



PRESS KIT

Notes From The New World
A film by Vitaly Sumin

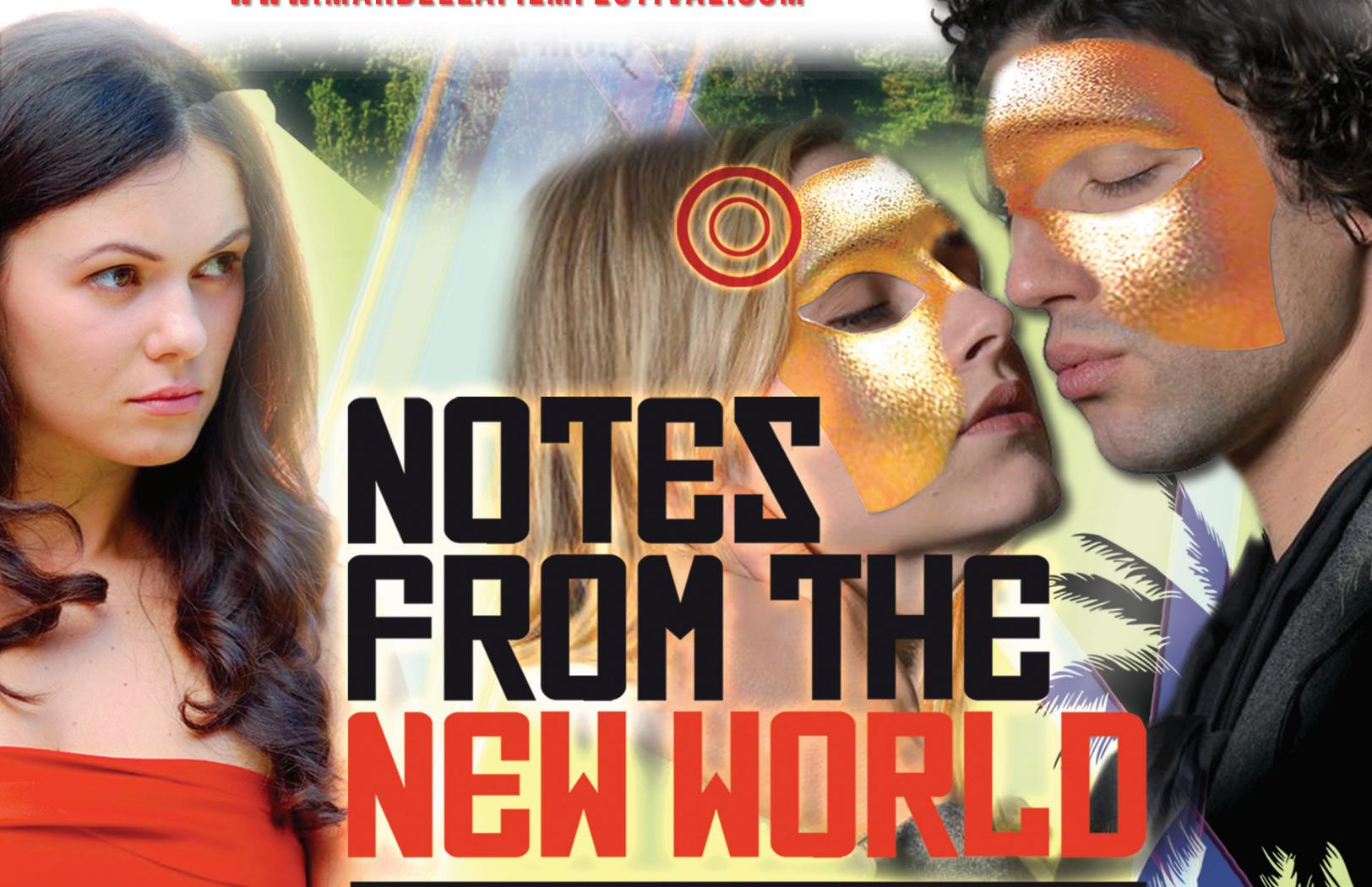




**SCREENING: 12:00 - 2:00 PM
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7TH, 2012**

**MARBELLA INTERNACIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL**

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**NOTES
FROM THE
NEW WORLD**

Sometimes living a lie can lead to the truth.

Based on *Notes from the Underground*

BY FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

A film by award-winning Vitaly Sumin



Winner
XIII International Festival
of Detective Films
Moscow, 2011



Official Selection
Marbella International
Film Festival
October, 2012



Best Script
Corinth International
Film Festival
December, 2011

www.notesthemovie.com © 2012 VM Productions



**DOLBY
DIGITAL**
IN SELECTED THEATRES



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A WORD by the Director

Whatever is depicted, it's essential that a film's content resonate with contemporary audiences. Vitaly Sumin, president of VM Productions, is the writer-director-producer of *Notes From The New World*, a feature adapted from Fyodor Dostoevsky's short story, *Notes From The Underground*. Relates Sumin, "In transporting the essential elements of the prophetic masterpiece, *Notes From The Underground*, that predicted the major events of our time from mid-19th-century Russia to modern-day California, I have underscored the universality of Dostoevsky's tale as well as the commonalities of the human experience..." (Christina Hamlett, in *American Chronicle*, during the first stages of preproduction, November 2009)

Notes from the New World is both an adaptation and a continuation of Dostoyevsky's work. At the same time, it's a re-telling. What's important are the ideas and themes of the original writing. I've never been particularly interested in the exact re-creation of stories by classical authors, including the appropriate attributes of the corresponding historical time period involved. For me, every classic work of fiction is a template serving as basis for explorations of our own age.

Vitaly
Sumin



THE FILM

Los Angeles, 2012. In the process of preparing for the leading role in a play based on Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*, a young actor is drawn into a world of intrigue, romance, and murder.

Steven (24), a struggling actor is hired by Bob (50), a wealthy playwright, to play the lead in a show based on Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*. To gather material, Bob hires Irina (24), a Russian Mafia call girl, to visit Steven as Liza, the prostitute in the original story. Their interaction is observed on video monitors by Bob and through a window by Sonia (19), a beautiful stalker. The two women soon find themselves vying for Steven's affections as well as the leading female role in Bob's play. Their acting, it turns out, is not confined to the stage.

Danger intrudes when a Mafia fortune disappears; everyone is suspected. Fortunately, Irina's boss and lover, Misha (29), is distracted by the prospect of managing her to Hollywood stardom.

The characters' parallel destinies converge with the premiere of Bob's play. But after the curtain falls, the film goes on to answer one final question: Can true love, peace, and happiness be found in a world of ceaseless danger and deception.

On another level the story suggests an amazing reading of the state of the post modern world. Are we witnessing a certain realization of Dostoevsky's prophecies?

THE Director BIO



After receiving an M.S. degree in Oceanography, Vitaly Sumin produced ocean-related documentaries (Jacques Cousteau style) which eventually led him to abandon his scientific career to get a B.A. degree in film directing. He subsequently worked as a co-writer and producer on numerous productions. Sumin's award winning short film *From Womb To Tomb*, which he wrote, directed, edited and produced, made a world tour of important festivals. Sumin's work revolves around the idea - one of many - that people sometimes accept to be pawns in a game they can't control. It is no surprise then that he received a US patent (#4,784,394) for his invention: "The World Belongs to You!" an interactive tourist game including video, reality TV and other versions. Sumin further studied at The Sorbonne in Paris under a study grant. His script *Idiot*, a contemporary international thriller based on Dostoevsky's novel, received a development grant from The Warner Bros Fund. A number of other of Sumin's scripts are circulating in the United States and Europe.

In 2006 he wrote, produced and directed the feature film *Shades of Day* in the framework of his "Dostoevsky-Los Angeles Project" - an adaptation of Dostoevsky's novella *White Nights* that was selected by the Rutgers University's professor Gerald Pirog for his course in cinema - along with the classic works by Bertolucci, Kurosawa, Bresson, Scorsese, Shradler, Von Sternberg..

In 2011, he wrote, directed and produced the feature film *Notes From The New World*, an adaptation of *Notes From The Underground* by F. Dostoevsky and the second chapter of the said "Dostoevsky-LA Project". The film won many awards: it was winner of the 13th International Festival of Detective Films in Moscow, Russia (April 2011) and was awarded Best Innovative Screenplay at the 2nd Corinthian International Film Festival in Greece (December 2011). It also came back from its Greek odyssey with the Golden Pegasus Plaque of Recognition by the Office of the Corinth Major. It has been chosen amongst 800 films from 52 countries to be screened at the Marbella International Film Festival, in Spain (October 2012).

Along with *Notes from the New World*, Sumin produced and directed a documentary, *The Missing Screenwriter*, about the mysterious disappearance of Robert Hurley, his co-writer on the film. Questions were raised about whether Hurley had engineered his own disappearance or fallen victim to foul play. This is partially a reflection of Sumin's irony laced humor, though the larger intent of this cyber-charade was the marketing of *Notes from the New World*, a 1a Blair Witch Project. *The Missing Screenwriter* was acclaimed and also became a winner of the 14th International Festival of Detective Films in Moscow, Russia (April 2012 - in the Crime and Punishment category).

Sumin is now working on a 107-min documentary, currently in post-production, titled *Re-Imagining Dostoevsky*, a behind-the-scenes revealing the creative process of *Notes From The New World*.

Vitaly Sumin currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

QUESTIONS TO Vitaly Sumin

What was it like working with the unknown actors?

Much better than with “known” actors.

If you had to do it all over again what would you do differently?

I wouldn't do it again. I would simply make another movie.

What did you learn from directing films?

It's better to watch films than to make them.

Who are your influences?

Bergman, Truffaut, Kubrick, Kurosawa, Hitchcock...

What do you see as the future of filmmaking?

And you?

Beyond the storyline you have developed in your film, what is your broader message regarding the state of society both in America and throughout the world?

Well, we're living in an unprecedented time of technological revolution and the fall of the walls. Hamlet who lived at the time of another revolution - the passage from Renaissance to Baroque - stated that “time has dislocated the joint!”—which I'm citing from memory. Whatever happens in a faraway corner of the world may become known right away anywhere in the world.

The problem is that to change a living human being in an evolutionary way requires a longer time, if it's ever possible. Most, if not all, social revolutions that intended to quickly change the world failed but provided us with experience. On the other hand, the technological revolution made some dreams come true; in a way, the world has become one.

Steven, hero of *Notes From The New World*, who is assigned to portray a modern “Underground Man” in the Los Angeles of 2012, claims: “Not all civilizations progress at the same pace, but then the losers use bombs to make all of us equal.”

Describe the process that you went through to develop a “life imitates art” storyline where the characters are actually living the modern version of the play in which they are acting on screen.

When an actor performs on stage, a process of identification with a character takes place. Depending on the degree and scope of the identification, an actor may need some time to “get back” and restore his or her inner self. In the story of *Notes From The New World*, Steven, a young actor at the beginning of his career, is asked by Bob, a mad Machiavellian-type director and playwright, to perform the part of the “Underground Man” in real life. Once Steven puts on the mask of the “Underground Man”, there's

no way back : he's entering a world of mythical forces that will push him all the way through the labyrinth into the "Unknown".

How is the action in your film juxtaposed against the futility of the "Underground Man" and his inability to change either himself or the society he blames for his misery?

Every common man of no particular influence or stature throughout history has felt that he has no real control over his own fate. In today's modern society, however, the common man has the illusion of control of his own destiny through technology. And even though Steven is surrounded by elements of modern technology-such as the spy cameras throughout his living quarters being used to help him develop his part-he ultimately finds that he's not the one controlling them. He only had the illusion of control. As such, he is really no different than the "Underground Man" that he is researching.

Do you see yourself as an underground man?

From time to time.



DEVELOPMENT AND BEYOND

Vitaly Sumin had completed the film *Shades of Day* based on the Dostoevsky's novella *White Nights*. It was time for the second film in his projected Dostoevsky/LA project. He had two Dostoevsky-inspired scripts completed: one was *The Idiot*, written in Paris several years before *Shades of Day*. The other was a re-visioning of *Crime and Punishment* set at the time of the riots that followed the Rodney King verdict in 1992.

But the creative process has a way of establishing its own schedule, and out of inspiration and perhaps a need for the proverbial change of pace, Sumin's writing took a different direction in the form of a new script titled *Love Game*. It was a post-Orwellian tale that combined multiple strands of modern life: high-tech voyeurism, virtual reality, greed, and the diminution of personal meaning. Its characters were caught in a web, not of their own making, but one to which they willingly submitted when they entered an electronically monitored maze in order to win a life-changing prize.

But with the ongoing tectonic political and social shifts occurring in the world post 9-11, it soon became apparent that the Dostoevsky/LA project could no longer be kept on hold; and the story that resonated most strongly with the new reality was *Notes from the Underground*, with its simultaneously sobering and inspiring themes of personal freedom and willful alienation. Working at a feverish pace, Sumin created a script that took Dostoevsky's nineteenth century novella as the starting point for a strikingly original contemporary tale.

Only later did Sumin realize that a key aspect of the plot—an ever-shifting love triangle between the main characters—had been subliminally derived from another work by Dostoevsky, his epic novel *The Idiot*.

The script, soon to be titled *Notes from the New World*, had additional roots in two books outside of the Dostoevsky canon: *The Magus* by John Fowles and *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. The prototype for the plot-driving character of Bob in "Notes," for instance, is none other than Fowles' wealthy Greek master manipulator, Maurice Conchis. Some of Bob's traits are also drawn from the character of Bill in the *Love Game* script, which Sumin wrote well before he'd read *The Magus*. To complete the creative circle, it should be noted that neither *The Magus* nor *The Alchemist* would likely exist without the influence of Dostoevsky.

It was in *Notes from the New World* that the inventions of *Love Game* would find a new and richer context. The concept of a bored, rich master manipulator observing human behavior in his private electronic matrix resurfaced with a heightened degree of humanity in the character of Bob Criden. But his surveillance activities were now motivated, not by idle curiosity, but by

a passion to understand and create. While ethically dubious, this pursuit was in the service of larger, tangible purpose—to provide him with material for play based on—you guessed it—Dostoevsky’s immortal *Notes from the Underground*. The architecture of the story achieved a new intricacy as it presented a play within a play within a play; it became the dramatic and visual embodiment of Shakespeare’s immortal formulation, “*All the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players.*”

As further evidence of this truth, the story’s themes of renewal and betrayal were recapitulated in the very process of making the film. During pre-production, almost the entire cast was replaced during the extended rehearsal process (see “About the Casting.”) In effect they became placeholders, allowing the production to gel until the final cast could appear, fresh horses bringing with them a new springiness and spontaneity. And an additional benefit was incurred: as newcomers, strangers in a strange land, they were able to viscerally capture the lost, searching qualities of their characters.

Meanwhile, video clips began appearing on YouTube and the *Notes from the New World* website (www.notesthemovie.com) concerning the mysterious disappearance of Robert Hurley, Sumin’s co-writer on the film. Questions were raised about whether Hurley had engineered his own disappearance or fallen victim to foul play.

This is partially a reflection of Sumin’s irony laced humor, though the larger intent of this cyber-charade was the marketing of *Notes from the New World*, a *1a* Blair Witch Project. In this instance, however, the Robert Hurley disappearance exists in its own universe, maintaining no direct connection to the narrative of *Notes from the New World*. Taken together, the Hurley clips constitute a verite-style film of its own, this one eerily featuring the original, mostly departed cast members of “Notes.”

But that only underscores one of the underlying themes of “Notes”—that reality holds the possibility of endless creative interpretation. And now, with regard to the film itself, the possibility of interpretation lies with those who view it. *Notes from the New World* is ready for its close-up.

DISCOVER MORE

Please watch our Trailers, Behind The Scenes Clips and review Full list of Credits and Technical Specifics on the IMDB page for "The Notes" here: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1558579>

An interview with Vitaly Sumin about *Notes From The New World* – April 25th 2011 by *The Voice of Russia* – was broadcasted to 160 countries in 38 languages. The interview is a part of 24 minutes program In Between Crime as a staple of modern culture (http://english.ruvr.ru/radio_broadcast/25547106/49484156.html) The Interview goes from 10:29min till 14:37min, just move the mouse to 10:29 or go to: http://www.notesthemovie.com/vitaly_blog.html

NOTES FROM THE NEW WORLD – An Interview with Vitaly Sumin
By Christina Hamlett
<http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/129603>

NOTES FROM THE NEW WORLD
By Jim Papamichos
MyFilm.gr <http://www.myfilm.gr/10300>

NOTES FROM THE NEW WORLD – An Interview with Vitaly Sumin
By Ioanna Fotiades during the Corinth International Film Festival in Greece
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dm6DZrykbmw>
<http://www.notesthemovie.com/Festivals-breaking-news-corinth.html>

Interview with Vitaly Sumin
By Lisa Pinckard
<http://www.shadesofday.com/VMP/smile.htm>

Article regarding *Shades of Day*
by Christina Hamlett
"Great Adaptations", in *Movie Maker Magazine* 2008

THE MISSING SCREENWRITER – *The Voice of Russia*, Interview with Vitaly Sumin by Donna West – April 16, 2012. Broadcast to 160 countries in 38 languages on short and medium waves, on the FM band, via satellite, and through the Internet and global mobile communications networks.
<http://www.notesthemovie.com/Festivals-THE%20MISSING%20SCREENWRITER.html>

VM PRODUCTIONS

OUR MISSION

VM Productions is dedicated to developing and producing quality films based on original stories and the masterpieces of world literature. Our films deal with a variety of contemporary issues often neglected by the mainstream cinema—whether studio productions or independents.

We admire the great artists of all times. The richness and complexity of their lives and the discoveries they made to help humanity move forward toward a deeper understanding of life, death, peace, and coexistence serve as the source of our inspiration.

VM Productions has completed two of four slated films in its Dostoevsky-LA Project. Each is conceived as a freewheeling contemporary re-envisioning of a timeless Dostoevsky masterpiece:

The first, *Shades of Day*, is based on the novella, *White Nights*. It was recently included in the cinema curriculum of Rutgers University, along with films by Bertolucci, Kurosawa, Von Sternberg, Scorsese, Shrader, and Robert Bresson.

The second, just completed, is *Notes from the New World* based on the novella *Notes from the Underground*.

The third, currently in development, is an international psychological thriller inspired by the novel, *The Idiot*.

The fourth planned film of the project is *Crime and Punishment, LA*, in which Dostoevsky's classic tale is transported to the Los Angeles of 1993, around the time of the rioting that followed the Rodney King verdict.



CREDITS

Written, Produced and Directed by

Vitaly Sumin

Based on *Notes From The Underground*
By Feodor Dostoevsky

Cast

REBECCA SIGL
Irina – The Call Girl

NATHANAEL THIESEN
Steven – The Poor Guy

NATASHA BLASICK
Sonia – The Angel

JERRY PRAGER
Bob – The Rich Guy

DEVORAH LYNN DISHINGTON
Michelle – Bob's Secretary

MAXIM POLLACK
Misha – The Mafia Boss

With (in order of appearance)

RAYMOND ALVAREZ
David – Sonia's Guardian Angel

NICK TERESCHENKO
Igor – Mafia Pimp

DMITRY KARPOV
Boris – Mafia Spy

RACHEL DWYNWIYN GARLINGTON
Angelina-Lolita

JULIA EMELIN
Linda – Struggling Actress

LANDALL GOOSLSBY
Brian – Steven’s Friend

TRIP HOPE
Dan – Steven’s Friend

BRIAN MARTINEZ
Little Angel (Bob’s show)

With
(Bob’s Show – audience)

DOUG DANE
Spectator (speaking part)

REX HOSS – Spectator
Spectator (speaking part)

JOHNNY GIOSA
JENNIFER HERENKOHL
PAULA HOROWITZ
ELNORA KELLER
CAROL KRAFT
MATT LEIKAM
UDI LOUSHI
BRIAN A. MARTINEZ
STEVEN RICHARDS
VITALY SUMIN

Script by
VITALY SUMIN

Produced and Directed by
VITALY SUMIN

Executive Co-Producer
ANK BERGSTEDT

Associate Producer
TAESUNG YIM

Original Music by
GERARDO PEREZ GIUSTI

Director of Photography
CHIA-YU CHEN

Film Editing by
SKIP SPIRO

Casting by
RICHARD CRATER

Art Direction by
BRAD LUBLIN

Script Supervisor
SHERRY MASON

Makeup/Hair & FX Department

Makeup/FX/Hair Department Head
MARIANNE PARISE

Makeup, Hair and FX Artist
MARIANNE PARISE

Hair Designer
LISA MALCOLM

Production Management

Production &
Post Production Supervisor
TAESUNG YIM

Co-Producer
JOHN KEARNS JR.

Line Producer
MATT LEIKAM

Production Manager
JOHN DAY

First Assistant Director
UDI LOOSHI

Second Assistant Director
MIKE MULLENIX

Art Department

Construction Coordinator
BRAD LUBLIN

Set Decoration
NOELLE PAUL

Sound Department

Production Sound Recordist
DAVIN PRESSNALL

Boom Operator &
2nd Unit Sound Recordist
GUILLAUME RAYNAUD

ADR Supervisor
DENI KING

Dialogue and Effects Editor
STEPHEN PARISE

Dialogue Editor and ADR Mixer
DAVID KRUK

Backgrounds and Music Editor
KAREN YEE

ADR Recordist
TYLER PAYNE

ADR Editor
JESSE DODD

Foley Artist
TONY MARGULIES

Foley Mixer
DONALD WAYNE JOHNSON

Sound Re-Recording Mixer
STEVE SHEPHERD

Sound Design/Mix
ExtremeMixing!

Visual Effects

Department Head
Effects, Title Animation
NIKKI JIEUN LEE

Digital Composer,
FXV, Titles (trailer)
BRENTON COVINGTON

VM Productions Logo-
Graphics & Animation WAN

Stunts

Stunt Double
NICK BOCKELMAN

Stunt Performer
ALEX LEVINGSTON

Stunt Coordinator
LANCE OSBORNE

Camera and Electrical Department

Camera Operator &
1st Assistant Camera
CHRIS DANDRIDGE

Gaffer and Key Grip
JOHN KEARNS, JR.

Grip Electrician
BRANDON FIERI

Grip Electrician &
2nd Unit's DP
DEAN SMOLLAR

Production Photographer
REX HOSS

Set Photographer
ADAM WHEELER

Costume and Wardrobe Department

Costume Designer
CHRISTINA KIM

Assistant Costume Designer
GABRIELLA GIGLIOTTI

Costume Supervisor
JOLENE WITHERS

Key Costumer
JENNIFER HERRENKOHL

Editorial Department

On-Set Editor
IAN CAMPBELL

Assistant Editors
NILES HOGUE
CHRISTY ANGELL

Editor-Trailer 1
SKIP SPIRO

Editors-Trailer 2
AMY MOGAVERO
CHRISTY ANGELL
(additional editor)
NILES HOGUE
(assistant editor)

Editor – “Love-Terrorism”(promo clip)
www.notesthemovie.com/behind_videos.html
AMY MOGAVERO

Editor – “Hurley Story”(clips)
www.youtube.com/VMproductionsUS
CHRISTINA CASTRO

Editor – “Funny Auditions”, “Poster”
www.notesthemovie.com/behind_videos.html
IHSUAN-JUDITH LIN

Colorist
ERIC JOHNSON

Music Department

Composer’s Assistant &
Music Programmer
MARIANTHE BEZZERIDES

Music Supervisor
(Rights & Clearances)
RHONA RUBIO

Other Crew

Production Assistant
MIKE MULLENIX

Assistant to Producer
ANNIE CHANG

Poster Designer
STEPHANIE PHILIPPE

Graphic designer - website
MIKE FRALIN

Webdesinger
THOMAS SGUARIO

Artistic Advisor
DAN MARCUS

PR Writers
TAESUNG YIM
JOHN FORTIN
LAILAH MORIDZADEH

Graphic Designer – Marketing Material
IAN SLATER

Graphic Artist – Promotion and Publicity
MILOS TIRNANIC

Special Thanks

Administrator for Theater Unlimited
DENNIS GERSTEN

Stunt Advisor
KAI NUUHIWA

Call Records
PAUL SARCICH

Avilon Audio
www.avilonaudio.com
GREGORY VOSSBERG

Soundtrack

“Jump Off”
Composer JAMIE WAY
Lyrics by JAMIE WAY
Performed by JAMIE WAY
Produced by JAMIE WAY
Published by VM PRODUCTIONS

“My Soul is singing”
Written by
MARTIN BLASICK, NATASHA BLASICK & LUDMILA KRYLOVA
Produced by MARTIN BLASICK
Performed by
NATASHA and MARTIN BLASICK
Published by
Lavish Music, BMI

Matthäuspasion Part 2. No 39. Aria
Composed by J. S. Bach
PAUL GOODWIN, Conductor
JONATHAN MILLER, Director
Courtesy of Cala Records
www.calarecords.com

Matthäuspasion Part 2. No 68. Chorus
Composed by J. S. Bach
PAUL GOODWIN, Conductor
JONATHAN MILLER, Director
Courtesy of Cala Records
www.calarecords.com

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