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# SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

PRESENTS

ETHAN HAWKE MARGARET QUALLEY BOBBY CANNAVALE ANDREW SCOTT

# BLUE MOON

Directed by RICHARD LINKLATER



Written by ROBERT KAPLOW

Run Time - 100 Minutes



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## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

On the evening of March 31, 1943, legendary lyricist Lorenz Hart confronts his shattered self-confidence in Sardi's bar as his former collaborator Richard Rodgers celebrates the opening night of his ground-breaking hit *Oklahoma!*

## **SYNOPSIS**

...You know how in marriage they say "for better or for worse"? I think, in terms of my life, I have entered the "for worse" part, and it happened so quietly I didn't even recognize it.

Richard Linklater's *Blue Moon* tells the story of legendary lyricist Lorenz Hart bravely facing the future as his professional and private life unravel at the opening night party for his former partner's hit show *Oklahoma!*

By the time this night is over, Hart will have confronted both a world that no longer values his talent and the seeming impossibility of love.

## PRODUCTION STORY

♪ *My funny valentine*  
*Sweet comic valentine*  
*You make me smile with my heart*  
*Your looks are laughable*  
*Unphotographable*  
*Yet you're my favourite work of art* ♪

Five-time Academy Award nominated writer-director **Richard Linklater** (The 'Before' Trilogy, *Boyhood*) was given the barebones script that would later become *Blue Moon* by friend and previous collaborator Robert Kaplow. As Linklater states, he loves the way Kaplow's mind works: 'He's a historian, he's a romantic, he really likes to jump into these moments in history. I love the music from the 30s and 40s, and that's where Robert and I bonded – we are both guys from another decade. He sent me this piece he had been working on – a night in the life of Lorenz Hart, but on the opening night of *Oklahoma!* It was a crazy, perverse idea, to see the triumph of this hit musical but through the eyes of the old lyricist.'

Linklater remembers discussing the project with frequent collaborator Ethan Hawke many years ago, and how they both loved the poignancy of Kaplow's script: 'To see the culture leaving you behind is so beautiful and sad. I knew it was going to be hard to pull off as a movie as it takes place in more or less one room. I wondered whether a whole movie could rest in one location, both tonally and performance-wise. When Ethan and I first talked about it, he was too young. You couldn't believe him as this older guy, so over the years of development, he's been able to grow into that.'

Producer **John Sloss** (*I'm Not There*, *Last Flag Flying*) remembers being involved in initial conversations between Linklater and Hawke, and how the script showcased a pivotal moment in musical theatre history: 'Both Rick and Ethan were struck by the inherent pathos of the story of a genius such as Lorenz Hart and how this moment in time was passing him by. The transition of Rodgers working with Hart to working with Hammerstein was immensely important. It reflects a change from the type of humor and stories that appealed to Hart, to the bigger, more sentimental and optimistic approach towards musicals that was seen in the new collaboration.'

The film draws inspiration from letters written between Hart and a young woman, which Kaplow researched for the script. The unidentified woman – whose first name was Elizabeth – would keenly correspond with Hart, and this sparked ideas in Kaplow's mind. As fellow producer, **Mike Blizzard** (*Hit Man*, *Clemente*), states, 'Hart was having some correspondence with a Yale University student. There were eleven letters that she wrote to him. From one side of the conversation, you can tell the other side of the conversation. We can't tell if they met for sure, but he sent her flowers. So, Robert asks the question – what if they did meet? What if Lorenz was in love with her?'

When Blizzard first read the script, he saw it as intricate interplay, almost theatrical: The film is set almost entirely at the famous restaurant, Sardi's, in New York's theatre district. This was the place where all of the theatre professionals hung out. All of the drama happens in one room and it's almost like a breakup movie. Rodgers is moving on from his long-term partnership with Hart, so it's a very emotionally laden story.'

**Ethan Hawke** (The 'Before' Trilogy, *First Reformed*), who plays Lorenz Hart, recalls reading the script and thinking it was one of the best things that he'd ever read: 'I would say around ten or twelve years ago, Rick sent me the script, and I cackled with laughter. I called him and said, 'let's make this movie.' He told me that I wasn't old enough and that we had to wait. So, every two or three years, we'd get together and read it aloud. I met Robert in the intermediary and grew to admire him, and we just tweaked and looked at the script from different angles. As the years ticked by, the script kept getting better until finally it was time to make it.'

Eddie, the Sardi's bartender and Hart's faithful confidante, is played by **Bobby Cannavale** (*The Irishman*, *Boardwalk Empire*), who recalls Linklater and Hawke coming to see him in a play in New York: 'They said we have to shoot this movie that takes place in New York, in Ireland, and we need New York to be in the room.'

That's how they sold it to me. They said, 'We need you to play New York'. So, that's how I came to play Eddie the bartender.'

**Andrew Scott** (*All Of Us Strangers*, *Ripley*), who plays Richard Rodgers, loved the script and how it showcased the transience of life: 'It's about creativity and vulnerability in many ways. It's about the idea how talent is allocated to different people. We are all given a certain amount of talent, and some people are given enormous amounts of talent but not a huge amount of resilience or ability to live in the world that your talent is attached to. The film is also about friendship and the enormous relationships that you build up within the theatre and within the movies. So, to me, that is the beating heart of the script.'

Elizabeth – the object of Hart's affection, is played by **Margaret Qualley** (*The Substance*, *Kinds of Kindness*), and she was drawn to the project because of the creative partnership of Richard Linklater and Ethan Hawke: 'The combination of Rick and Ethan is extraordinary and once in a lifetime. I have dreamt of getting the opportunity to work with them, as I am such a huge fan of their collective work.'

**Simon Delaney**, who plays Oscar Hammerstein II, started his career in musical theatre and jumped at the chance to portray one of the pioneers of this art form: 'One of the first shows I did was *Oklahoma!* and to be given the chance to play Oscar Hammerstein was quite exciting.'

## LORENZ HART – STANDING UNDER FIVE FEET TALL

*♪ Isn't it romantic, music in the night, a dream that can be heard?  
Isn't it romantic moving shadows, write the oldest magic word?  
I hear the breezes playing in the trees above  
While all the world is saying you were meant for love ♪*

Hart's contribution to the American musical theatre industry cannot be understated. The sharp wit of his lyrics, which often reflected his turbulent private life, have meant that his name is synonymous with the shining lights of Broadway. Linklater describes Hart as 'Probably the greatest American lyricist ever. Those lyrics and that music will last forever. *Blue Moon* is fundamentally a breakup movie. Rodgers has partly moved on – *Oklahoma!* has been hugely successful but there are whispers of a reunion with Hart. Their lives are segueing. This is the beginning of the second half of Rodgers' career, which was already pretty amazing, but then goes on to reach unprecedented heights. Hart is like the guy that is left behind. We've always talked of the film as being a breakup movie, however, instead of two lovers, it's two artists. There's a love between them but there's also an exasperation.'

Hawke regards Hart's lyrical style as magical and extremely dynamic: 'His lyrics have a quality that people love – they're bittersweet and melancholy. He's incredibly funny whilst being moving, which is probably my favourite quality of poetry – when something is funny and profound. He was not a big person. He was a diminutive man and was always fighting for attention in whatever ways he could find it.'

Hawke wasn't fully aware of who Hart was upon reading the script for the first time: 'Rodgers and Hart were kind of the Lennon and McCartney of their era. I knew tons of their songs that are classics today, but I didn't know it was them, largely because Rodgers and Hammerstein went on to be the greatest musical theatre duo in the history of theatre, so Hart got usurped. It's as if Wings became bigger than The Beatles. That's how I came to think of it.'

Hart's career decline is, in part, due to his alcohol addiction, which led him to be a distant and difficult creative partner. As Hawke states: 'I've lost many friends to addiction and it's certainly prevalent within the artistic community. Larry is a guy who is in a lot of pain, and alcohol is a painkiller, so he's relying on it tremendously. But it's not a movie about addiction as much as it is about an addict and how people in pain reach for what they perceive as something healing.'

Lorenz Hart was a small man, standing at below five feet tall, which likely added to his feelings of low self-esteem and insecurity. As Sloss states: 'When people see Ethan in this film, they will not recognise him. Physically, Lorenz Hart could not be more different from Ethan Hawke, but he embodies him.'

For **Latham Gaines**, height is a very important aspect of the film, and essential to understanding Lorenz as a character: 'I experimented with my height at home, making myself smaller than my wife. When she approached me, she towered over me. I noticed that she instinctively lowered herself towards me and then gave me this look like I've never seen before from my wife. I was looking at her from a new angle and felt an emotional experience that I'd never felt before. Larry's height explains a lot about his character, and his relationship with the world around him. It wasn't just a visual thing for the movie, but an emotional thing for Ethan to help embody the character.'

Ethan worked alongside makeup artist **David Keith Atherton** (*The Homesman, Oz the Great and Powerful*) to transform into Hart: 'David loves performance, which separates him from other makeup artists. He's really interested in helping facilitate the actor to do whatever they want. He was a partner when building Larry and that has been wonderful. It was important that it be both subtle, yet a dramatic change. Larry Hart is very different to me, so I needed a change that wasn't self-conscious. It needed to let Larry come forward.'

## HART'S SUPPORTING CAST

♪ *She gets too hungry for dinner at eight*  
*She likes the theatre and never comes late*  
*She never bothers with people she'd hate*  
*That's why the lady is a tramp* ♪

Although at different stages of their careers, the relationship between Rodgers and Hart is still ongoing, with plans to reunite on a revival of 'A Connecticut Yankee.'

Scott describes 'Rodgers and Hart had this extraordinary, creative, beautiful friendship. It's always fascinating to me how those relationships and their dynamics play out. I would say that, at this point in the story, Richard Rodgers is more interested in following his heart than Hart. He wants to inject his musicals with more of a beating heart, and that is what he explored with Hammerstein. However, he has a huge amount of respect for Larry Hart, and he loves him very much. So, it's bittersweet when we see them interact.'

Scott continues 'It's a big challenge to play somebody who is so legendary, but I think that the biggest challenge is to be able to incorporate and understand the nature of their friendship. The friendship between Lorenz Hart and Dick Rodgers is the most important thing. That's what you want the audiences to feel – these are two really intimate friends who are at very different stages of their lives. We've all had that feeling of not being in the same place as you once were with a friend. You have to put aside the famousness of these people and remember the dynamics of the relationship.'

As this is the opening night of *Oklahoma!*, the first production by new duo Rodgers and Hammerstein, there is clearly tension once Hart throws himself between them, something that Simon Delaney was aware of when understanding his character, 'Hammerstein and Hart had a working relationship. They operated in the same circles. When Rodgers split from Hart and took up with Hammerstein, things became a little fractious. So, on the 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1943, there's tension in the air.'

Separated from the titans of the musical theatre industry is Elizabeth, the one-way love interest for Hart. As Qualley describes, 'Elizabeth looks up to Hart and is trying to learn from him. Hart is in love with Elizabeth, to whatever degree that actually exists, or whether it is just a projection. They have a very special bond.'

During Hart's life and thereafter, there was speculation about his sexuality, with friends stating that he was a closeted homosexual. For Hawke, this assumption, and Hart's relationship with Elizabeth in this film, was a

really interesting dynamic: 'It's interesting that a man could be forty-seven and madly in love with a twenty-year-old woman, as well as not being heterosexual. That is a fascinating human characteristic – why did he fall so hard for this woman? She doesn't see the relationship in the same way but, for Hart, he felt that she would save his life.'

Eddie, the bartender at Sardi's, almost acts as a therapist for Hart, having served him drinks and listened to his ramblings many times. As Cannavale states: 'Eddie is a friend to Larry. He's a great sounding board. He represents safety in a way. A great success is coming into the bar and Larry's got nothing to do with it, so it's a difficult night for him. However, as long as Eddie's at the bar, he's got someplace safe to come.'

## **THE THEATRE TROUPE**

♪ *The great big city's a wondrous toy*  
*Just made for a girl and boy*  
*We'll turn Manhattan*  
*Into an isle of joy!* ♪

Linklater and Hawke were excited to reunite with *Blue Moon*. Linklater declares, 'This is probably the most demanding thing I've ever seen Ethan have to do. He's got to be short. He's got to be bald with a comb over. It's been a huge lift for Ethan, but I can tell he's exhilarated by it.'

Sloss agreed with Linklater, noting Hawke's commitment to the quirks of the role: 'Ethan has brought everything to the role. Not only the physical transformation, but the amount of dialogue that he has to recite. One thing I have noted about Ethan, and I have known him a long time, is that apart from being a true artist, he will outwork anyone. When him and Rick collaborate, it's really something to behold.'

On finding Elizabeth, Linklater says 'I thought about Margaret Qualley for the role of Elizabeth, met with her a year or so ago and was thrilled when she wanted to play the role.' As Elizabeth is a fictionalised character, who is almost a mystery, Linklater wanted someone to capture her energy, and Hart's admiration for her. He adds: 'We really needed someone to bring that believably to life and embody that character. Margaret was really fun to work with and epitomised that fun, free-spirited college girl.'

In the last few years, we had been thinking about Bobby for the role of Eddie – it's not a big part, but it's crucial. Bobby is Eddie, he's very New York, so we're so blessed. Linklater has known Cannavale for twenty years but had only collaborated once prior to this, so was thrilled to have him come on board: 'I'm so lucky that he's in this movie. Everything he does is inspired and he is so solid. If this was sports, you'd want him on the team. He's going to take you to the championship. He's a super talented actor. I can't say enough about him.'

Hawke was on a family trip to London many years ago and came across a production of *Hamlet* starring Andrew Scott. Immediately, he was struck by his talent: 'I wanted to bring my son to see *Hamlet*, and we went, and I couldn't believe this young actor. I've seen that play a lot of times, and seen some great people do it, but this was the best production I'd seen. I wrote his name down, and hoped to work with him over the years, and then watched him become this huge star. We knew the scenes between Hart and Rodgers were going to be challenging dialogue scenes, so we needed somebody who would have a passion for this material and be interested in the way Rick likes to work. We found a perfect partner in Andrew Scott.'

Rodgers is such a crucial, historical part, so it was naturally more difficult to cast. 'I thought about Andrew Scott but assumed he would be busy. But we sent it to him anyway and were thrilled when he liked the material. I'm so happy with the cast- just feels perfect.'

Scott was excited to work with Hawke, especially on the more intimate moments in this bustling environment: 'It's been such a pleasure working with Ethan. I adore watching what he's doing. He's a great scene partner, just completely generous. Ethan understands the nature of what an opening night is and how overwhelming

it can be, so we've been trying to encapsulate what that is like, and how to have a stolen conversation with somebody in an otherwise overwhelming environment.'

## RICHARD LINKLATER – THE CONDUCTOR

*♪ I'm wild again!  
Beguiled again!  
A simpering, whimpering child again!  
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered am I ♪*

Hawke was twenty-three and starring in a play when he met Linklater for the first time and, according to him, 'they got along like a house on fire.'

As he elaborates: 'Rick and I just talked all night and before long I auditioned for *Before Sunset*. That was the summer of 1994, so in the last thirty years, we've made eight movies together, with *Blue Moon* being our ninth. I love the way he thinks and the way that he works, and his interest in humanity. Actors long to have a meaningful collaboration with a filmmaker and working with excellent filmmakers is the key to having a career. We've actually worked together and collaborated together longer than Rodgers and Hart did, so we know what we're talking about.'

Blizzard praised Linklater's attention to detail, and his ability to elevate the work of everyone around him: 'This story is based on very specific events, and I think that really appealed to Rick. Almost everyone in the film is based on a real person, and one of his specialities is to be able to take a script and bring out the performances of the actors and turn it all into cinema.'

Qualley was thrilled to get the opportunity to work with Linklater: 'It's been awesome. I've loved every single minute. I look up to him so much. I'm such a fan of his mind and his heart, and his absolute unique approach to filmmaking and life. This has been a really dreamy experience.'

Delaney appreciated Linklater's approach to working with actors – knowing when to rehearse key moments and knowing when to allow the actors to get on with it: 'Richard Linklater is one of the best in the business. He's the kind of director an actor loves. Before the scene, there is discussion and rehearsal. You can work the scene over and over again. When it comes to shooting the scene, he lets you get on with it and play with it. An actor wants a director who trusts them, and, with Rick, that is what you get.'

Scott notes Linklater's creativity as a filmmaker, especially as they were only dealing with a single setting: 'He gives you the time to understand and learn the music of the piece. That's really necessary when you're making a film that is one location and also that celebrates theatre. You've got to really have a degree of humility about that. He listens to actors, especially those who have experience in theatre. I felt like I could contribute, speak up and be free. Which is what you want when you're on a movie set.'

## THE LOOK OF 1940s NEW YORK

*♪ Sir Paul was frail, he looked a wreck to me  
At night he was a horse's neck to me  
So, I performed an appendectomy  
To keep my love alive ♪*

When cinematographer **Shane F Kelly** (*Hit Man, Where'd You Go, Bernadette*) discovered the one-location setting of the film, he immediately considered how they would keep the visuals dynamic and cinematic: 'I

started thinking about it technically and how to keep it interesting. With single locations, there is always the worry of finding different shots and being able to tell the story. Once I started talking to Susie, our production designer, and looking at her drawings and the layout of the space, I knew how to keep it fresh.'

Being a period piece, this film is visually different to the majority of Linklater's previous films, as he states: 'With this, it's a different palette. Shane and I have done all different kinds of movies. On this, we're shooting anamorphic and it's a fun challenge for us. Shane is really outdoing himself here and really rising to the demands of this movie. He's done a really great job but that's no surprise.'

Once production designer **Susie Cullen** (*Abigail, Mrs Wilson*) read the script, the most important thing was to maintain the character of the real Sardi's, whilst also creating a space that was visually interesting for the camera: 'Sardi's is a real place in New York, which was very popular amongst the theatre crowd in the 40s and later. So much of our story was set in the restaurant so it was important to try and add in other layering whilst still retaining the essence.'

Cullen describes the conversations with Linklater as very collaborative, stating that he was very open to ideas: 'We chatted and I would send him drawings and digital models, so we could try and travel through the set as much as possible. Once he was comfortable that the layout was going to give him enough angles, he allowed us to get on with it.'

Cullen was lucky to find plenty of historical content, as the people that frequented these places were very famous and often photographed: 'There are lots of photographs from our period up until present day, and some of it hasn't changed a lot. We then chose the essence of what we wanted to use and bring into our set, which is based on, but not absolutely loyal to, the real layout. Because it is set in one place, we wanted to add as many layers to the set as possible, adding in textures to the walls where possible.'

Lining the walls of the real Sardi's are hundreds of caricatures of celebrities, all of whom have dined in the restaurant. When recreating the restaurant on the set at Ardmore, Cullen was able to add members of the cast and crew – including Richard Linklater – to the walls, to commemorate their collaboration.

Costume designer **Consolata Boyle's** (*Florence Foster Jenkins, The Queen*) initial conversations with Linklater boiled down to him saying it is a love story, which she kept in her mind all throughout filming: 'That was my North Star throughout. So, if I ever felt lost or not quite sure which way to go, I would turn to that. Richard and I had that initial conversation, then we'd continue about individual aspects of each character. It was very inspiring.'

Boyle was elated to dive into the period setting of the film, noting: 'I think it's a very important point in history. The music of that time, and what was happening on Broadway. The 40s is an amazing period – it's full of beauty and ugliness. All of that was so enticing, it was an irresistible mix of things. That dynamic that was happening that made everything so very important.'

For the characters of Hart, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Boyle was met with a deluge of imagery on their dress wear but was able to be more imaginative with their backstories: 'These people are photographed so often so there's no lack of material there. However, there is less information about their personal lives. In a way, what we're doing is an interpretation. So, everything was accurate as needed, but accuracy is just one element of many. I hope we pushed it beyond that and to tell a story that's wonderful, sad, complex and truthful – a human story about a genius that flew too close to the sun and fell to earth but left something wonderful behind.'

When creating the look of Elizabeth, Boyle didn't have any archive material to draw from, so instead wanted to be inspired by what she meant to Hart: 'She is this wonderful, vibrant, artistic, creative woman, but also with a more calculated side. She knows where she wants to go and what her aims are, so there is a practical element to her which is reflected in the costume.'

Playing such a unique character, Hawke was grateful to have such imaginative and creative people around him to help achieve this look: 'All of these people – cinematography, directing, hair and makeup, costume,



the actors – are facilitating this portrait of Larry. There's so much energy going into making him a three-dimensional figure for the audience.'

Linklater adds, 'It's wonderful to work with top level industry professionals – those that have mastered their craft and yet are still excited about new challenges and how to pull something off.'

## A HART UNKNOWN

*Larry was more difficult to work with [than Oscar]. He was more mercurial, he was harder to find, he was harder to pin down. And when you did, it was awfully well worth it.*

- Richard Rodgers

Despite being one of the most prolific lyricists to ever grace the Broadway stage, Lorenz Hart's story remains mostly unknown – many of the cast and crew of *Blue Moon* had heard the songs, but didn't know who wrote them.

For Blizzard, bringing Hart's life to the screen was one of the most important reasons for making this film: 'I think this is one of the great untold stories of musical theatre. Most people don't know who Lorenz Hart is. They know his work, but they don't know the person. This is a very important moment – both in the world and in Broadway history – but we also have this very personal story that weaves through it. We want to feel what Lorenz Hart felt like at this great turning point, and the culmination of this great partnership.'

Delaney hopes that audiences will take away a recognition of the work that Hart gave to the world: 'I want there to be an appreciation of the body of work that Larry Hart gave us – timeless work, not just in musical theatre, but on the music scene generally. People might know his name but might not know his story.'

Hart can be described as a tragic character, but for Hawke, it is his humanity and wit that shine above this: 'There is something so tragic, human and hysterically funny about Lorenz Hart. We've all been the person who feels ignored, lost or confused. Larry Hart is a wonderful embodiment of that. We all understand jealousy and what a terrible feeling it is to feel and how it makes us behave like idiots. And if I did my job at all, I hope to translate the feeling of what it was like to read the script. I hope people have as much fun with it as I have. All of Rick's films have a wit to them and that makes them unpretentious and fun to be around, so I hope people find that in this film.'

For Sloss, having such great quality actors play such interesting people will make a tremendous viewing experience: 'I think it's certainly going to be the virtuosity of the performances. For those interested in musical theatre history, it will be essential viewing. I think for those interested in seeing great actors working together and off each other at a high level, it will also be essential viewing. Let's face it, Richard Linklater is one of our greatest living visual storytellers, and he's amassed quite a following. So, I think for anyone who appreciates his filmmaking, they will not be disappointed.'

When looking for a guiding light during the making of the film, Linklater would always turn to the work of Rodgers and Hart: 'It's all about love and being on the outside of it. An impossible love that is just not going to happen for you. At its best, we want *Blue Moon* to be like a Rodgers and Hart song – beautiful, funny, witty and sad.'

*♪ Blue moon, you saw me standing alone  
Without a dream in my heart  
Without a love of my own  
Blue moon, you knew just what I was there for  
You heard me saying a prayer for  
Someone I really could care for ♪*

## ABOUT THE CAST

**ETHAN HAWKE** | Lorenz “Larry” Hart

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may" is a phrase a young Ethan Hawke took to heart while filming *Dead Poets Society*, the iconic drama that launched his career as an actor. Thirty years and countless honors later—including four Academy Award® nominations, as both an actor and writer—Hawke has established himself as a multifaceted artist: actor, screenwriter, director, producer, musician and best-selling novelist. In 2019, *The New York Times* summed up his screen persona by stating, “Ethan Hawke has quietly emerged as perhaps our boldest and most distinctive screen actor.”

As a filmmaker, Hawke most recently directed and co-wrote the Flannery O’Connor biopic *Wildcat*, starring Maya Hawke, Laura Linney and Steve Zahn. Released by Oscilloscope in May 2023, this unconventional meditation on art, faith and life invites audiences to weave in and out of celebrated Southern Gothic writer Flannery O’Connor’s mind as she ponders the great questions of her writing.

*Wildcat* was produced by Under the Influence Productions, the production company Hawke founded alongside his wife and producing partner Ryan Hawke. Under the Influence also recently produced the six-part Paul Newman-Joanne Woodward documentary, *The Last Movie Stars*, directed by Hawke and produced by Martin Scorsese. The series—an intimate portrait of the public and private lives of two of Hollywood biggest stars—received two Critics Choice Documentary Award nominations and a Gotham Award nomination.

In 2020, he received career-best universal acclaim for his television debut, the Showtime limited series *The Good Lord Bird*, which he starred in, executive produced and co-wrote, winning a Peabody Award among numerous accolades. The series, based on the National Book Award-winning novel by bestselling author James McBride, also received an AFI Award for ‘TV Program of the Year’. His onscreen portrayal of 19th Century abolitionist, John Brown, was honored with the Gotham Award for Outstanding Performance in a New Series, and SAG Award, Golden Globe, and TCA Award nominations. He also received a WGA Award and USC Scriptor Award nominations for his writing across the series.

Hawke’s prolific filmography includes numerous collaborations with filmmaker Richard Linklater, including *Boyhood* (Academy Award®, SAG, Golden Globe®, BAFTA, Choice and Independent Spirit Award nominations), *Fast Food Nation*, *Waking Life*, *The Newton Boys*, *Tape*, and memorably the *Before* trilogy (*Before Sunrise* and its two sequels *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight*), costarring Julie Delpy. Hawke, Delpy, and Linklater received Academy Award® and Independent Spirit Award nominations for writing the latter two films, and were honored with the Louis XIII Genius Award for the trilogy at the 2014 Critics Choice Awards.

He received Academy Award® and Screen Actors Guild nominations for ‘Best Supporting Actor’ for his work in Antoine Fuqua’s *Training Day*, opposite Denzel Washington. He also received career-best notices for Paul Schrader’s *First Reformed*, for which he won the Independent Spirit Award, the Gotham Award and over 30 critics’ awards, including the New York Film Critics Circle Award and the Los Angeles Film Critics Association prizes for ‘Best Actor.’

As an author, in 2021 Hawke released two new works: his first novel in twenty years, *A Bright Ray of Darkness*, which explores art, love, fame, and heartbreak in a blistering story of a young man making his Broadway debut in Henry IV just as his marriage implodes; and the graphic novel *Meadowlark: A Coming-of-Age Crime Story*, his second collaboration with illustrator Greg Ruth following their graphic novel *Indeh*. A best-selling author, Hawke’s written works also include the novels *The Hottest State* and *Ash Wednesday*; and the children’s book *Rules for a Knight*. In addition to writing, Hawke has narrated multiple audiobooks, including David Egger’s *Eyes & The Impossible* and John Grisham’s *Sparring Partners*, both of which were Audie Awards finalists.

Hawke resides in Brooklyn, New York.

## **MARGARET QUALLEY** | Elizabeth Weiland

Golden Globe nominee Margaret Qualley has become one of the most sought-after actors of her generation in the years since her esteemed debut portrayal of Jill Garvey on the critically acclaimed HBO series *The Leftovers* in 2014.

Currently, Qualley can be seen in her Golden Globe nominated role starring opposite Demi Moore in Coralie Fargeat's *The Substance*, which premiered at Cannes Film Festival winning Best Screenplay, and TIFF People's Choice Midnight Madness Award. Qualley recently appeared in Yorgos Lanthimos' *Kinds Of Kindness*, with Jesse Plemons and Emma Stone, which also premiered at Cannes Film Festival. Earlier this year, Qualley starred in Ethan Coen's *Drive Away Dolls* alongside Geraldine Viswanathan and Beanie Feldstein, also starring Pedro Pascal, and Matt Damon. Last year, Qualley starred opposite Emma Stone and Mark Ruffalo in Yorgos Lanthimos' *Poor Things* which received numerous accolades including an Academy Award "Best Picture" nomination, Golden Globe Nominations and a Gotham Award Nomination. Upcoming films Ethan Coen's *Honey Don't*, also starring Aubrey Plaza and Chris Evans; Richard Linklater's *Blue Moon*, also starring Ethan Hawke and Andrew Scott; and *Huntington* from A24, also starring Glen Powell.

In the spring of 2023, Qualley starred in Neon's romance-thriller, *Sanctuary*, alongside Christopher Abbott, directed by Zachary Wigton, which premiered at the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival. In 2021, Qualley starred in the critically acclaimed limited series for Netflix from LuckyChap Entertainment and John Wells, *Maid*, for which she received Emmy, Screen Actors Guild and Critics' Choice Award nominations. The show, based off Stephanie Land's New York Times best-selling memoir, *Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay and a Mother's Will to Survive*, *Maid*, premiered to rave reviews and has been watched by 75+ million households.

In 2019, Qualley appeared in two award-winning projects: Quentin Tarantino's 10-time Oscar nominated film, *Once Upon A Time... In Hollywood* as Pussy Cat, alongside Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio, Lena Dunham and Margot Robbie; and in the eight-episode 17-time Emmy nominated limited FX series, *Fosse/Verdon*, as Ann Reinking alongside Sam Rockwell and Michelle Williams, and for which she received Emmy and Critics Choice nominations. The series, directed by Thomas Kail and executive produced by Lin Manuel Miranda, was based on the biography by Sam Wasson, *Fosse*.

## **BOBBY CANNAVALE** | Eddie the Bartender

Bobby Cannavale was last seen starring in Tony Goldwyn's acclaimed film *Ezra*. The film follows divorced stand-up comedian Max Bernal (Cannavale) who embarks on a cross-country road trip with his neurodivergent son, Ezra, that has a transcendent impact on both of their lives. Upcoming, he can be seen in William Goldenberg's *Unstoppable* for Amazon alongside Jharrel Jerome, Jennifer Lopez, Michael Peña, and Don Cheadle which premiered at the 2024 Toronto Film Festival.

Cannavale is currently in production on Amazon's series *Scarpetta* starring and executive produced by Nicole Kidman and Jamie Lee Curtis. The project based on Patricia Cornwell's best-selling Kay Scarpetta book series that follows Kay Scarpetta (Kidman), Chief Medical Examiner.

Additional film credits include Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman* which received a SAG nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture, *Old Dads*, *Blonde*, *Thunderforce*, *Superintelligence*, *I Tonya*, *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, *Ant-Man*, *Danny Collins*, *Annie*, *Spy Chef*, *Blue Jasmine*, *WinWin*, *The Station Agent*, *Romance & Cigarettes*. Cannavale also starred in the Netflix series *The Watcher*, *Bupkis*, *Nine Perfect Strangers*, *Homecoming*, *Angie Tribeca*, *Mr. Robot*, *Maser of None*, *Nurse Jackie* for which he received 2 Emmy nominations, *Boardwalk Empire* for which he received an Emmy Award and a SAG nomination and *Will & Grace* for which he also received an Emmy Award. Theater credits include *Here We Are*, *The Lifespan of a Fact*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Motherf\*\*ker with the Hat* for which he received a Tony Award nomination and *Mauritius* for which he also received a Tony Award nomination. This year Cannavale received the Newport Beach Film Festival "Artist of distinction" Award.

## **ANDREW SCOTT** | Richard Rodgers

Andrew Scott is an acclaimed Irish actor who has starred in an array of projects across film, TV, and theatre.

Andrew currently stars in the Netflix limited series, *Ripley*, in which he plays the titular character, “Tom Ripley”, opposite Dakota Fanning, receiving nominations for a Primetime Emmy, Golden Globe, and Critics Choice Award. He also recently starred in Andrew Haigh’s film, *All Of Us Strangers*, opposite Paul Mescal, Claire Foy, and Jamie Bell for Searchlight Pictures, for which he received a Golden Globe Awards Nomination for “Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Drama” and a British Independent Film Awards nomination for “Best Lead Performance.”

Upcoming, Andrew will reprise his role in the one-man show *Vanya*, based on Simon Stephens’ adaptation of the Anton Chekhov play. The show will return to the stage in New York, running through May 2025. He previously starred in the show when Sam Yates directed it for the West End in Fall 2023. In 2024, Andrew became the first person in history to win Critics Circle lead actor prizes in both film and theater in the same year for his performances in *All Of Us Strangers* and *Vanya*.

Andrew received widespread acclaim for his portrayal of “The Priest” in Amazon’s *Fleabag*, earning a Screen Actors Guild Award for his performance. Other projects include Lena Dunham’s *Catherine Called Birdy* opposite Bella Ramsey, Joe Alwyn, and Isis Hainsworth for Amazon; the Amazon/BBC One limited series; *Pursuit Of Love*, opposite Lily James, Emily Beecham, and Emily Mortimer; and Bart Sher’s HBO drama, *Oslo*, opposite Ruth Wilson.

Other previous work includes *Denial*, starring alongside Rachel Weisz and Timothy Spall; *Spectre* from the James Bond franchise; *Alice Through The Looking Glass* with Johnny Depp; *King Lear* with Anthony Hopkins; Ken Loach’s *Jimmy’s Hall*; and an acclaimed role in the hit British film, *Pride*, for which he received the British Independent Film Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role. He also played the role of Lieutenant Leslie in Sam Mendes’s *1917*.

Andrew is perhaps best known on television for his role as ‘Moriarty’ in the international hit series, *Sherlock*, for which he was awarded the BAFTA award for Best Supporting Actor. Other television credits include *Modern Love*, *The Hollow Crown*, *The Town*, *The Hour*, *John Adams*, *Bands of the Brothers*, and *Black Mirror*. He also starred on stage in the critically acclaimed revival of Noel Coward’s *Present Laughter*, directed by Matthew Warchus, at the Old Vic.

A celebrated stage actor, he has had roles in notable productions such as *Cock* and *A Girl In a Car With a Man at the Royal Court*, both for which he received an Olivier Award. He was also nominated for the Olivier Award, the Evening Standard Award and won the Critics Circle Award for his acclaimed performance as *Hamlet* at the Almeida and its subsequent transfer to the West End.

## **ABOUT THE CREW**

### **RICHARD LINKLATER** | Director, Producer

Richard Linklater (writer/director) is a five-time Oscar nominee, two-time Golden Globe winner, two-time Bafta winner who has directed 25 feature length films. His more recent credits include *Boyhood* (2014), *Everybody Wants Some!!* (2016), *Last Flag Flying* (2017), *Where’d You Go Bernadette?* (2019), *Apollo 10 ½: A Space Age Childhood* (2022), *Hit Man* (2024), *Hometown Prison* (2024) and the upcoming “*Nouvelle Vague* and “*Blue Moon*, (both 2025). He also serves as the Artistic Director for the Austin Film Society, which he founded in 1985 to showcase films from around the world that were not typically shown in Austin. The Austin Film Society operates a repertory theater, manages a film studio, and has given out over \$2,700,000 in cash grants to Texas filmmakers since 1996.

### **ROBERT KAPLOW** | Writer

Robert Kaplow is the author of numerous novels. In 2008, director Richard Linklater filmed an adaptation of Robert’s novel *Me and Orson Welles*. In the past, Robert has taught English and Creative Writing, and for

over a decade he and his band (“Moe Moskowitz and the Punsters”) wrote, produced, and performed satirical sketches for NPR’s Morning Edition. *Blue Moon* is his first original screenplay.

#### **MIKE BLIZZARD** | Producer

Mike Blizzard is a former political & public relations consultant who emerged onto the film scene in 2014 as producer of the award-winning *No No: A Documentary* which premiered in competition at the Sundance Film Festival and has been licensed by Showtime, Netflix, and ESPN. His directorial debut, the 2018 experimental documentary *Also Starring Austin*, screened at the Dallas and Austin Film Festivals and played to sold out crowds at AFS Cinema and other regional theaters.

More recently Blizzard has teamed with Oscar-nominated writer/director Richard Linklater as producer of the film adaptation of Stephen Sondheim’s *Merrily We Roll Along*, the animated Netflix film *Apollo 10 ½: A Space Age Childhood* and *Hit Man* – which premiered at the 2023 Venice and Toronto Film Festivals and became the #1 movie on Netflix worldwide for three weeks running in 2024. Mike also serves on the Board of Directors of the Austin Film Society, and previously served two terms as Board President.

#### **JOHN SLOSS** | Producer

John Sloss is founder and CEO of Cinetic Media, and partner in Sloss Eckhouse Dasti Haynes LawCo. Through Cinetic, John produces motion pictures and television, provides various content sales and corporate advisory services, and presides over a rapidly growing talent management division. He has produced or executive produced over 70 films including Richard Linklater’s Academy Award-winning *Boyhood*, *Last Flag Flying*, and *Before Series*, Todd Haynes’s *The Velvet Underground*, *Wonderstruck* and *I’m Not There*, Peter Farrelly’s Academy Award-winning *Green Book*, Errol Morris’s Academy Award-winning *The Fog of War*, Kimberly Peirce’s Academy Award-winning *Boys Don’t Cry*, Jennifer Westfeldt’s *Friends With Kids*, and Ethan Hawke’s *Blaze*.

In addition to his ongoing roles at Sloss Eckhouse Dasti Haynes LawCo and Cinetic Media, John founded Filmbuff, a digital distribution company, which he later sold. He founded Producers Distribution Agency in 2010, a theatrical distribution company which released Banksy’s *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, Asif Kapadia’s *Senna*, Emilio Estevez’s *The Way*, and Katie Dellamaggiore’s *Brooklyn Castle* among other titles. He also founded the groundbreaking digital production and distribution company InDigEnt alongside Gary Winnick and IFC Films. John is a member of the Board of Directors of Film at Lincoln Center and serves on the Finance Committee of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

John has handled the sale of more than 600 films including *Napoleon Dynamite*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *The Kids Are Alright*, *Precious*, *Amy*, *Knock Down the House*, *Summer of Soul*, and many of the most iconic independent films of the past 25 years. In addition, he advises a range of corporate entertainment clients across film and television to shape business strategies and support the growth of production, distribution, and marketing capabilities.

# CREDITS

Directed by.....RICHARD LINKLATER

Written by.....ROBERT KAPLOW

Produced by.....MIKE BLIZZARD  
JOHN SLOSS  
RICHARD LINKLATER

Director of Photography.....SHANE F. KELLY

Costume Designer.....CONSOLATA BOYLE

Production Designer.....SUSIE CULLEN

Hair Designer.....LINDA GANNON

Make Up Designer.....LIZ BYRNE

Film Editor.....SANDRA ADAIR

Casting by.....OLIVIA SCOTT WEBB