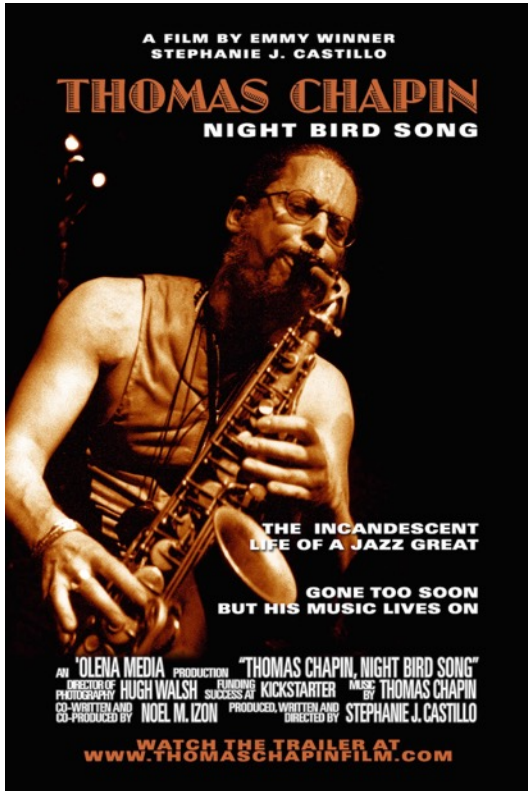


PRESS KIT



Contact:

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[Online Press Kit](#)

LOGLINE

Destined to be among the great virtuosos of jazz, Thomas Chapin, an alto sax and flute master, was nearing the pinnacle of his meteoric rise when leukemia took him at the age of 40 in 1998. Though fame and world recognition have eluded him despite the mark he left on jazz in the '80s and '90s, his passionate life and incandescent music remain unforgettable to fans who knew him and musicians who played with him. And today, his music is inspiring a new generation of artists and musicians who have discovered him. The new documentary THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG draws an intimate portrait of this musical explorer who pushed and transcended the boundaries of jazz and dissolved the distinctions between sound

and music. Because of this film, he will no longer be only a footnote in jazz. His indelible mark will be known.

SYNOPSIS

THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG

THE INCANDESCENT LIFE OF A JAZZ GREAT

Destined to be among the great virtuosos of jazz, Thomas Chapin, an alto sax and flute master, was nearing the pinnacle of his meteoric rise when leukemia took him at the age of 40 in 1998. Though fame and world recognition have eluded him despite the mark he left on jazz in the '80s and '90s, his passionate life and incandescent music remain unforgettable to fans who knew him and musicians who played with him. And today, his music is inspiring a new generation of artists and musicians who have discovered him. The new documentary THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG draws an intimate portrait of this musical explorer who pushed and transcended the boundaries of jazz and dissolved the distinctions between sound and music. Because of this film, he will no longer be only a footnote in jazz. His indelible mark will be known.

From his early days in jazz school as a young prodigy, to his formative years with big-band showman Lionel Hampton, and then to his immediate success with his own “power” jazz trio, it is clear that Thomas Chapin was ahead of his time. According to music critics and musicians who played with him, no

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one since the 80's and 90's when he lived has bent the genre of jazz the way he did or has emerged with the innovative originality that he played with.

Who was Thomas Chapin, where did he come from, and where was he going? This intimate, 140-minute documentary (two-parts) will unfold his fascinating story, beginning with his rapid ascent as a jazz artist and as the Thomas Chapin Trio enters the wildly inventive, experimental days of music during the 1980's and the 1990's when the "downtown scene" of New York City exploded with artists who were pushing the music and bending genres. The journey through his incandescent life and music will mesmerize and inspire.



Director Stephanie J. Castillo captures Chapin's story through an amazing treasure trove of photographs and archival footage that document his career. Chapin himself seemed to have kept every document and shred of his musical existence (most of it archived at Duke University's Rubenstein Library), greatly aiding the detailed and compelling story woven by Castillo, a 1993 EMMY winner. Adding great depth to the storytelling is Chapin's highly innovative and highly original music that dictate a lot of the film's editing style (the film is edited by Castillo). Castillo calls it a "film collage", in describing the feel of her epic creation. Viewers who have seen the rough cut call it mesmerizing and absorbing.

With 40-plus interviews and no narrator, Castillo's engaging storytellers weave a rich and moving tapestry, accented by Chapin's own collages, journal entries and poems. Fellow musicians, family members, and jazz writers who followed Chapin's career through its ascent and then decent into the illness that took his life provide insightful and soulful windows to who Chapin was. As the film soars to the heights of Chapin's musical life, viewers will be taken on an amazing, joyful biographical journey to what Chapin called his "abyss of despair", which Chapin also described as "the realm of the miraculous." Just as he had transcended the boundaries of jazz and music, Chapin's tragic end proves to be transcendent even as his life had to end too soon.

The film contains moments of jazz history, as Chapin's life is put into the context of his time and as he is defined by his times. In his day, in jazz, there was a schism -- between the traditional and the avant-garde, between what was known as the uptown and the downtown camps of jazz. NIGHT BIRD SONG will show how Chapin made no distinctions in the music he composed and played as he freely moved between both camps and bridged the gap. Rare in this way for his day, Chapin became known an ambassador from the downtown to the uptown and was called "a centerpiece" and a powerful force despite the schism.

Bob Blumenthal, jazz writer-critic of the Boston Globe wrote this: *Affirmation, honesty, passion, risk, the coherence of successful collective enterprise; all of the things we expect from the strongest and most lasting jazz permeated the music of Thomas Chapin. In every note he played ... and until the leukemia that took Chapin's life on February 13, 1998 interrupted his ascendance – Chapin was a study in the testing and exceeding of limits.*

In every live set and on every recording, he plunged headlong into the musical abyss and responded with a driven yet upbeat concept that held humor, cataclysm and contemplation in rare equilibrium. The sound tapestries that resulted – solidly rooted in a tradition Chapin knew intimately, yet straining that tradition's boundaries at every turn – were both lucid and combustible. They remain just as inspiring now that Chapin is gone. "The point is to stay awake and alive to what is going on," he wrote in 1996; and the sounds Chapin left assure that he continues to be a living force.



This two-part documentary film seeks to honor the music and memory of Thomas Chapin which, after more than 15 years since his death, is in danger being relegated to the footnotes of jazz.

Biographies



Stephanie J. Castillo, Director/Producer/Writer

Stephanie is former Hawaii newspaper journalist and an EMMY Award-winning independent filmmaker. She has been developing television documentaries full-time since 1989. It is her passion. Her film awards are many. Her Hawaii-based production company, 'Olena Productions is her vehicle for expressing her film ideas. This documentary project, THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG, is her 10th documentary film. She has an Executive MBA (2000) from the University of Hawaii and was a 1999 Selected Professions Fellow with the American Association

of University Women.

Her 1993 EMMY-winning film was her first documentary film, a co-production with Hawaii Public Television. SIMPLE COURAGE told the tragic story of Hawaii's leprosy epidemic in the late 1800's and the courageous intervention of Belgian missionary priest, Father Damien. The film drew parallels with how the AIDS epidemic was being handled in the 1980's, the time of that epidemic's height.

Three of her other documentaries were aired by PBS, including AN UNTOLD TRIUMPH, a WWII story that she co-wrote/associate produced and which aired for four-straight years in PBS national prime time. For more information on her film work, go to www.olenamedia.com

Noel M. Izon, Co-Producer/Co-Writer

Noel "Sonny" Izon is a veteran filmmaker with over four decades of film and television experience. His films have won nearly every national and international film and video awards. More recently, he has concentrated on feature length historical documentaries involving World War II. His trilogy of Forgotten WWII Stories is two-thirds complete. The first, *An Untold Triumph*, a multiple award winner narrated by actor Lou Diamond Philipps premiered on prime time national PBS in May of 2005. The second, *Choc'late Soldiers* from the USA narrated by actor Shemar Moore. The third, *An Open Door: Holocaust Rescue in the Philippines*, is slated for completion in 2016. It is the story of how the Philippines was able to provide refuge for 1,305 Jewish souls between 1935 and 1941. The prestigious Jewish Eye International Film Festival in Ashkelon Israel screened it as a work-in progress at the November 2013 Festival. sonnyzon@aol.com

TIMELINES

- The film has been in the making since January of 2012.
- A Kickstarter campaign in Feb. 2013 raised \$51,552 from 224 backers.
- Film completion is scheduled for early January 2016.
- Theater/museum showcasing and film festivals available starting February 2016.
- National and international TV release — unknown
- DVD with Special Features slated for Summer 2016.

FILM'S BUDGET

\$175,000



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August 15, 2013

Grants Administrator
Catapult Film Fund
39 Mesa Street, Suite 209
San Francisco, CA 94129

Re: The Thomas Chapin Film Project

Dear Grants Administrator:

We are writing in support of the very worthy THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG project. This documentary, by EMMY-winning filmmaker Stephanie J. Castillo, will reveal the never-before-told story of Thomas Chapin—the beloved, phenomenal jazz multi-instrumentalist, composer, and educator from Manchester, Connecticut. Castillo is seeking funding to help move this 90-minute film forward toward its slated completion by late 2014 or early 2015.

In his early twenties, Thomas Chapin played with Lionel Hampton, went on to enjoy a remarkable, trailblazing career in the uptown and downtown jazz clubs of New York City in the 1980s and '90s, and played on many of the world's biggest stages. Although struck down by leukemia at age 40 in 1998, Chapin remains very much alive in his recordings, compositions and, as one music reviewer put it so well, "in a wealth of memories in the hearts and minds of anyone who was ever touched by his passionate music or his friendly, unassuming yet deeply spiritual and intellectual presence." The film will demonstrate that Chapin bequeathed a rich, life-affirming legacy.

Chapin's poignant story will be told with great intimacy and affection by those who knew him best. Its main storyteller will be Mario Pavone, the bassist in Chapin's trio for seven years and his collaborator for 18 years. With Castillo's skillful direction, Pavone will take us on a filmic journey of where and why the music is energetic and powerful. He and others close to Chapin will tell tales of struggle, love and brotherhood, the magnetic, emotional, transcendent connection that develops among musicians. In an interview that will appear in the film, Pavone said, "I lived the Thomas Chapin story. "I still miss the music I never got to hear." And, "After he died, I couldn't play for two years." Assuredly, the film will be deeply satisfying, profoundly enriching, and will greatly add to the under-represented 1980s and 90s cultural history of jazz music.

NIGHT BIRD SONG's recent crowd-funding success at Kickstarter.com, which raised \$51,552 and allowed Castillo to begin shooting the film this summer, is a testament to the great will that abounds to see this story told and shared.



PRESS KIT

Akasha, Inc.
The Non-Profit for the Legacy of Thomas Chapin

P.O. Box 721032 Jackson Heights, NY 11372 Tel. 718/476-0766
www.thomaschapinfilm.com

To: Catapult Film Fund

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to share my strong support for funding Stephanie Castillo, award-winning Emmy independent filmmaker, and her documentary-in-the-works, *Thomas Chapin, Night Bird Song* about my late jazz musician-husband. Thomas was an important figure in the jazz world in both NYC's downtown experimental scene as well as the uptown traditionalist jazz world during the 80s and 90s. He was a celebrated bandleader, saxophonist-flautist and composer who in his 20's was Lionel Hampton's musical director and lead sax. In his 30's he was the top performer and first recording artist of the famous New York downtown club, Knitting Factory, a leader experimental music.

In 1997, Thomas was gaining altitude with a growing international following and was on the verge of wide acclaim when he was diagnosed with leukemia at age 39. He died a year later. The world lost a unique and brilliant talent who was changing the music and pushing the envelope with his original sound that was unlike anything being played then, influenced by the greats -- John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Eric Dolphy and his hero Rahsaan Roland Kirk. Thomas continues to be a highly influential and inspirational force to those who knew him and to those who continue to know him through his music and example.

Filmmaker Stephanie Castillo is a gifted documentary storyteller as evidenced by her acclaimed 1992 EMMY-winning first film, *Simple Courage*, about Hawaii's leprosy epidemic in the late 1890's, the banishment of 8,000 Native Hawaiians and the intervention of Belgium priest, now St. Damien. Stephanie is bringing almost 30 years of documentary filmmaking experience to the production of the Thomas Chapin story. The maker of nine documentaries, she also brings to the task a stellar journalistic background as an in-depth feature writer at USA Today and Hawaii's Honolulu Star-Bulletin. She has already spent more than a year in film research and has interviewed dozens of knowledgeable inner-circle figures who hold the key to revealing this story of someone who died too soon but whose music lives on. In February/March this year, she ran a successful Kickstarter.com fundraising campaign for the film, raising \$51,552 in 45 days. This success allowed her to begin shooting her film this July -- a music concert and 15 interviews. She moves on now to create a professional fundraising trailer for art funders and corporate sponsors.

The story of Thomas Chapin will inspire everyone who sees it and will keep his legacy from fading and his music from being forgotten. With your funding support help at this time, Stephanie can continue her tireless effort to bring her vision to the screen. Akasha Inc. the nonprofit for Thomas Chapin's legacy, happily serves as this film's fiscal sponsor and a rich resource and guide for the film.

Sincerely,

Teresita Chapin, Executive Director, Akasha, Inc.

.....

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Email address: hartjazzsociety@aol.com
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A Non-Profit Organization

The Hartford Jazz Society, Inc.

Grants Administrator
Catapult Film Fund
39 Mesa Street, Suite 209
San Francisco, CA 94129

August 14, 2013

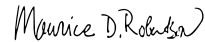
Re: The Thomas Chapin Film Project

Greetings! My name is Maurice D. Robertson, programming chairman for the Hartford Jazz Society. We are the oldest, ongoing jazz society in the United States, based in CT. I am also a jazz radio host and photographer. I was a friend of the late, saxophonist, composer and bandleader Thomas Chapin. I had the pleasure of hearing him live on several occasions throughout his career before his untimely passing. He was quite a contributor to the musical vocabulary of this improvisational art form.

His recorded output was always compelling and his live performances were stratospheric. I applaud Ms. Castillo's attempt to bring his musicianship to the awareness of a greater audience through this film documentary. I have viewed the current footage and I am thus far, amazed at the soulfulness and technical virtuosity displayed in the movie production.

This project must go forward. I would hope that you look kindly on The Thomas Chapin documentary project and give it the required funding to insure its completion.

Respectfully Yours,



Maurice D. Robertson
Programming Chairman
Hartford Jazz Society

KEEPING JAZZ ALIVE

