

AMERICAN MASTERS



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New Documentary *American Masters – Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny* Spotlights Fascism June 27 on PBS

Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny details the life and career of the prolific writer who influenced modern political thought on totalitarianism and immigration.

Hannah Arendt was one of the most fearless writers of the 20th century, and her report of the Adolf Eichmann trial coined the phrase, “the banality of evil.” The German American scholar transformed her time as a political prisoner and refugee during World War II into insights about the human condition, the refugee crisis and totalitarianism. After immigrating to the United States, her warnings about a crisis in American democracy during McCarthyism and Watergate continue to resonate today. Learn about her life and legacy as in ***American Masters – Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny***, premiering nationwide Friday, June 27 at 9 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings), pbs.org/americanmasters and the [PBS App](#).

The documentary, which features actress **Nina Hoss** (*Tar*) as the voice of Hannah Arendt features interviews with notable scholars and historians including **Lyndsey Stonebridge**, **Roger Berkowitz**, **Leon Botstein** and more.

Featuring archival footage and materials drawn from books, speeches, articles and personal correspondence, ***Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny*** begins with her early life in Germany in the early 1900s. Born in 1906 to Socialist Democratic parents in Linden, Arendt was introduced to political advocacy at a young age. As a young woman, Arendt began her studies at the

University of Marburg and then subsequently received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Heidelberg in 1929. During her time in Marburg, Arendt, who was Jewish, had a romantic relationship with philosopher and scholar Martin Heidegger, who later became a prominent member of the Nazi Party.

Arendt's examinations of political institutions developed as Germany's Nazi regime rose to power in the 1930s. In 1933, Arendt was imprisoned for her research on antisemitism and resistance against Nazi power. After her release, she fled to Paris and helped Jewish children escape, before being detained by Nazis and kept in a prisoner-of-war camp.

Her time as a political prisoner, along with her observations on the Nazi's threat to democracy and human rights in the 1930s and 40s, inspired her political writing for years to come. Arendt arrived in New York City as a refugee in 1941, and her written works, which include *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), *The Human Condition* (1958), and *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), *On Revolution* (1963) and *Crises of the Republic* (1972), are regarded as expositions on the development and impact of totalitarianism, as well as the fault lines in American democracy. Decades later, Arendt's writing continues to influence political theory, philosophy and social thought. Her views on the dangers of unchecked power continue to resonate in the current world of political polarization and misinformation.

Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny is directed and produced by Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Chana Gazit and Jeff Bieber. Gazit's work includes the ***American Masters*** film *Ballerina Boys*, *Slavery and the Making of America* and *American Experience's The Pill*. Bieber previously produced the ***American Masters*** film *Julia Alvarez: A Life Reimagined*, and executive produced the PBS limited series *Latino Americans*, *Asian Americans* and *Italian Americans*.

Now in its 39th season on PBS, ***American Masters*** illuminates the lives and creative journeys of our nation's most enduring artistic giants — those who have left an indelible impression on our cultural landscape — through compelling, unvarnished stories. Setting the standard for documentary film profiles, the series has earned widespread critical acclaim: 28 Emmy Awards — including 10 for Outstanding Nonfiction Series and five for Outstanding Nonfiction Special— two News & Documentary Emmys, 14 Peabodys, three Grammys, two Producers Guild Awards, an Oscar, and many other honors. To further explore the lives and works of more than 290 masters past and present, the [American Masters website](#) offers full episodes, film outtakes, filmmaker interviews, the podcast "American Masters: Creative Spark," educational resources, digital original series and more. The series is a production of The WNET Group.

Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny is a production of Jeff Bieber Productions, LOOKSfilm and SWR in association with American Masters Pictures and the Center for Independent Documentary. Jeff Bieber, Gunnar Dedio and Michael Kantor are executive producers. Chana

Gazit and Salme M. López Sabina are producers. Maia Harris is writer and Sabine Kraysenbühl is editor. Jason Longo is director of photography. The film is written by Jeff Bieber and directed by Chana Gazit and Jeff Bieber. For **American Masters**, Michael Kantor is executive producer, Julie Sacks is series producer and Joe Skinner is digital lead.

American Masters will be available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org) and the [PBS app](#), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. PBS station members can view many series, documentaries and specials via [PBS Passport](#). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](#) website.

American Masters' commitment to accessible programming is a continuation of PBS's mission to provide more resources and availability of audio-described content streaming on PBS.org. In addition to audio description (AD), **American Masters** programming with extended audio descriptions (EAD), large open captions, on-screen ASL interpretation (ASL), combined descriptive transcription and more can be found [here](#).

Major funding for **Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny** provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, MDM Mitteldeutsche Medienforderunh GmbH, Sylvia A. and Simon B. Poyta Programming Endowment to Fight Antisemitism, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, The German Federal Ministry of Finance, Melony and Adam Lewis, Jewish Story Partners, Creative Europe, The Better Angels Society's member Philip I. Kent, Leslie and Roslyn Goldstein Foundation and public television viewers.

Major support for **American Masters** is provided by AARP, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Rosalind P. Walter Foundation, Burton P. and Judith B. Resnick Foundation, the Blanche and Hayward Cirkel Charitable Trust, Koo and Patricia Yuen, the Lillian Goldman Programming Endowment, Seton J. Melvin, The Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation, Thea Petschek Iervolino Foundation, Anita and Jay Kaufman, The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation, The Marc Haas Foundation, The Ambrose Monell Foundation, Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, Ellen and James S. Marcus, André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation, The Charina Endowment Fund in memory of Robert B. Menschel and Candace King Weir.

Websites:

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About The WNET Group

[The WNET Group](#) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York's [THIRTEEN](#) – America's flagship PBS station – [WLIW](#), THIRTEEN PBS KIDS, WLIW World and Create; [NJ PBS](#), New Jersey's statewide public television network; Long Island's only NPR station WLIW-FM; [ALL ARTS](#), the arts and culture media provider; newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](#); and FAST channel PBS Nature. Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment, and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group's award-winning productions include signature PBS series ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters***, and ***Amanpour and Company*** and trusted local news programs like ***NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi***. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group's award-winning Kids' Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series ***Cyberchase***, interactive ***Mission US*** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for more than 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding, and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.

About Janis Ian

Janis Ian is a 10-time GRAMMY nominee (two-time winner) whose songs and performances have resonated with a diverse group of fans for more than five decades. She is one of just a handful of artists who have received nominations in eight completely different categories. Raised by activist Jewish parents on a New Jersey farm, she currently lives in Florida with her partner and wife of 34 years.

Ian received her first GRAMMY nomination in 1967 for "Best Folk Album" with *Janis Ian*, featuring "Society's Child." She took home her first GRAMMY in 1975 for "Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female – At Seventeen," and her second for "Best Spoken Word Album – Society's Child: My Autobiography" in 2013. Her 2023 GRAMMY nomination for "Best Folk Album," *The Light at the End of the Line*, brought her full circle.

Two of her most powerful songs, "Society's Child" and "At Seventeen," were inducted into the GRAMMY Hall of Fame in 2002 and 2008, respectively. She received the International Folk Music Awards Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023 and was honored by Ireland's Tradfest and Ireland's Minister of Culture in 2024 for Outstanding Achievements In the Arts.

Ian has been mining her treasure trove of music and memorabilia for a massive archival project, the Janis Ian Archives, that opened in October of 2024 at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. She has also been preparing collections of rare and previously unreleased recordings. The first two releases, *Live at the Calderone Theater 1975* and *Worktapes & Demos Vol. 1*, dropped last fall with more to come. She is also making appearances to support the theatrical release of a documentary about her life and work. *Janis Ian: Breaking Silence* is helmed by award-winning director/producer Varda Bar-Kar, best known for *Big Voice* (Netflix, PBS) and *Fandango at the Wall* (Max). Along with Ian, the film, which will have a June 2025 broadcast premiere on PBS' famed *American Masters*, features interviews with friends including Joan Baez, Arlo Guthrie, Lily Tomlin, Jean Smart, Laurie Metcalf, and others.