

Disneynature  
**POLAR BEAR**

**“We are ice bears. How are we to survive without ice?”**

**~ Disneynature’s “Polar Bear”**

**PRODUCTION BRIEF**

Director Alastair Fothergill has wanted to make a polar bear movie for Disneynature for years. Apropos of a good Disneynature storyline—it was an epic journey. “Every year, we would come to Burbank and pitch our ideas,” he says. “And every year, I’d pitch polar bears. They’re solitary animals—white bears in the middle of an Arctic setting—how do you make a 75-minute movie about polar bears? But I really believed in it.”

Fothergill, who’s been filming polar bears for more than 20 years, knew there was a story to tell, and it’s only deepened in the dozen years since he first pitched the film to Disneynature. “I’ve always known that polar bears would deliver—they’re unbelievably beautiful creatures and simply dominant in their habitat,” he says. “And the landscape is amazing; it’s second to none. Plus, polar bear cubs just might be the cutest cubs on the planet, which is perfect for Disneynature.

“But when we first pitched the film, we weren’t expecting it to have an environmental component because we didn’t know at the time how much climate change would affect the Arctic,” Fothergill continues. “We always knew it was happening faster in the Arctic than anywhere else in the world, but we didn’t expect it to be quite as drastic as it is. Polar bears have been forced to adapt—we witnessed it and captured some of those behaviors—it’s extraordinary. But they have a tough road ahead.”

Disneynature’s “Polar Bear” tells the story of a new mother whose memories of her own youth prepare her to navigate motherhood in the increasingly challenging world that polar bears face today. “The heart of the story is family—that bond between mothers and cubs,” says producer Roy Conli. “That relationship lasts between two-and-a-half and three years—in that time the mother will teach her cubs everything they need to know to survive.”

Adds director Jeff Wilson, who has been researching and filming the natural world for two decades, “It’s impossible not to relate to and feel for the mother in our story as she reflects on the past and faces uncertainty about the future in a world that is changing fast.”

Wilson and Fothergill worked on “Frozen Planet,” a 2008 series for BBC’s Natural History Unit, that fueled both filmmakers’ passion for the Arctic. “Our knowledge—the world’s knowledge—of the natural world is ever expanding,” says Wilson. “The polar bear is an iconic animal whose narrative is incredibly powerful. It’s getting more and more powerful

with every year, given how much its habitat is changing. We were keen to tell their story. But it's an incredibly difficult thing to do simply because just accessing their habitat is a challenge, much less finding the bears and filming enough behavior for a feature film. The technology has greatly improved as has our understanding of how to access the bears' habitat. If we'd tried this 10 years ago it would have been almost impossible."

Catherine Keener ("Capote," "Being John Malkovich") narrates the film. "There was something about the quality of her voice," says Conli. "She's a two-time Academy Award® nominated actress who, I found, makes really interesting, really grounded choices. She had a definite emotional connection to the story."

Keener was already a fan of DisneyNature—particularly the 2019 film "Penguins." "I wanted to work with the directors and the polar bear cast," says Keener. "It's very important for our collective community to learn about these important issues. I hope families can discuss where our Earth is and what we can do about it."

DisneyNature films are an extension of Walt Disney's pioneering wildlife documentary filmmaking. Disney produced 13 True-Life Adventure films between 1948 and 1960, including "Seal Island" (1948), "Beaver Valley" (1950), "The Living Desert" (1953) and "Jungle Cat" (1958); the films earned eight Academy Awards®. The signature storytelling continues in DisneyNature's films with an entertaining and engaging blend of humor, education and stunning visuals. In honor of the film's majestic and extraordinarily resilient stars, DisneyNature and the Disney Conservation Fund will continue their longstanding commitment to caring for wildlife and their habitats by supporting Polar Bears International in their efforts to help protect polar bear mothers, cubs and their Arctic home.

#### "POLAR BEAR" BY THE NUMBERS

- 20 typically solitary bears dining together on a whale carcass
- 94 days in camp/field
- 147 days on a boat
- 210 days in edit
- 241 total crew days in the field
- 650 miles from Svalbard filming location to the North Pole
- 1747 packets of freeze-dried food consumed
- 2,040 Yorkshire tea bags consumed
- 46,335 kilometers traveled via skidoo
- 4-22-2022 release date on Disney+

The film features an original score by Harry Gregson-Williams ("The Martian," "Mulan"). The "Polar Bear" digital score soundtrack from Walt Disney Records will be available on April 22.

Helmed by Alastair Fothergill and Jeff Wilson, the directing team behind DisneyNature's "Penguins" and "Monkey Kingdom," and produced by Fothergill, Wilson and Conli, "Polar Bear" launches exclusively on Disney+ on April 22, 2022. "Like previous DisneyNature films, 'Polar Bear' offers an incredibly beautiful, truly cinematic experience," says Conli. "Disney+ allows a much broader audience to see these films again and again. In my mind, kids will embrace the heart of this film the more they see it, building an appreciation for the natural world that grows as they do."

## ARCTIC ENDEAVOR

### Filmmakers Take to Air, Land and Sea to Capture Stunning Polar Bear Behavior

Filming for Disney Nature's "Polar Bear" kicked off in 2019 in Svalbard, Norway—650 miles from the North Pole. The archipelago—located between mainland Norway and the North Pole—features glaciers, large expanses of frozen tundra, mountains, fjords, coastlines—and more polar bears than people. During winter and most of spring, the seas surrounding Svalbard freeze over, providing the ideal hunting ground for polar bears.

Working in the Arctic as a filmmaker is far from a 9-to-5 gig. The region goes dark from early October through February—a season known as northern lights winter. The other two seasons include sunny winter and polar summer, and the sun doesn't set between April and August, which

"No one had ever really put themselves in a position to survive for that length of time in that location before. It made a significant difference to what we could achieve and the level of ambition we could have."

- Jeff Wilson, Director/Producer

allows filmmakers to work around the clock—both a blessing and a curse. Capturing footage of polar bears roaming the frozen tundra was important for the story—particularly footage of mothers and cubs. Says director Jeff Wilson. "We had to figure out how to be in the bears' presence for the longest period of time possible in order to really capture the kind of character moments and the behaviors that we knew could support a film. To do that—especially in those winter months, you need to figure out how to survive out there."

### BRAVING THE WILD

Filmmakers chose a strategic location to set up camp to have the very best potential to find the bears they sought. The effort called for the creation of a revolutionary, environmentally friendly, self-contained, sled-mounted mobile camp with a kitchen, lounge area, sleeping accommodations, among other rooms. "It had its own heat, generated its own water, gave us protection from the bears and allowed members of our team to survive for up to four months," says Wilson.

It all had to be transported 100 kilometers across a glacier—the operation took 10 days. "That alone broke new ground," adds Wilson. "No one had ever really put themselves in a position to survive for that length of time in that location before. It made a significant difference to what we could achieve and the level of ambition we could have. It took 18 months to plan and build before filming even started."

Even with a state-of-the-art camp and expert guides, shooting in the arctic is no picnic. "The darkness, the cold and the ever-changing sea ice make it very challenging to work," says Wilson. "The habitat changes seasonally more than any other habitat on the face of the planet. The bears live and travel on the sea ice, where they hunt seals and interact with one another. Once the sea ice melts, the bears become almost entirely aquatic.

"Our whole mode of operating completely changes with the melting ice," Wilson continues. "We go from working on skidoos and track vehicles to being completely boat-based and traveling thousands of nautical miles in search of bears."

Adds director Alastair Fothergill, “Not so long ago, polar bears would get 90 percent of their food on the frozen sea ice between early March and late May. But the freeze is coming later and the ice is melting earlier. The west coast of Svalbard has lost its ice all together. The bears have increasingly had to resort to alternative food types—fortunately, they’re very clever animals.”

The production team worked with scientists from the Norwegian Polar Institute, who have long shared their knowledge of the region and bear behavior. This keen understanding of the bears was essential to a successful shoot—but the production still proved challenging. It was made significantly more challenging when the worldwide pandemic prevented filmmakers from shooting for an entire season. Ultimately, team members—which included an Emmy®- and BAFTA®-winning long-lens cinematographer, an award-winning drone operator and a revolutionary gyro-stabilized camera system & operator and professional arctic guides—logged 241 days of filming in the field.

### ACTION!

Filmmakers had a few options when it came to the camera work, often doubling and tripling up to capture the best behaviors from multiple angles.

- Traditional long lens work, which Fothergill describes as “the heart of a lot of our filming.”
- A gyro-stabilized camera system was “a big breakthrough for this film,” says Fothergill. “It stabilizes a long lens so that we could get rock-steady images from a long way away with a powerful lens. We could mount it on track vehicles or boats so we could move with the bears. There are wonderful shots where we track with a bear—from a good distance—during a brilliant aquatic stalk. To understand the stalk, you need to be down at sea level. The bear was trying to get close to a hooded seal and she’d go up, up, up—then decide ‘not yet’ and go down, down, down. We could hardly breathe while shooting that shot.”
- Drones have come a long way, says Fothergill. “The behaviors we were able to capture were far and above what would’ve been possible five years earlier. We’d wait a hundred days for a behavior to happen and when it happened, we could launch a drone within a couple minutes and shoot in parallel. It allows you to cut and, very importantly, create a wonderful sense of place. I love the shots where the female is diving under the ice—the drone shots are really critical.”

Filming the largest land predator and biggest member of the bear family comes with a certain amount of risk. According to filmmakers, however, not only were they accompanied by experienced guides, their collective understanding of bear behavior not only kept them safe—it led to capturing better footage. “You can wait days or even weeks without finding any bears,” says Wilson. “And when you do come across one, that doesn’t mean you’ll be able to film. That bear will choose whether they are willing to tolerate you in their presence for long enough to film—we’re very careful in these circumstances. Bears are living on the edge of survival up there so it’s not really in our interest to pursue a bear to get footage. The bear always has to accept you from the moment you appear on their horizon. Half the bears accept you and half don’t.”

The filmmakers’ experience with the animals lends itself to creating a preliminary script for the film long before they arrive on site. Says Fothergill, “We write our initial 40-page

script based on our expectations having filmed polar bears in the years leading up to this film,” he says. “Of course, the animals never read the scripts, so loads of things happen that in your wildest dreams you would never expect.

“Bears are very solitary creatures, so to see those numbers in one place is actually mind-blowing.”  
- Alastair Fothergill, Director/Producer

“In ‘Polar Bear,’ for example, a young female and young male came together one day for a truly extraordinary interaction,” Fothergill continues. “The field guys we work with have been working in Svalbard all their lives and spent thousands of hours with polar bears—

they’d never seen anything like it. They’re both playful, sliding on the ice together—it was almost like a dance. The female sort of toys with the male while she’s playing with a bit of fur.”

Adds Wilson, “They spent hours and hours in each other’s presence just playing with no clear intent. We sent the footage to the scientists that we worked with in an effort to understand what was going on—and nobody had any idea. The conclusion you can draw is that there is no purpose other than to hang out with another bear and enjoy its company. All of us who witnessed it were genuinely moved by this amazing moment.”

Filmmakers also captured a virtual buffet—a rare and wonderful gathering of hungry bears. “A whale carcass washed up to Svalbard,” says Fothergill. “What completely blew us away was how many bears came together—I think it was 20 at one point. Bears are very solitary creatures, so to see those numbers in one place is actually mind-blowing.”

Better yet, when the bears’ bellies were full of rich blubber, many found themselves in a splash-happy celebration in the water surrounding their meal. The entire event was a good example of how the team was able to employ multiple cameras to capture the action. “You have to make the most of it,” says Wilson. “We had the drone up, the GSS on the boat was being used and we had people on foot at a safe distance filming from a tripod.”

## STORYTIME

As the footage comes together, filmmakers go back to the script and build a story that reflects what they’ve filmed. One of the benefits of creating a Disney nature film is feedback from Walt Disney Animation Studios’ story trust. “It’s the core creative storytellers who are heavily involved in every film we make at Disney Animation,” says producer Roy Conli, who’s been part of the studio for nearly 30 years. “The story trust looks at the story the directors want to tell and make suggestions on how to best clarify that story, how to strengthen the themes that the filmmakers want to bring to the screen. It’s what I love about our process—we are always looking for ways to strengthen thematic content—not necessarily specific story moments. It’s always about the big picture.”

One theme evolved throughout the production, becoming an essential part of the film. “It was important to us to include the environmental story that underscores what the bears are experiencing,” says Wilson. But to paint a picture for viewers of what was happening, filmmakers knew they’d need their story to take place over a decade or more. Says Wilson, “It would be false to tell a story about a single bear who’d witnessed climate change because it’s really what happens over a much longer timeframe. By choosing to

tell a story that spans 15 years of a bear’s life, we’re able to showcase the kinds of changes that are happening in places like Svalbard.”

Adds Conli, “Globally, temperatures have risen about 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit since the late 1800s. The Arctic has warmed more than 4 degrees just since 1960. Last year, 70 miles north of the Arctic Circle, a little town in Russia recorded a 100-degree temperature.”

## POLAR BEARS INTERNATIONAL

Disneynature and the Disney Conservation Fund continue their longstanding commitment to caring for wildlife and their habitats by supporting Polar Bears International (PBI). Among a host of activities, PBI is deploying a new aerial radar detection tool to allow aircraft to identify polar bear dens to help protect these sites for polar bear moms and cubs during this crucial period, giving each new cub the best possible start in life. The non-profit organization is also working with Arctic communities to reduce potential human-bear conflicts to keep bears and people safe, as well as efforts to inspire action on climate change globally. “Polar Bears International is an exceptional organization doing exceptional work for both the polar bears and the environment in which they live,” says Conli. “They bring essential awareness to the general populace of what’s going on in the Arctic and the realities polar bears face today, and inspire us all to take action to positively change the future for this species. I’m so proud that we’re working with their incredible team.”

“Disneynature’s engaging and beautiful films are known for their ability to tug at the heart and inspire people to care,” adds Krista Wright, executive director of Polar Bears International. “We’re thrilled to be working with such a creative team as they tell the story of a polar bear mom as she navigates a changing Arctic. We’re also extremely grateful to Disneynature and the Disney Conservation Fund for their generous support of our work to protect moms and cubs as well as our other polar bear conservation efforts.”

“I think this film is about resilience. It’s about striving to overcome odds. It’s about a commitment to our planet—to protect these environments and the species that call them home.”

– Roy Conli, Producer

## SOUNDS GOOD

A key component in Disneynature’s signature storytelling is the film’s score. “Harry Gregson-Williams is our composer,” says director Alastair Fothergill. “We’ve worked with him on ‘Penguins’ and ‘Monkey Kingdom.’ Apart from Catherine’s narration, the score is the emotional arc of this movie.”

Gregson-Williams was challenged with creating something unique for each storyline—one of the polar bear as a cub with her mother and brother, and the other of the same bear much later as a mother herself. “Harry created a brave score,” Fothergill says. “He’s a very clever composer.”

According to Gregson-Williams, the score had to be nimble. “It’s at times very playful, yet as the story unfolds it becomes deeply emotional and sometimes quite bleak reflecting the plight these wonderful animals go through,” he says. “My mission was to try and reflect

the natural beauty and fragility of their surroundings and their irresistibly heartwarming nature which ultimately shines through bright and clear.”

Anchored in majesty and gravitas, the score was recorded by a symphony orchestra. Says Gregson-Williams “The sound is complemented by various ethnic woodwinds—chosen for their breathy tone and emotional capacity—and additionally by a recurring motif heard on a solo flugelhorn being played only using the instrument’s mouthpiece. I found these colors brought an unusual and distinctively personal aura to the small family of bears we follow.”

Exemplifying the emotional power of the score is one of Gregson-Williams’ favorite scenes. “There are so many scenes within the film that stood out to me, but possibly my favorite one was the incredibly emotional moment that the now mature cub is left to fend entirely by herself by her mother, whom she will never see again. Indeed, the narrator tells us in that moment that in the three years that follow, our cub doesn’t set eyes on another polar bear. At all.”

For producer Roy Conli, the scene exemplifies the heart of the story. “I think this film is about resilience,” he says. “It’s about striving to overcome odds. It’s about a commitment to our planet—to protect these environments and the species that call them home.”

### [Also Streaming on Disney+ Beginning April 22](#) **“BEAR WITNESS”**

Narrated by Blair Underwood, “Bear Witness” journeys to Svalbard, Norway—650 miles from the North Pole—where the filmmakers behind DisneyNature’s “Polar Bear” take on profound challenges to film one of the planet’s most intriguing creatures. Before the cameras even rolled, they had to create and transport a state-of-the-art arctic camp—an environmentally friendly, self-contained, sled-mounted mobile facility with a kitchen, lounge area and sleeping quarters. The team, which included an Emmy®- and BAFTA®-winning long-lens cinematographer, an award-winning drone operator and a revolutionary gyro-stabilized camera system and operator—navigated virtually impassable snow drifts and tenuous sea ice in their efforts to locate, track and film the majestic white bears. Their unprecedented footage reveals the bears’ struggles within their changing environment, and never-before-filmed adaptive behaviors that surprised even this veteran team of filmmakers.

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**FUN FACTS**  
**Polar Bears in Svalbard**

Filmed in the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard, “Polar Bear” tells the story of a new mother whose memories of her own youth prepare her to navigate motherhood in the increasingly challenging world that polar bears face today.

- Approximately 3,000 polar bears—a ninth of the world’s polar bear population—live in the Barents Sea region bordering Norway and Russia. An estimated 300 polar bears remain in Svalbard, Norway year-round.
- Female polar bears in Svalbard weigh 150 to 350 kilograms (330 to 771 pounds) and males tip the scales at 300 to 700 kilograms (661 to 1,543 pounds). Adult polar bears vary in length from 180 to 260 centimeters (6 to 8.5 feet).
- Polar bears are the world’s largest land predator and biggest member of the bear family. However, because they spend most of their lives on the sea ice, they’re the only bear species classified as marine mammals.
- Polar bear mating season is in April or May; females in Svalbard typically mate for the first time around age 5.
- A pregnant female packs on the pounds, often doubling her weight by the time she builds a birthing den in late autumn. There, she goes into a deep winter sleep, dropping her metabolic rate and body temperature to conserve energy.
- Polar bears most often give birth around the New Year to 1-2 tiny cubs weighing just 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds). Thanks to mom’s fat-rich milk, the family can leave the security of the den by March or April, when the cubs have reached a solid 10 kilograms (22 pounds).
- A polar bear mother receives no help from her solitary mate, and juveniles follow their mother until the age of 2.5 years.
- Polar bears prefer to eat ringed seal, the most common sea species in Svalbard, but they’ll also make do with animal carcasses, small mammals, birds, and even eggs and vegetation.
- A polar bear’s skin is actually jet black, as seen on their nose and footpads, and it absorbs infrared light from the sun to create warmth. Their fur is translucent but appears white because it reflects visible light.
- Don’t let their laidback lumber fool you: polar bears run up to 40 kilometers per hour (25 miles per hour) and sport 42 super-sharp teeth, which they use to trap and devour prey.
- Polar bears are most often seen above ground, but they can swim for days at a time to reach another ice flat. The longest non-stop polar bear swim ever recorded was nine days and 426 miles—comparable to the distance between Washington, D.C., and Boston.
- The average lifespan of a polar bear in the wild is 15-18 years. The oldest polar bear in the Arctic lived for 32 years, and the oldest known polar bear in a zoological park lived for 45 years.



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## BIOGRAPHIES

**ALASTAIR FOTHERGILL (Director/Producer)** co-founded Silverback Films in 2012 after a long and highly acclaimed career at the BBC Natural History Unit. He has been at the forefront of natural history programming for over 30 years.

Fothergill studied zoology at Durham University and made his first film, “On the Okavango,” while still a student. He joined the BBC Natural History Unit in 1983, working on a wide range of the department’s programs, including the BAFTA® Award-winning “The Really Wild Show,” “Wildlife on One,” “The Natural World” and the innovative “Reefwatch.” He went on to work on the BBC One series “The Trials of Life” with Sir David Attenborough and produced “Life in the Freezer,” a six-part series for BBC One celebrating the wildlife of the Antarctic, presented by Sir David Attenborough. In 1992, while still working on this series, he was appointed head of the BBC Natural History Unit.

Six years later, Fothergill stood down to concentrate on hands-on filmmaking. His BBC credits include:

- Series producer of “The Blue Planet,” the original landmark series on the natural history of the world’s oceans
- Producer of “Deep Blue,” a cinematic movie of the world’s oceans
- Executive producer and a presenter of the innovative live broadcast “Live from the Abyss”
- Series producer of the landmark series “Planet Earth,” the ultimate portrait of our planet
- Co-director of the acclaimed cinematic version “Earth”
- Executive producer of “Frozen Planet,” the critically acclaimed major landmark series on the natural history of the polar regions

Fothergill left the BBC in late 2012 to set up Silverback Films. He was the executive producer of “The Hunt,” a landmark series for BBC One that looks at the dynamic relationships between predators and their prey, and producer of a 3D giant screen version of the series “Incredible Predators.” Fothergill was a series producer for Netflix’s first natural history series, “Our Planet,” which was released globally in April 2019; a director for “David Attenborough: A Life on our Planet,” released on Netflix in 2020; and an executive producer for both the BBC One series “A Perfect Planet,” which aired in January 2021, and the Netflix feature “Breaking Boundaries,” released in June 2021.

Fothergill has co-directed numerous Disney nature films, including “Elephant,” “Penguins,” “Dolphin Reef,” “Monkey Kingdom,” “Bears,” “Chimpanzee” and “African Cats.”

Fothergill is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and was awarded their gold medal in 2012. He has honorary doctorates from the University of Bristol, Durham University, York St John University and Hull University. In 2017, Fothergill was named the BBC Grierson Trustees' Award winner and he was awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2019 for his services to film.

**JEFF WILSON (Director/Producer)** had already spent a lifetime in the company of African animals across East Africa before joining the BBC Natural History Unit in 2001 as a biologist and researcher on Sir David Attenborough's "The Life of Mammals." He then worked on BBC Two's "Natural World" before joining the team on the BBC One/Discovery Channel landmark series "Planet Earth."

In 2007, Wilson directed and produced the multi-award-winning "Snow Leopard: Beyond the Myth," based in Pakistan, for BBC Two/Animal Planet, followed by BBC One's seminal polar series "Frozen Planet" in 2008. He went on to direct the observational documentary "A Year in the Wild" for BBC Two before again returning to BBC One/Discovery Channel to produce "Great Bear Stakeout," a two-part, presenter-led series on grizzly bears in Alaska.

In 2013, Wilson left the BBC to join Silverback Films and Disney Nature's feature release "Monkey Kingdom," based in Sri Lanka. He directed and produced the "Forests" episode of Netflix's "Our Planet" whilst also directing Disney Nature's feature film "Penguins." Wilson series produced 2021's "The Mating Game" for BBC One and is embarking on a new series yet to be disclosed.

**CATHERINE KEENER (Narrator)** can currently be seen in Shawn Levy's feature film "The Adam Project" opposite Ryan Reynolds and Mark Ruffalo. She recently appeared in a one-season arc in Nick Antosca and Lenore Zion's new Netflix series, "Brand New Cherry Flavor." Prior to that, Keener co-starred with Jim Carrey in Showtime's "Kidding," which ran for two seasons. She was also seen in the Amazon series "Modern Love," based on the popular and long-running New York Times column of the same name, as well as in Alan Yang and Matt Hubbard's Amazon series "Forever" opposite Maya Rudolph and Fred Armisen.

Keener stars in the independent feature "No Future"—by the producing team of the critically-acclaimed "Sorry to Bother You"—opposite "Stranger Things" star Charlie Heaton.

As a two-time Academy Award® nominee, Keener ("Capote," "Being John Malkovich") continues to be a dominant force on screen, recently appearing in the critically-acclaimed box office hit "Get Out" from Universal Pictures and Jordan Peele. She can also be seen opposite Josh Brolin and Benicio Del Toro in Black Label Media's "Sicario" sequel, "Sicario: Day of the Soldado," written by Taylor Sheridan and directed by Stefano Sollima.

Keener was also recently seen opposite Oscar Isaac in “Show Me a Hero,” a six-part miniseries for HBO, written by David Simon and directed by Paul Haggis. Before that, she joined longtime collaborator and acclaimed director Nicole Holofcener for “Enough Said” alongside Julia Louis-Dreyfus and James Gandolfini. Previously, she appeared with Mark Ruffalo and Keira Knightley in “Begin Again,” written and directed by John Carney. Keener voiced Uggla in the 2013 animated hit “The Croods” for DreamWorks Animation, as well as Evelyn Deavor in Disney and Pixar’s Incredibles 2.”

**ROY CONLI (Producer)** produced Walt Disney Animation Studios’ Oscar®-winning feature “Big Hero 6,” as well as DisneyNature films, including “Dolphin Reef,” “Elephant,” “Penguins” and “Born in China.” Conli is currently producing Walt Disney Animation Studios’ “Strange World,” an original action-adventure releasing Nov. 23, 2022.

Conli joined Disney in 1993, and after assembling all the creative elements for “The Hunchback of Notre Dame” and launching the project, he relocated to France to oversee the contributions of the Paris-based animation team over the two-year production schedule. Upon completion of the film, he remained in France and guided production on the animated films “Hercules” and “Tarzan.” Conli returned to the studio in Burbank to produce “Treasure Planet.” He served as producer of Walt Disney Animation Studios’ 50<sup>th</sup> animated film, “Tangled,” and he’s part of the executive leadership team for Disney Animation.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Calif., Conli studied theater at San Francisco’s prestigious American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.). A chance meeting with a group of creative talents from The Pasadena Playhouse led Conli to a position with the legendary theater and, ultimately, a four-year stint as director of operations. In that role, he initiated a restoration of the neglected venue, contributed his talents as production manager and guided the theater to its official reopening in 1983.

Conli subsequently moved to Boston where he continued his education at Boston University and eventually earned an M.F.A. After graduation, he served as associate producer for the Camden Shakespeare Festival in Maine. In 1989, Conli joined the production team at the Mark Taper Forum, the leading regional theater in Los Angeles. Over the next four years, he managed all special projects and new play development for the Taper, where he helped launch premieres of such award-winning plays as “Angels in America,” “Jelly’s Last Jam” and “The Kentucky Cycle.”

**HARRY GREGSON-WILLIAMS (Composer)** is one of Hollywood’s most sought-after and prolific composers whose long list of film and television credits underscore the diverse range of his talents. He most recently wrote the music for “The Last Duel” and “House of Gucci,” both directed by Ridley Scott. In addition, he wrote the music for Disney’s live-action feature film “Mulan,” which was directed by Niki Caro with whom he worked previously, having scored her film “The Zookeeper’s Wife.” Gregson-Williams also co-wrote the original song “Loyal Brave True” for “Mulan,” performed by Christina Aguilera. He and his brother, composer Rupert Gregson-Williams, wrote the original score for the drama series “The Gilded Age,” which debuted on HBO on Jan. 24, 2022,

in the U.S. and will be available to stream on HBO Max. "The Gilded Age" launched on Sky Atlantic and streaming service NOW in the U.K. on Jan. 25, 2022.

He was the composer on all four installments of the animated blockbuster "Shrek" franchise, garnering a BAFTA® Award nomination for the score for the Oscar®-winning "Shrek." He received Golden Globe® and GRAMMY® Award nominations for his score for Andrew Adamson's "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." He has collaborated multiple times with a number of directors, including Ben Affleck on "Live by Night," "The Town" and "Gone Baby Gone"; Joel Schumacher on "Twelve," "The Number 23," "Veronica Guerin" and "Phone Booth"; Tony Scott on "Unstoppable," "The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3," "Déjà Vu," "Domino," "Man on Fire," "Spy Game" and "Enemy of the State"; Ridley Scott on "The Martian," "Prometheus," "Exodus: Gods and Kings," "Kingdom of Heaven," "The Last Duel" and "House of Gucci"; Bille August on "Return to Sender" and "Smilla's Sense of Snow"; Andrew Adamson on the "Shrek" series, "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," "The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian" and "Mr. Pip"; and Antoine Fuqua on "The Replacement Killers," "The Equalizer," "The Equalizer 2" and "Infinite."

Some of his other recent film projects include the documentary "Return to Space," directed by Oscar®-winning directors Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin with an original score by Gregson-Williams and composer Mychael Danna, which marks their first collaboration together and premieres April 7, 2022 on Netflix; "The Ambush," directed by Pierre Morel; "Life in a Day 2020," directed Kevin Macdonald; "The Meg," directed by Jon Turteltaub; Aardman's "Early Man," directed by Nick Park for which he received an Annie Award nomination; and DisneyNature's "Penguins." His television credits include "Whiskey Cavalier"; the miniseries "Catch-22," along with his brother Rupert Gregson-Williams; and "Philip K. Dick's Electric Dreams" for which he created the main title theme and scored two episodes of the anthology series, receiving an Emmy® nomination for the episode titled "The Commuter."

KEY CREDITS FOLLOW

Disney nature  
**POLAR BEAR**

**KEY CREDITS**

DIRECTED BY	ALASTAIR FOTHERGILL JEFF WILSON
NARRATED BY	CATHERINE KEENER
PRODUCED BY	ALASTAIR FOTHERGILL JEFF WILSON ROY CONLI
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER	JANE HAMLIN
PRODUCTION MANAGER	EMILY LASCELLES
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