

Production Bios

CINEMA'S EXILES: From Hitler To Hollywood

KAREN THOMAS

Executive Producer, Film Odyssey

Director, Producer & Writer, Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood

Karen Thomas is an award-winning producer whose television productions are broadcast nationally in prime-time on PBS. *Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood* continues Film Odyssey's interest in biographical subjects and its long-standing association with Thirteen/WNET. Her biographical documentaries include *Isaac Stern: Life's Virtuoso*, *Robert Rauschenberg: Inventive Genius*, and *Edgar Allan Poe: Terror of the Soul*. Historical productions include *The GI Bill: The Law That Changed America*, a history of the *Washington National Cathedral*, and programs on the American Bill of Rights. She produced a four-part series *Dinosaurs!*, narrated by Barbara Feldon; and *A Gift from the Past*, a special on the Makah Indian Nation, narrated by Wes Studi.

Prior to forming Film Odyssey in 1986, Karen Thomas was Vice-President of The Film Company, in Washington, DC, where she co-produced the television documentary *Herman Melville, Damned in Paradise*, produced a documentary about race and politics, and put into production a three-part series on F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Thomas Wolfe.

Karen Thomas began her television career at the Public Broadcasting Service, where responsibilities included working with independent producers, management of program discretionary funds, and the initiation of a long-term program planning system.

MARGARET SMILOW

Executive Producer, Thirteen/WNET New York

Margaret Smilow has been producing award-winning films on international culture and arts since 1979. Her projects with Alternate Current, the company she founded in 1979 include the highly acclaimed series *Music for the Movies*, a collection of films on the art and craft of scoring music for feature films. The first film in the series, *Bernard Hermann* was nominated for an Academy Award in 1992. Other works include: *Musicals Great Musicals: The Arthur Freed Unit at MGM*, *Dashiell Hammett. Detective. Writer.*, *Busby Berkeley: Going Through The Roof* and *Isamu Noguchi: The Sculpture of Spaces*.

Ms. Smilow joined Thirteen/WNET as Director of Culture and Arts Documentaries in 1997. Recently she completed *Barenboim on Beethoven* on DVD (a six volume set distributed by EMI Classics) which features the great pianist performing all 32 Piano Sonatas (and 6 masterclasses) which won the prestigious "Jury Nomination" prize for best "Recording of the Year" as well as in the category of "Best Concert DVD" at the 2008 *Midem Classical Music Awards*, dedicated exclusively to honoring classical music in all its forms. *Dream of Life* about punk rocker and poet

Patti Smith opened in competition at Sundance and won best cinematography 2008 and *Simon Schama's Power of Art*, the 8 part television history of the creative moment that featured 8 artists won an *International Emmy Award* for the episode on *Bernini*.

Margie Smilow received the 1999 *Creative Arts Emmy Award* for Outstanding Classical Music - Dance Program for her film *Itzhak Perlman: Fiddling For The Future* and a Non-Fiction Series Emmy for *Leonard Bernstein: Reaching For The Note*. Her projects for GREAT PERFORMANCES include *Maestro: Portrait of Valery Gergiev*, *Barenboim on Beethoven*, *Kurosawa*, *Making the Misfits* and *Degas and the Dance*, which won a *Peabody Award*.

She is currently working on *Maestro: Portrait of Valery Gergiev* as well *Music Instinct* and *Paris: Luminous Years*.

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