

American MASTERS

20
years

thirteen
WNET NEW YORK

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press information

A Production of
Thirteen/WNET
New York for PBS



THIRTEEN/WNET NEW YORK'S *AMERICAN MASTERS* PRESENTS RARE ENCORE OF 1991 FILM TREATISE ON THE SMARTEST MAN OF OUR TIME IN ALBERT *EINSTEIN: HOW I SEE THE WORLD*, THIS AUGUST ON PBS

Albert Einstein's theories on the nature of time and space profoundly affected the human conception of the physical world and set the foundations for many of the scientific advances of the 20th century. As a thinker on the human condition, politics, and all issues of the day, he was as well-respected as anyone. Yet the man who was considered among the smartest ever dropped out of high school, barely passed special exams to get into college and spent part of his 20s toiling in obscurity in a Swiss patent office. Luckily for mankind, Einstein's job at the patent office allowed free time for independent work – it was during these seven years that he made his most important discoveries. The film lauded by the Los Angeles Times as “one of the most astonishing and poetic compressions of grand ideas ever managed in one hour of television time,” *AMERICAN MASTERS Albert Einstein: How I See the World* will be rebroadcast Wednesday, August 16 at 9 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings.) The film, which is part of the 20th anniversary celebration of *AMERICAN MASTERS*, is written and directed by Richard Kroehling. Co-writer is Laura Nathanson. William Hurt narrates.

“Albert Einstein is considered the 20th-century answer to Isaac Newton,” said Susan Lacy, creator and executive producer of *AMERICAN MASTERS*, a five-time winner of the Emmy for Outstanding Primetime Non-Fiction Series and a recent recipient of its seventh Peabody Award. “We’re so pleased to share this 1991 classic with our viewers again. It raises the question – just who is today’s answer to Albert Einstein?”

The documentary includes interviews with the scientist's friends and associates, including Abba Eban and Linus Pauling, as well as newsreels and home movies. When it first premiered, *How I See*

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the World was applauded for the unconventional way the film manages to bend biographical time, covering Einstein's years in the United States as well as his earlier European period. Einstein was born in Ulm, Germany, though his family moved to Munich shortly thereafter and Einstein renounced his German citizenship at 17. He showed little academic promise as a teenager, and didn't begin to make his mark until he moved to Zurich, Switzerland.

It is at the patent office that he devises his controversial relativity theory, which is the first redefinition of the universe since Newton. In *How I See the World* George Bernard Shaw is seen comparing the two revolutionary scientists.

The film covers the major periods of Einstein's life, from his family's flight from the Nazis to his 1939 decision to alert Franklin Roosevelt of the need to develop an atomic bomb. Though Einstein was never directly involved in the creation of the bomb, it was his earlier theories that had paved the way for its possibility. After its eventual use on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Einstein became a constant and vocal activist for peace – spending much of the rest of his life speaking and writing on the subject.

How I See the World offers a comprehensive look at the extraordinary life Einstein led, from his divorce and his Hollywood years to his scientific and political life. In a review, *The New York Times* said, “Although both his politics and his science seemed out of fashion for much of his life, tonight's documentary brings out the honesty, consistency and idealism of the spirit behind them.”

With his publication of the article, “On the Movement of Small Particles Suspended in a Stationary Liquid Demanded by the Molecular-Kinetic Theory of Heat,” Einstein abandoned Newton's theory that light was made of particles, in exchange for one that presented light as being made of particles and waves. It was for this work with light that he was eventually awarded the 1929 Nobel Prize for physics.

Susan Lacy is executive producer of *AMERICAN MASTERS*. Barry Schulman is director of cultural and arts programs for Thirteen/WNET New York.

To take *AMERICAN MASTERS* beyond the television broadcast and further explore the themes, stories, and personalities of masters past and present, the companion Web site

(<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters>), created by Thirteen/WNET New York, offers interviews, essays, photographs, outtakes and other resources.

AMERICAN MASTERS is produced for PBS by Thirteen/WNET New York. This acclaimed series, now celebrating its 20th season, has become a cultural legacy in its own right. The *AMERICAN MASTERS* film library is one of the most highly honored in television history with profiles of more than 140 artistic giants. In addition to seven Peabodys, an Oscar and two Grammys, *AMERICAN MASTERS* has won 16 Emmys, including Outstanding Primetime Non-Fiction Series for 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, and 2004.

Corporate funding provided by Visa Signature. *AMERICAN MASTERS* is also made possible by the support of the National Endowment for the Arts and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Additional funding for *AMERICAN MASTERS* is provided by Rosalind P. Walter, The Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation, Jack Rudin, The Marilyn M. Simpson Charitable Lead Trusts, The André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation, and public television viewers. More information about *AMERICAN MASTERS* can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

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Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *AMERICAN MASTERS*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Secrets of the Dead*, and *Cyberchase* - as well as the work of Bill Moyers - to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as *The Ethnic Heritage Specials*, *The Thirteen Walking Tours*, *New York Voices*, and *Reel New York*. With educational and community outreach projects that extend the impact of its television productions, Thirteen takes television "out of the box." And as broadcast and digital media converge, Thirteen is blazing trails in the creation of Web sites, enhanced television, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, educational software, and other cutting-edge media products. More information about Thirteen can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

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