



# SAVED!

## Production Notes

“Good girl” Mary (Jena Malone) and her domineering best friend, Hilary Faye (Mandy Moore), are starting their senior year at the top of the social food chain at American Eagle Christian High School – that is until Mary’s boyfriend tells her he thinks he might be gay. When Jesus appears to her in a vision, she heeds his message to “do everything she can to help him,” and, to her horror, she ends up pregnant. Suddenly, Mary begins to question everything she’s believed in, and Hilary Faye and her devoted “disciples” (including Heather Matarazzo) turn against her.

As an outcast, Mary finds herself alone until she’s befriended by the school’s other pariahs: Hilary Faye’s cynical, wheelchair-bound brother, Roland (Macaulay Culkin); the principal’s skater heartthrob son, Patrick (Patrick Fugit); and the high school’s lone Jew, an exuberant rebel named Cassandra (Eva Amurri). In this sweetly subversive comedy, a group of outsiders band together to navigate the treacherous halls of high school and make it to graduation, ultimately learning more about themselves, finding faith in unexpected places, and realizing what it truly means to be *Saved!*.

United Artists is proud to present *Saved!*, a Single Cell Pictures and Infinity Media production. Directed by Brian Dannelly from his script with Michael Urban, *Saved!*’s up-and-coming cast includes Jena Malone, Mandy Moore, Macaulay Culkin, Patrick Fugit, Heather Matarazzo, Eva Amurri, with Martin Donovan and Mary-Louise Parker. Produced by Sandy Stern, Michael Stipe, Michael Ohoven, and William Vince, the accomplished production team includes director of photography Bobby Bukowski, editor Pamela Martin, costume designer Wendy Chuck, production designer Tony Devenyi, and music by Christophe Beck.

## GETTING SAVED!

Producers Sandy Stern and Michael Stipe were sent the script for *Saved!* in 1999 after the success of *Being John Malkovich* prompted a flood of scripts to their company, Single Cell Pictures. “You might think it would be easy to choose a project,” says Stern, “but obviously, it’s really hard to find a good script, something you believe in so much you’re willing to spend a few years of your life on it and shed blood, sweat, and tears to get it made.

“When I read a script,” he continues, “I look for something original, something that stands apart from the crowd, a story that is told in an exciting new way. When I read *Saved!*, it was so of the moment, so topical, had something to say, and it was funny. It had all the hallmarks of a traditional high school movie, but spun in an entirely unique way.”

Producer Stipe agrees with Stern. “I thought it was one of the funnier and more absolutely audacious, subversive scripts I had seen in some time,” he says. “I just fell in love with the characters and the story immediately.”

Stern admits that the *Saved!* storyline also held a particular personal appeal. “There has always been a part of me that’s an arrested adolescent,” he says. “High school is a time we all look back on – every single one of us – and for so many of us, those were some of the worst years of our lives. Part of *Saved!* is about being the outsider in high school, and unfortunately, I was able to relate to that. I think many people can.”

Writer/director Brian Dannelly (who co-wrote the script with Michael Urban while they were enrolled at the American Film Institute) says *Saved!* came about as a result of his own diverse background. “As a kid I went to Catholic elementary school, Christian high school, and a Jewish summer camp,” he says. “The biggest lesson I learned from my experiences became a line in the script: ‘They can’t all be wrong and they can’t all be right.’ I wanted to write a movie based on that. I wanted to write a movie that was grounded with the iconography of a mainstream teen movie yet incorporated concepts and ideas you would never see in those kinds of movies – an accessible film with an independent spirit.”

Recalling the strict rules of his school years, Dannelly says, “In my high school, we weren’t allowed to dance,” he says. “Everybody had to be at least 6 inches away from the opposite sex at all times. We had record burnings, and the entertainment at my senior prom was a puppet show – it wasn’t very exciting.”

Co-writer Urban had similar experiences with his fundamentalist upbringing. “I grew up in a traditional Baptist home in the South,” he says. “Where I went to college in Tallahassee,

Florida, I regularly saw people who lived in this metaphysical world with punishments and demons and things I had a hard time understanding. Sometimes things are twisted and exploited in the name of religion or God. I wanted to explore that.”

Because the characters in *Saved!* are teenagers, the contemporary Christian youth movement provides the vivid, multifaceted background against which the story is set. With enormous youth retreats, Christian rock bands (and their rabid fans), all-teen prayer groups, and devout young disciples who often believe even more purely and unquestioningly than their adult counterparts, observing the youth movement was an important aspect of research done by the filmmakers and cast.

“Belonging to these groups when they’re teenagers can really motivate and unify today’s young people,” says Dannelly. “It brings such a sense of excitement and acceptance into their world and gives them a sense of community and security, which is very powerful. Our kids are growing up in a time of terrorism, AIDS, and classmates shooting up their schools. Teens are scared, and the Christian movement is something young people can be a part of and feel safe. It’s a fantastic reflection of pop culture: everything cool in the secular world is mirrored in the Christian world. There’s very little difference between the two now, and I think that’s part of its appeal.”

On the other hand, the strict rules associated with that lifestyle can also make it a tricky road to follow. “The danger can be that the road is really narrow. Not everyone can walk it, and if you don’t live up to certain biblical standards, you risk being left behind, alone and alienated,” Dannelly says. “It’s hard enough being a teenager without having to make the path so difficult with no room for mistakes – God knows I made plenty.”

To get into their characters, prior to the beginning of principal photography, Dannelly and a number of the principal cast members were taken to a “Salvation Rally” in Anaheim Stadium, California. In British Columbia the whole cast also attended another teen Christian rally as part of their research. “I wanted to make sure the cast understood the dynamics of what the Christian community fondly calls ‘Jesus freaks.’”

### **AND A DIRECTOR SHALL LEAD THEM...**

Ultimately, even though Dannelly was a first-time writer/director, it was the force of his conviction and personality that convinced Stern and Snipe to give him the reins. “Brian spent months convincing me he was the guy to direct this movie,” Stern says. “The more time I spent

with him and the more I understood his vision of the movie, the more entrenched I became in supporting him as director. As a producer, what I wanted most from this movie was something really funny, really smart, and really emotional – and those are the qualities I would use to describe Brian.”

For his part, Stipe felt Dannelly would make the film believable. “From the beginning, I knew I didn’t want one of those films where 24-year-olds are playing teenagers,” he says, “and it was my feeling with Brian that we would wind up with characters that were very real.”

It was a challenge to find financing for such a potentially risky project. “Not only did we have a first-time director,” Stern says, “but we had a high school movie with edgy subject matter. It took unwavering faith in Brian and Michael’s script and an incredibly talented group of actors to finally get people to fund the film.”

There were still a few bumps in the road to production: in spring 2001, only two weeks away from the start of filming in Florida, funding fell through and the project went into temporary limbo. Luckily, Infinity Media (a Vancouver/L.A.-based company headed by William Vince and Michael Ohoven) stepped up to the plate. “We had just hit an iceberg, I was in a lifeboat, and the voice of Bill Vince was our salvation,” says Stern. “He has an entire Vancouver-based operation that seamlessly pulled together the production in record time. We’re incredibly grateful to Infinity Media.” In addition, Single Cell has a first look deal with United Artists. “The Infinity and United Artists combination helped us get out of the quicksand,” says Stern.

It also didn’t hurt that the production attracted what Stern refers to as “the perfect ensemble cast.” Eschewing the services of a Los Angeles casting director, Stern and Stipe handled the principal casting themselves.

### **CHRISTIAN JEWELS AND OTHER GEMS (The Cast of *Saved!*)**

“It was really a delight to get this group of actors together,” says Stern. “It’s our dream cast, and every actor we approached basically agreed right away. What’s even more remarkable is that they stayed with us for at least a year of on-again, off-again start dates.” Jena Malone, Macaulay Culkin, Patrick Fugit, Heather Matarazzo, and Mary-Louise Parker were among those who stayed on board during that year. Mandy Moore, Eva Amurri, and the rest of the cast were signed closer to the beginning of principal photography.

As for Dannelly, he was on the same casting page as the filmmakers right from the beginning. “I wanted and needed to cast *Saved!* with very talented, very smart actors who could relate to and understand the story,” he says. “A lot of the cast has already had some big experiences in their lives, so they understood what it meant to go through hurdles. They came to us already informed.”

Though it’s very much an ensemble piece, the character at the center of *Saved!*’s comedic storm is Mary, played by Jena Malone. “I always thought Jena was an incredible young actor,” says Stern. “The first thing I saw her in was *Bastard Out of Carolina* and she gave an unbelievable performance. Everything I have seen her in, she brings such a truth, honesty, and depth of soul – when we met her we knew instantly we’d found Mary.”

Dannelly gives credit to Malone for doing such a great job with such a multi-layered role. “In her own life she’s already had to make some very grown-up choices, and she was familiar with what that meant,” says Dannelly. “It works well for her character because Mary goes through such a huge decision-making process and journey of self-discovery. And Jena had such good insight into the character. I literally cried when I met her because she explained the story to me from her perspective and it was so right on.”

In describing her attraction to the piece, Malone says, “I had never read a script like *Saved!* and I loved it. I love the humor and comedy, but also the really interesting sentiments about loss of faith and the idea of being an outcast – they combine to make this really interesting story. That drew me to the script.”

Above all, Malone loved her character’s journey throughout the film. “When the audience meets Mary Cummings,” she says, “she has already started questioning things. Although she is still best friends with Hilary Faye, you can see something is a little off.

“In every young person’s life,” she continues, “there is a point when you have to question your foundation before you start building the walls for your own house. Mary’s foundation, which she was born in and has grown up with, was a specific faith: Christianity. But she’s starting to question it, and circumstances propel that questioning even further, which eventually leads to a breaking down of faith. In the film, she goes through that process as well as everything that goes along with it – anger, sadness, hurt, confusion, and, ultimately, joy at finding what works for her.”

To play Mary’s influential best friend, Hilary Faye, the filmmakers went after actress and music star Mandy Moore, though they admit they thought it was a long shot. “Mandy is a golden girl at the moment; she’s being offered many, many projects,” Stern says. “But we sent her the

script, and seven days later she committed to the movie. I have never had an actor come onto a project so easily and joyously as Mandy. It was incredible.”

Moore originally heard about the story through Heather Matarazzo. “I remember her talking about this movie. For the longest time I thought it was a drama until I finally got my hands on the script and read it and was just on the floor in hysterics laughing – and I wanted to be a part of it.

“Besides the fact that the script was unbelievably well written, I wanted the opportunity to work with this cast.” Moore continues. “It’s an amazing cast of young people my age. Jena, Macaulay, Patrick, Heather, and Eva – they’re all people I really respect and admire. That was the clincher.”

As the leader of the perfect and popular “Christian Jewels,” Hilary Faye is the school’s top cheerleader for the Lord. “Hilary Faye is really strong-minded, and very, very religious,” says Moore. “She has a really strong sense of faith and knows where she’s going. She’s not afraid of who she is or of spreading the word. On the other hand, she’s very insecure. She doesn’t have an identity outside of Jesus, and you really see throughout the film how she uses her faith to control people and to take advantage of people around her.

“The fact is,” Moore continues, “Hilary Faye has come from a really loveless family, and she’s escaped that by finding solace in Jesus and by spreading that word to everyone. It’s become such a part of her that when she starts to doubt it a little bit she begins to break apart. You actually see the first glimpse of the true Hilary Faye at the very end of the film. She becomes human.”

Macaulay Culkin plays Roland, Hilary Faye’s smart-mouthed, wheelchair-bound brother; Culkin had known producer Stern for years and was very enthusiastic about the script. “It was really well put together, and I liked the story and overall message,” Culkin says. “It’s about love and faith in more ways than just about a specific religion. I thought it was wonderful and that Roland was a very charming character. It was a great opportunity, so I took them up on it.”

Speaking about his character, Culkin says Roland has his own cross to bear. “He’s in a wheelchair,” he says, “and his sister uses this to her advantage by dragging him around as if he were some kind of merit badge just to prove what a good Christian she is. But he’s just trying to find himself, and trying to find love and friendship in his life.”

Culkin says Roland ultimately finds that kindred spirit in Amurri’s rebellious Cassandra: “His relationship with Cassandra helps him find independence and discover who he is without his sister, outside the Christian high school world. It’s a very passionate relationship these two

have, because it's hard for them to find people who can understand where they're coming from. That's why they connect.”

In order to prepare for and do justice to his role, Culkin spent considerable time learning how to maneuver in a wheelchair. He knew it was important to his character to understand as best he could what life in a wheelchair would be like, how it would affect your daily life as well as your relationships with others. He brought a wheelchair home so he could begin to familiarize himself with it. “It was the first thing I asked for when I agreed to do *Saved!*,” he says. “You wouldn't realize how hard certain things are to do in a wheelchair – opening a refrigerator door is so much harder than you would ever think.”

Upon his arrival in Vancouver, Culkin immediately went to a rehab facility where he did more formal training with a quadriplegic named Brad. “I learned how to get up curbs, down curbs, uphill, downhill, across grass, how to get into a chair off the ground and off the bed, how to get out of the chair and into a car – just all these things.”

Dannelly gives credit to Culkin for his attitude and attention to the role. “Mac was very particular about how he was going to portray this boy in a wheelchair,” says Dannelly. “Roland is strong, he has a mind of his own, but he's also vulnerable. His relationship with Cassandra sort of brings that vulnerability out.”

In Patrick Fugit's case, Stern remembers the young actor was initially surprised to be cast as the film's romantic lead, Patrick. “Girls go crazy over Patrick Fugit – the guy is a heartthrob and doesn't know it,” Stern says. “Of course, that's what makes him even more appealing.”

In describing the project's appeal to him, Fugit says he relished the idea of working with such an accomplished young cast, especially on something they all believed in so much. “I really liked the people that were involved,” Fugit says. “The script was good from the beginning, but the cast brought it up another level.”

Fugit's character, Patrick, is the minister's son, a “new kid on the block” recently returned from missionary work with his skateboard in tow. He's an attractive, outgoing kid who immediately gets the attention of all the ladies. “Patrick has been away and comes back to school the head of the Christian skateboard team,” says Fugit. “He does what he believes in, and does it for himself. What he finds so attractive about Mary is that she is an outsider. Mary questions her beliefs with is something he can relate to.” Those same qualities are what convinces Mary that Patrick's the guy for her.

One of the strongest champions of the project from its inception, smart young actress Heather Matarazzo is referred to by Stern as “the cheerleader of the script amongst young

Hollywood.” As mentioned before regarding Mandy Moore, Matarazzo helped get many young actors interested in the project in the first place.

Matarazzo points to the honest emotions depicted in the script as the principal motivator behind her serious commitment to the project. “What struck me about the script,” she says, “was its honesty and passion and the fact it explained how to avoid putting yourself in a box, to challenge ideas and beliefs. It’s pretty much all about love and acceptance, for other human beings and for yourself. Through that you get your spirituality – it’s not about pushing it down someone else’s throat.”

Matarazzo’s character is Tia, the “Christian Jewels” wannabe who finally gets to replace the disgraced Mary as one of Hilary Faye’s disciples when Mary is “banished.” “Tia is the most manipulative and destructive of the bunch,” Matarazzo explains. “Although Mary calls her a ‘low-wattage bulb,’ Tia’s actually funny, cunning, and witty – and she ends up being the most manipulative and destructive of the bunch.”

Finally, Eva Amurri was cast to play the most flamboyant of the school’s outcasts, Cassandra Edelstein. Like the others, Amurri immediately knew she wanted to do the film. “The script was so funny and well written; I just loved it,” she says. “I knew I had to audition for this role.” She was so determined, in fact, she flew herself to Los Angeles specifically to audition for the filmmakers.

It was a good thing she did. As they recall, Amurri’s initial script reading floored them. “At 17 years of age, she had this amazing power and charisma,” says Stern. “We looked at each other and said, ‘Oh my God, we’ve found the perfect Jew for our Christian high school.’”

“Eva came in and brought all this life to her character, whereas other people had approached it somewhat glibly,” adds Dannelly. “To me she was a really special find.”

“Cassandra is the only Jewish girl at American Eagle Christian High School,” Amurri continues, “and she is an outsider in a lot of ways in order to compensate. She’s the rebel: she smokes, she drives a purple Javelin, and she’s pretty intense. She’s very spunky.”

In doing research screenings of *Saved!*, the filmmakers found that audiences responded very positively to Cassandra – a testament to Amurri as well as the writers that brought the character to life in the first place. When discussing the film after one such screening, Stern recalls a teenager who remarked, “If you really look at Cassandra, even though she’s Jewish, you realize she’s one of the most ‘Christian’ characters.”

During the film, Cassandra feels herself drawn to Hilary Faye’s wheelchair-bound brother, Roland. Amurri feels Cassandra’s attraction to Roland is only natural. “She is attracted



to him because he's also on the outside," she says. "His sister overshadows him because she is very controlling, and I think Cassandra is sympathetic to that. Also he doesn't judge her, which is really important to her."

## **A BAND OF ANGELS**

There was a feeling of high-spirited camaraderie on set as the ensemble worked with Dannelly and each other to make the story come to life. For the filmmakers, the performances and the genuine enthusiasm of the crew made the experience a dream come true.

Producer Michael Stipe says, "I have never been on a film set where everyone got along so well. Everyone involved in this film was really excited to be working on a project like this."

The results of this collaboration were apparent early on. "What we were seeing on the dailies and in the assembled footage made it all worthwhile," says Stern. "It made my previous year and my newfound relationship with my cardiologist worth it," he laughs.

According to Jena Malone, working with Dannelly was "awesome." "Brian is really a hypersensitive man," she says. "He really knew his characters, who they were and where he wanted them to go. As actors, he allowed us a lot of creative freedom and mutual respect."

Stern feels Malone deserves plenty of respect herself. "Jena Malone will have a career like Holly Hunter – she will win an Oscar® someday," he says. "She creates these amazing, full-dimensional characters, and she works incredibly hard. She worked every single day in this movie, never had a day off, and always gave 100%."

As for her co-stars, Malone says, "I was in love with all of them. It was a pleasure just to come to work with those beautiful smiling faces, and they all had a really great sense of humor."

Eva Amurri also has nothing but praise for the filming experience. "Brian was great – and so funny," she says. "He put a lot of trust in us. Every day was a learning experience, and it was more than I ever imagined."

Working with Dannelly was also a highlight of Heather Matarazzo's experience. "As a writer and director he checked everything," she says, "from hair to make-up, to wardrobe, to boom mike operators. He was just so passionate, so full of love for this film that it made everyone else equally as happy to be doing it. He's the most dedicated person I've ever met or worked with."

Mandy Moore says, “Brian was absolutely wonderful – beyond belief. He set up the story and shaped these characters so beautifully, you really didn’t feel like you had much work to do. And he’s hilarious; he cracked us all up.

“I was so lucky to be a part of this movie for so many reasons,” Moore continues. “The cast was unbelievable, people I really admire and respect. They’re the cream of the crop. Even when I wasn’t working I was able to observe and absorb as much as I could from them, because there was just so much to learn. It was pretty wonderful.”

In playing a role so different from those in her previous films – and a role so different from her pop star image – cast and filmmakers alike were particularly impressed by Moore’s acting. Pal Heather Matarazzo, who worked with Moore on *The Princess Diaries*, admits Moore “is like my sister so I am a little biased. But Mandy did it; she made the transition from music to acting, and it’s really beautiful to witness something like that.”

Patrick Fugit says, “From the first read through I could tell she was going to kick ass. I think she could be an actress with a singing career on the side.”

Dannelly says. “Mandy had such insight and compassion for her character. It was very, very important to her that Hilary Faye was always trying to be good and do things for the bigger cause. The other thing that blew me away was her instinct and improvisation. There are so many little beats in the film that are pure Mandy”

Of his *Saved!* experience, Macaulay Culkin says, “We had a great group of people. Everyone really understood their character and what we all wanted to accomplish making the film. We were also extremely lucky we got along both on- and off-screen. We had faith in one another, and we never second-guessed each other. That’s a very comforting feeling on the set.”

Dannelly concludes by again emphasizing the very supportive nature of the entire experience. “Everyone wanted to make this film,” he says. “They had something they wanted to say and they all supported each other. The cast always stuck around for each other’s scenes. They gave 110% when they were performing with each other. There was a spirit of kindness on the set that I wasn’t expecting.”

## **CONTROVERSY?**

The script’s look at fundamentalist Christianity eventually caused the production to lose several locations during production – and a rock band. The owner of the home that was to serve as Mary’s house decided at the last minute there would be no room at the inn after hearing about

the comedic aspects of the story. As a Christian, he claimed it would be inappropriate.

Similarly, a Lutheran church originally slated as a location backed out of the deal after perusing the script. A United church, however, happily offered to host the production.

Also, a well-known Christian rock band had agreed to perform in the film. The script had been approved by the band members and their management, but at the eleventh hour the band's label pulled the plug, fearful Christian fans might be offended.

In discussing the potential controversy raised by *Saved!*'s subject matter, the cast and filmmakers are quick to point out that the main message of the film is one of love, one of inclusion and acceptance of all religions and beliefs. The film does not criticize Christians, religion, or faith. The film speaks out against those who are intolerant and their inability to open their hearts and minds to others' way of thinking – or at least their inability to realize everyone on earth will never believe in exactly the same things.

Jena Malone says there will very likely be some debate about *Saved!*'s subject matter, but feels the film actually promotes religion, when it's practiced with tolerance. "The film is absolutely pro-faith," she says. "It's about wanting to believe in something and the idea that belief and love can be in many different forms. It's not a matter of grouping it into clean neat piles, but really understanding the chaos, understanding the debris on the side and knowing it's all part of the same thing."

Co-star Eva Amurri feels that religion needs to be adapted to modern life and needs. "I think no matter what religion you are, you have to learn to adapt to the world today," she says. "It's about how you take these morals imposed on you by certain religions and transpose that onto what you're experiencing in everyday life."

"The great thing about this film," she continues, "is that the characters are forced to find their own voices and make their own decisions. As an audience member, I think you're allowed to react to that in your own way. It's about testing your beliefs – and I think that's very important. It's wonderful there is a film addressing that."

Producer Sandy Stern explains that the film offers a very timely reflection of a religious awakening in present-day America, especially among young people. "The humor in the story is not meant to mock Christianity. We are not making fun of Christian people in this movie," he says. "Something is going on in the world right now that we haven't quite seen – Christianity has become a multi-billion dollar industry. With war, September 11<sup>th</sup>, Columbine, drugs, AIDS, terrorism – with everything we're faced with – people are turning to religion. With *Saved!*,

we're trying to show how teenagers are using religion as a way to cope in *their* day-to-day world."

Mandy Moore believes the film is sending out a very positive message. "Obviously some things are exaggerated for comedic effect," she says, "but the message of this film is not about mocking Christians. It isn't anti-anything at all. It is about discovering who you are and what you believe in. It's about tolerance, acceptance and diversity.

"I'm really happy to be part of a film that's going to make people think on so many different levels," Moore continues. "I think it's pretty inspirational to see this character, a Christian who tests her faith and finally decides to come back to it because it's what she believes in. But Hilary Faye also shows how intense beliefs can become really extreme, how you can find yourself becoming a really judgmental and cold person because of it. I think *Saved!* shows both the good and bad aspects of having faith."

Macaulay Culkin says, "I knew coming into this that some people might not like it, but I didn't make the film to be controversial. I think we're making a wonderful film with a very important message. Just because it takes place in a Christian high school and concerns Christianity, some might not agree with it for one reason or another. But I agree with what the film says, so I hope people just walk in with an open mind and take it for what it is."

"Before you make up your mind how you feel about something, you should be able to challenge it – religion, politics, or whatever," says Heather Matarazzo. "When speaking about something, it shouldn't just be empty words with feeling behind them. It should be educated words with feeling behind them. That is what we're trying to convey. I hope everyone likes it, including Christians."

Producer Michael Stipe is also adamant about the film's positive stance on religion. "I don't think this film in any way mocks Christianity," he says. "I come from a very religious family, and I would not insult them or the people I grew up with by working so hard on something I thought was insulting. This film presents things the way they really are. Teenage girls get pregnant, people figure out they're gay, and sometimes those things happen in places where they are least expected.

"My personal belief is that Christianity and spirituality in general need a little bit of a push into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly from the point of view of a teenager," he continues. "That is what this movie captures in such a brilliant way. It is subversive, but it is sweetly subversive. I don't think we are stepping on anyone's toes."

Regardless of controversy, the cast and filmmakers feel the potential audience for *Saved!* is broad, and the film is about much more than just religion. “There is a shift in the film,” says Stern. “Once Mary is pregnant, the film explores more than just Christianity. It becomes a film about young people trying to find their way.”

“I think anyone who has been an outsider will relate to the film,” says Dannelly. “Anyone who has ever had their faith tested will relate to this film. Anyone who has ever been in high school will relate to this film. And I would like to think our film is slightly more intelligent than your standard teen movie. I think people will appreciate it.

“People who are secure in their faith aren’t going to be worried about *Saved!* one bit. It’s like *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*,” he continues. “I don’t think Greek people were up in arms because it dealt with Greek stereotypes. People who are strong in their faith will not be afraid of this movie.”

## **ON LOCATION**

*Saved!* was filmed quickly over a 28-day period during the fall of 2002 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

An old friend of producers Stipe and Stern, cinematographer Bobby Bukowski says, “As a cinematographer you are sent dozens of scripts, but from the second page of *Saved!* I started laughing out loud and thought, ‘Whatever the budget of this film, I want to be part of it.’ Having joy involved with your work is a rare and wonderful opportunity, and this movie signaled that from the very beginning.”

Bukowski goes on to point out that the humor in the story has been greatly infused with compassion. “What’s beautiful about the script was you were sitting there laughing but you weren’t really laughing at anybody,” he says. “Brian was very careful not to place judgment on his characters. There is a great humanity behind the movie, and by the end it is so beautiful.”

Filmed entirely on location without any studio shooting, the production was dependent on finding the right sets, and was also at the mercy of the unpredictable weather.

Production designer Tony Devenyi explains the significance of the very modern suburban homes and school that were chosen as the background for the story: “We wanted to create a kind of world unto itself, the Christian world that was the basis for the film. Our research showed that there were a lot of new communities being built that were very similar and extremely spotless.

We also realized the overriding colors were very neutral and monochromatic – cream or beige right down to the artwork.”

Further explaining the strategy of filming against these modern, tidy neighborhoods, cinematographer Bukowski says, “Sometimes when you’re watching a film, a cacophony of design and color can be distracting and make it hard to put your characters in the foreground. From the beginning we were going for a very neutral palette against which to showcase these very colorful characters. Dramatically, Brian was also trying to keep this neutrality by not saying, ‘This is the bad guy and this is the good guy.’”

Production designer Devenyi explains how color was used to introduce some of the story’s standout characters. “We introduced color during some of the flashbacks of Mary’s earlier life,” he says. “We also introduced color by means of Eva Amurri’s character, Cassandra, the girl who drives a wild purple car and overturns the apple cart of the Christian structure in which she’s trapped. The color red is also kept out of the picture until Mary shows up wearing a red dress at the prom.”

The modern high school, which provides the focal point for much of the film’s action, was chosen for its unusual design as well as its proliferation of windows and skylights. The filmmakers found the Clayton Heights Secondary School in the suburb of South Surrey to have exactly the look needed for the film’s American Eagle Christian High.

“We wanted a school that was very atypical, that had never been seen on film before,” adds Devenyi. “The design for this school was very cubist, almost like a German Expressionist film set, with a lot of angles, strange lines, and broken up imagery. It gave us many great angles to shoot from inherent in the architecture. Ultimately, it also gave us a nice representation of the fractured look we wanted as the Christian world breaks down for the characters.”

One of the most notable creations made for the film is the giant 25-foot tall billboard of Jesus wearing running shoes looming over the parking lot outside the school – it’s a billboard being painted in the film’s opening by “Christian Jewels” Jena Malone and Mandy Moore. Following Dannelly’s idea of using contemporary artwork influenced by Nike ads, Devenyi says they decided to go for something “cool that kids could identify with. We made a Jesus wearing running shoes, drawn in a fashion familiar to anyone who picks up a teen magazine today.”

The challenge of working within a twenty-eight day shooting schedule called for the production crew to work quickly and efficiently, a synchronized unit. To a great extent, this process was speeded up by the fact that cinematographer Bukowski also operated the camera. “I had been with the script for 8 months,” he says. “We worked hard at storyboarding the film in

Florida and Brian imparted a great understanding of the story to me. As an operator director of photography, you have a great collaboration with the director in that you can tell the story as it's happening. You don't have time to rehearse shots and the actors don't have time to rehearse scenes, so everything happening in front of the camera is happening for the first time. It adds a freshness and electricity to everything."

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

**JENA MALONE (Mary)**, who is 19 years old, made her acting debut in *Bastard Out of Carolina*, which earned Malone her first of three Young Artist Awards, along with nominations for Best Actress in a Miniseries by the Screen Actor's Guild and Best Debut Performance at the Independent Spirit Awards. Malone was nominated twice in a row for Best Supporting Actress at the Blockbuster Entertainment Awards, and in 1998 Malone earned her first Golden Globe nomination for her work in the television movie *Hope*.

Malone's other film work includes *Donnie Darko*, *Contact*, *The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys*, *Stepmom*, *For the Love of the Game*, *Life as a House* and *Cold Mountain*. She will next be seen in *The United States of Leland* and *Rose and the Snake*.

**MANDY MOORE (Hilary Faye)** is quickly making her mark on the big screen while continuing her success as a solo artist.

Moore's critically acclaimed album "Coverage" was released on October 21, 2003; Mandy is featured singing contemporary versions of songs by Elton John, Joan Armatrading, Todd Rundgren, and Cat Stevens, among many others. It was Mandy's idea to bring these songs to a younger generation.

On the big screen, Moore will star in Andy Cadiff's *Chasing Liberty* and lend her voice to Frederik Du Chau's animated *Racing Stripes*. Moore was last seen starring in Clare Kilner's *How to Deal* and the box-office success *A Walk to Remember*, for which she performed four songs.

Moore made her feature film debut playing a haughty, cruel and popular high school cheerleader in the smash hit comedy *The Princess Diaries*, but she first came to national attention with 1999 release of her debut album, "So Real," which reached platinum status in three months and produced the top ten single "Candy." Moore's second album, "I Wanna Be

With You (Special Edition)” was released in May 2000, and also went platinum. Her self-titled third album featured the hit single “Cry.”

Mandy was raised in Orlando, Florida and currently lives in Los Angeles.

**MACAULAY CULKIN (Roland)** returned to acting after a six-year hiatus when he starred in *Madame Melville*. In addition, he has recently performed a starring role in the feature film *Party Monster*. He began his stage career at the age of four and made the first of several small film appearances in *Rocket Gibraltar*, playing the grandson of Burt Lancaster. It was in the John Hughes film *Uncle Buck* (playing John Candy’s inquisitive nephew) that Culkin first began to attract real attention. He then shot to international stardom with his lead role in Hughes’ film *Home Alone*, in which he played a resourceful child accidentally left behind when his family goes on vacation. Culkin received a Golden Globe nomination for his performance. A later sequel, *Home Alone II: Lost in New York*, was also a worldwide success. His other film credits include *Jacob’s Ladder*, *My Girl*, *The Good Son*, and *Richie Rich*.

**PATRICK FUGIT (Patrick)**, who currently resides in Salt Lake City, began his acting career at the age of eleven. He is most remembered for his role in *Almost Famous*, but before then he had recurring roles on TV’s *E.R.* and *Touched by an Angel*.

Fugit’s other film credits include *Spun*, *White Oleander*, and the upcoming *Dead Birds*.

**HEATHER MATARAZZO (Tia)** first came to the attention of filmgoers with the award-winning *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, for which she won an Independent Spirit Award. She has since been seen in blockbuster and independent films alike, including *The Devil’s Advocate*, *The Deli*, *54*, *All I Wanna Do*, *Getting to Know You*, *Cherry Moon*, *Scream 3*, *Company Man*, *Sorority Boys*, and *The Pink House*.

Matarazzo will next be seen reprising her role in the sequel to the popular *Princess Diaries* as well as the upcoming *Home of Phobia*. Her television credits include guest leads on *Strangers with Candy*, *Law & Order*, and *Now And Again*. Matarazzo also had a recurring role on the hit series *Roseanne*.

**EVA AMURRI (Cassandra)** started her film career with 1992’s *Bob Roberts*. She followed that with a role in *Dead Man Walking*. In 2002 she appeared in *The Banger Sisters*, for



which she won a Young Artist Award. Her other film credits include *Anywhere But Here* and *Made-Up*.

Amurri has also appeared on television, with a lead guest appearance on the hit series *Friends* and a role on HBO's *Earthly Possessions*.

**CHAD FAUST (Dean)**, the 22 year old who was raised in Victoria, has starred in *The Ranch*, a pilot for Showtime, and *Still Life* for Fox, which has just been picked up for its first season.

Faust was last seen in *All I Want*, which features him sporting a long mullet, cheap sunglasses, and a spiked collar alongside Elijah Wood, Franka Potente, and Mandy Moore.

Probably the only actor to play an entire supporting role in nothing more than a green speedo, Faust battled egos with Colin Firth in Disney/Touchstone's *Hope Springs*, where he played Heather Graham's bible-thumping brother. Faust also starred in *Bang, Bang, You're Dead*, a film about high school shootings.

Among Faust's other credits are multiple independent films, the CTV television series *So...?*, as well as guest spots on NBC's *Skate*, Dreamworks' *Taken*, WB's *Black Sash* and *Smallville*.

Faust has written, directed and produced six short films and one feature. *We Ran Naked*, a feature film about an author living in the shadow of his successful first novel, premiered in 1999, when Chad was just 19.

His new screenplay, *Izzy Underwood*, is in development to be produced in the summer of 2004. As a solo recording artist, Faust has released two CD's under the independent label, Zotzman Music.

**MARTIN DONOVAN (Pastor Skip)** is a respected and accomplished actor, who was most recently seen in *Pipe Dream* and will next be seen in *The United States of Leland*.

Donovan's other feature credits include *The Portrait of a Lady*, for which he won the National Society of Film Critics Award for Best Supporting Actor. He also starred in MGM's *Agent Cody Banks*, as well as *Insomnia*, *The Opposite of Sex*, *Living Out Loud*, *In a Savage Land*, *Onegin*, *Heaven*, *Hollow Reed*, and *Nadja*.

Donovan has enjoyed a long association with celebrated director Hal Hartley, and made his Sundance Film Festival debut with Hartley's *Trust* (which won the Waldo Salt screenwriting award) in 1991. Other Hartley collaborations include *Amateur*, which was selected for both the

Cannes and New York Film Festivals; *Simple Men*, which was also an official Cannes selection; *Surviving Desire*; *Flirt*; and *The Book of Life*, which was shown at the New York Film Festival.

Donovan also appeared in the FX telefilm *RFK* and the Fox series *Pasadena*. Other television credits include *Amy and Isabelle*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *When Trumpets Fade* for HBO. Donovan made his television series regular debut in the critically acclaimed drama series *Wonderland*.

**MARY-LOUISE PARKER (Lillian)** was most recently seen on Broadway starring in “Proof,” for which she received the 2001 Tony Award for Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Play, as well as The Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Drama League, Lucille Lortel, Obie and New York Magazine Awards. She also earned the 2001 T. Schreiber Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre.

For her role in “Prelude to a Kiss,” Parker received a Tony nomination for Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Play, as well as Theatre World Award, The Clarence Derwent Award and Drama Desk nominations for her performance. She originated the role of “L’il Bit” in the critically lauded “How I Learned To Drive,” for which she received an Obie Award, a Lucille Lortel Award for Best Actress, and a Best Actress nomination from the Outer Critics Circle.

Parker’s next role was in “Communicating Doors,” and she previously appeared in “Bus Stop” and “Four Dogs and a Bone.” Other stage credits include “Throwing Your Voice,” “Babylon Gardens,” “The Importance of Being Earnest,” “Up In Saratoga,” “The Miser,” “Hayfever,” “The Age Of Pie,” and “The Girl In Pink,” among others.

Parker began in film with starring roles in *Fried Green Tomatoes* and *Grand Canyon*. Other film credits include starring roles in *Reckless*, *Boys on the Side*, *The Client*, *Naked in New York*, *Bullets Over Broadway*, and *Longtime Companion*. She also starred in *The Five Senses*, for which she was nominated for a Genie Award for Best Actress. Parker was recently seen in the independent feature *Pipe Dream* and Brett Ratner’s *Red Dragon*.

On television, Parker starred in *Sugartime*, *A Place for Annie*, *Saint Maybe*, *Cupid and Cate*, and *The Simple Truth of Noah Dearborne*. Most recently, Parker received an Emmy nomination for her role as ‘Amy Gardner’ on NBC’s *The West Wing*, and she starred in HBO’s critically-acclaimed *Angels in America*, receiving a 2003 Golden Globe nomination.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**BRIAN DANNELLY (Director/Writer)** was born in Wurtzburg, Germany. At age 11 his family relocated to a suburb of Baltimore, Maryland. After Catholic elementary school, Jewish summer camp, and Baptist high school, Dannelly eventually graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Maryland Baltimore County (Visual Arts), then became a directing fellow at the American Film Institute, graduating from their directing program in 1999. Dannelly met writing partner Michael Urban at AFI and they wrote *Saved!*, Dannelly's first feature film. Also completed: *Runner Up*, to be produced by Single Cell with Dannelly directing.

**MICHAEL URBAN (Writer)** was born on the tornado swept plains of Bartelsville, Oklahoma. As a young child his family relocated to Bogota, Colombia, for a few years before settling in Miami, Florida. Because he was a poor test taker in high school, Urban attended Florida State University where he majored in German Language and Art History. After winning a scholarship, he went on to complete his studies at the Freie Universität in Berlin, Germany, and upon graduation moved to Los Angeles. After writing the world's worst screenplay, he realized he was in need of additional studies. Urban applied to and was somehow accepted into the American Film Institute's Center for Advanced Film and Television Studies screenwriting program. It was there he met directing fellow Brian Dannelly and the two became writing partners.

Urban and Dannelly have written several projects together and recently completed *Runner Up*, their second project to be produced Single Cell with Dannelly attached to direct.

**MICHAEL STIPE (Producer)** is the singer/songwriter of the band R.E.M. (formed 1979), and has two film production companies: Single Cell Pictures, which he started in 1995 with Sandy Stern, and his other production company, C-Hundred Film Corp, formed in 1987.

Stipe's production credits include *Being John Malkovich*, *American Movie*, *Velvet Goldmine*, *Spring Forward*, *Girls Town*, *Our Song*, and *Stranger Inside*. Stipe's next films will be the 2004 pictures *Brother to Brother* and *Everyday People*.

**SANDY STERN (Producer)**, whose first feature was the critically acclaimed teen anthem *Pump Up the Volume*, has produced many other films for both film and television. He has also produced *Red Hot* for HBO, *Equinox*, and *Freak City* for Showtime.

Stern partnered with Michael Stipe in 1995 and their productions together include *Being John Malkovich*, *Velvet Goldmine*, and *Thirteen Conversations about One Thing*.

**MICHAEL OHOVEN (Producer)** is a German businessman who formed Infinity Media, Inc. in August 2000 and serves as its chief executive officer. Raised and educated in Germany, Ohoven learned financing and institutional investment at the prestigious Commerzbank. He then joined the International Corporate Affairs division of RTL Television, Europe's largest private broadcaster, where the station's renowned founder, television mogul Professor Helmut Thoma, became Ohoven's mentor. After two and a half years, Ohoven left the company to create Infinity Media, Inc. Under his leadership, the company quickly established strong working relationships with major studios, talent representatives, and financial institutions. As a result, the company has completed production on 12 films in its first three years of operation.

**WILLIAM VINCE (Producer)** is now in post-production on *White on White* and recently served as executive producer on *Dreaming of Julia*. Vince's other credits include *The Snow Walker*, *Dead Heat*, *Liberty Stands Still* (executive producer), *A Fate Totally Worse Than Death* (line producer), *Ricky 6*, *Here's to Life*, *The 4<sup>th</sup> Floor*, *Air Bud: Golden Receiver*, *Hoods*, *Air Bud*, *Wounded*, *Underworld*, *White Tiger*, *Crash*, *The Final Cut*, *Malicious*, *Tomcat: Dangerous Desires*, and *Anything for Love* (line producer).

**BOBBY BUKOWSKI (Director of Photography)** recently wrapped *The Dying Gaul*, directed by Craig Lucas and starring Peter Sarsgaard, and *Boogeyman*. Some of Bukowski's recent work includes *Crime and Punishment in Suburbia*, *Arlington Road*, *The Minus Man*, *The Last Time I Committed Suicide*, *Going All the Way*, and *Ethan Frome*.

In addition to films, Bukowski worked on HBO's acclaimed miniseries *If These Walls Could Talk*.

**PAMELA MARTIN (Editor)** has many film credits to her name, including the upcoming *Glory Days*, *Bubble Boy*, *How to Kill Your Neighbor's Dog*, *Gun Shy*, *Slums of Beverly Hills*, *The House of Yes*, *The Substance of Fire*, *Ed's Next Movie*, *Spanking the Monkey* and *What Happened Was...* (Associate Editor). Martin also served as dialogue editor on *Eat Drink Man Woman*, *The Wedding Banquet*, and *Pushing Hands*.

Martin's television credits include *Warning: Parental Advisory, Dottie Gets Spanked* (Sound/Asst. Editor), and *TV Nation* (Sound/Asst. Editor). She also served as editor on several documentaries, including *AIDS Films* and *The Beckett Project*. Her additional credits include working as sound editor for *The Last Party* and *The Quiet Revolution*, as well as an assistant editor credit on *Fortune Cookies*.

**WENDY CHUCK (Costume Designer)**, whose first feature film credit as designer, *A Country Life*, earned her an Australian Film Institute Award nomination for best costume, has since designed costumes for Alexander Payne's critically acclaimed award-winning satire *Election*. She also served as costume designer on the box-office success *Varsity Blues* as well as on *About Schmidt* (which garnered her a CDG award for Excellence in Costume Design), *Strange Hearts*, *Auggie Rose* and *Sugar and Spice*. She is currently at work on Terry Zwigoff's (*Ghost World*) new film.

Chuck began her career working in her native Australia in theater, opera, and television. She shared her tenure at the Queensland Theater Company with Academy Award®-winning actor Geoffrey Rush. She also worked on costumes for the Australian Opera Company and on many productions for ABCTV in Australia.

After working on Jane Campion's telefilm *2 Friends*, she reunited with two-time Academy Award® nominee Janet Patterson on Campion's *Portrait of a Lady* and *The Piano*.

In addition to her work in film, theater, opera and television, Chuck has designed over 100 period costumes a year for special displays at London's Museum of the Moving Image and for the United Kingdom's Department of Trade and Industry exhibit at the 1992 World Expo in Seville.

**CAL SHUMIATCHER (Line Producer)**, a resident of Vancouver, Canada, has worked successfully as a producer, director and sound designer. Among his producing credits are the films *Cuba Libre*, *North of Pittsburgh*, *Matinee* and *My Kind of Town*, and the television series *The Chris Isaak Show* (Production Supervisor), *Tracker*, *Beggars and Choosers*, *Weird-Ohs*, and the telefilm *Boys Will Be Girls*.

Shumiatcher also produced the documentaries *When's Mum Coming Home*, *Kink*, *The Last Days of WWII*, *Chasing the Cure*, *Murder in Normandy*, *To Russia with Fries*, *The Deal Maker*, *Mordecai*, *On the Edge*, and *Whisky Man*. His credits as a director include episodes of *Tracker*, *Beggars and Choosers*, and *Beast Wars: Transformers*.

As a sound designer, Shumiatcher has worked on *Gary Larson's Tales from the Far Side* (both I and II), *Beast Wars: Transformers*, *Brothers Grunt*, as well as the films *Warriors of Virtue*, *Adventures of the Yellow Dog*, *Angel Square* (Genie Award for Best Sound Editing), *The Road to Saddle River* (Genie Award nomination for Best Sound Editing), and *Whale Music*, which garnered him his second Genie Award for Best Sound Editing. Shumiatcher also designed the sound for three simulator attractions, "A Trip to Mars," "Strike Force," and "Sea Trek."

**CHRISTOPHE BECK (Music)** has scored numerous films in virtually every genre. His talent is evident in a wide-range of features, from the now-classic teen comedy *Bring It On* to the bestselling novel film adaptation *Under the Tuscan Sun*. Beck's credits this year alone include *Just Married*, *Confidence*, *American Wedding* and *Dickie Roberts*. Other credits include *Guinevere*, *The Alarmist*, *Thick as Thieves*, and *The Tuxedo*. The Montreal native started piano lessons at five and by eleven he was writing music for his first-ever band, Chris and The Cupcakes. During high school he studied flute, saxophone, trombone and drums, and performed in rock bands.

While studying music at Yale, Beck discovered that his talent for composing was far greater than his talent for performing. He wrote two musicals with his brother Jason, as well as an opera based on "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allen Poe.

Upon graduation from Yale in 1992, Beck moved to Los Angeles to attend USC's prestigious film scoring program. A personal recommendation from the legendary Buddy Baker, head of the USC Music Department, led to his first assignment for a Canadian TV series called *White Fang*. Soon thereafter, he was asked to score a new TV series *Buffy*, based on the movie, for which he received an Emmy for Outstanding Music Composition.