

People & Places

Film

Difficult to adapt

'Room' path to screen unusual

LOS ANGELES, Oct 17, (RTRS): When **Emma Donoghue's** novel "Room" was published in 2010, it became an instant sensation, landing on several bestseller lists and inspiring an avid following. Readers fell in love with the story of Jack, a five-year-old boy who has lived his entire life in a single room with his "Ma."

While it might seem a difficult story to adapt to film, director **Lenny Abrahamson** ("Frank") has done a remarkable job of taking the tough material and forging an uplifting, inspiring movie via Donoghue's screenplay. **Brie Larson** and **Jacob Tremblay** are earning Oscar buzz for their roles, and the film has already won the



Donoghue

People's Choice Award at the Toronto Film Festival. A24 Films is opening "Room" in limited release Friday, before expanding nationwide on Nov 6.

Donoghue spoke to Variety about the unusual path "Room" took to the big screen.

Question: When the book came out, there was talk of a film adaptation. But I heard you were holding out to write the screenplay?

Answer: I suppose I felt I was in an unusually strong position in that I had this book people wanted and I really wanted to be the script writer. I started writing the script even before the book was published. This way, when I was talking about filmmakers I could say, "I'm not asking you to hire me unseen, here's a script. Let's go on from there." The whole thing was done in an unusual order.

Q: And you were holding out for the right director?

A: Yes, it was really important to me to get the right director. I wasn't willing to sell to a producer who would then put some director in place. Tonally you could mess up "Room" so badly; it could be so rapey, it could be so soppy. So basically I waited for the right director. And I knew it would not be hard to cast it because there are so many great actresses between 20 and 30.

Q: I have this image of you turning down calls from the likes of Steven Spielberg.

A: I wouldn't say every director in the world was courting me. I was getting lots of nibbles, not just from directors, but producers and actors. But none of them seemed quite right. Also, I didn't feel there needed to be a film made of this. A lot of writers will scorn the film world and will boast about how they sold the rights and don't care. But I love cinema. And the publishing experience had been so great, and especially my relationship with the book fans. I had a real sense I owed them a great film or none.

Q: So when did you finally sell the film rights?

A: I didn't technically sell them until the first day of filming. Again, an unusual way to proceed. Lenny's company Element came looking and they wanted an option and my agent at UTA always said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want to be fully involved. I want to be the screenwriter." So instead of selling them an option, we did an attachment where we all agreed to work together with nobody getting paid for anything until the beginning of filming.

Q: Lenny says he wrote you a long letter detailing why he was the right person for the job. What did he say that convinced you?

A: Even though I hadn't heard of Lenny before, this letter he sent me just blew me away.

It was 10 pages, typed. He's really smart, he's really eloquent, he's even more bookish than me. It was a smartly, well written letter and he completed understood the novel. He saw past the criminal element. And he told me exactly how he would make it. It was a letter from the heart, with his incredibly smart mind. There was none of this my people will have lunch with your people. It just blew me away.

Q: The trailers reveal that Ma and Jack escape from "Room," while the book's promotion kept it a bit more ambiguous. How did you feel about that?

A: Trailers almost always give it away. I remember having the same discussion with my publishers when the book came out, there was a blurb for the jacket that gave away the entire plot. I said, "Please don't tell about the escape." So we negotiated on a phrase like, "Ma dreams of a better life." That's the perverse thing about publicity; we'd all prefer the audience going in knowing nothing at all. But in order to hook them, you have to tell them something.



This file picture taken on Nov 25, 2013 shows Canadian singer Celine Dion performing during her first of seven shows scheduled until Dec 5 at the Bercy's Palais Omnisports in Paris. (AFP)

Music

Springsteen to release scrapped album in 'River' box

Dion new songs appeal gets 4K entries

PARIS, Oct 17, (Agencies): A public appeal by Celine Dion for new songs for her next album in French has been met with a flood of offered tunes, according to a former Canadian media boss close to the singer's manager.

Around 4,000 songs were sent to Dion's website and management company by the Oct 5 deadline, Charles Benoit, ex-head of the Quebec TV arm of Canadian group Bell Media, told AFP this week.

Dion's husband and manager, Rene Angelil, and the CEO of the Les Feeling Productions firm managing her career, Aldo Giampaolo, "were surprised by the dimensions this initiative has taken, and they asked me to organise the works' selection", he said. Dion in late August made her appeal for fresh songs, emphasising that it was "open to everyone".

The 47-year-old Canadian singer, most famous for performing "My Heart Will Go On" as the theme song for the hit 1997 movie "Titanic", said she wanted new material for an album in French she's bringing out next year, and for another one in English in 2017.

The current crop of submitted songs are all for the French album and came by letter, social networks and MP3 files from France and other French-speaking countries.

Whittled

They will be whittled down to just 25 songs by a panel of six French-language broadcast critics, said Pierre Fortier, a Quebec music festival director whom Benoit tapped to be in charge of the selection process.

"Naturally, out of the 4,000 songs received, there aren't 4,000 hits, but

we've already found several good ones," Fortier said.

An online vote open to the public through Dion's www.celinedion.com website will choose which one of the shortlisted 25 songs will make it on the singer's album, with the winner announced Dec 1.

A 56-year-old French amateur singer-composer, Gilles Mazetto, said he hoped his submission, "Cicatrice Dedicacee" (roughly meaning "auto-graphed scar"), would make the cut.

"It's a message in a bottle I'm hoping will be picked up by Celine Dion," he said.

"I think the song fits her repertoire: it talks about passing time, the moments that define our existence, of those that remain."

Dion's last album came out in 2013. In August, she resumed regular concerts she has been giving in Las Vegas since 2011 after taking a year-long hiatus to care for Angelil, 73, who has throat cancer.

Bruce Springsteen will release a discarded 1979 album in its entirety for the first time as part of a box set for his influential work "The River."

The rock legend on Friday announced a Dec 4 release for the long-awaited collectors' edition, which will include four CDs and three DVDs.

"The River," released in October 1980, was Springsteen's first album to reach number one on the US chart.

The double-length album foreshadowed much of Springsteen's later work, moving beyond energetic rock tunes to offer darker thoughts about the future of the working class in the United States.

"The River" featured the title song — a bleak tale of a worker, based on Springsteen's brother-in-law, who on his 19th birthday "got a union card and a wedding coat" — as well as the pop hit "Hungry Heart."

The previous year, Springsteen recorded a standard-length album but discarded it, explaining later that it "lacked the kind of unity and conceptual intensity I liked my music to have."

The box set will mark the first time the 1979 album is released as it was recorded, although seven of the tracks were incorporated in some form in the double album of "The River."

Intense

The box set will also include a video of a Springsteen concert during his tour for "The River" on Nov 5, 1980 at Arizona State University.

Long described as one of the most intense performers by the famously energetic artist, Springsteen took the stage under a cloud after **Ronald Reagan's** sweeping victory a night earlier in the presidential election.

Springsteen has since become open about his left-leaning politics but in the 1980s was a subtle critic of Reagan, with albums "Nebraska" and "Born in the USA" focusing on the plight of workers.

Springsteen, 66, remains active both in the studio and on the road, releasing his 18th studio album last year.

The box set will include four hours of previously unreleased video on three DVDs, including footage from a 1980 show in Tempe, Arizona, tour rehearsals and a new documentary called "The Ties That Bind."

It also comes with a coffee table

book of 200 rare or previously unseen photos and memorabilia.

Fans can pre-order the album, due for release on Dec 4, on iTunes and Amazon.com, a press release said. It was listed on Amazon for about \$130.

It has been a long time coming.

Canadian singer-songwriter **Bryan Adams** says his new album, "Get Up," is the ideal follow-up record to his iconic "Reckless" album of 30 years ago.

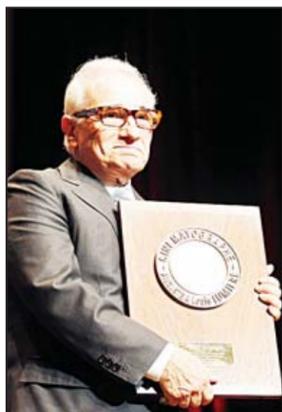
The album, released on Friday, features several fast, catchy tunes like "Brand New Day," and "You Belong to Me" which harken back to the signature feel-good style that made Adams a household name in the 1980s with hits like "Heaven" and "Summer of '69."

"In many ways it is the album I wish I'd been able to make 25 years ago," Adams said, describing "Get Up," as carefree, rocking and retro sounding.

His songwriting for Hollywood earlier in his career spawned some of his biggest hits, including "Heaven," one of the best things to come out of the much-panned movie "A Night From Heaven," and "Everything I Do I Do it for You," the theme song from the 1991 film "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves."

But Adams, who has sold more than 65 million albums worldwide and won multiple awards, has never paid attention to shifting audience trends. He is all about his art and music.

"I don't actually know what my target audience is and I don't know anything about the music business. I just do what I do, which is make music, which is what I've always done. I just like making songs that I like and that's it," he said.



US director Martin Scorsese holds his Lumiere Award during the 7th Lumiere Festival in Lyon, central France on Oct 16. (AP)



Meek



Weller

Variety

LOS ANGELES: **Barbara Meek**, a veteran member of the Trinity Square Repertory Company in Providence, R.I., and an actress on television, died unexpectedly in Providence on Oct 3, 2015. She was 81.

Meek joined Trinity Rep in 1968 and appeared in more than 100 Trinity Rep stage productions. Highlights of Meek's career at Trinity Rep include leading roles in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," "Boesman and Lena" and "Master Class." Meek also appeared in the Broadway production of "Wilson in the Promised Land." Her final Trinity Rep appearance was in a production of "Julius Caesar."

Meek is best known to television viewers for playing the character of Ellen Canby on "Archie Bunker's Place." Other television credits include Adrian Hall's adaptations of "Brother to Dragons," "The House of Mirth" and "Life Among the Lowly," all broadcast on PBS.

Meek was born in **Detroit**. As an undergraduate she was asked to join Wayne State University's graduate theater program.

In 1965 Meek toured with the United Services Organization, performing for wounded soldiers on Okinawa and other US Army bases. In 1968, she joined the Trinity Repertory Company with her husband, **Martin Molson**, where they debuted together in "Brother to Dragons." (RTRS)

LOS ANGELES: Longtime TV producer **Ralph Andrews** died Friday at the age of 87 from Alzheimer's disease.

Andrews was best known for the slew of game shows he produced, including "The Liar's Club," "By The Numbers," "Zoom," "Show Me," "You Don't Say," "I'll Bet," "Wedding Party," "The Family Game" and many more.

Andrews was co-founder of the Entertainment Industries Council, which he founded with columnist **Jack Andrews** to fight drug and alcohol abuse. He also produced films including "The Silent

Treatment" and "Wild in the Sky."

Raised in **Saginaw, Mich.**, he started out as a disc jockey and then moved to **California**, where he landed a page job at NBC. He formed his first production com-

pany with **David Wolper**, producing early reality show "Divorce Hearing," then produced and hosted "Lie Detector," which challenged public figures to take polygraph tests.

He then became director of live programming for Desilu, overseeing gameshows such as "By the Numbers" and "Show Me" for KTLA. After leaving Desilu, he started his own production

'Weeknd' & 'Uptown' lead Soul Train noms

NEW YORK, Oct 17, (AP): The Weeknd and the duo behind "Uptown Funk," **Mark Ronson** and **Bruno Mars**, are tied for five nominations each at the Soul Train Awards this year on Nov 6.

All three share nominations for Video of the Year, Song of the Year and The Ashford & Simpson Songwriter's Award. The Weeknd also is nominated for Best R&B/Soul Male Artist and Album of the Year. And Ronson and Mars are nominated for Best Dance Performance and Best Collaboration.

Beyonce, Chris Brown, Jidenna and Tyrese have four nominations each for the awards show held at Orleans Arena in Las Vegas. The show will air on Centric and BET on Nov 29.



Journalist and author **Mary Mapes** (left), and director **James Vanderbilt** pose for photographers as they arrive for the screening of the movie "Truth," at Rome's Film Festival, in Rome on Oct 16. (AP)

company and sold "You Don't Say" to NBC, going on to sell many more such as "The Family Game" with **Bob Barker** and "It Takes Two" with **Vin Scully**.

He also produced and hosted "Lingo" in Canada and produced shows such as "Boggle" and "Trivial Pursuit" for international territories. (RTRS)

LOS ANGELES: British musician **Paul Weller** has been writing hits such as "Town Called Malice" and "That's Entertainment" for nearly 40 years — but the former frontman for The Jam and The Style Council member says he has never thought of himself as a rock star.

"I don't know what the hours are or what the job entails ... I just think of myself as being a writer and a musician, and I don't know about pop star, rock star stuff," Weller told Reuters in an interview.

"I'm a bit old for that really. But I was never really sure even when I was younger. I wasn't really buying into it. I don't think I'm really rock star material to be honest."

Weller, who won an Ivor Novello Award for Lifetime Achievement, has enjoyed an illustrious career since he started out with The Jam in the 1970s.

The musician, known as "The Modfather," says his songwriting has changed with latest solo album "Saturns Pattern". (RTRS)