

**press release**

*Biographies*

**JAC VENZA**

Executive Producer

Director of Cultural and Arts Programs, Thirteen/WNET New York

As one of the pioneers of non-commercial television in America for over three decades, Jac Venza has been a major figure in harnessing the power of television to achieve international recognition for America's leading performing artists. Beginning with the *Great Performances* series in 1972, Mr. Venza created a new framework for the performing arts on PBS, launching the sub-series *Theater in America* and *Dance in America* to initiate television collaboration with performers and artistic companies throughout the country. *Great Performances'* vast program collection has garnered virtually every major television honor, including 58 Emmy Awards. In 1997, Mr. Venza became Thirteen/WNET's director of Culture & Arts Programs, and the department's recent co-productions for PBS include Robert Hughes' six-part *Australia: Beyond the Fatal Shore* (broadcast September 2000) and Sir Richard Eyre's six-part history of the English-language theater, *Changing Stages* (broadcast August 2001). In October 2000, Mr. Venza launched the new theater showcase *Stage on Screen* with the live telecast of *The Man Who Came to Dinner* from the Roundabout Theatre in New York City. Among the culture and arts projects currently in production is *Broadway: The American Musical*, a six-part chronicle of the American musical theater from the turn of the last century to today's multi-million dollar extravaganzas.

**ANDREA MILLER**

Executive Producer, BBC

Andrea Miller has been an executive producer in BBC Arts for five years. During that time she has produced more than 160 arts programs in an array of formats, including screen magazines, long-form documentaries and presenter-led series, most notably *The Late Show* and the award-winning *The Works and Close Up*. Ms. Miller has been involved in several successful international co-productions. In addition to *Changing Stages*, she was involved in the development of *Happy Birthday Walt*, a three-part BBC1 Christmas special on the Disney Corporation; *Fame School*, a BBC1 prime-time observational documentary series on the oldest stage school in the world; *The Biggest Wheel in the World*, the story of London's Millennium Wheel (a co-production with Discovery Channel); *The Beginning of The End of The Affair*, the real love story behind the Graham Greene novel and recent motion picture (a co-production with NVC Arts); and *The Coen Brothers*, a look at the maverick filmmakers at work (a co-production with BBC Worldwide).



**CHRIS GRANLUND**

Producer

Chris Granlund has worked as producer/director in the BBC's Music & Arts Department since 1991. He is currently producing a three-part series based on Peter Ackroyd's *Biography of London*. He has produced and directed many documentaries for the BBC Arts Department. His films have been shown at festivals in Montreal, Naples, Rio, Munich, and Amsterdam. A Robert Rauschenberg profile, *Man At Work*, was screened at the Guggenheim Museums in New York and Bilbao as part of Rauschenberg's 1997 retrospective. *Dickens: Secrets* won the Best Arts Film prize at the 2003 Montreal Festival of Films on Art.

**PETER ACKROYD**

Writer/Host

Peter Ackroyd was educated at Cambridge and Yale Universities. His journalism has included the reviewing of both films and TV, and for some years he was literary editor of the *Spectator*. He is now chief non-fiction book reviewer for *The London Times*. He has published poetry and criticism, as well as fiction and biography. His first novel, *The Great Fire of London*, was followed among other fiction by *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde* (for which he won the Somerset Maugham Award in 1984), *Hawksmoor* (the Guardian Fiction Prize and the Whitbread Novel Award), *Chatterton* (shortlisted for the Booker Prize), *Dan Leo and the Limehouse Golem*, *Milton in America*, and *The Plato Papers*. His biographies are *Ezra Pound and His World*, *T.S. Eliot* (for which he won the Whitbread Biography Award and the Royal Society of Authors William Heinemann Award), *Dickens* (shortlisted for the NCR Book Award for 1991), *Blake*, and *The Life of Thomas More* (James Tait Black Memorial Prize). He is also author of *Dickens - Public Life and Private Passion*, which accompanies the TV series *DICKENS*.