



"So, we're saving the galaxy again?"—Rocket

From Marvel Studios, the studio that brought you the cinematic global blockbuster franchises of "Iron Man," "Captain America," "Thor," "Ant-Man," "Doctor Strange" and the "Avengers," comes the highly anticipated sequel, featuring the world's favorite band of intergalactic misfits—the Guardians of the Galaxy.

Picking up where "Guardians of the Galaxy"—2014's highest grossing film of the summer—left off, Marvel Studios' "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" continues the action-packed, irreverent, epic space adventures of Peter Quill aka Star-Lord and his gang of eccentric characters as they patrol and protect the universe, doing mercenary work in the wake of the popularity and fame they garnered from saving Xandar.

Set to the backdrop of Awesome Mixtape #2, the story follows the team as they fight to keep their newfound family together while traversing the outer reaches of the cosmos to unravel the mysteries of Peter Quill's true parentage. Old foes become new allies and fan-favorite characters from the classic comics will come to our heroes' aid as the Marvel Cinematic Universe continues to expand.

Marvel Studios' "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" is written and directed by James Gunn ("Guardians of the Galaxy," "Dawn of the Dead") and produced by Kevin Feige. Louis D'Esposito, Victoria Alonso, Jonathan Schwartz, Nikolas Korda and Stan Lee serve as executive producers.



The film stars Chris Pratt ("Jurassic World," "Guardians of the Galaxy") as Peter Quill/Star-Lord, Zoe Saldana ("Guardians of the Galaxy," "Star Trek Beyond") as Gamora, Dave Bautista ("Spectre," "Guardians of the Galaxy") as Drax, Vin Diesel ("Guardians of the Galaxy," "Furious 7") as the voice of Groot, Bradley Cooper ("Joy," "American Sniper") as the voice of Rocket, Michael Rooker ("Guardians of the Galaxy," "The Walking Dead") as Yondu, Karen Gillan ("Guardians of the Galaxy," "The Big Short") as Nebula, Pom Klementieff ("Ingrid Goes West,"

“Oldboy”) as Mantis, Elizabeth Debicki (“The Great Gatsby,” “Everest”) as Ayesha, Chris Sullivan (“The Knick,” “This Is Us”) as Taserface, Sean Gunn (“Guardians of the Galaxy,” “The Gilmore Girls”) as Kraglin, Tommy Flanagan (“Gladiator,” “Sin City”) as Tulik, Laura Haddock (“Guardians of the Galaxy,” “Luther”) as Meredith Quill, with Sylvester Stallone (“Creed,” “The Expendables”) as Stakar, and Kurt Russell (“The Hateful Eight,” “Furious 7”) as Ego.

Director James Gunn’s creative team also includes director of photography Henry Braham (“The Legend of Tarzan,” “The Golden Compass”), production designer Scott Chambliss (“Star Trek Beyond,” “Tomorrowland”), editors Fred Raskin (“The Hateful Eight,” “Guardians of the Galaxy”) and Craig Wood (“Guardians of the Galaxy,” “Tomorrowland”), three-time Oscar®-nominated costume designer Judianna Makovsky (“Captain America: Civil War,” “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone”), Oscar®-nominated visual effects supervisor Christopher Townsend (“Avengers: Age of Ultron,” “Iron Man 3”), stunt coordinator Thomas Robinson Harper (“Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales,” “Captain America: The Winter Soldier”), six-time Oscar® nominee, special effects supervisor Dan Sudick (“Captain America: Civil War,” “Marvel’s The Avengers”), composer Tyler Bates (“Guardians of the Galaxy,” “John Wick”) and music supervisor Dave Jordan (“Guardians of the Galaxy,” “Marvel’s The Avengers”).

Marvel Studios’ “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” opens in U.S. theaters on May 5, 2017 in Digital 3D.

FROM COMIC BOOK TO BOX-OFFICE HIT

Created by Arnold Drake and Gene Colan, the “Guardians of the Galaxy” were introduced in 1969 as a team of heroes in the 31st century—each member the last of its kind. With the phase two expansion of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, “The Guardians of the Galaxy” was the first franchise introduced outside of the core Marvel cornerstone characters. The film was also a dramatic departure in tone and style from any previous Marvel film franchises.

Looking back to the development of the franchise, Feige acknowledges it wasn’t always an easy sell. “A number of years ago we were saying that we wanted to do a space movie,” he says. “And looking through the books, we realized we had this great group of characters that had been re-formed in publishing recently called the Guardians of the Galaxy and what an outrageous grouping of people it was—most outrageously that one member was a tree and another member was a raccoon.”

Continuing, Feige adds, “I took a lot of joy in pitching that to people who had never heard of it. But it took a huge leap forward when we hired James Gunn, who initially wondered what we were talking about, and then drove home and thought about it more and tapped into his love of these kinds of movies, his love of little animals and his love of characters.”

When they met again, Gunn was 100% on board with the project. “He rewrote the script, did a new outline and added some songs,” Feige recalls. “And we knew we had something even more special than we were anticipating, and the audience responded to that. The film came out and was the success that it was. It was great because that really proves the point of you don’t have to have ever read any of these comics. You don’t have to even ever have heard of any of these comics.”

Feige was convinced that “if we deliver the movie, that’s all that matters. We knew even before the film came out that we were feeling very good about it and that the buzz was very good. And we knew the film delivered.”

When the uniquely creative and original film was released in the summer of 2014, “Guardians of the Galaxy” became a worldwide box-office sensation, with audiences warmly embracing the eccentric cast of intergalactic characters.

Writer/director James Gunn recalls his reaction to seeing the characters being propelled into the pop-culture zeitgeist. “It was truly gratifying and fulfilling that the Guardians’ characters spoke so profoundly to so many people all over the world,” says Gunn. “At the core of the film, the Guardians are a group of outsiders who come together and find a way to make it work. I think that’s what speaks to such a wide array of people. It’s a great feeling when kids come up and say they loved the film and that their parents and grandparents loved it as well. These characters were able to connect to all generations around the world from Thailand to South America to London.”

CRAFTING THE STORY

Postproduction on the “Guardians of the Galaxy” helped to provide director James Gunn with the roadmap to find the story in “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” particularly when it came to audience reactions during screenings. The way audiences responded to the different elements of the first movie gave filmmakers a leg up in terms of story direction for “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2.”

“I knew where I wanted the story to go before the first film was out in theaters,” explains writer/director James Gunn. “I knew what the general shape of the sequel was going to be, but the one thing I had to figure out was if I was going to tell the story of Peter Quill and his father as Volume 2, which I thought was the big reveal or save it for a later time. Ultimately I decided that it was the best story I have in hand right now and went with.”

The “Guardians of the Galaxy” successfully introduced the world to an eccentric group of selfish, self-interested, un-superhero like characters who are thrown together with the task of saving the entire galaxy. For “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” director James Gunn was tasked with delivering a story that continued not just their exploits, but their evolutions as characters

as well. When Gunn delivered his initial treatment for the story, it was a hit with his fellow filmmakers.

“What I loved about James’ vision for the film was that it was everything you love about the film—the characters, the humor, the action, the music—but it also evolved the story and franchise in a really interesting way that felt completely organic,” says executive producer Jonathan Schwartz. “Every character is a different person at the end of the story than they are at the beginning. So keeping the characters moving forward keeps the franchise moving forward in a really honest way which is what made it really interesting to us.”

“I think one of the big advantages that James had the second time around was that he could write the script specifically for all of the actors’ voices,” adds executive producer Nikolas Korda. “On most films you are not sure who is going to play what when the script is in the development phase. Going into this film we knew almost all the characters’ voices and rhythms, what worked and what didn’t in the first film. So that really allowed James to dial the story in very early on and play to the strengths of all the actors in the film.”

And now what can fans expect from the highly anticipated sequel’s storyline? Producer Kevin Feige gives some hints: “When we started turning the wheels on a sequel, there were some very obvious clues at the end of the first film where the storyline could go. Peter talks about his father. Glenn Close, Nova Prime, tells us something very ancient, very unusual. Yondu tells us that he purposefully did not deliver Peter to his father. So James went back and started to work on where that would take us in a storyline. And it takes us to a place where we meet the Guardians only a few months after the events of Guardians 1.

“We meet them in the midst of a job, and we introduce some new villains. And more importantly we introduce some new heroes, most importantly Mantis, who is an amazing new addition to the Guardians. Returning characters Yondu and Nebula play surprising new roles in the film, and we continue to deepen the relationship between Peter Quill and Gamora, which we’ll see more of.

“Also we further the evolution of Rocket, who is not the nicest raccoon around, but who certainly has a begrudging loyalty to his team. Then we meet a new version of our beloved Groot who has crawled out of the little pot that we saw him dancing in in the first film and now is our new Baby Groot for this film,” Feige concludes.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS RETURN

As the cast returns to inhabit the colorful, unique, dysfunctional Guardians characters, there is a new dynamic. The first movie was about becoming a family and “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” focuses on *being* a family. As James Gunn explains, “This movie is about all of the characters being a family. And being a family is a lot more difficult than becoming a family. It’s a much

more complicated story. In the first movie, a bunch of characters are outsiders. They come together. But where does that leave them?”

And that’s exactly what audiences will discover as the characters’ relationships unfold, starting with Peter Quill aka Star-Lord, who faces a family issue that he is compelled to resolve—his true parentage. Chris Pratt reprises the role that propelled him into Marvel fandom and leading-man status.

STAR-LORD/PETER QUILL

CHRIS PRATT

Having now saved the galaxy once, the half-human intergalactic adventurer known as Star-Lord is newly famous and keenly aware of it. When the Guardians’ newfound notoriety brings Quill’s long-lost father back into his life, his bond with the other Guardians will be put to the test.

On casting Chris Pratt as Star-Lord/Peter Quill, James Gunn says, “When I was auditioning Star-Lord the first time around I was looking for somebody who’d come in, do everything that was on the page, do it well, do it in a funny way, but also give that a little something extra that made Peter Quill a little bit of a different character. And Chris came in and did that immediately. Chris is a very unique movie star in that he is a combination of being a big, masculine guy but also a very vulnerable guy. He has a vulnerability that the classic movie stars hint at, whether it’s Humphrey Bogart or Gary Cooper. Chris really brings that to life on the screen, and I think that’s what makes him a truly modern-day movie star.”

For Pratt, “Guardians of the Galaxy” afforded him the vehicle to showcase both his comedic and physical talents in a way that he had not been able to do on film. “What appealed to me the most about this character was the opportunity to add my own personal brand of humor into it,” comments Pratt. “This was something that I knew I could do that was unique to me, and I had been dying for an opportunity to do that. I wanted to do something that was both comedic and physical. This role is a comfortable space to do that. What is so exciting to me is that I can just do the best version of my best stuff with Star-Lord.”

Describing where we find Peter Quill in the new story, Gunn relates, “As you know, the first ‘Guardians of the Galaxy’ is about Peter’s relationship to his mother and coming to terms with that. The second movie is about Peter Quill’s relationship to his father and his other fatherly figures. Yondu is obviously a fatherly figure to him. And then he meets his actual father, Ego, played by Kurt Russell, who is in a lot of ways everything he wanted. He is coming to terms with things. His feelings of abandonment, how he feels about his real father’s life, which is very different from his own, etc.”

Pratt offers insight on the importance of Peter’s quest to find his true parentage. “Quill is desperate to know who his dad is and dreamed his whole life that his dad was somebody special, somebody important, somebody cool,” says Pratt. “So when Quill finally meets his

bigger-than-life father, who's been searching for him, it fills this giant void that he's had in his heart his whole life."

In the course of the film, Quill finds himself reexamining his relationship with Yondu as well. "Of course, he's always looked at Yondu, who abducted him, as being the guy who threatened to eat him or was hard on him," Pratt says. "But he learns through the course of this film that the relationship is more of a father/son dynamic than he could've ever expected to get from anyone else."

And what can audiences expect from the evolving relationship between Quill and Gamora? Pratt hints, "There is chemistry there and an attraction and this second movie doesn't ignore that. It picks up where it left off. We realize that there is something more going on between Quill and Gamora than any of the other Guardians know, or any of the audience has ever known."

He adds, "Gamora's not the most vulnerable person and not super open to being vulnerable. So Quill is trying to get her to emote and to express her feelings. Through the course of this movie, that happens, and we get to see that relationship come together in an amazing way."

GAMORA

ZOE SALDANA

Reformed assassin Gamora hopes that her heroic deeds with the Guardians will help her atone for the sins of her past. Gamora must grapple with her own demons and the consequences of her flight from Thanos' employ when confronted by her adoptive sister Nebula.

Zoe Saldana returns to the role of the deadly, green-skinned assassin Gamora, another character dealing with family issues related to the fact that her adoptive father is Thanos and her sister is Nebula. "In the first film, it seemed like Gamora was a good person and Nebula was a bad person and almost a villain of sorts," explains executive producer Louis D Esposito. "In this movie we learn it's a much more complex relationship than that. Gamora's beginning to come to terms with her own sins, her own fears, and her own way of pushing people away, which is really what this movie's about."

"Gamora is surrounded by these idiots, the Guardians of the Galaxy, who are making her life very difficult," adds Gunn. "She loves them. She knows she loves them. She's aware of that. But then she has one guy, Peter Quill, who's saying he's in love with her, which she's not that comfortable with. The boys are fighting constantly, and they're all a pain. She doesn't have any female companionship. She's in a spot, since it's only a couple months after the first movie, where they're all having growing pains and sophomore moments in their relationships. Then she comes face-to-face with her sister Nebula at the beginning of the movie. For Gamora there's an emotional part of this. She has a fair amount of spite for her sister and on the other hand her sister says she just wants to kill her. And that is where we start Gamora's story."

Saldana explains her character's arc in the new film. "In the first 'Guardians' she's on a mission to be free or die because she's over it. There's a selfish essence to her, and it makes prerogative very personal. Versus like in this one, she's on a path of redemption, so she wants to be very present in trying to do good. And that also means, on a very personal and uncomfortable level, that she has to try to just let go of whatever animosity existed between her and her sister."

"The challenging part of Gamora's evolution is getting to that place as an older sibling of accepting and being the one to let that younger sibling know their true powers," adds Saldana. "So that's part of her arc in trying to make peace with her sister is a part of her redemption because she is starting to realize that she is the only family member she'll ever know, and she's worth the sacrifice, work and the pain."

DRAX

DAVE BAUTISTA

Having taken his revenge on Ronan for the death of his family, the taciturn warrior Drax is now a stalwart member of the Guardians. While Drax's friendship is never in doubt, his literal-minded nature can make him a less-than-ideal teammate. Drax still has a lot of learning to do, even as the desire for more vengeance burns within him yet.

Dave Bautista is back as the physically intimidating, tattoo-covered Drax. Drax is a complex character who is as menacing as he is lovable and is blissfully unaware of his extreme literal nature in perceiving the world around him. "I think that we know very clearly that Drax is not very good at picking up on social cues," reminds Gunn. "He doesn't quite understand what everyone around him is talking about all the time. He finds amusement in things that he should not find amusement in. But I think at the beginning of the movie, in a lot of ways, Drax is the happiest member of the Guardians of the Galaxy. He finds everything funny but he can be a little bit mean-spirited."

Bautista explains where we find Drax now and what to expect from him this time around. "We pick up not too long after where the last movie left off, says the actor. "So it's not too far in the future. But in this one you definitely get to know Drax a little bit more. He's more visible in this film and has a lot more of the witty dialogue.

He adds, "It's so great because Drax is the vehicle for James Gunn's twisted, witty sense of humor. I love when I'm shooting and delivering stuff that I can hear James off in the distance laughing because I know that it is what he wanted. That it is what he was expecting out of the dialogue that he wrote. That in itself makes me feel really good because I love giving him what he wants."

In the film, Drax develops a friendship with a new character, Mantis, played by Pom Klementieff. "It's hard to think that Drax would have some innocence to him but he really does,

and it comes out in this film,” Bautista relates. “That’s in the connection he has with Mantis. There’s a lot of innocence in both characters. They’re almost like two kids who find each other and become playmates. They just connect on a certain level that they can’t connect with anybody else. They’re both suffering from some pain and learning new things and new feelings, new experiences. They’re going through that together and that’s where the connection is.”

According to Bautista, there is much to like about his character. “What I really love about Drax is he’s not what you’d expect from reading the comics,” says Bautista. “Everybody was expecting one thing, and we gave them another. It makes it more interesting. It’s easy just to be the big guy who’s always growling at people and intimidating people. We’ve seen it a million times. But when you get the same guy who looks the same way but just says the most ridiculous things that make you laugh, it makes him more interesting. And he’s also got that side to him that’s just all heart. He’s still heartbroken over the loss of his family. And I love that dynamic, man. I love playing with that. It’s challenging. It makes it’s interesting. It makes the character loveable and it makes people connect to him.”

ROCKET

BRADLEY COOPER (VOICE)

The cybernetically and genetically augmented mechanical genius/woodland creature known as Rocket is an invaluable, though sometimes reluctant, member of the Guardians. With his best friend Groot now just a sapling, Rocket is uneasily thrust into the role of caretaker. He may yet prove to be the heart of the Guardians if his less sociable impulses don’t drive the team apart first.

When it comes to voices, James Gunn knows Rocket’s better than anyone as the director has many times professed that there is a little bit of himself in the character. Rocket, a tortured little beast who’s been torn apart and put back together, is still incredibly funny and heartfelt at times, particularly as voiced again by Academy Award® nominee Bradley Cooper.

Four-time Oscar® nominee Bradley Cooper is delighted to be back to voice the frenetic, cybernetic Rocket in Marvel Studios’ “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2.” “Initially, the thing that got me excited about the movie was completely James Gunn,” Cooper says. “We talked about it, and he had this idea for who Rocket could be. And it was his excitement and his vision that really inspired me and continued to. I’m so happy that we’re doing a second one.”

Cooper acknowledges that both he and the filmmakers learned a lot about Rocket from doing the first movie and following the character’s journey. “We have a better understanding of who Rocket is,” Cooper says. “With the technology evolving, I think also the character has evolved. That’s been a fun process to be a part of. I’m just a small part of Rocket—so many people go into who Rocket is.”

Explaining where we find Rocket in the new film, Cooper says, “Rocket is the forever martyr. But he has a pack now. It’s not just Groot and him. So he’s got other people to contend with and harmonize with and battle with. I think at the end of the first one you just can’t wait to see how this dynamic is going to play itself out.”

“Of all the Guardians, Rocket has the furthest to go in terms of personal development,” explains executive producer Jonathan Schwartz. “Over the course of movie he learns that being a jerk all the time may not be the best thing for him. So in that way, Rocket has the most emotional maturation to go through over the course of the film. This is embodied by his relationship with Groot as he is now Groot’s caretaker even though he's not great at it.”

BABY GROOT

VIN DIESEL (VOICE)

After Groot made the ultimate sacrifice, Baby Groot was born from his splinters. Although completely adorable, he struggles with anger issues and has a love/hate relationship with the other Guardians. He may need to grow up quickly to prove his worth.

A scene stealer in “Guardians of the Galaxy” with only the same three words of ‘I am Groot,’ was the wise, old, talking humanoid tree creature Groot, voiced by Vin Diesel. Despite his unique appearance and extremely limited communication skills, Groot embedded himself in the heart of audiences around world with just those three little words. A valuable ally and a loyal friend to Rocket and the Guardians, the character makes the ultimate sacrifice and returns in the sequel as a baby Groot.

Voiced again by Diesel, the little Groot is a totally different character. “He doesn’t have the memories of adult Groot and he is a baby,” explains Gunn. “He’s completely adorable, but has a lot more anger issues than adult Groot did. All of the other characters react to Baby Groot in different ways. Drax doesn’t like him. Rocket yells at him a lot, but he is okay with him. Gamora definitely has motherly instincts towards him, and Quill barely acknowledges his existence.”

The director continues, “They all have different reactions to what is basically a child in their midst and how they deal with that. Baby Groot wants to prove himself and be part of the group. He tries to learn how to do that throughout the process of the movie.”

Describing Groot in the new story, Diesel says, “We’re seeing Groot’s transformation. Just to be a character that could regenerate is already cool but to be able to chart that over multiple pictures is super cool. I don’t think we have seen the full-fledged Groot yet. But to see this resurrection and watch this character regenerate itself and go through the various stages of development is fun for us to watch as an audience. It’s going to be a real fun ride with Baby Groot. It’s such a cool thing to be able to breathe life into such a unique character like Groot and through his story audiences can see the different stages of this character. This film represents the toddler stage of this incredible and fascinating character Groot.”

All of the Guardians watch out for Baby Groot but Rocket is definitely his primary protector. “That’s what’s so endearing about Rocket and Groot’s relationship,” Diesel says. “I think their relationship is one of the best combos we’ve seen on film. And I think Bradley Cooper does such a great job voicing Rocket.”

According to producer Kevin Feige, the ending of the first film came from the comic books where Groot is implanted in a little pot and is a little version of Groot, so making Rocket his caretaker and protector was a natural fit. “We always thought that if we got to do another one of these movies, it would be funny to flip it,” the producer says. “Rocket is tiny compared to Groot in the first film. He sits on Groot’s shoulder when he fires the machine gun. Groot is very protective of him. How fun would it be to flip that in the next film? We talked about that on the first movie a little bit and when James went off and came back with an amazing, very lengthy treatment for this movie, he nailed it in terms of Baby Groot and in terms of that new dynamic between Rocket and Groot.”

For Zoe Saldana and her cast mates, seeing how cute and adorable the diminutive Baby Groot is, made it easy to see how the character’s popularity will continue to rise. “I can already hear the audiences say ‘aww’ every time Groot comes on the screen,” laughs Saldana. “I can just hear the ‘awws’ like 70 times during the movie. Mark my words. We can bet money.”

As to what audiences can expect in the sequel, Diesel offers, “James Gunn was really successful in taking this off-planet comic world and creating this family of misfits in a really great way. And I think he delves deeper into that this time. We learn a lot more about Peter Quill. There are strong father/son themes that are played out in this story as well as sisterhood themes that are played out.”

YONDU

MICHAEL ROOKER

Since being outfoxed by Peter Quill, the unscrupulous Yondu Udonta’s control of his band of marauding Ravagers is tenuous at best. After one concession too many, Yondu must fend off a mutinous challenge to his leadership and fight alongside the Guardians of the Galaxy to reclaim his Ravager honor.

While “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” chronicles the journey of Peter Quill following the discovery of his biological father Ego, it also is the story of his adopted father Yondu, played by Michael Rooker.

“The character of Yondu is an extremely important one and we laid a lot of track in the first film in terms of who Yondu was,” explains James Gunn. “I have a fascination with multifaceted characters who are good in certain ways and bad in other ways. Michael Rooker is the best at playing that type of character because you don’t know if he’s going to punch you or if he’s going

to hug you and that's a beautiful thing. He brings that dynamic to life in Yondu, who is crazy, but also has quite a soul, which we saw at the end of the first movie when he was ripped off by Peter Quill, but he was proud of him. In a lot of ways, Peter Quill and Yondu's friendship is the central relationship of this movie."

Explaining where we find Yondu at the beginning of the film, Rooker says, "Yondu has his hands in everything! His whole career has been set on making money and growing his Yondu Empire, so to speak. But, we as viewers come to find out that some of the things Yondu has done are coming back to haunt him. Star-Lord's real father, who we see is back in the picture, may pose an issue to Yondu in the future."

As fans of the franchise know, the relationship between Yondu and Quill is very complex. "It's somewhat of a father/son relationship, where we don't agree on things," offers Rooker. "When the movie opens, we haven't seen each other in a few months, so our relationship is very intense and conflicted, to say the least. They are constantly at each other's throats. Of course, we find that there are deep-rooted feelings for one another that exist and eventually that comes out in our storyline. You discover that Yondu truly cares about this kid."

With Yondu's expanded role in the film the character is much more defined and explored, which was something Rooker was pleased about. "In this one, James [Gunn] wanted people to experience more in-depth what Yondu was thinking and how he's feeling—a more serious Yondu. There are things from Yondu's past that audiences find are much darker and more sinister; those feelings and emotions are rearing their heads and affecting Yondu."

When work on "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" came to an end, Rooker admits it was a "real downer." "I really had such an amazing time with everybody' he says. "It was one of those movies that you wish would go on forever. I loved going into work and couldn't wait to get on set. I couldn't wait to get in, put on the Yondu makeup, see my friends, work on the movie, and make it great."

NEBULA

KAREN GILLAN

Last seen fleeing from the battle over Xandar, the galactic fugitive and cybernetic warrior known as Nebula still harbors a deeply-seeded grudge against her adoptive sister Gamora. When the two cross paths once again, Nebula sets out to extract revenge.

Another character with a much bigger role in the film is Gamora's adversarial sister Nebula, played by Karen Gillan. A supreme bad-ass, Nebula will not rest until she has destroyed Gamora and anyone or anything that gets in her way.

Director James Gunn speaks on the character's evolution from the first to second film. "At the end of the first movie, we see Nebula very distinctly decide that everyone around her is crazy,

says Gunn. “This is her own reaction to knowing other people. She decides Gamora’s crazy, Ronan’s crazy, Thanos is crazy. We know she hates Thanos. We know she wants to kill Thanos in the first movie. And she just detaches herself from it all. We pick it up when we find her a few months later and life has not been good to her.”

Continuing, he adds, “She has a crappy claw hand, in replacement of her hand that she had before. She’s in tatters, her clothes are bad, and she’s been caught trying to steal some batteries for money. So she hasn’t done too well for herself. In a way she’s like somebody who’s just moving away from home for the first time and doesn’t have their support base anymore. There was always something about Nebula that’s been like the 13-year-old Goth girl at heart. She’s rebellious and unnecessarily surly at times.”

For Gillan, playing Nebula in the first “Guardians of the Galaxy” film was rewarding as she got to explore the character’s intense dark side and villainous ways. When she received the script for the second installment she was pleased with the development of her character. “When I read the script, I was just so excited because she has a much bigger role, and we get to understand her much more,” Gillan says. “She’s just become a more layered, interesting character.”

There is no doubt in that Nebula was a bad guy in the first “Guardians of the Galaxy” film, but Gillan admits, “That’s what I love about her, to be honest. I love that she has this real dark side, and I get to explore that, which is really cool. In terms of the second film, she’s still a bad guy. But we’re going to get to understand her motivations for being a bad guy a little bit more.”

Elaborating, she adds, “I feel like Nebula’s a little misunderstood, like a lot of villains. She’s a bad guy, but she has a real valid reason for it and it’s because of an even bigger bad guy, Thanos. She has so much pent-up anger and so much sibling rivalry inside of her that is just bursting out. I just feel really sorry for her, actually. Whenever you’re playing a villain, you have to become their lawyer and understand why they did the things that they did and sort of justify it. And through doing that, I really began to care about her. I think she’s a great interesting character.”

During the production of the film, when asked which actor is the most different from the character they play, the immediate response from the cast and crew is Karen Gillan. Upbeat, jovial, silly and periodically clumsy off the set, Gillan is able to flip the switch and turn into one of the fiercest characters in the Marvel Universe. “In the first one, Karen had a few lines and a couple little funny things she had to do, and that was it for Nebula,” says Gunn. “In this movie she has an incredibly key role. It is as much Nebula’s story as it is Gamora’s story. So, I needed to make sure Karen would be fully Nebula in this one. And she brought it. She really, really brought it. She’s an exceptional actress. In real life, Karen is a total goofball. I say ‘Hello Kitty’ off screen, but Clint Eastwood on. When she transforms, it’s instant; she just goes there instantly. It’s a cool thing to see.”

EGO

KURT RUSSELL

Peter Quill's long-lost father Ego is a celestial being and intergalactic explorer. Finally reunited, Ego forms an instant fatherly bond with his son and begins making up for lost time by recruiting Peter for his most important mission yet.

Feige and Marvel Studios' approached the casting of "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" by following their unique style. "Casting for us is never about just name value or marquee value. It's about who we think could bring something fresh and unique to the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Who could embody this character?" explains Feige.

And that thinking led them to Kurt Russell to play Ego, Peter Quill's long-lost father. "In the case of Ego, Quill's father, it's a very unique character," Feige says. "You want the audience to have the same sort of rush as Peter does when he learns who it is. So when you have Disney legend, film icon Kurt Russell step out of that ship and announce himself to Peter, even when it was just a green screen on a small set on a sound stage, it was a chill-inducing moment. And that's why you get Kurt Russell."

For veteran actor Kurt Russell, the decision to join the cast of Marvel Studios' "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" was a process that he enjoyed. "After I read the script, I watched the first movie," Russell says. "I remember that six or seven minutes into the movie, Chris Pratt is walking along. Then the music starts up, and he kicks off one of those alien rats or whatever they were. And I immediately liked the movie. I liked the atmosphere. And I liked his character."

He continues, "I began to see things that reminded me of some things in the past that related to things that I had been involved with and characters I had played. Then as I watched it unfold, I got it. I read the script again and began to look at it and understand what was being asked. I started looking forward to it because I thought it was going to be an interesting project. There was a father/son relationship here that I thought was very relatable and very interesting that 20, 30 or even 40 years from now will sustain more than just the entertainment value of what the viewer is watching."

The casting of Kurt Russell to play Ego was exciting for Chris Pratt, who says, "When I found out that Kurt Russell was playing Quill's father, I was just thrilled. It was like sitting at the poker table with a great hand and then getting another ace dealt to you. It was just perfect casting and it couldn't have worked out better. On top of the fact that he's an exceptional actor, he's also a really great guy."

James Gunn explains the character's backstory. "Ego is an intergalactic adventurer in his own way who has gone to many different worlds and many different planets and had his own kind of adventures, not dissimilar to what the Guardians have gone thorough. He also has been looking for his son for a very long time and he wants a relationship with him in the same way that Peter

wants a relationship with his father because it fills this giant void that he's had in his heart his whole life. Since he was a child, Peter has carried around a photograph in his pocket of David Hasselhoff, which he told the other kids at school was his dad. Yondu of course was supposed to deliver Quill to Ego and didn't for some reason and audiences are going to see the reveal behind that mystery."

Working with writer/director James Gunn was a positive experience for Russell, who says, "It's always fun when you're working with somebody who is the writer of it, who really understands it better than anyone ever will. I have been fortunate, as I have had many opportunities to do that with directors/writers/filmmakers who were creating their stories. And James Gunn is that guy. He knows it completely. You can always ask. You can always question. You can always create with him, corroborate, collaborate, do all of those things. But the reason you can do it comfortably is because he's the father of it. It's his baby. And it's fun to be a part of the world that James Gunn is creating here. It's really cool."

MANTIS

POM KLEMENTIEFF

A strange insect-like alien, Mantis was raised alone on Ego's planet. Mantis' empathic abilities help ingratiate her with the Guardians, who may not be the best examples of refinement and socialization.

To cast the role of Mantis, the filmmakers auditioned many actresses and ultimately decided on Pom Klementieff, who takes on her biggest role to date. "We auditioned a lot of actresses for that role," Gunn says. "We had four actresses screen test and each of them was completely amazing. Pom Klementieff just happened to be the best in terms of being very emotional, which the character has to be. That by her nature is her super power, so to speak. She is an empath."

Gunn explains why he decided to have the popular comic book character cross over into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. "I like the character Mantis quite a bit in the comics. I always thought she was an interesting character, the celestial Madonna. The act of creating Mantis was a great one as I felt that character quite a bit. I wanted to add a female character who as goofy and silly and strange as the other male characters, namely Drax and Rocket and Groot, who are all just goofballs. I wanted to have a female character that had that same oddness as those other characters."

For Klementieff, getting the part of Mantis in Marvel Studios' "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" was the beginning of an exciting experience. "When I had the audition, I had no idea how big the character would be and that it would be a really fun and moving and special character," the actress says. "She makes me think of a kid who had a difficult and lonely upbringing and then meets people who open a new world to her. It's a beautiful arc for the character."

Describing Mantis, Klementieff says, “Mantis is an alien; she has some insect elements in her. She grew up pretty much on her own and hasn’t had much interaction with people.”

But over the course of the movie, Mantis develops a friendship with Drax, played by Dave Bautista. “I think they get along because they both have a weird sense of things, and they don’t really have the same sense of humor that everyone else has,” the actress comments. “I think what is interesting is that they’re just friends. There is nothing romantic about it. They just get along.”

Mantis is an empath and in the first scene that Klementieff shot with Drax, a moment is shared that impacts Mantis. As Klementieff explains, “When they talk and when she touches him, she sees what he went through in his life and the people that he lost. She feels all that, and she is really moved by it. It just changes her perception of the world when she understands how someone can love someone else.”

On set, Klementieff worked closely with Kurt Russell, who plays Ego, and she found that working relationship to be very rewarding. “Kurt’s amazing and really funny,” says Klementieff. “He’s generous, down-to-earth, and really easy to work with. We had a great time. It’s amazing to work with a legend. We hung out when we were not working, and he taught me how to play Pétanque, which is a French game. It’s inspiring to work with people like that who are amazing actors and who are also good people.”

AYESHA

ELIZABETH DEBICKI

The high priestess of a genetically perfect and singularly arrogant alien race known as the Sovereign, Ayesha hires the expendable Guardians to protect her planet and citizens from an interdimensional menace—a decision that very quickly backfires.

For the part of Ayesha, the filmmakers chose the stunning and beautiful Australian actress Elizabeth Debicki, whose 6’3” frame was perfect for the leader of a planet of beautiful beings. James Gunn explains why Debicki was the obvious choice to play the role. “When I first wrote the role, I was very specific in the way that Ayesha was written,” says the director. “Our casting director, Sarah Finn, read the role and suggested Elizabeth Debicki. I didn’t know who she was but when I looked up pictures I thought she looked great. Elizabeth came in for an audition and I knew right away that she was the one. I’m usually not like that but she was Ayesha.”

Debicki admits that she was “ecstatic” when she learned that she was tapped for the role of Ayesha. “I completely didn’t expect it,” Debicki says. “I loved the first movie. I thought it was hilarious and clever and heartwarming. And I loved the characters. I had spoken to James Gunn a few times. He’s a lovely man and a brilliant director, so I was just so happy to be involved.”

Describing her character, Debicki says, “Ayesha is the high priestess of the Sovereign planet. She’s a very powerful woman within this planet. She runs everything with an iron fist. Her people are a genetically engineered race of aliens, and they’re all gold and perfect and wanting to be physically and mentally impeccable. Ayesha has hired the Guardians to protect the planet’s precious batteries from an interdimensional beast.”

The contrast between the perfection of the Sovereign people and the rag-tag Guardians creates an interesting dynamic between Peter Quill and Ayesha. Debicki explains, “Because the Sovereign think they are so superior, they’re highly judgmental of anyone. Everybody, as far as they’re concerned, is sort of inbred and disgusting and filthy and sort of scraping the barrel. The great thing about the interchange with Quill is that Ayesha’s intrigued by him, but she’s repulsed by him at the same time. Even though she feels that they’re inferior and disgusting, she still thinks he’s really good looking. That leads to an interesting exchange.”

THE RAVAGERS

In “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” the apocalyptic, cutthroat world of the Ravagers comes front and center. Writer/director James Gunn explains why he decided to explore the dynamic and memorable characters more extensively in the film. “I thought there were so many things about the Ravagers in the first film that we left untouched and on the cutting room floor,” reveals James Gunn. “The Ravagers are a pretty worked out universe that includes hundreds of factions that are very different from each other. It’s a different sort of culture and they are pretty cutthroat and place a high value on strength over any sort of compassion or weakness of any type.”

While Yondu is one of the most feared and respected Ravagers, his right hand man is Kraglin, a loyal and lifelong Ravager. “Kraglin is Yondu’s first mate,” says Sean Gunn, who plays Kraglin. “In the first film he did a lot of just saying yes and being at Yondu’s side, but in this movie things take a little bit of a different turn as Kraglin has a little bit of a crisis of conscience and has to decide whether he’s going to stick with Yondu or join forces with the growing faction of mutineers.”

For Kraglin and the other Ravagers, the driving force leading the uprising against Yondu is Taserface, a physically menacing character who is mean and nasty to the core. The filmmakers looked at many talented actors before casting actor Chris Sullivan.

Sullivan gives his take on the character: “Taserface is one of Yondu’s enforcers and space bounty hunters. He is one of the many in his army who don’t like the way that things are going and decides to take it upon himself to lead a little mutiny against Yondu. He has a growing legion of followers who want to make the money and do the job they’ve been sent to do in delivering Peter Quill and collecting the bounty.”

In addition to the new character of Taserface, writer/director James Gunn has introduced other new Ravagers into the fold. “We have a lot of new Ravagers and we get to see a much more of them and their universe this time around,” explains James Gunn. “We have Tulik who’s played by Tommy Flanagan. Tulik and Kraglin are Yondu’s right hand men and closest friends.”

For screen veteran Tommy Flanagan, landing a role in the film was thrilling for the actor and Marvel fan. “I’m a big Marvel fan and the first ‘Guardians’ was definitely my favorite because of the humor and the fact that they’re not Super Heroes,” explains Flanagan. “Tulik is a cool character and as far as Ravagers go, he’s a good guy and loyal to Yondu.”

Another addition Ravagers is Stakar, played by Academy Award® nominee and legendary screen actor and director Sylvester Stallone. A much anticipated addition to the cast of “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” the filmmakers were thrilled to have the beloved Hollywood icon as part of the film.

“Having Sylvester Stallone in the film was a little daunting,” admits James Gunn. “He was an iconic part of my childhood and I used to run around in my back yard pretending I was Johnny Rambo. I must have watched ‘Rocky’ fifty times.”

For Stallone, working in the Marvel Cinematic Universe was a whole new world that he was impressed by the minute he walked onto the set at Pinewood Studios. “I loved the first ‘Guardians’ film and thought it was a breakthrough because it was a real cross-pollination of all kinds of humor and physical activity and unusual sci-fi characters,” says the actor. “I was really excited to be part of this film and my first scene was shot on the most fascinating set I’ve ever seen. It’s certainly the most entertaining set I have been on in long time, I didn’t even go back to my trailer between set ups, I was just sitting around and looking in amazement at all these different creatures and characters.”

A lifelong respected Ravager, Stakar isn’t fond of Yondu. Sylvester Stallone offers the character’s back story: “Stakar had banished Yondu many years earlier for doing something wrong and he finally sees him almost twenty years later at this particular establishment called the Iron Lotus where all of the Ravagers go to blow off steam. And then we have a confrontation which is pretty intense and it’s kind of a father/son type of thing and now he’s going to have to pay the piper. His karma has come back ten-fold.”

Putting the Ravagers together was especially fun for Gunn who also wound up casting his friends to play parts. “It’s fun because all my friends are playing Ravagers,” says Gunn. “Jimmy Urine plays Halfnut. He is one of my best friends who I hang out with all the time. Steve Agee, who plays Gef, is one of my best friends in the world. Stevie Blackhart, who plays Brahl, is actually my best friend in the world. And my friend Evan Jones plays Retch.”

Gunn adds, “So it really is a group of people I’ve known for a long time who’ve stepped into these roles and I think it’s really important that we have this big group of Ravagers. But within that group there are many characters who stand out with just with a line or a look and that was

important to me because I went in to this film with the credo that every character matters and there are no throwaway roles or moments in the film.”

Talented Laura Haddock rounds out the cast as she returns to play Peter Quill’s mother, Meredith Quill. And last, but not least, director James Gunn’s dog has a cameo. Again.

CREATING THE WORLD

While the first “Guardians of the Galaxy” was shot entirely in the United Kingdom, the filmmakers shifted the production base to Pinewood Atlanta Studios, in Fayetteville, Georgia, for the sequel. The studio, with its 18 stages, has become the largest studio complex in the United States outside of Hollywood.

“We shot the first Guardians in England, but because Pinewood Atlanta has so much soundstage space, we were able to have the entire production base on the lot,” says James Gunn. “For ‘Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2’ we needed very big soundstages because our sets are very large, even though a lot of the film is CGI. I like to have as many practical sets as we can and make the environments as real as possible so it balances out the CGI elements. Pinewood Atlanta is a fantastic facility and it was a great advantage for the production to be able to house everything under one roof.”

For Chris Pratt, shooting in Atlanta has become old hat as he has shot three films on the studio lot in the past two years. “Atlanta’s where it’s at,” says Pratt. “Everybody’s been really nice. I’m totally seduced by the southern charm. The hospitality really speaks to me. I love the people. And I love the outdoor activities that you can do on your days off, whether it’s golfing or fishing or getting out in the wilderness. Pinewood is amazing. These facilities are brand-new, state-of-the-art.”

Director James Gunn had a vision for the look of “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” and wanted to infuse the film with as many practical sets as possible. “I came into the first Guardians film with a very clear idea of exactly what the visuals would be and I did the same thing for this film,” he explains. “I really wanted it to be inspired by the look of early pulp novels, 1950s and 1960s, science fiction, old pulp stuff, old Wally Wood art and both the original Flash Gordon and the 1980s Flash Gordon. That’s the heart of where my inspiration came from.”

The director continues, “‘Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2’ is a little more difficult production design-wise than the first movie because we actually have more sets, but fewer places we visit. So with the places and planets we get to see, it’s been about giving them more specifics and details. I also came into this with a vision of where I wanted to go with the color palette, where I wanted to go with the photography and how I wanted it to look a bit different from the first movie.”

Elaborating on the color palette, Gunn says, “It has a very broad color palette, but I think we’re a little bit more contained and a little bit more controlled than we were in the first film. We made more distinct choices regarding the different locations and exactly what colors we’re using. I also think we’re taking more advantage of the grand space-scapes that we have. We’re taking our time with some of these things more than we did on the first movie and we’re soaking in the beauty of it. It was very important to me that this time around we make a more elegant film, a more beautiful film, where we really got to enjoy these space-scapes and our characters within them.”

Fans will be happy to know that there are new worlds to explore in “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2.” “We either have brand-new worlds or we get to know some of the worlds that we didn’t get to know much about in the first movie,” says Gunn. “We get to know the society of the Sovereign—where they come from, what they’re like, what they believe in, what their truths are. We also get to see new worlds like the uninhabited world they crash land on. And of course we get to know Ego’s planet, quite intimately.”

Continuing, Gunn adds, “In the first movie, I had to be very careful about not knocking people off-balance, and I’m still very careful of that. I don’t want things to be disorienting. But because we now have these grounded characters we know and love, it does allow us to explore some more outlandish places than we did in the first film.”

For production designer Scott Chambliss one of the first challenges was creating the lair of the high priestess, Ayesha, the ruler of Sovereign planet. “The Sovereign planet is a very stark, graphic sort of a 1950s pulp fiction variation on 1930s art deco design aesthetic,” explains Chambliss. “James Gunn wanted a very pulpy feel to this sequence in particular, but it also needed to be quite beautiful because they are a perfect race. In the 1930s there’s a great version of the Cleopatra story that Cecil B. DeMille made, so I looked at that. So we started with a 1930s feeling to the design process and then just pushed it further and further into 1950s pulp and somehow landed somewhere in the 1970s in Las Vegas. Because the color palette is so limited with the gold, it also feels kind of comic book-like, which is something we were going for too. This perfect race that creates everything beautiful is really superficial and they take themselves really seriously, which in itself is ridiculous and beautiful.”

One of the treats for the audience this time around is that they will get to see a much more expanded Ravager universe, which includes their ship, the Eclector. The Eclector set is the biggest set and is 100% practical, with a 360-degree view in any direction. The set was built so that different sections have the ability to detach off, reconfigure and become another part of the Eclector. Filmmakers can reuse the different pieces like a giant jigsaw puzzle to create different versions of the ship.

For production designer Scott Chambliss, the Ravagers Eclector set was a great example of director James Gunn mantra of creating practical environments despite the fact that the film is taking place in space and other universes. “James and I both wanted to have as much real space for actors to work in as we can because it allows for better performance since they have

something to interact with and believe in,” says Chambliss. “I’ve been really impressed at how much James let us build on this one. All of the Ecliptor sets are very large, 360 degree environments. We also built the interiors of spaceships that are 360 degree full sets. I know from experience how hard it can be for an actor to do a big dramatic scene on a stage in a blue void or a green void.”

He adds, “The one thing I have really enjoyed about designing this film is that all of the worlds are so different from each other and I have been afforded the opportunity by James to create as many practical elements as I can to contrast the visual effects which is really exciting.”

Another key element in creating the world of the Ravagers is the Iron Lotus located on the planet of Contraxia. “Contraxia is kind of this pleasure planet for the Ravagers,” explains Jonathan Schwartz. “It’s this kind of neon jungle in its own way and covered in ice and snow. The Ravagers come here to unwind, drink and blow off steam, which is why there are so many neon bars like the Iron Lotus.”

When faced with making the Ravager hangout a reality, Chambliss asked himself some questions: “If you’re going to make a playground for space pirates, who designed it? What’s it made of? And what are they comfortable in?”

Continuing, he says, “The first thing that came to mind to me was a whole yard of repurposed junk where old spaceships are cast away and industrial materials that aren’t of use anymore are just left to rot. And my thought was that these guys or their friends made it themselves. Like somebody who was enterprising realized there was no good place to hang out anywhere. So he just looked at what was around and started cobbling it together. You can think of how Times Square used to be back in the 1970s and ’80s or various European districts that are all about people gathering and interacting.”

For the cast and crew of “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” the Iron Lotus set, which took almost five months to construct, was one of their favorites and the final result was something that looked like it could be in the post-apocalyptic Lower East Side of Manhattan.

“That set of the Iron Lotus was super cool,” says Sean Gunn. “There was all this fake snow on the ground. I loved the days we shot on the set when there was a lot of background around with the Ravagers and Love Bots who are there for friendships and relationships. The set was so colorful even though it’s a little bit darker, which makes it not quite so dreary and super hero-dark and futuristic. It also gave us a great practical environment to work in, which always makes for better performances.”

“The Iron Lotus was one of my favorite sets I have ever seen and so different from what I am used to working on,” says Sylvester Stallone. “It’s a great backdrop for Stakar and the Ravager world. I really enjoyed working on that set with Michael Rooker and it’s been educational for me. I really enjoyed the craftsmanship of the sets.”

Jonathan Schwartz sums up, “Scott did a great job of making all of those different planets and environments come to life. It was so important to make sure that that we built practically because it grounds the actors and helps the movie feel more real and not like we’re in a world that’s solely made up for the purposes of science fiction. There’s a grittiness to the life of the Guardians that makes it fly off the screen.”

COSTUME DESIGN

For Marvel filmmakers, the look of a character begins with concept design. Andy Park, visual development supervisor, and his team of artists are at the forefront of the moviemaking process. “It usually begins with us and the script,” Park says. “But very often we are designing before a finalized script is in place. Once our designs are approved, the costume designer takes that and figures out how to best accomplish that look.”

He adds, “Very often it is taken literally down to the stitching, but very often as well, the costume designer will have to make adjustments to make the design a reality. Our department and the costume department work very closely together throughout the process. They help us and we help them in making the character’s visuals the best it can be. It’s a fun collaboration of seeing the transition of our painted 2-dimensional design illustration become a reality on an actor.”

Research is a necessity for the visual development team when designing characters for the Marvel Cinematic Universe. “Each character, and even their costume, needs to be a story in itself,” explains Park. “It should tell the audience something about who the character is. The overall design choices, materials, textures and even colors should all tell the story. The audience might not know that fact, and they don’t need to, but if it’s done correctly it should feel right. That’s the art of character design.”

Park and his artists created the concept designs for Star-Lord’s initial look, Gamora’s overall look, Nebula’s initial look as well as her new hand, and Mantis’ look and costume. They also did many different takes on what Ego could look like but, according to Park, “It was an amazing design that Jackson Sze did that James Gunn liked the most.”

Three-time Academy Award®-nominated costume designer Judianna Makovsky’s work on “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” began with a discussion with James Gunn to understand his vision. “When I first met James, we talked about the look from the first ‘Guardians.’ He said his vision for this film was to have the characters not be so outrageous, to be a little more rock and roll, rock-star like, because now they’re the rock stars of the universe. So we tried to find a way, keeping with the look of the first film, to incorporate that. We toned down the colors a little bit, and the garments they wear are a little bit more normal.”

Although Chris Pratt as Peter Quill has basically the same look he had in the first film, he does sport sexy pants, a new coat, and different tee shirts to give him more of a rock-star appearance. Coming up with a tee-shirt with something clever on it was a challenge for Makovsky, who enlisted her graphic artist to help. “We must’ve done maybe 300 different logos until we found the one. And it’s like, what would it say? And what would the language be? Luckily they developed a different language on the first movie. So we found a way to use that language, and it actually says ‘gearshift’ in this alien language. It’s a candy. So, it actually does say something on the shirt, and it means something.”

For Zoe Saldana, Gamora’s look is a more grounded, punk-rock vibe, with a cut-up tee shirt leather pants and a vest. She does have a special coat with a 1980s flair that was designed by Makovsky and her team. “I wanted something that was a simple coat, not something so outrageous,” says the costume designer. “But it’s just in the stitching and the seaming and it looks a little ’80s. James just loves that coat.”

When it came to designing the extravagant, gold gown for Ayesha, played by Elizabeth Debicki, picking the right shade of color the high priestess’ look was a critical factor in the design. “We really wanted the dress to be gold because in the comic it is gold,” says Makovsky, “But we were terrified that it was going to look like a Las Vegas show showgirl, so we had to be very careful what type gold we picked. It couldn’t be sequined or shiny gold and James thought that this civilization was an older one so we went with very old golds and there is a bit of simple shine to everything as well.”

Makovsky details the process for designing Ayesha’s signature look. “The first designs I received were some sketches done by Marvel, but they were too renaissance, which is not James’ world. He’s very rooted in the 1980s, so we pulled it back a little to give it a more modern feel and made it very simple. By adding touches of bronze and navy blue it took it away from that theatrical look.”

Another challenge for Makovsky and her team in designing the signature look for the character was the height of the character. “Elizabeth Debicki is 6’3” and James wanted me to make her even taller so she would tower over Chris Pratt. So she ended up being 6’7” by the time we were done with her platform shoes. Getting the proportion correct was one of the most important things because if she didn’t look stunningly beautiful, you wouldn’t buy her as the head of this perfect race. We made the dress slightly sexy so we could see her shape. We had to balance the metal with softness and femininity. So that was a bit of a challenge as well as getting the makeup to read the same tone as the clothes and have it all fit because the costume is part of her throne. It really was one of the most collaborative costumes I’ve ever had to do and had to be coordinated with a lot of departments.”

“Ayesha’s just this majestic creature,” says Elizabeth Debicki. “It’s all about high maintenance with her. Judianna managed to create a look that I’ve never seen before on screen. I was completely blown away when they were creating it. It’s very Elizabethan. Ayesha has these chambermaids since she definitely can’t put that outfit on herself. You get the sense in terms of

the ritual that they are flitting around her chamber getting her dressed because it's just this enormous beast of a dress. But it lends her this instant kind of status and otherworldliness. Like an Elizabethan queen, she's untouchable in that dress."

For Debicki, the costume also helped inform her performance. "It's a really interesting thing when costume informs your character so hugely. The restrictions in a costume like that, the corset element of it, the severity of the angles of it and even the weight of it, completely informs how you move because you can't do certain things in it, which then indicates the type of person you are. When you think of the logic of that character, you wonder why she wears something like that. But it's because she's informing her people the type of queen she is. It completely changes your physicality, though. I didn't really feel like Ayesha in a way until I put that dress on and then sat on that throne. Then I really knew what she was all about."

"One of the biggest wins of the film was Judianna designing Ayesha's costume, and she just completely nailed it," praises Gunn. "In pre-production, I had very specific ideas about how I wanted to create a majestic high priestess gold gown that was also a part of this massive throne and she and my production designer, Scott Chambliss, worked together to create these amazing elements that set the tone early on for how ambitious both the costumes and the production design are going to be in this film."

Another ambitious collaboration between Chambliss and Makovsky was creating the expanded world of the Ravagers that writer/director James Gunn had created for the film. "The Ravagers have a different sort of culture where everything is based on touch," explains James Gunn. "They basically have a muscle car culture and like the feel of things. All of their stuff has buttons on it and things where you wave and something happens."

"I think the hardest thing to accomplish on this film was the costumes for the Ravagers," says Makovsky. "In the first film there was only a very small amount of Ravagers and in this film we had so many. The clothes we made are beautifully made with so much detail. We ended up making over 400 garments for the 200 Ravagers."

For Makovsky another challenge in the film was coming up with the look and designing the new characters of Ego and Mantis played by Kurt Russell and Pom Klementieff. "Mantis was a collaboration with Marvel's visual development team," says Makovsky. "They generated the first sketches, but they were a little bit flat so we had to find some technique to open it up a bit and make it more interesting with some texture. We also didn't want Mantis to look like a creature and have her costume look like a version of clothes. I showed Dale Wiven, my cutter/fitter, a piece of research on the technique of open weaving leather and he went, 'Let's try that.' He's a genius and presented me with a sample that blew me away and really took the costume in a whole different direction. That was interesting because we were weaving two different colors of leather into the skirt and it was just the detail we wanted to make it pop on screen."

Describing her costume, Klementieff says, “It’s beautifully made. The color is green, but it’s a little bit shiny but not too much, and it seems to change color. It makes me think of an insect. Like a beetle.”

Regarding Ego, played by Kurt Russell, costume designer Makovsky describes the influences in designing the look for the character. “We wanted something where he was kind of a space frontiersmen mixed with a little bit of western because that’s Kurt Russell’s style,” says Makovsky. “I didn’t want to do a typical, super hero where it’s molded and hard. So it’s actually all leather, like a frontiersman would be, and we laced it all together. It’s layers and layers of different leathers on top of each other that are laser-etched and dyed to make an almost medieval/renaissance detail all over it.”

She adds, “When we first talked about it with Kurt, he looked at some of the sketches and really got it. It’s kind of like a space conquistador like Don Quixote. We looked at actually how conquistador clothes were made and we went in that direction, but made his pants and boots very modern.”

“Judianna did a fantastic job with the costume design in the film,” exclaims James Gunn. “I couldn’t be more impressed. I think that she really elevated so many of the costumes in the film.”

A LOOK AT SPECIAL-EFFECTS MAKEUP

While Makovsky produced all of the amazing styling and costume looks in the film, special effects makeup supervisor Brian Sipe and his team gave the characters of Gamora, Drax, Yondu, Nebula, Mantis and all of the Ravagers in “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” their physical looks. On the first film, the hair and makeup process for the characters often took anywhere from three to six hours. One of the biggest challenges for Sipe and his Legacy Effects team was coming up with systems to reduce the time the actors were in the hair and makeup chairs.

One of the biggest breakthroughs on the film was with the character of Drax as special effects makeup supervisor Brian Sipe explains. “On the first film Drax’s makeup took on average about three and a half hours” says Sipe. “I think the fastest previous time was two hours and 50 minutes. We were able to get our fastest time getting down to one hour and eighteen minutes. That translates to more sleep for Dave and better turnaround times. Dave Bautista was also pretty happy with being able to see his muscles and definition through the prosthetic. The way the prosthetics are built now he can actually do a little bit of a workout if he wants to in the Drax costume. The thinner design also gives a little bit more rugged look as well, when he moves you will really see all of him moving.”

Describing the new process, Sipe says, “For Dave, we ended up re-sculpting all of his prosthetics, saving the integrity of the design that was done, and then kind of flopped the process. Instead of putting on silicone prosthetics and then painting his body wherever we

needed to, we actually paint him first. We switch the prosthetic from silicone to a prosthetic transfer process, which are already pre-painted. Those go down really quickly and there's no thickness to them, so you don't get any buckling or wrinkling or anything that can betray the makeup later on."

The team also developed a new method of getting the makeup off, which required Bautista to go into a sauna-type machine. "This makeup process, even though it takes half the time to put on, is a little bit harder to take off because it's a different process completely," says Bautista. "So it's kind of a trade off, but at the end of the day I just want Drax to look as good as possible."

Bautista adds, "It's really much more like my own skin and you can see more of me and my body. So I had to get into great shape on this one. I wasn't nearly as concerned on the first film because I was covered in sheets of silicone and you couldn't really see through it so I wasn't training as hard. But on this one I've really busted my butt to get and stay in great shape. When Drax just looks so badass on film, man, it's just all worth it."

For Zoe Saldana, the makeup changes were not as dramatic, but Sipe and his team did shave some time off by re-sculpting her three facial prosthetics into one piece seamless piece. When it came to painting Gamora's green skin, Sipe chose new products that were more actor-friendly. Describing the painting process, Sipe says, "We airbrush or hand brush the colors. She's got eight layers that get built up to create that color green, so that it saves all its vibrancy and gives it some depth."

Another makeup process Brian Sipe and the Legacy Effects team were able to refine despite some new challenges was Nebula. "Nebula was another big challenge for all the artists involved," says Brian Sipe. "For the last film, Karen Gillan shaved her head for the film which made things much easier. For this film, she wanted to see if we could apply the makeup and prosthetics without having to shave her head. Nebula is just layers upon layers of full head and face prosthetics and there is one strip down the center of her face and neck that doesn't have any prosthetics, but then that just creates another challenge in matching color. The face is all geometric shapes that are straight lines, so the artists really have to be precise as they're doing it and still moving quickly."

Karen Gillan describes her transition into this character for "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2." A typical day getting ready for Nebula would be coming in at about four o'clock in the morning. Then I'll spend an hour having my hair wrapped up, so that I can be bald. Then I will sit in the makeup chair for about two and a half hours while they stick all of Nebula's skin on me. I basically get into her skin, which is kind of creepy, and then I get into costume. Compared to the last film, which took about five hours, we now have it down to about three and a half, so I'm excited by that.

For Gillan the physical transformation also helps the actress become the character. "I like to think that my personality is a little removed from Nebula's personality, one would hope, but

putting on that makeup really does do half of the job for me. I remember a definitive moment on the first film where I looked in the mirror and really saw myself. I went, 'Oh my God, I know who this person is now. I know how to move as this person. I know that I want to tilt my head like this because of the way it looks.' I feel like that was the moment I really figured her out. And that was a look thing. It just really does do a lot of the work for me to just be in that costume, to see the way that people look at me, which is slightly different. It just affects everything, and that's all you want as an actor."

For Elizabeth Debicki, who plays Ayesha, the head of the Sovereign, it was a few hours in hair and makeup every day. "The gold paint is a process," says the actress. "Also every time we see her, she's got completely different hair, so the wigs shifted around massively. But the other day I bumped into Chris Sullivan, who plays Taserface, and after looking at that makeup, I thought I cannot complain. I cannot open my mouth because I mean as far as 'Guardians of the Galaxy' makeup goes I think the Sovereign people had the easiest out. I'm not going to that say playing Ayesha is the height of comfort but it's a wonderful creation to be able to walk into and have all that happen to you as an actor."

Speaking of Taserface, who is a new Ravager, Sipe and the Legacy Effects team had to build the look from scratch. "There were different design stages that we had to go through for him," explains Sipe. "We worked off of images of Chris Sullivan, trying to create something that would be interesting, something that wasn't necessarily done before. Of course, we also had input from production as to the direction they wanted to see. Christopher Swift sculpted the first prosthetic and it ended up being really cool. It's almost like this great, big, hulking character with a big, flowing Mohawk and Chris actually brings this great pirate kind of life to it."

For Michael Rooker as Yondu, the new look involved re-sculpting the headpieces to accommodate changes to his fin. The blue skin design was also redone, and as Rooker explains, "There's a base that goes on really quickly and then my makeup team builds everything else from there. They have done an excellent job, as my blue skin looks and feels so real and natural. It actually allows my sweat beads to come through and it doesn't smear or smudge! To test it, I ran around the set. The makeup team and I got it down to about an hour and 15 minutes to apply my makeup. It takes about an hour and a half to take off everything and I'm still getting blue out of my ears two or three days afterwards."

Sipe adds with a laugh, "Rooker's a whole other thing when it comes to Yondu. He's got a lot of energy and he likes to be really involved. He's there helping clean his beard. He's there helping place the fin. He's very hands on as far as the makeup's concerned."

GROOT, ROCKET & MANTIS GET REAL

In "Guardians of the Galaxy," one of the most beloved characters for audiences was Groot. The character makes the ultimate sacrifice at the end of the film, which results in him reappearing

as a seedling about ten inches tall. Bringing the diminutive character to life in a believable way fell squarely on the shoulders of visual effects supervisor Chris Townsend.

“Groot was a very successful character in the first film and James didn't want anything that was too human for Baby Groot,” says Townsend. “He wanted to do something cute, sweet, charming, but definitely alien. He had the idea of the character being two and a half to three years old. So we needed to create a Groot that was cute and adorable for the character and narrative in the film, but also was something that wasn't too much like a small child and something that had a mischievous alien streak to him, so that we'd never ever think of him just as a wooden human. He also gets pretty angry and can get pretty vicious. So that is a real contrast of characteristics that we were trying to encapsulate into this one little design.”

Townsend explains the process of bringing the CGI character to the life. “Legacy Effects created the original sculpt based on artwork created by the Marvel visual development team. Once Legacy had created this practical sculpt that everyone signed off on, we then handed that over to our visual effects companies and said, ‘Start building this and let's see how his face and the internal vines move. The older Groot had a crusty series of panels of wood that you can use to articulate, but for Baby Groot we've got a young, smooth-barked face. So the challenges are how do you make a smoothed bark face move and animate so it doesn't look like a big stretchy piece of rubber.”

Another challenge for Townsend and the filmmakers with the character was its diminutive size compared to its co-stars. “The way we approached the character on set in terms of blocking scenes was looking at how we should shoot it if Groot was really there,” explains Townsend. “That was a big challenge because Dave Bautista and Chris Pratt who are both around 6'3 were standing next to this little ten-inch tall character. So the question became how do you actually frame shots so that they feel natural?”

To solve the issue, Townsend and his team used a ten-inch maquette of Baby Groot, which they would put down in the scene, and then Henry Braham, the cinematographer, James Gunn and Townsend would figure out where to place the camera in order to capture the smallness of the little character along with the vastness of the set and human characters. “We used a lot of special camera rigging to bring the camera down to a low enough height to be able to see Groot or look over his shoulder up at these towering humans,” Townsend says. “But the interesting thing about a film like this is trying to find and use those spatial contrasts to make that point.”

While Townsend and the filmmakers had to make the special provisions for the CGI character of Baby Groot, they were able to utilize the skills and voice of Sean Gunn to play Rocket on set. Sean Gunn, who also plays the Ravager, Kraglin, gave Rocket life in both “Guardians of the Galaxy” and “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” through movement and expression that was motion-captured for the CGI character, voiced by Bradley Cooper.

“I have worked on a lot of stuff with Sean over the years and he was in my very first movie I ever made,” says James Gunn. “We work exceptionally well together and I think one of the

crazy things about the last movie was when Fred Raskin, the editor, turned to me at one point during the edit and said, ‘It’s a shame that some of the best acting is going to be left on the floor because no one will ever see Sean’s physical performance as Rocket. So I was really happy that we get to see Sean do his thing as Kraglin, a pivotal character who has quite an emotional arc in the film.’”

While the CGI characters of Rocket and Groot were complete builds for Townsend and his team, the new character of Mantis required a much subtler approach. “With the character of Mantis I was fortunate enough just to be able to watch the screen tests of various actresses and Pom Klementieff brought a very specific, subtly alien thing to the performance of the character, which was beautiful,” says Townsend.

“She is supposed to be bug-like, so we talked about larger eyes, strange mandibles and various prosthetics. We played around with lots of different ideas from a concept point and again the Marvel visual development team came up with a lot of different looks. We eventually ended up realizing that Pom’s performance is so beautiful and so subtle, that all we really needed to do was put the antennae on her head and give her black irises to give her more of a bug feeling.”

Townsend continues, “So we ended up working with visual effects companies to create an animation for these antennas that was incredibly subtle because James didn’t want the antennae to be a performance enhancer. He felt that the performance was just spot on, so they just needed to exist and be there, in a believable way, so that the audience would not question them and just see this woman with antennae that sometimes glowed when she used her special powers.”

PROPS AND WEAPONS

Prop master Russell Bobbitt’s job is to take the concepts that filmmakers come up with and bring them to life by designing, engineering and manufacturing unique outer-space items, including weapons, accessories, furniture and tools.

The first step for Bobbitt was meeting with James Gunn and Scott Chambliss to discuss their vision of the environment and what props would be needed to create the outer space world and enhance it. “In this case we wanted it to be recognizable. It couldn’t be something that you just don’t understand,” Bobbitt says. “We had to find that fine line between figuring out what outer space could be—what came from Earth, what came from different universes—and throw it all together and then figure out the look.”

High on the list were the many types of weapons that the Guardians and their foes employ. These weapons range from rifles, space pistols, bazookas, knives and swords. Though several weapons could be reused from the first film with slight or no changes, such as Star-Lord’s blasters, Gamora’s sword and Drax’s knives, all others had to be manufactured and aged.

Bobbitt explains one example of artistic aging using Nebula's pistol. "I mixed a bunch of different metallics and then gave the illusion that the pistol's been fired so many times that it heats up. So you sort of get all of that color. It's an artistic way of depicting a weapon that's used all the time but actually we're using it for the first time here."

Bobbitt and his team designed and built four weapons for the Ravagers and 15-20 were made of each design to be distributed among the Ravagers. Some of the weapons were grown on a 3D printer and many different welders and painters were involved in the process.

In the film there could be up to 85 to 95 Ravagers in a scene at any given time—and all of them had to wear belts and holsters to hold their weapons. To make belts for the Ravagers, the props team visited the steampunk world and pulled apart computers, radios, cell phones and every kind of electronic device imaginable and then glued the pieces to the belts to make each one a unique piece of art.

"We had fittings with each actor and each stunt man and figured out their size and their look and accommodated that when we made our wild weapons for the Ravagers," Bobbitt informs. "Very few of the belts were store bought. We mainly cut all the leather ourselves and found buckles and pieces of hardware that could appear to be buckles and sewed them, riveted them, or glued them and then stamped the leather ourselves. We visited many surplus stores who carry aircraft parts, purchased a lot of items that we didn't even know what they were."

The Ravager world is mostly red, so the props team used dyes and different to accomplish the colors and the feel. "We used different sorts of sandpapers and wire brushes to give the appearance of them being used and old and beaten up, as if the Ravagers had been in battle for many years, when in actuality they're all brand-new belts," says Bobbitt.

The Props Department also had to come up with an edible bug for a scene in the film. First an illustrator drew the insect based on a stinkbug, and then they used a 3D printer to grow it to scale and then put a cool-looking paint job on it. Next molds were made so that edible versions could be made out of chocolate.

When the director wanted one of the legs to fall out of the actor's mouth as he ate the bug, Bobbitt had to come up with how to make that happen. "So we took the chocolate body and we injected it with honey, black honey, so that when he bit down the honey poured out of his mouth. And when he bit that leg, it fell out onto the ground. We used melted chocolate to glue the legs in."

Another scene involved an actor eating a "yarrow root," which is an indigenous root that is found in the imaginary space world. Bobbitt and his team had to custom design the root and make it edible. Through a process that involved blowing up pollen by 2000 times and 3D printing, Bobbitt came up with a design that James Gunn liked.

Then they sculpted and made a mold of the body of the plant and bought some real radish roots from the store. The final yarrow root was made from non-dairy white chocolate. And as usual, Bobbitt took a bite first to show the actors to show that the creation is edible.

In a scene early on in the movie, viewers will notice homemade speakers that were made to look like the Guardians put them together. As simple as it looks, it actually took drawings of about 300 different styles of speakers in 45 different colors to finally get to the speaker used in the movie. And then the props team had to construct 15 sets of them!

A vehicle in the film sure to be a hit with fans is the 1979 Ford Cobra. James Gunn chose it to be the automobile Peter Quill's dad, Ego, drives at the very beginning of the movie. The car is painted teal and orange just like the Milano, Peter Quill's space ship. Explaining the choice of vehicle, Gunn says, "I'm a huge fan of muscle cars. I think the '79, '80, '81 Mustangs are overlooked cars that aren't used much in films. You usually see things from the late '60s, mid-'70s. So using that particular Cobra was like unearthing this little gem that people don't know about."

HIGH-OCTANE STUNT ACTION

While writer/director James Gunn infused "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" with sharp-witted humor, the film also contains plenty of action as the Guardians patrol the galaxies. For Chris Pratt and the other cast members, that meant getting their hands dirty in many of the great action sequences in the film.

"Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2' has great comedy but it was also pretty stunt heavy with all the action sequences," says Chris Pratt. "I try to do as many of the stunts as I can and Kurt Russell was right there with me. We were hanging sixty feet in the air, by wires, throwing punches all day long for many days in a row. He's really a pro and also an incredible athlete. So it was pretty cool to see that he is a natural stuntman himself. I learned a lot from working with him in terms of how to throw a punch properly in regard to where the camera is to the person you're punching. I usually would not be mindful of the camera."

The actor continues "It's always refreshing to work with somebody who doesn't complain and that was certainly the case with Kurt Russell. It was a good reality check because sometimes I caught myself wanting to complain because when you get put in harness, hoisted up on wires and thrown around for a while there's definitely a level of exhaustion that you hit. But Kurt was so great and always did what was asked and embraced it."

For screen actor Kurt Russell, being prepared frees him up to do whatever has to be done. "As an actor, I've just never been able to not be surprised by the fact that when you learn your lines well, you can do anything. Anything can happen. I can try it a million different ways because I don't think about what the words are going to be. I can just think about how I feel and basically

respond to what I'm seeing the other actor do. That also affords me the ability to learn from what I'm watching the other actor do. And I enjoyed that dynamic with Chris."

For Zoe Saldana, "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" gave the actress opportunities to mix it up with the stunt team. "I did many more stunts in this than in the first film," says Saldana. "The stunts in this film are more jumps, flying in the air and moving a lot more on gimbals. Gamora's quarreling with Nebula feels much more sophisticated. She chases me trying to kill me and I feel like we've stepped it up a notch in the action department."

On such sequence in which Saldana had to step it up in every sense of the word is when in a scene where Gamora is running back to the ship as she barely misses being blown to pieces by an explosion. "The mortars that were going off were so close," laughs Saldana. "I was like 'this is not what we did in the rehearsal,' which was at least seven feet away from me. During the take they were blowing up so close behind me I could feel the air on my sneakers. But it ended up being great and it looked wonderful."

The chance to work closely with Saldana in action scenes was something Karen Gillan looked forward to. "I love working with Zoe Saldana," says the actress. "She's so incredibly experienced in these types of films. She does a lot of action films, so she knows what looks good. She really helps me out with the fight sequences. If you ever see us acting together on set, you will constantly see her tweaking my position. I'm really grateful for that because I want to look cool."

"It's super helpful to be able to get the performance in those action beats out of the actors," says Jonathan Schwartz. "That's really what you want and when you can actually use your actors and see the action on their faces and learn more about their characters through action, which is sort of the idealized version of those scenes. The way the action works best is when you truly understand what the characters are going through and identifying with them. And that's something that was very easy on this movie because Chris, Kurt, Zoe, Karen, Dave, Michael were able to do so much by themselves."

CUE THE MUSIC

"Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" is filled with great action, humor and performances, but it is also infused with a new mixed tape and soundtrack, a dynamic that resonated deeply with audiences in the first film as evidenced by the success of the soundtrack album.

Marvel Music and Hollywood Records' Grammy®-nominated "Guardians of the Galaxy" soundtrack album reached No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart, becoming the first soundtrack album consisting entirely of previously released songs to top the chart. The album was certified Platinum by the R.I.A.A., having sold over 1,000,000 copies, and the album also peaked at No. 1 on iTunes in 60 territories.

Commenting on the music's popularity, Chris Pratt says, "One of the first things I always hear from fans is how much they loved the music. People just loved the Awesome Mix Volume 1, and at the end of the first movie Quill gets Awesome Mix Volume 2 from his mother, which is a harbinger of things to come."

And, once again, music plays an important role in the telling of the story. As Gunn explains, "We had Awesome Mix Volume 1 last time, and this time we have Awesome Mix Volume 2. It was so important that it's actually part of the film's title this time around. As most people know, Quill's mom made the first tape for a slightly younger boy, and she made the second type for a slightly older boy. So, in many ways the songs reflect the story."

Continuing, he adds, "The songs are a little bit deeper in some ways; a little bit less pop in some ways. Some of the choices are a bit more eclectic; some of the choices are a bit more popular. But we have a real amazing group of songs that, like in the first movie, I wrote into the script. They are a part of the storytelling. Each song is very specific to the scene where it's placed."

While most films use temp tracks during production and figure out the music in post-production, James Gunn flips the script for the process of getting music for the film. "The way the mix tapes come about is by James writing all the songs into the script," says Jonathan Schwartz. "Every song is in the script for a very specific purpose. Some are meant to be humorous. Some are meant to be an ironic contrast to the action scenes. Some are meant to carve more emotional moments, but each of them has a very specific design and purpose that accentuates sonically what James is trying to do visually."

The music also plays an integral role on set with Gunn playing the actual songs during the scenes on the shooting day. It a process that the actors have come to embrace and enjoy. "The music that James infuses into the film on shooting day makes the whole process of accessing emotional beats or sense memory much easier," informs Zoe Saldana. "So when you have a song that fits the tone of what's really going on between two characters who are having a moment with each other, it just takes you there so quickly, and moves you internally to hit those feels more naturally."

"It's really helpful to have the music ahead of time so you can play it sometimes during the scene," adds Chris Pratt. "If we can't play it out loud during a scene sometimes we'd have it in an earwig, which is like a small, little receiver inside of our ear so we could hear the music. It's important since the movie is going to be cut to that music playing and it also puts everyone on the same page rhythmically."

Pratt continues, "I've started incorporating music into my performances more and more and that comes from my experience on the first movie with Tyler Bates score. James would play that during Groot's scene when he's sacrificing himself. That allowed you to step out of the way and let the music take the lead. It's a really important thing as an actor to understand that it's okay to do very little in a moment where music is going to be filling the empty space."

James Gunn agrees with Pratt on the importance of the score in the film, which often gets overlooked in a film heavy with popular songs. “The one thing that is underappreciated is how important Tyler Bates’ score is to the first film,” says the director. “We still use the score from the first movie while shooting this film and it doesn’t get the respect it deserves because it gets so overshadowed by the soundtrack. There’s some beautiful score on that first soundtrack, and I know that the music we’ve written for the second film is even better than what we did for the first film. Tyler Bates has absolutely outdone himself, and we’re giving something very special to people with the music in this film, both the pop songs and the actual score.”

Gunn and composer Tyler Bates worked on the score during pre-production so that they would have some of the major score themes worked out before the shoot began. This allowed Gunn, the actors and the camera crews to work with the music that will end up being used in the final film. Gunn learned this method from Sergio Leone and his composer, Ennio Morricone. “It’s something that helps us to set the tone,” Gunn explains. “It makes us all feel very emotional. We see the grandness of the scene. And it’s a great, great help to the making of the film. It’s something that not too many filmmakers do. But this is the third movie that Tyler Bates and I have done this way.”

Karen Gillan speaks for the rest of the cast when she sums up, “Music is so vital to this franchise. It plays such a huge role. It was so important in the first film. That’s what people came out of the cinema saying they loved so much. And it’s an even bigger role in the second film. Music is more of a subconscious thing; it connects to a different part of the brain than words or pictures do. That’s why I think people respond so well to it. There are loads of new songs on the new soundtrack that I’ve never heard before, so I feel like we’re going to introduce some cool, older tracks to a new generation.”

HERE COME THE GUARDIANS

What can audiences expect when the Guardians of the Galaxy blast back into their lives on May 5th?

“What I’m really hoping for is that they’ll get all of the different aspects they loved about the first movie but in a completely different way,” says Chris Pratt. “People go the movie theater to have a profound life or mood-changing experience and this film is going to really knock their socks off.”

“This film has a ton of laughs, but it also tackles a lot of emotional issues like relationships with fathers, friends, siblings and asks the question what is family to you and how do you grow and evolve as an adult,” adds Zoe Saldana. “I love that about ‘Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,’ because it gives you a very human essence even though it takes place in another galaxy and universe. I think audiences are really going to connect to this film and all of the heart and the great story it tells.”

Karen Gillan believes everyone will relate to the family theme of the movie. “There are so many aspects of that storyline throughout the film” Gillan says. “Everybody’s going to find something in this film that they can connect with and understand. Also, it’s so funny. People are going to have a really good time, and they’re going to be entertained. And they’re going to hear some good music.”

Dave Bautista is confident that audiences will connect to the film on a personal level as well. “The first film was more about people coming together for the greater good,” Bautista says. “And I think this film is more about relationships with people. It is the story of a family. Your family doesn’t always have to be blood family. They can be chosen family. So I think this is more of a relationship film, and everyone can relate to that.”

Producer Kevin Feige comments, “What James has done with ‘Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2’ is something very unique and very special that continues everything that was unique and special about the first film but really evolves it and takes it to new unexpected surprising places. James said, ‘Look, the first film was a creative risk. We all decided together to do something very different. We have to do that again.’ And that’s what he’s done. And I can’t wait for people to see it.”

On that thought, Gunn sums up, “I hope that we have picked up the mantle of the first film and taken it to another place. I wanted to make the best, most moving story possible. It’s about making a story that is worthy of who the Guardians are as characters and making a film that is about those characters that’s worthy of them, and I hope that we’ve done that.”

ABOUT THE CAST

CHRIS PRATT (Peter Quill/Star-Lord) has firmly secured himself as one of Hollywood’s most sought-after leading men.

Pratt most recently appeared in the Sony sci-fi drama, “Passengers,” opposite Jennifer Lawrence for Oscar®-nominated director of “The Imitation Game,” Morten Tyldum, and “The Magnificent Seven,” opposite Denzel Washington and Ethan Hawke, for director Antoine Fuqua.

In 2015, Pratt headlined “Jurassic World,” which is the 4th highest grossing film of all time behind “Avatar,” “Titanic” and “Star Wars: The Force Awakens.” He will reprise his role of Owen Grady in the 2nd installment of “Jurassic World,” which is set for a 2018 debut.

2015 also marked the end of seventh and final season of Emmy®-nominated series “Parks & Recreation,” for which Pratt is perhaps best known for portraying the character Andy Dwyer, opposite Amy Poehler, Nick Offerman, Aziz Ansari and Adam Scott.

2014 was truly the year of Chris Pratt. He top lined Marvel's "Guardians of the Galaxy," which was one of the top three grossing films of 2014 with over \$770 million at the global box office. Pratt also lent his vocal talents to the lead character, Emmett, in the Warner Bros. animated feature "The Lego Movie," which made over \$400 million worldwide.

Other notable film credits include: the DreamWorks comedy "Delivery Man," Spike Jonze's critically acclaimed "Her" and the Universal comedy feature, "The Five-Year Engagement."

In 2012, Pratt portrayed an iconic member of SEAL Team Six in Kathryn Bigelow's "Zero Dark Thirty," which was nominated for Best Picture for both the Golden Globe® and Academy Awards®.

In 2011, Pratt starred in "Moneyball," where he delivered a memorable performance as Oakland A's first baseman, Scott Hatteberg. The Columbia Pictures film also starred Brad Pitt, Jonah Hill and Philip Seymour Hoffman and received six Academy Award® nominations, including a nomination for Best Picture.

In addition to acting, Pratt includes among his other passions hunting, fishing and writing. He currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife and son.

ZOE SALDANA (Gamora) was most recently seen in "Live by Night," the directorial debut of Ben Affleck. The film focuses on a group of individuals during the Prohibition Era and their dealings in the world of organized crime. Saldana stars opposite Ben Affleck and Sienna Miller. Additionally, Saldana stars in the emotional and cutting-edge video for "Free Me" from recording artist Sia. The music video will use its large-ranging platform to bring further awareness to the HIV epidemic as well as prove itself as a key aid in fundraising efforts for the END HIV Foundation.

Saldana also was recently seen in "Star Trek: Beyond," the third installment of the 2009 blockbuster hit. Saldana graced the silver screen as Nyota Uhura, opposite Chris Pine and Zachary Quinto. The J.J. Abrams' film released in July 2016.

Saldana is best known in her starring role as Neytiri in the record-breaking film, "Avatar," James Cameron's sci-fi thriller, co-starring Sigourney Weaver and Sam Worthington. "Avatar" quickly became the highest grossing film of all time, winning the 2010 Golden Globe® for Best Director and Best Picture. "Avatar" went on to receive a total of nine 2010 Academy Awards® nominations, including Best Picture. Saldana will reprise her role in the highly anticipated "Avatar 2," slated for release in December 2018.

Saldana's other film credits include "Infinitely Polar Bear," "Blood Ties," "Out of the Furnace," "The Words," "Colombiana," "Takers" and "Death at A Funeral," as well as her breakout role in the film "Center Stage." Her television credits include appearances on the television reboot of "Rosemary's Baby," the WB's "Keeping It Real," and NBC's "Law & Order."

Furthermore, Saldana is spending time behind the camera with her film production company Cinestar. Founded with her two sisters, Cinestar produced the NBC miniseries “Rosemary’s Baby” as well as The AOL Digital series “My Hero.” Additionally, Saldana teamed up with the millennial mom-gear network Awestruck to create digital content for AwesomenessTV. Partnering with Awestruck on both unscripted and scripted content, Saldana executive-produced two series and created a YouTube channel for the Awestruck platform with her sisters. The lifestyle network can be accessed on YouTube, Facebook video and Verizon’s Go90 video service.

When not in production, Saldana engages in meaningful philanthropic work involving children’s development, well-being and confidence building. Saldana has been very vocal in her involvement with Brave Beginnings. The organization focuses on bringing essential life-saving equipment and services to seriously ill children and their families. Brave Beginnings specifically works to ensure ventilators and lifesaving neonatal equipment are always available to newborns in critical need. Annually, Brave Beginnings provides grants for essential neonatal intensive care equipment such as critical airway carts, infant resuscitators, incubators, omnibeds and much more.

Additionally, Saldana also lends her support to The Step Up Network—an organization that works to propel young women from under-resourced communities to fulfill their potential by empowering them to become confident, college-bound and career-focused leaders. The organization offers effective after-school programs as well as influential mentorships. Each year the organization holds their Annual Inspiration Awards Gala, at which Saldana was honored in 2014.

In 2011, Saldana directed the short film “Kaylien” in her ongoing effort to raise awareness about autism. The short film—which served as Saldana’s directorial debut—was a part of the GLAMOUR Reel Moments series that brings Hollywood’s leading female talent to take a turn behind the camera, directing a short film inspired by real-life story submissions from Glamour readers. “Kaylien” starred Malin Akerman and Bradley Cooper. Zoe has long been an advocate of autism awareness by engaging in organizations such as Actors for Autism, Autism Speaks and the annual event Light It Up Blue, taking place on April 2nd each year.

Saldana has also taken part in The Haiti Relief Inc., which works tirelessly to provide disaster relief to Haiti after the devastating earthquake in 2010. The organization focuses on distributing medical supplies, food, clothing and other necessary items (such as soap, chlorine bleach, etc.) to aid and assist the residents of Haiti. The organization also assists in rebuilding schools, medical clinics and hospitals being the focus of the organization from relief to development.

Additionally, Saldana has participated development efforts with FINCA—an organization designed to alleviate poverty through lasting solutions to help build assets, create jobs and raise the standard of living. In 2010, Saldana spearheaded the “Lend a Hand” campaign—FINCA’s safe and easy to use online donation tool. The campaign allowed people to donate to

FINCA and the women from around the world who are working to free their families from poverty and better the lives of their families.

In 2014 Saldana became the face of L’Oreal. In her role as an international spokesmodel, she has appeared in several multimedia advertisements for the brand’s plethora of beauty products.

Saldana was born and raised in New York. When not on location, she resides in Los Angeles with her husband and twin boys.

DAVID BAUTISTA (Drax), who reprises his role from 2014’s “Guardians of the Galaxy,” recently wrapped two independent films. “Final Score,” where he stars opposite Pierce Brosnan, follows an ex-soldier who must use his military skills to save the 35,000 capacity crowd at a major sporting event. He also starred opposite Sly Stallone on “Escape Plan 2.” He is currently in pre-production for the crime thriller “Hotel Artemis,” shooting opposite Jodie Foster in Los Angeles. The film was written and will be directed by Drew Pearce.

Bautista was seen at the 2017 Sundance Film in the independent film “Bushwick,” starring opposite Brittney Snow. The film centers on a war veteran and a young girl who must cross a treacherous five blocks in Brooklyn to escape an invading military force. November 6, 2017, he can be seen in Warner Bros.’ “Blade Runner 2049,” the sequel to the 1982 film. He will star opposite Harrison Ford, Ryan Gosling and Robin Wright.

In November 2015, Bautista was seen in the Sony feature “Spectre,” the 24th installment of the James Bond series. Starring opposite Daniel Craig, Christoph Waltz and Lea Seydoux, Bautista played Hinx, a fast-driving, battle-hardened hit-man for the secretive terrorist cartel SPECTRE. He was also seen in action film “Heist,” starring opposite Robert DeNiro and Jeffery Dean Morgan.

A former professional wrestler and mixed martial artist, Bautista is best known for his time in World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), where he was a six-time world champion and an international spokesman for the organization. Bautista retired from the WWE to focus on his acting career in mid-2010.

Past film credits include Luc Besson’s “Warrior Gate,” Universal’s “Riddick” and “The Man with the Iron Fists.” Past TV credits include “Chuck,” “Headcase” and “Smallville.”

A native of New York City, **VIN DIESEL (Voice of Baby Groot)** is a prominent actor, producer and filmmaker and has been honored with both a Hands and Footprint Ceremony at the TCL Chinese Theatre, as well as a Star on the Walk of Fame in Hollywood.

Currently, Diesel is reprising his role as Dominic Toretto in the eighth installment of “The Fast and the Furious” franchise, “The Fate of the Furious,” in which he both starred and produced. The film opened in theaters on April 14.

Most recently, Diesel led a star studded ensemble cast in the highly anticipated “xXx: Return of Xander Cage.” Additionally, Diesel recently appeared in the Ang Lee–directed “Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk.”

“Furious 7,” which he starred in and produced, grossed more than \$1.5 billion in worldwide box office and is the #1 grossing film in China’s history. In 2013, he starred in and produced the box-office smash hit “Fast & Furious 6,” which has grossed almost \$800 million worldwide, as well as “Riddick,” the third installment in hit cult-franchise. In 2015, he starred in and produced “The Last Witch Hunter” for Lionsgate, opposite Sir Michael Caine.

On 2011’s “Fast Five,” the fifth installment of the blockbuster “The Fast and the Furious” series, and on “Fast & Furious” as well, Diesel wore multiple hats as he reprised his role as Dominic Toretto and produced the films, along with Neal H. Moritz. He also wrote and directed the original short film “Los Bandoleros.” The short, which was showcased on the “Fast & Furious” DVD, tells the intriguing backstory of the characters and events leading up to the explosive oil-truck heist in the film.

Another endeavor in Diesel’s entrepreneurial rise was the creation of his successful video game company, Tigon Studios, which recently created and produced the multi-platform “Riddick: The Merc Files” as well as 2004’s top-selling Xbox game, “The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay.”

Diesel previously starred alongside Michelle Yeoh in 20th Century Fox’s “Babylon A.D.” for director Mathieu Kassovitz. He was also seen in the courtroom drama “Find Me Guilty,” directed by renowned filmmaker Sidney Lumet.

Diesel will play the title role in “Hannibal the Conqueror,” and Diesel’s One Race Films will produce “Hannibal the Barbarian,” a children’s animated series based on the stories of Hannibal, for the BET network. Diesel’s future projects also include Touchstone’s “Player’s Rule.” The film, written by Ron Bass and Jen Smolka, will be Diesel’s first role as the lead in a romantic comedy. Diesel will star in “The Wheelman” (MTV Films/Paramount Pictures/One Race Films) and his Tigon Studios and Midway Games will collaborate to release the film and video game simultaneously.

Diesel starred in his first comedy feature for Disney, “The Pacifier,” opposite Faith Ford, Brad Garrett, Lauren Graham and Brittany Snow. “The Pacifier” was a huge box-office success.

In the highly anticipated science-fiction feature “The Chronicles of Riddick,” Diesel reprised the title role of Richard B. Riddick. Produced by One Race Films, it was the follow-up to the cult

favorite “Pitch Black.” Diesel previously starred in the action-thriller “A Man Apart,” which he also produced.

Topping Diesel’s list of credits is his star turn in 2001’s “The Fast and the Furious,” for which he won an MTV Movie Award for Best On-Screen Team, along with co-star Paul Walker, and was nominated for Best Male Performance. He starred in the blockbuster “XXX,” which he also executive produced. Diesel appeared in “Saving Private Ryan,” for which he was nominated for a Screen Actors Guild® Award as part of the film’s ensemble cast. His other credits include roles in “Boiler Room” and “Knockaround Guys,” and, he voiced the title character in “The Iron Giant,” which won an Annie Award for Best Animated Feature.

Diesel wrote, produced, directed and starred in the independent short “Multi-Facial,” which explored the issue of being multiracial in today’s society. The film follows Diesel, whose biological mother is Caucasian and biological father is African-American, on several auditions in which he is told he is either “too black” or “too white” for the part. It was after seeing this short at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival that director Steven Spielberg created the role of Private Adrian Caparzo in “Saving Private Ryan” specifically for Diesel.

Diesel wrote, produced, directed and starred in the full-length feature “Strays,” which he described as a “multicultural ‘Saturday Night Fever.’” The drama was selected to compete at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival.

BRADLEY COOPER (Voice of Rocket) was most recently seen in Warner Brothers’ “War Dogs,” directed and produced by Todd Phillips. Cooper also served as a producer on the film under his and Phillips’ production company, Joint Effort. The film was released in August 2016.

Cooper’s upcoming projects include “A Star Is Born,” which is in pre-production and will be Cooper’s directorial debut, and “Black Flags,” a television series for HBO based on the book, “Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS,” which Cooper and Phillips will executive produce under their Joint Effort production banner.

In 2016, Cooper reunited with David O. Russell, Jennifer Lawrence and Robert DeNiro for Golden Globe® nominated “Joy.” The film was released by 20th Century Fox. In the fall of 2016, Cooper starred in “Burnt,” directed by John Wells and written by Steven Knight, alongside Daniel Bruhl and Sienna Miller. The film was released by The Weinstein Company.

In 2015, Cooper completed a two-and-a-half-month London run of the play “The Elephant Man” at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in the West End, directed by Scott Ellis. Cooper reprised his role as John Merrick, alongside Patricia Clarkson and Alessandro Nivola. In the fall of 2014, Cooper performed the play at the Booth Theater on Broadway, which garnered him a Tony® nomination for Best Performance by an Actor in Leading Role, an Outer Critics Circle nomination for Outstanding Actor in a Play, a Drama League award for Outstanding Distinguished Performance and a Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Actor in a Play. The

Broadway production received five Tony nominations, including Best Revival of a play. Cooper previously performed the role on the Nikos Stage at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in the summer of 2012, also directed by Ellis alongside the same cast. In July 2015, Cooper reprised his role as Ben in the Netflix remake of “Wet Hot American Summer: First Day of Camp,” alongside Amy Poehler, Michael Ian Black and John Slattery.

In 2014, Cooper produced and starred in Clint Eastwood and Warner Brothers’ critically acclaimed, Oscar® nominated film “American Sniper,” which became the top-grossing film of 2014. Cooper’s performance as celebrated Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, garnered him his third Oscar® nomination, a Producers Guild Award nomination, and won a Broadcast Film Critics Association Award and an MTV Movie Award. The film is based on an adaptation of the autobiography of Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, “American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History.” Cooper optioned the book in 2012 under his production company. “American Sniper” was released on December 25, 2014.

Also in 2014, Cooper was nominated for an Oscar® for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal as the unhinged FBI Agent, Richie DiMaso in the David O. Russell drama “American Hustle,” starring opposite Christian Bale, Amy Adams and Jennifer Lawrence. “American Hustle” was nominated for 10 Academy Awards®, including Best Picture. Cooper received nominations for a BAFTA Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role, a Broadcast Film Critics Association Award, a Satellite Award and a Golden Globe® nomination for Best Supporting Actor. The cast received the Screen Actors Guild® Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

In the same year, Cooper lent his voice for the character Rocket in Marvel Studios’ 2014 smash action-adventure, “Guardians of the Galaxy,” directed by James Gunn.

In April 2013, Cooper starred opposite Ryan Gosling, Eva Mendes and Dane DeHaan in the critically-acclaimed Focus Features film “The Place Beyond the Pines,” directed by Derek Cianfrance. The film was recognized by the National Board of Review as one of their top 10 films of 2013.

Also in 2013, Cooper starred opposite Ed Helms and Zach Galifianakis in the third installment of the comedy trilogy, “The Hangover Part III.” Cooper also starred in the previous installments, all directed by Todd Phillips, which collectively grossed over \$1.4 billion globally. “The Hangover Part II” smashed opening weekend records for an R-rated comedy, and “The Hangover,” which grossed \$469.2 million worldwide, still ranks domestically as the highest grossing R-rated comedy ever.

In 2012, Cooper was nominated for an Oscar® for Best Actor for his portrayal of Pat Solatano in the critically-acclaimed, Weinstein Company drama “Silver Linings Playbook.” The film, directed by David O. Russell, and starring Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro, Jacki Weaver and Chris Tucker, was nominated for eight Academy Awards®, including Best Picture. Cooper was recognized by the National Board of Review for Best Actor and won the Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Actor in a Comedy. Cooper also received a Golden Globe® Award

nomination for Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical and a Screen Actors Guild® nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role, as well as nominations from the Independent Spirit Awards for Best Male Lead, and the BAFTA Award for Best Actor in a Lead Role.

In March 2011, Cooper starred opposite Robert De Niro and Abbie Cornish in the box-office smash, “Limitless,” distributed by Relativity Media and directed by Neil Burger. Cooper also served as a producer on the film.

Cooper’s additional film credits include “The Words,” “The A-Team,” “New York I Love You,” “He’s Just Not That Into You,” “Hit And Run,” “Yes Man,” “All About Steve,” “Wedding Crashers,” “Wet Hot American Summer,” “Aloha” and “Serena.”

Cooper made his Broadway debut in the spring of 2006 in Joe Montello’s production of “Three Days of Rain,” opposite Julia Roberts and Paul Rudd. In July 2008, he joined the cast of the critically-acclaimed Theresa Rebeck play “The Understudy,” which premiered at the Williamstown Theatre Festival to rave reviews and sold out performances.

On television, Cooper portrayed the character of Will Tippin on the hit ABC series “Alias,” which was on the air for five seasons. Cooper also starred in the F/X Drama “Nip/Tuck” as well as Fox’s single-camera comedy, “Kitchen Confidential,” based on the trials and tribulations of renowned chef Anthony Bourdain. His other television credits include “Jack & Bobby” and a guest appearance on “Sex and the City.”

In March 2012, Cooper and Warner Bros. entered into a two-year first look deal for his production company, 22nd & Indiana Pictures. In 2015, Cooper joined forces with longtime friend and partner, Todd Phillips to form production company Joint Effort as producing partners for a three-year, first-look production deal with Warner Bros. Pictures.

Born in Philadelphia, Cooper graduated with honors in the English program at Georgetown University. After moving to NYC, he obtained his Masters in the Fine Arts program at the Actors Studio Drama School.

This year marks an exciting time for **MICHAEL ROOKER (Yondu)**, as he is set to star in two films premiering within two months of each other.

In addition to “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” which opens on May 5, audiences recently saw him in Blumhouse Tilt’s indie horror thriller, “The Belko Experiment,” which opened on March 17. The film is the terrifying yet humorous look at a group of employees that become guinea pigs in a company-wide experiment that leads them to either kill their fellow employees or be killed themselves. Returning to his indie roots, Rooker stars as maintenance worker, Bud Melks, one of the employees trapped in the office building, who may or may not be able to kill his fellow staff member.

Rooker made his film debut in 1986, playing the title role in “Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer,” a film based on the confessions of serial killer Henry Lee Lucas. It was here that audiences were first introduced to Rooker’s impeccable ability to channel a character’s idiosyncrasies and subtleties. He has also starred in some of the most iconic films, such as “Mississippi Burning,” “Sea of Love,” “JFK,” “Tombstone” and “Jumper” to name a few.

In August 2014, Rooker starred in one of the most memorable franchises in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, “Guardians of the Galaxy,” as Yondu, the blue-skinned renegade space pirate and surrogate father to Peter Quill. The film went on to gross over \$700 million at the worldwide box office.

On the television front, Rooker is best known for his series regular role as Merle Dixon on AMC’s hit show “The Walking Dead.” Audiences loved to hate the ill-tempered redneck hunter and were sad to see him killed off the series in season three. Rooker has completed a variety of stints on some of the most prominent shows on television: “Criminal Minds,” “CSI: Miami,” “Las Vegas,” “Law and Order” and “Archer,” among others.

Additionally, Rooker’s talents go beyond both film and television. He adds his voice to various video games, including “The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct,” “Call of Duty: Black Ops 2” and “Lollipop Chainsaw.”

Scottish-born actress, **KAREN GILLAN (Nebula)**, who reprises her role from Marvel Studios’ “Guardians of the Galaxy,” has quickly made her mark in Hollywood as a young talent who can do both comedy and drama—in film and television—as demonstrated by her diverse resume.

Gillan landed the coveted female lead role in Sony’s “Jumanji” as Martha/Ruby Roundhouse opposite Dwyane “The Rock” Johnson. The film, directed by Jake Kasdan, follows four teenagers who are sucked in Jumanji’s world and must play as characters from the game to survive. The film has a release date of July 28, 2017. She can also be seen in the upcoming indie drama “All Creatures Here Below” as well as STX’s “The Circle,” which is adapted from Dave Eggers’ best-selling novel of the same name.

Gillan is currently in production on her feature film directorial debut “Tupperware Party,” which she also wrote and stars in. The film is co-produced by Mt. Hollywood Films’ president R. Andru Davies, CEO Albert Gersten and CFO Sloan Martin. Gillan’s producing partner Mali Elfman, Tien Huei Grace Yeh and Claire Mundell are also producing.

In 2016, Gillan appeared in the revenge Western film “In a Valley of Violence,” produced by Blumhouse Productions and written and directed by Ti West. In 2015, she appeared in Paramount’s Academy Award®-nominated film “The Big Short.”

In fall 2014, Gillan starred in the role as Eliza Dooley in the new ABC comedy "Selfie" from creator Emily Kapneck. The sitcom took a modern twist on the classic "My Fair Lady." John Cho played Henry a marketing guru who helps her to rebrand her image.

In May 2009, Gillan was cast in the coveted role of Amy Pond' the Doctor's companion, in the long-running hit British science-fiction television series "Doctor Who." Gillan played the role for three seasons and garnered several awards for her portrayal, including Cosmopolitan's Woman of the Year Award for Best Actress in 2010; SFX Award for Best Actress; TV Choice Award for Best Actress and Scream Award for Best Sci-Fi. The award-winning show has a huge following in the U.K. and it aired in the U.S. on BBC America.

Gillan's other credits include the BBC drama "We'll Take Manhattan" as well as the romantic lead in John McKay's romantic comedy "Not Another Happy Ending." She was also seen in the box-office success "Oculus," a thriller that was written and directed by Mike Flanagan and released by Relativity Media in April 2014.

Growing up in Inverness, Scotland as an only child, Gillan caught the acting bug at a young age and set the bar high by joining several local youth theater groups and taking part in a wide range of productions at Charleston Academy. Gillan pursued acting at Edinburgh's Telford College and at Performing Arts Studio Scotland, studying under renowned theater director Scott Johnston. She later moved to London, at the age of 18, to study drama at the prestigious Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts. The 5'11" actress naturally fell into the world of modeling briefly while she continued to pursue her acting career.

Among her many talents, Gillan plays the piano and is a fashion trendsetter. Gillan now resides in Los Angeles, Calif.

A natural talent, with a striking presence, **POM KLEMENTIEFF (Mantis)** is one of Hollywood's most vibrant up-and-coming actresses.

Klementieff recently completed production on two films: the comedic drama "Ingrid Goes West," starring opposite Aubrey Plaza and Elizabeth Olsen, and a supporting role in Drake Doremus' "Newness" opposite Nicholas Hoult. "Ingrid Goes West" made its world premiere debut at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival in January. A release date for "Newness" has yet to be confirmed.

Klementieff's first professional acting job was the French independent film "Après lui" (2007), in which she portrayed the stepdaughter of the protagonist played by Catherine Deneuve. Klementieff had her breakthrough role in 2013 in Spike Lee's "Oldboy," starring Josh Brolin, Elizabeth Olsen and Samuel L. Jackson. Other film credits include "Sleepless Night" and "Loup."

Born a French citizen in Quebec City to a Korean mother and French-Russian father, Klementieff lived in Canada only for one year before her family traveled extensively due to her father's

career in diplomacy. She lived in Japan and the Ivory Coast before settling in France. Klementieff currently resides in Los Angeles.

ELIZABETH DEBICKI (Ayesha), an Australian stage and film actress, is quickly on the rise. She first made her mark in 2013 when she appeared in Baz Luhrmann's critically acclaimed film, "The Great Gatsby" alongside Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire and Carey Mulligan. Debicki was awarded an Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Award (AACTA) for her role as Jordan Baker in the film. She was also nominated for an Empire Award for Best Newcomer.

Debicki was most recently seen on-stage at the National Theatre in London in David Hare's production of "The Red Barn," based on the novel "La Main" by Georges Simenon. Debicki starred in the production alongside Mark Strong and Hope Davis. "The Red Barn" opened on October 6, 2016, and ran until January 17, 2017.

Debicki will soon be seen starring in the J.J. Abrams'-produced Untitled Cloverfield Anthology Series alongside David Oyelowo and Daniel Brühl. The movie, directed by Julius Onah, will follow a team of astronauts fighting for their survival, and it is set to be released by Paramount Pictures on October 27, 2017.

In 2018, Debicki will be voicing a role in the live-action feature adaptation of Beatrix Potter's classic tale, "Peter Rabbit." Margot Robbie, Daisy Ridley, Domhnall Gleeson, Rose Byrne and James Corden will also be featured in roles for the film. Debicki will also appear in "The Tale" with Laura Dern and Ellen Burstyn, although no release date has been set for the film.

Previous film credits for Debicki include Guy Ritchie's "The Man from U.N.C.L.E." alongside Henry Cavill, Armie Hammer and Alicia Vikander; The Weinstein Company's "Macbeth" with Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard; and "Everest" with Jake Gyllenhaal, Robin Wright and Keira Knightly.

On the small screen, Debicki was recently seen in the Australian drama on Foxtel, "The Kettering Incident." The show delivered consistently strong ratings and was subsequently acquired by Amazon Prime in the U.S.

Additionally, Debicki starred as Jed in "The Night Manager," the miniseries adaptation of John le Carre's novel of the same name. The miniseries, which also featured Tom Hiddleston, Hugh Laurie and Olivia Colman, followed the story of a night manager of a European hotel who was recruited by intelligence agents to infiltrate an international arms dealer's network. "The Night Manager" premiered in the U.S. on April 19, 2016. Debicki's role as Jed garnered her a 22nd Annual Critics' Choice Award nomination in the category of Best Supporting Actress in a Movie Made for Television or Limited Series.

On stage, in addition to "The Red Barn," Debicki starred in the Sydney Theatre Company's production of "The Maids" alongside Cate Blanchett and Isabelle Huppert. The show, based on

a notorious murder case in which two homicidal sisters killed their mistress and her daughter, played as a part of the 2014 Lincoln Center Festival in New York.

Debicki currently resides in Sydney, Australia.

CHRIS SULLIVAN (Taserface) is best known for his work on the small screen. This season, he played the lovable Toby in the new series “This Is Us” (as well as a small but memorable role in the pilot episode of “Strange Things”). Previously, he completed two seasons as Irish ambulance driver Tom Cleary in Steven Soderbergh’s “The Knick.” His recent films include “Morgan” with Paul Giamatti, “Imperium” with Daniel Radcliffe and Ben Affleck’s “Live by Night.”

Sullivan also works in the theater. He was recently nominated for a Lucille Lortel Award for his performance in the new folk-rock musical “Hadestown.” He has also appeared on Broadway in “Lombardi,” “Chicago” and the Gershwin musical “Nice Work If You Can Get It.” Before moving to New York, Sullivan worked extensively in the Chicago theater. His first big gig was the national tour of the one-man show “Defending the Caveman.”

When he is not acting, he loves to write and play music with his band, Sully and the Benevolent Folk.

SEAN GUNN (Kraglin) returns in the role of Kraglin, which he played in the 2014 summer blockbuster, Marvel Studios’ “Guardians of the Galaxy.”

Gunn was first noticed when he guest-starred in the second episode of “Gilmore Girls” as Mick, a DSL cable installer. As the first season continued, Gunn was brought back to play the recurring role of Kirk Gleason, one of Stars Hollow’s most eccentric citizens. From 2002 until the end of the series in 2007, Gunn was a regular cast member and fan favorite on the show.

Some of Gunn’s other television credits include “October Road,” “Angel,” “3rd Rock from the Sun,” “Yes, Dear,” “True Jackson VP,” “Andy Richter Controls the Universe,” “Glee,” “Bunheads” and “Bones.”

On the big screen, Gunn most recently portrayed Marty in the MGM/Blumhouse horror film “The Belko Experiment.” He has also been seen in the films “The Specials,” for which he also received a co-producer credit; “The Man Who Invented the Moon,” directed by fellow Goodman School of Drama alum and Gilmore Girls cast member John Cabrera; “Ordinary World,” with Billy Joe Armstrong and Selma Blair”; “The Hive”; “Who the F is Buddy Applebaum”; and “Pearl Harbor.”

Gunn is also the voice actor behind the character of Swan in the Warner Brothers video game “Lollipop Chainsaw.”

TOMMY FLANAGAN (Tulik) starred for seven seasons on the FX hit series “Sons of Anarchy” as the role of Filip ‘Chibs’ Telford, opposite Charlie Hunnam in the hour-long drama, which focuses on a motorcycle gang working to maintain their independence and way of life in the small town of Charming. The series has become one of the highest-rated shows on television.

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Flanagan was making his living as a DJ for the local clubs, when he became a member of Robert Carlyle’s Raindog Theatre Company, performing in such plays as “Wasted I and II,” “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” and “MacBeth.”

In 1995, Flanagan made his breakout performance in Mel Gibson’s epic “Braveheart,” playing the brash rebel Morrison in a memorable role that earned him worldwide recognition. Flanagan followed this up by working with the industry’s top directors in films such as Phillip Noyce’s “The Saint,” John Woo’s “Face/Off” and David Fincher’s “The Game.” In 1999, he would get the chance to once again work with longtime colleague Robert Carlyle in “Plunkett and Macleane.”

That same year, Flanagan earned critical praise and numerous best actor nominations for his role as Da, the troubled Irish father in Lynne Ramsay’s “Ratcatcher.” The film would go on to earn many awards, including honors from the London Film Critics Circle and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

He then played the role of Cicero, a trust-worthy ally to Russell Crowe’s character in the Academy Award®-winning “Gladiator” for director Ridley Scott. Flanagan followed this up with starring roles in films such as Art Linson’s “Sunset Strip,” playing a 1970s heart-throb, rock star; New Line Cinema’s “All About the Benjamins” opposite Ice Cube; “Trauma” opposite Colin Firth; Paul W.S. Anderson’s “Alien Vs. Predator” for 20th Century Fox; and Miramax Films’ “Sin City” for director Robert Rodriguez.

Flanagan played the pivotal role of the Stranger, terrorizing Camilla Belle, in Simon West’s re-make of “When a Stranger Calls,” and followed this up with an equally chilling performance as the enigmatic hit man Lazlo Soot in Joe Carnahan’s “Smokin’ Aces.”

Flanagan also continued to create great roles in hit series, including ABC’s “Detroit 187,” FOX’s “24” and “Lie to Me,” and “Peaky Blinders” opposite Cillian Murphy and Sam Neill.

This year, Flanagan played the enigmatic The Knife in the highly rated second season of FOX’s “Gotham,” based on characters from the Batman DC Comic books. Flanagan was also recently seen in the award-winning independent film “Winter,” directed by Heidi Greensmith, in which he plays an emotionally tortured painter trying to keep his family together after the sudden loss of his wife. He won Best Leading Actor Award for his performance at the New York City International Film Festival.

Flanagan will next be seen in the military drama “Sand Castle” opposite Henry Cavill and Nicholas Hoult, which opens in April 2017.

Since graduating from the Arts Educational School London, **LAURA HADDOCK (Meredith Quill)** has showcased her talent across a variety of television, film and theater projects. She will next be seen in the latest installment in the “Transformers” franchise, the much anticipated “Transformers: The Last Knight,” where she will star opposite Mark Wahlberg. The Michael Bay-directed feature is due for release June 2017.

Haddock was most recently seen in ITV drama “The Level” alongside Karla Crome, Philip Glenester, Noel Clarke and Amanda Burton. The six-part series aired in September. 2016 has also seen Haddock guest star in the third series of “The Musketeers,” which saw her star as Pauline alongside Santiago Cabrera, Luke Pasqualino and Tom Burke.

Last year, Haddock was seen in a two-part special series of “Luther” with Idris Elba. The show aired in December 2015 and Haddock was nominated in the Best Supporting Actress in a Movie Made for Television or Limited Series for her role at the 2016 Critics Choice Television Awards. 2015 also saw Haddock in the third series of Starz’s US historical fantasy “Da Vinci’s Demons.” The series sees Haddock revisit her lead female role from the first two series, Lucrezia Donati, opposite Leonardo Da Vinci played by Tom Riley. In 2015 she was seen in the superhero comedy feature film “SuperBob,” in the role of June alongside Brett Goldstein, Catherine Tate and Natalia Tena, and short films “Hardwire,” directed by photographer Rankin, and “Goldfish” by Arjun Rose.

In 2014, Haddock was seen on screens in the smash hit Marvel film “Guardians of the Galaxy” alongside Chris Pratt, Bradley Cooper and Zoe Saldana. She also appeared in a small British indie film, “A Wonderful Christmas Time.” Summer 2011 saw Haddock make her cinematic debut in the “Inbetweeners Movie,” in which she played Alison; lead character Will’s holiday fling. This breakout performance gained her a nomination for Best Female Newcomer at the 2012 Empire Awards.

Laura Haddock’s television career to date has been prolific. In 2013 she was seen in the award-winning BBC miniseries, “Dancing on the Edge,” which was also shown on Starz in the US. In 2012 audiences watched her in the hit BBC drama series “Upstairs Downstairs,” playing Beryl Ballard, alongside Keeley Hawes and Claire Foy, and in “Missing” for ABC, directed by James Strong. Haddock has also starred in “Strike Back” on Sky 1, playing Dr. Claire Sommers alongside Richard Armitage.

Haddock’s natural comedic flare has gained her numerous roles; she starred in the BBC3 sitcom “How Not to Live Your Life,” and in ITV’s hilarious office comedy “Monday Monday.” She has also had roles in the award-winning comedy “My Family” and starred alongside Amanda Redman in “Honest,” an upfront comedy-drama for ITV in which she played Kacie. In 2008 Haddock played alongside David Jason and Christopher Lee in Sky One’s BAFTA-nominated

adaptation of Terry Pratchett's novel of the same name, "The Colour of Magic."

Haddock is no stranger to theater either. 2010 saw her in the role of Nancy in "When We Are Married," which opened to rave reviews at the Garrick Theatre. She has also starred as Mrs. Holroyd in "The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd" and as Treena in "Famous Last," a two-hander with Pauline Collins, directed by John Alderton.

SYLVESTER STALLONE (Stakar) has established worldwide recognition as an actor, writer and director since he played the title role in his own screenplay of "Rocky," which won the Academy Award® in 1976 for Best Picture.

Since that seminal motion picture, "Rocky" grew to a franchise of five sequels, and in 2006 Stallone concluded the series with "Rocky Balboa," a critical and audience success, which resolutely confirmed both Stallone and "Rocky" as iconic cultural symbols. In addition, to commemorate a character that has become as real as any living person to film-going audiences around the world, a statue of Rocky Balboa was placed at the foot of the now-famous steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum at a dedication ceremony presided over by the Mayor.

In 2015, 40 years after the original film, Stallone returned to the role of Rocky in "Creed" for director Ryan Coogler, co-starring Michael B. Jordan. His critically-acclaimed performance earned him an Academy Award® nomination for Best Supporting Actor, the Golden Globe® Award, National Board of Review and Critic's Choice Awards as well as countless Awards and nominations from National Critic Associations. The role enthralled audiences and solidified Stallone as one of the most enduring and endearing actors of his generation.

Stallone wrote, directed and starred in "Rambo," which continued the saga of Vietnam vet John Rambo, 25 years after the debut of "Rambo: First Blood." For the latest installment, Stallone took the company on location to the inner jungles of Burma.

Stallone then released his most ambitious project, the action thriller "The Expendables," which he wrote, directed and starred in, and for which he hired an all-star cast, including Jason Statham, Mickey Rourke, Jet Li, Eric Roberts, Dolph Lundgren and Steve Austin, as well as Bruce Willis and Arnold Schwarzenegger. The film opened to Number One at the Box Office—making him the only actor to open a number one film across five decades. Stallone took the company on location to the interior of Brazil and the city streets of New Orleans, filming over just a few short months.

Born in New York City, Stallone attended school in suburban Philadelphia where he first started acting and also became a star football player. He then spent two years instructing at the American College of Switzerland in Geneva.

Returning to the United States, he enrolled as a drama major at the University of Miami and also began to write. Stallone left college to pursue an acting career in New York City, but the

jobs did not come easily. By 1973, Stallone had auditioned for almost every casting agent in New York and had gone on thousands of acting calls, with little success.

During this period, he turned more and more to writing, churning out numerous screenplays while waiting for his acting break. The opportunity first came in 1974 when he was cast as one of the leads in "The Lords of Flatbush." He also received his first writing credit for "additional dialogue" on this film.

With the money earned from that film, Stallone left New York for Hollywood. He again began to make the rounds of studios and casting agents, managing to get a few small roles in television and movies. He also continued to pursue writing.

Prize fighter Rocky Balboa was born and given life in a script Stallone wrote in longhand. Several producers offered to buy the screenplay, wanting to cast a name star in the title role, which Stallone insisted on playing himself. Although his bank balance was barely \$100, Stallone held fast with his perseverance finally paying off in a big way.

In addition to "Rocky Balboa" and "Rambo," Stallone's credits as actor/writer/director are "Rocky II" and "Paradise Alley." As actor and co-writer, Stallone filmed "F.I.S.T.," "First Blood," "Rambo: First Blood Part II," "Rhinestone" and "Rambo III." He co-wrote, directed and produced "Staying Alive" and starred in "Nighthawks," "Victory," "Tango & Cash" and "Lock Up." "Rocky V," starring and written by Stallone and directed by John Avildsen, opened in 1990.

He also starred in "Demolition Man," which set box-office records for its fall 1993 release and in the films "The Specialist," "Assassins" and "Daylight." Stallone starred in the challenging and unique role of Freddy Heflin, in the Miramax feature film "Copland," which has garnered him further international critical and audience acclaim.

He had the starring role in "Get Carter" for Warner Brothers, co-starring Michael Caine, which opened in the fall of 2000. Stallone wrote and starred in the number one box office race-car thriller "Driven," co-starring Burt Reynolds and Christian de la Fuente. In addition, he filmed "Avenging Angelo," co-starring Madeline Stowe. Both films were for Warner Bros. He also starred in the role of The Toymaker for director Robert Rodriguez in the hit film "Spy Kids 3," the final installment of that successful film franchise.

He was associated with "The Contender," a powerful and action-packed unscripted series that aired on the NBC Television Network and then ESPN.

In 2002 Stallone was honored by the Video Dealers Software Association when he was presented with the Action Star of the Millennium Award at the Organization's 21st Annual Convention.

In addition, Stallone's influence and appreciation are acknowledged worldwide. In 2008 The Zurich Film Festival presented him with the Festival's Inaugural Golden Icon Award, which

recognized his achievements as a great American actor and filmmaker, and in 2009, The Venice Film Festival honored Stallone with their Glory to the Filmmaker Award.

For the release of “The Expendables,” Stallone was honored at Spike TV’s Guys Choice Awards with the coveted GuyCon Award, presented by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. He was also feted at the 2010 Los Angeles Film Festival as the event’s Honored Guest and received the Visionary Award at the Hollywood Reporter Key Arts 2010 Event. At the 2010 ComiCon Convention, he was the first inductee into the IGN Action Hero Hall of Fame.

“The Expendables 2,” the highly-anticipated sequel opened to number one at the box office. Shot on location in Bulgaria, Stallone wrote and starred in the film along with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis, Jason Statham and the original *Expendables* cast. Liam Hemsworth, Jean-Claude Van Damme and Chuck Norris also starred.

Stallone appeared in “Bullet to the Head” for director Walter Hill and producer Joel Silver for Warner Bros.; “Escape Plan.” co-starring with Arnold Schwarzenegger for Summit Pictures; and he starred with Robert DeNiro in the Warner Bros feature “Grudge Match.” He starred in “Expendables 3” with many of the original cast and included the additions of Mel Gibson, Harrison Ford and Antonio Banderas. The film was also shot on location in Bulgaria.

In March, 2014, “Rocky the Musical” opened at The Winter Garden on Broadway. The musical was based on the original film written by Stallone with music by Stephen Flaherty and Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and earned a Best Actor Tony® nomination for the play’s star, Andy Karl.

In addition to his extensive film career, Stallone is an accomplished artist, completing paintings on canvas as well as sculpture work. He has had impressive exhibitions at Art Basil, The Russian State Museum and most recently at the Nice Museum of Contemporary Art in France.

Throughout his impressive 50-year career, **KURT RUSSELL (Ego)** has crossed genres to play some of Hollywood’s most memorable roles. He was recently seen Peter Berg’s “Deepwater Horizon,” based on the events surrounding the tragic oil spill of 2010. Co-starring Mark Wahlberg and Kate Hudson, “Deepwater Horizon” was released by Lionsgate in September 2016. Also in 2016, Russell starred with Patrick Wilson, Matthew Fox and Richard Jenkins in “Bone Tomahawk,” which was released in October after screening at the London Film Festival.

December 2015’s “The Hateful Eight” marked Russell’s second collaboration with Quentin Tarantino. Russell previously played “Stuntman Mike” in “Death Proof,” which was nominated for the Palme d’Or upon its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007. Also in 2015, Russell joined the cast of the beloved “The Fast and the Furious” franchise with “Furious 7” for director James Wan. With over \$1.5 billion in ticket sales, the blockbuster is one of the highest-grossing films of all time.

Russell is perhaps best known for his several collaborations with director John Carpenter. The actor donned an eye-patch and trademark snarl as Snake Plissken in “Escape From New York” and its sequel, “Escape From L.A.” Russell gave an Emmy®-nominated performance as Elvis in Carpenter’s critically acclaimed eponymous telefilm about the entertainer. “The Thing,” lauded as one of the best horror films ever made, re-teamed Russell and Carpenter in a cold, paranoid, desolate environment. Russell and Carpenter further diversified their collective body of work with “Big Trouble in Little China,” a martial arts, action comedy.

Russell received a Golden Globe® nomination for Best Supporting Actor for Mike Nichols’s “Silkwood,” co-starring Meryl Streep and Cher. His work with contemporary cinema’s most esteemed directors includes roles in Robert Zemeckis’s “Used Cars,” Jonathan Demme’s “Swing Shift” and Cameron Crowe’s “Vanilla Sky.”

Russell showcased comedic chops in the romantic comedy favorite “Overboard,” starring alongside Goldie Hawn as a carpenter who manipulates—and falls for—a wealthy amnesiac. Like “Overboard,” the taught thriller “Breakdown” has amassed a cult following since its release in 1997. Co-starring J.T. Walsh and Kathleen Quinlan, “Breakdown” was directed by Jonathan Mostow.

Russell’s notable additional credits include “Tequila Sunrise,” with Michelle Pfeiffer and Mel Gibson; “Tango & Cash,” with Sylvester Stallone; “Backdraft,” “Tombstone,” “Stargate,” “Executive Decision,” “Soldier,” “The Mean Season,” “The Best of Times,” “Winter People,” “Captain Ron,” “Unlawful Entry,” “Dark Blue,” “Dreamer,” “Poseidon” and “The Art of the Steal.”

Russell’s long relationship with Disney Studios yielded 15 features, including “Follow Me, Boys,” “The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes,” “The Barefoot Executive,” “The Fox and the Hound,” “Miracle, Sky High,” and appearances in several episodes of “The Wonderful World of Disney.”

Russell began acting at the age of 10, first in episodic television, including guest roles in “Gilligan’s Island” and “The Man from U.N.C.L.E.” Russell’s other television credits include “Amber Waves” and “The Deadly Tower,” in which Russell portrayed the Texas murderer Charles Whitman.

A native of Springfield, Massachusetts, Russell now lives in Los Angeles and Aspen.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JAMES GUNN (Writer/Director) is the prolific filmmaker behind some of pop culture’s most notable feature films.

Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, Gunn began his filmmaking career at the age of twelve by making a zombie movie with an eight-millimeter camera and an actor, his brother Sean.

Thirty years later, Gunn brought to life what is now turning into one of the most memorable franchises in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, “Guardians of the Galaxy.” The film, which Gunn wrote and directed in 2014, had the biggest August opening weekend of all-time, earning \$94 million in the US. Having grossed over \$770 million at the worldwide box office to date, the Marvel feature was the second highest grossing film of 2014 and spent five weekends atop the box office. “Guardians of the Galaxy” has not only been a massive financial success, it also garnered impressive reviews from top film critics around the world, won the Critics’ Choice Award for Best Action Movie, earned two Academy Award® nominations and garnered Gunn a WGA Award nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay. The film is cemented with stellar performances from Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana, Bradley Cooper, Vin Diesel, Dave Bautista, Glenn Close and Benicio Del Toro. Also featured in the film is Gunn’s brother, Sean, who played Kraglin, and the on-set version of Rocket Raccoon.

Knowing what an important role music plays in a movie, Gunn personally chose every song on the “Guardians of the Galaxy” soundtrack. The album, which featured pop songs from the 1960s & ’70s, was highly praised by critics as being a secondary character in the film and is the first soundtrack comprised entirely of previously released songs to ever reach the No. 1 spot on the Billboard charts. The album has gone on to certified Platinum status and received a Grammy® nomination for Best Compilation Soundtrack Album for Visual Media.

Prior to its release, the “Guardians of the Galaxy” garnered so much positive buzz and faith among Marvel executives that a sequel was greenlit weeks before its opening. “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” which Gunn wrote and directed, will bring back the original cast along with more surprises and Easter eggs to be found by audiences when the film releases in the U.S. on May 5, 2017.

This year, fans also have a chance to see Gunn’s horror feature, “The Belko Experiment,” which he wrote and produced. Starring John Gallagher, Jr., Tony Goldwyn, Sean Gunn and Adria Arjona, the feature is a terrifying, provocative and at times hilarious thrill-ride that provokes the question—what does it take to survive at work? It premiered during Midnight Madness at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival and was immediately acquired by Blumhouse’s BH Tilt and Orion and released on March 17, 2017.

Gunn’s love for the comedy and horror genres coalesced in the humorous horror film “Slither,” released by Universal in 2006. Gunn wrote the film, which was his feature-film directorial debut, and it stars Nathan Fillion and Elizabeth Banks. The film is currently featured on Rotten Tomatoes as one of the Top Ten All-Time Best Reviewed Horror Films. It was named The Best Horror film of 2006 by Rue Morgue Magazine, and Gunn won a Saturn Award and a Fangoria Chainsaw Award for his work on the film.

Additionally, Gunn directed the independent feature film, “Super,” starring Rainn Wilson, Ellen Page, Liv Tyler and Kevin Bacon. It is the dark, comedic tale of a disturbed man who dresses up as a superhero to save his ex-wife from her drug-dealing new boyfriend. “Super” was an official selection at the Toronto Film Festival, was picked up by IFC Films, and is IFC’s top selling film ever on On Demand.

Gunn also wrote the live action “Scooby-Doo” movie, which grossed over \$300 million worldwide and in March of 2004, he became the first screenwriter in history to write back-to-back #1-for-the-weekend box office hits, with the critically-acclaimed, re-imagined “Dawn of the Dead” on March 19, 2004 and “Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed” on March 26, 2004.

Gunn got his start in the industry while attending Columbia University. He applied for a part-time job filing papers at famed B-movie studios Troma Entertainment and was paid \$150 to write the screenplay for the feature “Tromeo & Juliet” instead. In 1997, “Tromeo” became a cult hit, playing in theaters around the world, including over a year of midnight screenings in Los Angeles.

Gunn left Troma to write and star (along with Rob Lowe, Thomas Haden-Church, and Jamie Kennedy) in the 2000 feature film, “The Specials,” about a group of superheroes on their day off. In the same year, Bloomsbury Press released Gunn’s critically acclaimed novel “The Toy Collector,” the story of a hospital orderly who sells drugs to finance his escalating toy collecting addiction. He also wrote, with Lloyd Kaufman, the non-fiction book “All I Need to Know About Filmmaking I Learned from the Toxic Avenger,” currently in its fifth printing.

In 2012 Gunn released his first video game, “Lollipop Chainsaw,” with Suda 51 and Warner Bros, on Xbox and Playstation 3. In 2008 he created Xbox Live’s first original content, producing seven comedy shows by horror directors, and creating his own, “Sparky & Mikaela.” Gunn also hosted the reality show “Scream Queens” for VH1.

Gunn lives in Los Angeles with his dog, Dr. Wesely Von Spears and his cat, Emily Monster.

KEVIN FEIGE (Producer) has been the driving creative force behind several billion-dollar franchises and an unprecedented number of blockbuster feature films, all connected to create the Marvel Cinematic Universe. In his current role as producer and president of Marvel Studios, Feige is a hands-on producer and oversees Marvel Studios’ feature film productions, all of which have opened No. 1 at the box office and grossed over \$10 billion worldwide collectively.

In addition to “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2,” Feige is currently producing the highly anticipated films “Thor: Ragnarok,” “Spider-Man: Homecoming,” “Black Panther,” “Ant-Man and the Wasp,” “Captain Marvel” and “Avengers: Infinity War.”

Most recently Feige launched another franchise with “Doctor Strange,” which continued the streak of No. 1 openings, and produced “Captain America: Civil War,” the highest grossing film

of 2016 worldwide. In 2015 he launched another successful franchise with “Ant-Man,” starring Paul Rudd, and earlier in the year he produced “Avengers: Age of Ultron,” the fourth largest domestic opening weekend of all time. In 2014, Feige produced “Guardians of the Galaxy,” starring Chris Pratt, which has grossed over \$770 million worldwide, and “Captain America: The Winter Soldier,” which broke the opening record for an April release.

In 2013, Feige produced the megahits “Thor: The Dark World” and “Iron Man 3.” In 2012, Feige produced the critically acclaimed “Marvel’s The Avengers,” which set an all-time domestic three-day weekend box-office record. The film went on to become Disney’s highest-grossing global and domestic release at the time.

In 2011, Feige produced and successfully launched two Marvel film franchises, “Captain America: The First Avenger,” directed by Joe Johnston and starring Chris Evans, and “Thor,” directed by Kenneth Branagh and starring Chris Hemsworth. In 2010, Feige produced “Iron Man 2,” directed by Jon Favreau and starring Robert Downey Jr. and Gwyneth Paltrow.

In summer 2008, Feige produced the first fully developed and financed films from the new Marvel Studios including the blockbusters “Iron Man,” directed by Jon Favreau, and “The Incredible Hulk,” directed by Louis Leterrier.

Feige joined Marvel in 2000 and served as executive producer on the second and third “Spider-Man” films, which took in combined worldwide box-office receipts of well over \$1.5 billion. Feige also co-produced “X2: X-Men United,” the second installment of the popular “X-Men” franchise, and executive produced “X-Men 3: The Last Stand,” among many other Marvel- branded films.

A graduate from the University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts, Feige first worked for Lauren Shuler Donner and Richard Donner at their Warner Bros.–based production company, which released the action-adventure “Volcano” and the hit romantic comedy “You’ve Got Mail.” Feige earned his first producer credit on “X-Men,” a film that is credited with revitalizing the comic book genre.

LOUIS D’ESPOSITO (Executive Producer) is co-president of Marvel Studios. He served as executive producer on the blockbuster hits “Iron Man,” “Iron Man 2,” “Thor,” “Captain America: The First Avenger,” “Marvel’s The Avengers,” “Captain America: The Winter Soldier,” “Iron Man 3,” “Thor: The Dark World,” “Avengers: Age of Ultron” and “Ant-Man” and most recently “Captain America: Civil War” and “Doctor Strange,” as well as working with Marvel Studios’ president Kevin Feige on the future Marvel slate that includes “Thor: Ragnarok,” “Spider-Man: Homecoming,” “Avengers: Infinity War,” “Black Panther,” “Ant-Man and the Wasp” and “Captain Marvel.”

As co-president of the studio and executive producer on all Marvel films, D’Esposito balances running the studio with overseeing each film from its development stage to distribution.

In addition to executive producing Marvel Studios' films, D'Esposito directed the Marvel One-Shot film "Item 47," which made its debut to fans at the 2012 Comic-Con International in San Diego and was featured again at the LA Shorts Fest in September 2012. The project was released as an added feature on the "Marvel's The Avengers" Blu-ray disc. With the success of "Item 47," D'Esposito directed the second Marvel One-Shot, "Agent Carter," starring Hayley Atwell, which premiered at 2013 Comic-Con to critical praise from the press and fans. The project is also an added feature on the "Iron Man 3" Blu-ray disc.

D'Esposito began his tenure at Marvel Studios in 2006. Prior to Marvel, D'Esposito's executive producing credits included the 2006 hit film "The Pursuit of Happyness," starring Will Smith; "Zathura: A Space Adventure"; and the 2003 hit "S.W.A.T.," starring Samuel L. Jackson and Colin Farrell.

VICTORIA ALONSO (Executive Producer), Executive Vice President of Physical Production for Marvel Studios, is currently executive producing Taika Waititi's "Thor: Ragnarok" as well as Jon Watts' "Spider-Man: Homecoming" and is in pre-production on "Black Panther" and "Avengers: Infinity War."

In her executive role, she also oversees post-production and visual effects for the studio slate. She executive produced Scott Derrickson's "Doctor Strange," Anthony and Joe Russo's "Captain America: Civil War," Peyton Reed's "Ant-Man," Joss Whedon's "Avengers: Age of Ultron," James Gunn's "Guardians of the Galaxy," Joe and Anthony Russo's "Captain America: The Winter Soldier," Alan Taylor's "Thor: The Dark World," Shane Black's "Iron Man 3," as well as "The Avengers" for Joss Whedon. She also co-produced "Iron Man" and "Iron Man 2" with director Jon Favreau, Kenneth Branagh's "Thor" and Joe Johnston's "Captain America: The First Avenger."

Alonso's career began at the nascency of the visual effects industry, when she served as a commercial visual effects producer. From there, she VFX-produced numerous feature films, working with such directors as Ridley Scott ("Kingdom of Heaven"), Tim Burton ("Big Fish") and Andrew Adamson ("Shrek"), to name a few.

JONATHAN SCHWARTZ (Executive Producer) is Vice President, Production & Development at Marvel Studios. Schwartz has overseen the "Guardians of the Galaxy" franchise since 2011 and co-produced the first "Guardians of the Galaxy" film. He began his career at Marvel Studios in 2008 and served as Kevin Feige's assistant on "Iron Man 2," "Thor" and "Captain America: The First Avenger," and as creative executive on "Marvel's The Avengers."

Schwartz was named to The Hollywood Reporter's Next Gen list in 2016 and was one of Variety's New Leaders in 2015. An alumnus of Pomona College, Schwartz previously worked at the William Morris Agency.

NIKOLAS KORDA (Executive Producer) reteams with director James Gunn after serving as executive producer on Marvel Studios' "Guardians of the Galaxy." Korda most recently executive produced "The Legend of Tarzan" and lists Ridley Scott's "Robin Hood" and Chris Weitz' "The Golden Compass" among his credits. As a unit production manager, Korda's credits include Ridley Scott's "Prometheus," Jonathan Liebesman's "Wrath of the Titans," Tim Burton's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy and Stephen Hopkins "Lost in Space."

Korda has worked as an assistant director on films that include Tim Burton's "Batman," Richard Attenborough's "Cry Freedom," Jim Henson's "Labyrinth" as well as "Rambo III" and "Hamburger Hill."

STAN LEE (Executive Producer) is the founder of POW! Entertainment and has served as its chairman and chief creative officer since inception. Known to millions as the man whose superheroes propelled Marvel to its preeminent position in the comic book industry, Stan Lee's co-creations include Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk, X-Men, The Fantastic Four, Iron Man, Daredevil, Silver Surfer and Doctor Strange.

Now the chairman emeritus of Marvel Media, Lee first became publisher of Marvel Comics in 1972. He is recognized as the creative force that brought Marvel to the forefront of the comic publishing industry. In 1977 he introduced Spider-Man as a syndicated newspaper strip that became the most successful of all syndicated adventure strips and now appears in more than 500 newspapers worldwide—making it the longest running of all superhero strips.

From June 2001 until the formal creation of POW! in November 2001, Lee worked to form POW! and to create intellectual property for POW! and start the development of various POW! projects.

HENRY BRAHAM (Director of Photography) is an award winning innovative cinematographer.

Recent motion-picture credits include "The Legend of Tarzan," and previously, "The Golden Compass" and "Flyboys." He was a frequent collaborator with Kirk Jones as cinematographer on "Nanny McPhee" and the critically acclaimed "Waking Ned Devine." He has also worked extensively in fashion, music and commercials.

Braham won an Emmy® for outstanding cinematography on the epic, two-part drama "Shackleton."

SCOTT CHAMBLISS (Production Designer) has designed for motion pictures, television and theater productions in Los Angeles and around the world. His most recent films are Brad Bird's "Tomorrowland," for which he was nominated for a Saturn Award, and "Star Trek Into Darkness," directed by longtime collaborator J.J. Abrams. He is currently designing "Godzilla: King of the Monsters" for Legendary Pictures.

Chambliss also designed "Cowboys & Aliens," "Salt," "Star Trek," "Mission: Impossible III" and the television series "Alias" and "Felicity." He won an Emmy® Award and an Art Directors Guild Award for his work on "Alias" and was nominated for the Art Directors Guild Award for "Star Trek Into Darkness," "Cowboys & Aliens" and "Star Trek."

FRED RASKIN, ACE (Editor), a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, began his career in the cutting room working as an assistant editor to Dylan Tichenor ("Boogie Nights") and Sally Menke ("Kill Bill"), before taking on the tasks of additional editor on Paul Thomas Anderson's 2002 romantic comedy, "Punch-Drunk Love," for Revolution Studios.

He then served as additional editor on Justin Lin's 2003 high-school crime story "Better Luck Tomorrow" for MTV Films, and went on to edit four more of Lin's films: "Annapolis" for Touchstone Pictures, and "The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift," "Fast & Furious" and "Fast Five" for Universal Pictures.

In 2012 Raskin received a BAFTA nomination for his work on Quentin Tarantino's "Django Unchained," and in 2014 he and co-editors Craig Wood and Hughes Winborne received an ACE Eddie award nomination for their work on the first "Guardians of the Galaxy." Other recent credits include S. Craig Zahler's "Bone Tomahawk" and Tarantino's "The Hateful Eight."

CRAIG WOOD, ACE (Editor) has worked with director Gore Verbinski on all of his previous feature films: "Lone Ranger," "Mouse Hunt," "The Mexican," "The Ring," "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," "The Weather Man," "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End" and "Rango."

Wood's other credits as an editor include "The Great Wall," Disney's "Tomorrowland," Marvel Studios' "Guardians of the Galaxy," "Forces of Nature," "We Were Soldiers," "The Burning Plain" and "The Road."

Wood won American Cinema Editors (A.C.E) Eddie Awards for both "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl" and "Rango," with nominations for "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End" and Marvel Studios' "Guardians of the Galaxy." In addition, he also won an Annie Award for "Rango."

JUDIANNA MAKOVSKY (Costume Designer) is a three-time Academy Award® nominee for her work on the films “Seabiscuit,” “Pleasantville” and “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone,” for which she was also nominated for a BAFTA award, and she has been awarded four Costume Designers Guild awards.

Makovsky has had a long and distinguished career, lending her outstanding costume design work to over 30 films, some of which include, “Captain America: Civil War,” “Captain America: The Winter Soldier,” “Earth to Echo,” “The Hunger Games,” “Trespass,” “The Last Airbender,” “National Treasure: Book of Secrets,” “Mr. Brooks,” “X-Men: The Last Stand,” “National Treasure,” “The Legend of Bagger Vance,” “For the Love of the Game,” “Gloria,” “Practical Magic,” “Great Expectations,” “The Devil’s Advocate,” “Lolita,” “A Little Princess,” “White Squall,” “The Specialist,” “The Ref,” “Six Degrees of Separation,” “Reversal of Fortune,” “Lost Angels” and “Big.”

Makovsky is currently serving as costume designer on “Avengers: Infinity War.”

CHRISTOPHER TOWNSEND (Visual Effects Supervisor) grew up in England, then traveled and worked throughout Asia and Australia before moving to the USA in 1994 to work at Industrial Light & Magic. He worked as an artist and supervisor on many influential movies, including *Star Wars* (both the rerelease of the original “*Star Wars: A New Hope*” and the new trilogy), “Mission: Impossible,” “The Lost World: Jurassic Park,” “AI: Artificial Intelligence,” “Hulk,” “The Day After Tomorrow,” “The Island” and the Academy Award®-winning “Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest.”

In 2007, Townsend became a freelancer and was the VFX supervisor on Walden/New Line’s “Journey to the Center of the Earth,” which made it to the Academy’s VFX shortlisted films. It was the first- ever stereoscopic motion picture shot and released in HD. He supervised on location for Fox’s “X-Men Origins: Wolverine,” oversaw the VFX in Europe for Warner Bros’ “Ninja Assassin,” supervised on Fox’s “Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief,” and again made it to the Academy’s Bake-offs in 2012 as the VFX Supervisor for Marvel Studios’ “Captain America: The First Avenger,” with a highlight being the groundbreaking Skinny Steve transformation effects for the title character. He was nominated for an Academy Award® for his work on “Iron Man 3” and again made it to the Academy’s shortlist for his work on Marvel Studios’ “Avengers: Age of Ultron.”

DAN SUDICK (Special Effects Supervisor) is one of Hollywood’s most well-respected special effects artists. He has been nominated for Academy Awards® for his outstanding work on the films “War of the Worlds” and “Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World.”

Sudick is currently in production on “Avengers: Infinity War” and recently completed work on “Spiderman: Homecoming,” “Captain America: Civil War” and “Passengers.” Sudick’s other

recent credits include “Fast and Furious 7” and Marvel Studios’ “Ant-Man,” “Captain America: The Winter Soldier,” “Iron Man 3” and “The Avengers.”

His other credits include “Cowboys and Aliens,” “Thor,” “Iron Man 2,” “G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra,” “Iron Man,” “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,” “Evan Almighty,” “The Haunted Mansion,” “Mission Impossible 2,” “National Security,” “Cellular,” “Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps,” “Serenity,” “Dragonfly,” “The Negotiator,” “Executive Decision,” “The Birdcage,” “Life,” “Home Alone 2: Lost in New York,” “The Fisher King,” “Switchback,” “Red Corner” and “The Mosquito Coast.”

Composer, songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist **TYLER BATES’ (Composer)** work resonates deeply throughout film, television, video games and pop culture at large—from critically acclaimed blockbusters such as “John Wick” and “Guardians of the Galaxy” to WGN’s “Salem” and Zack Snyder’s groundbreaking “300.” An adept and versatile music mind, he develops a distinct sonic palette for each project that is reflective of the director’s unique brand of story-telling and emotion, whether it be sweeping epic grandeur or sheer terror.

In 2004, after a decade of writing film music, he scored Zack Snyder’s reimagining of “Dawn of the Dead,” written by James Gunn, igniting longstanding relationships with both. His soundtrack for Snyder’s “300” quickly became one of the biggest-selling score albums of the 21st Century. “300” was followed by further collaborations with the filmmaker such as “Watchmen” and “Sucker Punch.” A partnership with Gunn evolved from the 2006 cult favorite “Slither” and led to “Super” and Marvel Studios’ “Guardians of the Galaxy,” which became the third highest-grossing film of 2014 worldwide. Throughout Bates’ career he has worked with iconic and influential filmmakers, including Academy Award® winner William Friedkin on “Killer Joe” and Rob Zombie on “The Devil’s Rejects,” “Halloween” and “Halloween II.”

His imprint on the gaming world is apparent in his music for “Killzone Shadow Fall,” “God of War: Ascension,” “Army of Two: The 40th Day,” and more. Bates’ work in TV spans a wide range of styles from Showtime’s “Californication” to Audience Network’s highly popular “Kingdom.” An on-camera performance for “Californication” is where Bates met Marilyn Manson, kicking off another focused and fiery creative alliance. Tyler Bates co-wrote and produced Manson’s “The Pale Emperor,” which bowed at #6 on the Billboard Top 200. “Cupid Carries a Gun” became the main title theme for WGN’s hit series, “Salem,” while “Killing Strangers” figured prominently in Keanu Reeves’ “John Wick.” He also held down lead guitar duties on Manson’s “Hell Not Hallelujah Tour” and his 2016 arena tour, playing to a half-million fans alongside metal giants Slipknot.

Beyond co-creating Manson’s forthcoming “SAY10,” 2017 sees Bates scores for Charlize Theron’s “The Coldest City,” “John Wick: Chapter Two,” co-composed with longtime friend Joel Richard, and the Gunn-penned-and-produced “The Belko Experiment,” directed by Greg McLean.

Ultimately, Tyler Bates' natural ability to connect with his collaborators yields music that not only becomes part of the film and television zeitgeist, but that resonates with authenticity to audiences around the globe.

DAVE JORDAN (Music Supervisor) began his career in the record industry but soon transitioned to become one of Hollywood's most sought-after theatrical music supervisors. Jordan's music supervision credits include some of the most successful film franchises in the world, including "Guardians of the Galaxy," "Iron Man," "Godzilla," "Marvel's The Avengers," "Transformers" and many more.

In 2001, Jordan founded Format Entertainment as a collaborative workplace for like-minded music supervisors to share ideas, experience and pool resources. The success of this model has allowed Format to grow and evolve into the largest collection of theatrical and television music supervisors working in the industry. Format's spectrum of clients consists of some of the most recognizable names in entertainment, media, advertising and consumer goods, including Marvel Studios, Warner Consumer Products, Mattel and marquee projects such as Marvel's "Captain America: Civil War," "Straight Outta Compton," "Trolls," "Empire" and many Barbie-brand campaigns.

Format's music supervision efforts have yielded a number of chart-topping albums, including number one spots for "Guardians of the Galaxy," "Trolls," "Empire" and "Pitch Perfect" soundtracks, and, just recently, Format soundtracks occupied an unprecedented four of the top five positions on the Billboard charts. Format has won several Guild of Music Supervisor Awards, received multiple GRAMMY® and Emmy® nominations and twice won the American Music Award for best soundtrack ("Pitch Perfect" and "Alvin & The Chipmunks").