



## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

Disney's "High School Musical" phenomenon leaps onto the big screen in **"High School Musical 3: Senior Year,"** in which the world's favorite high school students (ZAC EFRON, VANESSA HUDGENS, ASHLEY TISDALE, LUCAS GRABEEL, CORBIN BLEU and MONIQUE COLEMAN) hit senior year. Amidst a basketball championship, prom and a big spring musical featuring all of the Wildcats, Troy and Gabriella vow to make every moment last as their lifelong college dreams put the future of their relationship in question. A crew of sophomore Wildcats (MATT PROKOP, JUSTIN MARTIN, JEMMA MCKENZIE-BROWN) joins in the fun as the film's incredible new music and exciting dance numbers take maximum advantage of the big screen.

Other actors reprising their roles from the first two Disney Channel movies include OLESYA RULIN, CHRIS WARREN JR., RYNE SANBORN, KAYCEE STROH, BART JOHNSON and ALYSON REED.

Walt Disney Pictures presents "High School Musical 3: Senior Year," directed and choreographed by Emmy Award®-winning Kenny Ortega. Ortega, who helmed the first two films for Disney Channel, also adds new duties as executive producer. "High School Musical 3: Senior Year" is produced by Bill Borden and Barry Rosenbush; Don Schain serves as co-producer. Peter Barsocchini, veteran HSM writer, penned the screenplay.

Behind-the-scenes talent includes director of photography Daniel Aranyó (Disney Channel's "High School Musical 2," "The Cheetah Girls 2"), production designer Mark Hofeling ("High School Musical," "High School Musical 2," "Minutemen"), editor Don Brochu ("The American Mall," "The Fugitive"), and costume designer Caroline B. Marx ("The Killing Room," TV's "Gilmore Girls"). Director Ortega shares choreographer duties with Charles "Chucky" Klapow and Bonnie Story—the three earned an Outstanding Choreography Emmy® for "High School Musical." Composer David Lawrence and music supervisor Steven Vincent also return. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures distributes.

## **BIRTH OF AN ENTERTAINMENT PHENOMENON**

### **An A'HA Moment – *Kids Really Do Love Musicals***

The phenomenon of “High School Musical” started out as an idea in producer Bill Borden’s living room. “I wanted to make a musical that I could sit down and watch with my kids. It was that simple,” says Borden.

Although the musical had seen somewhat of a revival with the success of adult fare such as “Moulin Rouge!” and “Chicago,” no one was making musicals for the teen audience. “Bill and I are true believers in this particular genre— the musical for teens,” says Borden’s producing partner Barry Rosenbush. “With the first movie, we weren’t trying to invent the wheel... we were trying to *reintroduce* the wheel.

“Movie history is filled with musical comedy for teens,” continues Rosenbush. “The movies back in the ‘30s and ‘40s, the movies that we grew to love—“Westside Story,” “The Sound of Music,” and later “Grease”—were all for young people.”

Borden and Rosenbush were already working with writer Peter Barsocchini on another project when the idea for “High School Musical” gained momentum; they tapped him to write the screenplay.

“They said they were doing a Disney project that involved music and sports,” says Barsocchini. “The world of music and sports was familiar to me—I played basketball during my youth and I was a music critic in the late ‘60s in San Francisco.”

Multi-talented director/choreographer Kenny Ortega then joined the trio to bring this musical idea to the small screen. “Kenny has many unique talents which make him a really fantastic director,” says Borden. “He is a musician. He’s a great dancer. He’s a choreographer. He’s an actor. He really does mold the screenplay. He can take a concept and make it come alive in a musical like no other person in the world. Kenny really is an amazing force of nature.”

“All I’ve ever tried to do here with High School Musical was to enjoy telling a story from a musical point of view in a light-hearted and joyful way without having an overly complicated story and overly complicated characters,” says Ortega. “I just try to bring it to life with as much fun and joy and color and excitement as possible.”

The team fathered a creative phenomenon that would come to include cable television’s highest ever rated telecast, the two highest ever rated Disney Channel movies, two multi-platinum soundtracks, a concert tour, an ice show, numerous awards and accolades, and a source of inspiration to teens worldwide. “There’s something about teenage life that is the same all around the world,” says Borden.

## **SENIORS’ STORY**

### **Growing Up... and Making Choices**

Bringing HSM from Disney Channel to a feature film was a dream-come-true for Ortega. “I’ve always wanted to direct a musical for the big screen.”

So when it came time to continue the Wildcats' story in a big-screen format, Ortega was ready. "The first thing out of Kenny Ortega's mouth was 'I don't want to remake the first two movies. I want to be true to the 'High School Musical' feeling, but I want to let these kids grow up,'" remembers Barsocchini. "They're high school seniors, so let's give them the pressures that high school seniors have about prom, finals, graduation and going away. There's a balance—we're making musical comedy but we want to try and base it in some emotional reality."

Ortega revels in being a part of a creative endeavor. "Peter has given us a wonderful blue print and has been there with me all along in the development of the song placement," he says. "We were able to do workshops with the actors and throw some improv out there. The last drafts of this script were actually done in the company of all the actors and dancers in the rehearsal studio."

Adds Borden, "Even though HSM3 is a big-screen feature film, we wanted to make sure it came out of the same world and has the same feeling as the first two."

The filmmakers admit that a major motion picture's screen size and production crew did allow them to up the ante. "'High School Musical 3' features bigger musical numbers with more difficult choreography and more dancers, more elaborate sets with more complicated lighting and sound, and more detailed and fabulous costumes," says Ortega.

## **CASTING**

### **Now or Never: What is your legacy as a team?**

Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens, Ashley Tisdale, Lucas Grabeel, Corbin Bleu and Monique Coleman return to the roles they created in the international smash hit "High School Musical" and the record-breaking "High School Musical 2," that catapulted them to the center of the worldwide HSM phenomenon.

"One of the untold stories of the High School Musical franchise is how talented the cast really is," says Barsocchini. "Yes, they've all become teen idols. But they're good young actors. Our principal cast has molded those characters into something that kids love. That's the secret."

Ortega adds, "The chemistry the kids have with each other elevates it and makes it something more than just telling a fun story. They are the most generous lot you could ever hope to work with. They really come to work with the right things on their minds."

Everyone's favorite high school sweethearts Troy Bolton and Gabriella Montez—played by Zac Efron and Vanessa Hudgens—still front the troupe.

"I'm very excited for 'High School Musical 3' to be on the big screen," says Efron. "This is what we've been waiting for, what we've been working towards, and it feels great because I feel like we earned it. We're just regular kids that made 'High School Musical' and now it's progressing."

Efron has grown up with his character. “Troy is a lot of different things,” he says. “He’s a very average kid going through high school, dealing with every day choices. But the fun thing about him is that he’s got these hidden talents. So Troy’s got a lot to balance: his basketball career, his newfound love of singing, and then of course, Gabriella. What’ll happen to them after high school? You don’t know. It’s like typical high school drama that we get to sing about.”

According to writer Peter Barsocchini, the Troy Bolton character was inspired by the great Pittsburgh Steelers football player Lynn Swan. Barsocchini went to high school with Swan; they played on the same basketball team. “One day we were riding on a bus to a game and he said ‘You know, I’d really like to try ballet,’” says Barsocchini. “There’s the character. There’s so much pressure on kids to be cool that it’s tough to do something different.”

Adds co-producer Don Schain, “One of the big lessons from the first movie is to break stereotypes. The power forward wants to be a pastry chef. The star basketball player wants to be a thespian. The message to children is that you can be whatever you want to be.”

“Troy Bolton has always planned to go to the local university with his best friend Chad,” explains Borden. “Now, because of his relationship with Gabriella and his relationship with the stage, he has some choices to make.”

But Efron’s character isn’t the only one with choices, says the producer. “Vanessa’s character is given a choice to go away to an early acceptance program at Stanford University.”

Adds Hudgens, “Gabriella has always been ruled by her head. In this movie, you see her kind of being torn by her heart and her head—making tough decisions, trying to figure out what to do with friends, family, relationships, school.”

Ortega appreciates Hudgens’ unique blend of talents. “She continues to amaze me in the way that she grows as an actress. This girl can dance. This girl can sing. This girl can act. She’s funny, she’s everything. She’s a real leading lady.”

“Shooting ‘High School Musical 3’ has been the most fun I’ve had on any of the movies,” says Hudgens. “We’re all close now and we got to be with each other every day, working, goofing off and just being kids.”

Hudgens says she was home schooled, experiencing many of the typical high school experiences through HSM. “I’ve never been to a prom, so through this movie I got to experience my prom. I never went to my graduation, but I got to wear a cap and gown.”

Ashley Tisdale returns to her signature role as Sharpay Evans. “Sharpay is a character who the world loves,” says Barsocchini. “There’s a part of every kid who would like to be Sharpay. She’s a mean girl with a heart of gold—sort of. The name Sharpay actually comes from a dog who bit me.”

“She is obviously the diva,” says Tisdale. “You love to hate her. Sharpay’s the one who stirs the pot. But, I think deep down—really, really, really, really deep down—she’s probably really sweet. Probably.”

“Ashley’s my girl,” says Ortega. “She’s just one in a million. I think Ashley is a classic in the making. I think she can deliver on many, many levels. She’s just a fun spirit.”

In the story, Sharpay, Ryan, Kelsi and a surprised Troy are up for *one* prestigious Juilliard scholarship. “Of course, Sharpay wants to get that scholarship and does everything she can to eliminate the competition,” explains Borden.

Lucas Grabeel reprised his role as Sharpay’s enigmatic brother Ryan Evans. “He’s a show-stealer,” says Ortega of Grabeel’s character. “It’s always been Sharpay’s show and in this film, Ryan explodes onto the screen. Ryan really blossoms and you get a greater sense of him than ever before.”

According to Grabeel, his onscreen brother-sister relationship has become an off-screen reality. “We’re a true brother and sister duo and it’s been great to have that. There’s an energy between us, we bounce off each other really well.”

“Lucas is absolutely wonderful, a great all-around actor, dancer and singer,” says Borden. “He’s created a character that is nothing like him in real life. Lucas is gentle, laid back and a really sweet guy. On screen, he’s hysterical.”

Adds Ortega, “He’s a wonderful improvisational actor as well as a wonderful studied actor and technician. He has some great dance numbers in HSM3 and he takes it to the edge.”

Corbin Bleu brings his character’s love of basketball to the big screen. “Chad’s a typical jock,” says Bleu. “He lives, eats and breathes basketball. He loves being around his friends, he loves being around Troy, and he has a nice girlfriend in Taylor.”

“Chad Danforth is a character I am very close to as a writer, because I grew up in a gym,” says Barsocchini. “I spent countless hours in smelly gym socks shooting baskets. Chad is not a conflicted character. He’s a guy who loves playing basketball and he wants to play in college.”

According to Barsocchini, Chad’s dilemma comes when Troy Bolton begins to question his own future. “Chad’s defined his own life by his experience with his best friend.”

Adds Bleu, “This movie explores friendship and camaraderie, the bond that’s been built between these two brothers and how it’s changing. It’s the joy in seeing a friend move on and do what he wants to do, and at the same time the sadness of losing a partner.”

Borden credits the actor. “Corbin is an amazing athletic dancer. He’s also a great actor.”

Adds Ortega, “He prides himself on being prepared. Corbin works as hard as anybody I’ve ever known. He’ll take one step and he’ll just drill it until he feels absolutely 100 percent about it. Corbin came up with the idea of Chad walking around with a basketball under his arm. He slept with that basketball. He didn’t let that basketball out of his sight until he felt that he owned it.”

Monique Coleman returns as Taylor McKessie. “For ‘Senior Year,’ Taylor has



a lot more responsibility—student body president and yearbook editor—which I think is very fitting and a pretty natural progression for this character,” says Coleman. “She’s really in her element. She has been ready to graduate since she started school; she’s ready to run the world.”

But in HSM3, Coleman’s character adds girlfriend to her resume. “It’s interesting because in the previous movies, Taylor has been strictly independent. It’s great to see her enhanced by the fact that she just adores Chad Danforth,” giggles Coleman. “Still, I think that it’s important for young girls to see a character whose strength isn’t about her relationship with a boy.”

Barsocchini says Taylor has always known what she wants and that doesn’t change in HSM3. “Taylor, like Chad, is not a conflicted character,” says the writer. “She sees no boundaries to what she can achieve and she’s willing to do the work. We’ve had thousands of letters from parents that say ‘thank you’ for having a character who does her homework. She’s got her eye on the prize.”

“I feel like what people see on-screen is magic and it comes from the fact that Kenny will not settle for just singing and dancing and acting,” says Coleman. “We are required to tell a story and be truthful about these kids’ lives.”

Ortega returns the compliment. “Monique is like the candle in the dark,” he says. “She never lets us fail ourselves as a team, a family, a group, a posse, a franchise.”

Actress Olesya Rulin once again brings to life Kelsi Nielsen, who is the composer of the Spring Musical called “Senior Year.” Says Rulin, “For me, it’s been a pleasure to see Kelsi change from the first movie, in which she’s shy, very quiet and almost unnoticed—to the second movie, in which she’s not only made friends, but she’s a little bit more comfortable with herself. Now, in HSM3, Kelsi’s really come out of her shell.”

Chris Warren and Ryne Sanborn return to leave their legacy as champion Wildcats basketball teammates Zeke Baylor and Jason Cross.

“Zeke is still a jock who likes to bake and he’s still in love with Sharpay,” says Warren.

In the story, Zeke gets to go to prom with Sharpay, so Warren had to learn how to waltz with Ashley Tisdale—much to the delight of their castmates. Says Hudgens, “Ashley and Chris have this brother-sister, love-hate relationship and they mess around with each other. Watching them dancing together was hysterical, like an old married couple.”

Warren also developed a close sibling-like relationship with his basketball co-star Ryne Sanborn. “We became really good friends from the beginning because neither of us was a dancer. We both came from playing sports. We had to put in extra time rehearsing.”

KayCee Stroh’s pop-lock brainiac Martha Cox becomes a Wildcat cheerleader for the big screen. “I’m just so excited for Martha because throughout each movie, she’s stepped out of her comfort zone a little bit more,” says Stroh. “In the first, she’s

a shy little brainiac who secretly loves to dance. In the second, you see her coming out of her shell. Now, in the third she is *head* cheerleader. I feel it's a great message—if you want to step out of your box and change, you can.”

Bart Johnson and Alyson Reed reprise their roles as Coach Jack Bolton and Ms. Darbus.

Johnson enjoys the line his character has to walk. “It’s an interesting dynamic that Coach Bolton has because he’s not just a hardnosed coach and he’s not just a loving dad. He’s trying to balance between the two.”

Reed is thrilled to be a part of the big screen extravaganza. “We have a full orchestra—a real youth orchestra. We also have a real youth choir singing,” she says. “And it’s all going to be 40 feet tall. It’s unbelievable.”

Also returning are Leslie Wing Pomeroy as Mrs. Bolton, Socorro Herrera as Mrs. Montez, Robert Curtis Brown and Jessica Tuck as Mr. and Mrs. Evans, and Joey Miyashima as school principal Matsui.

### New Wildcats

Filmmakers cast Matt Prokop (“Hannah Montana,” “The Office”) as Jimmie ‘the Rocket’ Zara, Justin Martin (TV’s “A Raisin in the Sun,” “The Express,” “Black Water Transit,” “The Soloist”) as Donny Dion, and British actress Jemma McKenzie-Brown (“The Amazing Mrs. Pritchard,” “M.I. High”) as Tiara Gold.

“To find the three new actors, we auditioned thousands of kids and it came down to 15 kids that we thought had star quality,” explains Borden. “We brought them into a dance studio and had them sing, dance, play sports. In the end, the final three had some magic that we felt would transfer to the big screen.”

Adds Ortega, “There’s that certain kind of effervescence, energy and excitement, a chemistry that is underneath the words, the music, the dancing that some of these kids carry into the room with them. And you want to know them and spend time with them.

“From the first day they arrived, they came in ready and excited,” continues Ortega. “I felt like we made really great choices. All of them come from good schooling and experience. In a matter of hours they were a part of the team.”

“When we thought about introducing new characters, the one thing that we all said was we do not want to find the ‘new Troy’ or the ‘new Taylor,’” says Borden. “We want to find new characters, we don’t want to clone anyone. That isn’t how school or life really is and that isn’t how we want these actors to be perceived.”

“Each new class is a new start,” adds Rosenbush. “Each new adventure is your experience to understand and to learn and to exercise your talents and your aspirations. So by watching Matt, Justin and Jemma in these new character roles, we’re going to see them find themselves. But they’re still dealing in this magical world of East High.”

“Jimmie ‘the Rocket’ Zara is your classic sophomore,” says writer Barsochinni. “When you’re that age, you think you rule the world. He’s a young kid

on the basketball team who really idolizes Troy Bolton. But on the other hand, sophomores think they're the coolest thing in the world. We wanted that kind of character at East High."

Actor Matt Prokop, 18, was thrilled to be cast as the rocker-wannabe. "It's a dream. I would have never thought in my life that I would be in a musical—I didn't sing and didn't dance before HSM3," he says. "It's kind of scary because everyone's heard of 'High School Musical' and now it's going to be in theatres."

Justin Martin was cast as Donny Dion, best friend to Jimmie and towel boy for the basketball team. Explains Borden, "Those two guys hang out and they're kind of like Abbott and Costello. They're an unlikely team, which is really fun."

Adds Barsocchini, "Of the pair, Donny Dion is the brains of the operation. Donny checks out the depth of the water before he jumps in the pool."

Martin adds, "He's sort of a chill character. He balances out crazy Jimmie. He idolizes Troy and Chad and hopes to be like them, but also wants to get them out of the school so he and his partner-in-crime Jimmie can take over."

Martin's family shared in his excitement of being involved in the project. "I have an 8-year old sister who thinks I'm the coolest brother ever," says Martin.

The search for the Tiara character took filmmakers across the pond to find Jemma McKenzie-Brown. "When we met Jemma, we thought this girl can do a lot of things," says Barsocchini. "She's got some sophisticated abilities. We knew we could give this character of Tiara more colors in the rainbow than we originally thought."

Adds Ortega, "Jemma's smart, sophisticated beyond her years and funny. She's effervescent and a ball of fun. She can sing. She can dance. I think she's got that thing that Ashley has."

"Tiara transfers to East High from England," explains Barsocchini. "She's a couple years younger than our principle characters and might have a couple surprises up her sleeve."

"She becomes Sharpay's personal assistant—her Mini-Me," adds McKenzie-Brown. "She looks up to Sharpay and sorts out her diva demands, but secretly, Tiara is conniving. She's the naughty one, Sharpay's a diva—together we're a nightmare."

The veteran cast members opened their arms to the new arrivals. "It's great having the new cast members," says Coleman. "It totally parallels real high school."

## **LET THE MUSIC PLAY**

### **A Big Screen Soundtrack for a Big Screen Story**

Composer David Lawrence and music supervisor Steven Vincent continue the HSM tradition. The soundtrack for "High School Musical 3: Senior Year" features ten all-new songs penned by several of the hit songwriters/producers from past HSM smash records, including "Now or Never" (Matthew Gerrard/Robbie Nevil), "Right Here, Right Now" (Jamie Houston), "I Want It All" (Matthew Gerrard/Robbie Nevil),



“Can I Have This Dance” (Adam Anders/Nikki Hassman), “A Night to Remember” (Matthew Gerrard/Robbie Nevil), “Just Wanna Be With You” (Andy Dodd/Adam Watts), “The Boys Are Back” (Matthew Gerrard/Robbie Nevil), “Walk Away” (Jamie Houston), “Scream” (Jamie Houston), and “High School Musical” (Matthew Gerrard/Robbie Nevil). Multiple reprises and medleys fill in the story about the spring musical called “Senior Year.”

“The returning composers and lyricists and the new folks that have joined us on this venture have turned out a soundtrack that I think is the best of them all,” says Ortega. “It serves the story. It serves the characters. It’s dynamic, rhythmic, romantic, funny, orchestral, symphonic and choral. It gets as big as it can and as intimate as it can and everything in between.”

“‘**Now or Never**’ opens the movie in a really brilliant way,” says Ortega. “We get to see how Troy, through song and dance, is actually facing a dilemma in his life. He’s a great singer and he wants to perform on stage, but he’s also an all-star athlete. We get to show sports, we get to show dancing, we get to show great singing, and we get to combine it in a storytelling way so that we understand the dilemma going on in this boy’s personal life.”

Adds Corbin Bleu, “It is the very first musical number and it starts off in a very heated basketball game. The Wildcats are down at halftime. This is the last game that we’ll ever play as seniors.”

The East High gym was filled with more than 2000 extras for the championship game. “The experience was completely surreal,” says Efron. “It felt like a real game because we were playing against a real team and we had real plays set up. A lot of the basketball you see was just us playing. Every time you missed a shot everyone would boo! When you’d make a shot, even if it was just a lay-up, everyone would go crazy.”

“‘**Right Here, Right Now**’ is Troy and Gabriella’s duet in Troy’s backyard treehouse. It’s about them just enjoying being in the moment and the time that they have. I think all the girls out there are just going to die when they see this number. It’s really magical,” says Hudgens.

“Right Here, Right Now” was shot on location at the Bolton House and on a visual effects soundstage, both in Salt Lake City.

“‘**I Want It All**’ is Sharpay’s version of how she sees the school in her fantasy world,” says Ortega. “We’re all blinged out. We’re colorful. Everything’s totally different.”

“It’s the biggest musical number for me,” says Tisdale. “Sharpay wants the Juilliard scholarship and she wants to use her brother to get it. The song itself is very Fergie/Gwen Stefani meets Sharpay Evans. I love it.”

Lucas Grabeel adds, “To coax Ryan into helping her out, or at least thinking that he’s helping her out, Sharpay paints this picture of what life could be like if they both got the scholarship.”

“I Want it All” takes place in the East High cafeteria with almost 150 people dancing on screen at one time. At one point in the number, Grabeel dances in a classic Radio City Music Hall kick line with 24 pink-haired kitty cat Rockettes.

“There’s a wink and a curtsy to the legends of the great White Way,” says Ortega. “It’s an homage to Gene Kelly and Bob Fosse and Jerome Robbins and Michael Kidd. This is a little bit of ‘Singin’ In the Rain’ meets ‘Chicago’—all through the eyes of a teenage girl who wants it all: fame, fortune and more.”

For **“Can I Have This Dance”** Kenny Ortega and his choreographers introduced a new genre of dance to the Wildcat seniors—ballroom. Audiences first hear the song as a duet between Troy and Gabriella on the rooftop of East High.

“It’s a really sweet, romantic and charming dance,” says Hudgens. “You don’t see people doing the waltz very often anymore, so the fact that we got to bring that back was magical.”

“I think it’s a great moment because it shows that Troy and Gabriella thing that’s been there from the very beginning,” says Efron.

Says Ortega, “I was inspired by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and all those wonderful Gene Kelly dances. I just wanted to find a romantic opportunity for the two of them to dance in each others’ arms, away from everybody else.”

The rest of the Wildcats were not off the hook when it came to learning the waltz. A reprise of “Can I Have This Dance” hits the prom when the audience is transported to the prom through a portal in Gabriella’s imagination. “Gabriella is finally at the prom that she’s always wanted with her friends, her boyfriend, just having the most amazing time of her life. It’s a fairy tale. Every girl wants to have a waltzing prom. It’s a beautiful scene,” says Hudgens.

**“A Night to Remember”** also involves partner dancing—a cha cha cha. It’s the first of many numbers in the film that take place on stage in the East High theatre auditorium.

“The original concept of this movie was always to have a big prom. So we attacked this in a new way, we’ve actually taken our prom and broken it up across the movie,” explains producer Bill Borden. “Preparation, rehearsal, performance and of course, the real prom—we get a taste of it all in the movie and in the end, we bring a big, unique, emotional moment to the prom.”

“With ‘A Night to Remember’ we suddenly find ourselves not at prom at all, but at rehearsal for a prom musical number,” explains Ortega.

“The play within a play, that’s my favorite thing about that number because when you first see it, you think that it’s part of the movie,” adds Ryne Sanborn. “But then you notice little things that show it’s a rehearsal. So it’s not really our prom,

which is kind of cool.”

“Basically East High puts on the school play about ourselves,” explains Hudgens.

“**Just Wanna Be With You**” begins as a duet created by Ryan and Kelsi in the music room, is reprised as a full-fledged production number in the spring musical featuring the whole cast.

“One of the themes is to live in the moment and not worry so much about the future,” explains Lucas Grabeel. “Kelsi and Ryan have a very interesting relationship. They’re both artists and musicians. I think it’s cool that they can find each other in that way.”

“‘Just Wanna Be With You’ works on a lot of different levels,” explains producer Barry Rosenbush. “I really like that song because it’s not only about wanting to be with you in a romantic sense, it’s about these kids knowing that they’re together in this moment and they’re going to enjoy it, but they’re moving on soon.”

“**The Boys Are Back**” is a fantasy rock duet that takes place in a junkyard at night with Troy Bolton and best friend Chad Danforth

“We’ve never really had a number just to ourselves,” says Zac Efron. “So this is a chance for us to team up and just go off each other’s energy.”

Corbin Bleu explains the characters’ back story. “When we were young boys, we used to hang out in the junkyard and pretend that we were super heroes and spies and ninjas. With all the stressful things that go on during senior year, we come back to relive those childhood moments.”

“‘The Boys Are Back’ was all about giving Troy and Chad a history and we felt that this style of dance and this space connected to the spirit of these two guys,” says Ortega.

The production number features the pair rolling a giant tire, sword fighting, break-dancing, teeter-tottering and dancing on cars. They’re joined by 19 dancers; some seem to appear out of the junk.

“It’s one of the hardest numbers—really hardcore stuff, rugged and dirty and real guy,” says Bleu. “The energy was through the roof.”

Gabriella’s soulful ballad “**Walk Away**” takes place at her home. Explains Hudgens, “She has to make some decisions about college and her boyfriend and her friends and she decides to do what she thinks is right and just walk away.”

Troy’s power ballad “**Scream**” has him contemplating his own situation, dancing throughout East High’s gym, hallways and theatre late at night.

“It starts on the basketball court, but he ends up on stage,” says Efron. “That just says it all right there. He’s got these amazing feelings for both.”

**“‘High School Musical’** is upbeat and fun and makes you want to leap up out of your chair and dance,” says Ryne Sanborn. “I used to think that they could never top ‘All For One,’ but ‘High School Musical’ is the ultimate party song.”

The Wildcat’s high school graduation big finale was shot over two days on East High’s football field. Approximately 1000 people participated, including a 25-piece orchestra, a 40-member concert choir (led by Justin Martin’s “Donny Dion”), and 600 background artists who created a Wildcat head with human animation.

“It was crazy putting on the Wildcat graduation robes,” says Efron. “It was really symbolic, I felt like we were graduating in so many different ways. Everyone was pretty emotional.”

“The song has a simple message,” says writer Peter Barsocchini. “What’s great about high school doesn’t have to end at graduation. Friendships can go on.”

In staging the final moment of graduation, Kenny Ortega took his inspiration from a Fred Astaire movie. “It looked like the whole world was a stage and I thought that would be a great thing to bring back for a new audience. The entire football field became our stage, complete with a gigantic red curtain.

“On the last shot, I was so moved, so touched, so happy and so satisfied, that I couldn’t even get the word ‘cut’ out,” continues Ortega. “It was a really an emotional day and deeply satisfying after three movies.”

“The song ‘High School Musical’ is an anthem,” says Rosenbush. “It represents the culmination of High School Musical 1, 2 and 3.”

The Walt Disney Records soundtrack hits stores on October 21, 2008.

## **LET’S DANCE**

### **Ortega, Klapow and Story Reteam for HSM3 Choreography**

Once again, the Emmy Award® winning trio Kenny Ortega, Charles “Chucky” Klapow and Bonnie Story share choreography duties.

“Kenny, Chucky and Bonnie have created a new standard in the dance musical industry that everyone else will try to reach,” says producer Bill Borden. “I think their talent and their love of what they’re doing shows up on all the dances and the actors love them.”

“When Chucky started working with me several years ago, he came with this young, hungry spirit, fresh out of school, hot-blooded and ready to tackle anything,” says Ortega. “Bonnie has this incredible history. She’s a teacher, an amazing dancer—classically trained, technically brilliant, and has worked with the best.”

The director says the trio flexed its creativity in HSM3. “I have one foot in the street and another foot in the pages of history,” says Ortega. “There’s a little bit of Broadway, funk, sport, ballet and ballroom—a real range of music and dance styles in this movie—and a dynamic range of dance locations including a basketball court, a rooftop, a treehouse. The dancing really is spread out beautifully throughout the

story. Each dance is like its own postcard.”

“We cover it all—waltz, hip-hop, breaking, pop, Latin salsa, jazz and Fosse,” adds Klapow. “So Zac Efron will go from being Fred Astaire in one scene to Michael Jackson in the next.”

Dance rehearsals took place in Salt Lake City. “For a whole week we sat around a table and talked before we even started dancing,” says Klapow. “Kenny painted a picture, he’s the visionary. Then Bonnie and I got in front of the mirror and fed off each other. It’s not just dance steps though. It has to make sense. We have to tell that story through movement.”

“With each new project, the actors and dancers have become better and we threw more at them,” says Story. “The choreography is more intricate, with more partnering.”

For the big screen, the choreographers had to raise the bar. In the two acclaimed television movies, the trio choreographed dances for as many as 10 principal actors, 12 principal dancers and 190 extras. In “High School Musical 3: Senior Year,” they worked with 15 principal actors, 18 principal dancers, (plus more than 60 featured dancers in the bigger production numbers), and up to 2,000 extras.

“There’s more screen to fill, so we cast more dancers,” explains Story. “We definitely took into consideration the fact that the big screen is wider than TV; we had to approach the choreography from a different point of view.”

Ortega, Klapow and Story added four additional members to their team to assist with the massive numbers designed for the big screen. Principal dancer Roger “Ro” Malaga acted as assistant choreographer and break dancing specialist. World-class dancer/coach Paul Winkelman served as assistant choreographer and ballroom specialist. Principal dancer Bayli Baker also served as assistant choreographer. In addition, the team tapped dancer Zachary Wilson as a choreography assistant to assist with the waltz.

Shooting in Utah did present one unexpected challenge. “Salt Lake City is a desert in the sky and it is *so* dry here,” says Klapow. “It’s hard to dance at that altitude. Our hearts would pound and we’d sweat; we couldn’t breathe. I’ll be the best athlete in the world because I trained in Utah.”

### **ALL DRESSED UP**

#### **Costume Designer Caroline B. Marx Creates a Signature Wardrobe**

Costume designer Caroline B. Marx took the big screen to heart when it came to wardrobe for HSM3.

“The costumes for HSM3 are more fashion forward; each character is clearly defined,” says Marx. “Layering of the actual pieces and attention to detail was very important for the big screen. In this film, we find each character growing up. Their costumes show their individual personalities.”



Director Ortega was very pleased with the vision Marx brought to the clothes. “Caroline is really wonderful and open and brought some wonderful new ideas to the musical. It’s bigger and more colorful and more exaggerated than ever. Because we introduce more fantasy and peek into the future, we could go places with the costuming in ‘High School Musical 3’ that we haven’t been able to visit before. And Caroline helped take us there.”

“Caroline came to us because of her inventiveness,” adds producer Rosenbush. “She has an amazing ability to take practical clothes—for graduations and prom and basketball games—and add the sparkle of Hollywood.”

Marx began prepping for the feature film five months prior to cameras rolling. “I wanted to make sure we were ahead of the game in terms of trends, so when the movie came out we’d hit at the same time or even further ahead of hot styles,” she says. “I went to Fashion Week in New York, attending 37 shows and as many parties as well as visiting showrooms and meeting with a lot of designers.”

Marx worked closely with the cast on their wardrobes. “After almost four years, they really know who their characters are,” she says.

The costume designer wanted Zac Efron’s character Troy to channel a James Dean/Young Elvis look, with a color palate of mostly blue and gray tones. Troy wears primarily slim-cut Diesel denim jeans and James Perse classic tees with Converse high top sneakers or low-top Vans.

Vanessa Hudgen’s Gabriella has a very innocent, girl-next-door feel. “Gabriella’s costumes have an arc. She starts in her quintessential white, blue, green and yellow floral dresses, sometimes with little cardigans. As time passes in the film, she becomes more self-aware and begins to take on a more “boho” style of dress,” says Marx. Hudgens wears clothes by American Eagle, Free People, Velvet, Miss Sixty (Italian), and Dutch designer Tony Cohen in the film.

Sharpay’s look is very expensive and over-the-top, with the majority of her clothes enhanced with Swarovski crystals. Labels include Marc Jacobs, Miss Sixty, L.A.M.B., Dolce & Gabbana, Juicy Couture, Betsey Johnson, Diesel, Sheri Bodell, Rock n Republic boots and oversized bags, and accessories from Kitson. “Hot pink and feathers are a focus for Sharpay,” says Marx.

Marx took Ryan’s wardrobe directly from the runway with neon pink Marc Jacobs pants, a J. Lindenberg nylon blazer and Paul Smith floral pants (with added side stripe) tucked into police boots. “He is usually wearing a Goorin Bros. fedora hat,” says Marx. “For the prom, he sports a bowler hat, inspired by a popular Spanish trend.”

According to Marx, Corbin Bleu’s Chad is the first character on film to wear primarily organic and sustainable clothing and shoes. “His entire wardrobe gives off a very eco-friendly vibe,” says the costume designer. His American Apparel organic tees feature custom eco friendly messages such as “My dog didn’t eat my homework, I recycled it” and “Greenster.” Marx found designers and companies that

manufactured green products, including G-Star, Livity Outernational, Alternative Earth, Lucky Brand, NIKE and Maasi Treads.

Marx describes Monique Coleman's Taylor as "brainiac and business like with a feminine edge." Taylor wears primarily J. Crew and Banana Republic sweaters and sweater vests over Theory and G-Star button front shirts (worn untucked), with skirts by Marc Jacobs, Piazza Simione and Corey Lynn Calter. "We feel that she's going on to be the future President of the United States so we gave her a very conservative look," says Marx.

Marx says the wardrobe for Olesya Rulin's Kelsi is very funky and artsy, but with a vintage feel that includes men's blazers and vests from Club Monaco and French Connection, and vintage character tees by Disney Couture. Kelsi's primary designer was artist Elisa Jimenez of "Project Runway." "The wardrobe has changed with Kelsi, going from ill fitting clothes to tight fitting and funkified," says Marx.

Kaycee Stroh's Martha takes on a very 80s vibe, "early Madonna combined with an urban hip-hop flare," says Marx. "She wears lots of leggings, multiple strands of pearls, bangles, multiple rubber bracelets and bandannas in her hair."

Ryne Sanborn's Jason sports the preppy East Coast jock. "He wears polos with the collars worn up, button down over-shirts worn open and un-tucked, with either pinstripe, plaid or khaki cargo shorts or jeans.

Chris Warren Jr.'s Zeke is young, hip and preppy with a crisp urban flare. "He wears oversize polos and shorts," says Marx. Zeke's chef-wear was customized with Wildcat emblems: his white chef hat bears the paw print, and his red apron the collegiate "E."

Jemma McKenzie-Brown's Tiara took on an English school girl look.

Matt Prokop's Jimmie was given an 'Emo vibe' with a little slacker/skater mixed in.

Justin Martin's Donny Dion sported a wardrobe that was a little conservative with a cool edge.

The prom dresses for Gabriella, Sharpay, Taylor and Kelsi are original designs by Marx and manufactured by famed Madonna seamstress Zoya Bergam.

"It's every girl's dream is to have that perfect prom dress," says Rosenbush. "Caroline put the magic into the ordinary and made it extraordinary."

## **ON LOCATION** **Albuquerque in Utah**

Filmmakers faced challenges including location issues, shooting in a real high school alongside studying students, and the physical and creative challenges of making elaborate movie sets out of an active high school and a working junkyard.

"Although the story is still set in Albuquerque, N.M., Kenny said 'I want to go back to Utah where HSM 1 and 2 were shot,'" says co-producer Don Schain. "He has

become very comfortable with the environment, the crew and the dance talent in Utah.”

So for the third time, filmmakers utilized Salt Lake City and the real East High School as the feature film’s primary location.

“‘High School Musical’ just belongs in Salt Lake City,” says Efron. “Right here on this gym floor we did ‘We’re All In This Together,’ so it’s good to go ‘home’ and dance on that same floor.”

“This is our home,” agrees Hudgens. “I walk down these halls and think this entire place is just filled with good memories.”

Audiences will recognize the Montez residence and the Bolton house. Production also transformed a real junkyard into a fantasy dance arena. Other locations included the International Peace Gardens in Salt Lake City and the Sanford University campus in Palo Alto, Calif., plus two days of stage work to complete production.

Production had to film at East High School for 15 days while school was in session before summer break started. Location manager Carole Fontana and her team acted as the chief liaison between the production and the school. “We were very conscious of the fact that filmmaking is not the primary business of the school; we couldn’t get in the way of that,” says Fontana.

East High principal Paul Sagers thought it was great that the students were exposed to a working movie production. “The crew involved us when they could,” says Sagers. “When they needed to rent band instruments, for instance, rather than go to a rental house, they’d come to us. When they wanted basketball players, they’d look to our athletes first. About 800 of those 2,000 extras in the gym scene are our students and teachers.”

“When kids were curious, we’d let them take a look at what we were doing, to allow them to have a sense of ownership over this movie,” says production designer Mark Hofeling.

East High School has become the second most popular tourist attraction in Salt Lake City. “Families come here and tour the Mormon Temple and then East High School,” laughs Utah Film Commissioner Marshall Moore.

But shooting a big screen production movie in a real high school presented some challenges, says Hofeling. “My first reaction to reading this script was feeling a little overwhelmed. That anxiety just increased after my first meeting with Kenny. More is more with Kenny.

“He really wanted to reintroduce kids to everything about musical film and musical theater,” continues Hofeling. “We all agreed that if we’re going to introduce kids to the song and the dance of the classic Hollywood and Broadway period, why not try to introduce them to a bit of the *stagecraft* of that time as well?”

According to Hofeling, the ambitious movie features four Broadway musicals. “One would be quite a challenge, especially since we’re putting Broadway level productions in a *high school* theatre... not to mention in a high school cafeteria!”

“The great thing about a feature is that we could let our imaginations run wild,” says Borden. “Mark Hofeling really gave us some magical sets—sets that fly in and out and roll across the stage. We have true theater magic. It’s added a whole new dimension.”

Adds Ortega. “With this we were going for heightened high school reality. We are definitely somewhere between high school and Broadway.”

Theatrical lighting designer Patrick Woodroffe, who has worked with The Rolling Stones, Elton John, Cirque du Soleil and The Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, created the lighting for all the production numbers in the theatre and for “I Want It All,” which takes place in the cafeteria.

The film’s diverse sets inspired filmmakers to flex their creative muscles. “For the cafeteria number, the cue Kenny gave us was Busby Berkeley, a great director and choreographer in the ‘30s who used to create these epic black and white musicals that were astounding,” says Hofeling. “It’s the glitz and the glamour of Sharpay’s imagined New York experience—this girl from Albuquerque dreaming about fame and fortune. “We took all of the color out of the cafeteria—the iconic red is gone,” continues Hofeling. “This familiar room becomes a ghost of itself—it’s about a big-time girl trapped in small-town high school and she wants out.”

Set to “I Want It All,” the cafeteria-based show stopper features a menu board marquee with pink neon chasing lights and hydraulic pivoting round tables for the dancers to dance on. The cafeteria ultimately morphs into a theatrical version of Times Square with lighted signs of old Broadway Theater names. It was no small feat, yet crews had only five days to transform the cafeteria from its normal red and white into its fantasy state—and three days to turn it back.

The theatre auditorium at East High was used for many scenes involving multiple musical moments. According to Hofeling, they extended the stage eight feet forward into the orchestra pit, added a proscenium and bought new stage curtains in beautiful Wildcat red. To facilitate the medley nature of the fictional musicale numbers done on stage, filmmakers created many flexible sets to punctuate the story beats in each song.

To shoot the rooftop waltz for “Can I Have This Dance,” crews had to lift approximately 40 crane-loads of construction materials, skylights, plants and filmmaking equipment to the top of the four-story building. “There’s something really magical and separate about the rooftop,” says Hofeling. “But Kenny said that they were going to waltz over the entire roof, which meant making a garden space out of almost a whole city block. There was an incredible view with the mountains all around and the valley couldn’t have been greener when we were on the rooftop.”

The junkyard set for “The Boys are Back” number was a unique challenge. Says Ortega, “Mark Hofeling and his art director Wing Lee did a fantastic job. We were actually in a real auto parts yard, but what was created does not have any resemblance of what it looked like on a normal day. They created a junkyard theater.” In addition to vintage cars, the junkyard featured aisles of junk, dirt, broken glass,

neon windows and scaffolding. “It’s so amazing to walk on a set like this because it’s a big playground to us,” says choreographer Bonnie Story. “You can rehearse all you want in a studio and you can visualize different levels, but when you bring the choreography into this space it comes alive. Even the costume designer played a role, making the dancers look like they were part of the cars.”

Filmmakers used Matchbox toy cars to plan out where cars would be placed. “It’s actually a lot more technical than just plopping a car here and there,” says Hofeling. “You really have to be thinking about the pace of the music, the choreography and the geography of the place.”

Another challenge involved the football field, the locale for the graduation scene. “The grass was mostly dead,” says Hofeling. “We made an enormous 24/7 effort—sodding, watering—just to get this grass back in time for our work there.”

The last shot for the “Scream” sequence and the last shot of the movie found Efron in a rotating hallway, built to look exactly like the stationary ones at East High. “We wanted the audience to feel Troy’s confusion that his world is betraying him,” says Hofeling.

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