



Swell Cinema
Presents

THE BALLAD OF FRED HERSCH

Directed and Produced by
Charlotte Lagarde and Carrie Lozano

74 minutes, 2016

SHORT SYNOPSIS

The Ballad of Fred Hersch is an intimate portrait of one of today's foremost jazz pianists. A genre unto himself, Hersch's poignant story as an AIDS and coma survivor reveal an unlikely musical journey and an irrepressible American master.

LONG SYNOPSIS

The Ballad of Fred Hersch is an intimate portrait of one of today's foremost jazz pianists. With more than 30 albums and 12 Grammy nominations under his belt, Hersch is internationally revered in jazz circles as a master improviser. A maverick in music and in life, he was the first jazz musician to come out as gay and HIV-positive in the early 1990s, and he miraculously survived a

two-month coma in 2008. Both exacting and full of love, our unfettered cameras capture Hersch's creative process as he does double duty as a workaday jazzman and first-time theater producer—turning his tragedies into triumphal art.

ABOUT FRED HERSCH

As a solo pianist, composer, bandleader, and theatrical conceptualist, Fred Hersch lives up to the praise of the *New York Times*, who, in a featured Sunday Magazine piece, aptly declared him, “singular among the trailblazers of their art, a largely unsung innovator of this borderless, individualistic jazz – a jazz for the 21st century.” With three-dozen recordings as a leader/co-leader, and numerous awards including a 2003 Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, and being named Jazz Pianist of the Year 2011 by The Jazz Journalists Association. He is also the first artist in the 75-year history of New York's legendary Village Vanguard to play weeklong engagements as a solo pianist. He has received eight Grammy® nominations – as pianist and composer (two in 2012 for his historic *Alone at the Vanguard*). Hersch is among the most admired of contemporary jazz musicians, having collaborated with an astonishing range of instrumentalists and vocalists throughout worlds of jazz (Joe Henderson, Charlie Haden, Art Farmer, Stan Getz and Bill Frisell); classical (Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, Christopher O'Riley); and Broadway (Audra McDonald). He has been dubbed by *Vanity Fair* magazine as “the most arrestingly innovative pianist in jazz over the last decade or so” and he has been an obvious influence on a new generation of pianists. The leader of a celebrated trio whose *Floating* received two 2014 Grammy® Nominations, he also placed as #3 Jazz Pianist in the 2015 Downbeat Critic's Poll. In 2011, Hersch mounted the ambitious production, “My Coma Dreams,” a critically acclaimed full-evening multimedia work available on DVD. His newest release Fred Hersch SOLO has received rave reviews: *All About Jazz* says “When it comes to the art of solo piano in jazz, there are currently two classes of performers: Fred Hersch and everybody else.”
www.fredhersch.com

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

CAST LIST, IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Fred Hersch; Pianist and Composer
David Hadju; Music Critic, Professor, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism
Richie Barshay; Percussionist
Florette Hoffheimer: Fred's mother
Scott Morgan; Fred's spouse
Julian Lage: Guitarist and Composer
Herschel Garfein: Director and Librettist of *My Coma Dreams*
Jason Moran: Jazz pianist, composer and Artistic Director for Jazz at The Kennedy Center

THE FILMMAKERS

Charlotte Lagarde (Director, Producer, Cinematographer)
Born in France, Charlotte Lagarde is a filmmaker whose work has aired on PBS series POV and Independent Lens, the Sundance Channel, HBO, and been exhibited at MASS MoCA. She is a

Sundance, BAVC and Camargo Foundation fellow. Her latest project *Colonial White* premiered in the exhibit *The Racial Imaginary Institute: On Whiteness* at The Kitchen in June 2018.

Lagarde studied documentary film at Stanford and has made over twenty films. The feature-length documentary she directed about the Hawaiian surfing legend, Rell Sunn, *Heart of the Sea*, was broadcast in over 30 countries and won numerous awards including the PBS Independent Lens Audience Award and Best Documentary at the Ashland Independent Film Festival. Her most recent documentary *The Ballad of Fred Hersch* premiered at the 2016 Full Frame Film Festival.

Lagarde's short film, *Jen Bervin's Silk Poems*, premiered in the exhibition *Explode Every Day: an Inquiry into the Phenomena of Wonder* at MASS MoCA and has been exhibited recently in Tbilisi, Georgia. Bervin and Lagarde are currently collaborating on a new project filmed in Suzhou, China, titled *Su Hui's Reversible Poem*.

Her producing credits include Shaleece Haas' *Real Boy* (PBS/IL 2017), Deann Borshay Liem's *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee* (PBS/POV 2010) and Carrie Lozano's Academy award-winning *Reporter Zero*, which premiered at the 2006 Berlin International Film Festival.

Carrie Lozano (director, producer, Editor)

Carrie Lozano is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and journalist. She is director of the International Documentary Association's new Enterprise Documentary Fund. Previously, Ms. Lozano was an editorial consultant for filmmakers and media organizations and led the Bay Area Video Coalition's National Media Maker Fellowship. She was also executive producer for documentaries at Al Jazeera America and senior producer of the network's investigative series "Fault Lines," where her team earned numerous honors, including an Emmy, a Peabody and several Headliner Awards. Ms. Lozano produced the Academy Award nominee "The Weather Underground," which premiered at Sundance and aired on Independent Lens, and produced and directed the Student Academy Award-winning film "Reporter Zero," which aired on MTV LOGO and premiered at Berlin. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, where she was also a post-graduate fellow at the Investigative Reporting Program (IRP). As a fellow, she reported on PBS Frontline's "Black Money" and on the history of chemical weapons disposal. With support from the Knight Foundation, she worked with the IRP to develop best practices for collaborative investigative reporting and co-founded Collabospace with MediaShift. She also served as director of operations for New Day Films. Her most recent work, "The Ballad of Fred Hersch," about one of the foremost jazz pianists of our time, premiered at Full Frame in 2016.

Warwick Meade (Editor)

Born and bred in New Zealand, Warwick Meade (Editor) has been working as a video editor in television and film for 20 years. His work has been awarded an Emmy, a Peabody, and an Alfred I duPont Award, among many others. From daily news and current affairs at Television New Zealand to International documentaries for Al Jazeera English, he has worked across the world in a range of programming and has been lucky enough to make films with some of the best television talent there is.

Andy Schocken (cinematographer)

Andy Schocken is a documentary filmmaker and cinematographer living in Brooklyn, NY. *Song of Lahore*, his directorial debut, premiered at the 2015 Tribeca Film Festival. He was a co-producer and cinematographer for *The Last Campaign of Governor Booth Gardner*, which was nominated for an Academy Award and aired on HBO. His cinematography credits include recent theatrically released documentaries such as *A Lego Brickumentary*, *First Position*, *Fight Church*, and *Gerhard Richter Painting*. His corporate clients include Apple, Facebook, and Etsy. Andy holds a Masters degree in documentary filmmaking from Stanford University and a Bachelors degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Octavio Warnock-Graham (Cinematographer)

Octavio Warnock-Graham is a documentary film producer and cinematographer. He is the founder of Octave Films in New York City, a production company promoting radical social change through non-fiction storytelling. While attending City College of New York's MFA film program he was honored with a Student Academy Award and won Best Documentary, Best Director and received The Seymour H. Bricker Humanitarian Award at the 28th College Television Awards. He produced the independent short film *Silences*, an official selection at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival and has won best documentary or best short documentary at over a half dozen film festivals including the San Francisco Black Film Festival. *Silences* aired in the United States on B.E.T. and internationally on the Al Jazeera network. Octavio worked as cinematographer on Emmy winning director Greta Schiller feature documentary *No Dinos in Heaven* and provided early cinematic support for Angad Bhalla's film *Herman's House*, which went on to win the 2014 Emmy for Outstanding Arts and Culture Programming. Octavio currently produces and edits segments for multiple popular television series on behalf of the largest university-run station in the country reaching more than 7.5 million households nationwide.

CREDITS

Directed by Charlotte Lagarde and Carrie Lozano
Produced by Charlotte Lagarde and Carrie Lozano
Edited by Warwick Meade and Carrie Lozano
Director of photography Andy Schocken, Octavio Warnock-Graham, Charlotte Lagarde
Music by Fred Hersch
Additional editing Robert Arnold
Sound editor James le Brecht

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