

Himalayan Adventure Film Set for Santa Cruz Film Festival: May 5th – May 13th

High Ambitions in the Himalaya – a documentary with an introspective and inspirational look at the pursuit of big dreams



ager in the Silicon Valley corporate world," he said. "Attempting to climb this mountain and making a film about it represented a heartfelt dream that my corporate colleagues thought was pretty irrational, especially when taking the time off would jeopardize my position during a declining economy. I went through with it anyway and proved to myself that I was much happier following the direction of my heart rather than my rational mind. I quit my corporate job, and now I'm living out a lifelong dream to make inspirational films."

About Lumin

The music in *High Ambitions in the Himalaya* is partly provided by Lumin, a San Francisco-based world music group. Lumin borrows devotional musical forms from South Asia to the Middle East, mixes in dynamic drums and bass, and fuses it all into a very danceable modern electronic groove. Lead singer Irina Mikhailova grew up in Kazakhstan singing Eastern European gypsy songs, and then trained in both western opera and classical middle-eastern vocal forms before jumping into the San Francisco ambient/electronic music scene. Band leader Jeff Stott is an accomplished player of traditional Middle Eastern and Indian instruments including the oud, baglama, yali tambur, and the santoor, as well as a range of percussion instruments. Lumin music samples can be heard on Amazon.com, <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/B000062Y9X/102-5932393-9551303?v=glance>.



Curt Dowdy on Mount Cho Oyu, Tibet

BeLegato Productions, a local film production company, announced that audiences at the Santa Cruz Film Festival will be treated to a preview of a new feature-length documentary, *High Ambitions in the Himalaya*. Screenings of the film will include appearances by adventure filmmaker Curt Dowdy and will be complemented by a live musical performance by San Francisco-based world fusion group Lumin, who also wrote some of the modern, transcendent music featured in the film.

The Santa Cruz Film Festival will be presented from May 5th through May 13th. For *High Ambitions in the Himalaya* venues, screening times and other festival information, please check the festival web site, <http://www.santacruzfilmfestival.com>.

"This film shows there's more to following a dream than arriving at a goal," said Curt Dowdy, the film's director. "We found that just setting out on the journey itself yielded life lessons we never expected, and the value of those experiences were as large as the endeavor."

High Ambitions in the Himalaya follows a team of mountaineers attempting to climb one of the world's highest mountains. One featured climber is John Taske, a survivor of the fatal 1996 Mount Everest tragedy documented in the bestselling book *Into Thin Air*. In 1996, John turned back 200 meters from the Mount Everest summit to save his own life. Now at the age of 61, John still yearns to climb one of the so-called 8000-meter peaks, one of fourteen prized mountains with summits above 26,000 feet, all located in the Himalayan Range.

John and his new teammates embark upon a six week expedition to climb a mountain in the Nepal/Tibet Mount Everest region named Cho Oyu. At 27,000 feet, Cho Oyu is the sixth highest mountain in the world. Each climber candidly shares his unfolding experience and reflections upon oxygen deprivation, extreme cold, and brushes with death among other teams. The climbers, sometimes impassioned and often humbled, discover new personal insights as their quest unfolds.

"It's fitting that this film should debut in Santa Cruz," commented director Curt Dowdy. *High Ambitions* has received tremendous support from the Santa Cruz community, including the help of two Santa Cruz production companies, Digital Media Factory and Streamworks Media. "By working within the sensitivity of the Santa Cruz creative culture, I feel we better captured an introspective look at extreme mountaineering, rather than just assembling another adrenaline-driven adventure film," said Dowdy.

Dowdy found his own form of personal transformation propelled by his experience on Cho Oyu. "I used to be a senior-level man-

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