

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS PRESENTS
A LIKELY STORY PRODUCTION

PLEASE GIVE

Written and Directed by Nicole Holofcener

Starring

**CATHERINE KEENER
AMANDA PEET
OLIVER PLATT
REBECCA HALL
ANN GUILBERT
LOIST SMITH
SARAH STEELE
THOMAS IAN NICHOLAS**

**Rating: R, Runtime: 90 minutes
US Release Date: 4/23/10**

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PLEASE GIVE

Catherine Keener.....Kate
Amanda Peet.....Mary
Oliver Platt.....Alex
Rebecca Hall.....Rebecca
Sarah Steele.....Abby
Ann Guilbert.....Andra
Thomas Ian Nicholas.....Eugene

Written and Directed by Nicole Holofcener

Produced by Anthony Bregman

Executive Producer Caroline Jaczko

Director of Photography Yaron Orbach

Editor Robert Frazen

Original Music by Marcelo Zarvos

Costume Designer Ane Crabtree

Production Designer Mark White

Associate Producer Stefanie Azpiazu

Casting Jeanne McCarthy

PLEASE GIVE
Director's Statement

A friend's apartment in New York was both the source and the setting for PLEASE GIVE. My friend bought her elderly neighbor's apartment, just as the couple does in the movie, and they became good friends. When it came time to find a location for the film we ended up shooting in that actual building, and in one of its apartments.

One of the great things about living in New York (if you have money) is being able to buy a beautiful place and fill it with beautiful things. But how do you do that and feel okay about it when there are hungry people right outside your (beautiful, newly stripped solid walnut) door? I've been struggling to forgive myself for those contradictions my whole life, and I think that's a struggle I heaped upon my characters, especially Kate. We tend to instantly sympathize with people who are struggling, so even though my characters do some unattractive things, I hope we can forgive them, especially while we laugh at them.

PLEASE GIVE begins with a montage of mammograms. Mammograms are like life: potentially tragic but really funny looking. You're stripped semi-naked, divested of dignity, shivering with cold and filled with dread. It's ridiculous but very necessary. With PLEASE GIVE I wanted to illustrate these kind of contradictory moments that make us human.

-- Nicole Holofcener

PLEASE GIVE

Summary Synopsis

Kate (Catherine Keener) has a lot on her mind. There's the ethics problem of buying furniture on the cheap at estate sales and marking it up at her trendy Manhattan store (and how much markup can she get away with?). There's the materialism problem of not wanting her teenage daughter (Sarah Steele) to want the expensive things that Kate wants. There's the marriage problem of sharing a partnership in parenting, business, and life with her husband Alex (Oliver Platt) but sensing doubt nibbling at the foundations. And there's Kate's free-floating 21st century malaise—the problem of how to live well and be a good person when poverty, homelessness, and sadness are always right outside the door.

Plus, there's the neighbors: cranky, elderly Andra (Ann Guilbert) and the two granddaughters who look after her (Rebecca Hall and Amanda Peet). As Kate, Alex, and Abby interact with the people next door, with each other, and with their New York surroundings, a complex mix of animosity, friendship, deception, guilt, and love plays out with both sharp humor and pathos. PLEASE GIVE is writer/director Nicole Holofcener's perceptive—and devastatingly funny—take on modern life's contradictions, good intentions and shaky moral bearings.

PLEASE GIVE

Full Synopsis

A good eye for furniture has served KATE (Catherine Keener) and ALEX (Oliver Platt) very well: their New York store, specializing in trendy mid-century modern design, is so successful that they've been able to buy the apartment next door to their own. They plan to enlarge and remodel the space they share with their teenage daughter ABBY (Sarah Steele), but the next-door apartment is still inhabited by its former owner, elderly ANDRA (Ann Guilbert). Before they can knock down any walls, they have to wait for Andra to vacate—that is, die.

Meanwhile, they stock up on vintage inventory by buying pieces from the apartments of newly-deceased New Yorkers; as Alex puts it, "We buy from the children of dead people." At one such apartment-emptying, Kate buys a trove of gorgeous modern furniture and accessories at a bargain from a busy son who doesn't recognize the value of his mother's "junk." Kate may be a canny buyer, but she worries about the ethics of her business and the poverty and homelessness she sees around her. She tries to compensate by handing out money to street people.

Her daughter is both amused and annoyed by Kate's guilty fretting. Affectionate and funny one minute, Abby is awash in teen-drama angst the next, preoccupied with her acne troubles and the search for the perfect pair of jeans. Alex looks on as a droll foil to both Abby and Kate, his partner in business, parenting, and life.

Next door, Andra's granddaughter REBECCA (Rebecca Hall) visits almost daily, shopping and tidying for Andra, keeping her company and tolerating her cranky quirks with good nature. Rebecca is a radiology technician who administers mammograms; her gentle aura is tinged with lonely melancholy. When she visits Andra she keeps a frosty distance from the family next door. "She looks at you and sees death," Abby tells Kate. "You're a vulture."

Rebecca shares a spartan apartment with her sister MARY (Amanda Peet). Mary is less forgiving of Grandma Andra's sharp tongue and crabby manner, so she visits less often. Mary works at a spa, where she gives facials and cultivates her tanning-bed bronze and

perfect grooming. Blunt, bitchy, and funny, Mary falls easily into the role of “bad sister” while Rebecca dutifully plays “good sister,” tsk-tsking Mary for her unhealthful drinking, tanning, and microwave food choices—as well as her neglect of Grandma.

Both sisters are single. Mary indulges her morbid curiosity about her ex-boyfriend’s new girlfriend by peering daily in the window of the shop where she works, occasionally pretending to browse to get a better look. Rebecca has tried computer dating with wretched results; she is befriended by one of her mammogram patients, MRS. PORTMAN (Lois Smith), who sees her as a potential girlfriend for her cute (but short) grandson EUGENE (Thomas Ian Nicholas). Rebecca is wary of the set-up, but Eugene seems sweet (and her equal in devotion to his grandmother).

To thaw the ice with the neighbors, Kate invites them over for dinner in honor of Andra’s birthday. It’s a hilariously—and painfully—stilted affair: Andra scowls and kvetches; Mary drops conversational bombshells over her bourbon glass and flirts with Alex; and Abby shows up at the table wearing panties over her head to hide a fulminating blemish. Mary declares that she can help Abby’s acne with a facial and urges her to come to the spa. She also badgers Kate into describing their planned remodel, despite the awkwardness of talking about what happens to Andra’s apartment after her death. Nevertheless, Kate’s good intention of improving neighborly relations do pay off—Rebecca warms up a bit to both Abby and Kate, while Abby considers Mary the ultimate in cool.

But it’s not Abby who shows up first at the spa. Alex (who otherwise doesn’t seem to take much interest in vanity) comes by for a facial from Mary that quickly turns into a kiss and escalates from there.

While Mary and Alex are embarking on an affair, Rebecca and Eugene are double-dating with their grandmas; they take Andra and Mrs. Portman for a scenic drive out of the city to view the autumn leaves. The drive was Rebecca’s idea: she had always dismissed people’s raptures about the changing leaves as silly, but when they come to a particularly spectacular vista, she finally understands what’s so special. Only Andra stubbornly refuses to take pleasure in the beauty.

Rebecca's romance with Eugene is taking off, but Mary's affair with Alex is fizzling out. Alex feels remorse about his experiment with infidelity and realizes that he doesn't want to cheat on Kate.

Kate, meanwhile, is beset by unease: free-floating guilt about the state of the world, coupled with hints that something is amiss with Alex. She searches for meaning by trying out volunteer opportunities—reading to the elderly, helping out in a sports program for cognitively disabled youth—but her efforts to redeem herself through good deeds just add to her sadness and she often finds herself in tears.

Finally, the day comes when Andra doesn't wake up from her chair in front of the television. Rebecca finds her dead. She calls Mary, who comes over briefly and then goes back to work, nonplussed. Rebecca goes next door to tell Kate that Andra has died, and the two share an empathetic moment of mourning and consolation. Kate stays with Rebecca while the mortuary truck comes to pick up Andra.

The same day, Mary's back at work in the spa when Abby comes in for her facial. Abby's disconcerted to learn not only that Andra has died, but that Alex has been coming to Mary for facials—an uncharacteristic activity for her rumpled father. Mary attacks Abby's blemishes with a strong enzyme peel, and by the time she gets home, Abby's face is pink and raw. Kate is there to lovingly comfort her distraught daughter, and Alex reassures Abby—in veiled language—that his dalliance with Mary is over. Wordlessly, just by affectionate gestures, Kate and Alex signal each other that their bond is still strong.

And Kate finally achieves a really satisfying act of redemption when she returns a valuable vase to the son who sold her his mother's furniture for a song.

The family attends Andra's funeral and says their goodbyes to the next-door neighbors. The apartment will now be theirs to renovate. On the way home, Abby spies something in a boutique window; inside, she finally tries on the perfect pair of jeans, as her parents look on lovingly. The jeans are expensive, but well worth the pleasure of giving them, together, to their daughter.

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Production Notes

It's a good thing that death, guilt, materialism, adultery and acne are such ripe topics for entertainment.

"It's nice when we can laugh," says Catherine Keener, "Because there's some very heavy material." In PLEASE GIVE Keener plays Kate, proprietor of a chic New York furniture store, loving wife and mother, and victim of a raging case of liberal guilt and 21st century malaise. While Kate's story encompasses the challenging sides of the human condition, writer-director Nicole Holofcener brings affectionate humor to her portrayal of Kate, her family, her neighbors and surroundings.

"Nicole doesn't really write villains," says Amanda Peet, whose character Mary comes closest to villainy as the neighbor who flirts—and then some—with Kate's husband. "Everyone has villainous moments and everyone has sublime moments."

Holofcener is known for subtle, funny, and complex characterizations in films such as *Lovely & Amazing* (2001) and *Friends with Money* (2006). Catherine Keener has been Holofcener's frequent choice of alter-ego in her films. In PLEASE GIVE, Holofcener says, "Catherine's character is in the midst of figuring out what gives her life meaning and what makes her feel good about herself and bad about herself. Catherine can relate to my own contradictions. Our collaboration has grown; I'm spoiled, because it's so easy to direct her—it's so easy for her to direct me!"

Apart from Keener, though, Holofcener worked with an entirely new cast on PLEASE GIVE.

"I begged Nicole for seven years to put me in a movie," says Amanda Peet. "I stalked her."

"Amanda Peet has a great sense of irony about her character and about herself," says Anthony Bregman, producer, who has also been a frequent collaborator with Holofcener.

About the part of Alex, Kate's husband who strays with Peet, Bregman says "Nicole actually wrote the part of Alex with Oliver Platt in mind."

"He's funny and attractive in an unconventional way," says Holofcener about her leading man. "It's one of those intuitive things. He just felt right. He has this hysterical low-ball humor but he also can be dramatic, and he's really likeable. That's important, because he does this skunky thing."

Indeed, much of PLEASE GIVE revolves around reconciling the "skunky" things that people do with the good people that they really are—or would like to be. As Platt recounts, "Nicole said, "You might know this guy better than me." He's been in a marriage for a long time, and ironically I think it's a marriage that works on a lot of levels, and he kinda just does this stupid thing. It's all about making it understandable—or deciding that it can't be understood. It just happened."

"The subject matter is at times brutal and difficult to look at," says Rebecca Hall, who plays Mary's younger, softer sister who has devoted herself to caring for their cranky, elderly grandmother. "Nicole gets in there with her sharply focused camera and doesn't really let up."

About Hall, Holofcener says, "Rebecca has that sweet, open, vulnerable, natural beauty that I think could be overlooked by someone...stupid. Or really not looking carefully." Rebecca plays the "plain" sister to Mary's hottie.

Natural beauty also drew Holofcener to Sarah Steele, who plays Abby, Kate and Alex's fifteen-year-old daughter (Steele is actually a 21-year-old college student). "I auditioned a lot of teenage girls, but when Sarah walked in, that was it. She literally flushed during the audition, which I loved. She's very present, a great listener, a very honest actor. She had the right combination of sweet innocence and the ability to be a horrible teenager. And she's funny, so Abby never seemed too dark or miserable, even when she was. She also happens to have beautiful skin, so clearly she's a good sport. Most of the people on the crew thought the zits were real and felt so badly for her."

PLEASE GIVE would be a much bleaker vision without the fundamental humor of the

actors chosen by Holofcener. “I also auditioned a lot of Andras,” the sisters’ cranky grandmother who lives next door to Kate, played by veteran character actor Ann Guilbert. “Again, Ann is a funny woman, and that really lent a lot to the character. Yes, she’s an awful person (not Ann, Andra), but if the actor playing her was humorless, it would have been too heavy. I was pretty worried about finding the right Andra, and Ann exceeded my hopes. She’s hilarious and sad at the same time, a hard thing to pull off. I also think it must have been fairly bittersweet for her to be playing someone so close to death. Or maybe it was just surreal. Either way, she played dead so well it was creepy. She said she had to be dead on stage many times and was an expert.”

“Andra reminds me of a mother-in-law I had who wasn’t a very likeable person—God bless her rest in peace!” says Guilbert. Unlike Andra, who has a negative word to say about everything, Guilbert speaks warmly of her director: “She’s very easy to work with. She gives me good direction and tempers my performance in a way I think is right.”

Holofcener cultivates an atmosphere of relaxed creativity on her sets. “Her way of filmmaking is very calm and sensitive and hilarious and nobody stresses,” says Keener. “For somebody who is such a talented writer she is very collaborative,” says Platt. “She understands the idiom, that as you’re developing a narrative things change. You learn things about the people, and as you’re working on the scenes you do need to make adjustments. She’s just fantastic at creating an environment where that happens, and you feel like part of the process.”

“I’m happy when the actors have suggestions,” says Holofcener, “Especially if they’re good ones, which they often are. Low budget movies unfortunately don’t leave enough time to rehearse a lot, but if the script is in good shape, I don’t think a great deal of it is necessary.”

Sarah Steele talks about how character dynamics come together in brief rehearsals of acting pairs. “We had a meeting, just me and Nicole and Catherine, doing the mother-daughter conflict scenes in different ways to understand better: is it that they scream at each other all the time, or is it more passive aggressive?” Says Holofcener, “These sessions are always too short, but very valuable and fun. Lots of laughs and screwing

around—that's why they're too short, by the time we get down to the serious work it's over."

While Holofcener now mostly lives and works in California, she is a native New Yorker; that kinship with the city is vivid in PLEASE GIVE. "I know the neighborhoods. I feel like I know where the characters would grow up and what streets they would live on. It's nice to feel so comfortable with a city." Kate and Alex's apartment in PLEASE GIVE is actually the apartment that inspired the story—Holofcener's friend bought the apartment next door, occupied by an elderly woman, and became close to the neighbor. Holofcener used their shared hallway and an apartment in the same building as principal shooting locations.

"One of the challenges of the film is that we were shooting in the 104-degree heat," says producer Bregman. "It's supposed to take place in the fall in New York"—autumn leaves are an extended motif throughout the film—"And it was incredibly hot. For some reason these actors were blessed with sweat glands that don't show as much on them as they do on us."

Despite the heat, "The people I work with are talented and they really get me and support me and know me very well," says Holofcener.

She hopes that viewers of PLEASE GIVE share that commonality. "I guess it's more interesting to me if a person comes out of the movie feeling all the things that the movie has stirred up in them. Not to think: "Hey, y'know, I'm a bad person!" Or "Hey, that's just like me" – it should be a more emotionally felt experience. If I had to sum it up into a sentence I probably couldn't. Which is a good thing."

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About the Cast

Catherine Keener (Kate)

Twice nominated for an Academy Award® as Best Supporting Actress, Catherine Keener has the innate ability to be both a potent force and a grounded presence in her films. She stars in Nicole Holofcener's comedy-drama *Please Give*, her fourth starring role in a Holofcener film. *Please Give* premieres at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival.

She received her first Academy Award® nomination in 2000, when she played 'Maxine' in Spike Jonze's *Being John Malkovich*. As 'Harper Lee' in *Capote*, starring opposite Philip Seymour Hoffman, Keener received her second Academy Award® nomination as Best Supporting Actress as well as nominations from the Screen Actors Guild and Toronto Film Critics Association.

She was nominated for an Emmy and Golden Globe for *American Crime* opposite Ellen Page. Prior to *Please Give*, she was most recently seen in *Where The Wild Things Are*, Spike Jonze's adaptation of Maurice Sendak's popular children's book. Keener will next be seen in Chris Columbus' *Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, due for release in February 2010. Another upcoming film, *Cyrus*, will also premiere at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival. She also stars in David O'Russell's next feature, *Nailed*. She recently completed *Trust* opposite Clive Owen and directed the independent film by David Schwimmer.

Keener starred in *The Soloist*, opposite Robert Downey Jr. and Jamie Foxx, Charlie Kaufman's *Synecdoche, New York*, Sean Penn's *Into The Wild* and Nicole Holofcener's *Friends With Money*. She also starred in the smash hit *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, Sydney Pollack's *The Interpreter*, opposite Sean Penn and Nicole Kidman, and Nicole Holofcener's *Lovely & Amazing*, where Keener was honored with an Independent Spirit Award nomination as Best Actress.

Her earlier films include *The Ballad Of Jack & Rose*, *Adaptation*, *Simone*, *Full Frontal*, *Out Of Sight*, *Death To Smoochy*, *Your Friends and Neighbors*, *Walking and Talking*, and the screen adaptation of Sam Shepard's *Simpatico*.

On television, Keener co-starred in HBO's critically acclaimed anthology, *If These Walls Could Talk*, directed by Nancy Savoca. On the stage, she starred opposite Edward Norton in the Signature Theater Company's critically acclaimed off-Broadway revival of Langford Wilson's "Burn This" in 2003.

Amanda Peet (Mary)

Peet is an accomplished and versatile film actress who is best known for her diverse choice of roles in romantic comedies, dramas and thrillers. Prior to her starring role as blunt-talking granddaughter Mary in Nicole Holofcener's *Please Give*, she was most recently seen in the epic adventure *2012*. She was also recently in *X Files: I Want to Believe*. In addition, Amanda's voice was featured in the animated film *Terra* along with the voices of Luke Wilson, Evan Rachel Wood, and Dennis Quaid.

She recently completed filming 20th Century Fox's *Gulliver's Travels* starring Jack Black and Jason Segel. Amanda also has been seen recently in the independent film *What Doesn't Kill You* opposite Mark Ruffalo and Ethan Hawke. Peet also joined John Cusack in the New Line Cinema drama *The Martian Child*. She starred as Jordan McDeere on Aaron Sorkin's *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip* alongside co-stars Matthew Perry and Bradley Whitford.

In 2006, Peet made her Broadway debut in the revival of Neil Simon's comedy, "Barefoot In the Park." She and Patrick Wilson starred as newlyweds in Greenwich Village in the 1960s. Last summer, Peet starred to critical acclaim, in the Neil LaBute off-Broadway play "This Is How It Goes" opposite Ben Stiller and Jeffrey Wright.

Her numerous film credits include the Oscar nominated, Warner Bros./Section Eight thriller, *Syriana*, also starring Matt Damon, George Clooney and Chris Cooper. In 2005 Peet starred alongside Ashton Kutcher in *A Lot Like Love*. Other credits include Woody Allen's *Melinda and Melinda* opposite Will Ferrell; *The Whole Nine Yards* and its sequel *The Whole Ten Yards*; the 2003 hit *Something's Gotta Give* with Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton. In 2003 Peet starred alongside John Cusack and Ray Liotta in the thriller *Identity*. In 2002, Peet was seen in *High Crimes*, alongside Morgan Freeman and Ashley Judd and *Changing Lanes* opposite Samuel L. Jackson, Ben Affleck and Sydney Pollack. That same year, she appeared as Jeff Goldblum's mistress, a beautiful and privileged young woman who is hooked on drugs, in *Igby Goes Down*. Audiences first warmed to Amanda when she starred as Jack on the hit drama, *Jack and Jill*.

A native of New York, Peet graduated from Columbia University with a degree in American History. While there, she also studied acting under Uta Hagen, which ultimately led her to pursue acting as a career.

Oliver Platt (Alex)

Oliver Platt has enjoyed success in film, television and on stage. He stars in Nicole Holofcener's *Please Give* as Alex, Catherine Keener's straying husband. Most recently, Platt appeared in Roland Emmerich's 2012 opposite John Cusack and Amanda Peet; Ron Howard's *Frost/Nixon* opposite Frank Langella Kevin Bacon and Sam Rockwell; and in the Harold Ramis comedy *Year One* opposite Jack Black and Michael Cera.

Platt's other feature film credits include *Casanova*; *The Ice Harvest*; *Funny Bones*; *Bulworth*; *Married to the Mob*; *Working Girl*; *Flatliners*; *Postcards From the Edge*; *Indecent Proposal*; *The Three Musketeers*; *A Time to Kill*; *Doctor Dolittle*; *Simon Birch*; *Lake Placid*; *Don't Say a Word*; and *Pieces of April*.

Platt made his producing debut on the indie film *Big Night*, which was codirected by actors Stanley Tucci and Campbell Scott. He would later reteam with Tucci in *The Impostors*. On television, Platt was seen playing the role of George Steinbrenner on the hit ESPN miniseries *The Bronx is Burning*, opposite John Turturro and Daniel Sunjata. His performance earned him a SAG nomination.

Platt graduated from Tufts University with a degree in drama and immediately began working in regional theater, as well as off-Broadway in such productions as "The Tempest" and John Guare's "Moon Over Miami." He also starred in the Lincoln Center production of "Ubu" and Jules Feiffer's "Elliot Loves," directed by Mike Nichols, and

received rave reviews for his performance as Sir Toby Belch in Brian Kulick's "Twelfth Night."

Platt received a Tony nomination for Best Performance by a Leading Actor for his work on Broadway in Conor McPherson's "Shining City," which was also nominated for Best Play. Other accolades include a Golden Globe and back-to-back Emmy nominations for his portrayal of Russell Tupper in Showtime's *Huff* as well as an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Drama Series for his portrayal as White House Counsel Oliver Babish on the popular political drama *The West Wing*. He was also nominated again for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Drama Series for his recurring role on *Nip/Tuck* playing the flamboyant TV producer Freddy Prune.

The son of a career diplomat, Platt was born in Washington, D.C., and spent part of his childhood in Asia and the Middle East. Platt now resides in New York with his wife and three children.

Rebecca Hall (Rebecca)

Having worked with many of the industry's most honored talent and treaded the boards in the world's most respected theatres, Rebecca Hall has emerged as a leading talent, challenging herself with each new role.

Hall stars in Nicole Holofcener's dramatic comedy *Please Give* as Rebecca, a loving and devoted granddaughter at the center of this human story about two families living in NYC.

Hall will next be seen in Julian Jarrold's *Red Riding: 1974*. The film originally aired on Channel 4 in early 2009, and will be released domestically by IFC Films in February 2010. Rebecca stars opposite Andrew Garfield as Paula Garland, a grieving mother and widow whose life is turned upside down by a gruesome killer.

Hall recently wrapped production on the Warner Bros. and Legendary Pictures' romantic crime thriller *The Town*, opposite Ben Affleck and Jon Hamm. Affleck directed the film and Graham King is producing. An adaptation of the Chuck Hogan novel *Prince of Thieves*, the story follows the relationship between a bank manager (Hall), the career criminal (Affleck) who stole more than her heart and the dedicated FBI agent (Hamm) who is trying to bust the crook and his gang.

Hall spent much of 2009 on stage in The Bridge Project, a transatlantic company of actors performing double-billings of classic works in repertory on tour to seven cities around the world, including New York and London. Co-starring opposite Simon Russell Beale, Sinead Cusack, Richard Easton, Josh Hamilton and Ethan Hawke, Hall has garnered critical commendation for her performances as 'Varya' in "The Cherry Orchard" and 'Hermione' in "A Winter's Tale." For her performance in "A Winter's Tale", Hall received an Evening Standard Theatre Award nomination.

Hall was seen in Woody Allen's *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* alongside Penelope Cruz, Scarlett Johansson and Javier Bardem. For her performance, Hall received Golden Globe, BAFTA Orange Rising Star, London Critics Circle and Gotham Award performance and breakthrough nominations. Additional film credits include Ron Howard's *Frost/Nixon*; Christopher Nolan's *The Prestige*, for which she received UK

Empire Award and London Critic's Circle best newcomer nominations; Philip Martin's *Einstein and Eddington*, Tom Vaughan's *Starter for Ten* and Oliver Parker's *Dorian Gray*.

On stage, Hall received wide acclaim for her performance as 'Rosalind' in Sir Peter Hall's production of "As You Like It," which began at the Theatre Royal Bath and was followed by an international tour to multiple destinations between the UK and US. Also at the Theatre Royal Bath, Hall has played the title role in Timberlake Wertenbaker's "Galileo's Daughter" and 'Ann Whitfield' in George Bernard Shaw's epic "Man and Superman," both directed by Sir Peter Hall; and in DH Lawrence's "The Fight For Barbara" and as 'Elvira' in "Don Juan," both directed by Thea Sharrock, also at the Theatre Royal Bath. For her West End debut as 'Vivie' in "Mrs. Warren's Profession," Hall won the Ian Charleson Award, and garnered a second nomination for her work in "As You Like It."

Television credits include Stephen Poliakoff's *Joe's Palace*; Brendan Maher's *Wide Sargasso Sea*; Stuart Orme's *Don't Leave Me This Way*; and Peter Hall's *The Chamomile Lawn*.

Sarah Steele (Abby)

Sarah Steele, who plays teenage daughter Abby in *Please Give*, hails from the suburbs of Philadelphia, PA where she began acting at the age of 8. Sarah had a very successful young career in local theatre and at age 10 was introduced to a New York talent manager, who signed her on the spot. Sarah continued to work in professional theatre, but her foray into feature film came when James L. Brooks tapped her to play Adam Sandler's daughter in Columbia Pictures' *Spanglish*. From that moment, Sarah emerged as one of New York's premiere young actresses. She earned critical acclaim for her off-Broadway debut in The New Group's production of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" starring Tony award winner Cynthia Nixon. Sarah went on to star in the Roundabout Theatre Company's production of "Speech and Debate," for which the critics raved over her performance. Most recently, Sarah starred in the Williamstown Theatre Festival's production of "Not Waving." Sarah has guest starred on the television series *Gossip Girl*, *Law and Order* and *Law and Order: CI*. Her other feature film credits include *The Gonzo Files*, *Man* (Short, Official Sundance selection), *The Return*, *Mr. Gibb* and *Margaret*. Sarah is an English major at Columbia University.

Ann Guilbert (Andra)

Ann Guilbert, who plays the stoic but irascible Andra, is beloved by television audiences as the neighbor Millie Helper on the classic *Dick Van Dyke Show* and as feisty Grandma Yetta on *The Nanny*. She has also given memorable performances in film and television and on stage throughout her distinguished career. Television appearances include *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Law and Order: SVU*, *Seinfeld*, *Newhart*, *Cheers*, a recurring role on *Picket Fences*, and a starring role on the series *The Fanelli Boys*. In 2007, she starred on Broadway in "The Naked Girl on the Appian Way." Other stage appearances include "The Matchmaker," "Arsenic and Old Lace" and "Waiting for Godot" at the Denver Theatre Center; "Harvey," "The School for Scandal," and "Fifth of July" at the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts, and "Nite, Mother" at Washington, DC's Arena Stage. She is a graduate of Stanford University's Department of Speech and Drama.

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About the Crew

Nicole Holofcener (Writer-Director)

Critically acclaimed writer-director Nicole Holofcener was born in New York City and moved with her family to Los Angeles when she was twelve. She worked on several movies as a production assistant and as an apprentice editor before she gave film school a shot. At the Columbia Graduate Film Program she made a short, *It's Richard / Love*, and then another entitled *Angry*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Her first feature, *Walking and Talking*, sold to Miramax at the Sundance Festival a few years later, and her second feature, *Lovely & Amazing*, was released by Lions Gate.

She has since made *Friends with Money* and her latest is *Please Give*. Nicole has also directed several episodes of television, such as *Sex and the City*, *Six Feet Under*, and most recently, *Bored To Death*. She lives in Venice, California with her two sons.

Anthony Bregman (Producer)

Anthony Bregman founded the New York City-based production company Likely Story in the fall of 2006. Bregman and Likely Story have two films premiering at the Sundance Film Festival this month: *Please Give*, written and directed by Nicole Holofcener (starring Catherine Keener, Rebecca Hall, Amanda Peet and Oliver Platt); and *The Extra Man*, written and directed by Bob Pulcini and Shari Springer Berman (starring Kevin Kline, Paul Dano, John C. Reilly, and Katie Holmes).

Bregman has also produced *Synecdoche, New York*, written and directed by Charlie Kaufman and starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Samantha Morton, Michelle Williams and Catherine Keener which Sony Pictures Classics released in the Fall of 2008. and which was recently named 'The best film of the decade' by Roger Ebert; *Sleep Dealer*, written and directed by Alex Rivera, which won prizes at the 2008 Sundance and Berlin Film Festivals; the Academy Award-winning *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, written by Charlie Kaufman and directed by Michel Gondry, and starring Jim Carrey, Kate Winslet and Kirsten Dunst; *Friends With Money* written and directed by Nicole Holofcener and starring Jennifer Aniston, Catherine Keener, Frances McDormand and Joan Cusack; *Carriers*, *Thumbsucker*, *The Ex*, *Lovely & Amazing*, *Human Nature*, *The Tao of Steve*, *Luminous Motion*, and *Love God*, the world's first digital film. Bregman executive produced *The Savages*, and *Trick*, and was associate producer on *The Ice Storm*, *The Brothers McMullen*, *The Myth of Fingerprints*, and *RoyCohn/Jack Smith*

Previous to Likely Story, Bregman was a partner at This is that for four years, and spent ten years as head of production at Good Machine, where he supervised the production and post production of over thirty feature films, including *Sense and Sensibility*, *Eat Drink Man Woman*, *Walking & Talking*, *What Happened Was...*, *The Wedding Banquet*, and *Safe*.

Bregman teaches producing at Columbia University's Graduate Film School, and is on the board of the Independent Film Producers (IFP).

Caroline Jaczko (Executive Producer)

Caroline's career in the business and art of film making began when she independently produced and undertook fundraising for her first project, *Things Terrestrial*, shot on a Navajo Reservation in Tuba City, Arizona. Her love for film blossomed with her next two pictures, *Piñero* and *Just A Kiss*. Caroline has been lucky enough to work with many gifted directors. She worked with David Guggenheim (Academy Award winner for his notable work on *An Inconvenient Truth*) on the feature *Gracie*, and has also tremendously enjoyed working with Nicole Holofcener on *Please Give*. Caroline is very proud of her work last summer on her most recent film, *Rabbit Hole*, directed by John Cameron Mitchell. Her staying power as a producer is as formidable as her love for her work.

Stefanie Azpiazu (Associate Producer)

Stefanie Azpiazu is VP of Production and Development at New York-based production company Likely Story.

In addition to her work as associate producer on *Please Give*, Azpiazu is also an executive producer on the upcoming comedy *The Extra Man*, directed by Sundance award-winning directors Shari Springer Berman and Bob Pulcini based on the Jonathan Ames novel. It stars Kevin Kline, Paul Dano, Katie Holmes and John C. Reilly. The film will premiere at the Sundance 2010 film festival.

Additionally, Stefanie was an associate producer on Alex and David Pastor's directorial debut *Carriers* starring Chris Pine, Piper Perabo and Lou Taylor Pucci. The film was released by Paramount Vantage in September 2009.

Next up for Likely Story is an adaptation of Laura Lippman's mystery novel *Every Secret Thing* that Nicole Holofcener has adapted and plans to direct. Other projects in development include Ross Katz's adaptation of *The Amateur American* based on Joel Saunders Elmore's debut novel, a TV series for the Sundance Channel based on Deborah Copaken Kogan's memoir *Shutterbabe* and Adam Brooks' adaptation of Paul Vlitos' comedic novel *Welcome to the Working Week*.

At Likely Story, Stefanie has overseen production on Charlie Kaufman's directorial debut *Synecdoche, New York*, starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Samantha Morton, Catherine Keener, Michelle Williams, Emily Watson, and Dianne Weist; and *Sleep Dealer*, a Spanish-language sci-fi love story directed by Alex Rivera which premiered at the 2008 Sundance and Berlin Film Festivals.

Prior to Likely Story, she worked as a story editor at USA Films, in acquisitions at October Films, at Good Machine where she worked on such films as Nicole Holofcener's *Lovely & Amazing* and Michel Gondry's *Human Nature*, and as an executive at This is that where she oversaw production on such films as Jesse Peretz's *The Ex*, Nicole Holofcener's *Friends with Money*, Mike Mills' *Thumbsucker* and Michel Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*.

Yaron Orbach (Director of Photography)

In addition to *Please Give*, Yaron Orbach's diverse film slate includes *The Ten*, *Birds of America*, *The Open Road*, *The Joneses*, *An Englishman In New York* and most recently John Carpenter's *The Ward*, all of which were screened at Sundance, Tribeca, Toronto and The Berlin Film Festivals. The 2009 Camerimage Film Festival awarded Orbach the

Golden Frog for Cinematography Achievement on the documentary *Unmistaken Child*. He currently resides in New York City.

Robert Frazen (Editor)

Please Give is the third film Robert has edited with Nicole Holofcener. He also edited *Friends With Money* and *Lovely and Amazing*. Robert just finished editing *The Company Men* for John Wells which is also having its premiere at this year's Sundance festival. Other films include *Synecdoche*, *Smart People*, *Smokin' Aces*, *Igby Goes Down*, and *The Great New Wonderful*.

Marcelo Zarvos (Original Music)

Marcelo Zarvos writes music for Film, Television, Dance, Theater and the Concert Stage. Along with *Please Give*, his recent film scores include *The Good Shepherd*, *Hollywoodland*, *Strangers with Candy*, *The Door in the Floor* and *Kissing Jessica Stein*. He received an Emmy nomination for Ross Katz' acclaimed HBO film *Taking Chance*. Recent and upcoming film releases include Allen Coulter's *Remember Me*, Cary Fukunaga's *Sin Nombre* and Antoine Fuqua's *Brooklyn's Finest*.

Ane Crabtree (Costume Design)

A Costume Designer for film and television, Ane Crabtree made an immediate and lasting impression when she created the look for *The Sopranos* in the original HBO pilot. But Crabtree has always been interested in breaking new ground. Hailing from Kentucky, Ane's DNA seemed to contain an authentic way of seeing with a keen antenna. She took those gifts to study fine arts at Harlaxton College (Lincolnshire, England) and fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Technology (New York). Ane wasn't long in Manhattan before she found herself pondering the theatrical power of visual merchandising while doing window display at Bonwit Teller on 57th Street. That led to a stint as stylist and editor for Elle Magazine. She credits those experiences with preparing her for the challenging period films that would come her way, like the sweeping vistas of Milcho Manchevski's *Dust*, which spans an entire century on two continents, or the fine-tuned, down-to-the-detail look of a historical film, *Chapter 27*.

Her emphasis on mixing creativity and efficiency has allowed her to mesh well with a wide range of directors from Nicole Holofcener to Mimi Leder to David Chase to Michael Mann. But she is also known for her creative touch with actors such as Morgan Freeman, Joseph Fiennes, Antonio Banderas, Helen Hunt, Carla Guigino, Sarah Jessica Parker, Liev Schreiber, and most recently, Timothy Olyphant.

Her commercial work includes various spots for "Adidas", "Sherwin Williams", "AT&T," "Miller Lite," and "Planters Peanuts." Her most recent films include *The Code* (2008) and *Every Day* (2010). Ane is currently designing for the up-coming FX TV series *Justified*. She lives in Los Angeles and works regularly on both coasts.

Mark White (Production Designer)

After earning a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Mark White began his career as a Toy Designer, later transitioning into a career first as a Theatre Designer and ultimately into film. He served as Set Designer on *Twenty-Nine Palms*, and Art Director on *Boiler Room*. As Production Designer, White's credits include: *Wet Hot American Summer*, *The Baxter*, *The Ten*, *Tully*, and the Comedy Central series *Stella*. White's *Down to the Bone* realized the 2005 Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Prize for actress Vera Farmiga along with the directing award while *Transamerica* starring Felicity

Huffman, was nominated for an Academy Award. Recent projects include Comedy Central's original series *Michael and Michael Have Issues* and Debra Granik's *Winter's Bone* which was selected for the U. S. Dramatic Competition in the 2010 Sundance Film Festival. White possesses an extraordinary ability to capture authentic moments and to create an environment that is sometimes chilling, sometimes funny or irreverent yet always complex. Mark resides in New York City.

Jeanne McCarthy (Casting)

Jeanne McCarthy has been working in television and film for over 20 years. Under the tutelage of renowned Broadway actress, Sandy Dennis, Ms. McCarthy began her career as a New York actress, where she worked with the likes of Horton Foote and Matthew Broderick. Ms. McCarthy's career eventually lead her towards casting, and to Los Angeles, and by the mid-90's, she was casting such films as *Mars Attacks!*, *Bulworth*, and *Austin Powers*. Ms. McCarthy has gone on to cast such notable television series and feature films such as *Tracey Takes On...*, *The Sarah Silverman Program*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *I, Robot*; *Zoolander*, *Anchorman*, *Friends with Money*, *The Savages* and *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. Ms. McCarthy has received numerous accolades for her work, including an Emmy nomination for the TNT TV Movie, *Door to Door*, and an Independent Spirit (Robert Altman) Award for *Synechdoche, NY*. Ms. McCarthy continues to make her mark as one of the most well-respected and sought-after casting directors in Hollywood.