



VANITY FAIR

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T

hirty years ago, a German film producer told the composer Elliot Goldenthal, "I know some girl whose work is just as grotesque as yours. You should meet her."

Goldenthal and the visionary director Julie Taymor have collaborated ever since, creating works for theater, opera, and film that transcend traditional boundaries in mind-expanding, often hallucinatory ways. But their movie of *The Tempest*, which opens in December, represents a historic breakthrough even by their own standard of startling originality. Taymor—whose Broadway production of *The Lion King* earned her the first Tony Award ever won by a woman director—has reconceptualized Shakespeare's valedictory play with a female Prospero as a vengeful mother, played by Helen Mirren in a performance already generating Oscar buzz. As the exiled sorceress Prospera, Mirren presides over a dazzling cast that includes Russell Brand, Alfred Molina, Chris Cooper, Tom Conti, and Alan Cumming, with Djimon Hounsou in an unforgettable portrayal of the "monster" Caliban.

Known by film-music aficionados as the thinking man's composer, Goldenthal illustrates Taymor's innovative screenplay with a haunting, otherworldly score that weaves a sonic tapestry from such eclectic elements as saxophone riffs and heavy-metal guitars, Japanese flutes, and Australian didgeridoos. Goldenthal won a best-original-score Oscar for their 2002 film, *Frida*; Taymor's latest solo project, the Broadway production of *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, also opens in December. Goldenthal says his creativity is always enhanced by Taymor's "magnetic sense of enthusiasm," and she is equally inspired by the scope of his talents. "Elliot can move in any realm; he can do rock 'n' roll and unbelievable opera," she says. "It's thrilling to be able to travel like that with the person you're in love with."

Julie Taymor and Elliot Goldenthal on the roof of their apartment building, near Manhattan's Union Square.

TAYMOR WEARS A SHIRT BY BRUNELLO CUCINELLI; SKIRT BY LES HABITUÉS; BELT BY BANANA REPUBLIC; SUNGLASSES BY ROBERT MARC. GOLDENTHAL WEARS A JACKET, SHOES, AND TIE BY DIOR HOMME; SHIRT BY GIORGIO ARMANI; JEANS BY DIESEL; SUNGLASSES BY RAY-BAN.

—LESLIE BENNETTS