



***THE SUPER HERO TEAM-UP OF A LIFETIME!***

**F**rom Marvel Studios in association with Paramount Pictures comes “Marvel’s The Avengers”—the most highly anticipated movie event of the year.

Iconic Marvel Super Heroes Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, Thor, Captain America, Hawkeye and Black Widow answer the call to action when Nick Fury, director of the international peacekeeping agency known as S.H.I.E.L.D., initiates a daring, globe-spanning recruitment effort to assemble The Avengers team to defeat an unexpected enemy threatening global safety and security.

Despite pulling together the ultimate dream team, Nick Fury and longtime confidant Agent Coulson must find a way to convince the Super Heroes to work with, not against each other, when the powerful and dangerous Loki gains access to the Cosmic Cube and its unlimited power.

Starring Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Hemsworth, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner and Tom Hiddleston, with Stellan Skarsgård and Samuel L. Jackson as Nick Fury, and directed by Joss Whedon, “Marvel’s The Avengers” is based on the ever-popular Marvel comic book series “The Avengers,” first published in 1963 and a comics institution ever since.

Clark Gregg and Cobie Smulders also join the talented cast in bringing the world’s mightiest Super Heroes together on screen for the first time.

Director Joss Whedon’s creative production team includes Oscar®-nominated director of photography Seamus McGarvey (“Atonement”), production designer James Chinlund (“25<sup>th</sup> Hour”), Oscar®-winning costume designer Alexandra Byrne (“Elizabeth: The Golden Age”), Oscar®-winning visual effects supervisor Janek Sirrs (“Iron Man 2,” “The Matrix”), four-time Oscar®-nominated special effects supervisor Dan Sudick (“Iron Man,” “War of the Worlds”) and editors Jeffrey Ford (“Crazy Heart”) and Lisa Lassek (“The Cabin in the Woods”).

“Marvel’s The Avengers” is produced by Marvel Studios’ President Kevin Feige and executive produced by Alan Fine, Jon Favreau, Stan Lee, Louis D’Esposito, Patricia Whitcher, Victoria Alonso and Jeremy Latcham. The story is by Zak Penn and Joss Whedon, and the screenplay is by Joss Whedon.

## **AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!**

With the successful launching of the “Iron Man” franchise in 2008, the first hints for what would be Marvel’s most ambitious new franchise to date began to surface—bringing together its beloved characters in one film for “The Avengers,” the holy grail of the Marvel Universe.

The idea for “The Avengers” first surfaced during the production of “Iron Man” when producer Kevin Feige had a notion that S.H.I.E.L.D. could be part of both “Iron Man” and “The Incredible Hulk.”

“We started looking at the list of characters in the Marvel Universe that hadn’t been taken by other studios: Iron Man, The Hulk, Captain America, Thor, Hawkeye and Black Widow,” says Feige. “And I thought, ‘Isn’t that interesting; all of these characters happen to form one of the most popular comic book series—‘The Avengers.’”

“When the idea of a Nick Fury cameo started coming up, we called Sam Jackson and he thought it was a cool idea,” continues Feige. “It was his enthusiasm about it that led us to shoot that end credit scene and what he says to Tony Stark in the scene, ‘You’re part of a bigger universe, you just don’t know it yet.’ The line was also Marvel telling that to the audience as well.”

The producer adds, “Audiences loved the cameo and the buzz about Nick Fury began. We did it again two months later on ‘The Incredible Hulk’ and the reaction once again told us ‘The Avengers’ is going to work. Our plan then became to build it one Super Hero at a time because it was really important that we introduced all of the characters first in their own franchises before putting them together in ‘The Avengers.’ We also hired filmmakers on ‘Thor’ and ‘Captain America’ who were open to the idea that they were playing in a shared sandbox.”

“The Avengers” was created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and first published in September 1963. “The Avengers” team originally consisted of Iron Man, Thor, The Hulk, Ant-Man and Wasp. Captain America joined the team in Issue #4 after being revived from being trapped in a block of ice. For Stan Lee, seeing so many of his characters continue to grow in popularity is a testament to the Marvel Universe he helped create over the last 50 years. “I’d like to think that one of the reasons that Marvel characters have been so successful is when we created them, we tried to give them interesting personalities and

personal problems so people would still be interested in them even if they didn't have superpowers," explains Stan Lee. "In other words we tried to make our heroes and heroines three-dimensional, interesting people."

Lee continues, "Sometimes people make the mistake of just concentrating on the superpower while the real person beneath the costume gets ignored. That's when those particular stories don't do as well. Every character in 'The Avengers' is flawed in some way and has a dynamic, interesting, personal story in addition to them saving the world."

While Lee's and Jack Kirby's colorful characters have thrilled Marvel readers for decades, one challenge for filmmakers was that they would still be editing and releasing both "Thor" and "Captain America: The First Avenger" during the pre-production and production schedule of "The Avengers."

"We had to have a lot of confidence in the direction we were heading, but two of the four characters had not been introduced to audiences yet and it was a bit of a leap of faith," says Kevin Feige. "A big part of the puzzle was introducing both 'Thor' and 'Captain America' in self-contained origin stories with very distinctive beginnings and endings that segued nicely into the storyline for 'The Avengers.'"

The plan worked to perfection for the filmmakers as both "Thor" and "Captain America: The First Avenger" were summer box office hits and fueled the fire for bringing "The Avengers" to the big screen.

### **DIRECTING "THE AVENGERS": JOSS WHEDON**

"When we put the word out that we were looking for directors, Joss Whedon came in and was very interested," recalls Feige. "I have known Joss since 2001 and I told him that one of the most important things with 'The Avengers' is it needs to stand alone and you need to structure it in a way so that people can watch the film without having seen any of the other Marvel films and get the story start to finish."

The producer continues, "The genius of Joss Whedon is that he can take these huge elements and find the balance, so the characters are never lost to the spectacle and visual effects. We wanted the film to have amazing sets and incredible action, but we did not want the tone and humor to be trumped by the spectacular images on the screen. What's always been the most exciting to see is Tony Stark and Steve Rogers together and how Tony reacts to Thor and seeing Nick Fury on his own turf for the first time. We wanted those relationship dynamics to be the real heart of the film and Joss was someone we felt could delve into the character development just as much as he could with the action in the film."

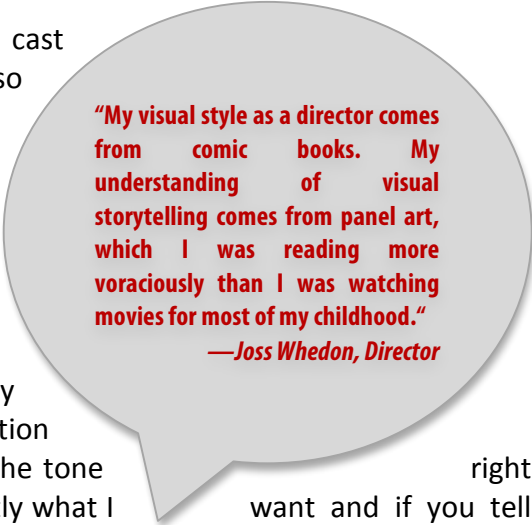
Joss Whedon (“Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” “Serenity”) explains what piqued his interest: “I am a fan of what Marvel has established. The films they have released are extremely informative, useful and fun, but when they first came to me, ‘Thor’ and ‘Captain America’ were not even close to being finished and I just felt like, ‘Okay, you have all these moving parts, but how can you possibly bring them together?’

“Iron Man, The Hulk, Thor and Captain America don’t seem like they could co-exist and ultimately that is what intrigued me and made me go, ‘This can be done and this should be done,’” continues Whedon. “These people don’t belong together and wouldn’t get along, and as soon as that dynamic came into focus, I realized that I actually have something to say about these people.”

“We have been able to attract uniquely talented directors as well as the best film technicians from top to bottom, which has resulted in mega-event movies with compelling storylines and characters that audiences enjoy watching,” says Feige. “We were able to pull this off again with ‘The Avengers’ by landing Joss Whedon, who is incredibly talented, and could not only direct the film but also develop a compelling story and screenplay.”

Actor Robert Downey Jr., who plays Tony Stark/Iron Man says, “Aside from casting, what Marvel does best is pick the right directors and it’s always an exciting announcement. Writing the script for ‘The Avengers’ is much more precise because it’s a more complex piece of machinery, where you’re trying to interface eight characters and have them all make sense, all have arcs and get their day in the sun.”

“I’ve been able to spend time with all of the cast members while I was writing the screenplay, so they knew I was building their character from the ground up for them,” explains Whedon. “As we progressed, I would go to them and say, ‘Here are my ideas and this is how I think you should play it. Is there something in particular you want to avoid? Something you feel the character needs? Wants?’ Every cast member had their input, to the degree that they wanted, so the script is very much a collaboration from the ground up and I think it helped set the tone away. My motto has always been ‘I know exactly what I want and if you tell me what you want, we can usually do both.’”



**“My visual style as a director comes from comic books. My understanding of visual storytelling comes from panel art, which I was reading more voraciously than I was watching movies for most of my childhood.”**

**—Joss Whedon, Director**

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For the filmmakers, developing the screenplay brought on a new challenge as they would have to rely more heavily on the Marvel cinematic universe than the Marvel Comic universe which consisted of 500 “Avengers” issues over the last 48 years.

“It was a very unique challenge in figuring out what material to adapt into the screenplay for ‘The Avengers,’” explains executive producer Jeremy Latcham. “For all of the previous films, we could look at the comics for a jumping off point, but with ‘The Avengers’ we said, ‘Let’s see what we’ve established in our previous films.’ It’s really about, ‘How do we pay off this cinematic universe that we’ve established? How do we give fans of the movies what they want while still honoring and giving fans of the comics what they want as well?’”

“Marvel had a very clear idea of what they wanted in the screenplay and the structure in which it played out,” says Whedon. “That was really great for me because it gave me something to build off of and the only thing I was interested in building was ‘how do we get there?’”

The director continues, “With spectacle, I believe you have to create it yourself so it fits into the framework. I don’t think you can just drop it in as you need it. I love creating action and I love being very specific about it. The start of the process for me is ‘who are these people and how is it that they are dysfunctional?’ How hard is it for them to be with each other and how much does that save them from themselves?”

In the film, S.H.I.E.L.D. director Nick Fury must assemble his team of Avengers when he discovers the world may be in great jeopardy.

Kevin Feige explains how S.H.I.E.L.D. is presented in the film: “Up to this point in the previous Marvel movies, S.H.I.E.L.D. has just been this shadowy organization that pops out occasionally to give some advice and goes back into hiding. In this film, you really see the world through the eyes of S.H.I.E.L.D. and for the first time, audiences will get to see this big organization that has a lot of resources, a lot of equipment and has been tasked with keeping the world safe.”

The producer continues, “At the beginning of the film, we check in with them and they’re overseeing an experiment with the Cosmic Cube—also known as the Tesseract—which they don’t know much about. So they’re working on this and something goes very, very wrong, which brings sources of evil into our world who begin to lay waste to them in such a way that it begs one question: If this big organization S.H.I.E.L.D can’t handle this, who can? It’s at that point that Nick Fury realizes he’s got to pick up the phone and start building a team of Avengers.”

What Nick Fury and S.H.I.E.L.D. don’t count on is how hard it is to get a group of the greatest Super Heroes ever assembled to come together and work as a team.

“The events that happen in the first act of this film are so far-reaching that Nick Fury realizes The Avengers must assemble despite what the World Security Council or other forces outside of S.H.I.E.L.D. might say,” explains executive producer Louis D’Esposito. “He knows it’s an extremely desperate measure, but he has to take it in order to save

the world. Unfortunately for Nick Fury, bringing his Super Hero team together is not as easy as it sounds. He has the means to bring people together, whether it's Agent Coulson or Natasha Romanoff, but the bigger issue is what happens when they all get in the same room together."

That dynamic would be one of many challenges for the filmmakers in developing a screenplay that revolves around eight characters, all of whom are larger than life, and four of whom already have their own individual franchises. With so many characters and worlds colliding, keeping the story and script grounded in reality was vital for the filmmaking team.

"One of things we always try to infuse all Marvel films with is that there are consequences to actions and that they play out in the real world," says D'Esposito. "That's why in the opening sequence of the film, it's really important that audiences see that there are real-world implications to the events that are unfolding and that Nick Fury is affected by them, because if you can set that up, then you can really buy off on the rest of the conceit."

"The tones of all of our films are very different, but they all have those classic Marvel elements: wish fulfillment, action, adventure and escalated stakes," says Feige. "What I really loved about Joss Whedon's script was all of these colorful personalities interacting together. As impressive as some of the spectacle moments are, it's those interplay moments in the script that will resonate with audiences because sometimes they'll all agree with each other and other times they'll disagree and not play so friendly in the sandbox."

"When I finished writing the script, it really felt like an original story," says director Whedon. "You get to see how these characters come together to form The Avengers despite themselves and all of the forces trying to prevent it from happening. Even with so many characters in the story, they all have their moments and scenes in which they get to shine."

## **THE AVENGERS TEAM**

### **IRON MAN** (Tony Stark)

played by ROBERT DOWNEY JR.

On top of being an eccentric genius, a billionaire, a playboy and a philanthropist, Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) is also the armored Super Hero known as Iron Man. Fresh off of defeating enemies the world over, Stark reluctantly agreed to serve as a consultant to Nick Fury's (Samuel L. Jackson) top-secret peacekeeping and intelligence agency known

as S.H.I.E.L.D. Now, with a global crisis on the horizon and the fate of the world in the balance, Stark must again power up his Iron Man armor to save the world and become a full-fledged member of The Avengers.

*Robert Downey Jr. on Iron Man: "Tony Stark is open to all possibilities and has no problem accepting extraordinary happenings. Joining The Avengers team is an act of curiosity—he wants to see what's happening firsthand. He realized a while ago that he's not an island and this time around he is beginning to understand that it's about a group mindset and that 'we' is better than 'I.'"*

## **CAPTAIN AMERICA** (Steve Rogers)

played by CHRIS EVANS

After a top-secret Super Soldier program transformed frail Steve Rogers (Chris Evans) into the powerful and heroic Captain America, his amazing WWII exploits made him a living legend. Steve saved New York City and turned the tide of the war, but crashed into the Arctic during his final mission. Awakening in the modern day, Steve learned that he had spent decades frozen in the icy tundra. Now, Steve Rogers finds himself alone in a modern world that he hardly recognizes. When Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson), director of the international peacekeeping agency S.H.I.E.L.D., calls on Rogers to help save the world again, he quickly suits up as Captain America, taking up his iconic shield and bringing his strength, leadership and no-nonsense attitude to The Avengers.

*Chris Evans on Captain America: "Big parts of Steve Rogers are his good nature, high morals and strong values. Those morals and values were created in a time when people treated each other differently. The level of interaction was a bit deeper. Everything feels one step apart with all of the technology we have now. A lot of the things that he believed in, stood for and loved have changed. They're not gone—they're just different. He's trying to find his footing in a modern world."*

## **THOR** (The God of Thunder)

played by CHRIS HEMSWORTH

An arrogant prince from the distant land of Asgard, Thor (Chris Hemsworth) was banished to Earth after his irresponsible behavior threatened his homeland. While in exile on Earth, Thor learned humility and helped save his new friends from a destructive threat sent by his brother Loki. In the process, Thor redeemed himself in the eyes of his father, Odin, the King of Asgard. After being welcomed back to Asgard as a hero, Thor must now return to Earth once again to prevent a cosmic-level catastrophe. With Mjolnir in his hand, a legendary hammer with immense power, the mighty warrior soon finds himself drawn into an unlikely alliance with Nick Fury's secret initiative, The Avengers, lending his power to their cause against his wayward brother, Loki.

*Chris Hemsworth on Thor: "Thor has more of a personal investment in what's happening than the other Super Heroes because Loki is his brother. The bigger conflict for him is that he's trying to protect the greater good, but he has some deep questions about what is going on with his brother."*

## **THE HULK** (Bruce Banner)

played by MARK RUFFALO

After a gamma radiation experiment went awry, mild-mannered scientist Dr. Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo) found himself with a peculiar condition. When angered or provoked, he would transform into the uncontrollable, green-skinned monster known as The Hulk. Now, fearful of the damage that The Hulk could inflict, Dr. Banner chooses to live a discreet life in remote parts of the world, working to cure the sick and help the poor while trying to elude those who would take advantage of his ability to change into the enormous, green menace. When a mounting threat calls for Banner's specialized scientific expertise, S.H.I.E.L.D. Director Nick Fury recruits him, knowing full well that the incredible strength of Banner's alter ego, The Hulk, would be an asset to The Avengers.

*Mark Ruffalo on The Hulk: "This Hulk is mercurial. He's very unpredictable; he's nuanced. There's a sense of humor there; there's an ability to communicate. But he's bristly and he's incredibly dangerous, like a wild animal. His rage feels real; his reactions to things feel human."*

## **HAWKEYE** (Clint Barton)

played by JEREMY RENNER

One of S.H.I.E.L.D.'s most elite agents, Clint Barton (Jeremy Renner), code-named Hawkeye, is the greatest living marksman on Earth. Armed with his weapon of choice, the recurve bow, Hawkeye fires his arsenal of custom-augmented arrows, specialized for any number of specific situations, with perfect precision. With the potential for global catastrophe on the horizon, he employs his amazing combat skills to fight alongside The Avengers.

*Jeremy Renner on Hawkeye: "Hawkeye is alone in the game, an outcast and a loner; he's a lone wolf sort of character, so he's not a team player, but will be there if needed."*



## **BLACK WIDOW** (Natasha Romanoff)

played by SCARLETT JOHANSSON

S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Natasha Romanoff, aka Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), is one of the world's greatest spies and quite possibly the world's most skilled assassin. Armed with an extensive arsenal of specialized weapons like widow stings and cluster bombs, as well as a vast repertoire of martial arts skills, Romanoff's unique talents make her one of Director Fury's top agents and an integral part in assembling The Avengers.

*Scarlett Johansson on Black Widow: "Black Widow is all business. She's sort of in a grey area. In a sense, she's been fighting the good fight despite her dark background. But she's committed because she has to be and her moral ground is more dutiful. She's militaristic in that way; that's how she knows right from wrong."*

## **LOKI**

played by TOM HIDDLESTON

After his bid to overthrow the throne of Asgard was thwarted by his brother Thor (Chris Hemsworth), the evil Loki (Tom Hiddleston) retreated to lands unknown to plot his revenge. Not just against his brother, but against Earth, whose inhabitants Thor now protects. Loki now returns with a nefarious plot to conquer Earth and will stop at nothing to see his vision realized. When his misuse of power threatens the entire planet, it may take more than The Avengers to stop him.

*Tom Hiddleston on Loki: "Loki's villainy is motivated by the fact that he's damaged and searching for his place in the universe, but in this film he's a lot more menacing and a lot more powerful. He's much more self-possessed. He's also a god, so he's more powerful than any human."*

## **NICK FURY** (Director of S.H.I.E.L.D.)

played by SAMUEL L. JACKSON

As the legendary director of the international peacekeeping organization S.H.I.E.L.D., Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) is humanity's first line of defense against the world's biggest threats. When S.H.I.E.L.D. becomes aware of an evil that threatens global safety, Fury assembles the planet's most powerful beings and forms The Avengers.

*Samuel L. Jackson on Nick Fury: "Nick Fury monitors a lot of things and when he sees a need, he generally goes against the grain; he rubs a lot of people the wrong way by taking actions in situations that they don't necessarily want him to take action in but he does anyway."*

## **MARIA HILL** (S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent)

played by Cobie Smulders

Maria Hill is second in command to Nick Fury, the director of S.H.I.E.L.D. A supremely loyal and capable agent, Hill quickly became one of Fury's most trusted aides. Hill's insistence on playing everything by the book leads to periodic clashes with Fury, who has no patience for bureaucracy or red tape. Still, Fury relies on Hill to remind him that the ends do not always justify the means. Hill's competence and efficiency as well as her finely honed principles make her a valuable asset to Fury's team.

*Cobie Smulders on Maria Hill: "Maria Hill and Nick Fury butt heads constantly. I think that Maria is a little bit more intuitive than Nick. But throughout the course of the film, she realizes that he is involved and he does care, and he is taking the right steps to protect our country and fight the bad guys."*

## **PHIL COULSON** (S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent)

played by Clark Gregg

Agent Phil Coulson is a veteran S.H.I.E.L.D. operative who is always seen in a suit and necktie despite the fact that he is the agent most often in the trenches, carrying out Director Nick Fury's directives. The go-to agent for Fury's sometimes secretive missions, Agent Coulson has proven himself to be more than capable of handling the world's most powerful Super Heroes—though he is a human being with no superpowers or super-abilities. As S.H.I.E.L.D.'s "Everyman," Coulson is dependable and loyal and unabashedly a fan of Captain America. When a threat to the world requires the formation of a team of Super Heroes to defeat it, Coulson takes on the task of assembling Nick Fury's Avengers as just another day at the office.

*Clark Gregg on Phil Coulson: "When you look at the team, it's made up of rock stars and divas with giant muscles and super-powered egos, so somebody has the job backstage to make them all play in the same super-band—and that's what Agent Coulson does."*

## **CASTING THE AVENGERS TEAM**

With Whedon putting his final touches on the script, the filmmakers began to focus their attention on the award-winning cast of "Marvel's The Avengers."

“One of the great things when you make a film that’s been set up like this is that you start the casting process 80% done,” informs executive producer Louis D’ Esposito. “With most of our main cast crossing over from other Marvel franchises, we could focus all of our attention on the few roles we needed to fill.”

Every team has a go-to guy when the chips are down and The Avengers is no different as they turn to billionaire industrialist-playboy Tony Stark aka Iron Man. One of the cornerstones and a fan favorite of the Marvel Universe, the first two installments of the “Iron Man” franchise, starring Robert Downey Jr. (“Sherlock Holmes,” “Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows,” “Tropic Thunder”) have grossed a combined \$1.2 billion at the worldwide box office.

“Robert is a tour de force as Tony Stark and he injects that confidence and sense of humor that brought to life and defined the character in the best way possible in both ‘Iron Man’ films,” says Feige. “We wanted to give Robert scenes with all the characters as we knew it would be a lot of fun to watch Tony’s interaction with Captain America, Thor and The Hulk. When Robert walks on the screen, the audiences embrace him in a very big and palpable way; he really is a powerhouse for us and the film.”

For Robert Downey Jr., the idea of being in “The Avengers” started on opening night of the first “Iron Man” in 2008. “I remember when we were all huddled around the dinner table waiting for the numbers to come in,” recalls Downey. “We had planted some ideas after the credits of the film, hinting at the notion of ‘The Avengers’ and in Hollywood, I’m always amazed when anything that difficult works out.”

The actor continues, “Tony initially thinks it’s ridiculous, but being Tony Stark, he is more open to the realm of possibilities that exist in the world of The Avengers. Tony already had hints of it from Nick Fury who has been stringing him along for awhile about becoming part of a larger universe.”

Executive producer Jeremy Latcham adds, “At the end of the day, he is Tony Stark and he understands the severity of the situation. He’s willing to make the ultimate sacrifice but at the same time, he’s kind of enamored by the absurdity of it. As a result, Tony Stark really is the audience’s way in because he is the closest thing to a normal person among the Super Heroes. That’s saying a lot because Tony Stark is a billionaire, playboy, philanthropist, who drinks too much, but is really funny and entertaining, which works out nicely.”

The director of S.H.I.E.L.D. (Strategic Homeland Intervention Enforcement Logistics Division) and the person trying to convince Tony Stark to join The Avengers team is Nick Fury played by Samuel L. Jackson (“Unbreakable,” “Pulp Fiction”). Nick Fury has to make the hard decisions that aren’t always popular when one is in charge of monitoring the world’s safety.

“The promise we made to Sam was, when we got to ‘The Avengers,’ it would be his time to shine,” says producer Kevin Feige. “Sam was very pleased when he got the script and saw how many great scenes Nick Fury had in the film. He is very active and in command on the Helicarrier and really gets into the action. If I had to say which character’s point of view the film is told from, it would be Nick Fury’s.”

For Samuel L. Jackson, having Nick Fury front and center in “The Avengers” was a welcome change to the many cameo roles in the other Marvel franchises leading up to this film. “It’s great to be the guy who is the organizer of The Avengers team,” says Jackson. “He’s the guy who has the *raison d’être*, that kind of understands the threat and has to get them to understand the nature of the threat—that they’re a lot stronger together than they are individually. Using Coulson in a manipulative way to get them to do what he needs them to do is not above Nick’s character. He does kind of fudge the truth a bit to get them to take the bait and join in, and eventually they all do.”

Director Whedon explains what he loves about Samuel L. Jackson as an actor. “I always think that there are two of him because he is famous for the sort of bravado ‘Pulp Fiction’ speechifying guy who can out-moxie anybody in the room. Before we started shooting the film, I told Sam my biggest note to remember was ‘less Shaft, more Glass [Jackson’s character in “Unbreakable”].’ I wanted to see a guy who could absolutely command a room with his voice that leaves no question of who is in charge of this enormous organization. I am also a huge ‘Unbreakable’ fan, so I’m also very much in love with the great depth and well of sadness that he can bring to the character as well.”

One Avenger who is suffering a little heartbreak is Captain America, played by Chris Evans (“Captain America: The First Avenger,” “Sunshine”). Frozen in a block of ice since 1945, Captain America awakes from the deep freeze to find a world he knows nothing about and where all of his friends and comrades have passed away.

“It’s not just that Captain America wakes up in a whole new world; it’s the fact that he has to deal with the emotions of finding out that everybody he knows is dead,” says Evans. “Every single person he called ‘brother’ on a battlefield is gone and the world around him is a different place. It’s more fast-paced and impersonal because new technologies have put barriers between people. In the ‘40s there was much more of a direct and honest sincerity in the way people behaved and I think human interaction helps breed manners. Waking up in modern day is just an extremely different way of life that Steve Rogers now has to get used to.”

With the success of “Captain America: The First Avenger,” which opened No. 1 at the box office and grossed over \$368 million worldwide, Evans had to get used to the adulation that comes with playing one of the most recognizable comic book characters of all time.

“Starring as Captain America was scary and exhilarating at the same time,” says Evans. “‘Thor’ had already opened and done very well and so I kept thinking ‘Captain America’ better open and do well because I don’t want to be the weak link of the ‘The Avengers.’ Luckily, the film did well and it was an amazing feeling to see kids’ faces light up when they saw me in the costume. It really was a completely new experience for me, for which I am very grateful.”

“We fought very hard to get Chris Evans into ‘Captain America’ and we had to convince him to do it,” says producer Kevin Feige. “We believed in him and knew how talented he was, but what was so satisfying was how much audiences embraced him as Steve Rogers. They have embraced all of our characters and so we wanted to bring all that goodwill into ‘The Avengers.’”

Robert Downey Jr. echoes Feige’s sentiment for his co-star. “I’m extremely fond of Chris Evans and I think he is one of the most underrated actors out there. I watch him and I think to myself, here is a guy who is wearing a stretchy American flag suit and I absolutely believe him. How is he doing this? The other thing I love about Chris is that he’s kind of this tough guy from Boston, but he also is a sensitive artist who really has an opinion.

“Our characters are very connected because Steve Rogers was close with Howard Stark and there’s something definitive and tangible about their relationship,” continues Downey. “If Steve Rogers and Tony Stark’s relationship doesn’t work, then the film doesn’t work.”

Another newly christened franchise in the Marvel Universe is “Thor.” The film kicked off the summer of 2011 with a bang when it opened No. 1 at the box office with \$65.7 million and went on to gross \$446 million worldwide. In “The Avengers” Chris Hemsworth (“Star Trek,” “A Perfect Getaway”) reprises his title role as the hammer-wielding Norse god Thor.

Hemsworth explains why family issues force Thor to return to Earth in “The Avengers”: “Thor has conveniently come back to earth briefly because Odin summons dark powers from the universe and it’s very costly,” explains Hemsworth. “He’s come back to retrieve Loki, who’s running mad on Earth and causing a lot of chaos. He also has some questions of his own he wants answered like, ‘How did this happen and where did I and my brother go wrong?’”

The actor continues, “In ‘Thor,’ my character learned a whole lot about humility and gained a new respect for humans because they were able to help him discover who he needed to become in order to earn his powers back. I also think he feels very protective of humans now because of his relationship with Jane. Joining The Avengers team is also tricky because he has a personal investment in that his brother Loki is the one who’s

causing the chaos and he fears that the others may just want to kill him instead of just stopping him and taking away his powers.”

“The reason we cast Chris Hemsworth is we didn’t want Thor to just be a one-dimensional Adonis-like character,” explains Feige. “What makes a character a Marvel character is that you can relate to them and recognize your own flaws and struggles in the characters’ flaws and struggles. In ‘Thor,’ the character has to learn the lesson of humility and Chris was able to bring that in a very likable way, despite the fact that he comes from another world.”

Helping Nick Fury keep The Avengers on point for their mission is Natasha aka Black Widow. Reprising her role from “Iron Man 2,” Scarlett Johansson (“We Bought a Zoo,” “Vicky Cristina Barcelona”) was happy to slip back into the sexy suit of her character’s alter ego Black Widow.

“To be honest, I really didn’t know what the future would hold for Black Widow after ‘Iron Man 2,’” informs Johansson. “I didn’t know how the fans would respond, but to be a part of the Marvel Universe and playing such a dynamic, ass-kicking character is pretty exciting. The first time you saw this character in ‘Iron Man 2,’ you didn’t get to learn much about her because she’s a bit of a slippery fish. She still has many different faces she puts on and, to this day, she still is divisive in that way. In this film, audiences will get to see more of her history and kind of shady past, which to me is very exciting because the darker part of the character was always very appealing to me.”

“Scarlett brings a toughness and savvy that women like to see in their female characters,” says Samuel L. Jackson. “She is beautiful, so guys like her, but she embraces the toughness of her character and makes it seem effortless, which is very difficult to do. Guys always think, ‘I don’t care how strong a girl is, she can’t knock me out,’ but she has a bigness of character that allows her to pull off the things Black Widow does. Nick Fury has a genuine father-daughter love for Natasha that kind of transcends the job and he gives her a bit more rope than he gives most other people because of it.”

For director Whedon, having a strong female as part of a testosterone-heavy Avengers team was essential. “Black Widow is a fun character and I was very clear from the beginning that it was unacceptable to have an all-male Avengers team,” says Whedon. “Because of the timing of the shooting schedule, there was a moment when we weren’t sure if we could get Scarlett, but I was a very happy man when she signed on because she adds so much to the film and it’s a great juxtaposition to her male counterparts.”

The director continues, “Scarlett is probably the least like her character because she’s so funny, delightful and just so darn cute. I wanted her to play the role completely opposite of her personality because we wanted Black Widow to be a darker incarnation of who she was in ‘Iron Man 2.’ You get a bit of a hint of her backstory in this film and it isn’t pretty. The great thing with Scarlett is she gets very precise about how she’s playing a

character and what she's doing with it, so it worked very well for the evolution of Black Widow."

This darker side of Black Widow is evident from the first time we see the character, as executive producer D'Esposito explains. "Black Widow's introduction in the film is absolutely phenomenal. She's tied to a chair and is being roughed up by some thugs who are interrogating her and you think that she can't possibly get out of this situation. A cell phone rings and Black Widow gets on the phone and says, 'I'm interrogating someone.' It's completely the opposite of what is going on and she hangs up the phone and takes care of business. It's really cool and I think audiences are going to absolutely love that scene."

After disposing of the thugs, Black Widow sets off to find Bruce Banner who has gone off the grid in order to stay away from anything that can bring stress and conflict into his life. With Eric Bana and Edward Norton playing the role in previous incarnations of the franchise, the filmmakers set off on their own journey to find an actor to tackle the complex character. For director Whedon, the search began and ended with Mark Ruffalo ("Shutter Island," "The Kids Are All Right").

"Mark was my dream choice and I had my heart set on him," says Whedon. "I wanted a completely fresh take on the character so I went to Marvel very early on and said, 'I know the guy who would be a great Bruce Banner' and they said, 'Unless it's Mark Ruffalo, we really don't know.' And I was like, 'What?!' I just froze and said, 'You've got to be kidding. You did not just say that.' I showed them the list that I had in my wallet with his name at the top and they were completely on board."

For Ruffalo, his friend and colleague Robert Downey Jr. was the inspiration he needed to take on the role. "'The Avengers' isn't the type of film that I've done in the past or that I am usually invited to do," laughs Ruffalo. "I was a little nervous about it because when Joss and I first met about the role, there wasn't a script. I thought a lot about Iron Man. I thought about what Robert Downey Jr. did with that part—he is one of my hero actors. I really loved what Robert did; he reinvented the genre. It made me feel like I could fit into that world with whatever it is I do. I had one meeting with Joss, who I liked instantly, so between him and Robert, I was in."


"Mark Ruffalo is very funny and when he first got cast he said, 'Bruce Banner is like his generation's Hamlet. Everyone has to take a shot at it; it's just required reading now for actors,'" recalls Jeremy Latcham. "I thought it was a funny way of looking at it because it really is a tough character and there have been a lot of great actors who have had a go at it. Mark really brings a lot of humanity to Bruce Banner and I think that his way into it is really to explore the human side of the character, who is a nice guy but very troubled."

“Besides Robert, Mark is probably the person I spent the most time with in pre-production,” says Whedon. “We talked about anger and how it manifests so we could get The Hulk away from being this roaring creature. Bruce Banner has given up on the idea that he can cure his anger problems and is just trying to manage it and focus all his energy on helping other people. He doesn’t want to be the center of attention and of course, he becomes the center of attention when he joins the team.”

“What appealed to both Joss and I about the character is that he would have a common man sort of feel to him and possess this world-weary charm,” says Ruffalo. “We also agreed he should have a sense of humor about his situation. Based on the last incarnation of The Incredible Hulk, there was the promise that Banner may actually have a little control over the Behemoth. We wanted him to be fun and interesting as Banner and awesome as The Hulk.”

“Joss and I thought it would be cool if we found Banner at a leprosy colony in India where there’s so much suffering that it would be almost impossible to get angry at anything in life that would bring on the transformation into The Hulk,” concludes Ruffalo.

“Joss wrote the character so that audiences feel for Bruce Banner much in the way they felt for Bill Bixby,” says producer Feige. “In ‘The Avengers,’ Bruce Banner has a good sense of and he is not in a constant state of melancholy and lot of the laughs in the film come from the character saw what Mark was doing with the role, we felt we finally had an opportunity to present Bruce Banner the way we always wanted to.”



**“All of the actors came to me with an extraordinarily positive attitude. Not just about the project, but about each other. All of the conflict that we create amongst The Avengers is acting, because these guys are really rooting for each other and helping each other.”**

**—Joss Whedon, Director**

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While the filmmakers were set on the members who make up The Avengers team, Feige comments on deciding who the villain or villains would be in the film. “In ‘Thor,’ we only saw Loki in Asgard and Jotunheim, the land of the frost giants, but the film is as much an origin story of Loki as it is an origin story of Thor,” explains Feige. “At the very end of that film, you see him literally break away from his past and family. We wanted to see his next step and in ‘The Avengers,’ Loki is intent on conquering Earth. His brother has a throne, his real father had a throne, his adopted father had a throne, and now he wants a throne of his own and he feels that it is ripe for the picking.”

The producer continues, “In the very first issue of ‘The Avengers’ comic, it’s Loki who is causing trouble and it brings them all together. So it not only worked into the order in which we were telling these stories in our movies but it also has it own origins in the very first issue of the comic.”



For actor Tom Hiddleston (“War Horse,” “Midnight in Paris”), who played Thor’s mischievous brother in “Thor,” remembering the day he was told his character would be expanding in a big way still brings a smile to his face. “Towards the end of the production of ‘Thor,’ Joss Whedon was coming into Marvel Studios a lot because he was writing ‘The Avengers’ screenplay and he asked me to go out for tea,” recalls Tom Hiddleston. “We were sitting in a coffee shop in Santa Monica and he said, ‘So, here’s the thing, Tom. There’s a lot of talk about multiple villains in the film and I don’t want any of that. I want Loki to be the bad guy.’ After I picked my jaw off the floor, I did back flips in the tea room and then we just talked for hours about who Loki was and what his motivations were and the kind of spiritual damage that was at the heart of the character as well as the delight he takes in being a mischievous trickster and an agent of chaos.”

Explaining the progression of the character from the end of “Thor” to the start of “The Avengers,” Hiddleston says, “At the end of ‘Thor’ he abandons any concern, affection and attachment to Asgard and his family and disappears into the wormhole and people think, is he dead? Where has he gone? Has he gone through a gap in space and time? But anyone who saw the post-credit sequence in ‘Thor’ sees Nick Fury and Selvig conferring over this mysterious iridescent blue cube of energy, which is a source of absolute and infinite power that can bring all who come before it to their knees. Loki’s going to use the cube as his super nuclear weapon to subjugate Earth and to force the human race to unite in worship of him.”

“Initially, I was worried that Loki was known for being a trickster, even though he is stronger than most of The Avengers,” says director Whedon. “A lot of time was spent building up the character to show how strong and dangerous he was, but at the end of the day, what makes it work is Tom Hiddleston. He really breathes life into the character and gets to be more of the classic Loki character from the comics than he got to be in ‘Thor,’ where he had a very poignant and beautiful arc.”

“Although Loki has moved on from where we last saw him in ‘Thor,’ the resentment, vulnerability and the big brother issues still burn deep inside him,” informs executive producer Jeremy Latcham. “Tom really layers that texture into the character and you feel like he might either walk right up and kill you or sneak up from behind and kill you. With Loki, you just don’t know which way it’s going to be.”

One aspect of Loki that carries over into “The Avengers” is his strained and contentious relationship with his half-brother Thor. “In ‘The Avengers,’ Thor begins as a noble warrior with the right intentions,” says Chris Hemsworth. “All of that and then some is tested as he must contemplate what’s more important, his personal relationship with his brother or the team he’s agreed to fight with. It’s a very difficult decision because he feels maybe there’s still some good in Loki behind all of the misguided evil.”

“Loki feels inferior and rejected by his brother, so I think the relationship between the two of them is palpable and strong,” explains Hiddleston. “Thor’s innately noble spirit recognizes a glimmer of redemption for Loki. That dynamic between Thor and Loki is the engine that propels their emotional journey and keeps that story interesting. You never quite trust Loki and you can’t quite pin him down.”

But the relationship between the two actors is very different. Hemsworth relates, “I really loved working on ‘Thor’ with Tom because we had so much time to develop our relationship. To come back and work with him again is so familiar. With everyone else, they’re all incredible actors, but you’ve got to find that rapport and build it. With Tom, we know each other’s rhythms and can just get into it.”

Thor and Loki each received wardrobe upgrades, courtesy of Academy Award®-winning costume designer Alexandra Byrne, who created both characters’ looks for “Thor.”

“Thor and Loki’s looks have both evolved visually from ‘Thor’ to ‘The Avengers,’” says Byrne. “I had the advantage of having worked closely with Chris and Tom already, so I could capitalize on what I learned from them both in terms of their performance and movement. Having created the costumes for ‘Thor,’ I knew that early technical decisions can have a tremendous impact as a costume comes near completion; decisions are always made for the best solution at that point of building, but the complexity of these costumes means that often you are trying to achieve [them] with new techniques and combinations of materials, and you can find yourself wishing to wind back the clock and adjust an earlier choice. It could be as simple as where to place a zipper, or where to make an articulation in a piece of armor. The process is an exciting mix of drawing on experience and testing the unknown.”

The costume designer continues, “Thor’s new sleeveless look was to achieve a less armored look for the conversational scenes between The Avengers. The look also takes a cue from the comics and works well with Chris Hemsworth’s incredible physique. His muscular arms are the iconic statement of Thor, and the discs and red cape are the iconic statements of the costume. The key element of Loki’s look in both films is his coat. I felt it was the perfect element of clothing to embody his vanity and to use Tom Hiddleston’s wonderful physical ability and range of movement. The idea came from the elegance and vanity of gentlemen in Rome, parading in their winter coats with up-turned collars at the first hint of chill in the air. Throughout the two stories, Loki has seven different styles of coat, all part of his ability to change his appearance.”

Protecting the Tesseract is the job of Nick Fury’s S.H.I.E.L.D organization and he puts his best man, Cliff Barton aka Hawkeye, on the job. Two-time Academy Award®-nominated actor Jeremy Renner (“The Hurt Locker,” “The Town”) plays Hawkeye and explains how his character finds himself in a precarious position when the mysterious Tesseract he is guarding comes alive and begins to wield its catastrophic power. “Barton has been monitoring Professor Selvig to make sure he isn’t doing anything to the Tesseract,” says

Renner. "He is an intense guy and takes his duties very seriously, but things start to go horribly wrong with the Tesseract and suddenly Barton is face to face with Loki, which is not a great place to be."

For Renner, playing a character in the Marvel Universe who is human and grounded in reality was an attractive element that intrigued him.

"Kevin Feige showed me images of Hawkeye from 'The Ultimates' and they were very cool, but what I liked more than anything was the idea that he's a human being with a high skill set who is a bit of a rogue agent. I've played a few snipers before and there's a really interesting mentality that comes along with being a sharp shooter, so I thought it was a pretty fun character to play."

"Hawkeye is introduced and is the largest new character in this film," says producer Feige. "Hawkeye has one of the coolest and most iconic of all of the weapons in the Marvel Universe and we were all very happy to be able to finally bring it to life in 'The Avengers.'"

An expert archer, Hawkeye's trusty bow shoots his distinctive and deadly silver tip arrows. Director Whedon comments on Hawkeye's unconventional armor and weaponry. "We wanted Hawkeye on the team because he was a fan favorite and adds a little bit of an X-factor," says Whedon. "To have a character who's not necessarily a mainstream hero that everybody knows about is very cool. The thing about archery is at first you go, 'All he uses is a bow and arrow?' People love archery because it's very primal and deadly, but at the same time it can be very elegant and lovely to watch."

The director continues, "Shooting a bow and arrow is a very specific movement and it informed the way Jeremy Renner moved as well. Jeremy is very athletic and can work like a stuntman, but at the same time he is extremely balletic and precise in his movements, which was perfect for Hawkeye. I loved the idea of shooting one way while looking another way because he's gauging the wind and the trajectory of his target. Action-wise, Hawkeye is as fascinating a character as there is in the film."

"We wanted to make sure that S.H.I.E.L.D was a grounded place because in the Marvel Universe it's a real organization with agents, missions and operatives," adds Latcham. "Hawkeye seemed like a logical extension of that, as he is a guy who is a master assassin who is very proficient at what he does, but he also is a bit of a wild card as well."

Latcham continues, "I feel like we won the lottery when we were able to cast Jeremy Renner in the role. The guy is an incredibly talented actor, who was nominated for an Oscar® two years in a row, and we were lucky that he happened to be in a moment where he wanted to go do something big and fun. He really brings it every single day and he's constantly upping the ante in every scene."

One element of Hawkeye's character in the comics that didn't translate to the big screen was the costume of the character. Director Whedon explains how he modified the look to fit both his and his actor's desire to ground the character in reality.

"Let's just say it, the purple mask Hawkeye wears in the comics is just not a good idea," laughs Whedon. "As much as possible with The Avengers, you want to see their faces and Jeremy Renner's face is incredibly compelling, so I said, 'Here's an idea...don't put cloth over it.' We ended up going with Bryan Hitch's vision of the costume from 'The Ultimates' and Mark Millar's vision of the idea that he's not a Super Hero; he is a S.H.I.E.L.D agent. Hawkeye also likes to sneak off by himself to the highest and darkest part of the room and he's not much of a team player."

Costume designer Alexandra Byrne expands on Hawkeye's costume for "The Avengers." "Hawkeye's weapons and fighting style were big influences in the costume design of the character," says Byrne. "Jeremy is extremely agile and I wanted to achieve a clean silhouette. Jeremy's stance for drawing the bowstring threw his neck tall and straight, but in a crouch position his neck came forward, so we developed a center back detail in the stand collar made with woven elastics. This meant the collar could stretch back with Jeremy as he drew the bow and would not be left poking out as he bent forward."

While Nick Fury runs S.H.I.E.L.D, his day-to-day eyes and ears in the field belong to Agent Coulson, the connective tissue of the newly minted Marvel Universe. Agent Coulson is one man who always gets the job done without fanfare or drama.

"I would be lying if I said that from the beginning we knew Agent Coulson would be the character in all of our films," says D'Esposito. "After the reaction to his character in 'Iron Man,' it was obvious that we wanted to continue the role," says the executive producer. "Agent Coulson is an Everyman who people can relate to because he is just so darn likable and loves every part of being a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent. He doesn't have any superpowers, but he does have some fighting skills and a sense of humor, which you really get to see in the way he speaks with Nick Fury and Tony Stark. It's absolutely charming and funny, and yet serious."

Clark Gregg ("Mr. Popper's Penguins," "(500) Days of Summer") returns to the role of Agent Coulson and comments on the long history he has enjoyed with the character and the impact it has had on the Marvel Universe.

"What I love about Coulson is how he has evolved from what seemed like an annoying bureaucrat pestering Tony Stark for an interview in 'Iron Man,'" says Gregg. "As the Marvel film universe has expanded, it's been a great thrill to see him become a much more formidable force who's kind of hiding in plain sight. Every time I get a Marvel script, I'm very excited to find out what new layers to his character and duties are revealed and it certainly has culminated with 'The Avengers,' where he is heavily involved with trying to pull the team together."

The actor continues, “The Avengers initiative has not necessarily been accepted by the World Security Council and is looked at with some great suspicion. The Super Heroes are viewed as dangerous and uncontrollable and I don’t think anybody, including Nick Fury, is fully convinced yet that The Hulk and Thor are good people to have around, based on what has gone down in the past. So in the time leading up to The Avengers, a major focus of S.H.I.E.L.D. is about developing the Tesseract and finding out a way to harness and use its vast power.”

For Whedon, the character of Coulson provided him with one of his favorite scenes to write and shoot in the film. “Coulson is the face of S.H.I.E.L.D in a way that Nick Fury isn’t,” says Whedon. “Nick Fury stays in the background pulling the strings, while Coulson is the guy in the trenches alongside ‘The Avengers.’ His relationship with Steve Rogers is one of my favorites. There are so many characters in this film with a dry wit, so I wanted to find some other dynamic Coulson could have with Captain America and it hit me, ‘Oh my god, he’s a fanboy!’ Giving him a man crush on Captain America not only lent itself to some of the funniest scenes, but also established the type of relationship they had, which led to the whole trading-card run in the scene, which is possibly my favorite thing in the movie.”

Helping Agent Coulson round up the team of Avengers is the beautiful, but tough-as-nails S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Maria Hill, Nick Fury’s second in command on the massive Helicarrier.

“The idea behind Agent Maria Hill was I needed someone to bounce off of Nick Fury so that everybody is not in accord,” explains Whedon. “I also needed someone to step up on the Helicarrier when Coulson is out in the field and last but certainly not least, for the love of God, I needed another woman in this movie! I love the character from the comics because of the tension with Nick Fury. She doesn’t necessarily think he’s doing things right and that gives the character a nice arc as well. It’s also something we can honor from the comic book and still bring in a new voice to the movie world.”

In casting the role, Whedon and his filmmaking team had actresses read with Samuel L. Jackson in order to make sure they had the right fit for the role. The filmmakers selected Cobie Smulders, star on the long-running television show “How I Met Your Mother.”

“We saw some really strong performances and then Cobie came in the room and it was fascinating because everyone had their own prediction of who might get it,” recalls Whedon. “They all read a fake scene with Sam Jackson and then we went right next-door and watched them instantly.

“Everyone was great in the auditions, but what it all boiled down to was the fact that when Cobie pointed that gun at him, I thought she might shoot him,” Whedon continues. “Even though I wrote the scene in the moment, I really thought she could

take him down. Cobie has an absolute authority and physical confidence that isn't ostentatious but instead, is very precise and absolute."

Landing the role of Agent Hill, second in command to Nick Fury, was one of Smulders' biggest coups of her film career. The actress reflects upon the experience. "I was just blown away when I found out that I got the role," pronounces Smulders. "To be able to be part of the Marvel Universe and play such a great character was something that still has not settled in and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity."

Explaining her character's motivations and drives, Smulders says, "At the beginning of the film, assembling The Avengers team is one of the major reasons that Nick Fury and Maria Hill do not get along. She thinks that they're a huge threat, especially The Hulk. They're very volatile characters and I think that she's a bit more by the rules and would rather take things out in military style rather than bringing together this team of loners—loners in the sense that they do their own thing. But then after what happens, she sees that we need them."

Executive producer D'Esposito asks, "Can you imagine how daunting and intimidating it would be to come on set when you're not a Super Hero, you don't have any superpowers, and you're going toe-to-toe with Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, The Hulk, Black Widow and your boss Nick Fury? What's amazing about Cobie is even when she is surrounded by all of the other characters in the film, she still stands out and pops on screen. Agent Hill is here to stay, and in 'The Avengers,' she becomes an important part of the S.H.I.E.L.D. team."

Segueing from his role as Jane Foster's mentor in "Thor," Stellan Skarsgård returns as Professor Erik Selvig, a genius who has been enlisted by Nick Fury to study and harness the mysterious powers of the Tesseract for the good of mankind and keep it out of the hands of the evil forces that lie in wait.

"I had no idea what the future of Selvig would be after 'Thor,' but one thing I knew was when you sign on to a Marvel film, you're on the hook for five," laughs Skarsgård. "When the film begins, Selvig is working for S.H.I.E.L.D. and Nick Fury has a big concern because something is going wrong with the experiments on the Tesseract. Unbeknownst to him, he actually ends up opening a portal to another universe and Loki shows up and that's when the fun really begins."

"It was so much fun to have Stellan back from 'Thor,'" says executive producer Patricia Whitcher. "He is such a gifted actor who quietly goes about his business and always makes everyone around him better. When you have actors as talented as Stellan Skarsgård in supporting roles, you're really going to elevate the film."

An Avengers film wouldn't be complete without an appearance by Tony Stark's right-hand woman and president of Stark Industries, Pepper Potts, played by Marvel fan-

favorite Gwyneth Paltrow. The Academy Award®-winning actress comments on what's been going on with the character of Pepper Potts since we last saw her.

"At the end of 'Iron Man 2,' Pepper and Tony had a real kiss, which was great because they had been building it up for two films," says Paltrow. "So in 'The Avengers,' the idea is that they're heading somewhere, but it hasn't, shall we say, consummated yet."

For Robert Downey Jr., incorporating Pepper Potts into the story of "The Avengers" was an important element in the progression of his character. "When we were in the first of several iterations of the storyline, the only thing I was sure about was that Tony Stark needed backup," says Downey. "I said to Joss and Kevin, 'We really need Pepper to be involved in some way.' I felt like it's been awhile since we have seen Tony and Pepper and they have grown to be pretty close and it just makes sense that she would have some kind of influence over his decision to join 'The Avengers' team."

With the casting process completed, producer Feige reflects upon his deeply talented cast and his desire to keep their characters grounded in authenticity.

"The great thing about the Marvel Universe is that it takes place in the real world; it's not a fictitious Metropolis," explains Feige. "A big part of this equation is having a team that can deliver that right balance of emotion so that audiences can connect to the human element of the story. We have been rewarded for making those slightly against-the-grain choices in finding the right actor for the job, whether they've ever been in these types of films or not. When I think about the cast in this film from top to bottom, I still get giddy with excitement because they all are fantastic artists who understand what we need in terms of performance and all bring their own unique sensibilities that elevate each of their roles."

## **LOCATING THE ASSEMBLY POINTS**

With the talented cast of "Marvel's The Avengers" preparing for their roles, the filmmaking team was busy securing shooting locations for the film. While the story of "The Avengers" unfolds in New York City, the logistics of staging the massive production entirely in the city proved to be too difficult.

Executive producer Louis D'Esposito explains: "Setting the film in New York City was very important for us. In 'Iron Man' we established Tony Stark on the West Coast with his amazing house in Malibu, but we also wanted him to have Stark Tower in New York City. So having 'The Avengers' set in New York was important, but the question became, 'How do you stage a massive attack and battle in the streets and blow up New York City?' It posed great logistical challenges that we felt we could overcome by shooting in

other cities that could double for New York and piecing it all together with visual effects.”

While the production would shoot a week of exteriors in New York City at the end of the shooting schedule, the filmmakers decided the production would be based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for three months before moving on to locations in Cleveland, Ohio; Wilmington, Ohio; Sandusky, Ohio; Worthington, Pennsylvania; and finishing in New York City.

“We had a great experience in New Mexico shooting on ‘Thor’ and Albuquerque Studios is a world-class facility that was brand-new and could accommodate all of the very large builds we needed to do as well as production support all in one self-contained facility,” explains executive producer Patricia Whitcher. “With so many moving parts in a production like this, it really benefited everyone to have the ability to set up shop and shoot in one location for three months before going on the road for the last portion of the shooting schedule.”

On April 24, 2011, in downtown Albuquerque, “The Avengers” production kicked off its 92-day shooting schedule with a scene in which Nick Fury confronts Steve Rogers in an old boxing gym with a new mission. Despite being faced with the harsh realities that come with being unconscious for 70 years, the mission contains one element of his past that he is all too familiar with—the devastating power of Tesseract.

“I think he would be very hesitant to get back into this world if the content of the mission had been different,” explains Chris Evans. “There isn’t anyone who has had more direct contact with the Tesseract than Steve Rogers. So even though he’s still adjusting and feeling conflicted with his new life, he’s going to give his all to the mission and help. That’s just typical Steve Rogers; he has some things to work out, but he knows his country needs him and he’s willing to give.”

“When the film opens, we see Steve Rogers in the midst of his loneliness and disassociation,” says director Joss Whedon. “He is having a little post-traumatic stress disorder as he has only been out of the ice for about a month and is feeling very isolated. The idea of setting the scene in an old gym was because it is a place where he felt comfortable because it hadn’t really changed over the years. It’s very evocative of the 1940s and the way we lit it felt like ‘The Godfather,’ which is what I really wanted for this scene in which Nick Fury gives Steve Rogers his mission and shows him that the Tesseract is still active.”

## **THE HELICARRIER: HEADQUARTERS OF S.H.I.E.L.D.**



With the first day of work completed, the cast and crew of “The Avengers” moved to Albuquerque studios where the production would be based for 14 weeks. For Joss Whedon and his production team, the first order of business was shooting scenes on the biggest and most iconic set of the film, the Helicarrier, headquarters for S.H.I.E.L.D.

“It’s basically an aircraft carrier in the sky,” says director Whedon. “Throughout the years, the look of the Helicarrier has evolved in the comics, but it was always the idea of this floating fortress. It was part of the bargain in writing the script that it had to be included and I wasn’t about to say no. We had a lot of discussions on figuring out how to make it work, but the streamlined design that our production designer James Chinlund came up with was very sleek and cool, but it also toed the line between fantasy and reality very well.”

The director continues, “The Helicarrier had to be state of the art and visually stunning because it elevates S.H.I.E.L.D. to something other than a bunch of guys in a cave with banks and banks of computers. A good portion of the movie takes place on the Helicarrier and it’s the only place that makes sense when having all of the Avengers there.”

“It’s such a beautiful set to work with and Joss really wanted to explore the architecture of this set as well as the placement with the lighting design,” says cinematographer Seamus McGarvey. “We’ve also tried to give him as much freedom and movement as possible to accommodate all of the cast as they interacted on the Helicarrier. The set was predominantly lit with a lot of practical sources. All of the technician areas are accented with lights on the consoles and some architectural accents along the outer edges.”

“What initially attracted me to my cinematographer Seamus McGarvey was the film he did called ‘Atonement,’” explains Whedon. “It was very studied and everyone’s character in the film had this extremely lovely glow about them that was a bit artificial because the movie has to do with memory and lies. We didn’t want any of that in ‘The Avengers,’ but I wanted a cinematographer that would push me toward something that was more beautiful and elegant. When I say ‘push,’ I mean that he had great ideas. We would discuss lighting setups in very general terms and then he would just make it happen. He just was so dialed in and he could feel the life force of the characters and bring out their internal radiance.”

For the filmmaking team, having the Helicarrier be both functional in the air as well as underwater made the S.H.I.E.L.D. headquarters more plausible as they monitor the world’s safety. “One of the things that was bumping for us early on was the idea that the Helicarrier had been flying around the whole time in the film,” says Kevin Feige. “If there’s an object the size of an aircraft carrier floating above Manhattan, I think the world would know about it and I think Nick Fury would have acknowledged it in our earlier films.”

The producer continues, “There’s already so much we’re throwing at the audience with the idea of S.H.I.E.L.D., the idea of Loki and Thor in Manhattan, the idea of invading evil forces, so we can’t just say, ‘Oh, and on top of that, this whole time there has been this large ship flying around in the sky keeping track of everything.’ So we decided S.H.I.E.L.D. is a crisis response team and we should see the Helicarrier rise up out of the water in a big moment in the film.”

Bringing the massive Helicarrier set to life fell squarely on the plate of production designer Chinlund, who explains the approach he and his team took in updating the iconic S.H.I.E.L.D. headquarters and adapting it for its big screen debut.

“We spent a lot of time trying to distill the essence of the Helicarrier from the various versions throughout the Marvel Universe,” explains Chinlund. “Ultimately, the goal was to create a ship that was completely mind-blowing and massive in its scale, but was also believable as a vehicle that could plausibly exist in today’s military. It was a real challenge creating a vehicle that occupied one-quarter mile of airspace and have the audience accept it as a viable piece of military equipment.”

“The bridge of the Helicarrier is one of the most iconic locations in all of the Marvel Universe and James Chinlund did a spectacular job creating it,” says Feige. “It is one of the largest sets we have ever created on stage because we wanted something that stood apart from anything we had done. We wanted audiences to be able to feel the hustle and bustle of being on a massive ship that is essentially the command center for all of S.H.I.E.L.D. James really infused a unique look and feel to it, which really made it feel original.”

“It’s a pretty awesome set,” exclaims Samuel L. Jackson. “To have my own place of power, where I actually control the ship and control everything that happens on it, is a pretty great feeling. It’s spectacular; it’s kind of wonderful. A lot of people are there running around doing stuff all the time, so it gives me a sense of power and the sense of urgency and business that a big ship like that would have, with all the intelligence gathering and capacities there too.”

Another classic Marvel vehicle, the Quinjet, is also making an appearance in the movie. The Quinjet is essentially the jump jet that The Avengers use to go to and from the Helicarrier and to go into battles. The Quinjet design fits in with the Helicarrier—the same technology that allows the Helicarrier to work has been incorporated into the Quinjet. But at the same time, the silhouette of the Quinjet, the cockpit, the engines on the back and the weaponry make it feel as though it could actually exist.

**AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!**

On Day 11 of the shooting schedule, what some thought could never happen did happen as the entire cast of “The Avengers” assembled for the first time for a scene in which they all find out why Nick Fury has rounded them up. Seeing the entire cast together was an unforgettable moment for the filmmakers, who for years have been shaping the Marvel Universe so that this team of Marvel Super Heroes could unite on one set.

“It really was a special moment seeing everyone together for the first time,” says producer Kevin Feige. “‘The Avengers’ is a cornerstone of Marvel Comics and to bring it to the big screen is quite an accomplishment and it was something the entire cast recognized in the moment and they were all very excited. I know I was giddy just watching at the monitor.”

“There weren’t many days when we had the entire cast on the set at the same time,” adds executive producer Patricia Whitcher. “But the day everyone remembers was the first day they were all together on the Helicarrier. The energy in the room was simply electric. After the first scene, everybody on set just stopped and looked at each other and spontaneously started clapping. It was like, ‘Wow, this is kind of a remarkable thing.’ On days like that, you really feel privileged to do what you do.”

Mark Ruffalo, looking around the room at his fellow Super Heroes in their super costumes, found it natural to feel the uneasiness that Banner felt in the group. “I am in a scruffy linen suit that was bought directly out of a thrift store and I am looking around the room at these impeccable human specimens feeling like a tool and thinking, ‘What am I doing here?’” laughs Ruffalo. “I felt a strange jealousy as I was looking at their cool outfits and strapping bodies. I was purposely told not to put on muscle for the role, so I was the pipsqueak. I longed to have my cool outfit and be part of the team and that is exactly how Bruce Banner is feeling as well.”

Wardrobe insecurities aside, Ruffalo had to overcome another obstacle as the actor was feeling a little overwhelmed on his first day during a scene that involved several pages of scientific dialogue between Bruce Banner and Nick Fury.

“I was nervous because I had a lot of long scientific dialogue,” Ruffalo recalls. “I thought I knew the scene pretty well, but standing next to Sam Jackson and all of the other actors in the cast for the first time, I just kind of fell apart for the first few takes. Thank goodness Sam made a good joke about it, which put me at ease and I was fine after that.”

For Chris Evans, shooting scenes with the entire cast, many of whom the actor grew up idolizing, was a surreal experience. “I’ve stepped outside of myself more with this character than I ever have before,” says Evans. “When we shot our first scene together, I kept thinking about how incredible this experience was. I’ve seen all of the Marvel movies and now I’m just so excited to be a part of Marvel history. I’m so grateful to

come on set and join an ensemble like Robert Downey Jr., Samuel L. Jackson, Chris Hemsworth, Jeremy Renner, Tom Hiddleston and Scarlett Johansson—it's been an amazing ride."

What was also clearly evident in those first scenes was the dynamic chemistry between the cast members and the collaborative atmosphere on the set of the film. Says director Joss Whedon, "The entire cast is very conscious of what everybody else is doing and I love that because as long as I can give them a place where they feel safe to create and try something different, it opens the door to finding unexpected moments that are pure gold."

While The Avengers are a collection of the greatest Super Heroes, they all have their own egos and issues, one of which is working together, something they are not used to doing. Chris Hemsworth says, "As powerful and unique as they are, they're all very different. They're all leaders in their own right when they're thrown together. That's the challenge and the conflict. Who is going to steer this ship, who is in control and when do we put our egos aside? All of us spend time feeling each other out and trying to work out how we fit into the puzzle."

The learning curve is steep when Iron Man and Thor don't agree on how to deal with Loki and they end up on a mountaintop settling their dispute the old-fashioned way—with the exception of a flying hammer and bursts of repulsor rays.

Chris Hemsworth explains, "Thor arrives a little late to the party after The Avengers have captured Loki and he tears the place apart, grabs Loki and disappears. Once they get to the mountaintop, he attempts a heart-to-heart with Loki, but that doesn't end well and Iron Man shows up and they're feeling each other out in an incredibly aggressive way. Thor is surprised by the strength of Iron Man and Captain America's shield and it ends up being a pretty epic battle that basically wipes out the entire mountaintop and forest."

For Chris Evans, shooting his first battle scene of the production with Robert Downey Jr. and Chris Hemsworth in their full armor as Iron Man and Thor was an experience he will always remember. "For that scene, we were shooting nights on this beautiful, wooded mountaintop with Iron Man and Thor duking it out. And then being the peacekeeper that he is, Captain America goes and tries to break them up," says Chris Evans. "This was actually the first time I'd seen Chris Hemsworth walk on set in full costume with the long red cape. And then Robert Downey Jr. comes on set in his full Iron Man armor. I remember thinking how much they both embodied their characters in costume. It was such a cool moment for me, standing there next to them both, because all of a sudden I felt like my Captain America suit took on new meaning. I felt that I was a part of something much bigger."

For Hemsworth, working alongside Downey was as equally exciting. "Robert is just a

fantastic actor and he is certainly the godfather of ‘The Avengers,’” proclaims Hemsworth. “He started it all with ‘Iron Man’ and there were a number of times when I’ve asked him how he navigates this. Or what do you think of this? He is always very gracious and open with giving advice, which is really helpful.”

## **STUNT TRAINING WITH THE AVENGERS**

With the script of “Marvel’s The Avengers” containing several major fight sequences, stunt coordinator R.A. Rondell set up a facility in Albuquerque where his stunt team could come every day to stretch out together, go through hand and weapon drills and choreograph the fights in the film. The facility also gave cast members access to train with fight choreographer Jonathan Eusebio and learn the various fighting techniques required for their roles. Nicknamed the “Stunt Dojo,” Eusebio and his team trained the cast members in different fighting styles including, Wushu, Kung fu, medieval fighting techniques and Kali. All of the training paid off immensely as the filmmakers were thrilled to see the actors performing confidently in all of the fighting sequences.

For Scarlett Johansson, the experience she had on “Iron Man 2” proved to be an invaluable reference in her preparation for “The Avengers.” “Stunts and fights are a huge part of my work on this film and being able to have a fighting style that audiences remember from ‘Iron Man 2’ is awesome,” explains Johansson. “Jonathan Eusebio created and choreographed the style and look of the movements and Heidi MoneyMaker, my stunt double, helped me learn them. What they both did for me is so important because it is just as much a creation of the character as whatever dramatic work I put into the job.”

“We wanted to make Black Widow very fluid and acrobatic,” says fight choreographer Jonathan Eusebio. “Wushu, a Chinese fighting style, works well for her body mechanics. It’s very graceful but requires a lot of strength and flexibility. You are also going to see Black Widow executing more sacrifice throws and using a variety of weapons. The game has changed and so has her skill set. She had to learn entirely new things and for her to deal with the various weapons like the ones we gave her was very difficult. She trained very hard and pulled off great performances on game day.”

Johansson agrees with her choreographer’s view on the high difficulty level of learning the new fighting techniques. “We definitely embraced Wushu a lot and there’s definitely more weaponry. It was a bit complicated because I could pick up all the hand- to-hand movements pretty well, but then he would say, ‘Oh yeah, here’s this giant staff you have to be holding while you’re doing the movements.’ So I am like, ‘Wait a minute, I had all those movements down and now I’m fighting with a 20 lb. giant stick?’ I have to be honest, the first time I saw what they had in mind, I was like, ‘I’m never going to be able to learn this.’ So it’s just a lot of failures until you get it right, but boy do those failures hurt sometimes!”

“Scarlett did an amazing amount of training in preparation as well as during production,” says R.A. Rondell. “She came to the stunt gym on a regular basis and really worked hard with Heidi and Jonathan to learn all of the new moves and fighting techniques. She had a great base from what she had learned on ‘Iron Man 2,’ so we were able to hit the ground running and teach her much more complex moves and sequences and add weaponry into the mix.”

“Scarlett worked so hard on the film to keep in great shape and that’s not easy when you have to go to the gym at 4 a.m. so you can be in makeup at 5 a.m.,” says executive producer Patricia Whitcher. “On other days, she would go straight from the gym to stunt training and then go work a full day, so it’s not all glamorous like people think. It’s really hard work to pull off these kinds of moves in a convincing fashion so that the audience sees it’s really Scarlett in there fighting.”

Another stunt gym attendee was Tom Hiddleston, who had to learn the most fight sequences of any cast member for his epic battles and action sequences with all of The Avengers. For Hiddleston, it was all about putting in the practice time so when it came time for him to step on set and square off against Captain America or Thor, it was like second nature.

“I have bruises all over my body, but it’s called ‘The Avengers’ and if it wasn’t action-packed, we’ve failed to do our jobs,” says Hiddleston. “We have the greatest stunt team in the world led by R.A. Rondell and Jon Eusebio, so the first thing I did when I got to Albuquerque was hit the stunt gym. I started going through the movements and as I did more and more, I started reconnecting to the character because I believe how you move informs everyone of who you are.”

The actor continues, “I love shooting action because my brain switches off and it’s almost like a dance once you get the moves down. All you have to do then is add in the emotion of throwing or catching a punch and it almost becomes a very Zen-like experience. So by the time you get to the day of shooting a fight between Loki and Captain America, hopefully the preparation and training kick in and it becomes about the simplicity of execution.”

Another challenge for Hiddleston was his wardrobe in the film, which looked amazing but weighed him down significantly during his action sequences. “The stunt training was my way of evolving Loki from who he was in ‘Thor’ and creating a new sense of danger in that he is physically stronger and more dangerous,” says Hiddleston. “I did all kinds of martial arts training: Wushu, boxing, lots of stick and staff work, knife work and hand-to-hand combat. There were also a lot of daily repetition drills that condition your body and muscle memory. That’s how you learn to jump off a building, fly through the air, barely miss Chris Hemsworth’s head and get slammed to the ground on your back, pick

yourself up and repeat the same motion 12 times over the course of a day in a costume of leather and metal that weighs 40 pounds.”

Thor and Loki square off against each other for an intense brother-against-brother battle on the balcony of Stark Tower. “We were trying to design the fight so it had a big-brother-versus-little-brother mentality,” says fight choreographer Eusebio. “Thor wants to take Loki home without harming him, while Loki wants to approach the fight with deadly intentions. As the fight continues, emotions escalate and the stakes get bigger. Thor becomes really angry and the fight becomes very brutal at its conclusion.”

Hiddleston expands on the battle of brothers: “Each of us has a particular weapon and skill and in this fight it’s Loki’s scepter up against Thor’s hammer. Thor uses his hammer like a boxing glove and Loki uses his scepter in more of a Wushu way. But after a little bit, Thor drops his hammer, Loki drops his scepter, and it’s just two brothers fighting sloppy and nasty.”

Hemsworth explains how he approached learning the choreography for the scene. “The thing about fighting on film is that you have to ratchet up the intensity as opposed to the speed. So we were just taking it beat by beat in super slow motion with no emotion and then as the moves start to sink in, you can speed it up to what it needs to be.”

Both Hiddleston and Hemsworth enjoyed doing many of their stunts. “As a cinephile and movie lover, I get such a kick when you see an actor flying across the screen and you know that it’s the real actor who’s done the stunt,” says Hiddleston. “I hate when they just cut around a stunt double and you just see the back of the actor’s head. I don’t want to see the back of my head, so I am always ready to get in there and mix it up with the stunt team.”

“I enjoy doing my own stunts when I can because I know it adds so much to the final product,” adds Hemsworth. “You get the blood pumping and adrenaline going, but the reality is that you can be super-athletic, but there’s no real athletic ability that prevents you from smashing headfirst into a wall sometimes. It’s just one of those things that hurts a bit, but you get up, brush yourself off and do it again. It’s fun and certainly breaks up the day.”

For director Whedon, seeing his actors’ willingness to do as many stunts as possible ultimately adds many more layers of performance to the finished product.

“The more I can show my actors’ faces during action sequences, the more audiences will be invested and root for our heroes,” says Whedon. “The minute you see a shot that is obviously not your actor is the moment audiences disconnect from a scene. I was very fortunate that we had an amazing stunt team and that so many of our actors worked their butts off in preparing for the film and stayed dedicated to putting the time in at

the stunt gym when we were shooting. I really think they are all going to be very happy when they see those scenes cut together.”

## **MEAN & GREEN: THE HULK**

One of the great unknowns for the filmmakers in making “The Avengers” was how they were going to handle the character of Bruce Banner when he turns into The Hulk. In previous incarnations with actors Eric Bana and Edward Norton, Bruce Banner and The Hulk were two separate entities with the latter being a completely CGI character void of any physical connection to the actor.

Joss Whedon explains the approach taken in developing the complex character. “We wanted to create a Hulk that had never been done before,” says the director. “In the comics, Bruce Banner and The Hulk didn’t look the same. On the television show, they were different actors and they’ve always been an actor and a CGI creature in the films, but now with the advancements of motion capture technology, we wanted Mark Ruffalo to play both sides of the character.”

The director continues, “Very early on, we decided to build The Hulk’s face off of Mark’s [Ruffalo], not just in terms of what he was going to do movement-wise in playing the character, but also the actual physicality of it, including the bone structure and contours of the eyes and mouth. We really wanted to bridge the gap between the characters so that when he turns into The Hulk, you go, ‘Oh my God, that’s Bruce Banner! Only he is big and green and very angry!’”

Mark Ruffalo reveals one aspect of The Hulk that is different from previous incarnations. “In a lot of the other versions of the character, The Hulk grew in size drastically, but in ‘The Avengers’ he is always going to be about eight and a half feet tall,” says the actor. “He gets stronger as he gets angrier, but he doesn’t really grow much taller.”

“We wanted to incorporate more of the actor than ever before so that the face and mannerisms of The Hulk come from Mark Ruffalo’s face,” says producer Kevin Feige. “We have never done this before, but it was a tremendous help in making audiences feel Bruce Banner and The Hulk were one and the same. When he turns into The Hulk, all of the goodwill we get from a very likable Bruce Banner goes into him and you get more expression, more character and more emotion than we have ever gotten out of the character.”

“When I found out there was a whole new arena of technology that would allow an actor to play what has always been a CGI character, I thought it could be something cool to try my hand at,” says Ruffalo. “It’s a game changer for The Hulk because it’s hard to



capture real anger in a CGI character. Anger is something that's deep and primordial. There are so many subtleties and variations to it, so this idea of bringing a darker, more humanistic Hulk was really exciting and compelling."

The filmmakers brought on Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), which worked with visual effects supervisor Janek Sirrs in creating a new version of the character that would incorporate Bruce Banner into the rage and anger of The Hulk. For Whedon, infusing every layer of Mark Ruffalo's performance into The Hulk was essential in creating the look and feel of the character.

"There are a million things we can build off of from Mark, but at the end of the day, the CGI Hulk needed to feel like flesh and blood, but at the same time had to express everything more dramatically than a human being is going to," says Whedon. "So there have been times when ILM is building off Mark's performance and I see it and say, 'We need to take this further; his mouth needs to be opened wider, his head needs to snap quicker.' All these things had to be augmented in order for them to read as pure Hulk, but they had to come from the basis of reality."

For Ruffalo, playing both sides of his character meant spending a lot of time at ILM going through the technical processes involved in creating motion capture. Ruffalo explains how his background in theater helped him with the technical side of the character.

"There are many different steps in creating this version of The Hulk," says Ruffalo. "It was interesting to me how relatable it is to theater, which is the oldest form of acting. As a theater actor, you walk onto a black box and there is nothing to live off of, so you really have to rely on your imagination and you have to put things out there that aren't there."

The actor continues, "Theater was my training as an actor and when they put me in this tiny little pod with thousands of cameras and lights all around and I could only move my head, I was able to use my imagination to put myself in the circumstance of fighting Thor or any other being."

Another aspect of the process that Ruffalo enjoyed was the first glimpse of what he would look like as The Hulk on the big screen.

"We went into a space that was as big as a warehouse with a ton of cameras all around and ILM put a motion capture suit on me," says Ruffalo. "There was this four-by-six foot monitor. You step out in front of it and incredibly you see The Hulk looking back at you."

"Every movement you make, you see The Hulk making the same movement in the monitor, so the image starts to tell you how the character stands and behaves," Ruffalo explains. "You also see that the body can only move certain ways, so you're creating the

character based on the physical presence that's in front of you, which was really exciting and challenging."

Expounding on this unique experience, the actor says, "I spent several days there and we went through fights, like Hulk against Thor, and I would simulate the fight with one of ILM's animators for three hours. They took all the information of our movements, put it into a computer and that becomes the basis for The Hulk. It's very complex, methodical, and in a lot of ways, a really nascent technology."

"It really is amazing what ILM can do now with this technology," says executive producer Jeremy Latcham. "It really opened the door for this character and enabled us to make the character more synergistic with how we want our Super Heroes to be in our films."

"It's a creature, but it also feels human and I'm thrilled by it," praises Mark Ruffalo. "My experience in a lot of these types of films is that you feel like you're watching two movies—the CGI movie and the human portion. But now we're free as actors through this technology and audiences can stay connected and track the character for the entire film."

## **AVENGERS REASSEMBLE**

On July 28, 2011, "The Avengers" wrapped its production schedule in Albuquerque and traveled to Wilmington, Ohio, to begin a five-week shooting schedule in the state. The cast and crew didn't have to go far to reach their first shooting location as the company's charter flight landed on set at Clinton County Air Park. The location, a massive complex with a 9000-foot airport runway and a 1 million square-foot, state-of-the-art shipping facility, would double for parts of the interior of the Helicarrier set.

For executive producer Jeremy Latcham, the massive scope and high-tech look of the facility allowed the production to shoot the visual textures it needed to match what the production had already captured on stage in Albuquerque.

"We needed a location that was very big and could accommodate large military vehicles, but still felt like it could be inside of a Helicarrier," explains Latcham. "It also needed to feel high-tech and easily integrated into the production design that we already established on the Helicarrier."

"The scope of the Air Park facility was amazing, so we just built into the existing structures and took advantage of the real textures, pipes, gratings, railings, catwalks and overhangs throughout the location," adds production designer James Chinlund.

“I was really thrilled with the look of the set,” says director Whedon. “James did a great job integrating what we needed into the practical location. It was seamless and you really couldn’t tell the difference between what was real and what we built. It also gave the actors a real environment to play within and anytime you can do that, you’re going to get more visceral performances.”

While the production’s first-unit crew was shooting sequences in Wilmington, Ohio, its second-unit crew was shooting a chase sequence in Worthington, Pennsylvania, at Creekside Mushroom Farms—the former home to world famous Moonlight® brand mushrooms. The facility is the world’s largest single-site mushroom farm and the only underground mushroom farm in the United States with over 150 miles of abandoned limestone tunnels encompassing 800 acres beneath the surface. It is recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records for its size and is unique in that all of the mushrooms are grown and harvested underground in complete darkness.

“The Avengers” is the first production to shoot in the facility, which provided the filmmakers complete access to the 150 miles of tunnels 300 feet below the ground. One of the challenges for the production in prepping the tunnels was rigging lights and power throughout them for the chase sequences that involved Loki, Agent Coulson and Agent Maria Hill. The task took months, but paid off in spades, as the set was so impressive that the buzz reached all the way back to the first unit.

“It was just extraordinary down there,” says Tom Hiddleston (Loki). “We were shooting a chase scene with about fifteen SUVs, driving 50 mph up and down the tunnels. I was loosely strapped to the back of the truck, and there’s just no substitute for the real experience. It feels exciting, dangerous and dramatic and you can feel the energy and dynamism of the shot. I think the sequence is going to be extraordinary. Personally, I let everyone know on first unit that it was probably one of the coolest locations I have ever shot in.”

Giving chase to Loki in the tunnel sequence is Agent Maria Hill, who is trying to catch him before he escapes the S.H.I.E.L.D compound. As with Hiddleston, Cobie Smulders shared her co-star’s excitement in being able to get into the action while shooting in the unique location. “I had to drive this huge military truck with no doors, which was a little scary, but after a few takes I was leaning out of the vehicle and shooting my gun,” says Smulders. “It was just so much fun. They kept telling me, ‘We got it,’ but I was having so much fun, I kept asking for more takes.”

## **STUNTS AND EXPLOSIONS: CLEVELAND ROCKS!**

With the production in the home stretch of the shooting schedule, the cast and crew of “The Avengers” began its work in Cleveland, Ohio, for the biggest action sequences in

the film. In the scene, unknown evil forces attack New York City, culminating with a massive strafing run of explosions on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. In order to pull off such a huge sequence, the production shut down East 9<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Cleveland for four weeks to prep and shoot the scene. Shutting down a main artery into downtown is not an easy task but the filmmakers worked closely with the city and state for many months in preparation for the shoot.

“When we presented our plan to the city of Cleveland, we brought a rendering that showed a picture of the street with the massive destruction and we said, ‘This is what we need to accomplish,’” recalls executive producer Louis D’Esposito. “It was quite daunting at first when you look at it and the collective reaction in the room was silence, then one word, ‘Wow.’ But then we took them through it one step at a time and showed how we would protect the streets and storefronts. They were very cooperative and let us do what we needed to do from day one.”

“We couldn’t thank the Governor’s office, the Mayor’s office and Greater Cleveland Film Commissioner Ivan Schwarz enough, because without all of their support and coordinated efforts, we never could have attempted such a massive setup on several downtown city blocks,” adds executive producer Patricia Whitcher. “The city was extremely accommodating, providing everything we needed. It was a pleasure to shoot there.”

In preparing for the sequence, the first order of business for the production was turning blocks of East 9<sup>th</sup> Street into the hustle and bustle of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in New York City. With most of the businesses on the street empty, production designer James Chinlund had his hands full building dozens of new storefronts into the existing buildings in a very short period of time.

“It was great working with the city of Cleveland and they were very helpful,” says Chinlund. “It was a huge advantage shooting in the downtown area, because it gave us all this texture to start with. Visually, East 9<sup>th</sup> Street is a great-looking street and its footprint is a virtual dead match for New York’s 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.”

Chinlund and his crew did such a great job recreating the New York City street that it was the talk of the town for months and attracted thousands of curious onlookers, who watched the street transform from empty buildings into a bustling New York City street complete with subway stop and popular storefronts with facades. The production design and set dressing was so convincing that locals were heard expressing their excitement about the new stores that were opening on the block.

Chinlund also had to make sure his production design was in sync with all the other departments on the film, so that they could all safely perform what they needed to when shooting the explosive action sequence.

“There was lots and lots of planning with the city and within our own departments involved in preparing for this sequence,” informs Chinlund. “We built a model of it many months ago and it showed where the gags were going to be and where the stuntmen and stuntwomen would be running. Although it looks simplistic, the model really helps inform everyone of what’s expected and how to prepare for it.”

“When you’re combining visual effects with a location, there has to be a seamless connection between the two,” explains producer Kevin Feige. “We like to take real structures and obviously real cars and any real element that we can use and then enhance them with visual effects. We don’t want the visual effects team to lead and that’s our philosophy. The ideal is 100% real and then the compromises are everything after that. James Chinlund did a great job designing the street because there is very little that we will have to enhance with visual effects.”

Director Whedon liked the fact that Cleveland had a lot of the same style of architecture as New York City and describes the scene. “It starts out with a frozen moment, where the people of New York are confronted with unrecognizable evil forces for the first time, so they’ve all stopped their cars and gotten out to figure out what’s going on,” says the director. “Then all of a sudden there is a huge strafing run, where they come down and start blowing up the street. There are cars exploding and flipping, people running for their lives and then a battle ensues between The Avengers and the evil forces.”

For the strafing run, special effects supervisor Dan Sudick and his team set up precision pyrotechnics and well-timed car gags so that the production’s stunt people could safely maneuver. To pull off the large pyrotechnic event, Sudick and his team rigged 28 explosions that went off in a wave fashion down the street to simulate an air attack. The sequence also included setting up 21 cars down the middle of the street, which included cannon cars, flipper cars and pyro cars, as well as a big semi truck that would explode. In total, there were 50 cars rigged for the sequence.

Coordinating all the pyrotechnics and explosions safely in a pretty tight space is all in a day’s work for Sudick who describes how he prepared for the sequence. “The first step for us is figuring out how the sequence fits into the environment and then it becomes dealing with the street closures, utilities companies and finding out what is under the street, so when we anchor the cars into it, we don’t get into high voltage power lines or gas lines,” explains Sudick. “It also helped that we had access to the buildings on the street and were able to put our equipment in them and lock them up. We also had to cover all the windows with Lexan to protect them during the explosions.”

Other challenges for Sudick and his team were coordinating and filtering information to the many departments involved. “Stunts, camera, construction, art, locations, set dressing all come into play when you’re shooting a scene like this, so there really has to be an organized and open line of communication between all departments,” says Sudick. “For example, with the stunt and camera department, we rehearsed to figure

out what the good camera positions were in order to see a lot of the action. Then, it's meeting with the stunt department to see how we can integrate stunts into these areas of action. Then, we'll figure out whether we need to tone something down or bring something up."

"At Marvel, Dan Sudick is the gold standard when it comes to special effects," proclaims executive producer Jeremy Latcham. "He's been with us since 'Iron Man' and there are two things you want to accomplish when shooting a scene like this: the first is for it to be a spectacle that can be seamlessly integrated with visual effects and the other is for it to be done safely. With Dan, you get the best of both worlds as he always delivers the spectacle that's required and we can sleep at night knowing that it's going to be taken care of and everyone will be safe."

On Monday, August 15, all the months of hard work and preparation paid off as Sudick and his team pulled off the impressive sequence without a hitch, and even though it was shot on East 9<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Cleveland, it still made the cover of The New York Post with the headline of "Save us, Thor!"

"Yeah, today we blew up the whole world," laughs director Joss Whedon. "I don't remember writing anything quite as big as what we shot. I don't think anybody was left alive, including 'The Avengers,' so that might turn out to be a problem later on."

The director continues, "It was a pretty exciting day. We ran about 15 cameras, flipped and exploded countless cars; it was just an orgy of destruction. This is not the kind of thing I usually do, but we managed to get some humanity in the middle of it as well. So it's not just all spectacle, but my God, what a spectacle it was."

Capturing the spectacle fell squarely in the capable hands of Academy Award®-nominated cinematographer Seamus McGarvey, who describes the camera setups for the strafing run. "We had four Aerial Alexas set up in various positions and we also shot slow motion on Arri 435s," says McGarvey. "In addition, we had five Canon EOS 5D Mark IIs and two Canon EOS 7Ds and they were just invaluable as we were able to put them in areas where we couldn't place a conventional camera."

McGarvey continues, "Although we put the Canon cameras in some very precarious positions, we didn't lose any. We had really great housings made to protect the camera, which allowed us to get close-up shots of taxis flipping through the air towards us. I also gave a stuntman one of the Canons and he was running with the camera, so you get a real sense of jeopardy and immersion in a stunt that is usually conventionally seen from outside of the action. With these cameras, we can provide a real immersive experience."

The following day, the production shot the aftermath of the strafing run and Whedon enlisted the help of 25 members of the Ohio-based 391<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion. The troops were brought in to add a layer of authenticity and give the combat scenes "great

realism,” says Lt. Col. John Clearwater, deputy director for OCPA-LA (U.S. Army, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs). “It’s a tribute to the U.S. Army Reserves and the veteran 391<sup>st</sup> MP Battalion. They rocked the streets of Cleveland with their 50-caliber machine guns and Mark-19s. The film crew was blown away by their firepower and teamwork.”

Director Whedon was also impressed and appreciative as he posed for pictures with the battalion after the scene was completed. “I was really happy that I was able to get them into the film,” says Whedon. “It’s a small part, but it adds so much to a scene when you have the real thing. They know how to carry and shoot a gun and take over a street that is being attacked and they did a fantastic job.”

Throughout the entire shooting schedule of “The Avengers,” there was one common denominator in the cast that you could count on—each character would have his moment against the evil trickery of Loki. Tom Hiddleston comments, “Loki goes toe-to-toe with Tony Stark, Nick Fury, Captain America, Thor, The Hulk, Black Widow and Hawkeye. It’s been absolutely amazing working with these actors. They’re some of the greatest actors and icons in their own right. It’s like being in the best kind of superhero rock band you could possibly hope for.”

Hiddleston’s Avengers co-stars were equally as excited about their experiences on the film. “When do you ever get to see this group of actors come together in this kind of fantasy world?” asks Scarlett Johansson. “For me, getting to work with everyone was just so incredibly rewarding. ‘The Avengers’ is a throwback to what people loved in the original ‘Iron Man,’ but with a sci-fi infusion. It is everything that Joss loves about sci-fi, which is being able to escape into this ultimate otherworldly reality, but still be heartfelt and sincere.”

“Sometimes in the moment on this film, the gravity of the situation would hit me and I would catch myself thinking, ‘What a sweet deal this is,’” says Robert Downey Jr. “I think more and more now that I’m 46, I should be in this phase of my development where you appreciate things while they’re happening. This is one of the first times I really had that feeling throughout the production and it just was a lot of fun to work and hang out with everyone.”

## **NEW YORK: AVENGERS DISASSEMBLE**

With the production completing its work in Cleveland, Ohio, it headed east to New York City for its final days of shooting. With the story of “The Avengers” set in New York, the entire cast re-assembled one last time for a scene in Central Park.

“Movies are not usually shot in order, but finishing in New York allowed us to shoot the last scene of the movie on essentially the last day of production with the whole cast in Central Park,” says producer Kevin Feige. “So half of the day was making sure we got the

scene perfect, and the other half was saying goodbye before we meet again down the line at the premiere.”

While shooting in Central Park is never easy, how about when you put the entire cast of “The Avengers” at Bethesda Fountain on Labor Day weekend? The cast, crew and filmmakers found out firsthand as thousands of onlookers got to see something that held the attention of even the most hardened New Yorker—the entire cast of the Avengers in costume, including Thor and Loki in their Asgardian finest. For the actors, it would be first time they were all on set together in over a month and also the last time they would be together.

For director Whedon, the challenge would be to keep his cast focused. “It was like a circus crossed with a class reunion,” laughs Whedon. “Paparazzi and fans were everywhere and the cast was so happy to see each other, talk and catch up. So I just tried to keep the cameras rolling as much as possible because I knew when we cut it was going to be a while to reset.”

“What’s great is we’re at a point now where almost every character has his own franchise and fans,” says Feige. “So you have all these little kids looking up and seeing Chris Hemsworth and yelling ‘Thor!’ and seeing Chris Evans and going ‘CAP!’ and of course Robert Downey’s reach spans the world over and even with Jeremy Renner, people are now starting to know that he’s Hawkeye and the feeling is that Mark Ruffalo is being embraced as the new Bruce Banner. I know it was tough on Joss who was just trying keep everyone focused, but it was pretty amazing to just have them all together in Central Park and watch people go ballistic when they walked by.”

On September 5, 2011 in New York City, production wrapped. The filmmakers reflect upon the creative journey they had taken with the cast and crew of “The Avengers.”

“In our films, we try to tell a great story that is packed with emotion,” says executive producer Louis D’Esposito. “So when the audiences are cheering or they are laughing or they are crying, it’s because they are connected to the characters in the story. When we hear those sounds in the movie theater, there is no better feeling and we know we did our jobs well. I feel with ‘The Avengers,’ audiences are really going to respond to the grounded human side of the story as well as the sneaky humor in the film.”

“I’m from New York, so it was great to be back and shoot all over the city,” says Whedon. “It just feels right to be ending in a place we’ve been replicating for so long. It was an amazing experience and I love every member of my cast.

“I’m less tired on day 92 than I was on day one and that is a tribute to the hard-working cast and crew of ‘The Avengers.’ If audiences enjoy this film as much as we did making it, then I think we’re going to be in good shape,” concludes Whedon.



"All I have ever wanted to do in my 10 years at Marvel is give fans a film where there is an event so big and catastrophic that it requires all of these heroes to stop what they are doing, join together and get along long enough to fight back as a single unit in order to accomplish their mission," concludes Feige. "Getting 'The Avengers,' together on the big screen is beyond my wildest dreams and is certainly a career highlight for me."

"Marvel's The Avengers" releases May 4, 2012, and is distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

**ROBERT DOWNEY JR. (Tony Stark/Iron Man)**, a two-time Academy Award® nominee, earned his most recent Oscar® nomination for Best Supporting Actor for his work in Ben Stiller's comedy hit "Tropic Thunder." His performance as Kirk Lazarus, a white Australian actor playing a black American character, also brought him Golden Globe®, BAFTA Award and Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award® nominations. Downey was honored with his first Oscar nomination, in the category of Best Actor, for his portrayal of Charlie Chaplin in Richard Attenborough's acclaimed 1992 biopic "Chaplin," for which he also won BAFTA and London Film Critics Awards and received a Golden Globe Award nomination.

In 2010, Downey received a Golden Globe® Award for his performance in the title role of the 2009 hit "Sherlock Holmes," under the direction of Guy Ritchie. Downey returned to the role of the legendary detective in a new Sherlock Holmes adventure, "A Game of Shadows," released in December 2011.

In the summer of 2008, Downey received praise from critics and audiences for his performance in the title role of the blockbuster hit "Iron Man," under the direction of Jon Favreau. Bringing the Marvel Comics superhero to the big screen, "Iron Man" earned more than \$585 million worldwide, making it one of the year's biggest hits. Downey reprised his role in the successful sequel, which was released in May 2010 and eclipsed the first film with \$624 million worldwide at the box office.

Downey's other recent films include "Due Date," opposite Zach Galifianakis; "The Soloist," opposite Jamie Foxx; "Charlie Bartlett"; David Fincher's "Zodiac," alongside Jake Gyllenhaal and Mark Ruffalo; Richard Linklater's "A Scanner Darkly," with Keanu Reeves, Winona Ryder and Woody Harrelson; "Fur," opposite Nicole Kidman, in a film inspired by the life of revered photographer Diane Arbus; and "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang." He also shared in a SAG Award® nomination as a member of the ensemble cast of George Clooney's true-life drama "Good Night, and Good Luck.," and in a Special Jury Prize won by the ensemble cast of "A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints," presented at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival.

Downey's long list of film credits also includes "Gothika"; "The Singing Detective"; Curtis Hanson's "Wonder Boys"; "U.S. Marshals"; Mike Figgis' "One Night Stand"; Jodie Foster's "Home for the Holidays"; "Richard III"; Oliver Stone's "Natural Born Killers"; Robert Altman's "The Gingerbread Man" and "Short Cuts," sharing in a Golden Globe® Award for Best Ensemble for the latter; "Heart and Souls"; "Soapdish"; "Air America"; "Chances Are"; "True Believer"; "Less Than Zero"; "Weird Science"; "Firstborn" and "Pound," in which he made his debut under the direction of Robert Downey Sr.

On the small screen, Downey made his primetime debut in 2001 when he joined the cast of the series "Ally McBeal." For his work on the show, he won the Golden Globe® Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Series, Miniseries or Motion Picture Made for Television and a Screen Actors Guild Award® for Outstanding Actor in a Comedy Series. In addition, Downey was nominated for an Emmy® for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series.

In November 2004, Downey released his debut album, "The Futurist," through Sony Classical. The album, containing eight original songs, showcased his singing talents.

Downey and his wife Susan recently formed Team Downey, a production company based at Warner Bros.

**CHRIS EVANS (Steve Rogers/Captain America)** was recently seen starring in Joe Johnston's highly anticipated action adventure "Captain America: The First Avenger" as the famed Marvel Comics character, Steve Rogers, who transforms into Captain America after volunteering for a top-secret research project in hopes of defending America's ideals. The film has grossed over \$369 million at the box office worldwide since it opened on July 22, 2011.

Evans also recently starred in Adam and Mark Kassen's indie film "Puncture." Evans portrays a drug addict who becomes involved in a legal battle between a safety-needle inventor and a monopolizing medical supply corporation. The film, based on a true story, was released on September 23, 2011.

Evans recently wrapped production on Ariel Vromen's drama "The Iceman," based on the Anthony Bruno book about Richard Kuklinski, a contract killer for the mob. Michael Shannon plays Kuklinski, aka The Iceman, and Evans plays his mentor, Robert Pronge.

Raised in Massachusetts, Evans began his acting career in theater before moving to New York where he studied at the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. In 2007, Evans reprised the role of Johnny Storm, aka The Human Torch, in the summer action hit, "Fantastic 4: Rise of the Silver Surfer," which had him re-team with his original "Fantastic Four" castmates Jessica Alba, Michael Chiklis and Ioan Gruffudd.

Other film credits include Mark Mylod's comedy "What's Your Number?" opposite Anna Faris, Edgar Wright's action comedy, "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" opposite Michael Cera; Sylvain White's "The Losers" with Jeffrey Dean Morgan and Zoe Saldana; "Push" opposite Dakota Fanning; "Street Kings" with Keanu Reeves and Forest Whitaker; Danny Boyle's critically acclaimed "Sunshine"; "The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond"; "Cellular"; "The Perfect Score"; "Fierce People" and the romantic drama "London." Evans' first cinematic role was in the 2001 hit comedic spoof, "Not Another Teen Movie."

Actor/director/producer/writer **MARK RUFFALO'S (Bruce Banner/The Hulk)** performance opposite Academy Award® nominee Laura Linney in Kenneth Lonergan's "You Can Count on Me" earned him an Independent Spirit Award nomination; the New Generation Award from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association; and Best Actor honors at the 2000 Montréal World Film Festival.

He recently starred opposite Leonardo DiCaprio in Martin Scorsese's "Shutter Island"; Steve Carell and Tina Fey in "Date Night"; Julianne Moore in "The Kids Are All Right"; Anna Paquin in "Margaret"; and Catherine Keener in "Where the Wild Things Are."

Ruffalo is currently in production on "Now You See Me," with Isla Fisher, Morgan Freeman and Woody Harrelson and will next film "Can a Song Save Your Life?" with Scarlett Johansson.

His feature directorial debut, "Sympathy for Delicious," received its world premiere and won a Special Jury Prize at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival. The independently made film stars Orlando Bloom, Laura Linney, Juliette Lewis and Ruffalo.

Among his other films as actor are Brian Goodman's "What Doesn't Kill You"; David Fincher's "Zodiac"; Michel Gondry's Academy Award®-winning "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"; Rian Johnson's "The Brothers Bloom"; Fernando Meirelles' "Blindness" with Julianne Moore; Michael Mann's "Collateral"; Terry George's "Reservation Road"; Isabel Coixet's "My Life Without Me"; Jane Campion's "In the Cut"; Gary Winick's "13 Going on 30"; Mark Waters' "Just Like Heaven"; Steven Zaillian's "All the King's Men"; Austin Chick's "XX/YY"; John Woo's "Windtalkers"; Rod Lurie's "The Last Castle"; and Ang Lee's "Ride With the Devil."

Ruffalo co-wrote the screenplay for Michael Hacker's independent feature "The Destiny of Marty Fine," which was first runner-up at the Slamdance Film Festival; has directed several plays, including Timothy McNeil's Margaret (at the Hudson Backstage Theatre in Los Angeles), and executive-produced John Curran's independent feature "We Don't Live Here Anymore," in which he starred with Laura Dern, Peter Krause and Naomi Watts.

Ruffalo made his Broadway debut in Bartlett Sher's revival of Clifford Odets' "Awake and Sing!" and received a Tony® Award nomination. In January 2010, he reprised the role in five performances of the play for L.A. Theatre Works, which recorded each performance for broadcast on its nationally syndicated radio theater series.

Australian actor **CHRIS HEMSWORTH (Thor)**, who starred in the title role of Thor in Kenneth Branagh's highly anticipated and well-received film version of the Marvel comic book "Thor," has become one of the most sought after actors in Hollywood. After "Marvel's The Avengers," where he reprises his role of Thor, Hemsworth stars in Universal's "Snow White and the Huntsman," opposite Kristen Stewart and Charlize Theron.

Hemsworth next stars in the lead role in Ron Howard's drama, "Rush," in which he plays British Formula One driver, James Hunt. He recently starred in the Joss Whedon-scripted "The Cabin in the Woods" and also stars in Dan Bradley's remake of "Red Dawn" in the role originated by Patrick Swayze.

Hemsworth made his U.S. film debut in J.J. Abrams' "Star Trek," playing the pivotal role of George Kirk, alongside Chris Pine and Zoe Saldana. He also starred in Relativity Media/Rogue Pictures' "A Perfect Getaway," opposite Timothy Olyphant.

Hemsworth was born and raised in Australia.

Four-time Golden Globe® nominee and BAFTA winner, **SCARLETT JOHANSSON (Natasha Romanoff/Black Widow)** has proven to be one of Hollywood's most talented young actresses. Recently, she won critical acclaim and a Tony® for her Broadway debut in the Arthur Miller play, "A View from the Bridge," opposite Liev Schreiber. She was recently seen in the Cameron Crowe film "We Bought a Zoo" and in the box office hit "Iron Man 2," playing the role of Black Widow. She recently wrapped production on the independent film "Under the Skin" for director Jonathan Glazer ("Sexy Beast"), playing the lead role.

Johansson received rave reviews and a Best Actress Award at the Venice Film Festival for her starring role opposite Bill Murray in "Lost in Translation," the critically acclaimed second film by director Sofia Coppola. She was seen in the box office hit "He's Just Not That Into You." She also starred in the Woody Allen film "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" and played Mary Boleyn in "The Other Boleyn Girl."

In 2009, Johansson released her second studio album of duets with Pete Yorn called "Break Up," which has received multi-platinum status. Before that, she released the album, "Anywhere I Lay My Head," a collection of Tom Waits covers, featuring one original song.

At the age of 12, Johansson attained worldwide recognition for her performance as Grace MacLean, the teen traumatized by a riding accident in Robert Redford's "The Horse Whisperer." She went on to star in Terry Zwigoff's "Ghost World," garnering a Best Supporting Actress award from the Toronto Film Critics Association. Johansson was also featured in the Coen Brothers' dark drama "The Man Who Wasn't There," opposite Billy Bob Thornton and Frances McDormand.

Her other film credits include the critically acclaimed Weitz brothers' film "In Good Company," as well as opposite John Travolta in "A Love Song for Bobby Long," which garnered her a Golden Globe® nomination (her third in two years.) and Woody Allen's "Match Point," which garnered her fourth consecutive Golden Globe® nomination in three years. Other film credits include "The Spirit"; "Girl with a Pearl Earring" opposite Colin Firth; "The Island" opposite Ewan McGregor; Brian De Palma's "The Black Dahlia"; Christopher Nolan's "The Prestige" and "The Nanny Diaries."

Her additional credits include Rob Reiner's comedy "North"; the thriller "Just Cause," with Sean Connery and Laurence Fishburne and a breakthrough role at the age of 10 in the critically-praised "Manny & Lo," which earned her an Independent Spirit Award nomination for "Best Female Lead."

Two-time Academy Award® nominee **JEREMY RENNER (Clint Barton/Hawkeye)** most recently starred in the worldwide blockbuster film, "Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol," opposite Tom Cruise. In 2010, he starred in the Best Picture winner "The Hurt Locker," which was directed by Kathryn Bigelow. The film received six Academy Awards® and Renner received his first Oscar® nomination for Best Actor. In his role as the self-assured Sergeant First Class William James, Renner was awarded the Breakthrough Award at the Hollywood Film Festival, the Spotlight Award at the Savannah Film Festival and was nominated as Best Actor at the 2008 Independent Spirit Awards. He also garnered a nomination for Breakthrough Actor at the Gotham Awards, in addition to his award for Best Ensemble Performance.

His second Academy Award® nomination came the following year as Best Supporting Actor for his role in the Warner Bros. Ben Affleck-directed film, "The Town." The film is an adaptation of the Chuck Hogan novel "Prince of Thieves."

In 2007, Renner was seen in three different features, "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford" for Warner Bros., directed by Andrew Dominik; "28 Weeks Later," the highly anticipated sequel to "28 Days Later"; and "Take" opposite Minnie Driver. In 2006, he starred in the acclaimed independent film "12 and Holding" (Independent Spirit Award Nominee – John Cassavetes Award).

Additional film credits include the acclaimed independent film “Neo Ned,” in which he starred opposite Gabrielle Union; Warner Bros.’ “North Country” opposite Academy Award® winner Charlize Theron; “A Little Trip to Heaven”; “The Heart is Deceitful Above All Things,” directed by Asia Argento as adapted from the critically acclaimed novel by J.T. Le Roy; Columbia Pictures’ “Lords of Dogtown” for Catherine Hardwicke and Aura Entertainment’s independent film “Love Comes to the Executioner,” written and directed by Kyle Bergersen.

In August 2012, Renner toplines the Tony Gilroy–directed film “The Bourne Legacy” for Universal Pictures and next year he stars in “Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters.”

In the spring of 2011, Renner and his partner, writer/director Don Handfield, formed The Combine, a production company that will create, develop and produce character-driven content for mainstream audiences.

**TOM HIDDLESTON (Loki)** first played the villain Loki, in what many consider his breakout role, in Marvel’s franchise hit “Thor,” directed by Kenneth Branagh. Recently, Hiddleston played F. Scott Fitzgerald in Woody Allen’s Academy Award®–winning “Midnight in Paris,” as well as starring opposite Rachel Weisz in Terence Davies’ “The Deep Blue Sea.” In December 2011, Hiddleston appeared as Captain Nicholls in the Academy Award®–nominated “War Horse,” directed by Steven Spielberg. He also starred in Joanna Hogg’s indie hit “Archipelago,” in which he played the leading role. Hiddleston had made his feature debut as an actor in Hogg’s feature debut as a director with “Unrelated.”

Hiddleston has recently completed shooting three adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays for television: Richard Eyre’s “Henry IV Parts I & II,” in which he plays Prince Hal, and the title role in Thea Sharrock’s “Henry V.” Both are produced by Sam Mendes in a co-production with the BBC & NBC Universal. They will air in the UK in summer 2012 as a part of the Cultural Olympiad.

In 2012, Hiddleston was nominated for a BAFTA for the Orange Wednesdays Rising Star Award and for the Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actor for his roles in “Archipelago” and “The Deep Blue Sea.” He won the British Rising Star Award at the Richard Attenborough Regional Film Awards 2012.

In 2008 Hiddleston joined forces with Kenneth Branagh to film the first series of “Wallander,” a BAFTA and Broadcasting Press Guild Award–winning and Emmy®, Golden Globe® and Satellite Award–nominated television series based on the detective novels by Swedish author Henning Mankell. In the same year, he went on to star in the Donmar Warehouse/West End production of Chekhov’s “Ivanov,” again opposite Branagh, as well as Gina McKee and Andrea Riseborough. He also starred in the second series of the highly acclaimed BAFTA and Emmy® Award–winning “Return to Cranford,” starring opposite Judi Dench and Jonathan Pryce.

In the theater, Hiddleston was nominated twice in the category of Best Newcomer at the 2008 Laurence Olivier Awards for Declan Donnellan's "Cymbeline" and Michael Grandage's "Othello" at the Donmar Warehouse (alongside Ewan McGregor & Chiwetel Ejiofor), and won the category for his performance in "Cymbeline."

Hiddleston was born in London, England, and grew up in Oxford. He trained as an actor at RADA.

A native of Sweden, **STELLAN SKARSGÅRD (Professor Erik Selvig)** is considered one of the country's top stage and film actors. He began his career with the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, where he spent 16 years working with such leading directors as Alf Sjöberg and Ingmar Bergman. His breakthrough role came in the 1982 Swedish film "The Simpleminded Murderer," for which he received the Best Actor Award at the Berlin Film Festival.

In addition to the more than 27 films in which he starred in Sweden, Skarsgård's additional credits include "The Unbearable Lightness of Being"; "The Hunt for Red October"; "Oxen" (Oscar®-nominated for Best Foreign Language Film); "Breaking the Waves" (which won the Grand Prix at the 1996 Cannes Film Festival) and the Norwegian Film "Insomnia."

Skarsgård has been honored with awards from the Berlin Film Festival, the Swedish motion picture industry, the Rouen Film Festival, the Chicago Film Festival, the St. Sebastian Film Festival, and the Telluride Film Festival. He won Outstanding European Achievement in World Cinema (1998).

He recently completed work on David Fincher's "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo," "Rogue Bresil" and Lars von Trier's "Melancholia."

He can also be seen in other hits such as "Angels & Demons," "Mamma Mia!," the second and third installments in the "Pirates of the Caribbean" franchise and "Good Will Hunting."

**SAMUEL L. JACKSON (Nick Fury)** is respectfully labeled as one of the hardest working actors in Hollywood. Jackson made an indelible mark on American cinema with his portrayal of Jules, the philosophizing hitman, in Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction." In addition to unanimous critical acclaim for his performance, he received Academy Award® and Golden Globe® nominations as Best Supporting Actor as well as a Best Supporting Actor Award from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. Among his many award-winning performances, Jackson made movie history with his portrayal

of a crack addict in Spike Lee's "Jungle Fever" when he was awarded the first and only Best Supporting Actor Award ever given by the judges at the Cannes Film Festival.

Playing Nick Fury, Jackson is a staple in the Marvel Universe having appeared in "Iron Man," "Iron Man 2," "Thor," and "Captain America: The First Avenger." Jackson's other recent credits include "The Other Guys" with Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg; writer Peter Woodward's "Unthinkable"; Frank Miller's "The Spirit"; voice for the character of Zog in "Astro Boy" and narrator of "Inglourious Basterds." Jackson also had starring roles in Doug Liman's sci-fi thriller "Jumper" and the quirky drama "Cleaner," directed by Renny Harlin. He was also seen in the Rod Lurie-directed film "Resurrecting the Champ" and the horror film "1408," based on the Stephen King short story. His other recent films include the Craig Brewer film "Black Snake Moan"; Irwin Winkler's MGM war drama "Home of the Brave"; "Lakeview Terrace" and the Dimension Films comedy "Soul Men" with Bernie Mac.

Other film credits include "Snakes on a Plane," "Coach Carter," the "Star Wars" trilogy, "In My Country," "The Man," "The Incredibles," "S.W.A.T.," "Formula 51," "Changing Lanes," "The Caveman's Valentine," "The Red Violin," "Shaft," "Unbreakable," "187," "Eve's Bayou," "Jackie Brown," "The Negotiator," "A Time To Kill," "Die Hard: With a Vengeance," "The Long Kiss Goodnight" and "Deep Blue Sea."

Jackson recently made his Broadway debut in Katori Hall's "The Mountaintop," co-starring Angela Bassett and directed by Kenny Leon. The play wrapped on January 22, 2012. He is currently in production on Quentin Tarantino's "Django Unchained," playing the role of Stephen, alongside Christoph Waltz and Jamie Foxx. "Django Unchained" is set in the Deep South during the 1850s and tells the story of a slave-turned-bounty hunter setting out to rescue his wife from a brutal Mississippi plantation owner.

**CLARK GREGG (Agent Phil Coulson)** began his acting career as a founding member and former artistic director of the Atlantic Theater Company in New York. He has acted in numerous productions with the company, including "Boys' Life" at Lincoln Center, "Mojo," "The Night Heron," "Sexual Perversity in Chicago" and most recently "Happy Hour," written by Ethan Coen. Other New York stage credits include Aaron Sorkin's "A Few Good Men" on Broadway, "Unidentified Human Remains" and A. R. Gurney's "The Old Boy."

Gregg moved to Los Angeles in the mid-'90s to pursue film and television work, landing recurring roles on "The West Wing," "Sports Night," "Will & Grace," "Sex and the City" and "The Shield," among others. He also appeared in the television movies "My Sister's Keeper" for Hallmark Hall of Fame, and "Tyson" and "Live From Baghdad" for HBO. He also co-starred with Julia Louis-Dreyfus on the long-running CBS comedy, "The New Adventures of Old Christine."



His film acting work includes "The To-Do List," "Mr. Popper's Penguins," "Thor," "Iron Man 2," "(500) Days of Summer," "Choke," "Iron Man," "In Good Company," "Spartan," "State and Main," "Lovely and Amazing," "The Human Stain," "We Were Soldiers," "One Hour Photo" and "Magnolia." He played the role of Hank/Henrietta in Tod Williams' debut feature, "The Adventures of Sebastian Cole," for which he received an Independent Spirit Award nomination.

Gregg's screenwriting debut, "What Lies Beneath" (DreamWorks SKG), starred Harrison Ford and Michelle Pfeiffer and was directed by Robert Zemeckis. His feature film directing debut, "Choke," which he adapted from the novel by Chuck Palahniuk, starring Sam Rockwell and Anjelica Huston, premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival. It was awarded a Special Jury Prize for Best Ensemble and was released by Fox Searchlight in 2008. Clark has written or rewritten scripts for Universal, Disney, Paramount, Warner Bros. and Fox 2000.

In addition, he has directed a number of plays, including Kevin Heelan's "Distant Fires," which was nominated for Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards in New York and moved to the Circle in the Square downtown for an extended run. The Los Angeles production, starring Samuel L. Jackson, won three "L.A. Weekly" Awards, including Best Direction, Best Ensemble and Best Play, and was nominated for four Ovation Awards, including Best Director. He also directed the acclaimed 1998 Atlantic Theater revival of David Mamet's "Edmond," and created, co-wrote and directed the Los Angeles serialized play, "The Big Empty."

Nabbing the first starring role she auditioned for, **COBIE SMULDERS (Agent Maria Hill)** burst onto Hollywood's radar and is emerging as one of its most versatile actresses.

Smulders has won over TV audiences as "How I Met Your Mother"'s Robin Sherbatsky. Now in its sixth season, the show was nominated for an Emmy® for Outstanding Comedy Series and won the People's Choice Award for Favorite TV Comedy. Additionally, Smulders has also starred in the ABC drama "Veritas: The Quest," a thriller-adventure. Her other credits include a recurring role on the critically acclaimed series "The L Word" and guest appearances on "Jeremiah" and "Special Unit 2."

Segueing between the big and small screen, Smulders worked on the film "The Slammin' Salmon," which was brought to the screen by the Broken Lizard comedy team that also created the indie hit "Super Troopers." The film debuted at the 2009 Slamdance Film Festival. Smulders was recently seen starring in "Grassroots," opposite Jason Biggs, and "The Long Weekend," with Chris Klein and Brendan Fehr.

Smulders spent a summer performing in Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron's Off-Broadway hit, "Love, Loss, and What I Wore," at the Westside Theatre. Based on Ilene Beckerman's 1995 book about clothes and the memories they trigger, the production is

directed by Karen Carpenter and features a series of five-person casts that play in four-week cycles. A portion of the production's proceeds benefit Dress For Success, a charity that provides work clothing and job support for low-income women.

Her other theater credits include "Singin' in the Rain," "Grease" and "Women and Wallace."

**GWYNETH PALTROW (Pepper Potts)**, one of today's most prolific and celebrated actors, catapulted to international acclaim with an Academy Award®, a Golden Globe® Award and a Screen Actors Guild Award® for her performance in director John Madden's "Shakespeare in Love." She went on to earn another Golden Globe® nomination for in Madden's "Proof."

Paltrow recently starred opposite Tim McGraw in the drama "Country Strong." She also reprised her starring role as Virginia "Pepper" Potts, opposite Robert Downey Jr., in Jon Favreau's box office hit "Iron Man 2" and delighted television audiences with a recurring role in the smash Fox hit comedy "Glee," for which she won an Emmy® Award in 2011.

Her film credits also include James Gray's romantic drama "Two Lovers," opposite Joaquin Phoenix, for which she received an Independent Spirit Award nomination; the blockbuster "Iron Man"; and her brother Jake Paltrow's directorial debut, the comedy drama "The Good Night," alongside Penelope Cruz and Danny DeVito, in which she played the role of the wife of a former pop star reduced to writing jingles.

Her additional credits include "Sylvia," in which she portrayed the famous poet Sylvia Plath; Ryan Murphy's "Running with Scissors"; Douglas McGrath's "Infamous" and "Emma"; "Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow"; Neil LaBute's "Possession"; Wes Anderson's "The Royal Tenenbaums"; Peter and Bobby Farrelly's "Shallow Hal"; "The Anniversary Party"; Bruce Paltrow's "Duets"; "Bounce," opposite Ben Affleck; Anthony Minghella's "The Talented Mr. Ripley," with Matt Damon and Jude Law; Andrew Davis' "A Perfect Murder"; "Sliding Doors"; "Great Expectations"; "The Pallbearer"; David Fincher's "Se7en"; "View from the Top"; "Moonlight and Valentino"; "Jefferson in Paris"; Alan Rudolph's "Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle"; "Malice"; Steven Spielberg's "Hook" and "Shout." Paltrow's first major role was her remarkable performance in Steve Kloves' critically acclaimed "Flesh and Bone," opposite Meg Ryan and Dennis Quaid.

Paltrow made her directorial debut with "Dealbreaker," a short film she co-wrote and co-directed with her friend Mary Wigmore.

Born in Los Angeles, Paltrow stems from a close-knit entertainment industry family. Her father, Bruce Paltrow was a highly successful producer and her mother is the award-winning actress Blythe Danner.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Emmy® and Oscar® nominee **JOSS WHEDON (Director/Story by/Screenplay by)** is one of Hollywood's top creators, scripting several hit films and creating one of television's most critically praised shows, "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." Born in New York on June 23, 1964, Whedon is a third-generation television writer. His grandfather and father were both successful sitcom writers on shows such as "The Donna Reed Show," "Leave It to Beaver" and "The Golden Girls."

After receiving a degree in film studies from Wesleyan University, Whedon landed his first writing job on the staff of the top-rated series "Roseanne." He later pulled double duty on the series "Parenthood," co-producing and writing a number of episodes.

After creating "Buffy" as a feature film script, Whedon brought it to television in 1996, where it became a cult phenomenon. In 2000, Whedon garnered his first Emmy® nomination in the category of Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series for his groundbreaking episode entitled "Hush." In 2002, he wrote, composed, and directed a Broadway-style musical episode entitled "Once More, With Feeling," which received worldwide recognition and spawned an Original Cast Recording soundtrack, which sold more than 400,000 CDs worldwide. In a New York Times Magazine profile, "Buffy" was called "one of the most intelligent, and most underestimated, shows on television." The show won several awards over its run, including Emmys®, Saturns, SFXs and a Hugo in its seventh and final season.

In 1998, Whedon developed and produced "Angel" through 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Television and his production company, Mutant Enemy. The "Buffy" spinoff gained a loyal following of its own and ran for five seasons on The WB. In 2002, he followed up with the critically acclaimed sci-fi drama "Firefly" for the Fox network. In addition to serving as creator and executive producer on "Angel," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Firefly," Whedon also wrote and directed multiple episodes of each series.

He earned an Academy Award® nomination for Best Screenplay with Disney's box-office smash "Toy Story." His other feature writing credits include "Titan A.E.," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," "Speed," and "Alien Resurrection." In fall 2005, Whedon made his feature directorial debut with "Serenity," based on the "Firefly" series.

Whedon's musical Internet series titled "Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog" made its debut online in 2008 and became a smashing success, winning numerous awards such as an Emmy® for Outstanding Special Class Short-Format Live-Action Entertainment Program. Concurrently, Whedon finished his second season, working as the creator, writer and director of his Fox television series "Dollhouse." Following "Dollhouse," Whedon teamed up with fellow "Dr. Horrible," Neil Patrick Harris, to direct an episode of Fox's

critically acclaimed series, "Glee." Most recently, Whedon wrote and produced MGM's horror-thriller feature film "The Cabin in the Woods."

In addition to his television and feature writing, Whedon created "Fray" for Dark Horse Comics, wrote "Astonishing X-Men" and "Runaways" for Marvel and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" season eight for Dark Horse Comics.

Over the past decade, **KEVIN FEIGE (Producer)** has played an instrumental role in a string of blockbuster feature films adapted from the pages of Marvel comic books, including the hugely successful "Spider-Man" and "X-Men" trilogies. In his current role as producer and President of Marvel Studios, Feige oversees all creative aspects of the company's feature film and home entertainment activities.

This past summer, Feige produced and successfully launched two new Marvel franchises with "Captain America: The First Avenger," directed by Joe Johnston and starring Chris Evans, and "Thor," directed by Kenneth Branagh and starring Chris Hemsworth. Both films opened at No. 1 and have combined to gross over \$800 million in worldwide box office.

Prior to "Thor," Feige produced "Iron Man 2," which was released in theaters on May 7, 2010. The sequel to "Iron Man," directed by Jon Favreau and starring Robert Downey Jr. and Gwyneth Paltrow, as well as new cast members Mickey Rourke, Scarlett Johansson and Don Cheadle, took the number one spot its first weekend with a domestic box office gross of \$128.1 million. To date, the film has earned over \$620 million in worldwide box office receipts.

In the summer of 2008, Feige produced the summer blockbuster movies "Iron Man" and "The Incredible Hulk," which were the first fully financed and developed films by the new Marvel Studios. In "Iron Man," Robert Downey Jr. originally dons the superhero's powerful armor. Directed by Jon Favreau, it co-stars Gwyneth Paltrow and Jeff Bridges, and was released May 2, 2008, to an immediate boxoffice success. Garnering the number one position for two weeks in a row, the film brought in over \$100 million its opening weekend and grossed over \$585 million worldwide.

On June 13, 2008, Marvel released "The Incredible Hulk," marking its second number one opener of that summer. The film stars Edward Norton, along with William Hurt, Tim Roth and Liv Tyler. Director Louis Leterrier's spectacular revival of the iconic green goliath grossed over \$260 million in worldwide box office receipts.

Feige is currently producing "Iron Man 3" for Marvel Studios, which is slated for release on May 3, 2013, and "Thor 2," which is slated for a November 15, 2013 release date.

**ZAK PENN (Story by)** is a screenwriter, producer and director. Penn has worked on seven films in the Marvel Universe and was a credited writer on “The Incredible Hulk,” “X2,” “X-Men: The Last Stand” and “Elektra.” His other writing credits include “Last Action Hero,” “Suspect Zero,” “Behind Enemy Lines,” “Inspector Gadget” and “PCU.”

Penn wrote, directed and produced the improvisational films “Incident at Loch Ness” and “The Grand,” co-starring himself and Werner Herzog. Penn created the television series “Alphas,” starring David Strathairn, which is entering its second season on the Syfy network.

**ALAN FINE (Executive Producer)** serves as President of Marvel Worldwide, Inc. He also serves as Chairman of Marvel’s Theatrical and Animation Creative Committees.

Formerly, Fine was the President & CEO of Marvel’s Toy and Publishing Divisions, as well the President of Kay Bee Toy Stores.

Fine grew up in Rhode Island, where he attended the University of Rhode Island and graduated with a BA in psychology.

**STAN LEE (Executive Producer)** is the Founder of POW! Entertainment and has served as its Chairman and Chief Creative Officer since inception. Known to millions as the man whose Super Heroes propelled Marvel to its pre-eminent position in the comic book industry, Stan Lee’s co-creations include Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk, X-Men, The Fantastic Four, Iron Man, Daredevil, Silver Surfer and Doctor Strange.

Now the Chairman Emeritus of Marvel Media, Lee first became publisher of Marvel Comics in 1972. He is recognized as the creative force that brought Marvel to the forefront of the comic publishing industry. In 1977, he introduced Spider-Man as a syndicated newspaper strip that became the most successful of all syndicated adventure strips and now appears in more than 500 newspapers worldwide—making it the longest running of all Super Hero strips.

From June 2001 until the formal creation of POW! in November 2001, Stan Lee worked to form POW! and to create intellectual property for it and start the development of various projects for the new company.

Multi-talented director, writer and actor, **JON FAVREAU (Executive Producer)** continues to challenge himself with a variety of eclectic projects. Most recently, Favreau directed the DreamWorks/Universal feature, “Cowboys & Aliens,” starring Daniel Craig, Harrison Ford and Olivia Wilde, based on the 2006 graphic novel, and both blockbuster hits “Iron Man” and “Iron Man 2,” starring Robert Downey Jr. and Gwyneth Paltrow for

Paramount Pictures and Marvel Studios.

Favreau also directed the acclaimed holiday smash hit “Elf,” starring Will Ferrell for New Line Cinema, as well as “Zathura: A Space Adventure,” a children’s adventure film starring Tim Robbins, for Sony Entertainment. He made his feature-film directorial debut with Artisan Entertainment’s “Made,” which he also wrote.

Favreau established himself as a writer of considerable talent with the acclaimed hipster comedy “Swingers.” In addition to his tremendous success on the big screen, Favreau has served as the creator, producer and host of the critically acclaimed and Emmy®-nominated IFC series “Dinner for Five.”

Also an actor, Favreau’s feature film credits include: “People Like Us,” releasing June 29, 2012, “Couples Retreat,” “I Love You, Man,” “Four Christmases,” “The Break-Up,” “Something’s Gotta Give,” “Wimbledon,” “Daredevil,” “Rocky Marciano,” “Love & Sex,” “The Replacements,” “Very Bad Things,” “Deep Impact,” “PCU” and “Rudy.”

Acting for television, his credits include “Seinfeld,” a recurring role on “Friends” and a special appearance on HBO’s critically acclaimed “The Sopranos,” in which he played himself. Additionally, he has lent his voice to “Zookeeper,” “Star Wars: The Clone Wars” and “G-Force.”

**LOUIS D’ESPOSITO (Executive Producer)** is Co-President of Marvel Studios. He served as executive producer on the blockbuster hits “Iron Man,” “Iron Man 2,” “Thor” and “Captain America: The First Avenger.” He is currently in pre-production on “Thor 2” and “Iron Man 3,” as well as working with Kevin Feige to build the future Marvel slate.

As Co-President of the studio and Executive Producer on all Marvel films, D’Esposito balances running the studio with overseeing each film from its development stage to distribution.

D’Esposito began his tenure at Marvel Studios in 2006. Prior to Marvel, D’Esposito’s executive-producing credits include the 2006 hit film “The Pursuit of Happyness,” starring Will Smith, “Zathura: A Space Adventure” and the 2003 hit “S.W.A.T.,” starring Samuel L. Jackson and Colin Farrell.

**PATRICIA WHITCHER (Executive Producer)** recently served as executive producer on “Thor,” directed by Kenneth Branagh and starring Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, Tom Hiddleston, Stellan Skarsgård, Kat Dennings, Clark Gregg, Colm Feore, Ray Stevenson, Idris Elba and Jaimie Alexander, with Rene Russo and Anthony Hopkins as Odin. The film debuted in first place and grossed over \$445 million worldwide at the box office.

Before entering the Marvel universe, Whitcher was an executive producer on “The Soloist,” the real-life drama filmed on L.A.’s skid row and onstage at Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2008. Adapted from newspaper articles written by Los Angeles Times columnist Steve Lopez, the film starred Robert Downey Jr. and Jamie Foxx.

In 2006, Whitcher was executive producer of the film adaptation of the Broadway musical “Dreamgirls,” starring Jamie Foxx, Beyoncé Knowles, Eddie Murphy and Jennifer Hudson. Directed by Bill Condon, “Dreamgirls” won two Academy Awards® (for Hudson and for sound mixing) and earned eight nominations.

“Memoirs of a Geisha,” which Whitcher executive-produced in 2005 for director Rob Marshall, was another big Oscar® contender with six nominations and three wins (art direction, cinematography and costume design).

Whitcher previously executive-produced Steven Spielberg’s dramatic comedy “The Terminal,” starring Tom Hanks and Catherine Zeta-Jones. Her producing credits also include Brad Silberling’s “Moonlight Mile,” starring Dustin Hoffman and Susan Sarandon; “Where the Heart Is,” starring Natalie Portman and Ashley Judd; and P.J. Hogan’s smash hit “My Best Friend’s Wedding,” starring Julia Roberts and Cameron Diaz. Additional producing credits include “How to Make an American Quilt,” “High School High” and “A Dangerous Woman.”

Before producing, Whitcher served as a unit production manager on “True Lies,” “The Meteor Man,” “The Lawnmower Man,” “Iron Maze” and “Darkman.” A lifelong Los Angeles resident, she is the mother of two children and a graduate of Loyola Marymount University.

**VICTORIA ALONSO (Executive Producer)** served as co-producer on “Iron Man” and “Iron Man 2” with director Jon Favreau, Kenneth Branagh’s “Thor,” Joe Johnston’s “Captain America: The First Avenger” and is now executive-producing “Marvel’s The Avengers” for writer-director Joss Whedon.

Alonso’s career began at the nascency of the visual effects industry, when she served as a commercial VFX producer. From there, she VFX-produced numerous feature films, working with such directors as Ridley Scott (“Kingdom of Heaven”), Tim Burton (“Big Fish”) and Andrew Adamson (“Shrek”), to name a few.

Currently she serves as Executive Vice President of Visual Effects and Post Production for Marvel Studios. Her future projects with Marvel are “Iron Man 3” and “Thor 2.”

**JEREMY LATCHAM (Executive Producer)** is the Senior Vice President of Production and

Development at Marvel Studios. Latcham served as an associate producer on the 2008 blockbuster “Iron Man” and as a co-producer on the successful 2010 follow-up “Iron Man 2.” Over the past year, Latcham has been working alongside Director Joss Whedon and Producer Kevin Feige as an Executive Producer on “Marvel’s The Avengers,” the most highly anticipated movie of summer 2012.

A graduate of Northwestern University, Latcham began his career at Miramax and Dimension Films and also worked at the Endeavor Agency. In 2004, he joined Marvel Studios where he has also held the titles of Vice President and Creative Executive. In 2011, Latcham was featured as one of “Hollywood’s New Leaders” by Variety.

**SEAMUS MCGARVEY (Director of Photography)** served as cinematographer on the Golden Globe® Award Winner for Best Picture (Drama), “Atonement,” for which he also received an Oscar® Nomination for Best Cinematography.

McGarvey recently lensed two films for Joe Wright, “Anna Karenina” and “The Soloist,” as well as the independent films “We Need To Talk About Kevin” and “Nowhere Boy.” McGarvey’s other film credits include Oliver Stone’s “World Trade Center,” for which he was nominated for an Irish Film and Television (IFTA) Award; Stephen Daldry’s “The Hours”; Gary Winick’s “Charlotte’s Web”; Breck Eisner’s “Sahara,” for which he won an IFTA award; John Hamburg’s “Along Came Polly”; Stephen Frears’ “High Fidelity”; Mike Nichols’ “Wit”; Michael Apted’s “Enigma”; Tim Roth’s “The War Zone”; Alan Rickman’s “The Winter Guest”; and Michael Winterbottom’s “Butterfly Kiss.”

McGarvey was born in Armagh, North Ireland. He began his career as a still photographer before attending film school in London. After graduating in 1988, he began shooting short films and documentaries, including “Skin,” for which he was nominated for a Royal Television Society Cinematography Award. He has also photographed and directed more than 100 music videos for such artists as Coldplay, Paul McCartney, Dusty Springfield, the Rolling Stones, U2 and Robbie Williams.

In 2004, he was awarded the Royal Photographic Society’s prestigious Lumiere medal for contributions to the art of cinematography.

**JAMES CHINLUND (Production Designer)**, a native of New York City, has been designing for film since the early ’90s. With a background in Fine Art, having studied at CalArts in Los Angeles, Chinlund cut his teeth designing music videos and independent films.

During this period, he joined forces with frequent collaborator Darren Aronofsky (“Requiem for a Dream,” “The Fountain”), in addition to many other icons of the New York independent scene, including Todd Solondz (“Storytelling”), Paul Schrader (“Auto Focus”) and Spike Lee (“25th Hour”).



In recent years, Chinlund has been very active in the worlds of commercials and fashion, working with some of the top names in the field (Inez and Vinoodh, Rupert Sanders, Spike Jonze, Fredrik Bond, Gus Van Sant, Lance Acord, Harmony Korine). In 2010, he won both the Art Director's Guild and the AICP awards for a commercial collaboration with director Rupert Sanders.

**DAN SUDICK (Special Effects Supervisor)** has been nominated for the Academy Award® four times for his outstanding work on the films "War of the Worlds," "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World," "Iron Man" and "Iron Man 2."

Other recent credits include "Cowboys and Aliens," "Thor," "G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra," "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," "Evan Almighty," "The Haunted Mansion," "Mission: Impossible III," "National Security," "Cellular" and Nutty Professor II: The Klumps."

Sudick's other credits include "Serenity," "Dragonfly," "The Negotiator," "Executive Decision," "The Birdcage," "Life," "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York," "The Fisher King," "Switchback," "Red Corner" and "The Mosquito Coast."

In 1993, **JANEK SIRRS (Visual Effects Supervisor)** came west to help establish the Los Angeles offices for a London-based VFX company known as The Computer Film Company (CFC). Since then, he has worked independently as a visual effects supervisor on such films as "I Am Legend" with director Frances Lawrence; "Batman Begins" with director Christopher Nolan; "The Big Lebowski" with the Coen Brothers and "Iron Man 2," with director Jon Favreau.

During this time, Sirrs won an Academy Award® and a BAFTA for his work on "The Matrix" with the Wachowski Brothers in 1999 and was nominated for a second Oscar® for his work on "Iron Man 2."

**ALEXANDRA BYRNE (Costume Designer)** is an Academy Award® and BAFTA winner, as well as a Tony® Award nominee. She received her first Oscar® nomination in 1997 for the costumes she designed for Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation of "Hamlet." Byrne received a second Oscar nomination in 1999 for her work on Shekhar Kapur's "Elizabeth," and a third in 2005 for Marc Forster's "Finding Neverland." She won the Academy Award in 2008 for Kapur's "Elizabeth: The Golden Age." She also received BAFTA nominations for "Hamlet," "Elizabeth," "Finding Neverland" and "Elizabeth: The Golden Age."

Byrne's film costume credits also include Marvel's "Thor," "Phantom of the Opera," Branagh's "Sleuth" and "The Garden of Eden."

In the late '70s, Byrne trained as an architect at Bristol University before studying theater design at the Motley Theatre Design Course at the English National Opera under the legendary Margaret Harris. She has worked extensively in television and theater, both as a set and costume designer, including many shows for The Royal Shakespeare Company, including Richard Nelson's "Some Americans Abroad," which subsequently transferred to the Lincoln Center, New York. Her television credits include Roger Michell's "Persuasion," for which she received the BAFTA Award for Best Costume Design, and "The Buddha of Suburbia," for which she received a BAFTA nomination and RTS award.

Byrne also received a Tony® nomination in 1990 for Best Scenic Design for "Some Americans Abroad."

Byrne is married to the actor Simon Shepherd. They have four children and live in England.

**JEFFREY FORD, A.C.E. (Editor)** was born in Novato, California, and attended the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts.

He began his filmmaking career in 1994, working as an editorial assistant on James Gray's debut feature film, "Little Odessa." He went on to work as an assistant editor on several feature films, including the Academy Award®-nominated "As Good as It Gets" for editor Richard Marks and director James L. Brooks.

Ford's first feature as editor was "The Yards" for director James Gray, which premiered in competition at the Cannes International Film Festival in 2000. He edited "Teddy Bears' Picnic" for Harry Shearer; "One Hour Photo" for Mark Romanek (garnering a Satellite Award nomination for editing); "Hide and Seek" for John Polson; "The Family Stone" for Thomas Bezucha (his work receiving an A.C.E. Eddie nomination) and "Street Kings" for David Ayer. He also edited "Shattered Glass" and "Breach" for director Billy Ray.

Most recently, Ford edited "Captain America: The First Avenger," "Monte Carlo," "Crazy Heart," Universal Pictures' "Public Enemies," and Shane Dax Taylor's indie "Bloodworth."

**LISA LASSEK (Editor)** is a frequent collaborator with writer-director Joss Whedon, having worked with him most recently on the horror-comedy "The Cabin in the Woods"

(directed by Drew Goddard) and on his previous feature “Serenity” as well as the series “Firefly” and “Buffy the Vampire Slayer.”

Other credits include the critically acclaimed series “Community,” “Wonderfalls,” the Emmy®-winning “Pushing Daisies” and the Emmy®-winning Internet sensation “Dr. Horrible’s Sing-Along Blog.”

**ALAN SILVESTRI (Composer)** is an Oscar®-nominated and GRAMMY®-winning composer who has written music for an extraordinary number of hugely successful films, including the “Back to the Future” trilogy, “Who Framed Roger Rabbit” and Best Picture Oscar® winner “Forrest Gump.”

Other recent films include “Captain America: The First Avenger,” “The A-Team,” “A Christmas Carol,” “G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra,” “Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian,” “Beowulf,” “Night at the Museum,” “The Polar Express,” “Cast Away,” “Lilo & Stitch” and many others.

Silvestri collaborated with Glen Ballard on the song “Believe” for “The Polar Express,” which earned Golden Globe® and Academy Award® nominations for Best Original Song. It won a GRAMMY® Award in 2005.

**DAVE JORDAN (Music Supervisor)** served as music supervisor for “Thor” and on both “Iron Man” and the hit sequel “Iron Man 2.” He recently served in the same capacity on “Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son,” “Gulliver’s Travels,” “Lottery Ticket,” “Vampires Suck,” “Marmaduke,” “When in Rome,” “Old Dogs,” “The Incredible Hulk,” “Charlie Bartlett,” “Transformers,” “Reign Over Me,” “Meet the Spartans,” “Ghost Rider,” “Date Movie,” “Man About Town,” “Fantastic Four,” “Kicking & Screaming,” “The Upside of Anger,” “Elektra” and “Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle.”

Jordan’s other credits include “Dude, Where’s My Car?,” “The Fast and the Furious,” “Daredevil,” “Cheaper by the Dozen” and “The Punisher,” as well as the television series “Glory Daze.”