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**Preliminary Production Information**

In this sequel to Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures Animation’s hybrid live action/animated family blockbuster comedy *The Smurfs™*, the evil wizard Gargamel creates a couple of mischievous Smurf-like creatures called the Naughties that he hopes will let him harness the all-powerful, magical Smurf-essence. But when he discovers that only a real Smurf can give him what he wants, and only a secret spell that Smurfette knows can turn the Naughties into real Smurfs, Gargamel kidnaps Smurfette and brings her to Paris, where he has been winning the adoration of millions as the world’s greatest sorcerer. It’s up to Papa, Clumsy, Grouchy, and Vanity to return to our time, reunite with their human friends Patrick and Grace Winslow, and rescue her! Will Smurfette, who has always felt different from the other Smurfs, find a new connection with the Naughties Vexy and Hackus – or will the Smurfs convince her that their love for her is True Blue? Returning cast includes Neil Patrick Harris, Jayma Mays, with Katy Perry as Smurfette and Hank Azaria as Gargamel. Brendan Gleeson joins the cast as Victor. Joining the voice cast are Christina Ricci and JB Smoove as Vexy and Hackus.

Columbia Pictures and Sony Pictures Animation present in association with Hemisphere Media Capital a Kerner Entertainment Company production, a film by Raja Gosnell, *The Smurfs 2*. The film stars Neil Patrick Harris, Brendan Gleeson, Jayma Mays, with Katy Perry as Smurfette and Hank Azaria as Gargamel. Directed by Raja Gosnell. Produced by Jordan Kerner. Based on the characters and works of Peyo. Story by J. David Stem & David N. Weiss & Jay Scherick & David Ronn. Screenplay by J. David Stem & David N. Weiss and Jay Scherick & David Ronn and Karey Kirkpatrick. Executive Producers are Ezra Swerdlow, Ben Haber, and Paul Neesan. Director of Photography is Phil Méheux, BSC. Production Designer is Bill Boes. Editor is Sabrina Plisco, A.C.E. Special Visual Effects by Sony Pictures Imageworks Inc. Visual Effects Supervisor is Richard R. Hoover. Costume Designers are Rita Ryack and Véronique Marchessault. Music by Heitor Pereira.

**ABOUT THE FILM**

In Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures Animation’s 2011 hit *The Smurfs*, the world’s favorite three-apple-high heroes proved that fifty years of success in every medium is no accident. Since first appearing in the pages of a Belgian comic book in 1958, Peyo’s Smurfs have entertained children and adults around the world, coming to life in comics, books, television series, films, videogames, live shows, figurines (over 300 million sold)… and, finally, they ruled the world’s box office. The film was truly a global phenomenon, going on to take in over $560 million. “Whether you live in Brazil, or in China, or in Russia, or Paris, or Belgium, or New York… whether they’re los Pitufos, or i Puffi, or les Schtroumpfs… everybody loves the Smurfs,” says producer Jordan Kerner. “With *The Smurfs*, and now *The Smurfs 2*, we’re seeking to make films that translate across all geographical boundaries – which fits, because the themes of the Smurfs cross all cultures.”

“These are characters that live in people’s childhoods,” Kerner explains. “They are remembered and revered in the hearts of the generations who saw or read them. So we believed it was our duty to take the characters that the audience knew and loved, and expand them into a present time, from an emotional and a comedic standpoint. Peyo’s daughter and a co-producer on the film Veronique Culliford and I work extremely closely together on the development of the stories – I’m very lucky that we get to work on a second film, because I love the characters, I love to see how they grow and change, and I desperately want to know what’s going to happen to them after the movie’s over. How could you not want to know what happens to Clumsy, Brainy, Grouchy, Papa, Smurfette, and Gargamel – the characters the writers and Raja brought to the screen?”

And what happens is this: where the first film saw our adorable blue friends taking a bite out of the Big Apple, *The Smurfs 2* sees them showing off their cosmopolitan appeal with a new adventure that takes them to the City of Light – Paris, France!

“The most exciting thing for me, as a director, is setting this huge adventure all through Paris,” says Raja Gosnell, who directs the film, reprising his role from the first film. “We even got to film places where, to my knowledge, no one has ever filmed before. We were on stage in the Paris Opera House, we shot in the flying buttresses of Notre Dame. Between the great love of the Smurfs and the work that Jordan and our co-producer Raphael Benoliel did with the Paris authorities, we got into places where I thought we’d never get to shoot. What more can a director ask for?”

As the film begins, Smurfette is in the Smurf village, surrounded by her brothers and Papa, but still feeling somewhat alone. After all, she hasn’t quite come to terms with her origins. As everyone knows, Smurfette was created by Gargamel as part of one of his evil schemes – but Papa used love and a magic spell to turn her into a True Blue Smurf. That was all a long time ago, but still… she’s not quite sure about it all. “She starts to ask herself some questions: where does she come from, does she fit in,” says Katy Perry, who voices Smurfette. “In a way, it’s like she’s becoming a teenager, asking the same kinds of questions we all go through when we come of age. She’s really trying to figure out if she’s a real Smurf. She was created by Gargamel, so there’s a bit of naughtiness that’s been subdued for a long, long time. But it’s not about where you came from or who created you; it’s what you choose to be and where you want to go in life.”

“In a way, she thinks of Gargamel as her ‘birth father,’ if you will, and Papa as the man who raised her and nurtured her. So that’s the question – is it nature or nurture?” says Raja Gosnell. “Is she the child of the parent who birthed her – sort of – or the child of the Smurf who raised her?”

These questions come to the fore when Gargamel plots yet another evil scheme to capture the Smurfs. “Gargamel has, in essence, created Smurfette’s ‘brother and sister’ – the Naughties, Hackus and Vexy,” explains Kerner. “They are just like Smurfette, created from a lump of clay. Gargamel wants to turn them into True Blue Smurfs, but only because then he can capture their essence – in fact, if he can find the magic spell that turned Smurfette True Blue, then he could make countless Smurfs and squeeze the essence out of them to become the most powerful wizard the world has ever seen.”

And the only way Gargamel can get that spell is to smurf-nap Smurfette and bring her to Paris. “If there weren’t a bad guy, there would be no need for heroes,” says Gosnell. “So what better bad guy is there than Gargamel? He’s sinister, but goofy. He’s capable of doing dark things, but you just know he’s going to mess it up. It’s so much fun to watch him plot… and plan… and flounder. Amazingly enough, I find myself rooting for Gargamel at times – he’s just so driven and passionate about what he does, and it’s so amusing to watch things go bad for him.”

The job of kidnapping Smurfette is one he tasks to Hackus and Vexy. Since they aren’t True Blue Smurfs, Hackus and Vexy aren’t Smurfs at all: in fact, they’re decidedly naughty, so that’s why Gargamel dubs them: the Naughties. And there’s nothing a Naughty like Vexy would rather do than kidnap her ‘sister,’ Smurfette. “Vexy’s not really bad – she’s misguided,” says Gosnell. “Gargamel is the only parent she’s ever known, so of course all she’s ever learned from him has been less-than-good. She sets out to manipulate Smurfette, to trick her into feeling like she’s bonding with the Naughties, like she’s part of the family. But a funny thing happens along the way and Vexy’s plan has some unintended consequences.”

When word reaches the Village that Smurfette has been kidnapped, Papa doesn’t hesitate, forming a plan to bring her back with the help of the best Smurfs for the job: Gutsy, Brainy, and Hefty. But, of course, a “clumsy” snafu ensures that Papa gets stuck with a “B” team – namely, Vanity, Clumsy, and Grouchy. (As Passive-Aggressive Smurf puts it, “I’m sure narcissism, ineptitude, and pessimism will be just as helpful. Good luck with that.”) That’s OK – Papa’s got one more trick up his sleeve: he’ll call on his old friends, the Winslows, for help once more. Neil Patrick Harris and Jayma Mays return for another adventure with the Smurfs as Patrick and Grace Winslow, and this time, they are joined in the Paris rescue by Patrick’s stepfather, Victor Doyle, played by Brendan Gleeson.

“In the first film, Neil’s character was concerned about the responsibility of having a child – he wanted to be a good father, but was a little nervous about it,” Kerner points out. “In this film, we meet Patrick’s stepfather – and it turns out that Patrick is facing the same nature-versus-nurture questions that are nagging at Smurfette. Patrick has never gotten along with his stepfather, but he comes to see that family is about what you choose it to be. We were glad to be able to make this a deeply felt family movie – and I think that there is a great deal more laughter and emotion in this film.”

Taking the helm of the movie is Raja Gosnell. “Raja is one of the kindest, smartest, most prepared, wonderful people – and as a director, he has a remarkable imagination and a great gift with the actors,” says Kerner. “Not only does he have to direct actors who are playing opposite other actors, but actors who are interacting with a little piece of wire with a dot on it – and, sometimes, he has to direct scenes that have no actors in them at all. It’s very difficult, and of course it takes tremendous planning and discipline. With Raja in charge, every day on a Smurfs set is a revelatory and happy day.”

Gosnell says that his favorite moments in the film are the ones that show off Paris to full effect. “We have a stork flight all through Paris,” he notes. “Smurfette, Vexy, and Hackus are on the run, trying to escape from Azrael. They jump on some storks that are at Tuileries Garden, and they fly – through the giant Ferris Wheel, over the Seine River, through the flying buttresses at Notre Dame, and over a sidewalk café, until they finish by circling the model of the Statue of Liberty that sits in the middle of the Seine. We have another sequence in which the Ferris Wheel breaks off its moorings and actually rolls through the city. There is also a very fun sequence in which Hackus gets loose in a candy store; he makes trouble, and it turns into a big chase – a ride through the streets of Paris on a candy cart. Those sequences were especially fun for us.”

**ABOUT THE SMURFS**

Feisty **SMURFETTE** hasn’t been feeling like her sparkly self – it’s her birthday and that always brings reflection. She’s been having some uneasy thoughts that maybe she isn’t really 100% true blue Smurf. True, Gargamel created her, but Papa used magic to make her a real Smurf. So, when Gargamel kidnaps her on the eve of her birthday, and she is introduced to her newly-created siblings, the Naughties, she starts to form a bond. Papa musters a daring rescue, but will she choose the family she knows, or the new family she’s discovered?

Nine-time Grammy Award nominee **Katy Perry** lends her own nuanced, energetic, and sensitive combination to the voice of Smurfette.

“It was fun to get back into character,” says Perry. “I blocked out a couple of days to prepare for it, because I get into a zone where I really have to turn it on. Smurfette isn’t my normal voice – it’s like my voice and a bag of rocks, with a pinch of sugar.”

Perry says she was gratified by the chance to work in scenes opposite Christina Ricci. “It’s nice to know that she’s playing my evil twin,” says Perry. “I really look up to her, both as a person and as an actress – she’s done so many incredible films.”

“Katy’s performance is amazing, because she’s able to portray both sides of Smurfette – from one moment to the next, she finds the character immediately,” says Kerner. “On the one hand, you have the kittenish, funny, sweet Smurfette character that everyone in Smurf Village embraces. On the other hand, this is a very dramatic story for her character – she’s kidnapped, separated from the Smurfs, and thinks she’s never going to see her family again. All of that sense of abandonment, and loneliness, and fear comes through in Katy’s vocal performance. She’s just revelatory as a comedic actress. She will be a major comedienne in films. Brilliant instincts, inherently funny, and just beautiful.”

**PAPA SMURF** is, of course, the wise, kind and gentle parent to his 100 children (99 boys and 1 girl), doing his best to make each one feel safe and loved and keep the Village a happy place. When Smurfette is kidnapped by Gargamel, it’s all for Smurf and Smurf for all! Papa loves all his children equally, but can’t deny that the bond with his adopted daughter has always been special. She’s always felt like she doesn’t belong, and even Papa isn’t quite sure how to prove to her that she’s a True Blue Smurf.

Comedy legend **Jonathan Winters** is the voice behind the altruistic, gentle and wise Papa Smurf.

Even after a heroic trip to New York City, **CLUMSY** has not developed any new, graceful moves. That’s OK – he knows that it’s what’s on the inside that counts most. So while he might not seem like an obvious choice for a rescue mission – and in fact, it’s his two left feet that bumble him into the job – he just might be a perfect choice after all.

**Anton Yelchin** gives voice to the innocent, exuberant Smurf with a heart of gold, Clumsy. He says that coming back into the booth to record the character was as comfortable as wrapping oneself in a warm blanket. “We had already done the hard work, on the first film, of figuring out what the character was going to be, what he was going to sound like, so I could just enjoy myself,” says Yelchin. “The second time around, I was used to the way it works – in animation, lines can change, animation can change, and that gives you a freedom in the booth.”

“The first film was about Clumsy discovering that he doesn’t always have to just be clumsy; he can be heroic, too,” Yelchin continues. “I think this film builds on that – he’s still doing everything that got him the name Clumsy in the first place, but now, he thinks of himself as a hero, too – it’s fun to play with that idea. I enjoy playing Clumsy because he’s so much fun – he’s very sensitive and tender, but also very funny and silly. And did I mention he’s a hero? He’d be very upset with me if I didn’t mention that.”

**GROUCHY** has always been the Smurf to see a dark cloud in any silver lining and going on another rescue mission really ticks him off! But that’s all about to change. In a fit of negativity, he looks for inspiration. He’ll proudly rename himself Positive Smurf! (Really?) With his glass now half-full, he discovers how much an upbeat attitude can contribute – but will the sunny disposition hold up when the Smurfing gets tough?

**George Lopez** is the voice that captures all of Grouchy’s irascible personality.

Meet **VANITY**, definitely the most handsome guy in the Village – as he’d be the first to tell you. Sure, he’s got charm and looks, but as far as being a valuable member of a search-and-rescue team, the only place you’ll find him looking is in a mirror. Even so, Vanity might just surprise you by revealing an inner depth and courage at a time when it’s needed the most. Or not.

English comedian and star reporter for “The Daily Show” **John Oliver** provides the voicethat puts the panache in Vanity.

**ABOUT GARGAMEL**

He’s back and out for blue! Unbelievably enough, the repulsive and nasty **GARGAMEL** is now a global superstar, admired by countless fans who find his Parisian magic stage show astounding and his “evil wizard” act charming. Regardless of all the fame and fortune, he still desperately seeks what he really wants – to be the most powerful conjurer in the world and capture the Smurfs to extract their essence! Creating the Naughties and kidnapping Smurfette is just the beginning of a dastardly plan that might be his ticket to power.

**Hank Azaria** once again steps into the madness of this wicked wizard. “He’s a miserable, angry, sad person, and the Smurfs are so happy that he takes it personally,” says Azaria. “He hates them for how happy they are. And, because he’s an evil wizard who is obsessed with Smurfs, he naturally concludes that they are all that is standing in his way from becoming the world’s most powerful wizard.”

For Azaria, revisiting Gargamel is sweeter the second time around. “It was easier this time. It’s such a weird character that it made me nervous the first time,” recalls Azaria. “I have to credit Jordan Kerner; he really wanted to make sure the character stayed medieval and antiquated, and Raja Gosnell wanted to make sure that he was heightened and always passionate and crazy. Now, Raja and I have a good shorthand with each other, what we want to try and what we want to do – it’s very pleasant, it’s a really fun job, coming to work and making these little creatures come to life every day.”

In fact, for Azaria, playing Gargamel is like no other role. “It is like being in another world. It really is odd,” describes Azaria. “The experience of making the movie is a little bit insane, since I’m mostly yelling at, screaming at, and chasing nothing – except on the occasions when they bring in a real cat.”

And ah, that cat. Azrael – the only “special someone” in Gargamel’s life. “I think it’s really funny that he has this intensely intimate relationship with a cat that is smarter than him,” says Azaria. “The cat knows better than he does, and when the cat meows he can tell what the cat is saying. I find that amusing.”

“Azrael really is smarter than Gargamel,” says Gosnell. “And the cat lets him know at every turn.”

“They are essentially an old, annoyed at each other married couple, and the romance has gone out of their relationship,” adds Azaria. “Every film, I try to get in the line, ‘Why did I ever marry you?’, saying it to the cat, but they never really keep it in there; one day, if we keep making these movies, one day I’ll be able to say that.”

“The relationship between Gargamel and Azrael was very much Hank’s creation,” says Gosnell. “Hank really didn’t want to be monologuing the whole movie – it was better for him to have a character he could bounce back and forth with, even if it is a cat.”

Kerner says that realizing the character of Azrael meant walking a fine line. “Azrael definitely has a voice, but isn’t a talking animal,” he says. “Azrael can say ‘meow,’ and Hank, as Gargamel, can reply with, ‘Why are you angry with me, because we left Paris?’ Meow means 10 million things to Gargamel.” On camera, the cats Cheeto and Krinkle, along with a few other hero tabbies, did most of the heavy lifting as Azrael; for his facial performance and scenes requiring a fully animated cat, the filmmakers call on Sony Pictures Imageworks for the CG cat. Voice actor Frank Welker gave the tricky kitty his meow.

It’s said that the clothes make the man – and surely that was never more true than about Gargamel. Azaria spent hours in the makeup chair every morning to help get him into character. “The overall look with his head being shaved, the teeth, the hair and everything, it changes him so much,” says makeup effects department head Todd Tucker. “When he gets into that makeup, he can’t help but go into Gargamel zone.”

“The wardrobe gives him a padded belly and back, his posture changes, he hunches over for the character,” adds Tucker. “His whole body movement, everything about him changes pretty drastically, so it’s a very different character than Hank is for sure.”

“As soon as Hank steps out in makeup and hair, he completely inhabits the role. He becomes Gargamel,” says Kerner. “It’s in his posture, it’s in the way he carries himself, it’s how he modulates his voice. He puts up with all the makeup, he puts up with shaving his head completely bald, he puts up with the big teeth we put in his mouth, and he’s having so much fun doing it that he’ll immediately give you ten variations on his performance.”

It takes about two hours, all told, to turn an actor into an evil wizard – about 90 minutes of makeup, followed by 20 to 30 minutes of hair.

As might be fitting, Gargamel’s robe gets a makeover for *The Smurfs 2* – one deserved by the toast of Paris. “We changed the lining of the cape, making it red,” explains Montreal costume designer Véronique Marchessault. “It also had to be kind of magical, because at one point he’s in his robe, and then, seconds later, the squirrel wings appear.” Gargamel uses those wings to fly off of the Eiffel Tower into the portal he conjures at the Trocadero Fountain.

Playing Gargamel in the Smurfs films has been a virtual rediscovery of Azaria’s childhood imagination. “You get to play like you’re a child; you’re imagining these little creatures. I had three imaginary friends when I was a kid, and I would spend a lot of time with them,” says Azaria. “It’s like I’m doing that again, only I’m a little more angry at these imaginary friends than the ones I grew up with. I’m playing with a pretend cat, pretending to do magic, and waving a magic wand, and then somebody makes a light effect happen. When you’re a kid, you always dreamed you could do things like that, and then you get to do it as an adult, and then they pay you – it’s pretty nice.”

**ABOUT THE NAUGHTIES**

When it comes to destroying the Smurfs, you can see Gargamel’s train of thought: if you can’t beat ‘em, make ‘em. After all, he did it before: take clay and just add wizardry. “Smurfette started as a lump of clay that Gargamel dropped into his cauldron and brought to life, so that she could infiltrate Smurf Village. But Papa Smurf saw the good in her, and used a magic spell to turn her into a True Blue Smurf,” says Gosnell. “So now, Gargamel has created the Naughties, Vexy and Hackus, and all he needs is Papa’s secret magic spell to turn his Naughties into ‘real Smurfs’ and have unlimited Smurf essence.”

In creating the Smurf-like characters, Kerner went the extra mile to make sure that Vexy and Hackus would fit squarely into the Smurfs universe. “Every step of the way on the *Smurfs* movies, we work very closely with Peyo’s daughter Veronique Culliford and Smurfs historian Tom Cosijn to make sure we are getting it right – in script development, production, all the way through the release of the films. And that went double as we created the Naughties,” he says. “The neutral color gray was their desire, as Peyo didn’t want the Smurfs ever associated with any particular human color. Peyo created this world – as we expanded what he built, we felt a duty to respect and honor what came before.”

**VEXY** is the sister that Smurfette never had -- until now. But unlike Smurfette, she’s not as nice; she’s determined to be Naughty and do Gargamel’s bidding. It’s not easy having a dad like Gargamel – Vexy has grown up to be tough, devious, and very persistent in bringing Smurfette to the naughty side… but when she meets Smurfette, it turns out that Vexy may not be as Naughty as she thinks.

**Christina Ricci** infuses the voice of Vexy with sarcasm and sauciness.

“Vexy is smart and mischievous and has lots of attitude. Attitude to spare,” says Gosnell. “And she really does want to please her father.”

“When we thought about casting Vexy, we thought about the fact that she’s Smurfette’s ‘sister,’” says Kerner. “Sure, one’s blonde and the other’s brunette; one’s a perfect Smurf, the other is rough around the edges, but we wanted the voices to feel like they were two of a kind. And the voice that stood out for us was Christina’s. She brings a great sense of humor, an articulate, clear voice, and a deeply raspy laugh that is a cousin to Katy Perry’s performance as Smurfette. She’s great at playing naughty, bringing a fun, ironic, tongue-firmly-in-cheek vocal quality. She and Katy really raised each other’s game.”

“Vexy is the brains of the operation,” says Kerner. “And her brother, Hackus, is the unbridled enthusiasm and brawn.”

**HACKUS** is a lovable, sweet, hyperactive loose cannon easily influenced by his Naughty sister, Vexy. He’s a bit berserk, sweet to the core, a cyclone of energy, and is a Naughty of few words—very few, in fact.

*Curb Your Enthusiasm*’s **JB Smoove** is the voice behind the misbehaving Hackus.

“I was a big Smurfs fan growing up,” says Smoove. “This was in the days that you’d have to wake up before your brother if you wanted to control the TV on Saturday morning. So when they called me to play Hackus, I jumped at the opportunity – I’m part of Smurf history now. I’ve done voiceover work for other animated shows, but nothing like this.”

Describing his character, he says, “He’s like an experiment gone wrong. Hackus loves to have fun and loves being naughty. Vexy and Hackus play tricks on Azrael, they play tricks on Gargamel, they play tricks on each other. He’s enthusiastic, happy, playful, curious, fun, and overwhelming. He’s Hackus. Hackus Hackus Hackus!”

“Because of his enthusiasm, Hackus speaks sometimes in shortened sentences,” says Kerner. “We needed someone who was a real voice artist, so we listened to many, many, many voices of different actors who could use their voice as an instrument, rather than simply a means of performance. The thing that convinced us about JB was that he – not unlike Hackus himself – is a ball of energy.”

The actor says that he can see why the filmmakers thought of him for the hyperactive Hackus. “I’m very good at raising my voice and laughing really loud,” he says. “Also, when you’re doing voiceover work, you have to add action to it – physical action. You have to be physical with it, because that’s the only way to dive into the character – if you just do the voice, it’s not projected the right way. Raja and Jordan gave me a lot of freedom to dive in there and have a good time with the character.”

**ABOUT THE HUMAN BEINGS**

Three years have passed since Patrick and Grace Winslow last saw their blue buddies. But when the Naughties kidnap Smurfette and bring her to Paris, the Winslows get a visit from Papa, Clumsy, Grouchy and Vanity – the Smurfs will need their human friends to save Smurfette from their arch-nemesis.

You’d think with **PATRICK WINSLOW** having a few years ago become a father to a son, Blue, he’d calm down, go with the flow a little bit more. Well, he might have, had he resolved his issues with his own stepfather, Victor Doyle. The two have butted heads for decades – while Patrick remembers his childhood one way, it’s never crossed his mind that Victor might have a distinctly different perspective. However, once the Smurfs recruit the Winslows (and Victor!) to take part in the rescue mission, all of those feelings are exposed when their attention should be on saving Smurfette.

As a father in his own right, **Neil Patrick Harris**, identifies with his character, Patrick Winslow. Being a part of the Smurfs franchise gives Harris the opportunity to share the experience with his family. “I’m a dad,” says Harris. “I really enjoyed making the first Smurfs and I was really proud of the end result. Now that I’m a family guy myself, I think it’s good to have roles in movies that are age appropriate for them to see, so it’s nice to be a part of *The Smurfs*.”

Harris sees Patrick’s and Smurfette’s story as a parallel journey towards family. “The story goes right to the history of Smurfette’s existence. It makes her question who her family is, who to trust, and where she’s from,” explains Harris. “That becomes the overriding question for all of us in our various ways within the movie.”

In *The Smurfs 2*, as Smurfette deals with her unresolved feelings toward her origins, so too will Patrick Winslow have to address his own relationship with Victor Doyle, the man who raised him. “Patrick’s father had left when he was very young, four or five, and his stepfather, Victor, moved in with him and his mother. They never got along, for a number of reasons,” says Harris. “And so, when Victor comes and joins the adventure, Patrick is having the same kind of internal struggle. He doesn’t feel like he’s Victor’s son, and he doesn’t really want Victor to be around. But Patrick learns through the process of this adventure with the Smurfs that your family is more about who you love and who loves you, and less about where you actually come from. That’s a great lesson for everyone to remember, if not learn for the first time.”

Patrick’s and Victor’s relationship may be like oil and water, but Harris had great chemistry with Brendan Gleeson. “He was just a terrific choice, because he’s able to be over the top, and yet very grounded in a sense of reality,” says Harris. “What could be a buffoon of a role, he makes it an actual person. Acting against him is terrific.”

In Jayma Mays, Harris could not have asked for a more perfect choice to portray Grace. “I’m a big, big fan of Jayma Mays. She’s just a bright light of adorableness, she’s smart, she’s so sharp, she’s beautiful, she’s funny, she’s just the perfect choice for the heroine in this type of movie,” says Harris. “We can have banter in the movie that seems like we’ve been a couple for a long time.”

**GRACE WINSLOW’s** warm, maternal instincts helped her forge a bond with the Smurfs during their previous visit to New York – especially with Smurfette, who she regards as a ‘sister.’ So, of course, Grace has no intention of sitting idly by while her sister is manipulated into participating in one of Gargamel’s horrid plans for destroying the Smurfs! Snapping up her adorable son (named in a loving tribute to the Smurfs), **BLUE WINSLOW,** she informs her husband that her sister is in trouble, and they are going to help—NOW!

**Jayma Mays** grew up with a Smurf-obsessed mom. “She was a huge fan. She forced me to watch the Smurfs,” recalls Mays. “When I was growing up, every Saturday morning, I would come downstairs thinking, ‘Oh, it’s my morning, it’s cartoon morning, and I can watch what I want.’ No, mom wanted to watch the Smurfs.”

A first-time mom, Grace’s relationship with the Smurfs has made her a better mother. “They have just had their first child, appropriately named Blue Winslow. She’s learning about parenting,” explains Mays. “I feel like Grace is probably the most grounded character. She’s a good mom. She cares about family. I think that’s why she loves the Smurfs so much – I feel like her mothering instincts kicked in when she met the Smurfs, because they’re these adorable wonderful creatures.”

For Mays, it’s especially gratifying to work opposite Neil Patrick Harris. “Working with Neil is fantastic. He’s everything that you assume that he would be. He’s wonderful, fun and caring. He’s as much fun off the set as he is on the set,” says Mays. “He comes in with amazing ideas; you can tell he really thinks about what he’s doing. He’s also so good at making a scene feel real and talking through things to make sure everything makes sense. It’s wonderful to be able to work with him.”

From Mays’ point of view, the Smurfs’ cross-generational appeal stems from its unique combination of light-hearted fun and uplifting, family-friendly life lessons. “They’re popular because they have such a good message,” explains Mays. “There aren’t a lot of family cartoons anymore where you can sit down as a family, watch, and actually learn something or gain something. Especially one that has such good, moral family tales as this, that is also funny and light.”

“I also feel that for kids, there’s always a Smurf to identify with,” adds Mays. “Whether you feel Jokey one day, or Grouchy or Clumsy another day, those specific identities are something that kids in particular can relate with, and I think just all those things combined, make them popular, desirable, and pleasing to watch.”

**VICTOR DOYLE** is an affable, disorganized, and big-hearted mess – just the opposite of his son (step-son!), Patrick Winslow. It seems that no matter what Victor’s intention is, his action turns out to be the wrong one, at least in Patrick’s eyes. The gulf is too wide for these two to ever get together… until they are forced to put all of that aside to help save Smurfette.

A newcomer to the Smurf franchise, **Brendan Gleeson** says, “I feel privileged to be part of something that opens that whole world up,” says Gleeson. “Being part of a world that is magical, young, optimistic, slightly complicated and fun is exciting.”

Gleeson plays the overly talkative, overbearing, but big-hearted Victor Doyle, the bumbling Korndog King. “Victor’s larger than life, and he embraces the world in a very wholesome kind of a way,” says Gleeson. “He actually believes that he makes the best corn dogs in the history of the world.”

“He’s got a very big heart. He fills the space in a room,” adds Gleeson. “What made me really like him was that he could do the tough love business, too, and he could take a few hits if it meant that Patrick could work his way through a difficult time.”

A dad himself, it’s a role that Gleeson identifies with – a parent’s unending patience for his children, whether by birth or otherwise. “Fatherhood is the best thing that ever happened to me in my own life, I know that,” states Gleeson. “For stepfathers, it’s a bit of a challenge about where they should fit in, particularly when you don’t have the old style nuclear family. But this film is really about love that is unconditional – it doesn’t have to be the way that most people see as ‘normal.’ It doesn’t have to be anything other than the fact that people care about each other, and I think that’s really valuable.”

But truth be told, there was one reason above all that sold Gleeson on the role. “This is one of the great reasons I did the film: I liked the character, of course, but how many times do you get to turn into a duck?” says Gleeson. “I’ll tell you: not very often. I couldn’t pass up the chance to explore my inner mallard.”

As for Harris, whose character interacts with Victor in this transformed state, the duck stole every scene. “They’re surprisingly good. They bat at things with their beak. They’re funny, they’ll sit there forever,” says Harris. “I’ll have a scene where I’m supposed to talk with the duck, and the duck will wag its mouth at me, shake its head, and everyone keeps laughing.”