



THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

SING STREET

PRODUCTION NOTES



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SYNOPSIS

Sing Street takes us back to 1980s Dublin seen through the eyes of a 14-year-old boy named Conor (Ferdia Walsh-Peelo) who is looking for a break from a home strained by his parents' relationship and money troubles, while trying to adjust to his new inner-city public school where the kids are rough and the teachers are rougher. He finds a glimmer of hope in the mysterious, über-cool and beautiful Raphina (Lucy Boynton), and with the aim of winning her heart he invites her to star in his band's music videos. There's only one problem: he's not part of a band...yet. She agrees, and now Conor must deliver what he's promised - calling himself "Cosmo" and immersing himself in the vibrant rock music trends of the decade, he forms a band with a few lads, and the group pours their heart into writing lyrics and shooting videos. Inspired by writer/director John Carney's (*Once, Begin Again*) life and love for music, *Sing Street* shows us a world where music has the power to take us away from the turmoil of everyday life and transform us into something greater.

ORIGINS

“I wanted to do something that was personal. I didn’t want to just be doing a musical story for the sake of it.” – Director John Carney

The origins of *Sing Street* go back many years to the director’s life as a teenager in 1980s Dublin. John Carney experienced growing up in the Irish Capital by moving from private school to an inner city comprehensive. It ultimately became the seed of an idea to create a musical film about this period in his life growing up.

Having worked with producer Anthony Bregman on the New York-set feature film *Begin Again* starring Keira Knightley and Mark Ruffalo, the director discussed the idea of building a story around his own experiences growing up in Dublin over a coffee one afternoon. It was in the cutting room that Carney told Bregman the story of *Sing Street*. “The origins of the project date back probably 20, 30 years, because a lot of the elements of this film have come from John’s experience of his childhood,” says producer Anthony Bregman. “He went from a posh school to Synge Street School for a year and went through the same transformation as our lead character - from a very refined educational experience to a much rougher world.

“He just told me this story over coffee. In fact, it’s pretty close to what the story is right now: about this kid whose father loses his job and where money is very tight. He gets taken out of his posh school and into the very rough Synge Street School where he immediately gets beaten up and where others take advantage of him. He forms a band, basically to protect himself and also to attract the interest of this very pretty girl he can’t otherwise get traction with.”

Both a rites of passage story with strong romantic elements and a film built on the musical foundations of 1980s British bands, *Sing Street* delivers an honest and moving perspective on the perils and wonders of teenage life.

For the producer Anthony Bregman, the idea of a fresh and yet innocent romance blossoming between the two lead characters, was a dynamic he had not seen in filmmaking for long time. “The relationship between Conor and Raphina is interesting because it doesn’t really get consummated in any real way,” Bregman explains. “She’s gorgeous and older, more sophisticated, and is off on her own living her own life. He is still very much forming as a character. From the very beginning, when he approaches her, it’s clear that he’s reaching above his grade for her.”

Alongside this romance, Carney also focuses on the complexities of marriages breaking down in Ireland during this period. Divorce was not allowed in Ireland at the time. As the parents’ relationship breaks down, the impact on their children is profound.

“There are a lot of strains on Conor’s parents’ marriage; among them that they came from a period of time where you couldn’t have sex outside marriage,” says Bregman. “So the parents got married too soon for the wrong reasons and then they couldn’t separate, because at this point it was very taboo to divorce. The most they could do was separate. They’re locked in a

marriage where they're not happy with each other or with the situation and that filters down to the kids. It creates a toxic atmosphere, and that is what initiates the story."

For Carney the director, the film is also a story of contrasts - the contrast of Ireland versus England, Dublin versus London, and the safety of a private education versus one in the state system. But most importantly for Carney, it was the contrast of a young teenage boy who thinks he has problems until those problems are far outweighed by those of the girl he meets and ultimately falls for.

"It's really a 'before and after' story, which is set in 80s Dublin," Carney explains. "It was a time of recession and immigration and a time when even the very rich or those who should have had money didn't have cash, and were forced to think a little bit differently in terms of what clothes they wore and how they expressed themselves through how they looked."

Having directed the Oscar®-winning musical film *Once* and then *Begin Again*, both with extensive musical threads throughout, Carney felt the time was right to make something musical that was even more personal - something solidly autobiographical.

"I didn't want to just be doing a musical story for the sake of it. I wanted to try and find something in my life that I'd be interested in doing and talking about. I wanted it to be something that was genuine and personal."

Producer Anthony Bregman had previously also worked with producer Paul Trijbits on the Stephen Frears film *Lay The Favorite*, starring Bruce Willis and Catherine Zeta Jones. Bregman had subsequently grown his company with investment and a slate of films. With an impending production in Ireland, Trijbits was keen to sign up and the two pulled together the project. As an added endorsement, Trijbits' business partner, producer Christian Grass, had recently seen *Begin Again* in Toronto and had loved it.

"Christian said it was the most enjoyable, wonderful film that he'd seen," notes Trijbits. "*Sing Street* then became a co-production between Likely Story, a New York-based company, and us in the UK, setting up a joint entity to make the film. Likely Story's producing and financing partners Kevin Frakes at PalmStar Entertainment, and Raj Brinder Singh at Merced Media immediately came on board to fully finance the film."

Trijbits then had to seek out an Irish producer to facilitate the production on the ground.

"We very quickly found Martina Niland who had done *Once* with John and was ready to take on the producer role," says Trijbits. "Then FilmNation came on board. We didn't have a script but we had an extended treatment to enable us to put the bulk of the money together. It was essential that we had the Irish Film Board in there, which was also an interesting journey for them. They had supported John before, but now had to make a choice to support him without the script being ready, which they did."

With the financing in place, Carney began to assemble the various elements, including the music soundtrack, his camera and design teams and, most importantly, his young cast.

CASTING

Producer Anthony Bregman's biggest concern was how the filmmakers would find enough young talent in an industry reliant on 'names' to enable a film to survive past its first weekend at the box office.

"When you're hiring a big movie star who's carried movies before, you know whether they have the ability to carry a movie, because they've done it before," says Bregman. "But these are kids who have never been in front of a camera and now they're going to be looked at for 90 minutes straight. That's a big burden."

Co-Producer Paul Trijbits agrees: "You have to believe that there are people out there who are going to be capable of carrying that."

Trijbits has had experience of this before as Executive Producer on Andrea Arnold's Cannes and BAFTA award-winning feature film *Fish Tank*. "When Andrea was looking for the girl to play the lead, that was a nine month journey. If you find people quite quickly and think, 'Oh, wow they're amazing,' there's a bit of you that thinks, 'Well, if you can find people that good, that quickly, there must be others out there,' and you keep going.

"What's hard is when you have people who are, in this case, relatively young," Trijbits adds. "Sometimes, there are bits of life experience that aren't present. So then all of a sudden they have to act certain things. You can't just say, 'Remember when your heart was broken,' because they might never have had their heart broken."

Unlike the usual casting process, the filmmakers decided to seek out new untapped talent from across Ireland. The team held auditions over a period of six months to look for their lead actor who would play Conor, the lead actress who would play Raphina, and the rest of the young band Conor pulls together at Synge Street School.

Carney, along with Dublin based Casting Director Louise Kiely, set up auditions across Ireland attracting thousands of young hopefuls.

"Casting was interesting because I wanted to get non-actors, firstly," says the director. "I didn't want them to be like that [Irish Stage School] Billy Barry sort of vibe. I wanted it to be very naturalistic. So we just did a big Open Call and saw everybody from around the country who thought they could play an instrument.

"It's amazing that almost all of the actors in the film are some of the first people we saw. We saw thousands, but you know very early when a kid is amazing. You then start writing the part around the kids that you like and then we started narrowing down the casting, to try her with him and him with her. That's the way we did it."

“John would actually send me pictures, as I was in the U.S. at the time; pictures of crowds of people snaking around blocks,” recalls Bregman of the casting process. “Every kid with a guitar or a drum kit was coming in. They would do a song and an interview and then they would act out a scene so we could see if they could sing and act. That’s how we found Ferdia and everyone in the band.”

Ferdia Walsh-Peelo had come from a musical family with a background in opera and Irish folk music. He had been a boy soprano and toured *The Magic Flute* with the Opera Theatre Company. He was also classically trained on piano.

Echoing the magic of the film’s own fairytale sensibility, it was only by sheer luck that he waited in line to audition and be discovered.

“When I got there the queue was so big,” Walsh-Peelo laughs recalling the process. “I was with my mum and I said I wanted to go home because I didn’t want to stand in that queue for hours. I was literally lining up for about five hours. I did the audition and sang a song. I felt it went really well. I then got re-called to a hotel and got down to the last six potential leads, which was amazing. We auditioned with different girls then. We didn’t hear from them for a while then, so I went off to Spain with my family on holiday. Half way through the holiday we got a call saying I’d been re-called for a few days time, so I had to book a flight and fly back, which was definitely worth it!”

Carney was delighted with his discovery.

“Ferdia is a very bright young man and the reason that I cast him in the film was that each time he came to an audition he got better,” the director explains. “Each time he left, he’d come back with the information processed that I had given him the time before, which showed me that he had the personality that was right for a film.

“It’s really hard for a young person, who’s not yet a man in that sense, to do that. Ferdia just had all the right ingredients for it. And he looked good, he had a great vibe and he’s got a good voice. He’s a smart kid.”

Carney had not previously worked with a cast of this age group, but he jokes that he has already had enough experience in others ways to give him the confidence to tackle a young band of teenagers.

“I’d worked with inexperienced actors before,” he laughs. “The first films I made were with my father. I would get him to play roles and try to direct him. I tried to get him to be in a Martin Scorsese style movie when I was young, in the garage. There’s no worse actor, I have to tell you. I like working with non-actors. Putting an experienced actor like Mark Ruffalo with Adam Levine who hadn’t officially acted before for *Begin Again* was a really interesting mix - a really dynamic thing to watch on screen. I think people like watching non-actors acting. It’s interesting.”

Carney was also able to pull together some of Ireland's biggest names including Aidan Gillen, Maria Doyle Kennedy and rising Hollywood star Jack Reynor.

For Gillen the story trod familiar ground for him, being a similar age and growing up in Dublin during the 1980s. His faith in Carney's ability to make it more than just a film with music attracted him to play the role of the father, Robert.

"We've seen music films before, but there aren't actually that many of them that work," Gillen suggests. "John's been in a band and he knows that world. It seemed like there was even more reason for this to work, as it's about what he was doing at that time. I know it's partly autobiographical, but it did resonate with me. Even the sound of the band that used to practice in the shed near me, the sound of switching on an amp and the crackle of that electronic noise, actually made my heart race. That kind of sound still has a visceral effect on me."

PRODUCTION

When a good thing works, *Sing Street's* director John Carney likes to keep it that way. His Director of Photography Yaron Orbach had been the architect of Carney's New York for *Begin Again*, transforming the city into a musical backdrop, shooting in the streets with little, if any, major support from tracks, lighting or cranes.

Both men had met through a mutual friend, the Irish film director Lance Daly with whom Orbach shot *The Good Doctor* in Los Angeles. At the time, Orbach was in a post-production company in Dublin called The Factory doing color corrections on Daly's film. He and Carney bonded over a few games of Ping-Pong.

"When *Begin, Again* was about to happen, I had a talk with Lance and he said he'd put in a good word with John," says Orbach. He'd also had previous experience working with producer Anthony Bregman. "So when Anthony was involved, there was another kind of "in." Between Lance and Anthony, I got to meet John in New York and here we are."

"It's funny working with Yaron," says Carney. "He's a Jewish guy from Israel originally, who lives in New York. He studied up on about 50 different Irish movies when we were in prep over those few months. But I was really glad to shoot it with a cameraman who wasn't from Ireland. He brought a great eye to *Begin Again*. That movie was set in New York. But he was also very interested in the light in Dublin and the way the light works here."

Inspired by the Technicolor look of the TV programs he watched as a boy, Carney was drawn to the idea of mixing the drab universe of 80s recession-era Ireland and what the director describes as "this colorful, amazing world" of pop videos.

"I lived through watching Top of the Pops and imagining that there was this great world of Duran Duran videos," Carney says. "That's what I thought London was like and I couldn't wait to get there. Not only was it the world in which you got 20 Marlboro instead of 10 in a

pack, it was just incredible haircuts and sexual liberation and freedom and we were still back here arresting people for putting condom machines in colleges. It was crazy.

“When you lived in Dublin, you couldn’t get your hands on a camera to save your life, or a costume or a look. We found that that was the way we were going to shoot the movie: do a sort of ‘before and after’ thing. You get the greyness of Dublin next to the Technicolor videos that they shoot, which is what’s in Conor’s head.”

Keeping the same shooting style as *Begin Again*, Orbach stripped down the camera.

“We wanted to give it a slightly different, more filmic look, but keep the spirit of *Once*. So we kept the handheld, no big lighting, no dollies, no SteadyCam. It was all handheld with that kind of free improvisation,” Orbach explains.

Extending the unique approach both the director and Orbach had to shooting, Carney would call in the cast to feel their way around the scene with Orbach lining up the first wide shot and then build the scene from there without an official shot list.

“John doesn’t like to do shot lists,” Orbach admits. “We came onto the set and there would be a mini line-reading/rehearsal. The actors would see where they wanted to put themselves and I would have a camera and put a wide lens on my shoulder. We’d find the master and go from there. We found the scene very quickly that way.

“Because of John’s style, which is all-inclusive and open to things that happen, there’s a lot of room for spontaneity with kids. It has been a bit challenging here and there. There were no positioning marks on the floor; we let them go wherever they wanted.”

“I like giving actors room to improvise a little bit and move around the script,” admits the director. “Sometimes things that kids say when they’re trying to remember the line that you wrote will often be way funnier than something that I could write. I would often encourage the kids in this film that if they’d forgotten their line, to not worry and just keep going and make some stuff up. It’s been fun and it’s easier to do when it’s your own script.”

For the Production Designer Alan MacDonald (whose previous work on *Love is the Devil*, *The Queen* and *Philomena* displayed his skill at period environments) tackling Dublin of the 1980s was a wonderful challenge.

MacDonald began by defining the moment in which we find ourselves – in this case, the early 1980s inner city Dublin. From there, he began slotting in each character to their background, creating a tableau to reflect their personalities, economic status, and most importantly, offering a back story to them.

“You psychologically have to analyze each individual character and the world they’re coming from and the world they’re living in,” says MacDonald. “I always see sets as psychological

portraits of people's socio-economic status or level, but also it's a kind of emotional tone in terms of how the film progresses and how the narrative progresses."

For the household, MacDonald had to portray them in a moment when they have fallen on hard times. Any wealth that might previously have made the house an affluent environment is crumbling.

MacDonald explains: "The world of Conor and his parents is that of a family collapsing. It's quite depressing. They've run out of money. They obviously had ambition and dreams that have collapsed around them. That becomes the basis for the design of the house: it's in decay."

The production chose to seek out locations in and around Dublin rather than look to do extensive builds of interiors in studios. In particular, the buildings of the Synge Street School, in the eighth district of the city spanning the Liffey (which still operates as a state-run Christian Brothers School) is not much changed since Carney's days there.

"I would say 50 percent of my job is getting the locations right," says MacDonald. "If they tell a truth, to me as a designer and as a writer-director, you're half way there. I had a great Locations Manager, Eoin Holohan, with whom I worked. I really pushed him because I knew that there would be locations that were remnants of the 80s in this town.

"For example, Eamon's house is a good one. As a basis, it had the remnants in a few rooms of insane carpets and wallpapers, which immediately gives you a foundation on which to build."

THE MUSIC

Writer/director John Carney wanted to find a songwriter early on in the development process to enable him to bring an authentic but accessible 80s sensibility to the songs he wanted the band to play. One such songwriter Carney had considered - Gary Clark - had recently moved back to his hometown of Dundee in Scotland from Los Angeles.

Clark is possibly best known for his hit single "Mary's Prayer" that he wrote for his band Danny Wilson in 1987. The song was released three times in the UK between 1988 and 1989 before reaching no. 3 in the UK charts. But in Ireland, the song had already become a huge hit, reaching No. 5 in the charts on its first release.

No stranger to working with musicians to devise a soundtrack, Carney had previously worked with Glen Hansard who starred in Carney's directorial debut *Once* and also wrote and performed the songs throughout the film. One of the film's songs, "Falling Slowly," won an Oscar® for Best Original Song in 2007.

For *Begin Again* Carney had employed New Radicals frontman Gregg Alexander to create the soundscape that formed the basis of Keira Knightley's character's song book.

“I wanted to explore some different options on this film,” Carney says. “It’s set in the 80s, so I wanted to get somebody who had actually written music during the 80s. I loved “Mary’s Prayer,” so I found Gary Clark. I rang him up out of the blue and said I made this film called *Once*. He had seen and really liked it. I said that “Mary’s Prayer” and his album [Meet Danny Wilson – 1987] changed my life. I listened to it with my brother when I was 14 in school when I should have been doing my work. I said, ‘What do you think about writing some songs, and I have some half-written songs which you could write lyrics for?’

“He got on a plane and came over. He is a brilliant songwriter with a very catchy, very hooky, 80s style. He wrote about five or six songs.”

Carney and Clark worked for a solid month before filming, recording the tracks with a studio band comprised of some of Ireland’s top session musicians. Ironically, because the band in the film has to begin learning to play as a band without the competence of a well-rehearsed ensemble, the musicians were encouraged to play badly.

“They were all told that they had to play down so that it felt realistically like a bunch of kids, not Ireland’s greatest studio musicians!” laughs producer Anthony Bregman. “This was especially true of the songs that happen earlier in the script. They do a cover of “Rio” by Duran Duran and the whole point of the recording of the cover is that it’s bad. We were sitting in the studio and John was saying, ‘No, it’s too good. Mess it up. Go faster. Go out of tune. Go out of sync.’ It was really trying to bring these great musicians down to the level of believability for kids who don’t know how to play.”

As the film’s protagonist Conor begins to experiment with different styles of 80s music, the songwriting and musicianship had to reflect his progress.

“The band goes through different phases,” Bregman adds. “They do a Duran Duran type song, then they do a Hall & Oates, they do a Cure, and an Elvis Costello type song. Each song is based on these different styles of songwriting and of singing from the 80s. It’s really fun to recognize a song that you haven’t heard before. You get what the style is.”

Carney’s love of music is reflected explicitly in his biography as a filmmaker. Co-Producer Paul Trijbits recognized the value of this early on the film’s development process, noticing the relentless passion Carney brought to every facet of the film’s soundtrack.

“John’s absolute skill is to tell stories using music. When you look at things that he’s done that we all love, that’s when he’s in his element. He knows how to do it. He had a great time being part of recording an album and effectively discovering a really young band. Finding Ferdia to become the lead singer of a band made up of the people around him made it all a really joyous experience for John and us. We were recording an album that we were laying down to sit alongside the story. Equally, it had to serve the story, which I think it cleverly does.”

When asked which bands and songwriters influenced him as the story came together, Carney is quick to respond and comprehensive in his knowledge.

“God, Frankie Goes To Hollywood was one of my favorite bands. Somebody asked me what was my guilty pleasure, and it has to be Level 42. I was a bass player so I was big into Level 42. I do sometimes pull a Level 42 CD down off the shelf and my girlfriend leaves the room, but I love them. I was listening to synth pop and funk and what everybody else was listening to as well: Joy Division, The Cure and loads of different stuff. I listened to lots of American music as well, a list too long to mention.”

For Carney’s Director of Photography Yaron Orbach, the trick was how to incorporate the musical elements into the narrative and shoot it seamlessly so that the audience was saved the awkward jump from dialogue to singing and music.

“What’s wonderful about handheld and about the loose approach is that it’s kind of rhythmic,” say Orbach. “Even when I’m just standing there, I can lean in and I can lean out. I think that gives a certain tempo to it, so when we’re capturing singing, I think the handheld has a naturally good marriage because it feels a bit more alive than if you’re doing very static dolly or crane shots.”

Along with the session band was the integration of the film’s lead actor Ferdia Walsh-Peelo who was thrust into center stage to make the vocals come alive.

“The studio was pretty intense,” Walsh-Peelo admits. “For about a month before that, I worked on vocals once a week because it was going to be long sessions in the studio where I’d be singing all day long. I learned a lot from that.”

For other members of the cast, it was an opportunity to reminisce. For actor Aidan Gillen it was an opportunity to reflect on some of his earlier encounters with 80s music as a teenager.

“I remember blagging my way into some pretty good stuff - Echo And The Bunnymen, The Smiths and U2,” Gillen recalls of his years living in Dublin. “There had been these bands coming out of Dublin. There was such a thing as an Irish rock star, like Van Morrison, Phil Lynott or Rory Gallagher, but they were looking back at blues stuff. With the likes of U2, it was something that was happening that was new. It was part of a new wave. It did feel exciting and it was happening in Dublin.”

Actor Jack Reynor is a child of the 90s but his music tastes were influenced very much by his own mother.

“I listened predominantly to music from the 70s and 80s growing up,” he says. “I would sit on set all day blaring out Steely Dan. My mother was born in 1970 and had grown up in the 80s. When I was a child, I knew all of her friends and the kind of culture that she had. It does resonate with me in a lot of ways and I’m definitely able to relate to the cultural context of the film.

“I was into music when I was 14. I liked The Beatles and The Rolling Stones and Guns n Roses. My musical taste has developed and matured since then. I was in a couple of bands when I was growing up and I loved it. I played guitar, a little bit of piano. I don’t do it anymore, but I miss it.”

For the younger members of the cast, it was an education in historical pop music. Carney would show the boys videos from the 80s to inform them of the way in which the bands moved on stage and on screen.

For the band’s young keyboard player Percy Chamburuka who plays Ngig, it was something very new. “Yeah, when I got the recall that’s when John showed me some dance videos from the 80s and keyboard players and the way they used to dress. He also led us through the whole music history of it. I had no clue about what type of music they were listening to and what style it was. So I’ve learned quite a bit about the 80s.”

For Lucy Boynton, who plays the film’s female lead, the musical education became a running joke between her and her director.

“It was really awkward because John kept referencing these really amazing films and songs and saying, ‘You know this?’ And I’d say, ‘No,’ and he’d say, ‘For God’s sake Lucy, where have you been living? What’s wrong with you?’ I’d say, ‘I’m so sorry, I wasn’t even born in the 80s!’”

THE VIBE OF THE 80S

Dublin in the 1980s was wracked by an aggressive downward socio-economic trend. Following the 1979 energy crisis, one of Prime Minister of Ireland Charles Haughey’s first functions was to address the nation about the worsening state of the country’s economy. With the government borrowing becoming a heavy burden on Ireland’s economic survival, many found themselves unemployed and struggling to maintain the quality of life they are previously been used to living.

However, director John Carney was keen to avoid the pitfalls of making a story about the economic downturn and effects on his surviving family. Instead, he concentrated on the contrasts that this moment in history presented to teenagers and their parents.

Divorce in Ireland up to and during the early 1980s was still prohibited and had been enforced by both the dominant Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of Ireland. An amendment to the Constitutional Bill had been proposed and rejected outright in 1986. The ban on divorce in Ireland was only lifted in 1996.

Carney wanted to explore the dynamic of a family living under this law and how it affected the children, who were ultimately the products of dissolving marriages.

“I didn’t want to do anything about Dublin politically, about the dark days of Ireland that we were living with in the late 70s and 80s. This film is more about a family falling apart. There are certainly no politics in this film, directly speaking,” he says. “There are just cultural politics to a degree. It’s about a family in trouble. The film is about a kid learning that, given the environment in which he’s growing up, he’s got to go off and create his own family. His nuclear family into which he was born is not going to solve the problems of his heart and his head.

“There are questions about unemployment and immigration in the film, but it’s not about that. It’s more about the idea of Ireland as an island. You can potentially get trapped in Ireland. It’s such a small country and it’s such a small population in a sense. You can think that you’re doing very well, but you’re not really doing that well from an international perspective. The film is in a sense a little bit about that; the kid realizes he has to go away and have some experiences elsewhere, apart from just living in Ireland.”

“It was certainly more uncommon,” says actor Aidan Gillen on the theme of divorce. “At that time there were a lot more people staying together because they felt they had to. It’s almost the norm not to, now. At that time there was stuff that kids just didn’t talk to their parents about. It was an era when parents weren’t trying to be best friends with their kids. They really were from another era, another age and just didn’t understand you. I do think however that kids now are probably more distant from their parents. They feel like they’re closer and they can talk about anything, but they’re lost in cyber space pretty much all the time. It’s quite hard to reach your kids, even though they’re loaded down with communication devices.”

The family dynamic was an element of the storyline to which the more mature actors could easily relate. For Jack Reynor who plays older brother Brendan, it was a scenario that would be recognizable to many Irish families who lived through the 80s.

“Because we’ve all grown up watching *The Late Show* on Friday nights with our families when we were kids, we understand the dynamics of an Irish family at the dinner table. It all came quite naturally to us. We knew where the cues were to pick up from one another. Aidan [Gillen] and Maria [Doyle Kennedy] are really great, veteran actors who have this kind of thing down. They were excellent in those scenes. Then you’ve got Kelly [Thornton who plays Conor’s sister Ann] and Ferdia [Walsh-Peelo], two very good young actors in their own right. They were really good at taking on those scenes and making them feel authentic.

Producer Martina Niland notes that family lives, the contrasts between Ireland and England, and in particular Dublin and London at that time were stark. “John’s was an Ireland that was this tough, grey, quite depressing place at the time. It didn’t seem like fertile ground for the creative industries, whereas, London by contrast, seemed like a metropolis and seemed so colorful. The film explores that perception I suppose, through Conor and the escapism on the TV in the corner, which had *Top of The Pops*, *Duran Duran* and all that kind of stuff going on.”

For costume Designer Tiziana Corvisieri, *Sing Street* offered a very accurate picture of life in that decade.

“For me, *Sing Street* is a very authentic representation of Dublin in the early 80s. I was here then and I was a 16-year-old in the early 80s. To me, it really does represent what was going on here. Across the water in the UK, everything seemed to have been going on. Here on the other hand, we were always looking across the water to see what was going on in the world.”

Rather than making the film feel as though it was made in the 1980s as other retrospective films have done to heighten the sense of place and time, Carney was keen to transport the audience there as though they were actually living it now - the colors, textures and sentiments being immediate and yet historical.

“John wanted to make a point when we spoke, that this is a movie set in the 80s, but it’s not an 80s movie,” says producer Anthony Bregman. “Meaning that he’s not doing a homage to 80s movies. He’s saying that he’s making it seem as though we’re there, that we’re living it. That’s an interesting distinction. You look at a 1980s movie now and you have to allow yourself a certain amount of 80s Hollywood artifice that wouldn’t work in a movie today. So, even while the movie is taking place in the 80s, it’s not being told in a way that would make us roll our eyes. It has to be something that we would understand. John has a style of making movies that is really consistent and this fits squarely into it.”

Standing on set as someone who was raised in the 1980s gave the crew an eerie sense of *déjà vu*. Costume Designer Tiziana Corvisieri’s extraordinarily well-sourced costumes from the period, Barbara Conway’s and Sandra Kelly’s hair and makeup work, and Alan MacDonald’s pin-point accurate art direction meant that no stone was left unturned in maintaining the true sense of ‘now’ that Carney insisted on.

Bregman felt it particularly during the school gig scenes. “It’s quite trippy for those of us who grew up in the 80s to look out on that crowd. It takes you back. You remember actually being there, in that crowd, with that over made-up, over-teased hair. You get to a certain age where a period film can actually be a part of your life that you remember.”

For Martina Niland it was the detail that made the whole environment convincing.

“It was more about seeing the washing up liquid we used in 1984 or 1985,” she points out. “It was about getting all of the utensils and things right and having people look at the film and go, ‘Do you remember that?’ That was really the key in John’s instruction to the art directing team. For a certain age group, it’s such a memorable decade I think, looks-wise, music-wise and costume-wise. You need to try and get that right so that they can enjoy the movie all the more.”

“I didn’t want to do big crane shots of big period detail. I’m not really that type of filmmaker. The devil is in the detail of these things. It’s the little digital watch that flashes you back to the period, or it’s the song on the radio or the hairstyle or the clothes, more than the big master shot,” says Carney. “So we didn’t go out into the streets and film Dublin that much. It was

more about the close detail, about the clothes and the vibe of the 80s rather than what Grafton Street looked like in the 80s.”

The film is peppered with 80s video moments as the band experiment shooting their own pop videos in the back alleys of Dublin and further afield in Dún Laoghaire. To incorporate these into the narrative of the film, Carney and his Director of Photography Yaron Orbach looked closely at numerous 80s videos, analyzing their structure, design and editing.

“John sent me a bunch of 80s videos, from Police to Madonna - everyone who was doing videos back then,” says Orbach. “We’d look at the style. Duran Duran was an important one. We’d look at the wackiness of it. They were just starting with the whole music video thing and getting cinematic, getting film cameras and film directors to shoot these music videos - it was a big outlet. It was interesting looking at them as a reference.

“At the beginning it was doing this more as a set piece and then, as we evolved, it seemed that because they’re kids, they’re kind of trying out and learning themselves. They have a little video camera and they’re experimenting. The first video was very shaky and not in focus, like a kid would do it. Then the second music video they’re getting a bit better, so it’s a bit more precise. The third music video - we decided to go a bit more into their imagination, so we’re shooting that on film. It’s departing a bit from the language, but it’s probably the most polished of them all and the most referenced to 80s videos.

“We shot the music video sequences on mini DV. We tested super VHS. It looks so good and bad at the same time. So we said, ‘OK, we want to have that spirit, but let’s give ourselves just a bit more quality to play with.’ So, mini DV felt like a good starting point. With two cameras, mini DV and no lights.”

For Production Designer Alan MacDonald it was all too familiar. “When I was Conor’s age, 13 or 14, I was obsessed with David Bowie. Of course that had a huge transformative effect on my life. It informed how I started to dress, how I started to wear makeup or dye my hair. That’s what Conor does in this film. It’s the same thing. He looks for these keys to discover who he is and what his identity should be. Music was the only real catalyst for me in developing an outward persona in terms of style and clothes.

“I think that’s one of the things that appealed to me about the film: it was an important time in my life. I was involved in designing and making a lot of pop videos at that time and I am obsessed with music, still. I think the music element is important in terms of the narrative because that’s the moment, often, when children grow into teenagers. They suddenly start to get interested in something that informs them, not just sonically, but also aesthetically. They start to notice clothes and hairstyles. Boys notice girls. Girls notice boys. They notice makeup. They start to dress better. I think the music thing was interesting to me but the idea of becoming a teenager was even more interesting.”

During the early 1980s, with fewer references from which to draw inspiration, MacDonald believes it was easier to make a mark in fashion, music and art.

“You really had to research. You’d watch Top of the Pops once a week and that would give you keys. You’d get NME or Sounds or Melody Maker or whatever and they would be keys. There were no youth culture magazines, no Internet, no digital blandness...”

The sense of innovation was something Costume Designer Tiziana Corviersi brought to the project. “There was no money in the 80s, so you couldn’t buy new clothes. Even if you did have money and you wanted to buy new clothes and trendy clothes; you couldn’t get them in Dublin. I think young people were always going back to charity shops, second hand shops and a lot of the time they were altering clothes to make them look like contemporary and funky clothes. But there was a lot of hand-me-down stuff from the 70s. There was raiding of siblings’ and parents’ wardrobes. Definitely it was a mixing pot of ideas.”

DUBLIN AS A LOCATION

The production shot the majority of days on location in and around Dublin with only one significant built set being Brendan’s room. The shoot benefitted from Dublin’s architecture not having changed too dramatically from the 1980s. Where it had, the art department was able to retro-fit some design work to bring it back to the period.

For the director John Carney, the film was not so much about promoting a large scale look at what Dublin might have felt like during this decade, but more a sense of how it felt to be there in people’s homes, schools and back streets.

There are pockets of Dublin that haven’t changed that much,” says producer Martina Niland. “Apart from trying to navigate the odd satellite dish here and there, and things that just weren’t around, there are ways of being smart about it. We didn’t have huge resources to throw at it so we picked the right streets that had the look.”

Producer Anthony Bregman agrees. “These buildings have been here since the 80s. Every place, every shop, was basically there since the 80s. They’ve changed a little bit and we’ve changed it back. One of the big challenges on *Begin Again* was that we were shooting a lot on the streets of New York and we had famous people in the movie, so wherever we were, it created these huge crowds of on-lookers snapping with their phones. Because Dublin isn’t a paparazzi culture and these kids are not paparazzi magnets - at least not yet - there weren’t so many distractions. They could just get into the scene without us having to block out the lenses and the crowds.”

The crew shot extensively in the high-walled yards of Synge Street School using the geography of the exteriors to highlight the inner city feel of the school. Synge Street School itself has changed very little since the 80s.

When filming on the streets of Dublin the production had noted in referring to old photography of Dublin from the 80s that, rather than fill the streets with period correct cars, they were able to leave them fairly empty. “Often with movies like this there’s a tendency for to

put loads of cars in when you do street scenes and think that'll tell the story," says Production Designer Alan MacDonald. "But when you look at pictures of Dublin in the 80s, there are hardly any cars on the street."

THE CHARACTERS

Sing Street follows 15-year-old schoolboy Conor as he moves from a private school education into an inner city school environment. At the same time, he is dealing with the breakdown of his parents' marriage. Though lead actor Ferdia Walsh-Peelo is of the similar age and had also experienced the concept of changing schools, this is where the similarities end.

Director John Carney and his young lead worked closely together to build what Walsh-Peelo describes as a loser with low self-esteem's journey to become someone with confidence.

"I had an experience of changing schools as well, but it was my decision, so it was a different kind of thing," explains Walsh-Peelo. "I think Conor is similar to me with the whole music thing and what music means to him. The things I don't relate to as much are probably his parents who are not as caring. They're a bit weird."

Working with Carney was a highly informative experience for the young actor. Being both a writer and director, Carney was able to restructure scenes organically with his young cast, allowing the opportunity to improvise and to feel their way through the role. Ultimately for Carney, this offered him a much truer performance. "It's really interesting, because when we started out we'd be thinking of a scene completely differently to how he [Carney] wanted it, and then we'd have to get into our heads what he meant," says Walsh-Peelo. "He didn't give us the exact way he wanted us to say it. He wanted that to come naturally."

Actress Lucy Boynton came to the project with slightly more experience than the others. She had already worked in film and TV with credits including *Miss Potter* opposite Rene Zellweger and Ewan McGregor, and *The Borgias* opposite Jeremy Irons.

The role of Raphina offered Boynton a chance to play a complex young girl, old before her age, who becomes the focus of Conor's romantic odyssey.

On Raphina, Boynton says: "She's been through a lot of stuff that thankfully most people her age haven't been through. Her response to that is feeling and acting a lot older than her actual age. You see that throughout most of the film, but there are some bits where you see her at her most vulnerable. You see that when she's without her hair and makeup, which she uses as a defense.

"Raphina is this pivotal figure for Conor's growing up. She opens his eyes to life beyond school. He is also so innocent and willing to understand her and know her and be patient with her that it really surprises her."

Walsh-Peelo and Boynton bonded over the process of finding their way through the characters' relationship. With Boynton already a seasoned pro in front of the camera, Walsh-Peelo constantly took mental notes on performance. Boynton found the process equally informative, though.

“Me watching him is more interesting than him watching me because you’re looking at somebody who probably hasn’t done much acting before,” Boynton says. “It’s interesting watching somebody relatively new to the game finding their way. I always have enjoyed watching people who aren’t set in their ways and who aren’t relying on their old tricks and the stuff they’ve done before that works for them. It’s interesting watching somebody do something that’s hard and get put through the mill!”

For actor Aidan Gillen, his character had a number of familiar references. “Robert is an architect who works at home,” Gillen explains. “Funnily enough, my father was an architect who worked at home. I was the same age in the era this film is set, as Conor is. My father wore polo necks and he looked just like this, and he drank whiskey occasionally too.

“I started acting when I was about 14 and going to see bands at that age. Those two things are probably the main passions in my life, still. It’s really nice to be acting in a film where the main characters are teenagers, and looking at them doing stuff for the first time ever, maybe even acting for the first time. They’re in situations, even in a film or make-believe setting, that they’re in for the first time in their lives. It’s exciting.

“The things you do when you’re 13 and 14, that you get into - they often do stay with you for the rest of your life. I know my own character and personality were really formulated around then. It’s at that age that, like the characters here, you’re breaking away from your family and finding out who you are. You may or may not stick with what you’re discovering in those years for the rest of your life. In my case, I think I did.”

For actor Jack Reynor, his character Brendan gave him the chance to channel his inner Pink Floyd fandom.

“He’s a complete stoner and sits up in his room all day, every day, listening to LPs and not doing much,” Reynor says of his character. “I think it’s a result of the relationship that he’s had with his parents and the things he wanted to do. The restrictions they’ve put on him have pushed him a bit further down this path. In a way, he acts as this sage-like character for Conor and he introduces him to all of this music and culture. He tries to help him to define his ideas and his opinions about his relationships and girls. There’s an element of Brendan living vicariously through his younger brother too.

“John didn’t give me any notes. It’s a little semi-autobiographical for John. I think my character was representative of somebody in his family. I’ve known him for a long, long time. We’ve always had a good rapport. He came and spoke to me about the role and just gave me the history of his family and his life and some of the relationships that he’d had.

“I could really relate to the character because I had similar people in my life and I knew what I wanted to do with it after that. I think John was happy enough to trust me and let me go for it. If there was something specific that he wanted, he’d look for that and he’d find it. But outside of that he trusted my vision for the character and I think we were on the same page.”

On his look, Reynor comments on the long hair he sports, a departure from the cropped look he’s worn in many of his other roles: “I wanted my hair long to look as much like Dave Gilmour as I possibly could.”

“I knew that he needed to look a bit disheveled and a bit introverted. We wanted him to be a bit scraggly and unshaven to give the sense that he’d been up there for a while and he was struggling to get through this part of his life. I think that really plays in the film. I think the character looks the part.”

“THE BEST UNIVERSAL STORIES ARE VERY SPECIFIC”

Producer Anthony Bregman believes what makes *Sing Street* such an inviting proposition not only for those who joined the team to make it, but also for those audiences who will engage with it internationally, is that it has a universal resonance.

“The best universal stories are very specific,” he says. “I think *Sing Street* is very specific in that way. All of my favorite stories happen in a community, in very specific circumstances, but they’re universal. One of the great aspects of being able to identify with a Chinese story, or French story, or Greek story, is that even though you live a life nothing like theirs, you actually share an enormous amount in common. That’s what’s going on here.”

Director John Carney brings the appeal for him back to the difference of family life in the 1980s compared to the parent/child dynamic of contemporary families.

“There’s a lot about marriage and separation in the film and the question of whether kids prefer their parents to stick together or to separate,” he says. “You’d hear about a family where the parents had officially split up. There would be whisperings about a family in trouble, but nobody was actually breaking apart. They couldn’t afford to and the church didn’t allow it.

“My lead character Conor hears that his parents might be splitting up, and the way he deals with it is to think about American TV shows in which you’d see couples splitting up and it’s all cool and the kids are fine. I remember that I’d go into people’s homes and you’d realize there was something wrong in the house; these people weren’t happy, but they’d stayed there to save face or save the wallet. In *Sing Street* there’s talk that the mother is having this affair and the kids are trying to process all of that information, in Ireland, in the 80s, which seems to me like a very interesting story to be telling.”

ABOUT THE CAST

Ferdia Walsh-Peelo (Conor)

Ferdia Walsh-Peelo began performing on stage as a boy soprano soloist at the age of seven. Coached by his mother, soprano Toni Walsh, he went on to win all the vocal competitions nationally as a boy treble, scooping bursaries and top prizes every time he sang. At the age of twelve he toured Ireland with Opera Theatre Company's production of Mozart's *Magic Flute*. He then played the role of *Miles* in Benjamin Britten's *Turn of the Screw* under conductor David Brophy.

Ferdia performed as guest boy soprano in various choral works including the *Chichester Psalms*, *Ceremony of Carols* and as Jake in Brian Irvine's *Rain Falling Up* with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland. In 2012 Ferdia clinched a much-coveted spot on the *Late Late Toy Show* singing *O Holy Night* and accompanying himself on piano.

At the age of fourteen he walked into an open casting for John Carney's *Sing Street*, his rendition of *Blackbird* by the Beatles put him on the shortlist for the role of Cosmo.

Ferdia attends an Irish-language school (Gaelscoil) in Bray Co. Wicklow.

Lucy Boynton (Raphina)

Lucy's previous feature film credits include Osgood Perkins' *February*, Ron Maxwell's *Copperhead* and Chris Noonan's *Miss Potter*.

Previous notable television credits include Simon Kaijser's *Life In Squares* for BBC 2; Joss Agnew's *Law & Order UK* for ITV1; Giuseppe Capotondi's *Endeavour* for ITV1; *Borgia* for Canal+; *Lewis - The Gift of Promise* for ITV; Channel 4's *Mo* directed by Philip Martin; *Ballet Shoes* directed by Sandra Goldbacher for BBC and John Alexander's *Sense And Sensibility* for BBC.

Jack Reynor (Brendan)

Jack Reynor is quickly becoming one of Hollywood's most sought after leading actors. As the major breakout of 2013's TIFF and Tribeca Film Festival, he has caught the attention of the industry's most talented people including Steven Spielberg, Michael Bay, Vince Vaughn, and Mark Wahlberg. Reynor recently became Ireland's highest grossing actor for a single film for his starring role in the latest installment of the *Transformers* series. Raised in Ireland, he has grown up with an incredible work ethic and a strong passion for films.

Reynor stars in the second feature from Irish director Gerard Barrett *Glassland*, a provocative human-trafficking story set in Dublin, alongside Toni Collette. Reynor recently finished filming the upcoming adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, directed by Justin Kurzel. Jack also stars in Julian Jarrold's *Girls Night Out*.

Most recently, Reynor won the 2014 Rising Star Award at CinemaCon. Reynor garnered rave reviews for playing the titular character in the Irish independent film *What Richard Did* directed by Richard Karlsen, for which he also won the IFTA Award for Best Actor of 2013.

Reynor made his US film debut in the Vince Vaughn comedy *Delivery Man* in 2013.

Maria Doyle Kennedy (Penny)

Maria's recent notable film credits include Andy and Lana Wachowski's *Jupiter Ascending*; Alan Gilson's *The Swan song of Eliza Lynch*; *A Thousand Times Goodnight* directed by Erik Poppe; Anthony O'Briens' *The Timber*; *Albert Nobbs* directed by Rodrigo Garcia; Gillies MacKinnon's *Tara Road*; Ian Fitzgibbon's *Spin The Bottle*; Mike Figgis' *Miss Julie* and *I Could Read The Sky* directed by Nichola Bruce.

Maria's previous notable television credits include Dominic Leclerc's *Call The Midwife*; Temple Street Productions' *Orphan Black* for which she won a Canadian Screen Award 2013; ITV's *Downton Abbey*; *The Tudors* for Showtime USA for which she won two IFTA's and a Canadian Screen Award.

Aidan Gillen (Robert)

Aidan Gillen played Stuart Alan Jones in the groundbreaking Channel 4 television series, *Queer As Folk*, and its sequel, for which he received a British Academy Television Award nomination for Best Actor. He was nominated for an Irish Times Theatre Award for his portrayal of Teach, in the Dublin Gate Theatre's 2007 production of David Mamet's *American Buffalo*, the same year playing Richard Roma in the west end production of *Glengarry Glen Ross*. In 2004 having been spotted by producers playing Mick (TONY nominated performance) in the Broadway production of *The Caretaker*, Gillen joined the main cast of HBO's acclaimed television series *The Wire*, portraying Tommy Carcetti for three seasons, for which he received an Irish Film and Television Award for Best Actor in a Lead Role in Television.

In 2011 Gillen joined the main cast of HBO's award-winning series *Game Of Thrones* portraying Petyr 'Littlefinger' Baelish, for which we received his second Irish Film and Television Award nomination. He starred with Jason Statham and David Morrissey, as cop killer Barry Weiss, in the British crime-thriller *Blitz*. Gillen played crime boss John Boy in the acclaimed Irish crime drama *Love/Hate* for which he received his third Irish Film and Television Award nomination and second win. That same year he won the best actor award at

Milan Film Festival for his performance in *Treacle Jr*; also picking up a best actor nomination at the British Independent Film Awards.

He played the CIA agent in the opening of *The Dark Knight Rises* and starred with Clive Owen and Gillian Anderson in the British/Irish spy-drama *Shadow Dancer*. He also appeared in John Michael McDonagh's film *Calvary* and in the American Independent film *Under The Harvest Sky* as well as the Sigur Ros Valtari Mystery film *Ekki Mukk*.

Recently completed projects include Guy Ritchie's *King Arthur: Knights of the Round Table*, RTE mini series *Charlie* as the lead Charles J Haughey, BBC thriller *May Day* and the feature film *Mazerunner: Scorch Trials*. He also starred in Mark Noonan's *You're Ugly Too*, which premiered at the Berlin film festival as well as Simon Blakes debut feature *Still*.

Kelly Thornton (Ann)

Chosen from an open casting for the leading juvenile role in Lance Daly's award winning feature *Life's A Breeze*, Kelly was nominated for a Lead Actress Film IFTA Award in 2014. Actor Zachary Quinto presented Kelly with the Bingham Ray New Talent Award at the 2013 Galway Film Fleadh.

Since then Kelly has been cast in a guest lead in RTE's most successful TV drama, *Love Hate* and appeared in season four of the show. Kelly most recently finished shooting the role of Corrina Mallon on RTE's mini - series *Clean Break*, directed by Gillies MacKinnon.

Ben Carolan (Darren)

Ben Carolan has previously appeared in RTE's productions *Elev8* and *The Late Late Toy Show* for television.

Sing Street is his first feature film.

Mark McKenna (Eamon)

Mark McKenna is an 18-year-old Dublin lad who has developed a love of music and acting from a young age.

Mark is currently a member of Dublin Youth Theatre and also of Portmarnock Youth Theatre.

Sing Street is his first feature film.

Percy Chamburuka (Ngig)

Percy is currently a student at the Institute of Technology Tallaght reading for a BA in Business Management.

His past achievements as a performer include being accepted into a theatre programme called Tenderfoot; being signed to an independent music label and being the CEO and Founder of B.A.M dance academy in 2013.

Sing Street is his first feature film.

Conor Hamilton (Larry)

Conor Hamilton is a 16-year-old Dubliner, currently in his 5th Year at Glasnevin-based Irish-language school, Scoil Chaitriona.

Conor is a songwriter with currently over 25 songs under his belt and he has released two singles; *Daydreamer* and *Lately*, both in 2013. He has headlined a sold-out show at the Academy, one of Dublin's premier music venues, and he is looking forward to the forthcoming release of his new single, *You Got It In You* that was recorded at Dublin's prestigious Sun Studios, and is produced by Mick Heffernan. Conor is planning the release of an as-yet untitled four-track EP.

Conor's previous television work includes presenting for RTE Young People programmes, including *Elev8*.

Sing Street is his first feature film.

Karl Rice (Garry)

Karl Rice has been starring in Christmas Pantomimes in Dublin's Olympia Theatre alongside Jedward and at the Helix since 2008. He has won awards for dancing and entertaining, that include Adjudicators Award for Best Choreography; Showbiz Kids 2013 and also Star of the Show: Showbiz Kids 2011.

He starred as Johnny in the short film *Cluck* in 2011 and as Donal in the Irish Film Board Signature short film *Cutting Grass* alongside John Hannah, in 2014.

Sing Street is his first feature film.

Ian Kenny (Barry)

Ian Kenny was born and raised in North Dublin and is pretty much as Irish as they come. He is a full time DCU student doing a degree in marketing innovation and technology but ultimately would like to make acting his full time career.

Ian fell into acting almost by accident aged 5, when he was cast in Ireland's longest running soap *Fair City* in the role of cheeky TJ Deegan, and played that role up until the age of 18.

Sing Street is his first feature film.

Don Wycherley (Brother Baxter)

Don Wycherley's most recent notable feature film credits include Paul Fraser's *My Brothers*; Ian Fitzgibbon's *Perrier's Bounty*; Tom Hall's *Wide Open Spaces*; Neil Jordan's *Ondine*; John Carney's *Zonad*; Lenny Abrahamson's *Garage*; Paddy Breathnach's *'Shrooms*; Joel Schumacher's *Veronica Guerir*; Lance Hool's *One Man's Hero*; Ruairi Robinsons *The Silent City* and Neil Jordan's *Michael Collins*.

Most recent television credits include *Moone Boy II*; John Carney's *Bachelor's Walk I,II,III* and *Bachelor's Walk Christmas Special*; Ian Fitzgibbon's *Showbands*; Kieran Prendiville's *Ballykissangeł*; Martin Friend's *Making The Cut* and Channel 4's *Father Ted*.

Lydia McGuinness (Miss Dunne)

Lydia McGuinness' most recent film and television credits include Peter Murphy and Rachel Moriarty's *Traders*; Jonathan Lambert's *Lethal Dialect '13 'till infinity*; Phil Sheeran's *Daddy Christmas*; Jackson Williams' *SpeedDating*; Peter McGlynn's *Natural Selection*; Patrick McKenna's *The Blaggettes* and Anthony Byrne's *Love/Hate*.

ABOUT THE CREW

John Carney (Writer/Director)

John Carney's most recent feature film credits as Writer / Director include *Begin Again* starring Mark Ruffalo and Keira Knightley and *Casting The Runes* produced by Barbara Broccoli and Michael Wilson and Eon Productions.

His other previous film credits as Writer / Director also include *The Rafter*s, produced by Martina Niland and Macdara Kelleher and the Irish Film Board; *Zonad* with co-writer Kieran Carney; *Once* featuring the music of Glen Hansard and produced by Martina Niland, David Collins and Samson Films; *On The Edge* starring Cillian Murphy and Stephen Rea and *November Afternoon* produced by Patrick O'Donoghue and Black & White film.

His previous television credits include *Bachelor's Walk Christmas Special* and *Bachelor's Walk* for RTE and *Just In Time* starring Frances Barber.

John's theatre credits include the stage show *Once*, adapted from the musical feature film, directed by John Tiffany.

Anthony Bregman (Producer)

Anthony Bregman's films include the Academy Award winning *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*; *The Ice Storm*; *Sense And Sensibility*; *Thumbsucker*; *The Extra Man*; *Friends With Money*; *Our Idiot Brother*; *Please Give*; *Synecdoche, New York*; *The Tao Of Steve*; *Lovely & Amazing*; *Human Nature*; *The Savages*; *The Brothers McMullen*; *Trick*; *Darling Companion*; and *The Oranges*.

Recent releases include Amy Berg's *Every Secret Thing* (Anchor Bay) starring Diane Lane and Elizabeth Banks; Bennett Miller's *Foxcatcher* (Sony Pictures Classics) starring Steve Carell, Channing Tatum, and Mark Ruffalo; John Carney's *Begin Again* (The Weinstein Company) starring Mark Ruffalo and Keira Knightley; Nicole Holofcener's *Enough Said* (Fox Searchlight) starring Julia Louis Dreyfus and James Gandolfini.

Anthony is currently in production on James Schamus' *Indignation*, based on the novel by Philip Roth and in pre-production on James Ponsoldt's *The Circle*, based on the novel by Dave Eggers and Alfonso Gomez-Rejon's *Collateral Beauty*, from the script by Allan Loeb.

Upcoming releases include Nima Nourizadeh's *American Ultra* (Lionsgate), written by Max Landis and starring Jesse Eisenberg and Kristen Stewart; Courtney Hunt's *The Whole Truth* starring Keanu Reeves and Renee Zellweger; and John Carney's *Sing Street* (The Weinstein Company).

In the fall of 2006, Bregman founded the New York City-based production company Likely Story, which he currently runs with Stefanie Azpiazu. Prior to Likely Story, Bregman was a partner at This is That for four years, and spent ten years as head of production at Good Machine, where he supervised the production and post-production of over thirty feature films, including *Sense and Sensibility*, *Eat Drink Man Woman*, *Walking & Talking*, *What Happened Was...*, *The Wedding Banquet*, and *Safe*. Bregman teaches producing at Columbia University's Graduate Film School and is Chairman of the Board of the IFP, the nation's oldest and largest industry association for independent filmmakers, which also sponsors the annual Gotham Awards.

Bregman's movies have won numerous awards at the Oscars, Golden Globes, BAFTAs, Gothams, Indie Spirits, and Cannes, Berlin and Sundance Film Festivals, among others. In 2010 Roger Ebert named "Synecdoche, New York" the Best Film of the Decade.

Martina Niland (Producer)

Martina Niland is an honors graduate of Communications - Film & Broadcasting and is a well-established film and television producer based in Dublin, Ireland.

Martina's most recent production is John Carney's much-anticipated new feature entitled **SING STREET**, which is due for release in 2016 and stars Aidan Gillen, Jack Reynor and Maria Doyle Kennedy. Film Nation is selling **SING STREET** internationally, with The Weinstein Company looking after it's release in North America.

Among Martina's producing credits is Karl Golden's debut feature film *THE Honeymooners* (2003) and his second feature *Belonging To Laura* (2009). Martina was a producer of Perry Ogden's debut feature *Pavee Lackeen* (2005), which won numerous awards including "Best Irish Film" at the Galway Film Fleadh, the Satyajit Ray Award at the London Film Festival and the IFTA for Best Irish Film. To date, her most critically acclaimed production was John Carney's *Once* which received the Oscar® for Best Original Song and was named "Best Foreign Film" at the 2008 Independent Spirit Awards. *Once* is sold internationally by Summit Entertainment and was released in the US by Fox Searchlight. In 2009 Martina produced Carmel Winters' first feature, entitled *Snap*, which had its world premiere at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival, screening in the narrative competition section. *Snap* also won 'Best Irish Film' and 'Best Irish Director' at the Dublin International Film Festival. In 2012 Martina also produced - John Carney's psychological chiller *The Rafter*s, and two co-productions; the comedy/horror *Grabbers*, which premiered at Sundance and was released in Ireland by Element Pictures and by Sony Pictures in the UK and is sold internationally by SALT; and *MILO*, a Dutch Irish Co- Production, which won the Young People's social Cine Club award at the Giffoni Film Festival 2012. Recently Martina produced the films *Run & Jump* and *Stay*. *Run & Jump* was co-written and directed by Oscar nominated Steph Green and won Best Irish Feature and Best Irish First Feature at the Galway Film Fleadh in 2013 and the Silver Spike Award at the Valladolid International Film Festival. Having had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in April 2013, it was then released in North America by IFC / Sundance Selects. *Stay*, which stars Aidan Quinn and Golden Globe nominee Taylor Schilling in the lead

roles, premiered at the Toronto Film Festival 2013. Gravititas Ventures released it in the USA and Canada in 2014. STAY is being sold internationally by Visit Films.

Paul Trijbits (Co-Producer)

Paul Trijbits is the Executive Producer of Disney's BAFTA and Golden Globe-nominated *Saving Mr. Banks*, starring Tom Hanks and Emma Thompson; and J.K. Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy* for the BBC and HBO starring Michael Gambon and Keeley Hawes.

Paul is Co-CEO of UK film and television production company FilmWave, founded in 2012 in partnership with Christian Grass, the former President of Production and Acquisitions, Universal Pictures International. Upcoming productions include Vincent Perez helmed *Alone in Berlin* starring Emma Thompson, Brendan Gleeson and Daniel Brühl, based on the best-selling novel by Hans Fallada, a co-production with X-Filme in Germany. The company is currently in post-production on *Once* and *Begin Again* director John Carney's new film *Sing Street*, as well as developing, packaging and producing a diverse slate of quality commercial film and television projects for the international market.

Paul was formerly Managing Director of Ruby Films & Television and before that the Head of the UK Film Council's New Cinema Fund. During his time at Ruby Films, Paul Executive Produced and Produced critically and commercially successful films including Cary Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre*, Andrea Arnold's *Fish Tank* and Stephen Frears' *Tamara Drewe* among others. In his role at the UK Film Council, Paul was responsible for titles such as, Kevin McDonald's *Touching The Void*, Andrea Arnold's *Red Road* and Paul Greengrass' *Bloody Sunday*. Paul's television credits include Stephen Poliakoff's Golden Globe winner *Dancing On The Edge* for BBC2 and *Starz, Case Histories* for BBC1 and Emmy award-winning and BAFTA nominated *Small Island*.

Christian Grass (Co-Producer)

Christian is the founder of UK production company FilmWave, and the former President of International Production and Acquisitions, Universal Pictures International.

Christian founded FilmWave in 2012 in partnership with Paul Trijbits, Executive Producer of *Saving Mr Banks* and *The Casual Vacancy* for the BBC and HBO. Alongside *Sing Street* current productions include Vincent Perez helmed *Alone in Berlin* starring Emma Thompson, Brendan Gleeson and Daniel Brühl, based on the best-selling novel by Hans Fallada, a co-production with X-Filme in Germany and *Brimstone* directed by Martin Koolhoven, starring Guy Pearce and Dakota Fanning.

Under Christian's leadership the Universal Pictures International Production Division produced and acquired such films as Andrés Muschietti's *Mama*, Matthew Vaughn's *Kick Ass*, the *Step Up* franchise, Quentin Tarantino's *Inglorious Basterds*, *Rubbeldiekatz* directed by

Detlev Buck, Timur Bekmambetov's *Black Lightning* and Park Chan-Wook's Cannes award winner *Thirst* among many others. Before joining UPI, Christian was Executive Vice President of Europe, the Middle East and Africa for 20th Century Fox International. At Fox Christian oversaw the theatrical distribution, sales and marketing of all Fox and Fox Searchlight releases including *Titanic*, *28 Days Later*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Independence Day* and *The Devil Wears Prada* among many others. Prior to joining Fox in 1996, Christian served as Vice President of International Marketing for Miramax International, where he supervised the marketing and publicity for all Miramax International releases including *Pulp Fiction*, *Pret A Porter* and *Bullets Over Broadway* among many others.

Kevin Frakes (Executive Producer)

Kevin Frakes is the founder and CEO of PalmStar Media. A producer of more than 30 films, Kevin also serves as a senior advisor to Merced Media.

In 2004, Kevin co-founded PalmStar, and has since gone on to raise over \$100M in development, production and distribution financing for motion pictures and other media content. In 2010, working with a group of San Francisco Bay Area investors, Kevin co-founded PalmStar Media, a leading independent production and financing company based in Los Angeles, with a focus on film and television content. In 2012 Kevin arranged a formal partnership between PalmStar Media and Minneapolis-based hedge fund Merced Capital to create Merced Media Partners.

Kevin's production credits include *Hateship Loveship*, *How To Make Love Like An Englishman*, and upcoming *American Ultra*, starring Kristen Stewart and Jesse Eisenberg, among others.

Kevin earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film and Television Production from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in 2001 and an MBA from Yale University in 2004.

Raj Brinder Singh (Executive Producer)

Raj Singh runs the film finance and production platform for Merced Capital. He has produced or executive produced several films including *American Ultra*, *November Man*, and *Laggies*. Prior to his role at Merced Capital, Raj worked in private equity and investment banking in New York City.

Jo Homewood (Line Producer)

Jo Homewood has been working in film for the last 20 years, having started her career from busking on Brighton seafront.

Jo's most notable credits in film and television include Jim Loach's *Life of Crime*; Tom Hall's *Trivia*; *Titanic - Blood And Steel* directed by Ciaran Donnelly; Jon Wright's *Grabbers*; *A Kiss For Jed Wood* directed by Maurice Linnane; John Smith's *Love And Savagery*; Kari Skogland's *50 Dead Men Walking*; Aisling Walsh's *Damage*; Ciaran Donnelly's *Proof*; Jim Sheridan's *In America*; *Bloody Sunday* directed by Paul Greengrass; *Borstal Boy* directed by Peter Sheridan; Angelica Huston's *Agnes Brown* and John Boorman's *The General*.

Alan Macdonald (Production Designer)

Alan is best known for his production design work on Stephen Frears' *The Queen*, which won him nomination for Best Art Direction in a Contemporary Film from the Art Directors Guild and Best Technical Achievement at the British Independent Film Awards, and for the Rajasthan-set *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* directed by John Madden, which won him a similar nomination for Best Art Direction in a Contemporary Film from the Art Directors Guild.

In 2013, he designed the sets for the Academy Award-nominated film *Philomena* and recently completed work on Stephen Frears' latest feature about disgraced Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong.

Other credits include *Love is the Devil*, depicting 10 years in the life of painter Francis Bacon; *The Jacket* and *The Edge of Love*, all directed by John Maybury; and *Kinky Boots*, the film on which the Broadway musical is based.

Alan's television credits include his design for *Henry V* directed by Thea Sharrock for the BBC, as part of 'The Hollow Crown' series and *Man to Man*, directed by John Maybury.

In 2014, Alan was production designer for Kevin Spacey's one man play 'Darrow' for the Old Vic Theatre in London.

Yaron Orbach (DOP)

Yaron Orbach's most recent notable film credits include Peter Bogdanovich's *Squirrels To The Nuts*; John Carney's *Can A Song Save Your Life?*; Mariana Chenillo's *Paraiso*; Stuart Blumberg's *Thanks For Sharing*; Josh Schwartz's *Fun Size*; *Our Idiot Brother* directed by Jesse Peretz; Lance Daly's *The Good Doctor*; John Carpenter's *The Ward*; Nicole Holofcener's *Please Give*; Derrick Borte's *The Joneses*; Richard Laxton's *An Englishman In New York* and David Wain's *The Ten*.

Previous notable television credits include Lionsgate's *Orange Is The New Black* and Miguel Arteta's *Rita* for Fox / Bravo and *The Carrie Diaries* for WBTV/CW.

Louise Kiely (Casting Director)

Louise received a Degree in Law from University College Cork and then trained at The Gaiety School of Acting. She was an Actor for a short period before setting up Louise Kiely Casting in 2005.

Her most recent notable film credits include Lenny Abrahamson's *What Richard Did*; Ian Fitzgibbon's *Death of a Superhero*; Darrah Byrne's *Parked* and Tom Hall's *Sensation*.

Tiziana Corvisieri (Costume Designer)

Irish-based Italian-born Costume Designer Tiziana Corvisieri has been working in the film industry since 1994.

Her previous feature film credits include *A Belfast Story* directed by Nathan Todd; Tom Hall's *Sensation* and with director John Carney, include the features *Once*; *The Rafter*s and *Zonad*.

Previous television credits include Dan Zeff's *Ice Cream Girls* for ITV; Nick Renton's *Little White Lie*; John Carney's *Bachelors Walk II and III and Christmas Special* and Thaddeus O'Sullivan's *Proof II*.

Eoin Holohan (Location Manager)

Eoin Holohan began his career in the Irish Film Industry in 1996, working as a Trainee in the Sound Department of *I Went Down*. He quickly realised that his talents were better suited to a different Department!

He has worked in the Locations Department of Films as diverse as *King Arthur* and *Veronica Guerin*.

His recent credits as Location Manager include 'Frank', 'Mrs. Brown's Boys D'Movie', 'The Lobster', and 'All Is By My Side'.

Barbara Conway (Key Make-Up Artist)

Barbara's previous film credits as Key Make-Up Artist include Jerzy Skolimowski's *Essential Killing*; John Carney's *Zonad*; Robert Quinn's *Cre ne Cille*; Kit Ryan's *Botched*; John Carney's *Once* and Lance Daly's *The Halo Effect*.

Her past film credits as Assistant Make-Up Artist include *Laws of Attraction* directed by Peter Howitt; John Crowley's *Intermission*; Liz Gill's *Goldfish Memory*; *The Magnificent Ambersons* directed by Alfonso Arau; *Not Afraid* directed by Annette Carducci and Gerard Stembridge's *About Adam*.

Barbara's television credits as Key Make-Up Artist include *Moone Boy 1&2&3* directed by Chris O'Dowd, Declan Lowney and Ian Fitzgibbon; Alan Shannon's *Roy*; David Caffrey's *Raw*; Nick Renton's *No Laughing Matter*; *Bachelors Walk Christmas Special* directed by John Carney; *Trouble in Paradise* directed by Emer Reynolds; David Coffey's *Dan and Becs*; *The Last Furlong* directed by Kieran Carney and Tom Hall; Darren Thornton's *Love is the Drug* and Dearbhla Walsh's *The Big Bow Wow*.

Gavin Glass (Music Director)

Gavin Glass is a music producer/director, instrumentalist, radio-presenter and songwriter from Dublin, Ireland.

He has released three critically acclaimed solo albums and has produced and played on countless Irish records over his twenty year career. He has toured and played alongside a range of Irish artists including Lisa Hannigan, Mundy, Jerry Fish, Cathy Davey and Declan O'Rourke to international acts such as Chas & Dave, Clarence Clemons (E-Street Band) and Garth Hudson (The Band).

As a music director, Gavin has worked on projects as diverse as "We Could Be Heroes", a production that worked with young local bands from Munster and developed them into a professional house-band for an outdoor festival which featured some of Ireland's top artists to the annual "Turning Pirate Mix Tape" which has performed to a sold out Vicar Street for the past six years.

In 2012 Gavin put together "The Grand Parade" a group of well known Irish artists for Today FM's "Shave or Dye" campaign and co-wrote the campaign song "Start Again" which was a top ten hit for the group and all proceeds went to the Irish Cancer Society. The band made several television appearances and went on to headline a stage at that year's Westport Festival.

He set up and continues to run Orphan Recording Studios in Dublin and presents "The Pick-Up" on Today FM's alternative station TXFM.

His fourth album "Sunday Songs" is due for release on the 28th September.

Gary Clark (Composer)

Gary Clark began his career as singer-songwriter-multi-instrumentalist in late '80s sophisti-pop band Danny Wilson. He penned the band's 1987 international hit "Mary's Prayer". Now considered classic, it still regularly re-enters the top 100 airplay charts in the UK.

After the band split in 1990 he continued for a while with some solo projects, but increasingly was moving into the areas of songwriting and production for other artists. He continues to do this today, and has worked with, amongst many others: Natalie Imbruglia, Liz Phair, Lloyd

Cole, Melanie C, Emma Bunton, The Veronicas, Delta Goodrem, McFly, Demi Lovato, Ferras, Lawson, Gin Wigmore and The Wanted. In 2014 he had two of his biggest international successes to date with Kim Cesarion's "Undressed" and Alex Hepburn's "Under" both of which were top five singles across Europe and number 1s in more than one country.

Although his credits in film and television to date are impressive, having contributed songs to *There's Something about Mary*, *Nightwatch*, *Jawbreaker*, *Wild Things*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *666 Park Avenue*, *Underbelly*, *Teen Wolf* and *Pretty Little Liars*, amongst others; *Sing Street* is the first time Clark has written directly for the screen.

Clark has 3 BMI awards, has won Nordoff-Robbins/PRS songwriter of the year and has an Ivor Novello nomination for Best song musically and lyrically for "Mary's Prayer".

Andrew Marcus (Editor)

Andrew Marcus began his editing career with Merchant Ivory Films. His credits include *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge*, *Howard's End*, *Remains of the Day*, *Surviving Picasso*, and *Jefferson in Paris*. He has also collaborated several times with director Kenneth Branagh on such films as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, *Peter's Friends* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. Andrew was the editor and second unit director of John Cameron Mitchell's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, Mary Harron's *American Psycho* and Callie Khourie's *Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood*.

An avid surfer, he is delighted to include the documentary *The Billabong Odyssey: The Quest to Surf the World's Biggest Wave*, a theatrical feature about tow-in surfing among his credits. Other credits include such *Under The Tuscan Sun*, *A Home At the End of the World*, *Everything is Illuminated*, *Tenderness*, *Flicka*, *When In Rome*, *The Moth Diaries*, and the *Step Up* films, 2 & 3. Over the past few years he has collaborated with John Carney on *Begin Again*, worked on the Netflix miniseries *Marco Polo*, as well as co-editing Roger Waters' *The Wall* and Nina Nourizadeh's *American Ultra*. He is currently editing *Indignation* for James Schamus.

Julian Ulrichs (Editor)

Julian Ulrichs, completed an undergraduate degree in Law in 2006 (LLB NUI Galway) before getting an MA in Production and Direction (Huston School of Film & Digital Media). He started out as an Assistant Editor (*Begin Again*, *Foyle's War*) before progressing to Assembly Editor on the multi award-winning Irish crime drama *Love Hate* (Series 3, 4 and 5) and the Justus Von Dohnanyi film *Desaster* (2015). Since then he has edited a number of projects that include *Jack Taylor: Shot Down* and *The Centre*.

Becky Bentham (Music Supervisor)

Becky entered the music industry working at the Performing Rights Society before moving into audio post-production at Goldcrest Films and Roger Cherrills in Soho. Becky then travelled to Australia where she managed post-production audio facilities in Sydney.

On her return to the UK in 1992 Becky established herself as a Music Supervisor and Composer Agent at Air-Edel Associates until 2002, when she set up Hothouse Music Ltd, which burst onto the scene securing its position as the Europe's leading Music Supervision Company and Composer Agency. Becky received the Ion Productions Business Award at Women in Film and TV awards 2009.

Becky's extensive list of composer clients includes Hans Zimmer, James Newton Howard, Harry Gregson-Williams, Angelo Badalamenti and Gabriel Yared. After 20 years working closely with Composers, Directors and Producers, handling all aspects of music production for feature film, Becky's knowledge of this industry is second to none.

Becky's reputation as a first-rate music supervisor is established not only in the UK but also in the USA where clients include Universal, Warner Bros., Dreamworks 20th Century Fox, MGM, Sony, The Weinstein Company, HBO, and Disney.

Responsibilities on projects include; budget control, track research, track clearances, selection of music team (composer, musicians, studios, orchestrators, conductors, programmers, copyists, music editors and engineers etc), contract negotiations, session planning, session attendance, securing soundtrack deals etc.

Becky also has a wealth of experience in supervising on-set music and musicians. This involves the organization of everything from pre-records to on-set filming with musicians/singers: from sourcing and clearing tracks and commissioning new material as required, handling contract negotiations, hiring arrangers, musicians and singers (including vocal coaching for cast members) and coordinating pre-record sessions, to distributing rehearsal material to relevant personnel prior to shoot, liaising with on-set sound, props and costume teams, scheduling and supervising on set filming with musicians and providing full budgets and cost breakdowns to Producers. Becky has supervised on-set music for a range of high profile films including *Les Misérables*, *Mamma Mia*, *De-Lovely*, *La Vie En Rose*, *The Edge Of Love*, *Strictly Sinatra*, *One Chance* and *The Book Thief*.

Becky has vast experience of score recording throughout the UK and Europe and in source music clearances, using her broad knowledge of popular and classical music to work with Directors and Producers to choose appropriate material both artistically and financially.

Projects which illustrate her expertise include the feature films *Les Miserables*, *Mamma Mia!*, *La Vie En Rose* for which she won a Czech Lion Award in 2008, John Madden's *Shakespeare*

In Love, Ridley Scott's *Kingdom Of Heaven* and Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins* and *The Dark Knight*.

Keiran Lynch (Music Supervisor)

Kieran Lynch is an Irish music producer and mix engineer working in the music, TV and film industries. Kieran's list of work includes projects with recording acts such as R.E.M., U2, Elvis Costello, The Beautiful South, Iarla Ó Lionáird, The Corrs, Paul Brady, David Lang, The Crash Ensemble and The Frank And Walters. Film work includes the soundtracks of features like *Get Rich Or Die Tryin'*, *In America*, *The Tailor of Panama*, *The Good Thief*, *Ella Enchanted*, *The Water Giant*, *Kisses*, *Frank and Sing Street*.

Kieran studied electronic engineering at University College Dublin before starting his career as a recording engineering at Windmill Lane Recording Studios in the mid 90s. There he worked for iconic producers such as Flood, Brian Eno, Daniel Lanois, Stephen Street and Mike Hedges as well as recording many film scores with the Irish Film Orchestra. He now runs his own production company - Smalltone Productions - from his purpose build studio in the heart of Dublin city. Kieran also works in film post-production sound as a sound designer and re-recording mixer.

In recent times, Kieran Lynch has lectured at a number of Irish education facilities including Dundalk Institute of Technology, The Windmill Lane Academy and BIMM Ireland.

CREDITS

The Weinstein Company presents

In association with Merced Media and PalmStar Media Capital

With the participation of Bord Scannán Na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board

A Likely Story / FilmWave / Distressed Films / Cosmo Films Production

A John Carney Film

Dublin 1985

Lucy Boynton
Maria Doyle Kennedy
Aiden Gillen
Jack Reynor
Kelly Thornton
Ferdia Walsh-Peelo

Casting Director
Louise Kiely

Line Producer
Jo Homewood

Original Songs by
Gary Clark and John Carney

Costume Designer
Tiziana Corvisieri

Music Supervisor
Becky Bentham

Music Producer
Kieran Lynch

Editors
Andrew Marcus
Julian Ulrichs

Production Designer
Alan MacDonald

Director of Photography
Yaron Orbach

Associate Producers

Chelsey Pinke
Mary-Claire White
Peter Cron

Executive Producers

Kevin Frakes
Raj Brinder Singh

Executive Producers

Bob Weinstein
Harvey Weinstein

Co-Producers

Paul Trijbits
Christian Grass

Produced by

Anthony Bregman
Martina Niland
John Carney

Story by

John Carney & Simon Carmody

Screenplay by

John Carney

Directed by

John Carney

SING STREET