



Compelling documentary *BAM150* to be released on DVD by The Cinema Guild, Nov 19

Features intimate interviews with cultural icons and an astonishing trove of material from Brooklyn Academy of Music archives

Directed by Michael Sládek, *BAM150* features interviews with Laurie Anderson, Peter Brook, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Chuck Davis, William Forsythe, Phillip Lopate, Meredith Monk, Mark Morris, Steve Reich, Alan Rickman, Isabella Rossellini, Robert Wilson, historian Mike Wallace, and others

Brooklyn, NY/Oct 3, 2013—*BAM150* (2012), a captivating history and current look at the nation's oldest performing arts center, The Brooklyn Academy of Music, is slated for DVD release by The Cinema Guild on November 19, 2013. Conceived by award-winning director Michael Sládek, the feature-length documentary, created to coincide with BAM's 150th anniversary, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2012 and aired on Thirteen/WNET and Ovation TV.

Through verité footage of recent performances, intimate interviews, and an astonishing trove of 150 years' worth of archival film, photography and ephemera, Sládek's film shows that BAM's 150 years were hard earned, and are a testament to the power and stamina of the institution that launched Brooklyn as a cultural mecca—while also serving as a home to such greats as Pina Bausch, Robert Wilson, and Merce Cunningham.

With unprecedented access, the film's crew captured the institution behind-the-scenes, embedding viewers in the artistic process at BAM. Footage of company arrivals, rehearsals, and backstage activity convey the complexity and variety of performances mounted in one season. Robert Wilson's production of *The Threepenny Opera*, the Baroque opera *Atys* featuring William Christie's Les Arts Florissants and Paris' Opéra Comique, Beijing Dance Theater's US debut (in *Haze*), choreographer William Forsythe's *I don't believe in outer space*, composer Darcy James Argue/visual artist Danijel Zezelj's *Brooklyn Babylon*, BAM's annual public tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., and a gala celebrating The Bridge Project's *Richard III* are seen from a rare fly-on-the-wall perspective.

Interviews with BAM performers and directors including Mark Morris, Robert Wilson, Peter Brook, Steve Reich, Meredith Monk, Isabella Rossellini, Laurie Anderson, Maggie Gyllenhaal, William Forsythe, and Alan Rickman add fascinating and candid first-person anecdotes to the narrative. Other luminaries seen participating in BAM events include film director Wim Wenders, NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and others. The DVD's bonus features include the director's audio commentary, extended interviews, deleted scenes, a theatrical trailer, and a booklet essay by playwright Charles Mee, adapted from the book *BAM: The Complete Works*.

To convey BAM's dense history, the *BAM150* film crew worked in tandem with BAM archivist Sharon Lehner, sifting through hundreds of hours of performance footage and using the recently published book *BAM: The Complete Works* as a reference. Sládek interviewed cultural experts and historians; writer Phillip Lopate and Pulitzer Prize-winning historian/author Mike Wallace shed light on the cultural development of a borough establishing its identity apart from Manhattan in the 19th century. Cultural critic John Rockwell discusses BAM's more recent history, beginning with Harvey Lichtenstein's bold vision for the moribund establishment four decades ago and continuing with the work of his successors—President Karen Brooks Hopkins and Executive Producer Joseph V. Melillo—who, amid a now-transformed Brooklyn, are forging the next steps for the revered cultural destination.

The film also underscores the adventurous spirit as well as the social consciousness that drew speakers to the BAM Opera House stage, including Frederick Douglass, Mark Twain, Ann Sullivan and Helen Keller, and American presidents of the pre-television age (including a pre-World War II speech by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt). The research process for *BAM150* revealed many archival jewels, including film footage of its original Montague Street building ablaze in 1903.

"Telling the history of BAM is essentially telling the history of live performance in the US from the mid-19th century," says Sládek. "It was important for me to show an early BAM not only as an underdog, but a rabble-rouser in terms of the art and speakers it featured. BAM has, for me, always been an oasis in this city. Being commissioned to tell such a riveting story of its rise, fall, and rise again (and the borough that gave it birth) while experiencing such amazing performances from the inside out, has been an honor and great joy."

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For press quality package art:

www.cinemaguild.com/homevideo/press

Credits

BAM150 executive producers are James H. Ottaway Jr., Martha A. Rubin, and Robert S. Rubin.

BAM150 is presented by BAM, Plug Ugly Films, and Room 5 Films in association with Ovation.

BAM150 is directed by Michael Sládek, produced by Greg Loser and Michael Sládek, and is edited by Joseph Krings and Michael Sládek. *BAM150* director of photography is Ramsey Fendall. *BAM150* was shot by Ramsey Fendall and Michael Sládek.

BAM150 co-producers are Karen Brooks Hopkins and Joseph V. Melillo.

About BAM

Brooklyn Academy of Music's (BAM's) mission is to be a home for adventurous artists, audiences, and ideas. America's oldest performing arts institution, it is recognized internationally for innovative dance, music, and theater programming—including its renowned Next Wave Festival. BAM also features an acclaimed repertory film program, literary and visual art events, and extensive educational and community programs. The institution is led by President Karen Brooks Hopkins and Executive Producer Joseph V. Melillo. www.BAM.org

About Plug Ugly Films

Plug Ugly Films, Inc. was founded in 2000 as a platform to create and provide production support for feature films, music videos, art films, commercial videos, TV programs, animated works, live performances and live events. Recent feature films include the lauded documentary *Con Artist* and the dark comedy *Devil's Are Dreaming*. Headed by Director/Producer Michael Sládek, the Brooklyn-based company works with various

producers and talent on a project-by-project basis, executing intensely creative work. The company's title reflects Plug Ugly Films' roll-up-your-sleeves, take-no-prisoners approach to producing superior, eclectic, and engaging content. www.PlugUglyFilms.com

About The Cinema Guild

Cinema Guild is a premier distributor of independent, foreign and documentary films. The company was founded in 1968 by Philip and Mary-Ann Hobel, producers known for their work in documentaries and features, including *Tender Mercies*, winner of two Academy Awards. Releases have included such acclaimed and award-winning films as *Museum Hours*, *The Interrupters*, *Leviathan*, *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, *35 Shots of Rum*, *Sweetgrass* and *Beaches of Agnes*.

Disc Specs:

BAM150 is presented with its original aspect ratio of 1.78:1 with English Dolby Digital 5.1 sound.

Total Run Time: 86 minutes

Rating: NR

Screen Format: Widescreen 1.78:1

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