A Film By JAVIER FUENTES-LEÓN

Peru’s Official Submission to the 83rd Academy Awards® for Best Foreign Language Film

2010 Sundance Film Festival World Cinema Dramatic Audience Award

AWARDS

Sebastiane Award for Best LBGT Film — San Sebastian Int'l Film Festival 2009
Audience Award in World Dramatic Competition — Sundance 2010
Audience Award in Official Competition — Cartagena Int'l Film Festival 2010
Audience Award in Iberoamerican Competition — Miami Int'l Film Festival 2010
Audience Award in Festivalissimo — Montreal Latin American Film Festival 2010
NAHCC Award to Best Hispanic Director — Nashville Film Festival 2010
Special Award for Originality of Vision — Miami Gay and Lesbian Film Festival 2010
Audience Award — Chicago Latino Film Festival 2010
Latin Angel Audience Award — Utrecht Latin American Film Festival 2010
Latin Angel Youth Award — Utrecht Latin American Film Festival 2010
Jury Award for Best Film — Festival La Chimenea Verde 2010, Villaverde, Madrid
Audience Award, Best Narrative Feature — Provincetown Int'l Film Festival 2010
Mayor of Trencin Honorary Award — Slovakia ArtFilmFest 2010
Outstanding First Feature Jury Award — Frameline34, The San Francisco LGBT
International Film Festival, 2010
Audience Award for Best First Feature — Galway International Film Festival 2010, Ireland
Special Programming Award for Artistic Achievement — OUTFEST 2010, Los Angeles
Jury Award for Best Feature Film — Qfest 2010, Philadelphia
Jury Award for Best Director — Qfest 2010, Philadelphia
Audience Choice Award — Vancouver Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
Audience Award for Best Film — Lima Film Festival, Peru 2010
Audience Award for Best Peruvian Film — Lima Film Festival, Peru
On-Line Audience Award for Best Film — Lima Film Festival, Peru
On-Line Audience Award for Best First Feature Film — Lima Film Festival, Peru
Narrative Feature Jury Award – Austin Gay & Lesbian International Film Festival
Audience Favorite for Best Foreign Feature — Outflix Memphis Gay & Lesbian Film
Festival
First Jury Special Mention — New England Festival of Iberoamerican Cinema
Jury Award for Best Feature Film — Skeive Filmer, Oslo, Norway
Award for Best Film — Long Beach Q Film Festival
Award for Best Director — Long Beach Q Film Festival
Audience Award for Best Film — Cineamissí, Latin American Film Festival, Helsinki,
Finland
Audience Award — Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

Additional documents and photographs available at: undertowfilm.com
With the support of
CONACINE, FONDS SUD CINEMA, IBERMEDIA, FILMSTIFTUNG NRW
FONDO DE DESARROLLO CINEMATOGRÁFICO
assistant director MANUEL HINOJOSA  director of production DELIA GARCÍA
delegate producer MIRLANDA TORRES
casting RODRIGO BELLOTT & GUSTAVO VIDAL
music SELMA MUTAL direct sound ÉDGRAR LOSTANAU
sound design DANIEL “GATO” GARCÉS / FRÉDÉRIC THÉRY
editing ROBERTO BENAVIDES & PHILLIP J. BARTELL
art director DIANA TRUJILLO  director of photography MAURICIO VIDAL, ACDF
executive producers ANDRÉS CALDERÓN, CRISTIAN CONTI, MICHEL RUBEN, ÉMILIE
GEORGES, OLE LANDSJÖAASEN, CHRISTIAN FÜRST,
ANETTE PISACANE
producers RODRIGO GUERRERO & JAVIER FUENTES-LEÓN
written and directed by JAVIER FUENTES-LEÓN
SYNOPSIS

Miguel is a handsome, young and beloved fisherman in Cabo Blanco, a small fishing village in the Northern coast of Peru, where the community has deep-rooted religious traditions. Miguel is married to the beautiful Mariela, who is 7-months pregnant with their firstborn, but Miguel harbors a scandalous secret: He is having a love affair with another man, Santiago, a painter who is ostracized by the townsfolk for being agnostic and open about his sexuality.

When Santiago drowns accidentally in the ocean’s strong undertow, he cannot pass peacefully to the other side. He returns after his death to ask Miguel to look for his body and bury it according to the rituals of the town. Miguel must choose between sentencing Santiago to eternal torment or doing right by him and, in turn, revealing their relationship to Mariela and the entire village. Miguel is forced to deal with the consequences of his acts and to come to terms with who he really is, even if by doing so he stands the chance of losing the people he loves the most.

With sweeping images of the beautiful Peruvian coastline, UNDERTOW (Contracorriente) is the emotional intersection of contemporary sexuality, confronted by tradition and belief. This sexy and redolent love story is the feature film debut of Javier Fuentes-León and stars Manolo Cardona (Beverly Hills Chihuahua and the hugely popular telenovela series, Sin tetas no hay paraíso, and was also named by People en Español as one of its 50 Most Beautiful People in 2005), Cristian Mercado (Che) and Tatiana Astengo. The film is produced by Javier Fuentes-León and Rodrigo Guerrero (Maria Full of Grace, Dog Eat Dog).

LEAD ACTORS

Miguel - Cristian Mercado (Bolivia)
Santiago - Manolo Cardona (Colombia)
Mariela - Tatiana Astengo (Peru)

CAST

Héctor – José Chacaltana
Pato – Emilram Cossío
Isaura – Cindy Díaz
Trinidad – Haydée Cáceres
Carlota – Liliana Alegría Saavedra
Dr. Fernández – Germán González
Tano – Juan Pablo Olivos
Jacinto – Cristian Fernández

Ana – Mónica Rossi
Sra. Rosa – Atilia Boschetti (Guest Artist)
Doña Flor – María Edelmira Palomino
Padre Juan – Julio Humberto Cavero
Sabino – Tomás Fernández
Sergio – Alfonso Gamboa
Baby – Jaziel Yenque Veliz

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DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

Contracorriente is my first feature film, a very personal project in which I explore themes that I believe are very relevant today. Having lived a long time away from Peru has allowed me to see with a new perspective certain aspects of the society in which I grew up, and to realize that the concept of “manhood” can sometimes be very distorted there (as it is in almost all of Latin America), and be replaced by poorer and more limited definitions that have less to do with honor and authenticity and more with masculinity and power. In a way, Contracorriente was born out of a personal quest to define what it is to be a true man and how manhood relates to sexual identity.

Many films have dealt with discrimination and homophobia, but usually represented as an external force, i.e. the discrimination of others against a person different to them. And although there is a good dose of that in Contracorriente, I firmly believe that most of the times our worst enemy is not necessarily the intolerance of others, but our own internal prejudices, and so I wanted to make that theme an important aspect of the film.

If we can overcome our own prejudices and accept ourselves despite the social conventions and the false expectations that we create for ourselves, then it will be much easier to deal with the discrimination of others. Because being at peace with ourselves is what gives us the strength to face any external obstacle and lets us act with honesty. Therefore, it was important to explore in Contracorriente the consequences of our dishonest behavior when trying to hide our true nature due to a vital urge to want to fit into the accepted parameters of the society in which we live in, and how our misguided actions sometimes end up affecting the people we love the most.

There is an alarming void of role models for the Latin American men and women who are struggling to define their sexual identity. My goal with Contracorriente is to tell a passionate and engrossing story that can connect with a wide audience, regardless of their sexual orientation, and that can help fill that void.

After all, Contracorriente is a love story, and as such is a story for everybody. True love is the best tool we have to free people from their fears and traps, and to make them confident and strong to accept with conviction who they really are, first to themselves, and then to the people around them... which is vital to foster a healthy and thriving society, because only a free person in the whole sense of the word can fully prosper, and then contribute their unique sensibility to the world around them.
CAST BIOS

Cristian Mercado - Miguel

A prolific artist who is comfortable wearing different hats, Cristian Mercado has consistently been a powerful force in the Bolivian alternative theater, film and music scene and is considered one of the most important Bolivian actors of the last decade and today.

Although he started his acting career at the age of 23 in underground Bolivian theater, Cristian was able to broaden his audience pretty quickly, touring and performing for the stage around the world since 1997, in countries like Chile, Mexico and France.

His talent has been recognized by Bolivian and international filmmakers alike, landing leading roles in Paolo Agazzi's Sena Quina, Steven Soderbergh’s Guerrilla and Javier Fuentes-León’s Contracorriente

When not acting or directing, Cristian spends his time writing and producing music as the frontman of his influential alternative band Reverso, which fuses blues and rock with Bolivian and Latin American folk music.

Manolo Cardona – Santiago

One of the most recognized actors in Latin America, with blockbusters such as La Mujer de mi Hermano, Rosario Tijeras, and Beverly Hills Chihuahua, Manolo has also starred in the Peruvian-Colombian co-production Contracorriente (Undertow), which premiered at the 2009 San Sebastian Film Festival and will compete at the World Cinema Dramatic Competition in the 2010 Sundance Film Festival. Currently, Manolo has several films in post-production, including Madrid, Mexico and the Last Death.

Manolo has a long career in Latin American television and over 15 years experience in the entertainment world. He is also a producer and cofounder of 11:11 Films, which produced the documentary Narcopotamos in association with BBC London.

Tatiana Astengo – Mariela

One of Peru’s most renowned leading actresses, Tatiana Astengo has a long career in TV, theater and film.

Currently living and working in Spain, Tatiana has created memorable characters that hold a special place in Peruvian cinema, such as “Pechuga” in Francisco Lombardi’s Pantaleón y las Visitadoras, the highest-grossing Peruvian film in history, or María in
Alvaro Velarde’s *El Destino No Tiene Favoritos*, Best Actress in the VII Festival Latinoamericano de Cine in Lima.

In recent years Tatiana has received critical acclaim for her performances in Belén Macías’ *El Patio de Mi Cárcel* (Official Competition 2008 San Sebastian Film Festival), Luis Vera’s *Fiesta Patria* and Javier Fuentes-León’s *Contracorriente* (Sebastiane Award, 2009 San Sebastian Film Festival).

She is currently alternating her film, TV and theater work between Peru and Spain.

CREW BIOS

**Javier Fuentes-León – Writer/Director**

After finishing his medical career in Peru, Javier was granted a scholarship from the OAS and moved to Los Angeles where he pursued a M.F.A. in film directing at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts).

His short film *Rooms* was awarded by the National Film Board of Peru (CONACINE) in 1997 and recognized by the Peruvian film magazine La Gran Ilusión as “among the best work done by a Peruvian filmmaker in the nineties”. Later, the National Theater of Peru distinguished his play *Mr. Clouds* as one of the best plays of the new millennium, which was published by the National Institute of Culture (INC) in the compilation called *Dramaturgia 2000*.

In 1998, Javier started his career in different areas of film and TV in the U.S., becoming the main writer of TV shows for Telemundo, subtitler of films for the major Hollywood studios, and editor of commercials and TV shows, like Rachael Ray’s Tasty Travels, who Javier took to Peru in 2007 to shoot a show about Peruvian food.

Javier also worked on his own projects throughout these years. He wrote and directed his most recent short film, *Gemini*, which screened in many North American film festivals, and wrote two feature scripts: *The Woman Who Feared the Sun* and *Contracorriente (Undertow)* which he started to write in 2003 under the mentorship of John August (Big Fish) and John Cooper (Director of the Sundance Film Festival). He received a scholarship from the Fundación Carolina in Spain to attend their screenwriting lab in 2005, where he finished his script under the mentorship of the renowned Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel (The Swamp) and the Mexican screenwriter Vicente Leñero (The Crime of Father Amaro). *Contracorriente* has received multiple awards and distinctions:

- **Winner** of co-production funding - Programa IBERMEDIA 2008
- **Winner** of the Feature Film Project Contest – National Board of Film (CONACINE) 2008
- **Winner** of the Fonds Sud Cinema Fund – 90,000 euros, France, 2007
• Winner of the NRW Filmstifung Cultural Fund – 75,000 euros, Germany, 2006.
• Finalist III Latin American Film Projects Lab, Fundación Carolina, Madrid, 2005
• Honorable Mention Script Contest Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano - La Habana, Cuba. 2004
• Finalist OUTFEST Screenwriting Lab. Los Angeles, USA 2003
• Semi-finalist 2003 Nicholl Fellowships - Academy of Motions Pictures Arts and Sciences. Los Angeles, USA.

Currently, Javier is preparing his 3 next projects: The Woman Who Feared the Sun, film adaptation of his play Mr. Clouds, Pearblossom Highway, a psychological thriller inspired by a short story by Argentinean writer Julio Cortázar, and Sinister, a rock musical that takes place in the near future.

Rodrigo Guerrero – Producer

Rodrigo Guerrero, originally from Colombia, studied Film Direction and Production at NYU - Tisch School of the Arts. He has worked since 1997 in various capacities in over 18 feature films in the US and Latin America, garnering the credits of Associate Producer on Maria Full of Grace (Academy Award Nomination 2005), Executive Producer on Dog Eat Dog (Sundance ’08), and Producer on Satanás (Colombian selection for the Foreign Language Academy Award ‘08) and on Hogue (Cannes’ Director’s Fortnight 2007 - short film)

In the past years, Rodrigo has produced Rabia, by Sebastian Cordero, a Mexican, Spanish and Colombian co-production that premiered at the 2009 Toronto Film Festival; Contracorriente (Undertow), by Javier Fuentes-León, a Peruvian, Colombian, German and French co-production that premiered at the San Sebastian Film Festival and will be part of the Sundance Film Festival 2010 – World Dramatic Competition; and Una Hora Más en Canarias, by David Serrano, a Spanish-Colombian co-production, currently in post production. These films will be released in 2010.

Rodrigo is currently in development of the following features to be produced in 2010: Bunker, directed by Andi Baiz, and Que Viva La Música, based on the best selling cult novel by Andres Caicedo.

Mr. Guerrero currently sits on the Colombian National Film Board in representation of Colombian film producers. He is based in Bogotá, where he is founding partner of Dynamo, a production company and Iberoamerican film finance private equity fund.

Mauricio Vidal – Director of Photography

Born in Ibagué (Colombia) in 1969, Mauricio started his career behind the camera in the
travel show *El Mundo al Vuelo* with Héctor Mora, shooting around the world for 5 years.

After being the cinematographer of several short films, commercials, and music videos for bands like Aterciopelados and El Bloque de Búsqueda, he shot his first feature film, *La Historia del Baúl Rosado* (Libia Gómez), in 2005. From then on, Mauricio has kept busy shooting award-winning feature films like *Satanás* (directed by Andi Baiz), *La Milagrosa* by Mexican director Rafa Lara, *Chance* shot in Panamá with director Abner Benaim, and *Contracorriente* directed by Javier Fuentes-León, shot in the Northern coast of Peru.

To keep himself “grounded”, Mauricio has shot several documentaries that have taken him to the heart of Colombia, its jungles, its coasts, and its armed conflict.

In 2007 he was invited by the International Film School in San Antonio de los Baños (Cuba) to be the Cinematography Consultant. He is one of the Founders of the Colombian Society of Cinematographers (ACDF), and a member of the Digital Cinematography Society.

**Diana Trujillo – Art Director**

An architect by profession, currently dedicated to Production Design and Art Direction for Film and TV, Diana is interested in mixing her experience in architecture, design, fashion, photography and art to create a cohesive visual esthetic in film.

Her film credits include award-winning films such as *Satanás, La Milagrosa, Dr. Alemán, Contracorriente* and *Lecciones para un Beso*.

In between films, Diana designs spaces for cultural events, has exhibitions of her own photography, and works as an architecture and visual consultant in Cartagena and Bogotá. She is currently in charge of designing the new image for the Cartagena Film Festival.

**Selma Mutal - Composer**

Born in Lima (Peru) to Dutch parents, Selma Mutal studied composition at the National Conservatory of Amsterdam and later attended the Film Scoring Programme at the ‘Ecole Normale de Musique’ in Paris.

She began her film-scoring career writing the score for *Madeinusa*, directed by Claudia Llosa, which won many awards worldwide. In 2008, Selma Mutal scored Llosa’s second feature film *The Milk of Sorrow*, Golden Bear Winner at Berlin Film Festival 2009. In 2009 she also composed the music for *Undertow*, directed by Javier Fuentes León.

Balancing her work schedule between Paris and other cities, Mutal has composed music for ballet, theatre, and TV documentaries as well. In 2009, she was commissioned by *Radio France Musique* to write an opening composition for the Commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall.
Rodrigo Bellott – Casting Director
Rodrigo was born in Santa Cruz, Bolivia in 1978. He has a BFA in Film, Photography and Visual Arts with a minor in Art History from Ithaca College.

His first student film, Destierro, was one of five films around the world nominated for a student Academy Award in 2001. While still attending college, Rodrigo wrote and directed Dependencia Sexual (Sexual Dependency), his first feature film. The film had its world premiere at the 2003 Locarno Film Festival, where it won the FIPRESCI award. It had tremendous critical reception at over 56 festivals, including Berlin, Rotterdam, Toronto, AFI and Telluride. The film was a box office success in Bolivia, and marked the re-birth of Bolivian cinema as the country’s first official selection competing for "Best Foreign Language Film" at the 2004 Academy Awards. The Los Angeles Times, New York Times and Time Out NY named Dependencia Sexual as one of the 10 best films of 2003.

Rodrigo’s second feature as director, Who Killed the White Llama?, debuted in Bolivia in 2006 and became the highest grossing box office success in Bolivian History. In 2007, VARIETY magazine named Rodrigo one of the TOP TEN Latin American talents to watch.
That same year, Rodrigo worked as casting director of three major international films: La Traque, by French director Laurent Jaoui (starring Franka Potente) as well as CHE part I and II, directed by Academy Award winner Steven Soderbergh, starred by Benicio del Toro. This last film recently premiered in Competition at the 2008 Cannes film Festival and won the Palm D’Or for best Male performance. Since then, he has worked as casting director in 5 other international films including Contracorriente by Javier Fuentes-Leon (Official Selection San Sebastian Film Festival 2009 & Sundance 2010) and Also the Rain by Iciar Bollain (Staring Gael Garcia Bernal and Luis Tosar).

He is currently casting Independent Films in Mexico and Korea while curating his first exhibition in Bolivia as part of a Residence in Kiosko, in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.
END CREDITS

Writer & Director  JAVIER FUENTES-LEÓN

Producers  RODRIGO GUERRERO
            JAVIER FUENTES-LEÓN

Executive Producers  ANDRÉS CALDERÓN
                     CRISTIAN CONTI
                     MICHEL RUBEN
                     ÉMILIE GEORGES
                     OLE LANDSJÖAASEN
                     CHRISTIAN FÜRST
                     ANNETTE PISACANE

Production Supervisor  DELIA GARCÍA
Line Producer  MIRLANDA TORRES
Assistant Director  MANUEL HINOJOSA

Director of Photography  MAURICIO VIDAL, ACDF
Art Director  DIANA TRUJILLO

Editing  ROBERTO BENAVIDES
         JAVIER FUENTES-LEÓN
Editing Supervisor  PHILLIP J. BARTELL
Music  SELMA MUTAL

Casting  RODRIGO BELLOTT
         GUSTAVO VIDAL

Direct Sound  ÉDGRAR LOSTANAU
Sound Design  DANIEL “GATO” GARCÉS
Sound Mix  FRÉDÉRIC THÉRY

Costume Designer  LESLIE HINOJOSA
Hair and Make Up  LUCIANA VALEIRIA SALOMÓN
CAST

Miguel CRISTIAN MERCADO
Mariela TATIANA ASTENGO
Santiago MANOLO CARDONA
Sra. Rosa ATILIA BOSCHETTI (Guest Artist)
Héctor JOSE CHACALTANA
Doña Flor MARIA EDELMIRA PALOMINO
Padre Juan JULIO HUMBERTO CAVERO
Trinidad HAYDEE CÁCERES
Pato EMILRAM COSSIO
Isaura CINDY DIAZ
Tano JUAN PABLO OLIVOS
Jacinto CRISTIAN FERNÁNDEZ
Ana MÓNICA ROSSI
Dr. Fernández GERMAN GONZÁLEZ
Carlota LILIANA ALEGRIÁ SAAVEDRA
Sabino TOMÁS FERNÁNDEZ
Sergio ALFONSO GAMBOA
Baby JAZIEL YENQUE VELIZ

CREW

Production Coordinator Gustavo Saavedra
Production Secretary Claudia García
Set Coordinator Carlos Carhuayal
Location Manager Marcos Camacho
Production Assistants Ricky Cotillo Paeza
Rocío Jaramillo Ortíz
César Leight Barreto
Production Support, Lima Amalia León de Fuentes
Javier Fuentes Villarán
María Cecilia Fuentes
Mario Velásquez
Erver Rojas
Eleana Illescas
Production Coordinator, Colombia Claudia Roca
UNDERTOW (CONTRACORRIENTE)
Page 13 of 19

Administrative and Financing Assistant
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Cynthia Pinet

Legal Services, Colombia
María Elena Bonilla

Accounting
MLV Contadores
Jeannette Pezo
Rocío Baldeón

2nd Assistant Director
Jorge Prado Alvarado
Script
Zarela Mercedes Flores
Video Assist
Paul Ray Córdoba

Casting Producer, Lima
Mariasela Castañeda

Casting Company, Lima
Spiral

Casting Extras
Jackeline Lavado

Casting Producer, Bogotá
Juliana Flórez

Talent Coordinator, Lima
Lorena Semorile

Dialect Coach
Ana María Diminich

Set Decorator
Maribel Villagaray
Prop Master
Napoleón Quintana
Art Assistants
Jhoann Gutiérrez
Pedro Pablo Querebalú
Cristian Parrales

Costume Assistant
Gabriela Novoa

Hair and Make Up Assistant
Elsa Rucoba

Santiago’s Paintings
Luis Felipe Salcedo

Focus Puller
Iván Suzzarini
2nd Camera Assistant
Iván Perleche

Gaffer
Andrés Magallanes
Grips
Justo Diestra
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Page 14 of 19

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Victor Ruiz

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Guillermo Pérez
Steadycam
Guillermo García
Light Rental
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Natividad Jaén
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Driver Light Truck
Ricardo Rioja
Driver Camera Van
Carlos Alberto Rioja
Driver Generator
Juan Ivan Romero Silva

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Amador del Solar
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Runner Negative
Richard Vera Cáceres
Boom Operator
John Gerardo Figueroa
Security
Eddy Purizaga
Javier Oviedo
Baltazar Gutiérrez “Talara”

Laundry
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Project Development
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Scanning/Recording: Tom Mayclim, Trevor Pickard
Customer Service: Nikc Iannelli

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Film Projects Assistant: Yudi Pinzón
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Foley: Daniel “El Gato” Garcés, Camilo Pérez, Jean Collot, José Valenzuela
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Film Projects Producer: Adriana Angel
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Conforming
Master Room
Tech Support Engineer
Marcela Posada
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Still Photography
Poster Photograph
Materials Design
Trailer
Gustavo Saavedra – Director
Héctor Álvarez
Héctor Álvarez
Phillipe Sholz
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MUSIC - SCORE
Original Score Composition
Published by
Violin
Viola
Cello
Guitar and Bass
Music Mix
Selma Mutal
Frédéric Leibovitz Editeur
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Final Mix  LOGODIO s.a.r.l.

Sound Mix  Studio Buzz
Sound Studio France  Cinéphase
Post-Production Manager, France  Alexa Rivero

“El Día Que Me Tocó Nacer”
Written and Performed
By Javier Fuentes-León
Produced by José Manuel Barrios
And Luis García H.

“Electro Song”
Written and Performed
By Manu Blanc

“De La Mano”
Written by Javier Fuentes-León
Performed by Manu Blanc

“No Me Arrepiento de Este Amor”
Written and Performed
By Miriam Bianchi Gilda

“Aunque No Sea Conmigo”
Written by Santiago Díaz Romo
Performed by Celso Piña y Su Ronda Bogotá
Duet with Café Tacuba
Published by Jam Entertainment, Inc.
o/b/o Sacramento Publishing (BMI)

“Mentiras No Mi Amor”
Written by Javier Alexander Villacorta
Performed by Los Villacorta

“Amor Pirata”
Written by Miguel Angel Escalante
Performed by Los Villacorta

“Tu Amor Me Motiva a Vivir”
Written by Pablo Hernández Castillo
Performed by Los Villacorta
“Cumbata”
Written by Ivan Penqueva
Published by Interpulse Publishing Logikal Studio

Shot on Location in Cabo Blanco, Perú.

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