American Masters
The Day Carl Sandburg Died

Premieres nationally Monday, September 24 at 10 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings) to commemorate the 45th anniversary of his death

Film Interviewees
(in alphabetical order)

Kate Benzel, Ph.D.
Scholar, University of Nebraska-Kearney

Kate Benzel, Professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, specializes in literary criticism in the 20th century. Benzel was a leading organizer of the “Carl Sandburg's Poetry and Songs: Prayers for the People” performance in April 2008. The program featured former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser reading Sandburg poetry and some of his own work, accompanied by other performers and musicians.

Norman Corwin (1910-2011)
Radio, Stage & Screen Writer

Considered the “poet laureate of radio,” Norman Corwin was a writer, producer, teacher, and long-time friend and colleague of Carl Sandburg. Corwin was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1993. In the film, Corwin provides personal and professional perspectives on Sandburg and his impact on the 20th century.

Rodney O. Davis, Ph.D.
Co-Director of Lincoln Studies, Knox College

Rodney O. Davis currently serves as co-director of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College. He is an award-winning essayist and has published extensively on Lincoln and Illinois history,
including Herndon’s Informants: Letters, Interviews and Statements about Abraham Lincoln, co-written with Douglas L. Wilson. Davis brings over 50 years of research experience with an acute knowledge of Sandburg’s most notable subject, Lincoln.

Ted Kooser
Former Two-Term U.S. Poet Laureate & Pulitzer Prize Winner

Former two-term United States Poet Laureate and Pulitzer Prize winner in Poetry, Ted Kooser is currently an English Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Kooser provides a look at poets as public personalities, a critical understanding of Sandburg’s work, and the current climate of poetry in the United States.

Robin O. Metz
Poet & Scholar, Knox College

As the Director of the Creative Writing Program at Knox College, Robin O. Metz has nearly 40 years of experience teaching 20th-century American, British and World Literature at Knox College. His poetry has been published in numerous anthologies including: In Other Words: An American Poetry Anthology, Artlife, National Poetry Anthology (Chester H. Jones Foundation) and International Poetry Review. Metz has also served on the Nobel Prize in Literature nomination committee.

Penelope Niven
Author & Sandburg Biographer

Penelope Niven is the author of Carl Sandburg: A Biography, Steichen: A Biography and, for children, Carl Sandburg: Adventures of a Poet. She is co-author with James Earl Jones of Voices and Silences and her latest book, Thornton Wilder: A Life, will be published October 30, 2012 by HarperCollins. Niven has been awarded two honorary doctorates, three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Thornton Wilder Visiting Fellowship at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, among other honors. She received the North Carolina Award in Literature, the highest honor the state bestows on an author, and lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Geoffrey O’Brien
Poet & Publisher - The Library of America

Geoffrey O’Brien is a poet and the Holloway Lecturer in the Practice of Poetry at the University of California, Berkeley. His books include The Guns and Flags Project, Green and Gray, and 2A. O’Brien also serves as the editor-in-chief for The Library of America, a nonprofit publisher of classic American literature. The Library of America, in conjunction with the American Poets Project series, recently released a new volume of Sandburg poetry entitled Carl Sandburg: Selected Poems.

Helga Sandburg Crile
Daughter of Carl Sandburg

Helga Sandburg Crile is the daughter of Carl Sandburg and an author in her own right. She has published several books, including A Great and Glorious Romance: The Story of Carl Sandburg and Lilian Steichen, and a memoir, Where Love Begins. Her life as Sandburg’s daughter, combined with her perspective as an accomplished author, add invaluable color and depth to the film.
Pete Seeger
Folk Singer, Writer & Political Activist

Pete Seeger is a folk singer, writer and political activist. Considered one of the most important figures in American 20th century music and a leader in the American folk music revival, Seeger recalls his relationship with and respect for Sandburg.

Marc Kelly Smith
Poet

Widely considered the father of slam poetry, Marc Kelly Smith has traveled nationally and internationally bringing his unique blend of stage performance and poetry to a wide variety of audiences. Also an author and playwright, Smith considers Sandburg one of his greatest influences and often performs his poetry.

John Carl Steichen
Grandson of Carl Sandburg

In the film, John Carl Steichen relates intimate memories of his childhood with his famous grandfather.

Studs Terkel (1912-2008)
Broadcaster & Author

Author, radio personality and Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at the Chicago History Museum, Studs Terkel was best known for his radio program, The Studs Terkel Program, which aired daily from 1952 to 1997. Terkel’s unique connection with Chicago and Sandburg allowed him to give a lively commentary on Sandburg’s Chicago Poems and other aspects of Sandburg’s public persona in the film.

Mark Van Wienen, Ph.D.
Scholar, Northern Illinois University

Currently an Associate Professor of English at Northern Illinois University, Mark Van Wienen has written several critical explorations of Sandburg’s writings, including Taming the Socialist: Carl Sandburg’s Chicago Poems and its Critics.

Evert Villarreal, Ph.D.
Scholar, University of Texas-Pan American

An English lecturer at the University of Texas-Pan American, Evert Villarreal wrote about Sandburg’s critical resurgence in his dissertation, titled Recovering Carl Sandburg: Politics, Poetry, and Prose after 1920.

Sean Wilentz, Ph.D.
Author & Historian

Sean Wilentz received his Ph.D. in history from Yale University and specializes in U.S. social and political history, particularly in the early nation and Jacksonian democracy. His work has been widely published in The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times and the New York Review of Books, among others. Wilentz provides a unique look at Sandburg’s scholarship on Lincoln compared to modern Lincoln research, and his resounding effects on the art of the biography.
Philip Yannella, Ph.D.
Scholar, Temple University

Professor of American Studies at Temple University, Philip Yannella’s book, *The Other Carl Sandburg*, was released in 1996. This book delves into Sandburg’s most politically active years, from his days working with the Social Democratic Party in Wisconsin to his experiences covering WWI and the Bolshevik Revolution. It includes detailed information about the resulting investigations into Sandburg’s personal and professional activities by the government’s Military Intelligence Division and the impact that it had on his writing career.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko
Poet

Currently a professor of Russian and European poetry and film at the University of Tulsa and Queens College of the City University of New York, Yevgeny Yevtushenko became an internationally recognized poet during the 1960s. Yevtushenko met with Carl Sandburg and his brother-in-law, Edward Steichen, during their visit to the Soviet Union accompanying *The Family of Man* exhibition in 1959.

Dan Zanes
Grammy Award-Winning Musician

Dan Zanes, formerly of the band The Del Fuegos, is a Grammy Award-winning musician currently performing worldwide with Dan Zanes and Friends. Zanes released *Parades and Panoramas* in 2004, a collection of songs from Carl Sandburg’s *The American Songbag*. 

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