

# MASKS

A USC MFA THESIS FILM

PRESS KIT

# LOGLINE

A CLOSETED MEDICAL STUDENT RISKS BEING OUTED TO HER FAMILY  
THE SAME EVENING A MASKED GUNMAN OPENS FIRE AT A GAY NIGHTCLUB.

# MAHALIYAH AYLÀ 0

DIRECTOR | WRITER | PRODUCER



MAHALIYAH IS A FILMMAKER FROM THE EAST BAY AREA. HER ORIGINAL PULL TO CINEMA WENT HAND-IN-HAND WITH THE URGENCY OF VARIOUS SOCIAL ISSUES SHE WAS RAISED AROUND. ONE OF HER EARLIEST MEMORIES IS OF SURVIVING A MASS SHOOTING AT AGE 5. THIS FORMATIVE EXPERIENCE INFLUENCES THE STORIES SHE IS COMPELLED TO TELL TODAY. SHE RECENTLY EARNED AN MFA IN FILM & TELEVISION PRODUCTION FROM USC AND IS CURRENTLY BASED IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.



# CREW



**STEVE MARKOWITZ**

EDITOR



**AYINDE ANDERSON**

DIRECTOR OF  
PHOTOGRAPHY



**VITA ESPERANÇA AMORE**

PRODUCER



**JANICE DUNCAN**

CO-PRODUCER



## VITA ESPERANÇA AMORE | PRODUCER

IS A STORYTELLER, EVENT PRODUCER, AND OVERALL CREATIVE VISIONARY, WHO SEEKS TO CHANGE THE WORLD THROUGH SPREADING LOVE AND VITALITY. HER LIFE AND CAREER GOAL IS TO CURATE AND CREATE PROJECTS THAT EMPOWER AND EVOKE POSITIVE CHANGE WITHIN THE INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE FORCE. VITA HAS PRODUCED NUMEROUS FILMS AND WORKED ON VARIOUS SETS, AND SHE LOOKS FORWARD TO EXPANDING HER BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE IN PRODUCING AND DIRECTING THROUGHOUT HER CAREER.

## JANICE DUNCAN | CO-PRODUCER

WAS BORN AND RAISED IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN. AFTER GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL WITH HONORS, SHE WAS ACCEPTED TO THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY ON THE PRESTIGIOUS GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARSHIP. SHE EARNED AN M.F.A. IN FILM & TV PRODUCTION FROM USC'S SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS IN 2016 AND IS CURRENTLY WORKING AS A PROFESSIONAL WRITER, PRODUCER, AND DIRECTOR IN LOS ANGELES. AS A FILMMAKER, SHE IS DEDICATED TO SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO UNDERREPRESENTED AND STIGMATIZED COMMUNITIES WHILE ALSO ADDRESSING ISSUES THAT UNDERMINE THEIR GROWTH AND POTENTIAL.

## STEVEN MARKOWITZ | EDITOR

IS AN AWARD-WINNING FILMMAKER, COMBINING HIS BACKGROUNDS IN ANIMATION AND LIVE ACTION TO BUILD WONDERFULLY AMBITIOUS WORLDS AND STORIES. CURRENTLY, HE PURSUES A MASTER'S DEGREE AT THE USC'S SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS, EMPHASIZING IN EDITING, DIRECTING, AND WRITING. HE IS IN PRODUCTION ON SEVERAL SHORT FILMS, AS WELL AS WORKING AS A FREELANCE ANIMATOR ON COMMERCIALS, DOCUMENTARIES, AND MORE ACROSS LOS ANGELES. HIS UNDERGRADUATE THESIS FILM, HANDS OF FLAME, SCREENED AROUND THE WORLD TO AN INCREDIBLE RESPONSE, WINING JURY AND AUDIENCE AWARDS FOR BEST STUDENT FILM AND BEST ANIMATED FILM.

## AYINDE ANDERSON | DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

WAS BORN IN BROOKLYN NEW YORK UNTIL THE AGE OF 8, WHERE HE THEN MOVED TO RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA. HE ATTENDED THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, AND GRAVITATED FULLY TOWARDS CINEMATOGRAPHY. THERE, HE STUDIED UNDER PROFESSORS SUCH AS MICHAEL CHAPMAN ASC AND THOMAS ACKERMAN ASC. HE THEN FURTHERED HIS EDUCATION AT AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE FOR CINEMATOGRAPHY. HE HAS SHOT A NUMBER OF AWARD WINNING SHORT FILMS, MUSIC VIDEOS, AND COMMERCIALS, AND CURRENTLY HAS HIS FIRST FEATURE FILM IN POST PRODUCTION.

MOJAN NOURBAKHSH | SABA



IS AN UP AND COMING ACTRESS/MODEL/PRODUCER WHO IS TAKING THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY BY STORM. SHE HAS A WELL-ROUNDED BACKGROUND BOTH IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA AS WELL AS BEHIND THE SCENES. WITH A DEGREE IN PRODUCING, ALONG WITH MANY YEARS IN THE PERFORMING ARTS, SHE HAS COMBINED HER TALENTS AND PASSIONS TO CREATE MANY FORMS OF THOUGHT-PROVOKING CONTENT. SHE ALSO HAS HER HANDS IN VARIOUS ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES. THROUGH THE GROWING CREATION OF HER PLATFORMS, HER BRAND FOCUSES ON EMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN TO TAKE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS ALL AROUND THE WORLD.

# JOEY MARIE URBINA | MAYA

IS A LATIN AMERICAN ACTRESS AND SINGER FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS. SHE IS A GRADUATE OF THE PRESTIGIOUS BFA ACTING PROGRAM OF TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY. SHE HAS BEEN PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED IN CLASSICAL THEATRE, SHAKESPEARE, COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE, AND PERIOD STYLES JUST TO NAME A FEW. SHE STUDIED ABROAD IN STRATFORD UPON AVON, ENGLAND WITH THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY STUDYING STAGE COMBAT, SHAKESPEAREAN TEXT/ANALYSIS, AS WELL AS MANY WORKSHOPS INCLUDING MOVEMENT, VOICE AND COACHING FROM JANE LAPOTAIRE. SHE CURRENTLY CALLS THE CITY OF ANGELS HER HOME.



## SHARAREH SHAHBAZI | MEIRA (SABA'S MOTHER)



IS AN ACTRESS AND VOICE ACTOR. BORN IN TEHRAN, SHE FINISHED HER EDUCATION AND GOT HER BACHELORS DEGREE BOTH IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND FRENCH LANGUAGE FROM TEHRAN UNIVERSITY. SHE ALSO RECEIVED HER BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN WEB DESIGN AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA FROM THE ART INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA NOHO AFTER SHE MOVED TO THE UNITED STATES IN 2002. SHE PURSUED HER ACTING PASSION AND STUDIED ACTING WHILE USING HER TALENT IN EXTENSIVE VOICE ACTING FOR HER MASTERY IN FARSI/PERSIAN AND FRENCH LANGUAGE.



# FRED BERMAN | NAVID (SABA'S FATHER)



LEFT IRAN BEFORE THE REVOLUTION AND WENT TO FRANCE TO STUDY URBAN PLANNING. HE THEN MOVED TO THE STATES AT THE AGE OF 27, AND HAS BEEN LIVING IN CALIFORNIA FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS. HE WORKED IN THE FIELD OF MANAGEMENT, AND HAD TWO DAUGHTERS. THEN, FARHAD BECAME INVOLVED IN THE CASTING OF THE MOVIE ARGO, DIRECTED BY BEN AFFLECK. HE WAS IN CHARGE OF CASTING AND DIRECTING THE 700 EXTRAS IN THE MOVIE. FARHAD JUST FINISHED CASTING THE STORY OF YOU, AND IS ALSO INVOLVED IN THE FILMS THE MAGIC SHOES, AND DESERT LULLABIES.

ALEXANDER GULATI | JACOB (SABA'S BROTHER)



HAS STARRED IN A FEW SHORT FILMS. MASKS WAS HIS FIRST AT THE AGE OF 7. SINCE THEN HE HAS BEEN IN SEVERAL COMMERCIALS AND MUSICAL PLAYS. HE ENJOYS ACTING, SINGING, DANCING, PLAYING PIANO AND MARTIAL ARTS.



# FILM STILLS





















IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE PULSE NIGHTCLUB SHOOTING  
AND ALL MASS SHOOTINGS ACROSS THE WORLD.