



BIG SCREEN CLASSICS

The Last of the Mohicans

The Last of the Mohicans

Director: Michael Mann

Production Companies:

Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation,
Morgan Creek Productions

Executive Producer: James G. Robinson

Producers: Michael Mann, Hunt Lowry

Production Associate: Bonnie Arnold

Supervising Producer: Ned Dowd

Production Accountant: Jennifer Freed

Post-production Accountant: Doris Hellmann

Production Co-ordinators:

Sondra Dee Boyachek, Judi Rosner

2nd Unit Production Co-ordinator: Mary Lou Devlin

2nd Unit Production Manager: Whitney Green

Unit Production Managers: Ned Dowd, Ellen Rauch

Location Manager: George C. Bosley

Location Manager (North Carolina): Michael Bigham

Post-production Supervisor: Judith Blume

2nd Unit Directors: Mickey Gilbert,

Gusmano Cesaretti

1st Assistant Director: Michael Waxman

2nd Assistant Director: Daniel Stillman

2nd Unit 2nd Assistant Director: Cyndie Williams

Script Supervisor: Alan Greedy

Casting: Bonnie Timmermann

Casting (London): Susie Figgis

Screenplay: Michael Mann, Christopher Crowe

Adaptation: John L. Balderston, Paul Perez,

Daniel Moore

Based on the screenplay by: Philip Dunne

Based on the novel by: James Fenimore Cooper

Director of Photography: Dante Spinotti

Additional Photography: Doug Milsome

2nd Unit Director of Photography: Jerry G. Callaway

Camera Operators: Don Reddy, Michael McGowan

Key Grip: Chunky Huse

2nd Unit Key Grip: Tom May

Steadicam Operators: Kyle Rudolph, Bob Ulland

Gaffer: Daniel Eccleston

Stills Photography: Frank Connor

Special Effects Co-ordinators: Tom Fisher,

Trix Unlimited

2nd Unit Special Effects Co-ordinator: Henry Millar

Editors: Dov Hoenig, Arthur Schmidt

Additional Editors: Jere Huggins, Wayne Wahrman

Production Designer: Wolf Kroeger

Visual Consultants: Gusmano Cesaretti, Lee Teter

Art Directors: Richard Holland, Robert Guerra

Set Designers: Karl Martin, Masako Masuda

Set Decorators: Jim Erickson, James V. Kent

Property Masters: Ron Downing, Mickey Pugh

Construction Co-ordinator: Anthony Lattanzio

Costume Designer: Elsa Zamparelli

Costume Supervisor: Jennifer Butler

Military Costume Adviser: Richard E. La Motte

Key Make-up Artist: Peter Robb-King

Prosthetic Make-up Artists: Evan Campbell,

Nicholas Dudman, Vincent Guastini,

Christopher Johnson, Neal B. Kelly, Joe Macchia

Music: Trevor Jones, Randy Edelman

Additional Music: Daniel Lanois

Sound Design/Supervision: Lon E. Bender

Sound Mixer: Simon Kaye

Re-recording Mixers: Paul Massey, Doug Hemphill,

Mark Smith, Chris Jenkins

Sound Effects Supervisor: Larry Kemp

Military Technical Adviser: Captain Dale Dye

Stunt Co-ordinator: Mickey Gilbert

Cast:

Daniel Day-Lewis (*Hawkeye*)

Madeleine Stowe (*Cora Munro*)

Russell Means (*Chingachgook*)

Michael Mann on 'The Last of the Mohicans'

Do you see Hawkeye in the same terms as the protagonists of your earlier films, Thief or Manhunter, as someone who, due to his special abilities, is coerced into serving an order that is at odds with his own personal code?

Yes, except that I wouldn't call Hawkeye's code personal: it's simply the value system and mores of a culture he more or less grew up in, which is Mahican. We don't know much about Mahican child-raising; we know a lot more about the Iroquois, their neighbours, so I borrowed freely from them. In coming up with who is Hawkeye? How does he walk, talk? How does he feel?, we had to have a basis: what was he born into? What was his childhood like? So we started with a background, based on anthropological work, which was primarily a mixture of Mohawk and Mahican, complicated by the degree of acculturation they would have had.

How did this kind of anthropology come into play in the story?

It comes up in how Daniel Day-Lewis plays Hawkeye – this man from another planet who Cora meets and with whom she falls desperately in love. Hawkeye is a wilderness frontier hunter and trapper and he lives in a physical world in which he sees everything, everything has meaning and he is constantly searching for meaning. That makes him a very direct person to be dealing with, so, for example, when Cora says to him, 'What are you looking at, sir?' the mode of courtship and his wilderness identity makes him look her in the face and say, 'I'm looking at you, miss.'

What is The Last of the Mohicans about, from your point of view?

I wanted to have the scale of a geopolitical conflict – the ethnic and religious conflicts, the struggle of white imperialism on a grassroots level, the conditions of the struggle for survival of the colonial population, and the struggle between the Euramerican and European powers and the American Indian population. That's the outer frame, that's the scale of the piece.

At the same time, I wanted an emotional intensity that came from the stories of Hawkeye, his father and brother, from each of their points of view, and from the Munro daughters and the obvious central love story, which I wanted to be very intimate. It occurred to me fairly early on that if you worked hard enough and were smart enough and didn't make too many mistakes, you could get the large picture, but that the trick was to get it there and have immediate emotional intensity; the trick to having it feel real was going to be that emotional connection.

What did you hope to achieve in the film visually?

I was influenced by Beirstadt's landscape painting, in terms both of compositions and of what the place looked like. Before I got involved I thought his paintings were romantic, fanciful Hudson valley landscapes, that forests don't look like this. But then I realised that they did look like this, they just don't look like this anymore.

Colour has always been a key issue for you. What concerns did you have in this respect, aside from what was dictated by the locations?

Eric Schweig (*Uncas*)
Jodhi May (*Alice Munro*)
Steven Waddington (*Major Duncan Heyward*)
Wes Studi (*Magua*)
Maurice Roëves (*Colonel Edmund Munro*)
Patrice Chéreau (*General Montcalm*)
Edward Blatchford (*Jack Winthrop*)
Terry Kinney (*John Cameron*)
Tracey Ellis (*Alexandra Cameron*)
Justin M. Rice (*James Cameron*)
Dennis J. Banks (*Ongewasgone*)
Pete Postlethwaite (*Captain Beams*)
Colm Meaney (*Major Ambrose*)
Mac Andrews (*General Webb*)
Malcolm Storry (*Phelps*)
David Schofield (*sergeant major*)
Eric D. Sandgren (*Coureur de Bois*)
Mike Phillips (*Sachem*)
Mark A. Baker (*colonial man*)
Dylan Baker (*Bougainville*)
Tim Hopper (*Ian*)
Gregory Zaragoza (*Abenaki chief*)
Scott Means (*Abenaki warrior*)
William J. Bozic Jr (*French artillery officer*)
Patrick Fitzgerald (*Webb's adjutant*)
Mark Joy (*Henri*)
Steve Keator (*colonial representative*)
Don Tilley (*colonial 1*)
Thomas E. Cummings (*colonial 2*)
David Mark Farrow (*guard*)
Ethan James Fugate (*French sappeur*)
F. Curtis Gaston (*soldier 1*)
Eric A. Hurley (*soldier 2*)
Jared Harris (*British lieutenant*)
Michael McConnell (*sentry*)
Thomas John McGowan (*rich merchant*)
Alice Papineau (*Huron woman*)
Mark J. Maracle (*Sharitarish*)
Clark Heathcliffe (*regimental sergeant major*)
Sebastian Roché (*Martin*)
Joe Finnegan (*redcoat 2*)
Sheila Adams Barnhill (*humming woman*)
USA 1992©
115 mins
Digital

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Objective reality outstripped me, and I brought it back to a more conservative palette. If you were an American Indian and grew up in the forest, so all you saw were brown and green, and then some Dutch or Swedish traders showed up with reflective objects or the colour red, you'd go for it in a big way. The indications we have from paintings is of a level of expression among the American Indians that was radical and more chromatic, more outlandish than anything I had. They would go into battle naked, with brilliant colours, the heads of birds, on their penises.

How did the environment affect the style?

It was terribly inspirational – and it was fleeting. Cities don't change: if I want to shoot a street at night it's going to look more or less the same from the moment it gets dark. In the forest, by the time you get set up to shoot something you've seen, it's gone. The light has shifted, the wind has shifted, the magic has vanished. I was getting inspired by things that were so transient I couldn't follow them.

There are a number of instances in the forest where you composed in depth, on several visual layers.

I liked that. I was always looking for depth; I wanted to capture the sense of the forest as a system which Hawkeye reads and operates within. It's not alien to him, he doesn't have to survive it, he is it. Daniel and I did a training regime that resulted in that conceptual re-orientation, as well as picking up all the physical skills and, equally important, the attitude that the physical skills generate.

Your films succeed in hijacking the viewer's nervous system so completely that it becomes, at least for me, emotionally overwhelming at a certain point.

That's why style is such an issue.

It's not style. You're getting at the reason why I love making pictures – it's the intensity of the experience, the power of film to make you dream, to take over your nervous system and sweep you away. It's because I love being swept away and I love the power of this medium to do that, intellectually and emotionally. But it only works when what things mean and the way they feel are all operating in total harmony. Style just gets you seven minutes of attention, that's it.

Michael Mann interviewed by Gavin Smith, *Sight and Sound*, November 1992