



THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG

THE INCANDESCENT LIFE OF A JAZZ GREAT

Gone too soon, but his music lives on

A documentary film & work in progress since 2012

Prepared by: Stephanie J. Castillo, Producer/Director/Writer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objective

Complete a two-part, two-hour documentary, now being edited in post-production. Obtain additional sponsors and donors, find finishing funds, and secure distribution partners.

2015 Goals

Complete Part One rough-cut by September. Identify possible distributors. Secure commitments from large funders/donors and corporate sponsors. Complete Part Two by end of November .

Solution

Circulate film trailers, rough cuts and contact possible funders. Solicit corporations and private funders..

Project Outline

Destined to be among the great jazz virtuosos, **Thomas Chapin was nearing the pinnacle of his meteoric career when leukemia took him at the age of 40.** Decades later, his passionate life and incandescent music continues to inspire new generations of artists and musicians. The new documentary THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG draws an intimate portrait of a musical explorer who transcended the boundaries of jazz and dissolved the distinctions between sound and music.

- **Funded at [kickstarter.com](https://www.kickstarter.com) with \$50,000** to launch her project, EMMY director Stephanie J. Castillo seeks to honor the music and memory of Thomas Chapin which, after more than 15 years since his death, is in danger of being relegated to the footnotes of jazz.
- 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 master flute player and alto sax man **Thomas Chapin was ahead of his time.**
- The film 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 throughout his incandescent life and music will mesmerize and inspire.**
- Just as he had transcended the boundaries of jazz and music, Chapin proved that **life itself is to be transcendent even if it had to end too soon.**

THE TARGETED AUDIENCE

Jazz-lovers, music lovers, art lovers, young and old. Elementary/high school/college jazz programs, jazz camps for young adults. Film festival, jazz festivals, music festivals, museum film programs, television audiences.

BUDGET

THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG's Projected Budget

The project began **development** in 2012. After a successful 2013 campaign at kickstarter.com, film shoots and **production** began in New York and Connecticut, and continued in 2014 in Washington DC and Europe. **Post-production**, involving creating an editing script and off-line editing, began in Jan. 2015 and is earmarked to end late 2015. Finishing funds and funds to begin **marketing and distribution** are being sought at this time.

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost
Research & Development			\$ 15,000
Production			\$ 60,000
Post-Production			\$ 75,000
Marketing/Distribution			\$ 25,000
Total			\$ 175,000

Seeking: \$75,000 to finish the film in post-production; \$25,000 to launch marketing and distribution.

\$100,00+ Raised and Spent

- \$51,224 raised at kickstarter.com
- \$50,000+ raised in personal donations and private funding

In Kind support

- \$20,000 in kind by producer/director/writer since 1/2012
- \$5,000 by co-producer/co-writer since 1/2014

SEEKING PRIVATE FUNDING AND DONATIONS in exchange for

- Tax-deductible receipt issued by Akasha, Inc, a 501 c3.
- Prominent Film credits — \$10,000+ donations will receive Associate Producer credits.
- A Special Acknowledgement in the film credits for donations under \$10,000.
- A tax-deductible receipt for big and small amounts; all donations are welcomed.
- The Prestige and Pride for supporting the arts and music education.

Donate at www.thomaschapin.com/donate. Assist an Emmy-winning filmmaker making her 10th film.



THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG

THE INCANDESCENT LIFE OF A JAZZ GREAT
Gone too soon, but his music lives on

Destined to be among the great jazz virtuosos, Thomas Chapin was nearing the pinnacle of his meteoric career when leukemia took him at the age of 40. Decades later, his passionate life and incandescent music continues to inspire new generations of artists and musicians. The new documentary THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG draws an intimate portrait of a musical explorer who transcended the boundaries of jazz and dissolved the distinctions between sound and music.

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 master flute player and alto sax man Thomas Chapin was ahead of his time. According to music critics and musicians who played with him, no 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, 90-minute documentary 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.

EMMY director Stephanie J. Castillo captures Chapin’s story through photographs, archival footage, his music and insights from the musicians, family members and jazz writers who followed Chapin’s career through its ascent and then through his descent into an illness that brought him to an abyss of despair and to, as Chapin described it, “the realm of the miraculous.” Just as he had transcended the boundaries of jazz and music, Chapin would prove that life itself is to be transcendent even if it had to end too soon.

At this time 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 as he freely moved between both camps and bridged the gap. Rare in this way for his day, Chapin became known as 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 documentary film seeks to honor the music and memory of Thomas Chapin which, after more than 15 years since his death, is in danger of being relegated to the footnotes of jazz.

For more information on the film, go to www.thomaschapinfilm.com and watch the trailer <https://youtu.be/xvWHsVSoPME>.

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](http://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.

A FILM BY EMMY WINNER
STEPHANIE J. CASTILLO

THOMAS CHAPIN

NIGHT BIRD SONG



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LIFE OF A JAZZ GREAT

GONE TOO SOON
BUT HIS MUSIC LIVES ON

AN 'OLENA MEDIA PRODUCTION "THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG"
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY HUGH WALSH FUNDING SUCCESS AT KICKSTARTER MUSIC BY THOMAS CHAPIN
CO-WRITTEN AND CO-PRODUCED BY NOEL M. IZON PRODUCED, WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY STEPHANIE J. CASTILLO

WATCH THE TRAILER AT
WWW.THOMASCHAPINFILM.COM



A SNEAK PEEK SCREENING 2015

Held on Aug. 4 and 8, 2015 at the Litchfield Jazz Festival and Jazz Camp in Connecticut, some 500 festival goers and jazz camp students viewed Part 1 of THOMAS CHAPIN, NIGHT BIRD SONG. The 55-min. screening proved to be absorbing. Before the event, the Litchfield County Times gave coverage to this special tribute to Thomas Chapin.





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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.

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www.monkinstitute.org • www.jazzinamerica.org

Success at kickstarter.com in April, 2013.

- Raised **\$51,552** in a 45-day campaign.
- 224 backers
- Purpose of funds? Launch the production shooting.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/290658030/night-bird-song-the-thomas-chapin-story>

Calendar 8 Apr 2013

Castillo reaches fundraising goal to shoot documentary on jazz musician Chapin

Chris D'Angelo
THE GARDEN ISLAND

LIHU'E — Kaua'i-based, Emmy-winning filmmaker Stephanie Castillo is celebrating a successful online fundraising campaign that will allow her to begin producing "Night Bird Song," her 10th documentary.

In an April 2 press release, Castillo described the campaign finish at Kickstarter.com — an online fundraising site — as a "white-knuckle, nail-biting morning."

"With just two hours before our deadline, we were still \$8,300 short of our goal," she said.

In the final hour of her 45-day campaign, a large number of pledges — big and small — came in to put Castillo above her \$50,000 mark.

The film, which she plans to begin shooting this summer, will focus on the life of jazz musician Thomas Chapin.

Castillo's friend and brother in law, Chapin emerged in the 1980s with a highly original style.

"As he rose to prominence in the downtown New York City scene and on the big jazz stages around the world, I had a chance to showcase him and his trio in Honolulu in 1993," Castillo

previously told *The Garden Island*. "I produced a short video for PBS Hawai'i of the Thomas Chapin Trio performing at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. Sadly, he passed away from leukemia five years later at age 40."

Castillo's new film will focus on Chapin's life and legacy cut short.

"It was a wild ending to a 45-day wild ride, but so worth it," Castillo said of the fundraising effort.

A total of 224 backers, pledging an average of \$232, brought in a total of \$51,552. Many, if not most, knew Chapin or had some connection to him, according to Castillo.

"Every name I did not recognize, I emailed and got these amazing stories back," she said. "Thomas' friends and fellow musicians were showing up ... I saw the great reservoir of will, the great desire to get this film made, and it has inspired me to get it done."

Moving forward, Castillo said she plans to finish her research interviews and begin conceptualizing the 90-minute documentary.

"This will tell me where I will be shooting, who and what," she said. "It's going to get very exciting, and if all goes well we will have some great footage to show



Contributed photo

Kaua'i filmmaker Stephanie Castillo reached her goal of raising \$50,000 to fund an upcoming documentary on the life of late jazz musician Thomas Chapin, who died of leukemia at age 40 in 1998.

to bigger backers, who will provide the big funds needed to complete the film."

Locations for her shoots will include New York

City, the home-base where Chapin lived and played the uptown and downtown scenes for all of his jazz career; the Hartford, Conn.

area, where Chapin was from and where he continuously visited, joining local musician friends at major jazz clubs; at Phillips

Academy in Andover, Mass., where Chapin attended high school and was introduced

See Goal, A6