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## What kid actors say about starring in their movies



Jude Hill stars as "Buddy" in director Kenneth Branagh's "Belfast." (Rob Youngson / Focus Features)

BY RANDEE DAWN

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When your big film rests on small shoulders, [the casting process is critical](#): How to find a child who can bear the weight of a dramatic feature while still seeming like ... well, a child? The good news is that several films this Oscar season have threaded that needle

with some truly talented up-and-comers. Here's a quick introduction to four of the biggest talents in small packages we've come across.

### **Sydney Kowalske, 8**

#### **Jessie, "Blue Bayou"**

(Now on Amazon Prime)

**On her heartrending crying scene at film's end:** "I thought about what it would be like if this happened to me, and [director-writer-star] Justin [Chon] made it very easy for me. It was the hardest scene for me because I wanted to get it right because this is something that happens to people and it's important."



AWARDS

**Kids say the darndest things — when film directors let them**

Jan. 19, 2022

### **Jude Hill, 11**

#### **Buddy, "Belfast"**

(In theaters and on demand)

**On having fun during filming:** "There's a scene where the entire family plays basketball and cricket, and that was so much fun — it wasn't really acting. But the most fun thing was during one of the riots. A bomb went off and it was scary, but I loved that scene. I had to play scared, but to be honest I didn't even have to act in that scene."

### **Lucian-River Chauhan, 12**

#### **Jay, "Encounter"**

(Amazon Prime and other streaming platforms)

**On understanding the big-picture issues like mental illness in the film:** "It's really important to tell these stories. I don't believe I've seen people with mental illness,

but personally I've had challenges at school where people bullied me because of how I looked. I think many people who watch this film can relate to those emotions.”

## Woody Norman, 12

### Jesse, “C'mon, C'mon”

(Amazon Prime and other streaming platforms)

**On playing a character who's not much like you:** “Being Jesse was the most challenging, because he's very, very different to me as a person. He's introverted and I'm quite extroverted. He's quite quiet and I'm a loud person — especially once you get to know me, I'm quite loud.”

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