

# SONATA

PRESS KIT

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# SONATA

## Plot Summary



**M**egan lives inside a seemingly perfect fairy tale, an isolated world created by her mother. Notorious for her children's stories, author Samantha Fergus takes great care to safeguard her daughter from any outside influence. Trapped in a prison dominated by her

mother's grim imagination, Megan's child-like understanding of reality begins to clash with her blossoming desires as a woman. When she receives a letter from an admirer she's never met, a mysterious presence begins to invade her sheltered existence. Samantha fears she is losing grasp of her "finest creation" and will defend it at any cost. As the mystery unravels, the sanctity of their secluded world spirals into an abyss of madness, deception and murder.



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# SONATA

## General Synopsis



**M**egan Fergus has grown up in isolation, living in a world carefully crafted throughout the years by her mother, the famous author of children's fairy tales, Samantha Fergus. Megan's only contact with the outside world are the lessons taught by her tutor, the humorless Ms. Glutz and the occasional dinner party her mother

throws for the publishing community, in an attempt to revive her suffering career. For recreation, Megan paints pictures of characters from her mother's stories and writes nightly in her diary. Even though she looks and acts like a child, Megan is a young woman who yearns to experience the world as such. In an attempt to safeguard her "finest creation" from the evils of the world, Samantha manipulates her daughter into submission by telling her the same, nightly bedtime story. The story is about the grim fate of an old seamstress's daughter who falls in love with a prince. As punishment for reveling in her newfound beauty, the girl's mother sews her eyes shut. Megan complacently repeats each word of the fairy tale as she descends into yet



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# SONATA

General Synopsis Cont.



another night's sleep, fearful of the very thoughts and sensations that have begun to enter her world.

Upon running an errand for her mother in town, Megan catches a glimpse of a young man who seems to be watching her from the shadows. Before she can even speak a word, the stranger



vanishes. Days later, Samantha discovers a love letter addressed to her daughter on the doorstep. Megan claims never to have met its author, but something tells her that she very well may have. Strange things begin to occur around the house. Megan becomes gradually withdrawn from her daily existence, nurturing the possibility that someone out there is thinking of her and possibly even watching her every move. Indeed, she hears footsteps of someone sneaking around the house and receives gifts from the same secret admirer, placed on her doorstep. Fearful of abandonment and of losing grasp of her daughter, Samantha's parenting methods begin to verge on cruelty. As the mystery unravels, the fairytale sanctity of the Fergus' household spirals into a world of deception and madness..

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### Nicole DuPort (*Megan*)



**N**icole DuPort was born May 17, 1980 in Santa Rosa, California and grew up in Vista, California. She began acting at 17 when she ended her ten year love affair with basketball in order to learn to play guitar and paint. When her brother proffered her a flyer for an evening acting class at the local college her life drastically shifted course. For the past six years Nicole has been faithfully following this

path. She has appeared in over twenty stage productions; some of her favorite roles including Grace in *The Crime of the 21st Century*, Helen in Charles Mee's *Orestes*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Mrs. Saunders, Ellen and Lin in *Cloud 9*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Millie Owens in *Picnic* and numerous colorful characters from original texts. While *Sonata* was Nicole's first feature length film, she has appeared in a number of award-winning short films. Having recently graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, Nicole is now a proud resident of Los Angeles where she is embarking on her professional acting career.

### AnnieScott Rogers (*Samantha*)



**A**nnieScott was born in the south, spending her first quarter century in North Carolina, where she attended Henderson High School with Charlie Rose. A clinical laboratory scientist by training, AnnieScott has had several careers in the field of clinical chemistry and corporate sales. A "kick in the butt from God" at middle age rekindled her love of performing, and turned the "lay off" experience into "rebirth" as an

actress, spending three years consumed with learning as much about being real in make-believe situations as possible. Reconnecting with the medical profession by day, she is pursuing her new career in the performing arts with a vengeance. Spending seven years studying with Cassandra Chamberlain at The Actors Studio in Sausalito learning film acting techniques made her passionate about character development and she began to audition and secure a variety of roles in independent films. A constant student, AnnieScott considers each role as an opportunity to grow as an actor.

### Tim Halpin (*Allan*)



**G**raduate of SIS, Actor Tim Halpin plays the role of ALLAN. Tim's first break into films came while working security as a police officer on the set of the Warner Brother's film MAD CITY, Oscar winning Director Costa-Gravos summoned Tim off the set perimeter and put him to work as an FBI rooftop sniper in the movie. Tim went on and completed 2 yrs professional actor's training from Ian McRae of the NY

Neighborhood Playhouse. When the opportunity came to participate in SONATA, Tim made a big decision and left the confines of the large San Francisco Bay Area city police dept. where he had worked for years. With this film role as Allan in SONATA, Tim has begun his journey as a full time film actor and is now currently listed in the Motion Picture Academy of Art and Sciences Players Directory. Tim's philosophy was said best by Herman Melville "Better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation!"

### Gabriel Diamond (*The Stranger*)



**G**abriel Diamond is a San Francisco Bay Area native. Film and TV credits include The Silent Cross, Christmas Tree Blues, Burning Clean, and Lovely Dish, Operation Algebra, Sharing English, and multiple voice over narration roles. Onstage he has performed with the Cutting Ball Theater, New Conservatory Theatre Center, Marin Shakespeare Company, Theater Artists of Marin and toured nationally

three times with the Hampstead Players/Traveling Lantern Theater. He graduated in 1996 from Trinity Repertory Conservatory in Providence, RI, where he performed with the company and at the Perishable Theater. At his day job, he's a producer, videographer, editor, and teacher at KDOL TV in Oakland.

### **Boris Undorf** *Writer/Director/Producer*



**B**orn in Odessa, Ukraine of the former USSR, Boris Undorf immigrated to the United States in 1989. Quickly straying from his family's traditional career in dentistry, Boris set out to plant his roots in the entertainment business. As a teenager, he studied for several years at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco and appeared in numerous stage productions. Having received a video camera from his parents on his twelfth birthday, Boris developed a strong passion for filmmaking early

on. A decade later, while completing his film studies at Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, CA, Boris began a project that would become his first feature film. Shortly after graduating, his feature debut SONATA, is screening at film festivals nationwide. He currently lives in Los Angeles, preparing his next film project.

### **Daniel Applegate** *Producer*



**D**aniel was born in Forest Grove, Oregon and at the age of one, moved to Eugene where he spent his formative years. His mother, a visual artist and his father a musician; Daniel was surrounded by art from the earliest of ages. Although he loved the visual medium, it was clear early in his development that he was unable to translate his vision using a pencil or brush like his mother. It was decided that his future career track would be that of a 'director of photography', as soon as he learned that such a

position existed. It was photography that brought him to Santa Barbara where he studied at Brooks Institute of Photography and met his friend and collaborator Boris Undorf. It was here that Daniel's love of the visual medium flourished and took flight. Sonata is the first project that Daniel has produced.

# SONATA

## Crew Biographies

### Ryan Vernon *Producer*



**R**yan Vernon was born in New Port Beach, CA and was soon after whisked away to the Santa Ynez Valley where he spent his formative years riding horses and eating grapes. After studying Economics at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Ryan transferred to Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, where he received his BA in Motion Picture Production in February 2001. With sights set on starting a production company, he ventured south to Los

Angeles where he began as an assistant at Creative Artists Agency, and is now working with manager/producer Lou Pitt. After co-producing his first feature film, "Sonata", he is currently planting the seeds for the company Station 12 Films. His main attractions to the business aspect of filmmaking are his knack for the makings of a good story and a love for the challenge of putting together a successful business venture. He continues to eat grapes, but stays away from horses following the accident.

### Vance R. Piper *Cinematographer*



**V**ance R. Piper brings over twenty years of professional filmmaking experience to "Sonata". Vance began making films at the age of thirteen. He received a BA degree in cinema production from the University of Southern California in 1982. By 1983 he was established as a professional assistant cameraman working on such films as The Terminator, Turner & Hooch, Mrs.. Doubtfire, Forrest Gump, Jamanji and Space Cowboys, among many others. He has worked as a professional director of

photography on numerous commercials, TV, documentaries and feature films including "Blue Movies", "The Magic of Special Effects" in IMAX, "Schemes" for USA Networks, "Star Wars" Episodes I & II, "Pearl Harbor", "Minority Report" and now "Sonata". Vance and Boris have been friends for more than ten years and this is their first collaboration together.

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# SONATA

## Production Notes

In the final six months of his studies in the motion picture program at Brooks Institute of Photography, 23 year-old director Boris Undorf was in a tight spot. After struggling fruitlessly with the Ernest Hemingway estate to gain permission to make a short film of one of the author's stories, Boris had no prospects for his thesis. With the deadline rapidly approaching, he gave up the long standing plan of adapting a short story and opted to do something that was entirely his own. With only a few months until graduation, he began writing a short film that would eventually become his feature debut.

Having been raised in a culture where fairy tales and folklore were a major part of his upbringing, Boris began to draw on certain experiences of his childhood to create a story. Recalling being often disciplined as a young boy with references to the fate of characters in various fairy-tales, Boris began to sketch the world of his protagonist. He was interested in what would happen if a child grew up with no reference to the real world, knowing nothing other than the reality of the fairy tale. Introducing elements of a



psychological thriller to the world of a young woman with a fantastical understanding of reality, something very unique started to emerge.

As the story for this short film gradually took shape, it became clear that certain stylistic requirements would be necessary to execute its telling. Opting for an elegant and lyrical visual aesthetic to paint the fairy-tale world, shooting on the staple low-budget Digital Video was out of the question. Shooting on film was a dream that seemed improbable from the outset. The budget, pieced together from student loans, credit cards and the kindness of relatives, wouldn't even support the short being made on 16mm.

Uncertain if the making of this film was possible after all, Boris called on his old friend Vance Piper, a visual effects cinematographer based at George Lucas' special effects company, Industrial Light and Magic (ILM). ILM happened to have at its disposal a full High Definition camera package, which was not in use, awaiting the final installment of the Star Wars films. The format would suit the stylistic needs of the story while the cost of HD tapes, although pricy, was not nearly as prohibitive as that of film and processing. After a few weeks of Vance pleading for his friend's cause, the making of Sonata changed from a fading dream to an impending reality. Vance had convinced the ILM brass to make a donation to this tiny film and came on board as the director of photography. Along with the good news, came an opportunity that would create a drastic change

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of plans. Instead of donating the camera package for a week, as Boris proposed, ILM found that the equipment wouldn't be needed for an entire three weeks. They also had an excessive amount of tape stock, allowing them to donate much more than needed to shoot a short film. With this generous excess, Boris recognized an opportunity staring him in the face. Without taking a beat, he decided to take ILM up on their offer and to challenge himself to turn his short film into a feature, less than two months before production.

The task wouldn't be a simple one. The short film script had to be expanded to feature length so that filming could start within the time allotted to take advantage of the donation. While pulling together various elements in the hurried pre-production, Boris began to expand the story. The prospect of making his first feature while still a student was always a distant idea, but never a possibility and never one with six weeks notice. In actuality, this was the best time to go out on the limb and take a shot. After all, this was a time to learn and to make mistakes. There

were no executives to please, no significant financial loss at stake, only experience to gain. Instead of writing elements into story that would be difficult to pull off in a short time, Boris manipulated the story to maximize whatever resources were already available. Putting doubts from schoolmates and personal fears aside, Boris used the foundation of the short film idea to finish a draft of his first feature screenplay.

The central location was set in a small suburb near San Francisco, leading Boris to reach into the vast ranks of the Bay Area theater community to find his cast. While writing the script, he already had in mind the actress who would play the leading role of Megan. Nicole DuPort was a student of UC Berkeley's theater department and had previously collaborated with Boris on a short film. The shooting schedule fell right on her summer break and she eagerly committed to make Sonata her feature film acting debut. AnnieScott Rogers, a popular character actress in the San Francisco theater circuit, with multiple film credits, was cast opposite Ms. DuPort as her overbearing and controlling mother. In supporting roles, Boris needed to find a half-dozen actors who could pull off Megan's peculiar perception of reality. Luckily, there was no shortage of colorful characters in San Francisco. As the casting process moved into its final stages, the production team had only a week to address costumes, props and to secure permits so filming could begin.

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002, production commenced in

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# SONATA

## Production Notes Cont.

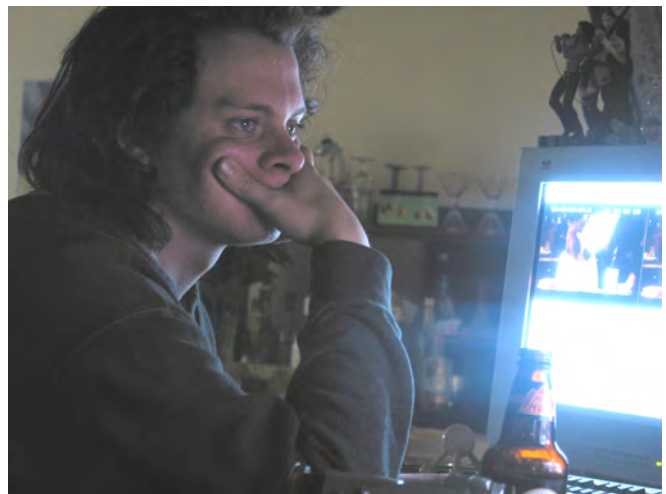
the quiet suburb of San Mateo, CA. With the script continuously evolving, Boris kept an open eye for unexpected opportunities and tailored the story to anything interesting that caught his eye during the shoot. On a day off, upon visiting a friend at a near-by Christian university, he fell in love with the 100 year-old school's main ballroom. Confident that it was ideal for his movie, Boris immediately convinced the school's administrator to donate to the production the \$6,000 a day facility by telling her he was making a religiously themed film. The scene that was filmed there the following day, was improvised to suit the location and became one of the central scenes in the story. With such lucky incidents plentiful, Boris often stayed up into the early hours of the morning, making adjustments to the script. By letting the story be inspired by the environment, he created a flexibility that allowed the story to grow while maintaining a creative excitement on the set.

The crew was made up largely of a group of friends that met just three years earlier in a classroom on the first day of film school. There was an unmistakable bond between these filmmakers, having worked together on over a dozen short films throughout the years. Sonata was the first experience of its kind for everyone involved. It was their first feature film and the first time any of them would work eighteen consecutive, 14 to 24 hour days. For sleeping quarters, the crew dispersed around the main location with two to three people per room. Frequently, as call time approached only a few hours after going to bed, they would wake up already conveniently in the middle of the set.

Although each member of the crew became ill during the production and nursed a high fever, the morale was always high and the show always went on.

The filming wrapped on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2002. As the exhausted crew went home to recover, Boris wondered about for two weeks in a comatose state. Still in shock that he was able to put together and complete the rigorous shoot, he had no idea of what lay ahead in post-production. The process lasted for eighteen months as the producers sought out ways to complete the film without any available finances. The edited version of the film was lost twice in the process when the computer, overstuffed with more hard drives than it could handle, crashed...and crashed again. When the film was finally completed in January 2004, Sonata was already nearly two years in the making.

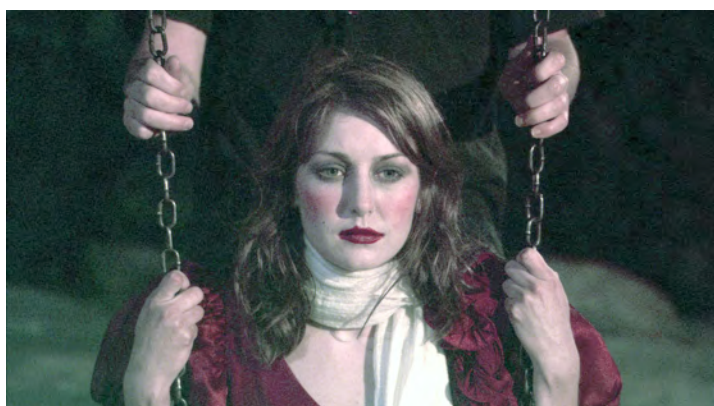
As Sonata ventures off to be seen by audiences, director Boris Undorf and his collaborators are preparing to start the process anew. Only now with the wisdom and lessons learned on their debut film firmly behind them.



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# SONATA

## Image Gallery



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# SONATA

## List of Credits

### Cast

Megan	Nicole DuPort
Samantha	Annie Scott Rogers
Ms. Glutz	Josephine Zeitlin
Mr. Fisk	Stephen Pawley
Mr. Doren	Karl Heinz Teuber
Allan	Timothy Halpin
Clown	Jerry McDaniel
Stranger	Gabriel Diamond
Janitor	George Simmons
Dr. Roberts	Ted Herzberg
Little Girl	Charlene Piper
Seamstress	Marilyn Imes

### Crew

First Assistant Director	Alex Taylor
Line Producer/Script Supervisor	Chantal Legros
Production Designer	Inna Undorf
Costume Designer	Arpine Kevranian
HD Vision Engineer	Calvin Roberts
Camera Operator	Michael Alba
Camera Assistant	Scott Sperry
Gaffer	Daniel Applegate
Best Boy(Girl)	Adriane Zaudke
Electrician	Wynona Wacker
Dolly Grip	Tyler Hamlet
Sound Engineers	Frank Misceo
	Dane Fishbaugh
Boom Operators	Catherine Grey
	Roman Belassario
Special Make-Up Effects	Tom Mounkes
Stunts	J & T Stunts
Still Photography	Angela Rodriguez
	Joshua Wood
Visual Effects	Dennis Sedov
Music Composed by	Vincent Gillioz
Original Artwork	Susan Applegate
Additional Artwork	Craig Howell
On-Camera Pianist	Stephaanie Sollers
2 <sup>nd</sup> Unit Director of Photography	Daniel Applegate
2 <sup>nd</sup> Unit Gaffer	Adriane Zaudke
2 <sup>nd</sup> Unit Camera Operator	Roman Belassario
2 <sup>nd</sup> Unit Camera Assistant	Brooke Rudder
2 <sup>nd</sup> Unit Production Assistants	Lana Undorf
	Sabrina Gornitsky
Post Production Supervisor	Teague Cowley
Editors	Daniel Applegate
	Boris Undorf
HD Online Editor	Teague Cowley
HD Color Timing	Teague Cowley
Re-Recording Mixer	Tom Ruff
Supervising Sound Editor	Clint Smith
Sound Designer	Dallas T. Rhodes
ADR	Outpost Studios
ADR Engineer	Dave Nelson
Foley	Covis Bummell
Additional Vocals	Mashal Arman
Composer	Vincent Gillioz

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