

# FAT ALBERT

A generation grew up watching “Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids,” the Saturday morning cartoon series that enjoyed one of the longest runs in cartoon history, airing from 1972-79. It was later reprised as “The New Fat Albert Show,” which ran from 1979-84.

Now, Bill Cosby’s beloved characters make their way to movie theaters nationwide in an all-new, live-action motion picture. The FAT ALBERT movie, like the famed series, is based on Mr. Cosby’s stand-up comedy monologues about his growing up with his friends in a Philadelphia neighborhood.

Not only was the show phenomenally popular, it was groundbreaking, cutting across ethnic and economic lines. It had an irrepressible sense of fun, yet at the same time imparted important lessons. “If you aren’t careful, you might learn something,” Mr. Cosby would tell viewers during each episode.

“Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids” even had an impressive educational pedigree. The program was studied by more academics than any show in television history, except “Sesame Street.”

Moreover, Mr. Cosby and the show’s producers assembled a special Advisory Board to consult on the program. The distinguished panel, comprised of linguists, psychologists, historians, teachers and scientists, had a clear goal: to create an entertainment program that would delight youngsters (of all ages) while telling pro-social, age-appropriate life lessons.

The program’s appeal was based equally on its sense of humor and fun *and* its pro-social messages and characters. “We wanted to do something good with this show,” says Mr. Cosby. “It was anti-stereotype. Fat Albert and his friends are fully-functioning,

bright kids...in their own way. Fat Albert himself, while heavysset, is heroic and a role model; Mushroom may have a speech impediment, but he's a bright young man.

"The stories were serious, but they still made people laugh and feel good," Mr. Cosby continues. "They felt good because you liked and trusted Fat Albert and his friends, and you wanted to hang out with them. But they're not superheroes; they're boys. They enjoy themselves even though they live in less than ideal circumstances. They make correct choices and help others make correct choices."

Now, as FAT ALBERT makes the jump to the big screen, its characters, themes and of course fun, remain just as relevant. "The problems and concerns that young people face, translate from the time of the series to today," says Mr. Cosby. "They're still relevant."

The movie adds an exciting new twist to the characters by having the boys step out into the "real world," becoming flesh-and-blood, and face challenges they couldn't have dreamed of as cartoon figures. Plus, the characters' "old-school" '50s-era sensibility makes them fish out of water in today's world.

As the story opens, Fat Albert and friends are playing their favorite game, buck-buck, on their home turf: a North Philly junkyard. At the same time, in the real world, a teenager named Doris is watching "Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids" reruns on television. The unhappy, lonely teen begins to cry, and as her tears fall onto the remote control, Fat Albert hears Doris. The big guy with the big heart stops what he is doing and dives headlong through the television screen – and into the real world – to help her. His friends, Rudy, Mushroom, Bill, Bucky, Old Weird Harold and Dumb Donald, follow shortly thereafter.

Fat Albert, the ultimate problem solver, is determined to help Doris, even though she insists she doesn't need his assistance. But as Fat Albert slowly brings Doris out of her shell, he begins to undergo some big changes of his own. For one thing he and his friends are fading. Even more significantly, Fat Albert has discovered love, courtesy of Doris' foster sister, a lovely high school student named Lauri.

Even more surprises await Fat Albert and his friends in their new world, including Fat Albert meeting his "creator," Bill Cosby. But as Fat Albert deals with his new feelings and challenges – and races to complete his mission and return to his world before

he fades from existence – one thing is certain: While they do their thing, they’re all gonna have a good time!

For years, Hollywood’s major film studios have pursued Bill Cosby for a feature film version of FAT ALBERT. But Mr. Cosby, protective of his beloved characters, kept Fat Albert and his friends “sitting in the can,” as he says, until producer John Davis and Twentieth Century Fox convinced him the time was right for a big screen Fat Albert adventure.

Davis, a longtime fan of the “Fat Albert” series, was delighted to join Mr. Cosby in making the movie. “Mr. Cosby IS Fat Albert,” says Davis. “He is its heart and soul. He was the voice of Fat Albert, and he has been his protector all these years. He really loves these characters, and part of our task was to bring them to life in a way that audiences – and Bill – would love.”

Mr. Cosby came up with the idea of having the animated characters emerge from a television set, through a portal, and into the real world to help a troubled teen. “It’s a wonderful notion,” says Davis. “It connects the cartoon world with the real world, and it connects the past with the present.”

For Mr. Cosby, devising a clever way to bring Fat Albert into our world was only the beginning. “We wanted there to be a reason for Fat Albert to visit our world,” he says. “I made them older than they were in the series, so they could fall in love, experience new emotions, and take a step into a new life. These are wonderful, very real emotions.

“Our hero, Fat Albert, is challenged like he never has been before,” continues Mr. Cosby. “The hero who solves everybody’s problems now faces a big challenge of his own: he’s falling in love for the first time. In the movie, we get to see the protagonist struggle with his own choices while trying to solve the problems of others.”

Mr. Cosby collaborated with Charles Kipps on the FAT ALBERT screenplay. Kipps, who previously had worked with Mr. Cosby on the series “The Cosby Mysteries” and more recently on the series “Little Bill” and “Fatherhood,” says that when Mr. Cosby was ready to move on a FAT ALBERT motion picture, everybody jumped. “The studio’s excitement, as well as John Davis’ and my own, grew to the size of Fat Albert,” jokes the screenwriter.

Kipps asserts that Mr. Cosby's brand of timeless comedy means Fat Albert's appeal is never out of style. "It's not dependent on foul language or of-the-moment jokes," says Kipps. "It's basic, universal comedy. Mr. Cosby's humor is inherent in the actions of the characters. It is humor with a heart, and that plays in '50s, '70s, or the new millennium."

As the screenplay took shape, the producers turned their attentions to finding a director. Joel Zwick, a noted theater and television director (he has helmed over 500 sitcom episodes), and whose independent feature "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" was a surprise blockbuster, got the nod. "Joel's a miniature version of Fat Albert," says John Davis. "He's got a big heart." Adds Mr. Cosby: "Joel was a fine choice to hold the keys to the world of Fat Albert. He's a neighborhood guy like me; he's from Brooklyn. So, Joel is able to identify with regular neighborhood guys, like our characters, and that's important."

Zwick was pleased to join fellow "neighborhood guy" Bill Cosby on the project. "I wanted to direct FAT ALBERT for two reasons," Zwick says. "Bill Cosby, and Bill Cosby. And if I chose a third reason, it would be the film's theme of first love. That's something everybody has experienced, and I loved its universality."

Zwick and Davis initiated a nationwide casting search for their Fat Albert. "We looked everywhere," says Zwick, but obviously there were not a lot of people who could be Fat Albert, because he would need to be big, funny and physically gifted."

Finally, Zwick and Davis found Kenan Thompson of "Saturday Night Live." But before Thompson could become Fat Albert, the filmmakers needed Mr. Cosby's approval. "I put Kenan's audition on tape, which I took to Mr. Cosby's home in New York," says Zwick. "I put the tape into his VCR and said, 'This is our Fat Albert.' Mr. Cosby saw no more than 15 seconds of that audition tape, had me shut off the VCR, and said, 'Hire him.'"

Little did Mr. Cosby realize that the newly anointed, big screen personification of his beloved character was, as Thompson puts it, Mr. Cosby's "number one fan."

"I grew up watching 'The Cosby Show' and have done Bill Cosby impressions almost since the day I could talk," Thompson continues. "Meeting him and playing his character was a dream come true."

Thompson recalls Mr. Cosby's one piece of advice to him about playing Fat Albert. "Mr. Cosby described Fat Albert as a 'humanitarian,' and that he created the character not as typical hero," says Thompson. "That's why he made him big, with a big heart. When someone has a problem, Fat Albert's mission was to solve it."

Thompson appreciated the film's love story, as well as its fish-out-of-water themes. "Fat Albert and his friends are pre-rock and roll, so they have a mentality that's definitely out of step with today's world," he says. "They know nothing about modern dances and slang; they speak only proper English, are perfect gentlemen, know which side of the sidewalk to walk on when escorting a lady – and a can of soda with a pull tab is a complete mystery to them."

Co-starring as Fat Albert's friends are Shedrack Anderson III ("Just Deal") as Rudy, the group's wheeler-dealer; Jermaine Williams ("The Jersey") as Mushmouth, whose Mush-speak defies understanding by most; Keith D. Robinson ("American Dreams") as Bill, the level headed and practical one; Alphonso McAuley ("Joan of Arcadia") as Bucky, who gets his nickname from his protruding molars; Aaron A. Frazier ("House of Sand and Fog") as Old Weird Harold, 6'8" tall and stick-thin; and Marques B. Houston ("You Got Served") as Dumb Donald, who can't help but look silly in his odd-looking hat.

"The camaraderie between these seven guys was amazing both on and off the set," says Joel Zwick. "They really put the point across that Fat Albert and his friends are all about helping people and being positive."

The story's female characters bring a new dimension to this world. Fat Albert and friends emerge through a television screen to help Doris (Kyla Pratt) because she has a problem. Says Pratt: "Fat Albert senses that Doris is a loner; she has low self-esteem and needs a confidence boost. Although she is reluctant to have these characters, who she knows only as cartoon figures, come into her life, really great friendships develop, and all kinds of surprises are in store for everyone."

Indeed, the film is rich in surprises, not the least of which is that it has Fat Albert discovering love. He falls head over heels for Lauri, (Dania Ramirez), Doris' popular foster sister. Fat Albert's feelings for Lauri are so strong that he considers not returning to his cartoon world.

Another prominent figure in FAT ALBERT is a certain “Bill Cosby,” who helps the title character understand that he must return to his cartoon world, despite his feelings for Lauri. “It took me a while to get into character,” jokes Mr. Cosby. “In the interest of research, I moved into his house, slept with his wife, and spoke with his children. They’re all very nice people, by the way. And I asked them all about this man, ‘Bill Cosby.’”

FAT ALBERT also co-stars former B2K frontman Omari Grandberry as Fat Albert’s nemesis, Reggie; J. Mack Slaughter, Jr. (“Like Family”) as Reggie’s friend and sidekick Arthur; “The Cosby Show” veteran Raven-Symone in the animated part of Danielle; and Jeremy Suarez (“The Bernie Mac Show”) in the animated role of Russell.

FAT ALBERT was filmed on locations in and around Los Angeles. Paramount Pictures’ storied backlot served as the exterior setting of Doris and Lauri’s Philadelphia neighborhood, with several interiors shot at Culver Studios’ Stage 16. Additional locations included Hollywood High School, where luminaries such as Judy Garland, James Garner, Mickey Rooney and Jason Robards launched their careers; and Los Angeles’ Broadway Bridge, where the production constructed a real world version of Fat Albert’s animated North Philly junkyard and clubhouse.

For an elaborate block party scene, the production reconfigured Paramount’s New York Street as a Philadelphia neighborhood. There, a hip-hop version of the famed Fat Albert theme is unveiled.

Renowned music producer Damon Elliott transformed the Fat Albert song into a high-energy rap song. Says Elliott, “It was nerve-wracking to take the original Cosby song and flip it, but I think the cast did a great job. All the guys can sing so that was a relief, and Kenan put on some great moves.”

Thompson performed these moves under a “fat suit” that weighed nearly 20 pounds. The suit had a zipper in the back, a sweater that snapped into its pants, and a detachable collar. While on set in his costume, Thompson relaxed on a one-of-a-kind, extra-wide director’s chair; the additional width, of course, was necessary to handle his prosthetic girth. In addition, the filmmakers built a special refrigerated trailer to keep the actor cool in his cumbersome suit, in between takes.

The sets and '50s-era, hyper-colorful costumes made an indelible impression on Mr. Cosby when he visited the set for the first time. "I laughed," he recalls, "because the colors and costumes really stood out. I apologized to each actor for putting them into those particular get-ups."

Throughout the lengthy pre-production, production and post-production stages, Mr. Cosby and the filmmakers never doubted that FAT ALBERT remains as relevant today as it was a quarter-century ago. "Older moviegoers will say, 'Yes, this is what I remember,'" says Mr. Cosby. "For the young people who are new to 'Fat Albert', we tell a fun story with wonderful actors. But for everyone, it's still about the essence of Fat Albert."

Adds Joel Zwick: "This movie is going to make people feel good about themselves – and about falling in love, respecting themselves and others, and trusting their life and choices."

And, as FAT ALBERT, the movie and character, remind us: caring, sharing – and fun – never go out of style.

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

**KENAN THOMPSON** (Fat Albert) recently began his second season as a featured player on "Saturday Night Live." Last year, he appeared in the film "Barbershop 2: Back in Business."

A native of Atlanta, Thompson made his television debut as a member of Nickelodeon's sketch comedy series "All That." He and his partner Kel Mitchell debuted in a spin-off show, "Kenan & Kel," in 1996. Thompson also had a recurring role on "Felicity." Thompson's feature film credits include "D2: The Mighty Ducks," "Good Burger," "The Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle," "Heavyweights," "Love Don't Cost a Thing" and "My Boss's Daughter."

**KYLA PRATT** (Doris) stars in UPN's "One on One," and voices the role of Penny Proud in The Disney Channel's animated series, "The Proud Family."

Pratt began her career in 1995 after being cast in the "Da Vinci, Time and Space" interactive computer game commercial. In 1999 she was voted Favorite Rising Star at

the Nickelodeon Kids Choice Awards. By age 12, she had made almost twenty supporting television guest starring and recurring roles in “Friends,” “Family Matters,” “Touched by an Angel,” “The Smart Guy” and “Moesha,” among other shows.

Pratt’s motion picture credits include “Psalms from the Underground” directed by Eric La Salle, “Jackie’s Back” with Bette Midler and Tom Arnold, “Mad City” with John Travolta, “Love & Basketball,” “Dr. Dolittle” and “Dr. Dolittle 2.”

Pratt has been nominated for NAACP Image Awards for her roles in the “Dr. Dolittle” movies, as well as for her work on “One on One” and “The Proud Family.”

**OMARI GRANDBERRY** (Reggie) was the former lead singer of the multi-platinum boy band B2K, and he is now a solo artist and actor. Born in Los Angeles, Omari made his feature film debut in the hit movie “You Got Served,” which was the highest grossing movie to open ever during a Super Bowl weekend. His starring role in that film earned him MTV Movie Award nominations for Best Breakthrough Male Performer, and for Best Dance Sequence, the latter with Marques Houston and the Lil Saints Dance Crew.

Grandberry guest starred on the television series “American Dreams” and made guest appearances on “Wayne Brady,” “On-Air with Ryan Seacrest,” “Regis & Kelly,” “Soul Train,” and MTV’s “Cribs.”

This fall saw the release of his solo album on TUG/Epic Records.

**RAVEN-SYMONNE** (Voice of Danielle) stars as Raven Baxter in Disney Channel’s hit comedy series “That’s So Raven.” She also voices the role of Monique on Disney Channel’s animated action/comedy “Kim Possible.”

Raven appeared in the hit Disney Channel Original Movie “The Cheetah Girls.” In addition, she stars in the Disney feature film “All-American Girl,” based on the best-selling novel from “The Princess Diaries” author Meg Cabot. Raven will also star in the Warner Bros. remake of “Sparkle.”

Best known as the adorable Olivia from the long-running hit series “The Cosby Show” and as Nicole in “Hangin’ with Mr. Cooper,” she appeared as Eddie Murphy’s rebellious daughter Charisse in “Dr. Dolittle” and “Dr. Dolittle 2.”

She released her hit single, “That’s What Little Girls Are Made Of,” at age five. That same year, she debuted on Broadway with the Boys Choir of Harlem for their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. She also toured with N’Sync to support her CD “Undeniable.”

In 2004, Raven won the prestigious NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Performance in a Youth/ Children's Program and a Nickelodeon Kids Choice Award for Favorite TV Actress.

**JERMAINE WILLIAMS** (Mushmouth) starred as a series regular on the Disney Channel’s “The Jersey.” He made a guest appearance as Charlie on the WB’s “The Nightmare Room.” His feature film credits include a supporting role in “Bulworth” and a co-starring role in the independent film “The Beat.”

Williams dances for the Norwood Kids Foundation formed by Brandy Norwood, and he has also danced for Culture Shock L.A. In 2001, Williams was nominated for the Best Comedic Performance in a Series by the NAMIC Awards.

**AARON A. FRAZIER** (Old Weird Harold) trained with JITA Actor’s Academy under the tutelage of industry veteran Ernest Johnson. While studying his craft, he began to work in commercials, including spots for 7 UP and Code Red Mountain Dew. He guest starred on the television series “First Monday,” “The Shield” and “Moesha.”

After working as a stand-in in various films, Frazier made his movie debut in the Todd Bridges film “Flossin.” This led to roles in the films “House of Sand and Fog” and “Brace Face Brandi.”

When he is not acting, Frazier spends his time working with Ernest Johnson and the Todd Bridges Youth Foundation to operate a community, non-profit group of homes for teen boys and girls who have been displaced, which helps to provide them with a safe and secure environment.

**JEREMY SUAREZ** (Voice of Russell) stars as Jordan on the hit Regency/Fox comedy series “The Bernie Mac Show.” Jeremy is a two-time nominee (2003 and 2004) of The NAACP Image Award in the category of Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series for his work on the series.

Jeremy's other notable television credits include "Chicago Hope," "Mad TV," "Beverly Hills, 90210," "The Wayans Bros.," "Sister, Sister" and "Hey Arnold." He also appeared in the feature film "Ladykillers" starring Tom Hanks and directed by Joel Coen. His other feature film credits include "Jerry Maguire," "Susan's Plan" and "Maniac Magee." Suarez also contributed voiceover work in "The Land Before Time VIII: The Big Freeze," "The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland," and "Treasure Planet." He is the lead voice of "Koda" in the Oscar-nominated animated feature film "Brother Bear."

**KEITH D. ROBINSON** (Bill) is an actor, singer and songwriter. He appears in the award winning television drama "American Dreams."

Robinson was born in Kentucky, where he discovered his love of the arts at a young age. Singing took center stage in high school in Augusta, Georgia, and he was signed to a contract during his junior year at the University of Georgia. Robinson, along with his two partners, was picked up by Motown Records and went on to perform with several top artists.

In 1999, Robinson moved to Los Angeles to pursue his singing career and try his hand at acting. His first audition landed him the role of the Green Power Ranger on the popular children's series, "The Power Rangers." Then came a lead role in the television movie "The Princess and the Marine," a recurring role on "E.R." and the lead in the pilot "Save the Last Dance," based on the hit movie. Roles in "Frozen Impact" and "Mimic Sentinel" followed. He continues to pursue his music and song writing career, lending his soulful voice to the new Neo-Soul United 2 album, which was released worldwide in April 2004.

**DANIA RAMIREZ** (Lauri), a native of the Dominican Republic, began her career as a model before turning to acting.

Dania's first film was "The Subway Stories," produced by Spike Lee for HBO. Since then she has been tapped for several other Spike Lee projects, including "25<sup>th</sup> Hour" and "She Hate Me." In the latter she plays the lead in a complicated love triangle involving a lesbian paralegal who wants to have a baby with her attorney girlfriend. Her other credits include the independent film "Cross Bronx."

**MARQUES B. HOUSTON** (Dumb Donald) is a singer, songwriter, producer and actor. He recently starred in the hit film “You Got Served,” which earned him an MTV Movie Award nomination for “Best Dance Sequence” with Omari Grandberry and Lil Saints Dance Crew. His other film credits include “House Party III,” “House Party 4: Down to the Last Minute” and “Good Burger.” He was one of the lead voices in “Bebe’s Kids.”

Houston’s television credits include a recurring role on the WB hit television series “Sister, Sister.” He has had guest starring roles on “American Dreams,” “Rock Me Baby,” “Family Matters,” and “Parent ‘Hood.”

Houston was a key member of the band Immature when the group hit the charts with “Tear It Up” from the soundtrack of the movie “Bebe’s Kids.” In 1999 the group changed its name to IMX, releasing “Introducing IMX.” The lead single is the lilting groove-flavored “Clubbin,” produced by R. Kelly.

Houston showcased his songwriting and producing talents by working with Platinum Status on the Destiny’s Child 1999 album “The Writing’s On the Wall” and IMX’s 2001 self titled New Line Records release.

**SHEDRACK ANDERSON III** (Rudy) appeared in the hit teen series “Just Deal” as the lovable Jermaine Green. He starred as Tommy in Lifetime’s “Gracie’s Choice” alongside Diane Ladd and Anne Heche.

He made his film debut as one of the Lost Boys in Steven Spielberg’s “Hook.” He then starred in “Warriors of Virtue 2,” and guest starred on the television series “Boston Public,” “The Parkers,” “Hollywood Lives,” “Hip Hop Massive” and “The Division.” Anderson is a recurring star on Disney’s hit show “Phil of the Future.”

Anderson attended the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, where he was honored with the Emerging Artist of the Year Award from PBS. After high school, he attended the Julliard School in New York, where he became interested in dance. He was a member of Ballet Hispanico of New York and became an assistant choreographer for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

**ALPHONSO McAULEY** (Bucky) has been acting in commercials since 1999. He has also done television, film and theatre. He appeared in the hit series “Joan of Arcadia,” was featured in the pilot “The Moron Channel,” and guest starred on “It’s Not About Me” and the Fox series “Boston Public.” His film credits include leading roles in “Trilogy Wars,” “DopeNuts,” “Outdated Carnation” and “Honey Brown.”

Some of his special talents include stand-up comedy, impersonations, improv, and spoken word poetry. He trained with the Groundlings on Improvisation Theory and with the Harvey Lembeck Workshop on Comedy Improv Scene Study.

**J. MACK SLAUGHTER, JR.** (Arthur) made his television debut as a series regular on the WB comedy “Like Family.”

Early in his career, he won a contest on a Dallas radio station that landed him a spot in a pop group called Sons of Harmony, which was signed to a small independent record label. A devoted fan base soon developed regionally in the Southwest as the boys garnered a #1 song and opened for Destiny’s Child, Jessica Simpson and 98 Degrees. When faced with signing a long-term deal with Sons of Harmony, J. Mack decided it was time to follow his heart and pursue acting.

In 2000, at age 17, Slaughter moved to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career. Only two months after his arrival, he landed an agent and was working on a pilot loosely based on his life. Though that project never came to fruition, he landed a guest-starring role on the WB’s “What I Like About You” playing Amanda Bynes’ love interest.

### **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**WILLIAM H. COSBY, JR.** (Screenwriter and Executive Producer) is, by any standards, one of the most influential stars in America today. Whether through concert appearances or recordings, television or films, commercials or education, Bill Cosby has the ability to touch people’s lives. His humor often centers on the basic cornerstones of our existence, seeking to provide an insight into our roles as parents, children, family members, and men and women. Without resorting to gimmickry or lowbrow humor, Bill Cosby’s comedy has a point of reference and respect for the trappings and traditions of

the great American humorists such as Charlie Chaplin, Will Rogers, W.C. Fields and Groucho Marx.

The 1984-92 run of “The Cosby Show” and his books *Fatherhood* and *Time Flies* established new benchmarks on how success is measured. His status at the top of the TVQ survey year after year continues to confirm his appeal as one of the most popular personalities in America. Cosby’s believability and humor makes him most effective as the spokesman for Jell-O. His lifelong contributions to American culture were recognized with a Kennedy Center Honor in 1998 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in July 2002.

Today, Cosby has touched the hearts of a new generation of young children with his “Little Bill” animated series, which airs daily on Nickelodeon and Saturday mornings on CBS. The show is based on Cosby’s popular children’s books. His interest in young people also spawned his best-selling book, *Congratulations! Now What?*, published by Hyperion. The book contains his amusing yet wise take on college life and what lies ahead for the new graduate in the real world.

*Friends of a Feather*, a HarperCollins book released in May 2003, is Cosby’s most recent children’s book. Illustrated by his daughter, Erika, it is a beautiful story that explores the theme of being true to yourself.

*I Am What I Ate ... and I’m frightened!!!* was released last year and entered the *New York Times* Best Seller List at #5. It offers a hip, humorous, hard-earned wisdom on the healthy lifestyle and the behavior behind it.

His best seller *Fatherhood* became an animated series on “Nick at Nite.”

Cosby’s initial success began with *Bill Cosby Is A Very Funny Fellow, Right?* and continued with many other comedy albums. He also has released a number of jazz recordings, including *hello, friend: to ennis with love* (released in 1997). Cosby has earned five Grammy Awards for Best Comedy Album.

Bill Cosby represents the voice of a vast, ordinary world. Everyone seems to easily identify with his characters and the situations in which they find themselves. He gives the twist of the ridiculous to everyday faults, foibles and successes and makes them a recognizable slice of life. Bill Cosby points out the humor in our lives, and in doing so, he touches our hearts. Because of this, his appeal is not restricted to any specific group.

His qualities have endeared him to people from all walks of life.

It is the fusion of these qualities that has resulted in television's biggest and most influential hit of the modern era, "The Cosby Show." The show was credited by many for single-handedly resurrecting the sitcom genre. Cosby's return to television after eight years was prompted by what he perceived as a lack of relevance and an abundance of superficiality in TV comedy programming. Week after week of #1 ratings and almost unanimous critical acclaim only confirms that others agree with his opinion.

His success on television, which had been a catalyst in promoting NBC to first place, has been matched in other areas. In 1986 he broke Radio City Music Hall's 53-year-old attendance record for his concert appearance. In 1987, wife Camille Cosby produced a home video cassette called *Bill Cosby: 49*, which was distributed by Kodak and sold in the hundreds of thousands. A comedy album on Geffen Records, *Those of You With or Without Children, You'll Understand*, sold close to a million copies, an almost unheard of phenomenon today for a comedy record.

In the publishing world, Bill Cosby has shattered records with each of his books. *Fatherhood*, published by Doubleday/Dolphin in 1986, became the fastest-selling hardcover book of all time. It remained for over half of its fifty-four weeks on the *New York Times* Best Seller List at #1. It has sold 2.6 million hardcover copies and 1.5 million paperbacks (published by Berkeley).

His next Doubleday/Dolphin title, *Time Flies*, had the largest single first printing in publishing history: 1.75 million copies. Like its predecessor, it too remained at the top of the *New York Times* list. Bantam Books published the paperback version in the fall of 1988 and received the same rights for *Love and Marriage*.

*Love and Marriage*, was published by Doubleday/Dolphin in April of 1989 and covered everything from childhood romances and adolescent crushes to first love, dating and courtship, the ebb and flow of relationships and the rewards of marriage.

*Childhood* (published by Putnam in 1991), deals with the predicaments of growing up and coming of age, combining stories of his legendary childhood with comic insights about children of today.

Exercising his deep concern with projecting positive images of African Americans, Cosby together with partners Tom Werner and Marcy Carsey, produced

“A Different World” on NBC for seven seasons. In this partnership, they also put on the air “Here and Now” (starring Malcolm-Jamal Warner) for NBC and the revival of the classic Groucho Marx show, “You Bet Your Life,” for first run syndication. They reteamed again with the CBS sitcom “Cosby,” which ran from 1996 to 2000.

At one point in the 1999-2000 television season, Cosby had three series running simultaneously: “Cosby,” “Kids Say the Darndest Things” (1996-2000) and Nickelodeon's “Little Bill.” Cosby's other television credits during the last decade included “The Cosby Mysteries,” a 1994-5 series on NBC, and the CBS television movie “I Spy Returns,” co-starring his original partner Robert Culp.

With over thirty years in comedy, Bill Cosby is for many young comedians the man who wrote the textbook. What Cosby teaches is to approach the monologue as a screenwriter looks at real life, bringing to each story the structure and body of a complete work. The Cosby student will also learn that one does not have to use offensive language or risqué topics to obtain laughs.

Cosby is, without a doubt, the best-selling comedian of all time on records. During the mid-sixties Cosby had as many as six albums on the charts at one time. Ten of Cosby's albums have been certified Gold Records and five have been certified Platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

Cosby made his motion picture debut in a powerful and dramatic role in the film “Man and Boy,” which was set in the post-Civil War era. He teamed with his “I Spy” partner, Robert Culp, for “Hickey and Boggs.” Cosby has co-starred with Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte in “Uptown Saturday Night” and in the sequel “Let's Do It Again.” Cosby joined Raquel Welch in “Mother, Jugs and Speed.” He also starred in an animated film, “Aesop's Fables.” Cosby and Sidney Poitier rejoined to co-star in their third film together, “A Piece of the Action.” He then teamed with Richard Pryor in a starring role in “California Suite.”

It was during Cosby's nightclub circuit period (when he was first getting started) that Carl Reiner caught his act in Pittsburgh and introduced Cosby to producer Sheldon Leonard, who signed him to star in the “I Spy” series. The series, about two spies disguised as tennis bums, was an instant smash hit on TV. Cosby's “I Spy” role as co-star broke the racial barrier of television. Before the series ended, he had won three

Emmy Awards. It was a historic moment in casting when a black man was placed alongside a white man as his equal and it created international interest in the show and in Bill Cosby. After “I Spy,” “The Bill Cosby Show” followed on NBC in 1971. In September 1976 Cosby hosted another variety show called “Cos,” this time on ABC.

In addition, Cosby has filmed numerous television specials, starred in NBC-TV's “Children's Theater” and PBS’ “The Electric Company” (the latter created by the “Sesame Street” Children's Television Workshop) and has written, directed and produced two educational TV shows (“Concern,” dealing with his concern for school children and “Prejudice,” an irreverent spoof of prejudiced hang-ups). His production company also turned out two animated specials featuring his lovable gallery of childhood pals. In the early ‘80s, Cosby hosted “Picture Pages” on Captain Kangaroo's “Wake Up” program on CBS. Today, the instruction Cosby leads, which is designed to develop readiness skills in pre-school children, is available on home video by Disney. The series was awarded the Gold Award at the 1981 International Film & TV Festival in New York as Outstanding Children's Program.

Someone up there touched Bill Cosby with the gift of comedy when he was born in Philadelphia on July 12, 1937, the son of William and Anna Cosby. He has two younger brothers, Robert and Russell. It didn't take a young Bill Cosby long to begin making up gags and practicing routines on his mom and dad. His appreciative audience of one, his mom, always encouraged his inventive performances of everyday household happenings.

Cosby attended Wister Elementary School along with his pals Fat Albert, Old Weird Harold, Dumb Donald, Rudy, Nolan and Weasel – all later immortalized by Bill Cosby's comedy routines. When school was out, they could all be found romping through the “projects” (four massive suburban tenement buildings with a cement playground in the center) or under the Ninth Street Bridge. It was there that Cosby acquired his athletic skills and his lifetime love of sports. Cosby's sixth grade teacher must have sensed his genius when she wrote on his report card, “William is a boy's boy, an all-around fellow, and he should grow up to do great things.”

He often neglected his studies for athletics and, after repeating the tenth grade, he left school to join the Navy. He finished high school via a correspondence course while

still in the service. When he was discharged, he enrolled at Temple University as the result of an athletic scholarship where he earned academic honors. His goal was to become a physical education teacher. He probably could have made it as a professional football player, but the world is richer in laughter because he decided on show business.

To support himself during his college days, Cosby tended bar at night, where he found a ready-made audience for his brand of homegrown humor. The enthusiasm of his customers convinced him that he might have a chance as a comedian.

His first stage appearance (for \$5.00 a night) was at a night spot called The Underground in a small room named The Cellar. It didn't have a stage, so Cosby did his act on a table with a chair propped on it. He not only had to climb over the bar to get to the "stage," but he couldn't stand up because of his height. He was probably the world's first "sitdown" comedian.

The beatniks were "in" at that time in New York's Greenwich Village, and word of Cosby's comedy spread from Philadelphia. A club called The Gaslight booked him for \$60 a week, and he was on his way.

His routines rocked audiences with laughter at the top clubs around the country. Many of his expressions became part of the jargon of this generation, like his famous drawn-out "riiiiiiiiiight." He established a rare rapport with all audiences. He talked about his youth in Philadelphia where two guys on the block shared one broken-down auto, crashed parties, cowered from trouble, and constantly scrimped around to raise the 19 cents they needed for gas for their car and the 14 dollars they needed for oil.

As busy as he is with his many ventures, Cosby has been a crusader throughout his career for a better world and for better understanding between people. Besides his involvement with a host of charity organizations, Cosby is also an active trustee of his alma mater, Temple University of Philadelphia. As philanthropists, Bill and Camille Cosby have made substantial gifts in support of education (most notably to predominantly African American colleges) and to various social service and civil rights organizations.

In addition, Cosby earned a Masters Degree in Education (M. Ed.) in 1972 and his Doctorate in Education (Ed. D.) in 1977 from the University of Massachusetts. His doctoral thesis was titled "The Integration of Visual Media via Fat Albert and the Cosby

Kids Into the Elementary Schools Culminating as a Teacher Aid to Achieve Increased Learning.”

Cosby’s been busy raising a family, too. He married the former Camille Hanks on January 25, 1964, while she was still a student at the University of Maryland. They raised four daughters (Erika, Erinn, Ensa and Evin) and one son (Ennis Cosby). The family resides in New England.

On the evolution of his own style of comedy, Cosby states that he was drawn at an early age to the masters of jazz: Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong, Charlie Mingus and Miles Davis. Through their musical example, Cosby learned to emulate in comedy their ability to take an idea and continually find new and innovative ways of expressing the same theme.

When Cosby and his pals yelled at the top of their lungs under the Ninth Street Bridge, the echo could be heard for blocks. The legacy of Cosby’s comedic genius continues to make sure that those echoes will continue to be heard around the world.

**JOEL ZWICK** (Director) recently directed the Broadway production of “George Gershwin Alone” at the Helen Hayes Theatre, the Cuillo Center for the Arts (Palm Beach) and Tiffany Theatre (Los Angeles). He directed “Elvis Has Left the Building” starring Kim Basinger and John Corbett. He also directed the independent smash hit “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” produced by Tom Hanks, Rita Wilson and Gary Goetzman.

Zwick began his theatrical career as the artistic director of LA MAMA, E.T.C., and has since directed shows on Broadway, Off-Broadway and for Broadway touring companies. Zwick is recognized as Hollywood’s most prolific director of episodic television, having helmed 525 shows, including 21 pilots that have gone on to become regular series. His television credits include “Laverne & Shirley,” “Mork & Mindy,” “Bosom Buddies,” “Webster,” “Perfect Strangers,” “Full House,” “Step By Step,” “Family Matters,” “It’s a Living,” “Brothers,” “Wayans,” “Joanie Loves Chachie,” “Jamie Foxx,” “Kirk,” “The Parent ‘Hood,” “Angie,” “On Our Own,” “Two of a Kind,” “Love Boat” and “Hangin’ with Mr. Cooper.”

His theater credits include “Dance with Me” (Tony nomination), “Shenandoah” (Broadway national tour), “Oklahoma” (national tour) and “Cold Storage” (American Place Theatre).

Zwick acted in the original New York production of “MacBird.” He directed “Esther” (Promenade Theatre, NY), “Merry-Go-Round” (Chicago and Los Angeles), “Last Chance Saloon” and “Woycek” (West End, London).

Zwick has taught drama at Yale University, Brooklyn College, Queens College and Wheaton College. He is a graduate (B.A., M.A.) of Brooklyn College, and he teaches television directing at the University of Southern California.

**CHARLES KIPPS** (Screenwriter) is a writer and producer who has won an Emmy® and a Peabody for his Nickelodeon show “Little Bill,” and a Best Movie or Miniseries Edgar Award for “Exiled: A Law & Order Movie” (NBC).

Kipps’ current project “Fatherhood,” is the first-ever original series for Nick at Nite, which he co-created with Bill Cosby and premiered in June 2004.

His other television credits include “The Cosby Mysteries” (NBC), and “Columbo” (ABC).

Kipps began writing as a journalist, serving as Features Editor for *Variety* and contributing to a number of publications, among them *The New York Times*. He is the author of two non-fiction books, *Out of Focus* and *Cop Without a Badge*.

Kipps was awarded seven Gold Records writing and producing songs for artists such as Van McCoy, Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, and former Temptation lead singer David Ruffin.

**JOHN DAVIS** (Producer), Chairman of Davis Entertainment, is one of Hollywood’s most prolific producers of major motion pictures and movies for television. His 60-plus film and television productions have earned more than \$3 billion worldwide, including \$1 billion earned in the past 12 months on five feature film projects.

Davis Entertainment’s three divisions— feature film, independent film, and television —develop and produce film and television projects for the major studios, independent distributors, networks and cable broadcasters. The company currently has a

first-look production deal at 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, and has over 30 motion picture projects in development at the various major studios.

A hallmark of Davis' success is his ability to attract the industry's most successful actors, directors, writers and other creative talent time and again to his productions. His proven ability to find and develop commercial projects coupled with his long-standing creative relationships account for his consistent success in producing both large and modest scaled theatrical productions, as well as major telefilms and specialized cable programming.

In summer 2003, the Eddie Murphy comedy "Daddy Day Care," starring Steve Zahn, Jeff Garlin, and Angelica Houston was released in theaters. Produced with Revolution Studios, the film grossed over \$100 million at the box office. Then Paramount Pictures released the John Woo action film, "Paycheck," starring Ben Affleck, Aaron Eckhart, and Uma Thurman.

The summer of 2004 was a busy season for Davis and Fox as they released three films together, all of which were box-office hits. First came the classic comic-strip-cat, "Garfield: The Movie," a live-action/CGI feature that appealed to kids and adults alike. Next was the Alex Proyas directed sci-fi thriller "I, Robot," starring Will Smith. Finally, there was the meeting of two of cinema's most fearsome adversaries in the sci-fi actioner, "Alien vs. Predator," from director Paul W.S. Anderson.

This fall saw the release of the Regency romantic comedy, "First Daughter," starring Katie Holmes and directed by Forest Whitaker, released by Fox. Another release for Davis and Fox is a remake of the classic Jimmy Stewart film, "Flight of the Phoenix," starring Dennis Quaid, Giovanni Ribisi, and directed by John Moore.

Other recent releases include the Fox/Davis produced "Life or Something Like It," starring Angelina Jolie, and the hit action film "Behind Enemy Lines," starring Owen Wilson and Gene Hackman. The Davis-produced feature, "Dr. Dolittle 2," starring Eddie Murphy, grossed over \$113 million domestically, and the MGM film "Heartbreakers," starring Sigourney Weaver, Gene Hackman and Jennifer Love Hewitt, opened as the #1 film in the country.

For television, Davis Entertainment Television recently produced the NBC made-for-television movies "The Jesse Ventura Story" and "Little Richard," as well as the ABC

made-for-television movie “Miracle at Midnight,” starring Sam Waterston, for the “Wonderful World of Disney” franchise. His television department has series and made-for-television movies set up with all of the major television networks and cable broadcasters.

Davis produced or co-produced an impressive slate of motion pictures in the 1990s, including “Dr. Dolittle,” starring Eddie Murphy; “Out to Sea,” starring the venerable comic pair of Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon; the blockbuster “The Firm,” which starred Tom Cruise and won a People’s Choice award for Best Dramatic Film; “Grumpy Old Men,” which was a People’s Choice award winner for Best Comedic Film; “Grumpier Old Men,” re-pairing Matthau and Lemmon; “Courage Under Fire,” starring Denzel Washington and Meg Ryan; “The Chamber,” John Grishom’s bestseller, starring Gene Hackman and Chris O’Donnell; “Daylight,” starring Sylvester Stallone; “Waterworld,” starring Kevin Costner; and “Richie Rich,” starring Macaulay Culkin.

Davis’ other feature producer credits include: “Predator,” “Predator 2,” “The Thing Called Love,” “Fortress,” “Gunmen,” “Storyville,” “Shattered,” “Little Monsters,” “The Last of the Finest,” “License To Drive,” “Three O’Clock High,” and “The Hunted.”

For television and cable, Davis produced “Asteroid,” the NBC mini-series that received the highest ratings for a mini-series, telefilm or feature film presentation on television during the 1996-1997 season. Davis Entertainment also produced “Volcano: Fire on the Mountain,” for ABC; the highly-rated NBC movie of Truman Capote’s “One Christmas,” starring Katharine Hepburn; and the popular CBS movie “This Can’t Be Love,” starring Katharine Hepburn and Anthony Quinn.

Davis’ other television and cable credits include “Tears and Laughter,” “The Last Outlaw,” “Silhouette,” “Voyage,” “Irresistible Force,” “Wild Card,” “Dangerous Passion,” “Curiosity Kills,” and “Caught in the Act.” Davis Entertainment Television is currently developing numerous series and event movies for network and cable outlets.

Mr. Davis is a graduate of Bowdoin College, attended Amherst College and received an M.B.A. from the Harvard Business School.

**CAMILLE O. COSBY** (Executive Producer) is a producer and educator who has brought to the American public projects that advance an appreciation of our rich and

diverse cultures. Dr. Cosby co-produced with Judith Rutherford James the Broadway run of “Having Our Say” which resulted in three Tony nominations. Dr. Cosby and Ms. James went on to win the 1999 Peabody Award for the highly rated, made-for-television film of “Having Our Say,” which was broadcast on CBS in April of that year.

Dr. Cosby’s experience with “Having Our Say” led to her co-founding with Renee Poussaint of the National Visionary Leadership Project, an institution dedicated to preserving and disseminating the histories of distinguished African American elders to inspire new generations of leadership.

In addition to FAT ALBERT, Dr. Cosby served as Executive Producer of numerous film projects, especially in the documentary genre. Her past credits include “Ennis’ Gift,” a profile of individuals who refused to be limited by their learning differences (aired on HBO in the Fall of 2001 and PBS); “No Dreams Deferred,” a portrait of a unique mentoring program for victimized youth (broadcast on public television in 1995); and the recently completed “Sylvia’s Path,” a story of one woman’s search for spiritual and human growth against the backdrop of Nazi Germany and modern day Tibet.

Camille O. Cosby received her doctoral degree in education from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Ms. Cosby authored a book based on her dissertation research entitled *Television’s Imageable Influences: The Self-Perceptions of Young African Americans* (University Press of America, 1994)

**PAUL ELLIOTT** (Director of Photography) was the cinematographer on “Elvis Has Left the Building” starring Kim Basinger and John Corbett for director Joel Zwick. Some of his other film credits include “Soul Food,” “My Girl,” “Welcome Home Roxy Carmichael,” “The Broken Hearts Club,” “Daddy’s Dying Who’s Got the Will,” and “Rachel River,” the latter winning him the Best Cinematography award at the Sundance Film Festival.

Elliott won an ASC Award for his HBO Film “Truman” and received ASC nominations for “And the Band Played On” and “Citizen Cohn.” His other shows for HBO include “Blindside,” “If These Walls Could Talk II (1961 Segment) and “A Private Matter.”

Elliott's other broadcast and cable TV credits include the CBS miniseries "Jackie," Showtime's "Thanks of a Grateful Nation," "The Piano Lesson," "The King of Texas," "Riot," "The Final Verdict" and "The Lost Capone."

**NINA RUSCIO**'s (Production Designer) previous films include director Shawn Levy's "Cheaper By the Dozen," "Just Married" and "Big Fat Liar," as well as the HBO films "Normal" and "If These Walls Could Talk: Part II." Her other credits are "When Billie Beat Bobbie," "The Annihilation of Fish," "Breakfast of Champions," "Toothless" and the Academy Award-nominated live action short "Graffiti."

Before becoming a production designer, Ruscio worked as an art director on the film "Enemy of the State," produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, and "A Rage in Harlem" for director Bill Duke. She won a L.A. Drama Critics Circle Nomination for set design for the production "SCAR."

**TONY LOMBARDO** (Editor) is a sought after comedy editor. As the son of legendary film editor Lou Lombardo, Tony grew up around the cutting room.

Tony Lombardo began his career as an assistant editor for Robert Altman before becoming his lead editor on such films as "A Wedding," "A Perfect Couple," "Health" and "Popeye." He has also collaborated with director Jonathan Lynn on classic comedies including "Major League," "Uncle Buck" and "My Cousin Vinny" with Academy Award winner Marisa Tomei.

Lombardo did additional editing on "Scary Movie 3" directed by David Zucker and also cut "Down and Derby," a family comedy about soapbox racing. Lombardo was recently the supervising editor on "Elvis Has Left the Building" for director Joel Zwick starring Kim Basinger and John Corbett.

**JEFFREY STOTT** (Co-Producer/Unit Production Manager) was executive producer on Rob Reiner's "Alex and Emma." He co-produced "The Princess Bride," "When Harry Met Sally," "Misery" and "A Few Good Men." He served as executive producer on "North," "The American President," "Ghosts of Mississippi" and "The Story

of Us.” His other credits in various production capacities with Reiner include “This is Spinal Tap,” “The Sure Thing,” and “Stand By Me.”

Stott executive produced Barbet Schroeder’s “Murder by Numbers” for Castle Rock Entertainment where he also served as Executive Vice-President of Production Management. During his tenure at Castle Rock, he oversaw the production of over 60 feature films and was the Executive in Charge of Production on the hit TV series “Seinfeld.”

Stott has a Masters of Art in History from Brigham Young University and a Ph.D. in history from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

**RICHARD GIBBS** (Composer) has a degree in classical composition from Boston’s prestigious Berklee College of Music, and was the keyboard player for the alternative rock band Oingo Boingo. From there, he became musical director for television’s “The Tracey Ullman Show” and scored the first season of “The Simpsons.” Along the way, he also worked with such artists as Chaka Khan, Robert Palmer, Aretha Franklin and Tom Waits.

Gibbs recent credits include “Johnson Family Vacation,” “Barbershop 2,” “My Baby’s Daddy” and “Love Don’t Cost a Thing.” His additional credits include Twentieth Century Fox’s “Like Mike,” “Dr. Dolittle,” the Fox/Regency Enterprises blockbuster “Big Momma’s House,” “I, Spy,” the drama “28 Days,” and the popular teen romance “10 Things I Hate About You.” Gibbs also scored Cameron Crowe’s romantic comedy “Say Anything” and Allan Moyle’s “The Gun in Betty Lou’s Handbag.”

**FRANCINE JAMISON-TANCHUCK** (Costume Designer) worked on “First Daughter,” starring Katie Holmes, “Serving Sara” starring Matthew Perry and Elizabeth Hurley, “Hard Ball” starring Keanu Reeves and Diane Lane, “Big Momma’s House” starring Martin Lawrence, and “The Negotiator” starring Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey.

Her other credits include “Courage Under Fire,” “Sister Act II,” “White Men Can’t Jump” and “Glory.”

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