

RIDDLE FILMS  
PRESENTS

DREAMING  
OF A  
JEWISH  
CHRISTMAS

A LARRY WEINSTEIN FILM



SEA-HI FAMOUS CHINESE FOOD

OPEN

ENTER

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

PRESS KIT

## LOGLINE

The amazing story of a group of Jewish songwriters who wrote the soundtrack to Christmas.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Set almost entirely in a Chinese restaurant, *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas* is an offbeat, irreverent musical documentary that tells the story of a group of Jewish songwriters, including Irving Berlin, Mel Tormé, Jay Livingston, Ray Evans, Gloria Shayne Baker and Johnny Marks, who wrote the soundtrack to Christianity's most musical holiday. It's an amazing tale of immigrant outsiders who became irreplaceable players in pop culture's mainstream - a generation of songwriters who found in Christmas the perfect holiday in which to imagine a better world, and for at least one day a year, make us believe in it.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

Directed by Oscar-nominated director, Larry Weinstein (Inside Hana's Suitcase, Leslie Caron: The Reluctant Star, Making Overtures), *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas* is an offbeat, irreverent documentary that tells the story of a group of Jewish songwriters, including Irving Berlin, Mel Tormé, Jay Livingston, Ray Evans, Gloria Shayne Baker and Johnny Marks, who wrote the soundtrack to the world's most musical holiday. It's an amazing look at the 20th century North American immigrant experience and the extraordinary outburst of musical energy from the children of those immigrants. This new generation rejected their parents' European past and instead embraced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway and, finally, Hollywood. The outsiders began writing the soundtrack to the insiders' American dreams and in doing so, wrote themselves into history.

Telling this story through words and song, *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas* features rarely-seen archival footage, musical performances and interviews with contemporary writers and performers, as well as connoisseurs of North American popular music.

*Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas* depicts a journey — a tale of immigrant outsiders who became irreplaceable players in pop culture's mainstream. They were a generation of songwriters who understood the times they were writing for and who would go on to transform themselves and pop culture at the same time. They found in Christmas the perfect holiday in which to imagine a better world and, for at least one day a year, made us believe in it.

**Featuring interviews with** Ben Sidran (There Was a Fire: Jews, Music & the American Dream), Ophira Eisenberg (The Moth, NPR's Ask Me Another), Robert Harris (Twenty Pieces of Music That Changed the World), Jennifer 8. Lee (The Fortune Cookie Chronicles), Jackie Mason, Rob Kapilow (What Makes It Great), Joshua Plaut, Lisa Geduldig (Kung Pao Kosher Comedy), Mark Breslin, Fr. Thomas Rosica, Mirjam Wenzel (Jewish Museum Frankfurt), Steve March-Tormé and Alan Dershowitz. **With performances by** Steven Page, Tom Wilson (Blackie & the Rodeo Kings), Dione Taylor, David Wall (The Flying Bulgar Klezmer Band), Aviva Chernick, Lemon Bucket Orkestra and more.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES FOR DREAMING OF A JEWISH CHRISTMAS

When the producers, Jason Charters and Liam Romalis first came up with their concept of *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas*, I was jealous that I hadn't thought of it! What a magical idea to create a program that is at once full of Christmas nostalgia, music, drama, wry humour and deep pathos. A potential Christmas perennial with an unexpected but poignant twist. And then, when they asked me to be the director of the film, I was elated, but equally thrilled that I was going to work with a team of like-minded, eccentric souls.

For much of my career, I've tried to come up with music film ideas that attempted to cross artistic lines yet reach out to a large audience—from the quirky revue approach of *All That Bach* (1985) and *September Songs* (1994); to humorous/irreverent documentaries *Making Overtures* (1984), *Mozartballs* (2006) and *The Devil's Horn* (2016) to dramatized comic operas like *Toothpaste* (2001), *Burnt Toast* (2005) and *Mulroney: The Opera* (2011).

But *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas* is a new kind of concoction—a hybrid within a hybrid! It's a drama, a performance film, a documentary; it consists of archives, faux archives, animation and is always musical. Starting from its very title—irreverent (even provocative) and witty—there is the sense that this is a program with thematic and visual power. The true story on which it is based is fraught with tales of pogroms and poverty and a desperate desire for assimilation and acceptance. It's occurred to me that Christ as a Jew, was a shunned outsider in his own time, as historically were so many Jews in Christian society (like red-nosed reindeers)—and that perhaps this is a theme of this film.

But at its heart *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas* is anything but tragic—it is all about pure joy and the celebration of the human spirit. It is infused with Jewish humour and light. That we blend musicians with comedians and experts (who, too, are often comedic) is indicative of the tone of the film. I was thrilled with the wildly varied talents that took part: musicians including Tom Wilson, Steven Page, Aviva Chernick, Dione Taylor; interviewees like comedians Jackie Mason, Ophira Eisenberg and Mark Breslin and experts like Rob Kapilow, Robert Harris and Ben Sidran. And it was truly exhilarating to work with such wonderful classics as "The Christmas Song" (Chestnuts Roasting), "Silver Bells," "Do You Hear What I Hear," and "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer"—all of them recast and re-invented!

I think the visual, musical approach that we devised is also something very special. Set in a Chinese restaurant (the very same restaurant that my family and I frequented as a child) in 1967, when our protagonist is ten years old (as I was in 1967). And within that seemingly unlikely venue we create a magical world with great performances (including an authentic Chinese Lion Dance) interwoven with historical and hysterical context. Ultimately, with this film, perhaps more than any I've had the pleasure of working on, we've aimed for a magical brew—a film that while highly entertaining and infused with joy, wry humour and even overt laughter, is ultimately heart-felt and moving. It's an unusual hybrid of a film that we believe will be a joy to watch.

It's a celebration. A Mitzvah. It's Christmas – the most wonderful time of the year!

Larry Weinstein  
Toronto, September 2017

## PERFORMER BIOS

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### KEVIN BREIT

Kevin Breit has recorded with Norah Jones, Rosanne Cash, k.d. Lang, Hugh Laurie, Cassandra Wilson, Holly Cole, Jane Siberry, Serena Ryder, Taj Mahal, Irma Thomas and countless others. Known for his inimitable guitar playing, exquisite lyrics and eccentric performances, Breit is a Canadian musical treasure. With multiple awards including a Maple Blues Award, National Jazz Award and two Juno Awards for his own recordings, as well as a collective ten Grammy Awards for albums he has appeared on, Kevin is one of the most sought-after guitarists in the country. His latest album is Johnny Goldtooth & The Chevy Casanovas.

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### AVIVA CHERNICK

Writing, recording and performing in Hebrew, Ladino, English and French, Aviva Chernick has been called a “fearless musical adventurer” by CBC Radio’s Tom Allen. She is both a solo artist and the lead singer of Jaffa Road, and her collaborative recordings have garnered many nominations and awards, including Canadian Folk Music Award Nominations for When I Arrived You Were Already There, Where the Light Gets In and The Huppah Project’s Under the Canopy, as well as Juno Award nominations for Where The Light Gets In and Sunplace. Aviva and her co-writers from Jaffa Road won the John Lennon International Songwriting Grand Prize in 2009 for their rendition of “Lo Yisa Goy”, a prayer for peace.

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### STEVEN PAGE

“I’ve always had a sense of wonder about Sixties and Seventies music,” Steven Page has said. “I remember getting Paul McCartney’s second solo album for my 11th birthday, and there’s a picture in it of him standing in front of his 16-track machine in his home studio, with his kid tugging at him. I think from the moment I saw that photo, while listening to this strange album he’d made at his house, I decided I wanted to do the same thing.” Steven got started, making 4-track tapes with friends on weekends, which eventually led to the Barenaked Ladies and six North American Gold and Platinum-certified albums. After embarking on a solo career, Page has collaborated with British singer/songwriter Stephen Duffy, participated in projects with Toronto’s Art of Time Ensemble and scored the music for five Stratford Shakespeare Festival productions. His latest album is Heal Thyself Pt. 1: Instinct.

## PERFORMER BIOS CONTINUED



### TOM WILSON

Singer/songwriter Tom Wilson is a member of two acclaimed Canadian rock bands: Blackie and the Rodeo Kings with Stephen Fearing and Colin Linden; and Lee Harvey Osmond, a collaboration with members of the Cowboy Junkies and the Skydiggers. He sold his first song to George Thorogood when he was eighteen and hasn't looked back since. His songs have been recorded by Mavis Staples, Colin James, Billy Ray Cyrus and Edwin among many others. Tom has also won three Juno Awards, released fourteen albums, dabbles in painting, and is currently at work on his first book, *Beautiful Scars: Steeltown Secrets, Mohawk Skywalkers and the Road Home*, to be released in November 2017 by Doubleday Canada.



### JUSTIN GRAY

Justin Gray is a bassist, composer, producer and educator based in Toronto, Canada. His main influences include jazz, Indian classical and world music, and he is the co-leader of both the Indo-jazz ensemble Monsoon and the contemporary jazz ensemble Gray Matter. In 2010, Justin invented and co-created, with luthier Les Godfrey, the Bass Veena, an instrument designed for Indian classical and Indo-jazz music, which he plays on *Do You Hear What I Hear* with Aviva Chernick. Justin is currently on faculty at Humber College in Toronto, where he leads the Indo-Jazz Collective.



### FRANC-ANTON HARWART

Franc is honoured to have been a part of *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas*. After travelling the world performing on luxury cruise lines (Royal Caribbean and Holland America) and throughout the US, Canada, and Germany performing in mega-musicals (*Miss Saigon*, *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, *The Buddy Holly Story*, etc.) he was thrilled to spend time back home in the Toronto area with the great group of people involved in this film. A proud Canadian Army Veteran and 2-time Regimental Soldier of the Year, Franc has had the honour of performing the National Anthems at both the Rogers Centre in Toronto and Giants Stadium in San Francisco. He is also a past winner of the Los Angeles Ovation Award for Lead Actor in a Musical for the role of the Engineer in *Miss Saigon*. He credits all his successes to incredible support from Mom & Dad and his 3 brothers (and their families) in Canada and his loving wife, Lizz, and awesome 4 girls Emilia, Keira, Renee, and Jacqueline.

## PERFORMER BIOS CONTINUED

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### LEMON BUCKET ORKESTRA

The Lemon Bucket Orkestra is Canada's only balkan-klezmer-gypsy-party-punk-super-band. Born on the streets of Toronto as a busking band in 2010, the original quartet of guerrilla-folk troubadours quickly amassed a battalion of troops armed with brass and bows and started touring the world. They have been heralded as groundbreaking by international media, and have performed at festivals across the globe. They have even gone as far as the eastern front of the war in Ukraine, using their music as catharsis, support, and even a platform for storytelling and information-sharing. Their most recent album, *Moorka*, was nominated for a 2016 Juno Award, and won a Canadian Folk Music award for "Best World Music Album". Lemon Bucket Orkestra was also given the title of "Best Band in Toronto" in NOW Magazine's 2015 "Best of Toronto" issue.

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### GASTON POON

Gaston Poon is a Toronto-based actor whose credits include *Canada: The Story of Us*, the feature film *Roobha* and many television series including *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues*, *ENG* and *Night Heat*.

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### ROGER FENG

Roger Feng is a Toronto-based singer and vocal teacher.

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### DIONE TAYLOR

A pastor's daughter from Saskatchewan, Dione Taylor was born and raised in a family she describes as "really connected to the gift of song." Dione herself began playing the organ at age four and by ten she was the music director and organist at The Shiloh Assembly Apostolic Church in Regina. Bursting onto the music scene with her Juno Award nominated debut album *Open Your Eyes*, Dione has performed across the globe for audiences that have included the President of the United States and Queen Elizabeth II, and was nominated for a Gemini Award for her rendition of Oscar Peterson's *Hymn to Freedom*, which she performed alongside Oliver Jones at the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame Gala. Her latest album, *Born Free*, takes her back to her spiritual and soulful roots.

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## PERFORMER BIOS CONTINUED

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### DAVID WALL

Composer, lyricist and singer David Wall is perhaps best known for the bands he has fronted, including The Bourbon Tabernacle Choir and more recently, the Jewish-inspired Flying Bulgar Klezmer Band and Winnipeg's From Both Ends of the Earth. He has recorded and performed with an eclectic mix of artists such as The Barenaked Ladies, Big Sugar, Lorraine Segato and Ken Whiteley, and has also collaborated on multi-media projects with architect Bruce Mau and filmmaker John Greyson. David spent two years studying cantorial music and has received several Canadian Screen Award nominations for his work scoring film and television.

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## EXPERT BIOS

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### JENNIFER 8 LEE

Jennifer 8. Lee is co-founder and CEO of Plympton, a San Francisco-based literary studio that innovates in digital publishing. The daughter of Chinese immigrants and a fluent speaker of Mandarin Chinese herself, Jennifer grew up eating her mother's authentic Chinese food in her family's New York City kitchen before graduating from Harvard in 1999 with a degree in applied mathematics and economics, followed by study at Beijing University. A former New York Times reporter, Jennifer is one of the producers of *The Search for General Tso*, a documentary which premiered at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival, and the author of the New York Times-bestselling book, *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles* (Twelve, 2008).

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### ROB BOWMAN

Rob Bowman's work as an interpreter and documentarian of historical recordings of popular music has been recognized internationally. A five-time Grammy nominee, he won in 1996 for Best Album Notes for *The Complete Stax/Volt Soul Singles, Vol. 3: 1972-1975*, which he co-produced. Other nominations include Best Album Notes for *The Malaco Records Story: The Last Soul Company* and *The Complete Stax Singles, Vol. 1 1959-1968*, Best Historical Reissue for *The Otis Redding Story* and Best Album Notes for *The Stax Story*, which he co-produced. Rob is also a professor of ethnomusicology at York University in Toronto, and his book, *Soulsville, U.S.A. – The Story of Stax Records*, has garnered numerous honours, including the Sweet Soul Music Award at the Poretta Soul Festival and the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award.

## EXPERT BIOS CONTINUED



### MARK BRESLIN

Mark Breslin opened the first Yuk Yuk's comedy club in the basement of Toronto's Church Street Community Centre in 1976. Over the next decade, Yuk Yuk's would expand across Canada to be the most recognized comedy chain in the country. Mark is the author of three books: *Zen and Now* (Somerville House), a popular Brian Mulroney joke book, *Son of a Meech* (Random House), and an autobiographical novel, *Control Freaked* (Insomniac Press). He has also written and narrated two audio books published by Harper Collins, titled *Yuk Yuk's Guide to Canadian Stand-Up and Rarities* and *Road Warriors*. Mark is the former producer of *Late Night with Joan Rivers* and *The Yuk Yuk's Great Canadian Laugh Off* annual TV special for The Comedy Network.



### ALAN DERSHOWITZ

Professor Alan M. Dershowitz is a Brooklyn native who has been called "the best-known criminal lawyer in the world," and "America's most public Jewish defender." He is the Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. He has published more than a thousand articles in magazines, newspapers, journals and blogs and is the author of 30 fiction and non-fiction works, including *The New York Times* #1 bestseller *Chutzpah*. He has written, taught and lectured about history, philosophy, psychology, literature, mathematics, theology, music, sports—even delicatessens. He has been the subject of two *New Yorker* cartoons, a *New York Times* crossword puzzle, a *Trivial Pursuit* question, and there is even a sandwich at Fenway Park named after him—pastrami, of course.



### OPHIRA EISENBERG

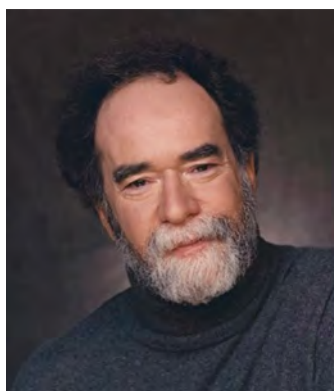
Originally from Calgary, Alberta, Ophira Eisenberg is the host of NPR's and WNYC's weekly trivia, puzzle and game show *Ask Me Another*, half raucous pub trivia, half comedy talk show with witty banter, celebrity guests, and live music blended in. She has appeared on *The Late Late Show*, the TV series *Girls*, on Comedy Central, VH-1, *The Today Show*, CNN, Oxygen Network, and in her own comedy special for CTV's Comedy Now. Ophira's memoir, *Screw Everyone: Sleeping My Way to Monogamy* (Seal Press, 2013) was recently optioned by Zucker Productions for a feature film. Her writing has also been featured in five anthologies including: *I Killed: True Stories of the Road from America's Top Comics*, *Rejected: Tales of the Failed, Dumped, and Canceled*, and *Heeb Magazine's Sex, Drugs, and Gelfite Fish*. Ophira is a regular contributor to *The Moth*.

## EXPERT BIOS CONTINUED



### LISA GEDULDIG

In 1993, San Francisco comedian Lisa was on her way to perform in South Hadley, Massachusetts at what she thought was going to be a comedy club. After telling Jewish jokes at what turned out to be a Chinese restaurant, a conversation led to the creation of Kung Pao Kosher Comedy. Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2017, Kung Pao was started as a community service for all Jews who have ever been stuck on Christmas with nothing to do but hide under the covers, contemplate midnight Mass, or visit a Chinese restaurant. The audience began as 99% Jewish and has expanded to include Chinese-Jewish couples, interfaith couples, singles, families, gays, straights, undecideds, those who are far from home, and just generally people who like smart comedy mixed with Chinese food. Henny Youngman performed his last show, at 91, on the Kung Pao stage in 1997.



### ROBERT HARRIS

There may be nobody better at explaining the significance of music on culture at large than Robert Harris. A long-time music journalist, writer, teacher and broadcaster, Robert was the host and producer of "I Hear Music", a weekly program presented on CBC Radio, and he continues to contribute stories to CBC's The Sunday Edition. These include "20 Pieces of Music That Changed the World," "The Great American Songbook," "The True History of Christmas Music," and "The Christmas Music of Black America." Robert is the author of two books, What to Listen for in Mozart, and What to Listen for in Beethoven and is the classical music critic for The Globe and Mail.



### ROB KAPILOW

A conductor, composer, commentator and author, the Kansas City Star has described Rob Kapilow as being "...as lively as a top-flight sports announcer and as entertaining as a stand-up comedian." He is a frequent contributor to many of North America's finest orchestras and halls including the Lincoln Centre, the TSO, National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Calgary Philharmonic and has also conducted many new works of musical theatre, including the Tony Award-winning Broadway production of Nine. Rob is the author of two highly popular books published by Wiley/Lincoln Center: All You Have To Do Is Listen, which won the PSP Prose Award for "Best Book in Music and the Performing Arts," and What Makes It Great?, the first book of its kind to be especially designed for the iPad with embedded musical examples. He is currently working on a new book for Norton/Liveright on music from the American Songbook entitled Listening to America to be published in 2017.

## EXPERT BIOS CONTINUED



### JACKIE MASON

Born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Jackie Mason was raised on the Lower East Side of Manhattan surrounded by rabbis. His father, grandfather, great grandfather, and great, great-grandfather were all rabbis, as are his three brothers. No surprise that at age 25, Jackie Mason was ordained a rabbi. Three years later, he quit his job in a synagogue to become a comedian because, he says, "Somebody in the family had to make a living." From humble comic beginnings in New York, the Borscht Belt, and comedy clubs around the country, Jackie Mason rose to become one of the most famous comics in America by the early 1960's.



### JOSHUA PLAUT

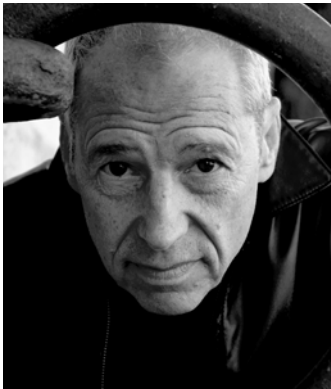
Rabbi Joshua Eli Plaut comes by his career honestly. His father and grandfather were both rabbis before him, and his uncle, Guenther, was for many years the Rabbi of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto. Plaut is the author of *A Kosher Christmas: 'Tis the Season to be Jewish*. A product of 20 years of research, it is the first book to be written on Jews and Christmas in America. Based in New York City, Joshua is Rabbi at the Metropolitan Synagogue in Manhattan and the full time executive director of the American Friends of Rabin Medical Center, a national non-profit charity helping to raise funds and awareness for one of Israel's premier hospitals, the Rabin Medical Center of Petach Tikvah. Prior to this, Rabbi Plaut was Executive Director of the Center for Jewish History, as well as Jewish Chaplain at MIT and Trinity College, and Rabbi in Martha's Vineyard and Glastonbury, Connecticut.



### FR. THOMAS ROSICA

Fr. Thomas Rosica is a priest of the Congregation of St. Basil. He was born in Rochester, New York and holds advanced degrees in Theology and Sacred Scripture from Regis College in the Toronto School of Theology, the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem. He is the founding Chief Executive Officer of Salt and Light Television, Canada's first national Catholic Television Network, and served as English language assistant to the Vatican's Holy See Press Office from 2013-16. A respected biblical scholar, lecturer, speaker, retreat preacher and author, Fr. Rosica has received awards from the Governments of Italy and Israel, and two Jubilee Medals from Queen Elizabeth for his work with young people.

## EXPERT BIOS CONTINUED



### BEN SIDRAN

Ben Sidran is the host of NPR's Peabody Award-winning series *Jazz Alive*, and VH-1 television's *New Visions* series, which received a Cable Ace Award for Best Music Series. A pianist, producer, singer and composer, he has recorded more than thirty solo albums, including the Grammy-nominated *Concert for Garcia Lorca*, and produced recordings for such noted artists as Van Morrison, Diana Ross, Rickie Lee Jones, Mose Allison and Steve Miller (with whom he co-wrote the hit song "Space Cowboy"). Ben is the composer of the soundtrack for the acclaimed film *Hoop Dreams*, and has authored two books on jazz: *Black Talk*, a cultural history of the music, and *Talking Jazz*, a series of conversations with inspirational musicians. He holds a PhD. in American Studies from Sussex University, Brighton. Other works include the memoir *A Life in the Music and There Was a Fire: Jews, Music and the American Dream*.



### STEVE MARCH-TORMÉ

Steve was born in New York City to the multi-talented Mel Tormé and the former model/actress, Candy Tockstein. They were divorced when Steve was young, and Candy married Hal March, an actor/comedian best known as the host of NBC's *The \$64,000 Question Show*, but who also starred on Broadway in Neil Simon's *Come Blow Your Horn*. An avid baseball player and fan growing up, Steve's dream was to play for the Yankees. He listened to games on the radio, and following every game he'd switch to the Top 40 stations and sing along with such artists as The Four Seasons, Nat King Cole, The Temptations and Ricky Nelson. Steve has released four albums as well as the two-disc, four-sided CD/DVD, *Tormé Sings Tormé* and is a radio host in Green Bay, WI and Lake Havasu City, AZ.



### MIRJAM WENZEL

Dr. Mirjam Wenzel is director of the Jewish Museum Frankfurt. It is the first Jewish Museum established in the Federal Republic of Germany after the Holocaust. Beforehand, she was Head of Digital and Publishing at the Jewish Museum Berlin, responsible for conveying German-Jewish history in print and online publications, digital media applications and installations. She studied comparative literature, theatre and political science in Berlin, Tel Aviv and Munich. She has published widely on Holocaust representation, critical theory and German-Jewish cultural history and has co-curated several exhibitions, including *Wonderyears: New Reflections on the Shoah* and *Nazism in Israel* and *Noalog: New Media Experiences*.

## CREW BIOS

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### LARRY WEINSTEIN, Director

Larry Weinstein is a Canadian film director of theatrical and television documentaries, performance films, and dramas. The majority of his films centre on musical subjects and the depiction of the creative process, while his other subjects range from the horrors of war to the pleasures of football.

Weinstein began making films as a teenager while attending Earl Haig Secondary School. He then went on to attend York University's film school. This led to teaming up with Barbara Willis Sweete and Niv Fichman to co-found Rhombus Media in 1979. Weinstein's directorial debut came in 1984, with *MAKING OVERTURES: THE STORY OF A COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA*, which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Short and won the first-ever Best Documentary Gemini Award in Canada. Best known for classical-music projects such as *RAVEL'S BRAIN*, *BEETHOVEN'S HAIR* and *MOZARTBALLS*, Weinstein has made thirty-six films that have garnered dozens of awards from around the world, including three International Emmy Awards (and several other Emmy nominations) and twelve Canadian Screen/Gemini Awards, as well as other major awards in Canada, the United States, France, the Czech Republic, Mexico, and Australia.

His films have been broadcast in over 40 countries and he has been the subject of many international film retrospectives including those at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, The Jakarta International Film Festival in Indonesia, Doc Aviv in Israel, MOFFOM (Music on Film-Film on Music) in the Czech Republic, The Look of Sound in Germany, Impara L'Arte in Italy, the Havana Film Festival in Cuba, and a recent tribute at TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto. In 1998, York University awarded him an honorary doctorate.

In 2015, Weinstein founded Larry Weinstein Productions and his distribution company, Dead Cow International. Weinstein's 2016 documentary *THE DEVIL'S HORN* premiered at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. His other 2016 film, *LESLIE CARON: THE RELUCTANT STAR*, premiered at the TIFF Bell Lightbox.

## CREW BIOS CONTINUED



### JASON CHARTERS, Writer/Producer

Jason Charters is one of the founding partners at Riddle Films, an award-winning company dedicated to capturing the worlds of the performing arts and culture and making them accessible to as broad an audience as possible. His most recent credits include THE GROUP OF SEVEN GUITAR PROJECT, a film installation and documentary in partnership with The McMichael Canadian Art Collection; the interactive documentary RE:COLLECTION, an exploration of the stories in the Azrieli Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program; and the upcoming documentary PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT ME WHEN I'M GONE: THE SEARCH FOR LEON REDBONE.

From 2010-2013, Charters wrote and produced the Canadian Screen Award nominated music series GOD'S GREATEST HITS, a look at the most loved spirituals, gospel songs and hymns ever written. The series featured many inspiring performances, including ones by The Blind Boys of Alabama, The Carolina Chocolate Drops, Sarah Harmer, Judy Collins, The Rebirth Brass Band and Rick Wakeman. Prior to that he wrote and produced the award-winning 13-part documentary series SEX + RELIGION, produced the live action short film NOISE, (Special Jury Mention at Clermont-Ferrand, Genie Award nominee for Best Live Action Short), and wrote and produced the Gemini Award-winning, seven-part documentary music series GOSPEL CHALLENGE.

Other recent credits include THE ROLSTON SESSIONS, featuring performances by ten of the world's leading string quartets; THE ONCE: LIVE AT THE STAGEHOUSE, shot at the scenic Stagehouse Studio in St. Phillip's, Newfoundland; the documentary BRUCE COCKBURN: PACING THE CAGE; and collaborations with musicians Serena Ryder, The Flying Bulgar Klezmer Band, Dione Taylor, dancer and choreographer Danny Grossman, The Gryphon Trio, and percussion ensemble Samba Squad.

## CREW BIOS CONTINUED



### LIAM ROMALIS, Producer

Liam Romalis got his start as a producer making videos for such eclectic artists as JP Cormier, The St. Lawrence String Quartet, Samba Squad and Frank Leahy. In 1998, his first documentary, PLEASURES OF URBAN DECAY, on New York cartoonist Ben Katchor, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and some people even said it was good. His follow-up film, the Gemini Award-winning documentary CARRY ME HOME, which he both produced and directed, told the little known story of Canadian-born Robert Nathaniel Dett, a child of the Underground Railroad and one of America's greatest African American classical composers.

In 2003, Romalis co-founded Riddle Films, a company dedicated to featuring stories and performances from the world of the performing arts and culture. There he has worked with such varied subjects as astronaut Roberta Bondar, urban philosopher Jane Jacobs, dancer and choreographer Danny Grossman and institutions like The Banff Centre, the Royal Conservatory of Music and The McMichael Collection of Canadian Art.

His other credits include the documentary and film installation THE GROUP OF SEVEN GUITAR PROJECT, in partnership with the McMichael Canadian Art Collection; the performance documentary THE ROLSTON SESSIONS, featuring ten of the world's greatest string quartets, THE ONCE: LIVE AT THE STAGEHOUSE with acclaimed Newfoundland trio The Once; the music series GOD'S GREATEST HITS, featuring performers like The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Judy Collins, Leon Bibb, New Orleans greats The Zion Harmonizers and Rick Wakeman; and the upcoming documentary PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT ME WHEN I'M GONE: THE SEARCH FOR LEON REDBONE.

## CREW BIOS CONTINUED



### AARON DAVIS, Music Director

Aaron Davis is an eclectic composer, arranger and keyboardist who is perhaps best known as a founding member of the Holly Cole Trio and as a composer of music for film. In 1979, he helped found a worldbeat band called Manteca, for whom he wrote and played keyboards from 1979 until 1991, and again in 2008. Aaron released two of his own discs, NOUVELLE AFRIQUE in 1983 and NEON BLUE in 1988, with Molly Johnson singing the title track.

Aaron has done orchestral & choral arrangements for artists including Alison Krauss, Natalie McMaster, Eliana Cuevas, Sarah Slean, Leahy, the Ennis Sisters, the Canadian Brass, Quartetto Gelato, Sophie Milman, Kevin Breit, and the Iseler Singers.

Orchestral writing of a different sort has also played a part in Davis' film writing. Since 1985 he has scored more than 100 films, many of them with his film-writing partner John Lang. Aaron has been nominated for three Genie awards and four Gemini awards. Aaron and John won a Gemini in 1996 for scoring NO PRICE TOO HIGH, won in 1997 for EBOLA: INSIDE AN OUTBREAK, and won a 2006 Gemini for EVERY DAY EINSTEIN. In 2008, they were nominated for a Gemini for HOW TO STOP A HURRICANE. They were also nominated for Genie awards for Clement Virgo's RUDE (1995) and LOVE COME DOWN (2000), and Aaron was nominated for OFFICE PARTY in 1989.

In 2006, Aaron started arranging and playing with singer Measha Breuggergosman. He produced and arranged I'VE GOT A CRUSH ON YOU and the music for the film SONGS OF FREEDOM, which was produced by Barbara Willis Sweete and Rhombus Media. Aaron's arrangements for the Art of Time Ensemble have been sung by guest artists Sarah Slean, Gregory Hoskins, Melanie Doane and Steven Page. He has also worked with Mary Margaret O'Hara, Serena Ryder, Hawksley Workman, Angelique Kidjo, Wycliffe Gordon and Ed Robertson.

Since 2011, Aaron has been working on art installations with his wife, visual artist Candida Girling. They created installations as part of Toronto's Nuit Blanche festival in 2011 and 2012.

Recent CD credits include Buffy St. Marie's Polaris and Juno award-winning POWER IN THE BLOOD, as well as CDs by Amelia Curran and Rose Cousins.

## CREW BIOS CONTINUED

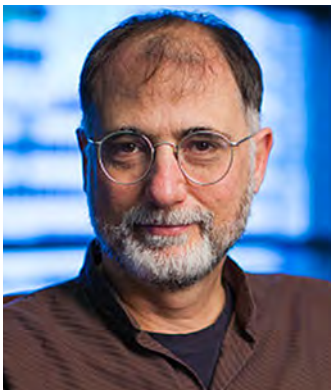


### MARIE-ODILE DEMAY, Executive Producer

In 2008, Marie-Odile Demay founded MODemay Entertainment, managing the television catalogues of cultural producers such as the Montreal International Jazz Festival, multi-award-winning Rhombus Media, and several European production companies.

Ms. Demay has also served as an executive producer for films including *bODY\_remix / gOLDBERG\_vARIATIONS* (2007), three Cirque Eloize performances: *NEBBIA* (2010), *RAIN* (2012) and *CIRKOPOLIS* (2013), and the documentaries: *30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL* (2009); *10 X DIX: A PORTRAIT OF OTTO DIX* (2011); *THE GREAT WHITE SHARK* (2014); *KING OF THE RIVER, SEASONS 1-3* (2015); *KING OF THE WORLD* (2015); *A FILM AND ITS ERA: LOST IN TRANSLATION* (2015); *LOUISE LECAVALIER: MOVEMENT* (2017) and *THE MISSION OF KENT NAGANO* (2017).

In addition to producing her own content for television, Ms. Demay specializes in the creation and production of trans-media content for institutions, museums and in collaboration with other producers. She also writes chronicles for the Huffington Post Quebec.



### DAVID NEW, Editor

David New is an editor, writer and director, based in Toronto.

He has directed documentaries on subjects ranging from weevils to electric cars, from iguanas to Muhammad Ali. *MUSEUM SECRETS: INSIDE THE LOUVRE* tells stories of mystery and darkness that lie behind the artifacts in the great French museum. *THE MAN WHO SAVED GEOMETRY* is a visual journey into multi-dimensional space through the eyes of the great mathematician Donald Coxeter. *THE POLAR SEA* takes a voyage through the Northwest Passage in a time of global warming, learning from scientists, activists, artists, and the people who live there. And *KARL KOECHER: STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND* unfolds the shadowy story of a spy, a Czech mole who penetrated the heart of the CIA at the height of the cold war. He was nominated for a Gemini award and a Golden Sheaf for *DINNER AT THE EDGE*, a one-hour performing arts film.

David has also won a Golden Sheaf Award and three Geminis for editing, and has been nominated for six other Geminis. In 2016, he won the CSA award for best editing in a documentary for the film *SONGS OF FREEDOM*.

## CREW BIOS CONTINUED



### **KIARASH SADIGH, Director of Photography**

Kiarash Sadigh is an Iranian born Canadian Cinematographer who has been an active lighting cameraman in filming many documentaries, commercials, feature films and music videos since his graduation from Humber College in 2004. His many credits include the Vice documentary series RISE, the Super Channel Documentary WHY HORROR? Animal Planet's MY PET'S GONE VIRAL, Snoop Dogg's and Kardinal Offishall's featured videos with Audio Playground and the indie horror feature film THE CHAIR directed by Brett Sullivan. Kiarash has been a long-time collaborator with Riddle Films for which he has shot CBC's THE ONCE: LIVE AT THE STAGEHOUSE, GROUP OF SEVEN GUITARS and VisionTV's series SEX + RELIGION and GOD'S GREATEST HITS for which he received a Canadian Screen Award nomination for Best Cinematography in a Music Series.



### **RICHARD SPENCE-THOMAS, Post Production Sound**

Richard Spence-Thomas began his career in sound before he could walk. His father started Spence-Thomas Audio Post in 1968 and since has become one of the most accomplished post production facilities in Toronto. Now at the helm, Richard has experience in almost every aspect of the family business. Credits include the film versions of Hamlet, The Adventures of Pericles and The Taming of the Shrew with the Stratford Shakespeare Company, the documentary AKA Doc Pomus, the recent Blurred Lines: Inside the Art World, which screened at both the 2017 Hot Docs and Tribeca Film Festivals, and dozens of live action and animated television series, including Museum Secrets and Paw Patrol. Richard has been nominated for four Canadian Screen and Gemini Awards, winning for Museum Secrets and Riddle Films' Gospel Challenge.



### **GARY VAUGHAN, Sound Recording, Editing and Mixing**

During his 33 years in film and television, Gary has worked on a variety of films, documentaries, television series and music specials. Nominated 4 times for Gemini and CSA awards (with 2 wins for "Museum Secrets" and "Gospel Challenge"), Gary continues to collaborate on many projects, including sound editing for The Stratford Festival's slate of Shakespearian plays for CBC and Cineplex, The Nature of Things documentary "The Equalizer", a 26 part children's music series and a recording project with seven of Canada's greatest guitarists including Bruce Cockburn and Don Ross.

## CREW BIOS CONTINUED

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### **MARIAN WIHAK, Production Designer**

Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Marian trained as a theatre designer, and studied visual art at the University of Regina, Dalhousie University, The Banff Centre, the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, OCAD and the Studio Arts Centre International in Florence, Italy. She completed a Creative Residency at Banff in 2009, and was the recipient of a 2008 Canada Council Grant for Research & Creation and a Central Canada Finalist in the 2001 RBC New Canadian Painting. Her work is currently in corporate, private and museum collections across North America.

Marian's solo exhibition **BOUNDLESS: SUBLIME MAELSTROM** opened at the Art Gallery of Regina, and has subsequently been held at Ottawa's Cube Gallery in and the Rotunda Gallery. A panoramic and immersive installation of large-scale oil paintings, the exhibition marks the beginning of an integration of her painting practice with her extensive design experience creating 3-dimensional environments for theatre and film.

Wihak's design work has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a Gemini nomination for Gordon Pinsent's **HEYDAY** in 2007, a Dora Mavor Moore nomination for **THE LEISURE SOCIETY** at Toronto's Factory Theatre, and the Gemini Award for Best Production Design for both **SEPTEMBER SONGS: THE MUSIC OF KURT WEIL**, produced by Rhombus Media, and **PIT PONY**, set in Cape Breton, 1900.

In 2010, Marian designed **MULRONEY: THE OPERA** for Rhombus Media, which screened as part of the Saturday Afternoon at the Met series, as well as the World Premiere of **BETHUNE IMAGINED** at the Factory Theatre. More recent credits include **THE SKYJACKERS TALE**, **FOR LOVE AND HONOR** and **GOOD WITCH**.

Marian is currently taking an Interdisciplinary Masters in Art, Media and Design at OCADU (in part time studies) where she is working with alternative modes of materialization to expand the possibilities of immersive and experiential environments, collaborating with the wide range of artists, scientists and designers in the program. In May of 2011, she immensely enjoyed a 3-week residency affiliated with the program, on Fogo Island, Newfoundland.

## CAST & CREDITS

### DIRECTOR

Larry Weinstein

### PRODUCERS

Jason Charters  
Liam Romalis

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Marie-Odile Demay

### WRITER

Jason Charters

### EDITOR

David New

### CINEMATOGRAPHER

Kiarash Sadigh

### SOUND

Richard Spence-Thomas  
Gary Vaughan

### PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Marian Wihak

### MUSIC

Aaron Davis

### PRODUCTION COMPANY

Riddle Films

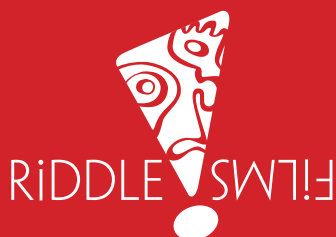
### CAST

Rob Bowman, Aviva Chernick,  
Alan Dershowitz, Ophira  
Eisenberg, Robert Harris,  
Rob Kapliow, Jennifer 8. Lee,  
Jackie Mason, Steven Page,  
Ben Sidran, Dione Taylor,  
David Wall, Tom Wilson

### PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH

CBC, The Documentary  
Channel, NDR, ARTE, SVT,  
RSI, YLE, NRK, The Canada  
Media Fund and The Rogers  
Cable Network Fund

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



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