

Disney
THE
PRINCESS
AND THE
FROG

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“‘The Princess and the Frog’ is a return to the timeless world of hand-drawn animation at Disney. It’s an ageless fairy tale, but with a fresh twist that combines everything we look for in great stories: comedy, adventure, music - and most of all, the kind of heart that always sets Disney animation apart.” - John Lasseter, Executive Producer and Chief Creative Officer, Walt Disney Animation Studios

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Walt Disney Animation Studios serves up a joyous gumbo of adventurous storytelling, captivating characters, offbeat comedy and memorable music in the all-new feature “The Princess and the Frog,” an animated comedy set in the great city of New Orleans. From the creators of “The Little Mermaid” and “Aladdin” comes a modern twist on a classic tale, featuring a beautiful girl named Tiana, a frog prince who desperately wants to be human again, and a fateful kiss that leads them both on a hilarious adventure through the mystical bayous of Louisiana. “The Princess and the Frog” marks the return to hand-drawn animation from the revered team of John Musker and Ron Clements, with music by Oscar-winning composer Randy Newman.

Everyone knows the story in which a princess finds true love by kissing a frog that magically turns into her handsome prince. In this telling of the story, the girl still kisses a frog, but the result is quite different, and only one of dozens of surprises in this mix of wacky humour, thrills, melody and emotion. Love eventually finds a way - between a prince and a princess... between frogs, perhaps... or maybe between a firefly and the object of his affection. But it’s clear that the most important details lie well beneath the skin. The film features Disney’s newest princess and it’s the Studio’s first fairy tale to be set in America.

“The Princess and the Frog” is executive produced by Academy Award-winning filmmaker (and Pixar Animation pioneer) John Lasseter (director of “Toy Story,” “A Bug’s Life,” “Toy Story 2,” and “Cars”). Disney veteran Peter Del Veche serves as the film’s producer. “The Princess and the Frog” is from an original story by Ron Clements & John Musker and Greg Erb & Jason Oremland; the directors teamed up with writer Rob Edwards to create the screenplay. Don Hall is story supervisor.

Oscar-winning composer Randy Newman (“Cars,” “Monsters, Inc.,” “Toy Story”) created an all-new score for the feature in a range of styles, including jazz, blues, gospel and zydeco; and featuring seven new songs.

The English-language voice cast for “The Princess and the Frog” features a varied and renowned troupe of actors. Tony Award-winner Anika Noni Rose (Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical, for her role in *Caroline, or Change*) stars as Tiana, international star Bruno Campos is Prince Naveen. Emmy Award-winner Keith David is the magical and menacing Dr Facilier; romantic Ray, the bayou firefly is illuminated by Emmy Award-nominee Jim Cummings. Jennifer Lewis casts a spell as the mystical Mama Odie, and Academy Award nominees Terrence Howard (“Hustle & Flow”) and Oprah Winfrey (“The Colour Purple”) are Tiana’s loving parents, James and

Eudora.

Walt Disney Animation Studios' executive producer and chief creative officer John Lasseter says, "If there was a single lesson we could take from Walt himself to take Walt Disney Animation Studios into the future, it is to leverage the richness of its past: its beloved storytelling forms, its successful characters, its musical opulence - all of these are an essential part of our newest hand-drawn project."

"The Princess and the Frog" is the sixth collaboration by the veteran team of Ron Clements and John Musker, whose roster of film achievements reads like an animation hall of fame, from their first teaming in 1986 on "The Great Mouse Detective," to "The Little Mermaid," "Aladdin," "Hercules" and "Treasure Planet." As usual, the animated duo was drawn to the project because of its compelling story and comic promise - potential that had eluded other development attempts.

"John Lasseter loved the idea," Musker recalls, "and the idea of New Orleans as a setting, with all the cultural, historical, visual and magical ideas that great city offered us. We decided that the Jazz Age added an element of both nostalgia and musicality, and we really wanted to play up the fairy tale archetypes."

Part of the magic of the story was a return to hand-drawn animation, once very nearly considered an abandoned art form. But the directors saw that the medium was as vibrant and appealing as ever, and ventured into re-creating the Disney Animation art form with reverence, purpose and a renewed sensibility.

"At every turn," Clements says, "we realized that we could reach out and touch the legacy of the animated Disney fairy tale, and yet move in surprising and interesting new ways, rather than slavishly imitating or reproducing what had been done before."

"The Princess and the Frog" is the 49th animated feature film from Disney, a tradition established nearly 75 years ago with the release of Walt Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," and including some of the most renowned and beloved films in history, among them "Cinderella," "Peter Pan," "One Hundred and One Dalmatians," "Beauty and the Beast" (the only animated feature ever nominated for the Best Picture Academy Award) and "The Lion King."

Producer Peter Del Vecho has taken great personal pleasure in being part of the rekindling of a great art form. "There's something really rewarding about watching the animator put down pencil to paper, and then when you're watching the film, you forget all about the individual pencil lines and those characters are really coming off the screen. You kind of take them home with you in your mind - each of the characters is rich and has a life of their own."

"BRING YOUR PAINTBRUSH. WE'RE PAINTING THE TOWN"

From Fairy Tale to Silver Screen - Disney Style

Once upon a time, not so many years ago, the traditional hand-drawn Disney animation gave way to new technology, leaving behind the single art form most closely identified with Walt Disney himself - and all the exceptional qualities of the hand-made moving image that Academy Award-winning animator and historian John Canemaker

wrote so lovingly of, “Its inherent warmth; the happy accidents of the human touch; the immediate intuitive link between brain, hand and drawing instrument; the special flexibility and style that is so different from the dimensionality, essential coolness and realistic imagery of CGI.”.

In 2006, when John Lasseter and Ed Catmull took the reins of Walt Disney Animation Studios, they understood that traditional handcraft of Disney animation certainly had not lost its value as either art or entertainment. And although his greatest fame has come from pioneering in the field of computer animation, Lasseter’s love was not exclusive to his own specific form. He grew up with and began his career in the traditional animation that Disney invented, nurtured and developed over decades into an art form all its own. New animated features were being considered, in whatever animation technique was deemed most suitable.

“We were invited to pitch ideas for new hand-drawn Disney features,” John Musker recalls. “We were all particularly inspired by the Brothers Grimm tale of ‘The Frog Prince.’”

“We’re returning to sincere, classic Disney fairytale storytelling. It’s a return to the musical. It’s also the return to the warmth and grandeur of hand-drawn animation and hand-painted backgrounds. All of that together makes it feel like coming home.” - Peter Del Vecho, Producer

Music was another element of the Disney legacy that the creative team wanted to reach back and touch, but take in a new direction, too. Clements and Musker pitched the film as a musical, but not in the traditional Broadway-style form that Disney had pioneered in 1937 and reinvented in the 1980s. They pitched the idea that the music would be a tapestry of zydeco, blues, gospel, jazz, and all of that distinctly “American” sound.

Finally, the team began to look at the artistic talent that would be required to make a new Disney animated feature. “It really is a great crossroads in the medium, and an opportunity for everyone here to do something that nobody else in the world is doing, and something that, to a certain extent, no one else *can* do,” Peter Del Vecho says. “Everyone on this project deeply cares about it.”

Film audiences will once again share an opportunity to see whether true love can really triumph, and strive for an ending where everyone lives happily ever after.

WHO’S WHO IN “THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG”

The Cast of Characters

TIANA (English-language voice of Anika Noni Rose) is certainly not the typical fairy tale princess. Her daydreams are not of far away kingdoms or castles in the clouds, but of personal success and a thriving restaurant business. She is an attractive and independent African-American woman, hardworking and strong-willed, but still a loving and loyal friend and a compassionate soul. She treasures her mother and holds her father near and dear to her heart, and although she knows the way won’t be easy, believes that anyone can achieve their ambitions.

In her sensible pursuit of her life's goals, however, Tiana never seems to appreciate what is happening on her way to them. She can never simply slow down and enjoy herself. She has no time for romance, and is certainly not about to waste her time mooning over men - let alone kissing any frogs.

But supervising animator Mark Henn notes the character's gentleness, "She's a little more vulnerable right off the bat, so I think you can more easily identify with her, or want to cheer her on. Our animated leading ladies have evolved over the decades, from just being 'princesses in peril' like Snow White - characters to whom events happen, rather than figures of action motivating their own story. It was an easy character to fall in love with and get in her corner. Tiana has her own motivating desire, and decisions that drive her and make her interesting and sympathetic."

PRINCE NAVEEN (English-language voice of Bruno Campos) The alluring qualities of New Orleans drew Prince Naveen from his far-off kingdom of Maldonia. Although spoiled and irresponsible, Naveen has an irresistible charm and *joie de vivre* that captivate those around him, and a passion for the Dixieland jazz being popularized by Paul Whiteman, Jimmie Noone, Earl Hines, King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong.

"Disney has a long tradition of princes, but they all fall short of being characters in and of themselves," says Randy Haycock, supervising animator of Naveen. "They're functional. They give the princesses somebody to fall in love with. We've never had a prince that really influenced a heroine, it was always love at first sight. For once we have a girl that meets a guy and it follows a romantic-comedy idea where the couple meets and they really don't like each other."

Like anyone, Naveen's flaws are actually part of his virtues. The heroine has a flaw, too - she doesn't know how to appreciate life. She doesn't know how to enjoy herself. "And that's what Naveen teaches her," Haycock says. "He teaches her to settle down once in a while and simply appreciate what's going on. Have some fun, enjoy, be happy with what you have around you."

DR FACILIER (English-language voice of Keith David) Facilier is a devious scoundrel, the shadowy figure of threat who causes no shortage of predicament and menace to Prince Naveen and Tiana. He's a smooth operator who works his magical spells and uses his connection to "friends on the other side" toward getting what he wants by way of his mysterious, menacing and dangerous charm.

"He's musical, he's threatening, he's tall, he's lean, he's thin. He can be very sweet. He's handsome. He's graceful. And I think all that stuff is, in very contemporary animation anyway, rare to see that type of villain," says Bruce Smith, supervising animator of Dr Facilier, "It's always great as an animator to get the villain, and the villain is always that character that holds up the film and keeps everything interesting and on edge. Luckily in this case I've really got a very unique villain - a great villain."

MAMA ODIE (English-language voice of Jenifer Lewis) Mama Odie is the bright side of Facilier, a sassy, eccentric and witty 197-year-old magic Queen of the Bayou who guides Tiana and Naveen in their mission to undo Dr Facilier's spell. According to the story, Mama Odie dwells in "the deepest, darkest part of the bayou." In

an old shrimp boat, improbably wedged upside down in a giant tree, Mama Odie and her pet snake Juju dispense spells, heyacalls and gris gris to those in need.

"I remember completely gravitating toward Mama Odie," supervising animator Andreas Deja says. "This blind little shrivelled up old woman who was eccentric and has this seeing-eye snake, and everything about her was just so unusual."

Much of the spirit of Mama Odie was guided by the filmmakers' appreciation of famed New Orleans storyteller Coleen Salley, author of several picture books, esteemed University of New Orleans professor and an ambassador for children's literature.

RAY (English-language voice of Jim Cummings) is the laid-back, love-struck Cajun firefly. Alight with Southern charm, gentle humour and even romantic passion - Ray's heart's desire is a "firefly" named Evangeline, the most beautiful firefly in all creation. His admirable devotion for his unattainable, but no less true love anchors the movie.

"He's the romantic," supervising animator Mike Surrey says. "He is what Naveen and Tiana are, but he has no problem expressing his love, openly and with not a care - where he knows the two of them are in the same boat he is, but they just can't. It's hard not to feel for a character like that. He brings a real embodiment of the idea of the transcendent power of love. All from this lumpy, gap-toothed, goofy-looking little guy."

LOUIS (English-language voice of Michael-Leon Wooley) is a syncopated swamp hipster, an engaging and charming alligator with a passion for jazz and trumpet playing whose suspect "assistance" to Tiana and Naveen add fun and comedy to their bayou adventure. "He's manipulative, he's needy," supervising animator Eric Goldberg says. "He's full of neuroses. But he has this one gift - playing jazz, and when he gets to play his jazz, that's when he really is who he is."

"Here was an alligator playing a trumpet - what's not to love?" says screenwriter Rob Edwards.

BIG DADDY (English-language voice of John Goodman) Eli La Bouff, known to many as "Big Daddy," is a solid, stout, funny Southern gentleman of wealth and station, who wants nothing more than her heart's desire for his "little princess" Charlotte - he even arranges a Mardi Gras Ball as the stage for Charlotte to debut as a "princess."

Big Daddy is *homage* to an American literary character made vernacular in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and "Hush, Hush Sweet Charlotte," the rich and powerful patriarch. But where those characters were motivated by power and station to destroy their children, this Big Daddy has a motivation not of control or authority, but rather unbridled adoration for his only daughter.

CHARLOTTE (English-language voice of Jennifer Cody) the spoiled, demanding and flamboyant daughter of Big Daddy is the ultimate early-20th century little rich girl, but Charlotte is by no means the stereotyped bratty daughter of wealth.

Big Daddy dotes on his blonde, blue-eyed dear one, taking every opportunity to shower her with custom-made dresses and feed her fantasies, which include marriage to a prince (and becoming a princess in the process), even if she has to kiss a few

frogs. Part of the grounding provided to Charlotte is the friendship of the little girl, Tiana, daughter of the finest seamstress in New Orleans - a sensible, non-frog-kissing girl who grows to become Charlotte's lifelong friend.

JAMES (English-language voice of Terrence Howard) is Tiana's inspiration and she is the legacy of his love. A strong, loving father who has instilled his daughter with her ethics and with a familiar bond in New Orleans residents: their love of good food. "You see," James tells little Tiana, "Food brings folk together from all walks o' life. It warms 'em right up, and puts smiles on their faces - and when I open my own restaurant people are gonna line up for miles, just to get a taste of my food."

"Our food," Tiana lovingly corrects him.

Supervising animator Ruben Aquino says, "It's the core of what she wants and why she is the way she is. I've got to sell the audience on showing how much love there is in the family and how James loves Tiana so much. He is always present in Tiana's heart."

EUDORA (English-language voice of Oprah Winfrey) is Tiana's foundation, both anchor and inspiration. Tiana sees in her mother the successful and respected businesswoman she aspires to be. As a girl, Tiana's happiest moments are spent with her mother, playing in the home of one of her wealthy clients with a little girl named Charlotte. But where Tiana's father James is a romantic, Eudora is a pragmatist. She knows the tough times Tiana will face as an independent woman.

"Eudora has a particular personality," supervising animator Ruben Aquino says. "She's more about being the nurturing mother who also has her own career, she's a seamstress and it's a modest living, but she's very good at what she does, and she loves her daughter, and wants what's best for her, too."

THE STORY

A New Twist on an Old Tale

On the bend of the Big River, New Orleans sparkles with opulence, adventure, romance, music and magic. Here in the "once upon a time" of the Jazz Age 1920s, among the wrought iron balconies and beckoning alleyways of the French Quarter and environs, a most unusual tale unfolds.

Tiana is an attractive, independent, hardworking young woman. She has no time for romance and the dalliance of dreams, she has a love of cooking, and plans to be a successful restaurateur, fulfilling the love of food that is her father's legacy. But in spite of her hard work and diligence, obstacles keep Tiana's goals out of reach.

Down on the Mississippi riverfront, a handsome and gregarious jazz fanatic has arrived in the Crescent City, the royal outcast Prince Naveen from far-off Maldonia. Spoiled, irresponsible, and indolent, Naveen has made his way through life on his good looks and undeniable charm. His wealth and station attract the evil Dr Facilier, a practitioner of dark magic, whose effort to steal Naveen's royal privilege results in the handsome prince's mysterious transformation into a frog.

Naveen's attempt to use the old fairy tale standby of a kiss to return him to

human form only results in Tiana being transformed, too, and the amphibious twosome find themselves cast adrift in the Louisiana bayou, pursued by frog hunters and seeking the good magic of a mysterious 197-year-old priestess named Mama Odie.

Helping them along in their precarious, awkward, but truly laughable journey are a lovesick Cajun firefly named Ray and a Jazz-playing alligator named Louis, and although their way is fraught with peril, the contrary pair bring out each other's better selves, overcome their differences and their obstacles, and discover that dreams do come true - but never in the way one might expect.

In the end, love wins out, and the differences that seemed so very important before seem to fade away into the bayou.

ANIMATION ALL-STARS

The Greatest Talents in Disney Animation Reunite

Directors Ron Clements and John Musker teamed up yet again for "The Princess and the Frog." Their credits include "The Great Mouse Detective," "The Little Mermaid," "Aladdin," "Hercules" and "Treasure Planet."

In putting together a team of artistic talent to bring "The Princess and the Frog" to the screen, the producer and directors wondered if animators who were now doing well in digital animation would want to return? They did. As much as they enjoyed other animation forms and were successful with them, they wanted to return to the more personal and visceral expression that hand-drawn animation offers. They yearned to express themselves through drawing.

There was also a whole new generation of artists who had grown up watching the classic Disney films, and those films that Musker, Clements, and their colleagues had made, back when they were the young guys. Many of the new recruits for "The Princess and the Frog" had seen films such as "The Little Mermaid" and "Beauty and the Beast" as children, and were equally as excited and enthusiastic to join in the production of another in the long line of Disney animated features.

"I think it behoves the Studio to do something pretty traditional. Right now, even with as much good CG work as there has been done, there is a fan base out there. People come up to me and say 'Gosh, I just really want Disney to be Disney' - they really want to see the hand-drawn stuff again." -Eric Goldberg, Supervising Animator, Louis

"We're trying to reinvent everything," art director Ian Gooding ("Tarzan," "Hercules," "Pocahontas") says. "It's so hard to just pick up this animation style again - it's not like it was in the freezer and you just thawed it out. There are lots of challenges - there's a lot of training and...trying to figure out where to buy paper from again."

"It has been a very interesting process," Peter Del Vecho says. "Fortunately, we have a lot of collective memory here, so we know how we wanted to do it, but since we are starting from scratch, we also had to think about how we want to do it going into the future. So we talked about doing paperless hand-drawn. But, since technology hasn't

quite caught up to that ability yet, the best thing to do for now was to animate on paper. I'm really glad we made that decision."

RENEWED ENTHUSIASM

"It is a process that is akin to laying the track as the train is going down the line," Del Vecho says. "It's not easy, and it causes a fair amount of anxiety, but we're trying to only pay attention to the things that matter. We're putting our efforts into what gets up on the screen. To us, it's all about what the audience ultimately sees."

"We want everything *gold*," Gooding says.

"As producer," Del Vecho says, "I'm really fortunate, in that we brought back to the Studio the best of the best. If you think about the animators we have on the team - it's almost like we're bringing back our modern day version of the Nine Old Men (Walt Disney's collective group of key animation talent, named as a joke after FDR's Supreme Court justices); they all get to collaborate on one movie together, they're at the top of their form."

Supervising animator Mark Henn ("The Lion King," "Aladdin," "Beauty and the Beast") agrees, "I got that kind of reaction when the cleanup crew started coming in. It was like old home week, and we've got the best of the best. Everybody is happy to be here, and they love the film, and everybody is just so excited just to be on the team and make this work."

"I think there's something about hand-drawn animation – where the animator's really expressing himself almost directly through his hand, through the pencil onto the paper - nothing else matches that. It's fun for a lot of these animators to be returning to their roots." -Peter Del Vecho, Producer

"One of the things that John Lasseter brought in is this idea that our communication could be more open," supervising animator Randy Haycock ("The Lion King," "Hercules," "Tarzan") explains. "We can be passionate about it. We don't have to be afraid of somebody getting freaked out because somebody's passionate about an idea. It's passion and it comes from the same place that everybody else's passion comes from - a desire to make this movie great."

"I think this film benefits highly from the skill level of all the artists," supervising animator Bruce Smith ("Home on the Range," "Tarzan") says. "I can't recall a film outside of ones the Nine Old Men did where there was such a concentrated group of talent in the animators' positions, and it really shows up on the screen. It's sort of a baseball cliché of everybody leaving it on the field, but it's like that. I think everybody's really pouring their guts out on the screen. You're really getting some great performances."

"DREAMS DO COME TRUE IN NEW ORLEANS"

Disney Designers Do a Little Hard Work to Make a Big Easy

On a crescent-shaped bend in the Mississippi River 120 miles from the Gulf of Mexico is a moody city full of history and mystery, of music and magic. Founded by the

French, succeeded to the Spanish, it is a city rich with African and West Indian influences, a vein of Roman Catholicism, and the fusion of worldwide culture found in a seaport city. Behind it all is a certain transience based in the nature of its livelihood.

A robust immigrant population in the early 20th century only added to the abundance and texture of this already rich and unique environment. Ocean-going trade nurtured the development of early jazz music, the legalized vice of Storyville, the artistic ferment of the *Vieux Carré* (French Quarter), and even some of the earliest organized efforts in the historic preservation movement.

“One of the unique things about ‘The Princess and the Frog - it’s not just a fairy tale, it’s Disney’s first American fairy tale. It’s actually set in a real time, in a real city. That’s been really fun, it allowed us to actually go to this place and research, and a lot of environments in the movie are places you can actually visit.” -John Musker, Director

As a setting for the fantastic, the enchanted, the musical, and even the villainous, nowhere on earth seemed quite so right for the setting of “The Princess and the Frog.”

“New Orleans is a shockingly *different* place. It’s just so different from anywhere else in America,” says art director Ian Gooding. “I think San Francisco has a lot of character, and New York is certainly, undeniably full of New York character. But if you blindfolded someone and put them on a plane that landed in New Orleans, and they’d never been there, you could tell them they were in another country - and they’d probably believe you.”

The sense of otherworldliness within a distinctly American setting was a component of the filmmakers approach to developing their New Orleans fairy tale. Within the geography and history of the region were all of the elements and setting the required, and the real places themselves inspired further additions and refinements to the storytelling.

THE GARDEN DISTRICT

Within the “single” locale of New Orleans, the filmmakers defined three distinct environments: As the residential setting for the ostensible “royal family” in this American fairy tale, the filmmakers found a locale that evoked, within its New Orleans setting, the ideas of luxury, solidity and tradition that are embodied within the classic story imagery as the stout walls of a majestic castle - The Garden District, the first suburban neighbourhood of the city of New Orleans. Originally developed from 1832 to about 1900, the Garden District evokes the stately homes and mansions of the sugar barons and cotton kings, wealthy newcomers building opulent homes reflecting their prosperity - and that of New Orleans in that era.

In approaching the design of the Garden District, the filmmakers faced the challenge of taking a very ordered, architectural real-world inspiration and making it into a lush and nostalgic fairy-tale realm. Additionally, the human environs had to seamlessly co-exist with the extreme naturalism of an uncultivated bayou that also plays such an important role.

Art director Ian Gooding added an element of caricature to the design, in order to relieve the innate rigidity of the horizontal/vertical statements of real architecture. Ornamentation, turnings, scrollwork and posts were exaggerated, but without compromising the solid look of the buildings. Verticals were not always drawn parallel, but tilting side to side, which actually appears balanced in the composition of the final shots. Older buildings in particular were given a more pronounced tilt or bow on the vertical, have more curved lines, and appear concave in overall shape. The result was caricatured, but solidly constructed, architecture.

THE FRENCH QUARTER

North of Canal Street is the picturesque French Quarter (*Vieux Carré*) of the old city, now one of the best-loved attractions in the American South.

Many of the multi-storied French Quarter buildings feature ornate balconies and elaborate cast-iron work, frequently festooned with hanging and potted plants. Most buildings are built with brick or plastered brick, painted in bright colours, and feature window and door shutters for protection against tropical storms. At night, the warm, flickering glow of gas lamps and lanterns light the cobbled alleys and courtyards, and cast shadows that stimulate the romantic, the imaginative - and the apprehensive.

This undercurrent of wickedness and black magic, the presence of sin in the shadows of virtue, of darkness lurking behind the graceful, sunny wrought-iron balconies helped define the key element of enchantment in the story. While sinister, this element is not unattractive - especially to the youthful and spirited prince.

In designing these more ominous settings of the city, the artists developed a visual vocabulary that would reinforce both the mood of the spaces and the characters that inhabit them. Tall, vertical, narrow spaces and doorways reveal artefacts, masks and objects. Strong contrast and unsettling light-and-shadow patterns add disquiet to altars containing candles, bottles, statues, scrolls and religious icons. In all, elements of fantasy and terror are more pronounced and stylized, the environment evokes the attractive malevolence of the villainous Dr Facilier.

THE BAYOU

In the deep Southeast of the United States, in particular the Delta region of Louisiana and Mississippi, sluggish offshoots of the "Big River" meander through marshes of the lowlands, creating great swampy regions known as bayous. Larger ones, such as Bayou Lafourche, are remnants of routes the Mississippi once followed on its way to the Gulf of Mexico. Here, where alligators slip silently through the brackish waters beneath a fan of palmetto leaves, and fireflies create a lantern glow veiled by the latticed skeletal branches of gnarled live oaks and scrub pine, all draped in shrouds of Spanish moss, is the perfect setting for the mysterious, magical and romantic.

"I grew up in Florida," says visual development artist James Aaron Finch, "so I had a sense of this Southern environment, the great oaks, the swampy areas. The indigenous plants that people don't see much in California, palmettos and things, and how to put them in there. I bring a little bit of that language of the South, and what's authentic to the Bayou."

“This movie is challenging in that it has such different environments. You have the French Quarter, and the wild, colourful Mardi Gras, and the polished sophistication of the Garden District - and then you have the Bayou.” - Maria Gonzales, Colour Supervisor

Bringing together such disparate environments was a genuine concern of the production team, but perhaps not in the manner one might assume. Kyle Odermatt explains, “The organics of the Bayou are easy to do, straight to final. The architectural things were actually harder to do. And the real challenge from an artistic standpoint is going from one to another and having it feel okay.”

Visual development artist Susan Nichols adds, “New Orleans really is emblematic of ‘Americana,’ in that it’s a melting pot of so many varied cultures, and always has been, which gives a flavour to the community and the ethnicity that is integral to the entire environment there. It added a layer of flavour to the visuals that we haven’t tapped into before, and I loved it.”

MOVING FORWARD WHILE LOOKING BACK

Classic Disney Design Informs “The Princess and the Frog”

Creating a world that has credibility while maintaining an aura of fantasy is a difficult balance in the best circumstances. Although the settings of “The Princess and the Frog” are regionally adjacent, they presented a challenge in making a single complete and credible setting within the needs of various types of locales and visual styles. The filmmakers looked to the past in order not to imitate, but to examine how the Disney masters of the past had designed their films.

“The directors were talking about ‘Lady and the Tramp’ for the architectural stuff, but ‘Bambi’ for the natural stuff, the organic stuff,” Ian Gooding says, “That’s a good jumping off point, but I didn’t think we could really do that, because if you were to edit together ‘Bambi’ and ‘Lady and the Tramp,’ you’d have a mess. You know, as beautiful as they are individually, they just wouldn’t go together.”

LESSONS OF “BAMBI” AND “LADY”

The dominant ‘Bambi’ influence of the film derives not from simply a look, but rather the philosophical, theoretical and technical underpinnings of the classic feature.

Gooding explains, “In ‘Bambi’ they took something incredibly complex, a forest environment - leaves and twigs, rocks and bark clumps, everything else that you find in a forest - and they painted only what was important. You still have the feeling of a forest, but not a literal forest. What they did in ‘Bambi’ was painted how it feels to be *in* a forest, instead of painting a forest. You don’t miss the billions of twigs and leaves and stuff. It completely works the way that they conceived and executed it. And it’s that spirit that we’re trying to go with for our movie.”

“The influence of ‘Lady and the Tramp’ really goes back to the sort of thinking and shapes of Edward Hopper, George Bellows and other American realism painters,” layout supervisor Rasoul Azadani says.

“We knew we were working on a period piece,” says production designer James Aaron Finch, “and we knew that some of the architecture was of that Garden District feel, so we looked at ‘Lady and the Tramp,’ not so much for the application of paint, but definitely the caricature of shapes and the compositional elements. Large foreground elements utilizing the screen shape, and then space of depth and pattern and a nice balance and rhythm of light shapes.”

“This movie was just filled to the rim. I think no other film that we’ve done has got so much going on in terms of location.” -James Aaron Finch, Production Designer

LIGHTING AND STAGING

“In lighting and colour, I think our film is actually a little bit more complex than our early films,” says head of backgrounds Sunny Apinchapong. “Although we often look to the simplicity of previous titles, we are adding the sophistication of new lighting and colour techniques.”

Ian Gooding says “The Princess and the Frog” benefits from past successes. “The lighting is absolutely terrific. The one thing I think where ‘Lady and the Tramp’ and ‘Bambi’ actually do overlap is lighting. They both are really great at using lighting to simplify very complex things and direct the eye to the correct spot.”

The task for the background artists was seemingly backwards according to Sunny Apinchapong. “It’s a challenge is to figure out what to put in, but here what to leave out was more important, so it would be less distracting to the focal point where we stage the characters. We keep everything pretty soft and focused on basic silhouette shape and design, more on designing, rather than just rendering the scenes.”

COLOR

In colour styling, visual development artist Lorelay Bove saw a need to balance between the location reality and the dictates of the story. “For the colour on the bayou, I would look at photographs and research on the Internet, and really look at what’s appealing from those pictures, or what colours were working together. I looked at that, and then at bayou plants, and then I just worked everything together, always thinking if the moment is a sad moment, maybe it’s monochromatic and more on the grey side - it depends on what scene, and on what mood.”

Ian Gooding began searching for a happy medium in visual detail. “We started with a background, and I painted it, contextually, too far - too organic, too brush-stroked, too painterly, too soft. We put characters on top of it and showed it to the directors and John Lasseter. They said, ‘Parts of this are working, but let’s tighten up these areas,’ and we started pulling back from the one that was too far, until we found something that worked. I think what we ended up with works really well.”

Apinchapong adds, “One thing we try to do is that even though we’re using software to paint these days, we don’t want the paint to look too digital. We try to make sure it feels more traditional, even though we don’t use brush or paint.”

Gooding says, "It's an exploration to see how far you can push things, and when we did that with the bayou stuff, we pushed it really, really far - and people didn't object. So you can actually leave it there. The buildings, you have to pull back a little bit. But they do feel 'of the same world.'"

"This movie was just filled to the rim," James Aaron Finch says. "I think no other film that we've done has got so much going on in terms of location. It's like taking two or three films like 'Hunchback' and 'Tarzan,' and then just put it all into one film and do it in a rapid schedule."

A FROG'S EYE-VIEW

The differing species of characters led to another unique design challenge for the filmmakers, that of creating a relative size scale that would enable the appropriate staging of scenes between characters of differing sizes, and their scale relationships to their settings.

"It's something we always have to be aware of and not just cheat like mad so it doesn't feel real," says supervising animator Eric Goldberg. "Yes, there's some liberties that you can take in order to stage things effectively and make it look like characters are having a conversation, but everything has to be in proper relationship to everything else."

Rasoul Azadani recalls how the notion of scale affected a research trip to a real bayou. "When I went to the bayou, some parts had no water, so we could see the build-up of bayou from the ground up, we could see what the ground would look like, and you could see the water marks, how the water would come in. So I was walking with my camera right on the ground, taking snapshots from the point of view of the frogs."

MUSIC

Oscar-winning Composer Randy Newman Adds Authenticity and Experience

It was unanimous among filmmakers - Randy Newman was their first choice, their ideal composer for "The Princess and the Frog," right from the beginning.

Newman, a long-time collaborator for Disney•Pixar films, received an Academy Award for his work on "Monsters, Inc." He won Grammy Awards for "Monsters, Inc.," "Toy Story" and "A Bug's Life" (among others).

Randy Newman's 1974 song, "Louisiana 1927," had gotten a lot of play after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the directors began thinking of the innate sense of musical theatre in a lot of Newman's work, including his scores for Milos Forman's "Ragtime" or Barry Levinson's "The Natural."

"We just kept thinking, 'You know, Randy would be really good, there is an Americana aspect of it and that just seems like it would be intriguing,'" John Musker recalls.

So, with a certain feeling of selling icemakers to penguins, Musker and Clements pitched Randy Newman to John Lasseter.

“John understood exactly what Randy could bring to our project,” Clements says, “but he also warned us, ‘You know, everyone is going to say that I *made* you use Randy Newman.’”

With family ties to New Orleans and a few summers there as a child - Newman says he has a life-long love of the music. “The music is, I find, congenial,” says Newman. “I don’t know what it is. It’s hard to believe I heard something as a baby, you know, that will always feel good to me. But, who knows? It’s very comfortable to me, that kind of music.”

Newman created an all-new score for the feature in a range of styles, including jazz, blues, gospel and zydeco; and featuring seven new songs.

Among the songs is a ballad for Tiana, performed by Anika Noni Rose. “‘Almost There’ is the song in which Tiana expresses her emotions about having a restaurant and achieving her goal,” says Newman. “Anika comes from Broadway and singing with a backbeat is not what she typically does, but she did it and did it beautifully.”

Newman says he understands the power of music for filmmakers, particularly those creating an animated film like “The Princess and the Frog.” “When you score an animated picture, the characters actual behaviour is reflected in the music,” he says. “If they fall down, you go ‘ba-dum-dum.’ And if you try not to go ‘ba-dum-dum,’ it doesn’t look right. But the music can also do stuff emotionally for you, too.”

One of the more emotional characters in “The Princess and the Frog” is Ray. Newman helped bring Ray’s emotions to light, so to speak, in a song entitled “Evangeline.”

“‘Evangeline’ is a love song for Ray, the firefly, who is in love with a beautiful far-away firefly he has yet to meet, which is a nice idea,” says Newman. “It was easy to write because I knew instantly that it was going to be a Cajun waltz. His emotion is clear. He’s in love.”

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JOHN MUSKER (Director) continues to be a major force in the art of animation and one of Disney’s greatest resources. From “The Little Mermaid” and “Aladdin” to the epic comedy “Hercules,” his irreverent wit, strong visual style and unconventional approach to storytelling helped to create some of the most successful films in motion picture history.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Musker first began drawing while in grammar school and knew by the age of 8 that he wanted to become an animator. Inspired by such Disney classics as “Sleeping Beauty” and “Pinocchio,” as well as Bob Thomas’ primer “The Art of Animation,” he developed a thorough understanding of the animation process. His fascination with comics, cartoons and *Mad Magazine* further stimulated his desire to draw.

At Loyola Academy, a Jesuit high school in Wilmette, Illinois, Musker became a cartoonist for the school paper. His special brand of caricature, which included

outrageous sketches of teachers and school celebrities, quickly caught on. This preoccupation with caricature and cartooning continued throughout his college years at North-western University, where he majored in English and drew cartoons for *The Daily North-western*.

Following graduation from college in 1974, Musker put together a portfolio and set out for California to pursue a career as an animator. Initially rejected by Disney, he enrolled at the California Institute of the Arts the following year to master his craft.

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

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

Musker and Clements joined creative forces in 1983 to write "The Great Mouse Detective" and went on to co-direct the film along with Burny Mattinson and Dave Michener. This successful collaboration led to a reteaming on "The Little Mermaid," the award-winning film that helped to revitalize feature animation at Disney and generate new excitement for the genre as a whole. Since then, Musker and Clements have co-written and co-directed two of the funniest and most memorable animated features ever, "Aladdin" and "Hercules." Their next project was the Disney animated feature "Treasure Planet," a swashbuckling intergalactic adventure based on the classic novel "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson.

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

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

RON CLEMENTS (Director) has emerged as one of the top talents in the field of animation today, and his gentle humour, visual integrity and strong story sensibilities have helped to attract a wider audience than ever before to animated feature films. Along with his directing partner, John Musker, Clements has dedicated himself to expanding the Disney legacy and taking the art of animation in exciting new directions.

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

Musker.

After graduating from high school, Clements came to California to try his luck at animation. Because there were no openings at Disney, he worked for several months at Hanna-Barbera while studying life drawing in the evening at Art Centre. With persistence and determination, Clements was finally accepted into Disney's Talent Development Program, a training ground for young animators. His self-taught experience and ambition made up for his lack of formal training.

After successfully completing the training program, Clements served a two-year apprenticeship under Disney legend Frank Thomas. He quickly progressed through the ranks from inbetweeners to assistant to animator-storyman. His credits include "Winnie the Pooh and Tigger, Too," "The Rescuers," "Pete's Dragon," "The Fox and the Hound" and "The Black Cauldron."

Clements made his writing-directing debut (with Musker) on the 1986 Disney animated feature "The Great Mouse Detective." Following that, he successfully pitched an animated version of the classic Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale "The Little Mermaid," which reunited Clements and Musker as co-writers and co-directors and became one of the studio's greatest artistic and commercial achievements. Musker and Clements went on to write and direct two of the funniest and most memorable animated features ever - "Aladdin" and "Hercules." Clements and Musker's next project was "Treasure Planet," the swashbuckling intergalactic adventure based on the classic novel "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson.

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

PETER DEL VECHO (Producer) joined Disney Animation Studios in 1995 and came to the studio with a wealth of production experience in theatre. Having worked at numerous theatres in New York and on the east coast, Del Vecho eventually joined the renowned Guthrie Theatre for a 9-year stint before leaving in 1995 as the Associate Producing Director. It was Del Vecho's passion for a collaborative artistic environment that brought him to Disney in 1995.

Del Vecho relies on his past production experience in both animation and theatre in his current role as the producer of Disney's next musical fairytale, "The Princess and the Frog." This latest film project, due for release in December 2009, reunites him with directors Ron Clements and John Musker, creators of "The Little Mermaid" and "Aladdin."

Peter began his professional career at Disney in 1995. As the Production Manager of "Hercules," he was responsible for guiding a production team of 300 artists and helping to bring this epic adventure to the screen. His next credit was as the Associate Producer of the 2002 animated film, "Treasure Planet." Del Vecho also served as Associate Producer on the 2005 animation adventure, "Chicken Little," where he was creatively involved in the production of the studio's first full-length 3D animated feature.

Born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts, Del Vecho developed an interest in music and theatre at an early age and he went on to study theatre production at Boston University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. From there he worked as a

Stage Manager in various theatres on the east coast before a 9 year stint at the renowned Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, MN where he left his role as the Associate Producing Director to come to Disney.

In addition to his accomplishments as a filmmaker, Del Vecho is married to a loving and supportive wife, Jane, and is father of twin 12-year-old children, Gregory and Georgina. Peter also holds an FAA Sport Pilot certificate and flies his own weight shift trike in and around the Los Angeles area.

JOHN LASSETER (Executive Producer) is chief creative officer of Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios and principal creative advisor, Walt Disney Imagineering. He is a two-time Academy Award-winning director and oversees all films from Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios and associated projects. Lasseter directed the groundbreaking and critically acclaimed films “Toy Story,” “A Bug’s Life” and “Toy Story 2.” Additionally, he executive produced “Monsters, Inc.,” “Finding Nemo,” “The Incredibles,” and “Up.” Lasseter returned to the director’s chair in 2006 with the release of the Disney•Pixar film, “Cars.”

In 2004, Lasseter was honoured by the Art Directors Guild with its prestigious Outstanding Contribution to Cinematic Imagery award and received an honorary degree from the American Film Institute. Lasseter received the 2008 Winsor McCay Award from ASIFA-Hollywood for career achievement and contribution to the art of animation.

Under Lasseter’s supervision, Pixar’s animated feature and short films have received a multitude of critical accolades and film industry honours. He received a Special Achievement Oscar in 1995 for his inspired leadership of the “Toy Story” team. His work on “Toy Story” also resulted in an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay, the first time an animated feature had been recognized in that category. “Finding Nemo,” released spring 2003, became the highest-grossing animated feature of all time and won the Oscar for Best Animated Feature Film.

As creative director of Pixar, Lasseter enjoyed the critical acclaim and box-office success of “The Incredibles” in 2004. The film was recognized with a record-breaking 16 Annie Award nominations and several “Best Of” awards by *The Wall Street Journal*, American Film Institute, National Board of Review and many others.

Lasseter also has written, directed and animated a number of highly renowned short films and television commercials for Pixar, including “Luxo Jr.” (1986 Academy Award nominee); “Red’s Dream” (1987); “Tin Toy” (1988 Academy Award winner); and “Knickknack” (1989), which was produced as a 3D stereoscopic film. Pixar’s “Tin Toy” became the first computer-animated film to win an Oscar when it received the 1988 Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film.

Prior to the formation of Pixar in 1986, Lasseter was a member of the Computer Division of LucasFilm Ltd., where he designed and animated the computer-generated Stained Glass Knight character in the 1985 Steven Spielberg-produced film “Young Sherlock Holmes.”

Lasseter attended the inaugural year of the Character Animation program at California Institute of the Arts and received his BFA in film there in 1979. While attending California Institute of the Arts, Lasseter produced two animated films, both

winner of the Student Academy Award for Animation: "Lady and the Lamp" in 1979 and "Nitemare" in 1980. His very first award came at the age of 5 when he won \$15.00 from the Model Grocery Market in Whittier, California, for a crayon drawing of the Headless Horseman.

RANDY NEWMAN (Composer) is an Oscar, Grammy and Emmy-winning composer and songwriter whose numerous film credits include "James and the Giant Peach" (1996), "A Bug's Life", "Monsters, Inc." and "Cars."

Newman has been nominated for 17 Academy Awards including two each for "Ragtime" (1981), "Monsters, Inc." and "Toy Story." He won his first Oscar in 2002 for the song "If I Didn't Have You" from "Monsters Inc." The song also earned him his second of five Grammy Awards. Newman's song, "When She Loved Me," written for "Toy Story 2" won a Grammy for Best Song Written for a Motion Picture, Television or other Visual Media.

Newman's other film scores include "The Natural," "Avalon," "Parenthood," "Seabiscuit," "Awakenings," "The Paper," "Pleasantville," "Meet the Parents" and "Meet the Fockers." He has also written songs for television, including the Emmy Award-winning "Monk" theme song, "It's a Jungle out There."

The multi-talented Newman co-wrote the screenplay for "Three Amigos!" (1986) with Steve Martin and Lorne Michaels and also wrote three songs for the film.

Born in 1943 into a famously musical family, Newman began his professional songwriting career at 17, knocking out tunes for a Los Angeles publishing house. His uncles Alfred, Lionel, and Emil were all well-respected film composers and conductors. Randy's father Irving Newman - a prominent physician - wrote a song for Bing Crosby.

In 1968, Newman made his recording debut with the lushly orchestrated album "Randy Newman." Before long, his extraordinary and evocative compositions were being covered by a wide range of top artists, from Pat Boone and Peggy Lee to Ray Charles and Wilson Pickett.

Critics raved about his 1970 sophomore effort "12 Songs," and increasingly the public started to take notice of his sly, satirical songwriting with albums such as 1970's "Live," the 1972 classic "Sail Away" and the acclaimed and provocative 1974 release, "Good Old Boys." His 1977 album, "Little Criminals," included the left-field smash hit "Short People."

In the 1980s, Newman divided his time between film composing and recording his own albums, including 1988's "Land of Dreams," another breakthrough work marked by some of his most personal and powerful work.

The 90s saw the release of Newman's comedic take on "Faust," which included performances by Don Henley, Elton John, Bonnie Raitt, Linda Ronstadt and James Taylor, the compilation "Guilty: 30 Years of Randy Newman" and a new 1999 album for DreamWorks, "Bad Love."

Newman's most recent studio album is "Harps and Angels," produced by Mitchell Froom and Lenny Waronker and released in August 2008.