



*Searchlight Pictures presents  
A Stephen Williams Film*

**Kelvin Harrison Jr. is**

# CHEVALIER

With

**Samara Weaving** as Marie-Josephine  
**Lucy Boynton** as Marie Antoinette  
And **Minnie Driver** as La Guimard

Directed by..... **Stephen Williams**  
Written by..... **Stefani Robinson**  
Produced by..... **Ed Guiney, Andrew Lowe, Stefani Robinson, Dianne McGunigle**  
Director of Photography..... **Jess Hall**  
Production Designer..... **Karen Murphy**  
Costume Designer..... **Oliver García**  
Composer of Original Score..... **Kris Bowers**  
Musical Performances Produced and Arranged by..... **Michael Abels**  
Editor..... **John Axelrad**  
Set Decorator..... **Lotty Sanna**

<https://press.searchlightpictures.com/>

Running Time: 107 minutes

Rating: PG-13

Los Angeles  
Julia Krom  
845.248.0711

[Julia.Krom@searchlightpictures.com](mailto:Julia.Krom@searchlightpictures.com)

New York  
Sarah Amro  
201.375.8935

[Sarah.Amro@searchlightpictures.com](mailto:Sarah.Amro@searchlightpictures.com)

Regional West  
Cristina Karangelov  
714.454.8930

[Cristina.L.Karangelov@SearchlightPictures.com](mailto:Cristina.L.Karangelov@SearchlightPictures.com)

Regional East  
Michelle Matalon  
212.536.6422

[Michelle.Matalon@searchlightpictures.com](mailto:Michelle.Matalon@searchlightpictures.com)

# CHEVALIER

Inspired by the incredible story of composer Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges. The illegitimate son of an African slave and a French plantation owner, Bologne (Kelvin Harrison Jr. in a tour de force performance) rises to improbable heights in French society as a celebrated violinist-composer and fencer, complete with an ill-fated love affair and a falling out with Marie Antoinette (Lucy Boynton) and her court.

Searchlight Pictures presents, a Stephen Williams film, CHEVALIER, starring Kelvin Harrison Jr., Samara Weaving, Lucy Boynton, Minnie Driver, Sian Clifford, Alex Fitzalan and Ronke Adékoluejo. Directed by Stephen Williams, the film is written by Stefani Robinson and produced by Ed Guiney and Andrew Lowe at Element Pictures, Stefani Robinson, and Dianne McGunigle. Production designer Karen Murphy, director of photography Jess Hall, composer Michael Abels, costume designer Oliver García, editor John Axelrad and set decorator Lotty Sanna round out the production team.

## **About the Film**

Set in 18<sup>th</sup> Century France, CHEVALIER unfolds the vivid, timely story of the soaring rise and defiant spirit of the musical phenomenon, Joseph Bologne, aka the Chevalier de Saint-Georges. The Chevalier was what we would call today a superstar—a blinding multi-talent at the top of several games: he was a virtuoso violinist who gave packed concerts; a champion swordsman; an ingenious composer; and, for a time, one of the most alluring, unexpected members of Marie Antoinette’s glittering court.

Historians have long struggled to document Bologne’s life. With his papers and his music destroyed in Napoleonic times, little is known of his inner experiences moving in the sphere of the elites. Director Stephen Williams (“Watchmen”) and screenwriter Stefani Robinson (“Atlanta”) aimed to give Bologne a fresh, contemporary life on screen. With many of the details imagined based on extensive research of the period, CHEVALIER is a buoyant and aspiring vision of a man driven to create and to truly be who he was, no matter the expectations put upon him, or the dreams forbidden to those like him.

Bologne was the illegitimate son of an African slave and a French plantation owner, a man of color in a society rife with racist beliefs and laws. In the midst of mounting bigotry and raging social fury, his path would take a turn—as he ultimately rebelled against the aristocracy that adored his talents yet disparaged his heritage and confined his potential.

While his story is set in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, it also speaks strongly to this moment. From its high-voltage opening violin battle, the film lends Bologne a touch of rock-and-roll swagger. But if Bologne’s fame and radiance echo the world of the modern pop star, his tale is equally an exploration of something very relatable today: how a person breaks out from the trap of what others expect or demand.

Robinson, who first was inspired by the Chevalier as a teenager, remembers being astonished by how epic his life was—from being born on a slave plantation to befriending the Queen. “His life had so many arcs and it was extraordinarily cinematic,” she says. “Joseph always felt like a rock star to me.”

Determined to bring his life to the screen, she saw a chance to revive his legend—it’s a story of identity, of someone who broke the frame, and then paid the price of being left out of the picture. “The more I learned about him, the more I was frustrated that people don’t know who he is,” says Robinson. “It was not easy to get him to the screen, but the fact that it’s here and feels so alive is a very special thing.”

Williams, a celebrated television director/producer and Emmy Award winner for the groundbreaking Tulsa Riots episode of the “Watchmen” series, was so drawn to the story that he chose CHEVALIER to make his big screen directing debut. He was drawn to recreating one of the most sumptuous eras in human history from an unseen angle, but even more so to “redressing the imbalances of historical storytelling.” Williams explains, “I’m very interested in reclaiming the stories of people who led compelling, impactful lives yet have been ignored and dismissed in the larger narrative.”

Bologne is a spectacular example of someone denied his due. He went from being a towering celebrity and influencer to evaporating from the pages of history books for centuries.

Williams zeroed in on the pressure Joseph must have felt, a pressure he knows well—the mindset that you must be ten times better than your peers, and above reproach, just to be valued. “You see Joseph start out believing that if he can just excel at everything he does, he’ll be accepted into aristocratic society,” comments Williams. “But what he discovers is that social acceptance is not what counts. It is *self*-acceptance that is most important in a life journey.”

The film’s period, one of rampant artistic innovation yet social upheaval, also felt intimately linked to ours, and Williams structured the film looking not just backwards but forwards. “The French Revolution

is so reminiscent of the social convulsions we've seen globally over the last few years, with similar outcries for equality and greater accountability," he notes. "It's a world that mirrors our own."

For Kelvin Harrison Jr. (*Luce, Monsters and Men*) – who studied violin for 7 hours daily to embody the title role—the Chevalier felt incredibly modern, especially the way he moves so fluidly between the worlds of music, sport, and ultimately the fight for justice. "I felt I could understand him as a Black artist. His path reflects how we all struggle to find the spaces where we can be seen and heard," Harrison says. "This story asks big questions about art and equality and why so many Black artists have been erased, but it's also a beautiful celebration of the Chevalier's life."

## **Rediscovering The Chevalier**

American President John Adams once declared Joseph Bologne as "the most talented man in Europe." It was an astonishing accolade for someone born in the Caribbean under the Code Noir, the French legal document that diminished and controlled every aspect of the lives of people of color— from who they could marry, to what religion they could follow, to which punishments they would endure.

Bologne forged stunning success out of these unjust circumstances. He was born in 1745 on the island of Guadeloupe to a wealthy French plantation owner and his 16-year-old slave from Senegal, known as Nanon. His father sent him as a child to Paris and then to the famed La Boëssière Academy to study music, math, literature, and fencing—all necessary in Enlightenment France. Joseph not only excelled in these, he triumphed.

As he came of age, his many skills multiplied and advanced. He became legendary as Europe's most undefeated fencer and lauded as a dancer, equestrian and fashion trendsetter. Soon, people flocked to his violin concerts as he gained a reputation for pushing the instrument to its limits. He went even further as a composer, writing some of the world's first, pioneering string quartets and helping to establish the rich symmetry and melody of the Baroque era. Complex and emotional, his work influenced other composers, including, many scholars suggest, his contemporary, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He was made an officer of the King's Guard and dubbed Chevalier de Saint-Georges in 1762.

Yet, even while leading a life of creative opportunity in Paris, Bologne was not afforded the same rights as others and was subjected to limits on his freedom and, at times, to outright hatred. While France's Enlightenment philosophers opposed slavery, Bologne was well aware that the monarchy supported it. On the cusp of becoming the first person of color to head the Paris Opera, way ahead of his time, a trio of divas intervened, declaring they would never "submit to orders of a mulatto."

All of this dramatic history stunned writer Stefani Robinson when she discovered Bologne in her teens. She would soon come to the fore as a young talent in her own right. In her early 20s, she became a writer/producer for the inventive Donald Glover comedy series "Atlanta." But even while working in television, she says, "I always had this story on my mind."

When she was ready to write, Robinson hunted down as much information as she could get her hands on. Still, she faced glaring gaps in Bologne's life and relationships, and imagination would have to fill in. This opened up what became a central theme for the film: how Joseph learned to follow his own path, not the one laid out by society. He came to defy the aristocracy he once moved within and was changed by a love made impossible by his race. And he rediscovered his heritage, bringing Creole influences to his music and fighting for his people.

“My approach was to use the limited history that has been documented as a jumping off point but not let it become a shackle,” Robinson explains. “I was interested in telling a story with a historical context but with a strong modern lens on it.”

That modern lens felt intensely personal, especially as she wrote about the heightened scrutiny that people of color face. “I can only speak for myself as a Black woman, but so often I’ve been told directly or indirectly that you can’t make mistakes, you need to be the best, you can never be enough. That’s an idea we challenge in this movie,” says Robinson. “Joseph throws himself into achievement as a means of feeling love and acceptance, of escaping from the literal and metaphorical plantation. But as he grows, there’s a deeper understanding of himself as a Black artist and a questioning of how he can use his voice.”

Producer Dianne McGunigle, who worked with Robinson on “Atlanta,” became an early champion of the project. With a producing team that would come to include Element Pictures’ Ed Guiney and Andrew Lowe, they found themselves lobbied by Williams, who already felt a compelling bond to the main character. “Stephen came in saying ‘I *have* to tell this story.’ He had a deep personal passion for this man he felt similarities with,” says McGunigle. “He had a fully formed vision of the entire film.”

Indeed, there were intriguing personal links between Williams and Bologne. “I was also born on an island, Jamaica, and left for boarding school at 13. I didn’t see my parents for years and experienced many feelings Joseph must also have experienced. So, I could relate to him on some very intimate levels,” the director says. “His story is in part about being displaced. Joseph’s push for excellence is a way to try to close certain emotional gaps.”

As development progressed, Robinson and Williams joined forces to continue learning all they could about Bologne. “The research was exciting,” says Williams. “It felt like being an amateur sleuth picking up clues, trying to reconstruct what this person’s life might have been like. We worked tirelessly for a year on the script, compressing a very sprawling life, while also creating ways to fill in the gaps in our knowledge based on who we felt he was. And Stefani was a great collaborator through it all.”

Adds Robinson, “Everything that resonated with me about the Chevalier resonated with Stephen, and he nailed the nuances that meant so much to me.”

## **Becoming The Chevalier**

Long before a frame of film was shot, Harrison made a staunch commitment to bringing the Chevalier dynamically alive in all his complexities, talents, and yearnings. The result is a portrait of urgent, joyful vitality but equally a poignant meditation on belonging, race, and identity. The New Orleans-born actor—already the recipient of a Screen Actors Guild Award, BAFTA Rising Star Award, and Indie Spirit Award—this year he also portrays another musical legend, BB King, in Baz Luhrmann’s *Elvis*. But the Chevalier would be unlike any other character he has played, starting with his extremely diverse skill set.

To get to the heart of Bologne, Harrison felt he first needed to understand what he loved. So, he leapt into 6 to 7 hours of violin lessons a day, learned to fence from masters and read the chaotic history of 18<sup>th</sup> Century France. He immersed himself in every physical and psychological detail down to how Bologne was said to have worked his bow with the sharp precision of a sword.

At the same time, he wanted to make the character his own. “I read all I could, looked at the pictures that exist, listened to his music, but no matter the research, you have to find the things that resonate

deeply with you and then go to a new place with them,” he explains. “I can’t become Joseph; I can only put everything into my own personal interpretation of him.”

The idea that hit Harrison hardest is that Joseph lived his life for the approval of others even in his heyday hobnobbing with the Queen of France—and that her betrayal opens his eyes. “Joseph has trouble trusting people and for good reason. But his inability to lead with an open-heart is his biggest problem,” Harrison observes. “Because that’s ultimately how we are fulfilled, when we open ourselves to the beauty of life and love and stop trying to manipulate ourselves to fit in.”

Harrison found it exhilarating to open a window into a man who changes himself, who aims for emotional freedom, and, in the process, becomes larger than even the sum of his achievements. “The Chevalier’s path is one of constantly exploring until he realizes what is most meaningful to him,” he says.

Bologne’s star-crossed love story with the singer Marie-Josephine also spoke to Harrison. “Marie-Josephine symbolizes all that seems off-limits to Joseph,” Harrison observes. “He thinks she is all that he wants but she is really part of his journey to finding what really brings him happiness.”

While there was intense technical preparation, Harrison was inspired equally by style. Bologne was said to have a blazing charisma, so he took as a guiding light the electrifying stage presence of two rock legends: Prince and Jimi Hendrix. This particularly comes out in the film’s rousing and dramatized opening scene where the Chevalier plays dueling violins with a rivalrous Mozart, setting the film’s playful approach.

“That scene was one of the first things I started learning on the violin, because it’s the hardest piece in the movie,” Harrison notes. “It was really exciting for me to try to access that rock star side of Joseph. I worked with a brilliant movement coach, Polly Bennett, and we tried to make the way he works the stage really fun. It felt like a rap battle with two guys in wigs each trying to prove they’re the best.”

Says Williams of how Harrison attacked the scene, “It had to give audiences an instant adrenaline rush and convince them that this guy can crush the heavyweight champ of classical music at the time. It’s one thing to learn to play the violin but another to do what Kelvin did, to move like a rock star and introduce us to this incredible persona at the same time.”

Prince also served as an inspiration for Joseph’s look and color palette, which riffs on traditional 18<sup>th</sup> Century menswear with a sly dash of modern sleekness. “I love that Joseph has a bit of cheekiness with his long lashes, eyeliner, and beauty mark. He’s elegant but also edgy and a little androgynous. The clothes were so stunning they really helped to give me that rock star feel,” says Harrison.

As they delved into the Chevalier’s creative, romantic, and revolutionary journey, Harrison grew tight with Williams. “We talked a lot about what it is to be a young Black artist, about how hard you have to try to keep your dignity and your self-love,” says Harrison. “I felt Stephen got it, he got me, he got the story, and he really got the ways in which Joseph can be an inspiration to people now.”

Throughout the production, Harrison’s 24-7 devotion to the role made him a leader on the set. “We couldn’t believe how lucky we got with Kelvin,” says McGunigle. “He went above and beyond, pouring himself into every moment because it was so important to him to do right by Joseph.”

For Williams, there was magic in the way Harrison channeled all the richness of the Chevalier’s interior. “Kelvin seemed to perfectly embody the qualities of an outsider who has mastered charm, good looks, and talent—that irresistible cocktail—but is searching for deeper purpose,” Williams says. “That’s a very tricky thing to play convincingly while also tapping into someone with the energy of a Hendrix or a Prince. Yet, Kelvin made that idea his own and transmuted it into every frame of the movie.”

## Chevalier and The Aristocracy

As a man of mixed race, Joseph Bologne was, during his time, undeniably shackled by French laws and by social conventions. And yet, his remarkable virtuosity and persona allowed him to enter, however precariously, the circle of elites enjoying wealth, power, and the outrageous excesses of the age.

Though forbidden to marry in France, Bologne was said to have been pursued by many adoring women. Few details are known of his private romantic life, but he was believed to have been especially close with Marie-Josephine de Comarieu, wife of the Marquise de Montalembert. In the film, Marie-Josephine is a singer longing for an escape from a loveless marriage when Joseph casts her in his opera, sparking a star-crossed love affair.

Taking the role is Samara Weaving, the Australian actress acclaimed for *Ready or Not*. Weaving was moved by this woman she sees as locked in by a life over which she has little control, a life that denies her the freedom to follow her heart. “For me, Marie-Josephine represents all the women who were unaware of how truly oppressed they were,” she says. “She has a beautiful house, and beautiful clothes, but she is essentially caged. So, when she gets a taste of freedom with the Chevalier, it’s like opening Pandora’s Box for her.”

To explore how artistic expression awakens Marie-Josephine’s dreams, Weaving jumped into singing lessons—and found the emotions of opera as liberating as her character does. “It was a bit terrifying, but opera is so personal and thrilling because it’s just your voice alone,” she comments.

Even more intriguing were her one-on-one scenes falling in love with the dazzling Chevalier. “Either you have chemistry, or you don’t, and we had it,” Weaving muses. “Kelvin is such a beautiful, gentle soul, he lifted Joseph off the page and made him real to me.”

Says Harrison of Weaving, “She was grounded in both who Marie-Josephine was and who she wishes she could be. She helped us find the levity in two young people who are both hungry for opportunity but fall for each other instead.”

Weaving says she often stopped during filming to reflect on how these two lives might be different if they met today—and on the cruelty of barring love out of prejudice. “It’s devastating to think about all these people who couldn’t live how they wanted, who couldn’t explore true happiness,” she says. “And it’s also devastating to recognize that this story is still so relevant in the world now.”

Despite his marginal status, Bologne’s brilliance was such that he was recruited to teach music to the most powerful teenager in the world: the iconic Marie Antoinette, the Austrian princess who would become the very last Queen of France, spurring the French Revolution, during which she would be guillotined. Arriving in France at the tender age of 14, Antoinette would eventually be maligned by history as the ultimate symbol of detached privilege and elitist hypocrisy. And yet, a more complicated view of her has emerged recently: that of an incredibly young, poorly prepared, if extravagantly spendthrift, girl tragically thrust into leading a country about to explode from extreme social inequality.

As with Bologne’s other relationships, only the broad outlines of his interactions with Marie Antoinette are known. But one thing that was clear is that when Marie Antoinette could have used her power to aid Bologne, she instead allowed dreams to be crushed. “So long as Joseph was just a fun play companion, Marie Antoinette was very content to indulge their relationship,” says Williams. “But when she was required to stand up for Joseph, she didn’t. In our film, that betrayal becomes the catalyst to Joseph envisioning a different kind of life for himself and for France.”

To bring complexity to a character whose reputation precedes her, the filmmakers cast Lucy Boynton, recently seen as Mary Astin in *BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY*. “Lucy’s challenge was to find a new

iteration of a woman familiar to us. She gets at the intricacies of someone who was a vital ally to Joseph until, for self-serving reasons, she chose to turn away and try to save herself,” says Williams.

Boynton came into the role determined to be anything but a caricature. “Marie Antoinette has been aggressively villainized in a way that seems exclusively reserved for women,” Boynton observes. “I wanted to put aside all my preconceived ideas and start from scratch in my education about her, coming at it with empathy. I took some things we think we know about her, her flirtatiousness, and her excess, and turned them around to really accentuate how young she was, and how quickly she had to grow up.”

While Boynton felt for Marie Antoinette, she did not let her off the hook. “Early on, I believe she truly appreciated Joseph’s genius. But as soon as she felt threatened, their friendship was an inconvenience. And that’s when she was able to retreat into her privilege. That angle on it, which is written into the film in a brilliantly confrontational way, and will resonate with audiences acutely.”

Harrison was struck by how Boynton gave the character a modern It Girl quality. “Lucy plays her as a girl in a scary situation trying to keep her cool. She’s like a lot of young people I’ve met in Hollywood, going out to parties, and trying to figure out all this responsibility. You can see in her eyes that drive to be loved. And to me that is the beauty of the relationship between Marie Antoinette and Joseph, while it lasts: they’re each, in their own way, trying to find belonging in this chaotic world.”

The aristocratic diva who flips Joseph’s fate is the powerful La Guimard, inspired by the famed ballerina, Marie-Madeleine Guimard, who was the toast of France under Louis XVI, a courtesan renowned for her extensive love life, and an influential member of Marie Antoinette’s inner circle. The film picks up on rumors that Guimard might have pursued Bologne romantically, but when he rejected her, she turned against him, leading a racist campaign to keep him from heading the Paris Opera.

Minnie Driver, known for her intuitive way with challenging characters, relished bringing out the darkness of the role. “She’s a villain but I think she’s also a product of her times, though her attitude is one still all too pervasive today,” says Driver. “She illustrates how all of Joseph’s grace, talent, and amazing energy are enjoyed but ultimately don’t matter because he’s a man of color in the French court.”

Most of all, Driver wanted to be part of bringing the Chevalier’s story back to the fore, where it belongs. “I know this story will fill people with wonder,” she says. “And I hope it will get people curious about many other stories we don’t know because our version of history is simply not complete.”

## **Chevalier’s Allies**

Leading a life at the opposite end of the spectrum from Marie Antoinette’s overwhelming power is Joseph’s mother, Nanon. Although Joseph’s mother was brought to Paris when he was 12 or 13 to live as a free woman, in the film, she reunites with a grown-up Joseph after having been separated from him for years. Taking the role of a woman who teaches her son there is always another choice in life is Ronke Adékoluẹjo, the English actress seen in Amazon’s spy thriller “Alex Rider”.

Williams was taken aback at the profound maternal understanding Adékoluẹjo brought to Nanon. “Ronke’s talent is stratospherically outsized. I’ve never seen anything like it,” he says. “Nanon’s journey is one of forging a new relationship with her son, working her way back to a meaningful role in his life. She becomes Joseph’s conscience in a way as she helps him find a truer connection to the totality of who he is. The way Ronke plays Nanon, she reminds me of many mothers, including my own, who are so gifted with wisdom and patience, they are willing to wait for a child to see them clearly.”

Adekoluejo wanted to evoke all of the knotty, pent-up emotions that come with being separated unwillingly from your family. “All the years Nanon spends away from Joseph form a black hole in her life but when she gets to Paris, it isn’t the mother-son fairy tale she hoped it would be,” she observes. “She has to relearn who her son is, and she has to relearn herself after being displaced.”

The role became something larger than just one character for Adekoluejo; it became a kind of duty to the many who lived this experience. “I felt I had to not only do Nanon justice but to highlight the things she and all her ancestors went through,” she says. “I remember having a conversation with Kelvin and Stephen where I was saying, ‘I don’t know if what I’m doing is enough for everything that these people had to go through for me to be here to do this.’ That weighed heavily on all of us.”

For Harrison, Adekoluejo helped clarify the ways the Chevalier changes. “Nanon brings out all of Joseph’s fears that he is unwanted and undesirable,” he says. “At first, he puts her at arm’s length to protect himself. But when he is ready to truly embrace her, it’s a huge moment for both.”

Sian Clifford, beloved for the very different role of sister Claire in the comedy hit “Fleabag,” plays Madame De Genlis, the real-life French noblewoman, musician, and author of some 120 books who wrote the libretto for Bologne’s opera, “The Anonymous Lover.” Clifford loved that De Genlis busts historical stereotypes. “She was strong and entrepreneurial way ahead of her time,” notes Clifford. “And since this is a story about the erasure of significant historical figures, I found it really exciting to discover this spectacular woman who was a true feminist powerhouse, yet we don’t ever hear about her.”

Rounding out the main cast is Alex Fitzalan as another of the period’s most fascinating figures: Philippe, the Duke of Orleans. Son of Louis XIII, cousin to Marie Antoinette, and Bologne’s close friend who co-founded the first French anti-slavery society with him, he is best known as the nobleman who rebelled against his class—bankrolling the Revolution and renaming himself Philippe Egalité (Equality.)

Fitzalan, a quickly rising newcomer who debuted in *Slender Man*, found himself wanting to know more than is available about Philippe. “A lot of mystery surrounds his life and there’s not much written, but we worked with a historian to learn what we could. We ended up with quite a fun and jovial character, yet with a serious side. He was born into immense privilege, but he fought to shut down the very thing that provided him with this life. I tried to find the spirit of someone who went from benefitting from the status quo to rejecting it.”

He especially loved working with Harrison. “Kelvin is very humble, but you could see how much this role meant to him and the enormous amount of work he put in. He essentially became a master violinist in five months, and he used that to get even deeper into who the Chevalier was as a man. He brought Joseph to life with so much originality and grace, I know people are going to be inspired by it.”

## **The Look of Chevalier**

Few eras in history have dripped with more money, elegance, and preening privilege than Marie Antoinette’s France. While the era of the *Ancien Régime* has been explored before in painstaking detail, Williams headed in the opposite direction: breathing fresh air into a period that can feel far away, using the era’s colors and textures to vivify a world where the past isn’t past but immediate, alive, and still affecting us.

“The entire conceit of the movie’s design revolved around finding the exact fulcrum between period credibility and a vital sense of modernity,” he explains. “And, tricky as it was, that came through in everything from the camera work and the lighting to the set design, costumes, hair, and makeup.”

Williams and cinematographer Jess Hall (who recently shot the hit series WANDA VISION) came to the mutual decision to shoot the film in long, kinetic takes that plunge the audience into the Chevalier's world. "We wanted the audience to be immersed in Joseph's life choices, obstacles, confrontations, heartbreak, successes and victories," the director explains. "That imposed a way of utilizing the camera that was truly challenging. I wanted to only cut when necessary because a cut can disrupt that immersion and I wanted to keep the camera moving freely and liberally to give a contemporary tone to the piece that felt like this could be happening today."

Hall worked tirelessly to choreograph his camerawork, dancing it through the intricate sets both deliberately and unobtrusively. "Jess, in addition to having the accidental virtue of also being of Jamaican heritage, is a brilliant technician and he has the one thing you can't teach: taste," Williams says. "He was tasked with the impossible and achieved it. The camera moves were intended to yoke the viewer to Joseph's journey and Jess was relentless in that aim."

Since the film is set in a time before electricity, in a shadow-lit world, there were myriad lighting challenges. "For example, in the opening battle, it would have been great to have stagehands with Leko lights, panning them and flaring the lens," says Williams. "But instead we mixed candlelight with camera moves for a rock concert feel."

Hall worked arm-and-arm with production designer Karen Murphy, known for crafting the transporting worlds of Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*, Bradley Cooper's *A Star is Born* and Michael Apted's *Chronicles of Narnia: The Dawn Treader*. "Like Jess, Karen has a great sensibility for color and composition," says Williams. "Her sets are vibrant, alive and never stuffy."

Murphy hewed closely to the decadent reality of elite French life before the Revolution but built her opulent sets to accommodate the sweeping cameras. "The contemporary feeling in the film is all about the camera, the acting, and the language, but the world is very real," she explains. "I did a lot of research. Though we filmed in Prague, I went to Paris many times, toured old houses, measured things, looked at the tiniest details of windows and doors. We brought in all the French antiques we could."

Joseph's lavish apartment on the Rue Chaussee D'antin, created largely from imagination as no images exist, became a favorite of cast and crew. "It was a very fun set to build, and the craftsmanship of the team was amazing," says Murphy. "Our set decorator, Lotty Sanna, managed to find incredible pieces in flea markets in France which we renovated, painted and re-upholstered." Says McGunigle of the apartment, "When I first walked through that beautiful set, I never wanted to leave. I wanted to live in it."

Murphy's team also went all in with the ostentatious overindulgence of Versailles. "We filled it with gold and pastels, with flowers, candles, fruits, and cake displays. It really contrasts with the grittier streets of Paris, showing how much society was divided as unrest was building," she describes.

The clothing of the social elite was just as luxurious, bursting with candy-colored pastels and textured fabrics of silk, organza, feathers, and lace. Costume designer Oliver García gave each and every piece its own life, drawing on history, but with a twist. Says Williams, "The costumes you see in the film are authentic, but they're cut and tailored in a more form-fitting way that carries the tonality of clothes today. The idea was to keep the luxury of that era real but so that modern audiences can relate."

For the Chevalier, for whom appearances are so key in his early life, García riffed on the classic silhouette for an influential man of the time—the jaunty waistcoat and breeches—but played with splashier colors and made the Chevalier even more androgynously beautiful. "We decided to go for shades of blue and purple for Joseph," García explains. "Blue was actually one of the most popular colors of the time, symbolic of elegance and sophistication. And then we chose purple because it's associated with sumptuousness and ambition which are also a part of his character."

Marie Antoinette, long a symbol of femininity taken to the max, also wears a palette of blue along with other dainty pastels. “We used a more saturated blue for her, and we also used a lot pink because it's such a girly, joyful, yet strong color,” describes García.

Lucy Boynton recalls that García's dresses felt like an extension of what she was going through in each scene. “Everything Marie wears tells a story,” Boynton says. “I love how her dresses evolve from being very youthful to becoming much more buttoned-up as she has to withdraw herself more.”

Minnie Driver felt similarly about La Guimard's clothing. “She's an opulent character but what Oliver managed to do was to give her an overblown elegance without it being a caricature. He also understood that I'm tall. It's wonderful when costumes are organically created out of a mixture of who the actor is physically and the persona of the character. He did that brilliantly.”

The full effect of the costumes was completed with an array of deeply considered hair and makeup looks overseen by Roo Maurice. In the late 1700s, makeup was used equally, and heavily, by both men and women. But Maurice took a lighter, more modern, hand than the harsh, often ghoulish, faces of the time. “Because they used lead paint on their faces, many people in that time lost all their facial hair, so the reality was very white faces with eyebrows painted on, and it could look quite shocking,” notes Maurice. “We did pale down our actors' skin and we used the rosy cheeks that were so in fashion, but we made it a touch more glamorous than it really was.”

The hair and makeup team went to town with Marie Antoinette. “She's the Queen and I wanted her to stand above everyone else,” says Maurice. “Her wigs were very, very big, and we used makeup in colors that were authentic to the 18<sup>th</sup> century but applied them with a more contemporary Hollywood look. I used lots of contouring and strong lips doing more of a bow shape that worked so well on Lucy.”

Bologne's hair became a major piece of storytelling. “For the Chevalier's powdered wig, we tried hundreds before finding just the right look and shape. But the biggest moment is when Joseph embraces his braids in the latter part of the film when he's finding himself,” says Maurice. “The braids looked really cool on Kelvin and they reflect the Chevalier seeing himself in a new way.”

## **The Chevalier's Music and Legacy**

CHEVALIER brings to audiences not only the remarkable life but also the real sounds of Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745-1799)—music which has only in recent years started to be played again to great acclaim by orchestras and opera houses worldwide. In pre-production, some of Chevalier's original compositions and musical performances were produced and arranged by composer Michael Abels – who supplemented Bologne's work with his own classical orchestral compositions – and who has worked on some of the most acclaimed films and series of the past decade including *Get Out*, “Allen v. Farrow”, *Bad Education*, *Us* and *Nope*. “I first heard Joseph Bologne's music years ago and since then, I've been inspired by him and curious about what his life must have been like,” comments Abels. “The chance to help bring his story to audiences through music is a realization of a lifelong dream.”

Composer Kris Bowers – who has scored numerous award winning films and series including *King Richard*, *Respect*, “Bridgerton”, and *Green Book* – composed the original score. With the film being a celebration of Joseph Bologne, both composers used his recovered melodies in conjunction with their own work. It was important to the filmmakers to create a score that felt vibrant and modern sounding, and was different from, although complementary to, Bologne's original music that is also showcased in the film.

“Michael and Kris are both genius composers and fans of Chevalier's music for a long time, and truly understand his role in the musical pantheon. Both were extremely well educated and well versed in all things Chevalier and created something evocative,” says Williams. “Their incredible work has brought the story of their hero to life.”

Bowers adds, “For the score, Stephen and I often talked about the importance of making Joseph, and all of the narrative themes and characters in this film feel urgent and palpable for today's audience. Stephen often expressed the importance of ‘scoring the man, not the clothes’, to convey the boldness and swagger of Joseph Bologne in his generation. For this I found leitmotifs in his music and derived many of the central themes from variations on those melodies, while making the compositional approach and sound of the score feel modern.”

Music Supervisor Maggie Rodford notes, “We did a large amount of research into the Chevalier’s music. It was especially exciting to find that he made many references in his work to traditional songs from Guadeloupe. So, a key point for us was to really develop that as part of the storyline.”

For the film’s many live concert scenes, Rodford worked closely with the cast to create a realistic feeling of watching Europe’s finest musicians. “There were a lot of practicalities involved, from the actors learning their instruments to preparing for on camera lip-sync work, as well as ensuring that every member of the orchestra looks as if they’re truly playing the music you’re hearing,” she explains.

In the film, Joseph’s final, renegade performance, as the French uprising sparks and then explodes in the streets around the theatre, shows a man transformed, not just musically but down to his very core. The solo part of the finale, *Violin Concerto No. 9*, is performed by young violinist Clayton Penrose-Whitmore, a Juilliard graduate who won the Sphinx Concerto Competition from the Detroit-based Organization, which for 25 years has helped launch many prominent musicians of color.

The stirring final moments reflect the reality that after being spurned for the job of heading the Paris Opera, the Chevalier turned from music to social change, becoming an abolitionist and soldier of the French Revolution. Even there he proved a genius, leading France’s first all-Black regiment, 1,000 men strong.

Williams wanted the final frames of the film to reveal Joseph tapping into more potential within himself than even his visionary mind had yet to imagine, the potential not just to impress but to stand up for himself and for something greater.

“At the end, Joseph has come into a true sense of self-awareness. He is fully connected to himself,” says Williams. “We’ve seen a person who has so many tributaries flowing into him creatively, and then they converge at this moment of complete defiance—defiance not only to the monarchy but to the version of himself that he had previously been. It is a moment from which he can’t go back, but it is equally a moment of self-discovery and triumph.”

More than 200 years later, the triumph of the Chevalier’s life, for so long erased, finally has a chance to be historically recognized, acknowledged and celebrated.

## FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

### **STEPHEN WILLIAMS (Directed by)**

Stephen Williams was born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, where his love of visual storytelling began. After spending his high school years in England, he later made his way to Canada and the prestigious Canadian Film Centre. Williams' breakthrough came when his first film, *Soul Survivor*, which he wrote and directed, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival to critical acclaim. He went on to direct several TV episodes and movies such as *Hard Time: The David Milgaard Story* which won multiple awards, including a Gemini for Best Director. In 2004, Williams directed an episode of "Lost", the show that won the Emmy for Best Drama that year.

Over the next five years, Williams directed over 25 episodes of "Lost", becoming an integral part of the show as a resident director and co-executive producer. Since then, Williams has worked on hit shows such as "Person of Interest", "The Americans", "The Walking Dead", "Ray Donovan", and "Westworld". In 2019, Williams signed on to be an executive producer/director for HBO's "Watchmen". His episode, "This Extraordinary Being" has been called the best hour of television of the year, and even, by some, of this decade. It earned Williams both an DGA Outstanding Directorial Achievement nomination and an Outstanding Directing For A Limited Series Emmy nomination.

### **STEFANI ROBINSON (Written and Produced by)**

Stefani Robinson is an Emmy®-nominated Writer and Executive Producer with an exclusive overall production deal with FX. She was an Executive Producer and Writer on the critically acclaimed comedy series "Atlanta" which premiered its fourth and final season this last Fall, 2022. Robinson has won two Writers Guild of America Awards for her work on the series, and in 2018, she made Emmy history as the first Black woman to be recognized for nominations in both "Outstanding Comedy Series" and "Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series" categories in the same year. She is also the first and youngest Black woman ever nominated for a solo-written entry in the latter writing category.

Robinson is also celebrated for her work as an Executive Producer and Writer on the hit vampire comedy "What We Do in the Shadows," which is currently in its fourth season. Her work on the third and fourth seasons garnered her additional Emmy nominations in the same two comedy categories in 2020 and again in 2022. Additionally, she has been nominated for two Critics Choice Awards for "Best Comedy Series," two Television Critics Association Awards including "Outstanding Achievement in Comedy," three WGA Awards, and one PGA Award on behalf of the show.

Her additional television credits include Supervising Producer and Writer on the fourth installment of the Golden Globe® and Emmy award-winning limited series " Fargo" and Staff Writer on the FXX comedy series "Man Seeking Woman."

As the Writer and Producer, *Chevalier* marks Robinson's feature film debut.

### **ED GUINEY (Produced by)**

Ed Guiney co-founded film and television production company Element Pictures with Andrew Lowe in 2001. Element has offices in Dublin, Belfast, and London, and works across film and television production. As founder and co-CEO, Guiney oversees the development and production of Element's film and television slate.

Current film productions and upcoming releases include Sebastián Lelio's *The Wonder*, starring Florence Pugh (Netflix); Joanna Hogg's *The Eternal Daughter* (BBC/A24); and Yorgos Lanthimos' *Poor Things*, starring Emma Stone, Mark Ruffalo, and Willem Dafoe (Film4/Searchlight Pictures).

Recent producer credits include Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Favourite* and *Room*, directed by Lenny Abrahamson as well as Sean Durkin's *The Nest*; Phyllida Lloyd's *Herself*; and Joanna Hogg's *The Souvenir Part II*, which had its world premiere at Director's Fortnight in July 2021.

His most recent executive producer credits for television include the adaptations of Sally Rooney's novels "Conversations with Friends" and the critically acclaimed "Normal People", both directed by Lenny Abrahamson (BBC/HULU); and Nancy Harris' "The Dry" (Britbox/ITV Studios). Shane Meadows' period drama "The Gallows Pole" (BBC/A24) is currently in post-production.

Guiney has been nominated for two Oscars for Best Picture and has won two BAFTAs.

In May 2022, Fremantle announced its acquisition of a majority stake in Element Pictures, marking a new and ambitious phase of growth for Element.

### **ANDREW LOWE (Produced by)**

Andrew Lowe co-founded Element Pictures with Ed Guiney in 2001. Element has offices in Dublin, Belfast, and London and works across film and television production. As founder and co-CEO, his focus is on production and the financing and commercial exploitation of Element's slate.

His most recent executive producer credits include the adaptations of Sally Rooney's novels "Conversations With Friends" and the critically acclaimed "Normal People", both directed by Lenny Abrahamson (BBC/HULU); and Nancy Harris' *The Dry* (Britbox/ITV Studios). Shane Meadows' period drama "The Gallows Pole" (BBC/A24) is currently in production.

Previous executive producer credits include award-winning *Room*, directed by Lenny Abrahamson; Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Favourite*; Sean Durkin's *The Nest*; Phyllida Lloyd's *Herself*; and he produced on Joanna Hogg's *The Souvenir Part II*, which had its world premiere at Director's Fortnight in July 2021.

Current film productions and upcoming releases include Yorgos Lanthimos' *Poor Things*, starring Emma Stone, Mark Ruffalo, and Willem Dafoe (Film4/Searchlight Pictures); Sebastián Lelio's *The Wonder*, starring Florence Pugh (Netflix); and Joanna Hogg's *The Eternal Daughter* (BBC/A24).

Before setting up Element Pictures, Lowe, a chartered accountant, freelanced as a production accountant and was Head of Business Affairs at the Irish Film Board. Andrew is Chair of the IBEC (Irish Employers representative body) Audiovisual Federation.

In May 2022, Fremantle announced its majority stake in Element Pictures, marking a new and ambitious phase of growth for Element.

### **DIANNE McGUNIGLE (Produced by)**

Upon graduating from Fordham University, Dianne McGunigle began her career as a trend spotter for Youth Intelligence, a boutique marketing firm based out of New York City. After Youth Intelligence was acquired by Creative Artist Agency in 2003, McGunigle was promoted to talent agent where she went on to create and oversee CAA's New York Comedy department.

In 2013, McGunigle relocated to Los Angeles to become a talent manager and producer at MGMT Entertainment. She serves as an executive producer on the Golden Globes winning FX series "Atlanta", and currently has several projects in development including the series "Desert People" with Alia Shawkat and Animal Pictures and the latest installment of the *Final Destination* franchise at New Line. She lives in Brooklyn, NY, with her husband and her dog, Donut.

## **JESS HALL (Director of Photography)**

*'I grew up experiencing two very different kinds of light. The Caribbean light is intense, powerful, and high contrast. And on the other hand, there was the soft, silver-gray light of northern Europe. Much of my work exists in this tension between these two sensibilities.'*

Jess Hall studied Film at Central St Martins College Of Art, London, and New York University. Prior to graduation he began an influential collaboration with the innovative and highly acclaimed contemporary choreographer William Forsythe. This produced two documentary films for the BBC focusing on the translation of three-dimensional movement into a two-dimensional medium. The first of these films, the award-winning *Solo* featured in The Whitney Museum of American Art Biennale Exhibition 1997 NY.

Hall photographed his first feature film *Stander* in 2001 for the director Bronwyn Hughes. The film was celebrated for its authentic portrayal of 1970's Apartheid South Africa. Hall went onto photograph the iconic British action-comedy *Hot Fuzz* written and directed by Edgar Wright. Produced by Working Title, the film was a critical and commercial success and established a cult following in the USA. Hall reteamed with Wright on the "Don't" segment of Quentin Tarantino's *Grindhouse* before going on to photograph *Son Of Rambo* written and directed by fellow St Martins Alumni Garth Jennings. The film charmed audiences at The Sundance Film Festival where it was acquired for distribution by Paramount.

In 2007 Hall received a Satellite Award Nomination for his cinematography on *Brideshead Revisited*. Taking his approach from the Dutch masters he was credited for crafting a dark yet luminous visual palette which subtly reflected the themes of love, faith, family, and betrayal. Another period film albeit in a different style followed. *Creation* directed by John Amiel and produced by the legendary Jeremy Thomas was made in direct collaboration with the Darwin family. The film features Paul Bettany as Charles Darwin and Jennifer Connelly as his wife Emma. Hall attempted to transcend classical period traditions to create an intimate film of emotional strength and depth. In 2010 he was invited to become a member of The British Society of Cinematographers.

Demonstrating a desire to move effortlessly between genres, his versatility as a cinematographer remains evident in his diverse choice of projects incorporating a multiplicity of cinematic styles. Hall's use of a naturalistic palette and poetic minimal shot structure was celebrated on James Ponsoldt's *The Spectacular Now* which took the Special Jury Prize at Sundance 2013. In addition to his feature film work, Hall continued to shoot award-winning commercials including multiple Cannes Gold Lion award winners and a Silver D&AD pencil for cinematography. Hall collaborated with the Academy Award winning documentarian Kevin Macdonald on his film *Marley* in 2012. In 2013 Hall was invited to join The Academy Of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences where he participated both practically producing images for brand development and conceptually as a representative on the The Future Of Film working group.

In 2014 Hall worked with Academy Award winning cinematographer Wally Pfister on his directorial debut *Transcendence*. The film was shot on 35mm anamorphic and finished photochemically at Fotokem in Los Angeles using a traditional film workflow. His live action rendering of the anime classic *Ghost In The Shell* in 2017 employed many innovative technical strategies, combining large format digital cinematography, state of the art LED lighting technology, custom built lenses, and the first 24 FPS Photogrammetry capture rig to be used on a live action feature film. Hall's use of advanced LED lighting to achieve the precise rendering of the complex secondary Anime color palette has been widely documented and was honored in the reception of the HPA Award for Best Color Grading On A Feature Film.

Recently, work was completed on Academy Award winning writer/director Stephen Knight's latest film *Serenity*. The film stars Mathew McConaughey and Anne Hathaway and is produced by Greg Shapiro (*The Hurt Locker, Zero Dark 30, Detroit*). In 2019 Hall accepted an invitation to join The American Society of Cinematographers. In 2020 he received the AICP award for Best Cinematography on "Smirnoff Infamous Since 1864". The project also saw Hall's work receive another award in the color grading category thus cementing his reputation as an artist who has dexterously navigated the color science required to produce resonant images of color depth in the digital format. In 2020 Hall helmed Marvel's first streaming

content for Disney+ shooting all nine episodes of “Wandavision” directed by Matt Shakman. The show was nominated for 23 Emmy Awards and received the AICP award for Color Grading in a Narrative Series.

### **KAREN MURPHY (Production Designer)**

Karen Murphy is a production designer known for her work with directors Baz Luhrmann, Derek Cianfrance, and Justin Kurzel. Originally from Australia, with a background in architecture, Murphy started in film on the set of Luhrmann’s *Moulin Rouge*. She went on to Art Direct *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, *The Kite Runner*, *Australia*, and *X Men Origins: Wolverine*. She co-production designed *The Great Gatsby* for Luhrmann. The film went on to win the BAFTA, Art Directors Guild, and Academy Awards for Production Design in 2014. She then moved to New York to production design his Netflix series, “The Get Down”, re-creating The Bronx of the 1970s. Their most recent collaboration can be seen in *Elvis* for Warner Bros.

Murphy also Production Designed the films Cianfrance’s *The Light Between Oceans*, Trey Edward Schultz’s *It Comes at Night* (A24), Kurzel’s *The True History of the Kelly Gang*, and Melina Matsoukas’ *Queen & Slim* for Universal. Her design for *A Star Is Born*, directed by Bradley Cooper, was celebrated with a 2019 Art Directors Guild nomination. She is currently working with director Marielle Heller on *Nightbitch*.

### **OLIVER GARCIA (Costume Designer)**

Born in Spain, Oliver García moved to England to pursue his dreams. An interest in movies had developed from a very young age but fashion design was his initial creative choice, so he studied design at UAL in the mid-2000s. While attending college, García worked as a stylist in music videos and later started designing costumes for various fringe theater productions in London. His career took a turn when he met the acclaimed costume designer Sandy Powell, allowing him an entry into the film industry.

He worked as her design assistant in movies such as Disney’s *Cinderella* directed by Kenneth Branagh, *Mary Poppins Returns* directed by Rob Marshall, and *The Favourite* directed by Yorgos Lanthimos. Other notable credits as assistant designer includes *Maleficent* and *Come Away*, both starring Angelina Jolie.

Eventually García earned his first credit as a costume designer in the British film *England is Mine*, based on the biography of the singer Morrissey starring Jack Lowden and Jodie Comer. This was followed by the AMC series “Soulmates”.

### **KRIS BOWERS (Composer of Original Score)**

Emmy award-winning composer and pianist Kris Bowers creates genre-defying music that pays homage to his jazz roots with inflections of alternative and R&B influences. The versatile composer’s repertoire includes documentaries Kobe Bryant’s *Muse* and *Norman Lear: Just Another Version of You*, scripted series “Bridgerton”, *When They See Us* and *Dear White People*, and films ranging from biopics *King Richard*, *Respect*, and *The United States Vs Billie Holiday*, to the live action/animated feature *Space Jam: A New Legacy*. In 2018, Bowers had the honor of collaborating with Emmy and Academy Award-winning director Peter Farrelly and Academy Award-winning actor Mahershala Ali on their critically acclaimed and Academy Award winning *Green Book*, not only scoring the film but also serving as Ali’s on-screen hand-double and piano coach.

Bowers received a Primetime Emmy nomination for his work in Ava DuVernay’s 2019 Netflix miniseries “When They See Us” about the Central Park Five. In 2020, he received another Primetime Emmy

nomination for his work on the FX miniseries “Mrs. America”, and a further two nominations in 2021 for “Bridgerton”.

At the 93rd Academy Awards, he was nominated for his documentary short, *A Concerto is A Conversation*, which he produced, co-directed, and scored. Executive produced by Ava DuVernay, the documentary premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival.

Bowers’ most recent work can be heard on Netflix in seasons one and two of “Bridgerton”, “Inventing Anna”, and “Colin in Black and White”, in the HBO series “We Own This City” (helmed by his *King Richard* and *Monsters and Men* director Reinaldo Marcus Green), as well as in the Ava DuVernay HBO Max limited series “DMZ”. His forthcoming film releases include Disney’s *Haunted Mansion*, from his *Dear White People* and *Bad Hair* director Justin Simien, starring Danny DeVito, Owen Wilson, and Tiffany Haddish.

Bowers has recorded and performed with artists including Q-Tip, Aretha Franklin, Ludacris, Christian Rich, Jay-Z, and Kanye West and has contributed to albums by Marcus Miller, José James, Moses Sumney, and Murs. Bowers is an official Steinway Artist and was named one of twelve ‘Artists to Watch’ by iTunes in 2014. In 2020, he was honored with the Distinguished Film Composer Award by the Middleburg Film Festival. In 2019, he received the prestigious ROBIE Pioneer Award from the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

Bowers currently lives in Los Angeles with his wife and daughter.

### **MICHAEL ABELS (Musical Performances Produced and Arranged by)**

Two-time Emmy-nominated composer Michael Abels is known for his genre-defying scores for the Jordan Peele films *Get Out* and *Us*, for which Abels won a World Soundtrack Award, the Jerry Goldsmith Award, a Critics Choice nomination, and multiple critics’ awards. The hip-hop influenced score for *Us* was short-listed for the Oscar and was even named “Score of the Decade” by *The Wrap*. Other recent media projects include the films *Bad Education*, *Nightbooks*, *Fake Famous*, and the docu-series *Allen v. Farrow*. Current releases include *Beauty* which premiered at the Tribeca Festival and is now streaming on Netflix and *Breaking* (formerly *892*) which premiered at Sundance and opens in theaters August 29. Abels’ third collaboration with Jordan Peele, *Nope*, released in July 2022.

Abels’ creative output also includes many concert works, including *At War with Ourselves* for the Kronos Quartet, *Isolation Variation* for Hilary Hahn, and the opera *Omar* co-composed with Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Rhiannon Giddens, which opens at Los Angeles Opera on October 22. His scores have been performed by the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and many others. Some of these pieces are available on the Cedille label, including *Delights & Dances* and *Winged Creatures*. Current commissions include a work for the National Symphony, and a guitar concerto for Grammy-nominated artist Mak Grgic.

Abels is co-founder of the Composers Diversity Collective, an advocacy group to increase visibility of composers of color in film, gaming, and streaming media.

### **JOHN AXELRAD (Editor)**

John Axelrad, ACE, is a feature film and television editor based in Los Angeles. Recent credits include editing the Lionsgate socio-political thriller feature film *Antebellum*, and additional editing on the Netflix feature trilogy *Fear Street* and the HBO Max feature *Charm City Kings*.

In 2018, Axelrad co-edited the 20th Century Fox science-fiction drama *Ad Astra* (starring Brad Pitt) for director James Gray. It premiered in competition at the 2019 Venice International Film Festival and was his fifth collaboration with Mr. Gray, previously co-editing the feature *The Lost City of Z* for him with Lee Haugen. After premiering as Closing Night Film at the 2016 New York Film Festival, *The Lost City of Z* was theatrically released by Amazon Studios and Bleecker Street Media in April 2017.

That same year, Axelrad also collaborated with Lee Haugen to co-edit the Charlie Hunnam and Rami Malek prison drama *Papillon*. In 2015, Axelrad edited the Universal Studios comedy/horror film *Krampus*, and Sony's *Miles Ahead*, a narrative comedy/drama about the life and music of Miles Davis. Starring and directed by Don Cheadle, the biopic premiered as Closing Night Film at the 2015 New York Film Festival. Prior to that, Axelrad edited the comedy-dramas *Before We Go* (dir. Chris Evans) and *Rudderless* (dir. William H. Macy). Axelrad's earlier collaborations with director James Gray have all premiered at the Cannes Film Festival: *The Immigrant*, *Two Lovers*, and *We Own The Night*. In between those films, Axelrad edited the thriller *Gone* for Lakeshore and Summit Entertainment, the romantic comedy *Something Borrowed* for Alcon Entertainment and Warner Bros., and the Miramax romantic comedy *The Switch*. In 2009, Axelrad edited Searchlight's critically acclaimed and Academy Award winning *Crazy Heart* for director Scott Cooper.

Earlier credits for Axelrad include James Gunn's horror/comedy *Slither*, directors Danny and Oxide Pang's horror/thriller *The Messengers*, and Sony Screen Gems' horror/thriller *Boogeyman*. He was also an additional editor on David Koepp's *Stir of Echoes* in 1999. In 2002, Axelrad served as editor on the pilot and 11 episodes of CBS' crime drama television series "Hack."

Axelrad began his editing career mentored by some of the best editors in Los Angeles, including working as an assistant editor for Anne V. Coates, ACE, on *Out of Sight*, *Erin Brockovich*, and *Unfaithful*. He made the move to editor by cutting several independent feature films and television movies in between assisting jobs.

### **LOTTY SANNA (Set Decorator)**

Lotty Sanna is a set decorator based in London, UK, currently working on a wide range of international film projects.

Having studied at the Courtauld Institute of Art, her background in art history, paired with a keen eye for the absurd and surreal aspects of life, has paved the way for a career focused on bringing to life screenplays through thoroughly researched and unique set decoration.

Starting in the film industry in 2011, Sanna assisted on large scale and critically acclaimed projects such as "The Crown", *Spectre*, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and *Wonder Woman*.

As a set decorator, Sanna leans towards projects where she can create worlds for under-represented protagonists, on which the sets can provide another facet of the story-telling process. Her recent work includes the critically acclaimed "Top Boy", Lena Dunham's *Catherine, Called Birdy*, and Steven Soderbergh's *Magic Mike's Last Dance*. She is currently working in Europe shooting *Lee*, the story of female war photographer and former Vogue model Lee Miller.

### **ROO MAURICE (Hair & Makeup Designer)**

Roo Maurice has been working in the hair and makeup industry for over 25 years; she is an accomplished, well-respected artist, and highly proficient designer; her attention to detail and management skills are synonymous with excellence. With a wealth of both life and work experience, Maurice's work ethic and personality is composed and highly organized, combined with a good sense of humor, thus making her a much sought-after head of department and team member. Working on a number of award-winning and nominated teams, she is often requested personally by actors, who always feel secure in her expertise.

Early in her profession Maurice was mentored by the legendary makeup artist Walter Schneiderman (*Chaplin*, *Elephant Man*, *Cry Freedom*) and in her long-standing career has worked alongside many great designers, expanding her knowledge and vast skills and turning them into an effortless practice. As a published and highly commissioned fine artist, Maurice's creativity and variation of skills make her an essential asset to any production and reduces the need to outsource, resulting in saving money and excellent

budget control. This skill set along with a strong business mind allows her to have complete control over the desired look of the hair and makeup design and oversee a highly organized team.

Maurice is experienced in all hair and skin types, ethnicities, and genres within the field and prides herself on carrying a team with the same ethos and passion for the industry. In recent times she has also completed 11 different vocational courses on the Covid-19 virus, ensuring safety for both her team and the talent, resulting in successfully designing two feature films back-to-back during the pandemic, proving her protocols to be a well-oiled machine!

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### **KELVIN HARRISON JR. (Chevalier)**

One of the most in demand actors in Hollywood, Kelvin Harrison Jr. is known for bringing to life some of the most dynamic and diverse characters on screens both big and small. In 2019, he captivated audiences in the drama *Luce* in which he leads as the title character opposite Octavia Spencer, Tim Roth, and Naomi Watts. The film first premiered in competition at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival and was released to great critical acclaim resulting in a Film Independent Spirit Award and BAFTA nominations for both Harrison and the film. That same year, Harrison starred in the A24 drama *Waves* which earned him an African American Film Critics Association award for Breakout Performance. *Waves* was his second film with director Trey Edward Shults and reviews singled out his performance as “brilliant”, “excellent”, and a “knockout”, and earned him mentions on several early Oscars contender lists.

In 2020, Harrison won a SAG Award as part of the ensemble cast of the Oscar nominated film *The Trial Of The Chicago 7*. The film also earned an Oscar nomination for Best Motion Picture of the Year. Also in 2020, Harrison starred in back-to-back romantic comedies. First, he was seen in *The Photograph* opposite Issa Rae and Lakeith Stanfield, and also starred as the male lead in *The High Note* opposite Tracee Ellis Ross and Dakota Johnson. 2021, Harrison was seen in MGM’s Joe Wright film *Cyrano* starring opposite Peter Dinklage and Haley Bennett. Harrison can also be seen in Baz Lurhmann’s *Elvis*, portraying the legend B.B. King. Additionally, Harrison also will voice the role of Scar in Barry Jenkins prequel of Disney’s *The Lion King*.

Harrison, who has been recognized as a face of independent film, has experienced significant festival success during his career. Audiences first fell in love with Harrison in his leading roles in *Monster* and *Monsters And Men* at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. In 2017, Harrison was applauded for his performance in A24’s *It Comes at Night* which received critical acclaim and earned him a Gotham Award nomination for Breakthrough Actor, and also had a great supporting role in the Sundance favorite and Oscar nominated *Mudbound*.

On the television front, Harrison was seen in the NAACP Award nominated, Epix crime drama, “Godfather of Harlem”, in which Harrison was able to put his musical talents to work in his portrayal as world class musician Teddy Greene. “Godfather of Harlem” is executive produced by Forest Whitaker and inspired by the story of infamous crime boss Bumpy Johnson (Whitaker).

Born and raised in New Orleans, Harrison grew up surrounded by the influence of music alongside his twin sisters. His family of musicians shared their passion with Harrison at an early age, which he embraced wholeheartedly by learning to play the piano and trumpet. After studying jazz instrumental at the prestigious New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Harrison further discovered his passion for performing and began doing local theater and musicals before enrolling at the University of New Orleans to study film. Shortly after, Harrison realized that acting was what he was meant to do when he booked a small role in the action sci-fi film, *Enders Game*. He went on to book several guest star projects and in 2016, Harrison delivered an emotional performance as Simon in Searchlight’s *The Birth Of A Nation*.

Harrison loves his craft and enjoys researching and prepping for the characters he plays. He is also a black belt in Korean martial arts and enjoys playing music. When not working, Harrison enjoys hanging out with friends, painting, and photography.

### **SAMARA WEAVING (Marie-Josephine)**

Samara Weaving is one of Hollywood’s most promising young talents working today. Weaving has a huge year ahead of her as it was recently announced that she will star as Holly Madison in an adaption of her memoir “Down the Rabbit Hole” at Sony TV as well as join the star-studded cast in Oscar-winning

director Damien Chazelle's *Babylon*. Later this year, she will also portray Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte in new biopic *Liz* in 2023. Earlier this year, Weaving starred as the lead opposite Eugenio Derbez in the Hulu film *The Valet*, which premiered globally across Disney's streaming services in May.

Last year, Weaving was seen in Hulu's eight-part limited series "Nine Perfect Strangers" which was released this past fall on the global streaming platform. Weaving played the character Jessica alongside executive producers Nicole Kidman and Melissa McCarthy. She was also recently seen in Paramount's long-awaited GI Joe spin off *Snake Eyes* which premiered in July 2021.

Weaving starred in the latest installment of the *Bill & Ted* saga, *Bill & Ted Face the Music*, opposite Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter. The film was released in August of 2020. In Spring of 2020, she starred opposite Darren Criss and Patty LuPone in Netflix's award-winning TV mini-series "Hollywood", created by Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan. In fall of 2019, Weaving made waves in Searchlight Pictures' horror comedy *Ready or Not* in which *The Wrap* called "a star-making performance".

Other credits include Amazon's Mini-Series "Picnic at Hanging Rock" for Fremantle Media, alongside Natalie Dormer, Lola Bessis, and Lily Sullivan, which follows three schoolgirls and their governess after they disappear on Valentine's Day 1900, and Searchlight Pictures' *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, opposite Frances McDormand, Woody Harrelson, and Sam Rockwell. Directed by Martin McDonagh, the film was nominated for a 2018 Academy Award for Best Picture. The film also received a Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture – Drama and the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast In a Motion Picture. In 2017, Weaving starred in McG's *The Babysitter* for Netflix, and also appeared in the 2020 sequel, *The Babysitter: Killer Queen*.

She began her career on the long-running hit Australian series "Home and Away" and went on to star as Peggy in Ivan Sen's *Mystery Road* (2013) opposite Ryan Kwanten and Aaron Pedersen. Other past credits include *Ash Vs. Evil Dead* produced by Sam Raimi, the Australian film's *Bad Girl* (2016), and *Before Dawn* (2017), as well as the television shows "Squirrel Boys", "Out of the Blue", and "The Wright Stuff".

She currently resides in Los Angeles.

### **LUCY BOYNTON (Marie Antoinette)**

Lucy Boynton is a dazzling talent whose affable poise and enigmatic performances are making an indelible mark across entertainment.

Boynton will next be seen in *The Pale Blue Eye* for Netflix, opposite Christian Bale and Harry Melling. Written and directed by Scott Cooper, the film is based on Louis Bayard's 2006 novel of the same name—a Gothic thriller that Cooper has been looking to make for more than a decade. It centers on a young cadet the world would come to know as Edgar Allan Poe (Melling) and a series of murders that took place at the United States Military Academy, West Point, in 1830. The film is eyeing a release date in late 2022.

Boynton was most recently seen in BritBox's three-part Agatha Christie series, "Why Didn't They Ask Evans?" opposite Will Poulter and directed by Hugh Laurie, as well as the ITV produced AMC + acquired "The Ipcress File" alongside Joe Cole and Tom Hollande. The six-part Berlin-set series based on Len Deighton's spy novel *The Ipcress File*, which inspired the 1965 Michael Caine film of the same name, was also picked up for a second season and will resume production in 2023.

Other recent roles for Boynton include Ryan Murphy's Netflix series "The Politician" opposite Ben Platt and Gwyneth Paltrow. The series, which Murphy served as a writer, showrunner, and executive producer, was nominated for a Golden Globe in the category of Best Television Series – Musical or Comedy. Seasons one and two presently live on the Netflix platform.

Boynton starred alongside Rami Malek in the 2019 Golden Globe Award-winning *Bohemian Rhapsody*. The film, a celebration of Queen, their music, and their lead singer Freddie Mercury, chronicles the years leading up to Queen's legendary appearance at the Live Aid concert in 1985. The film was also nominated for an Academy Award in the category of Best Picture, a SAG award in the category of

Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture, and a BAFTA Award in the category of Best British Film.

Boynton marked her breakthrough as the female lead in John Carney's *Sing Street*, opposite Ferdia Walsh-Peelo. The story follows a boy growing up in Dublin during the 1980s where he escapes his strained family life by starting a band to impress the girl he likes (Boynton). The film got rave reviews and received a Golden Globe nomination in the category of Best Motion Picture for a Musical or Comedy.

Her first feature film role was as young Beatrix Potter in Chris Noonan's *Miss Potter*, for which she received a nomination for Best Supporting Young Actress in a Feature Film at the Young Artist Awards.

Additional film credits include *Locked Down* opposite Anne Hathaway and Chiwetel Ejiofor; Gareth Steven's *Apostle*; *Murder on the Orient Express* opposite Johnny Depp, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Dame Judi Dench; Danny Strong's J.D. Salinger biopic *Rebel in the Rye*; Osgood Perkins' horror film *The Blackcoat's Daughter*; the BBC production of *Ballet Shoes* opposite Dame Eileen Atkins, Victoria Wood, and Emma Watson; Osgood Perkins' *I Am the Pretty Thing That Lives in the House* opposite Ruth Wilson and Bob Balaban; Caradog James' *Don't Knock Twice*; Neville Pierce's *Lock In*; Ron Maxwell's US Civil War drama *Copperhead*; Philip Martin's *Mo*; and Ryan Vernav's *Hymn to Pan*.

On the small screen, Boynton is known for her role of Angelica Bell, daughter of artist Vanessa Bell and niece of Virginia Woolf, in the BBC Two three-part drama about the Bloomsbury Group, "Life in Squares". She is also known for her role as Margaret Dashwood in the three-part BBC production of "Sense and Sensibility", adapted by BAFTA-winning writer Andrew Davies opposite Dominic Cooper and Dan Stevens. Boynton was also seen in "Gypsy" for Netflix, "Law & Order UK", "Endeavor", "Lewis", and Channel 4's BAFTA nominated series "Borgia".

In 2012, Boynton also starred in Saint Raymond's music video for his debut song "Fall at Your Feet". Boynton was born in New York and raised in London, where she currently resides today.

### **MINNIE DRIVER (La Guimard)**

Minnie Driver first came to the attention of audiences and critics alike in 1995 for her critically acclaimed performance in *Circle of Friends*, in which she starred with Chris O'Donnell. She went on to earn Oscar and Screen Actors Guild nominations, both in the category of Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role for Miramax's award-winning feature, *Good Will Hunting*, directed by Gus Van Sant. In 1998 she was honored with ShoWest's prestigious Female Star of Tomorrow for her work.

Her film career is not only filled with characters from all over the world but includes diverse choices in both the independent and major film worlds. Among her critically acclaimed performances are the films *Take*; the dark comedy *Grosse Pointe Blank*; *Return to Me*; *An Ideal Husband*; provided the voice of Jane in Walt Disney's *Tarzan*; *High Heels and Low Lifes*; *The Governess*; *Beautiful* which she produced with her sister Kate for their production company, Two Drivers; *Big Night*; *Ella Enchanted*; *Sleepers*, the only female alongside Robert DeNiro, Brad Pitt, and Dustin Hoffman, directed by Barry Levinson; Marc Evans' British musical-comedy *Hunky Dory* (opposite Aneurin Barnard); and the British ensemble comedy *I Give it a Year*.

Driver will be seen in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Studios' *Rosaline*. *Rosaline* is a comedic retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* told from the point of view of Romeo's ex, Rosaline. The film is directed by Karen Maine and will also star Sean Teale, Kaitlyn Dever, Isabela Merced, and Bradley Whitford. Driver released her memoir, *Managing Expectations: A Memoir in Essays* on May 3, 2022. The memoir discusses Minnie's life in which she explores navigating the depths of failure, fighting for success, discovering the unmatched wonder and challenge of motherhood, and wading through immeasurable grief.

Last year, Driver starred in the second season of Amazon's critically acclaimed series "Modern Love" based on the NYTimes column of the same name. Shortly thereafter, she was also seen starring in Amazon's musical *Cinderella* written and directed by Kay Cannon and based on the fairy tale of the same name. The film also stars Camilla Cabello, Billy Porter, Pierce Brosnan, James Corden, and Idina Menzel.

Driver starred in three seasons of ABC's hit comedy "Speechless". The series followed a family with a special-needs child and the challenges they face together. Amongst her other notable television credits, Driver appeared as the unforgettable Dahlia Molloy on the critically acclaimed FX television series "The Riches". An audience favorite, Driver received an Emmy and Golden Globe nomination for her role. She also made several guest appearances on NBC's "Will & Grace," as Lorraine Finster, a critic and fan darling.

Driver, a singer before she became an actress, lent her vocals to the original title track, "Learn to be Lonely", written by Andrew Lloyd Weber, for the 2004 film version of his *Phantom of the Opera*, directed by Joel Schumacher. She also made an indelible impression as Carlotta, the reigning Italian opera house diva, and received critical praise for her performance including a nomination by the Critics Circle in the Best British Actress in a Supporting Role category. Driver also released three solo albums over the years.

Driver hosts her iHeart podcast "Minnie Questions with Minnie Driver" which premiered in March 2021 and is also an activist and philanthropist for causes that involve environmental preservation and animal well-being.

###