

**ABOUT THE PRODUCTON**

***“Only when we know what ails us can we hope to find the cure”***

**From visionary director, Gore Verbinski, A CURE FOR WELLNESS is a chilling and mind-bending psychological thriller. Dane DeHaan stars as Lockhart, a driven Wall Street stockbroker who is sent by his firm to a remote alpine medical spa.** Lockhart is on a mission to retrieve the company’s CEO, Pembroke (Harry Groener), a patient at the spa, who has told his staff that he has no intention of returning to New York. Lockhart arrives at **the tranquil sanitarium where the residents are supposedly receiving a miracle cure. In fact though, they seem to be getting sicker.** As he investigates the dark and baffling secrets behind the spa, he meets a young woman, the hauntingly beautiful Hannah (Mia Goth), a patient herself. He also gets to know another patient, the eccentric Mrs. Watkins, played by Celia Imrie, who has done some detective work of her own. Soon, Lockhart is diagnosed with the same condition as the other patients by the institution’s director, the ominous Dr. Volmer (Jason Isaacs), and finds that he is trapped in the alpine retreat. Lockhart begins to lose his grip on reality and has to endure unimaginable ordeals during the course of his own ‘treatment’.

 In **the tradition of Verbinski’s indelible 2002 classic, THE RING,** the Academy Award® winning filmmaker brings his inimitable style and vision to A CURE FOR WELLNESS. Atmospheric and visually breathtaking, the film is compelling and thought provoking, exploring the true meaning of wellness and the trappings of avarice and power, while asking what fulfillment really means.

The film was produced by New Regency and Blind Wink Productions. Justin Haythe wrote the screenplay; the story was written by Justin Haythe and Gore Verbinski. The producers are Verbinski, Arnon Milchan and David Crockett. The executive producers are Justin Haythe and Morgan Des Groseillers. Responsible for the film’s original music was Golden Globe® and Emmy® nominated British composer, Benjamin Wallfisch, whose work includes HIDDEN FIGURES, BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE and THE LITTLE PRINCE.

**THE INSPIRATION**

Embarking on A CURE FOR WELLNESS, Verbinski wanted to make a thriller with the depth, insight and power of classics in the genre that he admired, such as THE SHINING (Stanley Kubrick’s 1980 film), DON’T LOOK NOW (Nicolas Roeg’s 1973 film) and ROSEMARY’S BABY (Roman Polanski’s 1968 film). The idea of a quick fix cure, together with society’s malaise and the obsession with perfect health were topics that fascinated Verbinski, whose films include the hugely successful PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN franchise and the Academy Award® winning animated film, RANGO. “We started exploring the notion of a health spa in the Alps, a wellness center that doesn’t actually make you well,” says Verbinski, “and it slowly evolved from there. It became pretty clear to us that this was going to be a genre piece, and we started playing around with the concept of inevitability. It’s the sense that there is a sickness, a sort of black spot on your x-ray that won’t go away!”

Verbinski sat down with screenwriter Justin Haythe (THE LONE RANGER, REVOLUTIONARY ROAD). “I had an idea bouncing around in my head for some time from various influences and preoccupations, but it mostly came from a suspicion of medicine,” says Haythe, who was inspired by the work of German writer Thomas Mann and by psychiatrist Carl Jung. “The film really concerns the pollution of our minds and bodies in the modern world and our obsession with purity as a result of that.”

**DANE DEHAAN AS LOCKHART, THE WALL STREET EXECUTIVE**

 One of Hollywood’s most exciting young actors, the gifted and charismatic Dane DeHaan (KILL YOUR DARLINGS, THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2, LIFE) was thrilled about taking on the role of Lockhart and working with Verbinski. “To listen to Gore’s vision and hear how passionate he was about it, and then to read the script and understand what a challenging role it was—that was irresistible,” says DeHaan. “My character goes through so much in this film, it’s crazy. And this was an opportunity to work with a great filmmaker.”

 “I saw Dane in THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES,” says Verbinski. “I just found him to be really interesting and photogenic and honest. I couldn’t get him out of my head for the role of Lockhart. He also has a really fantastic work ethic, which is what you want when you’re casting a spell, as we are doing in this movie. You can’t blink at all. The audience is there with sharpened knives! Dane is great because he is always finding something truthful. If you get down to his core mantra, it is: ‘don’t pretend. Be truthful.’”

As well as authenticity, DeHaan brings strength and vulnerability to his complex character. “Lockhart is a perfect everyman hero for a film like this, which deals with wellness and ambition and health and today’s society,” says DeHaan. “The fact that he is a young guy who works on Wall Street says a lot! What those young people working for Wall Street companies go through is pretty incredible. It is almost like a hazing process. They work around the clock, and it is almost like: ‘what are you willing to give up for this company?’ They are asked to sit at their desks for most hours of the day and work and work and work. You’re not really doing anything helpful for the world. I guess ultimately the end goal for them is personal gain and power and wealth, to get ahead in the company and to prove themselves to everybody. These people make crazy amounts of money and that’s what they’re after. That takes a very specific kind of person.”

“Lockhart is a guy who’s determined to succeed at all costs,” says Verbinski. “We made Dane’s character a stockbroker because I think at the end of the day, that is the ultimate example of that kind of person. He makes money, okay, but what does he really make? He makes money off other people who make money, unlike people who make, for example, clay pots or shoes. Those people are making something real. Lockhart has decided he is not going to be like his father, who didn’t make it. He’s going to have that job on the board of the company. He will cheat and lie and deceive and do whatever it takes to beat his fellow man,” adds Verbinski, discussing the motivation and psyche of the character, which is rooted in the young stockbroker’s troubled family history.

“When Lockhart arrives at the spa, he is in denial, he doesn’t think there is anything wrong with him,” says Verbinski. “But he has this disease worse than any of the other patients. He is diagnosed with the same mysterious illness and becomes a patient at the sanitarium himself. He starts to investigate the deeper, darker secrets of the place,” continues Verbinski. “But the closer he gets to the truth, the more his grasp on reality begins to slip.”

**THE MASTER FILMMAKER**

A superb storyteller and a master of pacing, Gore creates an unsettling, ominous atmosphere throughout A CURE FOR WELLNESS, immersing the audience in the world of the spa, where nothing is clear or straightforward. “Well it is interesting, because I think the more enigmatic you make something, particularly in this genre, the more you can employ a sort of dream logic,” says Verbinski. “Things can remain enigmatic because you sense there’s some other force, something inevitable happening. To me, that’s the big tease—to try to make everything feel like there’s this sickness that's not going away; it is pulling you. You are pointing the camera down the corridor and leading the protagonist towards his ultimate epiphany. Once you have that working, you don’t need to have so much exposition, explaining how things work. You just feel like this is all happening for a reason.”

The opportunity of working with Gore was a formidable draw for everyone involved in the film, from the cast to the production team. Justin Haythe describes the experience as a pleasure. “He’s the best! Gore is uncompromising,” says Haythe, “but only and always in pursuit of the best movie. Ego does not factor in. Design and sound have great power in this genre and Gore is a master of both.”

 “I loved working with Gore,” says Dane DeHaan. “It was a real treat. Some people have a photographic memory, I feel like Gore has a cinematic memory. He knows exactly what he’s doing. He is on top of every aspect of it, the lighting, the props, the acting. It is like he has the entire movie in his mind. Gore is so visual and specific in terms of how he tells the story; he is particular about every shot in the movie. He is also an easy director to trust because he knows exactly what he wants. My job was just to bring what he wanted to life, in a way that I have never experienced before. It was a real collaboration between the two of us. He respected all the work I did and brought to the table, but he also had a very specific vision himself. It was incredible to work with him.”

Veteran British actor, Jason Isaacs, notes that Verbinski is a director with a unique and compelling perspective. “Talking with Gore it became clear that he was interested in nuance, and keeping everyone surprised at all times. Gore is a phenomenon on the set, he was very aware of how all the scenes would play together,” continues Isaacs. “He would come to the set with a giant white board covered with storyboards that only he could interpret, which meant we actors felt very safe. And if we had some ideas, he was always open to listening to them.”

Olivier award-winning and Screen Actors Guild-nominated actress, Celia Imrie, whose films include BRIDGET JONES’S BABY, ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS: THE MOVIE and THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL, was equally impressed by her experience of working with Verbinski. “He knows the entire script off by heart. But he is also unusually generous with his encouragement and praise, not just for us, for everyone. He was encouraging to a young actor who came in for just one day, playing an orderly who takes me off for treatment,” says Imrie. “That attitude makes you want to work harder and better. I’d willingly do any of his films from now on!”

 “I have never met a better prepared director than Gore Verbinski,” concurs producer, David Crockett. “He’s already shot the entire movie in his head, and he knows exactly where he wants to take the audience on this journey. And he always has the audience’s enjoyment in mind. The other great thing about him is his ability to move from talking with the technical crew, the set designers or the props guys about the minutest detail of a shot, to walking across the set and having a very detailed conversation with an actor about his or her character. I really find that unique about him, his ability to take the entire filmmaking world, from creative to technical, and put it all into one great package.”

**DR. HEINRICH VOLMER AND HIS CURE**

***“What we offer here is a process of purification away from the modern world”***

Jason Isaacs (Lucius Malfoy in the HARRY POTTER films, BLACK HAWK DOWN, ARMAGEDDON, THE PATRIOT) is suitably sinister as the charming and enigmatic Dr. Volmer. His patients seem happy, but why aren’t they getting better? And what is going on behind the doors of his strange sanitarium? Volmer draws Lockhart into his dark web and persuades the young stockbroker that he needs treatment. “Volmer may or may not be nefarious, or he may just be a man who’s happened upon the secret to happiness. It’s up to Lockhart to find out,” says Isaacs. “Volmer has an odd obsession with the baron who first owned the castle in which the institution is housed. In the local town, there are strange stories about the baron’s experiments on his family members. There is also something uncomfortable about Volmer’s obsession with purity—everything in the sanitarium is white and sterile. The film is a kind of mystery,” adds Isaacs. “It’s a fun, dark, macabre ride. When I read the script, I had the same reaction I hope the audience has: I just wanted to know what was going to happen. I wasn’t quite sure who was doing what, whether Lockhart was insane or a crusader and whether this institution that Volmer runs was Shangri-La or an evil cult.”

When Lockhart arrives at Volmer’s sanitarium, he assumes that his mission will be simple: he will talk to Pembroke, his boss, and persuade him to come back to New York. But Pembroke doesn’t want to leave. Nobody leaves. As the plot unfolds, we experience Lockhart’s mounting anxiety. In danger of losing his sanity, whom can he trust? Lockhart agrees to undergo a course of treatment administered by the doctor and his team. “Volmer is an authority figure but at first he seems like a good guy, who means well,” says DeHaan, “but Lockhart becomes frustrated with him pretty fast, because it really is apparent to Lockhart that he’s not getting what he wanted. Things keep going wrong, things keep getting in his way; the relationship between Lockhart and Volmer is passive aggressive, then later it gets pretty aggressive.”

**MIA GOTH AS HANNAH: THE YOUNGEST PATIENT AT VOLMER’S SPA**

Early in the story, Lockhart becomes friendly with Hannah and together they set about uncovering the menacing secrets of the institute and its history. The talented Goth, who was highly praised for her role in THE SURVIVALIST, brings a poignant, raw innocence to her role as Hannah. Far younger than the other patients, Hannah has spent her whole life at the Volmer Institute. Dr. Volmer takes care of her and she has minimal knowledge of the outside world. “I thought it was the most gripping story I had ever read,” says the actress, explaining her enthusiasm for the role. “I didn’t put the script down from start to finish and I had to read it three times before I could actually fully wrap my head around the story. Hannah goes through a transformation that is so intense and so painful. I just fought with everything in me to be a part of this film.”

“When Lockhart meets Hannah for the first time at the spa, he doesn’t really understand what he’s seeing, she’s almost like a vision,” says DeHaan. “She’s playing a song which is the same song that his mother, who has just died, had in her music box. So he’s really bewildered and mystified by Hannah, because she doesn’t seem to fit into the puzzle. It seems as though maybe the answers to the mystery of the spa lie with her.”

“When we’re first introduced to Hannah, she comes across as this extremely naive and sheltered young woman,” says Goth about her character. “She’s never been encouraged or felt the need to question what it is that Volmer or the sanitarium represents. And I think that’s because she has this remarkable ability to see the good and the beauty in all things. On one level, it really is a father and daughter relationship between Hannah and Volmer, and there is a lot of deep love and respect there. She has cometo love and depend on her jailer,” says Goth, elaborating on the complex relationship between Hannah and Volmer. “The way I can best describe it is that it is almost a Stockholm syndrome situation (a psychological condition that causes hostages to develop sympathetic sentiments towards their captors). It’s what she knows to be real, it’s her normality and it’s like an addiction. The spa is also a safe place to find comfort, while all these things that Lockhart has unleashed are going on around her. Being able to return to Volmer is comforting and helps her in this process.”

“Hannah is a very innocent, rather strange girl who’s grown up in the Institute. Volmer has a relationship with her that’s actually tender and very loving,” says Jason Isaacs. “Nobody knows quite who she is or what she’s doing there—or rather, nobody else knows except me! I’ve raised her. I seem to be very caring, but maybe over-protective of her, and our relationship might harbor dark secrets. Hannah starts to form a relationship with Lockhart and I don’t like it. I think it’s dangerous for her. I probably feel a bit threatened by it, since there’s a certain way I think she should view the world, and he’s beginning to shake it.”

In fact, when Hannah meets Lockhart, her life and perspective shift completely. It’s almost as though she wakes up from a dream-like existence and becomes aware that something is not right at the Institute.“Lockhart acts as a pin prick,” says Goth, “and from that moment on, they both start to question everything they once considered to be real and true. Externally, that means Volmer, the sanitarium and its world, and internally it’s about who you are as a person and what it is you actually want and need.”

Goth says acting alongside Dane DeHaan was exciting. “I’ve always wanted to work with him. I love everything he does. He’s a very giving actor and I’ve learned a lot from him.”

“Mia came in and read for the part and she was ‘it’, exactly what I had in mind for Hannah,” says Verbinski about casting Goth in the key role. “It is a very difficult part to play. Hannah has been living at this place, the sanitarium, for so long that she has an entirely unique worldview and is able to see things differently from everyone else. She has been clouded by the modern world. I think that role needs to be enigmatic and hypnotic and Mia was just perfect for it.”

**THE MYSTERIOUS MRS. WATKINS**

Apart from Hannah, the other patients at the alpine sanitarium (including Pembroke) are wealthy and influential industry titans undergoing ‘treatment’ in the hope that they will be cured by Dr. Volmer. Acclaimed British actress Celia Imrie plays the oddly fascinating Mrs. Watkins. “Mrs. Watkins is a wily old thing,” says Imrie. “We know that she spent forty years working at Xerox. We don’t know much else about her but she’s very on the ball and wants to know exactly what’s going on in the sanitarium. However, it turns out that she is too nosy and curious for her own good! I think I’m quite lucky with the character of Mrs. Watkins, because she’s a vital part of the plot, and without me, you have no puzzles. You find out that she has worked out the puzzles of the spa. It seems at first as though she’s talking nonsense and Lockhart isn’t really listening to anything she says, but in quite a clever way, it becomes apparent that he’s taken in absolutely everything she’s said. Without spoiling the story, it turns out that she was right all along. She’s really one step ahead of Lockhart and that’s not what you’d expect.”

The actress joined the cast, incidentally, after receiving a personal note from Verbinski. “I don’t think I’ve ever had that before from a film director,” says Imrie. “In his letter, he very cleverly described Mrs. Watkins as ‘the garlic in our soup.’ And I thought, ‘what a marvelous way of putting it.’ I was completely bowled over by him. And I loved the script. Sometimes, films can be a bit formulaic, and I don’t think this film is at all. I think it’s quite unexpected in its twists and turns. I like that. It is not what you would expect.”

**THE TREATMENT**

Dr. Volmer’s lifesaving ‘cure’ involves supposedly ‘healing water’ at the spa, which he utilizes for his highly unconventional approach to medicine. There are fascinating allusions to European mineral spas with their emphasis on cleansing, rejuvenation and revitalization. Academy Award® nominated production designer, Eve Stewart (THE DANISH GIRL, THE KING’S SPEECH, VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN) did extensive research into European spas prior to the onset of production. “I’m a great researcher in all my projects. I’m a stickler about getting to the bottom of what things should be. I looked at a pool in Budapest where people play chess in the water. I looked at lots of baths, particularly in Eastern Europe, where they have a very holistic approach to the life of their citizens. That was something we wanted to investigate. They think that it is good for you to be sprayed with tons of water and sit in bubbly salts!”

As we discover, Dr. Volmer’s bizarre experimental therapies have a very different focus from the healing baths at the European spas. The audience is right there with Lockhart as he endures the treatments that will allegedly heal him of his condition. What exactly are those treatments? “Without giving too much away, there are a lot of eels involved! There is a sensory deprivation chamber; there is some pretty intense dental work! I truly get tortured throughout the movie,” laughs DeHaan who had several sessions in an isolation tank. “First I was in the tank, and then I was in the dentist chair. I call it my week of torture. The isolation tank was a really intense experience because I would be underwater for 25 to 30 minutes. I didn’t have any goggles and I couldn’t see anything because the lighting was dark and I was in a leg cast and I had wires holding me in the tank horizontally. So even to get out would be difficult. I just had to play mind games with myself and make sure that I knew it was okay. That’s a week I’ll never forget. I was really exhausted by the end of it and bloated from all the scuba gear and the pressure of the water. It’s supposed to be scary and it was scary!”

Filming Volmer’s chilling treatment rooms was one of the most challenging aspects of the production and took place on the stages of Berlin’s historic Babelsberg Studios. “The issue with the isolation tank was the water pressure,” says the film’s production designer, Eve Stewart, “and how it would impact on the glass in front of it. We had to ask: how thick would that glass have to be? Does it act like a magnifier? Would it make everything look bright green? How would the paints react with the water? Would the varnish go white? It was a steep learning curve.” Stewart also had to ensure that the water was warm so the actors would be comfortable during repeated takes.

DeHaan did extensive work with stunt coordinator, Volkhart Buff, to prepare for the isolation tank sessions. “Dane can swim but he didn’t have experience in diving or being in a claustrophobic underwater setting,” says Buff, “but he was completely focused and was an incredibly fast learner.”

According to Verbinski, it’s not just the patients who are experiencing Dr. Volmer’s cure. The film is so immersive that audience members almost feel as though they are enduring the treatment along with the protagonist. “What’s nice is that we’re perpetrating crimes upon the audience,” says Verbinski. “There’s a treatment that is happening to Lockhart and you are observing what is happening to him with the treatment, with the experiments at the sanitarium. But the question is: who is the patient? It is like the Milgram Experiment [1963 experiment by psychologist Stanley Milgram focusing on the conflict between obedience to authority and personal conscience]. Is the patient Lockhart or is it the audience? That’s what fascinates me about this genre; we’re taking people into a darkened room and performing a psychological experiment on them. I’ve set out to analyze the moviegoer; I wanted to ‘diagnose’ the audience and then offer a cure. And we’re giving them a good story to keep them involved.”

**BEAUTIFUL BUT SINISTER: NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS**

Located in a breathtaking alpine setting, Volmer’s Institute is the perfect location for healing and rejuvenation. But as soon as Lockhart arrives at the spa, he discovers that beneath the soporific exterior, there is an unsettling atmosphere that permeates the tranquil retreat. “We were trying to create a world that at first seems very sanitized and idealistic and rather nice… and gradually gets nasty.” It was important to Stewart that there was a stark differentiation between the world Lockhart was leaving behind in New York at his Wall Street firm and the ostensibly Utopian spa. Tone and atmosphere were key elements in creating the unnerving world of A CURE FOR WELLNESS, so the locations were critical.

 “In New York, we particularly wanted to show what Lockhart was in danger of losing, and it was a very kind of glitzy, glamorous, open plan office. It is all about money, with all the stresses and strains that must bear upon people working there,” says the British production designer. “We wanted to create an incredible contrast between that financial world and the peaceful spa, which is sunlit, a little gossamer flying down, with bird noise. The audience needs to understand why Pembroke and the other patients want to stay at the spa for so long. It looks great at the beginning, as though they are having a nice rest!”

“Eve Stewart had a challenging task in bringing a period feel to a very modern movie. It’s hard to tell when the film is set,” says Crockett. “The cars are modern, Lockhart is a stockbroker of today but he goes to the world of the Volmer Institute that sometimes feels like the 19th century and sometimes like the 1950s. What Eve was able to do was create something that is very new but feels old at the same time.”

Most of A CURE FOR WELLNESS was shot in Germany (with additional filming in Switzerland and New York). Stewart and Verbinski found the perfect setting for Volmer’s spa at Hohenzollern Castle in the foothills of the Swabian Alps in southern Germany. “The beauty of that particular castle is that it is so isolated from the landscape around it,” says Stewart. “It seemed to be the essence of ‘the spooky castle on a hill’. But what is really interesting is that it looks massive on the hill, when you’re driving up to it.”

Dating back to medieval times, the impressive and dauntingly austere castle is the ancestral home of the imperial House of Hohenzollern and is actually the third castle to stand on the site—only the original medieval chapel remains from its 15th century incarnation. It lay abandoned, neglected and ruined, until the current castle was built in the early 19th century. Based on the English Gothic Revival style and the French chateaux of the Loire valley, the stunning 140-room fortress is perfect to depict Volmer’s Institute. “We were fortunate enough to meet with and work with the head of the Hohenzollern family, Prince Georg Friedrich, who is a direct descendant of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the last Hohenzollern monarch,” says Crockett. “It is a real part of history and its grand scale helps to make our story come to life.”

In addition to filming at Berlin’s Babelsberg studios, some interiors of the sterile spa were shot at the derelict Beelitz-Heilstätten military hospital outside Berlin. “The hospital had a kind of inherent beauty in its dereliction,” says Stewart. “It was a hard process as an artist or a designer to strip away that kind of incredible vision and then replace it with something else. So we worked very hard to keep what it was about the building that seemed so interesting, in its space, its color, its sheens and its dampness. We tried to hold on to all that, while removing fifty tons of mold!”

“The sets were really amazing,” enthuses Dane DeHaan. “They had a great vibe to them and a great look. It felt a bit like being in a hospital that hasn’t been renovated and you don’t really want to be there.”

 Crockett notes that director of photography Bojan Bazelli (THE LONE RANGER, THE RING) collaborated closely with Eve Stewart to create the distinctively eerie look of A CURE FOR WELLNESS. “Bojan lit the sets in a way that used a lot of practical lights to create a moody atmosphere, rather than an overly glossy film atmosphere. In doing so, he created rich environments and colors that are at once terrifying and beautiful. Gore and Bojan have a very interesting, long term working relationship,” adds Crockett, “so they have a shorthand with each other and that definitely helped.”

 “I hadn’t imagined that the sets would be on quite so large a scale,” says Jason Isaacs. “Some of the rooms are gigantic; some of the sets are amazing. We did a lot of night shoots in Beelitz at the abandoned hospital, which is supposedly the most haunted place in Germany. There is certainly something very uncomfortable about shooting there as we did at night, for weeks at a time. And hopefully it bled into the film. I hadn’t encountered sets like that since I did HARRY POTTER. You arrive somewhere, and your breath is taken away by the scale of the thing.”

**DRESSING THE CAST: THE LOOK OF THE CHARACTERS**

Academy Award®-winning costume designer Jenny Beavan (MAD MAX: FURY ROAD, A ROOM WITH A VIEW) who has received a total of ten Academy Award® nominations, was in charge of dressing the actors and bringing their characters to life. “It was very different from anything I’d done before, which is always my favorite challenge,” she says. “Gore’s first statement was: ‘Welcome to the World of Weird.’ He’s very specific, he’s a micro-manager in the best possible way, in that he really knows what he wants, he looks at every aspect of the film.”

Beavan worked closely with Stewart. They had previously collaborated onTHE KING’S SPEECH*.* Beavan took inspiration from the decaying beauty of the Beelitz hospital for the colors of the costumes. Blues, faded pinks and greens went onto her mood board, which contrasted sharply with the blues and greys of the New York scenes and the bright whites that dominate the Volmer Institute. “Lockhart is a young, up-and-coming broker in the traditional world of New York finance, but we decided to dress him in a traditionally cut suit,” says Beavan. “When he arrives at the sanitarium, he is given white pajamas, a dressing gown and slippers, just like all the other patients.”

Designing costumes for Mia Goth’s character, Hannah, provided an interesting challenge. “She’s an enigma in terms of who she is, how old she is, where she comes from,” explains Beavan. “But we were very lucky to find a dress with filmy, gauzy overlay which is transparent when held up to the light, and that was exactly what Gore wanted. We made three different day dresses, all with this thin overlay which gives Hannah a slightly ghostly, unearthly feel.”

“Jenny has a really brilliant mind,” says Goth. “Her idea of dressing Hannah in flowing light-colored dresses was inspired because it instantly makes the audience feel more connected to who she is. The costumes really brought Hannah to life.”

Jason Isaacs concurs: “There’s something very timeless about the film and the setting, and that is manifest in Jenny’s fabulous costumes. Everything from her costumes down to the smallest detail, like the light switches, give a sense of disquiet to the tone of the film.”

Beavan dressed Isaacs in a simple linen suit teamed with a white shirt and a white coat. “It’s a practical outfit and something a doctor would easily wear but it also hints at his being a cult leader,” she says. One of the most interesting challenges for Beavan involved a crucial wedding scene. The designer began by researching costumes from the 18th century, also looking at Pagan ceremonies. “We found the most extraordinary reference to a 19th century English ladies college, Whitelands College, where they had all-white May Day celebrations. It had the strangest look. With those elements in our minds, we came up with a Pagan wedding with everyone in white cloaks and white tunics, carrying candles.”

“Jenny had the job of outfitting hundreds of extras,” says Crockett. “All our orderlies, our nurses, our patients at the Volmer Institute are in various shades of white, which makes for very interesting visuals. It looks so vivid, the whiteness versus the locations and the sets that Eve Stewart designed. It’s amazing how they all work so well together.”

Another crucial member of the team, working closely with Beavan, was make up and hair designer Sharon Martin (DOCTOR STRANGE, PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: ON STRANGER TIDES). “Everything has to be as perfect as it possibly can be with Gore, because it’s all about the visuals,” she says. “Mia is so beautiful and we just had to enhance what’s there already, because she’s perfect as Hannah. She is a character who has never seen life outside the spa and we wanted her to look like a child with a kind of airiness and softness. Her hair sometimes has backlight going through it. She’s open and pure.”

For Lockhart, the biggest makeup task was showing a progression of injuries on his face and body, as his stay at the spa lengthens and he goes through Volmer’s treatment. For the other patients at the Institute, Martin gave the extras a subtle dehydrated appearance. “We used a green marble sealer,” she says. “We prepare the mix, then we paint it on and stretch the skin, then release it and coax it to create wrinkles. It took an hour and a half with each character, and that was just a normal day for us.”

Another interesting aspect of Martin’s job involved contrasting the look of the characters at the spa, who are mostly affluent, with the characters in the nearby village. “The villagers are normal, everyday people unlike the residents at the spa. It’s a comment on society really.” The makeup, she says, had to reflect that commentary. “The villagers work hard and they are not impressed by these people at the top of the hill in the Institute. So the kids in the village look a little punky and it’s a very different look from the sharp cleanliness at the spa. Some scenes required huge make up sessions with Volmer that were really challenging. But it was all totally enjoyable. As a hair and makeup designer, this is the stuff that dreams are made of!”

**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FEAR**

The evocative world created by Gore and his gifted team, the treatments that the patients undergo at Volmer’s spa, and the dramatic tension throughout the film, combine to create a gripping and terrifying cinematic experience. Like the best films in the genre, A CURE FOR WELLNESS leaves the audience unsettled and unnerved, questioning the darker side of human nature. It’s the kind of unease that lingers long after the closing credits have rolled. “It’s like people telling ghost stories around a campfire,” says Verbinski, explaining why moviegoers enjoy watching an engrossing psychological thriller. “There’s something about a group of people, particularly strangers who are watching a film together, which creates that kind of powerful experience. It is not quite Schadenfreude because it’s not an overt enjoyment at somebody else’s demise, I would say, but for me the power of enigma is that if you don’t quite know what’s happening, you (the audience) let me inside your head. You know, when you’re eating pizza and everything’s great you’re going to forget about that meal right after you walk out of the cinema. We’re trying to give you a meal that you’re going to remember. But the process of not quite understanding something and leaning into it and trying to follow breadcrumbs, rather than a ‘hand on your back’ is quite a different kind of storytelling. You are asking: What is this all about? If I can get you nibbling breadcrumbs, that can do a lot more in terms of giving you something that's going to stick with you.”

“It’s almost like a huge roller coaster, but the film is also asking a lot of important questions,” comments DeHaan. “At times, you are really feeling terrified. But if you are in a communal setting like a theater, you know you are safe and you know that what is happening on screen is completely removed from reality.”

“The film is disturbing in a very fun way,” laughs Isaacs. “I don’t know why, but there's something deliciously enjoyable about being made that uncomfortable by a film, and by a filmmaker who knows just how to turn the screw.”

“I just think this is an opportunity to watch a movie that is compelling but also frightening,” says DeHaan. “It’ll be a good time, and it’ll be fun, but it is also a movie that leaves an impression on you, and a movie that’ll shock you. I don’t even want to talk about it too much. You just have to go and see it. It is almost like a dare. I dare you to go and see the movie!”

**WHAT AILS US: IS THE CURE WORSE THAN THE DISEASE?**

A CURE FOR WELLNESS is unsettling and utterly riveting, but it also contains insights into the purpose of life, looking at the way in which people often don’t take time to examine what they really want for themselves. “I think the movie is actually a comment on wellness,” says DeHaan. “The ultimate question is: What is the sickness? Maybe the sickness is what happens when you give yourself over to ambition and selfish desires for wealth and wanting to advance in this world. I think it’s an interesting question to ask, especially in the world we live in today. Ultimately people want to be healthy and people want to be successful,” continues DeHaan. “If it appears that those things could come quickly with just a simple treatment or a simple trick and that would make life easier, people want it. So I think that is why fad diets exist and different spa treatments that promise to make people better or cure them. But when you go in for those quick fixes, is that ultimately what you are being given? Probably not. Some people are so healthy it is unhealthy. And some people are so successful that it is detrimental to them as human beings, so I think it is about finding balance, and anytime that balance is thrown off, it can have the opposite effect that you want it to have.”

It’s a subject that Verbinski says is right at the heart of the movie. “I think that there’s a whole wellness industry preying upon us,” says Verbinski. “The patients at Volmer’s medical spa are confident that they are getting better, despite evidence to the contrary. The sanitarium is a place that heads of industry and oligarchs come to for a cure, people who do whatever they can to win at all costs,” comments the filmmaker. “These are people who might be vulnerable to Dr. Volmer’s diagnosis, to being told: ‘you’re not well but there is a cure.’ But in fact it is all a great con, and it is the thing that keeps them there. We are exploring that sense of there being a sickness that we are all in denial of. It is perhaps the sickness of the modern man, if you will. We must at our core have a sense that something is not right, to battle the human condition.”

The film explores what it means to lead a life that is examined and meaningful. “We look at the universe; we look at the stars. We’re born onto a treadmill and then we could get hit by a bus and I think it’s interesting to say, wait, is that all it’s about? More than anything it’s saying: ask the question, what’s the point of it all? That is the existential crisis in its purest form. We are not providing the answer in this film, but we are saying: ‘maybe it’s time to pause, just take a moment.’”

**ABOUT THE CAST**

**Dane DeHaan** (Lockhart) has made a formidable impression on film, television and theatre audiences from the early stages of his career. DeHaan began his career under the direction of Oscar nominee, John Sayles in the film, AMIGO in 2011*.*DeHaan received an Obie award for his performance on-stage in the off-Broadway production of THE ALIENS in 2010 at the age of 24. DeHaan's first main television role followed, in the critically acclaimed HBO show, “In Treatment”. In 2012, DeHaan starred in the breakout film, CHRONICLE, which put him on the map in the film world. Following the success of CHRONICLE, DeHaan starred in DEVIL’S KNOT, LAWLESS*,* and had a small role in Steven Spielberg’s, LINCOLN*.*

DeHaan’s pivotal role in Derek Cianfrance film, THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES caught the eyes of independent filmmakers and his performance in the film solidified him as both a character actor and a leading man. Following, DeHaan was nominated for a Gotham award for his role in KILL YOUR DARLINGS, for his portrayal of Lucien Carr. The film and DeHaan’s performance garnered rave reviews.

  Also in 2013, DeHaan starred in METALLICA THROUGH THE NEVER, an IMAX thriller concert film in which he portrayed a young roadie. Dane also starred in the music video for, “I Bet My Life” by Imagine Dragons.

  DeHaan is currently the face of Prada in the brand’s most recent ad campaign. This marks DeHaan’s fourth Prada campaign.

DeHaan’s additional film credits include; LIFE AFTER BETH, THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2, playing the infamous Harry Osbourne, LIFE, in which he portrayed James Dean, TWO LOVERS AND A BEAR (currently in theatres) and TULIP FEVER. This summer, DeHaan will star in Luc Besson's passion project, VALERIAN AND THE CITY OF A THOUSAND PLANETS as Valerian. DeHaan resides in New York City.

**Jason Isaacs** (Dr. Volmer) began his acting career at Bristol University, where he studied law but fell in love with the stage. After graduating, he trained for three years at London’s prestigious Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. In the 30 years since, he has won or been nominated for Golden Globe®, BAFTA, International Emmy®, Critics’ Circle, Satellite, SAG and Critics’ Choice Awards among others. In 2000, his breakout role as Colonel William Tavington in Roland Emmerich’s feature film THE PATRIOTestablished him in Hollywood. Two years later, Isaacs began his role as Lucius Malfoy in HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS.  He went on to reprise the role and garner global recognition in HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE, HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX, and in the last two films, HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HOLLOWS, PARTS I and II.

Other films include PETER PAN, BLACKHAWK DOWN, ARMAGEDDON, FURY, THE TUXEDOand many, many more. On television, he has starred in “Awake”for NBC, “Dig”for USA, “Brotherhood”for Showtime and appeared in “Rosemary’s Baby”, “The West Wing”and “Entourage”.

Isaacs can currently be seen in the hit Netflix show “The OA,” Veep creator Armando Iannucci’s THE DEATH OF STALIN*,* YA thriller BEHIND THE GLASSand HOTEL MUMBAI,about the siege of the Taj hotel in 2008.

**Mia Goth** (Hannah) is currently in production on Luca Guadagino’s thriller SUSPIRIA, opposite Dakota Johnson and Tilda Swinton.

Goth recently completed filming Sergio G Sanchez’s film, MARROWBONE, in which she will star opposite George Mackay and Charlie Heaton. Next year Goth will star opposite Robert Pattinson in HIGH LIFE, the English-language debut film from director Claire Denis.

In 2015, Goth starred as Milja in the science-fiction thriller THE SURVIVALIST, alongside Martin McCann for director Stephen Fingleton. The film premiered at the 2015 Tribeca Film Festival and earned Goth a nomination for the “Most Promising Newcomer” at the 2015 British Independent Film Awards.

  Goth’s other credits include Lars Von Trier’s NYMPHOMANIAC: VOL. II, which marked her acting debut, opposite Charlotte Gainsbourg and Shia LeBeouf, and EVEREST, opposite Robin Wright, Jake Gyllenhaal, and Josh Brolin. On the small screen, Goth guest-starred in the acclaimed PBS series “Wallander”, as well as “The Tunnel” for Sky network and Canal+ in the UK.

Goth is currently featured as one of the faces of Prada’s new La Femme fragrance campaign, along with Dane DeHaan, Mia Wasikowska, and Ansel Elgort. Goth currently resides in Los Angeles.

**Celia Imrie** (Mrs. Watkins)is an Olivier award-winning and Screen Actors Guild-nominated actress. In 2015, she starred in THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL as Madge Hardcastle, a performance that The Daily Telegraph declared “shining”. The film received critical acclaim and accolades including Best Picture nominations from The Hollywood Foreign Press, BAFTA and The Screen Actors Guild (Ensemble Award). In 2015, Imrie made her debut as a novelist with *Not Quite Nice*, which was Bloomsbury’s top selling title, a Sunday Times Best-seller, reached number five on the iBooks paid for chart and was number six on the Amazon bestseller list. In March last year, Bloomsbury published her witty and enchanting sequel novel, *Nice Work (If You Can Get It),* which publishes in paperback in February of this year. Last year saw Imrie reprise her role as Una Alconbury in BRIDGET JONES’S BABY, as well as playing Claudia Bing in the highly anticipated ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS: THE MOVIE. Imrie also starred in the role of Joan Erikson in YEAR BY THE SEA, adapted from Joan Anderson’s best-selling memoirs.  Last year also saw Imrie star as Phyllis in the first season of FX’s new comedy series “Better Things”, co-created by and starring Pamela Adlon. In 2016, Imrie returned to the stage in KING LEAR at The Old Vic as Goneril, one of King Lear’s elder daughters.  The production also saw Glenda Jackson return to the stage as the eponymous king alongside Rhys Ifans, Jane Horrocks and Harry Melling. This year, Imrie is also due to star as Mrs. Green in the Olaf de Fleur Johannesson-directed HUSH, a horror film based on the novella by E.M. Blomqvist.

**ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

Academy Award®- winning filmmaker **Gore Verbinski** has enjoyed tremendous box office success as the innovative director to both character driven-franchises and thoughtful genre-bending fare.

Most recently, Verbinski directed THE LONE RANGER, starring Johnny Depp and Armie Hammer. Previously, he released his first animated film RANGO. Grossing over $245 million worldwide, the film won an Academy Award® for Best Animated Feature Film and also earned Golden Globe®, BAFTA, PGA, and Annie nominations. Verbinski previously helmed the hit franchise PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN, which collectively grossed over $3 billion worldwide. Verbinski made his directorial debut in 1997 with MOUSE HUNT starring Nathan Lane. His additional directorial credits include THE WEATHER MAN, THE RING and THE MEXICAN.

Verbinski is also an award-winning commercial director. He has been honored with four Clio Awards and a Cannes Silver Lion Award for his work on an assortment of memorable advertising spots such as Nike’s “100 Foot Hoop” featuring Michael Jordan, and the first of the popular Budweiser “Frog” spots. In addition, Verbinski directed music videos for artists such as Bad Religion and Crystal Method.

A graduate of the School of Theater, Film and Television at UCLA, Verbinski resides in Los Angeles with his family where he runs his production company, Blind Wink.

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