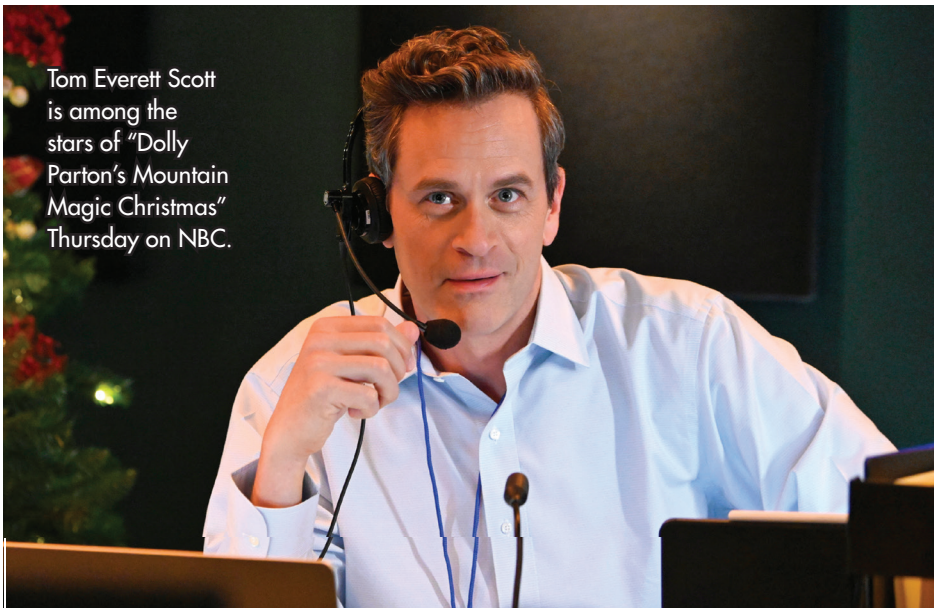


coverstory

BY JAY BOBBIN

Dolly Parton brings a 'Mountain Magic Christmas' to NBC



Tom Everett Scott is among the stars of "Dolly Parton's Mountain Magic Christmas" Thursday on NBC.

Music has played a big part in Tom Everett Scott's acting career, and thanks to Dolly Parton, that's continuing.

Well-known for his first major role, as the drummer for The Wonders, the fictional '60s pop group in "That Thing You Do!" – the 1996 movie written and directed by co-star Tom Hanks – Scott plays Parton's real-life producing partner Sam Haskell in NBC's new film "Dolly Parton's Mountain Magic Christmas" Thursday, Dec. 1. Clearly inspired by Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," the tale finds the country superstar on a journey through her personal past (guided by "Three Wise Mountain Men") while making a holiday television special at her Dollywood resort.

"I've never played someone who was right there on the set watching me before," the friendly Scott says, reporting that it ultimately was "a totally positive thing. (Haskell) is the greatest guy. He and I first got to know each other over Zoom, and he could not have been more supportive."

Jimmy Fallon, Willie Nelson, Billy Ray Cyrus, Jimmie Allen, Zach Williams and Miley Cyrus make guest appearances in the story, which also features "Saturday Night Live" alum Ana Gasteyer. An executive producer of the project as well, Parton keeps it a family affair by also including her young grand-nephew Liam Rauhoff, who portrays himself, in the cast.

"I have always loved and been a huge fan of Dolly Parton," Scott maintains, "and I was honored to be able to work with her. She's everything that everybody wonders and hopes she is, and more. I just had a great experience, and I miss it. I miss my Tennessee 'family.'"

Scott also enjoyed the show-within-a-show concept that "Dolly Parton's Mountain Magic Christmas" follows. "The whole 'putting on a show' thing is such a big part of being in show business," he reasons. "Learning the little things Sam goes through, his mannerisms when he's stressed out, I liked that. Also, with this being about Christmas, you think of things like 'White Christmas' (which also was, in large part, about the making of a TV special)."

While "That Thing You Do!" would seem to be a popular film among those in the music business, Scott still isn't positive she knew him from that: "It never came up, but she probably knows it, if she knows me and knows that was a big movie for me."

Besides that picture's Hanks, Scott has worked with such other icons as Meryl Streep (in "One True Thing") and Diane Keaton ("Because I Said So"), and he also was in the Oscar-winning "La La Land." He reflects, "It's been a wonderful career, and I certainly hope to keep it going, and to work with more of the greats."

In Focus

"Fit for Christmas" (CBS — TV movie premiere, Dec. 4)

An enthusiastic Christmas-obsessed fitness instructor named Audrey (Amanda Kloots) is teaching classes at her beloved, but financially beleaguered, community center in quaint Mistletoe, Mont. But she suddenly begins a holiday romance with a charming, mysterious businessman (Paul Greene), complicating his plans to turn the center into a more financially profitable resort property in this 2022 holiday romance. Kloots co-wrote the film and serves as executive producer.

"Barmageddon" (USA Network — series premiere, Dec. 5)

WWE Hall of Famer Nikki Bella hosts as buddies Carson Daly and Blake Shelton are featured in this new celebrity game show you never knew

you needed. The superstar trio goes all in on good times as they head to Blake's bar, Ole Red in Nashville, Tenn., for a front row seat as their celebrity friends compete in over-the-top bar games. With Carson behind the bar and Blake taking the stage for live music sing-alongs, these icons show a new side of themselves.

"The Real Housewives of Miami: Season 5" (Peacock — season premiere, Dec. 8)

Lisa tries to mend her friendship with Larsa and Guerdy's husband urges her to slow down. Meanwhile, Julia struggles with being an empty nester and Dr. Nicole is healing her old wounds with her father and mulling over whether to give him a second chance as this unscripted original series returns for its fifth go-round.



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