Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Young Faces in Movies

Elisa Leonelli · Wednesday, December 5th, 2018

It feels like a breath of fresh air to see so many new faces among the young protagonists of movies released in 2018, and they come in a variety of ethnicities and nationalities, which is a reflection of our vitally multicultural American society.

Elsie Fisher, 15, from California, plays a 13-year-old middle schooler who posts videos on YouTube in *Eighth Grade* (2018), written and directed by Bo Burhnam, 28.

Thomasin McKenzie, 18, from Wellington, New Zealand, is the daughter of a Vietnam vet (Ben Foster) in *Leave No Trace* directed by Debra Granik from the 2010 novel *My Abandonment* by Peter Rock.

Danielle Macdonald (c) Magnus Sundholm-HFPA

Danielle Macdonald, 27, from Sydney, Australia, played a rapper in *Patti Cake$* (2017). She is Jennifer Aniston's daughter in *Dumplin'* by Anne Fletcher, an overweight teenager who enters a beauty contest inspired by Dolly Parton, a pregnant woman who bonds with an equally pregnant Sandra Bullock in *Bird Box* by Susanne Bier.

Trevante Rhodes, 28, from Texas, had acted in *Moonlight* (2017) by Barry Jenkins. He plays Sandra Bullock's lover in *Bird Box* directed by Susanne Bier from the 2014 novel by Josh Malerman.

Millicent Simmonds (c) Magnus Sundholm-HFPA

Millicent "Millie" Simmonds, 15, from Utah, acted in *Wonderstruck* (2017) by Todd Haynes, she is the deaf teenage daughter in *A Quiet Place* by John Krasinski.

Richie Merritt, 15, from Baltimore, Maryland, plays Richard Wershe, a teenage FBI informant, in *White Boy Rick* with Matthew McConaughey as his arms-dealer father. **Bel Powley**, 28, from London, who acted in *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* (2015) by Marielle Heller, is his heroin-addicted sister.

Isabela Moner (c) Magnus Sundholm-HFPA

Isabela Moner, 17, born in Cleveland, Ohio of a Peruvian mother, is a teenager adopted by foster parents (Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne) in *Instant Family*, the kidnapped daughter in *Sicario: Day of the Soldado*.

Awkwafina (c) Magnus Sundholm-HFPA

Awkwafina, 30, born Nora Lum in Queens, New York, is Chinese-American. She plays a pickpocket in *Ocean's 8* with Sandra Bullock and Cate Blanchett, Constance Wu's college friend from Singapore in *Crazy Rich Asians*.

Henry Golding, 31, born in Malaysia, raised in England, stars with **Constance Wu** in *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018) directed by Jon Chu from the 2013 novel by Kevin Kwan, with Blake Lively and Anna Kendrick in *A Simple Favor* (2018) by Paul Feig.

Amandla Stenberg, 20, from Los Angeles, plays a teenager who witnesses her friend being shot by a policeman in *The Hate U Give*. She was featured on the cover of TIME magazine as a Next Generation Leader.

Nick Robinson, 23, from Seattle, who co-starred with Amandla Stenberg in *Everything, Everything* (2017), is a gay teenager in *Love, Simon* by Greg Berlanti.

Elizabeth Debicki, 28, from Melbourne, Australia, plays a battered wife turned prostitute in *Widows* by Steve McQueen.

Cynthia Erivo, 31, born in London of Nigerian parents, is a singer in *Bad Times at El Royal* with Jeff Bridges, a hairdresser in *Widows* by Steve McQueen with Viola Davis.

KiKi Layne, 26, from Cincinnati, Ohio, and **Stephan James**, 25, born in Toronto Canada of Jamaican parents, play the young lovers in *If Beale Street Could Talk* directed by Barry Jenkins from the 1974 novel by James Baldwin. James was civil rights activist John Lewis in *Selma* (2013) and 1936 Olympic medalist Jesse Owens in *Race* (2016), he acts with Julia Roberts in TV series *Homecoming* by Sam Esmail.

John David Washington, Laura Harrier-BlacKkKlansman © Focus

John David Washington, 34, son of Denzel Washington, plays Ron Stallworth, the African-American detective who infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan in mid-70s Colorado Springs, in *BlacKkKlansman* by Spike Lee. His activist friend is played by **Laura Harrier**, 28, from Chicago, sporting an Angela Davis afro.

Joe Alwyn, 27, from London, acted in *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (2016) by Ang Lee. He is the lover of Queen Elizabeth (Margot Robbie) in *Mary Queen of Scots*, the husband of Abigail (Emma Stone) in *The Favourite* by Yorgos Lanthimos, the college boy who assaults Garrard Conley (Lucas Edges) in *Boy Erased* by Joel Edgerton.

Lucas Hedges, 22, born in New York, acted in *Manchester by the Sea* (2016) by Kenneth Lonergan, plays a college freshman sent to gay conversion therapy by his parents (Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe) in *Boy Erased* directed by Joel Edgerton from the 2016 memoir by Garrard Conley, the drug-addicted son of Julia Roberts in *Ben is Back*, directed by his father Peter Hedges.

Timothée Chalamet (c) Magnus Sundholm-HFPA

Timothée Chalamet, 23, born in New York from a French father, was a sensation last year in *Call Me by Your Name* by Luca Guadagnino, he confirms his talent in *Beautiful Boy* with Steve Carell, based on books written by father and son David and Nic Sheff, about meth addiction.

Victor Polster, Lukas Dhont © Armando Gallo-HFPA

We have to mention two stand-out young performers in foreign films: **Victor Polster**, 16, in the Belgian movie *Girl* by first time director Lukas Dhont, 25, and **Yalitza Aparicio**, 24, from Oaxaca, Mexico, as the nanny in *Roma* by Alfonso Cuáron.

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