



# MIDNIGHT MOVIE

**Now on Blu-Ray**



# MIDNIGHT MOVIE

## REVIEW QUOTES

Top 10: All Time Best Direct-to-DVD Horror Movies!

Midnight Movie is one of the best low-budget direct-to-DVD slasher picture yet made. It's shot on film and looks it (the opening scenes are striking to those used to the grainy, grimy video images found in this genre), and the acting is at least adequate. But the big difference is that this variation on the old 'let's watch this legendary horror film that is shrouded in mystery' is actually pretty scary. The murders are savage and violent, and the masked killer is actually frightening, both in appearance and behavior (he moves quickly and doesn't bother to toy with his victims). The narrative avoids the 'idiot plot' whenever possible and the pay-off is surprising, if somewhat illogical. This is simply a rock-solid, old-fashioned scary movie that happens to have debuted on DVD (and eventually Blu Ray).

- The Huffington Post

5 out of 5 stars! - To say that this film is absolutely kick ass would be the understatement of the year!

- Gorezone Magazine

Beyond the villian himself, Messitt does an excellent job creating an atmosphere that oozes dread.

- Blu-Ray.com

Clearly the most original horror film I've seen this year! I'll watch this one many times in the years ahead!

- HorrorNews.net

Popcorn with a pinch of Elm Street - and a whole lotta' blood.

- Sean Decker, Fangoria.com

A gory and fast-paced good time! Packed with great kills by a frightening new villian!

- Johnny Butane, DreadCentral.com

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This film is a true modern day horror classic. Midnight Movie brings an instantly iconic slasher to the big screen, the likes of which could go toe to toe with both Jason and Freddy. Each chilling thrill builds into an unexpected climax. Midnight Night movie is a Gut Punch of Cinema that truly lives up to his name in cult horror. A horrifying treat for gore hounds and old school horror fans alike.

– Movieweb.com

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**Literally: a killer flick!**

– Jo Satana, Nightmarevue.com

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The best original horror movie I've seen since Saw. It will get ahold of you and put you through the ringer.

– Robert Ohlandt, Graveyardshow.com

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**DVD of the Month: March 2009 - Perfect Fear Fare!**

Perfect Fear Fare! Midnight Movie delivers the goods with solid craft and a sense of what it's doing. Messitt stages the murders for maximum punch, and while he doesn't flinch from the gory results, he doesn't overstate the bloodshed either. There are genuine jolts to be had here, rather than simple gross-outs.

– Fangoria Magazine

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The film delivers 80 minutes of jokes, jolts and jumps, and the technical specs are sharp.

– Minneapolis Star Tribune

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I gotta say, Midnight Movie blew me away with its smart, engaging script and the iconic horror movie villain we've all been waiting for! It certainly lives up to its moniker and is certain to make midnight cult movie fans very happy! For me, Midnight Movie is definitely one of the best films I've seen all year!

– Fatally-Yours.com

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[www.midnightmovie.com](http://www.midnightmovie.com)

# MIDNIGHT MOVIE

## PAST EVENTS AND SCREENINGS

### TV Screenings

THE MOVIE CHANNEL (TMC)  
July 4 - 19, 2009 | USA

THE MOVIE CHANNEL 2 (TMC2)  
July 10 - 30, 2009 | USA

SHOWTIME  
August 1 - 24, 2009 | USA

### Exclusive Theatrical Run

October 24 - 30, 2008  
Minneapolis, MN      Oak Street Theater

November 7 & 8, 2008		
Portland, OR	Cinema 21	10:00pm
Dallas, TX	Angelika Film Center	10:00pm
Houston, TX	Angelika Film Center	10:00pm
Pittsburgh, PA	Southside Film Works	10:00pm
San Diego, CA	Regal Horton Plaza	10:30pm
New York	Village East Theatre	Midnight
Baltimore, MD	Charles Theatre	Midnight
Los Angeles, CA	Laemmle Sunset 5	Midnight
Tempe, AZ	Valley View Theatre	Midnight

### Film Festivals & Screenings

FESTIVAL MAUVAIS GENRE  
April 2009 | France  
[www.festivalmauvaisgenre.com](http://www.festivalmauvaisgenre.com)

SAN SEBASTIAN HORROR & FANTASY FILM FESTIVAL  
October 31-November 8 | Spain  
<http://www.donostiakultura.com/terror/2008/>

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## DEADMONTON HORROR FILM FESTIVAL

October 26, 2008 | 5:50 p.m. | Metro Cinema  
[www.deadmonton.net](http://www.deadmonton.net)

## ESCAPISM FILM FESTIVAL

October 17-19, 2008 | Carolina Theater - Durham, North Carolina  
<http://festivals.carolinatheatre.org/escapism/index.html>

## EERIE HORROR FEST

October 10, 2008 | 12:15 a.m. | The Warner Theater - Erie, PA  
[www.eeriehorrorfest.com](http://www.eeriehorrorfest.com)

## SHRIEKFEST HORROR/SCI-FI FILM FESTIVAL

October 03, 2008 | 9 p.m. | Los Angeles, CA  
[www.shriekfest.com](http://www.shriekfest.com)

## CHICAGO HORROR FILM FESTIVAL

September 27, 2008 | 9:45 p.m. | The Portage Theatre  
[www.chicagohorrorfest.com](http://www.chicagohorrorfest.com)

## BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

September 2, 2008 | 7 p.m. | Prius Hall  
Screening followed by Director/Producer Q&A

## INDIANA UNIVERSITY UNDERGROUND CINEMA SERIES

September 5, 2008 | 7 p.m. | Radio/TV 25  
Screening followed by Director/Producer Q&A

## FANGORIA WEEKEND OF HORRORS

April 25-27, 2008 | Los Angeles Convention Center, Table 94

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## SYNOPSIS

At a run down theater in a sleepy suburban town, a group of friends attend the midnight screening of a 1970s cult horror film. These unsuspecting teenagers are unaware that the director and star of the movie made a bloody escape from a psych ward five years earlier and may still be on the loose.



As the midnight movie begins, the kids heckle the old black-and-white scenes. But they are jolted when the killer butchers one of their friends...on screen! They soon realize that the killing is not a prank. They are locked inside the theatre and the killer from the movie is after them!

Caught between reality and the screen's flickering shadows, are they becoming the unwilling stars of the very horror movie they are watching?

USA • 2008 • 80 minutes



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## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

**T**he horror genre has gone through a great transformation in the past decade. We have left behind traditional slasher films like *Friday the 13th* and brought the world of the supernatural to a new level with Japanese films like *Ringu* and *Ju-on* and their US remakes *The Ring* and *The Grudge*. With *Saw* and *Hostel*, horror movies elevated to a realm of gore that had been only

touched on by their predecessors. Our challenge with *Midnight Movie* was to try to create a more traditional slasher film that would satisfy the audience that had embraced these newer films.

Due to the supernatural nature of our story, we were able to create a villain that paid homage to the past, but with a fresh approach. It was fun to explore what a more traditional slasher villain would do in a modern film.

To help achieve this, we structured *Midnight Movie* to mirror the history of horror films. In the beginning, you see what happens just before and just after a massacre. The next kill reveals a bit more and with each successive murder, you see even more, escalating to the gore that today's audiences expect.

But when shooting the gruesome climax of *Midnight Movie*, we retreated a bit from the obvious gore because I believe what you don't see is much scarier and ultimately more satisfying. The mind will always fill in the gaps in a much more terrifying way than a filmmaker can portray.

Jack Messitt, director / writer of *Midnight Movie*



# MIDNIGHT MOVIE

## KEY CAST

Rebekah Brandes	"Bridget"
Daniel Bonjour	"Josh"
Mandell Maughan	"Samantha"
Greg Cirulnick	"Mario"
Stan Ellsworth	"Harley"
Melissa Steach	"Babe"
Jon Briddell	"Detective Barrons"
Michael Swan	"Dr. Wayne"
Michael Schwartz	"Sully"
Justin Baric	"Timmy"
Arthur Roberts	"Radford"



**Rebekah Brandes**  
"Bridget"

Originally from Baltimore, Rebekah studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Hollywood. Since completing the program, Rebekah has performed in numerous plays, commercials and films. **Midnight Movie** is her fifth horror film, her most recent being the Lionsgate feature, **Grim Reaper**. Rebekah recently completed a pilot for Showtime and starred in an original musical revue at the Next Stage theatre.



**Daniel Bonjour**  
"Josh"

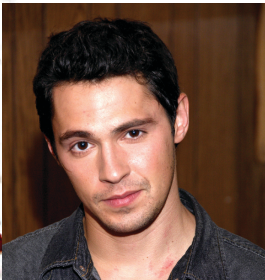
Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Daniel began acting at the age of three and starred in commercials, TV shows and theatre. In 1995, Daniel took on his first lead in an American film as "Ricky" in **Night Siege: Project Shadowchaser 2** (produced by Nu Image/ Avi Lerner). Shortly after, he made the move to America where he took time off to finish school at Boston College. Since arriving in Los Angeles, Daniel has kept busy with a wide variety of roles ranging from award-winning festival films to outrageous mockumentary comedies. Later this year, you can look for him in two Lionsgate projects; **Richard Speck** and **Bram Stoker's: Dracula's Guest**, as well as the title role in **Simon**, an award-winning independent

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**Mandell Maughan**  
"Samantha"

A native of San Diego, California, Mandell performed musically and in pageants, winning the title of Miss Cabillor, Portuguese in 2001. Mandell then headed to the University of Arizona where she graduated with a bachelor of fine arts degree in professional acting training. Since Mandell moved to Los Angeles, her credits include guest starring in Spike's **The Playbook**, playing the lead in Fox's new mobisode, **Prison Break: Proof of Innocence**, appearing in several commercials and starring in the feature film **Girl Talk: Confidential**.



**Greg Cirulnick**  
"Mario"

Born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y., Greg graduated from Binghamton University with a bachelor's degree in marketing and information technology. Greg studied privately under acting coach Harold Guskin and at The William Esper Studio in Manhattan. Once in Los Angeles, Greg continued his studies at the Howard Fine Acting Studio. Greg recently worked on theatrical productions of **Danny and the Deep Blue Sea** and **In Arabia We'd All Be Kings**. He has also guest starred in **General Hospital** and in the remake of **Revenge of the Nerds**.



**Stan Ellsworth**  
"Harley"

After serving 8 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, Stan received a bachelor of arts from Brigham Young University. After playing in the NFL for the Detroit Lions and the Seattle Seahawks, he was a defensive coordinator at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Arizona and received a doctorate in sports psychology from the University of Utah. Since starting his acting career, Stan has appeared in numerous feature films and television including **Unaccompanied Minors**, **Church Ball**, **History Hogs**, **The Luck of the Irish** and the soon to be released

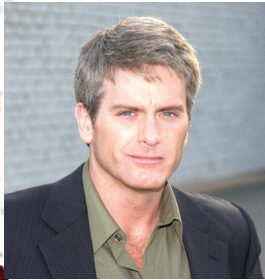
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**Melissa Steach**

"Babe"

Melissa Steach graduated from the Alabama School of Fine Arts. She has worked on the stage and behind-the-scenes for countless Off-Off-Broadway productions. Since arriving in Los Angeles, Melissa has appeared in the feature film *The Kid* and *I* with Henry Winkler, in the independent films *Glenna's Bedroom* and *What About Jane*, and in various television shows. She also starred in *Psyche* at the Hudson Theatre and in *Angel* for the award-winning Unity Players Ensemble.



**Jon Briddell**

"Detective Barrons"

Jon Briddell began his professional acting career in 1989 performing in a Second City (Chicago) affiliated sketch comedy show. Since his arrival to Los Angeles, his credits include over 20 feature films, constant television guest appearances, numerous commercials, infomercials and print campaigns. Most recently, Jon played "Dr. Burns" in multiple episodes of *Fashion House*, opposite Bo Derek, as well as the district attorney on NBC's *Heist*, and as "Officer White" in 20th Century Fox's *The Heiress*. His series, *What Goes On*, aired in the fall of 2007 on the N network.

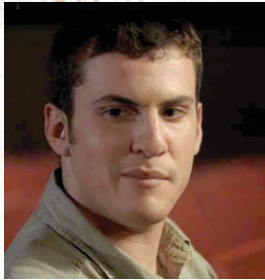


**Michael Swan**

"Dr. Wayne"

In the early seventies, Michael Swan began his career with a recurring role in *Medical Center*. This led to 17 years of starring and guest appearing in some of the most popular prime time shows of the '70s and '80s; including *MASH*, *The Rockford Files*, *Magnum PI* and *Murder She Wrote*. In 1986, he began a decade stint as Scottish adventurer "Duncan McKechnie" in *As the World Turns*. He continued in the soap opera world in *The Bold and the Beautiful*, as well as worked in commercials, voiceovers and films.

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**Michael Schwartz**

“Sully”

Michael Schwartz is a graduate of the University of Southern California and also studied at the British American Drama Academy in London. In the past year, Michael has performed on various Los Angeles stages in **Company** (Bing Theatre), **Marat/Sade** (Sacred Fools Theatre, LA Weekly Award: Best Production of the Year) and **42nd St.** (Fullerton Civic Light Opera). After filming **Midnight Movie**, Michael participated in the Director’s Lab at Lincoln Center in New York.



**Justin Baric**

“Timmy”

Justin Baric began appearing on TV when he was four weeks old playing Paul Rizer’s and Helen Hunt’s baby on **Mad About You** (along with his twin sister Alyssa). Justin has had a varied career ever since, including appearing in a national commercial spot for Office Depot. He played an orphan in the Sarah McLachlan and DMC music video **Cats in the Cradle** and had a principal role in the short film **R.P.** where he played “Young Matt,” a boy losing his sight.



**Arthur Roberts**

“Radford”

A Cum Laude graduate of Harvard and holding an M.B.A. from NYU, Arthur Roberts learned his craft with the Harvard Summer Players alongside Faye Dunaway and Jane Alexander. There, he played the title roles in **Mr. Roberts** and **Poor Richard**. Theatrically, he played the title role opposite Tracy Lords in **Not of This Earth** and starred in **Revenge of the Ninja**. On television, Arthur was a series regular on **General Hospital** and **Air America** opposite Lorenzo Lamas. In New York, he played “Hank” with the original cast of **The Boys in the Band**, starred on Broadway in the Tony-winning **Borstal Boy** and won critical acclaim as “Karenin” in **Anna Karenina**.

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## PRODUCTION TEAM

**Director/ Writer**  
Jack Messitt

**Writer**  
Mark Garbett

**Producers**  
Kacy Andrews  
Liam Finn  
Jacques Thelemaque

**Executive Producer**  
Michael Gleissner

**Co-Producer**  
Albert Hasson

**Directors of Photography**  
Clyde Smith  
Ruben Russ

**Production Design**  
Bradd Fillmann

**Editor**  
Kristoffer Villarino

**Costume Designer**  
Charlotte Kruse

**Casting**  
Christine Scowley

### **Jack Messitt**

Director/ Writer

A longtime Director of Photography, Jack Messitt made his feature film directorial debut with *Midnight Movie* - a film he co-wrote. After being named Best Feature Film at the Chicago Horror Film Festival, it had a successful limited theatrical run in the fall of 2008. Distributed by Peace Arch Entertainment/Phase 4 Films, *Midnight Movie* has already sold over 150,000 DVDs, aired on Showtime and The Movie Channel, and recently debuted on Blu-Ray.

Messitt's screenplay *Trust* was produced by TF1 International. The thriller starring Jamie Luner recently debuted on Lifetime and Lifetime Movie Network and has aired on the numerous TF1 networks throughout international markets.

Jack recently finished the script *Kaloyev*, a drama for Bigfoot Entertainment based on

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the actual events surrounding the 2001 Uberlingen airline disaster. He also served as Story Consultant on Bigfoot's feature film Irreversi, which filmed in Hong Kong and is in the final stages of post-production.

Working together with manga publishing giant Tokyopop, Messitt wrote the screenplay and is attached to direct the adaptation of the graphic novel 12 days.

Jack has a library of completed original screenplays including Remote Control, "a tight, well constructed thriller," says StoryPros. "There are some tense and exciting sequences here. The climactic twist is clever and impeccably set up. It's an ingenious narrative payoff."

Jack's visual flair and vast production experience comes from his background as a Director of Photography and Camera Operator. He has shot projects in Thailand, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Belgium, Canada, Philippines and throughout the United States, including the feature films Irreversi, Victim of Circumstance and The Curiosity of Chance. Jack was also the 2nd Unit Director on Irreversi and Victim of Circumstance.

His television work includes Fox's Bones and American Idol, DirecTV's CD-USA, Comedy Central's Strip Mall and Oxygen Network's Campus Ladies. Jack earned a B.A. in Journalism from Indiana University and a B.F.A. in Cinematography from The American Film Institute. Messitt is the 1st Vice President of the Society of Camera Operators and editor of Camera Operator magazine.numerous TF1 networks throughout international markets.

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## Mark Garbett

### Writer

An award winning screenwriter, Garbett has optioned several screenplays in the horror and thriller genres. He penned scripts for Safehouse Films and CodyFilms, prior to writing Midnight Movie for Bigfoot Entertainment and Filmmakers Alliance. Garbett also wrote and produced the supernatural thriller Reflections, which is currently in post-production. His short thriller Send in the Clones was screened at the 2007 Dances With Films Festival. His on-set experience includes the horror films Cabin Fever and Inhabited. He has won or placed in

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numerous screenwriting contests, including Slamdance/ Sci-fi Channel and the International Screenwriting Competition. His screenplays have been studied at the Art Institute of California, and he currently serves on the committee for the Scriptwriters Network Hollywood Outreach Program.

## Kacy Andrews

Producer

Kacy Andrews is CEO of Bigfoot Entertainment and has been actively involved in the entertainment industry for over 20 years. She spent nine years in both production and project development at Hyperion Pictures where she was one of the producers on Miramax's *Playing By Heart* (Sean Connery, Dennis Quaid and Angelina Jolie). Her portfolio also includes work on the feature *Tom's Midnight Garden*; *Bone Chillers*, a children's television series for ABC, and numerous animated projects - FOX's "*Life With Louie*", HBO's "*Happily Ever After, Fairy Tales for Every Child*" (Denzel Washington, Robert Guillaume and Whoopi Goldberg), and Paramount Pictures' "*The Oz Kids*". Kacy was the executive producer on the teen comedy *The Curiosity of Chance*, the psychological thriller *Within* and the documentaries *USS Cooper* and *9,000 Needles*. Her most recent producing credits are the psychological thrillers *Irreversi* and *Hui Lu*, shot concurrently in Hong Kong as well as the horror film *Midnight Movie* and Bigfoot's new feature, *Girl With No Number*.

## Liam Finn

Producer

As the Vice President of Filmmakers Alliance, a Los Angeles based filmmaker collective, Liam Finn has managed the production affairs of over 400 filmmakers. He is also the co-president of FA Productions which released in theaters, its first feature film, *The Dogwalker*. In addition to *Midnight Movie*, the company is in post production on *Within*, a psychological thriller. Finn has also put himself on the cutting edge of distribution for independent filmmakers by establishing NeoFlix, a company dedicated to helping filmmakers circumvent the traditional distribution paradigm.

## Jacques Thelmaque

Producer

Jacques co-founded Filmmakers Alliance (FA), a Los Angeles based filmmaker collective; is currently the co-president of FA Productions; and is Chief Community Officer for Withoutabox.com. As a director, his films include: *Transaction* (Sundance Film Festival, and winner of the Grand Prix du Jury Award in the Labo Competition at the Clermont-Ferrand).

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International Short Film Festival), **Infidelity In Equal Parts** (Sundance Film Festival), **The Dogwalker** (Los Angeles Film Festival, Best First Feature - Cinequest Film Festival), **Egg** (Best Comedy Short - Cinequest Film Festival) and **Love Without Socks** (AFI International Film Festival). Thelemaque recently finished the script for **Red White And Blue** as one of ten filmmakers involved in the feature-length omnibus project. In September 2007, he began production on his new feature film, **Rust**.

## Michael Gleissner

Executive Producer

Michael Gleissner served as Executive Producer on the recently released **3 Needles** (Lucy Liu, Chloë Sevigny and Stockard Channing), **East Broadway** (Fay Ann Lee and Margaret Cho), **Shanghai Kiss** (Kelly Hu and Hayden Panettiere) and the documentary **USS Cooper: Return to Ormoc Bay**. Most recently, he made his directorial debut with two films, **Irreversi** and **Hui Lu**. The films were shot concurrently in Hong Kong using the same script, written by Gleissner, but in two languages (English and Mandarin) using different cast and crew. Gleissner is currently directing his follow up effort, **Deep Gold** in Cebu, Philippines.

## Albert Hasson

Co-Producer

- Since the late '90s Albert Hasson has been production manager and line producer for numerous films. Originally from Athens, Greece, Hasson has used his talents in films like National Lampoon's **Adam & Eve** (2005) and **Dead End** (Grand Prize of European Fantasy Film in Silver-Brussels International Festival of Fantasy Film and International Fantasy Film Award at Fantasporto). Hasson also worked on **Bar Hopping**, a TV show starring Tom Arnold, and was the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival Producer in 1999 and 2000.

## Clyde Smith

Director of Photography

Emmy winner Clyde Smith was born with a camera in his hand and has never put it down. His diverse background in science and art includes master's degrees in both film and psychology. Since Clyde's first outing as a director of photography on HBO's **Not Necessarily the News**, he has worked with many notable talents including Ben Stiller, Jack Black, John Landis, Al Yankovic, and Steve Martin. In addition to national commercials and multiple television series, Smith's work can be seen in the soon-to-be-released feature, **Slow Mo**. Among the many memorable moments he has created are Billy Crystal's opening films for the Oscar Awards.

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## • **Ruben Russ**

Director of Photography

Ruben F. Russ started his career as a fashion photographer in Spain. After moving to Los Angeles to study at UCLA, he worked in various positions ranging from camera assistant to camera operator on several feature films (**Happy, Texas, Zig...**). Since receiving a master of fine arts in cinematography from the American Film Institute, he has shot commercials in the US, Romania and Spain. His narrative work includes second unit on **Streets of Legend** (Best Cinematography at Sundance), **Cross Bronx** (Best Digital Feature at Tribeca), as well as feature films with Paul Sorvino, David Carradine, Timothy Bottoms and Jason Connery. Russ' resume also includes several award-winning shorts including **Chasing Patterns** and **The Florist** and more than 20 music videos with such artists as Foo Fighters and The Finch & Arash.

## • **Bradd Fillmann**

Production Design

Bradd Wesley Fillmann sat too close to the television as a young child. Extended exposure to repeat viewings of **Dark Crystal** and **Labyrinth** caused him to--at a early age--start building sets in his bedroom out of cardboard boxes, blankets and scotch tape. He graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of fine arts from Columbia College, Chicago. After a few years of work in Chicago, he headed to Los Angeles. As production designer, he has worked on countless music videos and commercials, but is most proud of his feature film work, which includes **Gardens of the Night** with John Malcovich and **Dr. Fugazzi** with Faye Dunaway.

## • **Kristoffer Villarino**

Editor

A native to Cebu, Philippines, Kristoffer Villarino began his career directing and editing music videos and short films. **Binaliw**, a short film written and directed by Villarino, won second prize at the 15th Cultural Center of the Philippines Awards for Alternative Film and Video and was a finalist at the MOV International Digital Film Festival. Kris now heads the editing team of Bigfoot Entertainment. He has edited several of Bigfoot Entertainment's feature length projects including **Irreversi**, **Hui Lu** and the documentary **USS Cooper: Return to Ormoc Bay**.

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## Charlotte Kruse

Costume Designer

Charlotte Kruse's knack for sewing and design distinguished her youth- from creating one-of-a-kind clothing in grade school to designing original costumes for theatrical productions at the Appel Farm Camp for Music and Arts in New Jersey. A graduate of Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Charlotte has designed for both theater and film. Her recent works include **Steamroom** starring Ruby Dee and Ally Sheedy, and **The Tempest** for Will Geer's Theatricum Botanicum.

## Penka Kouneva

Music Composer

Penka Kouneva is a rising Hollywood film composer who blends her native Eastern-European influences with modern orchestra, Medieval chant, rock, and electronica. Her music is dark, emotive, and soulful. To date, she has scored 13 indie features, 4 television films for the SciFi channel, and episodic TV shows. These include the dramas **The Third Nail** and **Richard III**, supernatural slasher **Midnight Movie**, sci-fi political suspense **November**, action-adventures **Ice Spiders**, and psychological thriller **Dorian Gray**. She is also a busy orchestrator and score producer on studio films including **Transformers**, **Pirates of the Caribbean 3**, **Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants**, **Bee Movie**, **Hostel I and II**, **Matrix 2, 3**, **Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2**, etc. Penka's music has been honored with WorldFest's Platinum Remi for Best Score, Aaron Copland Award, and Sundance Composer Fellowship.

## Christine Scowley

Casting

Christine Scowley used her experience casting for television comedies and reality TV shows to choose the stars of the feature film **Midnight Movie**. Her earlier projects include **The Bachelor** in 2002 and **Take Home Chef** in 2005. She also wrote nine episodes of the TV series, **Saints & Sinners** in 2007. Christine is currently serving as casting director for the TV series, **Ancient Bones**.

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## DIRECTOR Q&A

### **What inspired you to write this story?**

I actually signed onto the project with an existing script which Mark Garbett had already reworked from Sean Hood's original script.

The original script was written for a specific castle in Belgium. But when that location was no longer a necessity for funding, Mark changed the story into something much closer to what you see on the screen. Really, the only thing that was kept from the original script was that there were people watching a movie that they ultimately become the stars of.

Then, when I came on board, the story went through a lot more changes, mainly to the movie within the movie. When I joined the project, the movie within the movie was not very defined. It was written to be a mish mash of images, like the video tape in *The Ring*. I didn't think that this worked for the movie audience in our film, so that was one of the first things I wanted to change.

As I worked with Mark, we went through a couple of different phases. The first was creating the movie in the movie in a 1930s style horror film. The problem was that, to today's audiences, the 1930s horror film doesn't really hold up. In their time, these films may have been terrifying but today's audiences are not going to have the same reaction to that style.

I wanted the movie in the movie to be a place that no one would ever want to visit. So when I wrote my draft of the script, I updated it to the late 60s early 70s horror films because films like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Night of the Living Dead* still hold up today. I think they are legitimately creepy. They portray a world that I would not want to be stuck inside. That was what *Midnight Movie* needed, so *The Dark Beneath* was born.

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## **Describe your experience as a first-time screenwriter.**

Actually, I have been writing for some time. Like everyone else in Hollywood, I have a dusty drawer full of unproduced scripts.

And just before *Midnight Movie*, I was a script consultant on *Irreversi*, a feature I shot in Hong Kong starring Mei Melencon (*Pathology*, *X-Men 2*), Ian Bohan (*Any Day Now*, *Wyatt Earp*) and Estella Warren (*Kangaroo Jack*, *Planet of the Apes*). This entailed rewriting a lot of the script with the director. But since there were already 5 writers credited on the project, I decided on a script consultant credit instead.

Then earlier this year, I sold *Trust*, an original script, to Insight Film Studios/TF1/Really Real Films. It is in the middle of production with Jamie Luner (*Heat Wave*, *CSI*), Nels Lennarson (*Good People Bad Things*, *Smoke Jumpers*), and Brendan Beiser (*Something Beneath*, *The Sandlot 3*).

## **Discuss your thoughts on the gore in *Midnight Movie*.**

Horror movies ebb and flow not only in popularity, but also in tone. The past few years have brought an onslaught of torture themed films, but I think that we are seeing their popularity start to wane. I think that is a good thing.

*Midnight Movie* harkens back to the slasher movies of the 80s - A time where the gore was there, but the films themselves had more of a playfulness about them.

*Midnight Movie* would not be here without the foundation of the movies that came before it. Within *Midnight Movie*, I certainly pay homage to a lot of classic horror movies. In doing so, *Midnight Movie* increases in gore as the film goes on.

If the movie's marquee kill starts the film, it makes it tough because you have little place to go from there. I wanted the kills to get better as we get deeper into the story.

Too many films today start at such a level of gore that they peak with scene one, or set a level that makes the movie kind of plateau from then on. So I decided to set up the kills in the movie to mirror the history of horror. In the beginning, you see just before and just after, like early Hollywood. But as the decades moved on, Hollywood's kills got more and more gory. So do the kills in *Midnight Movie*.

And we get all the way to today's "torture porn" level... And while it is by far the creepiest scene in the movie, there is a surprisingly small amount of gore. Just goes to show you that the mind will fill in the blanks in a far worse way than a filmmaker can.

Ultimately, it isn't only the gore that makes a film scary. Only when you care about the characters is a movie every truly terrifying.

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## **How did the casting come together?**

Being a non-SAG film, our pool of actors was more limited. But we got really lucky. Our casting agents found a great group of unknown, but ready to break actors. You may not know their names today, but I guarantee that you soon will.

## **What part of the process was most challenging for you?**

Oh, where to start... Let's just say that there were numerous times that we thought the film would not get finished. Those were the toughest times.

## **What part of the process has been most rewarding?**

As a longtime director of photography and camera operator (The Curiosity of Chance, American Idol, Bones), the production process held little surprise for me. But working with DPs Clyde Smith and Ruben Russ and camera operator Greg Collier was really an amazing experience. It was really liberating to let go of the technical aspects that a DP has to deal with and be able to focus on the emotional impact of the film's visuals.

But there were several aspects of production that were a new experience for me... the casting process and then working with actors' performances was something that was I had never done. I loved every minute of it.

Helping bring life to the characters was so much fun. Actors always bring a lot to the table, but focusing them and really honing in on who their character really is inside was a great challenge, but really rewarding.

Working with the sound department and music composer was also a completely new to me. It is really amazing to feel the difference that they both make.

When you are editing, you do your best to make the scenes as tension filled as possible, but when you start adding music and sound effects, you can both bring a scene to a new level.

It was amazing to feel the difference when mixer Andy Kantos played with the sound elements. With the addition of a good mix of sound effects, he was able to transform what was "good" scene into something that really puts you on the edge of your seat.

And with a movie within our movie, our composer Penka Kouneva, really had her work cut out for her. She had to score two distinct films and then make those soundtracks blend into one seamless score. She was able to elevate the film to new heights with her tension filled music.

## **What do you hope audiences will take away after seeing this film?**

You cannot make a movie about people watching a movie without making a comment on the movie going experience itself. Midnight Movie is a pretty fun ride... but what is it that makes it so fun? The answer is different for everyone and I hope that our movie is able to spark a little conversation for our audiences after they watch the film.

Ultimately, I wanted Midnight Movie to be a rollercoaster ride for the audience. In the

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first third of the film, the anticipation is built as we climb the hill so to speak. We are getting to know the characters and setting up the peril they will soon face. But once we peak the crest and the killing really takes center stage, it does not stop until the film stops rolling – literally.

## **Would you direct another horror film?**

Who wouldn't want to direct a horror film? Making a horror film is really making a movie. You get to play with all the special effects, work with stunt men and all the other fun stuff that goes into the gore and suspense. And I get to yell across the set, "I need more blood!" It's a lot of fun.

But even with all the make-believe going on around you, you get to nurture the actors performance and help create credible characters that an audience cares about. It is really the best of both worlds.

I have several potential projects in the directorial pipeline. Some are horror, but many are not. We'll see which one is able to get off the ground first.

But no matter the genre, making movies is just a fancy way of sitting around a campfire and telling a story. To be effective, the story needs to be a good one. Then you have to tell it well. I look forward to taking on that challenge again, for sure.

## LINKS OF INTEREST

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## ABOUT BIGFOOT ENTERTAINMENT

Bigfoot Entertainment is an innovative entertainment company, which provides quality content, products, services and training for the global marketplace. Founded in 2002, the company continues to nance and produce feature lms, television series and reality shows that are distributed throughout the world, many of which receive recognition and awards at lm festivals. With primary production facilities in Cebu, Philippines and a presence in Hong Kong and Los Angeles, Bigfoot is positioned to be a viable competitor in the international entertainment industry.

Bigfoot Entertainment - leaving lasting footprints in the world of entertainment!

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