

Vulcan Productions

presents

Where God Left His Shoes

Written and Directed by Salvatore Stabile

Produced by Daniel Edelman, Salvatore Stabile, Richard Hutton, Michael Caldwell

Executive Producers: Paul G. Allen, Jody Patton, Petra Höebel, Rosanne Korenberg

Starring

John Leguizamo

Leonor Varela

David Castro

Samantha Rose

SYNOPSIS

When Frank, Angela, and their two children are evicted from their New York City apartment, they have no choice but to move into a homeless shelter. After a few difficult months, good news comes their way on Christmas Eve: a nearby housing project has an apartment available immediately – however, Frank needs a job on the books in order to qualify.. While the rest of the city prepares for Christmas, Frank and his ten-year-old stepson, Justin, roam the cold streets of New York trying to find a job by day's end. *Where God Left His Shoes* is the story of a family that refuses to break apart during the darkest time of their lives and discovers that they will survive as long as they have each other.

WHERE GOD LEFT HIS SHOES

ABOUT THE CAST

John Leguizamo (FRANK DIAZ)

A multi-faceted performer and Emmy Award winner, John Leguizamo has established a career that defies categorization. With boundless energy and creativity, his work in film, theatre, television, and literature cover a variety of genres, continually threatening to create a few of its own.

Leguizamo recently completed production on Overture Films' HUMBOLDT PARK, a heartwarming family dramedy about three siblings' return to their parent's home for the holidays in Humboldt Park on Chicago's northwest side. The film also stars Debra Messing and Alfred Molina.

Leguizamo was also seen in M. Night Shamalan's THE HAPPENING, opposite Mark Walberg. The film is about a family on the run from a natural crisis that presents a large-scale threat to humanity. 20th Century Fox released the film on June 13th, 2008.

Leguizamo also recently filmed RIGHTEOUS KILL for Overture Films, opposite Robert Deniro and Al Pacino. The film revolves around two Veteran New York City Detectives who hunt a vigilante who may be one of their own.

Also upcoming for Leguizamo this year are the independent films THE BABYSITTERS, opposite Cynthia Nixon, Brad Furman's THE TAKE, opposite Rosie Perez, and Franc Reyes's THE MINISTERS.

In the Fall of 2007, Leguizamo was seen in New Line Cinema's LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA, the screen adaptation of celebrated writer Gabriel García Márquez' novel. Directed by Mike Newell, the film also stars Javier Bardem, Benjamin Bratt and Giovanna Mezzogiorno. The film charts the evocative story of an unrequited love spanning five decades in turn-of-the-20th-century South America, with the tale of 'Florentino' (Bardem) and 'Fermina' (Mezzogiorno). Leguizamo stars as 'Lorenzo Daza,' Fermina's father determined to keep them apart.

In the summer of 2007, Leguizamo starred in Spike TV's limited series "The Kill Point", in which he played the leader of the robbers, who happen to be a team of U.S soldiers who recently returned from serving in Iraq.

Also an accomplished author, Leguizamo penned his autobiography "Pimps, Hos, Playa Hatas, and All the Rest of My Hollywood Friends." Harper Collins released the fast-paced, hilarious, and poignant memoir in October 2006.

In spring 2006, Leguizamo was heard in theaters in ICE AGE: 2 THE MELTDOWN, in which he reprised his voice role as 'Sid, the Sloth' and co-stars alongside Ray Romano,

Denis Leary and Queen Latifah. Additionally, the ever versatile Leguizamo appeared as a guest star in twelve episodes of NBC's cornerstone drama "ER" during the 2005/2006 season.

In 2005, Leguizamo earned rave reviews for his role as a popular TV reporter who's willing to sacrifice everything to get the story of a notorious serial killer in CRONICASA. The film screened at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival and 2004 Toronto Film Festival and was honored as an Un Certain Regard selection at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival.

For his performance as a sensitive drag queen in TO WONG FOO: THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, JULIE NEWMAR, Leguizamo garnered a Golden Globe nomination for Best Supporting Actor.

Leguizamo's credits include LAND OF THE DEAD, Ed Burns' THE GROOMSMEN, LIES & ALIBIS, ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13, SUENO, SPIN, Baz Luhrmann's MOULIN ROUGE, (ALMA nomination, Best Supporting Actor), ICE AGE, Spike Lee's SUMMER OF SAM, Seth Zvi Rosenfeld's KING OF THE JUNGLE (ALMA nomination, Best Lead Actor), the cult hit SPAWN, Baz Luhrmann's WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO + JULIET, and DR. DOOLITTLE. Brian de Palma's CARLITO'S WAY, Brian de Palma's CASUALTIES OF WAR starring Sean Penn and Michael J. Fox.

Leguizamo also starred in HBO's "Undeclared," his feature directorial debut. Scripted by Frank Pugliese from a story by Leguizamo and Kathy DeMarco, the film is a drama about a young Latino boxer dealing with love and career success.

In 1991, Leguizamo created an off-Broadway sensation as the writer and performer of his one-man show, "Mambo Mouth" in which he portrayed seven different characters. He received Obie, Outer Critics Circle and Vanguardia awards for his performance. The play's HBO special led to his first television comedy special, Comedy Central's "The Talent Pool," for which he received a CableACE Award.

Leguizamo's second one-man show, "Spic-O-Rama," had an extended sold-out run in Chicago at the Goodman and Briar Street theaters before opening in New York. The play received numerous accolades including the Dramatists' Guild Hull-Warriner Award for Best American Play and the Lucille Lortel Outstanding Achievement Award for Best Broadway Performance. Leguizamo received the Theatre World Award for Outstanding New Talent, as well as a Drama Desk Award for Best Solo Performance. "Spic-O-Rama" also aired on HBO, receiving four CableACE Awards. "Freak," Leguizamo's third one-man show, ended a successful run on Broadway in 1998. Billed as a "Semi-Demi-Quasi-Pseudo Autobiography." "Freak" was described as "scathingly funny" (The New York Times.) Along with the Tony Award nominations for Best Play and Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Play, Leguizamo won the Drama Desk and the Outer Critic's Circle Awards for Outstanding Solo Performance. A special presentation of "Freak," directed by Spike Lee, aired on HBO and earned Leguizamo the Emmy Award for Outstanding Performance in a Variety or Music Program as well as a nomination for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Special.

Fall of 2001 saw Leguizamo's return to Broadway with his "Sexaholix...a Love Story." Directed by Peter Askin, the play is based on the sold-out national tour, "John

Leguizamo Live!" Leguizamo was nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award for "Outstanding Solo Performance" and the show received a Tony nomination for Best Special Theatrical Performance. "Sexaholix" aired as an HBO Special in Spring 2002 and also toured the country. Additional stage credits include "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "La Puta Vida" at the New York Shakespeare Festival and "Parting Gestures" at INTAR.

Raised in New York City, Leguizamo studied acting with Lee Strasberg and Wynn Handman at New York University. He was the recipient of the 2002 ALMA Award for Entertainer of the Year.

Leonor Varela (ANGELA DIAZ)

International film star Leonor Varela first came to the attention of American audiences when she starred in ABC's critically-acclaimed mini-series CLEOPATRA. The mini-series garnered the network's highest movie-of-the-week rating that season. From her portrayal of Cleopatra, Daily Variety called Varela a true find, inhabiting the role with a smoldering gusto born of defiant confidence.

Varela has just recently been honored at the 23rd Annual Imagen Awards with the Best Supporting Actress Award for her role in the Vulcan Production's WHERE GOD LEFT HIS SHOES. IFC Films has recently acquired the North American rights and will distribute theatrically and on Video On Demand beginning this December. She will follow that in late February, starring in Ted Hope and Anthony Bregman's SLEEP DEALER, through Maya Pictures.

Varela recently co-starred in Dimension Film's HELL RIDE (Weinstein Co.) opposite Michael Madsen and Disney's GOAL! 2, sequel to Milkshake Film's GOAL!

Varela received critical acclaim for Lawrence Bender Production's INNOCENT VOICES, directed by Luis Mandoki and produced by Lawrence Bender. This film was Mexico's official Best Foreign Language Film entry for the 78th Annual Academy Awards (2005) and was based on the true story of screenwriter Oscar Torres and his mother (portrayed by Varela) who braved the Salvadoran civil war. Varela received an Ariel Award nomination for her performance as well as Miami's New Herald 2006 Best Actress of the year award.

Varela's immense talent is evident by the diversity of the roles she has portrayed. She starred opposite Wesley Snipes in New Line's BLADE II, starred opposite Geoffrey Rush in TAILOR OF PANAMA, starred opposite Ashton Kutcher and Dylan McDermott in the feature film TEXAS RANGERS, and appeared as a recurring guest lead in the Emmy-winning FOX series ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT.

Varela reached international stardom for her performance opposite Jean Reno and Gerard Depardieu in the mega-hit French comedy TAIS-TOI (aka SHUT UP) which remained number one at the French box office for many weeks, and for her portrayal of

a free-spirited, liberal Spanish surgeon in the French film, PAS SI GRAVE, directed by Bernard Rapp.

David Castro (JUSTIN DIAZ)

David grew up in Long Island along with three older sisters and one brother. Coming from a family whose roots are in entertainment it wasn't a surprise when at the age of 5 David followed his sister Raquel into acting. Tagging along on a shoot with his sister for A LITTLE CURIOUS, David was asked to join the cast. From there he began to book commercials followed by his first movie at the age of 7. Todd Soldanz infatuated by David's on screen persona and his love for break dancing landed him the role of Carlito in Palindromes. He then grabbed the lead of Joey in the remake of THE LITTLE FUGITIVE directed by Joanna Lipper. He then welcomed the challenge of playing a blind kid in the film ARRANGED. A soccer player in the movie BELLA was short but, sweet followed by a lead part in WHERE GOD LEFT HIS SHOES. The director Salvatore Stabile compared his acting skills to those of Leonardo Dicaprio. Working with the multi talented John Leguizamo allowed David to further grow as an actor. The short TRACKS OF COLOR he did with Gianna Palminteri is currently being turned into a feature film. In Minister's David played twins Dante and Perfecto the younger versions of John Leguizamo. Showing his comedic side in 27 DRESSES had Anne Fletcher and the rest of the cast always laughing. Now at the age of 12, David's love of Football, Dancing, Piano and of course acting keep both his days and nights full but, he always finds time to be just a kid.

Samantha Rose (CHRISTINA DIAZ)

Samantha was born on August 18th, 1998, on Long Island, NY. Samantha is no stranger to the camera: her immediate family, which consists of her mother, grandmother, and aunt, followed her around for her first year with a camera in one hand and a camcorder in the other. The folks at the one-hour photo mart watched Samantha grow up on 35MM.

Samantha was first introduced to the public through pageants. Her titles include Petite Miss Long Island Photogenic 2001, Little Miss Model, Petite Miss International Ambassador 2003, National Petite Miss Photogenic Winner 2003, 3rd Runner up Little Talent (Singing), and her most valued title, Petite Miss New York State 2002.

Samantha's favorite school subject is writing. She loves to write poems, greeting cards, songs, feel-good quotes, miniature books and short stories, and would love to be published one day. She loves to sing and dance and considers herself a fashionista and a trend setter, always ahead of the curve with her style and dress. Her teachers say she is intelligent, funny, caring, an exemplary role model.

Samantha's heritage is varied, including Irish, Polish, El Salvadoran, Hungarian, Ukrainian, but remember that, above all, Samantha is an American Girl.

DAVE SALERNO

Dave Salerno (Aldo) is best known for his portrayal of the character "Frankie Coffeecake" in the movie *A Bronx Tale*. Salerno also had feature roles in *Analyze This* and *Analyze That*. He has also appeared in *Sleepers* and *Mickey Blue Eyes*.

In addition, Salerno had a principal role in the initial season of the *Sopranos*. He also co-starred in the TNT documentary: *Family Values, The Mob and The Movies*, which included several members from the cast of the *Sopranos*. Salerno grew up in the Fordham section of the Bronx, better known as "Little Italy." His life long childhood friend is Academy Award nominee, Chazz Palminteri, who wrote and co-starred in *A Bronx Tale*.

JERRY FERRARA

Jerry Ferrara (Vinny) is best known for his role as "Turtle" on HBO's hit comedy *Entourage*. He recently wrapped production on the feature film *Garden of Eden* with Lukas Haas. He also has a lead role in *Brooklyn Rules*, starring with Freddie Prinze Jr., Scott Caan, Alec Baldwin and Mena Suvari.

Ferrara began studying theater in college, where he was inspired by a teacher to pursue a career in acting. An agent he met at a talent showcase encouraged him to move to Los Angeles, where he quickly landed his first role on *King of Queens*. Other television parts soon followed. He was then cast in the independent feature *Cross Bronx* which premiered at the 2004 Tribeca Film Festival.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Ferrara currently resides in Los Angeles.

ADRIANE LENOX

Adriane Lenox (Carita) is the winner of a 2005 Tony, a Drama Desk, and a Lucille Lortel Award, for her performance in the play, *Doubt*. She made her Broadway debut in *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and then was cast in *Dreamgirls*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Fascinating Rhythm*, and *Kiss Me Kate*. Her off-Broadway shows includes an Obie Award in the 1999 off-Broadway show *Dinah Was*, she also played Miss Evers in *Miss Evers' Boys*, with other credits for *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Beehive*, and *Caroline or Change*. She has solos on the recordings of *Kiss Me Kate*, *Beehive*, and the York Theatre production of *Merrily We Roll Along*. In 2004, she portrayed Shug Avery in a new musical version of *The Color Purple* that ran at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta.

In addition to the theatre, Adriane was seen in several motion pictures in 2006 including Paramount Pictures' *Black Snake Moan*, (starring Samuel L. Jackson); *Griffin and*

Phoenix (starring Dermot Mulroney and Amanda Peet) from Gold Circle Films; and *Preaching to the Choir*, (featuring Eartha Kitt) from Freestyle Releasing. She has appeared on television episodes of *Law and Order*, and *Law and Order: SVU*, *Third Watch*, *Whoopi*, *On the One*, and *MOW Double Platinum*, in addition to various other shows.

With her husband, music arranger and past Tony Award nominee Zane Mark (whose recent work includes *All Shook Up*, featuring music from the Elvis Presley catalog) they make their home in Brooklyn. They have a daughter, Crystal, who is in college.

MANNY PEREZ

Manny Perez (Luis) is one of the hardest working young actors on both coasts, having recently completed ten films in the last 12 months and some television shows. His film roles includes Jennifer Lopez's *El Cantante*, Colin Farrell's *Pride & Glory*, John Singleton's *Illegal Tender*, Toronto International Film Festival's People Choice Award Winning film *Bella*; where Roger Friedman from Fox News declared, "Manny Perez, is terrific." Other recent films include *Yellow* with Roselyn Sanchez, and The Crook Brothers' *Rockaway*. Perez is currently filming *Coming Soon* and *Amexicano*.

Manny came to the attention of the film community in 2002, after he produced, starred and co-wrote *Washington Heights*, an independent movie set in his own neighborhood, (Best Actor-Milan International Film Festival, TriBeCa Film Festival). His award winning performance garnered praise from many critics. Stephen Holden of The New York Times stated "Mr. Perez has charisma to burn,"

Manny is also well known in the small screen. He starred in Sidney Lumet's Critical Acclaimed series *100 Centre Street* with Alan Arkin. More recently Manny had a recurring role in John Well's *Third Watch* as Officer Manny Santiago for NBC and had a recurring role in Dennis Leary's *Rescue Me* for FX, among many appearances in episodes television.

Manny has a solid background in the theater as well, with a list of plays originating from the Trinity Repertory Company in Providence. Other theatre includes, INTAR, American Place Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theatre, among others. He is a member of the LAByrinth Theatre Company, in New York City.

Manny is fluent in Spanish and lives between Washington Heights, NYC and Los Angeles.

WHERE GOD LEFT HIS SHOES ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Salvatore Stabile (Writer/Director/Producer) completed his first feature film, *Gravesend*, when he was 19 years old, which went on to attract the attention of Oliver Stone and Steven Spielberg. Since then, the Brooklyn native has worked on several award winning television shows, including *The Sopranos* and *Rescue Me*. His second feature, *Where God Left His Shoes* stars John Leguizamo and was produced by Paul Allen's Vulcan Productions. The film will premiere at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival. His inspiration for the film came from his own childhood family experiences. Raised in an Italian-American working class family, Stabile cites Italian neo-realism as his main influence as a filmmaker and is dedicated to making films about the challenges of everyday life and people faced with difficult, life changing, economic and moral decisions. Sal is currently in pre-production with his third feature, which will be filming in New York this Fall.

Vanja Cernjul, (Directory of Photography) was born in 1968 in Zagreb, Croatia. After graduating from the Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1995 he moved to New York to get his Masters from Graduate Film School at NYU. Since graduation Vanja has DP'd 14 feature films such as *The Mudge Boy* (Michael Burke, director, Stanley Tucci, Executive Producer) which premiered at Sundance in 2003.

Vanja has received the Best Cinematography Award at Aspen Shortfest for *Fishbelly White* (Michael Burke, director), a Kodak Vision Award at Avignon/New York Film Festival for *The Photographer* (Jeremy Stein, director, Chris Moore, producer) and The Best Cinematography Award at Stockholm International Film Festival for *Rain* (Katherine Lindberg, director, Martin Scorsese, EP). His recent work includes two films from the 2006 Sundance Film Festival Dramatic Competition: *Forgiven* (Paul Fitzgerald, director) and *Wristcutters: A Love Story* (Goran Dukic, director).

Jeff Beal (Composer) has scored over 50 projects for film and television, including Ed Harris' critically acclaimed directorial debut, *Pollock*, William H. Macy's Emmy awarded *Door to Door & The Wool Cap*, Bob Rafelson's *No Good Deed*, Jessica Yu's critically acclaimed *In The Realms Of The Unreal & Protagonist*, HBO's moody western series *Carnivale*, and the theme and underscore for USA's hit comedy series, *MONK*..

Current projects include the scores to the HBO/BBC epic co-production *ROME*, ABC's Golden Globe winning series *Ugly Betty*, the independent feature films *He Was A Quiet Man* (starring Christian Slater & William H. Macy) & director Phillip Haas' Iraq war drama *The Situation*. In 2006 Beal composed the scores for all eight one hour films of the Stephen King anthology series *Nightmares & Dreamscapes* for TNT. The premiere

installment, *Battleground* stars Academy award winner William Hurt in a dialog-free hour film, featuring a rich and pulsing original symphonic score.

Beal received 2 Emmy awards in 2003 -- one for his quirky main title theme for *Monk*, and another for his score to the NBC's Olympic documentary, *Peggy and Dorothy*. In 2005/6 Beal was honored with four prime time Emmy nominations for his work on *Carnivale*, *Rome*, & *The Water Is Wide*.

Chris Monte (Editor) has an award winning background which includes over 12 years of editorial experience with over 100 hours of episodic television and promotion for broadcast.

Recently, Monte produced and edited a one-hour special for Fine Living Network called *Flying In Style* that is currently airing. Guests included John Travolta, Sydney Pollack and Carly Simon. Previously, Monte co-produced *Dream Jets*, a 2-hour special, for PBS domestically and internationally for the National Geographic channel. He is currently producing a series pilot for Discovery Channel called *X-Ops* that is scheduled to air beginning in Summer 2007.

For the past 6 years, Monte has been producer/editor of *DIRECTV News*, a magazine show exclusively produced and broadcast to over 13 million homes of DIRECTV subscribers. During those same 6 years, Chris also produced and edited *DIRECTV Basics*, a how-to show designed to reduce customer service calls.

Monte is the President and CEO of Magic Hair, Inc., a 4000 square foot HD/SD postproduction facility in Los Angeles that houses 6 edit bays, 2 motion graphics bays as well as a Protocols/voiceover audio suite.

Daniel Edelman (Producer) was Executive Producer of Sal Stabile's first film, *Gravesend*. Prior to that he was in charge of production and distribution of the Academy Award-winning *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China* and ran the London-based literary and talent agency Curtis Brown. His support of independent films has included *Roger & Me*, *Paris is Burning*, *Coming Out Under Fire*, *Just Another Girl on the IRT*, *H-2 Worker* and *Maria's Story* as well as serving on the boards of IFP/West (Film Independent) and AIVF.

Richard E. Hutton (Producer) is the Vice President of Media Development for Vulcan Productions. He oversees the feature film and documentary teams at Vulcan Productions and manages a variety of content partnerships, business and distribution deals, and professional relationships in the film, television and internet worlds. Hutton was formerly the executive producer of the critically acclaimed PBS series *Evolution*, co-produced by the WGBH/NOVA Science Unit and Vulcan Productions.

Before *Evolution*, Hutton was senior vice president of creative development at Walt Disney Imagineering. There, he led the creative team responsible for the design of all Disney three-dimensional storytelling (theme parks, retail concepts, etc.). Prior to Walt Disney Imagineering, Hutton was vice president and general manager of the Disney Institute, where he directed the transition of the organization from an idea into an operating business. Before Disney, Hutton was senior vice president, television programming and production, for WETA Television in Washington, D.C., and earlier, director of public affairs programming for WNET Television in New York. His projects have included the award-winning *The Brain* (1984) and *The Mind* (1988), as well as various books, medical texts and articles for national publications, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *Omni* and *Cosmopolitan*.

Documentaries produced by Vulcan include: the Emmy award-winning *Rx for Survival*, *Strange Days on Planet Earth*, *Lightening in a Bottle*, *Black Sky: The Race for Space*, *Black Sky: Winning the X-Prize*, *The Blues*, *Cracking the Code*, *Evolution*, *Me and Isaac Newton* and *Inspirations*.

Hutton holds a B.A. degree in history from the University of California at Berkeley.

Michael Caldwell (Producer) is Director of Motion Picture Production for Vulcan Productions. Caldwell oversees development, production, and post-production of all motion pictures produced by Vulcan Productions. Feature films produced by Vulcan include *Hard Candy*, *Bickford Shmeckler's Cool Ideas*, *Coastlines*, *The Safety of Objects*, *The Luzhin Defense*, *Titus* and *Men with Guns*.

Prior to joining Vulcan Productions, Caldwell served as a production executive with New Line Cinema, where his credits included *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* and *Love Jones*. Before that, he was a production executive with Walt Disney Studios, where his credits included *The Joy Luck Club* and *Miami Rhapsody*.

Caldwell holds a B.A. degree in business and accounting from the University of Washington, Seattle, and an M.F.A. degree in Cinema/Television Production from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Paul G. Allen (Executive Producer) founded Vulcan Productions in 1997, the independent film production company behind such award winning films as *Hard Candy*, *Black Sky; The Race for Space*, *Far From Heaven*, *Titus*, the 2001 *Evolution* series on PBS, and *The Blues*, executive produced in conjunction with Martin Scorsese and Jody Patton.

Allen creates and advances world-class projects and high-impact initiatives that change and improve the way people live, learn, work and experience the world through arts, education, entertainment, sports, business and technology. He co-founded Microsoft with

Bill Gates in 1976, remained the company's chief technologist until he left Microsoft in 1983, and is the founder and chairman of Vulcan Inc. and chairman of Charter Communications. In addition, Allen's multibillion dollar investment portfolio includes large stakes in DreamWorks Animation SKG, Oxygen Media and more than 40 other technology, media and content companies. In 2004 Allen funded SpaceShipOne, the first privately-funded effort to successfully put a civilian in suborbital space and winner of the Ansari X-Prize competition. Allen also owns the Seattle Seahawks NFL and Portland Trail Blazers NBA franchises.

Named one of the top philanthropists in America, Allen gives back to the community through the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, whose goal is to transform individual lives and strengthen communities by supporting arts and culture, youth engagement, community development and social change, and scientific and technological innovation throughout the Pacific Northwest. Allen is also founder of Experience Music Project, Seattle's critically-acclaimed interactive music museum and the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame.

Jody Patton (Executive Producer) is president of Vulcan Productions and is responsible for managing all elements of Vulcan Productions film and development projects. Patton's creative vision defines the composition of the slate of projects undertaken by Vulcan Productions, and she has served as producer or executive producer on various projects including award winning features such as *Hard Candy*, *Far From Heaven* and *Titus*, and documentaries such as *Black Sky: The Race for Space*, and *The Blues* and *Evolution* series on PBS. Patton is also president and CEO of Vulcan Inc., the project and investment management company founded by investor and philanthropist Paul G. Allen.

Patton is co-founder of Experience Music Project, Seattle's one-of-a-kind interactive music museum, and the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame. In addition, Patton is the executive director of the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and is on the board of Charter Communications. An active member of the arts and education communities, Patton serves on the board of directors of the University of Washington Foundation, the International Glass Museum, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Theatre Communications Group.

Q&A with Writer and Director Salvatore Stabile

Q: I am sitting down to talk with writer/director/producer Salvatore Stabile about his new independent film *Where God Left His Shoes*, starring John Leguizamo. This is Sal's second feature film. His first, *Gravesend*, which he directed when he was only 19, attracted the attention of Oliver Stone and Steven Spielberg. Since then, Sal has written for numerous television shows, including *The Sopranos* and *Rescue Me*. *Where God Left His Shoes*, is produced by Paul Allen's Vulcan Productions, and will premiere at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival.

Q: Congratulations on your new film. It's a very honest and inspiring story.

Sal: Thank you.

Q: What was your main inspiration for writing it?

Sal: There were a few things. I've wanted to do a father/son/family story for a long time. I grew up just outside Coney Island, and it wasn't easy for my parents to raise three children. There were a lot of times when it felt like we were going to make it. But we did, and I think the reason was because we always stuck together as a family, no matter how difficult things got. So, when I set out to write the script, the most important thing I wanted to show was a family going through the most difficult time of their life, and in the end come to the decision that no matter how bad things get, they will stick together and survive as long as they have each other.

Q: Your producer said you wrote the script very quickly.

Sal: It usually takes me 3 months to finish a solid first draft. With *Where God Left His Shoes*, I finished it in 3 weeks. What was even more surprising, only a week after finishing my first draft, I found financiers who wanted to make the film.

Q: Wow.

Sal: Looking back, I remember my agent reading it and calling me up the next day and saying it was the best script I have ever written. I didn't believe it - not that it was my best script, but that my agent actually read it in one night. That's how I knew this was something special.

Q: How do you feel now?

Sal: Now? I'm just happy I got the chance to make the film. Over the last 10 years working in the business, I've learned that if 10% of what you write gets made, you are considered wildly successful. I also learned that in order to be happy, and to survive this business, you have to remove all hope and expectation.

Q: Paul Allen's Vulcan Productions, how did you get them to read your film?

Sal: A lawyer who was doing another film with them read the script and thought it would be a perfect fit, so he sent it to them. They really responded to it, so we had a meeting and I told them my vision for the film, which they liked. From there, we came up with a budget they approved and started casting.

Q: So many filmmakers struggle for years to find financing for their film, you make it sound so simple.

Sal: It's not...However in this case, it was all oddly simple.

Q: What was your relationship like with your producers?

Sal: Very respectful and harmonious. Dan Edelman and I worked on Gravesend together, so we were totally in sync. And Richard Hutton and Michael Caldwell, from Vulcan, are filmmakers at heart. They knew exactly how to assist me in realizing the vision of the film. They knew when to step in and make suggestions and they knew how to do it in a way that inspired me and everyone else. I look forward to working with them again real soon.

Q: Where God Left His Shoes. It's a great title and such a unique phrase. How did you come up with that?

Sal: It's an old Italian saying. My father would say it all the time. When I was a kid, we moved into this apartment, and I remember him looking all around the place and saying, "Well, it's not where God left his shoes, but it'll do."

Q: This is your second feature that you directed. Your first, Gravesend, came out in 1997. I think I remember the story...you made it in film school when you were 19?

Sal: Yes.

Q: For \$10,000 or something like that?

Sal: Yep. That was crazy.

Q: How did that prepare you for *Where God Left His Shoes*?

Sal: It taught me how to cut production expenses, and it taught me how to solve production problems creatively, without throwing money out the window.

Q: You mentioned that you took your time in deciding what you wanted your second film to be. Why is that?

Sal: After *Gravesend* came out, there was a lot of pressure on what I was going to do next. The truth is, I think I realized that, although I made a film which showed some promise for me as a director, I really needed to learn my craft. I had all of these opportunities and I didn't want to blow them by making a bad, or the wrong, second film.

Q: Is that why you've done so much writing and producing for television?

Sal: Yes. I made a very conscious decision to work as a writer as much as possible, so I could hone my craft as a screenwriter, get on as many sets as I could and watch more experienced directors.

Q: So, after writing *Where God Left His Shoes*, did you feel you were ready to direct again? Or was there still some doubt?

Sal: I think there's always doubt, no matter how successful you become. But it's that doubt that fuels me to go above and beyond my own, and everyone else's, expectations. But to answer your question, yes, I felt that I had grown enough, both as a person and filmmaker, to bring the film the respect and integrity the script called for...that's why my first choice for the role of Frank was John Leguizamo.

Q: What was it like working with him?

Sal: Frightening, at first. He's one of the best actors of our time.

Q: What did you do to prepare?

Sal: John and I worked closely on the character and the emotional reality of where he should be at each point in the script. But beyond that, the way I work is, I let my actors do whatever they want for the first two takes. Then, I help them bring out other choices that I may want in the editing room. But by allowing them to interpret the material without my comments or direction, they bring their own essence to the character...an essence that I would never be able to see unless I allow them to be free.

Q: Sounds like an actor's dream?

Sal: I find that giving an actor a lot freedom allows more opportunities for things to happen that you never expect.

Q: Where did you find the kids? They were amazing.

Sal: Yeah, it's scary how talented they are. My casting director, Sig De Miguel, found both David and Samantha. David Castro, who plays John's son in the film, was only 9 when we shot the film...He is so talented...he has a long future ahead of him.

Q: Did you employ the same approach with the children as you did with everyone else?

Sal: Well, I actually discovered that kids are better actors than adults. They retain things so much better...they never forget their lines or how a scene evolves. Kids have very little self consciousness, so when they're in the scene, they are very natural and truthful. My process with them was simple, I would talk through the scene with them, address any questions they had and then we would shoot. The only other thing I did was to make sure the environment was very peaceful. I went out of my way to let them feel like it was ok to make mistakes...but they never did.

Q: Did John work with David Castro a lot off set?

Sal: Both John and Leonor Varela, who plays the mom, had a huge hand in helping their performances. John is the most humble actor I have ever met. He was so prepared and focused and giving. I think his generosity and spirit elevated everyone's effort. And Leonor bonded with the kids as if they were their own. It was like this instant family.

Q: You mentioned that you tried to create a peaceful environment on set. Most of the film was shot on location in New York City, amidst crowds of people. You shot in Rockefeller Center, Washington Square Park, Times Square, 34th street, on trains and train tunnels...how did you make those sets peaceful?

Sal: At first, I tried to control everything...it was very stressful. There were thousands of people all around us and focusing wasn't easy. But on like the third or fourth day my AD pulled me to the side and said, "Sal, it's bigger than you. Don't try to control it. Try to go with it." That's what I did and it really helped.

Q: Because so many of your locations were unmanageable, did that compromise your visual style?

Sal: No, it actually helped us execute it better than originally envisioned. My DP and I worked very closely. We wanted the film to feel honest and real. Our goal was to make this family feel like they are all alone in a city of five million people. We drafted an intense shot list, chose every lens carefully and visited each location several times to map out the shots so we were on the same page when we got to production. We also watched a lot of films together, specifically films from the Italian neo-realism era, which are my biggest influences as a filmmaker. Films like *Umberto D* and *The Bicycle Thief*.

Q: It sounds like you are a huge advocate of pre-production?

Sal: On an independent film, it's the most important stage of production. It can make or break you. And in my case, I was only allowed to have the kids on set for I think it was 6 hours a day. On a 25 day shoot, to get the performances we got, in all the elaborate locations we shot at...that was an amazing feat.

Q: What was the hardest scene to shoot?

Sal: Wow, the hardest scene?...I think there were two. The Times Square scene and the scene towards the end in the restaurant.

Q: How did you pull off the shots of John Leguizamo begging in Times Square?

Sal: I used very long lenses and set the camera up about a block away, so no one saw what we were shooting. And then I set John and David out to military island in the middle of Times Square and let them do their thing.

Q: Your producers said that someone called the police on you during that scene.

Sal: Yeah. There was some rich looking suit guy, who saw John and David begging. I guess he didn't recognize John and he didn't see the cameras. So, to him, it looked like this father was making his son beg in the cold in the middle of Times Square. The guy walked across the street, over to the NYPD traffic control officers, and he starts yelling

that a man was making his son beg in the middle of the street.

Q: What did they do?

Sal: The cops, who really didn't know the content of what we were shooting, rushed onto the scene only to find out it was our movie. But the funniest part was, the guy who went to the cops was still pissed off. He yelled at me, "That's not right! I gave that kid money!" So, I gave the man, who looked like a millionaire, his dollar back and wished him a Merry Christmas. Ah, New York!

Q: You made this beautiful film...now, what would you like to see happen with it? What are your expectations?

Sal: My hope for the film is to find a distributor who is as passionate about the film as I, and everyone else was about making it. Also, I hope it finds a huge audience and makes a lot of money, but not for my own benefit. My producers and I are donating a part of the film sale and proceeds to homeless families and charities around New York City.

Q: That's very generous.

Sal: None of us made any money up front. We all worked for a back end. Then, while we were doing location scouts and research in various shelters around the city, I think we all felt that to make a film like this and not give back to the people who need it more would be negligent. So, while we were filming we ran a clothing, food, toy and money drive for several homeless shelters. It was very successful. It was by far the most special part of the film.

Q: Sounds like it.

Sal: We ran the drives all throughout production. Then, the day after we wrapped, myself and a few others loaded up three huge cube trucks of stuff and went all around the city right before Christmas, and gave everything out to all the people in the shelters. I remember pulling up to one place and there was this woman who I gave a bag of clothes to, and she looked at me and said, "Thank you for remembering us." I wish I could have done more. I felt guilty leaving her there.

Q: That's how I felt when the film ended. I didn't want to leave that family. I wanted to do something to help them. And then song that plays over the credits, it brought me to tears. Who sings that?

Sal: It's called "The Rain Don't Last." It's an original song performed by an up and coming artist named, Hope. She's amazing. I met her in Los Angeles. Her and her brother were performing on Venice Beach and I heard her singing and approached her right there. The tone of her voice was so soothing, it was the perfect fit for the ending...It really makes you feel like everything will be alright.

Q: It does. It's beautiful.

Sal: Since then, she signed a huge deal with Atlantic Records and has an album coming out soon.

Q: Sounds like all's well that ends well.

Sal: Thankfully...and hopefully.

Production notes:

Where God Left His Shoes was shot entirely in New York City – more than fifty locations in 25 days. With a small but full crew, shooting with an Arri-SR Super 16mm camera on Vision 2 Kodak stock, the production moved through some of the city's busiest and most visible sites: Times Square, Herald Square, two days inside the subway including control of a train, the streets of Little Italy, Washington Square Park, the South Street Seaport, one of the city's largest housing projects, a Wall Street newsstand, a chase outside Grand Central station at lunch hour, and even Rockefeller Center with the Christmas Tree as background. All of these locations were captured during the Christmas season's peak shopping days.

A Vulcan Production, *Where God Left His Shoes* is the second feature film written and directed by Salvatore Stabile. (Stabile's first film, *Gravesend* was released in 1999 by Chris Blackwell's Palm Pictures). The production qualified for the NY City and State tax incentive program – a 15% rebate for being "Made in New York." It was the first film to qualify for a new training program financed by the NY State Department of Labor and administered by the Independent Feature Project, NY - paying partial salaries of crew members in a job they've never done before. With a majority of the cast either Latino or African-American the Screen Actor's Guild raised the budget cut-off that qualifies a production for lower-budget agreements. Many other New York City organizations contributed and supported the film because of the importance of its subject – a homeless family – and their enthusiasm for the project. Trinity Church provided free use of a full-floor office space in lower Manhattan, Toys 'R Us opened their doors early (after Thanksgiving!) to film at their Times Square flagship store. More than a dozen churches housed the cast and crew for meals, wardrobe and just to stay warm. And more than a few of NY's most filmed locations, who usually make a profit from film and television productions, extended their resources and support on terms appropriate to the budget.

With most of the story taking place throughout one day and featuring two minors, one of whom appears on every page of the script, passing time, fading daylight and worsening weather were all key elements not only of the story but also the production. Most of the snow was real, and most of the rain was created and many of the most important dramatic moments were shot in the fast-fading twilight of November and December's ever colder and ever shorter production days.

Only two of the "locations" in the movie were built – the homeless shelter and a half-day shoot on a soundstage in Queens that helped the film qualify for the "Made in NY" program. The homeless shelter was a challenge – operating shelters are rarely empty and they don't want to ask residents to appear as extras out of concern for their privacy. So the production did what many temporary and not-so-temporary shelters do – took over a church basement, brought in cots and blankets, shopping carts of donated clothing and

personal effects, and created its own make-shift home for the Diaz Family and □a dozen SAG extras.

The home that the Diaz family seeks in the story was more authentic in the extreme – almost too much for those apart of the production. The subsidized housing project in the Bronx that allowed the production to shoot in their management office also offered access to one of their apartments, although they wouldn't know which one until the day of the shoot. That morning, pre-dawn with a crew scaled down from the usual 25 to fewer than a dozen, equipment was loaded onto two carts, each one barely fitting in the elevators that stopped on every one of the fifteen floors on the way up to an apartment that had a fresh eviction notice on the door. Non-payment of \$245 a month in rent and the family had left so fast that rotting food was in the refrigerator and the 5-year old daughter's drawings "to Mom" still decorated the first bedroom, which became the holding area for anyone not on camera. Right out of the pages of the script, a family had been ripped from their home and were now lost – in a shelter or on the streets – one could only guess. It was the quietest film set in this crew's experience.

The shoot was finished on schedule and without tapping the budget's contingency – a rare luxury at this budget level that allowed the producers to enhance the film's finish - full purchase of music rights, a 2k Digital Intermediate post, and even an additional day each of color correction and sound mix after the first round of in-theatre screenings of the final cut.

A certain amount of luck always plays a role, as when good weather and bad seemed to come exactly on the hours and days when they were needed. But something else happens as the cast and crew of a film starts to become a family and realizes that the producers, writer, director and lead actors have all sacrificed their usual pay, and witnesses them handing over their personal credit cards to cover an overage on a meal or an unexpected rental. Even those at the bottom of the production ladder, who are closest to getting paid their ordinary rates, find themselves invested in something that is more than just a job.

Witness the production assistant, controlling pedestrian traffic across the center of Times Square as dusk settles and the fast fading light means that there may only be time for one last take of a critical scene in the movie – the father and son turn to begging. He notices that, in the rush to get the day's last shot, no one has re-set the coffee cup prop in the trash can that the son will "find." With the camera already rolling and minutes into the take, he grabs a cup from another member of crew, dumps its contents, pulls up the hood on his jacket and enters the scene as a background extra, casually dropping the cup into the trash can where, a moment later, the 9-year old actor playing the son reaches in, finds it and finishes the scene. That's an independent film.