

Forum of Facts

- Walt Disney Pictures' 35th full-length animated feature, "Hercules," is an epic comedy and the Studio's first animated film to draw its inspiration from classical mythology. Taking an extremely irreverent and hilarious approach to the amazing adventures of the legendary super-hero, the film follows Hercules on his exciting journey from "zero to hero" as he discovers what it means to be a true hero and regains his rightful place among the gods of Mount Olympus. Along the way, he matches wits with one of Disney's most cunning and comical villains, a hot-head named Hades who will stop at nothing in his hostile takeover bid for control of the Universe. Despite his many labors battling mythical monsters of every shape and size, it is the labor of love that has the most profound impact on Hercules as he discovers that a true hero is not measured by the size of his strength but by the strength of his heart.
- Overseeing the production of "Hercules" is the distinctive and dynamic filmmaking team of **John Musker** and **Ron Clements**, who serve as directors, producers and writers on the film. Following their directing debut in 1986 with "The Great Mouse Detective," they continued to play a major role in the revitalization of Disney feature animation by directing, producing and writing "The Little Mermaid" (1989) and "Aladdin" (1992). With their trademark brand of wacky humor, broad caricatures and stylish art direction, Musker & Clements have once again come up with an animated film which breaks the mold and is sure to please moviegoers of all ages. Producer **Alice Dewey** worked with the directors as production manager on "Aladdin." In addition to an extensive background in theater, she also served as associate producer of Disney's 1994 animated blockbuster, "The Lion King." **Kendra Haaland** is the associate producer.
- Also reuniting with Musker & Clements on this project is eight-time Academy Award®-winning composer **Alan Menken**, who had previously worked with the team on "The Little Mermaid" and "Aladdin." Providing lyrics to Menken's melodies this time around is Tony Award-winner **David Zippel** ("City of Angels"). Adding to the fun and entertainment of "Hercules," the songwriters use a pastiche of styles with a gospel influence.

- Musker & Clements selected “Hercules” as their latest project in the Fall of 1993, after reviewing nearly 30 ideas in various stages of development at the Studio. The directors were immediately attracted to the mythological aspects of the Hercules story and felt that not only hadn’t it been done before at Disney (except briefly in the Pastoral segment of “Fantasia”) but it would be great for animation because of its fantasy elements, larger-than-life characters and strong potential for anachronisms and satirical humor. Most importantly, they saw Hercules as a “common man’s hero” with tremendous possibilities because of his demi-god (half-man, half-god) status.
- Over the next nine months, Musker and Clements collaborated on an outline, several treatments and eventually drafted an initial script for the film. During that time, art director **Andy Gaskill** (“The Lion King”) joined the team and began overseeing visual development on the film. Taking actual pages from the script, he illustrated them with rough images suggesting layout and color possibilities. This jump-started the creative process and helped to get the film ready for storyboarding and animation. **Barry Johnson** also came on board at an early stage as head of story. Writers **Bob Shaw & Don McEnery** and **Irene Mecchi** brought additional humor and definition to the script.
- Rounding out the creative team are artistic supervisors **Tom Cardone** (Background), **Rasoul Azadani** (Layout), **Nancy Kniep** (Clean-Up), **Mauro Maressa** (Effects Animation) and **Roger Gould** (Computer Generated Imagery). **Tom Finan** and **Jeff Jones** serve as editors.
- Another major influence on the look of the film came from renowned British artist/political cartoonist **Gerald Scarfe**, who was brought in initially to assist with the character design. Musker had been a long-time fan of the artist’s work for The London Sunday Times, The New Yorker and other leading publications. Scarfe’s credits also include production design for the 1982 Alan Parker film, “Pink Floyd — The Wall,” for which he also directed the animated sequences. Expanding on his original role as a conceptual artist, Scarfe remained very involved throughout the production and functioned as an ongoing artistic advisor to the animators. Just as the distinctive style of legendary caricaturist Al Hirschfeld inspired the design elements for “Aladdin,” Scarfe’s bold, expressive linear style gave the filmmakers a new and exciting look for their characters. Musker describes Scarfe’s drawings as having “an innate and anarchic energy that seem to explode off the page. He draws from the shoulder with big swoops, so there are these big, strong shapes which have a bold and immediate impact.”
- To further prepare for the artistic challenges that the production presented, Dewey, Musker & Clements led a group of their key department heads on a tour of Greece and Turkey in Summer, 1994. There, they soaked up the ancient sites and scenery and heard expert accounts of the classic Greek mythology. They filled notepads with sketches and took extensive photos and video to further inspire them.

- Animation on “Hercules” began in early 1995 with a team of nearly 700 artists, animators and technicians ultimately contributing to the finished film. Disney’s excellent animation facility in Paris joined in the effort (as they had on “The Hunchback of Notre Dame”) and provided nearly 10 minutes of animation, including the film’s exciting finale with the rampaging Titans and Hercules’ daring descent into the Underworld.
- Walt Disney Feature Animation continues to use the latest breakthroughs in technology to enhance the scope and excitement of its films and “Hercules” is no exception. The Studio’s acclaimed CGI Department (Computer Generated Imagery), which had previously created a swirling ballroom for “Beauty and the Beast,” a roller coaster “Cave of Wonders” for “Aladdin,” a wildebeest stampede for “The Lion King” and a living, breathing crowd scene for the “Festival of Fools” in “The Hunchback of Notre Dame,” came up with some new tricks for this film. Under the direction of artistic supervisor Roger Gould, a team of specially trained animators and technicians helped to create an awesome 30-headed Hydra, the mythical monster that sports multiple new heads to replace each severed one. Artistry and technology join forces here to lend a sense of drama, fantasy and excitement that would not have been possible with traditional techniques. The film’s other CG elements include morphing Olympian clouds which form Baby Hercules’ crib and a reclining chair for Zeus.
- “Hercules” represents the latest artistic achievement for Walt Disney Feature Animation. Over the past decade, under the leadership of Peter Schneider, president of Feature Animation, the Studio’s animation department has expanded from 150 employees to nearly 1,700 worldwide with Studios in Florida and Paris. A second major animation building opened in Burbank in December, 1996 to accommodate the vast number of projects currently in development and production. Among the exciting and diverse upcoming slate of animated features is “Mulan,” a Chinese fable filled with comedy and adventure, which will be the first feature completely animated at the Studio’s expanded Florida facility. Also in production is “Tarzan,” a delightful new animated version of the Edgar Rice Burroughs’ classic; “Fantasia ’99,” an updated version of Disney’s innovative 1940 experiment with sight and sound; and “Dinosaur,” a bold new adventure in CG animation.

THE STORY

- Our story begins with a blessed event on Mount Olympus, the heavenly home of the Greek gods, as Zeus and his wife Hera throw a palatial party to celebrate the arrival of their newborn son, Hercules. The tike's strength is enormous, as evidenced by his vice-like grip and a propensity for tossing around his father’s lightning bolts. As a special gift, Zeus presents his son with a loyal companion named Pegasus — a winged horse created from cloud formations. Everyone is in a jolly mood except for one gloomy guest named Hades. This disgruntled god, who hates his job as Lord of

the Underworld, is tired of hanging around with a bunch of deadbeats and has been secretly plotting a hostile takeover of Mount Olympus.

- Back in the Underworld, the fiery Hades commiserates with his two dim-witted and demonic, shape-changing sidekicks, Pain and Panic, and consults with the Fates, a trio of wizened women who use a common eyeball to gaze into the future, to find out what impact Hercules may have on his plans. They tell him that in 18 years the planets will align and the time will be right to unleash the Titans and topple Zeus. They add: "A word of caution to this tale; should Hercules fight, you will fail." Not wanting to tempt the Fates, Hades dispatches Pain and Panic to Mount Olympus to abduct the child, give him a potion which would render him mortal and then dispose of him. But after bringing Baby Hercules to Earth, the sidekicks bungle their mission and fail to administer the last few drops of the potent "Grecian formula," which leaves the infant with god-like strength but human mortality. Figuring that Hades will be none the wiser, Pain and Panic take off and Hercules is found by a mortal couple, Amphitryon and Alcmene, who raise him as their own.
- Unaware of his origins, Hercules grows into a gawky teen but increasingly feels that he doesn't quite fit in. His uncontrollable strength wreaks havoc and further alienates him from the townsfolk. Determined to "go the distance" and find his place in the world, Hercules is unsure what to do until Amphitryon tells him that he was adopted. A medallion, the symbol of the gods, offers one clue to his origins, so Hercules decides to go to the Temple of Zeus to seek some answers. There, a statue of Zeus springs to life and father and son are reunited. Zeus tells the boy that only gods can live on Mount Olympus and the only way he can return home is to prove himself a "true hero" on Earth. His father suggests that he seek out a trainer of heroes named Philoctetes ("Phil" for short) to help him in his mission. Zeus also brings Hercules together with his childhood companion, the flying Pegasus.
- Flying to the Island of Idras on Pegasus' back, Herc locates Phil, a sarcastic satyr, who advises him that he's retired from the hero-training racket. Still reeling from his latest failure, a heel named Achilles, Phil is "persuaded" to take the lad on as his "one last hope" to coach a champion. An intense training period follows whereby Herc learns to harness his strength and prepare for the task of becoming a hero.
- Phil and Herc head to Thebes, the toughest town in Greece, but are sidetracked by a damsel in distress. The woman is a Grecian beauty named Megara (or "Meg") and she appears to be at the mercy of a self-centered centaur named Nessus. After a shaky start, Herc conquers the beast only to find that Meg wasn't in danger after all. She is tough, resourceful, witty and unlike any woman he has ever met. After Herc and company depart, Meg is joined by her "boss" Hades, who wants to know why she failed to enlist the services of Nessus. When she explains the snafu and mentions the name of her rescuer, Hades has a cosmic meltdown at the

realization that his nemesis is still alive. After a heated exchange with Pain and Panic, he begins making new plans for eliminating Hercules.

- Meanwhile, in the "Big Olive" (Thebes), a hapless metropolis plagued by disasters and monsters, Herc sets about building his "rep" as a hero. When Meg arrives seeking assistance for "two boys" (actually Pain and Panic in disguise) trapped behind some rocks, Herc moves into action unaware that it is all part of Hades' scheme. On the scene, Hercules is drawn into battle with a Hydra, a ferocious monster that sprouts multiple heads to replace any that are severed. With Phil's coaching, Herc manages to save the day and is hailed as a hero. Hades mounts an offensive and sends a slew of monsters in every shape and size (wild boars, sea serpents, a Minotaur) to challenge our hero. Each new victory adds to Hercules' fame as he catapults from "zero to hero" and instantly becomes a household word, a merchandising sensation and a heartthrob.
- With a string of heroic labors under his belt, Hercules returns to the Temple of Zeus to tell his father he is ready to return home. Zeus explains that being famous isn't the same as being a true hero and tells him to look inside his heart for the answers.
- With the moment he has waited 18 years for rapidly approaching and Herc still at large, Hades becomes increasingly stressed and desperate. Against her will, Meg is sent to uncover Herc's weakness, but in the process she begins to realize just how strong her feelings are for him. It doesn't take Hades long to figure out that Meg *is* Hercules' weakness. Hades gets Hercules to agree to give up his strength for 24 hours in exchange for Meg's safety and freedom. As a parting shot, he tells Hercules that Meg has been part of his team all along and that her affection for him was part of the charade. In addition to feeling weak, he now feels betrayed.
- As the planets align, Hades frees the massive Titans -- a fearsome foursome made of rock, wind, lava and ice -- from a giant cage where they were imprisoned by Zeus back when the world was new. Rampaging across the land, Hades leads them to Mount Olympus to exact their revenge on Zeus and the other gods. Meanwhile back in the city, Hades has sent a giant Cyclops to finish off the weakened and dispirited Hercules.
- There's plenty of excitement, surprises and dramatic action in the film's climax as Hercules struggles to rekindle his belief in himself. Against overwhelming odds, he bravely fights back and ultimately discovers what it takes to be a true hero.

THE MUSIC

- Eight-time Academy Award®-winning composer **Alan Menken** (whose spectacular credits for Disney include "The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin," "Pocahontas" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame") teams up with Tony Award-

winning lyricist **David Zippel** ("City of Angels," "The Goodbye Girl") to create six winning new tunes for "Hercules."

- Adding to the film's overall entertainment and uniqueness, the directors decided from the inception not to use the obvious choice of Greek instrumentation or musical themes but rather to incorporate pop and gospel influences into the songs. Musker explains, "Gospel music is very exhilarating and is often associated with hope, idealism and larger-than-life things. This seemed to be the perfect kind of music for our Muses because their traditional role is to tell of the gods' heroic accounts."
- The film's opening number is "**The Gospel Truth**," a spirited spiritual with lots of energy and drive, in which the Muses set the musical stage for the adventure that is to follow and reveal how the Titans came to be imprisoned by Zeus back when the world began. Later in the first act, teenage Hercules (sung by Roger Bart) gets a chance to express his heartfelt desire and determination to find his place in life with the beautiful anthem, "**Go the Distance**." Grammy-winning recording artist **Michael Bolton** has recorded a pop version of this song which appears over the film's end credits.
- A skeptical satyr named Phil, who is enlisted as Herc's personal trainer, gets his moment in the musical spotlight with "**One Last Hope**," a lively comical song in which he tells of his previous disappointments and guarded optimism about his latest prospect. When Hercules finally does establish himself as a popular hero with all the fame and hype that goes with it, the Muses return to sing "**Zero to Hero**," a delightful Gospel-tinged tune that chronicles his meteoric rise to the top.
- The beautiful Meg is moved to song when she finally realizes her true feelings for the heroic Hercules. The song, "**I Won't Say**," complete with vocal backings by the Muses, captures Meg's mixed emotions as she attempts to come to grips with what she is feeling.
- Rounding out the musical bill is a knock-out Gospel flavored finale, "**A Star is Born**," which is sung in high style by the Muses as they testify to Herc's status as a true hero.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS / VOICE TALENTS

- **HERCULES (HERC)** -- This handsome, strong and trusting Greek hero is the stuff that myths are made of and he has the kind of face and physique that looks great on a vase. Fighting monsters and saving distressed damsels is all in a day's labors for this brave and popular muscle man but he quickly learns that becoming a "true hero" involves more than just being famous. Actor **Tate Donovan** (who starred in the NBC series "Partners") lends his mighty voice to adult Herc while **Joshua Keaton** and **Roger Bart** are the respective speaking and singing voices for the adolescent hero. Renowned supervising animator **Andreas Deja**, who has

designed and animated such memorable characters as Scar ("The Lion King"), Jafar ("Aladdin") and Gaston ("Beauty and the Beast"), is in top form here as he brings this incredible super-hero to life with credibility and entertainment. **Randy Haycock** supervised the animation of Hercules as a baby and a teen.

- **MEGARA (MEG)** -- With a tough exterior and a heart of gold, this Grecian beauty is one of Disney's most complex, comical and fascinating female leads. Although her soul belongs to Hades, she remains an independent spirit who learns to say what's in her heart when she meets a caring hunk named Herc. **Susan Egan**, the "Belle" of Broadway who received a Tony nomination for her role in Disney's stage production of "Beauty and the Beast," lends her exquisite singing voice and

versatile acting talent to the speaking voice of "Meg." Supervising animator **Ken Duncan** is the skilled hand who helped to create this captivating character's personality and movements.

- **HADES** -- This fast-talking, quick-scheming, underhanded lord of the Underworld is "dead tired" of looking after a bunch of stiff and is hot to takeover Zeus' cushy job on Mount Olympus. After 18 years of waiting impatiently for the right moment, this god of gloom and doom is ready to make some ungodly moves to make sure Hercules doesn't get in his way. Adding plenty of sizzle and sly humor to the vocal performance of this fire-y figure is acclaimed actor **James Woods** ("The Ghost of Mississippi," "Salvador"). Veteran Disney animator **Nik Ranieri**, whose credits include overseeing Lumiere for "Beauty and the Beast" and Meeko for "Pocahontas," was responsible for supervising this vibrant villain.
- **PHILOCTETES (PHIL)** -- When it comes to training heroes, this surly satyr (half man, half goat) is the best in the biz, but after a string of disappointments (Odysseus, Perseus, Theseus and Achilles) he's down to one last hope. A tough taskmaster, Phil trains Herc for the challenges that lie ahead but is unable to prepare him for the labor of love. The incomparable **Danny DeVito** gives voice to this hilarious character who helps to make a hero out of Hercules. **Eric Goldberg**, the acclaimed supervising animator who brought the Genie to life in "Aladdin" and served as co-director of "Pocahontas," is the enormously talented artist behind this memorable comic creation.
- **ZEUS** -- This mighty ruler of the gods controls the universe yet is powerless to bring his missing son, Hercules, back to Mount Olympus. However, this proud papa's fatherly advice sets Herc on the right path for a heavenly homecoming and the two ultimately join forces to save the planet from Hades' hostile takeover bid. Adding heart, humor and strength to the vocal performance is actor **Rip Torn** (currently seen as "Arthur" on HBO's Emmy Award-winning hit, "The Larry Sanders Show"). Disney veteran **Tony DeRosa** was the supervising animator.
- **HERA** -- Hercules' Mom is an elegant goddess and a protective parent who cautions her infant son about teething on lightning bolts. **Samantha Eggar** (an

Oscar® nominee for "The Collector") provides the maternal voice and **Tony DeRosa** was once again in charge of overseeing the character's animation.

- **PAIN AND PANIC** -- If you want the job done right, don't send for this dim-witted demonic duo. As Hades' misguided minions, these frisky fellows are always ready, willing but not necessarily able to lend a claw and do his dirty work. Although they can morph into any shape imaginable, they still manage to leave things in worse shape than they found them. Wacky comedian **Bobcat Goldthwait** provides the long-suffering and hilarious vocal performance for Pain while actor **Matt Frewer** ("Max Headroom") creates a comic panic as the easily agitated Panic. Supervising animators **James Lopez** (Pain) and **Brian Ferguson** (Panic) were in charge of bringing this comic couple's wild antics to the screen.
- **PEGASUS** -- This high-flying stallion has enough horsepower to wing his master to wherever his heroic services are needed. Loyal, protective and always ready to horse around, Pegasus' one drawback is that he is saddled with the brain of a bird. **Ellen Woodbury** (who also gave wing to a hornbill named Zazu in "The Lion King") was the supervising animator.
- **HERMES** -- Hovering close by the side of his commander-in-chief, Zeus, this merry messenger is the life of the party even when he has to deliver bad news. Master musician and sidekick extraordinaire **Paul Shaffer** (of "The Late Show with David Letterman" fame) lends his distinctive voice and persona.
- **AMPHITRYON AND ALCMENE** -- Herc's adoptive parents try to give their growing boy some proper grounding and provide him with a real down-to-Earth home. **Hal Holbrook** and **Barbara Barrie** lend their voices to the kindly couple and **Richard Bazley** was the animator.
- **THE MUSES (CALLIOPE, THALIA, CLIO, MELPOMENE AND TERPSICHORE)** -- As goddesses of the arts and proclaimers of heroes, this a-muse-ing quintet narrates the story of Hercules with style and song and serve as a very soulful Greek chorus. With animation supervised by **Mike Show**, the voices for these lively ladies are provided by **Lillias White** (Calliope), **Vaneese Thomas** (Clio), **Cheryl Freeman** (Melpomene), **LaChanze** (Terpsichore) and **Roz Ryan** (Thalia).
- **THE FATES (CLOTHO, LACHESIS AND ATROPOS)** -- There's nothing you can tell this all-seeing, all-knowing trio of prognosticators that they don't already know. They control some mighty important strings (the threads of life) and Hades plans to profit from their prophecies. **Amanda Plummer** (Clotho), **Carole Shelley** (Lachesis) and **Paddi Edwards** (Atropos) provide the Fate-ful voices and **Nancy Beiman** was the animator.

- **THE TITANS** -- This ferocious foursome of titanic troublemakers were imprisoned by Zeus back when the world was new, but thanks to Hades, they're back and ready to rumble. Volcano Titan, Rock Titan, Tornado Titan and Ice Titan are disasters waiting to happen and they happen to be heading for a showdown with Zeus on Mount Olympus. **Corey Burton, Jim Cummings** and **Patrick Pinney** are heard as the Titans. Animation for these characters was done at Walt Disney Feature Animation France under the supervision of Dominique Monfery.

THE FILMMAKERS

- **JOHN MUSKER** (Director/Producer/Writer) has played a major role in the revitalization of Disney feature animation over the past two decades through his creative contributions as a director, producer, writer and animator. His previous credits as director include "The Great Mouse Detective" (1986), "The Little Mermaid" (1989) and "Aladdin" (1992). Born and raised in Chicago, Musker first came to Disney in 1977 after completing a two-year stint in the character animation program at CalArts. Following an assignment as assistant animator on the featurette, "The Small One," he served as an animator on "The Fox and the Hound" and contributed to the story development for "The Black Cauldron." He made his directing debut on "The Great Mouse Detective" (which he also co-wrote) and received credits as producer/director/writer on both "The Little Mermaid" and "Aladdin." Last year, Musker extended his commitment to Disney Feature Animation by signing an exclusive new long-term agreement.
- **RON CLEMENTS** (Director/Producer/Writer), a 21-year veteran of Disney's Feature Animation Department, has helped to create several of the Studio's most popular films of all-time and has been an integral part of animation's exciting new era of growth and achievement with his impressive contributions as an animator, writer, director and producer. Previously, he has directed "The Great Mouse Detective," "The Little Mermaid" and "Aladdin." A native of Sioux City, Iowa, Clements began his career at Disney with a two-year apprenticeship under the legendary animator Frank Thomas and subsequently animated on "The Rescuers," "Pete's Dragon" and "The Fox and the Hound." For Disney's 1986 animated release, "The Great Mouse Detective," Clements served as co-writer and co-director with John Musker. The duo repeated those same roles for "The Little Mermaid" (1989) and "Aladdin" (1992). In 1996, he renewed his commitment to Disney with an exclusive new long-term contract.
- **ALICE DEWEY** (Producer) has been a key player on Disney's Feature Animation production team since 1990. Her previous credits include associate producing "The Lion King" (the Studio's most successful animated release of all-time) and a role as production manager on the 1992 animated blockbuster, "Aladdin." Her first assignment at Disney was on the animated featurette, "The Prince and the Pauper," which teamed her with the Studio's legendary star, Mickey Mouse. A native of Milwaukee, Dewey's career highlights prior to Disney include nine years of stage

managing major productions for such prestigious New York venues as the Manhattan Theater Club, the Ensemble Studio Theater and the WPA as well as a stint with the Hartford Stage Company. Her Broadway touring production credits include such major hit plays as "Amadeus," "42nd Street," "Big River" and "Les Miserables." Her educational background includes an MFA in Directing.

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"HERCULES"

Production Information

Brimming with humor, heroics and plenty of heart, Walt Disney Pictures' 35th full-length animated feature, "Hercules," takes moviegoers on an incredible odyssey of fun, fantasy and adventure that is rooted in Greek mythology and lifts the art of animation to Olympian heights. Taking an extremely irreverent and hilarious approach to the amazing adventures of the legendary superhero, this latest animated offering from Disney follows Hercules on his exciting journey from "zero to hero" as he discovers what it means to be a true hero and seeks to regain his rightful place among the gods of Mount Olympus. Along the way, he matches wits with one of Disney's most cunning

and comical villains, a hot head named Hades who will stop at nothing to take control of the Universe. Helping to make this animated film one of Disney's all-time best is a spectacular action-filled story, a colorful cast of characters and vocal talents, the world's finest animators, extraordinary art direction and style, great music and some exciting new technological innovations.

Overseeing the production of "Hercules" is the distinctive and dynamic filmmaking team of John Musker and Ron Clements, who served as directors, producers and writers on the film. Following their directing debut in 1986 with "The Great Mouse Detective," the team continued to play a major role in the revitalization of Disney feature animation by directing, producing and writing "The Little Mermaid," (1989) and "Aladdin" (1992). With their trademark brand of wacky humor, broad caricatures and stylish art direction, Musker & Clements have once again come up with an animated film that breaks the mold and delivers great entertainment in the process. Producer Alice Dewey worked with the directors as production manager on "Aladdin." In addition to an extensive background in theater, she also served as associate producer of Disney's 1994 animated blockbuster, "The Lion King." Kendra Haaland was the associate producer.

Musker & Clements began working on "Hercules" in the fall of 1993 and devoted the next nine months to writing an outline, several treatments and a first draft of the screenplay. During that time, art director Andy Gaskill ("The Lion King") joined the team and began overseeing visual development on the film. Barry Johnson also came on board at an early stage as head of story. This group was later joined by screenwriters Bob Shaw & Donald McEnery and Irene Mecchi, who brought additional humor and definition to the script.

For this project, the directors are reunited with eight-time Academy Award®-winning composer Alan Menken, who had previously worked with the team on "The Little Mermaid" and "Aladdin." Providing lyrics to Menken's melodies this time around is Tony Award-winner David Zippel ("City of Angels"). The songwriters used a pastiche of styles with a gospel influence to bring a wonderful sense of fun and entertainment to the film. In all, they created six new tunes for the film and Menken once again composed the entertaining and evocative underscore which accents the story's various moods and emotions.

Helping to make the film as visually exciting as the story itself is the inspired production design of renowned British artist Gerald Scarfe (The London Sunday Times, "Pink Floyd--The Wall"), who was initially brought on to assist with the character design. His bold, expressive linear style gave the filmmakers a fresh and unified look for the project and his role expanded from conceptual artist to that of an ongoing artistic advisor to the animators. Scarfe also worked closely with art director Andy Gaskill and production stylist Sue Nichols to incorporate "Scarfisms" into almost every aspect of the production from backgrounds to effects and layout, and also provided a bridge from Greek vase paintings to Disney animation. The result is one of the most striking and unusual looking of Disney's animated films, with a style all its own that perfectly complements the filmmakers' comedic approach to the subject.

Rounding out the creative team for the film, Musker & Clements hand-picked many of the Studio's top talents to head up specific areas of the production. The artistic supervisors were Rasoul Azadani (Layout), Thomas Cardone (Backgrounds), Mauro Maressa (Visual Effects), Roger Gould (Computer Graphics Imagery) and Nancy Kniep (Cleanup). Peter Del Vecho was the production manager with Dan Hansen serving as artistic coordinator and Ann Tucker taking on the role of technical coordinator. Tom Finan ("The Lion King") was the film's editor.

Disney's version of "Hercules" begins with a blessed event on Mount Olympus, the celestial home of the Greek gods, as Zeus and his wife Hera throw a palatial party to celebrate the arrival of their newborn son, Hercules. To mark the occasion, the proud papa presents his powerful progeny with a special birthday gift -- a winged horse named Pegasus. Everyone is in a jolly mood except for Hades, a disgruntled god who hates his job as Lord of the Underworld and has been secretly plotting a hostile takeover of Mount Olympus.

Back in the Underworld, the Fates warn Hades that in 18 years the planets will align and the time will be right to unleash the Titans, a horde of brutish giants

imprisoned long ago by Zeus, and mount his attack on Mount Olympus. They add: A word of caution to this tale; should Hercules fight, you will fail. Not wanting to tempt the Fates, he dispatches Pain and Panic -- his two dim-witted and demonic, shape-changing sidekicks -- to abduct Baby Hercules, give him a potion to render him mortal and then dispose of him. But after bringing the infant to Earth, they bungle their mission leaving Hercules with god-like strength but human mortality. Figuring that Hades will be none the wiser, Pain and Panic take off and the boy is found by a mortal couple, Amphitryon and Alcmene, who raise him as their own.

Unaware of his origins, Hercules grows into a gawky teen but increasingly feels that he doesn't quite fit in. Determined to "go the distance" and find his place in the world, he goes to the Temple of Zeus to seek some answers. There, a statue of the mighty god springs to life and father and son are reunited. Zeus explains that only gods can live on Mount Olympus and the only way he can return home is to prove himself a "true hero" on Earth. Hercules is reunited with Pegasus and told to seek out a legendary trainer of heroes named Philoctetes ("Phil" for short) to help him in his mission.

Herc locates Phil, a cynical satyr who's been disappointed one too many times in his attempts to train the "greatest hero ever." With a little "persuasion," he reluctantly agrees to take the lad on as his "one last hope" to coach a champion. After an intense training period, the duo head to Thebes ("The Big Olive"), a hapless metropolis desperately in need of a hero.

En route, Hercules is sidetracked by a Grecian beauty named Megara (or "Meg") who appears to be at the mercy of a self-centered Centaur. After a shaky start, the fledgling hero conquers the beast only to discover that Meg wasn't in danger after all. She is tough, resourceful, witty and unlike any woman he has ever met. When Hercules departs, Meg is joined by her "boss" Hades, who has a cosmic meltdown at the realization that his nemesis is still alive.

In no time flat, Herc convinces the skeptical townsfolk that he really is a hero. Hades sends a 30-headed Hydra and a slew of monsters of every shape and size (wild boars, sea serpents, a Minotaur) to challenge him, but he emerges a winner every time. Each new victory adds to Hercules' fame as he catapults from "zero to hero" and instantly becomes a household name, a merchandising sensation and a heartthrob. Still, it isn't enough to bring him home to Mount Olympus. Zeus explains that being famous isn't the same as being a true hero and tells him to look inside his heart for the answers.

With time running out, Hades becomes increasingly desperate and uses Meg to help double cross Hercules and uncover his weakness. As she realizes just how much she cares for Hercules, Hades realizes that Meg *is* his weakness. Using her safety and freedom as a bargaining tool, Hades gets Hercules to give up his strength for 24 hours. As a parting shot, Hades tells Hercules that Meg has been part of his team all along and that her affection for him was part of the charade. In addition to feeling weak, he now feels betrayed too.

As the planets align, Hades frees the massive Titans -- a fearsome foursome made of rock, wind, lava and ice -- from a giant pit. As they head towards Mount Olympus to topple Zeus, Hades sends a giant Cyclops to Thebes to finish off the weakened and dispirited hero.

There's plenty of excitement, surprises and dramatic action in the film's climax as Hercules struggles to rekindle his belief in himself. Against overwhelming odds, he bravely fights back and ultimately discovers that a true hero is not measured by the size of his strength but by the strength of his heart.

In order to bring the extraordinary story of Hercules to the big screen, the filmmakers turned to an extraordinary ensemble of versatile vocalists. Adding muscle to the voice of adult Hercules is Tate Donovan, a talented actor ("Memphis Belle," "Partners") who gives the character a perfect blend of innocence and charm. Joshua

Keaton speaks for the awkward adolescent Herc, while Roger Bart "goes the distance" as that character's singing voice. Hitting all the right notes as the speaking and singing voice for Meg, Herc's complex and comical love interest, is Susan Egan, the Tony-nominated "Belle" of Broadway in "Disney's Beauty and the Beast." Acclaimed actor James Woods (a recent Oscar® nominee for "Ghosts of Mississippi") puts some real fire into his vocal performance as the fast-talking, quick-scheming, underhanded Hades. The incomparable Danny DeVito sings and speaks for a hero-training satyr named Phil, who's down to "one last hope" of training a champion.

Rip Torn delivers a ripping good vocal performance as Zeus, the mighty ruler of Mount Olympus and proud papa of Hercules. Samantha Eggar is the voice of Herc's caring mom, Hera. Providing voices for the boy's down-to-Earth adoptive parents, Amphitryon and Alcmene, are veteran actors Hal Holbrook and Barbara Barrie. Bobcat Goldthwait and Matt Frewer generate pain, panic and lots of laughs with their frantic antics as the voices of Hades' misguided minions, Pain and Panic. Paul Shaffer lends his hip and nutty delivery to the winged messenger god, Hermes. The Muses get great vocal backing from five gifted ladies with a talent to a-muse: Lillias White (Calliope), Vaneese Thomas (Clio), Cheryl Freeman (Melpomene), LaChanze (Terpsichore) and Roz Ryan (Thalia). And a trio of all-seeing, all-knowing prognosticators called the Fates are voiced by Amanda Plummer (Clotho), Carole Shelley (Lachesis) and Paddi Edwards (Atropos).

And, in the opening of the film, the legendary Charlton Heston lends a delightfully dignified tone to the narration.

To help them prepare for the artistic challenges that the production presented, producer Alice Dewey and the directors led a group of their key supervisors on a tour of Greece and Turkey in spring, 1995. There, they soaked up the ancient sites and scenery and heard expert accounts of classic Greek mythology. They filled notepads with sketches and took extensive photos and video to further inspire them.

Animation on "Hercules" began in late 1995 with a grand and unprecedented total of 906 artists, animators and technicians ultimately contributing their talents and labors to the production. That figure includes a staff of more than 100 based at Disney's excellent animation facility in Paris, where nearly 10 minutes of the film was created. Dominique Monfrey supervised the animation of the Titans and, in particular, the Cyclops character at the Paris Studio, where the "armageddon" film finale and Hercules' daring descent into the Underworld were created.

Back in Burbank, 41 background artists created 1,601 hand painted backgrounds for the film. A team of 108 visual effects animators was responsible for putting the glow into the gods and the fire into Hades' hair, as well as creating the whirlwind of elements surrounding the various Titans, Zeus' lightning bolts, rain, wind, flames and, of course, the trails of pixie dust left by Hermes.

The legend of Hercules remains one of mythology's most often told tales and has been a popular source of material for filmmakers and television producers for more than four decades. Film versions have starred such famous muscle men as Steve Reeves, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lou Ferrigno with titles ranging from the sublime ("Hercules Unchained") to the ridiculous ("The Three Stooges Meet Hercules," "Hercules in New York" and "Hercules Against the Sons of the Sun"). The fascination with this Greek superhero continues today with the ongoing success of the syndicated TV series "Hercules: The Legendary Journeys," filmed in New Zealand and starring Kevin Sorbo.

Alice Dewey observes, "There's something about Greek mythology and the story of Hercules, in particular, that has appealed to people for many centuries. It's timeless, universal and the stories are filled with lots of passion. Hercules himself is a very popular and accessible hero who was literally on every plate, jug and vase back

in the glory days of ancient Greece. As storytellers, we really embraced this strong yet vulnerable character and the sense of the journey that he embarks on to become a true hero."

Roy Disney, vice chairman of The Walt Disney Company and chairman of Walt Disney Feature Animation, adds, "Hercules is a character that I think everyone can relate to. We've all said at one time or another in our lives, 'What am I doing here?' 'Who am I anyway?' 'What is my mission in life?' The film itself is perfect for animation because it's about characters that never really existed except in our imaginations. And what animation does best is to tell you stories about things you couldn't see any other way. The look and style of the film and the way the characters are drawn is in keeping with mythology and gives it that bigger than life feel."

For Tom Schumacher, executive vice president of Walt Disney Feature Animation and Walt Disney Theatrical Productions, "Hercules" represents a significant milestone for Disney animation. He says, "Fundamentally, this film is about some very important things. It's about the idea of strength, of who you are and what character is. It also deals with the notion of what celebrity is, what pop culture is, what it means to be popular. The most extraordinary thing about 'Hercules' is that it is a departure from the recent films that we've done. The look, the design, the color, the excitement and the enthusiasm makes this a truly unique film. At the same time, the emotional core is there too in Hercules' relationship with Meg and Phil, that will really get audiences involved with the characters."

As president of Walt Disney Feature Animation and Walt Disney Theatrical Productions, Peter Schneider has spent the last dozen years overseeing one of the Studio's most exciting and prolific periods of creativity. Reflecting on this latest accomplishment, he says, "It has been such a pleasure to see John and Ron mature and grow as filmmakers over the past 12 years. Their sophistication in storytelling, use of camera and music has gotten better and better. They are also able to bring humor,

emotion and heart to all their projects and create a depth of character in their writing and directing that is second to none. Another wonderful thing about 'Hercules' is that it is finally bringing some major recognition in this country for Gerald Scarfe, whose style and design are amazing and have added a new dimension to this picture that is unlike anything the Studio has ever done before."

Schneider adds, "It's also very exciting to see the tremendous work that our animators have done on this picture. Andreas Deja has been one of our superstars for some time, but has focused mainly on villains. He has done a spectacular job with our leading man Hercules and given it tremendous panache. Nik Ranieri has done the best work of his career on Hades and has shown enormous growth as an artist. And Ken Duncan, who is supervising a major character for the first time, has impressed us all with his animation on Meg. I can't say enough about all of the great artists and animators who contributed to this film. I am very proud of all that they have done to make this one of Disney's best efforts."

ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

After completing work on "Aladdin" in 1992, Musker & Clements began exploring numerous possibilities for their next project. They looked at about 30 ideas being developed by the story department before settling on the classic tale of the popular Greek hero. The idea for a Disney film about "Hercules" had originally been suggested by animator Joe Haidar at one of the department's "gong show" presentations, where anyone from Feature Animation is able to pitch potential projects.

According to Ron Clements, "Mythology appealed to us because it hadn't really been tapped into before for an animated feature. The Pastoral sequence in 'Fantasia'

touched on it somewhat but not to any great extent. The idea of Hercules being half-man, half-god presented lots of interesting and humorous possibilities."

John Musker adds, "The story of Hercules seemed like it would be great for animation because of its fantasy elements and the fact that you're dealing with characters that are larger than life. The opportunity to do a superhero action-adventure story was too good to pass up. There have been many 'cheesy' versions of the Hercules story done before but there hasn't really been an 'A' version."

In their role as screenwriters, they spent the next nine months reading lots of books on mythology, revisiting several of the "cheesy" film versions from the past, and writing an outline, several treatments and eventually their own first draft of a script. During this same period, they also worked on some preliminary visual development for the film as well.

"We discovered that there wasn't just one definitive version of the Hercules legend, but many, many different stories," says Clements. "He became such an incredibly popular hero that, in fact, a lot of other stories about other heroes got turned into Hercules stories. He was so popular that they took the earlier myths and reinvented them."

Musker observes, "Another thing that we really liked about Hercules was that he was the common man's hero. Whereas a lot of the gods seem beyond something you could aspire to, people related to Hercules because he was more of a regular guy. That's why he became the most common subject on vases and objects of the period."

As the script took shape, so did the humor. Musker and Clements decided to portray Greek society as a kind of parallel of modern day society. The bustling town of Thebes took on the nickname of "the Big Olive" and drew inspiration from modern-day Manhattan and Los Angeles. Another major creative direction they chose was to inject elements of classic '30s and '40s screwball comedy into the mix.

Clements comments, "We wanted to do this sort of Frank Capra/Preston Sturges take on the subject with a worldly, snappy-talking femme-fatale and an innocent leading man. We envisioned Meg as Barbara Stanwyck and Hercules as Jimmy Stewart or Henry Fonda in the body of Arnold Schwarzenegger. This seemed like a great opportunity to do that sort of relationship and give it an edge. We wanted to turn the whole story on its head a bit."

Loosely borrowing from the original myths, Musker & Clements found great material and characters to work with. "Pain and Panic were actually attendants to Ares, the god of war," notes Musker. "He had four minions -- Pain, Panic, Famine and Oblivion. It sounds like a terrible law firm. We decided to use Pain and Panic because they seemed like the perfect names for Hades' sidekicks."

Once Musker & Clements completed their first draft of the screenplay and began to concentrate on other aspects of the production, the screenwriting team of Bob Shaw & Donald McEnery came on board to provide additional humor and definition to the script. Shaw & McEnery had written an Emmy-nominated episode of "Seinfeld" and they had each had extensive experience as stand-up comics. Also collaborating on the final screenplay was Irene Mecchi, a witty and talented writer whose previous credits include the Disney features, "The Lion King" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."

HERCULES -- THE MYTH BEHIND THE MAN

The Greeks had a word for him -- *Heracles*, to be exact. Although Disney's animated account of the mythological superhero takes the liberty of calling him by his more common Roman name of Hercules, Musker & Clements and the story team were inspired by the always fascinating and often outrageous tales of the legendary Greek hero.

With its loose and comedic approach to the subject matter, Disney's "Hercules" is not exactly an accurate account of Greek mythology. And yet, the written accounts of Hercules became an important springboard for the film. Ovid was the first to write about this great hero in the year 1000 BC and, several thousand years later, the 5th century poet Euripides added to his legacy with perhaps the most famous version of the story. Even among experts, there are many varying versions of the classic mythological tales. Hercules, being one of the most popular heroes of the day, was also one of the most chronicled and each region had its own version of his adventures.

By all accounts, Hercules was Ancient Greece's consummate hero -- part superman, part everyman. To commemorate his superhuman acts of heroism, he became an icon and his likeness appeared on a staggering number of Grecian vases, plates and other artifacts. He was courageous, indomitable and alone in his fight against the tyrannies of the world.

In classic mythology, Hercules is indeed the son of Zeus but his mother is a mortal named Alcmena. Practical and egotistical Zeus took it upon himself to sire this demi-god in response to a prophesy that the only way to save the world from the Titans -- 50 gigantic beasts with the legs of serpents -- was with the help of the greatest and strongest of mortal men. When Hera discovered what Zeus had done, she sent two serpents to kill the child but young Hercules strangled the creatures with his bare hands.

Aware now of her son's destiny, Alcmena had Hercules trained in all the arts required of a warrior hero: charioteering, fencing, wrestling and music. Too strong for his own good, Hercules was sent into the mountains as a shepherd, where at age 18 he killed a great lion. He used the skin as a cloak with the head forming a kind of hood and this is the famous costume depicted in most artwork.

Hercules' first marriage to Princess Megara produced three sons but came to a tragic end when a vengeful Hera caused him to go mad. Hera added misery to his grief

by conspiring to have him become the slave of his cowardly cousin King Eurystheus for a period of one year, during which time he was subject to every demand and labor the evil little relative could dream up. With Hera working behind the scenes to suggest increasingly impossible and perilous tasks, the "Twelve Labors of Hercules" began to take shape and would lead to the hero's further glory. The labors included fighting the Nemean Lion, killing the nine-headed Hydra (which grew two heads to replace each severed one), capturing the murderous boar of Mt. Erymanthus, cleaning the stables of King Augeas, driving away the Stymphalian birds, catching the fire-breathing bull of Crete, bringing back the golden girdle of the Amazon Queen Hippolyta, picking three golden apples guarded by a fire-breathing dragon and bringing back Hades' three-headed guard dog, Cerberus.

His labors completed, Hercules returned to civilization to resume his life and chose a Caledonian princess named Deianira to be his second wife. On the way home from the marriage, Hercules killed the Centaur Nessus for making ungentlemanly passes at his bride but not before the crafty creature convinced Deianira to take a few drops of his blood to prevent Hercules from desiring other women.

Adventure and trouble continued to find Hercules. Another incident had him indebted to Queen Omphale of Lydia, who forced him to dress as a serving woman for three years and to spin and sew with his big hands.

When Hercules' wife became jealous of another woman, she decided to use Nessus' "love charm," not knowing that it would seal his fate. Finding himself in unbearable pain, Hercules begged to be placed on a funeral pyre. Accompanied by a loud thunderclap, he was borne up to Mount Olympus where he was at last reunited with his godly kin and thus making good on that prophesied battle with the Titans. Begging Hercules' forgiveness for all her treachery, Hera gave him her own daughter Hebe (goddess of eternal youth) as his bride.

Hercules may not have been a real person but "The Pillars of Hercules," two giant crags which separate Europe from Africa and which were said to have been placed there by him on the way to a labor, are still in place today.

TAKING ANIMATION IN NEW DIRECTIONS -- MUSKER & CLEMENTS

As filmmakers, the names of John Musker & Ron Clements may not be as widely known to the public as such industry luminaries as Spielberg, Lucas or Scorsese, but their films have achieved a level of worldwide popularity and respect that ranks them among the most successful in their field. Together they have helped to change the face of animation and usher in a whole new era of excitement and experimentation for the medium. Starting in 1986 with the release of "The Great Mouse Detective," they became the first of a new generation of Disney directors to bring their style, sensibilities and humor to animation. Having trained and worked directly with several of Walt Disney's "nine old men," they also became the torchbearers for the art form that the Studio helped to invent and define.

The duo's passion for character animation, experience as animators, superb storytelling skills and enormous senses of humor have established them as two of today's animation superstars.

Musker attributes his successful partnership with Clements to the fact that "we're both relatively agreeable Midwestern types and we each have slightly different strengths and approaches. Ron is more structure-oriented and makes sure that the overall story doesn't disintegrate during the course of too many rewrites. I tend to be more concerned with specific details and gags. We constantly go over each other's scenes and drafts and add new ideas and suggestions in the process."

Detailing their approach to screenwriting, Clements explains, "We have a certain process when we write a script. We start out talking a lot about it. Then John goes off and does almost a stream-of-consciousness kind of approach where he just fills pages and pages with lines of dialogue and ideas for the film."

Musker adds, "In the beginning, I'm not too concerned with how everything is going to fit together. It's more like improvisation on paper. When I'm through, Ron starts writing the script a bit more methodically and puts in a lot of his own stuff and changes other things. He ends up with a rough draft of the script. Then I do notes and re-write over what he's written. It goes back and forth sort of like a tennis game."

As directors they jointly oversee the storyboard sessions, working with the head of story and the story team to stage the scenes and create a workbook outline of the entire film. They also work as a team to develop the characters, record all the voice actors and in the editing room with the editor to shape the film and perfect its timing.

In terms of dividing up specific scenes, Musker tends to handle the action oriented ones (like the Hydra battle) while Clements often takes on those that are more character driven (e.g. Herc's arrival in Thebes). Song sequences are divided up evenly and both contribute equally to the film's overall comedic tone.

After working as closely as they have for all these years, the filmmakers admit they tend to think along the same wavelength and share similar tastes and ideas. There is even a tendency to finish each other's sentences without being aware they're doing it. Yet, they also have their individual strengths and weaknesses which help to make their films as good as they are.

Says Clements, "We argue occasionally and John will either talk me into something or I will talk him around to my point of view. We always feel that we're trying to make the same movie. If we do disagree, it's more about how we're going to do something, as opposed to what we're doing."

With four features to their credit, one thing is certain; you can't argue with their tremendous talent and their unique ability to tell a story in animation with heart and humor.

THE MUSIC -- THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ALAN MENKEN & DAVID ZIPPEL

When you think of a film set in Greece and focusing on the legendary gods of Mount Olympus, you might expect the music to feature bouzoukis, lyres and other Greek instrumentation. But like just about everything else in "Hercules," Musker & Clements opted for the road less traveled and came up with some inventive and offbeat ideas for the film's music as well. To help them in their efforts, they turned to eight-time Oscar®-winning composer Alan Menken, with whom they had worked so successfully in the past on "The Little Mermaid" and "Aladdin."

For this project, Menken joined creative forces with Tony Award-winning lyricist David Zippel, who provided wit, irreverence and emotion with his clever words for the songs. Menken and Zippel have been friends for over 16 years and even wrote a few songs together in the early '80s. They had been wanting to collaborate on a musical for some time and this film gave them the perfect opportunity.

The basic idea to infuse the songs in "Hercules" with gospel style overtones came from John Musker. He explains, "Gospel is a storytelling kind of music which is often associated with hope, idealism and larger-than-life events. It can be exhilarating, especially when it gets everybody on their feet. From the beginning, we were looking for a contemporary equivalent for the Greek references that would add an aspect of fun to the film and this style of music seemed to be entertaining and a real departure at the same time.

"As we were researching the story and learning about all the gods and goddesses, we came across the Muses, who were the goddesses of the arts," continues Musker. "When you're doing a musical about Greece, it seemed like the Muses should be in there. We thought they would be a great storytelling device -- our own version of a Greek chorus. And gospel music with some rhythm and blues and pop influences seemed to be the perfect kind of music for our Muses because their traditional role is to tell of the god's heroic accounts."

Clements says, "We really wanted to work with Alan again. There is something about his music and melodies that we really gravitated toward. He always brings lots of enthusiasm to these projects and is great to work with. Alan has an innate gift for writing melodies that really catch your ear. You hear them once or twice and they stay with you. And that's something many composers can't do."

Musker adds, "We wanted a lyricist who could be funny and sharp and smart and David Zippel fit that bill in every way. We had just seen 'City of Angels' and we felt he brought a real sense of '40s sassiness and hipness to it which were the same sensibilities we wanted for 'Hercules.'"

As he's done so successfully in the past, Menken's work blends together a variety of musical styles to create a melodically impressive and unique pastiche.

The film opens with a rousing and energetic gospel style song called appropriately enough "The Gospel Truth," which is spiritedly sung by the Muses. Menken says, "One of the first rules of a musical is that you have to open with a song that sets the tone and establishes that this is a musical. The Muses are just pure fun and they work effortlessly in the film. For this song we wanted something a la 'Dream Girls,' kind of Motown and a bit sexy. The song explodes into the chorus and it is very entertaining."

Zippel adds, "'The Gospel Truth' is our introduction to Zeus, Hercules and history. It sets the tone for the film because it introduces the Muses as well. This song

immediately gives the audience a sense of the film's humor and style and our approach to telling the story."

The song, "Go the Distance," is sung by teenage Hercules (singing voice of Roger Bart) as he musically expresses his heartfelt desire and determination to find his place in life. More than any of the other songs, this one emerges as an anthem for the film and captures the emotion and motivation for Hercules' quest. The song is heard again over the film's end credits where it is soulfully sung by Grammy-winning recording artist Michael Bolton.

"'Go the Distance' is an extremely important theme for the film, both musically and lyrically," explains Menken. "It began as a heroic fanfare I was writing for the main title and I suggested that we construct a song out of it. It was a hard song to write because it was a real balancing act to bring together the grandness of this melody and still make it kind of intimate. We wanted it to be very accessible and hold you as it builds up to this big release about wanting to 'go the distance.' It is really very exhilarating and filled with emotion. David and I are particularly proud of this effort."

Demonstrating their versatility and talent, the songwriters switched from gospel and R&B to a bouncy Vaudeville style for the tune "One Last Hope," delightfully delivered by a skeptical satyr named Phil (Danny DeVito). In this song, a "satyr-but-wiser" Phil tells of his previous disappointments and guarded optimism about his latest hero-in-training.

"This song gave us a chance to get into another style completely," says Menken. "We were looking for our big comedic production number -- a real Broadway-style tune in the tradition of 'You've Gotta Have Heart' or the kind of songs that Frank Loesser used to write. Danny is not an experienced musical theater performer but he ended up giving a real musical theater performance. He really got it. At first, he was singing it too much, so I told him to think of Jimmy Durante -- the way he would half speak his songs -- and then it came out sounding like Danny DeVito singing. It was great. This

song also served an important story point because it shows Hercules mature from an awkward kid into a disciplined and muscular adult."

The Muses return to sing Hercules' praises in the gospel-tinged tune, "Zero to Hero." Accompanied by some inventive and quick-paced cutting, this witty ditty offers some insightful comments about becoming an instant celebrity.

"'Zero to Hero' was the first song we wrote," recalls Menken. "It's as close to rock and roll as I've gotten at Disney. It's a big production number and one of the best I've ever been involved with. It's just sensational the way the Muses are trading off lead vocals and then singing background. Working with Lillias (White) and the other vocalists has been one of the most pleasing assignments that I've had on any of my film projects. They put lots of work into honing their vocals and really making this something very special."

The beautiful Meg takes the musical spotlight on a song called "I Won't Say," in which she finally begins to realize that she's falling for Herc but isn't ready to admit it to herself. Complete with musical backings by the Muses, this song captures Meg's mixed emotions as she attempts to come to grips with what she is feeling. For this song, Menken incorporated a late '50s, early '60s girl group sound (think Leslie Gore, Carole King) which gave it a distinctive flavor all its own.

"It's a love song with a sense of humor," says Zippel. "It's the classic love song of 'I'm not in love' and we know she really is. Susan Egan is an extraordinary actress who really understands her character. She has an edge and yet she's likable at the same time. Susan really delivered the goods."

Rounding out the musical bill is a knock-out gospel flavored finale, "A Star is Born," which is sung in high style by the Muses as they testify to Herc's status as a true hero. Menken notes, "It's an explosion of joy which is very much in the gospel response song tradition. It's unusual to introduce a new song at the very end of the

film, but this one really works well and is a celebration of the fact that anyone can be a true hero if they make the effort."

Zippel sums up his experience on "Hercules" in this way: "I think animated musicals are as close as movies get to Broadway shows. You want to create characters that sing and speak in the same voice. It's very much about story and keeping the drama going through the songs. Broadway was a great training ground for working on animated features. And collaborating with Alan, John & Ron has been an absolute pleasure."

BRINGING THE CHARACTERS TO LIFE -- A HERCULEAN LABOR

Just as Hercules had to "go the distance" to find himself, the animators working on "Hercules" had to embark on a personal journey of their own to create the style and personalities of the film's extraordinary cast of characters. Gerald Scarfe's extreme designs offered additional challenges to the usual process of creating a performance and forced them to explore new and rewarding ways to animate the characters.

For Andreas Deja, one of his generation's superstar animators and a 17-year Disney veteran who has supervised such memorable villains as Gaston, Jafar and Scar, the assignment of overseeing the heroic lead was a welcome and challenging departure.

"For me, it's more difficult to animate a hero than a villain because they're more subtle," observes Deja. "Villains usually have broad mannerisms and their expressions are juicier. Animating Hercules presented a totally different set of challenges. He starts out very innocent and naive but at the end of the film he emerges very confident as a result of all he's been through. These attitudes are reflected in the way he walks and in

other body language. Although physically he has some similarities to Gaston, their personalities are entirely different and my experience on 'Beauty' allowed me to do a better job animating Hercules.

"Hercules is probably the most difficult character that I've ever had to draw because his muscles and much of his anatomy are visible. Usually a character has a shirt or a coat to hide these things but with Hercules you couldn't cheat. You had to know how the knee works and what the muscles in the arm look like when they turn. Live action reference was helpful up to a point but because the character is so stylized, you end up closing your eyes and trying to figure out how does a Greek god do this. A lot of inspiration comes from the voice and, for this character, Tate Donovan was a terrific springboard. He had a very positive, bouncy quality to his performance and he provided a nice honest charm without being too cute or saccharine."

According to Deja, "To be a good animator, you have to be a good performer. That is really more important than the drawing. If you just draw well and you know how to draw Disney characters, it doesn't make you a good animator. You have to give these things a soul, which is easy to say and very difficult to do. Moving things around and knowing animation rules isn't enough. The thing you have to do is really dig very deeply into the character and analyze him or her. And also be clever about it at the same time."

As for the film's unique style, Deja says, "When I first came on the movie, Gerald had done a few drawings and I thought, 'my God, this stuff is wonderful and wild but how am I going to animate it?' 'Where are the joints and how can you make this stuff move in a believable way?' But you just roll up your sleeves and try it. Then you find a middle ground where you have your Disney experience and you take on this new look and it becomes a fun mix. Gerald was a joy to work with because he loved what we did. He had also done some animation in the past so he knew the problems that we were up against."

For Nik Ranieri, a nine-year Disney veteran whose credits include supervising Lumiere and Meeko, the assignment to animate Hades was a dream come true.

"We've never really had a villain like Hades before," observes Ranieri, "which is what really appealed to me about the character. Unlike some of our other villains who are brooding or mysterious, Hades is very charismatic and outgoing; sort of in your face. On the one hand, he's trying to be your best friend and schmooze you because he knows you can catch more flies with honey. But he also has an ulterior motive that he's not showing. We envisioned him as a fast-talking Hollywood dealmaker or a used car salesman, dangling a carrot on a stick to get people to do certain things. That sort of false face is fascinating but it also is the worst kind of evil because you don't recognize it until the end."

Ranieri drew inspiration from Scarfe's many concept drawings and worked with the production designer and the directors to give the character a look all his own. But it wasn't until James Woods was cast to do the voice that the character's personality truly emerged.

"James Woods was amazing to work with and really helped to make Hades a unique villain," says Ranieri. "At the recording sessions, he was so lively and he gave us so much to work with. He'd be dancing around and wanting to try each line lots of different ways. He also ad-libbed a lot and many of those lines ended up in the film. He really made the character come alive and gave us ideas we never would have thought to use with a villain. It's an animator's dream to get a great performance on the voice track and with James I could actually hear the expressions on the tape. As I would watch him perform, I couldn't wait to get back to my drawing board and try to bring some of his expressions and features to the character. I would push the lips a little bit and make the face a little more gaunt. The pupils got a little bigger and the eyes rounder. Before you knew it, it started to look like him. When he saw the drawings I had done at the next session, he really got jazzed."

Adding to Hades' unique look and personality is his flaming hair which runs the gamut from cool gas-jet blue to fiery red depending on his mood. The actual animation of the hair was handled by the talented team in effects animation with detailed input from Ranieri as to how it should move.

Ken Duncan, the supervising animator in charge of Meg, enjoyed creating the performance and personality for this dynamic and energetic female lead.

"What's nice about Meg is that she's a very strong character with a mind of her own," says Duncan. "She's quick-witted, independent and has a dramatic arc in the film which takes her from being untrusting and hard-edged to being a softer, more open person by the end of the film. Susan Egan was fantastic to work with and her take on the character gave me great ideas as to attitudes, poses and gestures. As an animator, the big payoff is when the audience gets involved with your character and feels the emotions that she is feeling. If they can relate to her, she'll live forever."

In the comic relief department, "Hercules" offers some of Disney's all-time funniest characters. Overseeing the animation of Phil was the incredibly talented Eric Goldberg, who had previously created the Genie character for "Aladdin" and went on to co-direct Disney's "Pocahontas." Between directing gigs, Goldberg welcomed the chance to put pencil to paper once again to create one of Disney's unforgettable characters.

Goldberg notes, "Phil is short, bald, overweight and has a beard, so it's really a stretch for me. I started out drawing Danny DeVito and everybody kept saying, 'Hey, it looks like you.' So there's probably a little bit of both of us in him. The character is very round, pliable and squishy so I thought a lot about Grumpy and Bacchus (from 'Fantasia') as well as the seminal character designs that Gerald provided. Danny's improvisation really helped to make the character come alive as well and provided just the right blend of comedy and emotion that the part called for."

He adds, "John and Ron have taken a canvas that's huge -- Ancient Greece and the gods -- and given it a scope and breadth that makes it magical. One thing that really does make animation magical is when it stops being something that you could see in live-action and goes to the next level. Animation allows us the scope to do things that are larger than life."

Orchestrating the hilarious antics of Hades' sidekicks, Pain and Panic, were animators Brian Ferguson and James Lopez. Inspired by the voices of Bobcat Goldthwait and Matt Frewer, these two first-time supervisors let their imaginations run wild and worked closely to create their characters' intertwined performances. In designing Panic, Ferguson started with the eyes and subsequently came up with the elongated head which best suited the character's cowering "demon-or."

Ellen Woodbury, the supervising animator for Pegasus, drew on her love of horses and experience animating Zazu (the hornbill in "The Lion King") to create Hercules' playful pony pal. She looked at lots of bird footage before deciding to give this big elegant horse the characteristics of a little tweety bird. "He's such a combination of opposites," she says. "Here's this sleek princely character and he turns out to be kind of a goofball jock. Instead of big commanding voice, he comes out with these little chirpy sounds. Pegasus' whole orientation is physical and he just loves to horse around."

For his animation of Baby Hercules, supervising animator Randy Haycock was able to do some important studies close to home with his own newborn, who arrived just in time to serve as a reference model. The animator was also responsible for overseeing Herc's actions as an awkward teen, and for that he drew on his own teenage experience of being tall, skinny and a bit uncoordinated.

HYDRA-PHOBIA -- USING COMPUTERS TO CREATE A 30-HEADED MONSTER

For more than a dozen years now, Disney's feature animation team has enlisted the power and technological advantage of computers to help them tell their stories in new and innovative ways. The first real breakthrough for CGI (computer graphics imagery) came with the 1986 Disney animated feature, "The Great Mouse Detective," directed by Musker & Clements. For that film, specially trained artists using the latest technology created the interior clocktower of Big Ben -- a treacherous and complex room filled with 54 moving gears, winches, ratchets, beams and pulleys -- as a backdrop for the climactic confrontation between a mouse sleuth named Basil and his rodent nemesis, Professor Ratigan. The effect was dazzling and dramatic and led to further experimentation with each successive film. Swirling ballrooms ("Beauty and the Beast"), a roller-coaster magic carpet ride through the Cave of Wonders ("Aladdin"), a stampede of wildebeests ("The Lion King") and unprecedented Medieval crowds at a fabulous festival ("The Hunchback of Notre Dame") are some of the wonders created by Disney's CGI team in recent years.

For "Hercules," CGI artistic supervisor Roger Gould undertook the department's most challenging assignment yet -- creating an enormous 30-headed mythical beast that the ancient Greeks called the Hydra. Choreographing the movement of the heads and integrating the action with the hand-drawn characters proved to be a two year long assignment for a team of 15 artists and technicians. The scene itself lasts just under five minutes. Additionally, the CGI team created new morphing programs that allowed painted backgrounds of Olympus to move and animate.

Gould explains, "The computer is really good at animating complex things that would be too time consuming to draw, like thousands of wildebeests. It's also terrific at

creating dimensionality and perspective. That's a great place to start, but John and Ron wanted a really loose style of animation with lots of squash and stretch, which is where the computer is historically weak. Our challenge was to bring the Hydra to life, create the dynamic movement of a flying, aerial camera through this living jungle of heads, and still make it look like it belonged in the same world as the hand-drawn characters."

The CGI team also constructed a computerized model of the Hydra that allowed the animators to stretch the eyes, twist the jaw and essentially make the character as loose as if it were hand-drawn. To achieve this level of flexibility for a single-headed Hydra required 1,244 individual animation controls, where each control represents one degree of movement, such as the left/right position of the left pupil, or the forward/back angle of one fin on the Hydra's head. Bringing the 30-headed creature to life necessitated 23,392 custom-designed animation controls.

Gould further explains, "Achieving the looseness of movement was the first step, but then we needed to teach the computer to 'draw' each frame in the hand-drawn style. Normally, three-dimensional animation is rendered by the computer to create highlights and shadows that mimic how light behaves in the real world. But realism is not our goal. For us, the key is a program developed at Disney over the past dozen years, that allows the computer to translate the three-dimensional object into a line drawing. The computer then colors in this 'drawing' with areas of color, just as traditional artwork is colored."

As far as animating the Hydra itself, Gould says, "It's definitely the most complicated character animation we've ever done on the computer. It's really intense because, in some scenes, you're dealing with the equivalent of 30 characters, all of whom have to be carefully choreographed to work together, and still keep the viewer's eye focused on the main action."

The directors wanted to make Olympus, home of the gods, an ever-drifting world made of clouds and where objects and props come to life from the clouds. To help bring this to life, the CGI team worked closely with the Effects and Background departments on a breakthrough morphing technique. Multiple paintings of clouds and cloud-like images were blended together and combined with drawn effects animation using a newly created program. This allowed background paintings to actually transform and animate while every frame still looks as rich and intricate as the original paintings. Examples of this include Baby Herc's cradle and Zeus' reclining chair forming from the clouds.

For Gould, his experience on the film has been a real eye-opener and one that was greatly satisfying. He notes, "The computer is a very versatile tool and we are just beginning to explore its many possibilities. Ultimately, the real power of the computer is that it expands our abilities as filmmakers to tell stories and show audiences things that they have never seen before."

THE LOOK OF "HERCULES" -- THE ANARCHIC DESIGN OF GERALD SCARFE MEETS THE ELEGANT ART DIRECTION OF ANDY GASKILL

As a long-time fan and admirer of renowned British artist/political cartoonist/designer Gerald Scarfe, John Musker was anxious to work with him and "Hercules" presented the right project at the right time. When Scarfe was called in to contribute some conceptual art and suggestions for character design during the project's formative stages, the filmmakers were so inspired by his work that his role expanded to that of production designer. Over the next three years, Scarfe created

literally thousands of drawings (many as large as 3' x 3') and became integrally involved in the production working in concert with the animators, the directors, art director Andy Gaskill, production stylist Sue Nichols and the other artistic supervisors to create one of Disney's most distinctively graphic films of all time.

"After looking at Gerald's art and conception of the characters, we realized that his style complemented some of the Greek vase painting style," recalls Musker. "They both had a strong emphasis on line and shape that was very calligraphic. Gerald described Greek art as a combination of power and elegance. It has this monumental quality, but it also has this very elegant, linear quality that is not unlike his own.

"We also discovered that Gerald's style was perfect for animation," continues Musker. "It's very graspable. His drawings have an innate and anarchic energy that seem to explode off the page. He draws from the shoulder with big swoops, so there are these big, strong shapes which have a bold and immediate impact."

Working from Scarfe's initial character designs and bringing his own artistic talents to the process, Gaskill began to adapt the artist's style to other aspects of the production including layout and background.

Gaskill explains, "One of the characteristic things about Scarfe's drawings is a sort of spikiness or swoopiness. His characters are so sharp, you could cut yourself on them. We began to incorporate the sharp pointy design element -- we call them Scarfy shapes -- into our layout and backgrounds. Even the clouds have spikes on them instead of being the soft amorphous objects you would normally expect. The result is a more fantastic and exaggerated look than we've ever done before, which can be quite humorous or sinister depending on how its used."

Scarfe himself was thrilled and flattered to work on the project. It also happened to involve three of his greatest passions: Disney animation, Greek art and mythology. As he got more and more involved in the collaborative process, his

enthusiasm and excitement mounted and he expressed to the directors his desire to have a hand in designing every character from the leads down to the people in the square in Thebes.

"Hercules is a marvelous subject," says Scarfe. "It deals with mythological subjects, not real Earth bound people, so it provides a great scope for letting your imagination fly. None of us know what Mount Olympus or the Underworld look like so it gives you a lot of room to be creative. Ron and John wrote a brilliant script which immediately triggered great images in my mind.

"One of the first things I did after I read the script was to go to the British Museum and start looking at the Greek vases," recalls Scarfe. "They've got all these amazing drawings of Hercules and other characters and they're done with a beautiful, elegant, economic flowing line -- a serpentine line. John, Ron and Andy all had the same vision and our code words became 'strength with elegance.'"

He continues, "My approach to designing the characters was to do everything instinctively. I would think, 'What does this character look and feel like?' and 'What should he or she be doing?' I would act and become the character, rather like the animators do. I wanted to feel what they felt and let it emotionally come onto the paper without kind of working it out too intellectually. The trick is to grab them quickly and slam them onto paper as fast as possible because ideas are a bit like dreams. After working on the character designs for about a year on my own, it came time to turn 'my babies' over to the animators. They looked after them brilliantly and brought them up and gave them life."

To help get the animators accustomed to his style, Scarfe met with them at a retreat early in the production and spent time with each of the supervisors. He would draw over their drawings and make suggestions as to how best to incorporate his style into their animation. The collaboration continued throughout the film with occasional visits and through the miracles of modern technology (faxes, satellites, etc.).

"One of my big efforts was to try and get a kind of style running through the entire movie," adds Scarfe. "I wanted to maintain that world as much as possible. I worked with the background department to help them get the same shape and simplicity into their paintings and I spent time with the clean-up team and did some drawings for them to get them on the same page."

In his role as art director, it was Andy Gaskill's job to make sure that the film had a unified look and that all the various elements worked together as a whole. In the early stages of visual development, he took actual pages of the script and began illustrating them with rough images to suggest layout and color possibilities. This jump started the creative process and proved to be a tremendous help in getting the production ready for storyboarding and animation.

Among his duties, Gaskill was responsible for guiding the lighting and color aspects of the film. "As a rule, we used a lot of theatrical or stage lighting throughout the picture," he notes. "We were able to change the lighting dramatically to suit the moment. If we needed a light we would turn it on and it could be whatever color it needed to be. Animation is very similar to stage lighting in that respect because the audience accepts it without explanation."

As for color, Gaskill and the creative team pulled back from their original concept of bright, bouncy backgrounds so as not to upstage the characters. Instead, they saved their bounciest and most color-saturated moments for the songs as in "Zero to Hero," where outrageous and preposterous colors are used with wild abandon. That colorful sequence also integrates elements of Greek design motifs and decorative arts, including the classic Greek key and images of waves.

Tom Cardone, who served as the film's artistic supervisor for backgrounds, was a key player in determining the color palette. He explains, "This film is quite varied in terms of environment and emotion and we tried to discover ways of showing that through the color. For the opening party on Mount Olympus, we used colors that were

happy and light; lots of violets and pinks with a deep blue sky. The 'Big Olive,' on the other hand, is a gray place that is supposed to be dirty and weathered after all the catastrophes. Hades' Underworld headquarters is primarily a black-and-white environment where the only real color you see is the flame of his hair. The Armageddon sequence starts with a warm green sky lit by a fire and transforms to deep violets and reds as the action intensifies."

Gaskill concludes, "Scarfe's designs stretched us in ways that were at first difficult and challenging for a lot of people. In the beginning we looked at his drawings and said these are really preposterous. We had never seen anything like them for an animated film. But once the animation started to come back and I saw that his designs were reflected in the work, I knew we had something that broke all the rules and was very special."

THE FILMMAKERS

JOHN MUSKER (Producer/Director/Co-writer) continues to be one of the guiding forces in the art of animation and one of Disney's greatest treasures. His irreverent wit, strong visual style and unconventional approach to storytelling helped to make "The Little Mermaid" and "Aladdin" two of the Studio's greatest successes of all-time. "Hercules" is his fourth feature film directing credit for the Studio.

Like many of the artists who eventually came to work at Disney, Musker knew at an early age that he wanted to become an animator. By the time he was 8, he had already set his sights on this profession.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Musker first began drawing while in grammar school. Inspired by such Disney classics as "Sleeping Beauty" and "Pinocchio" as well as Bob Thomas' primer on animation entitled The Art of Animation, he developed a thorough

understanding of the animation process. His fascination with comics, cartoons and Mad Magazine further stimulated his desire to draw.

At Loyola Academy, a Jesuit high school in Willmette, Illinois, Musker became a cartoonist for the school paper. His special brand of caricature, which included outrageous sketches of teachers and school celebrities, quickly caught on. This preoccupation with caricature and cartooning continued throughout his college years at Northwestern University, where he majored in English and drew cartoons for The Daily Northwestern.

Following graduation from college in 1974, Musker put together a portfolio and set out for California to pursue a career as an animator. After an initial rejection by Disney, he enrolled at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) the following year (with a partial scholarship) to master his craft.

After completing his first year, which included a summer internship at the Disney Studio, he was offered a full-time job as an animator. This time Musker turned it down, opting instead to complete the second year of his training.

In 1977, Musker started work at Disney where his two training tests were enthusiastically received and he began as an assistant animator on "The Small One." He also animated on "The Fox and the Hound" and did story work on "The Black Cauldron."

Musker and Clements joined creative forces in 1983 to write "The Great Mouse Detective" and went on to co-direct the film (along with Burny Mattinson and Dave Michener). This successful collaboration led to a re-teaming on "The Little Mermaid," an award-winning film which helped to revitalize feature animation at Disney and generate an excitement for the genre as a whole. Following that, Musker & Clements joined creative forces once again to produce, write and direct the international blockbuster, "Aladdin" (1992).

Musker and his wife, Gale, whom he met at Disney, have three children (including twins). They live in La Cañada.

RON CLEMENTS (Producer/Director/Co-writer) is one of the top creative talents in the field of animation today and his gentle humor, visual integrity and strong story sensibilities have helped to attract a wider audience than ever before for animated features. Clements has successfully added to the Disney legacy and taken the art of animation in exciting new directions. "Hercules" marks his fourth directorial effort for the Studio.

Born and raised in Sioux City, Iowa, Clements traces his interest in animation to his first viewing of "Pinocchio" at the age of 10. As a teenager, he began making super-8 animated films, which led to a part-time job as an artist at a television station, where he animated commercials for the local market. While there, he made a 15-minute featurette (which he animated single-handedly) entitled "Shades of Sherlock Holmes." Several years later, his animated Sherlock Holmes project helped him get a job at Disney and also served as the inspiration for "The Great Mouse Detective," which Clements wrote and directed (with John Musker).

After graduating from high school, Clements came to California to try his luck at animation. Since there weren't any openings at Disney, he went to work for several months at Hanna-Barbera while studying life drawing in the evening at Art Center.

With a little persistence and determination, Clements was finally accepted into Disney's Talent Development Program, a training ground for young animators. His self-taught experience and ambition made up for his lack of formal training.

After successfully completing the training program, Clements served a two-year apprenticeship under Disney animation great Frank Thomas. He quickly progressed through the ranks from in-betweener to assistant to animator/storyman. His credits

include "Winnie the Pooh and Tigger Too," "The Rescuers," "Pete's Dragon," "The Fox and the Hound" and "The Black Cauldron."

Clements made his writing/directing debut (with Musker) on the 1986 Disney animated feature, "The Great Mouse Detective." Following that, he successfully pitched an animated version of Hans Christian Andersen's classic fairy tale, "The Little Mermaid" and went on to write and direct the film (again with Musker), which became an instant classic upon its release in 1989. The film won Academy Awards® for best song and original score and helped to inspire a new generation of moviegoers and animators.

Clements & Musker continued to make animation history with their next collaboration, "Aladdin," in 1992. Both served as writers, producers and directors on the film, which went on to earn \$486 million at theaters all over the world and become one of the most popular animated films of all-time.

Clements and his wife, Tami, live in the San Fernando Valley.

ALICE DEWEY (Producer) has been a key player on Disney's Feature Animation production team since 1990. Her other distinguished Disney animation credits include a role as associate producer of "The Lion King" (the Studio's most successful animated release of all-time) and as production manager on the 1992 comedy blockbuster, "Aladdin." She began her association with Disney as assistant production manager on the animated featurette, "The Prince and the Pauper," which teamed her with the Studio's legendary star, Mickey Mouse.

In 1980, Dewey began a seven season association as stage manager with Dallas Summer Musicals, where she supervised dozens of classic musicals. Between 1981-90, she also served as stage manager for numerous productions at such prestigious New York venues as the Manhattan Theater Club, the Ensemble Studio Theater and the WPA. During that time, she also spent two seasons at the Hartford

Stage Company, where she was involved in managing productions of "Hamlet," "Hedda Gabler" and "A Doll's House," among others. Starting in 1982, she began stage managing touring productions of several Broadway productions including "Amadeus," "42nd Street," "Big River" and "Les Miserables."

A native of Milwaukee, Dewey studied theater and education at the University of Wisconsin and went on to receive an MFA in theatrical directing at the University of Texas. Her teaching credentials include undergraduate courses in drama at both almas maters, a two-year term teaching junior high school English and theater and a term at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

ALAN MENKEN (Composer) is an eight-time Academy Award®-winner who continues to be one of the most celebrated and prolific composers of the day. His diverse and impressive body of work for the stage and screen has earned him just about every accolade as well as an enormous legion of fans all over the world. "Hercules" is his sixth animated feature for Disney and it follows his previous composing credits (songs and score) on "The Little Mermaid" (1989), "Beauty and the Beast" (1991), "Aladdin" (1992), "Pocahontas" (1995) and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" (1996).

The composer's most recent accomplishments include the world premiere concert event, "King David," which he wrote with lyricist Tim Rice and which had a limited engagement run at The New Amsterdam Theatre in New York in May. Menken's upcoming schedule includes a variety of musical projects for stage and screen as well as his own album of new and existing compositions, which will be released by Sony Records.

Earlier this year, Menken received his latest Oscar® and Golden Globe nominations for his work on Disney's 1996 animated release, "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." For that film, he also wrote six songs with lyricist Stephen Schwartz. He had

previously worked with Schwartz on Disney's "Pocahontas," which earned both songwriters a Best Song Oscar® for "Colors of the Wind." Menken's score for that film also earned him his eighth Academy Award®. His contributions to "Pocahontas" were further acknowledged with a Golden Globe Award and an additional Grammy.

Among his many musical milestones, Menken composed the score for the Broadway production of "Disney's Beauty and the Beast" for which he received Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations. He also composed the score and songs for the enormously successful Disney animated film "Aladdin" (with lyricists Howard Ashman and Tim Rice) for which he received two Academy Awards® and two Golden Globes for Best Original Score and Best Song (with Tim Rice) for "A Whole New World" as well as four Grammy Awards including Song of the Year for "A Whole New World." He was also responsible for composing the songs (with lyrics by Howard Ashman) and score for the Disney animated film "Beauty and the Beast" for which he received two Academy Awards® as well as two Golden Globe Awards for Best Original Score and Best Song for the title song "Beauty and the Beast" as well as three Grammy Awards. For "The Little Mermaid," Menken received two Academy Awards® and two Golden Globe Awards for Best Score and Best Song ("Under the Sea") and two Grammy Awards. With lyricist Jack Feldman he has written "My Christmas Tree" for "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" and the songs for the live-action musical feature "Newsies." The composer's score for "Life with Mikey" featured two songs, "Cold Enough To Snow" with lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and a title song with lyrics by Jack Feldman. Additional credits include the score for the ABC miniseries "Lincoln" which was broadcast in December, 1992, and the music and lyrics for the "Rocky V" theme song "The Measure of a Man" recorded by Elton John.

With Howard Ashman, Menken received the New York Drama Critic's Award, the Drama Desk Award, the Outer Critic's Circle Award and the London Evening Standard Award for Best Musical for "Little Shop of Horrors" and an Oscar® nomination for Best

Song ("Mean Green Mother From Outer Space") from the film version of "Little Shop of Horrors." In 1983, the composer received the BMI Career Achievement Award for his body of work in musical theater including "Little Shop of Horrors," "God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater," "Real Life Funnies," "Atina: Evil Queen of the Galaxy" (produced in workshop as "Battle of the Giants"), "Patch, Patch, Patch" and contributions to numerous reviews including "Personals" and "Diamonds." In 1987 a musical adaptation of "The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz" with lyrics by David Spencer was produced in Philadelphia. In 1992 the WPA Theatre in New York produced Menken's "Weird Romance" with lyrics also by David Spencer.

In December, 1994, Menken debuted a brand new stage musical based on the Dickens classic, "A Christmas Carol," with lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and book by Mike Ockrent and Lynn Ahrens, at the Theater at Madison Square Garden. The show proved to be a great success and has become a perennial New York holiday event.

Menken grew up in New Rochelle, New York and developed an interest in music at an early age. He studied piano and violin through his high school years, but it wasn't until after his graduation from New York University with a liberal arts degree (and a brief dalliance with pre-med) that he decided to focus on a career in music. While attending the Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop at BMI, he developed a passion for musical theater. This experience led to an intense personal learning and growth period for him as a musician and eventually resulted in his meeting Howard Ashman.

At this time, Menken was working primarily as a songwriter who performed frequently in local clubs and had an active career writing and singing commercial jingles. Several shows that he had written for had been successfully showcased, but not yet produced. His first collaboration with Ashman was in 1979 on the WPA production of "God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater," which was subsequently well received in its off-Broadway debut.

Menken and his wife Janis, a former professional ballet dancer, reside in upstate New York with their two daughters.

DAVID ZIPPEL (Lyricist) makes an impressive Disney debut with his lyrical contribution to "Hercules," providing witty words for a half-dozen memorable new tunes composed by Alan Menken. The Tony Award-winning lyricist is already hard at work on the Studio's 1998 animated release, "Mulan", which is due in theaters next summer.

Zippel made his Broadway debut with "City of Angels" for which he received the 1990 Tony Award, New York Drama Critics Circle Award and Drama Desk Award, London's 1994 Olivier Award and Evening Standard Award. His next Broadway show was "The Goodbye Girl" (with music by Marvin Hamlisch, and a book by Neil Simon) for which he was nominated for the 1993 Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Lyrics. In 1994, he and Joe Leonardo co-directed the hit Chicago production of "The Goodbye Girl" which was nominated for three Jefferson Awards.

With Hamlisch, Zippel has written several songs for motion pictures as well as the text to that composer's symphonic suite "Anatomy of Peace." His lyrics for "The Swan Princess," an animated musical were nominated for a 1995 Golden Globe Award. With composer Wally Harper he has written numerous songs for singer Barbara Cook including "It's Better With A Band," from Cook's live at Carnegie Hall album of the same name and the original songs for her Broadway and West End concert: "Barbara Cook: A Concert for the Theatre." Off-Broadway, Zippel has contributed lyrics to the revues "A...My Name Is Alice" and Hal Prince's "Diamonds" and, with composer Doug Katsaros, wrote the musical comedy "Just So." A revue of his songs also entitled "It's Better With A Band," played off-Broadway and on London's West End. He wrote the original songs for "5,6,7,8...Dance!" which starred Sandy Duncan at Radio City Music Hall and his songs have been performed by numerous theater, cabaret and recording artists including Michael Bolton, Cleo Laine, Mel

Torme, Nancy LaMott, Elaine Paige, Jason Alexander and Jeffery Osborne. With Jonathan Sheffer and Joe Leonard, Zippel wrote "Going Hollywood," a musical adaptation of Kaufman and Hart's "Once In A Lifetime."

Among his upcoming projects, he will be writing new lyrics for Andrew Lloyd Webber's production of "A Star Is Born" featuring music by Harold Arlen and a book by Larry Gelbart. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he is delighted not to practice law.

BOB SHAW & DONALD McENERY (Screenwriters) bring their vast experience as stand-up comics and talents as comedy writers to their assignment on "Hercules." Among their accomplishments as writing partners, they shared an Emmy nomination for a 1993 episode of "Seinfeld" entitled "The Tape." From their first meeting in New York six years ago, they hit it off immediately and knew that they wanted to write together. That desire was renewed in 1992 when they were both on the same bill at a comedy club in Nashville (Zanies Comedy Showplace). That same year, their collaboration began and they wrote scripts together as well as a television project for Gene Wilder. When Shaw took a one-year stint as a staff writer on the hit TV show, "Seinfeld," he brought McEnery aboard to write an episode with him. Since completing their work on "Hercules," McEnery & Shaw have written a draft of the next animated film from Pixar and Disney ("A Bug's Life") to be directed by John Lasseter ("Toy Story"). They have also begun writing a direct-to-video sequel to "Hercules" for Buena Vista Home Video.

Bob Shaw grew up on the East Coast and launched his stand-up comedy career in New York City, appearing at such popular comedy spots as The Improv, Catch a Rising Star and The Bottom Line. Moving to California in the late 1970s, he continued doing stand-up and found additional success through guest appearances with Johnny Carson and David Letterman. His big break came when he began writing television specials for such top comedians as Alan King, Steve Allen and others.

Donald McEnery was born and raised on Long Island and started his career as a stand-up comic one week before he turned 25. For the next 16 years, he worked the comedy circuit full-time, appearing at The Improv, Catch a Rising Star and other top clubs in New York and around the country. McEnery also appeared on such popular TV variety shows as "Star Search," "Evening at the Improv" and "Caroline's Comedy Hour." He moved to California in 1994 and has been writing exclusively with Shaw for the past five years. He and his wife currently live in Los Angeles.

Shaw & McEnery both enjoyed their first experience collaborating on an animated film. "One of the things that made this such a terrific assignment for us," says Shaw, "was that we got to work with people who had a great appreciation of comedy. We also learned a lot from John and Ron about making a great film. With our background as stand-up comedians, we were able to bring a very strong idea of jokes to the script and we could look at a scene and instinctively know how to make it funny. After you've been doing comedy on the road for about 18 years, you get a sense of rhythm and have a pretty good idea when something is funny."

IRENE MECCHI (Screenwriter) continues her winning streak at Disney Feature Animation with her valuable contribution to the screenplay for "Hercules." The talented writer previously collaborated on the screenplay for Disney's mega-hit, "The Lion King," and also added dialogue and key story elements as a screenwriter for the 1996 animated release, "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." Among her most recent accomplishments, she co-wrote the upcoming stage adaptation of "The Lion King," due for a Broadway bow this fall at the magnificent New Amsterdam Theatre.

A third generation San Franciscan, Mecchi studied theater and literature at UC Berkeley. Her aspirations to direct theater led her to the renowned American Conservatory Theater (ACT), where her instructor, Second City alumnus Joy Carlin, was impressed with her writing and encouraged her to pursue it on a full-time basis.

Mecchi's first network writing assignment was on the Emmy Award-winning Lily Tomlin special, "Lily: Sold Out." Prior to that she wrote a series of children's programs for Nickelodeon.

Mecchi's television sitcom credits also include "Valerie," "The Popcorn Kid" and a season as staff writer on "My Sister Sam."

Several years ago, Mecchi researched and wrote a play drawn from 50 years of legendary newspaper columns by the late Herb Caen, renowned for his witty observations of San Francisco. The play was "work-shopped" at ACT and led Mecchi to edit two books of Caen writings, which were published in 1992 and 1993: The Best of Herb Caen: 1960-1975 and Herb Caen's San Francisco: 1976-1991.

The writer began her association with Disney in March, 1992, when she wrote a 10-minute animated short called "Recycle Rex." That film encouraged younger viewers to "recycle, reduce and reuse" waste materials.

In June, 1992, she was brought into the feature animation department on "The Lion King" and was teamed with Jonathan Roberts ("The Sure Thing," The Official Preppy Handbook) for the project.

Mecchi's next screenwriting assignment for Disney is on the upcoming animated feature, "Kingdom of the Sun," a South American-based adventure tale which reteams her with Roger Allers, who directed "The Lion King" and also co-wrote the book for the stage adaptation of that film.

KENDRA HAALAND (Associate Producer) makes her Disney debut with "Hercules" and brings to the project a diverse background in advertising, marketing and animation production management.

Born in Newport Beach, California and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Haaland attended the University of Minnesota and went on to receive a masters degree in international management from Thunderbird University (the American Graduate

School of International Management in Phoenix). In 1984, she moved to New York to launch her professional career with McCann-Erickson Advertising, where she started as an assistant account executive and eventually handled such major clients as Lufthansa Airlines and Mennen. Among the highlights of her four years with McCann, she spent a year in Sweden, where she participated in the agency's first junior executive program. In 1989, Haaland returned home to Minneapolis to take a job with Saatchi & Saatchi as an account executive on the Northwest Airlines account.

While visiting her brother, an animator, in California in 1990, Haaland met director Bill Kroyer, who was involved at that time in making the animated feature, "FernGully...The Last Rainforest." Shortly after that encounter, she was offered a job as the film's operation manager and she accepted. Relocating to Los Angeles, she spent the next 1-1/2 years coordinating the complicated logistics of making the film in several different countries. Following her assignment with Kroyer Films, she went to work for Iwerks Entertainment as a marketing director and spent the next 18 months working on "Virtual Adventures" and "Cinetropolis," a location-based entertainment complex which debuted in Connecticut.

In 1995, she joined the Disney Feature Animation team and was immediately assigned to the "Hercules" unit.

GERALD SCARFE (Production Designer) lends his unique and original sense of artistry and design to "Hercules" and helped to make it into one of Disney's most stylish and graphically distinct feature efforts.

Born in London in 1936, Scarfe was a chronic asthmatic as a child and spent much of his time drawing and reading. After a brief period at the Royal College of Art in London, he established himself as a scathing satirical cartoonist, working for Punch magazine and Private Eye during the early sixties.

He joined the Daily Mail in 1966 and the Sunday Times in 1967 as a political cartoonist, also making on-the-spot war cartoons in Vietnam, Northern Ireland and the Middle East.

In 1968, Scarfe worked for Time Magazine in New York creating covers and contributing reportage drawings. He also traveled with President Lyndon B. Johnson, Senator Barry Goldwater, Senator Robert Kennedy and President Richard Nixon.

The acclaimed artist has had many exhibitions in New York, Montreal, Chicago and London, including 45 one-man exhibitions.

Among his other accomplishments, he has designed the sets and costumes for many plays, operas and musicals in London, Houston, Los Angeles and Detroit, including "The Magic Flute" for Los Angeles Opera in 1993 (which returns to Los Angeles next year). His set and costume designs for the Feydeau Farce "Le Dindon (An Absolute Turkey)" in 1993-94 earned him an Olivier Award.

He designed sets, films and inflatables for Pink Floyd, as well as designing and directing the animation sequences for MGM's film "Pink Floyd--The Wall."

The talented artist has had his own TV series and has written and directed many films for BBC television, including his autobiographical "Scarfe by Scarfe" which won the BAFTA in 1987.

Many books of his work have also been published including Scarface and his latest effort, inspired by "Hercules," entitled Hades: The Truth at Last (told from the villain's point of view).

Currently, he is a political cartoonist for the London Sunday Times and his work appears regularly in other periodicals including The New Yorker and Vogue Italia.

Based in London, he is married to actress Jane Asher and they have three children.

THE VOICE TALENTS

TATE DONOVAN (Hercules) flexes his mighty vocal talents as the awesome Greek demi-god whose daring deeds and innate goodness help him to save Mount Olympus and win the heart of the beautiful Meg.

Filled with excitement and energy for the role, Donovan recalls getting the news that he was selected for the part of Hercules. "It was like a dream come true," recalls the actor. "I wanted the part so bad and I just kept working and working at it. When my agent called, I started jumping up and down and laughing and crying. I realized that I was going to be part of something that I could really be proud of. And that's an amazing feeling.

"Hercules is an incredibly eager young guy," Donovan continues. "I remembered what I was like when I was his age and just starting out and it was easy to get into that frame of mind. Initially, Herc wants to be a hero for the glamour of it all and has a shallow sense of ambition. But when he falls in love with Meg, he discovers what it means to sacrifice and put others ahead of himself.

"To do an animated voice," Donovan notes, "you have to really use your imagination and let your voice do all the work. As an actor, I use my hands, my body and my face to create a performance. In front of a microphone that's completely meaningless. It was a real challenge to get my voice to be really high and low because when you're doing an animated voice it has to be expressive and huge. It takes a lot of energy."

Currently starring opposite Wesley Snipes in "Murder at 1600," Donovan's film credits also include "Memphis Belle," "Ethan Frome," "Love Potion #9" and "Inside Monkey Zetterland."

On television, he starred in the acclaimed Fox series "Partners," "The Long Black Song" for HBO, "Vietnam War Stories" for which he was nominated for a

CableAce Award as Best Actor in a Dramatic Series, and the miniseries "Nutcracker." Additionally, he's appeared in stage productions of "Picnic," "The American Plan" and "The Thrill."

JOSHUA KEATON (Young Hercules, speaking) perfectly captures the spirit and struggles of an adolescent Hercules trying to find his place in the world.

"Working on 'Hercules' has been my big break," admits Keaton. "I had only been in small independent productions so this was a great experience to work on a big film for three years with such a talented group of filmmakers.

"I see many things about myself in Hercules," says the actor. "I don't have a personal trainer, but I do have a personal animator, which is really cool. Watching the character, I see this weird facial contortion that I also do. Even the smile, the look of confusion and the expressions in the eyes are a lot like mine. I can relate to Hercules in a lot of ways. For example, being confused and not knowing really what you're supposed to be doing or not feeling accepted by people in certain situations. I think everyone has had those feelings at some point in their life."

At the ripe age of 18, Keaton's decision to become an actor was natural given the fact that he has always enjoyed being the center of attention and making people laugh. He is currently working on the independent feature "Illusion Infinity." His other film credits include Disney's "Newsies," "All I Want For Christmas" and the films "Showdown on Rio Road," "Just Write" and "Souler Opposites." For television, he has appeared in "Chicago Hope," "Step By Step," "Baywatch" and "Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman." His stage credits include "Lost in Yonkers" and "The Diary of Anne Frank."

Also a singer, he and his R&B band recently signed with Sony Records, with a single due out this summer. He plays piano, saxophone and clarinet.

Keaton is a native of Los Angeles, where he is currently studying the fine art of cinema as a student at USC.

ROGER BART (Young Hercules, singing) delivers a fine tuned performance as the youthful and idealistic singing voice of an adolescent and outcast Hercules, who is determined to find his place in the world.

As a huge animation fan, being cast in "Hercules" is a life-long dream fulfilled. Bart is currently in the Broadway production of Alan Menken & Tim Rice's "King David" Before that he had the role of Bud Frump in the national touring company of "How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying" starring Ralph Macchio and directed by Des MacAnuff. Prior to that, he appeared in Fox TV's "The George Carlin Show" as George's son. He has also had the part of Cousin Kevin in "The Who's Tommy (U.S., Germany and London tours). Other credits include the role of Dickon in "The Secret Garden" and Tom Sawyer in "Big River" (Broadway and tour). Off-Broadway he has appeared in Todd Rundgren's musical "Up Against It." He graduated from Mason Gross School of Arts at Rutgers University with a degree in acting, which he has been doing since early childhood.

DANNY DEVITO (Phil) gives a gold medal performance as a surly satyr and trainer of heroes who, after a string of disappointments, is down to one last hope. A tough taskmaster, Phil trains Herc for the challenges that lie ahead but is unable to prepare him for the labor of love.

For the veteran actor, doing a voice for a Disney animated film was a great new experience. "I'm a big Disney fan," he says. "I was really glad that they asked me to do the part of Phil. It's exciting and the animation is so beautiful. The music is also great and I get to sing a song in the film, which is really cool. I've never done any singing, so it was really a gas to do it with an orchestra and the whole megillah. I've recorded a lot of music for the movies that I've directed, but this was the first time I ever got to actually sing with a 90 piece orchestra.

"Phil is a neat looking character," observes DeVito. "He's half-goat and half-man and he's also very bawdy. The animators pick up little characteristics of your movement and incorporate them into this goat-man character and it's wonderful to see. They're great artists. When you're doing the voice in front of the microphone and you're whackin' away at the lines, they get you to do great things. You can fall off cliffs, do spins in the air and other things that you can't normally do. I can't do those things but it's amazing to have my character do them."

As for the film itself, DeVito calls it "empowering and a good lesson for kids. Hercules fights the forces of evil and, like in all good fairy tales, the evil forces represent the tough things we all need to face and overcome in our own lives."

DeVito has been called the most likable person in Hollywood as well as one of the entertainment industry's most successful filmmakers. Having written, directed and produced several short films early in his career, he finally gained recognition in 1987 for directing and starring in "Throw Mama from the Train." Since then, he has directed many successful and critically acclaimed motion pictures including "The War of the Roses," "Jack the Bear," "Hoffa" and "Matilda."

In 1992 he formed Jersey Films with producers Michael Shamberg and Stacey Sher. In addition to producing such films as Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction," which won the 1994 Palme d'Or and seven Academy Award® nominations, Jersey Films has also launched "Reality Bites," "Get Shorty," "Sunset Park," "Feeling Minnesota" and "Fierce Creatures."

DeVito's recent film credits include "Mars Attacks," "Space Jam" and "Matilda." He also starred in "Junior," "Renaissance Man," "Batman Returns," "Jack the Bear," "Other People's Money," "Twins," "Romancing the Stone," "Jewel of the Nile," "Wise Guys," "Ruthless People," "Tin Men," "Terms of Endearment" and "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

On television, DeVito achieved prominence as the star of the hit series "Taxi," which earned him Emmy and Golden Globe Awards.

Born in New Jersey, DeVito attended Our Lady of Mt. Carmel grammar school and Oratory Prep School in Summit. After graduation, he pursued several jobs before studying at the American Academy of Dramatic Art in New York. He subsequently appeared off-Broadway in productions of "The Man With the Flower in His Mouth" and "The Shrinking Bride," which led to the role of Martini in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." He recreated his role in the film adaptation.

He is married to actress Rhea Perlman.

JAMES WOODS (Hades) serves up a sizzling performance as the quick-scheming, acid-tongued hot head in charge of the Underworld who concocts some rather grand plans to take over Mount Olympus.

"Doing a voice for a Disney animated film makes you feel like you're a kid again," says Woods. "It makes you feel like the first time you were an actor and you were so amazed at what you're able to do and that somebody was actually paying you to do it. This experience has been as fresh and as new as any I've ever had in my career. It's just been fun since day one and I'm really glad that this magic has touched my life.

"I never realized how much the actors get to create their roles," notes the actor. "We get to create and ad-lib and come up with crazy lines. Everybody knows it's working if we're laughing. And if we're not laughing, then we think of something better. When I first came in for the part of Hades, I was feeling kind of silly that day, so I did him like a big Hollywood agent selling some guy on a bus-and-truck tour of some cheesy play. And for some reason, it stuck. And the more we did this kind of insane, loopy 'from-the-hip' stuff, the funnier it became to us. It's a great group effort and the Disney team is a great family to be a part of."

Throughout his numerous recording sessions, Woods got to work closely with Nik Ranieri, the supervising animator responsible for Hades. "It was funny actually creating the character with Nik, who is doing this wonderful, magical part," says Woods. "We had this nice rhythm going together where I would say the lines and he would supply those extra animation gestures that make character so entertaining on screen."

As far as working by himself in a recording booth, Woods jokes, "It's rather difficult because you have to respond to things that aren't happening. On the other hand, it's every actor's dream to have the stage all to himself without the other actors to work with."

A veteran of such acclaimed films as "Casino" and "Nixon" as well as telefilms including "Indictment: The McMartin Trial" and his tour de force performance in HBO's "Citizen Cohn," Woods has had much experience portraying controversial real-life figures -- a penchant which began with the role of a cop killer in "The Onion Field." He most recently received an Academy Award[®] nomination for his portrayal of a quintessential bigot/murderer in last year's drama "The Ghosts of Mississippi" and strong reviews for his work in "Killer: A Journal of Murder." His upcoming films include the Martin Scorsese-produced comedy "Kicked In The Head" and Robert Zemeckis' sci-fi thriller "Contact."

Woods began his acting career while attending the fine arts college -- Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As he studied political science on full scholarship, he still managed to appear in over 36 plays at M.I.T., Harvard and the Theatre Company of Boston. He made his Broadway debut in "Borstal Boy" and followed up with "Saved" (for which he won an Obie Award and the Clarence Derwent Award for Most Promising Actor) off-Broadway. Other New York stage credits include "Finishing Touches," "Green Julia" and "Moonchildren."

In film, he made his debut in Elia Kazan's "The Visitors" followed by a small, but memorable part as Barbra Streisand's college boyfriend in "The Way We Were." His early major starring roles were in "Alex and the Gypsy" and "Night Moves." But Woods' breakthrough role was that as Gregory Powell in "The Onion Field" which earned him a Golden Globe Award. Other film credits include "Eyewitness," "Once Upon a Time in America," "Videodrome," "Diggstown," "Against All Odds," "True Believer" and "The Specialist."

On television he has also appeared in Hallmark Hall of Fame's "All the Way Home," "My Name is Bill W." (won an Emmy Award), the landmark event "Holocaust," "Badge of the Assassin" and "The Boys."

For his work in "Citizen Cohn," one of the most enthusiastically reviewed performances in TV history, he was honored with the first American Television Award for Best Actor and a Peabody Award. His other accolades include an Academy Award® for Best Actor nomination and the Independent Film Project Spirit Award for his work in "Salvador"; the Golden Globe, Golden Apple and Emmy Awards for Best Actor in "Promise" and also a Golden Globe nomination for NBC's "In Love and War."

SUSAN EGAN (Meg) lends her exquisite singing voice and versatile acting talent to the voice of this Grecian beauty with a tough exterior and a heart of gold.

"I've auditioned for every animated feature since 'Beauty and the Beast,'" says Egan, "and getting a role in a Disney film has always been one of my biggest dreams. At first, they weren't even going to let me audition for this role because I was already playing Belle on Broadway and they must have thought I was like Belle. But I finally got a chance to try out and show them that I could do something completely opposite. They described Meg as sort of a sexy Barbara Stanwyck type and I'm a sucker for those old screwball comedies."

Describing her character, Egan says, "Meg is definitely sarcastic and a little jaded. She can just look at a guy who's as innocent as Hercules and push all his buttons. She knows how to make him as uncomfortable as possible and that's very funny. John and Ron are tremendous and really helped me through my first voiceover assignment. They're so articulate with the things they want conveyed in your delivery. They're also very funny and always throwing new jokes at you. They delight in something well done and you feel really good when you've done something that pleases them or makes them laugh."

She originated the role of Belle in Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" on Broadway (Tony and Drama Desk nominations) and Los Angeles (Drama-Logue Award). After two-and-a-half years and over 700 performances, she finally hung up her yellow ball gown last March. Following her stint as Belle, she went on to star on Broadway as Margy in the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, "State Fair," a role she originated in the play's 1992 production. She has toured the country as Kim MacAfee in the national tour revival of "Bye, Bye Birdie" with Tommy Tune and Ann Reinking. Her regional credits include the leading roles in "The Sound of Music," "Singin' in the Rain," "No, No Nanette," "Baby," "South Pacific," "Sunday in the Park With George," "My One and Only" and "42nd Street." On television, she has appeared on "Party of Five," "Almost Perfect," "Partners," "The Best Years," "All My Children," "Loving" and movies of the week for ABC, CBS and the Disney Channel. She is recording two albums for the Varese-Sarabande label: a collection of "Peter Pan" and the musical "Drat the Cat." In addition to performing, Egan produces off-Broadway theater and tours with her partner Michael Rafael, and has founded Favored Nations, a performance group of Broadway actors dedicated to the nurturing of new theatrical works.

RIP TORN (Zeus) gives heart, humor and strength to the mighty ruler of the gods who controls the universe, yet is powerless to bring his missing son, Hercules,

back to Mount Olympus. His fatherly advice sets Herc on the right path for a heavenly homecoming and the two ultimately join forces to save the planet from Hades' hostile takeover bid.

For the veteran actor, this was his first chance to do an animated voice. "I was very honored to be asked to do the voice of Zeus because I've always worshipped the Disney animated films. With six children, I've gotten to see lots of them and I know them all pretty well. As a father, I could also relate to Zeus. You have hopes for your children and you watch them struggle. I've always told my kids to persevere no matter what the problem; keep up the good fight and even if you don't win that particular battle, you're in better shape the next time because you stood the course. I find all those elements that are very human about this story, besides the fact that it is a great adventure story. We tried to make a very human Zeus."

Torn continues, "My dad, Elmore Torn, used to emphasize to me that if you had a well-trained and powerful voice, it would make you seem attractive even if you were funny looking. So I labored for many years to take the pitch in my voice out of my head and bring it down more into resonators and make a sound like a violin does. So that the vibrations are clearer. For the role of Zeus, I pitched the character more towards some of the tragic heroes I've played in Shakespeare with a bit more basso profundo and a lot more fun."

A talented film, stage and television actor, Torn has gained new acclaim and lots of fans in recent years for his acerbic portrayal of Arthur, the talk show producer on Garry Shandling's "The Larry Sanders Show." That popular role has earned him two straight CableAce Awards, the American Comedy Award, three consecutive Emmy nominations and finally an Emmy as Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series. Currently starring with Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith in "Men in Black," his recent film appearances include "How To Make An American Quilt" and "Down Periscope."

He has also starred in such films as "Pork Chop Hill," "Sweet Bird of Youth," "King of Kings" and "The Cincinnati Kid."

Additionally, Torn is in the stage production of "Young Man From Atlanta," for which he received a Tony Award nomination. His Broadway repertoire also includes "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," "Anna Christie," "Strangers In The Land of Canaan" and the off-Broadway stagings of "Chaparral" and "Desire Under the Elms."

In live television, he was a top performer from 1957 to 1960 with such shows as "Omnibus," "Kraft Theatre," "Playhouse 90," "Hallmark Hall of Fame" and "Alfred Hitchcock Presents."

Born Elmore Rual Torn Jr., in Temple, Texas, the son of Elmore and Thelma (Spacek), Torn always preferred the nickname "Rip," which he acquired from his father.

SAMANTHA EGGAR (Hera) provides the maternal voice of this elegant goddess and protective parent who cautions her infant son about teething on lightning bolts.

She has established a notable career on stage, films and television as well as winning the Best Actress Award at the Cannes Film Festival, an Oscar® nomination for Best Actress, the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress, and the New York Critics Award for her role in William Wyler's movie "The Collector" in 1965.

Born and raised in England, the daughter of a Brigadier General, she was educated at a convent and attended art school in London followed by three years of drama school. After a year in repertory, she began her theatre career in a Cecil Beaton play at the Dublin Theatre Festival with subsequent roles in stage productions of "The Lonely Road," "The Seagull," "The Women," "Taming of the Shrew," "Hamlet" and "Mame."

Her film credits include "The Phantom," "The Wild & The Willing," "Return from the Ashes," "Doctor Dolittle" and "The Molly Maguires." For television she has starred in CBS' movie of the week "Everything to Gain" and the NBC miniseries "The Secrets of

Lake Success." She has also had guest spots in "L.A. Law," "Burke's Law," "Matlock" and "Magnum, P.I."

LILLIAS WHITE (Calliope) delivers an outstanding performance as leader of the Muses, bringing with her a whole lot of rhythm and song as the bearer of heroic poetry.

White recalls wanting to be an entertainer ever since she was a little girl. In pursuit of that dream, she followed the footsteps of her Aunt Lillias, the first black dancer in the June Taylor troupe which performed on "The Jackie Gleason Show," to the Great White Way to become an acclaimed singer/performer. Currently, she stars in the hit Broadway musical "The Life," nominated for 12 Tony Awards, including a Best Supporting Actor nod for her. Other Broadway credits include "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," "CATS" and "Dreamgirls" (Drama-Logue Award). Her off-Broadway credits include "Waiting for Godot," "The Princess & the Blackeyed Pea" and "Antigone Africanus." On television she has appeared in "Law & Order," "NYPD Blue" and four seasons of "Sesame Street" (Emmy Award).

She lives in New York with her children and cat, Mixie.

CHERYL FREEMAN (Melpomene) is the emotional/over the top Muse of drama. She most recently starred role as Vy in the Old Globe Theatre production of "Play On." Prior to that, she starred on Broadway as the Acid Queen in "The Who's Tommy." Her off-Broadway credits include "Beehive," "The Little Shop of Horrors" and "Abyssinia." In film, she has had roles in "Dead Presidents," "Fresh," "Get a Life" and "Sunset Heat." For television she has appeared in "Prince Street" and "New York Undercover."

She is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music.

LACHANZE (Terpsichore) is the swinging Muse of dance and choral song. She can currently be seen in the Los Angeles production of "Ragtime." Her other stage credits include the Broadway productions of "Company," "Once On This Island" (1991 Tony Award nomination), "Dreamgirls" and "Uptown...It's Hot." Her film credits include "Leap of Faith," "For Love or Money" and "Mo' Better Blues." For television, she has appeared in "New York Undercover," "One Life to Live," "The Cosby Show" and "For Love and Glory." Additionally, she has had roles in the regional theatre productions of "Ragtime," "Comfortable Shoes," "Cry, The Beloved Country" and "Jesus Christ Superstar."

ROZ RYAN (Thalia) takes a truly entertaining turn as the funny Muse of comedy. For more than 20 years she has been a consummate actress, singer, recording artist and night club performer. On Broadway she appeared in "Dreamgirls," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "South Pacific," and "Blues In The Night" which earned her both the Carbonell and Zoni Awards for Best Actress in a Musical as well as a Carbonell Award for Best Supporting Actress for her performance in "Cole Porter Requests the Pleasure." Her recording/singing credits include "Boy Where Have You Been" and "Waiting For My Love" as well as her albums ROZ and High On Mad Mountain. Ryan has also performed with recording artists such as Earth, Wind & Fire, Billy Paul and The O'Jays. On television, she played the recurring role of Amelia on the sitcom "Amen" and has been a celebrity guest on shows including "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson."

VANESE THOMAS (Clio) does an excellent job as the bright Muse of history who recounts the heroics of Hercules. She was born in Memphis, Tennessee and grew up with a mix of musical influences. R&B, gospel, blues and jazz were standard fare in her household. She has recorded with popular artists such as Freddie Jackson, Eric

Clapton and Joe Cocker. On television, she has appeared in the "Late Night with David Letterman," "The Late Show with Conan O'Brien" and "The David Sanborn Show." Thomas also has a lengthy "jingle-ography" and can be heard on numerous television and radio commercials for Coca-Cola, Chevrolet and Domino's Pizza to name a few.

BOBCAT GOLDTHWAIT (Pain) injects the right amount of anguish and hilarity into one of Hades' misguided lackeys who, along with sidekick Panic, fail in their mission to get rid of Baby Hercules.

"I was on this film a year and a half before I realized it wasn't an 'Aladdin' sequel," jokes Goldthwait. "Basically the scene where I turn into a snake was very difficult for myself because I'm a method actor and I had to actually spend time shedding my skin and getting down to my lower epiderma. I was also disappointed because I kept showing up to the recording sessions expecting to meet Xena, but she was never there."

As far as ad-libbing his lines, the comedian says, "Well, my idea of ad-libbing is arson and total destruction so I kinda stuck with the pages and didn't really get myself into trouble because I'm still on probation."

He adds, "I don't like it when people say 'You know, I did this film for the kids.' Who are they kidding? I did this one for me, man. I'm actually in a movie with a plot! Normally all I do is walk in and something falls down and they yell 'Cut!' In 'Hercules,' I'm actually part of a story so I'm very excited about being in this movie. And it's nice to know that I'll be a keychain or a McDonald's toy."

Goldthwait began his stand-up career performing at local clubs while in high school in Syracuse, New York. In 1980, at age 18, he and comedian friend Tom Kenny founded "The Generic Comics." When he was 20 he made his first appearance on "Late Night with David Letterman." After opening for Paula Poundstone he made the move to San Francisco. In Los Angeles his star began to rise once he was booked on

a showcase night for Whoopi Goldberg which landed him a starring role in "Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment." He followed up that project with the "Police Academy" sequels as well as "One Crazy Summer," "Scrooged," "Burglar," "Radio Land Murders" and "Shakes the Clown," which he wrote and directed. On cable television, he has appeared in the HBO hit series "The Larry Sanders Show" and "Arli\$\$." Other television credits include guest appearances on "The John Laroquette Show," "ER" and "Living Single." His unique voice has been featured on MTV's "Beavis and Butthead" and "Unhappily Ever After."

MATT FREWER (Panic) presses all the right buttons as the voice of Hades' distressed and hysterical minion, who along with partner Pain, manage to leave things in worse shape than they found them.

A classically trained stage actor, he has the distinct honor of being the first actor to give voice to the Pink Panther in the syndicated cartoon series. But it was his creation of the computerized video jockey, Max Headroom, that brought him to the attention of American audiences, making it a memorable image in television history.

He was recently cast in a starring role of the new weekly drama, "Psi Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal." Other television credits include Showtime's "American Untitled," HBO's award-winning "The Positively True Adventures of the Alleged Texas Cheerleader-Murdering Mom," "Apollo 11" for the Family Channel and the ABC miniseries "The Stand."

His film credits include Disney's megahit "Honey, I Shrunk The Kids," "Lawnmower Man," "Speed Zone," "Far From Home," "The Taking of Beverly Hills" and "The Fourth Protocol."

Frewer was born in Washington, D.C., but grew up in Canada. He is a great fan of hockey and maintains a membership in a celebrity hockey team which raises money for charity.

HAL HOLBROOK (Amphitryon) is the supportive and encouraging father who adopts Hercules and tries to help him through his awkward stage.

In his long career he has often played a seasoned authority figure, capitalizing on his paternal qualities in roles as military officers, lawyers and concerned fathers. Though, he is probably best remembered for his role as Deep Throat, the informant in "All the President's Men" (1976), Holbrook has put together an impressive list of credits over the years. For the stage he wrote and performed his award-winning production of "Mark Twain Tonight!" His other stage credits include "I Never Sang for My Father" and the epic "King Lear." He has also had roles in high-profile historical miniseries such as "George Washington" (1984) and "North and South" (1985) as well as the television productions of "The Glass Menagerie" (1966) and "Our Town" (1977). More recently on series television he played the role of Burt Reynolds' father-in-law in the sitcom "Evening Shade" (1990-94). In film, one of his more important roles was as senior partner of "The Firm" (1993). He is married to actress-singer Dixie Carter.

BARBARA BARRIE (Alcmene) is the sweet voice of Hercules' mother on Earth. A versatile character actress, she made her feature film debut in a bit part in "Giant." Her film credits include "Private Benjamin," "Breaking Away" (which earned her an Academy Award® nomination) and "The Caretakers." She also has numerous stage and television credits. On Broadway she has appeared in "Torch Song Trilogy," "California Suite" and "Company" (Tony Award nomination). She received an Obie and Drama Desk Award for her work in the off-Broadway production of "The Killdeer." Most recently, she returned to series television as Brooke Shields' grandmother in the sitcom "Suddenly Susan."

PAUL SHAFFER (Hermes) adds some zip and cheer as Zeus' merry messenger who is the life of the party even when he has to deliver bad news.

"Working on 'Hercules' has been a terrific, relaxed and wonderful experience for me," says Shaffer. "It was a thrill to be selected for the part and when my four-year-old daughter sees it and recognizes me, it's gonna be an even bigger kick. This is a classic story, and just like classic rock and roll, you can't go wrong with a classic. I grew up watching Disney and Mickey Mouse as the Sorcerer's Apprentice is indelibly etched in my brain. Hermes has a lot of energy because he's always zipping in and out real fast. He's a cat who knows the right kind of gift to bring."

He adds, "Seeing the animation come to life has been amazing. In the sound booth, I would say a line that was supposed to be funny and then they animated it with a facial expression that was funny. Which made the line really funny and getting an animated laugh is a great kind of laugh to get."

He has been David Letterman's Musical Director and sidekick for more than 13 years. He began his career playing keyboard with high school and night club bands around his hometown of Thunder Bay in Ontario. As Music Director with the Toronto production of "Godspell," he met Stephen Schwartz who invited him to play piano for Broadway's "The Magic Show." From there he became part of the original "Saturday Night Live" band. He has also established his recording career with two albums, composing the "Late Night" theme song as well as co-writing the hit song "It's Raining Men." His movie credits include "Gilda Live," "This is Spinal Tap," "Scrooged" and "Look Who's Talking Too." Additionally, he served as Music Director of the Closing Ceremonies of the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta.

CHARLTON HESTON (Narrator) is the righteous storyteller who sets the majestic but irreverent mood in the beginning of this epic tale.

A legendary actor with more than 50 feature film and theatre credits to his name, Heston's illustrious career includes starring roles in such well-regarded motion pictures as "The Ten Commandments," "The Greatest Story Ever Told" and the Academy

Award®-winning "Ben Hur." His stage appearances include "State of the Union," "The Glass Menagerie," "Kiss and Tell" and "Antony and Cleopatra." In 1977, the actor received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award during the Oscar telecast.

Over the years he has acquired numerous television credits, become an author and served as president of the Screen Actors Guild.

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