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MYSTERIOUS ROBBERIES INSPIRE A UNIQUE EXPERIENTIAL SONIC EXPLORATION IN “THE TUBA THIEVES,” PREMIERING ON INDEPENDENT LENS ON MAY 20, 2024

MARCH 18, 2024

Unconventional Documentary Explores Sounds of Los Angeles from a d/Deaf/Hard of Hearing Perspective

(San Francisco, CA) March 18, 2024—Closing the Spring season of INDEPENDENT LENS documentaries, the unconventional sonic exploration “The Tuba Thieves” will premiere on May 20, 2024. Directed, written, and produced by hard of hearing filmmaker Alison O’Daniel, the film uses a series of tuba thefts in Los Angeles high schools as a jumping-off point to explore the nature of sound itself, through several d/Deaf people telling stories in the film equivalent of a game of telephone.

“The Tuba Thieves” will debut on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on Monday, May 20, 2024, at 10 p.m. (check local listings). The film will be available to stream on the [PBS App](#).

Between 2011 and 2013, tubas were stolen from high schools across Southern California. While reporters focused on the thieves, O’Daniel was curious about the impact of the thefts on the students and school communities. She wondered how these thefts were altering the sound of the bands, which ultimately led her to question the role of sound itself and what it means to listen. In “The Tuba Thieves,” O’Daniel explores the question of

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sound, prioritizing a form of storytelling in which information collides and is allowed to be misunderstood. In prioritizing Deaf and hard of hearing communication, she generates new sensitivity to sound and meaning.

“Music isn’t necessarily about listening, and hearing is not always an auditory experience,” said Director, Writer, and Producer Alison O’Daniel. “With the ‘The Tuba Thieves,’ I wanted to create a holistic exploration of musicality and the expansion of sound, with an eye towards both hearing and d/Deaf/hard of hearing audiences experiencing the story in similar ways.”

Throughout the film, we are introduced to Nyke Prince, a Deaf woman who is given a drum kit; Geovanny Marroquin, a high school saxophone player impacted by the tuba thefts; and Sam Quinones, an L.A. Times reporter seeking answers. Various Los Angeles musicians are also highlighted, performing in Deaf spaces and presenting concerts frequently (mis)interpreted as silent.

O’Daniel worked on the project for 11 years before premiering it at the Sundance Film Festival in 2023. The film is bolstered by open captioning, which O’Daniel and two other hard of hearing team members worked on to create a more accessible audiovisual experience, expanding them to include more detail and creative sound description than typical films.

“‘The Tuba Thieves’ is a one-of-a-kind film and sonic experience,” said Lois Vossen, executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. “Alison O’Daniel has created a project that pushes us to think beyond our own perspective and uses music, sound, and open captions to show, not just tell, the stories of Nyke, Geovanny, and the curious tuba thefts.”

“The Tuba Thieves” received Open Call funding from ITVS. Visit the [“The Tuba Thieves”](#) page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

About the Filmmakers

Alison O’Daniel, Director, Writer, Producer

Alison O’Daniel is a visual artist and filmmaker based in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Included in Filmmaker Magazine’s 25 New Faces of Independent Film, she’s a recipient of the Guggenheim and Ford Foundation Disability Futures fellowship, the Louis Comfort Tiffany and Creative Capital Awards. Represented by Commonwealth and Council, she is an associate professor of film at California College of the Arts.

Su Kim, Producer

Su Kim is an Academy Award-nominated and Emmy® and Peabody Award-winning producer. Her films in release include “Bitterbrush,” the OSCAR and Primetime Emmy-nominated “Hale County This Morning, This Evening,” “Free Chol Soo Lee,” and “Midnight Traveler.”

Maya E. Rudolph, Producer

Maya E. Rudolph is a producer, filmmaker, and writer. In 2022, she joined Louverture Films as Vice President of Nonfiction. Her work as a nonfiction producer includes “The Tuba Thieves,” “Shirkers,” and “Cablestreet,” and the Emmy Award-nominated Netflix original series “The Andy Warhol Diaries.”

Rachel Nederveld, Producer

Rachel Nederveld is an independent producer based in Los Angeles and Louisiana. She is an alum of the Sundance Producing Fellowship, IFP Cannes Producing Fellowship, Points North Fellowship, and Tribeca Film Institute's All Access program. Her films have premiered at Sundance, TIFF, Tribeca, SXSW, and more.

Director

Alison O'Daniel

ProducersAlison O'Daniel
Rachel Nederveld
Su Kim
Maya E. Rudolph**Executive Producers**Wendy Ettinger
Maida Lynn
Sally Jo Fifer
Lois Vossen**ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS**

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning PBS documentary series. With founding executive producer Lois Vossen, the series has been honored with 10 Academy Award nominations and features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, INDEPENDENT LENS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation,

Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. Stream anytime on the PBS App. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens.

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years, the San Francisco nonprofit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS App. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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