

## THE KARATE KID (2010)

### Production Notes



12-year-old Dre Parker (Jaden Smith) could've been the most popular kid in Detroit, but his mother's (Taraji P. Henson) latest career move has landed him in China. Dre immediately falls for his classmate Mei Ying - and the feeling is mutual - but cultural differences make such a friendship impossible. Even worse, Dre's feelings make an enemy of the class bully, Cheng. In the land of kung fu, Dre knows only a little karate, and Cheng puts "the karate kid" on the floor with ease. With no friends in a strange land, Dre has nowhere to turn but maintenance man Mr. Han (Jackie Chan), who is secretly a master of kung fu. As Han teaches Dre that kung fu is not about punches and parries, but maturity and calm, Dre realizes that facing down the bullies will be the fight of his life.

#### Cast and Crew

Jaden Smith: THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL

Jackie Chan: THE SPY NEXT DOOR, KUNG FU PANDA

Taraji Henson: DATE NIGHT, I CAN DO BAD ALL BY MYSELF

Director: Harald Zwart: THE PINK PANTHER 2, AGENT CODY BANKS

## About The Film

“Dre Parker is a cool American kid who’s left Detroit and now is just trying to make it in China,” says Jaden Smith, who previously starred alongside his father in the worldwide hit *The Pursuit of Happyness* and now takes the star reins himself, headlining *The Karate Kid*.

“He’s definitely having a rough time – he feels like he just doesn’t fit in. He doesn’t mean to, but he gets on the bad side of some bullies. He’s got no friends and nowhere to go, and that’s when he finds out that his building’s maintenance man, Mr. Han, is a kung fu master. Mr. Han teaches him kung fu, and they end up having a special bond between them.”

It’s a theme that has long resonated with audiences – and explored in the hit movie of the same title that starred Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki “Pat” Morita. Morita’s portrayal of the stoic sensei, Mr. Miyagi, earned an Oscar® nomination and passed into legend.

Producer Jerry Weintraub, who produced the first series of films as well as the new film, says that the story endures because its underlying story is universal. “Ultimately, it’s the tale of a father and son,” he says. “It’s not so much about the karate. What endures, what kids look to, is the story of a boy searching for a father and a mentor.”

It would be up to producers Will and Jada Pinkett Smith, James Lassiter, and Ken Stovitz, as well as director Harald Zwart to bring around this new version of the classic, updating it for a new generation.

“The teenagers who made the original *Karate Kid* a hit are now parents with kids of their own,” says Lassiter. “We wanted to remind them of the movie they loved so well – that we all love so well – but also make a modern movie that their kids can enjoy, too.” The new film couldn’t be a remake – it would have to capture those themes while standing on its own.

“The key for anybody in touching material like this is to make sure that you pay homage and respect to the original but somehow find a way to expand upon it and bring it to 2010,” says Zwart.

Perhaps the biggest challenge was in casting the role of the mentor. The filmmakers would need an icon—and they found one, in Jackie Chan. “Really, who else could do it?” says Stovitz. “Jackie is the only man who fits the bill. When I would say to myself, ‘We’re making *Karate Kid* with Jackie Chan in the Mr. Miyagi role,’ well, frankly, that was a movie I wanted to see.”

Chan felt a particular affinity for the story, as he admits he can actually relate to the young American character. “I understand the fish out of water story,” he says. “About 30 years ago, I went to America for the first time by myself. When you’re in a completely different culture, it’s very frightening.” With Chan excited to be on board, it seemed natural to the filmmakers to open up the story.

The karate kid would now pick up and move from Detroit to Beijing, China – truly upping the ante for a fish out of water. And since the setting is changed to China, it was clear that a number

of things would be different – including the fighting style.

“We’re in a new country, and I learn kung fu,” says Jaden Smith. “The reason the movie is called *The Karate Kid* is that at the beginning of the movie, Dre thinks he can fight the bullies with a little karate he knows,” says Stovitz. “But in China even the kids know kung fu and they’re experts. So if Dre is going to survive, he has to learn kung fu.”

Of course, calling the movie *The Karate Kid* also seemed like a good way to honor the movie that came before. “The first movie has the famous wax on, wax off sequence,” says Zwart. “In our movie, Mr. Han tells Dre to put his jacket on and take it off a million times. If you’ve seen the first movie, you get the reference.”

Of course, the part required Smith to learn kung fu. He would learn from the best: Wu Gang, the stunt coordinator of the Jackie Chan Stunt Team. Because Chan performs most of his own stunt work in his films, Chan formed his Stunt Team in 1983 as a way to facilitate the fight choreography.

“When I first met Jaden, I liked him, but you can never be sure. I wasn’t sure if he’d really be up to the task,” says Wu. “He proved himself: he is very talented and he worked very hard. And it wasn’t easy. I loved training Jaden.”

Of course, in addition to the invaluable training from Master Wu, Smith had another way of learning kung fu. “I watched a lot of Jackie’s movies and even copied some of his moves,” laughs Smith.

In fact, an entire sequence – in which Mr. Han and Dre train and spar with sticks – is a reference of sorts to one of Chan’s earliest and most famous fights. Smith’s relationship with Chan really did mirror their characters’ in the film.

“He is amazing. He was always teaching me things,” says Smith. “How to stretch correctly, how to be in a scene, how to focus. He was right there with me the whole time.”

Harald Zwart says that the young star dazzled the filmmakers with his performance. “Jaden is charismatic and charming, but he’s also a fantastic actor,” says the director. “He fully committed to every aspect of the part. Not just the kung fu – which he worked very hard to learn – but the emotional story of the boy who becomes a man.” The director has equally high praise for Smith’s veteran co-star.

“Jackie is just fantastic to work with,” notes Zwart. “He never stops, and he loves the process of filmmaking, so he helps out with every practical aspect. For example, if an extra didn’t get a particular message due to the language barrier, he went over and respectfully whispered direction to them. He’s just wonderful and so helpful.”

The story tells the tale not only of a master and student but of the bond that’s formed between a lonely, childless man and a fatherless boy. Says Chan: “At first Mr. Han thinks he is only helping this bullied boy, but in the end, his life is also transformed.”

“Dre is like boys everywhere – they want to kick something, a way to get revenge,” says Chan. “But kung fu is not about hurting people. It’s about helping people.” Chan observes of his young co-star: “I’ve never seen a child that’s as clever as Jaden is. He learns whatever I teach him. I mean, I’d show him something and, boom, he got it right away. He’s amazing!”

Zwart recalls one poignant moment from the shoot: “I saw Jackie and Jaden relaxing between set-ups sitting on a little beach, you know, skipping stones in the water, and I was thinking if I was 11 years old and just hanging out with Jackie Chan, that would be a dream come true.”

Portraying Dre’s mother, Sherry, is Taraji P. Henson, who received an Academy Award® nomination for her stunning performance in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

Henson says she was attracted to the role because it reminded her of the relationship between she and her own son. “We’re great friends, because it’s just the two of us, and that’s the thing that spoke to me when I read the script,” she says. “The new film also gave Sherry a larger ‘parental’ role. You really get to know Dre by watching his interaction with his mother,” Henson continues. “She’s a strong yet supportive woman.” Henson was impressed with how open the Smiths were in allowing her to form a credible relationship with their son.

“We had three weeks of rehearsals before we went to China. Both Will and Jada created such a comfortable environment for Jaden and I to bond,” she says.

### **"The Karate Kid" Learns Kung Fu**

When the filmmakers decided to open up the movie and go to China, one change that became necessary was the fighting style that Dre would learn. He would learn a Chinese fighting style, rather than karate, which originates from Okinawa and Japan.

So the karate kid would learn kung fu. In one scene, the bullies mock Dre, calling him “the karate kid” for trying karate in the land of kung fu.

If Dre is going to survive, he will have to learn kung fu. The word kung fu has several different meanings, but it is not specifically a martial arts term.

The word might be literally translated as “work,” “skill,” or “time and effort” – a writer might have good kung fu at storytelling. At the same time, this term has a special meaning when applied to martial arts, and outside of China, kung fu can be used to describe the gamut of Chinese martial arts and a range of techniques.

In *The Karate Kid*, Dre learns wushu martial arts, a physically demanding, active kung fu sport taught and practiced in China. He was trained by Wu Gang, the stunt coordinator for the Jackie Chan stunt team, which is responsible for the stunts in the films that Chan directs.

Master Wu, as Jaden Smith came to call him, trained Smith for three months in Los Angeles before the production began in Beijing, then continued to train him throughout the four-month

production.

“When I first met Jaden, he was just a kid,” says Wu. “A few months later, he was at the same level as kids that have been training for five or six years. He was very focused, very talented, and never complained. I’m very proud of him.”

They were starting at the beginning. “Whenever I teach anyone kung fu, but especially a kid, the first thing I teach them is respect for other people. Kung fu isn’t about fighting, but about helping people,” says Wu.

From there, Wu began training Smith in wushu. Despite the fact that they were making a movie, Wu says that the filmmakers were never tempted to rely on moviemaking tricks to make Smith look like he could do something he couldn’t. “No matter what, he had to learn how to move, how to fight, the basic training. There was a serious need for real kung fu, wushu learning.”

Of course, Smith and all of the other kung fu kids would be taught how to fight for the camera in a choreographed match and look good doing it on the big screen.

“All of the kids in the film are full time wushu students, but none of them had movie fighting experience,” Wu notes. “It’s not easy to get the timing, the rhythm, and the reaction when you get hit. Also, the drama and the acting in the fight are just as important as the action – the kids needed to tell the dramatic story of the fight with their faces and bodies. It’s very challenging. But the big difference with this movie is that the movements are real.”

Jaden Smith says movie fighting is not easy. “You have to actually hit the person – you do it softly, but you make it look hard,” he says. “You also have to block. If you don’t block the hit, you’re going to get hit in the face.” And did Smith enjoy his training? “He asked me to continue training him after the movie wrapped,” says Wu. “I was honored.” “Yeah, I want to stay buff,” says Smith. “If Taylor Lautner ever needs a stunt double, I’m ready for action.”

## Filming In China

In adapting *The Karate Kid* for modern audiences, the filmmakers sought a location that would place as many obstacles in Dre’s path as possible. “We wondered, could we find a location that would be like dropping Dre in another world?” says Will Smith. “When we cast Jackie Chan as Dre’s mentor, it struck us – China. We knew we’d be asking for a challenge, but in the end, the setting not only made the theme stronger, but made the film epic. I couldn’t be more proud of what we accomplished in China. When you see Jaden and Jackie training together on the Great Wall, it strikes you – there’s no way we could have made this movie in L.A.”

The decision to take the entire production to China was not taken lightly. Because many of the desired settings in the story are off-limits and difficult to access, the producers turned to the China Film Group, the largest and most influential state-run film enterprise in the country, to assist in securing locations.

“One little shot took months of planning,” says Zwart. “Just as an example, we are the first film to be given permission to shoot inside the Tiananmen Gate and the Forbidden City since Bertolucci’s *The Last Emperor* more than 20 years ago.”

For Chan, this film was both a homecoming and a dream-come-true. “I am so thankful to the production company for filming in China. We may have a five thousand year old history but our government is only sixty years young, a new government. This movie will give audiences a chance to learn about Chinese culture as well as Chinese martial arts. Such a wonderful promotion,” he exclaims. Producer Jada Pinkett Smith observes that filming at actual historical locations only adds to an actor’s strength of performance.

“You can’t beat the energy that such a place can bring. You can’t recreate it. It’s a very special thing giving the movie authentic texture,” she says. “China is extremely unique, and this has been a really powerful experience for us as a family, working together in a place like this,” she continues. “It’s one of those once in a lifetime opportunities, one we’ll always remember. And of course, we’ll have a wonderful film to remember it by.” The production was headquartered out of the old Beiyong Film Studios.

The “backlot” is essentially filled with hutong or passages between rows of siheyuan courtyard houses. Siheyuan is the traditional, albeit disappearing, style of residence of Beijingers, each consisting of a rectangular courtyard surrounded by one-storied tile-roofed houses, usually one to six meters wide.

The lot also featured an empty seven-story building which doubled as the exterior of Dre’s apartment building, “The Beverly Hills Apartments,” and as the rooftop where Mr. Han and Dre start training. Mr. Han’s house and garage were also built here using a mixture of existing old structures and set decoration.

A Beijing location – the Staff Residence Building #3 at the Beijing Forest University - doubled as the Detroit street where Dre and his mother start out.

One visually stunning scene in the film was shot at the prestigious Beijing Shaolin Wushu School and highlights 400 students dressed in traditional red gi doing their morning lawn routine.

Established in 1991, the school features education – primary through senior high – with a wushu-style philosophy.

Smith enjoyed working alongside his Chinese costars. “I learned a lot of kung fu from them, and I taught them their first English words: ‘Yo. What’s up.’”

### **The Forbidden City**

Shooting at the Tiananmen Gate and inside the Forbidden City was a thrilling yet daunting experience for both cast and crew alike. Very few productions are permitted access and this is the first company to film here in over 20 years.

Zwart says, “We had to rush everything because we only had two hours to shoot the entire scene. Fortunately, we had an extremely flexible crew, and being able to shoot there was incredible.”

The Forbidden City was the home of the Emperor of China and seat of power from 1420 until 1912, when the last emperor of China abdicated. It received its name because no one could enter or leave the palace without the express permission of the Emperor.

Today, the Forbidden City, which covers 7.8 million square feet and 960 structures, houses the Palace Museum; it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987. The Tiananmen Gate is often referred to as the front entrance to the city.

The company also filmed at The Golden Buddha, overlooking the entire Forbidden City.

This sacred shrine, located at the highest point in Beijing, offers an unobstructed 360 degree view of the entire city.

### **The Great Wall of China**

Another coup for the production was gaining filming access to the Great Wall of China. “Mr. Han brings Dre to the Great Wall to train,” explains Pinkett Smith. “It’s where he learns his forms, and they run the wall. It’s kind of like his ‘Rocky’ moment.”

Since vehicles are not permitted on the wall, the crew was forced to manually carry heavy equipment. “It was very tough for the crew. When you see the wall, you don’t think it’s that steep, but it is in many places,” says Zwart. Zwart was amazed at how involved Chan was in the production process. “You see Jackie lifting up gear and helping to water down the road. He did everything he could to help get the movie made,” he says.

The section of the wall that was used was at Mutianyu, located in Huairou County about 45 miles from Beijing.

The wall was first built in the Northern Qi Dynasty (550 – 557). In the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644), two famous patriotic generals rebuilt it in order to strengthen its defensive potential when they guarded the strategic pass. It served as the northern protective screen, guarding the capital and imperial mausoleums for generations.

The Great Wall is one of the largest building construction projects ever completed. It stretches across the mountains of northern China, winding north and northwest of Beijing.

The wall stretches some 5,500 miles, including trenches and natural barriers.

In and Around Beijing Additional unique filming locations in and around Beijing included the Beijing Capital International Airport, the largest and busiest airport in China and the main hub for China’s national flagship carrier Air China; the Foton Auto Factory, a working high tech truck manufacturing company that doubled as Sherry’s new workplace; and Wang Fu Jing Snack Street, a famous Beijing area known for its interesting snack food, such as the “fried scorpion,”

which Dre and Mei Ying eat on their date.

“No scorpions were harmed during the making of this movie,” says Zwart, smiling, “as the film’s props department made scorpion mock-ups made out of flour and then deep-fried in order for Jaden and Wen Wen to eat them.” The China Film Group Film Base, located in Huairou, about 90 minutes outside of Beijing, is a modern film studio with a hutong backlot called Fei Teng.

This is where the production built the interior sets of Sherry and Dre’s apartment, the auditorium for Mei Ying’s violin recital and an exquisite Mountain Temple.

### **Wudang Mountain**

One of the most moving and impactful scenes in the film occurs when Mr. Han takes Dre on a spiritual pilgrimage to the Wudang Mountains to discover the origins of kung fu. Only after climbing to the top of the mountain can Dre drink and replenish from the Well of Kung Fu.

The company travelled south to these mystical mountains, located in central China, for four days of filming. For the most ambitious location shoot of the production, the cast, crew, and equipment had to be transported via cable car and then climb steep stone steps to get to the top of the temple. Zwart discovered the site while surfing the Internet. “I was looking for beautiful temples, and I came across a photograph of the Golden Summit, and I thought, ‘This is the most glorious temple I’ve ever seen.’ Then I found out that Wudang Shan and the entire surroundings are the very heart of kung fu. I knew we had to shoot here. There’s no substitute for the aura and energy of these temples.”

Zwart said that it gradually became apparent just how many obstacles would be in the way of the shoot. “I was feeling a bit guilty, because I was asking the crew to lift very heavy gear into impossible places,” he says. “There was no way we could get vehicles in there. We had to walk the steps and trudge through the woods. We tried to keep it as light as we could.” In spite of the obstacles, Will Smith says the inclusion of Wudang into the schedule was integral to the production.

“Everything you do in life should be about experience and character growth. So if you have the opportunity to shoot in a place like Wudang, you have to take it! Here we are, learning some Chinese history and experiencing a beautiful place like this. It was a big win for us to shoot there,” he exclaims. Several scenes from the story crucial to Dre’s development were shot on the mountain.

“The stick training sequence is one that was inspired by one of Jackie’s earlier movies. It’s where he duplicates the movements of a theater puppet. It will play again later in the story,” notes Zwart. “Another plot point we shot here involves Dre being mesmerized by a woman charming a cobra with controlled movements. It’s an amazing spectacle.”

To create Mr. Han and Dre’s train ride to Wudang, the company shot the interior and exteriors on a stationary train car at the Art Center in Beijing.

## Romance and the Qi Xi Festival

Sometimes called Chinese Valentine's Day, the annual celebration of the Qi Xi Festival falls on the seventh day of the seventh month on the Chinese calendar. Recounting the tale of two forlorn lovers, the goddess Zhinu and Niulang, the boy she loves, who are forced apart by sad circumstances. As the legend goes, for a single night, all the birds in the sky, feeling sorry for the lovers, form a bridge so they may come together.

The festivities were shot at night on the Fei Teng backlot at the China Film Group Film Base, which was dressed like a sparkling village, lit with beautiful, glittering lanterns of all shapes and sizes. The set was also dressed with vendors offering the traditional cakes, incense sticks, and lanterns. It is here that Dre runs into his love Mei Ying, and they go off to share a date and their first kiss.

"I was really nervous about our kissing scene, and my legs were shaking," remembers Wenwen Han, who plays Mei Ying. "But Jaden was brave and told me not to be scared, because he was nervous too."

"It was my first screen kiss, too," says Jaden Smith. "It was kind of odd when we first started shooting the scene and then Wen Wen started getting nervous so I just said, 'Relax, relax...I'm good at kissing, so it's gonna be alright!' And finally it was all fine and we got the shot."

Also constructed at Fei Teng backlot was the shadow theater, where puppets re-enact the Qi Xi tale of the forsaken lovers.

## The Tournament

Everything that Mr. Han is instructing leads up to the tournament, the final showdown between Dre and the bully, Cheng. The interior of Beijing's Feng Tai Sports Arena represented the "People's Auditorium" where the huge competition takes place.

In order to allow Jaden Smith and his castmates to have as much training as possible, the production scheduled this scene over an eight-day period at the end of the shoot.

The Jackie Chan Stunt Team choreographed the finale, combining their cinematic techniques with authentic martial artistry. "Everything you see is Jackie's interpretation," says Wu Gang.

In addition, the Stunt Team was responsible for auditioning hundreds of kids to perform in the key scenes. They searched through thousands of kids at various wushu schools around China. "A lot of these kids had good skill but no movie fighting abilities. I had to train the kids five to eight hours every day for timing, rhythm and reaction when they got hit," Wu says.

Over 800 extras were brought in daily to simulate the Tournament's crowds and high energy atmosphere. Moreover, dozens of extras posing as photographers and videographers were also on hand.

## ABOUT THE CAST

It's no wonder to anyone that the acting bug bit **JADEN SMITH (Dre Parker)** early. He comes by it naturally. Jaden is the eleven year old son of Will and Jada Smith. But Jaden need not rely on his family ties. The youngest Smith son is creating quite the buzz in Hollywood on his own. Smith has already been presented with the 2010 ShoWest "Breakthrough Male Star of the Year" Award for his role in *The Karate Kid*.

He was last seen on screen in 2008, starring opposite Keanu Reeves and Jennifer Connelly in the highly anticipated sci-fi remake of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Directed by Scott Derrickson, the 20th Century Fox blockbuster gave Jaden an opportunity to explore his love for science fiction while also sharpening his craft. Jaden won the 2009 Saturn Award for Best Performance by a Young Actor for his role in the film.

In 2006, Jaden wowed audiences with his heartfelt interpretation of a young Chris Gardner Jr. in Columbia Pictures' *The Pursuit of Happyness*. Oprah Winfrey described his debut film performance as "mesmerizing."

This dynamic performance garnered Smith an MTV Movie Award for Breakthrough Performance, a Phoenix Film Critics Society Award for Best Performance by a Youth in a Lead or Supporting Role - Male, a Black Reel Award, and nominations by the Broadcast Film Critics Association, the NAACP Image Awards and the Teen Choice Awards.

In between films, Jaden has appeared on the Disney smash hit TV series "The Suite Life of Zach and Cody." He had his television debut on the Smith family-produced series "All of Us" at the age of five.

Smith is not only a talented young actor, he is also a philanthropist serving as a youth ambassador, alongside his sister Willow Smith, for the organization Project Zamboni in conjunction with Hasbro, Inc. and the Hasbro Children's Fund. Project Zamboni helps children orphaned by AIDS in Africa.

**JACKIE CHAN (Mr. Han)** is an actor, action choreographer, filmmaker, comedian, producer, martial artist, screenwriter, entrepreneur, singer and stunt performer. Originally from Hong Kong, he is known for his acrobatic fighting style, comic timing, use of improvised weapons and innovative stunts. Jackie Chan has been acting since the 1970s and has appeared in over 100 films.

In 1960, his father immigrated to Australia, to work as head cook for the American embassy, and Chan was sent to the China Drama Academy, a Peking Opera School. There, Chan trained rigorously for the next decade, excelling in martial arts and acrobatics.

Upon his graduation in 1971, Chan found work as an acrobat and a movie stuntman, most notably in *Fist of Fury*, starring Hong Kong's resident big-screen superstar, Bruce Lee. For that

film, he reportedly completed the highest fall in the history of the Chinese film industry, earning the respectful notice of the formidable Lee, among others. After Lee's tragic death, Chan had decided that he wanted to break out of the Lee mold and create his own image.

Blending his martial arts abilities with an impressive nerve—he insisted on performing all of his own stunts—and a sense of screwball physical comedy reminiscent of one of his idols, Buster Keaton, Chan found his own formula for cinematic gold.

Chan's first major breakthrough was the 1978 film *Snake in the Eagle's Shadow*. Under director Yuen Woo Ping, Chan was allowed complete freedom over his stunt work. The film established the comedic kung fu genre, and proved to be a breath of fresh air for the Hong Kong audience.

Chan then starred in *Drunken Master*, which finally propelled him to mainstream success. In 1983, he established the Jackie Chan Stuntmen Association, which began as an official organization of six members, and meant that its stuntmen not only received insurance coverage, but also a monthly salary and higher pay.

His noteworthy list of film credits includes *Supercop*, *Supercop 2* with Michelle Yeoh; *Rumble in the Bronx*, *Thunderbolt*, *Mr. Nice Guy*, three *Rush Hour* movies, co-starring Chris Tucker; *Shanghai Noon* and *Shanghai Knights* with Owen Wilson; *The Tuxedo*, co-starring Jennifer Love Hewitt; *The Medallion*, with Claire Forlani, Julian Sands and John Rhys-Davies; *Around the World in 80 Days*, in which he portrayed Passepartout/Lau Xing; *Kung Fu Panda* (voice of Monkey) and *The Spy Next Door* co-starring Amber Valetta, Billy Ray Cyrus and Georg Lopez. He also voiced himself in the animated series “Jackie Chan Adventures.”

Chan has received stars on the Hong Kong Avenue of Stars and the Hollywood Walk of Fame. As a cultural icon, Chan has been referenced in various pop songs, cartoons and video games.

Chan is also a Cantopop and Mandopop star, having released a number of albums and sung many of the theme songs for the films in which he has starred.

**TARAJI P. HENSON (Sherry)** earned critical acclaim and an Oscar® nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her role opposite Brad Pitt in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. Her other film credits include *Baby Boy*, *Four Brothers*, *Talk to Me*, *Hustle and Flow*, *Smokin' Aces*, Tyler Perry's *I Can Do Bad All By Myself* and *Family That Preys*, *Not Easily Broken*, and *Hurricane Season*.

She most recently costarred in *Date Night* opposite Tina Fey and Steve Carell. Henson recently completed filming *Larry Crowne* with star and director Tom Hanks. Her other upcoming films include *Once Fallen* with Ed Harris, *Peep World* with Rainn Wilson and *The Good Doctor* with Orlando Bloom.

Henson made her singing debut in *Hustle & Flow* and performed the Oscar®-winning song at the 2006 Academy Awards®.

On television, Henson was a series regular on *The Division* and David E. Kelly's *Boston Legal*

and recurred on ABC's *Eli Stone*. She has guest starred on several television series including *Smart Guy*, *CSI*, and *House*.

## THE DIRECTOR

**HARALD ZWART (Director)** has a knack for weaving visual magic and telling stories that are funny and accessible. He is one of the leading lights of a new generation of internationally trained feature filmmakers.

Fluent in three languages, the Dutch-born filmmaker has a unique gift for reaching across cultural boundaries to touch the minds and hearts of audiences of all backgrounds and ages. Zwart was born in Holland and grew up in Fredrikstad, Norway where he began making films when he was eight. He received his formal training at the prestigious Dutch Film Academy in Amsterdam.

After his student film “Gabriel’s Surprise” was shown on Scandinavian television, he began receiving offers to direct television commercials and he went on to become one of Europe’s most successful directors of advertising and music videos.

He won numerous awards for his commercial work including Director-of-the-Year honors (1998) at London’s Midsummer Awards. His commercial credits include spots for BMW Mini, ING, Sky Television and Nokia. Due to Zwart’s feature background he is often called upon for celebrity testimonials, these have included spots with Jose Mourinho, Michael Douglas, John Travolta and Richard Gere for Lancia.

In 1997, Zwart made his debut as a dramatic filmmaker with “Commander Hamilton,” a 4-part mini-series for Scandinavian television. Starring Academy Award®-winner Lena Olin (*The Unbearable Lightness of Being*), Mark Hamill (*Star Wars* trilogy) and Peter Stormare (*Bad Boys II*, *Minority Report*), the series achieved unabated popular and critical acclaim. A feature-length version was subsequently released theatrically and became the region’s top-grossing film of the year. Based on that success, Zwart began to receive offers from Hollywood. He became the first Norwegian director to be accepted as a member of the Director’s Guild of America and Zwart’s feature film debut followed in 2001 with “One Night at McCool’s,” starring Liv Tyler, Michael Douglas, Matt Dillon and Paul Reiser. A black comedy about three men who fall in love with the same woman on the same night, the film showcased Zwart’s talent for complex narrative, edgy humor and inspired casting.

Zwart directed “Agent Cody Banks,” the action/adventure film starring Frankie Muniz and Hilary Duff. Such was his involvement in the project that he went on to create the story for *Cody Banks II*.

Zwart went on to helm “*The Pink Panther 2*,” with Steve Martin, Jean Reno, Emily Mortimer, Andy Garcia, Alfred Molina, Aishwarya Rai, John Cleese, Jeremy Irons and Lily Tomlin. Zwart, who divides his time between Los Angeles and Oslo, continues to direct commercials and develop Feature projects through Zwart Arbeid, the company he founded with Veslemoey Ruud Zwart.