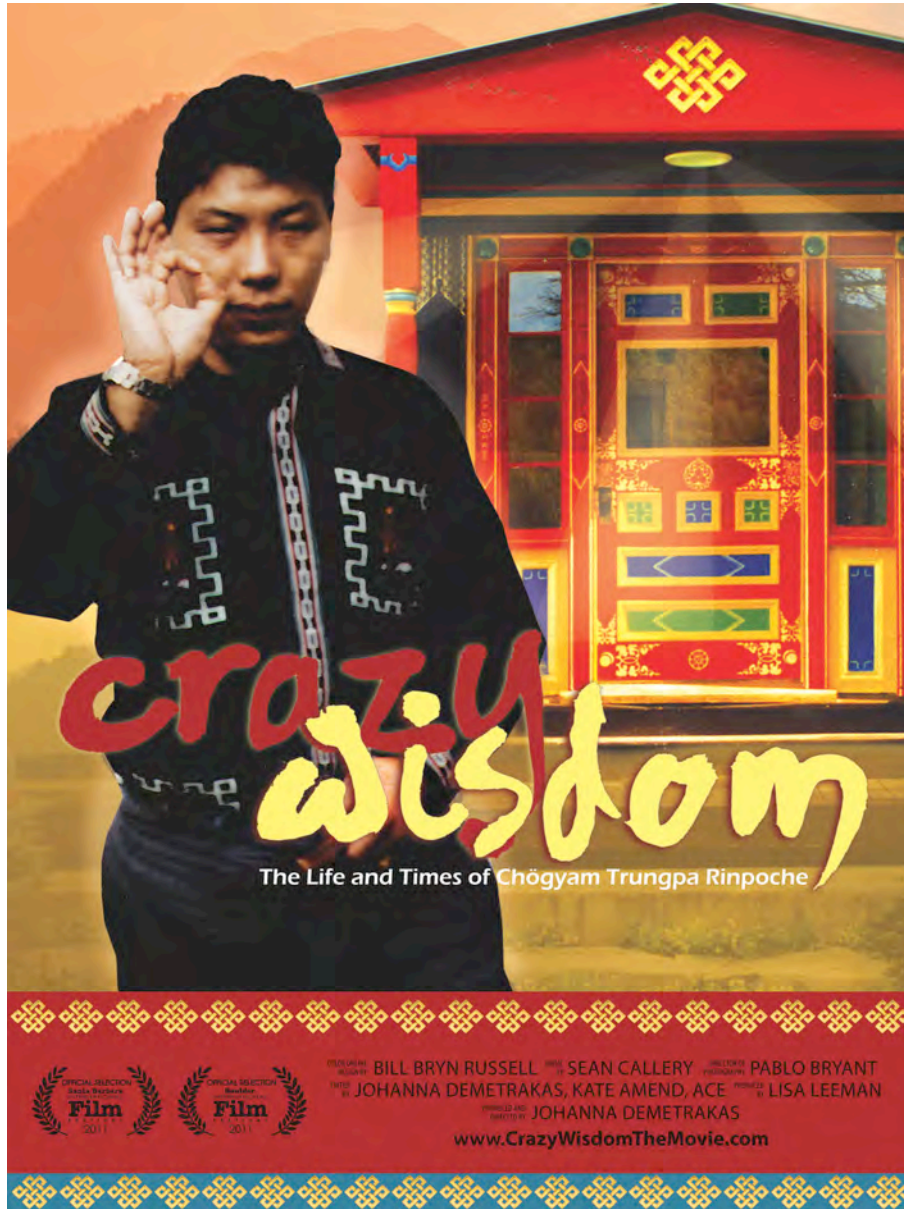


ALIVE MIND CINEMA PRESENTS



Trungpa “caused **more trouble** and did **more good** than anyone I’ll ever know.”

-Rick Fields, author, *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*

**Film opens in NYC on November 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Film opens in LA on December 2**

**Media Contact:**

Sasha Berman, Shotwell Media  
310.450.5571  
sashaberman@mac.com

**Booking Contact:**

Mallory Jacobs , Alive Mind Cinema  
212.629.6880  
www.alivemindcinema.com

[www.crazywisdomthemovie.com](http://www.crazywisdomthemovie.com)

## Critical Acclaim for Crazy Wisdom

*“Demetrakas has managed to create a riveting kaleidoscope of images and sound bites that bring to life the young monk who saw the madness of the world reflected in the Chinese invasion of Tibet...A beautifully conceived and edited film...it’s like being introduced to someone we’ve fallen in love with from afar but never imagined we’d meet.”*

**– Tricycle Magazine, Fall Issue 2011**

*“A provocative account...insightful and often entertaining”*

**–The Hollywood Reporter**

*“A tale told simply by its filmmakers, “Crazy Wisdom” is a touching tribute to one arm of the spiritual movement of the 60s and 70s, and explains the roots of efforts of Chogyam Trungpa to introduce his crumbling world to a new foundation”*

**– MovingPicturesMag.com**

*“Inspiring and thought-provoking...the “original punk” who dared to fight the system.”*

**– Buzzine.com**

*“A most engaging narrative”* – **Variety**

*“Demetrakas...makes brilliant use of archival footage of the “bad boy of Buddhism”...The documentary overflows with vivid imagery – the footage of Trungpa’s cremation ceremony in Vermont is breathtaking and fascinating – and captures the undeniable awe felt by his devoted followers.”* – **Boulder Daily Camera**

*“Johanna Demetrakas’ film makes a nice primer to a fascinating figure. The film delivers on the human being part, though his first wife as well as Pema Chodron, admit that in the end, it was really hard to know who he was. “Crazy Wisdom” presents the enlightened man as mystery.”*

**– Santa Barbara News**

*“Demetrakas’ unflinching portrayal of her former spiritual guide is refreshing”*

**– Boulder Weekly**



*"...his way of pulling the rug out, of going beyond boundaries – which could be painful, I loved it."*

Bernie Glassman

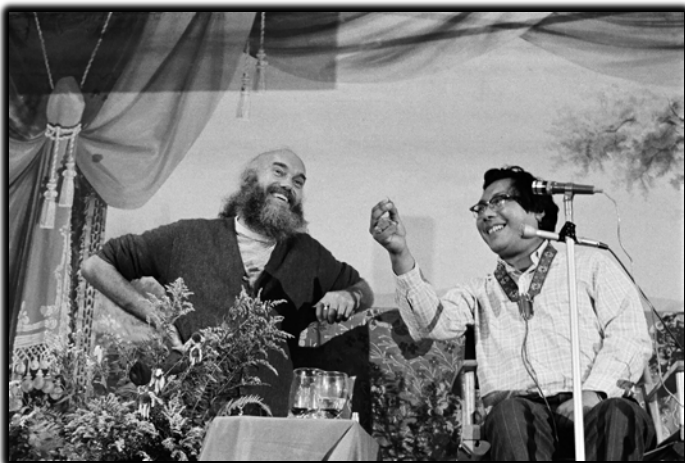
*"He asked me to be his poetry teacher and I asked him to be my meditation teacher. And I think I got the best of the deal."*

Allen Ginsberg



*"The path was courageous. Trungpa was courageous. Trungpa was a rascal."*

Ram Dass



## Logline:

A brilliant Tibetan monk escapes the Communist invasion of Tibet, and breaks all the rules in order to bring Buddhism to the West.

89 minutes – HD CAM or Blue Ray – 5.1 Surround Sound – English – Not Rated – 2011

## Short Synopsis:

Chogyam Trungpa, the brilliant ‘bad boy of Buddhism,’ fled the invasion of Tibet, studied at Oxford, and shattered Westerners’ notions of how an enlightened teacher should behave.

Was it *crazy wisdom* when he renounced his monastic vows, eloped with a sixteen-year old aristocrat, openly drank alcohol, and had intimate relations with women students? Was it *crazy wisdom* when he founded a military order to dismantle aggression? Or was it when, to counter the materialism he saw infecting the world, he worked tirelessly to build an ‘enlightened society,’ based on compassion and courage?

The film presents a direct experience of Trungpa, and stories from his wife and students, including best-selling author Pema Chodron and poet Allen Ginsberg, as well as colleagues and critics like American guru Ram Dass and eminent scholar Robert Thurman.



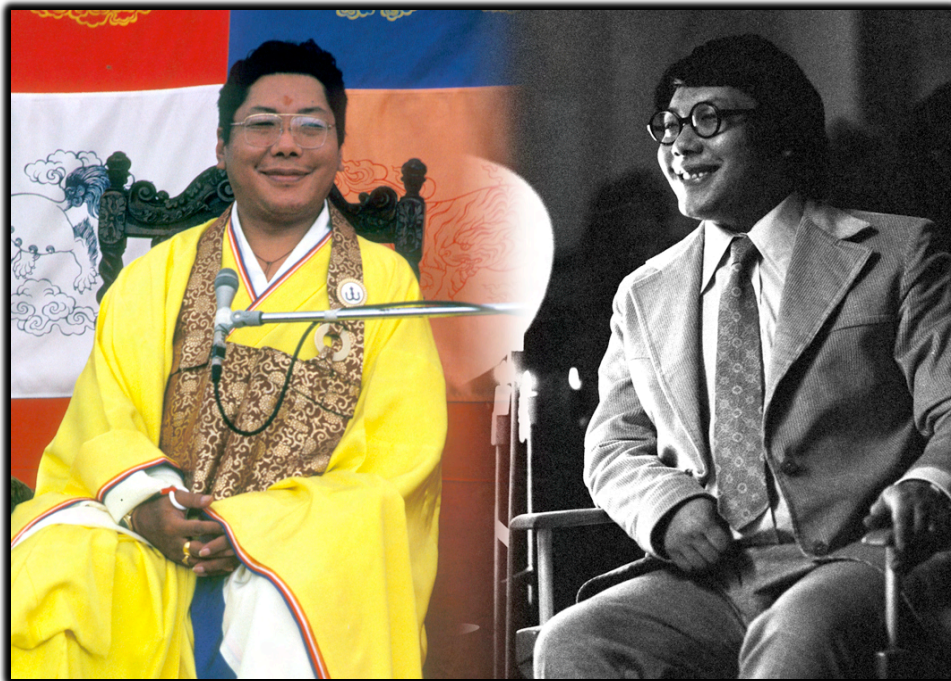


## Long Synopsis:

*"The coming of Buddhism to the West may well prove to be the most important event of the Twentieth Century."*

-Arnold Toynbee, historian

We speak casually of good parking *karma*, *Samsara* is a perfume, and *Nirvana* is a rock band. A recent survey by Germany's *Der Spiegel* revealed that Germans like the Dalai Lama more than their native-born Pope Benedict XVI. Tibetan Buddhism is doubling its numbers faster than any other religion in Australia and the U.S.A. How did this happen?



*Crazy Wisdom* explores this profound cultural shift through the story of Chogyam Trungpa, the brilliant "bad boy of Buddhism." Born in Tibet, trained in their rigorous monastic tradition, Trungpa fled the Communist invasion in 1959, the same year as the Dalai Lama. In Britain, seeing the cultural gap blocked his students from any deep understanding of Buddhism, he renounced his vows, eloped with a sixteen year-old, and lived as a westerner. In the U.S., he openly drank alcohol and had intimate relations with students.

Was this the "crazy wisdom" that his Tibetan colleagues recognized as an authentic way to manifest in the world? And was it "crazy wisdom" that helped him build the first Buddhist university in the western hemisphere and articulate the Buddhist path in a way that would sweep across the country in one short decade?

## Long Synopsis (continued):

Trungpa landed in the U.S. in 1970 and legend has it that he said to his students: "Take me to your poets." He drew a following of the country's prominent spiritual teachers and intellectuals - including R.D. Laing, John Cage, Ram Dass, and Pema Chodron. Poet Allen Ginsberg considered Trungpa his guru; Catholic priest Thomas Merton wanted to write a book with him; music icon Joni Mitchell wrote a song about him. Trungpa became renowned for translating ancient Buddhist concepts into language and ideas that Westerners could understand. Humor was always a part of his teaching - "Enlightenment is better than Disneyland," he quipped, and he warned of the dangers of the "Western spiritual supermarket."

Initially judged harshly by the Tibetan establishment, Trungpa's teachings are now recognized by both western and eastern philosophers and spiritual leaders, including the Dalai Lama, as authentic and profound. Today, twenty years after his death, Trungpa's books have been translated into thirty-one languages and sell worldwide in the millions. His organization thrives in thirty countries and five continents. Yet Trungpa's name still evokes admiration and outrage. What made him tick, and just what is crazy wisdom anyway?

Veteran director Johanna Demetrakas uses archival footage, animation, interviews, and original imagery to build a film that mirrors Trungpa's challenging energy and invites viewers to go beyond fixed ideas about our teachers and leaders.



## Filmmaker Comments:

From the first seminar, called “The Battle of Ego” in Los Angeles, to filming his cremation on a cloudless but rainbow-filled day in Vermont, Chogyam Trungpa blew my mind. He always created a feeling of stark reality, compassion and biting humor at the same time. Being in his presence was like being suddenly aware of an oncoming truck: it put every cell in your brain SMACK! into the present moment. And in that moment you could be outraged, moved to tears or intellectually inspired... or all at once.

This brilliant energy was difficult to resist but exhausting to experience. On top of that, he lived an unapologetic life that challenged every one of us who crossed his path with fixed ideas about how a “spiritual teacher” should behave. He wore suits, spoke precise English and lived like a bon vivant westerner, so it took years of practice and study to understand that in the rich history of Tibetan Buddhism, his outrageous “crazy wisdom teaching style” was just another tradition. In fact it was impossible to separate his life-style from his teachings. He was living a life that was somehow utterly contemporary, western, controversial and totally Tibetan as well.

He loved film so we worked together on several projects. He taught me how to recognize the energy of a situation both visually and emotionally, and, how to direct a scene to express that energy. It was like unearthing ancient wisdom and somehow capturing it through a contemporary medium, film. It is my obvious prejudice that only film can come close to creating that kind of experience 23 years after Trungpa’s untimely death.

Ultimately what inspired this film was far beyond the paradox of his controversial life style paired with the authentic teachings. It was the message of his life’s work: to wake people up from their blind addiction to materialism, which he saw as degrading both human society and the earth at an alarming rate.



## Production History:

Way back in Boulder, on a summer day in 1983, Chogyam Trungpa and I met to talk about film. Trungpa loved film and saw it as a powerful way to communicate for centuries to come. At this meeting, he asked me to make a Shambhala film. I had no idea what a Shambhala film would be, but I said yes anyway. Four years later, I was filming his cremation with four 16mm cameras and I wasn't sure of anything.

More years went by, I still had no vision but I started the research and occasionally shot an interview, trying to find the story. Finally, it was the world spinning madly toward what Trungpa might call "a dark age of materialism" that forced me to begin. I remembered what he kept saying the last time he taught in Los Angeles..."The world does need your help so badly, very badly. If you don't help it, who will?" And it came to me; the images, the teaching, the controversies, the humor, the ineffable experience of Trungpa's stunning and infuriating mind... there's your Shambhala film. See if you can tell that story.

Assembling a team was imperative to help me on this journey. I had to find a producer with the curiosity to want to make such a film, the down-to-earth skills to find the money and the patience to keep going until it's right. So I called on an old, unsuspecting friend, an intrepid filmmaker, Lisa Leeman. Lisa: "Working on CRAZY WISDOM has taken me across 14,000 foot mountain passes in Tibet... to Maui cliffs, the seaside home of Ram Dass and into the many chambers of my own mind, thanks to Chogyam Trungpa."



The Greek tradition of nepotism revealed Pablo Bryant, who happens to be both a sensitive cinematographer and my son. Pablo: "Shooting CRAZY WISDOM, for me, was discovering who Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche was. He has changed from an occasional figure from my childhood into someone I have in my corner."

Bringing films to life, Kate Amend (renowned ACE editor) came on board because I knew her sense of humor matched Trungpa's so well. Kate: "I met Chogyam Trungpa when he visited

Los Angeles in the 80's but it wasn't until I attended a Shambhala weekend taught by him that I got it. He was magical—he filled the room. I remember the humor and delight he took in the laughter. I knew Johanna wanted to give her audience the feeling of being in the room with Rinpoche and that was the way I approached editing the film. I always try to find moments of subtle humor when I'm cutting any film and this was a bonanza!



As we gathered more and more footage of his talks we were able to take the many rich, profound and delightful Trungpa moments and sprinkle them throughout the film. I don't think I've ever used the word "sprinkle" in reference to editing before, but I think it's apropos in conveying the light touch of Trungpa's heavy wisdom. "

I knew this would be a nice change for Sean Callery, an old friend who won 3 Emmy's composing the music for all seven years of "24." Sean: "Writing music for the scenes that featured CRAZY WISDOM's 'star', Chogyam Trungpa, was the biggest challenge. Speaking to a group, painting, or just sitting silently in a chair, he had genuine presence, full of dignity, humor and spontaneity. Who knew that drinking a glass of water could be so elegant? He always seemed completely comfortable with who he was. The music score required that level of personal authenticity. Whatever came up while composing--fear, anger, embarrassment, frustration, shoulder pain--all of it is in the score because it was real while it happened. If it wasn't coming from that raw place then the music simply didn't work."

And Bill Bryn Russell, our technical genius, quietly made every single shot in the film more beautiful. Bill: "Trungpa snuck up on me while I was doing my work. It is indeed absurd to spend so much time on the technicalities of film finishing, a job that should have taken me weeks instead of a year. That ridiculous year of minute and repetitive practice is what it took for me to absorb some crazy wisdom. About halfway through the job, Trungpa started to appear in my dreams. The clarity of the sensations, emotions and insight I take away, even when I can't remember the details... only thousands of hours in solitude, listening to Trungpa's word fragments over and over again and catching his coy and woozy manners out of the corner of my eye, could possibly afford such dreams."

With a team like that, anything is possible.

When I left my passport at a remote Tibetan monastery, a young monk, who happened to be making the ten-hour motorcycle drive on the most harrowing of roads to our last location, brought it to me in one day. This is how we got the film done, out of the blue people stepped up. I learned how to wait and trust the universe. And yet, after four and a half years of active filmmaking, 68 interviews, shooting in England, Scotland, Canada, Tibet and all over the U.S., unearthing hundreds of hours of archival footage going back decades, why do I feel like we're just beginning to scratch the surface?



## Filmmaking Team:

### Director - Johanna Demetrakas



With her first documentary, *Womanhouse*, about a ground-breaking feminist art installation, Demetrakas won the AFI Independent Filmmakers Grant, a place in the Whitney Museum's New American Filmmaker Series, and international recognition at festivals such as the Venice Biennale, Paris, and New York. Her second art doc, *Right Out of History: The Making of Judy Chicago's Dinner Party*, was broadcast on PBS and the BBC after acclaim at the London and Berlin Film Festivals. Her art documentaries have been in many museum shows, including the major exhibit, "Los Angeles 1955 – 1985," at the Pompidou Museum in Paris, 2006. The Pompidou

recently bought a print of *Womanhouse* for their permanent collection. Since winning the Discovery Program Award and making the dramatic short *Homesick* in 1989 (Sundance, Houston Fest winner, Showtime broadcast), Demetrakas has turned her energies to writing and directing dramatic fiction as well as documentaries. Her credits include *LA Law*, *Doogie Howser, MD*, and the Lifetime television feature *Out of Line*, starring Jennifer Beals. In 2004, Demetrakas produced, directed, and edited a two-hour special *Biography of Richard Gere* for A&E. It was the first A&E Biography without a narrator.

Well known for her editing prowess, her credits include *The World According to Sesame Street* and *Amandla! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony*. That epic documentary, edited by Demetrakas, won both the Audience and Freedom of Expression Awards at Sundance, 2002, as well as being nominated for five Emmys, including editing for Demetrakas. She Co-Directed and Edited *Busriders Union* with the legendary cinematographer Haskell Wexler. She has collaborated with Renee Tajima-Pena on several films, including *My America, or Honk if You Love Buddha*, the PBS special *My Journey Home*, and the P.O.V. film, *Calavera Highway*. Demetrakas has served on several awards juries including the Director's Guild of America, the IDA, The Student Academy Awards, and The Greek Film Festival. She taught writing and directing at Cal Arts and is now on the faculty at USC's School of Cinematic Arts.

### Producer - Lisa Leeman



Lisa Leeman writes, produces, directs and edits documentary films. She most recently directed the feature doc, *One Lucky Elephant*, which premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival, is currently in theatrical release, and will be broadcast on Oprah Winfrey's new network OWN in late 2011. Lisa directed the feature doc *Out of Faith*, and the feature *Metamorphosis: Man Into Woman*, which won the Sundance Filmmakers Trophy, and aired on PBS's POV series. Leeman has collaborated with many acclaimed filmmakers, including the renowned cinematographer Haskell Wexler, with whom she co-directed and edited *Who Needs Sleep*. Lisa is currently

co-directing, with Paola di Florio, a feature doc on the life and teachings of the renowned swami Paramahansa Yogananda, a modern mystic who brought yoga to the West in the 1920s.

## Filmmaking Team (continued):

Lisa has served as a judge at the Sundance Film Festival, the president of the International Documentary Association, and on the boards of the IDA and the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers. She sits on the faculty of USC and has taught documentary filmmaking in Beijing, China & Amman, Jordan. Honors include the Sundance Film Festival's Filmmaker's Trophy for her groundbreaking film *Metamorphosis: Man into Woman*; an Emmy nomination; and the once-in-a-lifetime American Film Institute Independent Filmmaker Grant.

Leeman spent a decade editing award-winning social issue documentaries, including the acclaimed *Made in LA*, and films for Renee Tajima-Pena; Michele Oyahan; Micha Peled; Stanley Nelson, and others. [www.lisaleeman.com](http://www.lisaleeman.com)

### Editor - Kate Amend, A.C.E



In December 2005, Kate Amend received the International Documentary Association's inaugural award for Outstanding Achievement in Editing for her work which includes two Academy Award-winning documentary features: *Into the Arms of Strangers* and *The Long Way Home*. Amend also received the 2001 American Cinema Editors' Eddie award for *Into the Arms of Strangers*, and edited the 2001 Oscar-nominated documentary short *On Tiptoe: Gentle Steps to Freedom*. Her collaboration with Michele Ohayon, *Steal a Pencil for Me* (2007), screened at the United Nations, South by Southwest, Berlin and Kagali Film Festivals. *Man from Plains* also released in 2007 and directed by Jonathan Demme, was a triple- award winner at the 2007 Venice Film Festival. *The Brothers Warner* was presented on *American Masters* in the fall of 2008. *One Lucky Elephant*, directed by Lisa Leeman, received an editing award at the 2010 Woodstock Film Festival.

*Beah: A Black Woman Speaks*, about the late actress Beah Richards and directed by LisaGay Hamilton, received the Grand Jury award at the 2003 AFI Film Festival, aired on HBO in February 2004, and received a 2005 Peabody Award. *Cowboy Del Amor* received both the Audience and Jury Awards at the 2005 South by Southwest Festival and was broadcast on Showtime in April 2006. Other credits include; *Thin* (2006), and *The World According to Sesame Street* (2005) which both premiered at Sundance 2006; *Peace by Peace: Women on the Frontlines* (PBS, 2004); *Pandemic: Facing AIDS* (Moxie Firecracker Productions, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and HBO, 2003); and *Bataan Rescue* and *The Great Transatlantic Cable* for PBS' *American Experience*.

Amend is a frequent advisor at the Sundance Institute Editing Lab and the NALIP Academy. She has served as a juror at the Sundance, AFI, and Riverrun Film Festivals. She is on the faculty of the *School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California*, is a member of the *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*, and serves on the Board of Directors of the *American Cinema Editors*.

## Filmmaking Team (continued):

### Director of Photography - Pablo Bryant



Pablo Bryant has been the Director of Photography on four feature documentaries, and has shot additional photography on many other projects, including the upcoming HBO film *Cinema Verite*. In 2007 he filmed in India and Nepal for the National Film Board of Canada's *Tulku*, which has just been released, and just finished shooting on *Crazy Wisdom*, in the US, the UK, and Tibet. In addition to his work as a cameraman he has produced and directed a short documentary film about the epidemic of homeless children in the US called *Stand Up For Kids*.

Bryant was a staff cameraperson for LTN, a Los Angeles lifestyle network, and before that on *Savvy* for the WE network, and has shot extensively for ReelzChannel. He recently finished shooting the DVD special features for *Mad Men* and he is currently working on a documentary called *When the Iron Bird Flies* about the influence of Tibetan Buddhism on western culture.

### Composer - Sean Callery



Sean Callery is best known for his composition work on the worldwide television hit series *24* starring Kiefer Sutherland. He has received three Emmy® Awards for Outstanding Music Composition for the series, the most recent of which was for the season finale in September of 2010. He has also received eleven ASCAP Top Series honors, for his work on *24* and for CBS's *Medium*. He began composing the score for the Fox TV series, *Bones* in 2008. He is currently completing work on an 8 hour miniseries, *The Kennedys*, starring Greg Kinnear and Katie Holmes, which will premiere in March of 2011 on The History Channel. Mr. Callery lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Debbie.



## Credits

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY  
JOHANNA DEMETRKAS

PRODUCED BY  
LISA LEEMAN

EDITED BY  
JOHANNA DEMETRAKAS  
KATE AMEND, A.C.E.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
PABLO BRYANT

MUSIC COMPOSED BY  
SEAN CALLERY

COLOR ONLINE AND DESIGN  
BILL RUSSELL

SOUND DESIGN BY  
MIDGE COSTIN



Copyright 2011, Crazy Wisdom Productions

## SONGS

“It’s Love”

Written and Performed by W.A. Stobo  
Guido Bryant, Lead Guitar  
Geoffry Dimmick, Bass  
Rob Brown, Drums  
Courtesy of STOBO

“The Blessing You Were”

Written and Performed by W.A. Stobo  
Guido Bryant, Lead Guitar  
Geoffry Dimmick, Bass  
Rob Brown, Drums  
Courtesy of STOBO

“Hara Hara Mahadev/Om Namah Shivaya,”  
courtesy of Jai Uttal and Invasion Group

“Milan String Quartet No.2

In B-Flat Maj. @ Allegro Di Molto”  
Written by Wolfgang Mozart  
Published by Sonoton APM (ASCAP)  
Courtesy of APM Music

“Movement 7”

Written and Performed by  
Jeff Reilly Jerry Granelli  
Courtesy of Jerry Granelli

“Immeasurable”

Written and Performed by Jerry Granelli,  
David Tronzo, Christian Koegel,  
And Anthony Granelli  
Courtesy of Jerry Granelli

“Shambhala Anthem”

Lyrics by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche  
Music from an Irish Traditional Melody,  
“Let Erin Remember”

“Shambhala Anthem” on bagpipes  
Performed by Jeremy Blackburn