

American MASTERS

thirteen
WNET NEW YORK

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press information



AMERICAN MASTERS
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American Masters *Neil Young: Don't Be Denied* *Production Biographies*

Ben Whalley, Producer/Director, BBC

Ben Whalley is a producer and director for BBC Television, working specifically in the Music Entertainment department since 2003. He has made a wide range of documentary films including *Detroit: From Motown to The Stooges*, *Pop Britannia*, *Folk America*, *If It Ain't Stiff... The Stiff Records Story*, *Once Upon A Time In New York: The Birth Of Hip Hop, Disco and Punk* and *Neil Young: Don't Be Denied*. He is currently making *Synth Britannia*- a 90 minute film about the impact of the synthesizer in British music. He lives in London with his wife, four month old son and two cats.

Mark Cooper, Producer, BBC

Mark Cooper is Creative Head of BBC Music Entertainment, the department responsible for much of BBC Television's coverage of popular music including studio shows *Later with Jools Holland* and the occasional *Top of the Pops*, coverage of festivals like *Glastonbury* and *Reading/Leeds* on BBCTWO and THREE, the *Session* series for BBCONE and FOUR, events like *Coldplay*, *Beyoncé* and *Red Hot Chili Peppers* live at the BBC and documentaries on popular music including the *Kings & Queens...* profile series on ONE and the *Britannia* and *Originals* series on BBCFOUR.

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Mark is the executive producer on *Later with Jools Holland* which he conceived with Jools and director Janet Fraser Crook in 1992 and remains core to everything he does in television. The world's most eclectic live music TV show has been going 17 years, 34 series and over 220 episodes with 16 annual New Year's Eve Hootenannies.

Mark is still primarily a programme maker, executive producing the BBC's coverage of Glastonbury, a relationship which he began a decade ago this year in '97. He has also executive produced a string of rock/pop documentaries on BBCONE including profiles of The Carpenters, Johnny Cash, Robbie Williams and The Rolling Stones and the Kings & Queens series, also on ONE that has included Queens of Pop/ Country/ Heartache etc and Kings of Cool/ Rock n Roll/ etc.

The BBC ONE Sessions started in 2006 and have already featured Elton John, Amy Winehouse, Annie Lennox, Tony Bennett, etc.

Mark has also executive produced BBCTWO documentary series on Reggae, 80s pop (Young Guns) and gender – *Girls and Boys – Sex and British Pop* and most of BBCFOUR's popular music coverage including the Prog Rock, Blues, Pop, Jazz, Folk and Soul Britannia documentary series and Barbican seasons, coverage of events like the Mercury Music Prize, the BBCFOUR Sessions featuring everyone from Ryan Adams and Ray Lamontagne to Randy Newman, Van Morrison and Marianne Faithfull, the Originals series of documentaries on Gram Parsons, Vivian Stanshall, Richard Thompson, Allen Toussaint, The Fall etc. and one-off documentaries like *Hotel California – LA From The Byrds to The Eagles*, *Factory: Manchester from Joy Division to Happy Mondays* etc.

Mark was a music journalist with *Record Mirror* (first review The Sex Pistols' last gig at Winterland, San Francisco, 1978!), *No 1*, *Q*, *Mojo*, *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph* etc. He continues to write occasionally for *Word* magazine.

He worked at Virgin and Polygram in the mid-80s, in Press, A&R and International,

before working on his first TV show, *Wired* for Initial and Channel 4 in 1988.

He started at the BBC in January 1990 on the then BBC2's arts and media program *The Late Show* with responsibility for music performance and features. Ice-T, Kronos Quartet, Ahmad Jamal and REM all appeared on the show alongside films about Tom Waits, Henry Rollins and soul men. Later started while Mark was still working on *The Late Show*.

Mark is 56 and lives in West London with his wife Sian Davies and four children. Lastly, he supports QPR and continues to play cricket badly. He has an MA in English and American literature and loves Henry James, Cormac McCarthy and Charles Dickens.

Susan Lacy, Series 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 150 documentary films about our country's artistic and cultural giants, those who have made an indelible impact on the American landscape. Now celebrating its 23rd 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 *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*.

Under her leadership, *American Masters* received the Primetime Emmy® for Outstanding

Non-Fiction Series in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2008 as well as 16 other Primetime Emmy® awards in various craft categories. Lacy is the recipient of five of those Emmys® for *Lillian Gish: The Actor's Life for Me*, *Broadway's Dreamers: The Legacy of The Group Theater*, *Unknown Chaplin*, *Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow*, and *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*. In addition to eight 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* and *Andy Warhol: A Documentary Film*, she received Grammy awards for *Lou Reed: Rock and Roll Heart* and *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*, 35 additional Emmy® nominations and three Oscar nominations.

Lacy's career in public television began in 1979, as deputy director of performance programs at THIRTEEN. 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, D.C. Women of Vision Awards recipient, honoring those in film and video who inspire and mentor. She serves on the board of governors of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, on the board of the Film Forum and is a trustee of the Independent Documentary Association. Lacy is a member of the Directors Guild of America, the Writers Guild of America, the Independent Features Project and New York Women in Film & Television.

Lacy has 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.