winning actress **LISA KUDROW (Aunt Heidi)** continues to bring her original sense of comedic timing and delivery to every role she takes on and ventures between films to television to the internet with ease.

Lisa made her feature film debut in the Albert Brooks' comedy "Mother" in 1996. Following "Mother" she starred opposite Toni Collette and Parker Posey in "Clockwatchers" (1997) and in the critically acclaimed hit comedy "Romy & Michele's High School Reunion" (1997) with Mira Sorvino.

She went on to star in "The Opposite of Sex" for writer/director Don Roos (1998); "Analyze This" (1999) and the sequel "Analyze That" (2002) with Robert DeNiro and Billy Crystal; "Lucky Numbers" (2000) with John Travolta; "Hanging Up" (2000) opposite Meg Ryan and Diane Keaton; "Wonderland" (2004) with Val Kilmer; "Happy Endings" (2005) for writer/director Don Roos; "Kabluey" (2007); "P.S. I Love You" (2007) with Hilary Swank and Gerard Butler; "Hotel for Dogs" (2008); "Paper Man" (2009) opposite Emma Stone, Jeff Daniels and Ryan Reynolds; "Bandslam" (2009); "Easy A" (2010) with Emma Stone, Stanley Tucci, Patricia Clarkson and Thomas Hayden Church and "Neighbors" (2014) and "Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising" (2016) with Zac Efron and Seth Rogen; the psychological thriller "Girl on the Train" (2016) for director Tate Taylor; "Table 19" with Anna Kendrick; the Academy Award®-

nominated family comedy “The Boss Baby” alongside Alec Baldwin, Steve Buscemi and Jimmy Kimmel; Olivia Wilde’s directorial debut “Booksmart” alongside Jason Sudeikis and “Long Shot” with Charlize Theron and Seth Rogan for director Jonathan Levine.

Lisa has always received rave reviews for her roles in both film and television. She won the Best Supporting Actress Award from the New York Film Critics, an Independent Spirit Award nomination and a Chicago Film Critics Award nomination for her role in “The Opposite of Sex.” She won a Blockbuster Award and received a nomination for an American Comedy Award for her starring role in the box office hit “Analyze This” for director Harold Ramis.

Of course, it was Lisa’s role as Phoebe Buffay, the character she brilliantly portrayed on the NBC hit comedy series “Friends” for ten seasons that brought her to audience attention worldwide.

For this role, Lisa was nominated for an Emmy® award five times and won once for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series in 1998. Lisa also received a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Comedy Series, an American Comedy Award for Funniest Supporting Female Performer in a Television Series, and a Golden Globe® Award nomination.

Most recently the “Friends” cast reunited for the HBO Max “Friends Reunion,” which premiered on May 27, 2021.

Lisa guest starred in two episodes of “The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt,” for which she received a Critics’ Choice Television Award nomination for Outstanding Guest Performer in a Comedy Series in 2016.

Lisa reunited with “Friends” co-creator Marta Kauffman, for a three-episode guest arc on season four of the Netflix hit comedy “Grace & Frankie” alongside Academy Award® winner Jane Fonda and Academy Award® nominee Lily Tomlin.

Recently, Lisa starred in the Netflix series “Space Force,” alongside Steve Carrell and John Malkovich, from the creator of “The Office. “

She also costarred in the British comedy-drama series “Feel Good” from and alongside comedian Mae Martin. The second and final season of the latter series was released on Netflix on June 4, 2021.

Lisa currently stars in Fox’s animated comedy “Housebroken.” The series follows a dog named Honey, played by Kudrow, who runs group therapy sessions to help neighborhood animals manage the neuroses brought on by their owners and each other. The series was recently renewed for season two.

In the fall of 2003 Lisa formed the production company Is or Isn’t Entertainment with actor and writer Dan Bucatinsky. Is or Isn’t Entertainment has garnered great success since its inception. Is or Isn’t’s first television series is the critically acclaimed HBO series “The Comeback.” “The docu-style, single-camera comedy had its season one debut in June 2005 and returned to HBO as a limited series in 2014. The series garnered four Emmy® Award nominations including two for Lisa for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series in 2006 and 2015.

“Who Do You Think You Are” is the second series from Is or Isn’t Entertainment. The documentary series traces the genealogy of a well-known person in each episode. To date, “Who Do You Think You Are” has been nominated for six Emmy® Awards – four for Outstanding Structured Reality Program and one win in 2016 for Outstanding Picture Editing for

a Structured or Competition Reality Program. It was recently announced that the docuseries was renewed for a twelfth season which will air on NBC.

Is or Isn't also produced the critically acclaimed Showtime series "Web Therapy" for four seasons in which Lisa starred as a therapist who does sessions with her clients via the internet. "Web Therapy" was the first web series to go to premium cable and the format of the show has been sold to and produced all over the world, including productions in Poland and Spain.

In 2009 Lisa received a Special Webby Award for Outstanding Comedic Performance for her role in season one of "Web Therapy." In 2010 the show won a Webby Award for Best Comedy Series and received two additional nominations including one for Lisa for Best Individual Performance and in 2011 Lisa Kudrow won a Webby Award for Best Individual Performance and "Web Therapy" won for Best Comedy: Long Form or Series. "Web Therapy" was nominated for an Emmy® Award in 2012 for Outstanding Special Class – Short-format Live-Action Entertainment Programs. Most recently, "Web Therapy" received a nomination from the Producers Guild of America for Best Web Series.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**TIM FEDERLE (Director/Screenwriter/Book Author)** is the showrunner and executive producer of "High School Musical: the Musical: the Series," which he created for Disney+. The GLAAD Award-winning show has been called "'Glee' as envisioned by Christopher Guest" (IndieWire), "joyous and clever" (Paste Magazine), and "bubbly and terrific" (New York Times). The first two seasons of "High School Musical: the Musical: the Series" are now streaming, and the third season is currently in production.

Federle's novels include the New York Times Notable Book Better Nate Than Ever and its Lambda-winning sequel, which Lin-Manuel Miranda called "a wonderful evocation of what it's like to be a theater kid" (New York Times).

Federle co-wrote the Broadway musical adaptation of "Tuck Everlasting" and won the Humanitas Prize for co-writing the Golden Globe® and Academy Award®-nominated Best Animated Feature "Ferdinand," starring John Cena and Kate McKinnon. Up next, Tim has signed on to direct "Sister Act 3" for Disney, starring Whoopi Goldberg reprising her role as Deloris, the nightclub singer turned nun.

A former Broadway dancer, Tim was born in San Francisco, grew up in Pittsburgh, and now divides his time between Los Angeles and the internet.

**MARC PLATT's (Producer)** producing career spans film, theatre and television and his projects have garnered a combined 41 Oscar® nominations, 36 Tony® nominations, 33 Golden Globe® nominations and 48 Emmy® nominations and have grossed over \$5 billion worldwide.

Mr. Platt's most recent film releases include Disney's hit "Cruella" starring Emma Stone and Emma Thompson which earned \$233 million worldwide and two Oscar® nominations and is an enormous success on Disney+; "Oslo" starring Ruth Wilson and Andrew Scott, directed by

Bartlett Sher for HBO, which earned two Emmy® award nominations; Aaron Sorkin's critically acclaimed "The Trial of the Chicago 7," which earned six Academy Award® nominations including Best Picture; Universal's "Dear Evan Hansen," based on the Tony® Award winning Broadway musical; and the hit comedy "Thunder Force" for Netflix starring Melissa McCarthy and Octavia Spencer.

His prior films include "La La Land," which tied the record for the most Oscar® nominations in history with 14, winning six; "Bridge of Spies," which earned six Oscar® nominations including Best Picture; Disney's "Mary Poppins Returns" and "Into The Woods," which both earned multiple Academy Award® nominations; " "Drive," starring Ryan Gosling, which was awarded the Best Director prize at the 2011 Cannes International Film Festival; "Legally Blonde" and its sequel; "Nine"; "Rachel Getting Married"; "Wanted"; "The Girl on the Train"; "Scott Pilgrim vs. The World"; "Hotel Artemis"; "Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk"; "Ricki and the Flash"; "Song One"; "Lost River"; "Winter's Tale"; "2 Guns"; "Charlie St. Cloud"; "Cop Out"; "The Other Woman"; "The Seeker"; "The Perfect Man"; "Honey"; and "Josie and the Pussycats."

Among his upcoming films are two for Disney: live-action feature "The Little Mermaid," directed by Rob Marshall; and a live-action "Snow White" directed by Marc Webb; and director Damien Chazelle's "Babylon" starring Brad Pitt for Paramount.

In theatre Platt produced the blockbuster "Wicked," currently in its 19th year on Broadway. His other shows include "The Band's Visit," which won 10 Tony® Awards including Best Musical; "War Paint," "Indecent," "Oh, Hello on Broadway," "If/Then," "Three Days of Rain" and Matthew Bourne's "Edward Scissorhands." In television, Platt executive produced "Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert" and "Grease Live!," receiving the top Emmy® Awards for both productions. He also produced HBO's Emmy® and Golden Globe® award-winning miniseries "Empire Falls."

Platt's other television shows include "Rent" (two Emmy® Awards); "A Christmas Story Live"; "Once Upon a Mattress"; "The Path to 9/11"; and MTV's series "Taking The Stage." Prior to becoming an independent producer, Mr. Platt served as president of production for three movie studios--Orion, TriStar and Universal.

**ADAM SIEGEL (Producer)** currently serves as President of Marc Platt Productions in Los Angeles.

Mr. Siegel most recently produced the feature film adaptation of "Dear Evan Hansen" starring Ben Platt, Kaitlyn Dever, Amanda Stenberg, Julianne Moore, and Amy Adams and directed by Stephen Chbosky. Prior to that he produced "Oslo" starring Ruth Wilson and Andrew Scott and directed by Bartlett Sher for HBO.

Siegel has produced numerous films including "Hotel Artemis" (2018), a crime thriller starring Jodie Foster, Sterling K. Brown, Dave Bautista, Sofia Boutella, Jeff Goldblum, Jenny Slate, and Charlie Day. He previously produced "2 Guns" (2013), an action comedy directed by Baltasar Kormákur, starring Denzel Washington and Mark Wahlberg, as well as "Drive" (2011), directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, starring Ryan Gosling, Carey Mulligan, Bryan Cranston, Albert Brooks, and Christina Hendricks. The film earned the Best Director prize at the 2011 Cannes International Film Festival. Prior, Mr. Siegel executive produced films

including “Wanted,” directed by Timur Bekmambetov, starring Angelina Jolie, James McAvoy and Morgan Freeman, as well as “Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World,” directed by Edgar Wright.

In the television space, Siegel has produced many live television musicals including Emmy® Award winner, “Grease Live!” (2016) on FOX – the live television event of the beloved musical, directed by “Hamilton”’s Tommy Kail, and starring Aaron Tveit, Julianne Hough, and Vanessa Hudgens.

Siegel is a graduate of Wesleyan University. He is married and a father to two kids, and recently one rescue dog named Macguffin.