

BFG (2016)

- Rated PG for action/peril, some scary moments and brief rude humor
- \$140,000,000 budget
- 2 hrs
- Directed by Steven Spielberg
- Produced by Kathleen Kennedy, Kristie Macosko Krieger, John Madden
- The film was produced by Amblin Entertainment, Walt Disney Pictures, Walden Media
- Premiered at the [2016 Cannes Film Festival](#) on May 14, 2016
- The first adaptation of *The BFG* came in 1989, with a direct-to-TV movie made in Britain and broadcast on the country's terrestrial ITV television network on Christmas Day that year.

QUICK THOUGHTS

- Phil Svitek
- Marisa Serafini
- Demetri Panos
- Sara Stretton

DEVELOPMENT

- Kathleen & Frank Marshall started working on an adaptation in 1991. Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall, setting up the groundwork with Paramount Pictures
 - "The BFG" is the story of the two lonely souls who, in finding one another, create their own home in the world, which is a consistent thread in Spielberg's rich body of work. "Steven has always gravitated towards stories about families, which is one of the reasons his films have resonated with so many people," says executive producer Kathleen Kennedy ("Star Wars: The Force Awakens," the "Indiana Jones" films).
- A screenplay was written by husband and wife team Nicholas Kazan and Robin Swicord. *Robin Williams* was the person producers originally wanted for the role in the early days of development, when Swicord and Kazan wrote their screenplay. "But he *did* carry out lots of cast readings" - Kennedy
- The Roald Dahl estate gave their blessing to a rewrite of the script by Gwyn Lurie in 2001, but it wasn't until 2011 that DreamWorks — set up by Spielberg — acquired the rights and the ball really got rolling
- John Madden (Shakespeare in Love, Captain Corelli's Mandolin) was originally pencilled in as *The BFG*'s director. Still involved in the *BFG* project as executive director
- Kennedy had initially thought of Spielberg as director, but hesitated asking him until a more concrete screenplay was presentable
- Spielberg stated, "*The BFG* has enchanted families and their children for more than three decades. We are honoured that the Roald Dahl estate has entrusted us with this classic story."
- [Walden Media](#) agreed to co-produce and co-finance the film with DreamWorks and Amblin in March 2015
- A month later, [Walt Disney Studios](#)—which was under prior agreement to distribute the film through its [Touchstone Pictures](#) banner—also joined the production as a

co-producer and co-financier, and shifted the film from a Touchstone release to a [Walt Disney Pictures](#) production instead

- Consequently, *The BFG* is the first Disney-branded film directed by Spielberg, though he has previously produced several films for the studio
- Additionally, DreamWorks did not receive a [marquee credit](#)—placement of the studio's [production logo](#) on marketing materials, nor in the film's opening titles, and instead is represented by Amblin, although DreamWorks still serves as a copyright holder for the film

WRITING (Melissa Mathison- Screenplay, Roald Dahl- Book)

- “Melissa was the first and only writer we thought of,” says Kennedy. “Her gifts as a writer and her particular sensibility were essential to bringing Dahl’s visionary tale to life.”
- Melissa Mathison which is based upon the novel of 1982 of the same name which is written by Roald Dahl. Publication in 1982
- Wrote *E. T.*
- It was the first time the pair (Spielberg) have worked together since the 1982 film, which came out same year Roald Dahl wrote *The BFG*. And it was Mathison’s first screenplay in nearly two decades, after 1997’s *Kundun*
- Screenwriter [Melissa Mathison](#) visited Gipsy House, source novelist [Roald Dahl's](#) home in Buckinghamshire, England, on numerous occasions, where she was given access to the author's library and study. There, she explored the life and works of this extraordinary writer so as to chart her own path into the wild, funny and rich landscape of his imagination, which provided her with a foundation for capturing the spirit of Dahl's adventure, further honing its sense of place and capturing the relationship at its heart in ways that would both build upon and honor his 1982 book "The BFG."
- "The BFG" (1982) children's novel is enormously popular around the world, and to date has been published in forty-one languages. It was also [Roald Dahl's](#) own favorite of all his stories. While the author passed away in 1990 at the age of 74, the producers of [The BFG](#)(2016) forged a relationship with his widow and had many conversations about how important the book was to Dahl and whether or not a movie was even realistic. Producer [Kathleen Kennedy](#) said: "We talked a lot about whether it would be better as animation or live action, because at the time, none of the technology that we were talking about using even existed."
- When reading [Roald Dahl's](#) source novel, screenwriter [Melissa Mathison](#) was drawn to the bond between the characters of Sophie and the BFG. Mathison said: "It is a very sweet relationship, but they actually start off a little combative and are suspicious of one another and even have their own little power struggles. But from the moment they have a plan and move forward as partners, there's just so much love between them. It's a wonderful little love story."
- Producer [Frank Marshall](#) said: "[Roald] Dahl's stories are not just happy-go-lucky fantasies. There's a lot of humor to them, but there's also a little bit of a dark side. He walks on the edge. They're a little scary, and I think that's what appeals to people." Director [Steven Spielberg](#) added: "It was very brave of him [[Roald Dahl](#)] to introduce that combination of darkness and light, which was so much Walt Disney's original signature in a lot of his earlier works like [Dumbo](#) (1941), [Fantasia](#) (1940), 'Snow White' [[Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#) (1937)] and [Cinderella](#) (1950). Being able to be scary and redemptive at the same time, and teach a lesson, an enduring lesson, to everyone - it

was a wonderful thing for Dahl to have done, and it was one of the things that attracted me to want to direct this Dahl book."

- According to The New Yorker magazine: "During principal photography, in Vancouver, in the spring of 2015, [screenwriter Melissa] Mathison was on the set every day, handing cards to the director with the day's scene on it - a practice carried over from "E.T." [[E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial](#) (1982)] that encouraged [director Steven] Spielberg to detach from the script in its entirety. "Melissa was so inspirational for me on 'E.T.' because she had this technique that I'd never used before, and I've only done it with Melissa," Spielberg says. "She said, 'Why don't you leave your script at home and just focus on the day's work?' So she wrote out the day's work on three-by-five cards, and printed the cards and gave me a copy. 'If you really need to see the script, the continuity person is sitting just over there.' I always carry the script with me all the time, and she weaned me of holding my script like Linus's security blanket. When we did 'The BFG,' I looked at Melissa and she said, 'Steve, are you ready to get back to the cards?' I went, 'Really, Melissa?' 'Yes, I think we need to keep a continuity between the last time we worked and this time,' so I went right to the cards"."
- Of utmost importance to the filmmakers was remaining faithful to source novelist's [Roald Dahl](#)'s voice, keeping consistent with the author's rhythm, language and interaction between his characters, all of which were uniquely his. Screenwriter [Melissa Mathison](#) said: "I tried to use Dahl's dialogue verbatim as much as possible. We didn't want to tamper with the tone."
- Just as the filmmakers anticipated, screenwriter [Melissa Mathison](#) took a personal approach to the material, maintaining the relationship between the scrappy orphan and the word-jumbly giant as they took on their big adventure from [Roald Dahl](#)'s source novel. Mathison said: "My imagination was invested in the two of them. Everything needed to be centered on their relationship." Director [Steven Spielberg](#) said: "Melissa took Dahl's book and did the most extraordinary but faithful translation, with a magic only Melissa possesses."

STORY/CAST

- **POINT OF DISCUSSION:**
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- On April 13, 2015, the rest of the cast was announced, which included [Penelope Wilton](#), [Rebecca Hall](#), [Jemaine Clement](#), [Michael David Adamthwaite](#), [Daniel Bacon](#), [Chris Gibbs](#), [Adam Godley](#), [Jonathan Holmes](#), [Paul Moniz de Sa](#), and [Ólafur Ólafsson](#)
- [Steven Spielberg](#) tried to convince [Gene Wilder](#) to make an appearance in the film, but Wilder declined. Wilder played the titular character in [Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory](#) (1971), also based on a [Roald Dahl](#) book
- The height of the BFG (the Big Friendly Giant) played by actor [Mark Rylance](#) was a twenty-four feet, the height of The Gizzardgulper ([Chris Gibbs](#)) was thirty-nine feet; the height of The Bloodbottler ([Bill Hader](#)) was forty-three feet; and the height of The Fleshlumpeater ([Jemaine Clement](#)) was fifty feet. The height range of the giants in Giant Country ranged between twenty-four and fifty-two-feet with the BFG's brothers all standing between thirty-nine and fifty-two feet. The height of source novelist [Roald Dahl](#) at his peak stood six feet six inches-tall, Dahl being somewhat of a giant in real life himself. Moreover, publicity for [The BFG](#) (2016) declares that its lead actor [Mark](#)

Rylance is "a giant himself". Another one of Dahl's stories which has been filmed is called [James and the Giant Peach](#) (1996)

- To help assimilate the nine actors into one unruly but cohesive tribe, the production brought on former Cirque du Soleil performer Terry Notary as the film's movement choreographer. As enormous giants, they move differently, and Notary used a combination of weights and bungee cords to build the strength and flexibility of the actors and help make them feel grounded and heavy, like they were moving through thick space, to help impart a sense of scale to their performances.
- "The process I use gives the actors the freedom to put their own spin on their character and helps fine-tune their performances," Notary explains. The actors' performances were filmed via performance-capture technology so they could be created digitally later on in production
- According to executive producer Kristie Macosko Krieger ("Bridge of Spies," "Lincoln"), "The thing that was most important to Steven was that the actors believed where they were and that they could exclude from their peripheral vision everything going on around them."

MARK RYLANCE (BFG)

- On October 27, 2014, [Mark Rylance](#) was cast
- Spielberg cast him in that role after being blown away by his performance on stage in Shakespeare's comedy Twelfth Night
- Spielberg was quoted as saying that "Mark Rylance is a transformational actor. I am excited and thrilled that Mark will be making this journey with us to Giant Country. Everything about his career so far is about making the courageous choice and I'm honoured he has chosen *The BFG* as his next big screen performance."
- Rylance performed the character through [motion capture](#), a process which he referred to as "liberating"
- Actor [Mark Rylance](#) was immediately inspired by [Melissa Mathison's](#) screenplay, and said: "Melissa added some twists and turns and made [source novelist Roald] Dahl's original story much more dramatic, in a way that gives you more of a chance to see the friendship develop. He is just misunderstood. The BFG and Sophie are both isolated beings, and they find a friend who understands them, maybe better than they do, and those are the best kind of friends. That's part of the great love and friendship they have for each other."
- According to the Wonderful World of [Roald Dahl](#) website, "Gobblefunk" can be defined as "Roald Dahl's own language". It states: "the words are found across his literature and explain meaning when Dahl's dreamworld transcends normal adjectives."
- Actor [Mark Rylance](#) appreciated the great care and detail that went into these sets, some of which were created exclusively to give the actors and the filmmakers a tactile feel for the worlds they were exploring. Rylance said "A lot of what was created will never be seen by the audience. It was just there to encourage a sense of playfulness for us, and for Steven as well."
- "He asked me to read the script and I didn't really realise he was asking me to read it because he wanted me to do it!" But he soon embraced his inner BFG, right up to mastering whizzpopping, the somewhat flatulent result of drinking frobscottle. He flies with his whizzpopping, too!" Rylance tells Empire. "He lifts up, he lifts off his seat. I remember a flying rig so that lifts me when I whizzpop and then I come back down onto

my seat. I remember a couple of big strong Canadian men pulling on ropes so that I'd be lifted up and dropped again with the force of my whizzpopping."

RUBY BARNHILL (Sophie)

- In mid-November 2014, it was revealed that a ten-year-old student of [Lower Peover School](#), [Ruby Barnhill](#), had auditioned for the film
- She had to learn six pages of dialogue in preparation for a possible role as the orphan Sophie
- After a lengthy search, on December 16, Barnhill was cast in the role, about which she said, "I feel incredibly lucky and I'm so happy."
- Spielberg stated that they "have discovered a wonderful Sophie in Ruby Barnhill."
- Sophie was named after one of [Roald Dahl](#)'s granddaughters
- For six months the filmmakers looked at thousands of girls varying in age and experience, but when the director saw 9-year old Barnhill, a school girl from Knutsford in Cheshire, England, her audition stopped him dead in his tracks. "There was just something about her," Spielberg says. "She is fascinating and incredibly talented, and just perfect for this role."
- The filmmakers set up a meeting between Barnhill and Mark Rylance where they spent an hour and a half improvising, and they knew they had found their Sophie. "They immediately hit it off and have amazing chemistry together," executive producer Kathleen Kennedy says "They would play table tennis and basketball between shots, and were basically inseparable."
- According to Barnhill, "I did about five auditions in London and Berlin where I pretended to be Sophie, so it was just so incredible when I heard I got the part. I could hardly breathe."

PENELOPE WILTON (The Queen)

- Actress [Penelope Wilton](#), who portrays The Queen, said of the Buckingham Palace Grand Ballroom set: "It is an absolute replica of the actual ballroom with the same carpet and paintings that are in the palace itself. But they also designed the Queen's bedroom which had this incredible woodwork and gold filling in the plaster-work and looks absolutely marvelous."

JERMAINE CLEMENT (Fleishlumpeater)

- Known for Rio, Rio 2, Men in Black 3
- Does a lot of animation VO work

REBECCA HALL (Mary)

- Actress [Rebecca Hall](#) has a very personal connection to [Roald Dahl](#)'s source novel. Hall said: "As a child it was the first book I was able to read by myself. Around that same time I also did a TV program in London where I played a character named Sophie, and even though it had nothing to do with the book, I have distinct memories of fantasizing that I was actually the Sophie from 'The BFG' [book]."

BILL HADER (Bloodbottler)

- For actor [Bill Hader](#), watching director [Steven Spielberg](#) at work was a dream come true. Hader said: "Steven is so calm and friendly on set, and he makes something incredibly complicated look incredibly simple."

- The rank of The Bloodbottler ([Bill Hader](#)) was second-in-command to The Fleshlumpeater ([Jemaine Clement](#)) whose rank was the unofficial leader of all the giants in Giant Country

EASTER EGGS / TRIVIA

- The film is the second adaptation of the novel following [the 1989 direct-to-television animated film](#)
- This film was the final produced screenplay written by [Melissa Mathison](#) prior to her passing in 2015. The picture is dedicated to her as a tribute
- [The BFG](#) (2016) marks the reunion of director [Steven Spielberg](#) and screenwriter [Melissa Mathison](#), following their celebrated collaboration on [E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial](#) (1982)
- This is the second filmed adaptation of a [Roald Dahl](#) novel to be distributed by Walt Disney Pictures; the first was [James and the Giant Peach](#) (1996). The two cinema movies theatrically debuted approximately twenty years apart
- "The BFG" is the seventh [Roald Dahl](#) children's novel to be made into an American / Hollywood filmed adaptation. Earlier movies have been [Matilda](#) (1996), [The Witches](#)(1990) (a US-UK co-production), [Fantastic Mr. Fox](#) (2009), [James and the Giant Peach](#)(1996) (a US-UK co-production); the earlier [The BFG](#) (1989) (a British production), and two versions of the same novel: [Charlie and the Chocolate Factory](#) (2005) and [Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory](#) (1971). [Roald Dahl's Danny the Champion of the World](#)(1989), an English tele-movie, received a theatrical release in some territories
- In 2007, an online survey by the American 'National Education Association' (NEA) of the USA listed the film's source [Roald Dahl](#) novel "The BFG" (1982) as one of "Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children"
- The movie mentions that the BFG abducted and befriends a boy, long before he met Sophie, unfortunately the boy was eventually found and eaten by the other giants. It turns out, in the early drafts of the BFG book, the child, the BFG originally abducts is a boy named Jody, it was then changed to a girl named Sophie (after Dahl's Granddaughter)
- The film's source novelist [Roald Dahl](#) of "The BFG" novel and the Disney studio's pioneer [Walt Disney](#) actually met in April of 1943 to discuss a number of projects, one of which was "The Gremlins," one of Dahl's first stories. The film was eventually shelved, but was later released as a book by Disney and Random House with all proceeds going to the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund. The book did go on however, to serve as inspiration for the 1984 film [Gremlins](#) (1984), which, coincidentally, was produced by [Steven Spielberg](#)
- "The BFG" was first published in 1982, the same year Spielberg's own story about an unusual and transformative friendship, "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial," captured the hearts and imaginations of children and adults alike. The British author is one of the world's most creative, mischievous and successful storytellers, someone who understands the inner lives of children and has a knack for creating characters that kids could relate to and storylines which kept them involved.

DIRECTING (Steven Spielberg)

- First Disney movie Spielberg has ever directed. Produced several films for them in the past

- [Steven Spielberg](#) had always wanted to direct [The BFG](#) (2016), since when he first read the original novel "I think it was kind of genius of [Roald Dahl](#) to be able to empower the children. It was very, very brave of him to introduce that combination of darkness and light which was so much Disney's original signature in a lot of their earlier works like in [Dumbo](#) (1941), [Fantasia](#) (1940), [Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#) (1937) and [Cinderella](#)(1950), and being able to do scary, but also be redemptive at the same time and teach a lesson, an enduring lesson, to everyone, it was a wonderful thing for Dahl to have done, and it was one of the things that attracted me to want to direct this Dahl book."
- According to director [Steven Spielberg](#), he was raised on Grimm Fairytales, and they were very dark and very frightening with no redeeming social value, whatsoever. Spielberg said: "They were almost object lessons for kids, but [Roald] Dahl and [Walt] Disney both subscribed to the precepts of children's folklore and embraced the darkness, because what is a fairy-tale without a dark center ? Without that dark center, where is the redemption, and how do you bring all of us out from the bowels of a nightmare into the most beautiful, enchanting dream we'd ever seen?"
- Throughout his career, director [Steven Spielberg](#) has shown a deft touch in creating conditions for performances to flourish, even amidst the most challenging of circumstances. Setting the stage for the friendship between a 24-foot giant and a 4-foot 6-inch girl required a shared vision and years' worth of imagination and innovation. Spielberg said: "Actors need each other to act together. It all comes down to the actors being able to look each other in the eye." Adds actor [Mark Rylance](#): "It's why we look in other people's eyes when we're speaking with them. If you're speaking with someone you can't see, it's much more difficult to know how to phrase it or how to express it."
- "The BFG" marked somewhat of a departure for director [Steven Spielberg](#) who explained: "I've been very blessed to have had all kinds of beautiful experiences telling stories. I'm hesitant to emphasize one story over the other because they have all had tremendous value to me. But I think the number of historical movies that I've been making - films like [Lincoln](#) (2012), [Bridge of Spies](#) (2015), and then going further back to films like [Amistad](#)(1997) and [Schindler's List](#) (1993) - have kept me fettered to the accuracy of telling a historical story. So being able to escape into the world of dreams and imaginations has been a dream in itself. That makes 'The BFG' special, because it was my escape into what I think I kind of do best, which is just let my imagination run away with itself."
- The fact that source author [Roald Dahl](#) chose a young girl as his protagonist in "The BFG" novel was something director [Steven Spielberg](#) appreciated as well. Sophie is a strong girl who does not take no for an answer and is not intimidated by someone who is six-times bigger than her, and the character is similar to strong females who are at the center of many Walt Disney films. A strong young female protagonist has appeared in two of director [Steven Spielberg](#)'s earlier family / childrens' movies, [Dakota Fanning](#) in [War of the Worlds](#) (2005) and [Drew Barrymore](#) in [E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial](#) (1982)
- Of the props and prop-work in the film, director [Steven Spielberg](#) said: "There was so much love put into every prop. So much thought put into something as simple as the BFG's bag, which [production designer] Rick [Carter] created to resemble a big doctor's bag. Of course the bag carries his dreams, but the dreams are kind of like medicine for the kids who are in need of them, and the bag was stitched together in a Frankensteinian way to almost resemble a patchwork quilt."

- Spielberg continues, “I could have made ‘The BFG’ with actors on oversized sets using a digital blend, but I wanted the giants to look beyond human. The only way I could capture magic with the giants was to animate them based on the performances of the actors I was casting and have the animation be super-photorealistic.”
- Spielberg gathered several members of his creative team and a handful of production assistants in the garage of his summer home back east and choreographed, blocked and filmed each scene within the digital world. Using a small, handheld virtual camera device, PAs in performance-capture suits, and crude animation, the low-res footage was then rendered in 3D so it could be broken down and analyzed once completed
 - “It became my prototype for the film and helped me to realize the story and determine the best way to tell the story,” Spielberg says. “It was one of the most valuable rehearsal exercises I have ever put myself through, and it helped me to understand the deepest, deepest DNA of the story.”

PRODUCTION/CINEMATOGRAPHY (Janusz Kaminski)

- Fifteenth of sixteen cinema movie collaborations of features films directed by [Steven Spielberg](#) and lensed by cinematographer [Janusz Kaminski](#) who is also shooting one of Spielberg's next films, [Ready Player One](#) (2018)
- [Principal photography](#) on the film began on March 23, 2015 in [Vancouver](#) and concluded on June 12, 2015
- Filmed in Vancouver, Canada, Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, England, and the Isle of Skye in Scotland.
- The real Buckingham palace was actually used as a filming location
- FIZZPOPPING: “I remember a flying rig that lifts me when I whizzpop and then I come back down onto my seat. I remember a couple of big strong Canadian men pulling on ropes so that I'd be lifted up and dropped again with the force of my whizzpopping.”- Rylance
- Director [Steven Spielberg](#) and cinematographer [Janusz Kaminski](#)'s first film to be shot digitally
- The Queen makes a call to Nancy asking for Ronnie only to find that he was asleep. This could be a reference to [Nancy Reagan](#) and [Ronald Reagan](#), the latter of whom known for taking naps regularly while in office. This would also set the movie sometime between 1981 and 1989, when Reagan was in office, and perhaps also when [E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial](#) (1982) was made and first released sometime between 1981 (filmed) and 1982 (debuted in cinemas)
- For scenes on the over-scale set featuring both Sophie ([Ruby Barnhill](#)) and the BFG ([Mark Rylance](#)) in the same shot, the filmmakers built a two-story scaffolding structure on which actor [Mark Rylance](#) would stand with a performance-capture camera floating in front of his face to allow eye contact and true rapport
- The two small on-set sound-stage tents were originally set up as a means for director [Steven Spielberg](#) to view coverage of his performance-capture footage. However, the director's skill and enthusiasm soon rendered the tents into a hub of discovery that further bridged the gaps between traditional filmmaking and the 21st century digital processes
- At the center of the production's challenge to enable the characters to act within the same environment, was veteran production designer [Rick Carter](#) who said: "The goal was to create as intimate a space where [director] Steven [Spielberg] could work with the actors and the actors could relate to one another, so that technology would not be an

obstruction to Steven's direction or take any authenticity away from the performances." As a result, Carter and his co-production designer [Rob Stromberg](#) went to great lengths to accommodate three different worlds for three different-sized beings, in some cases duplicating sets three times over. There was a set for the 50-foot tall giants, for the 24-foot tall BFG, and a huge, over-scale set with big over-scale props for Sophie ([Ruby Barnhill](#)) to make her look small. Fortunately, actor [Mark Rylance](#) had a tremendous amount of faith in the story and, actress [Ruby Barnhill](#), a tremendous amount of faith in her imagination. Carter added: "Between Mark's belief in story and how to perform the story, and Ruby's belief that everything is possible, both of those actors made this world of evolved technology disappear so that they could give each other the most authentic performances."

- Director [Steven Spielberg](#) said of the film's production designer: "[Rick Carter](#) did an amazing job. He designed everything from the most amazing, Dickensian cobblestone streets to a grand ballroom in Buckingham Palace, which we built practically."
- It was partially due to the extraordinary contributions of cinematographer [Janusz Kaminski](#) that the magic on screen looks as beautiful as it does. Kaminski was instrumental in lighting all the practical sets where the live-action scenes were shot and the virtual sets being used to shoot scenes with performance-capture technology so they were seamlessly integrated
 - Of cinematographer [Janusz Kaminski](#), Weta Digital's [Joe Letteri](#) said: "Janusz is someone who sees light in a way that is unlike anybody I have ever encountered, and in a way that I certainly don't fully understand. Our conversations as to what to bring to this movie are on levels that allow him to see into the darkness, and then to see its relationship to light and to then find the nuances between the two as to where the light and shadows truly interact with one another. Janusz really paints with light, and once everyone saw the sets fully lit, it was truly magical. They were better than we could have ever imagined."
- At the same time, costume designer Joanna Johnston ("Lincoln," "War Horse") was working with seven foot maquettes modeled after the giants, dressing them to get a sense of how the costumes should be physically constructed and how they would behave. Even though the giants would all be created digitally, Johnston designed costumes for each one. These costumes would end up both inspiring and guiding the actors' performances and would then provide the animators who would be bringing the giants to life with a detailed, real world template with which they could follow.
 - "Joanna outdid herself with the costumes for the giants," says Steven Spielberg. "They were so creative and were just beautiful."
- In addition to shaping the looks of the virtual characters, Johnston's creativity and attention to detail helped provide the actors portraying live-action characters with a foundation upon which to further hone their performances. "Joanna's costumes helped enormously," explains Hall. "She's truly one of the most detailed and brilliant costume designers I've ever worked with. She has such precision, everything down to the slip I was wearing."

VFX (Joe Letteri)

- Rather than capturing the bones of the performances separately and then merging the human and digital performances in post-production, the filmmakers chose to enlist the support of Weta Digital's [Joe Letteri](#) and his talented team of artists to devise an entirely new process that would be as close to live-action shooting as possible. As a result,

production on [The BFG](#) (2016) was a hybrid style of filmmaking using a blend of live action and performance capture techniques to bring the story's fantastical characters to life, all on real sets that were built specifically for the film

- Weta Digital- Kevin Andrew Smith - VFX Supervisor
- Four-time Oscar-winning senior visual effects supervisor Joe Letteri.
- Spielberg used a 'Simulcam,' an idea originally conceived by Cameron and first used on *Avatar*. It's the process of combining real-world actors and sets with actors and sets that are computer-generated. "With Simulcam, we can pre-record a performance and then play it back through the camera monitor so that the camera operators could actually see the virtual performance unfolding in real time as they're photographing the live-action scene," Letteri explained
- According to Weta Digital's [Joe Letteri](#), whose relationship with director [Steven Spielberg](#) dates back to [Jurassic Park](#) (1993) when he worked as a computer graphics artist, "We wanted to allow Steven to be able to work as Steven, to utilize all the elements he brings to the process: his creative team, live action sets, lighting and costumes, while simultaneously creating a virtual world. For much of the film, Sophie is a little girl in this land of fantasy which is inhabited by giants, but we gave Steven the ability to shoot the movie as if the whole thing was live-action so as to bridge the gap between the virtual worlds and the digital worlds." Previous films featuring performance-capture technology like *Avatar* (2009) or [The Adventures of Tintin](#) (2011) were shot on a very sparse set where the actors had to imagine their surroundings

EDITING (Michael Kahn)

- Michael Kahn was born on December 8, 1935 in New York City, New York, USA. He is an editor, known for [Saving Private Ryan](#) (1998), [Schindler's List](#) (1993) and [Jurassic Park](#) (1993)
- Edits with both an upright Moviola (on most [Steven Spielberg](#) films) and digital Avid
- "Keep fresh by walking away from your edit; you'll come back the next day and see a different scene"
- "Always overlap/duplicate 2-3 frames on match cuts because of eye sensory lag"
- "Don't edit from knowledge - edit from feeling"

SOUND/MUSIC (John Williams)

- [John Williams](#) will be back to do the music score for [The BFG](#) (2016). Spielberg and Williams had not worked together on Spielberg's previous movie [Bridge of Spies](#) (2015). Only twice in forty-two years have the pair not worked together on a cinema move

PROMOTION

- *The BFG* premiered on May 14, 2016, at the [2016 Cannes Film Festival](#), in an out of competition screening
- Disney released a [teaser trailer](#) on December 9, 2015
- A second [trailer](#) was released on April 5, 2016
- A third trailer was released on May 16, 2016
- The film held its North American premiere at the [El Capitan Theatre](#) in [Hollywood, California](#) on June 21, 2016
- A children's promotional leaflet for the movie suggests "whenever any member of your family has a dream, encourage him or her to write it down and put it in the Dream Jar. Then at the end of each month, read the dreams aloud with the whole family"

- A quote from the film's source novelist [Roald Dahl](#) features in a children's promotional flier for the film. It quotes the following Dahl quotation: "Those who don't believe in magic will never find it"

BOX OFFICE

- Domestic Summary
 - Opening Weekend: **\$19,584,969**
(#4 rank, 3,357 theaters, \$5,834 average)
- Widest Release: 3,357 theaters
- In Release: 6 days / 0.9 weeks
- It was released in the United States on July 1, 2016, and is distributed worldwide by [Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures](#), except for territories in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, where the film's distribution rights were sold by [Mister Smith Entertainment](#) to independent distributors
- DreamWorks' financial partner, [Reliance Entertainment](#), will release the film in India. [Entertainment One](#) will release the film in the U.K. on July 22, 2016
- *The BFG* opens alongside *The Legend of Tarzan* and *The Purge: Election Year* in over 3,200 theaters, with opening projections starting at \$22 million and going as high as \$32 million
- The film was notably vying for drawing family audiences with the studio's own *Finding Dory*
- It made \$775,000 from its Thursday previews, however the low figure wasn't surprising, given how family films tend to attract less audiences during late-night showings
- This was followed by a \$7 million opening day (including previews) and a disappointing \$18.6 million opening weekend, which [Deadline.com](#) called "an awful start for this film which is estimated to cost \$140 million"
- *Forbes* noted that Steven Spielberg's films tend to have long runs, irrespective of their opening numbers. However, it also pointed out that the July 4th weekend proves to be a non-leggy release schedule and most films released during this time end up making only twice their holiday total over the course of their domestic theatrical run
- Disney's distribution chief, Hollis said, "We're going to be reliant in a lot of ways on international [audiences]." Internationally – during its opening weekend – where the [4th of July weekend](#) is not a holiday, the film opened to \$3.9 million in its opening weekend from two markets, Australia and Russia. In Australia, it opened to \$2 million placing third while in Russia it debuted second with \$1.9 million, which tops the entire runs of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *War Horse*. The next major openings are in the United Kingdom on July 22, Brazil on July 28 and Korea on August 4
- The movie is being released in a number of formats including standard 2D, Disney Digital 3-D, RealD 3D, and IMAX 3D

RECEPTION

- **IMDB:** 7.2
- **RT:** [Tatometer](#) 71% based on 177 reviews, [Audience](#) 67%
 - "*The BFG* minimizes the darker elements of Roald Dahl's classic in favor of a resolutely good-natured, visually stunning, and largely successful family-friendly adventure."
- On [CinemaScore](#), audiences gave the film an average grade of "A–" on an A+ to F scale

- [Matt Zoller Seitz](#), editor-in-chief of *RogerEbert.com*, highly appreciated Spielberg's direction of the film, giving the film 3 and a half out of 4 stars
- Seitz remarks that "I can imagine a some adults finding the movie dull; 'Nothing happens,' they'll say. 'And it's too nice.' But I can imagine other adults loving the film for helping them remember what it's like to be young enough to hide from a movie monster because he's big and weird-looking and then laugh because he's kind of silly..."
- [Richard Brody](#) of *The New Yorker* gave a negative review of the film, stating that "[the film] plays like a forced march of fun, a mandatory strain of magic and a prescribed dose of poetry, like a movie ready-made for screening in classrooms when a teacher is absent."
- He, however, observes that "Spielberg is the BFG who's menaced by bigger and more monstrous giants who aren't interested in edifying their audiences but merely in consuming them—consuming the consumer, so to speak.... Spielberg's vision of a quaint and virtuous monarchy, a seemingly permanent touchstone of dignity in a world where temporal rulers come and go with fluctuating values and standards, is a peculiar mark of self-justification, self-congratulation, and self-interest."

FINAL THOUGHTS