

# BLUE BAYOU



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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

From award-winning writer/director Justin Chon (*Gook*), BLUE BAYOU is the moving and timely story of a uniquely American family fighting for their future. Antonio LeBlanc (Chon), a Korean adoptee raised in a small town in the Louisiana bayou, is married to the love of his life Kathy (Alicia Vikander) and step-dad to their beloved daughter Jessie. Struggling to make a better life for his family, he must confront the ghosts of his past when he discovers that he could be deported from the only country he has ever called home.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

From award-winning writer-director Justin Chon (*Gook*, *Ms. Purple*) comes a moving and timely story of a uniquely American family fighting for their future.

New Orleans tattoo artist Antonio LeBlanc (Justin Chon) is a devoted family man, looking to build a better life for pregnant wife Kathy (Alicia Vikander) and precocious step-daughter Jessie (Sydney Kowalske). But for an ex-con with a checkered past, opportunity can be hard to come by, meaning money is always tight, especially with a new baby on the way. Complicating matters is Kathy's ex Ace (Mark O'Brien), a Louisiana cop who wants to play a larger role in Jessie's life—despite having abandoned the girl and her mother years earlier.

When a family spat unexpectedly leads to a grocery store confrontation with Ace and his racist partner, Denny (Emory Cohen), Antonio is arrested and transferred into the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Despite having been brought to America at the age of three, the Korean-American adoptee—who is married to an American citizen—suddenly faces deportation from the only country he's ever known as home. Trapped in a waking nightmare, Antonio and Kathy seek out legal assistance to help fight the deportation order, only to discover that they have precious little hope of keeping their family together.

With Antonio facing an uncertain future, he finds an unlikely ally and source of support in a Vietnamese-American woman named Parker (Linh-Dan Pham) who also is at a place where she

is struggling to come to terms with a difficult truth. Determined to remain near his loved ones, an increasingly desperate Antonio is forced to confront his past, going to ever greater lengths to remain on American soil. But the painful secrets that come to light threaten to upend his relationships with Kathy and Jessie—even as Denny resolves to seal Antonio’s fate.

Focus Features in association with MACRO and eOne presents BLUE BAYOU. Justin Chon, Alicia Vikander, Sydney Kowalske, Linh-Dan Pham, Mark O’Brien, Emory Cohen, Vondie Curtis Hall. Editor, Reynolds Barney. Costume designer, Eunice Jera Lee. Production designer, Bo Koung Shin. Composer, Roger Suen. Cinematographers, Ante Cheng and Matthew Chuang. Produced by Charles D. King, Kim Roth, Poppy Hanks, and Justin Chon. Executive produced by Nick Meyer, Zev Foreman, Clara Wu Tsai and Eddie Rubin. Co-produced by Greta Fuentes and Yira Vilaro. Written and directed by Justin Chon.

## A HEARTBREAKING STORY OF IMMIGRATION, IDENTITY AND FAMILY

Actor-turned-filmmaker Justin Chon took the Sundance Film Festival by storm in 2017 with his startling black-and-white L.A. riots drama *Gook*. His 2019 follow-up, *Ms. Purple*, was set in modern-day Koreatown and told the story of a brother and sister caring for their terminally ill father. With his latest feature, *BLUE BAYOU*, Chon leaves behind Southern California for the balmy climbs of New Orleans and its environs to tell the compelling story of one man whose future and whose family hangs in the balance after his citizenship status is called into question.

The story is one that could be ripped from today's headlines—it was, in fact, inspired by a series of news articles that Chon came across several years ago about adoptees from South Korea being deported from the United States after having lived their entire lives in the country. “I read that, and it really affected me and got me very emotional—the stories just broke my heart,” says Chon, who hails from Southern California. “Growing up, I’ve been friends with a lot of Korean-American adoptees, and I always felt their experience being an American was so different to mine. I thought it was a side of the American experience that really wasn’t really shown in film.”

Chon put together a pitch—though he’d also resolved that he would write this story whether anyone in Hollywood chose to back him or not. Fortunately, Chon found excited creative partners in MACRO, who responded strongly to the young filmmaker’s vision. “*BLUE BAYOU* is a beautiful story about a Korean-American who was raised in the South, and at 37, discovered that as an adopted child, he did not have the proper immigration papers,” says MACRO CEO Charles D. King. “It’s just a beautiful, heartfelt, tragic story around challenges that we’re facing around immigration laws and reform.

“It was important for us to tell this story because the mission for our company MACRO is to elevate the voices and to tell the stories of people of color, both domestically and globally and tell them authentically, and to tell the spectrum of those stories,” King continues. “When Justin shared this story with us, we were just struck by it. I didn’t know that this is something that’s happening in the country, and I could only imagine that there’s a wider audience that isn’t aware of these challenges that some members of our community are facing. We thought that it was

incredibly important to tell this story, especially right now with many of the issues that are facing our country. We saw it as a story that could show the universality of who we are and could help to build bridges and bring people together.”

As BLUE BAYOU took shape, the character at the heart of the emotional tale became ever clearer to Chon, as did the importance of the film’s Louisiana setting. “One thing that was very important to me as an Asian-American is how we’re portrayed in the media,” Chon says. “A big thing for me was the name Antonio—seeing an Asian-American with that name was very peculiar. I placed it in the South because I’ve never seen Asians with Southern accents treated as just very naturally a fact of life.”

Adds Chon: “I placed it in New Orleans specifically because there’s a huge enclave of Vietnamese people there, and one of my goals with this film was to have two adjacent Asian ethnicities in one film. This Korean adoptee Antonio learns what his culture could be like through this friendship with a Vietnamese woman. It’s his introduction into Asian culture. They’re countries that share a lot of similar war trauma.”

Although Chon had written, directed and starred in his previous films, he initially planned to cast an actor to play the pivotal role of Antonio. But when it came time to cast the part, he found that the character was simply too close to his heart to be portrayed by anyone else. “The story was so important to me that I really wanted to be present to focus on the story and the filmmaking,” he says. “But I just got to a point where I’d lived with the story for so long and these people were so real to me that I started to get very nervous. I felt like if anyone was going to mess it up, I’d be the one to mess it up. I didn’t want to be in a position where if somebody didn’t quite give it the energy that I thought was necessary that I would be bummed out, you know?”

From then on, it was a matter of finding the right actors to portray the colorful cast of characters that surround Antonio on the streets of New Orleans, and the casting process began in earnest.

## **CASTING *BLUE BAYOU*: AN ENSEMBLE TAKES SHAPE**

When *BLUE BAYOU* opens, Antonio LeBlanc is interviewing for a job at an auto body shop. He's lanky, skinny even, with tattoos latticed across his skin and an accent that immediately announces his Louisiana heritage. Yes, he tells his prospective employer, he was born in Korea, but he hails from St. Francisville, about an hour north of Baton Rouge. On his lap is his adopted step-daughter, a sprightly seven-year-old named Jessie with bright, searching eyes. She silently listens as Antonio admits he has two felony convictions for non-violent crimes. Stealing motorcycles, to be precise, but that time in his life is long since past. These days, he's a family man with a baby on the way, a hard worker who is desperate to improve his circumstances.

Antonio does not get the job.

It's a brief interlude, but it establishes a great deal about who Antonio LeBlanc is and how he's perceived by those around him. He's a good man with a checkered past who's haunted by the ghosts of a faraway land that he can summon only in fleeting memories or dreams. We see early on that in his quietest moments his thoughts turn to his birth mother, the mysterious woman who chose for whatever reason to part with her infant son. Her decision set Antonio down his current path, moving toward a difficult future where hope can sometimes be hard to find.

"Antonio, he's a proud man," explains King. "He's a man who cares about his family. This is a man who's willing to do whatever it takes to work hard, to provide for his beautiful wife, and for Jessie, his adopted daughter, that is just his heart and his soul. He's a man that everyone who has children, who's a family person, can relate to and can identify with. Yes, he's had some challenges in his life. He's overcome obstacles, but he's a man who has wanted to face those demons and to set his life on the right track to support and do what is best for his family."

Fortunately, love and acceptance do come to Antonio from his wife Kathy and her daughter from a previous relationship, Jessie. As the two people the tattoo artist loves most in the world, the characters take on a vital importance in *BLUE BAYOU*. "Kathy, I think, is a true survivor in the film," Chon says. "She's truly a rock. Without her, I think Antonio would be completely

unhinged. It's because of her that Antonio really tries to step up because he doesn't want to let her down. She really is the glue that holds the family together. In the face of adversity, she is able to keep a level head and keep the family together."

Offers BLUE BAYOU producer Poppy Hanks: "Kathy is almost like a liberated Southern belle. Kathy knows what she wants, and Kathy appreciates how much Antonio loves her daughter and loves her. Even though they struggle financially, I think Kathy feels safer with Antonio—until she doesn't. She would do anything for Antonio. She would go to the moon and back. She would do anything for him."

For Kathy, Chon cast Academy Award®-winning Swedish actress Alicia Vikander, known for starring turns in such memorable films as *The Danish Girl* and *Ex Machina*. "I wanted someone very visceral and authentic and real for Kathy—and who better to play an authentically viscerally Southern, working class, blue-collar girl than Alicia Vikander?" Chon says with a laugh. "I felt like Alicia was going to come to the role with a very critical eye, and she's so talented that I felt that she was going to bring a depth to Kathy that maybe I didn't even entirely write on the page."

Vikander was moved by Chon's earlier work and her initial conversations with the writer-director assured her that BLUE BAYOU would equal or surpass the superlative storytelling he already had achieved with his previous films. "He always chooses to tell very accurate stories about regular people, people that we know exist but sometimes people whose stories don't get the chance to get highlighted, Vikander says. "And it was an opportunity for me to get the chance to play a blue-collar American citizen, which is maybe a part that I have never really had put in front of me with my being an international European actress."

Adds Vikander of Kathy: "She's a hard-working woman. She has quite a strong moral compass. You get hints of her backstory, her relationship with her mother. She has made quite a journey of wanting to break away from the ideas and conventions of where she comes from and wanting to create and shape her own life. She's met a man that her mother might not approve of but that she knows will fulfill her and be the best partner in her life. I think she's a good parent. I think I



looked up to her. It's impressive how she's quite stubborn, the way that she faces tough challenges in her everyday life, but she's not a quitter. She's a person who keeps on going."

Hanks says she was impressed by Vikander's unwavering commitment to the role. "Alicia was really wonderful for the role of Kathy—I give it up to her," says the producer. "She went to New Orleans early. She worked with a dialect coach. She really wanted to get that accent. She really embodied who we pictured Kathy to be and even took it further. I felt like she played her with a quietness that still showed her strength. We see even more of her fury at some point in the movie, but she definitely was that calm to Antonio's chaotic nature."

Chon was no stranger to writing compelling roles for children—for *Gook*, he created the character of 11-year-old Kamilla, then cast actress Simone Baker to play her after discovering her at a South Central Los Angeles arts center. With Jessie, he took the same approach to shaping the character and then finding the right young star to bring her to the screen. "I wrote the role very honestly," Chon says. "I try to respect the age. I try to respect the questions they would ask."

Realizing Jessie would be a difficult part to cast, Chon urged casting directors to search outside of Los Angeles and instead focus on Louisiana and the surrounding states for someone who might feel more natural in the role. Little Sydney Kowalske, who had had a role on the TV series *Doom Patrol*, soon emerged as a leading contender. "I wanted to find the girl as is, somebody who was not trying to be this character but just was naturally being herself. Then I came across Sydney's tape. I knew right away—this is our girl. It sounds so hippie, but it's just an energy thing."

Chon arranged to visit Sydney—who was only six years old at the time—at home with her family in Atlanta to get to know her better, and they spent time playing video games and just hanging out. She next traveled with her father to New Orleans where Chon was preparing for the shoot, and the writer-director did some preliminary work with the young actress. "We did a bunch of improv because I just wanted to see how loose she could be," he says.

Says Sydney: “I liked the character. She’s a lot like me in some ways. She’s feisty, she’s funny and determined and also very emotional like me. She’s having a really hard life—and I’ve had a pretty easy life.”

After officially offering the role of Jessie to Sydney, Chon, who is himself a father to a little girl, asked her to come to set prior to the beginning of production so they could continue to build their father-daughter screen rapport. “We did quite a bit of rehearsal, though a lot of those rehearsals aren’t necessarily working on the scenes,” Chon says. “It’s spending time together and helping her understand why the scenes exist so that she understands emotionally what’s going on at a cellular level.”

Adds BLUE BAYOU producer Kim Roth: “Sydney Kowalske is such a discovery. She’s magical. She hadn’t done a lot of work, but she just had that incredible spark and twinkle in her eyes and her reactions. They had this incredible chemistry from the beginning. It really helped to bring the kind of chemistry and bond that hopefully you see in the film.”

It’s Jessie who inadvertently pulls another key figure into Antonio’s orbit. At the hospital where Kathy’s pre-natal appointment is underway, the child asks Antonio for a snack from a vending machine, a request that leads to a chance encounter with a woman who introduces herself as Parker. After she helps Jessie retrieve a wayward treat, the trio strikes up a brief conversation before parting ways—Antonio doesn’t realize he’s just met someone who will play a profound role in the trials he’ll soon experience, someone who is herself struggling to accept the difficult circumstances in which she’s found herself.

“Parker is a Vietnamese-American immigrant,” Chon says. “She came when she was very young. She impacts the story and also Antonio’s journey because she provides a different perspective on the Asian-American experience. He never really considered or thought about what his place was in the United States, and she really makes him reflect on his identity and what it means to be an immigrant.”

“There’s a bond somehow,” says Linh-Dan Pham (*Mr. Nobody*, *The Beat That My Heart Skipped*) of Parker. “When she meets Antonio, she is intrigued. She’s there. She’s open. She’s welcoming this friendship.”

When the writer-director contacted the French-Vietnamese actress initially, she was unfamiliar with his work. But after watching *Gook*, she immediately recognized him as a gifted filmmaker and someone who could become a trusted creative partner. “What I like about Justin’s work is that he’s very good at observing life and human relationships,” she says. “It’s always truthful.”

Explains Roth: “Parker is a really important character in the movie, and Justin knew from the beginning he wanted Linh-Dan Pham. She’s fearless. She brought so much soulfulness, so much beauty, honesty to the role. She meets Antonio at this moment where he’s fighting to stay in the country and keep his family together, and they form this unlikely family. She shows Antonio, this other side of this family, this immigrant family.”

As Antonio and Kathy attempt to navigate the challenges of daily life while barely getting by financially, the couple also must cope with Kathy’s contentious relationship with Jessie’s father, police officer Ace. Despite his having left Kathy and Jessie when the girl was much younger, he now wants to play a larger role in his daughter’s life—even though the child has little interest in seeing him.

On a fateful morning, Ace is venting to his partner Denny about the custody dispute when they happen into the same grocery store when Antonio, Kathy and Jessie are shopping. After an exasperated Kathy begins arguing with Antonio over the way he indulges Jessie, their raised voices attract Ace’s attention. As he prepares to confront Kathy about visitation, Denny arrives—and within moments, a fist fight breaks out, one that ends with Antonio in handcuffs in the back of a squad car.

The roles of Ace and Denny went to Mark O’Brien (*Ready or Not*) and Emory Cohen (*BlacKkKlansman*) respectively. O’Brien, who is a writer-director as well as an actor, says he was impressed by the nuance with which Chon approached Antonio’s story and the characters

who around him, including Ace. “You could paint this picture of this cop who clearly has had some sort of tumultuous past relationship with Alicia’s character,” he says. “You can clearly see that he can be painted as the bad guy. When you meet Ace, you’re not really on his side because he is at odds with our protagonist. But what I really like about Ace is that he’s actually not a bad guy. You have this perception that he’s going to be one thing, and he’s not really. There’s a lot of gray area in the film.”

“Ace on the surface is a guy that you hate,” King adds. “He seems like he’s coming across as a deadbeat dad, but it was really beautiful to see how his character unfolded and what Mark O’Brien brought to this character. He really, I thought, evolved from what could have been a one-dimensional character to one you, at the end of the day, have empathy for and care for.”

Cohen’s character, by contrast, serves as more of a traditional antagonist. “Denny, he’s a very confused person,” says Cohen, known for his performances in films such as the acclaimed romance *Brooklyn* and the Netflix cult favorite TV series *The OA*. “He’s definitely a bit of a bully. Ultimately, I saw him as a really sad guy who wanted to be loved and wanted to be loved by Ace. He’s someone who didn’t have many friends. He driven by loneliness and a desire to connect and a desire to show Ace what a good friend he is and stand up for his friend.”

“Emory embodied Denny with a humorous cadence,” adds Hanks. “He could have easily played him just like the straight, racist, hard-edged guy, but instead, he really dug into that character in a way that created a few more nuances. Those were on the page, but he amplified them.”

After Antonio is arrested, he’s transferred into the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and by the time Kathy’s been able to secure his release, wheels have been set in motion, with the Department of Homeland Security planning to deport him. Convinced that this must be some terrible mistake, Antonio and Kathy seek legal counsel, but attorney Barry Boucher informs them they have little recourse. A bill was passed in 2000 that granted citizenship to adopted children, but Antonio was brought to the United States in 1991. Even though he’s married to an American, for him to remain in the country legally, Antonio and Kathy would have needed to have taken steps to secure his status.

His only options? Depart voluntarily and petition to return from overseas—or appeal the ruling. Should the judge uphold the deportation order, however, Antonio would forfeit any chance of ever returning to the U.S.

Veteran actor and filmmaker Vondie Curtis-Hall, recently seen in the Harriet Tubman biopic *Harriet*, portrays immigration lawyer Barry Boucher. “I thought it was a different take on how we are viewing immigration policy these days,” he says of *BLUE BAYOU*. “My character is a matter-of-fact person—he sees a lot of people, and so he looks at the paperwork that’s in front of him and makes an assessment. In this case, the assessment is, I don’t know how this is going to work out for you because these things weren’t taken care of.”

Determined to do whatever she can to keep Antonio in the country, Kathy wants to ask her mother, Dawn (Geraldine Singer), for the \$5,000 retainer Boucher requires, but Antonio insists he’ll find a way to earn it on his own. Soon after, he’s hustling on the street, trying to flag down passersby in the hopes of finding anyone in the market for a tattoo. He unexpectedly runs into Parker, and to Antonio’s great surprise, she becomes his next customer—and a friendship is born. Parker is dealing with a dark fate of her own; she’s suffering from terminal cancer and is nearing the end of her life.

“Her dying, I felt, was necessary because when Antonio is going through something that’s so traumatic like this, it’s very easy to blame the world,” Chon says. “But when there’s someone that’s going through something much more profound and final, you have to shut up and listen. I mean, what’s worse than possibly losing your family, getting kicked out of the country that you call home? So, Parker was so important to help him gain perspective and to realize that there’s beauty in what he does have and not to throw that away. But I also wanted her to feel full and soulful and not just play into his struggle.”

Playing a patient with terminal cancer, Linh-Dan had no reservations about shaving her head for the role. “I said, ‘Of course, I’ll do it,’” she says. “It’s the least I can do to honor people who really are suffering from a terminal illness. I had done it 10 years ago for a sci-fi film, so it was

not as traumatic as it was the first time, but it does affect you. It affects the way people look at you. It affects how you feel because of the way people look at you.”

As time grows short for Antonio, he’s forced to make increasingly desperate choices in the hopes of remaining with Kathy, Jessie and his unborn child. Reluctantly, he reunites with his old crew at Algiers Chop Shop—Quentin (Altonio Jackson), Lajon (Martin Bradford) and Reggie (Renell Gibbs)—and agrees to pull a heist with them, stealing motorcycles from a dealership. Antonio understands if he’s caught, he’ll only jeopardize his standing, but he sees no other way to obtain the money he needs.

“When he can’t get an honest job, he goes back to what he knows how to do and what will give him the money that he needs to pay the lawyers and fight this case to stay in the country and stay with his family,” says Roth. “Antonio might go about it the wrong way, ultimately, but it’s all for the love of his family and keeping them together.”

For Antonio’s crew, Chon relied on local Louisiana actors, but the film also features some non-professional talent. For example, Chon cast Toby Vitrano, who plays Antonio’s friend Merk, an Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agent, after discovering him working behind the counter at a nutritional supplement store in Biloxi, Mississippi. The filmmaker recalls that a skeptical Vitrano required a bit of convincing before agreeing to play the role.

“His accent is just exactly what I thought Merk would sound like, and he was so charming,” Chon recalls. “I was like, ‘So, have you ever thought about being in a film?’ He’s like, ‘Nope, Never thought about it. Don’t want it.’ ... But—and I think this is why that energy thing is so important—he actually worked at Angola prison for eight years, so he knows law enforcement, and he’s from Baton Rouge. He has this thick Baton Rouge accent, and he could speak Cajun French. I was like, My God, can’t get more authentic than this guy.”

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION: HEADING INTO THE BAYOU**

BLUE BAYOU was shot over the course of 30 days in the late fall of 2019 and saw Chon reunite with key contributors from his previous films, including Ante Cheng (who worked alongside Matthew Chuang as one of two cinematographers on the movie), production designer Bo Koung Shin and costume designer Eunice Jera Lee. Chon never wavered about partnering once more with trusted members of his behind-the-scenes team.

“There’s a purpose behind what I’m doing, and I need my collaborators to share the same energy, the same motivation for making this stuff,” Chon says. “My collaborators are going to tirelessly work to make it a beautiful film, as opposed to people who consider it a job and are willing to just do enough. As we all know, this industry is very tough. We spend so much time working, I want to work with people I care about. Also, it’s a journey, and I’d like to for there to be this beautiful shared history among us as we grow. If you can choose who to work with, why wouldn’t you work with people you care about?”

With the support of their producers at MACRO, Chon traveled to the south with Cheng ahead of the shoot to take candid photos that would help them home in on the specific mood they hoped to evoke with the film. They were looking to capture a sort of effortless authenticity that would have all the color and texture of the New Orleans locale.

“I look at New Orleans as another character in the film,” King says. “The accent, the people, the culture, the music, the food—I could feel and taste that within the world that Justin painted. It’s a universal story, but it’s one that also leaned into communities in cities like New Orleans. You could tell very clearly that this was New Orleans. You have the bayou, beautiful scenes shot in the swamp lands.”

“One thing we found was just to really embrace the weather in New Orleans,” adds Cheng. “It can go from sunny to overcast to raining just in one day, but that’s what’s real, and I wanted to capture it. The weather actually worked out for the film to have quite a few different looks.”

Chon wanted BLUE BAYOU to have a very visceral reality, an evocative aesthetic inspired by films from the 1970s, including those directed by indie film legend John Cassavetes. “I wanted it to feel immediate but also timeless,” says the filmmaker. “The issues are of the moment—the deportation aspect of it and seeing an Asian man in the South. You would never see that in the ’70s or ’80s or the ’90s, so there is a contemporary feel to it. But I wanted the film to have a feeling that it’s been weathered and distressed, so when people watch this film 10 years from now, it doesn’t feel dated. I wanted the audience to feel like they were sitting in a room with these people. That’s why we crafted the visual language as such.”

Pivotal to the overall look of the film was the decision to shoot BLUE BAYOU on Super 16mm stock. “This film is first and foremost about the people and the performances within this place,” offers Chuang. “We thought that 16mm enhanced that and made it feel grounded at the same time it felt crafted visually. We always wanted a balance between something that felt very spontaneous and lively with the camera but also had certain moments where we wanted to get into the mind frame of Antonio.”

“The texture and the feeling of it just being more real, more authentic is a key part of the story of this character, this family,” adds Cheng.

With authenticity and realism as the primary goals, the cast and crew shot exclusively in practical locations, including the shotgun house that Antonio and Kathy call home. “There are many restrictions when it comes to shooting on location for a major number of scenes,” explains production designer Shin. “However, there is the advantage that actors can easily immerse themselves in emotions. These locations have their own special reality and warmth of the space where people actually live.”

Color became a major focal point for both Shin and Lee when it came to their designs. Each character in the story was assigned a specific color that represented something fundamental about his or her identity, as well as their role in their narrative and their relationships to one another. Antonio’s color was yellow—inspired by the yellow seen in Francis Bacon paintings.



“Yellow represents the brightness of the sun, but at the same time represents corruption,” Shin explains. “I could relate this to Antonio’s background of being abandoned and then being abandoned again by his new mother and new motherland. In color psychology, yellow is interpreted as innocence, sunshine, juvenile and childish. This interpretation of the color psychology of yellow is an expression that suggests that Antonio’s childhood pain is still in the present. Yellow is also the mocking expression of Asian skin colors. Yellow is also a fragile color that quickly becomes dirty and easily deteriorates when it meets other colors. At the same time, yellow, orange, mustard, camel and amber are all colors that can express a warm heart.”

Kathy, meanwhile, was assigned cobalt blue, sky blue and white, “representing a poor but hard worker,” Shin says. “Her color palettes are the opposite of Antonio’s yellow and orange, but at the same time, are the best match.” Jessie’s principal colors were lemon yellow and lime to express her deep bond with Antonio, while Parker’s colors were pink, opera red and Linden green, showing her Vietnamese origin and her longing for her hometown and her family. “The chosen main color became the reference whenever selecting the characters’ outfits, houses, office walls, curtains, cars and props,” Shin says.

To create the home where the LeBlanc family lived, the filmmakers sought out a traditional New Orleans shotgun house—commonly found throughout the region, the residences are long and narrow with rooms arranged one behind the other. Shin applied the color palette to each of the individual spaces the characters inhabit while taking care that the overall design would still feel cohesive and comforting.

“Antonio and Kathy’s house is not simply just a house, but a home that represents a true family,” the production designer says. “The house is their sanctuary from the harsh reality. I wanted to design the house with each of Antonio, Kathy and Jessie’s own characteristics showing, but in a harmonious and gentle way, like a mother’s womb.”

Initially keying into Antonio’s job as a tattoo artist, she at first imagined the family home awash with a riot of color and pattern. But she eventually moved away from that idea, hoping instead to underscore the stabilizing influence Kathy has on her husband’s life. “So instead of filling up the

house with loud patterns, I chose retro-style floral wallpaper from the 1960s,” Shin says. “The living room and dining room were set as Antonio’s section, so I chose yellow, mustard and orange-toned floral wallpaper. I hung a mirror overlooking the whole living room on one side to reflect Antonio.”

The location was ideal in many ways. Chon and Shin were especially delighted to find a house that was not only near a set of train tracks, which added visual interest, but also was painted in a way that corresponded to the film’s palette. The bedroom and bathroom, both of which were set up as Kathy’s spaces, were decorated in shades of blue. To add a bit of Antonio’s influence into the room the couple share, Shin chose prints rather than plain bedding and added a vintage stained-glass lamp to the décor. In the bathroom, Shin hung a three-sided mirror in which Antonio, Kathy and Jessie’s reflections would overlap.

For the little girl’s bedroom, Shin opted for pastel tones. To show Jessie’s affection for Antonio, Shin added bedding, curtains and accessories with various cultural accents, with Mardi Gras bead necklaces and masks representing her New Orleans roots. “I hoped Jessie would dream of a brighter future,” she says.

Historic New Orleans tattoo parlor AART Accent Tattoos & Piercings, which owner Jacqui Gresham opened in the Treme neighborhood in 1976, doubled as the shop where Antonio works (Gresham herself, a local legend and the first Black female tattoo artist, makes a cameo in the film). “Antonio lives in an unstable, confused and difficult reality, but at least while he is working on a tattoo, he forgets reality and feels at ease,” Shin says. “That’s why the tattoo parlor is a place of hope. I imagined Antonio being tattooed with natural light shining on him, rather than him being in darkness.”

Shin and her art directors and set decorators came together to dress the location with large amounts of tattoo-patterned frames, sketches, sculptures, cartoonish or antique props and neon signs within a short period of time, with some crew members even bringing in their own paintings and sculptures.

To find a property that could double as Parker's home, where Antonio brings Kathy and Jessie for a large and friendly outdoor party, Shin felt it was important to truthfully depict the sort of residence in which an immigrant family would live. So, she sought out a location within New Orleans' sizeable Vietnamese community. "We selected Parker's house focusing on the size and scenery of the backyard, keeping in mind the importance of the backyard party scene we would need to shoot," Shin says.

Although the backyard area was large, it was relatively plain, with little in the way of landscaping or lighting. To give the space more character, Shin thought back to her travels through Vietnam. "I remembered the streets of Hoi An that I had seen," the production designer says. "I sketched and designed the backyard party with the motif of the street where colorful Hoi An silk lanterns were hanging. On the day of the shoot, pink and Linden green matching tablecloths were placed all around, colorful Hoi An silk lanterns were lit up and a Vietnamese band performed a Vietnamese variation of old pop songs. For the cast and crew, it felt as if they were at a party somewhere in Vietnam."

## **COSTUME DESIGN: DRESSING THE CHARACTERS**

Eunice Jera Lee had never spent time in New Orleans prior to *BLUE BAYOU*, but Chon made a point to discuss the film with the costume designer even as he was in the earliest stages of writing the script. Using the months that the project was in development to research and study, Lee spent time pouring through Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr. She also watched films and television series set in the Louisiana city—she cites HBO’s *Treme* as a point of reference—imagining backstories for the characters so that their looks might feel more multi-dimensional.

“But it’s funny,” Lee says. “No matter what backstory I created for these characters, when I talked it out with Justin, he already had them figured out. He’s like, ‘Oh I know how Kathy met Antonio—I’ll tell you exactly how they met.’ Justin’s such a creative genius. Because he’s not just the writer, he’s the director as well, every question is answered straightaway.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, designing costumes for Antonio became the priority. “He really was the biggest challenge because he’s not just the main character, but also he’s an Asian-American and this character has never been shown on television before or film,” Lee says. “We wanted to make sure that we represented this Asian-American man in a way that feels relatable to every viewer regardless of background or creed. We really had to make sure that everything was on point and believable, but that he still had his own way about him. He wasn’t just another Asian-American guy.”

Antonio’s look went through a lot of different iterations, before Lee and Chon arrived at his distinct style—collared shirts worn open over sleeveless tanks, high-waisted pants, utilitarian boots. “Initially, he started off as this really bro-y American guy: Army print camo, things like that, something that you would immediately identify as American,” Lee explains. “But we landed on this incredibly unique look. I don’t think there’s any way to pinpoint his fashion at all because Antonio draws from different subcultures of New Orleans. He’s got his motorcycle side, and then he’s got the tattoo/indie side. Ultimately, though, he’s just a really poor guy who doesn’t invest in fashion at all. We repeated so much of his wardrobe to give him this idea that

he doesn't need much. He gives as much as he can back to his family, and he's not so concerned about how he looks, but he wants to be presentable in his own right."

Additionally, Lee and Chon spent weeks discussing what Antonio's body art would look like and settled on custom pieces of his neck and back, which were then designed by Chon's wife Sasha Egorova, a model and tattoo artist. "She sketched them out, we got them printed on tattoo paper, it was a process," Lee says. "I think the entire three weeks that I was in New Orleans before filming began, we were discussing tattoos."

Given the weight that color has throughout BLUE BAYOU, the costumes Lee designed for Kathy all hewed to the palette that had been established. "Alicia existed in this world of blues—absolutely every single thing in her wardrobe was blue," Lee says.

To dress Vikander, Lee relied heavily on garments from such local Louisiana designers as Passion Lilie that were then customized for the actress, whose character spends much of the film in late stages of pregnancy. "We wanted everything as realistic and authentic as possible," Lee says.

Another staple piece was Kathy's Mignon Faget necklace. "That was significant because it tells a lot about who she is and her upbringing," Lee explains. "As a young girl in New Orleans, Mignon Faget is pretty much everyone's high school graduation gift. It lingers in that zone of fine jewelry and costume, but it's like your first piece into womanhood. That lily is specifically what you would have received."

For Jessie, Lee took cues for the child's wardrobe from her spunky personality. "She's bright, she's vibrant," Lee says of Kathy's child from her relationship with Ace. "We wanted to make that really apparent through her wardrobe." Early in the film, Jessie makes an indelible impression when she attempts to leave the house to go to school wearing a laughably mismatched ensemble complete with superhero helmet. "It was basically scripted that she's in some superhero costume, just to show the silliness of who she is," Lee says. "We wanted to

make her as quirky as possible. She does all sorts of crazy things, and she had parents who enable her to be creative and allow her to be herself. We really wanted to represent that.”

Lee adored working with child actress Sydney Kowalske. “She was a ray of sunshine,” the costume designer says. “She was ready to work every single day, no complaints. That little girl is a powerhouse. She would run into the fitting the happiest person I’ve ever met. I don’t think I ever saw that girl scowl. Even when she was tired, hungry, she was always smiling. And she liked everything. Anything we put on her, she was excited about. She brought a smile to everyone on set.”

As for Parker, the woman who comes into Antonio’s life at such a pivotal moment, “she’s the person that gets him to understand that he needs to grow up,” says Lee of Linh-Dan Pham’s character. Parker wears green to represent her connection to Antonio: “It’s their heritage, their ethnicity,” says Lee, who incorporated subtle nods to Parker’s Vietnamese background into the character’s costumes.

Parker’s costumes were also designed in such a way to emphasize the toll that illness is taking on her body. “With her, there’s much more of a story for the character from the start all the way to the end,” Lee says. “You see this decline, and we wanted to do that with her wardrobe more than anything. Toward the end, we were putting her in really baggy clothes to punctuate how tiny she is.”

Although she’s never named onscreen, Antonio’s birth mother is never far from his imagination—it’s her image that opens the film. In a haunting prologue that could either be memory or fantasy, the distraught young woman stands on a tiny boat in placid waters with her newborn baby boy in her hands, pondering a terrible act. She wears a cream-white *hanbok*, traditional Korean dress for festivals, celebrations and ceremonies.

“We didn’t want it to be this ethereal moment,” Lee says. “Even though it is a dream, we wanted to make sure that we kept true to what she might’ve possibly been wearing. But you never know if that was the reality, because this is going off a memory or a dream that Antonio’s had. Maybe

in real life, she wasn't ever wearing a *hanbok*, but it's this idea that he had of his mother and about this foreign country that he's never been to or experienced any of the culture really."

It was that garment, Lee says, that was by far the most challenging she was required to create for the film. "We started working on that immediately," she says. While modern-day *hanboks* are typically made from silk, Lee designed the garment using a rough linen-cotton blend to suggest that the character is from limited means. Since the *hanbok* needed to appear worn and damaged from mud and water, Lee's team had to break down the material once the gown had been fabricated, but the fabric turned out to be quite sturdy. "Trying to break that down, it was just a nightmare," she says. "It's very thick. If you could imagine a canvas, that's pretty much what it felt like."

The costume department distressed the layers of the *hanbok*, shredding the fabric, dirtying it or dyeing it as needed until the day the actor playing the mother, Sage Kim Gray, arrived on set. "We were still doing the last layer of distressing, and she was sitting in her trailer."

When she finally had a chance to watch the scene being shot, Lee says it felt gratifying—it was easy to see that the sequence would be stunning on screen. "It was incredible," she says. "We're in this gorgeous bayou with this boat. You get her on there and just the whole thing came together. It's funny because we were adding all this extra fake dirt on her *hanbok*, and the second we got to set, it was so sludgy and disgusting that we really didn't need to go through all the trouble. As soon as she sat on the boat, it was soaking wet. The entire bottom of the *hanbok* was dirt and mud, a mix of everything. There was no way to avoid it."

## THE SHOOT

With Chon both directing and starring in BLUE BAYOU, preparation was key. He and the cast rehearsed as much as they could before embarking on the emotional shoot. “With as many of the actors as we could, we did tons of rehearsal, but the thing is, when we showed up on set, we threw it all the way, let it breathe,” Chon says. “But then at least I’d worked out any character kinks that the actors might have or questions they might have. We’d talked it through, so we’re not on set trying to find the scene. It’s more about, let’s play and get what we need, and then also see where we can push it to.”

“This is a man that is an artist, that is committed to his craft through and through, and he will literally put a 110 percent into every scene,” adds King of Chon. “When you have someone like that who is an actor first and now filmmaker, that’s where he brings that added lens to it. It was quite magical watching him perform in front of the camera while being behind it as well. He’s truly uniquely talented.”

O’Brien, for one, welcomed the opportunity to improvise on set and found Chon to be an open, collaborative director as well as a scene partner. “I love working with directors who are actors,” he says. “Acting with Justin in the scenes, he’s aware of everything that’s happening, and he is setting the tone for his movie by his performance. That’s what’s great about having an actor as a director. They don’t need to say as much because they just show you the tone of the scene.”

“It’s pretty incredible to see his work on this film,” adds Vikander of Chon. “He was everywhere and so involved in every single department, giving everyone that support that they need, including the actors. I was trying to figure out how he does it. I don’t think he slept for a few months leading up to making this film. But the incredible thing is that he loves it more than anything. He’s a true filmmaker.”

Chon had equally kind words for Vikander: “She’s the best. For someone of her stature and accomplishments and her body of work, I was so shocked at her work ethic and her approach. When you get to a certain level of fame, I think sometimes it can corrupt the process because you



get used to certain treatment. Alicia is the opposite of that. She's just a true actress and a true storyteller as well. She only cared about the right things. She respected me as a director as well—I mean, who am I to her? I'm just some guy who makes small films. So, that was really humbling.”

One of Vikander's most unforgettable moments on screen comes midway through the narrative when Kathy is invited onstage at the backyard party held at Parker's house to perform an impromptu rendition of Linda Ronstadt's Grammy Award-winning 1977 hit, “Blue Bayou,” which gives Chon's film its title. Indeed, the first two stanzas of the beloved track might as well tell Antonio and Kathy's story: *“I feel so bad/I got a worried mind/I'm so lonesome all the time/Since I left my baby behind/On Blue Bayou/Saving nickels/saving dimes/Working 'til the sun don't shine/Looking forward to happier times/On Blue Bayou.”*

The Oscar-winner says that working up the courage to sing “Blue Bayou” in that scene required an incredible force of will. “I'm not a singer,” Vikander says. “Justin was like, ‘Well, you don't have to be a singer,’ which I understand, but also, she jumps a whole octave in that song. It's not the easiest song to sing, and it was quite cold when we shot that scene. The song ended up being the last scene of the day—it was probably past midnight. By that point, I'd already been on set for 12 hours, and the nerves and the stress to perform this song had risen to a level that I don't think I've experienced in my career for maybe the last 12 years. I actually had a moment when I stood up there in front of all the extras, and I thought to myself, ‘Oh my God, Alicia, your hand is shaking.’”

Once she began to perform, however, her confidence grew. “As soon as I really started to sing, it changed,” says Vikander. “I got to almost start to feel what Kathy felt singing that song and what that moment between the two of them meant. And then there's the beauty of the song, the notion of, they're still in the fight, but also the sad realization of their future and what is about to happen. Even though I was nervous, it might be one of my favorite scenes in the film.”

“Alicia singing was one of the highlights, I think, for everyone on the film,” recalls Chuang. “Her performance is so captivating. We obviously all had that song in our heads, but when she

did that scene, it went beyond what all of us thought that scene could be. I think Ante felt that it was one of the best moments that he'd ever been part of on a film set, and I felt the same. She did what she does best, and it changed the whole dynamic of that scene. With someone like Alicia, you knew she was going to bring quite a lot to it, and we all felt it when we were shooting it."

For a story filled with quiet contemplation and heartbreaking interpersonal drama, BLUE BAYOU also had a not-insignificant number of scenes that required inventive stunt work, much of it involving motorcycles. In one sequence, a despairing Antonio drives his bike headlong into the bayou where he typically goes to clear his head and find solace.

Chon hadn't ridden a motorcycle for nearly 15 years prior to beginning work on BLUE BAYOU, and he relied heavily on the expertise of stunt performer Joe Dryden when it came to designing all the motorbike sequences, including the one at the bayou. For those scenes, the special effects team constructed a ramp that a stunt driver could ride into the water, but getting it right the first time was a necessity.

"That character almost needed to have a rebirth within himself, so it was quite symbolic and metaphoric for him to actually ride into the bayou," says Chuang. "It was getting colder at that point, so the stunt man could really only do it once or twice before he got severe hypothermia. I believe we only did it once. We had three cameras running at the same time for that one shot to capture different angles. Ante was on one camera, I was on one camera and I gave a camera to the stunt team, which got a great shot. They ran behind the motorbike. It worked out well."

Chon's editor Reynolds Barney (who had cut both *Gook* and *Ms. Purple*) traveled to New Orleans to be close to the shoot and to assemble a rough cut of the film as footage became available. It was a system they had developed on their previous collaborations, and the approach continued to serve them well on BLUE BAYOU.

"Often, the schedule is so packed that we don't have time to go back and reshoot anything, but this way we're able to get a general sense of how things are going and adjust," Barney says. "If a

certain beat wasn't hit, there might still be a way of incorporating it into another scene or something technical like coverage or camera work can be adjusted for scenes not yet shot."

Barney says he and Chon focused on how to give each character his or her due without sidelining Antonio's journey. "Parker and Ace were supporting characters that were pretty tricky," he says. "Parker being Antonio's link to his Asian heritage and Ace being the antagonistic force, we needed to figure out just the right amount of time to spend with them so that we understood their actions and emotions, but without taking away from Antonio's family, the core of the story. We referred to it as the right 'alchemy' of each character since removing or adding just a small thing has a ripple effect through the whole film...We really combed through every moment and glance between Antonio and Kathy to make sure the audience would empathize with both of them."

## ABOUT THE SCORE

Few locations in the country can lay claim to the same sort of rich musical tradition as New Orleans. Yet when filmmaker Justin Chon and composer Roger Suen began to talk through their ambitions for BLUE BAYOU's score, neither was interested in pursuing the most obvious path of a jazz-inflected soundtrack. "We talked about if we should let the setting influence the choices we made, but in the end, we decided to stay away from that," says Suen. "That's consistent with our other films. We always try to pick a style of music that has absolutely nothing do with the location. We're trying to suggest the idea that this story is not localized to any one specific area, rather it's something that we can hopefully all relate to."

Like so many of Chon's other behind-the-scenes collaborators, Suen's creative partnership with Chon dates to the filmmaker's breakthrough *Gook*; for the black-and-white drama, Suen created a score that he says, "was as colorful as it gets—like 1940s jazz." By contrast, the music in BLUE BAYOU is more understated. "We were really trying to let the film do the heavy lifting in terms of the emotion rather than the score," Suen says.

Suen was involved with the film nearly from its inception, with Chon supplying the composer with drafts of the script as he completed them. Together, they discussed employing a range of musical styles, before they homed in on the bayou itself as a source of inspiration. "We were thinking about what it felt like to be in the bayou where Antonio spends his time," Suen says. "We thought about water. Then, we realized, it's not even about the water—it's more about the wind blowing through the trees as you're sitting by the bayou. You'll notice, the instrument that gives our score its character is the organ."

For Suen, the organ sounds represent Antonio's mother—whose decision to give up her son for adoption has colored every aspect of his life. "The film in some ways is all about him living with what his mother had done, how her choice influenced his whole life," the composer says. "She's always in the back of his mind. Anytime he starts daydreaming, he starts thinking about his mom. That's the organ that's the sound of the wind."

Just as Chon spent a great deal of time rewriting and revising the screenplay for the film, Suen, too, attempted multiple iterations of the score before landing on something that satisfied both he and the writer-director-producer-star. “I can’t tell you how many versions of the score we did,” Suen says. “Just to find the right thing that seemed very simple, almost like a kid could play it on the piano with one finger—finding that was really challenging. But that’s the thing about working with Justin. He really finds the bare minimum of what we need.”

Complementing the organ are darker string sounds, which were performed by a string quintet, occasionally punctuated with some other instruments including trumpet. A total of 12 musicians were brought together to play Suen’s compositions—though, owing to COVID-19 restrictions, the performers had to record their parts separately and then send them to Suen to marry up. Yet the end result was seamless, every instrument in perfect harmony.

“What we did keep consistently from our previous projects is a tendency to have a more melodic style,” Suen says. “That can seem a little old-fashioned these days, but we wanted the score to basically have some little tune, a little hook that your ear can grab onto...I’m the proudest of our collaboration on this one by far.”

## **A STORY THAT MATTERS: SPEAKING TO ISSUES OF TODAY**

Immigration and deportation. Police brutality and the abuse of power. Family separation. Cultural identity. All these concerns are inextricably bound up in BLUE BAYOU as it relates the story of one American family. Yet with its beautifully realized performances and the inherent empathy with which filmmaker Chon approached the project, his stellar drama never falls prey to Message Movie tropes. This is a nuanced, verité-style narrative that simply invites audiences into the world of one man struggling to build a life with his wife and step-daughter who comes up against a system that seems designed to break him.

It's a story that's all too timely. "We are in a process now of fighting for our country's future and what our country stands for," says producer Charles D. King. "The idea of the melting pot, people from all backgrounds being welcomed and a part of the fabric of the United States, right now, a lot of that is at risk. And so, issues that are touched on in this movie around immigration and challenges for certain communities being invited to be a part of this great country, this is getting people to think about the changes that we can make as a community to get back to what the founding principles of this country were supposed to be about."

Adds producer Poppy Hanks: "The theme of family separation is relevant because it's happening right now. I don't think you've seen it the way that we have it in our movie, so up-close and personal and with a child. It really brings it home in a way that you can't turn away from. I hope audiences will receive the message of the humanity being destroyed by these practices, by our government. It's easy to become numb to it when it's the same story and the same visuals over and over, but seeing Kathy and Jessie and Antonio together, seeing why they should be together, I hope will land with people in a different way. Hopefully, it will have people rethinking the policies of this country and what we're doing to these families."

Although Chon does not consider himself to be a political filmmaker, he too, hopes that BLUE BAYOU serves not only as an affecting experience for viewers but also one that does shine an important light on the impact of our immigration policies on so many. According to the non-profit organization Adoptees for Justice, more than 500,000 children have been adopted by

American families since the end of World War II, yet many did not have their U.S. citizenship secured by their adoptive parents.

“We’re dealing with something that’s actually happening—these adoptees are getting deported—and it’s an injustice,” Chon concludes. “I would love for this film to bring up a conversation that spurs some sort of reform to happen. I look at these Korean-American adoptees like they’re my brothers and sisters. And I want to make it clear this isn’t just happening to Korean people. This is happening to people adopted from India, China, Africa, Mexico, all over the world. So, I hope that this film can open up the conversation. If this movie could do that, it goes beyond art then. It’s something that can be very positive for a lot of people.”

## ABOUT THE CAST

**JUSTIN CHON (Antonio LeBlanc)** was born in Orange County, California. He most recently wrote, directed and is starring in *BLUE BAYOU* alongside Alicia Vikander for Focus Features. As a filmmaker, Chon burst onto the scene with his film *Gook*, in which he also starred. The film won the NEXT Audience Award at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, and Chon was awarded the Kiehl's Someone to Watch Award at the 2018 Film Independent Spirit Awards. His 2019 film, *Ms. Purple*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. Dramatic Competition and was released by Oscilloscope Laboratories. As an actor, Chon is known worldwide for playing Eric Yorkie in all five installments of the *Twilight* franchise.

**ALICIA VIKANDER (Kathy LeBlanc)** is one of the most promising actors of her generation. Since making her film debut in *Pure* in 2009 (for which she received a Guldbagge Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role), Vikander has garnered critical and awards recognition for a diverse range of roles. Her sensitive portrayal of Gerda Wegner in *The Danish Girl*, directed by Tom Hooper, resulted in her winning an Academy Award® for best supporting actress, as well as a SAG Award and the Critics Choice Award, among other prizes. Additionally, she was nominated for a Golden Globe and a BATFA Award—at both ceremonies, she was nominated for best actress and best supporting actress in *The Danish Girl* and the film *Ex Machina*, respectively.

Vikander can most recently be seen in *The Glorias*, a drama directed by Julie Taymor based on Gloria Steinem's bestselling memoir and her life as a feminist icon. Vikander stars alongside Julianne Moore, Allie McCulloch, Janelle Monáe and Bette Midler. She will also appear in David Lowery's *The Green Knight* with Dev Patel, a re-telling of the medieval story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Vikander will also lead Ferdinando Cito Filomarino's *Born to Be Murdered* for Netflix, opposite John David Washington. The Luca Guadagnino-produced thriller will follow a vacationing couple who fall trap to a violent conspiracy with tragic consequences.

Vikander can also be seen in the 2019 noir thriller *Earthquake Bird*, directed by Wash Westmoreland. A female-fronted adaptation of Susanna Jones' award-winning novel, the story



concerns a young expat living in Tokyo suspected of murder. 2019 also saw Vikander star in the short film *I Am Easy to Find*, directed by Mike Mills, in support of rock band The National's eighth studio album. Prior to this, she was heard in the Netflix series *The Dark Crystal: The Age of Resistance*, which united her with a stellar voice cast including Taron Egerton, Anya Taylor-Joy, Awkwafina and Helena Bonham Carter.

2018 saw Vikander star in the much-anticipated reboot of *Tomb Raider* in the leading role. The story follows a young Lara Croft as she sets out on her first expedition to finish her father's archaeological research. A sequel has been commissioned by MGM and Warner Bros. Vikander lent her voice to the character of Meena in Penrose Studios 2017 release *Tide's Fall*, which she also executive produced. 2017 also saw Vikander star alongside Eva Green and Charles Dance in *Euphoria*, which she produced through her company, Vikarious Productions.

Joe Wright's 2012 *Anna Karenina* introduced Vikander to international audiences— she took on the role of Kitty alongside Keira Knightley, Domhnall Gleeson and Jude Law. In the same year, Vikander was highlighted by the European Film Awards as one of their Shooting Stars, and in 2013, she was nominated for a BAFTA in the Rising Star category. Her additional credits include *Submergence*, *Tulip Fever*, *Jason Bourne*, *Son of a Gun*, *The Light Between Oceans*, *Seventh Son*, *The Crown Jewel*, *A Royal Affair*, *The Fifth Estate*, *Hotel* and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*

She is an ambassador for French fashion house Louis Vuitton.

**SYDNEY KOWALSKE (Jessie LeBlanc)** will be seen in the feature film **BLUE BAYOU** opposite Alicia Vikander and Justin Chon in a story about Korean-born American Antonio who marries Kathy and adopts Jessie, with whom he shares a special bond.

Even at her young age, Sydney has worked in the industry for years. She appeared on the popular HBO Max series *Doom Patrol* as Clara Steele for Warner Bros. and Lifetime's *Girl in the Basement* as young Marie Cody. Sydney can also be seen with her father in the socially distanced short film about life in quarantine *(Dis)Connected* as Jane Keller; the project is directed by Canedy Knowles and produced by the Atlanta Workshop Players.

Sydney lives in Atlanta and comes from a family of actors and writers. Her older sister Savannah is also an actress, and her father, Ryan, is an actor and screenwriter. Sydney's hobbies include making her own movies at home, singing Broadway tunes, dancing, art, reading and travelling/exploring. She loves her dog Jerry, who is a black lab-retriever mix.

**LINH-DAN PHAM (Parker)** came onto the scene in Régis Wargnier's Oscar®-winning film *Indochine* where the French-Vietnamese actress played the adopted child of Catherine Deneuve, for which she was nominated for a Best Newcomer César award. That same year, she went on to shoot the German film *Jamila*, directed by Monica Teuber. She took a break from acting for the next 10 years to finish her education, complete a business degree at the American University of Paris and gain business experience in Vietnam and Singapore.

Deciding to return to acting in 2001, Linh-Dan moved to New York and undertook her first formal drama studies at the Lee Strasberg Theater Institute. 2005 was the year of her grand return, with leading roles in two films. She first entered blue-collar Paris alongside Pascal Elbé and Simon Abkarian in *The Gamblers (Les mauvais joueurs)*, directed by Frédéric Ballekjian, and then was chosen by Jacques Audiard for *The Beat That My Heart Skipped (De battre mon coeur s'est arrêté)*, which swept the Césars in 2006 with eight wins and the BAFTA for Best Foreign Language Feature Film. Linh-Dan starred opposite Romain Duris and was again nominated for the César for Best Newcomer, this time winning the award.

From then on, Linh-Dan has pursued an eclectic career filming in France and internationally. She's starred in comedies such as *Sunny Spells (Le bruit des gens autour)*, directed by Diastème, Maïwenn's kaleidoscope of self-parody on actresses, *The Actresses' Ball (Le bal des actrices)* and Géraldine Nakache's *All That Glitters (Tout ce qui brille)*. She's also appeared in such dramatic works as the Vietnamese drama *Adrift (Choi voi)* by the award-winning Vietnamese director Bui Thac Chuyen in which she plays a manipulative and sadistic writer adrift in a love triangle.

Linh-Dan has performed in sci-fi films such as *Dante 01* directed by Marc Caro, alongside Lambert Wilson, and *Mr. Nobody* directed by Jaco van Dormael alongside Jared Leto; action

films like *Ninja Assassin* by James McTeigue; and a gangster film, *De force*, directed by Frank Henry, with Isabelle Adjani and Eric Cantona.

Linh-Dan is no stranger to television where she has performed in highly acclaimed series such as Canal+'s *Pigalle*, Arte's *Mythomaniac*, France 2's family series *Have Kids (Faîtes des gosses)* and the BBC drama series *One Child and Casualty*.

**MARK O'BRIEN (Ace)** is a rising star in both the United States and in Canada. He is the winner of the 2020 Canadian Screen Award in the category of Best Actor for his portrayal of famed Canadian hockey goalie Terry Sawchuk in the 2019 biopic *Goalie*. The film was directed and co-written by Adriana Maggs with O'Brien serving as an executive producer. O'Brien recently wrapped Justin Chon's feature film *BLUE BAYOU* opposite Alicia Vikander.

O'Brien was previously seen in Fox Searchlight's *Ready or Not*, directed by Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett. The film stars Samara Weaving as a newlywed who is hunted by her spouse's family. O'Brien portrays her husband, with Adam Brody, Henry Czerny and Andie MacDowell as members of his family. He recently made his directorial debut with *The Righteous*, a psychological horror film that he also wrote and stars in alongside Mimi Kuzyk and Czerny.

Additional credits include *Hammer* opposite Will Patton, Jason Reitman's *The Front Runner*, Noah Baumbach's Academy Award®-nominee for Best Picture, *Marriage Story*, *Bad Times at the El Royale* opposite Jeff Bridges, Chris Hemsworth and Jon Hamm, *The Darkest Minds*, *How It Ends* and Denis Villeneuve's Oscar-nominee for Best Picture, *Arrival*.

On the small screen, O'Brien can be seen in Showtime's *City on a Hill* starring opposite Kevin Bacon, Aldis Hodge and Jonathan Tucker. His additional credits include acclaimed television shows *The Last Tycoon*, *Republic of Doyle*, *Halt and Catch Fire* and *Hannibal*.

**EMORY COHEN (Denny)** is one of Hollywood's most formidable talents, consistently receiving rave reviews for his performances. In the Netflix original series, *The OA*, produced by

Plan B and Anonymous, Cohen stars opposite Brit Marling. In *The Loudest Voice*, a seven-part limited series about Roger Ailes starring Russell Crowe, he plays Joe Lindsley.

Cohen has just finished shooting Brian Petsos' *Big Gold Brick* leading a cast that includes Andy Garcia, Megan Fox, Lucy Hale and Oscar Isaac; *The Birthday Cake* with Shiloh Fernandez, Val Kilmer and Ewan McGregor; and Justin Chon's *BLUE BAYOU* with Alicia Vikander. He is best known for his performances in *Brooklyn* (Sundance '15), playing Saoirse Ronan's love interest to widespread critical acclaim, and *The Place Beyond the Pines*, opposite Bradley Cooper, Ryan Gosling, Eva Mendes and Dane DeHaan.

Other noteworthy roles include Dex in Elijah Bynum's *Hot Summer Nights* with Timothée Chalamet; Sebastian in *The Education of Frederick Fitzell* with Dylan O'Brien and Maika Monroe; Dylan Dougherty in Sean McEwen's *The Dougherty Gang*, based on a true story about three siblings who embark on a cross-country crime spree; Varg in Jonas Åkerlund's film *Lords of Chaos*, which premiered at Sundance '18; Skunk in Malik Bader's *Killerman* opposite Liam Hemsworth; Billy in *The Wolf Hour* opposite Naomi Watts; and Lucas in Blumhouse's *Sweetheart* with Kiersey Clemons, both of which premiered at Sundance '19

Cohen was praised for his roles in *Stealing Cars* (L.A. Film Fest '15), starring John Leguizamo, William H. Macy and Felicity Huffman, and Paramount's *The Gambler* opposite Jessica Lange, Mark Wahlberg and John Goodman. Cohen is also known for his role in the critically acclaimed *Beneath the Harvest Sky*, and he can be seen in other films including *Four*, *Detour*, *Vincent-N-Roxy*, *By Way of Helena*, *Shot Caller*, *The Duel* and *War Machine* with Brad Pitt.

He has been featured in *Forbes*' 30 Under 30 (2017), *TheWrap*'s Breakout Stars list and *Variety*'s 10 Actors to Watch.

**VONDIE CURTIS-HALL(Barry Boucher)** is an acclaimed actor, director and screenwriter. In addition to his series regular role on ABC's *For the People*, he is best known for his work on *Daredevil*, *Chicago Hope* and *ER*, which earned him an Emmy® nomination. He can next be seen in *BLUE BAYOU* opposite Alicia Vikander and Justin Chon.

Curtis-Hall was most recently seen in the Kasi Lemmons-directed feature *Harriet* for Focus Features, starring opposite Cynthia Erivo and Leslie Odom Jr. The film premiered on November 1, 2019 and has since received two Academy Award® nominations and two Golden Globe nominations. He will next be seen in David Bruckner's *The Night House*, in which he stars opposite Rebecca Hall. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was acquired by Fox Searchlight in one of the largest purchases at the festival.

Over the span of his career, Curtis-Hall has appeared in more than 40 features including *Die Hard 2*, Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, *Eve's Bayou*, *Breaking Brooklyn* and *Cymbeline*. As a director, he has been nominated for the films *Gridlock'd*, *Waist Deep*, *Redemption* and *Abducted: The Carlina White Story*. His additional directorial credits include *Toni Braxton: Unbreak My Heart*, *ER*, *Firefly*, *Gossip Girl*, *Sleeper Cell*, *The Starter Wife*, *Boston Legal* and *Faith Under Fire*, which won the 2019 Christopher Award, Vision Award, Wilbur Award and Gracies Award.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**JUSTIN CHON (Writer, Director, Producer)** was born in Orange County, California. He most recently wrote, directed and is starring in *BLUE BAYOU* alongside Alicia Vikander for Focus Features. As a filmmaker, Chon burst onto the scene with his film *Gook*, in which he also starred. The film won the NEXT Audience Award at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, and Chon was awarded the Kiehl's Someone to Watch Award at the 2018 Film Independent Spirit Awards. His 2019 film, *Ms. Purple*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. Dramatic Competition and was released by Oscilloscope Laboratories. As an actor, Chon is known worldwide for playing Eric Yorkie in all five installments of the *Twilight* franchise.

**CHARLES D. KING (Producer)** is Founder & CEO of MACRO, a multi-platform media company representing the voice and perspectives of Black people and people of color. King casts the overall vision, mission and strategic goals for the company and its multiple business verticals that includes a film (MACRO) and television studio (MACRO Television Studios) that finances, develops and produces theatrical features and premium television, talent (M88) and influencer (UNCMMN) management divisions, a branding and creative agency (Brand MACRO) and an affiliated venture firm (MaC Venture Capital).

Formerly a partner/senior agent at William Morris Endeavor, King was the first African-American partner in the company's 100+ year history and the first ever African-American partner at any major talent agency. Known industry-wide for his innovative dealmaking, keen eye for talent and strategic long-horizon thinking, King's list of notable clients spanned every sector of the entertainment industry, including acclaimed filmmakers, music icons, media moguls and innovators.

King also made history again in 2021, when the Best Picture Oscar nomination for the film *Judas and the Black Messiah* made King, along with Ryan Coogler and Shaka King, the first ever and only all-Black team of nominated producers for an Academy Award®. The company's film projects have received 15 Oscar nominations and three wins.

King was also a producer for critically-acclaimed films including *Mudbound*, *Sorry to Bother You*, *The Land*, *Tigertail* and *Blast Beat*. As an executive producer, his credits include *Fences*, *Roman J. Israel Esq.*, *Just Mercy*, *Farewell Amor*, *Nine Days* and the television series *Gentefied* and *Raising Dion*.

King is an angel investor, dedicated philanthropist, member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences and The Television Academy. He also sits on several nonprofit boards—including the Sundance Institute, the National Basketball Players Association’s Think 450 and College Track, where he serves as National Vice Chair.

The graduate of Vanderbilt University and Howard University School of Law resides in Los Angeles with his wife Stacey Walker King and their two sons.

**KIM ROTH (Producer)** is the Co-President and Chief Creative Officer at Bill Pohlad’s River Road Entertainment. Prior to joining River Road, Kim was President of Production at Charles D. King’s MACRO, a multiplatform media company that represents the voice and perspectives of persons of color.

At MACRO, Roth oversaw both film and television projects. Through the MACRO banner, she most recently produced BLUE BAYOU, which is being released by Focus Features on September 17, 2021. The film is premiering at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival for Un Certain Regard. Roth also executive produced the upcoming film *Nine Days*, starring Winston Duke, Zazie Beetz, and Benedict Wong, and to be distributed by Sony Classics on August 6, 2021. Additionally, she produced *Really Love*, the feature directorial debut from award-winning writer and director Angel Kristi Williams, which will release on Netflix in Summer / Fall 2021.

Previously, Roth executive produced Shaka King’s *Judas and the Black Messiah*, which won two Academy Awards®: one for Daniel Kaluuya for Best Actor in a Supporting Role and the other for Best Original Song “Fight for You” by H.E.R. Roth has also overseen such films as Dee Rees’s *Mudbound* starring Carey Mulligan, Garrett Hedlund, Jason Clarke, and Mary J. Blige; and Alan Yang’s *Tigertail* for Netflix.

Further executive producer credits include Denzel Washington's multi-award-winning *Fences*, which earned Viola Davis an Academy Award® and Golden Globe; *Roman J. Israel, Esq.*, which garnered an Oscar nomination for Denzel Washington; *Sorry to Bother You*, starring LaKeith Stanfield, Tessa Thompson, and directed by Boots Riley; and *The Apollo* documentary for HBO, which won a Primetime Emmy® for Outstanding Documentary or Nonfiction Special and was nominated for Outstanding Documentary (Film) at the NAACP Image Awards.

On the television side, Roth executive produced *Gente-fied* for Netflix, a half-hour bilingual dramedy from Marvin Lemus and Linda Yvette Chávez with America Ferrara as an executive producer. Roth also executive produced *Raising Dion* for Netflix, a sci-fi family drama based on director Dennis Liu's short film.

Before MACRO, Roth was at Ron Howard and Brian Grazer's Imagine Entertainment for 16 years, the last six years of her tenure as President of Production. At Imagine, Roth produced numerous films including *American Made* starring Tom Cruise, *Tower Heist*, starring Ben Stiller and Eddie Murphy, and *Pele: Birth of a Legend*, a biographical film about the early life of Brazilian footballer Pele, to name a few. She was also an executive producer on *The Good Lie* starring Reese Witherspoon, Spike Lee's *Inside Man* starring Denzel Washington, *The Dilemma*, *Undercover Brother*, *Inside Deep Throat*; and *Lowriders*. Roth also co-produced *Fun with Dick and Jane* starring Jim Carrey and Tea Leoni.

Roth began her career at Witt / Thomas Films, where she executive produced Christopher Nolan's *Insomnia* starring Al Pacino and Robin Williams and was a co-producer on David O. Russell's *Three Kings* starring George Clooney and Mark Wahlberg.

Roth is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, the Producers Guild of America, and a mentor for the Sundance Momentum Fellowship.

**POPPY HANKS (Producer)** is the Senior Vice President of Development and Production at MACRO, the next generation multi-platform media company founded by former WME Partner/Agent Charles D. King, where she manages the company's slate of film projects.



Most recently, Hanks was an executive producer on the MACRO produced and co-financed Academy Award-nominated Warner Bros. Pictures film *Judas and the Black Messiah* starring Daniel Kaluuya and Lakeith Stanfield and *Blast Beat*, directed by Esteban Arango starring Moises and Mateo Arias, Wilmer Valderrama, Diane Guerrero and Kali Uchis. She also executive produced Ekwa Msangi's feature directorial debut *Farewell Amor*, which, along with *Blast Beat*, debuted at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. Hanks also served as a producer for Justin Chon's *Blue Bayou*. Chon also stars in the film opposite Oscar-winner Alicia Vikander.

MACRO's *Really Love*, the feature directorial debut for Angel Kristi Williams, was executive produced by Hanks and stars Kofi Siriboe and Yootha Wong-Loi-Sing. The film was awarded Special Jury Recognition for Acting at the SXSW Film Festival. Hanks also produced Alan Yang's *Tigertail*, which debuted on Netflix.

Previously, Hanks executive produced the director Boots Riley-helmed *Sorry to Bother You*; starring Lakeith Stanfield, Tessa Thompson, Steven Yuen, and Armie Hammer. The film was co-financed by MACRO, made its debut at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. She was also an executive producer on both of MACRO's 2018 Oscar-nominated films. *Mudbound*; directed by Dee Rees and starring Carey Mulligan, Jason Clarke, Jason Mitchell, and Mary J. Blige; premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival and was acquired by Netflix in the highest sale of the festival. It received four 2018 Academy Award nominations. *Roman J. Israel, Esq.*, a legal drama written and directed by Dan Gilroy with Denzel Washington and Colin Farrell starring, was co-financed by MACRO along with Sony Pictures and received an Academy Award nomination as well.

In addition, Hanks was co-executive producer of MACRO's first major studio feature *Fences*, directed by and starring Denzel Washington with Viola Davis. The film received four 2017 Academy Award nominations. It won a myriad of awards including Davis' Academy Award and Golden Globe wins and Washington's first-ever SAG Award. Her other credits include *The Land*, which debuted at Sundance in 2016 and was acquired by IFC Films.

On the television side, Hanks executive produced *Raising Dion*, a 10 episode hour-long, sci-fi, family drama. The series was renewed for a second season with MACRO producing for Netflix.

Prior to joining MACRO, Hanks was Senior Vice President for Tyler Perry's 34th Street Films. During her tenure, she oversaw production on *For Colored Girls*, starring Thandie Newton and Whoopi Goldberg, and *Peeples*, starring Kerry Washington and Craig Robinson. She was also part of the team that was instrumental in bringing *Precious*, starring Gabourey Sidibe, to the big screen after discovering it at Sundance.

Previously, Hanks was Vice President for George Tillman and Bob Teitel's State Street Pictures. While there, she oversaw development of successful box office standouts *Barbershop* starring Ice Cube, *Cedric The Entertainer* and *Michael Ealy*, *Men of Honor* starring Robert De Niro and Cuba Gooding Jr., and *Soul Food* starring Vanessa L. Williams and Nia Long.

Hanks received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Screenwriting from the University of Southern California's School of Cinema. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two children.

**ANTE CHENG (Cinematographer)** has achieved much in his early cinematic career. His first feature film, *Gook*, directed by frequent collaborator Justin Chon, won the Best of NEXT Audience Award at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. His collaboration with Chon continued with the feature, *Ms. Purple*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival last year. His work on this project was described in *Variety* as "leading a restive, lonely handsomeness to the often nocturnal images."

Cheng also recently shot the comedy series *East of La Brea* with executive producer Paul Feig, which is nominated for the prestigious SXSW Grand Jury Prize. Of note, his work can also be seen in the hilariously informative video Chicagoist TV Exclusive: *Elderly Aldermen*, which starred Chance the Rapper and Hannibal Buress diving deep into Chicago politics. In the advertising world, Cheng shot the Nike documentary produced by *Vice* featuring the Nike Cortez shoe.

Originally from Taipei, Cheng participated in Film Independent's signature mentorship and diversity program Project Involve in 2018. He worked on many shorts during these programs including the Project Involve-produced *Masculine/Masculine* and the Student Academy Award® 2018 semi-finalist *Sedation*.

Currently, Cheng is shooting for Chon once again on his upcoming Apple+ series titled *Pachinko*.

**MATTHEW CHUANG (Cinematographer)** has worked internationally in the United States, Europe and Asia. He shot the Fractures "It's Alright" clip on location in Chernobyl, Ukraine; the video was hand-picked and featured as a Vimeo Staff Pick and has most recently been nominated for Best Music Video and Best Cinematography at the prestigious Camerimage International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography in Poland. Short form projects include *Yo! My Saint*, a short film for Kenzo directed by Ana Lily Amirpour, and *Adult Baby*, a 30-minute visual album with Kazu from Blonde Redhead directed by Eva Michon.

In addition to BLUE BAYOU, Chuang has been working with Allen Hughes on the five-part documentary series *Outlaw: The Saga of Afeni and Tupac Shakur* with FX. He recently wrapped principal photography on *You Won't Be Alone*, written and directed by Goran Stovleski. Produced by Causeway Films and Focus Features, the film stars Noomi Rapace, Anamaria Marinca, Sara Klimoska, Alice Englert, Carloto Cotta and Felix Maritaud.

**BO KOUNG SHIN (Production designer)** is an internationally recognized, award-winning production designer who previously collaborated with BLUE BAYOU filmmaker Justin Chon on his 2018 feature, *Ms. Purple*. A member of the Production Designer Guild of Korea, her recent credits include the 2015 Chinese web drama *Beauty Water*, as well as the feature films *Summer Snow*, directed by Yoon Su Jeon, *Alumni*, directed by Hong Su Park, *You're My Pet*, directed by Byung Gon Kim, and *Le Grand Chef 2: Kimchi War*, directed by Dong Hoon Paek and Kil Hyung Kim.

Additionally, she served as production designer for such films as *Once Upon a Time in Seoul*, *TaeGukGi: Brotherhood of War*, *Over the Rainbow*, *My Beautiful Days*, *Secret Tears*, *Art Museum by the Zoo*, *Tie a Yellow Ribbon*, *The Contact*, *Kill the Love* and *Out to the World*. Early in his career, he was the set designer for *No Emergency Exit* and assistant director on *Blue in You*.

She hails from Seoul, South Korea and has served as a commissioner on the Korea Film Council in Busan.

**EUNICE JERA LEE (Costume designer)** is a Korean-American costume designer and stylist born in Los Angeles. Her early education from Parsons, Central Saint Martins and the high fashion industry shaped her fantastical aesthetic. While working on her first feature, Lee met Justin Chon who hired her for his second film, *Gook* (2017) and has continued collaborating with Chon ever since, including on *Ms. Purple* (2019) and *BLUE BAYOU*. Lee's culture and identity are tied to the juxtaposition of her American home and her Korean heritage, which lends to Lee's personal ethos to humanize minorities by bringing the stories of her fellow POC & LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters to life on screen

**REYNOLDS BARNEY (Editor)** is a film editor based in Los Angeles. Born and raised in Hawaii on the island of Oahu, Barney graduated from the American Film Institute in 2016, receiving his MFA as an Editing Fellow. He previously collaborated with Justin Chon as editor on *Gook* (Sundance 2017, NEXT audience award) and *Ms. Purple* (Sundance 2019 competition). Next, Reynolds is signed up to edit Octavio Pisano's directorial debut feature, *The Life Cycle of a Butterfly*.

**ROGER SUEN (Composer)** has lent his expertise to numerous feature films, television series and documentaries. In the last two years, Roger has scored *By Whatever Means Necessary*, a companion piece to *The Godfather of Harlem* from EPIX about civil rights era music, and the Stephon Marbury ESPN documentary *A Kid from Coney Island* in addition to writing additional music for Pinar Toprak on the sci-fi series *Krypton* and John Paesano on the *Spider-Man* and *Spider-Man: Miles Morales* video games.

Suen also recently reunited with director Justin Chon to score the MACRO-produced Asian familial-centric drama *BLUE BAYOU*, which will premiere at Cannes in 2021 and was acquired by Focus Features. Suen previously worked with Chon to score his films *Gook* (Sundance 2017) and *Ms. Purple* (Sundance 2019). *Film Music Magazine* said Suen's acclaimed score for the Sundance award-winning *Gook* was "powerfully unexpected, musical color" and included it in their Top 10 Scores of 2017.

Suen's diverse music portfolio includes scoring additional music for Guillermo Del Toro's four-time Oscar-winning film *The Shape of Water*, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox's science fiction thriller *The Darkest Minds*, starring Amandla Stenberg and Mandy Moore, Netflix's five-time Emmy-nominated series *Daredevil*, starring Charlie Cox and Deborah Ann Woll, and Marvel's Emmy-nominated series *The Defenders*, starring Cox, Krysten Ritter and Mike Colter.

Through his mastery of orchestral composition and modern electronica, he has created heart-pounding additional music for blockbuster films such as Oscar-nominated *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, *X-Men: Apocalypse*, *Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials* and *Maze Runner: The Death Cure*.

Suen's musical versatility is even more apparent in Sony Pictures' animated film *The Star* and Warner Bros.' comedy *The Nice Guys*, starring Russell Crowe and Ryan Gosling, as he seamlessly navigates every genre from groovy funk to Wagnerian orchestral drama without missing a beat.

A Southern California native, Roger studied music composition as an undergraduate then graduate student at UCLA and CSUN. He currently resides in Los Angeles.

FOCUS FEATURES presents  
a MACRO production  
an ENTERTAINMENT ONE production

## **“BLUE BAYOU”**

Written and Directed by  
JUSTIN CHON

Produced by  
CHARLES D. KING  
KIM ROTH  
POPPY HANKS

Produced by  
JUSTIN CHON

Executive Producers  
NICK MEYER  
ZEV FOREMAN

Executive Producer  
CLARA WU TSAI

Executive Producer  
EDDIE RUBIN

Co-Producers  
GRETA FUENTES  
YIRA VILARO

Directors of Photography  
MATTHEW CHUANG ACS  
ANTE CHENG

Production Designer  
BO KOUNG SHIN

Edited by  
REYNOLDS BARNEY

Costume Designer  
EUNICE JERA LEE

Music by  
ROGER SUEN

Casting by  
MARISOL RONCALI, CSA  
and  
CHELSEA ELLIS BLOCH, CSA

JUSTIN CHON

ALICIA VIKANDER

MARK O'BRIEN

LINH-DAN PHAM

Introducing  
SYDNEY KOWALSKE

With  
VONDIE CURTIS-HALL

And  
EMORY COHEN

GERALDINE SINGER  
ALTONIO JACKSON  
TOBY VITRANO

A JUSTIN CHON Film

## CAST

Antonio LeBlanc	JUSTIN CHON
Kathy LeBlanc	ALICIA VIKANDER
Ace	MARK O'BRIEN
Parker Nguyen	LINH-DAN PHAM
Jessie LeBlanc	SYDNEY KOWALSKE
Barry Boucher	VONDIE CURTIS-HALL
Denny	EMORY COHEN
Dawn Landry	GERALDINE SINGER
Merk	TOBY VITRANO
Quentin aka Q	ALTONIO JACKSON
Quoc	TRUONG QUANG TRAN
Nicole	IVY VY LE
Antonio's Mother	SAGE KIM GRAY
Reggie	RENELL GIBBS
Ms. Jacci	JACCI GRESHAM
Lajon	MARTIN BRADFORD

Kamal	TYLER HENRY
Susanne	SUSAN McPHAIL
Rhonda	RHONDA DENTS
Doctor	JIM GLEASON
Nurse	KERNESHA STEELE
Lady at Airport	MONICA CHOE STERLING
TSA Agent	RANDY AUSTIN
Randy	BRAD BLANCHARD
Rodrigo	JOSEF A. PONS
Lead Singer	TRONG NGUYEN
Sylvia	SYLVIA GRACE CRIM
Ice Agent	CHRIS BOSARGE
DHS Agent #1	HALEY ANSLEM
Middle Eastern Patient	SATINDER ACHREJA
DHS Agent #2	SEAN RICHMOND
DHS Agent #3	JEREMY SANDE

#### STUNTS

Stunt Coordinator    JOE DRYDEN

#### Stunts

CHRIS ARTHUR • JONATHAN ARTHUR • STANTON BARRETT  
 NICOLAS BOSC • TONY CARBAJAL • OLIVER KELLER  
 BRIAN PHILPOT • ADAM RIVETTE • CORRINA ROSHEA BOBB  
 JOHN ROTTGER • BRAD ROYSTER • ROBERT SHAVERS  
 EMERSON TERRELL • TARYN TERRELL • BRITTON WEBB  
 JUSTIN WEBB • NEDAL YOUSEF

Unit Production Manager    EDDIE RUBIN

First Assistant Director    LAURA KLEIN

Second Assistant Director    JESSICA DEAN ROSE

#### Co-Producers

ALEX CHI  
 ALI JAZAYERI  
 ALAN PAO

Production Supervisor	ASHLEY FARRELL
Post-Production Supervisor	ASHLEY CONTINO

Set Decorator    BRADFORD JOHNSON

"A" First Assistant Camera	SAMUEL KIM
"A" Second Assistant Camera	MELANIE GATES
"B" First Assistant Camera	NOELL DOMINICK



"B" Second Assistant Camera	DANIKA ANDRADE
Film Loader	BILY SALAZAR
Additional Film Loader	EMMETT CROCKETT
Underwater Camera Operator	ELIOT BRASSEAU
Camera Utility	MERLIN RAMSEY
Production Sound Mixer	JONATHAN PARHAM
Boom Operator	CARLOS WILKERSON
Gaffer	BRAD MARTIN
Best Boy Electric	MIKE GRACE
	SCOTT MORRISON
Genny Operator	JORDAN WHALEY
Lamp Operators	CHRIS TROSCLAIR
	LEE LUNDGREN
Key Grip	JUSTIN CRAWFORD
Best Boy Grip	JOSH ERMON
Company Grips	JARED MARTIN
	ROB CREWS
	NATHAN HARVEY
Special Effects Supervisors	MATT KUTCHER
	DONNIE DEAN
Special Effects Coordinator	ROBERT BENAVIDEZ
Special Effects Foreman	PAUL FERRETTI
Costume Supervisor	SARAH K. HANSON
Set Costumer	MEGAN MCAFEE
Hair Department Head	MARCOS GONZALES
Key Hair Stylist	CRYSTAL WELLS
Hair Stylists	
CHRISTY DURHAM • DARMITA JONES • BONNIE WALKER	
MONIQUE YOUNG	
Makeup Department Head	ASHLEY TREADAWAY
Key Makeup Artist	RENEE DAIGREPONT
Makeup Artists	
ANA AYESTA • MICHELLE CARDOZA • WENDY KARCHER	
CLAIRE RAVANACK • JAMIE ROSS • MIKI SAUTBINE	
JENNIFER SPIVEY	
Script Supervisor	ALEXANDER B. HILL
Antonio's Tattoos, Motorcycle & Helmet Designs	ALEKSANDRA CHON

Production Designer Assistant	JEAN KIM
Art Department Coordinator	KYLA MCFALLS
Property Master	BILLY BAMMAN
Assistant Property Master	SAM BASS
Leadman	MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN
On Set Dresser	CRISS GREEN
Set Dressers	BILL SUTHERLAND
	BRAD HARRIS
Location Manager	DAVID ROSS McCARTY
Location Coordinator	DAWSON WARNER
Key Location Assistant	TONY YUSE
Location Assistants	ETHAN ESTEB
	XAVIER DUPRIEST
Production Accountant	THERESA L. MARSH
Accounts Payable Clerk	DANNI COLL
Payroll Clerk	ANGELA SCARDUZIO
Filing Clerk	FIONA TURNER
Payroll Services provided by	ENTERTAINMENT PARTNERS
Post Production Accounting provided by	THREE POINT CAPITAL
Post Production Accountant	AMI FRANCIS
Production Office Coordinator	NICK REASONS
Production Secretary	ERIN MURPHY
Second Second Assistant Director	SUE YOUNG KIM
Los Angeles Casting Associate	KARRI MILES
Local Casting	MATTHEW MORGAN, CSA
Local Casting Assistants	THUY VY VU
	PHILIP GORDON
Local Casting Associate	RIKKI GEE
Assistant to Mr. King	CARYN LAWSON
Assistant to Ms. Roth & Ms. Hanks	KYLE BOWLES
Key Set Production Assistant	KYLIE ARCENEUX
Set Production Assistants	SHELBY ENGLISH
	AMY LAWS
	CRAIG MULLINS
Office Production Assistant	JOSHUA D. SIMMONS
On Set Greensman	JIM FUCCILIO

Picture Car Coordinator	RYAN VALLOTTON
Picture Car Consultant	TY GUIDROZ
Picture Car Mechanic	JOHN BERRY

Transportation Coordinator	ADAM BRAZY
Transportation Co-Captains	DANNY THOMAS
	TONY CAMP

Drivers

DAVID CATCHINGS • JACKIE JONES • ALICE MERRILL  
ANDREW MORGAN • DAWN ROBINSON • GREG RUSHING  
LARRY THOMAS • DONAZ WARD • ERIC WHITE

Dialect Coach to Mr. Chon	ELIZA SIMPSON
Dialect Coach to Ms. Vikander	CHARLOTTE FLECK
Studio Teacher	SHERRY BRISCOE
Set Medic	GARIN SPARKS

Craft Service by	DON DAKIN JR.
Assistant Craft Service	JESSICA MARIA CASTRO

Catering by	THE LAKEHOUSE
Owner	CAYMAN SINCLAIR
Catering Chefs	GEORGIA BELCHER
	PERRY GAFFNEY
	MATTHEW MCSHAY
	RYAN MCSHAY

Additional Editor	JOAN SOBEL, ACE
Assistant Editor	GARY LAM

Post Production Sound Services Provided by  
APEX POST PRODUCTION  
NEW ORLEANS, LA

Sound Supervisor & Re-Recording Mixer	JON VOGL
Sound Effects Editors	AIDAN DYKES
	DAVID BARBEE
	DICKEN BERGLUND
Dialogue Editor	JON VOGL
Dialogue Assistant	BRANDON KOTFILA
Foley Supervisor	SANAA KELLEY
Foley Mixer & Editor	ARNO STEPHANIAN
Foley Artists	SANAA KELLEY
	ADAM DeCOSTER
	MATT SALIB

Foley Assistant	KYLE ANGELLO
ADR Supervisor	JON VOGL
ADR Mixers	AIDAN DYKES (APEX POST PRODUCTION)
	GREG CRAWFORD
	(SMART POST ATLANTA)
	MATT HOVLAND (SMART POST SOUND
	BURBANK)
	JAMIE HARTLAND
	(SOHO SQUARE STUDIOS)
	MARIO DIAS
	(DIGITAL AZUL, LISBON, PORTUGAL)
ADR Assistant	MAYA LEWIS (APEX POST PRODUCTION)

Loop Group Voice Actors  
 AMY LE • LANCE E. NICHOLS • BILLY SLAUGHTER  
 DENEEN TYLER • DEVYN ARIEL TYLER

Color and Finish by  
 COMPANY 3

Colorist	TOM POOLE
Finishing Producer	MOISES CRUZ
Finishing Editor	MATTHEW JOHNSON
Image Scientist	DR. JOHN QUARTEL
Technologist	MIKE CHIADO
Color Assistants	JAKE WHITE
	NICK NASSIF
Data I/O	ANGELLA SZYNKOWSKI
Digital Restoration	CHRISTOPHER CLAUSING
Director of Feature Production	CARL MOORE
Head of Production	LAURA GEUCHERIAN
CO3 President	STEFAN SONNENFELD

Dailies By  
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Dailies Operator	MICHAEL ANGELO MACIAS
Scanning Operator	DAN GARSHA
Dailies Producer	MARIO ALLEN
Resource Manager	NICK BURSON
Director of Dailies Operations	DAVID B. HALL
Director of Production Services	MARK VAN HORNE

Visual Effects By  
 TUNNEL POST

VFX Supervisor	ALAN PAO
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VFX Producers	HEATHER TOLL SHIRLEY LUONG
Lead Compositors	MAY SATSUKI ASAI WANYAN ZHU
Compositors	XUNCHENG CHEN YANLAN LIU
Underwater Art Direction	GIANTSTEP STUDIOS
Title Design by	TUNNEL POST
Credits Consultant	SHARON STEINHAUSER
Score Mixed by	PHIL MCGOWAN, CAS
Score Mixed at	MCGOWAN SOUNDWORKS, LTD.
Score Coordination	ENCOMPASS MUSIC PARTNERS
Violin	PAUL JACOB CARTWRIGHT
Viola	JONATHAN MOERSCHEL
Cello	ERIC BYERS
Bass	BLAKE ESTRADA
Organ	AARON SHOWS
Trumpet	MIKE COTTONE
Drums	JAM
Guitar	JONATHAN MARTIN BERRY
"Blue Bayou" Music Production	RAMP MUSIC MEDIA
"Blue Bayou" Engineered and Mixed by	DANIEL CLARK JONATHAN CLARK
"Blue Bayou" Vocals Recorded by	MARIO DIAS (DIGITAL AZUL, LISBON)
Piano	GERALD O'BRIEN
Guitar	JAY LAZAROFF
Pedal Steel Guitar	JOHN SCHREFFLER
Bass, Mandolin	JONATHAN CLARK
Drums, Marimba	CHRIS O'BRIEN
Production Legal	BUSINESS AFFAIRS, INC. RAYMOND WU JENNIFER MODGLIN MALCOLM RANGER-MURDOCK
Financing provided by	THREE POINT CAPITAL LOUISIANA
Production Insurance arranged by	FRONT ROW INSURANCE BROKERS
Script Clearance provided by	INDIE CLEAR
Clearances provided by	CLEARED BY ASHLEY, INC./ ASHLEY KRAVITZ
Additional Clearances provided by	STLKR
Editing Systems and Services provided by	HULA POST

## ENTERTAINMENT ONE

SVP Production	JUSTIN BURSCH
SVP Post Production	LESLEY DYER
SVP Business and Legal Affairs	ROSALIND READ
SVP Business and Legal Affairs	AARON MICHIEL
Senior Director, Business and Legal Affairs	SAMEER PATEL
SVP Distribution Services & Operations	SCARLETT PETTYJOHN
Director, Content Planning and Analysis	BEN BUDIANTO
Music Supervisors	SEAN MULLIGAN
	VICTORIA BEARD
Music Coordinator	TIFFANY SU

## SONGS

"Ja Jang Uri"

Traditional

Performed by Sage Kim Gray

"Wash"

Written by Justin Vernon

Performed by Bon Iver

Courtesy of Jagjaguwar

"Rent"

Written by Roget Chahayed, Michael Fonseca,  
William McAuley, Ramiro Padilla, Adam Pigott,  
Freddie Ross and Rosina Russel

Performed by Big Freedia

Courtesy of Asylum Records

By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film &  
TV Licensing

"In Fantasia"

Written by Kaoru Ishibashi

Performed by Kishi Bashi

Courtesy of Joyful Noise Recordings

By arrangement with Terrorbird

"Bad Decisions"

Written and performed by

Pete Masitt and Jonathan Kingham

"Drifting By"

Written and performed by

Richard Lacy and Sarah Elizabeth Lacy

"Stay Right Here"

Written and performed by Li Daiguo and Roger Suen

"Elegy for Strangers In Inglewood Park"

Written and performed by Li Daiguo

“Jelly Donut”

Written by Matt Nguyen and Tessa Nguyen  
Performed by ARIUS

“Lời Tỏ Tình Dễ Thương”

Written By Phạm Ngọc Sơn  
Performed by Trong Nguyen and Melody Band

“Biết Đến Thuở Nào”

Written By Tùng Giang, Trường Kỳ  
Performed by Trong Nguyen and Melody Band

“Sáu Mươi Năm Cuộc Đời”

Written by Y Vân  
Performed by Trong Nguyen and Melody Band

“Ngõ”

Written by Phạm Anh Dũng and Sóng Việt Đàm Giang  
Performed by Khánh Duy

“Blue Bayou”

Written by Joe Melson and Roy Orbison  
Performed by Alicia Vikander

"Ja Jang Uri"

Traditional  
Performed by Justin Chon

#### FILMMAKERS WISH TO THANK

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Anderson Le Chris Lee • West Liang • Chris Martin • Ed McMurtry • Lynne Richardson  
Zan Robertson • Linda Ronstadt • Charlie Sarroff • Peter Savasta • “Sizzle” • Syx • Uyen Vu  
Michael Woolson • Teo Yoo • Ji Hyun Yoon

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