



RiverBend Films PRESENTS

The Artist

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY BY Matthew Marcus

AN Ashley Kinney PRODUCTION

A Kevin G. Bender FILM

The World Premiere:

Friday, May 1st 2009 – 8:00pm

Culbreth Theatre

Charlottesville, Virginia

www.theartist2009.com

RiverBend Films

Williamsburg, Virginia

**PRESS RELEASE****Contact:** Kevin G. Bender, Director/Executive Producer**Email:** bender@riverbendfilms.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10 April 2009

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA. The official **World Premiere** of *The Artist* will take place on Friday May 1st, 2009, at Culbreth Theatre on the campus of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, at 8:00pm. *The Artist* comes from the creators of the critically-acclaimed and award-winning 2008 film *The Receipt*. The film will be shown in spectacular **1080p High Definition** with accompanying Dolby Digital 5.1 surround-sound mix. *The Artist* stars **Matthew Marcus**, a University of Virginia theatre student, as the films' hero Alex. Starring opposite Marcus are fellow University of Virginia theatre students **Casey Stein** (Rebecca) and **Russ Hicks** (Matthew), and Charlottesville community actors **Glenn Aubrey** (Jared) and **Andrew Todhunter** (Dr. Anthony Andrews), along with eighth-grade Charlottesville student **Arietta van der Voort** (Alice), who makes her film acting debut. The film co-stars **Katie Willis** (Claire), **Sam Taggart** (Thomas), **Christopher Moneymaker** (Max), and **Jacque Walters** (Linda).

The original screenplay of *The Artist* was written by Matthew Marcus (also the films' leading actor) and tells the story of Alex, a college student and avid comic book fan who is entering his final semester of college. As a result of unresolved events in his past, Alex invents a comic-book inspired fantasy wherein Alex is a superhero destined to save his girlfriend, Rebecca, from his arch nemesis, who turns out to be one of his professors, Dr Anthony Andrews. As delusions unravel and reality sets-in, *The Artist* becomes a story of star-crossed lovers, secrets revealed, the enduring pain of loss, and the encapsulating psychological hold the powerful wield over the powerless

Principal photography on *The Artist*, which began on September 27th, 2008, was completed on February 14th, 2009. *The Artist* was filmed on-location in Charlottesville, Virginia, in high definition digital using Sony motion picture cameras. All post-production work, including video and sound editing, rendering, and digital compositing, was done using Adobe Creative Suite CS3, which is the same software package utilized in the post-production of such films as *Superman Returns* and *The Matrix* trilogy. The finished film will also feature a complete 6-channel Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound mix-down and a two-minute-long sequence of 3D-animated visual effects.

The Artist welcomes back music composer **Kyle Ringgenberg** from *The Receipt* who composed for the film a completely-original musical score of over 50 minutes in length, orchestrated and sequenced using the Vienna Symphonic Library digital toolset, which has been frequently utilized in many major film productions, including *Underworld* and *The Dark Knight*.

The Artist will be the fifth full-length feature-length film to be directed by Williamsburg-area filmmaker and RiverBend Films' co-founder and chief executive **Kevin G. Bender**. For more information, visit the film's official website (www.theartist2009.com) or the homepage of RiverBend Films (www.riverbendfilms.com).

Plot Synopsis

The Artist tells the story of Alex, a college student and avid comic book fan who, along with his apartment-mate Matthew, is entering his final semester of college. In one of his classes, he has a chance meeting with a girl, Rebecca, who shares Alex's love of comic books. As Alex gets to know Rebecca better, he begins to suspect that she is harboring a deep secret that she's not sharing with anyone, even Alex. His suspicions are confirmed when she suddenly shows up at his apartment one night in tears, leaves just as suddenly, and then Alex never hears from her again.

Alex himself is not immune from secrets, however: he too is harboring a hidden secret. But Alex's secret is not one he keeps from others, but one he keeps from himself, one that holds enough psychological power over Alex that he begins to invent a comic-book inspired fantasy wherein he is a superhero, the "Savior" who is destined to save Rebecca, "The Guardian" from his arch nemesis, Dr Anthony Andrews, the professor of the very class where he met Rebecca. As delusions unravel and reality sets-in, *The Artist* becomes a story of star-crossed lovers, secrets revealed, the enduring pain of loss, and the encapsulating psychological hold the powerful wield over the powerless

About the Film

The Artist is an independent feature-length narrative film that was shot in and around Charlottesville, Virginia. The totally-volunteer cast and crew consists of a diverse group of people from all-over Virginia and Maryland and includes college students, community actors, and many others. Much of the cast and crew returns to film work from the critically-acclaimed 2008 film *The Receipt*. The production is being funded and managed by RiverBend Films, the production studio of Williamsburg-area filmmaker Kevin G. Bender, who is also directing the film. The original screenplay for the film comes from University of Virginia senior Matthew Marcus, who also leads the film's cast, and the production team is lead by first-time producer Ashley Kinney, also a University of Virginia student.

Like its predecessor, *The Receipt*, *The Artist* will feature over an hour of totally-original musical score, compiled and sequenced using the highly-sophisticated Vienna Symphonic Library instrument library. The film is also a highly special-effects intensive film, utilizing a number of complex green-screen keying effects and featuring two minutes of advanced 3D digital animation. *The Artist* will be shot and exhibited entirely in full-1080p high definition digital and will feature a complete Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound mix.

Principal photography on *The Artist*, which began on 27th September 2008, was completed on February 14th, 2009. Post-production will remain in progress until the film's world premiere, which is scheduled to take place Friday May 1st, 2009. Approximately a month following the premiere, the film will be available for purchase on DVD and Blu-Ray Disc high definition formats.

Quick Facts

- At a running-length of 90 minutes, *The Artist* surpasses *The Receipt*, its predecessor, to become the longest film ever produced at the University of Virginia.
- The cast and crew of the film come from diverse localities and backgrounds, and include college students, community actors, professional filmmakers, and graduate students, and are from localities ranging from Lynchburg to Canada.
- Total production lasted almost 12 months: the production was originally conceived in May 2008 and was finally brought to completion in late-May 2009.
- Over 40 people were involved in the production process of *The Artist*.
- The film was subdivided into 40 major sequences which were shot in some 15 different locations
- Approximately 80% of the completed film will contain background score or music, exceeding the averages for most big-budget "Hollywood" productions.
- Over 60 hours of film footage was shot and over 20 hours of audio was recorded in the production of the film.
- Over 25,000 different computer files, totaling over 1 terabyte in size, were stored and associated with the post-production of *The Artist*.
- Principal photography of *The Artist* lasted over six months, shot primarily on evenings and weekends to facilitate the class and work schedules of its totally-volunteer cast and crew.
- A total of well-over 3,000 hours were spent on post-production of the film.
- The final operating budget of *The Artist* was approximately \$2,000. The gross accumulated value of equipment, software, and materials previously purchased that were used in the production of the film exceed \$15,000.

Technical Specifications

Shooting Format: Sony HDV 1440 x 1080i (1.33 pixel) High Definition digital video (mpeg2, 25mb/s)

Audio Recording Format: 24-bit, 48khz mono

Exhibition Format: 1920 x 1080-30p, High Definition digital video (mpeg4, 35mb/s)

Audio Exhibition Format: 24-bit, 48 kHz Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound

Principal Cast and Crew



Glenn Aubrey (Actor - "Jared")

Glenn's experience in theatre has included a brief spot at Live Arts, Charlottesville, and Fine Arts Academy of Lynchburg, Renaissance Theatre of Lynchburg, VA Western College of Roanoke, and Little Town Players of Bedford. Also, he had the opportunity to be an extra in the HBO movie *John Adams*. He held the role of Lord Montague this summer in the first season of the Blue Ridge Summer Festival performed at Sweet Briar College - Romeo and Juliet. He currently resides in Lynchburg and is the proud Dad of two beautiful daughters.



Kevin G. Bender (Director, Executive Producer, Editor)

Kevin G. Bender is the award-winning and critically-acclaimed producer/director of *The Receipt* and the co-founder and C.E.O. of RiverBend Films. His filmmaking credits feature over 40 short films, including documentaries, comedies, art films, recruiting videos, commercials, and music videos. He has previously produced and directed four feature-length films, including *Seven Days Under the Sun* (2004), *Life's a Smoose* (2005), *Below the Beltway* (2007), and *The Receipt* (2008). He is presently an accountant in Norfolk, Virginia. IMDb page: www.imdb.com/name/nm3234081/



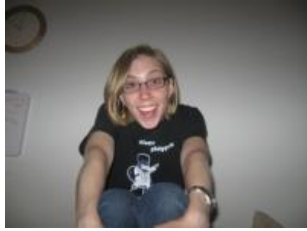
Kai Chang (Director of Photography)

Kai Chang is a fourth year student at the University of Virginia studying physics, cognitive science and dance.



Jalysa Conway (Costume Designer)

Straight from the historical streets of Washington, DC comes Jalysa I. Conway. A 3rd year Computer Science student at the University of Virginia, Jalysa's greatest aspirations are for world domination or to make enough money to fill an entire single family home with designer shoes. Although appearing in numerous stage productions in high school, this is her first acting/crew gig in her adult life. She likes long walks on the beach and cuddling up to watch a good action/violence flick.

**Jamie Coupar (Sound Effects Designer)**

Jamie Coupar has turned to film only recently after retiring early from her illicit (and extremely successful) career in that industry. Armed with the noises of cows, guns, Westminster Chimes, music boxes, trains, cars, water, and old 1920's-style telephones she plans to slowly but surely take over the world one sound project at a time.

**Charles Russ Hicks (Actor – “Matthew”)**

Russ Hicks is a third-year Drama and English-Poetry Writing major at the University of Virginia. His acting credits for UVA Drama include *Hair*, *Oklahoma!*, *Twelfth Night*, and *A My Name...is Alice*. He has also appeared in *Oklahoma!*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Barnum*, and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* with Barter Theatre and *Voices of the Class 2008* with Spectrum Theatre.

**Ranjan Khan (Director of Photography)**

Ranjan Khan is a senior at the University of Virginia. He performs in the Charlottesville improv group Amuse Bouche and is interested in the art of filmmaking.

**Ashley Kinney (Producer)**

Ashley Kinney is a second-year English major at the University of Virginia. Her directing experience consists of the one act play *Ah, Eurydice!* at Park View High School in 2007. Previous acting credits include Spectrum Theatre's *Voices of the Class 2008* and *Harvey* (2005), *Damn Yankees* (2007), and *Fools* (2004, Cappie Nominee) at Park View High School. *The Artist* will be her first time working on a film and she is very excited and grateful for the opportunity.



Jason Kobielus (Production Designer)

Jason Kobielus is executive producer of Spectrum Theatre and founder/producer of his own company Patterson Productions. With Spectrum, he has produced such shows as *The Last Five Years*, *Voices of the Class*, and U.Va.'s February 2009 presentation of the V-Day Campaign. With Patterson, he produced the one-act *God Is On The Radio*, which he also wrote, as well as a staged reading of his first full-length play *In The Valley*. Also with Patterson, he produced *A Night of Ten-Minute Plays* in Cherokee, North Carolina, which he also wrote and directed.



Matthew Marcus (Actor – “Alex,” Writer, Co-Producer)

Matthew Marcus is a fourth-year drama and media studies double-major at the University of Virginia. His UVa drama department credits include *Twelfth Night*, *Ubu Roi*, *R+J*, *Oedipus*, and *Scapin*. He also played the male lead Thomas in 2008's *The Receipt*, also from RiverBend Films. He plays Alex, the protagonist and hero of *The Artist*, which he also wrote. The film is his first screenplay.



Gabrielle Moskey (Co-Producer)

Gabrielle Moskey is a 2008 alumna of the University of Virginia. Her acting experience includes: *Tickle* (Senior Seminar), *The Homicide Blog* (U.Va. Lab Series), *The Voysey Inheritance* (U.Va Drama), *Barhoppers: Tragic Hero* (Offstage Theatre), *The Receipt* (RiverBend Films), *Xerxes* (Opera Viva), *Henry IV* (SotL). She also wrote the short dramas *Art.Sex.Go.* (DRAM 499), *Three Magical* and *Purple Balloons* (Inside the Box) and served as an Assistant Stage Manager for *God is on the Radio* (Spectrum), *Twelfth Night* (U.Va Drama) and Assistant Costume Designer for *Hedda Gabbler* and *The African Company Presents Richard III* (U.Va. Drama).



Zachary Pruckowski (Production Sound Mixer)

Zachary Pruckowski is a senior at the University of Virginia, where he is pursuing a degree in Computer Science. His previous sound work includes mixing live concerts in Charlottesville, Virginia, and with the University of Virginia Programs Council. He also served as an assistant sound mixer for RiverBend Films' *The Receipt*.

**Kyle Ringgenberg** (Music Composer, 3D Animator)

Kyle Ringgenberg is a graduate student in the Electrical Engineering Department at the University of Virginia. During his time at Rice University, he remained very involved in numerous musical groups, working on original compositions for several events. He composed the completely original score for *The Receipt*, including the original vocal piece *In Any Way I Can* (performed by Annie and Elyse Steingold). *The Artist* will be his second full-length feature film score.

**Casey Stein** (Actress – “Rebecca”)

Casey Stein is a third-year psychology major at the University of Virginia who enjoys all aspects of theatre and technical theatre. She is an active member of the First Year Players. This is her first film project and she is excited and grateful for the opportunity. Her past theater credits include: *Voices of the Class* (2008-Spectrum Theatre), *Grounds for Discussion* (2008-Orientation and New Student Programs), *Artpark* (2007) and *Henry IV* (2007-Shakespeare on the Lawn).

**Andrew Todhunter** (Actor – “Dr. Anthony Andrews”)

Most of Andrew's acting experience was in San Francisco, where he was a member of a theater company and a student of Jean Shelton. Memorable projects include Christopher Durang's *Betty's Summer Vacation*, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, Conan Moats world premiere of *Strictly Convenience*, *Macbeth* at Burning Man and several independent and professional films. Currently Andrew lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.

**Arrietta van der Voort** (Actress – “Alice”)

Arietta van der Voort is a seventh grader at Tandem Friends School. This is her first time acting for the camera, and she would like to thank everyone who is involved in *The Artist* for giving her such an amazing opportunity. She would also like to thank Larry Goldstein for helping her be a part of the production. Previous roles include: Edna in *The Good Times Are Killing Me* (LiveArts), queen and mean girl in *The Little Match Girl* (LiveArts), Mrs. Mayor and a bird girl in *Suessical* (Tandem Friends School), and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Tandem Friends School).

Film Still Images



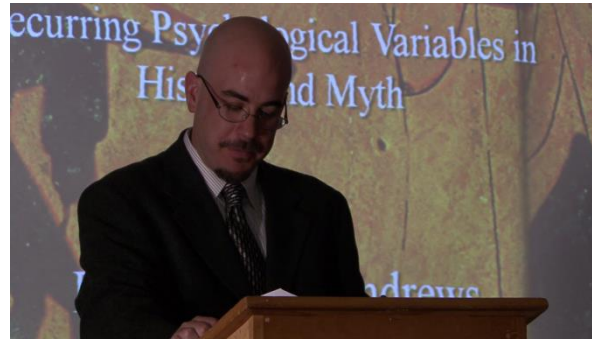
Casey Stein and Matthew Marcus star in RiverBend Films' *The Artist*.



Casey Stein stars in RiverBend Films' *The Artist*.



Glenn Aubrey stars in RiverBend Films' *The Artist*.



Andrew Todhunter stars RiverBend Films' *The Artist*.



Casey Stein stars in RiverBend Films' *The Artist*.



Matthew Marcus stars in RiverBend Films' *The Artist*.

Production Still Photographs



Ranjan Khan, Matthew Marcus, and Jalya Conway on the set of *The Artist*.



Jamie Coupar and Zachary Pruckowski recording sound for RiverBend Films' *The Artist*.



Zachary Pruckowski, Ranjan Khan, and Kevin G. Bender filming *The Artist*.



Matthew Marcus, Kevin G. Bender, and Andrew Todhunter on the set of *The Artist*.



David Gassmann, Sam Rabinovitz, Ranjan Khan, Casey Stein, and Ashley Kinney on the set of *The Artist*.



Kai Chang filming a scene from *The Artist*.

For Additional Information

For Additional Information Please Contact:

Kevin G. Bender, Executive Producer (email: bender@riverbendfilms.com)

Additional Online Content and Sites of Interest:

RiverBend Films Homepage: www.riverbendfilms.com

IMDb Page for The Artist: www.imdb.com/title/tt1587319

IMDb Page for Kevin G. Bender: www.imdb.com/name/nm3234081/