



LARS & THE REAL GIRL

PRODUCTION NOTES

A
CRAIG GILLESPIE
Film

RYAN GOSLING
EMILY MORTIMER
PAUL SCHNEIDER
KELLI GARNER
PATRICIA CLARKSON
NANCY BEATTY
MAXWELL McCABE-LOKOS
KAREN ROBINSON

Written by
NANCY OLIVER

CERT: 12A
RUNNING TIME: 106 mins

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LARS AND THE REAL GIRL

Production Notes

When Lars Lindstrom (*Ryan Gosling*) introduces his brother Gus (*Paul Schneider*) and sister-in-law Karin (*Emily Mortimer*) to his new friend Bianca, who he met on the internet, their immediate response is shock and disbelief. Has Lars, the sweet, socially challenged introvert gone completely mad— they meet Bianca and see a doll, but Lars sees a friend. Bianca isn't a real woman at all but a Real Doll, how will they explain this to the residents of the sleepy Midwestern town they've grown up in and currently reside? Karin and Gus consult the town's family physician, Dr. Dagmar Berman (*Patricia Clarkson*), who advises them to go along with it. Lars is experiencing a delusion and in order to help him through this crisis, they and the townsfolk need to get onboard. After some persuasion and appeal to their love and concern for Lars, Gus and Karin enlist their cooperation. Soon Bianca is attending church, modeling at the local dress shop, volunteering at the hospital and accompanying Lars to his first ever social events. Surprisingly to those around her, Bianca weaves her way into the hearts of everyone she meets, filling voids they didn't know they had.

What follows is an emotional, comical, transformative journey for Lars and the people around him.

Written by *Six Feet Under* scribe Nancy Oliver, *Lars and the Real Girl* also stars Paul Schneider and Kelli Garner. *Lars* is directed by Craig Gillespie (*Mr. Woodcock*) with Sidney Kimmel producing, along with John Cameron and Sarah Aubrey. William Horberg, Peter Berg and Bruce Toll serve as executive producers.



ABOUT THE STORY

Lars Lindstrom (*Ryan Gosling*) is just getting through life. In the small Midwestern town he has always lived in, Lars holds down a nondescript office job, occupies the garage apartment behind his childhood home, where his brother, Gus (*Paul Schneider*) and sister-in-law Karin (*Emily Mortimer*) now live. He lives in near isolation, avoids human contact—literally, his social life consists of weekly church attendance and chats with his co-worker with whom he shares an office cubicle. He refuses all invitations from Karin and Gus and runs from the obvious flirtations of his coworker Margo (*Kelli Garner*). As director Craig Gillespie puts it, “He’s been living in limbo, getting by under the radar. He’s almost invisible.” While Gus has grown accustomed to Lars’ routine, Karin tries desperately to engage him in some interaction, conversation and normal family activities especially now when their family is about to grow – Karin is pregnant with their first child.

But everything changes when Lars introduces Gus and Karin to Bianca, a beautiful half-Danish, half-Brazilian missionary “on sabbatical to experience the world.” Much to Gus and Karin’s horror, Bianca is a RealGirl, a custom-ordered, life-size doll. That she is so is obvious to everyone but Lars, for whom Bianca is a religious girl raised by nuns, she is reliant on a wheelchair, shy and soulful. And she is now their houseguest as they already agreed to Lars’ request that Bianca stay with them lest her modesty be offended.

The strain on the family is apparent from the first moment as Karin and Gus fight over how to react. While Karin is able to respond with compassion and understanding, “Gus is representative of the nay-saying, suspicious, angry outside world that has decided his brother is insane, that this is ridiculous and wrong and awful, and he doesn’t want to think about it,” explains Emily Mortimer. “So I’m immediately stuck in the middle, trying to corral my furious husband while still loving him very much, and wanting he and Lars desperately to be friends.”

“Karin encompasses a lot of what Lars sees as his mother,” suggests Gillespie. “Karin’s very strong and opinionated but she’s also incredibly warm and comforting and nurturing. She’s the glue in the family.”

“Gus gets bullied into playing along,” responds Paul Schneider. “Karin’s so aggressive about it, like if he doesn’t do this he’ll be a bad person, and how could she be married to a bad person?” So now not only does Gus have to deal with the stigma of having a mentally ill brother, “he has to deal with how the person he loves will consider him; he’s the guy who’s going to be in trouble with his girl if he doesn’t do the right thing.”

Gus, director Gillespie notes, represents the audience in this movie in that he’s the most resistant to the premise and, adds Producer John Cameron, Schneider creates such an engaging character that this empathy is maintained throughout the film. “Gus is funny but torn and angst-



ridden and confused for much of the film,” says Cameron, “and Paul does a marvelous job of running through that roller coaster of emotions.”

Paul Schneider adds, “There is more going on with Gus than first appears. The recognition that Lars might be unbalanced brings up long denied feelings of guilt and remorse. “This is a dysfunctional family that has been maintaining its dysfunction for quite some time,” admits Schneider. “Now, all of a sudden my character has to deal with the fact that he’s been a massive failure as a brother. Bianca’s arrival into our lives brings this front and center and, in a very painful way, exorcises all of this.”

Thinking quickly on her feet, Karin suggests to Lars they all take Bianca to the local family physician, Dr. Dagmar Berman (*Patricia Clarkson*), just to ensure Bianca’s health isn’t affected by the sudden change of climate. A small town necessity, Dagmar also possesses a degree in psychology; surely, Karin argues with Gus, Dagmar will know what to do.

“Actually, I don’t think she knows if she can, at first,” says Patricia Clarkson, who plays the kind physician. “She just does her best. She gives it a go; she’s in it for Lars.” Dagmar quite matter-of-factly makes it clear to Gus and Karin that Bianca is real – for Lars it maybe a delusion he has, but she is actually in the next room and they have to deal with her, like it or not. Dagmar quickly surmises that the only way to treat Lars is to treat Bianca, therefore, she diagnoses a “condition” requiring weekly treatments. Each visit provides Dagmar and Lars the opportunity to talk about Bianca’s difficulties which, not surprisingly, closely mirror Lars’ problems. “But were Lars ever to suspect that Dagmar has ulterior motives,” says director Craig Gillespie, “he could never open up to her. So Patricia really stayed true to that. She was always non-judgmental, accepting, open, and patient.”

Clarkson, who had very little time to rehearse after landing on set, credits Gillespie with keeping her character true. “Dagmar is so calm and centered and still; there’s nothing extraneous about her. Craig has that similar quality, so I could take him in with me and start the scene. He has a great love for this project and for the people involved. And he understands this film beautifully.”

In private, Dagmar counsels Gus and Karin to go along with the delusion, “she points out it is not necessarily a negative, this may be a way to work things out,” says Gillespie. Gus and Karin begrudgingly agree, mindful of the reaction Lars’ mental illness is likely to inspire. They set about informing the community, begging for understanding and cooperation. Though reluctant at first, most agree to help, especially the elderly Mrs. Gruner who has always treated Lars with unconditional acceptance. And Bianca herself turns out to be more useful than anyone at first realized. Before long she’s helping out at the local daycare, “reading” an audio book to the children; she’s modeling at a dress shop, volunteering with Mrs. Gruner at the hospital, and sitting on the school board. It’s a response, says writer Nancy Oliver, that speaks to “the human ability to adapt to whatever is there and incorporate these things into our lives. Bianca becomes a



member of the community and serves a purpose. A question I have often asked myself is, if there are so many desperate people walking around with mental illness, what would happen if we treated their illnesses and their delusions with compassion, acceptance and tolerance instead of this medieval shunning thing that we do? If this is the way it is for them, that's the way it is. Why should we put them on the fringes because of something they can't help?"

This theme of acceptance and cooperation resonates with the cast. "The film has a lot of affection for its characters and for people in general," raves Ryan Gosling. "It believes people want to do the right thing; they want to be part of something good. In so many films, the overriding idea is that people will ruin everything; that if we get our hands on something special we'll destroy it. This film doesn't believe that."

"And I admire Lars. Even though he is a very lonely person, he doesn't make a choice to be loved; he makes a choice to love something. I like the idea that you can love something and it doesn't necessarily have to love you back. It doesn't need to be a transaction; you can just give."

"Usually you expect the drama to be between this misfit guy and the society that's not accepting him," says Emily Mortimer, "yet Bianca is easily integrated into this community. They're good, decent people trying their best to help this lost soul in their midst, they take Bianca seriously and, in fact, all develop their individual relationships with her." Mortimer explains, for Karin "this doll becomes a companion and a friend, someone I can share secrets with and talk about clothes with, dress her up and brush her hair. There is something lovely about that – especially at a time when I'm getting fatter and fatter and feeling less and less like the sexy lady Bianca is. To have this creature in my midst at that time of my life is both confusing and kind of wonderful."

Through Bianca, Lars takes his first tentative steps through the minefield that is romance. At the park where he walks Bianca through his childhood haunts, he sums up the courage to serenade her from atop a popular tree house, a suggestion made by Gosling. "At some point in the movie, you need to see Lars truly expose himself to Bianca, to make himself as vulnerable as he can. I was thinking of things that would make me feel very vulnerable, and I realized it would be equally hard for him to sing in private as it would be for me to sing in a movie."

That Bianca's presence is having a positive effect becomes clear when Lars accepts an invitation to a coworker's house party. "Having a girlfriend, even if she is silicone, gives him permission to participate in the community in the way he's always wanted to," explains Nancy Oliver. "It makes him feel normal." Lars brings Bianca and once the initial strangeness is dealt with, she quickly becomes the center of attention—and Lars along with her. The evening proves exhilarating. "Lars has the hottest girl at the party," says Oliver. "He's proud of her and he's proud of himself. He's never been able to be in a room with so many people talking to him. He's got a girlfriend and as strange as he is, he's just like everybody else. It's a night of beautiful fulfillment for him."



The scene was critical and nerve-wracking for the cast and director Craig Gillespie. “It ends on this beautiful note where everybody is dancing and they’ve kind of forgotten about Lars,” smiles Gillespie. “The initial curiosity is done with, everyone’s moved on, and he’s been accepted. Ryan had this idea of wanting to be there but in his own world with his eyes closed, dancing by himself. It makes perfect sense for his character, that he’s there but he’s still in his own space. And Ryan did it in the most beautiful way.”

“Oh, my god,” adds Kelli Garner, “that dance broke my heart. My Margo is so in love with Lars that when he does stuff like that it’s so endearing. It’s heartbreaking. It’s so sweet and pure. Ryan’s a magnificent actor.”

As Lars gradually emerges from his cocoon, Dagmar skillfully manages Lars’ deepest issues. She slowly tackles his haphophobia (fear of being touched) and broaches the subject of Karin’s impending delivery and the dangers Lars imagines lay therein. “Lars’ mother died during his birth,” explains Gosling, “so birth for him is closely linked with death. His feelings about pregnancy are visceral so it’s hard for him to separate himself from Karin’s experience.” As Karin’s pregnancy progresses, Lars’ fears intensify.

Lars’ terror is exacerbated by Karin’s maternal personality. “Emily Mortimer has such a wonderful, open quality to her,” confirms writer Nancy Oliver. “At the same time she has a real strength and presence to her that to me is very much part of the character of Karin. From the very first scene when she invites Lars for breakfast, her directness and her love for him is so clear and simple and unsentimental.”

That Lars is growing within becomes apparent when his fear of Margo’s flirtations is replaced by jealousy over her new boyfriend. Margo is “the quirky, kooky female doppelganger of Lars,” believes Garner, and Margo’s equally active imagination explains why “she more than anyone understands what Bianca’s purpose is.”

Garner’s vulnerability is balanced by a joyful *joie de vivre* that director Craig Gillespie immediately grasped onto. “I really didn’t want to see two damaged people ending up together” he explains. “When Kelli came along she was this beacon of light and optimism. She wasn’t quite where my head was for the role, but once I saw her I said this has got to be. She has this enthusiasm and this pure love of life.”

As with Clarkson, Garner credits Gillespie for helping her find her character. “I felt really awkward on this set, which was a good thing for my character, but Craig made the playing ground really safe. Then one night he talked to me about finding the woman in Margo, which was really interesting because I had been focusing on trying to find the child in Margo, her shiny, childlike spirit. As an actor, you’re often so focused on one thing that you forget to look elsewhere. There



was a revolution in my brain when Craig said that, yet it was so simple. Some directors really know how to walk their way through the backdoor of your brain and plug something in.”

News that Margo is now dating a colleague doesn’t sit well with Lars. It is uncomfortable for Lars to have such an emotion, and he is becoming increasingly torn between what he feels developing for Margo while being attached to another woman – Bianca. When Lars returns home to Bianca only to find she’s going out with Mrs. Gruner, his frustration manifests and he is obviously annoyed and upset. Later, when Karin goes to check on Lars, they end up in their first fight and Karin angrily points out Lars’ ingratitude for the lengths everyone has gone to accommodate Bianca. This outburst of emotion is a new experience for Lars, and Karin is thrilled.

As Lars’ affection for Margo surfaces, things with Bianca take a turn for the worse. “Through Bianca Lars is learning how to deal socially with people, particularly women,” says director Craig Gillespie. “He begins to see qualities in Kelly that he’s attracted to. Frustration builds with those feelings because he’s trying to stay true to his woman, and this frustration becomes a catalyst.”

As Bianca’s condition worsens, Karin and Gus are beside themselves with worry that Lars is falling deeper into the abyss. But Dagmar points out the opposite, explains Patricia Clarkson: “The treatments haven’t worked because Lars is moving on from Bianca, literally and figuratively.” Lars is in many ways coming-of-age, discovering new emotions, previously unknown feelings and what it is to be a grown-up. As Dagmar had pointed out, this is a way for him to figure things out and deal with things, Gillespie adds “that is what he is doing with this process and then you see how much love he has to give through this conduit of Bianca.”



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

"I've had many weird jobs," recalls writer Nancy Oliver about the inspiration for *Lars and the Real Girl*, "during the course of which I often wander around the Internet." Oliver came across RealDoll, a company based near San Diego that manufactures lifelike "anatomically correct" silicone sex dolls. "These dolls were so bizarre they stuck in my head, because you can totally see the reason for them. How many people do you know who can't operate with real human beings? That's a large part of Lars' journey: he's been so deprived of female companionship and mother love, he's hungry for that kind of comfort and softness."

But where it would have been easy to descend into bawdy humor, Oliver chose instead to write a sweet, off-kilter story about loss and pain and the power of kindness. "It seemed to me there were a lot of movies that were dark, edgy, sarcastic and sometimes mean-spirited. I wanted to write something about compassion and goodness, something that was sincere, because I wasn't seeing any of that anywhere. And this particular story ties together a lot of the themes I work with often."

The script was sent by Oliver's agent to producer John Cameron "*Lars* immediately grabbed me. I hadn't heard of Nancy, I didn't know anything about the script or the story—it was sent from her agency in an envelope without any kind of pitch—so it was a cold reading that turned warm very quickly."

Cameron immediately knew whom he wanted for director. Cameron and then commercials director Craig Gillespie had been friends for years, ever since they were introduced by actor Frances McDormand, and Cameron had been "blown away" by Gillespie's reel. "It's very funny, really great stuff," says Cameron. "So in addition to getting to know him better, I kept an eye on his work. Recently he won the DGA award for Best Commercial Director after having been nominated three or four times. This guy knows narrative. He knows theme. I thought this would be a great project for him in terms of his sensibility. He approaches everything from an extremely realistic perspective.

He doesn't look at a scene and say, 'What can be funny here?' rather he asks, 'What's the idea that we're trying to communicate?' If it's funny, great, but his approach is real from the get go. And I thought a movie about a man who falls in love with a life-size doll, if not grounded in some kind of reality, would become farce, and that's not what the script is about."

Both men knew, however, that the story would be a difficult pitch. "It's very delicate, intimate, and life-affirming but it's not easily pigeonholed," explains Cameron. "The plot sounds ludicrous when you encapsulate it too briefly. Thematically it's a little easier: It's about a damaged, sweet, shy young man coming to terms with a trauma from his past. And beyond that, it's a movie about community, how his family and the folks around him come together to help."



“It scared a lot of people,” confirms Gillespie, “because it’s such a tightrope to walk. We had a lot of trouble trying to set it up with studios because everybody knew that it was such a fine line to pull this off. I always felt I had a really strong handle on the tone and the delicacy of it, but we had it for three years before it got off the ground. I think people just didn’t want to take the risk. But we had lots of meetings because everyone loved the script so much.”



Bill Horberg, President of Production at SKE had gotten the script, loved it and shared it with SKE President Jim Tauber who had the same enthusiasm for it. This became a high priority for them and they quickly set a meeting with John Cameron and Sarah Aubrey who filled them in on Gillespie. There was a lot of competitive interest in the project and SKE was eager to get it. Horberg and Tauber brought Gillespie and Cameron in to meet with Sidney Kimmel who was equally interested in getting the project done at SKE. Knowing this would be a filmmaker friendly relationship with collaborators who had as much love for the material as they did, the deal was done. "We couldn't have asked for more enthusiastic partners who have been supportive every step of the way, and that is a big part of why the movie came out the way it did." says Cameron. "I was truly allowed to make the film I wanted to make, which is incredibly gratifying as a filmmaker and remarkable given the leap of faith we were asking them to take." acknowledges Gillespie.

"We then sent it off to Ryan who responded immediately. We sent it to him on a Friday and he came in on Monday and met with me, which was great because he was my first choice. And I could see from the scenes that he was asking about and his thoughts on the film that he was perfect for it; we were both on the same page. So he was on board, it all happened that week, it was very quick."

The film's remaining casting also went like clockwork, for which producer John Cameron credits the script more than anything. "Once we got the script to the actors we were interested in, we had our cast. It's a strong story and a true actor's piece." The very experienced Patricia Clarkson, who plays Dagmar, couldn't agree more: "I've read a lot of scripts at this point in my life and my career, and I found *Lars* surprising and moving and very funny. It's the best of all worlds. And quite heartbreaking, too. It is just so beautifully written."

Many of the actors were also surprised by the depth of their reaction to the script. "There's a scene where my character tries his very best to avoid a subject he hasn't wanted to talk about for a long time, and ends up blurting out this apology," offers Paul Schneider. "I read that scene when I was auditioning for this film and started crying. I don't tend to be a blubberer but I started crying. And I was very surprised."

Although everyone was ready to go, the production team chose to delay start of filming to coincide with the film's time of year and also its tone. "We postponed the film until wintertime," recalls Gillespie, "because I really wanted to have those open, empty skies to reinforce the loneliness. And the snow was a big factor, too: the coldness of it, as a subtext. And I love that soft light. There is this fable quality to the film; it's a bit of a fairy tale."

"The movie takes place in the upper Midwest in the winter and passes through into spring," adds Cameron. "So there's a stark quality to the landscape, the houses, the people. The photography was designed to capture that in a beautiful way without calling attention to itself. And the look of the film, much like the script itself, is spare and beautiful. It's beautiful in its



simplicity and the depth of emotion that arises out of that simplicity. The photography, the production design, the costume design of the film, all is in keeping with that spare beauty: a simple approach to a complex story.”

To capture the natural light as desired meant the film needed to be shot as far north as practical and still be within a production zone where the film could get good crews and equipment. Toronto was deemed the logical place to shoot as it’s a large film center with world-class crews, nearby rural locations, and the potential for real snow. The location proved an excellent choice, says Cameron. “And we had great weather. The weather worked with us almost perfectly throughout.”

The film was also shot primarily on location, which made the scouting process an arduous one. “But it was always Craig’s idea to shoot as much on real locations as possible,” Cameron recalls. “Again, the whole idea was to ground this slightly fantastical story in the real world and not build to suit. Ninety-eight percent of the film was shot on practical locations.”

One such location was the small town of Whitevale, just east of Toronto, where the Lindstrom house was situated. Years ago the town had been abandoned to build an airport but plans changed, leaving a ghost behind. “Everyone sold their houses so there’s all these empty mansions in the middle of the country,” says Ryan Gosling. “It’s so scary. It’s like a vampire town.” Gosling had taken to sleeping in the apartment in the garage in order to connect with his character, but the emptiness soon took its toll. “I got scared. I started sleeping with the light on. Then one morning I woke up and there were two voices in my head talking to me. I was terrified—until I realized it was two effects guys doing prep on the set,” laughs the actor. “They started banging on the door to wake me up. They brought me coffee and doughnuts.”

That Gosling should take up residence in his character’s apartment was admired by his cast mates and indicative of the commitment that permeated Gosling’s performance. Despite the intensity, however, Gosling retained his usual affable and charming demeanor. “He went in really deep,” laughs Emily Mortimer. “I don’t know whether it was method acting but if it were, then he’s the least irritating method actor I’ve ever met. He does it with such charm. And he didn’t make heavy weather of it. He immersed himself fully in this character without making us feel alienated from him.”

“Ryan is just extraordinary. He works really hard and is completely devoted. He watches himself on the monitor after each take. I admire how much responsibility he takes for his performance. Me, I avoid all those people in video village, the producers and the writers and everybody that’s watching me do my thing. I wish I were as brave as him.”



Nothing, however, compared to the peculiarity of having a silicone doll for a leading lady. Kelli Garner, who competes with Bianca for Lars' affection, was particularly taken aback by her onscreen nemesis. "It was, like, how do I relate to this doll?" asks Garner. "Is she going to be in a chair hanging on set when she's not in use? Is this going to be cool; are people going to be friends with her? And she's very expensive so I tried not to touch her. I'm a klutz. I felt like she was sacred to Craig and Ryan so I just let her be."

Gosling, Gillespie and Cameron had decided in advance that the best way to maintain the tone of the film was to treat Bianca as she is treated in the film, as real and one of the family. "Our approach," explains producer John Cameron, "thematically and from a practical aspect, was to treat her like we would treat any actress in a film, with respect. We don't make jokes about people on set so we didn't make jokes about Bianca. It would have been so easy to fall into that because this is such a fantastical idea. It's crazy. But she's real to Lars. So we asked the crew to play along and they were great about honoring that request."

"It was beautiful to see how kindly people treated Bianca even when the camera wasn't rolling," adds Patricia Clarkson. "It was very funny. She had such an effect on everyone. A case of life imitating art. She permeated the consciousness of all of us on the film."

"She's a really soulful actress," quips Ryan Gosling. "Even when she's not saying anything she's communicating everything. It was amazing to watch. And it's a really rare, rare quality. It's intimidating, to be honest, because she has no agenda for a scene. A lot of actors come into a picture and they have this idea of the way it's supposed to go, the way they've rehearsed it in the mirror so it will be best for them, but it doesn't involve anyone else's side. So it was hard to embrace that freedom and not try and control it a little bit. But I learned. I learned a lot."

"It's so true," laughs Emily Mortimer. "Bianca's a very subtle actress and incredibly modest. She sits quietly, she waits. She doesn't pace around and throw hissy fits and demand things. She's very well-behaved. And her performance is incredibly low key."

"It was a difficult piece tonally," adds Mortimer, turning serious again, "because it treads a fine line somewhere between the ground and one foot above it. The absurdity of life can often be very funny so the tone of this was sometimes hard to gauge. And the lines were so brilliant and often hilariously funny, so you had to resist the temptation to play the joke."

"To be honest I didn't know where that balance was going to be," admits Gillespie, "but I felt as long as everything was honest, and everybody was grounded in reality, grounded in the trauma of having to deal with somebody who has a mental illness, the delicacy of that but also the hopefulness, that was the main thing. Because the script had that. As long as we stayed true to that I knew we'd be fine no matter how much or how little humor there was in the film."

"It's an archetypal story about somebody dealing with feelings of loss and grief and loneliness, an inability to cope with the world, feelings of rejection and neglect, and acting out,"



concludes Emily Mortimer. “And then how he eventually comes to terms with those feelings. It’s a story we’re all familiar with in our own lives as well as in fiction. But what makes this fresh and strange and different and breathes new life into that old, timeless story, is the presence of Bianca. She breathes life into it even though she’s this completely inanimate creature sitting there amongst us.”



ABOUT THE CAST

Ryan Gosling (*Lars*) first caught Hollywood's attention with the role of Bosley in *Remember the Titans* with Denzel Washington, but it was landing the challenging lead role of Danny in the controversial film *The Believer* that proved a career breakthrough, garnering Gosling unanimous rave reviews and industry-wide attention. In addition to taking the Grand Jury Prize at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival, Gosling also received a prestigious 2002 IFP Spirit nomination for Best Actor. He was awarded the Golden Ram for Best Actor by the Russian National Critics Association and was nominated for Best Actor by the London Film Critics' Circle.

Gosling returned to Sundance the following year with the independent feature *The Slaughter Rule*, playing the emotionally vulnerable and estranged Roy opposite David Morse. Gosling's desire to pick intricate and complex characters led him to being cast in the role of Leland in *The United States of Leland*, opposite Don Cheadle and Kevin Spacey. The film was accepted for dramatic competition at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival. Gosling also received strong reviews for his work as the nihilistic predator Richard in the psychological thriller *Murder by Numbers*, co-starring Sandra Bullock and directed by Barbet Schroeder.

Following the success of Nick Cassavetes' *The Notebook*, Gosling starred in *Stay*, opposite Ewan McGregor and Naomi Watts for director Marc Forster. He then starred in the critically acclaimed *Half Nelson* for which he received both an Oscar® and Screen Actors Guild nomination for best actor, followed by *Fracture* with Anthony Hopkins.

In addition to *Lars and the Real Girl*, audiences will soon see Gosling in *The Other Side* and *The Good Heart*.

Patricia Clarkson (*Dr. Dagmar*) The roles Patricia Clarkson plays are as varied as the platform in which she plays them. Her comfort in taking on roles from motion pictures, television and the theatre has earned her great accolades and success, and has become one of today's most respected actresses in the entertainment industry.

Clarkson is wrapped production on several films including Stanley Tucci's *Blind Date* in Belgium., Daniel Banz's directorial debut *Phoebe in Wonderland* and Woody Allen's *Untitled Spanish project* in Barcelona opposite Scarlett Johanson and Javier Bardem.

Blind Date centers around a couple (Tucci and Clarkson) who have lost a child and tries to rebuild their relationship by pretending to be other people by meeting on blind dates.

In *Phoebe in Wonderland* she stars opposite Felicity Huffman, Bill Pullman and Elle Fanning. Clarkson plays the role of an unconventional drama teacher who tries to guide a rebellions little girl (Fanning).

In addition to *Lars and the Real Girl*, this fall she will be seen in *Elegy* opposite Sir Ben Kingsley and Dennis Hopper. Directed by Isabel Coixet, the film is based on the novel by Philip



Roth about a cultural critic, played by Kingsley, who's life is thrown into disarray after an encounter with a student. MGM is scheduled to release the film November 16th.

Earlier this year, Clarkson wrapped production on *Married Life*, a romantic drama set in the 1940s directed by Ira Sachs which also stars Pierce Brosnan, Rachel McAdams and Chris Cooper.

Additional credits include: *All The King's Men*, *Goodnight, and, Good Luck*, *They Dying Gaul and The Woods*, *Far from Heaven*, *Pieces of April*, *The Station Agent*, *Miracle*, *High Art*, *Dogville*, *Welcome to Collinwood*, *The Pledge*, *The Green Mile*, *Everybody's All-American*, *The Dead Pool*, *Rocket Gibraltar*, *Tune in Tomorrow*, *Joe Gould's Secret*, *Wendigo* and Brian De Palma's "*The Untouchables*", her film debut.

In 2003, Clarkson's work in two independent films earned her unparalleled recognition. She was nominated for an Academy Award, Golden Globe, SAG Award, Broadcast Film Critics Award and an independent Spirit Award for her role in *Pieces of April*. In addition, the Sundance Film Festival awarded her the Jury Prize for Outstanding Performance in *Pieces of April*, *The Station Agent* and *All the Real Girls*. Her performance in *The Station Agent* earned her a SAG Award nomination for Best Actress and Best Ensemble Cast. The National Board of Review and the National Society of Film Critics named her Best Supporting Actress of the Year for her work in *Pieces of April* and *The Station Agent*.

She also won best-supporting-actress awards from the New York Film Critics Circle and National Society of Film Critics for her performance in Todd Haynes' *Far From Heaven*. That role also earned her a nomination from the Chicago Film Critics.

Her performance as Greta in Lisa Cholodenko's *High Art* earned her a nomination for an IFP Independent Spirit Award.

On television, Clarkson won an Emmy in 2006 and 2002 for her guest-starring role on HBO's acclaimed drama, *Six Feet Under*.

Clarkson made her professional acting debut on the New York stage. Her theatre credits include "Eastern Standard" (on and off-Broadway), "Maidens Prayer" (for which she received Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Award Nominations), "Raised in Captivity", "Oliver Oliver", "The House of Blue Leaves", and "Three Days of Rain". Her regional credits include performances at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, South Coast Repertory, and Yale Repertory."

Born and raised in New Orleans, Clarkson began acting in school plays in her early teens. After studying speech at Louisiana State University for two years, she transferred to Fordham University in New York, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in theatre arts. She earned her MFA at the prestigious Yale School of Drama, where she appeared in "Electra", "Pacific Overtures", "Pericles", "La Ronde", "The Lower Depths", and "The Misanthrope".



Paul Schneider (*Gus*) made his film debut as Rico Rice in *George Washington*. The film was directed by David Gordon Green, whom Schneider forged a relationship with while the director was studying at the North Carolina School of Arts, starring in Green's short *Pleasant Grove*, the genesis of *Washington*. Schneider then starred in the Dogma '95 film *Security Colorado*, after which he reunited with Green on his short *Physical Pinball* and his feature *All the Real Girls*, with Zooey Deschanel. This was followed by *Crude* and *50 Ways to Leave Your Lover*.

Schneider was finally recognized with Cameron Crowe's *Elizabethtown*, opposite Orlando Bloom, Kirsten Dunst, Susan Sarandon, and Alec Baldwin; and the critically acclaimed *The Family Stone*, with Claire Danes, Diane Keaton, Rachel McAdams, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Dermot Mulroney. Schneider was next seen in *Live Free or Die*, again opposite Deschanel, followed by *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*, alongside Brad Pitt.

Emily Mortimer (*Karin*) is an award-winning actress who is quickly building an impressive list of film credits both in the U.S. and in her native England. In 2003 she won an Independent Spirit Award for her performance in *Lovely and Amazing*. More recently, Mortimer was recognized with an Empire Award nomination for her work in *Young Adam*, opposite Ewan McGregor, and with a European Film Award nomination for her work in the romantic drama *Dear Frankie*.

Mortimer was most recently seen in *Match Point*, then with Steve Martin, Beyoncé Knowles and Kevin Kline in the remake of the classic comedy *The Pink Panther*. Mortimer next began production on the soon-to-be-released romantic comedy *Chaos Theory*, opposite Ryan Reynolds under the direction of Marcos Siega.

Born in London, England, Mortimer studied English at Oxford University before pursuing her acting career. After a number of television roles and work in the theatre, she made her feature film debut in *The Ghost and the Darkness*, opposite Val Kilmer and Michael Douglas. Her earlier film credits also include *The Saint*, starring Kilmer; Shekhar Kapur's acclaimed biopic *Elizabeth*, starring Cate Blanchett, Geoffrey Rush, Christopher Eccleston, and Joseph Fiennes; the romantic comedy hit *Notting Hill*, with Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts; and the horror sequel *Scream 3*.

In 2000, Mortimer joined the ensemble cast of Kenneth Branagh's modern take on Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, and also starred opposite Bruce Willis in the comedy fantasy *The Kid*. Mortimer has since been seen in such films as Ronny Yu's *The 51st State* with Samuel L. Jackson, *A Foreign Affair*, *The Sleeping Dictionary*, and Stephen Fry's *Bright Young Things*.



Kelli Garner (*Margo*) is emerging as one of the most prolific and accomplished young actresses in Hollywood. She was discovered by Larry Clark who cast the teenager in his acclaimed film *Bully* opposite Michael Pitt and Nick Stahl. Garner went on to guest star in TV shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Law and Order: SVU*, and was featured in the independent film *Love Liza* opposite Philip Seymour Hoffman.

In 2004, Garner was chosen by Martin Scorsese to play Faith Domergue, the young wife of Leonardo Di Caprio's Howard Hughes in the multiple award-winning film *The Aviator*. Garner then showed her comedic abilities as a lovestruck cheerleader opposite Tommy Lee Jones in *Man of the House*. In that same year, she starred in the indie hit *Thumbsucker* in the company of such stars as Keanu Reeves, Vince Vaughn, and Tilda Swinton.

Garner was seen in 2005's *London*, opposite Jason Statham, Jessica Biel and Chris Evans, and in Morgan J. Freeman's *Piggy Banks*, opposite Gabriel Mann. Next up was *Return to Rajapur*, and then *Dreamland*, which premiered at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival. Garner will next be seen in *Normal Adolescent Behavior* with Amber Tamblyn, and is currently working on *Safety Glass*.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Craig Gillespie is one of the most honored commercial directors working today. Following nominations in 2001 and 2002, he received the Directors Guild Award in 2006 and Emmy and Golden Lion (Cannes International Advertising Festival) awards in 2005. Two of Gillespie's spots also belong to the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art. On September 14, New Line will release *Mr. Woodcock*, the comedy starring Billy Bob Thornton, Seann William Scott and Susan Sarandon that marks Gillespie's feature directorial debut.

An Australian native, Gillespie moved to the United States at the age of 19 to study illustration, graphic design and advertising at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan.

Producer **John Cameron** began his career in film-making with a series of inventive shorts in collaboration with high school friends Sam Raimi and Bruce Campbell. Cameron left New York University film school to work on Raimi's first feature *The Evil Dead*, and subsequently worked as Raimi's assistant director on *Crimewave*, *Army of Darkness* and *The Quick and the Dead*. Soon thereafter he began a lengthy association with the Coen Brothers, first as assistant director on *The Hudsucker Proxy*, then as co-producer on the Oscar-winning hit *Fargo*, as well as *The Big Lebowski*, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, *The Man Who Wasn't There*, *Intolerable Cruelty* and *The Ladykillers*. Cameron went on to produce the box office hit *Bad Santa* for Dimension and executive produce *Friday Night Lights* for Universal and director Peter Berg. After that successful collaboration, he went on to co-found the film and television production company Film 44 with Berg and producer Sarah Aubrey. While there he executive produced the Universal feature *The Kingdom* and continues to serve as co-executive producer on the award winning



Friday Night Lights television series for NBC. Most recently, Cameron was executive producer on the upcoming Sony/Screen Gems film *Lakeview Terrace*, directed by Neil LaBute and starring Samuel L. Jackson.

Producer **Sarah Aubrey**, reteams with producing partner John Cameron following the Coen Brothers' irreverent hit comedy *Bad Santa* and Peter Berg's football drama *Friday Night Lights*. The Austin native and former entertainment lawyer (who earned her law degree at the University of Texas after graduating from Princeton University) partners in Berg's production company Film 44 and executive produces Peabody Award winning NBC series *Friday Night Lights* and forthcoming feature *The Kingdom*, starring Jamie Foxx and Jennifer Garner.

Producer **Sidney Kimmel** is chairman and CEO of Sidney Kimmel Entertainment, the Los Angeles and New York-based production, finance and distribution company.

Active in the motion picture industry for more than 20 years, Kimmel is responsible for such pictures as *Blame It On Rio*, *9½ Weeks* and *The Emperor's Club*. His passion as an independent producer eventually led to the founding of Sidney Kimmel Entertainment in October 2004. Producing up to ten features per year, the company works with esteemed filmmaking talent to create quality, commercial films.

Kimmel and Sidney Kimmel Entertainment, in association with Universal Pictures, financed Academy Award nominee Paul Greengrass' critically acclaimed *United 93*, as well as executive producing Billy Ray's *Breach*, starring Chris Cooper, Ryan Phillippe and Laura Linney. Universal also released Nick Cassavetes' *Alpha Dog*, the controversial film starring Emile Hirsch, Bruce Willis, Sharon Stone and Justin Timberlake, which Kimmel produced and financed.

Kimmel is producing a diverse slate of films including [Frank Oz' *Death at a Funeral*, starring Matthew Macfadyen and Peter Dinklage released by MGM](#), [Kasi Lemmons' *Talk to Me*, starring Don Cheadle and Chiwetel Ejiofor, released by Focus Features](#), [Jon Poll's *Charlie Bartlett*, starring Anton Yelcin, Robert Downey Jr. and Hope Davis](#) to be released by MGM in 2008, [Ira Sachs' *Married Life*, starring Pierce Brosnan, Chris Cooper, Patricia Clarkson and Rachel McAdams](#); [The *Kite Runner* directed by Marc Forster which is being produced with DreamWorks Pictures, Participant Productions and Parkes/MacDonald Productions to be released by Paramount Vantage](#) and Charlie Kaufman's directorial debut *Synecdoche, New York* starring Academy-Award winning actor Phillip Seymour Hoffman.

In addition to his success in filmed entertainment, Kimmel founded Jones Apparel Group in 1975, which has since grown into a \$4.5 billion diversified fashion industry empire. Still active as the chairman of Jones' board of directors, he has also established the Sidney Kimmel Foundation and its subsidiary, the Sidney Kimmel Foundation for Cancer Research, which is one of the nation's largest individual donors to cancer research. Kimmel is extremely involved in philanthropic endeavors benefiting his hometown of Philadelphia as well as Jewish education and continuity. He recently oversaw the opening of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in



Philadelphia, home of the world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra. He is also a partner in Cipriani International, the acclaimed international restaurant and catering establishment, and is a part owner of The Miami Heat.

Nancy Oliver (Writer) studied literature at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and holds a graduate degree in acting and directing from Florida State University. Oliver spent most of her career writing and directing theater before joining HBO's acclaimed drama *Six Feet Under* in 2003, contributing five episodes including the fourth season finale "Untitled" and the fifth and final season's "Ecotone." *Lars and the Real Girl* is her first screenplay.

Prior to *Lars and the Real Girl*, **Arv Greywal** (Production Designer) most recently worked as production designer on Richard Donner's *16 Blocks* and George A. Romero's *Land of the Dead*, for which he received a DGC nomination for best Production Design. Greywal was the art director on *The Pacifier*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Bulletproof Monk*, *Finding Forrester*, *K-19: The Widowmaker*, and David Cronenberg's *Spider*, for which Greywal received a Genie nomination for best Art Direction.

Born in Bombay, India, Greywal emigrated to Canada with his family when he was thirteen years old. After graduating from the University of Waterloo with a Bachelor of Environmental Studies and a Bachelor of Architecture, he spent a period running his own architecture practice before entering the film industry. After honing his craft as assistant art director on such features as *American Psycho*, *eXistenZ*, *Crash*, and *Mimic*, Greywal moved up to art director on Bruce McCulloch's *Dog Park* and Frank Pierson's *Dirty Pictures*, winning the Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture made for TV in 2000. He is currently working on the feature *Driver*.



Kirston Mann (Costume Designer) has been working as a costume designer and stylist for the last ten years. Before designing *Lars and the Real Girl*, Mann worked on television shows, commercials and designed the movie *The Pacifier* in 2003. She writes a column called "Fashion Cents" for *Women's Wall Street* and other publications in the U.S. Kirston lives in Santa Monica, California with her six year old son.

Tatiana S. Riegel (Editor) began her career as an apprentice film editor on the indie sleeper *River's Edge*. She cut her teeth assisting on bigger budget films like Oliver Stone's *JFK* and *Last Action Hero* before working with Quentin Tarantino as Assistant Editor on *Pulp Fiction* and *Four Rooms* and as Associate Editor on *Jackie Brown*.

Riegel most recently edited *PU-239*, directed by Scott Z. Burns. Her other feature film credits include Paul Thomas Anderson's upcoming film, *There Will Be Blood*, starring Daniel Day Lewis; Wim Wenders' *The Million Dollar Hotel*, starring Mel Gibson; and Gregg Araki's *Splendor*. Riegel also served as an additional editor on *Mr. Holland's Opus*.

For the small screen Riegel has edited the popular series *House* and *American Dreams*, as well as the pilot for the series *Pasadena*, directed by Diane Keaton. Riegel has also edited several Showtime Original Movies including *Off Season* and *Snow In August*.

Riegel is incredibly proud of her collaboration with Craig Gillespie on *Lars and the Real Girl*, which she found fun and rewarding.



METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PICTURES

And

SIDNEY KIMMEL ENTERTAINMENT
Present

A JOHN CAMERON / SARAH AUBREY
Production

A
CRAIG GILLESPIE
Film

RYAN GOSLING
EMILY MORTIMER
PAUL SCHNEIDER
KELLI GARNER
PATRICIA CLARKSON
NANCY BEATTY
MAXWELL McCABE-LOKOS
KAREN ROBINSON

Casting by
DAVID RUBIN, C.S.A. and RICHARD HICKS, C.S.A.

Additional Casting by
ROBIN D. COOK, C.S.A.

Music Supervisor
SPRING ASPERS

Music By
DAVID TORN

Costume Designer
KIRSTON MANN

Editor
TATIANA S. RIEGEL, A.C.E.

Production Designer
ARV GREWAL

Director of Photography
ADAM KIMMEL

Executive Producers
WILLIAM HORBERG, BRUCE TOLL, PETER BERG

Produced by
SIDNEY KIMMEL

Produced by
JOHN CAMERON, SARAH AUBREY

Written by
NANCY OLIVER

Directed by
CRAIG GILLESPIE