

THE DUKES

A film by Robert Davi

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THE DUKES

They used to sing for gold. Now they're going to steal it.

SYNOPSIS

THE DUKES is the wry comic tale of a down-and-out Doo Wop band who take a bumbling detour into burglary in their endless quest to make good on their dreams. Featuring an accomplished ensemble cast and the directorial debut of beloved tough-guy actor Robert Davi, the film is a rollicking caper that is also deeply candid about life, love, friendship and the heart it takes to keep on struggling to find meaning and connection as life takes one absurd turn after another. For when these middle-aged buddies are forced to become mid-life bandits – and think they've hit on a sure-fire plan for the score of a lifetime -- it accidentally results in far greater pleasures than loot.

Punctuated by a retro rock n roll soundtrack, the fun begins as The Dukes – once hit-makers in the 1960s– are barely making ends meet in 2007. Band leader Danny DePasquale (ROBERT DAVI, *“Die Hard,” “License To Kill,” “The Goonies”*) is horrified by the fact that he can't even afford to help his ex-wife fix his darling son's teeth. Meanwhile, his partner, George Zucco (Academy Award® nominee CHAZZ PALMINTERI, *“Bullets Over Broadway,” “A Bronx Tale”*), drowns his financial sorrows by indulging his passion for plus-size women. Even as their manager, Lou Fiola (Academy Award® nominated director-producer-writer-actor PETER BOGDANOVICH), searches to find gigs for an act that has gone utterly obsolete, Danny and George take jobs in their feisty Aunt Vee's (MIRIAM MARGOLYES, *“Being Julia,” “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets”*) Italian trattoria.

Danny and George's closest friends are hardly better off. Armond (the late FRANK D'AMICO), a stand-up comic who used to open for The Dukes, is now a diabetic confined to a wheelchair; and Murph (ELYA BASKIN, *“Spiderman 2 and 3”*) lost his lofty job as an airline mechanic after smoking just a wee too much weed.

Still, even amidst their busted dreams, broken marriages, faded celebrity and daily humiliations, The Dukes are determined to resurrect their flagging hopes and self-esteem. They daydream of money-making schemes that would allow them to build an updated Doo Wop nightclub from which they could stage a fresh comeback. Then, opportunity knocks. When they hear of a shady dentist's lab brimming with cavity-filling gold, the temptation is irresistible. After recruiting a semi-pro safecracker (Emmy winner BRUCE WEITZ, *“Hill Street Blues”*), the heist is on.

But nothing comes easy for the Dukes these days, and soon the Big Score blows up into a giant nightmare. Yet when all seems lost – time after time – the Dukes refuse to go down. In the end, The Dukes' relentless pursuit of Doo Wop turns out to be not just about music, money or manhood, but about the bonds of brotherhood, the tenacity of the heart and the indomitable nature of the American Dream . . . even when you have to re-invent it the second time around.

THE DUKES is directed by Robert Davi from a screenplay by Davi and James Andronica. The film is produced by Davi, Don Dunn and James Cypher and co-produced by Chazz Palminteri. Also joining the cast are Melora Hardin (*“The Office”*), Eloise DeJoria (*“Weekend at Bernie's”*), jazz star Alphonse Mouzon and ten year-old Dominic Scott Key (*“Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End”*).

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THE DUKES

PRODUCTION NOTES

Track One: Hatching The Plan

*“You guys lead a clean life,
why do you want start playing this game at your age?”*
-- Tulio

With his directorial debut, **THE DUKES**, Robert Davi spins a heist comedy that is also a soulful tale about the tenaciousness of everyday American dreamers who refuse to let hard times halt their dreams. The story follows the charismatic but no-longer-in-demand members of a former hit Doo Wop group who turn to a daring act of crime, hoping to make the big score that will fund their comeback. But if most capers are about stealth, cunning and cold calculation, these guys are about to defy every single one of those expectations – pulling off the job, and facing its unintended consequences, with bumbling gusto, dark humor and a genuine camaraderie that drives them through one farcical turn after another just as much as the promise of a fortune in gold.

Sums up Davi: “With **THE DUKES**, I wanted to tell a story that would appeal to the Everyman – a story filled with music and humor that was raw and honest but also very positive, a story about that American spirit that makes people want to pick themselves back up and get back in the game.”

Fittingly for a film that is about chasing after the American Dream – even when the reality of that dream is changing faster than you can run – **THE DUKES** began with Davi’s own long-held yearnings. A highly sought-after actor familiar to audiences from his turns as villains and tough guys in such movies as “License to Kill” and “Die Hard,” as well as television’s “The Profiler,” Davi had harbored a desire to write and direct a film since childhood.

Indeed, Davi’s childhood heroes were an unlikely bunch: they were Italian directors like Rosellini, Fellini, Antonioni, Visconti and Scola – and he hoped one day he would be able to pay homage to their unforgettable style of comedy, as rife with intimate humanity as it was with playful humor. “I loved the Italian comedies of that era, the way they were influenced by the Neo-Realists and utilized real human stories and social statements as the roots of their satire,” he says. “They had

such a raw beauty about them. As I watched those films, I knew directing was something I wanted to do – and I hope I was able to pay homage to these movies with **THE DUKES**.”

It would take many decades and plenty of success in front of the camera for Davi to make good on his filmmaking ambitions. Davi actually began writing **THE DUKES** in the late 1970s, a time not so different from 2008 -- when America was in the middle of a dispiriting recession, a new digital economy was in its volatile early stages and unemployment rates were soaring. As Davi read about life-long steelworkers being laid off, it put him in mind of all the people whose jobs had become quite suddenly obsolete in a transitional economy – men in mid-life with families faced with the bracing challenge of finding a way to re-invent themselves.

“When I started writing **THE DUKES**, I wanted to give a voice to the struggle of the working man who dreams of a small piece of the better life,” he says. “That theme was very personal for me, because I come from a blue-collar family and one night my Dad came home and told us that he got laid off. For years he had worked for General Bronze and then for Grumman Aircraft, but now, just like that, it was over for him. So that idea of having it all taken away has always in my mind and heart.”

It was also in the 1970s, while working on his first film as an actor, “Contract on Cherry Street” with Frank Sinatra, that Davi had a fateful meeting with Jay Black, who had once been a member of the hugely successful Doo Wop band Jay and the Americans (whose hits included “She Cried” and “Come a Little Bit Closer”) until he, too, had to switch careers when he could no longer make a living with a form of music that was once burning up the charts.

“Meeting Jay brought home that it wasn’t just steelworkers or my father who were being effected by a society changing from an industrial to a technological one – it was also entertainers,” Davi explains. “The country was going through a real metamorphosis that was personal and societal and it came to me that Doo Wop was a way to write about that with a light comic touch.”

Thus was born the idea of The Dukes, a once successful Doo Wop group whose musical hopes have been quashed by the MTV era of rappers, tweeners and instant pop stars – and who are now pushed into an unthinkable criminal plot in their search to find a way to break through a second time. From the beginning, Davi saw the film not just as the story of a caper gone awry, but as a winning comedy with a realistic and thought-provoking edge.

Davi, who was classically trained in opera, began immersing himself in Doo Wop, and soon developed a passion for the unique form of music that emerged from the streets of Northeastern cities in the 1950s and was woven into the pop music revolution of that era. “I like the melodiousness of Doo Wop and as an opera singer I appreciate the *a cappella* nature of it,” says Davi. “It’s a form of music that seems to hearken back to a simpler time of individuals

harmonizing together. And it's also a form of music that came out of the immigrant experience, especially for Italians. Doo Wop became the American equivalent of Neapolitan street songs.”

With all of these inspirations driving him, Davi soon started collaborating on a screenplay with his close friend James Adronica. Together, they focused on forging complex, nuanced relationships between the characters that add vitality and juice to the action of the heist, lending the film an exhilarating depth for a buddy comedy. “The dialogue was honed and sculpted,” says Davi. “I have a very musical ear and there’s a certain rhythmic quality I was always going after, while at the same time wanting a very naturalistic conversational style between the characters.”

“One of the things we really wanted to capture was the reality of men’s friendships,” continues Davi. “In addition to Italian comedies, we were very influenced by John Cassavetes and the kind of bittersweet camaraderie he explored. Many things in the screenplay were also inspired by friends of mine and people I knew – for example, I had a friend who was laid off from his job and had to work at a newsstand, much like Murph in the film.”

When **THE DUKES** was completed, Davi put it back in his drawer, waiting – not unlike *The Dukes* – for opportunity to knock. At long last, it all came together. Explains Davi: “A few years ago, I met a gentleman named Frank Visco through my neighbor Larry Logsdon. We became close friends and he wanted to help make my dream of directing a reality. So he put together several of his friends to finance the film. Another close friend of mine, John Paul DeJoria also said he wanted to invest. It was their belief in me, and this project, that has made **THE DUKES** a reality and I am eternally thankful to all of them.”

Davi’s ultimate gratification came when the film was recently shown to a standing ovation at the Rome Film Festival. “It was really something to hear people say that I had captured the essence of the *Commedia al Italiana* in a totally American way,” he says. “Here I am this Italian American kid who’s been wanting to make exactly that kind of movie all my life, and I was very pleased that I had accomplished that.”

TRACK TWO: RECRUITING THE TEAM

“It’s all changed now. The whole playing field is different. With today’s technology, everybody’s an actor, everybody’s a singer. There’s just too much competition.”

-- Lou

The heartfelt comedy of **THE DUKES** emerges out of a series of naturalistic performances from a highly accomplished ensemble cast. From the beginning, Robert Davi knew that the key to bringing **THE DUKES** to life on the screen would lie in casting a group of men and women adept at revealing the full range of foibles and fractured dreams at the heart of human experience. At the same

time, they also had to be believable as a group of buddies who could scheme up – and would attempt to carry out -- the heist of a life-time.

“It was all about putting together the right energies and creating an ensemble that would work as a whole,” Davi says. “These are characters who are often surprising and defy expectations, so the mix of personalities was very important. That’s why I believe in casting over a meal so that you can see the real person and all their idiosyncrasies and individuality. Then, as a director, it becomes a matter of bringing out all those textures in front of the camera.”

Davi always knew he would take the role of The Dukes’ lead singer Danny DePasquale, a man who wears on his sleeve the raw heartbreak of watching his musical career, his marriage and his middle-age esteem flee from his grasp. Perhaps the one realist among The Dukes and their friends, Danny nevertheless still clings to a shred of belief that he can turn things around, which leads him to consent to the gold heist despite his misgivings.

Davi enjoyed having the chance to do something entirely new and different from the roles he is usually associated with in thrillers and action movies. The part of Danny often took him to dark places. In one of the film’s most wrenching scenes, Danny stands before a mirror practicing an impassioned speech about human dignity, only to moments later suffer profound humiliation in a tomato costume. “I think that’s something everyone can relate to,” Davi remarks of the scene. “We’ve all had those private moments in the bathroom where we feel completely humiliated, where we think we’re ready tell the boss to go screw himself, and then we walk out and put on the tomato hat. Everyone has been there.”

Also key to his performance, Davi says, is Danny’s relationship with his son, who lives with his ex-wife and who idolizes his father in spite of his current run of bad luck. “Danny’s story is in part about a father’s driving love for his son and the wisdom children sometimes inadvertently give to us. For me, there are echoes of ‘The Bicycle Thief’ in Danny’s desire to do right by his kid.”

To play Danny’s cousin, the incorrigible ladies’ man George Zucco, Davi always had in mind his good friend Chazz Palminteri, an actor renown for giving vibrantly colorful performances, including his Academy Award® nominated turn as a mob hitman in Woody Allen’s “Bullets Over Broadway.” Palminteri plays George as a man with a literally huge lust for life – and the raffish enthusiasm that leads The Dukes into their unlikely second act as gold thieves. “I always knew I wanted Chazz because we have such a good natural rapport together and he’s such a wonderful actor,” says Davi.

If The Dukes are floundering, their manager is even deeper water, trying to keep them barely afloat with some of the worst gigs in all of entertainment – from playing bobble-heads to performing as singing tomatoes in low-rent ads. Lou Fiola is portrayed in all his bittersweet grittiness by Peter

Bogdanovich, himself an Academy Award® nominated writer and director whose films include “The Last Picture Show,” “What’s Up Doc?,” “Paper Moon” and “Mask” -- and whose recent acting roles include playing Dr. Elliot Kupferberg on HBO’s acclaimed hit series “The Sopranos.”

“It hurts Lou even more than it hurts The Dukes to watch them having to go through all this humiliation,” says Davi. “I had known Peter Bogdanovich for years through Stella Adler and I knew he would do great things with this role.”

The main cast is supported by a cadre of equally strong performers including the late Frank D’Amico, who was ill during filming (like his character he faced the prospect of an amputated leg due to advanced diabetes) and passed away in June of 2008. D’Amico reveals his warm wit and big heart in the role of Armond Kaputo, who was once a successful stand-up comic. “I met Frank at a barbeque and thought he had a great energy that would be interesting for the film,” recalls Davi. “In the end, he gave a really solid, funny and touching performance.”

Another hard-luck friend of The Dukes’ – former hotshot airline mechanic Murph Sinitsky, whose job went up in a puff of pot smoke – is played with a wry vulnerability by familiar comic face Elya Baskin, who made his breakthrough opposite Robin Williams in “Moscow on the Hudson” and recently has been seen as Peter Parker’s landlord in “Spiderman 2 and 3.” Murph becomes the group’s reluctant technical expert during the heist, with hilarious results. The burglary is further bolstered by the addition of the seemingly suave safe-cracker Tulio – whose hardened exterior hides his own down-trodden secrets -- played by Emmy Award winner Bruce Weitz, best known for his long-running role on “Hill Street Blues.”

Finally, there’s Aunt Vee – the big-mouthed, iron-fisted Italian restaurateur whose soft spot for The Dukes’ music helps to revive their fading dreams. Davi tapped an unusual actress for the role: veteran British star of stage and screen Miriam Margoyles, who brings out both Aunt Vee’s fierceness as well as her hidden faith in her nephews. “She’s one of the great English actors but she had a quality I thought would work for Aunt Vee,” says Davi.

Rounding out the ensemble are an intriguing multi-generational group of actors in smaller but key roles including “The Office’s” Melora Hardin as Danny’s ex-wife Diane; Eloise DeJoria as Katherine, the waitress who has her eye on George, but whose svelte, blonde beauty ironically turns him off; legendary jazz drummer Alphonse Mouzon as one of the long-lost members of The Dukes; rising young star Dominic Scott Kay as Danny’s beloved son Brion; and veteran star of stage and television Joseph Campanella as the elderly food bandit who inspires The Dukes.

Despite **THE DUKES** marking his first time on the set as a director – and despite being surrounded by a group of Academy Award® nominated actors and filmmakers – Davi found that his directorial debut felt completely organic, perhaps because he had anticipated it for so long. “I’ve

learned that directing is really about being a benevolent despot. You have to give the actors freedom but at the same time you always know what you want and follow that vision.”

TRACK THREE: PULLING OFF THE HEIST

“You mean f-o-o-l?”
-- Danny DePasquale

THE DUKES was shot on a typically fast-paced 25-day indie schedule on practical locations all around Los Angeles, including Venice Beach, Redondo Beach and Malibu – where The Dukes first meet Tulio the safecracker in a lavish estate home. Robert Davi’s desire to use authentic, unadorned locations even went so far as to utilizing the real-life Da Vinci Veneers dental lab to shoot the rollicking heist sequence.

Davi worked closely with cinematographer Michael Goi – who most recently shot the new David E. Kelly show, “The Wedding Bells” – to create the film’s mix of musical fluidity and stark realism. They made an early decision to shoot the film in Super 16. “I wanted to shoot with Super 16 because I knew I wanted a film look, but not too slick of a film look, with some real graininess,” Davi comments.

He continues: “Michael and I sat in my house for days watching Italian films to give him a sense of the style I had in mind and I think he captured that kind of rawness in his work. We also used a very musical camera style – the film opens with camera spinning in circles like an old record album. I want to go back to a smoother camera style, without all these quick cuts people have become so used to right now. People have said to me that the film feels fresh precisely because it’s not attempting to be edgy. It echoes back to a grander era of cinema that a lot of young people have never really seen.”

TRACK FOUR: RHYTHM AND MELODY

“We had hit songs when you weren’t even allowed to cross the street. And you wanna tell us how to sing?”
-- Danny DePaquale

Everything about **THE DUKES** – from the story, to the performances to the design -- was inspired by rhythm and melody – from the smooth, sultry essence of Doo Wop itself to the wistful melancholy and romanticism of Italian popular songs.

The soundtrack includes many timeless classics from such 60s Doo Wop acts as The Edsels, The Emeralds, The Earls, The Chords and The Velvets. Says Robert Davi: “I’ve been listening to

Doo Wop for a while and there was no trial and error to picking the songs for the film. When I heard these songs, I knew instantly they were right.”

In addition to the Doo Wop tunes, Davi laced the film with songs from Paolo Conte, the Italian singer, songwriter and pianist renowned for his smoky, evocative voice and wry, emotional lyrics. A life-long fan of Conte’s music, Davi says he chose six of Conte’s songs for the film because “the humor and the pathos of his artistry reflects the everyday lives and struggles of The Dukes.” Also heard on the soundtrack are two artists who reveal the influence of the operatic and Neapolitan ballad traditions on *a capella* pop music: Sergio Bruni, a noted interpreter of traditional Neapolitan songs and Luciano Pavarotti performing Ottorino Respighi’s “Nebbie.”

Finally, Davi brought on board composer Nic. tenBroek, who has not only composed numerous scores for film and television and such groups as the Kronos Quartet, but also worked with many popular artists as a producer, musician and arranger. His broad range of musical experience allowed Nic. to pursue Davi’s unique request – to create a dynamic, whimsical score reminiscent of the circus-like themes that the great Nino Rota created for Fellini. His score drives the film’s comic high points – especially the anxious, accident-prone heist itself.

“From the start, Nic. and I were in total harmony,” says Davi. “He was particularly amazing at being able to deconstruct everything that was going on in the heist sequence and give back to me the blood of it in a very creative way.”

Davi and tenBroek would later journey to Monterey, Mexico to record a 60-piece Orchestra performing the score. This commitment was typical of what Davi was willing to do, even on the tightest of budgets, to tell the story of The Dukes in the most evocatively true way.

He summarizes: “For me, the important thing was to tell this story in a way that would appeal to the Everyman in everyone. It seems to be a story that touches a universal chord. There’s a lot of stuff going on just under the current of the story about hard times, about change, about the need to pull together, about the American spirit, but the idea was always to get to all that in an unpretentious, light-hearted and human way.”

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Life Could Be a Dream: **A Brief History of Doo Wop**

*“Oh, life could be a dream (sh-boom)
If only all my precious plans would come true (sh-boom)”*
“Sh-boom,” first recorded by The Chords in 1954

At the heart of THE DUKES is the sound of Doo-Wop – which before there was Elvis or the Beatles, before punk, hip-hop or grunge, was one of the first major musical youth movements, helping to usher in the age of rock and roll. It emerged from gritty street corners, tenement stoops, church basements and working-class neighborhoods in the early 1950s, reflecting the growing urge towards expression of African-American and ethnic immigrant teens alike.

The distinctive style of Doo Wop – an indelible mix of three-part harmonies, lilting falsettos, heavy backbeats, dynamic baritones and often romantic, sentimental lyrics – would influence American pop culture for decades and imprint itself on the evolution of rock music to this day.

With its focus on group harmony, wry lyrics and moody nostalgia, Robert Davi also felt Doo Wop would make the perfect backdrop for his dark comedy about friendship, mischief and second chances.

Doo Wop got its playful name from the nonsense syllables – including plenty of repeated “doo-wops” – that create the rhythmic background to the form’s intricate harmonies. But the style signified more than just a new musical twist. It became a reflection of America’s urban diversity and youthful energy, sparking the success of all kinds of fresh musical talent – including African-American groups (and the first African American pop idol, Frankie Lymon), Italian groups and the rise of all-girl groups.

The roots of Doo Wop go back to jazz, swing and gospel, to African-American rhythm and blues groups like the Ink Spots, but also to Italy, where “*acapella*” (literally meaning “church style) singing groups were long a popular form of street entertainment. The simplicity of vocal harmonizing, which didn’t any require any instruments or even electrical power, meant that groups could form on sidewalks, subway platforms and schoolyards in cities like New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Los Angeles – hoping audiences would discover them.

They soon did. The first Doo Wop act to hit the big time was The Vibranaires, a Baltimore, Maryland group that formed in 1946 and later changed its name to The Orioles, topping the charts in 1949 with “Tell Me So,” the first hit song to use the doo-wop technique of a worldless falsetto in the lead vocal.

By the early 1950s, acts such as Frankie Lymon & The Teenagers, The Heartbeats, the Five Satins and the Cadillacs had become the street heroes of a generation, much as hip-hop stars would in the 1980s.

The popularity of Doo Wop among diverse audiences also helped to drive the burgeoning new business of indie record labels – including Chess, Vee Jay, King, Atlantic and Jubilee, all of whom started out making Doo Wop records, capitalizing on an audience hungry for fresh, modern sounds. However, while the record companies flourished, the bands themselves often struggled financially. Most were paid a single, modest fee for a recording session rather than for the number of records sold, which meant they didn't share in the wealth amassed from their hit songs. Making matters worse, the bands often had to pay astronomical touring expenses out of their own royalties. Due to these conditions, only the most committed and tenacious of bands were long lived, with many “one-hit wonder” bands rising and then just as quickly disappearing from the scene.

Even so, for a time, the music was king.

By 1955, Doo Wop was so popular that Allan Freed's famous “Rock and Roll Jubilee” presented numerous Doo Wop groups as headliners, including the Clovers, the Drifters, the Harptones and the Moonglows. Out of that era came some of the most enduring Doo Wop songs, among them such instantly recognizable hits as The Chords' “Sh-Boom,” the Penguins' “Earth Angel,” The Del Vikings' “Come Go With Me,” The Monotones' “Book of Love” and the Silhouettes' “Get a Job.”

However, in the early 1960s, the territory began to change. The British Invasion ushered in the electrical era of rock music, and Doo Wop began morphing into R&B and soul, influencing the rise of Motown and the urban sounds of the 60s and 70s.

Still, the timeless appeal of Doo Wop never truly faded. Indeed, in 1982, there was a brief resurgence of Doo Wop when the label Ambient Sound began releasing new records by such acts as the Harptones, the Moonglows and the Capris. More recently Doo Wop has influenced the hugely popular “boy bands” of the 1990s and the recent success of the Tony Award-winning musical “The Jersey Boys.”

For many, Doo Wop remains the purest, original expression of the rock and roll spirit -- but as The Dukes discover, it can take some very clever maneuvering to get the joy and excitement of the music to an audience.

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ABOUT THE CAST

ROBERT DAVI (Danny DePasquale)

From his portrayal of James Bond villain Franz Sanchez, to FBI profiler Bailey Malone in “Profiler” (1996), Robert Davi is one of the film industry's most recognized tough guys, whether on the big screen or on television. His work as a Palestinian terrorist Salim Ajami in an award-winning TV movie brought him critical acclaim and caught the eye of legendary James Bond producer Albert R. Broccoli, who cast Davi as Colombian drug lord and lead villain Franz Sanchez in the Bond film “License To Kill” (1989).

His body of work includes over 60 films, in which he's collaborated with prominent directors and producers such as Ang Lee, Steven Spielberg, Richard Donner, Joel Silver, Blake Edwards, John McTiernan, Paul Verhoeven and Albert R. Broccoli. Among his many notable film credits are “Die Hard” (1988), “License to Kill” (1989), “The Goonies” (1985), “Son of the Pink Panther” (1993), “Raw Deal” (1986) and “Showgirls” (1995). His big break came when he was cast opposite Frank Sinatra in the telefilm “Contract on Cherry Street” (1977), and he has gone on to work in projects with Marlon Brando, Roberto Benigni, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis, Clint Eastwood, Benicio Del Toro, Danny Glover and Adam Sandler, to name a few.

Davi received critical acclaim within the industry for his provocative and smoldering portrayal of FBI profiler Bailey Malone in the hit TV show “Profiler” (1996). The show, currently in syndication, struck a chord with audiences, paving the way for such shows as “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation” (2000), “Without a Trace” (2002), “Law & Order: Criminal Intent” (2001) and many others.

Davi, whose parents were both descendants from Italian immigrants, grew up watching Italian films and is heavily influenced by the storytelling of legendary directors such as Federico Fellini, Vittorio de Sica, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Luchino Visconti, and Roberto Rossellini. He received a drama scholarship from Hofstra University and went on to study with the legendary Stella Adler, who became his mentor. He is a member of the prestigious Actor's Studio, where he studied with Lee Strasberg, and is trained in classical opera and has amassed over 700 stage performances, from Shakespeare to Beckett.

Robert is currently starring in the David Zucker film “An American Carol” also starring Kelsey Grammer, and he can be seen in the film “Magic Man” opposite Billy Zane.

CHAZZ PALMINTERI (George Zucco)

Chazz Palminteri recently garnered critical acclaim with his performance as Monty in “A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints,” winning Best Ensemble Award at Sundance. He's earned high praise and an Academy Award nomination for his performance in Woody Allen's “Bullets Over Broadway.”

Palminteri delivered another gripping, noteworthy performance in Anthony Drazen's feature “Hurlyburly” in which he co-starred opposite Sean Penn, Kevin Spacey, Garry Shandling, Meg Ryan, Robin Wright Penn and Anna Paquin. He has starred in “Analyze This,” with Robert DeNiro and Billy Crystal; “The Perez Family” opposite Marisa Tomei and Angelica Houston; “The Usual Suspects” co-starring Gabriel Byrne, Kevin Spacey and Stephen Baldwin; “Jade” opposite David Caruso and Linda Fiorentino for director William Friedkin; “Mulholland Falls” opposite Nick Nolte

and John Malkovich for director Lee Tamahori; “Diabolique” co-starring Sharon Stone and Isabelle Adjani; and “Down To Earth” with Chris Rock, Eugene Levy, Greg Germain and Regina King.

Palminteri made his feature film directorial debut with the holiday film “Noel”, starring Penelope Cruz, Susan Sarandon, and Paul Walker. The film was the first feature film to be distributed via Flexplay, the 48-Hour No Return DVD.

Well known for “A Bronx Tale,” Palminteri originally wrote the script for the stage and performed it as a one-man show in Los Angeles. He then moved the production to New York, where it played for four sold-out months and earned him nominations for the New York Outer Critics Circle for both acting and writing. While in New York he completed the screenplay of “A Bronx Tale,” which became one of the hottest properties in Hollywood. He held out for an offer that would let him star in the film, and soon found himself starring opposite Robert DeNiro, who chose the script for his directorial debut. Last October, Chazz worked with composer Jimmy Webb to bring “A Bronx Tale: The Musical” to the New York Stage, and had an 18-week run on Broadway at the Walter Kerr Theatre. Chazz is currently touring the country with the show.

PETER BOGDANOVICH (Lou Fiola)

Director, writer, producer actor, Peter Bogdanovich has directed over 20 feature films including such international award winners as “The Last Picture Show,” which received a total of eight Academy Award® nominations, including three for Bogdanovich and was designated by the Library of Congress as a National Treasure; “What’s Up, Doc?” which won the Writer’s Guild Award for Best Screenplay, which Bogdanovich co-wrote with Buck Henry, David Newman and Bob Benton; “Paper Moon,” which received four Oscar® nominations; “Daisy Miller,” “Saint Jack,” “Mask”; cult favorites “Targets,” “Texasville,” “Noises Off” and “The Thing Called Love.” Among stars he’s introduced to the screen are Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Tatum O’Neal, Madeline Kahn, John Ritter, Sandra Bullock; and he has directed such stars as Audrey Hepburn, Barbra Streisand, Michael Caine and Cher.

Also a best-selling author, Bogdanovich’s books include: Who the Devil Made It, The Killing of the Unicorn, John Ford and This is Orson Welles.

As an actor, he has most recently been seen on “The Sopranos.” He will soon return to directing with “The Broken Cord.”

FRANK D’AMICO (Armond Kaputo)

The late Frank D’Amico, who passed away in June of 2008, started his career by entertaining his fellow workers on a picket line for the Teamsters (Local 456) in Westchester, New York. After honing his onstage skills he quickly became a national headliner and opening act for many major artists. Frank used his comedy to raise funds for the children’s Diabetes Association, the NYPD Widow’s and Orphan’s fund and the Burke Rehabilitation Center for the disabled, among many other charities.

Frank’s stand-up performance on Comedy Central drew the attention of director Roger Nygard who gave him his start in movies. Frank has been seen alongside Tom Sizemore in “The Fly Boys” directed by Rocco DeVilliers; in Vanessa Parise’s award winning film “Kiss The Bride” and Roger Nygard’s documentary “Trekkies” (which features his stand-up comedy act) .

MIRIAM MARGOLYES (Aunt Vee)

A veteran of stage and screen, award-winning actress Miriam Margolyes has achieved success on both sides of the Atlantic. Winner of the BAFTA Best Supporting Actress award in 1993 for "The Age of Innocence," she also received Best Supporting Actress at the 1989 LA Critics Circle Awards for her role in "Little Dorrit" and a Sony Radio Award for Best Actress on Radio in 1993 for her unabridged recording of "Oliver Twist." She also performed the voice of the Matchmaker in "Mulan" and the mother dog, in "Babe."

Major film credits during her long and celebrated career include "Yentl," "Little Shop of Horrors," "I Love You To Death," "End of Days," "Sunshine," "Cold Comfort Farm," "Cats & Dogs," "Magnolia" and was Professor Sprout in "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets." Most recently, Margolyes appeared in Stephen Hopkins' "The Life and Death of Peter Sellers," "Modigliani," Istvan Szabo's "Being Julia" and "Ladies in Lavender." Her many TV credits include playing Franny in the CBS sitcom, "Franny's Turn." In 2002, The Queen awarded her the Order of the British Empire for her services to Drama.

ELYA BASKIN (Murph Sinitsky)

Elya Baskin was born in Riga, Latvia and studied at the Moscow Theater and Variety Arts College. He debuted in Hollywood in 1977 with a role in Gene's Wilder's "The World's Greatest Lover." More than 60 different parts in movies and television followed after that. They include the sad clown Anatoly in Paul Mazursky's "Moscow on the Hudson" with Robin Williams, cosmonaut Max Brailovsky in "2010" with Roy Scheider and Helen Mirren, Brother Severinus in "The Name of the Rose" with Sean Connery and Christian Slater, Russian terrorist Kolchak in "Air force One" with Harrison Ford and Ambassador Dobrinin in "Thirteen Days" with Kevin Costner.

Baskin has recently been seen in "Spiderman 2" and "Spiderman 3" as Peter Parker's eccentric landlord Mr. Ditkovich.

BRUCE WEITZ (Toulio)

Bruce Weitz has appeared on Broadway in "Death Of A Salesman" with George C. Scott, in "The Basic Training Of Pavlo Hummel" with Al Pacino, in "Thieves" with Marlo Thomas and Norman in "Norman, Is That You?" With Maureen Stapleton and Lou Jacoby. Off-Broadway he was seen in "Frankie And Johnny In The Claire De Lune" and the revival of "Light Up The Sky at the Roundabout Theatre."

Weitz has appeared in twenty feature films including "Deep Impact," "Half Past Dead," "El Cortez," "Route 66," "Fools' Gold," "Memorial Day," "Velocity Trap," "Coyote Summer," "Windrunner," "Liar's Club" and "Rainbow's Drive." He has been a series' regular on "Hill Street Blues," "The Byrds of Paradise," "Anything But Love" and "Mama's Boy." He has had recurring roles on "ER," "Judging Amy," "The Guardian" and "Sisters.". He has also guest starred in more than 70 TV shows and starred in many TV movies. Weitz has been nominated for eight Emmys -- one nomination each for the ABC mini-series "Baby M" and the NBC series "Midnight Caller." He was nominated six times for "Hill Street Blues" and won the Emmy for his portrayal of Mick Belker.

MELORA HARDIN (Diane)

Melora Hardin can be seen every week on the hit NBC series, "The Office," in which she portrays Jan Levinson—Steve Carell's rigid corporate boss and love interest. She is also known for portraying Tony Shaloub's dead wife in the hit USA show, "Monk."

Hardin's feature film box office successes include "Thank You for Smoking," "The Hot Chick," "Soul Man" and "Absolute Power" opposite Clint Eastwood and Gene Hackman. She can also be seen in the upcoming horror film, "Drive-Thru," and will make her directorial debut with the independent feature to be released this summer entitled "YOU." Her latest feature film, "The Comebacks," was released last fall.

JOSEPH CAMPANELLA (Giovanni Zorro)

Joseph Campanella began his career as a Sports Announcer and Stock Theatre Producer, Actor, and Director in Pennsylvania, then as a newscaster and classical music announcer in New York, before studying acting with Lee Strasberg. After many roles in Stock and Off-Broadway (including an Obie nomination) he became part of the Golden Age of Television.

On Broadway, he received a Tony nomination for his work opposite Henry Fonda in Garson Kanin's "A Gift of Time." Other roles led to his first Broadway musical opposite Judy Holliday in "Hotspot" and first starring role in a prime time series "The Nurses." California beckoned with many guest star roles from "The Untouchables" to "Gunsmoke." His numerous series include "Mannix," "The Bold Ones," "One Day at a Time," "Dynasty II" and "The Colbys." More than 1000 TV appearances have resulted in three Emmy nominations. His recent TV roles include "Touched By An Angel," "Walker Texas Ranger," "Melrose Place," "The New Rockford Files," "The Practice," "The Division," "E.R." and the title role of "The Last Untouchable" episode of "Early Edition" opposite Ernest Borgnine. He continues to be the voice on radio and television for BMW.

His numerous film credits include "Meteor" with Sean Connery, "A Show of Force" with Amy Irving, "My Body My Child" with Vanessa Redgrave, "Murder, Inc." with Peter Falk, and many others.

DOMINIC SCOTT KAY (Brion)

Ten-year-old Dominic Scott Kay has 21 films to his credit, including Steven Spielberg's "Minority Report," in which he played Tom Cruise's son, "Loverboy," directed by Kevin Bacon and "Charlotte's Web" for which he voiced the role of "Wilbur."

Dominic's dream to become a director/writer/actor came true last year when he shot his first short film titled "Saving Angelo," based on his real-life experience of nursing a Boxer puppy to recovery after finding it left for dead on a highway. "Saving Angelo" stars Kevin Bacon, Eric Close, Dana Barron, Julie Gonzalo, and Dominic, who plays himself. All proceeds from his film will go to animal charities. In addition to his film work, Dominic is an accomplished musician, and loves to play music with his father, Scott Kay, "The Commodores" drummer for 15 years, who scored three of his son's films: "Guarding Eddy," which won the Indie Spirit Best Picture Award at the 2004 Boston Film Festival, "They Call Him Sasquatch," starring Neal McDonough and Garry Marshall, and "Saving Angelo." Passionate about animals, Dominic is the spokesperson for Adopt-A-Star Greyhound Rescue.

ELOISE DEJORIA (Katherine)

Eloise DeJoria – actress, mother, wife, and spokesmodel for John Paul Mitchell Systems – has relied on hard work and perseverance to achieve her dreams. A native of Texas, Eloise jumpstarted her acting and modeling career while raising her first two children, Michael Harvey and Justin Harvey, as a single mom. After moving from Texas to LA, and marrying John Paul DeJoria, Eloise began her tenure as spokesmodel for Paul Mitchell while continuing her other entertainment industry endeavors. Eloise and John Paul have a seven-year old son – John Anthony DeJoria.

Eloise's acting credits include roles in such films as "Songwriter," "Dangerous Love," "Troop Beverly Hills," "Weekend at Bernie's," "The Big Tease," "April Shower" and the 2004 release with Julia and Emma Roberts "Grand Champion." Eloise has enjoyed numerous modeling credits. In her role as spokesmodel for John Paul Mitchell Systems, Eloise loves helping hairdressers find ways to combine their artistry with business savvy to reach their goals.

ALPHONSE MOUZON (Ray Simone)

Alphonse Mouzon's musical associations read like a veritable Who's Who of Modern Jazz and Pop Music. He was the rhythmic foundation for the far reaching musical explorations of pianist McCoy Tyner. He was a charter member along with keyboardist Joe Zawinul and saxophonist Wayne Shorter, of the group Weather Report. Along with guitarist Larry Coryell, he was co-founder of The Eleventh House, the seminal fusion band of the seventies. The Larry Coryell's Eleventh House reunited after 25 years in July 1998 and toured all over the world featuring Alphonse Mouzon until December 12, 1999.

Mouzon has also played and/or recorded with Gil Evans, Roy Ayers, George Benson, Herbie Hancock, Dizzy Gillespie, Stanley Clarke, Al DiMeola, Les McCann, Ronnie Laws, Klaus Doldinger's Passport, Jaco Pastorius, Ron Carter, Nathan East, Cecil McBee, Albert Mangelsdorff, Joachim Kuhn, Jasper van't Hof, Michel Legrand, Stanley Turrentine, Freddie Hubbard, Hubert Laws, Donald Bird, Chet Baker, Randy Brecker, Michael Brecker, Ernie Watts, Sonny Rollins, Wallace Roney, Arturo Sandoval, Christian McBride, Kenny Barron, Cedar Walton, George Coleman, John Klemmer, Billy Harper, Dave Grusin, Russ Freeman, George Howard, Kirk Whalum, Jeff Lorber, Kenny G., Joanne Brackeen, Horace Parlan, Robin Kenyatta, Ross Carnegie Orchestra, Roberta Flack, Gloria Lynn, Gloria Coleman, Denise Williams, Freda Payne, Shirley Scott, Anita O'Day, Betty Davis, and in 1991, he performed with Miles Davis on the soundtrack album "Dingo."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ROBERT DAVI (Director/Co-Writer/Producer)

THE DUKES is Robert Davi's feature-length directorial debut. Davi is one of the most instantly recognized actors in the world. His body of work includes over 60 films, in which he's collaborated with prominent directors and producers such as Ang Lee, Steven Spielberg, Richard Donner, Joel Silver and Albert R. Broccoli.

His long love affair with cinema began as a child when he was first introduced to Italian Neo-realism. Davi, whose parents were both descendants from Italian immigrants, grew up watching Italian films and is heavily influenced by the storytelling of legendary directors such as Federico Fellini, Vittorio de Sica, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Luchino Visconti and Roberto Rossellini.

He received a drama scholarship from Hofstra University, and went on to study with Stella Adler for 3 years in New York. He is a member of the prestigious Actor's Studio, is trained in classical opera and has amassed over 700 stage performances, from Shakespeare to Beckett.

JAMES ANDRONICA (Co-Writer)

Robert Davi penned THE DUKES with long-time friend and collaborator James Andronica, whom he met on the set of "The Gangster Chronicles." Andronica has written several screenplays for cult director Paul Williams and such stars as Edward James Olmos and Sean Young.

MICHAEL GOI, ASC (Director of Photography)

Michael Goi, ASC traces his interest in filmmaking to the day he saw an 8 mm prints of "Dracula" and "Frankenstein" projected on a wall of a friend's house when he was seven years old. Goi convinced his parents to buy him an 8 mm camera which he used to make movies with the help of neighborhood kids. He did odd jobs and saved enough money to upgrade to a 16 mm Bolex camera when he was 14. After graduating from high school, Goi enrolled at Columbia College in Chicago and began shooting PBS documentaries while he was still in college. After graduation in 1980, he shot local commercials and documentaries. Goi also opened a still photography studio, concentrating on fashion and product shots. He shot "Moonstalker," his first narrative film in 1987.

Goi moved to Los Angeles during the early 1990s, and has compiled nearly 40 credits, including films for cinema and television screens. Goi was nominated for the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) Outstanding Achievement Awards for the telefilms "The Fixer" (1999) and "Judas" (2005). His credits also include the new David E. Kelley show "The Wedding Bells," and the feature films "Cut Off," "Fingerprints," "Red Water," "What Matters Most," "Who Killed Atlanta's Children?", "Christmas Rush," "Funky Monkey," "Welcome to Death Row" and the Emmy® Award-winning documentary "Fired-Up: The Story of Public Housing in Chicago."

NIC. tenBROEK (Composer)

Raised in Berkeley, California, Nic. began his musical education with piano lessons at age 9. While still a student at Berkeley High School, Nic. was teaching and playing professionally. After high school Nic. accepted a scholarship to The Juilliard School, majoring in performance and composition. Between his studies and performing professionally in both jazz and classical settings, Nic. was also the recipient of the prestigious Lincoln Center Award.

As a studio musician has has performed with a diverse range of artists including the Pointer Sisters, Santana, Herbie Hancock, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Gladys Knight, the Jacksons, Patti LaBelle, the O'Jays, Tom Jones, Cher, and the San Francisco Symphony. As a composer, Nic. has created scores for feature film, network television, and documentary films. He has also composed works for the Kronos String Quartet, Turtle Island String Quartet, Metrepol Orchestra, and a full-length ballet based on Louis Carroll's "Through the Looking Glass."

As a producer and arranger Nic. has worked with such artists as jazz singer Nancy Wilson, Bobby McFerrin, Les McCann, and Warner Bros. artists Reel Big Fish. In between his film and television projects, Nic. and Grammy award winning producer Val Garay have joined forces and are busy producing for a variety of recording artists and record labels.