



**“This is gonna be the best year ever,
and nothing’s gonna get in my way.”**

~ Meilin Lee, “Turning Red”

PRODUCTION NOTES

Disney and Pixar’s all-new original feature film “Turning Red” introduces Meilin Lee, a confident, slightly dorky 13-year-old with a solid group of friends, an admirable record in school and a better-than-average relationship with her family for the most part. Meilin—Mei to her friends—has every reason to expect smooth sailing throughout the rest of her middle school career. “I just love her dorky confidence,” says director Domee Shi. “I love her spunk and her spirit.”

But, Shi adds, like a lot of 13-year-olds diving headfirst into adolescence, Mei is in for a wild ride. “I really wanted to explore the conflicts of a young teen girl,” she says, “how she’s torn between being a good daughter and embracing her true messy self.”

The mother-daughter relationship takes center stage in “Turning Red,” and it’s a theme that’s very close to the director’s heart. Shi, who helmed Pixar’s 2018 Oscar®-winning short “Bao,” says that when she was asked why the little dumpling in the short was male, her response was—it turns out—prophetic. “I said it would take a whole feature to unpack the mother-daughter relationship,” says Shi. “It was actually a big motivating factor in my pitch for ‘Turning Red.’ It’s never black and white. At the beginning of the movie, Mei genuinely loves her relationship with her mom, but she’s being pulled in new directions—as everyone her age is. It’s a time of big changes.”

In “Turning Red,” this phase of growing up is marked in an unexpected, can’t-hide-from-it, larger-than-life way: when Mei’s emotions get the better of her, she “poofs” into a

giant red panda. “One minute, everything’s perfect,” says Shi. “And then, just like with all of us, all of a sudden there’s terror everywhere. She’s way taller, hungrier, more emotional. She’s, in fact, turned into a giant red panda, and the only way to turn back into a human girl is to take deep breaths, calm herself down and control her emotions. It’s kind of like ‘The Incredible Hulk,’ but cuter.”

According to producer Lindsey Collins, “Turning Red” is set in Toronto, Canada, in the early 2000s. “It takes place in a familiar time and place that kind of roots us all in reality,” says Collins. “It’s not a magical world. That’s important because the story itself is pretty fantastical with a girl that hits a magical kind of puberty and turns into a big red panda—yet we can all still relate.

“It’s a coming-of-age story about change and those transitional moments,” continues Collins. “It’s about that time in our lives when we’re trying to figure out who we are. We have a girl who is torn between her family and her friends, learning that she’s not at all who she thought she was. And we have the mother whose daughter is suddenly interested in strange music and boys—a mother who struggles with letting go so her child can become who she needs to be. It’s a universal theme that rings true whether you’re the parent, the child, or maybe both.”

According to Collins, the story is relatable in large part because it’s rooted in Shi’s own life. “She was 13 in 2002,” says Collins of the director. “She had a very tight and somewhat hilarious and complex relationship with her mom. Some of the craziest moments in the film are based on things that actually happened to Domee.”

But, says Collins, it’s not just that profound relatability that sets “Turning Red” apart from other coming-of-age stories—it’s Shi’s approach to filmmaking. “Domee has an energy to her that I find really engaging—she’s an engine,” says Collins. “She moves fast; she’s super decisive. She brings an unexpected and unapologetic quirkiness to her storytelling, the stylization, and to the entire film.”

Filmmakers cast newcomer Rosalie Chiang as the voice of Meilin; Sandra Oh (“The Chair,” “Killing Eve”) lends her voice to Mei’s protective if not slightly overbearing mother, Ming. Mei’s tightknit group of friends are voiced by Ava Morse (“Ron’s Gone Wrong”) as Miriam, Hyein Park as Abby, and Maitreyi Ramakrishnan (“Never Have I Ever”) as Priya. The voice cast also includes Orion Lee (“First Cow”) as Mei’s dad, Jin; Wai Ching Ho (“Daredevil,” “Iron Fist”) as Grandma; Tristan Allerick Chen (“The Barbarian and the Troll”) as classmate Tyler, and Addison (Addie) Chandler (“American Horror Story”) as Mei’s sudden secret crush, Devon. Rounding out the voice cast are Lori Tan Chinn (“Awkwafina Is Nora from Queens”), Mia Tagano (“Tantalus: Behind the Mask,” “Law & Order: Criminal Intent”), Sherry Cola (“Good Trouble”), Lillian Lim (“Motherland: Fort Salem,” “Meditation Park”), James Hong (“Big Trouble in Little China,” “Kung Fu Panda: The Paws of Destiny”), Sasha Roiz (“Grimm”) and Lily Sanfelippo (“Spidey and His Amazing Friends,” “Firebuds”).

“Turning Red” introduces Pixar’s first-ever boy band, 4*Town. “They represent that one band—that one song we all heard at her age that transformed us,” says Shi. “They’re Mei’s first crush, her first obsession. This passion for 4*Town is really her first dip into adolescence.”

Jordan Fisher, Finneas O’Connell, Topher Ngo, Grayson Villanueva and Josh Levi provide the voices of 4*Town, and GRAMMY®-winning singer-songwriters Billie Eilish and O’Connell penned three songs for the fictional band. “When we first started talking about Billie and Finneas—back before they’d won a billion GRAMMYS—we could see then how they had their finger on the pulse,” says Collins. “We were big fans.”

GRAMMY®, Oscar®- and Emmy®-winning composer Ludwig Göransson (“Black Panther,” “The Mandalorian”) composed the score for “Turning Red.” Streaming exclusively on Disney+ beginning March 11, 2022, Disney and Pixar’s “Turning Red” is directed by Academy Award® winner Domee Shi (Pixar short “Bao”) and produced by Lindsey Collins (“Finding Dory”). The screenplay is by Julia Cho and Shi.

FRIENDS, FAMILY AND 4*TOWN **Who’s Who in “Turning Red”**

Director Domee Shi kicked off efforts behind “Turning Red” with an important mission topping her to-do list: getting to know her characters. “I think finding the characters as early as possible is the most important thing to making a good story,” she says. “The first goal of a filmmaker is having the audience fall in love with your characters—being interested enough in them in those first 5-10 minutes to want to sit down and follow their journey for the next hour and a half.”

Shi and her team went on to develop the kind of characters that would capture viewers’ hearts and hold on till the credits rolled. Leading the pack, of course, is 13-year-old Meilin Lee, and Shi surrounded her protagonist with a crew of friends and family—each with a distinct personality that both complements and contrasts with Mei as she navigates adolescence. “This is a very personal story for Domee,” says producer Lindsey Collins. “It’s a mother-daughter story set in the early 2000s, which is super cool. And it has a voice that feels very different—the reaction here at Pixar to the first scene [we shared internally] mirrored the way that I feel about this film: I’ve never seen this before.”

The look of the characters, says Collins, is similarly distinct. “Everyone had to tap their inner 13-year-olds to capture the style Domee wanted,” says Collins. “It’s a world seen through the eyes of Mei. Everything is vibrant and colorful.”

According to character art director Jason Deamer, Shi’s vision for the characters pulled from a host of sources and styles. “She’s really interested in anime and stop motion, and I think she wanted to meld those together with the huge, expressive facial shapes of anime and shorter proportions you sometimes see in stop motion,” says Deamer. “Domee also referenced Chinese porcelain sculptures that have this beautiful soft way of interpreting anatomy.”

Additionally, Shi is a big fan of Hayao Miyazaki, Japanese animation like “Sailor Moon” and Edgar Wright films. These references and longtime influences—coupled with Shi’s unique approach to filmmaking—resulted in something new and different. Says Collins, “The design is textured and tactile and chunky, and the animation style and, every now

and then, facial expressions are pushed. The characters are caricatured, and the way they move and pose is fresh.”

Animation supervisor Aaron Hartline was drawn to that freshness. “Domee is a new director with a new voice and a new style,” he says. “It was exciting that she wanted to try something completely different in terms of animation style. She called it East meets West—where anime represents the East, and signature Pixar animation is West.”

Shi infused the film with bold but strategically placed details from anime. “I love how fast and loose they play with emotion—how the expressions can change in an instant,” says the director. “If Mei spots a boy she likes, or she and her friends see a 4*Town ad, their eyes get super dilated with sparkles and stars—we really want to push the animation to reflect how our characters are feeling.”

Director of photography Jonathan Pytko and his lighting team contributed to the pushed look of the characters’ eyes—a fun feature that appears about a dozen times in the film. “They’re oblong shapes—not perfect circles—and we add multiple highlights,” he says. “We did a bunch of tests and ultimately settled with a look where there’s a primary, secondary and tertiary highlight that’s the color of the iris. That became our default look, and then there are special shots with jittering highlights, stars and hearts.”

Says Shi, “It just felt perfect for a film about an adolescent girl who’s on an emotional roller coaster with all of the mood swings.”

Animation supervisor Patty Kihm says Shi was keen to showcase all of that emotion in a big way. “Domee is very quirky,” says Kihm. “She always wants to push the boundaries. If somebody was freaked out and looking frazzled, Domee wanted to push the pose beyond anything we’d done before, including handcrafting facelines to help express emotion. She’s awesome because she knows exactly what she wants in every shot of the film.”

Director of photography Mahyar Abousaeedi, who headed up layout and camera for the film, embraced Shi’s vision. “We wanted to make the cinematic language of this movie playful when it came to camera and staging,” he says. “Domee is pretty unconventional in the way she frames—she tends to frame her characters on-center and likes to break the fourth wall. As the film opens and Mei engages the viewer directly, giving her control of the frame, it says a lot about who she is.

“We also used symmetry and flat compositions in our framing of Mei and her mother to show the harmony in their relationship—at least in the beginning,” Abousaeedi continues. “But as Mei begins to change—and her uncertainty is evident—Mei drifts away from the center of the frame, camera moves are relaxed, and compositions are more organic.”

DETAILS, DETAILS

Shi’s vision for the look of the film can be summed up in two words: chunky cute. Says character supervisor Christian Hoffman, “That meant that not only were the characters’ limbs a little bit simpler and less anatomical, but they were also thicker. For their faces,

we wanted to keep the shapes simple. We avoided pronounced nose and brow bridges.”

But, says Hoffman, artists added detail in other ways. “We introduced this concept of color pooling,” he says. “For example, if you painted a figurine and then took a cloth and wiped off the paint, some paint would collect in the grooves and along the edges and corners. On our character faces—in the grooves along the noses, for example—there’s a different coloration that’s a bit more saturated and has a slightly different hue on it to add a little bit more richness.”

Similar color pooling can be seen on garments wherever stitching appears.

WHO’S WHO IN “TURNING RED”

The character lineup includes Mei, her inner circle of friends and family, and members of a boy band known as 4*Town. Filmmakers called on a rich roster of voice talent to help bring the characters to life. “The Toronto setting of this story called for a diverse cast,” says associate executive producer Adrian Molina. “Hopefully more and more people are seeing experiences like their own on the big screen. ‘Turning Red’ offers a unique perspective of a 13-year-old Chinese Canadian that—at its heart—shows how we’re all connected.”

MEILIN LEE is a middle-school force of nature. Exuberant, ambitious and over-achieving, Chinese Canadian Meilin excels at school and at home. Her posse of loyal besties always has her back—they share a borderline out-of-control obsession with boy band 4*Town, but what 13-year-old doesn’t? At home, Mei is a dutiful and driven keeper of the ancestral family temple, working contentedly alongside her mother, Ming. But when the teen mysteriously begins to “poof” into a giant, uber emotional red panda at the most inconvenient times, a gulf opens up between Mei and her mom, forcing a reckoning between Mei’s two selves: the spirited teenager and the obedient daughter.

“She’s spunky, confident, nerdy, passionate, weird and a little bit snooty,” says director Domee Shi of her main character. “When I was her age, I was Mei. I was writing Harry Potter fan fiction, passionately drawing fan art. I had a secret sketchbook that my parents did not know about. Now that I’m grown, I know so many amazing women who all had nerdy beginnings. I just wanted to show that with Mei.”

Like her 13-year-old protagonist, Shi was tempted to break a few rules and, on occasion, the fourth wall. Says director of photography Mahyar Abousaeedi, “Domee’s style of breaking the fourth wall invites the camera to be a character in the scene as the audience. We decided to keep Mei’s direct engagement with the audience as simple as possible, reserved for moments of the film when we hear her narration.”

“Mei has that teenager vibe,” adds Kihm. “She feels like she can do it all. She has tons of energy just bubbling over, but she hasn’t found her footing yet—she’s still awkward in a lot of ways. She stumbles and trips. Her glasses slip. She might strike a pose, but it’s not quite right.”

Newcomer Rosalie Chiang, who lends her voice to Mei, brought her own teenager vibe to the role. “Mei is an energetic, confident and emotional mess,” says Chiang. “She fights for what she believes in and doesn’t back down without a fight. I relate to her because we both go crazy over boy/girl bands, have a tightknit group of friends, come from an Asian household and are passionate about what we believe in.”

Producer Lindsey Collins says they all saw the similarities, too. “Rosalie is this amazing girl who we auditioned in the beginning to do the scratch—or temporary—recordings as we were working on the story. She’s super close to her mom, she was home-schooled and an A student—in many ways she’s just like Mei. Her genuine, unrehearsed, authentic performance breathed such life into Mei. After two years, we were ready to cast the role. We listened to a lot of auditions, but we’d already fallen in love with Rosalie, and in the end couldn’t imagine Mei being voiced by anybody else.”

Chiang was sworn to secrecy for a long time before she was finally able to reveal the news to her friends. “They FREAKED out!” says Chiang. “They didn’t realize I was working for a huge project like ‘Turning Red’ for four years. They were so happy and supportive of me because they knew how hard I had worked on my acting career.”

RED PANDA MEI is the same Mei her friends and family know and love—but in the form of an unpredictable, eight-foot-tall, smelly and inadvertently destructive red panda. She may be fluffy and impossibly cute, but Red Panda Mei represents Mei as her most vulnerable, messy and true self. “We’re basically using the red panda as an adorable metaphor for the very unadorable phenomenon of puberty,” says Shi.

Filmmakers had to figure out how to execute the transformation from teen to beast. Effects supervisor Dave Hale says the “poof” is the signature effect for the film. “We played with stop-motion effects, but ultimately moved in the direction of volumetric effects with this misty element to help seat it in a more physically rendered world that pushes the stylization. The poofs themselves are really dense, bubbly pink clouds that split into smaller pink clouds—it all has this nice poppy nature. The pink—sometimes blue—mist lingers.”

Abousaeedi and the camera team helped underscore the heightened emotion that often preceded Mei’s transformations. “In those key moments when Mei experiences a sudden surge of embarrassment, frustration or bliss, we wanted the background to fade away and the focus be narrowed in on Mei in an exaggerated way,” he says. “We coined these moments ‘emotional spikes,’ and found that combining a crash zoom while dollying in and out to a wide-angle lens really supported the discomfort Mei was feeling.”

Chiang aptly amplified her performance when it came to the bigger, messier, fluffier version of her character. “Red Panda Mei is essentially a heightened and more intense version of Mei,” she says. “She screams and roars louder, laughs harder and wails bigger. I definitely had to lose control of my emotions and not worry about how embarrassing it might seem. Domee was a great help because she always explained to me exactly how she envisioned the red panda saying those lines, which helped me almost ‘become’ Red Panda Mei.”

According to production designer Rona Liu, the oversized furry character embodies the chunky cute style. “We’re all imperfect, and this character needed to reflect that,” says Liu. “We don’t want Red Panda Mei to be glamorous—we want her to be messy. Bodies come in all shapes and sizes, and it should all be celebrated. Her belly jiggles, her fur is matted—it’s inspired by Alpaca fur because it’s soft and cuddly, but if you look closely, it’s also clumpy and ungroomed.”

All of that hair complicated efforts to achieve the kind of expressions filmmakers wanted from the character. “We looked into technology that was just beginning to come together called profile movers,” says visual effects supervisor Danielle Feinberg. “We weren’t sure if it would pay off, but it was fantastic. Animators were able to get the performances they needed.”

Character supervisor Christian Hoffman says the technology allowed technicians to add curves around the character and put controls on the curves instead of on the skin. Ultimately, it allowed the kind of iteration a character like Red Panda Mei required. “It was the main mechanism used to pose her,” he says.

Red Panda Mei’s fluffy exterior also helped filmmakers convey the character’s emotional state. Artists had the ability to sculpt specific shapes, adjust the length of the hair or direct it to sell a particular emotion. “Think of how a cat reacts when it’s scared or angry and how the hair on its back stands up,” says Hoffman.

MING LEE is a proud wife, devoted mother and hardworking keeper of the Lee Family Temple in Toronto’s Chinatown. Elegantly turned out and poised at all times, Ming takes her professional duties seriously—but she’s even more dedicated to keeping an eye on her precious daughter, Meilin. There’s no doubt Ming is fierce, stubborn, funny, controlling and—as Mei would put it—a lot, but the deep love she has for her family is always apparent. “Ming is a compilation of all of the very strong and awesome Asian women in my life,” says director Domee Shi. “Ming can be intense, but all of the crazy stuff she does is motivated by her love for her daughter.”

Screenplay writer Julia Cho, who has a young daughter of her own, could relate to Ming. “I’ve always thought of Ming as about my age,” Cho says. “Even when she’s at her most extreme, I always tried to see her as someone believable and fully human. I’m pretty sure Ming is my future – if not my present.”

To help convey the contrast between mother and daughter, filmmakers gave Ming a more buttoned-up look in a contrasting color. “Their colors alone are a big statement,” says Liu. “Mei is fire red and Ming wears emerald green—they sit on the exact opposite sides of the color wheel.”

Simulation supervisor Jacob Brooks says the contrast is evident in other ways, too—from their hairstyles and wardrobe to their shape language. “We gave Ming a tight bun and a blazer with pronounced shoulder pads to make her look strong, tall and even sharp,” he says. “While Mei is more rounded, the shape language for Ming is boxy. A lot of work went into getting the appropriate angles for her shoulders, which actually mirror her mood. If she’s frustrated, those angles get sharper.”

Filmmakers called on Sandra Oh to voice Ming. “She’s a tricky character,” says producer Lindsey Collins. “Ming is a force. In the wrong hands, she could come off as unlikable. It’s a balancing act: she’s super strong, yet funny and a little wacky. Then the next minute, she’s incredibly nurturing. When Sandra went into the recording booth for the first time—just to play around and see what she could bring to the role—she was everything we imagined and more. She’s such a pro—a total gift.”

Oh, who’s a native of Canada, was especially drawn to the story’s setting. “I was so excited that this was a Pixar movie set in Toronto,” she says. “When you come in for a session, they’ll show you what they’ve animated. The opening sequence when Mei is walking down the street—I knew exactly what corner that is. That was so exciting, because you feel the personal investment in the storytelling.”

For Oh, while “Turning Red” is largely Mei’s story, the teenager isn’t the only one navigating change. “Ming has to go through a little bit of a transformation herself,” says Oh. “She loves her daughter deeply but she has to accept her for the young woman she is turning out to be.”

Oh describes Ming as hypervigilant—a mother who expects a lot of Mei. And while this mother doesn’t want her daughter to hide anything from her, “Ming is carrying a secret of her own,” says Oh.

JIN LEE, the quiet, steady presence in the Lee family, works hard and aspires to a life of simple pleasures: cooking a good meal for his family, sneaking the occasional donut, and gardening. He’s a necessary balance to his strong-willed wife, Ming, and a doting and loving father to his daughter, Mei. But when an ancient phenomenon throws his family into chaos, Jin’s quiet life is upended.

Says Shi, “He’s the soft-but-stoic rock of the family. He’s loosely inspired by my dad, but my dad is a little bit louder. He’s a good complement to Ming—he pulls her back down to Earth. He’s the quiet hero.”

According to production designer Rona Liu, the character’s look had to reflect his gentle nature. “We wanted to give him a slight belly,” she says. “He wears neutral colors—a beige shirt and khaki pants—and of course sandals with socks.”

Orion Lee voices Jin. “I first saw him in a film called ‘First Cow,’” says Shi. “There’s something very soothing about his voice that drew me to him. He can give Mei comforting words of wisdom, and then turn around and offer up very funny dad jokes.”

Says Lee of his character, “It’s not really much or obvious but Jin has a calming presence in the way he is. He is the silent mediator and invisible connector between mum and daughter. He is a naturally quiet man who feels the needs of his wife and daughter are most important. I can definitely see myself in Jin’s position in the future.”

MIRIAM is loyal, easygoing and a total goof who can make her besties laugh when they need it most. A bit of a tomboy, Miriam regularly rocks a flannel shirt and slouchy cap, and shares her friends' obsession with boy band 4*Town. Mei's mom, however, is not a fan of Miriam. Ming sees Miriam as a threat to her relationship with her daughter, despite the girl's stellar support for Mei. "Miriam serves up everything that's contrary to Ming's pride, beliefs, taste and hopes for Mei," says story supervisor Rosana Sullivan. "She's disheveled, natural—she just *is*. Miriam is in Mei's corner no matter what—even when she starts turning into a red panda."

According to screenplay writer Julia Cho, the unwavering support of Miriam and all of Mei's friends is no accident. "We'd all seen bullying and mean girls in film and television," says Cho. "Domee really wanted to do something different. Mei's friends don't judge each other or put each other down. When you really look at a lot of friendships—mine, my daughter's or Domee's within Pixar—they're nurturing and supportive. I love emphasizing that component of female friendships because for too long the narrative has been that we're competitive, hierarchical and we tear each other down. The truth is different. And that became a really important part of the movie."

To make her quickly identifiable throughout the film, Miriam's color palette includes green with yellow as her secondary color. And she has a defining characteristic that filmmakers showcased whenever possible. "We had a rule for Miriam that we'd always try to show off her braces," says animation supervisor Aaron Hartline.

Ava Morse lends her voice to Miriam. "She's the coolest 15-year-old you'll ever meet," says Collins of the actor. "She's a drummer and a singer. Her gravelly voice is just perfect for Miriam."

Morse tuned in to her character instantly. "Just like Miriam, I am very energetic and love spending time with my friends," she says. "Because we are so similar, when voicing Miriam, I was just basically being an exaggerated version of myself. I had a lot of fun with that."

Morse adds that the character represents the kind of friend everyone should have. "Miriam has like a sixth sense to Mei's emotions, so she can always tell when something is up, and she never fails to cheer her up," says Morse. "It's so important to have a friend like Miriam who is always there for you no matter what."

PRIYA is meticulous yet artsy, passionate yet stoic. She's a quiet wild card with a deadpan sense of humor and a calm and collected approach to school, friendship and just about anything—except 4*Town. Even Priya can't contain her love of 4*Town.

"Priya represents me and my friends near the end of middle school," says director Domee Shi. "We discovered vampires, punk rock and emo. I think Priya is headed in that direction."

Filmmakers differentiated Priya by giving her an ochre color palette and a distinct look to her eyes. Says Hartline, "We never raise her lids all the way—Priya just shows

minimal emotion. Domee always said Priya had a little goth to her—she’s always calm and stoic. She might look almost bored at times—which shows how cool she really is—but she’s completely engaged.”

Maitreyi Ramakrishnan was cast as the voice of Priya. “I remember my first reaction to seeing just a rough sketch of Priya while recording,” says Ramakrishnan. “I was immediately so excited about how similar she looks to me—I’m talking about the bushy hair, the nose piercing, glasses and the slight eye bags from probably staying up way too late the night before! I definitely was not as quiet and cool as Priya is when I was in middle school, but we both are always ready to stick up for a friend.”

The actor says that Priya’s low-key personality was tricky to pull off. “Sounding excited, sad or angry while also staying monotone is a very fine line to walk,” she says. “Priya is just someone with a monotone voice, but she still has feelings like every other middle school kid, so keeping that in mind definitely helped. Recording early in the morning also helped to sound monotone! Not a fan of mornings.”

ABBY is a stick of dynamite—a fierce-but-tiny warrior who will not hesitate to launch herself at anyone who threatens her besties. The opposite of shy, Abby is not afraid to be heard. She does have a soft spot for Red Panda Mei, however. The extreme fluff is just too hard not to hug. “She is completely infatuated with the adorable red panda,” says Hyein Park, who provides the voice of Abby.

According to Park, the character doesn’t always have control of her feelings. “She is full of passion and emotion, which tend to get expressed in explosive assertiveness,” says Park of Abby, who is Korean Canadian. “I believe this intensity of hers has partially developed from having to stand up for herself while navigating experiences as an immigrant child. As a first-generation Canadian immigrant myself, I relate to this deeply—adapting to a new life was quite tough even as a child. People often lacked understanding and empathy which left me feeling disrespected. Thinking back on it now as an adult, this tough-nut front of mine went overboard at times in quite humorous ways, just like Abby in the film.”

According to animation supervisor Patty Kihm, Abby’s distinguishing trait—other than her purple wardrobe—is her eyebrows. “We had a rule for Abby—she always had to have a furrowed brow,” she says. “Even if she’s happy, she still has an angry brow. She is a firecracker, and that feature defined her character. It just makes her even more irresistible.”

TYLER NGUYEN-BAKER is that kid everyone knows from middle school—the relentlessly annoying, oddly aggressive classmate who seems to pop up at the worst possible times. Tyler may play the role of jerk—but deep down, he has all the same fears and doubts of every other middle schooler. Despite his inexplicable disdain for Mei, he recruits Red Panda Mei to make an appearance at his birthday party.

Graphics art director Laura Meyer and her team were called on to create the invitation to Tyler’s party. “We made it look like he designed it in Word,” says Meyer. “Tyler thinks

he's cool, so he would definitely put his face on it: 'Tyler Presents Tyler's Birthday'—I laughed out loud when I first saw it. We always keep the source in mind."

Tristan Allerick Chen was called on to voice Tyler.

4*TOWN, the hottest, coolest boy band of all time, is behind songs like "Nobody Like U"—the single from their latest album that's climbing all the charts. Their concerts are truly epic, featuring high-flying theatrics, lights, pyrotechnics and—best of all—the five dreamy members of 4*Town. Lending their voices to Robaire, Jesse, Aaron T., Tae Young and Aaron Z., respectively, are Jordan Fisher, Finneas O'Connell, Topher Ngo, Grayson Villanueva and Josh Levi.

Says producer Lindsey Collins, "The songs the guys sing—and that Mei and her friends belt out whenever they can—are all original songs. They sound so much like the early 2000s that, when we've shown our reels internally, people just tune in and start singing along as if they can remember the music from their high school days."

According to executive producer Dan Scanlon, while the process was fun—revealing hidden boy-band fans throughout Pixar as 4*Town took shape—filmmakers took it all very seriously. "This band creates the most important music of Mei and her friends' generation," he says. "In many ways music shapes our experience at that age, and this is Mei's story. It wouldn't be complete without 4*Town."

Character art director Jason Deamer was tapped to create the model sheets for each member of the group. "I didn't make them cute enough," he laughs. "Domee spent a weekend transforming them into the teen idols they needed to be—she chiseled their jaws a little more and amplified the coolness factor."

The animation team followed Shi's guidance when it came time to choreograph the boy band. "Domee has said from the beginning that we're not making fun of boy bands," says animation supervisor Aaron Hartline. "It's really a celebration of them. So instead of looking for opportunities that we could play up for comedy, we looked for those earnest moments—these guys are pouring their souls out."

Adds animation supervisor Patty Kihm, "Whenever a 4*Town shot would come up in dailies, everybody weighed in. We all wanted to make them the coolest boy band ever."

GRANDMA, AUNTIE CHEN and AUNTIE PING are Ming's loyal mother and sisters, who travel cross-country to help the Lee family navigate an escalating crisis. Although they mean well, their presence isn't immediately welcome. Ming may not see it, but the loving-but-complicated mother-daughter relationship emerging between her and Mei looks a lot like her own relationship with her mother. According to simulation supervisor Jacob Brooks, Grandma's look takes cues from Ming, offering insight into Ming's other mother-daughter relationship. "She has a sharp shoulder line that mimics Ming's," he says.

Wai Ching Ho provides the voice of Grandma. “A woman of legendary elegance and fiercely high standards, Grandma sets the bar by which all is judged,” says Ho.

Lori Tan Chinn lends her voice to Auntie Chen, and Lillian Lim voices Auntie Ping.

SUN YEE is the Lee family’s most revered ancestor, an example of the strong women who came before them, and the central figure in their temple. Ming and Mei share Sun Yee’s story with temple guests in fun and vibrant fashion that culminates with Mei in a makeshift red panda costume.

Says director Domee Shi, “During wartime when all of the men were gone, Sun Yee prayed to the gods to give her the power to defend her daughter and defend their village. And the gods blessed her with the power to transform into this magical mystical beast.”

“Sun Yee is a revered ancestor,” adds screenplay writer Julia Cho. “She’s a strong female warrior, scholar and poet, breaking from traditional gender roles. The magic running through the Lee family women adds such richness to Mei’s story, and the fact that even Sun Yee’s not perfect really resonates.”

Animation supervisor Aaron Hartline says the vignettes featuring the character were grounded to showcase the respect the Lee family had for their ancestor. “Sun Yee represents power and grace,” he says. “We didn’t want to have any big moves or anything flashy—it’s about total control. Every movement is precise and specific.”

CROWDS characters are instrumental in creating a believable environment whether that’s in and around Toronto, in the middle school or at the long-awaited 4*Town concert. The concert alone featured the most crowd characters in a single shot for the film at 30,685. Of those characters, 93 percent were teens and 7 percent were adult.

According to crowds animation supervisor Jane Snow Cassidy, the overall look for characters in the film extended to crowds characters. “We applied the chunky-cute style to our characters—making them a little stockier, a little rounder—and just overall cute.”

The animation, says Cassidy, matches that of the main characters. “It’s not super naturalistic,” she says. “We hit really strong poses and work within that pose. So even the movement is stylistic.”

Adds crowds technical supervisor Paul Kanyuk, “I think we tended to group characters together in strong poses. So, if you look in the hallways of the school, you’ve got your chunky cute characters in chunky-cute poses acting like crazy middle school kids.”

An important aspect of the crowds character models is the diversity represented—including skin tone, ethnicity and disabilities. “One character model wears an insulin patch with a monitor on his belt,” says Kanyuk. “There are a couple character models in wheelchairs—and the school has a wheelchair ramp. There are at least two character models at the concert cheering on 4*Town from wheelchairs.”

ON LOCATION

From Toronto to Chinatown to a Middle School Bathroom: Filmmakers Create World of “Turning Red” from the Lens of a 13-Year-Old Girl

Set in Toronto, Canada, during the early 2000s, “Turning Red” gave the artists and filmmakers responsible for building the environments a clear jumping-off point: Toronto is a real place, after all. But while the city’s recognizable skyline, architecture style, street signs and Chinatown proved invaluable resources to filmmakers, their re-creation would be unique. For starters, it all had to be chunky cute. Says production designer Rona Liu, “We are looking at this world from a 13-year-old’s lens, so we rounded sharp corners and angles and didn’t taper shapes. Everything is round and pretty.”

The style is woven throughout the environment—whether soaring above Toronto as a giant red panda leaps from building to building or joining a private confab in a middle school bathroom. Artists looked at references from the early 2000s for inspiration—from Sailor Moon and Hello Kitty to Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata. Adjustments were made to make room for the stylized choices. Says Liu, “If a staircase has 10 steps, we might reduce that to seven and make them all thicker. A dozen trees becomes eight with really chunky trunks.”

Sets co-supervisor Eric Andraos and the shading team had to interpret how chunky cute would affect their efforts. “It still sits on the bedrock of the way we generally approach shading,” he says. “But we had to adapt our process to reduce as much of the visual complexity that comes with photorealism and replace that with something that’s much more handcrafted and deliberate.

“For example, how do you make concrete feel chunky and cute?” Andraos continues. “We had to stylize the patterns you might find on concrete, exaggerating the size of features to invoke that sense of charm. We replaced the scratches and wear that we might use in another film to convey age with bubbly shapes and patterns. Instead of adding dirt and grime in shades of brown, we’d boost the color to make it feel like it had been painted by hand and that the paint had pooled or collected in corners.”

The color palette veered far from a photoreal representation of the locale. Director of photography Jonathan Pytko, who headed up lighting, says the color choices are unlike anything Pixar’s ever done before. “It’s a really unique combination of pastel colors and really vibrant primary colors,” says Pytko. “The background has a pastel wash so that the characters, who are done in really poppy primaries specific to each character, really stand out against the background. It really takes advantage of the fact that these images have all this beautiful light data.”

According to visual effects supervisor Danielle Feinberg, achieving the unique look for the film was a challenge—but not unlike those throughout Pixar’s history. “A big part of my job is to take all of the hopes and dreams artists have for the film and make sure we have the technology and know-how to create them in the computer,” she says. “When I started on ‘A Bug’s Life,’ we had to have a crowd of ants—it was impossible until we did it. Later, we had to feature fish underwater—impossible, right? The DNA of Pixar is figuring out how to bring the next idea to life. We don’t do new technology to do new

technology. It's always driven by story. Domee has a different sensibility and it's been fun to engage in that.

"If you look at the backgrounds in some of our shots," Feinberg continues, "it looks like a cross between computer animation and something very graphic and otherworldly. The biggest challenge for 'Turning Red' was that the inspiration was coming from a very two-dimensional place with graphic references like anime. We had to take that inspiration and marry it with our typically very complex, detailed, three-dimensional world."

TIME AND PLACE

To establish the time and place of any film, filmmakers add period-specific items ranging from the cars on the street to the computers utilized to the kind of lighting featured. The list is long as every prop, piece of furniture and costume provides an opportunity to transport audiences to the right time and place. In animation, each of those items must be built in the computer. "The film is set in Toronto—more specifically, Toronto's Chinatown—in 2002," says sets supervisor Steve Karski. "That's an exciting prospect for us. It's a semi-period piece. While only 19 years ago, it gives us a lot of opportunities to highlight everything that has changed since then. We had to ensure that everything in a given scene made sense—street furniture, cell phones, candy bars, stickers—everything. The nostalgia of it all can be exciting."

To root the film in Canada, Karski's team included subtle-but-monumental details—milk, for example, is sold in bags—and was in the early 2000s. Graphics art director Laura Meyer even created t-shirts for background characters. "One says 'Oot and Aboot,'" she says. "We did one that says 'Don't Moose with Me,' plus others with 'Toronto University' and 'Quebec.'"

All packaging, signage and myriad printed items like magazines, posters and invitations in the film had to represent the era. Meyer says, "Graphics during any period speak volumes. So, we were really focused on the idea that this was happening in the early 2000s with an eye for those fonts that fit best within the chunky-cute stylization. It's more of a flat graphic look—there's not a lot of shading depth or variations in color."

TORONTO

Toronto, Canada—hometown to director Domee Shi and the characters of "Turning Red"—is featured prominently in the film, calling for specific nods to iconic locales. But compared to the representation of New York City in "Soul," "Turning Red" aims for a less realistic look. "It feels more like a very soft, colorful, magical, idyllic, almost youthful version of the city," says executive producer Dan Scanlon.

Adds sets art director Kristian Norelius, "It's like making a painting. You select the things that are the most important. We wanted to feature the CN Tower with the SkyDome—it's a very iconic look."

Helping to bring the skyline to life was the lighting team. Says director of photography Jonathan Pytko, "If you look at photos of Toronto, there's a lot of gray in the buildings, but we wanted something a little more colorful. So, while we used the same materials—concrete, glass, metal, steel—we played with different pastels to create a lot of color

variations among the buildings. It's still clearly Toronto, but the look is lifted and fresh—as if conjured from the mind of a 13-year-old.”

Similarly, some everyday details were tweaked to capture the fresh look. “All of the vegetation,” says sets supervisor Steve Karski, “has a two-dimensional art look versus a realistic look. While leaves normally grow in every natural direction, we pushed them to grow more toward the camera to achieve a clearer read of the leaves’ silhouettes.”

CHINATOWN & THE LEE FAMILY TEMPLE

To create the film’s representation of Chinatown and the Lee family’s ancestral temple, artists did extensive research—from careful analysis of two specific streets in Toronto’s real Chinatown to visiting the Asian Museum of San Francisco—and collaborated with a host of consultants. “Cultural authenticity was super important for us,” says director Domee Shi. “We took several trips to historic temples in California built by early Chinese settlers just to get a feeling of what these grassroots temples are like.”

Filmmakers wanted to highlight key elements in Chinatown. Says Pytko, “We tried to pop certain things like the red lanterns over the street, just to really drive home this is the location that we’re in.”

Graphic elements help punctuate the locale—Meyer’s team did their homework to ensure authenticity. “We had this really cool Zoom meeting with Domee Shi’s dad, who demonstrated Chinese calligraphy with us,” says Meyer, adding that it was particularly instrumental in the Chinese lettering outside the temple.

Author and Chinatown historian Arlene Chan served as a consultant on the film. “The family site was discussed in great detail,” says Chan, who grew up in Toronto’s Chinatown as a third-generation Chinese Canadian. “[We discussed] location in Chinatown, including locale and landmarks; the [temple’s] altar and its objects—like fruit, oil, candles, chopsticks, teacups and incense; placement of photos and donor names; role of temple keeper; and the ancestral portrait and clothing.”

According to production designer Rona Liu, Chan’s input was invaluable. The story called for a few adaptations, however, including the placement of the temple in a courtyard setting despite the fact that the vast real estate would likely be hard to come by. Inspired by China’s siheyuan—a historical residence with a courtyard—artists created a home and temple space for the Lee family better suited to the story. “We made the temple look a little older than the house,” says Liu. “We felt the house might’ve come later.”

The temple décor includes sculptural details, a tiled roof and subtle nods to the red panda. “The panda motif can be seen in furniture, carvings and signage,” says Norelius. “The color red symbolizes good fortune and was clearly the only choice for the temple.”

LEE FAMILY HOME/MEI’S BEDROOM

The Lees’ home is a perfect representation of the family’s Chinese Canadian lifestyle. And while Mei blends seamlessly into her household, joining mom and dad for

homemade meals and watching TV alongside her mom, Mei's growing pains come to light within the walls of her bedroom. At first glance, it is quite tidy for a teenager's room. But—like Mei herself—there's more to that story. Says Norelius, "I think she's been trying to live up to her mom's expectations by having everything sorted and organized. But hidden beneath the bed is evidence of her emerging self with new interests that she shares with her friends."

Included in Mei's private treasure trove under the bed are a series of drawings she does while daydreaming. Meyer and the graphics team spearheaded those sketches.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Several sequences take place within Mei's middle school, showcasing her friendships and new interests away from her mother's watchful eye (for the most part). Artists had to build the middle school with the film's city setting in mind. Director Domee Shi pointed artists toward the school she attended—and sets supervisor Steve Karski actually found the blueprints for the school. "We used them as inspiration to see how an urban school in Toronto might be laid out," he says.

The school came to life with an assortment of props and set decoration—Norelius says the team ensured each item was appropriate to the era. "We added a telephone on the wall," he says. "The computers really helped establish the time period, too. Sets people love to include a lot of detail, but when you find the right balance the set starts to sing."

Norelius adds that each item embodied the chunky-cute stylization. "Corners are rounded off—everything is on the softer side with no sharp angles."

The hallways were decked out in age-appropriate posters, made to look like students had created them. "Some promoted school activities, some featured words of encouragement," says graphics art director Laura Meyer, who drew most by hand.

Among the most effective "props" to convey middle school versus high school or elementary were the students themselves. According to crowds animation supervisor Jane Cassidy, these background characters also helped reinforce the time period. "There are girls in the hallway singing along while listening to a CD player with shared headphones. If you look closely, you might even be able to tell which real-life boy band song they're singing. Other characters can be seen playing with handheld video games and skateboarding."

The lighting team utilized standard school lighting aka fluorescent to support the middle school look. "But we didn't want it to be dark or scary," says Jonathan Pytko, director of photography. "We wanted it to keep it really lively and fresh where the characters still pop with their local colors."

CONCERT VENUE

Mei and her friends are determined to attend the 4*Town concert, so filmmakers knew they'd need a spectacular venue for the occasion. Artists started with the actual

dimensions of Toronto's SkyDome, then played with the scale to find the sweet spot, allowing the climactic ending to unfold to its greatest potential.

Effects supervisor Dave Hale and his team studied live concerts to help build the effects for the concert sequences. "We did a bunch of stage fog, pyrotechnics and vapor geysers," says Hale.

Director of photography Mahyar Abousaeedi set out to create an authentic concert experience. "I was obsessed with the boy band scene to the point where I spent an entire weekend watching every NSYNC and Backstreet Boys music video I could find," says Abousaeedi. "We really wanted our camera and choreography to capture the look and feel of videos from the late 1990s and early 2000s. I looked at technology from the era and found the Spidercam. It was brand new at the time and all the rage—it was attached to a cable so it could move across the wide spans of a stadium. There is a larger-than-life feeling you get with wide-angle lenses. And animation brought gold to that scene."

The lighting team added more than 4,900 lights to the concert sequence. Most are stair safety lights—ensuring the safety of the thousands of animated crowds characters! Says director of photography Jonathan Pytko, "We built up this light pipeline to do these really cool animated lights timed to the music, which really made the concert come to life."

According to Kanyuk, there are more than 30,000 people at the concert—too many to capture in a single shot. "We developed a lot of new crowd tools for Presto, our proprietary animation software," he says. "One is called the Presto Crowd Framework, or PCF, which is a way of having a single aggregate model to represent many thousands of characters but still give animators and layout artists control. We did a whole lot of choreography of cheering and dancing and reaching."

KEEPING PACE

The stylization of "Turning Red" included a quirky approach to the editing. According to editor Nicholas Smith, ACE, several of the reference films director Domee Shi mentioned included "aggressive cutting with things moving very quickly," says Smith. "The pace was very high in the first act. It was fun to throw cuts where you normally wouldn't and do transitions where you normally wouldn't—like wipes and punch-ins and snap zooms. Once the narrative settled down and we got into the story, we reserved it for montages."

TUNING RED

**GRAMMY®-, Oscar®- and Emmy®-Winning Composer
Ludwig Göransson Creates Original Score; GRAMMY®-Winning Singer-
Songwriters Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell Pen 4*Town Songs**

According to "Turning Red" director Domee Shi, if you set a 13-year-old girl's coming-of-age story in the early 2000s, it's pretty much mandatory to include a boy band. "We needed our character Mei to be obsessed with something that her mom would not

approve of,” said Shi. “Boy bands were the first step into the world of boys for a lot of girls that age. The guys were all super pretty, polished, soft and loving, and they had a way of bringing girls and their besties together. Plus, I thought it’d be really cool to create an animated boy band.”

Enter Pixar’s first-ever boy band, 4*Town. GRAMMY-winning Music Producer and President of Walt Disney Music Tom MacDougall arranged a meeting with the “Turning Red” filmmakers and singer-songwriters Billie Eilish and Finneas O’Connell. “When deciding what musical artists to meet with on our films, we don’t look to who’s the most popular, but who’s best suited to the creative needs of the project,” says MacDougall. “In the case of Billie and Finneas, we were lucky to have both.”

Adds producer Lindsey Collins, “We met with them and pitched this crazy idea of a boy band, asking if they’d be interested in writing and producing the songs. They were!”

“I don’t know anyone who wouldn’t be interested in working on a Pixar movie,” says O’Connell, the youngest ever to win the GRAMMY for producer of the year (non-classical). Boy band music, he says, “is really like a masterclass in simplicity and memorability. It’s a really catchy melody, harmonies, claps and choreography. It’s so infectious and appealing with these young heart-throbby teens who the kids can’t help but fall in love with.”

The brother-sister writing team had to channel an era that emerged before they could even talk. “We had to write songs that would be popular in 2000, which at the time, I was one year old,” says Eilish, who made history as the youngest artist to win in all the major categories at the 62nd GRAMMY Awards, receiving awards for best new artist, album of the year, record of the year, song of the year, and best pop vocal album. “But boy bands have a very specific sound, and it’s music I grew up listening to and loved. It was really, really fun to just play around in that world and write in the mind of a corny boy.”

Filmmakers wanted three songs, each fulfilling a different purpose—and each embracing the style of some of the most popular boy-band songs. “The first one is the hit that everybody knows,” says Shi. “Then there’s the earnest, heart-on-your-sleeve power ballad. The third is the party show-stopper—the fun, energetic song. We knew if we had those three songs, we could use them throughout the movie.”

“Nobody Like U”

Written to work its way into every listener’s head for hours, “Nobody Like U” is an instant hit. Says O’Connell, “It’s that song that feels like you’ve heard it a million times already—boy bands are so good at doing that. It was such a fun challenge to write a song like that. I love playing with all of the double negatives—‘I’ve never met nobody like you, you’re never not on my mind, you’re never not by my side.’”

“The lyrics aren’t always good grammar,” adds Eilish. “And they can be hilariously corny—‘I’ve had friends and I’ve had buddies, it’s true. But they don’t turn my tummy the way you do.’ But they’re being honest—they’re trying to say something sweet, profound.”

“That song is really about friendship, too,” says O’Connell. “The storyboards we’d been given from the film showed the character’s relationship with her friends. I think the coolest thing about all of this music when you’re that age is that you’re internalizing it, right? You take a song written and sung by people older than you and say, ‘This is my song. This is my story.’”

“1 True Love”

Capable of tugging at heartstrings, “1 True Love” is the kind of song performed to give boy band members a break from choreography. “I love this song,” says Eilish. “I really enjoyed making this one because we just sat down at the piano and got in the mind of this person who’s heartbroken. It’s raining, very melodramatic. ‘Heavy rain on a Saturday when you said my name in the saddest way. Nothing numbs the pain. You’re still the light of my life.’ I just love how dramatic it is. If I heard that song from somebody I was infatuated with when I was 13, I’d be—‘Oh my God! He’s talking to me!’”

“U Know What’s Up”

Designed to bring a crowd to its feet, “U Know What’s Up” features a sing-along style. Says Eilish, “That was the last one we wrote—and the most challenging. We wanted to make these fans feel confident and independent: ‘I’m gonna make it all the way—just watch me. I’m gonna hustle every day. Making paper like it’s origami. I only came to win the game. Can’t stop me.’”

“We did a whole call-and-response second verse,” adds O’Connell. “It’s a motivational song—that’s the goal.”

SCORE

Composer Ludwig Göransson, who’s behind the original score for “Turning Red,” incorporated the 4*Town songs into the score to make it all feel part of the same musical world. “I used a lot of the same sounds and synths that were inspired by the Cheiron studio—the Swedish studio that established the ’90s boy-band sound,” he says. “The boy band is a part of Mei’s identity, so it was important to weave that sound into the score.”

Director Domee Shi has been a fan of the GRAMMY®, Oscar®- and Emmy®-winning composer for a while. “We were drawn to his versatility,” says Shi. “He’s a composer, but he also produces pop music. We knew he would help us create a very unique sound.”

According to Göransson, the score is eclectic—a musical representation of what it might feel like to be a teenager in the early 2000s. “The score is a clash of cultures as well a clash between the older generation and the new,” he says. “The clash in musical styles also represents Mei’s internal struggle with her own identity. But these conflicts push her forward into her journey of self-discovery.”

“Turning Red” is, of course, Mei’s story, so the composer wanted the score to reflect the inner turmoil of a teenager who’s entering adolescence. “There are heightened emotions such as fear, confusion and excitement,” says Göransson. “Throughout the

score, I switched genres frequently, almost like a mixtape made by a 13-year-old. Traditional Chinese instrumentation, a 75-piece orchestra, elements of New Jack Swing and '90s boy band all reflect the confusion in Mei's mind as she struggles to comprehend what her parents want for her and what she wants for herself. She loves the traditions of her family but she wants to put a new spin on it. I tried to encapsulate that idea through the score."

Göransson created character-specific themes for Mei, her mother, Ming, and a third for the red panda. "Mei's theme is represented by the flute," he says. "At the beginning of the film, Mei's theme alternates between the western flute and the dizi [a traditional Chinese flute made of bamboo], to reinforce the split in her sense of self.

"Ming's theme is represented by the guzheng [Chinese plucked stringed instrument]," continues Göransson. "Her theme is traditional, nostalgic and always there to remind Mei of the love that she has for her daughter."

The composer had fun with the red panda theme, which he describes as "quirky, grotesque and awkward." And, like the other themes, the red panda theme incorporates an ancient Chinese instrument, the bianzhong, which is a set of bronze bells to highlight, according to Göransson, "the heightened uncertainty of Mei's chaotic, emotional state."

In addition to the dizi, guzheng and bianzhong, Göransson incorporated other traditional Chinese instruments, including the pipa, a pear-shaped stringed instrument; the erhu, a two-stringed Chinese fiddle; and Chinese opera percussion. These instruments were used to underscore the Lee family heritage and their mystical connection to their ancestor Sun Yee. "Some of these instruments were played traditionally or often unconventionally," says Göransson, "to reflect the dichotomy of her cultural identity."

ABOUT THE VOICE CAST

Newcomer **ROSALIE CHIANG (voice of Meilin Lee)** realized at age 7 her desire to be a professional actor, from watching TV and participating in children's musicals and Shakespeare plays. Her training began in the Bay Area Acting Studio, and continued with a variety of acting studios and coaches in Los Angeles, including Cynthia Bain and David Wells. She has been studying under Tony Gonzales at Kids VO, who sparked her interest in voiceover acting.

Chiang has acted in various short films and commercials. Notably, she was the lead in Yamaha Piano's first TV commercial in North America in 2017. She also played the lead in "Soiled," a USC MFA thesis film, which was featured in the Seattle Asian American Film Festival and the NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA) Film Festival in 2019. She was called on to provide the scratch—or temporary—voice for Meilin Lee in "Turning Red" at Pixar in 2018, and later hired to voice the character in the final film.

Raised in the Bay Area, Chiang currently splits her time between there and Los Angeles. Born to parents from Taiwan and Singapore, she is fluent in Mandarin. She

has won several national-level poetry/writing prizes, and has published two poetry books: “A is for Albatross: Birds A to Z” and “A is for Arowana: Freshwater Fish A to Z.” The former won the Skipping Stone Honor Book Award in 2017. Volunteering at Friends of Children with Special Needs, Chiang co-directed, wrote and narrated its Friends Coffee & Tea commercial in 2020. In her free time, the 15-year-old enjoys baking, dancing hip-hop and traveling. She hopes to study biology in college, while continuing her acting career.

Born and raised in Ottawa, Canada, **SANDRA OH (voice of Ming Lee)** started ballet lessons at age 4 and appeared in her first play, “The Canada Goose,” at the age of 10. She started working professionally at age 16 in television, theater and commercials. After three years at the prestigious National Theatre School of Canada, Oh beat out more than 1,000 other hopefuls and landed the coveted title role in the CBC telefilm “The Diary of Evelyn Lau,” based on the true story of a tortured poet who ran away from home and ended up a drug addict and prostitute on the streets of Vancouver. Her performance brought her a Gemini (Canada’s Emmy®) nomination for best actress and the 1994 Cannes FIPA d’Or for best actress.

Oh can be seen starring in the Netflix comedy series “The Chair,” for which she has been nominated for a 2021 Critics Choice Award for best actress in a comedy series. Oh served as executive producer for the project. She has recently wrapped production on the fourth and final season of BBC America’s “Killing Eve,” for which she also serves as executive producer. Oh won a historic Golden Globe® Award for best actress in a drama series, a SAG Award® for female actor in a drama series and a Critics Choice Award for lead actress in a drama series for her work on the show, and has also received three Emmy® Award nominations for lead actress in a drama series for this series.

Oh hosted a 2019 episode of “Saturday Night Live,” for which she was nominated for an Emmy® Award in the category of outstanding guest actress in a comedy series. She will be seen starring in the feature film “Umma” for Sony Pictures.

Oh starred on 10 seasons of the hit ABC series “Grey’s Anatomy,” winning a Golden Globe® Award and Screen Actors Guild Award®; she received two Emmy® Award nominations for her role as Dr. Cristina Yang. Previously, Oh starred in the enormously successful and Oscar®-winning Fox Searchlight feature film “Sideways,” for which she won a Screen Actors Guild Award for outstanding performance by a cast in a motion picture.

On stage, Oh starred in “Death and the Maiden” at the Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago, and completed a sold-out run of the world premiere of “Satellites” at New York’s Public Theater for playwright Diana Son. Oh won her first Genie Award (Canada’s Oscar®) for her leading role in “Double Happiness,” a bittersweet coming-of-age story about a young Chinese Canadian woman—a performance that brought her much acclaim and secured her place as one of Canada’s rising young film stars. Never straying far from her theater roots, Oh has also starred in the world premieres of Jessica Hagedorn’s “Dogeaters” at the La Jolla Playhouse and Diana Son’s “Stop Kiss” at

Joseph Papp's Public Theater in New York, a role for which she received a Theatre World Award. Oh also performed "The Vagina Monologues" in New York.

Oh appeared at The Public in New York, in Hansol Jung's "Wild Goose Dreams," which participated in the 2016 Sundance MENA workshop in Morocco.

Oh's additional feature film credits include "Under the Tuscan Sun," "Tammy," "Defendor," "Blindness," "The Night Listener," "For Your Consideration," "3 Needles," "Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity," "Sorry, Haters," "Ramona and Beezus," "Rick," "Bean," "Guinevere," "The Red Violin," "Waking the Dead," "The Princess Diaries" and "Pay or Play." Oh also starred in Michael Radford's improvised "Dancing at the Blue Iguana," a bleak and raw view of life in a strip club in Los Angeles. Her performance in "Last Night," a Canadian film about the end of the world, led to her winning a second Genie Award for best actress in 1999. Oh moved to Los Angeles in 1996 to begin the first of six seasons as Rita Wu, the smart and sassy assistant on the HBO comedy series "Arli\$\$," for which she won the final CableACE award for best actress in a comedy. Most recently, she starred in "Catfight" opposite Anne Heche, and lent her voice to the animated features "Over the Moon," "Raya and the Last Dragon" and "Window Horses."

Her additional television credits include the British production of "Thorne: Scaredy Cat," HBO's "Six Feet Under" and Showtime's "Further Tales of the City."

AVA MORSE (voice of Miriam) made her network television debut at age 8 in 2014 with a recurring role on NBC Universal's "Chicago P.D." Her love of acting and singing—along with her magnetic personality—have provided her with a vibrant entertainment career. Morse's voice can be heard in 20th Century's "Ron's Gone Wrong" as the science geek character named Ava now streaming on Disney+.

Morse's credits include an accomplished list of national commercials, feature films, voiceover credits and theater performances. In addition to acting, she is an up-and-coming singer-songwriter with more than 70,000 streams of her music across several platforms.

HYEIN PARK (voice of Abby) began at Pixar Animation Studios in June of 2016. She worked as a story artist on the Academy Award®-winning short film "Bao," and also worked on the Academy Award-winning feature films "Toy Story 4" and "Soul." She is currently working on an upcoming unannounced Pixar project.

As a story artist, Park helps to develop the stories and early visual concepts of the film. She and the other story artists brainstorm ideas with the director and writers, then take the script and start to draw out storyboards that can be used as a rough blueprint of the film.

Park was born and raised in Seoul, South Korea, until she was 12. She emigrated to a northern country town in Canada, where she spent most of her teens before moving to Toronto. Park attended Sheridan College Institute of Technology in Oakville, Canada.

Prior to Pixar, Park worked as a character layout artist and an animator right after college, but has primarily been a story artist starting from her third year of college. She started as an intern at a Canadian studio called House of Cool, before starting her internship at Pixar. Park worked at multiple Canadian studios for about five years until she returned to Pixar as a fulltime story artist.

Park resides in Dublin, Calif.

MAITREYI RAMAKRISHNAN (voice of Priya)—one of the 2021 TIME100 Next, an annual list of individuals who are shaping the future of their fields and defining the next generation of leadership, a recipient of The New York Times’ best actors’ category, and an ambassador of Plan International Canada—has won the hearts and minds of a global audience.

Her natural talent in acting and comedy was revealed through her breakthrough, starring role as Devi Vishwakumar in Mindy Kaling’s global hit show “Never Have I Ever.” Captivating international audiences with fast-paced comedic and heart-wrenching dramatic skills, Ramakrishnan’s multifaceted acting talent has been recognized by the Gracies, awarding her actress in a breakthrough comedy role for 2021. In addition, she was recently recognized by the Annual Asian American Awards 2021 for breakout in TV, and was nominated for best actress 2021 by the Independent Spirit Awards.

Ramakrishnan is filming Season 3 of “Never Have I Ever.”

ORION LEE (voice of Jin Lee) is the lead in the Kelly Reichardt film “First Cow,” premiering at Telluride in 2019. He appeared in Rian Johnson’s “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” and Warner Bros.’ “Justice League,” directed by Zack Snyder. His credits also include the hit James Bond film “Skyfall” and Brad Pitt’s “Fury.” Lee’s professional debut as an actor was in Lucy Prebble’s “Enron” at the Royal Court. Other prestigious theaters he has worked with include Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre of Scotland and the Abbey. Lee graduated from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in 2009.

WAI CHING HO (voice of Grandma) was born and raised in Hong Kong and speaks fluent Cantonese and Mandarin. After graduating from the University of Hong Kong, she emigrated to New York City and started her 50-plus-year career in theater, film and television. She has appeared in many Off-Broadway productions and has worked with prestigious regional theaters across the country. Film credits include “Hustlers,” “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” “Premium Rush” and “Robot Stories,” for which she won the best actress award in the 2003 Indie Festivals in Puchon, Madrid and St. Louis. Ho will also be seen guest starring in the soon-to-be-released “Sight” and “Lovely, Dark and Deep.” Television credits include “Awkafina Is Nora from Queens,” “New Amsterdam,” “Fresh Off the Boat” and “Law & Order.” She portrayed Madame Gao in numerous episodes of Marvel’s “Daredevil,” “Iron Fist” and “Defenders.”

TRISTAN ALLERICK CHEN (voice of Tyler) is a Chinese Jamaican actor whose credits include “The Barbarian and the Troll,” “Poupelle of Chimney Town,” “The Kominsky Method” and “WandaVision.” Chen provided additional voices in “Ron’s Gone Wrong,” “Diary of a Wimpy Kid” and David Fincher’s “Mank, ” to name a few.

Chen loves to play piano and ukulele, sing and write songs, and is a product of Disney. His parents, who hail from Toronto, Canada, met when they starred as Simba and Nala in the Disney musical “The Lion King” in Toronto, Chicago, and Los Angeles, and on Broadway.

Chen built his own PC last summer, loves to play video games, enjoys reading, animating and drawing, and is a lover of all things anime.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

DOMEE SHI (Directed by/Story by/Screenplay by) began as a story intern at Pixar Animation Studios in June 2011, and was soon hired as a story artist on the Academy Award®–winning feature film “Inside Out.” Since then she has worked on the feature films “The Good Dinosaur,” “Incredibles 2” and the Academy Award–winning “Toy Story 4.” In 2015 she began pitching ideas for short films, and soon was green-lit to write and direct “Bao,” which won an Academy Award for best animated short film. In her role as a creative VP, Shi is involved in key creative decision-making at the studio and consults on films in both development and production.

Shi graduated from the animation program at Sheridan College, where she was fueled by her love of anime/manga, Disney, and Asian cinema influences that can be seen in her work to this day.

Shi was born in Chongqing, China, and resided in Toronto, Canada, for most of her life. She currently lives in Oakland, Calif., and notes that her love of animation is only rivaled by her love of cats.

LINDSEY COLLINS (Produced by) joined Pixar Animation Studios in May 1997. She has since worked in various capacities on a number of Pixar’s feature films. Collins’ film credits include “A Bug’s Life,” “Toy Story 2” and the Academy Award®–winning “Finding Nemo” and “Ratatouille.” Collins also provided the voice of the character Mia in Pixar’s 2006 release “Cars.”

Collins co-produced the Golden Globe®– and Oscar®-winning feature “WALL•E” with producer Jim Morris and director Andrew Stanton and was a producer on the Walt Disney Studios feature “John Carter of Mars.” Collins was the producer of Disney and Pixar’s “Finding Dory” in 2016, after which she assumed the role of Pixar’s vice president of development. In her development role, Collins pioneered Pixar’s SparkShorts program, created to discover new storytellers, explore new storytelling techniques, and experiment with new production workflows.

Prior to joining Pixar, Collins worked at Disney Feature Animation for three years, managing creative teams on the films “Pocahontas,” “The Hunchback of Notre Dame” and “Hercules.”

Collins earned a Bachelor of Arts in diplomacy and world affairs at Occidental College in Los Angeles. She resides in Piedmont, Calif., with her husband and three children.

DAN SCANLON (Executive Producer) joined Pixar Animation Studios in September 2001 as a storyboard artist on Pixar’s award-winning feature films “Cars” and “Toy Story 3.” During the initial production stages for both films, he worked closely with the directors to bring their ideas to the screen.

Scanlon went on to co-direct the original short film “Mater and the Ghostlight,” which is included as one of the bonus features on the “Cars” DVD. In addition to his work at Pixar, Scanlon simultaneously wrote and directed the live-action film “Tracy,” released in 2009.

Scanlon made his animated feature directorial debut in 2013 with “Monsters University,” which grossed over \$738.9 million worldwide at the box office, and received the 2013 Hollywood Animation Award from the Hollywood Film Awards. Scanlon also directed Pixar’s original feature film “Onward,” which released March 6, 2020.

In his role as vice president, creative, Scanlon is involved in key creative decision-making at the studio and consults on films in both development and production. Scanlon also served as executive producer on Pixar’s Academy Award®-winning film “Soul.”

As a child growing up in Clawson, Mich., Scanlon possessed a love for Warner Bros. cartoons, animated Disney films and, as fate would have it, Pixar short films. His passion inspired him to study film and animation in high school and in college, where he focused on illustration at Columbus College of Art and Design (CCAD).

Upon graduating from CCAD, Scanlon began working as an animator and story artist for Character Builders, a 2D animation company that produced feature and commercial work in Columbus, Ohio.

Scanlon resides in San Francisco with his wife, Michele.

PETE DOCTER (Executive Producer) is the Oscar®-winning director of “Monsters, Inc.,” “Up” and “Inside Out,” and chief creative officer at Pixar Animation Studios. He most recently directed Disney and Pixar’s Oscar-winning feature film “Soul” with producer Dana Murray and co-director Kemp Powers, which is now streaming on Disney+.

Starting at Pixar in 1990 as the studio’s third animator, Docter collaborated on and help develop the story and characters for “Toy Story,” Pixar’s first full-length animated feature film, for which he also was supervising animator. He served as a storyboard artist on “A Bug’s Life,” and wrote initial story treatments for both “Toy Story 2” and

“WALL•E.” Aside from directing his three films, Docter also executive produced “Monsters University” and the Academy Award®–winning “Brave.”

Docter’s interest in animation began at the age of 8 when he created his first flipbook. He studied character animation at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, Calif., where he produced a variety of short films, one of which won a Student Academy Award®. Those films have since been shown in animation festivals worldwide and are included on “Pixar Short Films Collection Volume 2.” Upon joining Pixar, he animated and directed several commercials, and has been nominated for nine Academy Awards, including best animated feature winners “Up,” “Inside Out” and “Soul,” and nominee “Monsters, Inc.,” and best original screenplay for “Up,” “Inside Out” and “WALL•E.” In 2010 “Up” also was nominated for a best picture Oscar® by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

SABINE O’SULLIVAN (Associate Producer) joined Pixar Animation Studios in May 2000 as a production assistant for “Monsters, Inc.,” and has continued on to work in many different departments throughout production. Since 2000 O’Sullivan has contributed to “The Incredibles,” “Cars,” “WALL•E,” “Toy Story 3,” “Monsters University,” “The Good Dinosaur” and “Incredibles 2.”

As associate producer, O’Sullivan helps manage the production team and works with leadership to plan and maintain the production schedule of the film. She supports the department managers, producers and director, collaborates with the visual effects supervisor, and helps strategize how to move the film through production.

Raised in Berkeley, Calif., O’Sullivan majored in Germanic Studies with an emphasis in Art History at University of Colorado, Boulder, and Freie University, Berlin. She resides in Berkeley, Calif.

JULIA CHO (Story by/Screenplay by), award-winning playwright, was born and raised in the arid suburbs of Southern California and Arizona. After a fairly uneventful childhood, she unexpectedly discovered theater as a teen and subsequently foiled her parents’ expectations of a life of respectability and normalcy.

Instead, armed with an MFA in writing from NYU and a prestigious fellowship at The Juilliard School, Cho launched herself into the New York theater scene. She soon landed residencies at the Sundance Lab and New Dramatists and productions at high-profile theaters in NYC and across the country. Memorable productions include “The Language Archive” (winner of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize), “Aubergine” and “Office Hour.” For her body of work, she received the 2020 Windham-Campbell Literature Prize for Drama, which wrote: “Alternately lyrical and sharp, rigorous and whimsical, Cho’s plays demand that we listen.”

Alongside her theatrics, Cho has also cultivated a career as a writer and producer of a broad range of television shows, from cult sci-fi (“Fringe”) to character-driven drama (“Big Love,” “Halt and Catch Fire”). She also adapted the critically acclaimed novel “The

Madonnas of Echo Park” for HBO and Starz, which showcased her ability to transform eloquent fiction into dynamic and propulsive narrative.

Driven by keen curiosity and a passion for language, Cho strives to create work that expands our worlds and sparks our deepest empathies. She’s currently under commission for South Coast Repertory to write a new play and is a co-executive producer for the Amazon series “Paper Girls.” In other words, she’s following a movie about four 13-year-old girls with a series about four 12-year-old girls. A project about four 11-year-old girls is forthcoming.

BILLIE EILISH (Original Songs By), whose sophomore album, “Happier Than Ever,” debuted at No. 1 in the Billboard 200 in the U.S. and in 19 countries worldwide, made history as the youngest artist to win in all the major categories at the 62nd GRAMMY® Awards, receiving an award for best new artist, album of the year, record of the year, song of the year and best pop vocal album.

FINNEAS O’CONNELL (Original Songs By), the youngest ever to win the GRAMMY® for producer of the year (non-classical), built a sterling discography penning and producing smashes for a cadre of superstars—not only for his sister, Billie Eilish, but also for Justin Bieber, Demi Lovato, Selena Gomez, Camila Cabello, Tove Lo, Kid Cudi and Ben Platt, among others. His debut solo album, “Optimist,” is out now.

In a career spanning only 14 years, **LUDWIG GÖRANSSON (Original Score by)** has amassed an impressive résumé in both the recording and motion picture industries, earning an Academy Award®, an Emmy® Award and multiple GRAMMY® Awards among countless nominations. After working as an assistant to composer Theodore Shapiro, Göransson got his first big break writing music for the NBC television series “Community.” This led to a friendship and collaboration with Donald Glover, who performs under the stage name Childish Gambino, on several studio albums including “Because the Internet” and “Awaken, My Love!” Göransson has been nominated for six GRAMMYS with Childish Gambino, and won two in 2019 for the Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 hit song “This Is America,” which became a cultural phenomenon and garnered worldwide acclaim.

While pursuing his master’s degree in film scoring at USC, Göransson met his other longtime collaborator, director Ryan Coogler, when he scored his short film “Locks.” Over the next nine years, Göransson would score all three of Coogler’s feature films. Much like iconic filmmaking duos Hitchcock and Herrmann, or Spielberg and Williams, Coogler’s diverse filmography has allowed Göransson to show his range as a composer, writing understated melodies for “Fruitvale Station,” hyping up audiences for “Creed,” and infusing African percussion into his themes for “Black Panther.”

In 2019 Göransson earned multiple awards and nominations for his score in “Black Panther,” including a Golden Globe® nomination, a GRAMMY® Award for best score soundtrack, and an Academy Award® for best original score. He won two GRAMMY

Awards for his song “This Is America,” which he co-wrote and co-produced with Childish Gambino.

Göransson composed the critically acclaimed score and produced the hit song “The Plan” for Christopher Nolan’s “Tenet,” which premiered late Summer 2020. Göransson has received many accolades for his score, including a Golden Globe® nomination and a Broadcast Film Critics Association Award nomination. In 2020 Göransson co-wrote and co-produced the songs for DreamWorks’ “Trolls World Tour” with Justin Timberlake, which exceeded expectations with its history-making digital release, racking up nearly \$100 million in sales in just three weeks. This follows his two-time Emmy® Award–winning score for “The Mandalorian” on Disney+, Lucasfilm’s first “Star Wars” live-action streaming series helmed by Jon Favreau. Göransson also co-wrote and produced the songs “Strangers by Nature” and “Wild Wild West” on the 2021 Adele record “30.” Up next, Göransson has a big year ahead. He is set to score “Black Panther 2: Wakanda Forever” for release in November 2022, and Christopher Nolan’s “Oppenheimer” releasing in July 2023.