

## The JOBS and Roles of the Film PRODUCTION OFFICE:

### **Producer:**

The Producer is the first person to become involved in a film production and who brings together the whole production team. Once the Producer takes possession of the script, the film belongs to them for the rest of its commercial life. This is why, in the main, they are extremely selective and only buy into scripts or concepts which they believe will give a good financial return. The Producer has the personality, focus, contacts and determination to persuade others to commit to their commercial and creative vision.

The Producer's many responsibilities span all the phases of the production process. The Producer and the Financial Controller, with input from the Heads of Department, are responsible for setting the budget and schedule for the whole project.

### **Assistant Producer:**

The Assistant Producer is a highly competent administrator who works with the Producer throughout the production process – from Script Development through to Marketing and Distribution. They must be well organised, highly flexible with a comprehensive overview of film production.

The Assistant Producer may be either freelance, or a long-term employee of the Production Company. It is a privileged position and should never be confused with the job of a Production Assistant. The work of the Assistant Producer may range from writing coverage on scripts, co-ordinating the fundraising process, assisting with duties on and off set, liaising between the Producer and the other departments and helping to prepare publicity materials. They might also oversee the job of securing clearances for copyright materials.

### **Associate Producer:**

Associate Producers in feature film production can come from several sources. They may be someone within the primary production company who has played a particularly significant role in the development of the script or screenplay, or contributed important creative ideas. They may be another Producer, or a senior Script Editor who helped to shape the direction of the final drafts of the screenplay, without whose input the film may not have been financed, or the Producer's Assistant who supervised development or post production for the Producer in their absence. They may also be a Producer from a smaller production company which is involved in co-producing the film and who has typically raised a small amount of funding for the project but not enough to warrant Executive Producer or Co-Producer credit.

The Associate Producer can be involved throughout the production process and may assist in development, research, packaging and raising production finance. In fact, they could carry out any production work that the Producer is too busy to supervise personally and which is not covered by one of the other production roles such as Executive Producer, Co-producer or Line Producer.

As an integral part of the Production Team, the Associate Producer should be able to plan, inspire, supervise, delegate - and act decisively and sensitively under pressure. It is essential to have a good understanding of feature film budgeting and scheduling, as well as a comprehensive knowledge of the different creative departments involved in feature film production.

The job of Associate Producer can be a good opportunity for promising young Producers with limited experience to learn on-the-job from a seasoned professional. It can be exhausting and require endless patience but may be the best way to learn about this particular role and the career path ahead if the aim is eventually to become a fully-fledged Producer. This is not an entry level position.

### **Line Producer:**

Where does the job title come from? They are called Line Producers because they cannot start work until they know what the 'Line' is. 'Above the Line' relates to writers, producers, directors and cast. 'Below the Line' relates to development costs, crew salaries, set design and construction, equipment hire, locations, catering, travel and insurance.

During pre-production, the Line Producer works closely with the Director, Production Manager, Art Director and other Heads of Department to prepare the production schedule and budget in order to set the start date for shooting. Line Producers oversee all other pre- production activities, including hiring the production team, setting up the production office, location scouting, ensuring compliance with regulations and codes of practice, sourcing equipment and suppliers, selecting crew, engaging supporting artistes and monitoring the progress of the Art Department and other departments.

During production, the Line Producer hands over control of the final budget to the Production Accountant and delegates the day-to-day operation of the Production Office to the Production Manager and Production Co-ordinator. However, Line Producers are still ultimately responsible for making sure that the production keeps to schedule and budget. This requires setting up and implementing financial monitoring systems, controlling production expenditure, controlling production materials and monitoring and controlling the progress of productions. Line Producers are responsible for certain Health and Safety procedures and for sorting out any insurance claims. At the end of the shoot, the Line Producer oversees the 'wrap', or winding down, of the production.

No qualifications can prepare anyone completely for this hugely demanding job. Line Producers must have considerable industry experience, which can only be gained by working for a number of years in film, television and/or commercial production. The progression to Line Producer is by working through a variety of jobs such as Assistant Director, or working through the Production Office.

A great deal of responsibility falls on the shoulders of the Line Producer so this job isn't for the under-qualified or the faint-hearted.

#### **Production Manager:**

The Production Manager (PM) is the pivotal role for any film production, combining the business skills involved in running a temporary company with the creative skills necessary to appreciate the vision of the Producer and Director. The PM helps to determine the most efficient and economic way to schedule shoots, negotiate business deals for crews, locations, technical equipment and make day-to-day decisions to ensure that the production proceeds smoothly. Production Managers are dynamic and highly self-motivated individuals.

Production Management requires a set of skills that take years of working in film production to perfect. The PM has budget control and is a procurement expert, legal expert, the interface between facilities, human resources, paymaster, accountant, logistics professional, mediator and is the Producer's right hand. Add to that the responsibility of being one of the first to be hired for a project and certainly one of the last to leave, combined with the need for a considerable knowledge of the technology involved in an ever-changing workplace and this gives new significance to the expression 'multi tasking'.

No qualifications can prepare anyone completely for this hugely demanding job. To qualify for this position, the Production Manager must be highly experienced in the film industry and have enhanced management skills.

#### **Production Co-ordinator:**

The Production Co-ordinator is directly responsible to the Production Manager. There are many operational duties in film production, including office and studio space to be found, supplies and equipment to be purchased or rented and production team members to be hired. Whilst the Production Manager oversees and signs off on all of these activities, it is the responsibility of the Production Co-ordinator to ensure that they are executed without a hitch.

In addition to employee relations and operational duties, a Production Co-ordinator will perform many clerical duties. This may include drafting internal and external correspondence, creating cast and crew contact lists as well as typing daily call sheets. Additionally, a Co-ordinator may type revised scripts, photocopy and distribute them.

**Director:**

If the cast and crew of a film can be likened to a creative army going into battle, then the Director is the General in charge of that army and is the ultimate creative voice of the production.

The Director leads and inspires his troops. He has schedule and strategy pre-planned in order to achieve his goal –to make a financially and creatively successful film to satisfy the Producer, the financial backers and the eventual audience.

The Director, working with the Producer, will select the creative and technical Heads of Department, usually beginning with the Production Designer and the Director of Photography and, from there start to create a detailed budget and production schedule.

The Director of Photography, a most important asset to the Director, will work with the Director on set. They will almost always have worked together on previous productions and so trust each others' judgment. The Director's own crew of Assistant Directors (and Second Unit Directors on a big budget feature) will also be trusted colleagues.

Whereas the Producer is in total control of the production, the Director is in charge of all the action on set. Along with the leading Heads of Department the Director will establish a shooting schedule, determine locations, hire the crew and select the cast members. Decisions on costume and all other creative elements fall to the final approval of the Director and are determined during pre-production. From rehearsing the actors before principal photography begins, right through to sitting in on picture and sound Post- Production, the Director is in creative control.

**Production Designer:**

As the Head of the Art Department, the Production Designer works very closely with the Director and other Heads of Department - Art Director, Construction Manager, Costume and Makeup Designers and the Director of Photography and plays a crucial role in helping the Producer and Director to the visual requirements of the film.

A successful Production Designer will be artistically talented and resourceful, with the ability to turn ideas into something tangible. The look of a film set or location is vital in drawing the audience into the story and is essential in making a film convincing and evocative. Every story is intended to leave the audience with a particular emotion, so the design of the set and scenery is just as vital to that experience as an actor's portrayal of a character

**Location Manager:**

Supported by the Assistant Location Manager and the Location Scouts, the Location Manager uses investigative research with on-site photography and notes to document potential locations that are perfect for filming. A good Location, Manager, Scout or Assistant Manager will usually have an extensive portfolio of locations to make initial suggestions to the Director, Producer and Production Designer, as they will already have travelled extensively during their career and worked in many overseas and local sites.

The primary duty is to find an environment best suited for a particular scene or, in some cases, the entire movie. The search begins with the script, which indicates what kind of location is needed. The scouting of potential sites usually begins with a file search, leading to physical visits to actual sites, whether exterior or interior. The Scout is responsible for contacting property owners to gain permission to investigate their property, plus permissions must be obtained from the appropriate authorities to prevent the possibility of trespassing or other legal liabilities that may occur, as well as noting details about the logistical implications of the site.

The more details they can provide to the Director, Producer and other Heads of Department the better and a complete picture of what to expect during the shoot is expected. Ambient lighting conditions, ambient sound, parking areas for the crew, sources of electricity, and access to the site are just some of the most crucial details that should be scouted. Once the location is chosen, the legal issues have been worked out and the crew arrives on site, the Location team photograph the site to ensure that any 'dressing' of the location', in the form of props and furniture or actual structural changes, can be easily undone and the location returned to its original condition once filming is complete.

## **Assistant Directors:**

### **First Assistant Director (1st AD):**

Works as the Director's right hand, taking responsibility for a number of important tasks so that the Director is free to concentrate on the creative process. During pre- production, 1st ADs break down the script shot-by-shot, working with the Director and the Art Director to determine the shooting order and then drawing up the overall shooting schedule (a timetable for the filming period). Once filming starts, the 1st is in charge of making sure that every aspect of the shoot keeps to this schedule. The main duties are to assist the Director and to co-ordinate all production activity on set - they are the key link between the Director, the cast and crew and the Production Office.

The 1st ADs' core responsibility is to keep everything on schedule, so they aren't always the most popular person on set! They have to frequently co-ordinate the cast and crew, control discipline, supervise the other Assistant Directors and oversee the preparation of the daily 'call sheet'. The 1st AD must be an authoritative team-leader and motivator and must try to cultivate as pleasant an atmosphere on set as possible by remaining calm (hopefully!), whilst keeping everything running efficiently.

### **Second Assistant Director (2nd AD):**

Works directly under the First Assistant (1st AD). The 2nd AD's main function is to ensure that all the 1st AD's orders and directions are carried out.

2nd ADs have two main responsibilities during production: the preparation of the 'call sheet' (the document which details the daily filming logistics for distribution to cast and crew) and overseeing all the movements of the cast, ensuring that the principal actors are in Makeup, Wardrobe, or standing by on the set at the correct times. On smaller productions, where there may be no 3rd AD, the 2nd may also be responsible for finding and looking after background artistes. Most 2nds liaise between the set or location and the production office, updating key personnel on the timings and progress of the shoot.

### **Third Assistant Director (3rd AD):**

When you've been a Floor Runner for some time and have proven to everyone that you're quick, efficient, reliable, pleasant, willing to work hard and absorb information – all the things necessary to progressing up the ladder to success – you may get the opportunity to go and work on set as a Third Assistant Director. When you reach these dizzy heights I'm afraid that, as a junior member of the team, you're still likely to be 'teamaker-in-chief' for the Cast, Director and Crew so, instead of having to make three or four cups at a time you'll be catering for thirty or more!!

You'll be supporting the First and Second Assistant Directors in whatever ways are necessary, which can involve a wide variety of tasks but mostly you'll be working around the movement of the Actors and Background Artistes involved in the action. The great thing is that every day is new and, because a 3rd doesn't have to worry about the grander things on set, you can use every moment to watch, listen and learn.

### **Production/Floor Runners and Assistants:**

If you ring the Production Office on any film looking for a job, it's likely that the person who answers the phone first is doing the job that you want – the Production Runner. Runners either work in the Production Office or on set. The term '*Runner*' comes from the time when the footage from the days' shoot (Rushes in the UK or Dailies in the USA) from either film sets or newsreels had to be carried as quickly as possible, back and forth between the set or the location and the laboratory for processing, so that the footage could be viewed by Director, Producer and Cinematographer early the next morning. Although this still happens to some extent when the Cinematographer is using film, the digital footage can now be transmitted electronically - but the title still lives on and describes the job perfectly.

The Runner is responsible for fetching, carrying and doing most of the odd-jobs. They are the foot soldiers of the production team whose duties are general office work but mainly fetching and carrying for absolutely everyone and, oh yes, making gallons of tea and coffee with a smile! You are there to support anyone who needs help in a variety of ways, until such time as you have learned enough to take on more responsibilities and begin to earn the title of a Production Assistant in the office or a Trainee Third Assistant on set. There are no specific qualifications necessary for this job but a good basic education is very necessary combined with a passionate interest in all aspects of film – this passion will carry you through all the difficulties and disappointments, which are all part of working in this mainly freelance industry where you are constantly on the search for the next job.

### **Script and Development:**

Every film begins as an idea; a Script. Whose idea is it? Do they own it? Is it a marketable story?

Development means extending an idea to the point where it becomes a film which the financiers might like – in other words a \*package. It is during this stage that the crucial decisions are made in the creation of the \*\*value chain of the project. If all those decisions prove to be right, this chain may extend many years after the initial release of the film.

So, what's the process? The Producer selects a story – it may come from a book, a play, another film, a true story or an original idea. Once the story or script has been chosen the Producer works with his writing team to prepare a synopsis, then a step-by-step outline which breaks the story down into one-paragraph scenes concentrating on dramatic structure, with description of the story, mood and characters, often with storyboard illustrations to help visualise key points. Next the Screenwriter will prepare a Screenplay, which may be rewritten several times and take several months. This Screenplay will be pitched to potential financiers and, if successful, the film will be given a 'green light', ie an offer of financial backing is secured.

However, this process is often shortened if the script/screenplay submitted to the Producer has already been assessed by either investors or a distributor as a potential financial success. Once all parties have settled the deal, the film will proceed into the pre- production stage. By this time, on a major feature film, there should be a clearly defined marketing strategy and target audience.

*\*Package: bring talent to a project – or finance where a project is packaged to include a pre-sale to a territory.*

*\*\*Value chain: a framework to identify all activities and analyse the costs and value for the financiers from production to display.*

### **Casting Director:**

Good casting is the make-or-break ingredient between a box-office flop and a ratings hit. The Casting Director is the person who puts together that magic blend of performers who bring the story on the screen to life and the audience into the cinema. Although the headliners, the 'stars', rarely have to go through the full and extensive casting process that unknowns endure, the Casting Director is responsible for every role from the romantic lead, to the old lady on a bus, to a hundred background artistes.

This job involves working closely with the Director and Producer to understand what the story needs, suggesting ideal artists for each role, as well as arranging and conducting interviews and auditions. The Casting Director will negotiate fees and contracts and act as a liaison between the Production Office, the performers and their agents. The Casting Director must have an extensive knowledge of actors and their suitability for a particular role with a massive contact list of agents and will generally stay on board with a film through to the end of shooting in case a role has to be re-cast or additional characters added.

### **Product Placement Executive (aka Brand Integration):**

If a scene in the film shows the star driving the latest model of fast car in a stunt- filled chase, or the leading lady's dress sparkles with a well-know brand of crystals, or the drunk at the bar is gazing fondly at a branded bottle of whisky; you can be sure that the Product Placement Executive has been doing their job!

Depending on the unique circumstances of each project, Product Placement may be answering calls or placing them. Whether a leading fashion house wants to dress the hero of the film, or a cosmetic company want the heroine to use their lipstick and mascara in a scene, the Product Placement Executive representing the film production company takes proposals from specialists and agents concerning verbal, visual or hands-on embedding.

It is their responsibility to determine the most lucrative and positive brand integration opportunities, whether that be carefully considering offers from advertisers or identifying exceptional opportunities for placement and seeking out an agreement and securing the rights to use a trademarked brand. When the negotiations are complete to mutual satisfaction, the advertiser reaches its audience and the Producer receives the much-needed goods or financial support.

**Executive Producer:**

An Executive Producer is typically someone who is either financing the film, representing a third party who is financing the film, or involved with a property which has been optioned into a film but has no direct input into the creative process of the film itself. For example, authors of optioned books sometimes get an Executive Producer credit on films made from their work, even though they have no hand in the production process. Occasionally, a leading actor or actress, whose international audience appeal will assure financial backing and distribution, will be credited as an Executive Producer.

Most films have multiple backers and therefore more than one Executive Producer. They don't necessarily have to have any film-making experience at all, so their sole responsibility is to protect the investors' interests. The traditional role of the Executive Producer is to supervise the work of the Producer on behalf of the financiers or the distributor.

**Co-Producer:**

The Co-Producer can be involved in a film's production from several angles. They may be a Line Producer who is also involved in the creative aspect of the film, or the lead Producer from a partner company which is co-producing the film, or a partner or corporate officer from the primary production company.

Occasionally the title of Co-Producer is accorded to a Producer who finds, options, develops or packages the project but does not own the rights and who plays a less significant role in the physical production of the film. For example, they may be relatively new-to-the-job Producers who need to work with, and gain experience from, a more senior Producer.

They may have raised a significant portion of the budget for the film but have less creative input than the lead Producer and, in some cases, the individual may choose to be credited as Co-Producer rather than as Executive Producer, in order to indicate that they played an important part in the physical production of the film.

**Financial Controller and Accounts Department:**

A large production company, or broadcaster, may employ an experienced and qualified Accountant as Financial Controller to ensure that proper controls and reporting procedures are in place across every aspect of the company's activities, including those of individual productions.

On larger productions, a freelance Senior Production Accountant may function as a Financial Controller to oversee the work of the Accounts team. The role is very challenging and requires excellent analytical skills, a wide-ranging perspective and flexibility.

Financial Controllers are responsible for controlling accounting, taxation and financial analysis for all the company's areas of operation, which may encompass development, production and distribution. Financial Controllers may also be required to supervise the activities of one or more full-time Assistants. On individual productions, Financial Controllers will assist Producers and Executive Producers to prepare original budgets and to raise finance, taking into consideration any relevant tax incentive schemes that may be available at that time.

**Publicity, Marketing, Distribution and Display:**

On major feature films the Marketing and Publicity Department oversees the creation and planning of the film's marketing campaign, once the Distributor has identified the target audiences and potential revenue. The advice from most professionals is that you should research the Marketing and Distribution options before you commit one penny of anyone's money into full production. Currently, film makers with a limited budget may use all the resources available through the social networks, using crowd funding and other options.

Marketing campaigns should reach target audiences as efficiently and frequently as possible, both before and during the release. Feature films are amongst the most eagerly anticipated products available to consumers and, as every film is different, every marketing campaign must also be quite unique.

Big budget films involving top stars usually spend more money on marketing and publicity because they have more production costs to recoup. Smaller niche, art house or 'indie' films have less to spend and must therefore use considerable ingenuity in order to be noticed. Work on a film's marketing campaign may begin over a year prior to its release but, more usually, the lead time is several months during which the Marketing and Publicity Managers must promote the film's visibility and stimulate public interest.

The aim is to enhance a film's visibility and to raise the public's awareness by convincing audiences that this is a 'must-see' movie and that the campaign peaks when the film opens, followed by further promotion to keep interest in the film after its theatrical (cinema) distribution into the television, satellite and DVD marketplace. Tactical skills are vital because of the ongoing need to develop and enhance the promotional campaign, whilst keeping channels of communication open with all parties in order to achieve maximum revenue

Press and publicity plays a vital role in the marketing of films. Press campaigns are carefully planned in advance and encompass both Unit Publicity, carried out during the film shoot and Distribution Publicity, arranged to coincide with the film's release. These two areas require different specialist skills and usually involve two different experts or publicity companies.

#### **Unit Publicists:**

Unit Publicists are hired by Producers, Distributors or Sales Agents and together they plan appropriate press strategies involving regional, national and global media. During filming, Unit Publicists work closely with the First and Second Assistant Directors to ensure that actors and selected crew members are available for interviews, and arrange the schedules for journalists and EPK (Electronic Press Kit) to schedule and conduct the interviews.

#### **The Unit Stills Photographer:**

The Unit Stills Photographer works closely with the Publicist taking enough good quality photographic stills during the shoot. This is an important part of the Publicity process and can make the difference between a newspaper or magazine editor deciding whether or not to run a piece. EPK crews are hired by Studios, Distributors, Sales Agents, or sometimes Unit Publicists, to produce interviews and behind the scenes footage of feature films. These segments are edited and transferred onto suitable formats and supplied to broadcasters as a package.

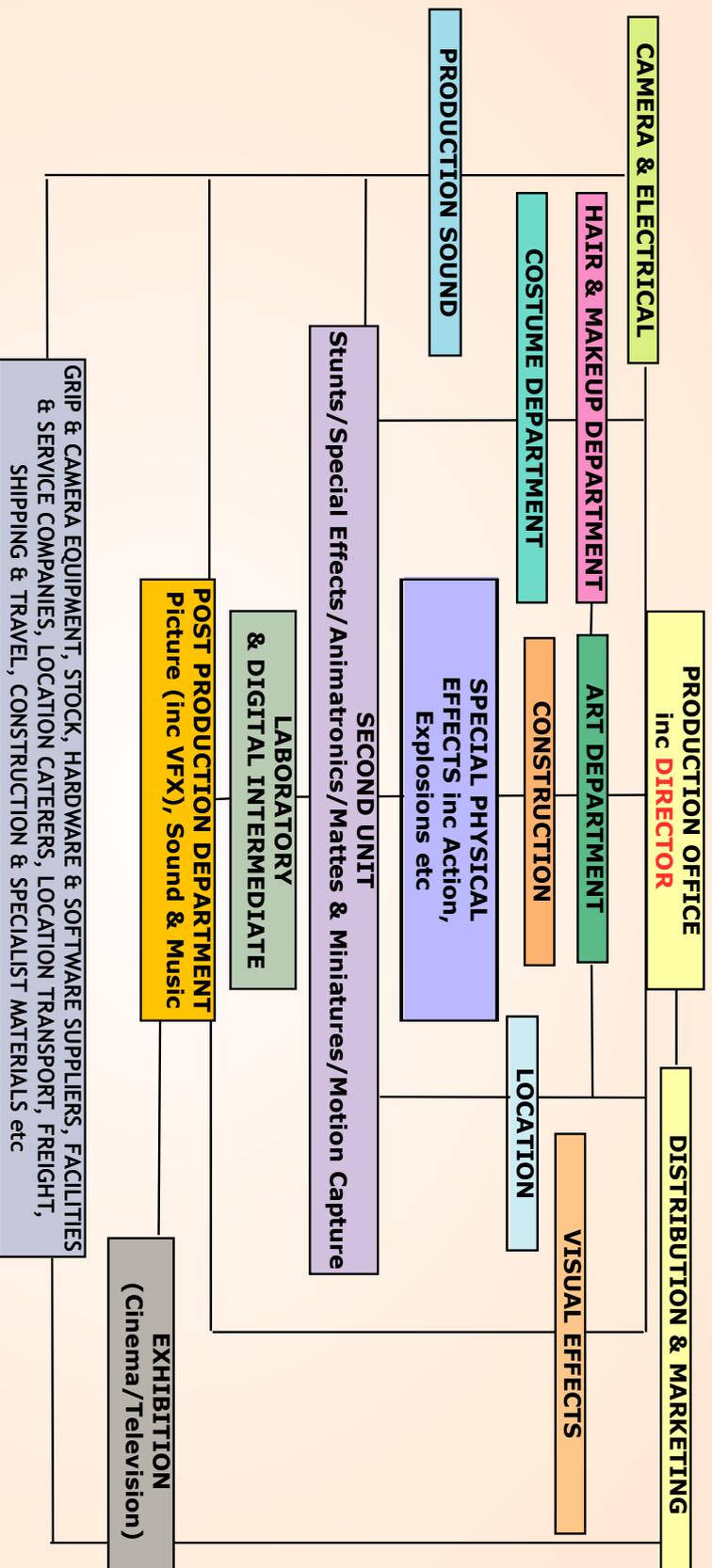
#### **Film Title and Poster Designer:**

The FTP Designer works closely with the Director and the Marketing and Publicity department. They are Graphic Designers with a talent for interpreting the ethos of the film into posters used for publicity and the ever-important title sequence of the film. The doyen of this art was Saul Bass, who started designing titles for Otto Preminger for the 1954 film *Carmen Jones*. For *The Man with the Golden Arm* he created such an iconic opening sequence that Preminger sent instructions with every can of film telling the projectionists to 'pull the curtains back before rolling the titles'. Until that point the titles were so dull the projectionists only revealed the screen once the titles were finished.

#### **Completion Bond:**

In general, a completion bond assures banks and financiers that the producers will complete and deliver the film in keeping with the screenplay, budget and production schedule; or the completion guarantor will complete and deliver the film in keeping with such pre-approved screenplay and production schedule, and advance such sums in excess of the pre-approved budget necessary to do so; or in the event the production of the film is abandoned, the completion guarantor will fully repay all sums invested in the film by the bank or financiers.

# PRODUCTION CREW OVERVIEW



This simplified workflow shows the interaction between the main sections within the production process from Acquisition to Display. As well as the 'on-set' crew, there is a comprehensive service & support industry which is an essential part of any production.

## PROFESSIONAL GUILDS & ASSOCIATIONS

Cineguilds; Production Guild of Great Britain; Production Managers Association; Director's Guild of Great Britain; British Film Designers Guild; British Society of Cinematographers; International Cinematographers Guild; Guild of British Camera Technicians; National Association of Screen Makeup Artists & Hairdressers; Writers Guild of Great Britain; Guild of British Film & Television Editors; Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Technicians Union; Association of Motion Picture Sound; Guild of Location Managers; Women in Film & Television; British Academy of Film & Television Arts; Visual Effects Society; Association of Professional Recording Services; Performing Rights Society; The Musicians Union; Music Producers Guild; Mechanical Copyright Protection Agency; British Academy of Composers & Songwriters; Association of Professional Recording Services; Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences USA); Costume Designers Guild (USA); Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (USA)