



American
MASTERS



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American Masters
Joffrey: Mavericks of American Dance

Premieres nationally Friday, December 28 at 9 p.m. (ET) on PBS
(check local listings)

Production Biographies

Bob Hercules

Writer and Director

Bob Hercules is an award-winning producer/director and co-owner of Media Process Group, a Chicago-based production company. Over his 26-year career, Hercules has filmed around the world and his work has been seen on PBS, the Discovery Channel, IFC, The Learning Channel and through television syndication nationwide.

His two new films both deal with the subject of dance: ***American Masters Bill T. Jones: A Good Man***, a film about the famed choreographer, and ***American Masters Joffrey: Mavericks of American Dance***.

His 2009 documentary, *Radical Disciple: The Story of Father Pfleger*, chronicles the iconoclastic priest, Mike Pfleger, whose confrontational methods to fight racism have put him in direct conflict with the Catholic hierarchy. The film premiered at the 2009 Black Harvest Film Festival and was named Best Documentary at the 2010 Big Muddy Film Festival.

Hercules directed the 2006 documentary *Senator Obama Goes to Africa*, chronicling the then-Senator's diplomatic trip to Africa (including an emotional visit to his late father's village in Kenya). The film was broadcast in over 100 countries and is currently in home video distribution from First Run Features. Hercules also directed Obama's Presidential launch and biography videos at the start of his historic Presidential campaign.

Also in 2006, his acclaimed documentary, *Forgiving Dr. Mengele* premiered at the Slamdance Film Festival, winning Special Jury Prize and the Crystal Heart Award at the Heartland Film Festival. The film tells the remarkable story of Auschwitz survivor and former 'Mengele twin' Eva Mozes Kor, whose decision to forgive the perpetrators as an act of self-healing sparked a firestorm of criticism. It is currently in home video release from First Run Features.

About the Producers

The film was born through the friendship of legendary multi-hyphenate actor-producer-director-writer Harold Ramis (*Ghostbusters*, *Caddyshack*, *Groundhog Day*, *Analyze This* and *SCTV*) and first-time producer Jay Alix. Fans of the Joffrey, they both saw the need to interview Gerald Arpino before he passed. When they discovered that no documentary had ever been made of this legendary company, they decided now was the time.

Harold Ramis

Executive Producer

Harold Ramis is a screenwriter, director and actor whose films include some of the most popular and influential comedies of our time – *Animal House*, *Caddyshack*, *Stripes*, *National Lampoon's Vacation*, *Ghostbusters*, *Back to School*, *Groundhog Day*, *Multiplicity*, *Analyze This*, *Bedazzled*, *Analyze That*, *The Ice Harvest*, and *Year One*. Among his numerous professional honors and awards, Ramis is the recipient of the American Comedy Award, the British Comedy Award, the BAFTA (British Academy) award for screenwriting (*Groundhog Day*), and The Just for Laughs Lifetime Achievement Award. Four of his films were listed among the American Film Institute's "100 Funniest Movies" and *Groundhog Day* was recently chosen one of the "101 Greatest Screenplays" by the Writers Guild of America. Harold Ramis has also directed several episodes of television's acclaimed series *The Office*.

Jay Alix

Executive Producer

Jay Alix is new to the documentary film world. Having completed many private and corporate documentary projects, this film is his production debut for public distribution. On the road to getting here, he was the Founder, past Chairman and President of AlixPartners, an internationally recognized firm of corporate turnaround, restructuring, performance improvement, and financial advisory professionals. He was also Co-Founder, Chairman and past President of Questor Partners, a \$1.2 billion investment fund focused on investing in turnarounds, underperforming and distressed companies, as well as special situations.

Una Jackman

Producer

Una Jackman founded the Detroit Friends of the Joffrey Ballet in 2000, an organization that has brought the Joffrey to perform at The Detroit Opera House for the past ten years and continues to have a presence in Detroit each year. Jackman was first introduced to Gerald Arpino and the Joffrey Ballet in 1980. While serving as a board member of Dance with Altitude in Telluride from 1995 to 2000 where the Joffrey enjoyed a summer residency for five years, she developed a closer friendship with Arpino and the two conceived of the Detroit Friends organization. The making of this documentary, particularly doing the final interviews with him, is her way of paying tribute to Arpino's life's work and to the Company he cofounded.

Erica Mann Ramis

Producer

Erica Mann Ramis is a poet and writer who has spent most of her life in and around the film industry. Her connection with the Joffrey began fifteen years ago when she met Gerald Arpino. Ms. Ramis' lifetime love of ballet and modern dance came to fruition when she and husband, filmmaker Harold Ramis, connected with Jay Alix and Una Jackman, and they resolved to document Arpino's life and the history of the Joffrey Ballet.

Melissa Sterne

Editor

Melissa Sterne is a Chicago based editor who began working in documentaries as an assistant editor on the award winning *Hoop Dreams*. Her recent work includes *Radical Disciple: The Story of Father Michael Pfleger*, which premiered to overflowing crowds at the 2009 Black Harvest International Film Festival, won Best Documentary at the Big Muddy Film Festival, aired on public television, and has shown at film festivals throughout the world. Melissa co-produced and edited documentaries *Senator Obama goes to Africa* and *Choices for the Future*, a cinema verité documentary that follows three grade school students as they progress through the

school year in Chicago Public Schools. Currently, Melissa is editing *Mixing It Up: The Redevelopment of Cabrini Green*, which spans 15 years of a community in turmoil during the city of Chicago's transformation of public housing.

Michael “Swanny” Swanson

Cinematographer

Michael Swanson (aka “Swanny”) brings more than a decade of experience to the film including D.P. work at TeamWorks Media and as a photographer at Orbis Broadcast Group. He was one of the D.P.'s of “Oprah’s Australian Adventure” which aired on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in 2011. He has lensed documentaries *The Team That Changed the World* and *Disco Demolition: 25th Anniversary* as well as corporate videos and commercials for the Big 10 Conference, Wilson Sporting goods, University of Chicago, Metra, the American Heart Association (or American Society of Plastic Surgeons) and Crown Imports.

Susan Lacy

*Writer, Director, Producer, **American Masters** Creator and Executive Producer*

Susan Lacy has been an award-winning originator of primetime public television programs since 1979. As the creator and executive producer of **American Masters**, she has been responsible for the production and national broadcast of more than 185 documentary films about our country’s artistic and cultural giants, those who have made an indelible impact on the American landscape. Now celebrating its 26th season on PBS, **American Masters** has garnered unprecedented awards and is consistently recognized by television critics as “the best biographical series ever to appear on American television.”

In addition to her executive producing role, Lacy is an award-winning filmmaker. Her 2004 **Judy Garland: By Myself** earned her an Emmy Award for writing and an Emmy nomination for directing. She wrote, directed and produced **Joni Mitchell: Woman of Heart and Mind** (IDA nomination for Outstanding Documentary) and **Leonard Bernstein: Reaching for the Note** (Emmy Award and DGA nomination). She produced the Peabody Award-winning films **LENNONYC**, a film exploring John Lennon’s life in New York City, **No Direction Home: Bob Dylan** and **Paul Simon: Born at the Right Time**, directed and produced **Rod Serling: Submitted for Your Approval**, and directed and produced **Lena Horne: In Her Own Voice** – all for **American Masters**. This year she produced, wrote and directed **American Masters Inventing David Geffen**, which premiered November 2012 on PBS and will be available on DVD January 8, 2013 via PBS Distribution.

Under her leadership, **American Masters** received 24 Primetime Emmy Awards: 8 for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series since 1999, 5 for Outstanding Nonfiction Special, and 11 in various craft categories, with 40 additional nominations. In its 26-year history, the series has

received 24 nominations for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series and Outstanding Non-Fiction Special combined. ***American Masters*** received the 2012 Producers Guild of America (PGA) Award for Outstanding Producer of Non-Fiction Television, in addition to 12 Peabody Awards for ***John Hammond: From Bessie Smith to Bruce Springsteen, Unknown Chaplin, Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow, Paul Simon: Born at the Right Time, Alexander Calder, F. Scott Fitzgerald: Winter Dreams, No Direction Home: Bob Dylan, Andy Warhol: A Documentary Film, Jerome Robbins: Something to Dance About, LENNONYC, A Letter to Elia***, and ***Charles & Ray Eames: The Architect and the Painter***. The series also received Grammy Awards for ***Lou Reed: Rock and Roll Heart, No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*** and ***When You're Strange: A Film About The Doors***, an Academy Award and four nominations.

Lacy's career in public television began in 1979, as deputy director of performance programs at Thirteen/WNET New York. She was senior program executive for *Great Performances* and worked as director of program development with *The American Playhouse*, where she was a founding member. Lacy then ran the East Coast office of Robert Redford's Sundance Institute from 1984 to 1987. She was a consulting producer at Time-Life Video during the launch of Time-Warner's new initiatives in long-form documentary production. Lacy also led programs at both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Lacy was one of the select 2005 honorees at the Museum of Television & Radio's "She Made It" event, which recognized 50 exceptional women who have created and informed the genre, and a 2008 Washington, DC, Women of Vision Awards recipient, honoring those in film and video who inspire and mentor. She was honored again in Washington, DC, in 2010 as the recipient of the Cine Golden Eagle Lifetime Achievement Award. She presently serves on the board of the Film Forum in New York City. She served on the board of governors of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for two terms and was a trustee of the Independent Documentary Association. Lacy is a member of the Directors Guild of America, the Writers Guild of America, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the Independent Features Project and New York Women in Film & Television.

Lacy holds a BA in American Studies from the University of Virginia, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and an MA in American Studies from George Washington University. She was a Graduate Teaching Fellow, a Smithsonian Fellow and completed a residency at the American Academy in Rome. In 1994, she was awarded an honorary doctorate from Long Island University and in 1996, she was named Distinguished Alumnus of the Year at Mary Washington College, the women's college of the University of Virginia.