



Final Production Notes

17-year-old Rashad (TIP HARRIS) was forced to become the man of the house earlier than most. Since the death of his parents, he's carried the responsibility for himself and his little brother Ant (EVAN ROSS) squarely on his shoulders. While he does his best to keep Ant in school and out of the trouble that's always lurking just around the corner in their South Atlanta neighborhood, sometimes it seems like a losing battle – Rashad can't be everywhere at once, and Ant is dangerously close to falling under the spell of a blinged-out local dealer who promises fast money and the respect Ant dreams of getting.

A talented artist, Rashad doesn't see any future for himself beyond assisting his Uncle George (MYKELTI WILLIAMSON) as a janitor after school. The thing is, "assisting" George actually means doing all the work and seeing none of the cash.

Lately it seems the only bright spot in Rashad's life is New-New (LAUREN LONDON). She sees something special in him, something more than he sees. When the two get together, everything begins to change, and Rashad's future starts to open up for the first time. But New-New has a secret that's getting harder and harder to keep.

Behind her ghetto-fabulous front, New-New is actually Erin, a rich girl from the right side of the tracks who's drawn to the music and vibrant life she sees in Rashad's neighborhood. Her father, successful CEO John Garnett (KEITH DAVID), grew up on the south side of town, but once he left he never looked back. Garnett doesn't want his daughter slumming on the southside, and forbids her from setting foot anywhere near his old neighborhood. So every weekend she leaves Erin behind, lying to her parents so that she can become New-New, the person she thinks she needs to be to find acceptance in Rashad's world.

Besides New-New, there aren't many people Rashad can count on. His best friend Esquire (JACKIE LONG) is an ambitious student who dreams of attending an Ivy League college, and is willing to do anything to make that dream come true. When Esquire runs into New-New while cozying up to her influential father for a letter of recommendation, he has to make a decision whether or not to blow her cover.

When Rashad finds out New-New's real story, he doesn't know who to trust anymore – it seems everyone in his life is lying to him, even the people he loves the most. As Ant gets pulled deeper into the life of a dealer and Rashad's dreams for him begin to fade, Rashad is going to have to make tough choices about what he wants and where he's going.

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Warner Bros. Pictures presents an Overbrook Entertainment production, *ATL*, starring TIP HARRIS, LAUREN LONDON and ANTWAN ANDRE PATTON with MYKELTI WILLIAMSON and KEITH DAVID. Directed by CHRIS ROBINSON, the film is produced by JAMES LASSITER, WILL SMITH, JODY GERSON and DALLAS AUSTIN. TIMOTHY M. BOURNE and TIONNE WATKINS executive produce. The screenplay is by TINA GORDON CHISM, story by ANTWONE FISHER. The director of photography is CRASH, ROBB BUONO is the production designer and DAVID BLACKBURN serves as editor. Music by AARON ZIGMAN.

ATL has been rated "PG-13" by the MPAA for "drug content, language, sexual material and some violence."

ATL will be released domestically on March 31, 2006 by Warner Bros. Pictures, a Warner Bros. Entertainment Company.

atlthemovie.com

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BACK IN THE DAY...

Directed by acclaimed music video helmer Chris Robinson and starring platinum-winning rapper Tip Harris, *ATL* is loosely based on filmmakers Dallas Austin and Tionne “T-Boz” Watkins’ experiences growing up on Atlanta’s south side. In the midst of drug dealers, gangs and violence, their only escape was a local skating rink called Jellybeans, where every Sunday night from 8:00pm until 1:00am, the teens and their close circle of friends entered a world that allowed them to escape the pressures of everyday life for awhile in the music and excitement of the rink. Many of today’s top hip-hop artists could be seen at Jellybeans every Sunday back then, including Atlanta-bred performers OutKast, Jermaine Dupri, Little Jon, Trillville and TLC.

“Atlanta is like a little high school,” says T-Boz, a founding member of the platinum-selling group TLC. “If you are from Atlanta and you were living in East Point or Collegepark in our time, you probably have either been to Jellybeans or heard of it at one time or another. It was urban kids putting their energy and creativity into musical expression and dancing – there was so much positive energy going on in that building that it almost breathed by itself. I’ve made a whole career out of what I learned going to Jellybeans every Sunday night.”

Acclaimed music producer Dallas Austin’s innovative style has shaped the sound of today’s pop and R&B music worldwide. Prior to *ATL*, Austin served as executive producer and executive music producer on 2002’s *Drumline*, which was based on his own experiences in his native Atlanta and explored the rich tradition of marching bands on traditionally black Southern campuses. Using the current electric Atlanta hip-hop scene as a backdrop, Austin wanted to ensure that *ATL* remain similarly authentic to the culture.

Music video director Chris Robinson was tapped to direct. Renowned in the music industry for directing some of the biggest names in hip-hop, such as platinum-selling artists Jay-Z, Snoop Dogg, Alicia Keys, Busta Rhymes and Usher, Robinson took on his first feature film with *ATL*.

“Everything I’ve done in my career up until this point, in the last ten years, has been an exercise, a training ground for me to direct this film,” Robinson asserts. “What I really love about this script is that it’s a character piece. It’s a story about five real kids who each have a

different dream. I wanted to make a film where you really care about the characters and the story. I already knew that the visual part would come.”

Robinson was well-suited for the project on two levels – in addition to his proven ability to shoot from a video-director’s point of view to capture the music-driven aspects of the film, the producers were interested in his ability to tell a compelling story. “A lot of music video directors can’t capture the story,” Austin says, “so what we’d do was turn on the directors’ tapes, turn down the music and just watch to see if we could find the story. Chris was far and away the best.”

To get the feel of the film, Robinson traveled to Atlanta and spent time with Austin to soak up the city’s unique vibe. “I went to his house and met his mom,” he recalls. “I experienced Atlanta with him and suddenly the story really opened up in my mind. I knew then that this film was perfect for me and that it had to be shot in Atlanta.”

The director also knew who he wanted to play Rashad, the young man whose story is at the heart of *ATL*: Tip Harris, also known as platinum-winning hip-hop artist and Atlanta native “T.I.” Four years earlier, Robinson had directed Harris’ first music video and was immediately impressed by the young talent. “He had a crazy charisma and so much presence,” says the director. “But on this film he came to the table, worked so hard and never tried to be T.I. – he became Rashad. Over a three-month period he turned down huge opportunities to do shows paying lots of money to do this project. He totally dedicated himself to making this film.”

Robinson brought Harris to Austin’s attention during the casting search for the film’s star. “I made mention to Dallas that he had to put me in this movie,” says Harris. “I told him, ‘you gotta make sure I’m a part of this project.’ And I was very, very up and coming at the time, it was early on in my career, and I think he still recognized how much authenticity I could bring to this film.”

Rapping since he was nine, Harris signed his first recording deal with Arista Records when he was 19 and released his debut album, *I’m Serious*. He generated a powerful underground buzz with the hugely successful Grand Hustle Records mix tapes *In Da Streets, Parts 1 and 2*. Harris exploded into national prominence with *Trap Muzik*, which debuted at #4 on the Billboard 200 album chart, spawning such top-charters as “24’s,” “Rubber Band Man” and “Let’s Get Away,” and along with other artists such as OutKast, Goodie Mob and Organized

Noize, helped bring Southern hip-hop into the national consciousness. His second release, *Urban Legend*, made an explosive debut in the #1 spot on Billboard's "Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums" chart.

Of his character Rashad, who has been placed in the position of head of the household at a very early age, Harris says, "He's a very focused young man. A mature young man who finds himself in a lot of adult situations. He's the father figure of the household, and he's perceived as a leader, as well as a no-nonsense kind of guy. And," he adds, "he's also a bit of a ladies' man."

A talented artist, Rashad dreams of being a cartoonist for the local paper. However, with the death of his parents, those dreams have all but vanished. Left in the questionable care of their Uncle George, Rashad and his little brother Ant do all of his janitorial work themselves after school, while he picks up the checks – and locks the food up tight at home to make sure they're not getting too big a share. Facing graduation from high school and seeing nothing promising in his future, Rashad focuses his attention on making sure his younger brother stays in school, saving up what little money he can put away so that Ant can get into college and move on to a better life.

"Like a lot of kids in America, Rashad's had to take on the role of a grown man at a very early age," says Robinson. "He's an old soul. He really considers what he does, how he spends his money, and tries to do what he feels his parents would have done, especially when it comes to his little brother. Then he meets a girl who brings color back into his world. He finds himself believing that he can have dreams and that perhaps his life isn't what he thought after all. Rashad's story, his art and what he learns along his journey form the centerpiece of the film."

The girl who inspires Rashad to dream of something better is ghetto-fabulous New-New. When he's around New-New, Rashad feels for the first time that someone thinks he's really worth something, that he has what it takes to move beyond his circumstances and make something of himself. "She sees something in Rashad," says newcomer Lauren London, who plays the rebellious young woman. "He seems more responsible than the other guys, he's a leader and he has a freedom that she envies. As she gets to know him, Rashad becomes more vulnerable and open to her – he shares his dreams with her."

But New-New has a secret.... Contrary to the front she puts up around the neighborhood, in her everyday life, New-New is really Erin Garnett – the daughter of one of the wealthiest

families in the city. Sheltered from the real world by her father, on Sunday nights Erin slips away to re-invent herself on the other side of town. But when she falls for Rashad, her secret becomes harder to keep.

“She’s been tucked away and sheltered all her life because her dad doesn’t want her to see the things he saw growing up in a bad neighborhood,” explains London. “New-New comes from Erin’s imagination – she dresses up in all these ghetto-fabulous outfits and crazy make-up. She’s the side of herself that Erin can’t show at home; New-New can have an attitude and be more aggressive, where at home the attitude doesn’t fly. So she portrays this character in order to fit in, until she learns that if you just be yourself, people will like you for who you are.

“New-New is based on T-Boz as a kid,” London adds, “I talked to her about my character and she was very open about her life. She explained to me how it was when she was young – the attitude and the flavor. And it’s funny, a lot of people say that I act like she used to act at the skating rink.”

“Yes, I’m the New-New of the movie,” laughs T-Boz. “But unlike New-New, my mom supported me going to the skating rink,” she continues. “If I did something bad, my punishment was that I didn’t get to go – and I’d just die twice. Of course, Mom didn’t know that I’d sneak out the window and go anyway.”

Although New-New is becoming important to him, Rashad’s life revolves around his fifteen-year-old little brother Ant, played by Evan Ross, who makes his film debut in *ATL*. Always in his brother’s shadow, Ant is struggling to find his own way. He believes that the easy road to success is becoming one of the big-time dealers who are rolling in cash and seem to command the respect of everyone in the neighborhood. The lure of making big money as a big man is too much for him to resist, and he quickly gets in way over his head.

Ross, the youngest son of Grammy-winning Diana Ross, feels that Ant is at a crossroads in his life. “His story is about being in high school and trying to choose which path to take – the right one or the wrong one – and finding strength to be somebody when you don’t really have anybody to look up to. I realize that kids all over are dealing with these same issues and sometimes they take the wrong path, but if you’re lucky, you get a second chance.”

Working with Harris was a revelation to Ross. “He’s a great actor,” he exclaims. “It’s his first movie too, and that has been good because we’ve been able to find ways of doing it

together that has made it a lot easier for each of us. We're able to talk about personal things and about growing up. He's had a totally different life than I have. He's from the South and knows about this side. He's helped me with my dialect – and he brought me to the hood. Now we're family!"

Rashad and his crew of three best friends Esquire, Brooklyn and Teddy are also just as close as family. "All these guys support each other and they look out for each other," says Robinson. "I think when we become adults that's one thing we lose – we forget how much our friends meant to us. You discover the world together. And although their paths may go in different directions after this summer, these four guys are on the cusp of adulthood, and they're facing it together."

Confronted with the challenge of finding young actors who would make up the film's ensemble cast, the filmmakers held open auditions in Chicago, New York, Atlanta and Los Angeles. From the beginning, Robinson knew he wanted newcomers – faces that had never been seen before. And once he found his crew, he made sure they were as tight offscreen as they were on.

"I wanted to create a group of friends who you really believed in," explains the director. "Before we ever shot a cell of film, I had them come to Atlanta for six weeks and we went over the script, sat around talking, ate dinner together, and learned to trust one another. It was so collaborative that we became this tribe, this little unit. The fact that we created a team like this is what's going to make this film really sing."

Of the four friends, Esquire is the most ambitious. No one in his family has ever been to college and he is determined to break the cycle by getting accepted into not just any college, but a prestigious Ivy League school. Having gotten himself into an elite prep school on scholarship, Esquire's worked hard to secure his future, and he seems to be on his way. However, there's one small snag – he needs someone of importance to write a letter of recommendation in order to have any chance of making it to the Ivy League. While his job at the local country club brings him into contact with the one person who could solve his dilemma, when that person turns out to be New-New's father, it creates a situation that could destroy his lifelong friendships.

"Esquire's life is a series of deceptions," says Jackie Long, cast as the determined Esquire. "His friends don't have too many goals, but he strives to be different. He goes to a

different school, he dresses differently and he works at a country club where he pretends to be someone he's not."

"Esquire reflects a friend of mine," says Austin. "He worked at the country club even though he told us he worked at a hot dog joint. When he'd come to school, he was all dressed up like GQ magazine and you'd think his family had money, but he lived in the projects."

In contrast to his ambitious friend, street poet Brooklyn can't seem to hold down a job for more than a day. The character of Brooklyn is brought to life by Albert "Al Be" Daniels, who has earned recognition as a poet, most recently appearing on Russell Simmon's *Def Poetry* for HBO.

"I've known Al Be since he was 15 years old," says Robinson, "when he was a production assistant on music video shoots in New York. He was this annoying kid who was always getting fired because he was so inquisitive and obnoxious. But I always thought he had something. Eight years later, I ran into him in New York at a poetry reading and knew he was perfect. But he had to audition and he didn't have any money to get to Atlanta, so he went out and hustled money doing poetry in the subways, got on the bus and came down. He was amazing and he got the part. He deserved it."

"I was a poet before this," says Al Be, "and on the stage there's no take two, no let's do it again. There's one time. The film has actually been easier because we had rehearsal and a couple of chances to get it right. We went through hard training, but it was fun – we had Popeye's chicken!"

Jason Weaver was cast as Teddy, the fourth member of the crew. Weaver had previously appeared with Whoopi Goldberg in *The Long Walk Home* and as the young Michael Jackson in the made for television movie *The Jacksons: An American Dream*. When the young actor appeared in Austin's *Drumline*, he so impressed the producer that there was no doubt about his having a role in *ATL*. "There's a Jason Weaver in any of our societies," says Austin, "so he'll probably be in most of my movies, if not all of them."

Weaver describes Teddy as "the comic relief of the film. He's what you'd call your average Atlanta or SWATS type of guy," he says. "SWATS stands for South Atlanta – gold teeth, really long shorts, very bold personality, very southern, genuine and sincere with his relationships and his friends. Sometimes he's a little loud, but when you get into who he really

is, he's a very soft person."

Unlike the other guys, Teddy doesn't go to school. Instead, he works at Eddy's Gold Teeth, fitting customers for their "grills." He's content with his job and even has his own set of trophies. "It's a big thing in the South," explains Weaver. "It shows people that you're successful, and in the hood that means everything. If you're walking around with a grill and you have four on the bottom or four on the top, if you've got ice in your teeth, that means you're shining, you're doing your thing, you're getting your money. It's an honor for Teddy to get his trophies, because it makes him feel like he's doing pretty well."

Twins Malika and Kadijah portray Star and Veda, New-New's best friends at the skating rink. The girls are not new to the world of show business, having been part of it since they were three years old. However, *ATL* is only their second film, and the first where they've actually played twins – they had previously appeared in the movie *Sky High*, sharing a single character.

Kadijah describes her character Star as "a ghetto fabulous Atlantian, who loves a few things – her friends, her boys, and stealing." Malika as Veda feels that her character is much the same with one exception. "She loves to talk. Veda is always talking when she should be listening. Gets her into a lot of trouble."

It was vital to the filmmakers that they give all of the young performers in their cast a platform to develop and display their talents. "We're going to make stars, and that's important to me," says Robinson. "All this young black talent out there, all these young black actors who don't get a shot or who have to wait years to get their shot, are getting their shot in this film, and they're bringing it."

"I call them my 'Black Pack,'" adds Austin, whose Dallas Austin Foundation is dedicated to developing the talents and skill set of urban youth by exposing them to various facets of the music and entertainment industries. "Like the Brat Pack used to be."

Emmy Award-winner Keith David portrays New-New's father John Garnett, CEO of a major Atlanta company. Garnett has risen up by sheer force of will and determination from the ghetto and lives comfortably in a very upscale neighborhood. He has no idea that his daughter lives a double life as New-New, drawn to the place that he's worked so hard to escape. Thinking he's rid himself of anything having to do with his old life, he's dismayed to find out that his daughter is associating herself with the old neighborhood and getting involved with a boy who

lives there.

“My daughter wants to hang out on the south side,” he says. “And when I find out, I come down really hard on her. She’s lied to me and because of that I conjure up all the worst possible scenarios. I don’t trust that I’ve raised her well enough to know how to be careful and to make a phone call if she gets in trouble.”

Having two daughters of his own made David more aware of what it means to be on the verge of adulthood. “It’s a coming of age story for young men and women,” he says. “It’s a story about trusting who you are and believing that you don’t have to lie about who you are to be friends with people who may not be in your social class. The only difference may just be the bank account.”

AUTHENTIC ATLANTA

In addition to his talented main cast, in keeping with the atmosphere of authenticity he was trying to achieve with *ATL*, Robinson wanted to have as many cameos in the film as possible. “I wanted all of our cameos to be authentic Atlanta,” he explains, “real people.”

Grammy Award-winning music producer Big Boi, who is half of the avant-garde hip-hop duo OutKast, plays the role of a flashy neighborhood drug dealer. Mega-producer and three-time Source Award nominee Jazze Pha plays the DJ who runs the rink every Sunday night. “He’s an Atlanta cat and he’s hilarious, and obviously does amazing music,” says Robinson. “We have Rico Wade, one of the original guys from Jellybeans who became part of the Atlanta-based production team Organized Noize. That team helped define and then represent the late 90s Southern rap by producing most of the area’s most esteemed artists.”

Grammy Award-winner and Dallas Austin protégé Monica appears in the film as a Waffle House waitress. Monica was first signed to Rowdy Records by *ATL* producer Dallas Austin and many of her songs were produced by Jazze Pha. Also making cameos are Atlanta rappers Killer Mike, Bone Crusher and Concrete. “It wouldn’t be right if they weren’t in the film,” concludes Robinson. “It’s not stunt casting or novelty casting. These are talented Atlanta people who really fit their role.”

MUSIC OF THE ATL

Music for *ATL* was coordinated by Austin, who views movies as a cultural extension of much of the music he's produced while being based in Atlanta. According to executive producer Timothy M. Bourne, "It's all new music that's rooted in the Atlanta vibe."

"I'm a musical person first of all," says Austin, "and that's how I pitched the story to Hollywood – as a way to make a musical without putting *Singing in the Rain* on the screen. *Drumline* was my first film and now we have another environment – the skating rink – that can fill a movie with music without the kids breaking into song. I'm determined to show Hollywood and New York the culture from the South."

Representing that culture musically in the film meant more to Austin than loading the soundtrack with current hit music. "We're not really interested in the big super acts," he says. "We thought it would be much more interesting to get the guys who are about to come out, the stars of next year that everybody in Atlanta is listening to right now. That way it's more like an event rather than a bunch of songs you've heard before."

"I think we've done a great job at putting together the little spices of Atlanta and its music," he continues. "Regardless of how you look at this movie now, in 10 or 50 years, at the end of the day, you will see what a huge place Atlanta is for music – the one place in America that hasn't stopped. It will always be a classic."

HITTING THE RINK

Three months prior to the start of production, the young actors gathered at Atlanta's Skatetown to begin training for the electrifying skating sequences in the film. Most of them had never been on roller skates before.

"We started from scratch," said Vaughn Newton, skate captain. "They had to learn basic balance, simple muscle building, and exercises to get them used to the skates. They had to learn coordination, the mechanics of the footwork and how the upper body works together with the footwork. And we had a rigorous schedule. We practiced from 9:00-11:00am, took a break and then again from 3:00 to 6:00pm."

“Lauren and the twins, Malika and Kadijah, adapted very quickly. The guys came along a little slower. Al Be, Jason and Jackie Long developed very fast. T.I. was determined to learn. They were all great students and very supportive of each other.”

“I can’t say that I was a skater,” says Harris. “I did go to the skating rink but I didn’t do moves or special routines and I didn’t have a skate crew, so I wasn’t really a skater, but what I didn’t have in skill, I made up for in heart,” he confides. “No time out.”

When Lauren London found out that she was being considered for the film, she visited a local rink in Los Angeles. “It wasn’t the same as Atlanta skating,” she remembers. “So when I got out here, I had to start all over. I found muscles in my legs I didn’t even know I had. But I loved skating with the guys. It’s like being a little sister playing with my brothers.”

Jason Weaver remembers roller skating when he was around 12 years old. Learning to skate for the film took him back to that childhood, but with a difference. “Back when I was 12 years old, I was just trying to stay on the wheels, trying not to fall, but this was really intense. We could spend up to two hours on moves like ‘the glide’ or ‘lay it down.’ You really had to focus and be in shape, too.”

While Albert “Al Be” Daniels felt Newton was a phenomenal coach, he says that his skating technique was refined by the extras, real skaters who were cast in the film. “These people skate every Sunday, every week,” he says. “Some would come by and say ‘arch your back a little bit,’ or ‘when you clap, do it this way.’ I learned a lot from them.”

Jackie Long was “so bad I didn’t even know how to put on a pair of skates.” Now he’s so good that he feels he could “teach a few lessons, flip, dip or whatever.”

Evan Ross’ character Ant doesn’t skate in the movie, but when he went out to the rink to watch, he was hooked. “Everybody was learning to skate and dance and there was all this choreography and, while I don’t have to skate in the movie, I am a dancer in real life so I had to go out there and see what I could do. Everybody said I was a natural. I was disappointed I wasn’t going to get to skate in the movie. The vibe was incredible.”

Choreographing fell to Devyne, one of Dallas Austin’s lifelong friends. “We actually hung out in the day at the skating rink,” he says, “and Dallas and T-Boz always promised that when they got the movie going, they would reach back and let me be part of it.”

Devyne has worked on artist development and choreography with talents such as Usher, Monica, Ciara, Gwen Stefani, P. Diddy and Jay-Z, to name a few. He had never been involved in skate choreography but had no qualms, because as he says, “what we do on skates, we actually do on foot. It’s the same kind of routines I put on artists.”

“At first, the cast was just mimicking what they saw,” adds Newton. “Then I watched them begin to grow in just the short time we were rehearsing. I had to take them back in history and teach them about Atlanta skating, where it started and those who came before them. It put my cast on a whole different level – it opened their minds. And once they took those lessons to heart, you could see the creativity and passion come through in their skating.”

ON THE RINK

Upon his return from a trip to Atlanta, director Robinson called production designer Robb Buono with exciting news. “I told him I couldn’t believe what I’d seen,” he says, then proceeded to describe some scenes he’d observed at the roller skating rink. “It was like New York City in the 80s,” he recalls. “It was like the evolution of hip-hop. Atlanta is where it’s going. What these kids are doing is so exciting. It’s amazing. It’s almost like break-dancing on skates. And the energy – I told Robb he had to come down and see it!”

The next trip to Atlanta included Buono, as well as executive producer Tim Bourne. “The three of us went around to skating rinks and I saw it for myself,” explains Buono. “And I was like WOW! Blown away! So even before I had a script, I knew what the heart and soul of the movie was. I knew what the story was about. I knew what the environment was.”

Robinson and Buono decided that there were two parts to the script – the reality of the teenagers’ life experience and the roller skating rink. “Even though the roller skating rink is set in the present,” says Buono, “we wanted to look at it through rose colored glasses, because when you think back on your memories of that time period – no matter what age you are – you see everything bigger. Our goal was to make that roller skating rink a character that grows as we keep coming back, and each time it’s more magical – a *Saturday Night Fever*-like contrast to the reality of life.”

It was on a Sunday night that the Cascade Family Skating Rink in south side Atlanta was discovered. “Chris and I had been to several other rinks,” says Buono. “We got to Cascade about 10:30pm. There were cars parked all along the highway, the parking lots were full and the gas station across the street was full. We had to park about two blocks away and walk in, and there’s such a scene, such energy outside. We’re just in awe. Then we went inside and the energy was even greater.”

Sadly for the filmmakers, the inside of Cascade was no more than a black box with a blank canvas. “It was the lowest common denominator,” sighs Buono. “Everything was bland – gray carpet, the colors were a WalMart blue and maroon – very 80s, and not a good 80s. So it was up to me to turn this rink into a magical place...to determine what was right for its character and for Atlanta.”

He decided on black and red as the rink’s color palette. “Red is an intense and energetic color and matches the energy and excitement of skating. Black is negative space and the more black you use in a space as large as a rink, it makes it bigger and larger than life. It makes the bold color of the red stand out.”

Buono also realized that lighting the rink was going to be a massive challenge. The giant white dropped ceiling afforded no room for the lights so it became necessary to remove it. “With the ceiling out, we realized that because we were going to have all these lights above the rink, they would bounce off the wood floor which would be too bright on the faces, so we had to refinish the floor, making it darker, which gave us a wonderful reflection of whatever lights we put up on the ceiling.”

Rigging for the lights became an artistic challenge for Buono. Working with the art department, the rigging electricians and the rigging grips, he designed a wagon wheel effect that moved with the motion of the skating and allowed the lights to be programmed, aesthetically lighting both ends of the rink and capturing the action of the skating sequences.

Buono gave every other part of the rink its own personality as well. “The skate rental, the snack bar, the arcade – all have their own personality,” he says, “so that while so much is happening on the skating rink, when we come back to the other areas, they don’t get monotonous.”

“We did every inch of that rink,” he continues. “The carpet on the walls, painting the ceiling, putting in the lights, painting the snack bar, changing the color of the tables. We used a lot of neon and bold bright colors.”

There was debate over what the Cascade sign on the outside of the building should look like. “Chris originally thought that the sign should be neon,” says Buono. “We were pretty sure that we wanted a classic old-school metal sign. I took a digital picture of the rink at night and drew in what I thought it should look like and lit it up digitally, and once I showed it to everyone, there was no doubt about what it should be. There are a lot of important things that happen at Cascade and I wanted to design a place that would lure us in – much like the way that old Las Vegas or old Atlantic City used to draw you into the hotel or casino or theater. I wanted the design to be that icon for what Cascade really means.”

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ABOUT THE CAST

TIP HARRIS – also known as rapper “T.I.” – (Rashad) is making his feature film debut with *ATL*. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Harris has been rapping since he was 9-years-old. He signed his first recording deal with Arista Records when he was 19 and released his debut album, *I’m Serious*, before joining Atlantic with his own Grand Hustle imprint. Under the name “T.I.,” Harris generated a powerful underground buzz with the hugely successful Grand Hustle Records mixtapes *In Da Streets, Parts 1 and 2*.

Harris exploded into national prominence in 2003 with *Trap Muzik*, his first Grand Hustle/Atlantic recording. The set debuted at #4 on the Billboard 200 album chart and went on to sell nearly a million units, spawning such top-charters as “24’s,” “Rubber Band Man” and “Let’s Get Away.” With the success of *Trap Muzik*, Harris dramatically clinched his reputation as the self-proclaimed “King of the South.”

Harris returns with *King* on March 28th, his fourth major label full-length solo release, and third through his joint venture deal with Atlantic Records. Picking up where his previous effort left off, *King* (Grand Hustle/Atlantic) builds on the sound and the success of 2004’s *Urban*

Legend – a blockbuster project that debuted at the top of Billboard’s “Top R&B/Hip Hop Albums” chart and at #7 on the Billboard 200; spawned the RIAA platinum-certified single “Bring Em Out;” and the Grammy-nominated smash “U Don’t Know Me” registered over \$3 million in ringtone sales and was certified RIAA platinum, going on to sell over 1.3 million copies in the U.S. alone.

LAUREN LONDON (New-New/Erin) makes her feature film debut in *ATL*. London’s career includes a starring role in the music video “Frontin” with Jay Z and Pharrell, as well as commercials for Nike and Diet Coke.

A native of Los Angeles, London attended Castle Heights Elementary School, where her drama teacher gave her the role of a lion who didn’t speak English. Having to improvise words that she didn’t understand peaked her curiosity and sparked her enthusiasm for acting. After a stint at Palisades High School, London was home schooled, affording her time to audition for films, music videos and commercials.

London currently lives in Los Angeles. Her plans for college are on hold while she pursues her acting career. She studies acting with Michael Wilson and wants to include some classes in psychology to aid in her personal growth and as an actor.

ATL marks **ANTWAN ANDRE PATTON**’s (Marcus) acting debut. Up next, he will star in the feature *Idlewild*, opposite Andre Benjamin. The film is a musical set in the prohibition-era South, where a speakeasy performer and club manager ‘Rooster’ (Patton) must contend with gangsters who have their eyes on his club. His piano player partner (Benjamin) must choose between love or obligations to his father. The *Idlewild* album and film will be released in summer 2006.

In 2004, Patton formed his own Atlanta based record label, *Purple Ribbon*. The label showcases a mixture of established artists as well as young up and coming MC’s and R&B singers. The first album, *Big Boi Presents...Got Purp? Vol. 1*, was released in fall 2004 and was followed up by *Big Boi Presents...Got Purp? Vol. 2* in fall 2005. In 2005 he also joined the world of car racing by investing in the NASCAR World Racing Team. Patton has also

established the Big Kidz foundation which helps children make lifestyle advances through film and music.

Patton, aka Big Boi, is half of the Atlanta-based super duo OutKast. OutKast started their luminous career in 1994 when their classic hit “Player’s Ball” became an unlikely single on LaFace Records’ Christmas album. Soon after, the young duo became the label’s first hip-hop act. Their spectacular debut LP, *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik*, sold one million copies and helped to lay a solid foundation for the current explosion of Southern hip-hop.

With their sophomore LP, *ATLiens*, OutKast showed the world that the South really did have something to say, and 1.5 million people were listening to their trunk-rattlin’ funk, gleaned from the spirit of Sly Stone, Mandrill and George Clinton.

On *Stankonia*, OutKast pushed the envelope even further by revisiting the spirit of George Clinton, Jimi Hendrix and Eddie Hazel, dipping millions of listeners into some good old-fashioned psychedelic hip-hop funk. The record sold five million units worldwide.

For their fifth effort the two decided to take a break and release a greatest hits album, *Big Boi and Dre Present... OutKast*. The record contained three new songs, one of which, “The Whole World,” earned them a coveted Grammy Award for Best Rap Song by a duo or group.

With their sixth release, *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*, OutKast reaffirmed their talent by adding another great album to their ever-expanding catalog of hits, further solidifying their legacy as one of the greatest hip-hop groups of all time.

OutKast has earned 6 Grammy’s, 3 World Music Awards, 3 BET Awards and 4 American Music Awards.

Patton currently lives in Atlanta with his family.

Versatile, instantly funny, terrifying, unforgettable... these are just a few of the phrases used by film and theater critics when describing the characters created by actor **MYKELTI WILLIAMSON** (Uncle George). Named by his grandfather for “Spirit” or “Silent Friend” in the language of Blackfeet Indians, Williamson has quietly built a reputation in Hollywood as one of the most consistently proven actors in the business, delivering stirring and honest performances that capture audiences.

Born in St. Louis Missouri, Williamson began performing on stage at the tender age of nine. Soon after receiving his first taste of the stage, his family moved to California where Williamson continued his education. After graduating from Gene Evans Motion Picture School in San Jose, California, Williamson began working professionally, appearing on several television shows. He made his feature film debut in the Walter Hill-directed feature *Streets of Fire*.

He would subsequently star in Forest Whitaker's *Waiting to Exhale*, partner with Al Pacino in Michael Mann's *Heat*, star alongside Nicolas Cage in *Con Air*, and co-star with his friend Tom Hanks in the critically acclaimed feature *Forrest Gump*.

Among Williamson's other credits are Mike Nichols' *Primary Colors*; *Three Kings*, opposite George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg and Ice Cube; Michael Mann's *Ali*, starring Will Smith; *The Assassination of Richard Nixon* with Sean Penn and *After the Sunset* with Pierce Brosnan. For the small screen, he has appeared in the critically acclaimed HBO telefilm *Soul of the Game*, *The Buffalo Soldiers* for TNT, and *Twelve Angry Men* for Showtime, as well as starring in the cable network's series *Hoop Life*.

Williamson is a recipient of several awards, including the Peabody, The Humanitas, the Los Angeles Theater Award and the American Film Institute's Award of Excellence.

Up next, he will be seen in the Morgan Freeman, Bruce Willis crime drama *Lucky Number Slevin*, *Fatwa* with Lauren Holly, *August Rush* and *Spinning Into Butter*, starring opposite Sarah Jessica Parker.

An aviation enthusiast and devoted family man, Williamson enjoys being active in the church, restoring classic cars and rodeoing in his free time. He currently lives in Southern California with his wife Sondra and his three daughters.

KEITH DAVID (John Garnett) possesses an extraordinary range of talent as evidenced by his body of work. Most recently, he was seen in *Crash*, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* and *Transporter 2*. He won the 2005 Emmy Award for his voice-over narration of Ken Burns' *Unforgivable Blackness: The Jack Johnson Story*. He previously starred in *The Chronicles of Riddick*, the television series *The Big House* and the hit film *Barbershop*. Other film credits include *Agent Cody Banks*, *Hollywood Homicide*, *Requiem for a Dream* and *Pitch Black*. Prior to that, David

was featured in *There's Something About Mary* and *Armageddon*. Other releases include *Dead Presidents* and Spike Lee's *Clockers*.

David gained wide attention in 1986 for his role as King in the Oscar-winning film *Platoon*. He has starred with Gene Hackman and Sharon Stone in *The Quick and the Dead* and with Richard Gere and Kim Basinger in *Final Analysis*. He has also worked with notable directors including: Clint Eastwood in *Bird*, Steven Spielberg in *Always* and John Carpenter in *The Thing* and *They Live*.

Born in Harlem, New York, and raised in East Elmhurst, Queens, David sang in the all-borough choir as a boy. He knew he wanted to act at the age of nine when he appeared as the cowardly lion in his school's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. He later attended New York's famed High School of the Performing Arts and then graduated from Julliard.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

CHRIS ROBINSON (Director) is one of the most prolific and sought after music video directors in the industry who is currently expanding into the world of commercials and feature film. Robinson's work is widely recognized for its cinematic scope, engaging sense of narrative and, occasionally, its humorous irreverence. *ATL* marks his feature film directorial debut.

Artists like Jay-Z, Busta Rhymes, Snoop Dogg, Alicia Keys, P. Diddy, Mary J. Blige, Fat Joe and Big Boi from Outkast, Usher and more have each called on Robinson to lend his dynamic vision to their music. Robinson has also directed a number of recognizable stars who have appeared in his videos including: Jennifer Lopez, Ben Stiller, Samuel L. Jackson, Ice Cube, Shaquille O'Neal, Will Smith, Vivica Fox, Puff Daddy, Lil' Kim and the late Aaliyah.

An award-winning video director, Robinson has been nominated for BET's Video of the Year category for the past three years, most recently for Alicia Keys "You Don't Know My Name." He won the award in 2003 for his work on Erykah Badu featuring Common "Love of My Life" and, in 2002, for Busta Rhymes featuring P. Diddy and Pharrell "Pass the Courvoisier."

Taking an active role behind the scenes as well, Robinson is the founder of Robot Films, which provides urban marketing services for companies that desire to reach the audience that he

caters to with his video and commercial work. One of the first notable projects for Robot Films is a community service campaign that encourages volunteerism in young adults, RockCorps.

ATL marks **TINA GORDON CHISM**'s (Screenwriter) second collaboration with producer Dallas Austin. Their first feature film, *Drumline*, was released in 2002.

ANTWONE FISHER (Story by) is a screenwriter and producer working in Hollywood since 1992. Fisher wrote the screenplay and served as co-producer on *Antwone Fisher*, a story based on his life.

Fisher has sold numerous screenplays and also wrote the highly successful book of poems Who Will Cry For The Little Boy (William Morrow), and his memoirs Finding Fish (William Morrow), a New York Times Bestseller. He is currently working on the follow up to Finding Fish, tentatively titled Finding More Fish.

JAMES LASSITER (Producer) is partnered with Will Smith in Overbrook Entertainment, a production company specializing in film, television, and music. His most recent film *The Pursuit of Happyness*, starring Will Smith, will be out later this year. He produced *Hitch* and *Ali*, both starring Will Smith, as well as *Saving Face* with Joan Chen. Lassiter served as an executive producer on the sci-fi thriller *I, Robot* and *Showtime*, starring Robert De Niro and Eddie Murphy.

Lassiter is also an executive producer on Overbrook's newest television series *All of Us* for UPN, and was an executive producer on the Fox sitcom *Getting Personal*.

Additionally, Lassiter produced the soundtracks for *Wild*, *Wild West* and *Men in Black*, both winners of the American Music Award for Favorite Soundtrack.

He won the 2001 Outer Critics Award for *Jitney*, an Off-Broadway play written by August Wilson.

Since he launched his entertainment career in the late 1980s, **WILL SMITH** (Producer) has become a man of diverse successes. He has made two multi-platinum records, has starred on a hit television comedy series, and become one of the entertainment industry's most sought after

leading men. He has also been nominated for an Academy Award and has recently become a producer.

Smith also serves as executive producer, along with his wife, Jada Pinkett Smith, on *All of Us*, a comedy series for UPN in its third season. It is about blended families and is loosely based on the couple's own experiences.

Smith most recently starred in the hit romantic comedy *Hitch*. He also voiced the central character 'Oscar' for the animated feature *Shark Tale*, a box office giant. Smith's next movie, which he is also producing, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, is slated for release later this year.

His succession of hit movies in July has earned the title of "Big Willy Weekend." *Bad Boys*, *Independence Day*, *Men In Black*, *Bad Boys II*, *Men In Black II*, and most recently *I, Robot* have all been top box office films.

Smith's film credits include *Ali*, for which he received an Academy Award nomination for his portrayal of the famed boxer. *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, directed by Robert Redford earned him a NAACP Award nomination for Best Actor. In the box office hit *Wild, Wild West*, his theme song went gold and the soundtrack, produced by Overbrook, went platinum. He thrilled audiences in the suspenseful *Enemy of the State* and starred in two of the 50 all-time top grossing films worldwide – 1997's summer smash *Men In Black*, additionally recording the Grammy-winning title song, and 1996's *Independence Day*. Smith also starred in *Bad Boys*, one of the largest grossing films of 1995.

His box office strength has come full circle – Smith was first recognized by NATO/ShoWest as the "Male Star of Tomorrow" in 1995 and he was honored with "Male Star of the Year" in 2002. In addition, he won the International Box Office Achievement Award in 1997 and was named "1999 Entertainer of the Year" by the NAACP Image Awards.

His other film work includes a critically acclaimed performance in the Oscar-nominated *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Made in America* and *Where the Day Takes You*.

A legendary music sensation, Smith made his first record as a high school senior and subsequently embarked on a rap career with friend Jeff Townes. DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince recorded several platinum and multi-platinum albums, winning two Grammys and three American Music Awards. Smith's first solo album, *Big Willie Style*, has sold 8 million copies. His album *Willennium* and the featured single "Will2K" went double platinum, selling over 2

million copies each. Smith's latest album *Lost & Found* has struck a chord with fans and is readily moving up the charts.

Smith made his transition into television as the star of *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, a sitcom created for him by Quincy Jones. The hit NBC series wrapped its sixth and final season in 1996.

Smith is partnered with James Lassiter in Overbrook Entertainment.

JODY GERSON (Producer) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and began her career in the entertainment business simply by growing up around it. Her father and grandfather, Charles and Dallas Gerson, owned and operated the legendary Latin Casino Nightclub where at a young age, Gerson was introduced to the talents of stellar artists such as Frank Sinatra, Diana Ross, Richard Pryor and the Temptations, among others. This experience so influenced Gerson, she chose a career that would enable her to discover and develop artists for years to come.

After graduating from Northwestern, Gerson moved to New York City to become a songplugger for Chappell Music. By joining one of the world's largest and most successful music publishing companies, at the time, she was able work closely with cutting edge writers and artists such as R.E.M., Rod Stewart and Bernie Taupin, among others. She spent six years at Chappell Music before she was hired by Martin Bandier to head up EMI Music Publishing's East Coast Creative division. It was at EMI that she immediately signed the group Nelson (the sons of Ricky Nelson), who went on to sell three million records and tour the world.

In 1991, Gerson moved to Los Angeles to run EMI's West Coast Operations. It was there that she signed and built a stable of some of the most cutting edge and innovative talent in the industry. Gerson's first signing was the multi-platinum hip-hop band Arrested Development, who went on to win the Grammy Award for Best New Artist in 1993.

It was around this time that Gerson sensed a new R&B sound emanating from Atlanta where she went and signed two young writer/producers named Jermaine Dupri and Dallas Austin. Signing the two exclusively to EMI Music, Gerson had created a hit factory as they each went on to write and produce songs for such multi-platinum acts as Kriss Kross, TLC, Madonna, Boyz II Men, Another Bad Creation, Monica, Usher, Mariah Carey and Janet Jackson, among others. Diverse in her musical tastes, Gerson was also interested in a number of other musical

sounds and during this period (1994-1997) worked closely with the Beastie Boys' label Grand Royal and signed artists Luscious Jackson, N'Dea Davenport, Deborah Cox and Blind Melon to EMI Music Publishing.

Always a step ahead of the public's choice in music, Gerson once again sensed a "new sound," this time coming from the Latin community. In 1997, she signed the Grammy Award winning recording artist Enrique Iglesias, who has gone on to record such worldwide #1 hits as "Bailamos," "Rhythm Divine," "Hero" and "Escape" from the 10 million selling album of the same name.

And again, known for spotting talent early and having the foresight to develop it, Gerson signed Alicia Keys in 1996 when the artist was fifteen-years-old. Her first record "Songs in A Minor" has been a worldwide phenomenon, winning 5 Grammy Awards in 2002, (including "Best New Artist" and "Song Of the Year,") and selling over 10 million records worldwide.

Adding another smash to the EMI Music Publishing roster, Gerson heard the music of Norah Jones in early 2002, and signed her to the publishing company immediately. In 2003, Jones earned 5 Grammy Awards for her album *Come Away With Me*, proving that once again, Gerson had heard the hits ahead of the curve. Gerson's vast list of innovative and cutting-edge signings to EMI have also included Blackground Entertainment (Aaliyah), T-Boz (TLC), Rooney, Van Hunt and Lostprophets, among others. Most recently, Gerson was responsible for signing Kelly Clarkson, who earned 2 Grammy Awards this year for her 8 million selling CD, *Breakaway*.

Along with Gerson's music business success, she produced the successful movie *Drumline* along with Dallas Austin and Wendy Finerman (*Forrest Gump*).

DALLAS AUSTIN (Producer) is one of the most sought after producers in the entertainment business. His creativity and innovative style have shaped the sound of today's pop and R&B music worldwide and, in recent years, have created a presence for Austin in the film and television industry. He produced his first motion picture project *Drumline* in 2002, which was based on his own life experience in a high school marching band. Following *Drumline*, Austin teamed up with friend and actor Orlando Jones for *The Orlando Jones Show* as the

show's music director. In 2004, he could be seen weekly as a judge on Missy Elliot's *Road to Stardom* on UPN.

Austin was born in Columbus, Georgia, where he began playing guitar and keyboards at the age of seven. He quickly became adept at playing drums, bass guitar, harmonica and any other instrument that was needed to further his understanding of music and production.

Following his move to Atlanta in 1986, he started playing in local bands. Soon afterward he produced his first Motown single "Mr. DJ" by former Klymaxx member Joyce "Fenderella" Irby, featuring a rap by Doug E. Fresh. It went to number two on Billboard's R&B charts in spring 1989.

Since the late 80s, Austin has produced more than 50 hit singles which have debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 list with 17 songs spending numerous weeks in the Top 10 list. He has had multiple Billboard number one hits, including "The Boy is Mine" from Brandy and Monica, and TLC's "Creep." Additionally, Austin's work with TLC on the group's critically acclaimed *Fanmail* album resulted in a Grammy for best R&B album at the 42nd Annual Grammy Awards in 1999.

The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS) honored him during its 3rd annual Heroes Awards. This is the highest honor bestowed by an Academy Chapter and is given to honor outstanding individuals and institutions in the Georgia region that have improved the environment for the creative community. In 2004, he received the Beacon Award from the Independent Media Artists of Georgia, Etc. (IMAGE) for his contribution to film during the Fourth Academy Awards ceremony.

As a result of his success, this multi-talented music and film producer is the creator and sole proprietor of a production company, a studio with three facilities, a record company, a film company, a merchandising and marketing company and three publishing companies, thus positioning Austin as one of the industry's top creative executives and business maven. His Rowdy Records Label produced and released the soundtrack to Tyler Perry's *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* and has two releases with Da Bac Wudz, a hip hop act and Dropsonic, a rock band.

Even with his many ventures, Austin remains heavily involved in the Dallas Austin Foundation, which he created in 2003 to develop the talents and skill set of urban youth by

exposing them to various facets of the music and entertainment industries. Key initiatives of the foundation include a college scholarship program, and the recently launched “Don’t Stop the Music” program, which was created to teach kids the ins and outs of the music business, while providing an alternative resource for music instruction during this period of decreasing arts funding in public schools.

TIMOTHY M. BOURNE (Executive Producer) was born and raised on Manhattan, New York’s upper west side, the fourth generation of a family steeped in film and theatrical history. But it wasn’t theater or film that beckoned to him. Exposed to show business through summer stock with the Yale Repertory Theater and The John Drew Theater in Easthampton, Long Island, Bourne decided that show business wasn’t for him and, for the next several years, he pursued his dream of being a chef.

While on vacation in New York visiting his father, production designer Mel Bourne, the young Bourne was asked if he would assist on a location scout for Woody Allen’s *A Midsummer Night’s Sex Comedy*. He agreed and the favor turned into a job for the rest of the production. Bourne stayed in New York working as location manager on Allen’s *Zelig*, *Broadway Danny Rose*, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, and as an assistant production manager for *Radio Days*.

Bourne has been attached to all of Penny Marshall’s movies, serving as co-producer for *Renaissance Man*, *The Preacher’s Wife* and *Riding in Cars With Boys*; and as production manager for *Big*, *Awakenings* and *A League of Their Own*. He worked on *Heartburn* and *Working Girl* for director Mike Nichols, and with Barbra Streisand on *The Prince of Tides*.

Other films Bourne has worked on include *The Muppets Take Manhattan*, *Everybody Wins*, *Sleeping With the Enemy*, *Bastard Out of Carolina*, *Summer Catch* and *A Walk to Remember*. He produced Andy Tennant’s *Ever After*, starring Drew Barrymore; The Jim Henson Company’s *Muppets From Space* and *The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland*. Most recently he produced *Drumline* and *Mr. 3000* for director Charles Stone III. Bourne has lived in Wilmington, NC since 1988 when he went there to work on *Everybody Wins*, a film written by Arthur Miller, starring Nick Nolte and Debra Winger.

He has three children – a 9 year-old daughter, Camille, a 5 year-old son, Lukas, and a 23 year-old son, Seamus, who is an aspiring production designer. Having studied at the drawing

board of his grandfather Mel, Seamus is the fifth generation set to carry on the family's legacy.

Many stars twinkle in the show business sky, but few shine as bright as **TIONNE “T-BOZ” WATKINS** (Executive Producer). As the lead singer of one of the most successful female groups of all time, TLC, T-Boz is a contemporary legend.

In addition to her celebrated singing career, she has also worked as an actress, appearing in Hype Williams' *Belly* and various sitcoms. Watkins is poised to take the world of children's fashion by storm with the opening of Chase's Closet. This is the first high end children's store in the south and the first and only celebrity owned children's boutique.

Born on April 26th, 1970 in Des Moines, Iowa, Watkins and her family moved from the Midwest when she was nine years old. After settling in Atlanta, she embarked upon a brief stint as a hair stylist. Fate intercepted and halted Watkins' styling aspirations when she auditioned for a teenage music group, Second Nature. The group soon attracted the attention of Perri “Pebbles” Reid and her husband, L.A. Reid, of LaFace Records. After the addition of Rozanda “Chilli” Thomas and Lisa “Left Eye” Lopez, the group was signed in 1991 as TLC. TLC would go on to become the most accomplished act in the history of the label. They experienced unprecedented success, sold over 33 million albums, received numerous Grammy's, MTV, Soul Train, Billboard and Lady of Soul Awards and amassed enough platinum records to fill up a room.

In addition to her work in TLC, Watkins has done some solo recordings, including the singles “Touch Myself” off the *Fled* soundtrack and “My Getaway” off the *Rugrats in Paris* soundtrack. She has also appeared on countless albums of high profile recording artists.

Watkins' success is not without adversity, however. As a small child, she was stricken with sickle cell anemia and initially hid details of her ailment from others. Watkins decided to go public with the disease in 1996 and today is actively involved in many philanthropic causes and serves as a spokesperson for the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America.

Back and ready for the spotlight, Watkins is busy at work with the new UPN reality show *R U The Girl?*, a reality show designed to find one lucky girl to perform with T-Boz and Chilli in a special concert. In 2000, she became the proud mother of daughter Chase, the namesake of her Houston boutique.

Inspired by her love of fashion and her desire to dress her daughter in only the best clothing, Watkins paired up with her former personal shopper to open the only place that offers baby and toddler couture in the south, Chase's Closet. Watkins will also soon be launching her new candle collection, Anela's Way.

Legends are made of determination, stamina, and drive in the face of adversity. They have a vision and like T-Boz, will not let any amount of adversity intercept their road to success. Watkins has continuously shown the world that she has these tools – hence a legend – has been born.

CRASH (Director of Photography) makes his film debut with *ATL*.

Raised in New York, Crash started out in the motion picture business at age 19 working as a grip. After working his way up to gaffer, he attended the American Film Institute and graduated in 1993.

He has filmed over 30 videos, many of them for director Chris Robinson, and was a nominee for the 2003 MTV Music Video Award for Missy Elliott's "One Minute Man."

Some of the artists with whom he has worked include: Big Punisher, Jennifer Lopez, Brandy, DMX, Nate Dog, Javier, Dave Navarro, Busta Rhymes and Snoop Dogg.

ROBB BUONO (Production Designer) has worked on hundreds of productions all over the world with such creative and diverse directors as Michel Gondry, Marcus Nispel, David Kellogg, Hype Williams, Wayne Isham, Jessy Terrero, Chris Robinson and Jake Nava.

Buono's commercial clients include many Fortune 500 companies like Coca Cola, Nike, Reebok, Jeep, Ford, Toyota, Tommy Hilfiger, Budweiser and Coors. His music video work includes artists Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan, Jay-Z, Snoop Dogg and Alicia Keys.

Buono has received two MTV "Best Art Direction" nominations for Alicia Keys' "You Don't Know My Name" and Slum Village's "Tainted," both directed by Chris Robinson.

He was the production designer on *Soul Plane* and was featured in the Hollywood Reporter's 2004 "One of the Next Generation Craft Artists to Watch." Buono developed his unique vision by spending time in the camera department and mastering the art of cinematography, designing numerous installations and playing guitar in a rock band.

DAVID BLACKBURN (Editor) was born in London, England and is the son of comedy writer Bryan Blackburn.

Working with directors such as Paul Hunter, Motion Theory and Joseph Kahn, Blackburn has edited music videos for Eminem, Gwen Stefani, Will Smith and Mariah Carey. He was nominated for MTV's best editing VMA for Eminem's "Without Me," and won the Best Editing MVPA in 2005 for Blink 182's video "Always."

Blackburn has also cut commercials for clients such as Playstation, NASCAR and Budweiser before making the transition to feature films, where his recent features include *Torque* and additional editor on *Catwoman*.

One of the most accomplished new voices in film music, **AARON ZIGMAN** (Composer) is rapidly establishing a glowing reputation for his exquisite, lyrical and highly evocative scores.

Zigman made his feature debut writing the music for director Nick Cassavetes' critically acclaimed drama *John Q*, starring Denzel Washington. Their collaboration continued with the romance *The Notebook*, starring Gena Rowlands and James Garner, based on the Nicholas Sparks novel; as well as the upcoming crime drama *Alpha Dog*, starring Sharon Stone and Justin Timberlake.

Zigman's upcoming scoring projects include *Akeelah and the Bee*, starring Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne; and *Flicka*, the remake of the 1943 film which spawned the television series, based on the novel My Friend Flicka by Mary O'Hara. The film will be released in July 2006.

Zigman is an accomplished composer of concert works, having written numerous symphonic pieces. Among his works is a 35 minute long tone poem divided into 5 movements, written as a tribute for Yitzhak Rabin, which was performed by the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony. The USC Symphony orchestra recently performed Zigman's "Impressions," a suite for wind ensemble.

Zigman has also worked extensively as a music producer, arranger and writer for such recording artists as Christina Aguilera, Seal, Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole, Oleta Adams, Phil

Collins, Tina Turner, Patti Labelle, Chicago, Nona Gaye, Carly Simon, the Pointer Sisters, Huey Lewis and Big Mountain.

His song work has been featured on such film soundtracks as *Mulan*, *Buster*, *What's Love Got To Do With It?*, *The Bird Cage*, *License to Kill*, *Pocahontas* and *Corrina, Corrina*.

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