

A Songbird Studios Production
In Association with the Cayton Goldrich Family Foundation

*From the Academy Award Nominated team behind PORCELAIN WAR
and the Grammy Award Winning QUINCY*

WHISTLE

MAY THE BEST **LIPS** WIN 

Directed by Christopher Nelius



“Whistling is something you probably walk past every day but don’t notice, and I hope audiences take that view of the world into their lives. What else do you walk by every day and perhaps haven’t taken the time to notice? Next time, stop and have a look at it. I think it’s just a beautiful celebration of humanity.”

-Director Christopher Nelius

2025

Run time: 84 mins

[Press Stills](#) * [Team Headshots](#)

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LOGLINE

An eccentric group of international whistlers descend on Hollywood to compete in the Masters of Musical Whistling, the world's greatest whistling competition. Egos clash, notes soar, and tears flow, but only one can be crowned the best whistler of the whole entire planet.

SYNOPSIS

The Masters of Musical Whistling is the largest convergence of international whistlers on the planet, where competitors go head-to-head, vying for the ultimate prize of World Whistling Champion. As tensions build, and judges judge, this eccentric ensemble of musical outsiders compete for the glory of being crowned the best whistler in the world.

Among them: Lauren, a New York theatre actress battling anxiety; Ayna, a fiercely ambitious Spanish competitor from a family of circus performers; Yuki, a musical prodigy from Japan determined to break his curse of always placing 2nd; Molly, the breakout whistling pop star, who longs for more reverb; Davitt, a volunteer who shares his passion for music with Alzheimer's patients; and Jay, who left Broadway dreams for his passion of teaching, now hoping to make his students proud.

Presiding over it all is 'The Whistling Diva' herself, Carole Anne Kaufman, a suburban hairdresser and the visionary producer behind the competition. She must manage her "strong personality" as she navigates financial jeopardy, a group of quirky volunteers and backstage drama on a quest to elevate the artform of whistling... just when the world may need it most.



PRO TIPS ON WHISTLING

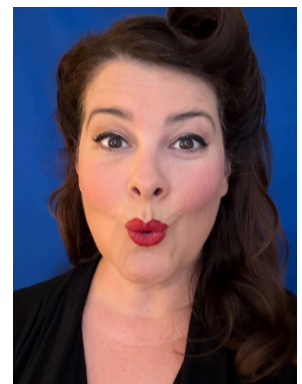
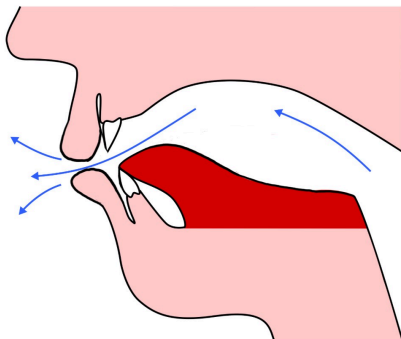
One of our featured characters offers THESE pro tips on HOW-TO WHISTLE. Practice up before Toronto!

How-to whistle:

1. Place the tip of your tongue behind your bottom teeth. Let the front half of your tongue curve up, but let the back half rest on the bottom of your mouth.
2. Pucker your lips! Not too tight, but not too loose. Think of saying the word “who” or the letter “q” and that should put your lips in the right place!
3. Start to blow, not too hard, but not too soft! Experiment with different levels of breath until you start to hear sound.
4. Practice! You may start out with just a few sounds or a couple notes, but keep working and your range will expand, and eventually you’ll be able to whistle full songs!

Pro tips:

- Use chapstick or try licking your lips before whistling to help lubricate your instrument
- Try sucking air in and making sound. This can help you whistle higher notes and make it look like you don’t need to breathe!





WHISTLE.... WHILE YOU WORK!

What our team learned about themselves... and whistling while making this film!

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF FROM WORKING ON THIS FILM?

DIRECTOR CHRISTOPHER NELIUS:

- I presumed I would have a small threshold for listening to whistling. Turns out when it's done right, by a real musician who has skill and dedication, it sounds sublime!

PRODUCER CAMILLA MAZZAFERRO:

- Whistling has become this unexpected way to spread joy. I also discovered that Luke (my husband and producing partner) can only whistle in... after I'd already married him.

PRODUCER LOUISE SMITH:

- Whistling is infectious... I left the edit suit so many times, whistling away to one of the pieces (probably Queen of the Night!). Whistling while you work really does fill the day with joy!

PRODUCER AND CO-WRITER LUKE MAZZAFERRO:

- About three years into making this film, I realised we all had a bit of Carole Anne Kaufman in us.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AND CO-WRITER PAULA DUPRÉ PESMEN:

- That whistlers and other performers are brave and put themselves genuinely out there...and maybe something to work on!

WHAT DO YOU HOPE AUDIENCES TAKE AWAY FROM THIS FILM AND THE SUBJECTS YOU FEATURE?

CHRISTOPHER:

- That there's so much going on out there in the world, it's easy to miss what is happening beyond the mainstream. The coolest people are the ones doing it for the love of the music, not fame or money.

CAMILLA:

- I think everyone will find someone they relate to in this film. These musicians are following their passion in the most unique way, and I think there's something really inspiring about doing what you love no matter what people think.

LOUISE:

- The first time I heard the whistlers performing I was struck by how accomplished they all were as musicians. This competition requires genuine musical ability - I can't wait for audiences to soak up their skill and passion!

LUKE:

- I hope audiences are surprised and delighted to discover that when performed properly, whistling can be truly beautiful. The film is also a fun reminder of the positive glow that can shine on one's self when you lean into your creative passion, no matter how outside of the mainstream it may feel. Celebrate and encourage that more and the world will be just that little bit brighter.

PAULA:

- Everyone has a passion, and it's so beautiful when people find theirs and follow it. The whistlers in this film are driven for excellence, and they show that when you love something, you can bring your passion and dream big. Even when competitive, the whistlers were kind and supported each other, which is something we can all strive for in this world.

DO YOU WHISTLE?**CHRISTOPHER:**

- Yes. I have been told by Carole Anne Kaufmann that I could potentially make a Level 2 whistler at the Masters of Musical Whistling. The best is Level 3. And I'm *ok* with that.

CAMILLA:

- Yes. My whistling is WAY better than my singing, but that's not saying much.

LOUISE:

- I remember being able to whistle from a fairly young age - probably because my Dad was always whistling (& still is!). When I was younger I gave my parents a postcard that still sits proudly on their fridge: Cheerful Whistling Permitted. What a philosophy to live by 🎵 💋

LUKE:

- As no whistling world champion ever stated, 'I can only whistle in'.

PAULA:

- Throughout the making of the film, I had never tried to whistle, but I'm getting closer to trying! Maybe at the premiere! 😊

Q&A WITH DIRECTOR CHRISTOPHER NELIUS

Before you started working on the film, how much did you know about the world of professional whistling?

I can safely say I didn't know anything about professional whistling before I began working on this film. I think a lot of families have someone that whistles too much. My dad would whistle nonstop around the house when we were growing up. What interested me early on was that whistling can be professional – it can reach that height in terms of musicianship. Once I started digging into the world of whistling and seeing the skills out there, I only wanted to know more! There is a novelty factor, but there is serious musicianship at the same time.

As you got into the world of whistling, when did you really start to appreciate that this is not just a hobby, it's an art form?

I think it was probably when I heard Molly Lewis. She is very hip and has a fantastic artistic take on whistling. It's amazing what she can do with her instrument – there's a kind of magical quality when you watch her whistling, where you don't actually realize that she's whistling in and out. You never see her take a breath. It's almost a subliminal magic trick going on. That's when I realized it's an art form.

In the film, you've assembled quite an array of whistlers to showcase – they're all so passionate about whistling and also interesting, relatable people. How and why did you choose the people you featured in the film?

The people in this film are on the fringes of the music world, they aren't in the mainstream culture. I always find non-mainstream culture just more fascinating and human. There's a world championship on the line, but they're also doing it for the love of the art form and to try to lift up whistling as a whole. If you look at competitions like spelling bees, no one is having to justify the actual pursuit of spelling to the wider world. Whereas, with whistling, they've got that added aspect of trying to be taken seriously.

There were so many great performances in the competition. What was the one that stopped you in your tracks?

There's definitely quite a few. Of the ones that are in the film, I think the first time I heard Jay do his classical piece is one of them. My sister is a concert violinist, so I know classical music really well and hearing him really reach and get to something that feels almost virtuosic with a whistle was really impressive. His whistling sounds a bit like a wind instrument. And then, there's just something about Molly's classical rendition of "The Swan." It's just incredibly captivating and I can't wait for people to hear that in a cinema beautifully mixed and everything.

Tell me a little bit more about Carol Anne Kaufman – how did you discover her?

When we met Carol, that was the point where I thought there really is a film here. We found her fairly quickly because the team at Songbird had been developing this idea and investigating the world of whistling. We started with Molly Lewis, and she was telling us about this amazing competition and how it has everything, which led us to Carol. She's got a lifetime of whistling – she calls herself "The Whistling Diva." She tried to make it as a professional whistler, but it didn't quite pan out, so now she's dedicated her life to helping make that happen for other people.

She is easily the most beguiling character in the film. There's so many layers to her that you learn about along the way. There is ego there, for sure, but if you dig a little deeper, she has a funny side, an abrasive side, and a huge heart – audiences will connect with and fall in love with her throughout the film.

Carol is carrying this competition and this world of whistling on her shoulders – the burden and the passion that it takes to want to make it work is such a huge part of the story. I look at her as being an American hero in her own way. She's bringing communities together, creating events that celebrate whistling and making things social. These heroes often don't get the spotlight, so it's great to do that here.

Something that most people may not know is that a lot of musicians use whistling in the background of their recordings. Can you talk a little about this under-discussed art form?

You hear it in everything from Guns N Roses to Billy Joel... and you don't even realize it! But once you enter this world, you start to think about how often you hear whistling on the street but you don't notice it. Whistling pops up all over the place in advertisements, popular songs, and more.

Molly Lewis, for example, ended up on the *Barbie* soundtrack. She ended up working with Mark Ronson, flew to New York to whistle a cover of the Oscar winning Billie Eilish song. I think that's why I was drawn to this – the moment you stop and pay attention, you realize that you actually hear whistling all the time.

In my own amateur sociologist examination of it, whistling has a bad rap because we generally hear bad whistling a lot. Most people aren't practicing their whistling instrument, they don't learn how to play it well. It's like when your neighbor is learning the violin. It sounds really bad until they practice and get good at it. When we're exposed to mostly bad whistling, we don't realize how good it can get. I think people will learn to appreciate how good whistling can be.

There's much more talent in there, and it will be fantastic to see how each of them puts their own imprint onto whistling.

The subjects featured in the film are so quirky and interesting, but the film also has so much heart. Why was that important to convey?

Humanism and heart is what I'm really drawn to. Their heart comes from somewhere very altruistic and honest. They just love music. Lauren says it toward the end of the film – they know they're not going to get money and fame from this pursuit. They just love doing it, and expressing themselves.

The world we live in feels like it's becoming faster and more focused on grabbing someone's attention on social media. To see people doing this for zero prize money, investing their own money to get themselves to the competition, I just think there's something really beautiful and honest and human about it.

Even though it's a competition, all of them cheer for each other. It's that sense of community Carol has created – they are working together to create something greater than the sum of their parts. When people come together, a spark happens. They are coming together to try to create something beautiful.

What's something you learned about yourself in making this movie?

Aside from not fully understanding how good whistling can get, the other thing that I really took away was the beauty of people who are doing things not to earn money or fame. Don't get me wrong. These guys would love to be rich and famous and suddenly have whistling become the hip thing in the world. But, they sacrifice a lot. They are spending their time and money for not a lot of reward. I didn't quite appreciate how deep that was until we got into shooting the film.

There's also some great one liners in the film. Do you have a favorite or one that you hope sort catches on?

Many of the best come from Carol. She has a vagina line that's priceless. And I don't want to give too much away, but there is a great moment when it comes to the concessions that were sold at the competition. I mean, I will never look at snacks that are being sold in the lobby of an event the same way again. In the film, you get a little economics business lesson. In LA, those snacks at a movie theater cost like \$12, so they were a total bargain at the competition.

Without wanting to offend or anything, there's something a bit ramshackle about the way it's all put together, and it's partly because Carol does it all herself and doesn't know how to delegate. I think she would agree with me that she can sometimes be her own worst enemy, which makes her such a fascinating character to follow. She had such a great line about "I'm not working the sheets" as in the Google Sheets – all of that stuff is super funny. She's got such a great turn of phrase.

Documentaries can often tackle very serious, important subjects. But sometimes we forget they can also be joyous. Why was that important to you?

When people have asked me 'what have you been working on?' I would say that I'm working on the next Christopher Guest film, except it's not a mockumentary, it's a documentary. The whole thing is just so true and so honest. There's a lot of heart and humor in this film, and audiences will love all the characters.

I've been making documentaries for a long time – both feature length and shorts – and there's definitely a preconception that documentaries need to be earnest and cause-driven. It's just not true. I think some of the greatest documentaries are full of humor, joy, eccentricity and the celebration of the idiosyncratic nature of humanity. You don't get to see that at movies often. Films like this can be just as deep and profound at the same time.

How are you as a whistler yourself?

I came out of high school as a musician, and then I was a composer for films, TV, and ads for quite a while. I was traveling the world between music and film, and then I finally decided to pick a line. Having a musical background, I've always whistled. In the process of sitting in the edit suite cutting a documentary on whistling for many months, myself, the editor and assistant editor would just be constantly whistling. It would just sort of seep into you. I think I've definitely leveled up a bit in whistling. There's three levels in the competition, and Carol said to me that I could probably hit level two. I felt good about that. It turns out if you practice, you get better with almost anything. With whistling, we don't actually think about practicing it. We just do it badly and annoy other people.

What do you hope audiences take away from the film?

Whistling is something you probably walk past every day but don't notice, and I hope audiences take that view of the world into their lives. What else do you walk by every day and perhaps haven't taken the time to notice? Next time, stop and have a look at it. I think it's just a beautiful celebration of humanity.

I also hope people feel a sense of connection and uplifted by just how beautiful people can be. That sounds so corny and cheesy, but in all the tiny corners of the world, you can find people doing really amazing stuff and pushing themselves, being expressive and artistic, and bringing communities together.

MEET OUR WHISTLERS!

CAROLE ANNE KAUFMAN



“If people only read the headline, what do I want them to know? I want them to know that there’s a whistler in the room, and that whistler has a vagina”

Carole Anne Kaufman is the indomitable force behind the Masters of Musical Whistling competition. Once a world champion herself, Carole now sees it as her duty to advance the artform of whistling and lead the motley crew of musical outsiders aboard her crusade. A suburban hairdresser of 20 years, she puts her livelihood on the line to personally fund what she believes will be the greatest whistling competition the world has ever seen. Armed with her loyal group of volunteers (many of whom are also customers at her hair salon), zero hours of sleep, and enough lip-shaped balloons to lift a house, Carole sets about creating a whistling extravaganza like no other.

MOLLY LEWIS



“I want to wield whistling in a way that shows it can be beautiful”

Molly Lewis is the pop-star of whistling. When she's not on her balcony dreamily serenading the LA sunset, she's releasing acclaimed albums and selling out shows to Hollywood's in-crowd. In recent years she's recorded with Dr. Dre, appeared on the Barbie soundtrack, and even performed privately at Greta Gerwig's 40th birthday party. But, having forged a successful career as a professional whistler, Molly has grown somewhat distant from the competitive whistling scene. She sees the Masters of Musical Whistling as her chance to reunite with this community and affirm her place as a torchbearer for their art form.

YUKI TAKEDA 



"I want to be at the very top at least once in my life"

Yuki is a classically trained wunderkind from Japan and a beloved personality in the competitive community. He's fluent in five languages, plays three instruments, and is an aficionado of Venezuelan music. But when it comes to musical whistling, Yuki is always the bridesmaid, never the bride. He's contended fiercely for a decade but hasn't been able to break the second-place ceiling, edged out each time by a first-timer who comes out of left field to snatch the gold. He is determined that this will finally be his year.

AYNA ZIORDIA BOTELLA 



“This is not a choice I’ve made, whistling has chosen me”

Anya is a fiercely ambitious performer from Spain. She has trained with steely determination for the past eight years in preparation for her competition debut. Hailing from a family of circus performers, her unique charm lies not just in the exquisite notes of her whistling but in the theatricality she brings to each performance. A maestro of both sound and spectacle.

DAVITT FELDER 



“In today’s world... I think we need the whistlers in today’s world man”

Davitt, a Los Angeles actor and part-time session musician is a welcome hug in a sea of big personalities. He shares his musical gifts at Alzheimer’s hospices and youth programs, whistling Sukiyaki with gray-haired ladies who adore him. This will be Davitt’s first time competing, but what he lacks in experience he makes up in enthusiasm.

LAUREN ELDER 



“I have anxiety and I tend to chew on my lips. And that can be disastrous for whistling”

A seasoned musical theatre professional and former world champion whistler, Lauren brings a bold, theatrical flair to the stage. But beneath her bubbly, vivacious exterior lies a quiet battle with anxiety. Resisting the urge to bite her lips (a habit that can be “disastrous” for whistling) she channels that tension into artistic expression. Clad in heavy costume makeup and a golden crown, she performs with raw passion and reclaims her sense of agency one power pose at a time...

JAY WINSTON 



“I’ve never done anything like this”

Jay is a classically trained opera singer turned high school teacher from the suburbs of New Jersey. With a calm, unassuming presence, he’s a quiet newcomer to the Masters of Musical Whistling. Though he once dreamed of performing on Broadway, Jay found his calling in the classroom where he shares his love of music with the next generation. He brings that same dedication to the stage, drawing on his classical training and a rigorous practice routine, fueled, in part, by a steady supply of sugar-free lollipops.

GABRIEL PERKINS 



"My mom's here!"

Atlanta born chef Gabriel defies his shyness with his transcendent performances. His vulnerability and authenticity will resonate with anyone who has ever pushed themselves out of their comfort zone and taken a chance.

CURT 



"Sometimes I cry"

Curt is Carole's incredibly loyal volunteer/servant. Curt mysteriously emerged years ago putting his hand up to help Carole with her first ever event.

These days, she couldn't do it without him.

ABOUT THE FILMAKERS

CHRISTOPHER NELIUS **Director, Writer**



Christopher Nelius is an Australian film director, producer and writer working across documentary and drama. His first feature-length film was a documentary about the life of surfer Ross Clarke-Jones, narrated by Dennis Hopper. Christopher developed that idea further to co-create a documentary series for Discovery Channel Asia and later the 3D feature documentary *STORM SURFERS 3D*, winning multiple international festival awards including runner-up in the audience award at Toronto International Film Festival and winning the Australian Academy (AACTA) Award for Best Feature Documentary.

Christopher's feature documentary *GIRLS CAN'T SURF*, about the struggle of women's professional surfing in the 1980s, was the highest-grossing box office documentary in Australia in 2021, as well as being selected for the Tribeca Film Festival and released in cinemas in the UK. The rights to *GIRLS CAN'T SURF* have also been optioned to be made into a scripted film.

Prior to his directing career, Chris toured as a professional musician and was a composer for film and television - making him the perfect director for *WHISTLE*.

AL HICKS
Producer, Writer



Al Hicks is a Grammy® Award-Winning filmmaker based in Sydney and Los Angeles. After working as a musician in and around New York, Hicks transitioned to filmmaking, directing his first feature documentary KEEP ON KEEPIN' ON, winning both the Audience Award and Best New Director honors at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival. The film also won awards from the IDFA, AFI, Cinema Eye, Seattle Film Festival, Palm Springs, Hamptons Summer Docs and went onto be shortlisted for the Academy Awards in 2015. Hicks then co-directed the documentary feature film QUINCY, following music legend and icon Quincy Jones. QUINCY premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2018, before a global premiere on Netflix. The film received the Critics' Choice Honor for Best Music Documentary, the African American Film Critics Award for Best Documentary. QUINCY was included in the Doc NYC Short List, the Hollywood Reporter's Top Ten Films of 2018, was honored as a New York Times Critics' Pick and won the Grammy® for Best Music Film. Most recently Hicks directed the feature documentary My Sister Liv (Karlovy Vary, Doc NYC 2022), and Executive Produced PORCELAIN WAR which was nominated for an Oscar® at the 97th Academy Awards and won the 2024 Sundance U.S Documentary Grand Jury Prize. He is a co-founder of Songbird Studios.

CAMILLA MAZZAFERRO
Producer



Camilla is the Managing Director and co-founder of the independent Australian production company Songbird Studios and a producer of the Academy Award–nominated *Porcelain War*, which also won the 2024 Sundance U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Prize. She began her career at PwC and RadicalMedia, producing a wide range of award-winning commercial campaigns, music videos, and short films, including *HOMEBOODIES* which premiered at SXSW 2016. Her other producing credits include feature documentaries *My Sister Liv* (Karlovy Vary, Doc NYC 2023), *A Fire Inside* (Sydney Film Festival 2021), *MACHINE* (MIFF 2019), and NETFLIX Original *Chef's Table*. Other projects include *The Meddler – El Metido* (MIFF 2020), *Uluru & The Magician*, *The Swimmer with Ian Thorpe*, and *Girls Can't Surf* (Tribeca Film Festival 2021). She is a member of the Producers Guild of America and winner of the 2025 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award for excellence in broadcast journalism.

LOUISE SMITH
Producer



Louise Smith is a celebrated Producer who most recently served as a Commissioning Editor at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) where she helped develop and Executive Produced scripted series such as Bay Of Fires, Significant Others, White Fever, Ladies In Black, Plum, and Mother and Son. She developed and is an Executive Producer on the upcoming StudioCanal feature film 'Kangaroo'. Louise's producing credits include the drama series The End for See-Saw Films, created by Samantha Strauss, Feature film The Square, directed by Nash Edgerton and written by Joel Edgerton & Matthew Dabner, the AACTA Award winning movie RIOT, directed by Jeffrey Walker and written by Greg Waters. She co-produced the feature film The Rage In Placid Lake, written and directed by Tony McNamara (Poor Things, The Favourite) and was an executive producer on the Dance Academy feature film.

Louise has worked with companies such as See-Saw Films, Werner Film Productions, Porchlight Films, Fulcrum Media, Transmission Films, and served as a Production Executive at Screen NSW. She has been a regular guest lecturer to aspiring producing students at the Australian Film Radio and Television School (AFTRS).

LUKE MAZZAFERRO
Producer, Co-Writer



Luke began his career at RadicalMedia when he was seventeen, working as a Directors Assistant collaborating closely with acclaimed filmmakers, eventually becoming a VP of Development. Most recently he was an Executive Producer on PORCELAIN WAR which was nominated for an Oscar® at the 97th Academy Awards and won the 2024 Sundance U.S Documentary Grand Jury Prize. He co-wrote/co-directed the feature documentary A FIRE INSIDE about Australia's 'Black Summer' bush fires (Sydney Film Festival 2021). Other credits include co-writer/producer on the feature documentary MACHINE (MIFF 2019), producer on the Webby Award winning documentary-short LOSING LENA and as development producer on GIRLS CAN'T SURF (Tribeca Film Festival 2021), and EL METIDO: THE MEDDLER (MIFF 2020). He has previously worked with director Patrick Hughes on a variety of drama projects including Hughes' feature debut RED HILL (Berlinale 2010), the acclaimed short film 'Signs', and The Expendables 3. Luke is a co-founder of Songbird Studios.

PAULA DUPRÉ PESMEN
Executive Producer, Co-Writer



Paula DuPré Pesmen is an Oscar® Nominated, Emmy® Award, and Grammy® Award winning producer. Pesmen produced the Sundance Grand Jury Prize US Documentary winner and Oscar-nominated film Porcelain War and the Oscar-winning feature documentary The Cove. In 2010, she was named Producer of the Year by the PGA.

Pesmen launched her film career as an Associate Producer on the producing teams of such narrative features as Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, Rent, Mrs. Doubtfire, Home Alone 2 and Stepmom. She produced the renowned documentary features Chasing Ice (Emmy winner, Sundance Cinematography Award, SXSW Audience Award), Keep on Keepin' On (Audience Award winner at Tribeca and Palm Springs film festivals) and Quincy (Grammy winner).

For her philanthropic work, Pesmen was named a "Local Hero" by Oprah Winfrey's O magazine.

CASEY VENTURA
Producer



Casey Ventura's work as a development executive and producer is defined by a commitment to bold, socially conscious storytelling. Her recent credits include the feature documentaries *My Sister Liv* (Karlov Vary, DOC NYC 2023), *A Fire Inside* (Sydney Film Festival 2021), and *MACHINE* (Melbourne International Film Festival 2019), *Girls Can't Surf* (Tribeca Film Festival 2021), *Fight for Planet A* (ABC), *Tough Conversations with Henry Rollins* (Network 10), and the Netflix Original *Chef's Table*.

MATIAS BOLLA
Editor

Matias Bolla is a Chilean-Australian filmmaker from Western Sydney whose work is grounded in his cultural heritage and passion for visual storytelling. Working across documentary, drama, music videos, and commercials, he brings a strong narrative sensibility to his roles as Director and Editor. His screenwriting debut on the anthology feature *Here Out West* earned an AWGIE nomination and an AACTA Best Film nomination. It was the opening night film at Sydney Film Festival in 2021 before its national theatrical release. He co-created, co-directed, and edited the ABC documentary food series *8 Nights Out West* (2022), and has co-edited acclaimed feature documentaries including *Wash My Soul in the River's Flow* (SFF 2021) and *This Is Going to Be Big* (MIFF 2023 Audience Award; 2024 ASE Ellie Award for Best Editing). Matias' short documentary *Campesinos* about Patagonian Gauchos was selected for 11 International film festivals and also selected as a Vimeo Staff Pick in 2020. Matias has also been engaged in a number of different production roles with significant experience in post-production working as an assistant editor on films such as *The Dry*, *Nude Tuesday* and *Palm Beach*.

JOHANNA SCOTT
Editor

Jo has been working in the film and advertising industry for more than 25 years. After studying film in her home town of Perth, Western Australia, she began her career in London, where she spent 10 years training under some of the best in the industry. Her work spans all forms and durations and has been screened and awarded across the globe, including at Berlinale, BAFTA and Cannes. Consistently garnering international awards, Jo was recognised for her outstanding commercial work with the Shots “Editor of the Year” in 2021 and again in the top three in 2023. She has been nominated three times for an AACTA for her feature documentary editing work and was additionally nominated for the Innovation Award in 2022 at the Melbourne International Film Festival.

HADYN WALKER
Composer

Haydn Walker is an award-winning composer and Creative Director with over 18 years in the music industry. He has received multiple APRA Screen Composer Awards, a Clio Award, and scored numerous acclaimed films and series, including *Girls Can't Surf* (Tribeca, SFF), *Spreadsheet* (Paramount+), *Observance*, and *Squinters*. His work spans from high-profile ad campaigns for Coca-Cola and Qantas to composing the ABC Radio News Theme, used daily for over a decade. Recent credits include *The Blind Sea*, *A Horse Named Winx* (SFF 2024), and the ABC/BBC series *Austin*. He also writes and performs under his musical project, *The Dark Horse*.

ROB GALLUZZO
Executive Producer

Rob Galluzzo has been fundamental in financing and creative shepherding numerous documentary projects, and has a passion for championing emerging talent. His credits include feature documentaries PORCELAIN WAR (Academy Award nominee, 2024 Sundance U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Prize Winner), A FIRE INSIDE (Sydney Film Festival 2021), GIRLS CAN'T SURF (Tribeca Film Festival 2020), MACHINE (MIFF 2019), EL METIDO: THE MEDDLER (MIFF 2020), ULURU & THE MAGICIAN, television specials THE SWIMMER (ABC), TOUGH CONVERSATIONS WITH HENRY ROLLINS (Network TEN), THE ART OF WALKING (National Geographic) and Patrick Hughes' narrative feature debut RED HILL. Rob is a co-founder of Songbird Studios.

ANIELA SIDORSKA
Executive Producer



Academy Award® nominated producer and writer of the 2024 Sundance Grand Jury Prize U.S. Documentary winner PORCELAIN WAR, Aniela Sidorska began her career in San Francisco as a visual effects compositing supervisor on the 2012 Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner and Oscar nominee for Best Picture BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD. She went on to VFX produce feature films, including CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER, LEE DANIELS' THE BUTLER, THE EXPENDABLES 3, as well as BOARDWALK EMPIRE (HBO), THE BLACKLIST (NBC), THE AMERICANS (FX), and ELEMENTARY (CBS). Most recently, she was involved in creature development for the Netflix Original CHUPA. She is a member of the Producers Guild of America, the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, and winner of the 2025 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award for excellence in broadcast journalism.

Songbird Studios, Production Company

Songbird Studios is an independent production company, producing creatively ambitious documentaries with a focus on extraordinary people and the most iconic figures in music and popular culture. Their work has been recognised with honours including Academy Awards® Nominations, the Sundance U.S Documentary Grand Jury Prize, the Grammy Award® for Best Music Film, Directors Guild of America Award, the Critics Choice Documentary Award, the DuPont-Columbia Award, the Tribeca Audience Award, the African-American Film Critics Award, an AACTA, and the Cinema Eye Audience Award. Their films have premiered at some of the world's most lauded film festivals including Sundance, Toronto, Berlinale, Tribeca, SXSW, Doc NYC, Sydney and Melbourne.

CREDITS

A Songbird Studios Production
In Association With the Cayton Goldrich Family Foundation

Directed By

Christopher Nelius

Produced By

Camilla Mazzaferro
Louise Smith
Luke Mazzaferro
Al Hicks

Producer

Casey Ventura

Written by

Christopher Nelius
Al Hicks

Co-written by

Paula DuPré Pesmen
Luke Mazzaferro

Edited by

Matias Bolla
Johanna Scott

Additional Editing by

Scott Walmsley

Assistant Editor

Sunday Jones-Evans

Cinematography by

Kathryn Milliss ACS

Original Score by

Haydn Walker

Executive Producers

Rob Galluzzo
Sal Navarra
Andrea Cayton
Garrett Cayton
Alice Fiori
William Campbell
Linda A. Cornfield
David J. Cornfield
Paula DuPré Pesmen
Aniela Sidorska
Kevin Marciano
Nelson Khoury

Co-Executive Producer

Margaret Kirby

Consulting Producer

Chris Albert

Contributing Producer

John Caulkins

Featuring

Molly Lewis
Carole Anne Kaufman
Yuki Takeda
Ayna Ziordia Botella
Davitt Felder
Lauren Elder
Jay Winston

MAY THE BEST *LIPS* WIN 