

# HYSTERIA

## Synopsis

In an age of invention, one man set out to find a medical cure for what ails women . . . and accidentally electrified our love lives forever.

HYSTERIA is a lighthearted romantic comedy based on the surprising truth of how Dr. Mortimer Granville came up with the world's first electro-mechanical vibrator. Academy Award® nominee Maggie Gyllenhaal (CRAZY HEART, NANNY MCPHEE RETURNS) and Hugh Dancy (ADAM, CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC) lead an accomplished cast in this untold tale of Victorian discovery, as a young doctor's quest to work out the key to women's happiness leads him to his own.

The time is the 1880's, the very peak of Victorian prudishness but also the dawn of the electrical age. In London, the brilliant and devoted young doctor, Mortimer Granville (DANCY) has just lost his hospital position for his insistent belief in a new fangled idea called 'germ theory' and needs a new job. He finds it with Dr. Robert Dalrymple (JONATHAN PRYCE), London's "foremost specialist in women's medicine". An expert in 'hysteria', Dr. Dalrymple is besieged by an alarming epidemic of women suffering from a wide variety of symptoms that include "weeping, nymphomania, frigidity, melancholia, and anxiety". Luckily, Dalrymple's 'manual massage' cure is shockingly effective. The handsome young doctor soon has women queuing around the block and finds himself engaged to the boss's younger daughter, the perfect and beautiful Emily Dalrymple (JONES). All this success comes at a cost. Mortimer finds himself dealing with both extreme hand cramps and the fiery disapproval of Dalrymple's vexing elder daughter, Charlotte (GYLLENHAAL), a champion of poor women's rights, who accuses both her father and the young doctor of being "quacks".

Losing his physician's touch, Mortimer can no longer satisfy his patients. As a result, he yet again loses his job and with it, his fiancée. With nowhere else to go, he turns to his lifelong friend the forward-thinking Edmund St. John-Smythe (RUPERT EVERETT). Edmund, obsessed with the 'new' science of electricity, unveils the plans for the new electric-powered feather duster, which gives the doctor a compelling idea . . . the result will revitalize his medical practice, thrill his patients and upend his heart, as Charlotte begins to teach him more about how women really work – and what they actually want – than he ever bargained for.

The result is a witty, winning comedy that not only reveals how the vibrator became one of the first electrical appliances in history to earn a patent – but also, sends sparks flying between a cautious man and a liberated woman brought together by the wonders of friction.

Shot in London and Luxembourg, HYSTERIA stars Academy Award nominee Maggie Gyllenhaal and Hugh Dancy. The film co-stars Jonathan Pryce (PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN, BEDTIME STORIES) Rupert Everett (MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING, SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE, ST. TRINIANS), and Felicity Jones (LIKE CRAZY, CHALET GIRL).

Appearing in co-starring roles in the film are Ashley Jensen (EXTRAS, UGLY BETTY), Olivier Award winning Sheridan Smith (London's stage version of LEGALLY BLONDE, GAVIN & STACEY), Gemma Jones (HARRY POTTER & THE DEADLY HALLOWS, BRIDGET JONES' DIARY) and Anna Chancellor (THE DREAMERS, WHAT A GIRL WANTS).

HYSTERIA is directed by Tanya Wexler (BALL IN THE HOUSE, FINDING NORTH) from a script by the writing team of Stephen Dyer and Jonah Lisa Dyer. A trio of women is producing the film: Sarah Curtis ( HER MAJESTY MRS. BROWN, MANSFIELD PARK), Judy Cairo (CRAZY HEART), and Tracey Becker (FINDING NEVERLAND).

# HYSTERIA

## About the Production

**HYSTERIA [hi-ster-ee-uh, -steer-] N. 1. Historically, a medical disorder marked by excitability, irritability, misbehavior and emotional extremes, occurring mainly in women; 2. A burst of hilarity**

Tanya Wexler's new film HYSTERIA looks and feels like the classic, sumptuous Victorian period piece we've all come to know and love. But there is more here than first meets the eye. At the heart of the film is an irreverent, hilarious and surprisingly modern story.

Set in the 1880's, just as a flurry of newfangled gadgets and inventions was forging the world as we now know it, the film follows the historic creation of the singular best-selling, domestic appliance that dared not announce its true purpose: the electrical vibrator. Yet, what emerges is more than a playful comic romp. HYSTERIA is a feisty love story and a trip into hidden history, an exploration of women's passion and a celebration of the forward-thinking spirit that has always kept human progress buzzing.

With a cast led by Academy Award® nominee Maggie Gyllenhaal (CRAZY HEART) and leading man Hugh Dancy (MY IDIOT BROTHER), the film might take place in a comical, colorful past of Victorian morals, misunderstood women and shocking medical practices, but it poses questions about sexual attitudes, about men and women and about how to lead a truly satisfying life that still raises eyebrows today.

### Getting Hysterical: The Screenplay

The spark of HYSTERIA began with a little-known quirk of history: the fact that the battery-operated vibrator was patented in the late 1800's by one Joseph Mortimer Granville, a highly-regarded English physician who designed it quite seriously as a medical device. Granville promoted his machine, known as "Granville's Hammer," for the relief of muscular aches and pains. But it was soon commandeered into service for what was, at the time, seen by many physicians as the only reliable treatment for the widespread, and notoriously mystifying, women's disorder known as 'hysteria'. This treatment was, "medicinal massage" of the female organs "to the point of paroxysm," which was in the Victorian view, a perfectly clinical release of the nervous system, certainly *not* to be confused with an orgasm and not in any way considered sexual.

While 'hysteria' would ultimately be exposed (albeit a century later) as a 4,000 year-old myth and a catch-all diagnosis for all sorts of ailments, the vibrator would go on to help usher in a whole new world where women gained the freedom to explore the power of their own sexuality.

When producer Tracey Becker, whose films include Marc Forster's Academy Award®-winning FINDING NEVERLAND (an imaginative retelling of J.M. Barrie's invention of Peter Pan), first heard the story of Granville from writer Howard Gensler, she was initially amused, but then she was inspired. The notion of an upright and proper Victorian doctor inventing what would become the world's most popular sex toy sounded like a terrific jumping off point for a modern movie.

"But it couldn't be another dusty biopic," Becker laughs. "It had to be a sparkling romantic comedy and a story that's about much more than the invention of the vibrator, that's about the spirit of change."

Becker brought the idea to director, Tanya Wexler, and the two of them, in turn, brought it to the writing team of Stephen Dyer and Jonah Lisa Dyer, who could not resist the shocking simplicity of the idea – although it soon became more complex. "Tracey and Tanya brought us one of those great comic concepts you can express in a single sentence: 'A Victorian doctor invents the vibrator.' And we just sort of said 'yes, we'll do it' right away, and only then did we start to wonder, *what on earth have we gotten ourselves into,*" laughs Stephen. "It was a brilliant idea, but it needed characters, situations, a whole world and structure to be built around it."

Says Becker: "We knew that we'd have to find a unique tone, because while it might be a 19<sup>th</sup> Century story, it's a subject that still makes us blush in 2011. I think the Dyers really capitalized on the fun of creating a kind of lush, Merchant Ivory reality on the surface but with a hilarious, unbridled comedy running underneath it. Rather than go for the obvious jokes, they allowed the humor to arise from the absurd events surrounding these very charming and relatable characters."

The Dyers immersed into research, discovering a time period on the very cusp between dust-worn traditions and the shock of the new – a time when doctors were moving away from a belief in vapors and leeches to an understanding of Germ Theory and psychology; when a candle and gas-lit world was turning into an electrified spectacle of mechanical devices; and when bold women began fighting for the right to make their own choices.

In the midst of all this, they learned about the strange chapter in 19<sup>th</sup> Century medicine when nearly a quarter of London's female population was diagnosed with 'hysteria', a phrase applied to a vast array of women's disorders -- including such apparent feminine mysteries as unhappiness, restlessness, disobedience, impertinence, either too little or too much interest in sex, and even the desire for voting rights. (While the diagnosis was finally dropped in the 1950s, even today we still say "don't get hysterical!" as a warning to women on the verge.)

Hysterical symptoms of one sort or another had a long and outrageous history, since the time of ancient Greek physicians, of being treated with "pelvic massage," "digital manipulation," and such creative therapies as horse-back riding and hydro-baths for the nether regions. But now, with Victorian

doctors believing they had an epidemic of female madness on their hands, the practice spread through England as it never had anywhere before. With it, came the staunch philosophy that such treatments were in no way erotic in nature. On the contrary, they were purely neurological therapy. The physical reaction that resulted could not possibly be related to what should only happen between husband and wife but rather, a medical release allowing toxicity and strain to drain from the nervous system.

The more the Dyers read about hysteria and its treatment, the more they were amazed. “Once we started digging into the history, we realized this had been going on for thousands of years, with women being prescribed horseback riding and water treatments, yet always avoiding the suggestion that there was anything sexual about it,” muses Jonah Lisa. “There was a real belief, up until very recently, that women couldn’t possibly derive pleasure without penetration by a man, so that’s how male doctors were able to divorce these treatments from anything sexual. But the women always knew what was going on!”

Indeed, the search for new ways to stimulate women led to early progenitors of the vibrator, and when Mortimer Granville invented his “Hammer”, he was well aware that it might be used to treat women for ‘hysteria’. This became a foundation of the film’s comedy as the Dyers started writing. Though they looked into the real Granville’s rather upright past, they decided to fictionalize his life and relationships, including his disastrous run-in with a very particular type of carpal tunnel syndrome, his romantic entanglements with his boss’s two opposite daughters and, most importantly, his biggest inner conflict: whether to settle for conventional success or dare to follow his convictions . . . and his heart.

“Mortimer’s journey is really about a man who believes in modern science, who wants to change medicine, but then he loses all that when he starts treating women for hysteria,” explains Stephen. “He loses it, until he meets the amazing Charlotte Dalrymple, Maggie Gyllenhaal’s character, and she forces him to confront what he can live with and what he can’t in his own actions.”

Continues Jonah Lisa: “We loved the idea of Mortimer as a young visionary who is ahead of his time and feels held back by society. This was such a rich period in human invention and progress – electrical appliances, modern medicine, women’s rights were all in the midst of their genesis. There were lots of people pushing the boundaries and the risks of doing so were very interesting to us.”

For Mortimer, the risks and the rewards of flying in the face of Victorian conventions are brought home in his choice between the two Dalrymple sisters, whose diametrically opposed takes on the Victorian feminine mystique bring life and verve to the story.

“Emily is of course the Victorian Ideal in the flesh -- dutiful, well-behaved and exquisitely turned out,” notes Stephen. “Charlotte, on the other hand, is a pure firebrand fighting for women’s rights and using her father’s money to lift women out of poverty. It’s a stark choice for Mortimer.”

Charlotte soon becomes the prickly thorn in Mortimer's side -- with deliciously flirtatious results. "I loved creating Charlotte, because she's such a modern character," says Jonah Lisa. "She truly believes in things and she shakes up Mortimer and reminds him that he used to believe in things, too. She really gets under his skin and all their bickering and banter just fuels their flame. It's an exasperating, funny relationship, but it's also a true love story, because in the end, Mortimer finds he is actually willing to sacrifice his safe, perfect life for Charlotte."

As the screenplay unfolded, the comedy and romance came naturally so the Dyers made authenticity their priority. "Tanya, Tracey, Jonah Lisa and I always envisioned a movie that would look like HOWARD'S END in its attention to details but play more like FOUR WEDDINGS AND FUNERAL in tone," explains Stephen. "And that's exactly what Tanya went on to achieve."

### **Hysterical Women: The Filmmaking Team**

It seemed only fitting that HYSTERIA be brought to fruition by women, and Producer, Tracey Becker and Director, Tanya Wexler would soon be joined by two other accomplished female filmmakers: British producer, Sarah Curtis and American producer Judy Cairo, who each brought their own expertise and passion to the project.

Wexler had directed several acclaimed short films while studying at Columbia University and made her debut with a pair of low-budget indie features (FINDING NORTH, BALL IN THE HOUSE), then she took a long break from filmmaking to start a family. In fact, Wexler met Tracey Becker when she appeared one day in the West Village toy store Becker ran with her husband.

"It was a very unconventional meeting," recalls Becker. "We just started talking without either of us knowing we were both filmmakers, only to discover that connection later."

But as the two became friends, Becker began to see that Wexler was the perfect match for HYSTERIA. Becker goes on: "I came to see Tanya as a force of nature. She is extremely intelligent, but also full of creativity and amazing intuitiveness. When I saw her first films, I realized that not only is she a genuine person but she is also a natural storyteller."

As soon as Becker mentioned an idea for a movie about the invention of the vibrator, Wexler jumped. "When she heard the idea, she lit up like a firecracker," Becker recalls. "She began doing so much research that she could probably now write her own book on Victorian sexual mores."

Wexler was so excited about HYSTERIA in part because she saw it as a hybrid of her two favorite film genres. "I'm a huge fan of British costume dramas but I also love sophisticated modern comedies," she explains. "So when I first heard about this story, I thought, I *have* to make this movie."

It would be so fun to contrast this upper-class, buttoned-down Victorian world with this very sexual treatment for women that they insisted wasn't sexual at all."

She quickly developed her own vision of the film and then introduced Becker to Stephen and Jonah Lisa Dyer, whom she had collaborated with on her other films. "I knew that the film had to play off the conventions of classic films of the past but turn them on their ear. We needed the wit of romantic comedies of the 30s and 40s with Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant, and with all that great back-and-forth banter and building sexual chemistry.... We needed the gorgeous design of elegant Merchant-Ivory style costume dramas, and the pace of a modern comedy," she explains. "The core of the story to me was this young forward thinking doctor whose world gets turned upside down by a woman who prods and challenges him at every turn."

Wexler always felt Charlotte Dalrymple was the emotional heart of the story. "She's such an awake and alive character," she says. "She has a comic side to her, but I love that she is inspired by real women activists of the 1900s – those bold suffragettes and adventurers who fought for women's rights, and who followed their convictions, sometimes to the detriment of their personal lives."

Yet Charlotte's nearly non-existent social life takes an unexpected twist when she meets Mortimer. "They have a classic romantic comedy collision," Wexler notes. "Mortimer has embraced conformity, which is not, however, who he really is, and Charlotte has put her priorities on things other than romance – but when they meet, all their plans get upended."

Once Wexler, Becker, and the Dyers had a finished developing the screenplay, they took a chance on sending it to one of England's most accomplished independent film producers, with credits that include *MRS. BROWN*, *MANSFIELD PARK* and *THE GOVERNESS*: Sarah Curtis.

"I was amazed at how well the writers had captured the English idiom," Curtis muses. "To be honest, I approached it quite cautiously because it seemed unlikely they could carry it off, but I found the accuracy extraordinary. The subject matter was handled so cleverly and deftly, and it brought in so many interesting themes. It might have been a one-joke story, but it was the opposite."

Wexler recalls, "Tracey and I were so excited to have a producer with Sarah's experience join the team. I was a huge fan of her films. I watched quite a few of them as reference for *HYSTERIA* before I ever met her."

Soon after Curtis fell in love with the script the three of them, Becker, Wexler, and Curtis set about getting the film financed. The two things they needed; cast and money.

"The first thing we knew we needed was a strong cast of versatile actors who had impeccable comedic instincts", says producer Curtis. The team worked closely with casting director, Gaby Kester (*FLASHBACKS OF A FOOL*, *CHEERFUL WEATHER FOR THE WEDDING*), to bring aboard Jonathan Pryce and Rupert Everett. "I couldn't believe it when Sarah and Tracey told me they were in.

It was a dream come true”, said Wexler. Everett and Pryce came on board early and stayed with the film through the ups and downs of raising the finance. Curtis explained “Given the economy and the state of film finance we knew we were going to need partners who believed as deeply in the project as we did. We were very lucky to have the early support and enthusiasm of our French co-producer Anouk Nora (By Alternative Pictures), Arte France/WDR and our Luxembourg partners Jimmy de Brabant and Bob Bellion from Delux Productions. All played a significant part in pulling together the finance for the film.”

Then at a crucial stage in this process, Judy Cairo, fresh off producing the Oscar® winning CRAZY HEART, fell head over heels for the script and completed the team.

“I get maybe 100 scripts a week, and this one went straight to my spam folder, but when I saw it, something made me want to open the e-mail. From the first page I knew instantly I had to be involved,” says Cairo. “It’s a brilliant story that gets you laughing on page one and you’re still laughing 100 pages later, but at the same time, it also moves you, sweeps you up in romance and reveals things to you. I felt that it would really speak to contemporary audiences.”

She continues: “There was one line that particularly touched me: when Charlotte says about her work with impoverished women ‘I get more from them than I give.’ The vibrator might be the hook of the film, but to me, this is the theme. It’s a story that makes you giggle but it’s about more than the funny side of desire; it’s also about the desire in all of us to lead a useful life.”

Cairo hopes that the film will get people talking in addition to laughing – maybe about things they don’t usually talk about. “It’s still almost a revolutionary thing to talk openly about women having sex,” she observes. “Hopefully, this film will make a dent in that.”

Cairo and her Informant Media team found they were able to quickly attract major support to complete the financing get the production off the ground. “High quality scripts like this one are always hard to come by and people fell in love with it,” she summarizes. “It drew an incredibly dedicated cast and crew.”

### **Victorians vs. Moderns: The Cast and Characters**

The filmmakers were thrilled with the ensemble they were able to cast. “Early on, we wrote a wish list of the names we wanted, and somehow they are all in the movie,” muses Tanya Wexler. “In large part it was the way the story was told in the script – when people would first hear the concept of HYSTERIA, they expected this very broad comedy but, instead, what they got was something funny, poignant, and with real heart. That surprised and pleased the as actors and, I think, ultimately attracted them to the project.”

This was true across the board, as the cast took on characters that were uptight, conventional Victorians or by contrast fiery, forward thinking moderns clashing with the tenor of the times. They include:

### **Hugh Dancy as Mortimer Granville**

To play Mortimer Granville, the filmmakers of *HYSTERIA* went in search of the quintessential British leading man -- someone who could pull off a smart, sophisticated 19<sup>th</sup> Century doctor who is slowly unraveled by a vexingly attractive woman who scoffs at his work “massaging” upscale female patients. They also needed an actor who would keep a stiff upper lip even while inventing the vibrator.

They found all that and more in rising British star Hugh Dancy. Dancy came to international attention with a diverse string of roles including D’Artagnan in *YOUNG BLADES*, medic Kurt Schmid in *BLACK HAWK DOWN*, Buddy in *EVENING* (where he met his wife Claire Danes), Galahad in *KING ARTHUR* and the autistic title character in *ADAM* – establishing a rare ability to move between drama, comedy, action and period roles.

Tanya Wexler had been searching a long time for her Mortimer when she ran across Dancy starring on Broadway in the British classic R.C. Sherriff’s “Journey’s End.” “He was in a very serious role, nothing like Mortimer Granville, but as soon as I saw him, I said ‘that’s him,’” she remembers. “I just knew it.”

The producers concurred. Says Judy Cairo: “Hugh, like Mortimer, is very intelligent and a very good soul, but he’s also got a mischievous side and can be quite funny. I think he is one of today’s most underutilized, brilliant young actors and he made the perfect sparring partner for Maggie with that 1940s kind of spark. I couldn’t imagine finding a better Mortimer.”

Dancy recalls being surprised almost immediately upon cracking open the screenplay. “I knew very little about it, and my immediate response was, of course, laughter,” he confesses. “But as I read on, I loved the mix of tones: there are farcical scenes, there’s a real romance running through it and there are some wonderful and serious ideas at work. At the same time, there’s always something quite lively, contemporary and fun about it.”

For Dancy, the role was rife not only with comedy but also with intriguing shifts in Mortimer’s perspective. After all, he begins the film as a bit of an upstart, bucking a medical establishment that still insists infection is caused by such vague notions as “bad air” and “noxious miasmas.” (Germ Theory was still a dangerous belief in Victorian times. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century physician, Ignaz Phillip Semmelweiss, was so mocked for his contention that doctors should wash their hands, he had a nervous breakdown and was carted away to a mental asylum.) But when he is offered a life of upper-class luxury, while making his patients blissfully happy . . . well, who could resist? Not Mortimer – at least, not at first.

Dancy was amazed to learn that respectable Victorian doctors actually treated women with regular bouts of intimate massage, but he came to see it was simply a different mind set. “I think they truly believed they were practicing medicine,” he comments. “They weren’t stupid, and it’s not simply that they didn’t have the knowledge that we have today about psychology. It was a whole moral standpoint that made it make sense to them. But, of course, from a comedy point of view, you couldn’t make up anything funnier than what was actually going on at the time!”

As for what Mortimer thinks of his female patients, Dancy laughs: “They exhaust him. But it’s his inability to perform his daily, uh, ministrations, that leads him to this remarkable invention.”

Dancy approached Mortimer as a man who wants to be a force for change, but gives in momentarily to what looks like the good life. “I think Mortimer deep down inside considers himself a forward-thinking scientist, but when he’s offered a steady job, it becomes a bit too easy to give up on his ambitions and his dreams – until Charlotte forces him to remember them,” he says.

Perhaps most fun for Dancy was moving back and forth between the two divergent Dalrymple sisters. “He’s quite in over his head,” he laughs. “On the one hand, Emily is everything he’s signed up for – she’s pretty, demure, does everything her father asks, even if she plays the piano badly and is a phrenologist. Charlotte, on the other hand, horrifies him straight away. She’s a threat to everything he thinks he wants, and a constant annoyance, but of course, he can’t get her off his mind.”

### **Maggie Gyllenhaal as Charlotte Dalrymple**

To play HYSTERIA’s defiantly non-hysterical heroine, Charlotte, the filmmakers chose an actress who seemed to have enough verve and intelligence to match the very feisty character: Maggie Gyllenhaal, long a favorite of indie filmgoers and a recent Academy Award® nominee for her portrait of a single mom falling for a washed-up country star in CRAZY HEART, opposite Jeff Bridges.

“For Charlotte, we thought who do women love to see on the screen? Maggie was at the top of that list,” notes Wexler. “Luckily, Judy Cairo had just worked with her and was able to get the script to her and she loved it. Once she took the role, it was as if it had been written just for her.”

Despite the fact that this was a very different role for Gyllenhaal, Cairo knew she was more than up to the challenge. “Maggie *is* Charlotte. She’s feisty, energetic, intelligent, has great heart and vitality – and she also happens to be an amazing actress. I knew that Maggie, being such a strong woman herself, could step right into Charlotte’s Victorian boots and she did so brilliantly.”

The script turned Gyllenhaal’s head on first read. “It was air-tight and really smart,” she says. “It’s a romantic comedy full of love and lightness, but it’s also about a lot of important things like women’s sexuality and doing good for others. Most romantic comedies don’t have these other qualities, which is what drew me so strongly. I also love that the fire of the movie comes from the

woman. Charlotte is such a great character, a true grown-up who is helping women to see all the power they have, and who believes women deserve to lead lives of pleasure and significance.”

To Gyllenhaal, Charlotte embodied the kind of female hero not often seen at the movies. “She’s fighting for a lot of things that I think we almost take too much for granted today,” she says. “I find it exciting to see how the rights we enjoy now were fought for and won. It tells us something about who we are and where we’ve come from. Someone like Charlotte never believed in the idea of hysteria as a disease, because she was aware that women had so many real and legitimate reasons for being upset and unhappy, and in her eyes, that’s what needed to be addressed.”

If Charlotte inspired her, the sexual undercurrent of *HYSTERIA* made her blush – but Gyllenhaal says that’s part of the point. “I get a little flushed and funny every time I talk about the movie,” she confesses. “It just goes to show that we still don’t really know how to speak openly about women’s sexuality. I think this movie will get people talking a bit more, though, because it takes such a fun and humorous approach.”

Gyllenhaal devoted herself to playing Charlotte as authentically as a modern American woman could. “I worked with a really good dialect coach on my accent and spent a lot of time in accent while we were in production,” she notes. “Most of all, it was important to me that Charlotte feel like a living, breathing person with blood flowing through her veins, as if she were here in 2011.”

Helping her to do that was Tanya Wexler. “Tanya was terrific throughout,” Gyllenhaal says, concluding: “And she definitely found ways to handle me playing this very wild, opinionated woman!”

### **Jonathan Pryce as Dr. Dalrymple**

Charlotte’s wildness and opinions might be an inspiration to some, but they are the bane of her father’s existence -- and a strain on his burgeoning business as one of London’s leading doctors for hysterical women. Playing the conservative, conventional man who is nevertheless a leading massager of women’s private parts is one of England’s most prolific stars of stage and screen: two time Tony Award Winning, Jonathan Pryce, whose recent film roles range from Terrence Malick’s *THE NEW WORLD* to the blockbuster *PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN* series.

“Jonathan is a genius performer,” says Wexler. “What I loved about him for this role is that he has impeccable comic timing but he has also has authenticity and truth at his core.”

Pryce was initially skeptical about the screenplay, but when he read it, his mind was changed. “Once I got past the shock of the idea, I found it quite a well-written story that’s really about the sexual politics of men and women – a subject that couldn’t be any more universal, really,” he laughs.

His mission as Dr. Dalrymple was to perform as if there was absolutely nothing humorous or even ever so slightly absurd about his treatment of women. “We didn’t play it for comedy, we played it

straight, because the situations themselves are laugh-out-loud funny,” Pryce explains. “In Dalrymple’s mind this is simply a clinical procedure that is so successful that he can’t keep up with business.”

Still, while his character might come off as straight-laced and straight-faced, Pryce admits that he had quite a bit of fun in the role. “A lot of wonderful actresses come in for the doctor’s treatment, and the fun for me was in seeing how they all reacted differently,” he muses.

### **Felicity Jones as Emily Dalrymple**

Dr. Dalrymple’s success in his profession is also a boon to his favorite daughter, Emily, the antithesis of the spirited, uncontrollable Charlotte, and the pinnacle of demure mildness. Taking on the role is Felicity Jones, the British actress whose film *LIKE CRAZY* was the surprise hit of the Sundance Film Festival this year. Also known for *CHALET GIRL* and such period dramas as *NORTHANGER ABBEY* and *CHERI*, Jones is one of the young rising stars of her generation. Jones says *HYSTERIA* isn’t quite like those other films. “The beauty of this script is that it comes on like a traditional costume drama but then you realize something completely different is going on,” she laughs.

Still, at heart, Emily is a traditional Victorian woman who does her duty agreeing to marry her father’s choice of husband, rather than thinking for herself, and that’s how Jones plays her. “Her sister is so courageous and confident, I think it pushes Emily to become even more tight and conservative in an effort to please her father the most,” observes Jones. “She has created herself to be the most perfectly feminine creature she can imagine, and Mortimer, at first, is quite taken in by that mirage.”

Naturally, the façade begins to crack as Mortimer begins to see he is really meant to be with Charlotte. “For me, it was so much fun to be part of this triangle,” says Jones. “Part of the comedy in the film comes out of how each of these two women appeals to a different side of his personality.”

To prepare for the role, Jones read up on 19<sup>th</sup> Century mores and especially on Emily’s hobby of phrenology – the once popular pseudoscience that involved “reading” a person’s personality from the shape of their skull. But nothing could prepare Jones for Emily’s own lavish hairstyle, worn to impress on the occasion of a party to celebrate her engagement to Mortimer. “We called it ‘The Incredible Tower,’” laughs Jones. “It’s a remarkable and very different hairstyle, but it doesn’t end well for Emily!”

### **Rupert Everett as Edmund**

Also taking a key role in *HYSTERIA* is another actor renowned for a wide variety of wry, sophisticated period roles: Rupert Everett. Edmund (Everett) is Mortimer’s aristocratic best friend whose plans to build an electric feather duster are taken in a most unexpected direction.

Like others, Everett couldn't resist the concept behind HYSTERIA. "Anyone you tell about this film cracks a smile almost immediately. It has the flavor of an Ealing Comedy of the 30's or 40s," he notes, referring to the quintessentially British style of post-war comedies known for blending an anarchic sense of fun with scathing satire.

On top of that, Everett was taken in by the time period. "The setting -- at a time when women were just emerging as individuals and the British Empire was coming to a close -- gives the humor a greater depth."

As for his character, Everett describes him as "a typical gentleman inventor who has led a privileged life and is free to be quite forward-thinking." He goes on, "In many ways, he and Mortimer are like brothers, and through it all, they remain great friends."

### **Ashley Jensen as Fanny and introducing Sheridan Smith as 'Molly the Lolly'**

Rounding out the main cast of characters are two women from London's working class: Fanny, the settlement house resident and Charlottes confidante, played by Ashley Jensen (UGLY BETTY and HBO's EXTRAS); and the former prostitute, 'Molly the Lolly', played by Olivier Award winning British comedy star, Sheridan Smith, who makes her feature film debut on the heels of her recent highly successful stage run in "Legally Blonde, The Musical."

Jensen describes Fanny as "a woman who basically has nothing, except an alcoholic husband who beats her up! She's the very opposite of all the women who show up at Mortimer's practice." Indeed, Fanny helps Charlotte bring home her point to Mortimer that, whereas affluent women are getting massages for mysterious maladies, working women are in dire need of real medical care.

Jensen was also caught up in the story's reminders of history. "What I think is so clever about the movie is that it's about some serious subjects, in addition to vibrators, which can be a serious subject in themselves! But it's also about the women who literally sacrificed their lives so that we could have equal citizenship with men," she says. "And I loved that so many women were in senior positions on this movie. It's wonderful to have a movie about women's sexuality and women's rights be helmed by women."

As for Smith, she says she had a blast in her debut role as the "guinea pig" on whom the first, fledgling vibrator was cautiously tested. "It couldn't have been more fun," she comments. "It's really my first film, so I was awed to be working with this caliber of actors. We all got into our costumes and our wigs, and suddenly we were completely different people!"

While Smith got a kick out of her character, she says the character who kept her inspired was Charlotte. “I think we all fell in love with her,” she concludes. “The way Maggie plays her, she’s such a fighter and she reminds you what it’s like to be a true-to-yourself woman in any age.”

### **An Electrified World: The Production**

With the cast in place, the filmmakers turned to the challenge of creating HYSTERIA’s very specific, and never before seen, world – that hidden corner of Victorian London where doctors engaged in intimate massage of their female patients.

From the beginning, Tanya Wexler knew she wanted to capture two sides of Victorian life: the stately, prim-and-proper decorum for which it is best known; but also the exhilarating promise of change in the air. After all, this was the period in which previously unimaginable inventions and ideas were overturning tradition at breakneck speed. In addition to the vibrator, inventions of the period included such world-changers as the home sewing machine, public flushing toilets, the pasteurization of food, the underground railway, the typewriter, the telephone, the phonograph, the gas-powered motorcar, all illuminated by the new electric light bulb.

To capture the volatile Victorian contrasts of Old World versus New, of wealth versus working classes, and of social graces versus social revolutions in the film’s look and design, Wexler turned to an artistic crew that includes director of photography Sean Bobbit (Steve McQueen’s HUNGER, television’s “Sense and Sensibility”), production designer Sophie Becher (ALFIE, TO KILL A KING), editor Jon Gregory (FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL, IN BRUGES) and costume designer Nic Ede (NANNY McPHEE, FLYBOYS).

“The work of Sean, Sophie and Nic was just exquisite at every level,” says Judy Cairo. “And it just got more exciting when all that amazing work was combined that with a broader American sensibility -- I think it made for a terrific blending of cultures.”

Adds Sarah Curtis: “Much like the cast, we dreamed up our ideal production crew – people who would have an affinity for the material, who understood the times, yet could have fun with it – and we were very lucky to get such an experienced and creative group.”

The search for authentic English locations was one of the most daunting challenges. “It’s become more and more difficult to do Victorian films in London because there are fewer and fewer places left where you can create a 19<sup>th</sup> Century bubble,” Curtis explains.

They found much of what they were looking for in and around Luton Hoo, an estate near Bedfordshire that has been in existence since the Middle Ages, and encompasses a lavish manor house but also numerous outbuildings. “It’s beautiful, versatile and has just the right period of buildings for the East End settlement area in the film,” says Curtis. “We were able to find a location that was red

brick with cobblestone streets under foot and it really suited us. Ironically, the more aristocratic London is easier to find because some of it has been preserved, while the poorer areas are mostly gone.”

The film’s settlement house, though fictional, was modeled after the real East London communal halls that emerged in the 1880s, usually started by a wealthy donor and intended to provide food, shelter and even education to uplift the new and growing class of urban poor.

After shooting in London for three weeks, the production traveled to Luxembourg where the film’s interiors were built. “Like England, Luxembourg has fantastic crews who really know how to create period settings,” Curtis notes.

The details of the film were painstaking, from the length of frockcoats to the height of hair towers. The rooms were filled with the proper medical antiques and the cast were fitted into their corsets and bustles, waistcoats and top hats. All was accurate and correct and yet, Wexler let a sparkling spirit of playfulness reign on the set.

“The way she pulled the whole production together was an amazing feat,” says Rupert Everett. “She really let the actors do their jobs, embraced our work, and made it quite fun.”

For writers Stephen Dyer and Jonah Lisa Dyer being on the set was like seeing their imaginations come to life. “Everywhere we looked, in every scene, we were saying to ourselves ‘this is exactly what we had in our heads when we were writing,’ says Stephen. “Part of that came from the specificity of the script, but Tanya, the cast and the crew really captured exactly the style and look we always hoped for – and at the same time, brought in some great surprises.”

Surprise will certainly be part of the reaction to *HYSTERIA*, a reality that those involved in the production quickly came to realize whenever an outsider asked about the movie. “It was one of the biggest challenges of the film: figuring out what to say when people wondered ‘what the movie’s about?’” laughs Hugh Dancy.

Producer Sarah Curtis sums it up: “When you tell people the basic concept, it usually results in wild laughter – but then, that’s followed by a lot of curiosity about where it will go as a story, and how it relates to men and women today, and that’s what interested all of us.”

## **A Brief History of Hysteria (and Vibrators)**

**4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE:** The idea that a “wandering uterus” (literally, *hysteria*) can cause strange symptoms, from amnesia to sleepwalking to madness, is first mentioned by the Ancient Greeks in the Hippocratic Corpus. Women’s sexual organs will be tied to unexplained behavior for the next 4,000 years.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.:** The early Greek physician Galen concludes that hysteria’s cause is sexual deprivation. The treatment he recommends is marriage. He is also the first to suggest the remedy of “digital manipulation,” describing the success of a woman he treated in this way: “From that time on, she was free of all the evils she felt.”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.:** The Roman philosopher Celsus first recommends bloodletting as a possible cure for women’s hysteria.

**10<sup>th</sup> Century:** The Persian physician and prolific medical writer Avicenna recommends a “rubbing” cure for hysteria, which he says will allow troubled women to “find peace.”

**13<sup>th</sup> Century:** The Spanish alchemist Arnaldus de Villanova recommends the use of vaginal suppositories to adjust the “balance of humors” in women with intractable disorders of various kinds.

**16<sup>th</sup> Century:** The French physician Phare writes of a new cure for hysteria: sending women to ride through the woods on horseback.

**1653:** The renowned Dutch doctor Pieter van Foreest writes about his treatment for hysteria -- involving pelvic massage “to paroxysm.” He especially advises it for “widows, those who live chaste lives, and female religious.”

**17<sup>th</sup> Century:** The pioneering English physician William Harvey, the first to describe the human circulatory system, opines that the female sexual organs are the cause of “horrid extravagancies of minde . . . Phrensies, Melancholy, Distempers and Outrageousness.”

**18<sup>th</sup> Century:** “Hydrotherapy devices,” often involving well-aimed nozzles, come into vogue as a therapy for a vast variety of female disorders at European health spas.

**18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries:** The term “Hysterick Fits” becomes popular in medical circles, used to describe a wide range of poorly understood phenomena, from epilepsy, depression and Tourette’s Syndrome to rebelliousness, marital displeasure and sexual infidelity.

**1850s:** Leading French physician Pierre Briquet announces the results of his study of female hysteria: it is caused by sexual frustration and the cure lies in the perfectly medical treatment he names as “la titillation du clitoris.”

**1859:** A study among British physicians finds that up to 40% of the female populace has now been diagnosed with hysteria.

**1866:** English doctor Isaac Baker-Brown offers an alternative to massage treatment for female hysterics -- clitoridectomy – before being banned from the London Obstetrical Society after an untold number of such surgeries.

**1869:** The American inventor George Taylor comes up with a steam-powered massage machine known as “The Manipulator.” Physicians treating hysteria quickly adopt it, but Taylor urges caution when using it on female patients in order to prevent overindulgence.

**1883:** The first electric vibrator is patented by Joseph Mortimer Granville and, despite his desire that it be used for muscular relief, is soon offered as a treatment for hysteria.

**1895:** Sigmund Freud and his associate Joseph Breuer write their landmark book on hysteria, and conclude something new: it is a mental rather than physical disorder, stemming from traumatic sexual experiences in early childhood. In the process, they kick-start the modern era of psychoanalysis.

**1899:** The Vibratile, a simple, \$5 vibrator made out of wire, is advertised in *McClure’s Magazine*, a popular 19<sup>th</sup> Century monthly, promising a cure for neuralgia, headaches and wrinkles.

**Early 1900s:** Dozens of “portable relaxation devices” are now being advertised in a variety of ladies’ magazines.

**1908:** *The London Times* publishes an editorial that says some suffragettes rallying for the right to vote “are suffering from hysteria.” This idea spreads, with anti-suffragette leaders questioning the mental health of female activists.

**1918:** Vibrating massagers are offered in the Sears Roebuck Catalog, advertised as “very useful and satisfactory for home service.”

**1952:** The American Psychiatric Institute finally determines that hysteria is not a disease.

**1970s:** The vibrator comes out of the closet, celebrated by feminists as a tool for sexual liberation.

**2007:** The Supreme Court refuses to hear a case questioning the constitutionality of state laws that prohibit the sexual use of vibrators in several states, making them still illegal for sexual purposes in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia.

## ABOUT THE CAST

**MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL** (Charlotte) is one of the great young actresses of today. Most recently, she gained critical acclaim and an Oscar nomination for "Best Supporting Actress" for her portrayal of Jean Craddock in *CRAZY HEART* alongside Jeff Bridges, further exemplifying her talent and versatility as an actress. After receiving rave reviews out of the 2002 Sundance competition for her starring role opposite James Spader in Lion's Gate's *SECRETARY*, she went on to receive a Golden Globe nomination for "Best Actress in a Comedy or Musical," an Independent Spirit Award nomination for "Best Actress," a Chicago Film Critics' Award for "Most Promising Performer," A Boston Film Critics' Award for "Best Actress," a National Board of Review Award for "Breakthrough Performance" and an IFP/ Gotham "Breakthrough Performance" Award.

Years later, back at Sundance in 2007, Maggie starred in *SHERRYBABY*; she played a female convict struggling to overcome her drug addiction and regain custody of her daughter. The film was well received by critics and garnered her second Golden Globe nomination, this time for Best Actress in a Motion Picture-Drama. Gyllenhaal was also nominated for a 2006 Independent Spirit Award for her role in Don Roos' *HAPPY ENDINGS*, opposite Lisa Kudrow and Tom Arnold.

She was Rachel Dawes in the Warner Bros. box office hit *THE DARK KNIGHT* directed by Chris Nolan. She was also seen in Sam Mendes' *AWAY WE GO*. Recently, Maggie starred in *NANNY MCPHEE AND THE BIG BANG* with Emma Thompson.

In August 2006, Maggie was seen in *TRUST THE MAN* with Julianne Moore, Billy Crudup and David Duchovny and in Oliver Stone's *WORLD TRADE CENTER* with Maria Bello and Nicholas Cage. She also starred in Marc Forster's *STRANGER THAN FICTION* with Will Ferrell, Dustin Hoffman, Queen Latifah and Emma Thompson. In the past few years, she appeared in John Sayles' *CASA DE LOS BABYS* with Daryl Hannah and Lily Taylor and Mike Newell's much-anticipated *MONA LISA SMILE* in which Maggie co-starred with Julia Roberts, Julia Stiles and Kirsten Dunst. She was also seen in *CRIMINAL* with Diego Luna and John C. Reilly as well as Spike Jonze's *ADAPTATION*.

Also accomplished on stage, Gyllenhaal starred as "Alice" in Patrick Mauber's award-winning "Closer" at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles for director Robert Egan, and previously at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. She has also appeared in "Anthony and Cleopatra" at the Vanborough Theatre in London. In 2004, Maggie starred in Tony Kushner's play "Homebody/Kabul," which ran in both Los Angeles and at B.A.M. Next, Maggie will be seen alongside Peter Sarsgaard and Mamie Gummer in "Uncle Vanya" by Anton Chekhov.

Recently, Maggie appeared in the Anton Chekhov play "Three Sisters" alongside Peter Sarsgaard, Jessica Hecht and Josh Hamilton.

Maggie made her feature film debut in 1992, alongside Jeremy Irons and Ethan Hawke in *WATERLAND*. This was followed by a memorable performance as "Raven", the Satan-worshipping

make-up artist in John Waters' quirky Hollywood satire, CECIL B. DEMENTED, which led her to a co-starring role in DONNIE DARKO, a fantasy-thriller about disturbed adolescence.

Gyllenhaal is a 1999 graduate of Columbia University where she studied Literature.

**HUGH DANCY** (Mortimer Granville) most recently appeared in OUR IDIOT BROTHER directed by Jesse Peretz and MARTHA MARCY MAY MARLENE, with both films receiving critical acclaim at 2011 Sundance Film Festival.

Dancy's other film credits include: ADAM, CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC, THE JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB, EVENING, BEYOND THE GATES, KING ARTHUR, ELLA ENCHANTED, THE SLEEPING DICTIONARY, BLACK HAWK DOWN and YOUNG BLADES.

On television, Dancy starred in Tom Hooper's critically acclaimed series "Elizabeth I" opposite Helen Mirren and Jeremy Irons. Dancy received an Emmy Nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Miniseries or a Movie for his role as Earl of Essex and the series received the 2007 Golden Globe Award for Best Mini-Series or Motion Picture Made for Television and the Emmy Award for Best Miniseries.

Dancy's other television credits include: "Daniel Deronda," "David Copperfield," "Relic Hunter" and "Madame Bovary."

On stage, Dancy starred on Broadway in David Grindley's "A Journey's End" opposite Boyd Gaines, Jefferson Mays and Stark Sands. "A Journey's End" won the 2007 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play. He recently returned to the stage in the critically acclaimed "The Pride" with Ben Whishaw and Andrea Riseborough.

Dancy graduated with an English Literature degree from St. Peter's College, Oxford.

**JONATHAN PRYCE** (Dr. Dalrymple) is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning actor, known for his outstanding performances on both stage and screen. From his seminal theatre performances in "Hamlet" and "Miss Saigon" to film roles in CARRINGTON and PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN, Pryce has entertained audiences on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond.

Pryce studied at RADA and upon graduating, joined the Liverpool Everyman Theatre Company for an 18-month season, followed by a season at the Nottingham Playhouse under the direction of Richard Eyre. He then returned to the Everyman for a season as Artistic Director.

An illustrious career of theatre credits has followed. In 1975, Pryce starred in Trevor Griffiths' "Comedians," directed by Richard Eyre at The Old Vic, and then took that role to New York, directed by Mike Nichols, where he won his first Tony Award. A season with the Royal Shakespeare Company came next, with lead roles in "The Taming of the Shrew," "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Measure for Measure," and in 1980, Pryce won an Olivier Award for his highly acclaimed "Hamlet," directed by Richard Eyre, at the Royal Court. Subsequent theatre credits include "Tally's Folly" at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith; playing The Fool in "Accidental Death of an Anarchist" on Broadway; "The Doctor and the Devils," directed by Freddie Francis; "The Seagull," opposite Vanessa Redgrave; "Macbeth" at the RSC; and "Uncle Vanya," directed by Michael Blakemore.

In 1989 Pryce created the role of The Engineer in the musical *Miss Saigon*, for which he was awarded the Tony, Drama Desk, Olivier and Outer Circle Critics awards for Best Actor in a musical, and other musical starring roles have since followed in “Oliver!” and “My Fair Lady” in London and “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels” on Broadway.

Pryce’s recent theatre credits include “The Goat or Who Is Sylvia?” at the Almeida Theatre and Apollo Theatre, which garnered him a nomination for Best Actor at the Olivier Awards; “Glengarry Glen Ross,” directed by James MacDonald; “Dimetos” at The Donmar Warehouse; and a landmark performance as Davies in “The Caretaker,” which played initially at the Liverpool Playhouse before transferring to the West End in 2010.

Pryce’s achievements on stage have been mirrored by his success on screen. His early film credits include Stuart Rosenberg’s VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED, Brian Gibson’s BREAKING GLASS, for which he won Best Newcomer at the Evening Standard Awards, Jack Clayton’s SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES, and Terry Gilliam’s award-winning BRAZIL, which was to be followed later by two other collaborations with Gilliam: THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN and THE BROTHERS GRIMM.

Other film credits include THE PLOUGHMAN’S LUNCH, MAN ON FIRE, CONSUMING PASSIONS, JUMPIN’ JACK FLASH, BARBARIANS AT THE GATE (for which he was Emmy and Golden Globe nominated), THE AGE OF INNOCENCE and GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS, and in 1995 Pryce starred in Christopher Hampton’s CARRINGTON, which brought him Best Actor awards at the Cannes Film Festival and the Evening Standard Awards and a BAFTA Award nomination. A starring role alongside Madonna in EVITA followed, as well as a memorable turn as a James Bond villain in TOMORROW NEVER DIES, and roles in RONIN and STIGMATA.

Pryce’s recent film work includes: BEDTIME STORIES, directed by Adam Shankman; G.I.JOE: THE RISE OF COBRA, directed by Stephen Sommers; MY ZINC BED, directed by Anthony Page; LEATHERHEADS, directed George Clooney; DE-LOVELY, directed by Irwin Walker; WHAT A GIRL WANTS, directed by Irwin Winkler; and THE AFFAIR OF THE NECKLACE, directed by Charles Shyer. Pryce is also known to millions for his role as Governor Weatherby Swann in the first three PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN films: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL, DEAD MAN’S CHEST and AT WORLD’S END.

Pryce’s television work includes: the lead roles of Wallace in the BBC TV film “The Man from the Pru” and Gerd Heidemann in the four-part telefilm “Selling Hitler”; starring in “Great Moments in Aviation” for BBC Films, directed by Beeban Kidron; playing Sherlock Holmes in “Baker Street Irregulars,” directed by Julian Kemp for RDF Media; and the lead role in “Thicker Than Water” for BBC TV. Most recently, Pryce played Mr Buxton in “Cranford: Return to Cranford,” for which he received an Emmy Nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Mini-series or Drama.

In recognition of his many achievements in film, television and theatre Pryce was awarded an honorary doctorate from Liverpool University in 2006, and in 2009 he was awarded the C.B.E in the Queen’s Birthday Honours.

**RUPERT EVERETT** (Edmund) was educated by Benedictine Monks at Ampleforth College where he became an accomplished pianist and trained as an actor at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London before leaving under a cloud, clashing with his teachers. He joined the Glasgow Citizen's Theatres, performing in such productions as "Don Juan" and "Heartbreak House." In 1984, he made his breakthrough into film with the leading role as Guy Bennett in *ANOTHER COUNTRY*, a role which he had played successfully on stage and which won him a BAFTA nomination as Most Outstanding Newcomer. He then played the doomed lover of murderess Ruth Ellis in Mike Newell's *DANCE WITH A STRANGER*, and had leading roles in Andrei Konchalovsky's *DUET FOR ONE*, Paul Schrader's *THE COMFORT OF STRANGERS*, Robert Altman's *PRET A PORTER*, Nicholas Hytner's *THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE*, and as Lord Rutledge, opposite an orangutan, in *DUNSTON CHECKS IN*.

He made an impact as Julia Roberts' gay confidant in *MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING*, for which he was a Golden Globe nominee and received his second BAFTA nomination. He then appeared as an uncredited Christopher Marlowe in *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE* and in Oliver Parker's film of Oscar Wilde's *AN IDEAL HUSBAND*, for which he received Golden Globe and European Film Award nominations. He played the villain in *INSPECTOR GADGET*, starred opposite Madonna in John Schlesinger's *THE NEXT BEST THING* and reunited with Oliver Parker for Oscar Wilde's *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*. Other film roles include P.J. Hogan's *UNCONDITIONAL LOVE*, Charles I in *TO KILL A KING*, Richard Eyre's *STAGE BEAUTY*, Prince Charming in *SHREK 2* and *SHREK THE THIRD* and the voice of Mr. Fox in *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE*.

His most recent appearances include Matthew Vaughan's *STARDUST*, the dual roles of the school's headmistress and her dastardly brother in *ST. TRINIAN'S 1* and *2* and *WILD TARGET* with Bill Nighy and Emily Blunt.

Poised with a combination of wit, charm, and brilliant comedic timing, **ASHLEY JENSEN** (Fanny) has left her mark on both audience and industry members alike. Nominated for an Emmy (Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Miniseries or Movie) for her work in the "Extras: The Extra Special Series Finale," honored with the best television comedy actress and newcomer awards at the 2005 "Fun Fearless Top Woman on TV" award, Ashley's commitment to comedic excellence has proven to be unwavering.

Jensen reprised her role as film extra Maggie Jacobs for HBO's second season of "Extras" and the special Christmas episode opposite Ricky Gervais. With A-list guest stars such as Kate Winslet, Ben Stiller and Samuel L. Jackson playing parodied versions of themselves on the show, "Extras" continually expanded on its comedic direction and range each week. "Extras" originally aired on BBC 2 in the United Kingdom. In 2006 Jensen won the Rose d'Or award for best Sitcom Actress at the 2006 Monte Carlo Film Festival. Jensen was also nominated for a BAFTA for Best Comedic Performance by an Actress in a Comedy Series. Jensen was named comedienne of the year in 2006 by *Glamour Magazine*, and was nominated for a WIN Award for her performance on "Extras."

Jensen is also known as the loveable Christina McKinney on ABC's hugely popular, award-winning show "Ugly Betty." Most recently she could be seen opposite Jenna Elfman on the CBS sitcom, "Accidentally on Purpose." Jensen also recently starred in BBC America's drama series "Eleventh Hour" where she co-starred opposite Patrick Stewart. As protection officer Rachel Young, Jensen was able to exercise her acting range in this politically charged suspense/drama. Some of her other TV credits include "Rebus," "Clocking Off," "City Central," "Sweet Medicine," "Two Thousand Acres of Sky" and "Outside the Rules".

On the big screen Jensen has been seen in *A COCK AND BULL STORY* and *TOPSY-TURVY*. Jensen also lent her voice to Phlegma the Fierce in Dreamworks *HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON* and to Nanette in Disney's *GNOMEO AND JULIET*.

Jensen was born in Scotland and currently resides in Los Angeles.

**SHERIDAN SMITH** (Molly) makes her feature film debut in *HYSTERIA*. Smith was born in Epworth in Lincolnshire and from a very young age began dancing with The Joyce Mason School of Dancing and then the National Youth Music Theatre, performing lead roles in such productions as "Bugsy Malone" and "Into the Woods." She has starred in numerous television shows, including the popular British series "Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crips," "The Royle Family" and "Gavin & Stacey."

Her theatres roles include a successful run as Audrey in "Little Shop of Horrors," and she most recently starred as Elle Woods in "Legally Blonde The Musical," for which she won the 2011 Olivier Award.

**FELICITY JONES** (Emma) is one of the brightest actresses of her generation. She has recently been seen in Julie Taymor's film adaptation of William Shakespeare's *THE TEMPEST*, in BAFTA-nominated director Niall MacCormick's *ALBATROSS*, in the romantic comedies *LIKE CRAZY* and *THE CHALET GIRL*, and in *SOULBOY*, a coming-of-age drama set in the 1970s Northern Soul underground musical scene, which premiered to great acclaim at the Edinburgh Film Festival. She will next be seen in Davis Hare's *PAGE EIGHT* with Ralph Fiennes, Rachel Weisz and Bill Nighy; and in the comedy *CHEERFUL WEATHER FOR THE WEDDING*.

Other recent films include *CEMETARY JUNCTION*, a comedy written and directed by the award-winning partnership of Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant; and the short movie *THE HANGUP*, based on Anthony Minghella's 1980 radio play.

Jones starred as Edmée in *CHERI*, directed by Stephen Frears, co-starring Michelle Pfeiffer, Kathy Bates and Rupert Friend. Her extensive film credits also include the role of Lady Cordelia Flyte in the remake of *BRIDESHEAD REVISITED*, directed by Julian Jarrold, opposite Matthew Goode, Ben Whishaw and Hayley Atwell; and *FLASHBACKS OF A FOOL* with Daniel Craig, Harry Eden, rapper Eve, Keeley Hawes and Olivia Williams.

On television, she played the sister of Anne Frank, Margot, in the critically acclaimed BBC adaptation of "The Diary of Anne Frank" and starred in Channel Four's chilling drama, "Cape Wrath."

She also starred in Jane Austen's "Northanger Abbey," directed by Jon Jones, playing the character Catherine Morland. She also played the role of Robina Redman in the hit BBC sci-fi series "Doctor Who." Other television credits include "Servants," "Weirdsister College," and the children's drama "The Worst Witch."

As well as film and television, Jones made her mark in radio by narrating the voice of Emma Grundy in the popular BBC Radio 4's program, "The Archers." Her other radio credits include "Watership Down," "What a Drag" and "Mansfield Park," which were all for BBC Radio 4.

Jones has also appeared in theatre, which includes "That Face" at the Royal Court. She played the role of Mia, directed by Jeremy Herrin. Jones teamed up with Michael Grandage to perform the role of Laurel in Enid Bagnold's "The Chalk Garden." Jones starred opposite Margaret Tyzack and Penelope Wilton at the Donmar Warehouse. It was this role that garnered Jones amazing reviews for her performance and also earned her a nomination at the Evening Standard Theatre Awards for The Milton Shulman for Outstanding Newcomer.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**TANYA WEXLER** (Director) Developed “Hysteria” with Producer Tracey Becker from a fledgling two page treatment and knew she had to make the story of the birth of the vibrator if she never did anything else with here life. She was born and raised in Chicago, IL, and received her BA in Psychology from Yale University. She attended the Columbia University School of the Arts and received her MFA in Film direction where she made two short films: THE DANCE (Telluride Intl. Film Festival, Seattle Intl. Film Festival) and COOL SHOES (Huston Intl. Film Fest Award Winner). Her two feature films are BALL IN THE HOUSE which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (aka RELATIVE EVIL) starring Jennifer Tilly, David Straithairn, Jonathan Tucker and Ethan Embry; and FINDING NORTH (Palm Springs Intl Film Festival, NY Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, LA Outfest, SF Gay and Lesbian Film Festival) starring Wendy Makkena and John Benjamin Hickey. Her films have been seen internationally in theatrical release and at film festivals. Tanya lives in New York with her partner and four children. She has never been diagnosed with Hysteria as far as we know.

**STEPHEN AND JONAH LISA DYER** (Writers) have written the screenplays THE HEIR, HYSTERIA and MILLER’S POND.

Jonah Lisa Dyer is an actor, stand-up comedienne, and screenwriter. She has appeared in numerous films, TV commercials, and Off Broadway and regional theater. For three years, she worked as the writing assistant to William Broyles, one of Hollywood’s most successful screenwriters (APOLLO 13, CASTAWAY). In that capacity she worked extensively on the screenplays for Robert Zemeckis’ POLAR EXPRESS and Sam Mendes JARHEAD, as well as the upcoming Fox 2000 film SHADOW DIVERS.

Stephen Dyer is the producer of the feature films the upcoming THE PLAYROOM, a co-production with Circle of Confusion and starring John Hawkes and Molly Parker, LATE BLOOMERS, FINDING NORTH and BALL IN THE HOUSE. His work has premiered at The Sundance Film Festival and The Toronto International Film Festival, and has played festivals around the world. Commercially the films have been distributed through Strand Releasing, Cowboy Pictures and Universal Home Video, and have played on venues including HBO, Showtime, The Movie Channel, The Sundance Channel and others. He is currently attached to produce THE HEIR, a screenplay he co-wrote with Jonah Lisa.

**SARAH CURTIS** (Producer) has been an independent feature film producer for 18 years. Her most recent feature is box office hit RUN FAT BOY RUN for Material Entertainment, starring Simon Pegg and Thandie Newton and directed by David Schwimmer. Sarah also produced ON A CLEAR DAY, starring Peter Mullan, Brenda Blethyn and Billy Boyd which opened the Sundance Film Festival and was bought for distribution by Focus Features. ON A CLEAR DAY won two Scottish BAFTAS in 2006, Best Screenplay and Best Film.

Her previous film credits include CHARLOTTE GRAY with Cate Blanchett and Billy Crudup for director Gillian Armstrong; Patricia Rozema's MANSFIELD PARK; THE GOVERNESS (Minnie Driver and Tom Wilkinson) directed by Sandra Goldbacher; MRS. BROWN, directed by John Madden; Christopher Monger's THE ENGLISHMAN WHO WENT UP A HILL BUT CAME DOWN A MOUNTAIN, which starred Hugh Grant, Tara Fitzgerald, Ian McNiece and Colm Meaney; and three projects with director Les Blair, BAD BEHAVIOUR (Stephen Rea and Sinead Cusack), BLISS starring Douglas Hodge and JUMP THE GUN, set in South Africa.

Prior to her career producing and executive producing feature films, Sarah produced three television films; "The Yellow Wallpaper" with Dorothy Tutin and Stephen Dillane; "Newshounds" starring Adrian Edmonson and Alison Steadman and "Tell Me that You Love Me," with Sean Bean, James Wilby and Judith Scott.

**JUDY CAIRO** (Producer) Judy Cairo's first feature film, CRAZY HEART, was one of the surprise hits of 2009/2010 and has gone on to win two Academy Awards® (Best Actor, Jeff Bridges and Best Original Song "The Weary Kind" written by T Bone Burnett & Ryan Bingham), two Golden Globes for the same, as well as the Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature and Best Actor. Cairo and her informant partners arranged the financing and she was the hands-on Producer for the film, which was released by Fox Searchlight on December 16, 2009. Based on the novel by Thomas Cobb, the film starred Jeff Bridges, Colin Farrell, Maggie Gyllenhaal, and Robert Duvall and represented the directorial debut Scott Cooper, who also wrote the screenplay.

Under the previous shingle of Cairo/Simpson Entertainment, Cairo produced 20 made-for-television films including the acclaimed 4-hour mini-series "Elvis," starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers for which he won a Golden Globe; the biopic "Gleason," the story of the TV legend; and "The Boy King," a drama about Martin Luther King, Jr. as a child, for which Judy worked closely with Coretta Scott King and Christine King Farris, Martin's sister, to accurately portray the childhood influences which shaped Dr. King's life. The film was Cairo's first, and won the George Foster Peabody. Her other films have garnered Golden Globes, Critics Choice Awards, the Christopher Award, IPA Satellite Awards, and numerous Emmy nominations.

In 2007 Cairo founded Informant Media, which develops, finances, and produces independent feature films, with partners Michael A. Simpson and Eric Brenner. She discovered the CRAZY HEART script in May 2007 at the Cannes Film Festival and Informant set about piecing together the financing for the independent film. Cairo shepherded the film from pre-production through distribution, and the ensuing success story is now well known in the indie film world.

Cairo just finished production on THE EXPATRIATE, an action/thriller starring Aaron Eckhart, Liana Liberato, and Olga Kurylenko, which was filmed in Brussels and Montreal; upcoming films include A NIGHT IN OLD MEXICO, a co-production with Robert Duvall's Butcher's Run Films, with a screenplay by William Wittliff (LONESOME DOVE, LEGENDS OF THE FALL) with Duvall also attached to star in this grandfather/grandson drama.

**TRACEY BECKER** (Producer) began her career as an actress and producer in NYC after training at Wright State, The American Academy of Dramatic Arts and with Sandy Dennis at HB Studios. In addition to appearing in over thirty plays, she made frequent guest appearances on TV networks like A&E, Comedy Central and Showtime performing sketch comedy. As a producer, she developed and produced industrial videos, music videos and co-wrote and produced a 1-hour comedy/reality hybrid pilot for the Food Network.

Tracey then launched Birnam Wood with partner Nellie Bellflower, a theater and film production company dedicated to developing works by new and established writers like Murray Schisgal, Christopher Durang, Ron McLarty and others. She produced the highly successful Off-Broadway run of Doris Davis' "Summer Share" that NBC TV's Jeffery Lyons called "Must-See Theater!" She then partnered with Dustin Hoffman to develop the one-hour TV drama pilot "44 Wall."

Birnam Wood optioned Allan Knee's play "The Man Who Was Peter Pan" which Tracey and Nellie developed with writer David Magee as the screenplay FINDING NEVERLAND. Partnering with Richard Gladstein, Nellie and Tracey produced the film for Miramax which starred Johnny Depp and Kate Winslet with Marc Forster directing, and was nominated for seven Academy Awards® including Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay, winning for Best Score, in addition to winning the National Board of Review's Best Picture honor.

In 2005, Tracey established Beachfront Films and moved her family to Venice, California. There she has worked developing a series of short films for Glamour Magazine, featuring the directing debuts of Jennifer Aniston and Bryce Dallas Howard. She developed the feature film script CHRYSALIS with Academy Award® winning actor/director Alan Arkin, and has been hired as a consultant on many feature film scripts, both in production and in pre-production.

Because of her long involvement with the New England Seacoast while developing the upcoming LOSING JERRY by writer/director Mitch Ganem which features a soundtrack by The Grateful Dead, she was asked to sit on the Board of Directors for the New Hampshire Film Festival, where she has been integral in attracting top-level talent and films, as well as organizing lectures and panels for this fast-growing, prestigious festival. In addition, she and producing partner Mark Constance recently showcased Mitch Ganem's KILLING DINNER and Chase Bailey's CROOKED LANE in competition in the festival, with CROOKED LANE winning for NH's Best Film.

Her upcoming projects include URBAN ASYLUM, to be directed by Eric Howell, and the big screen adaptation of HUCK FINN, written by Stephen and Jonah Lisa Dyer (HYSTERIA).

Having worked with directors like Michael Winterbottom and Paul Greengrass, **SEAN BOBBIT** (Director of Photography) exploded onto the world's stage when he shot Steve McQueen's HUNGER, which won the Camera D'Or prize at the Cannes Film Festival. He recently reunited with McQueen for the forthcoming SHAME and shot the Rwandan soccer comedy AFRICA UNITED.

He has also worked extensively in long-form British television, lensing the latest acclaimed adaptation of "Sense & Sensibility," in addition to "The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby," "The Canterbury Tales" and "The Long Firm."

**JON GREGORY** (Editor) has had a long and impressive career editing features and longform television. Especially adept at comedy, Jon edited the British classic *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*, *PUSHING TIN*, *LIVING OUT LOUD*, and Mike Leigh's latest *ANOTHER YEAR*, in addition to the acclaimed dramas *THE ROAD*, the Academy-Award nominated *IN BRUGES* and *PENELOPE*.

**SOPHIE BECHER's** (Production Designer) recent credits include Michael Radford's forthcoming *THE MULE*, Gabor Csupo's *SECRET OF MOONACRE*, David Schwimmer's *RUN FAT BOY RUN* and Radford's *FLAWLESS* starring Michael Caine and Demi Moore.

Becher started her design career working on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This led to a post-graduate course in theatre design at the Riverside Studios in London where she also started working on low budget films. From there she worked her way through the art department ranks working on such films as *THE GOOD FATHER*, *PERSONAL SERVICES* and *LIFE IS SWEET*.

In 1992 Becher designed her first production, *THE BORROWERS*, for Working Title Television and the BBC, directed by John Henderson, for which she won an RTS Award for Best Production Design as well as a BAFTA nomination for Best Production Design. Her first film as designer was *A BUSINESS AFFAIR* starring Christopher Walken and Carole Bouquet. Thereafter followed *LOCH NESS* for Working Title Films and the sequel to *THE BORROWERS*, both directed by John Henderson, for which Becher received BAFTA and RTS nominations respectively.

Other credits include: Trevor Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT*; *B MONKEY* for Mike Radford; *BEST LAID PLANS*, *LORNA DOONE* and *TO KILL A KING* for Mike Barker; and Charles Shyer's *ALFIE*, starring Jude Law.

**NIC EDE** (Costume Designer) has designed for many award-winning contemporary and period films, from Richard Linklater's *ME AND ORSON WELLES* starring Zac Efron and Claire Danes to Tony Bill's World War I action adventure *FLYBOYS*, for which he was nominated for a Saturn Award. He was also nominated for an Emmy for the TV Mini-Series *DASH AND LILLY* starring Sam Shepard and Judy Davis. Other notable productions include *NANNY MCPHEE*, *WILDE*, *LOCH NESS* and *BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS*.