

MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN'S  
**HURRICANE**  
ON THE **BAYOU**

**A Film for IMAX® Theatres and Giant Screen Cinemas**

Presented by



[weather.com](http://weather.com)

**Executive Produced by Audubon Nature Institute**

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

*HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU is produced by MacGillivray Freeman Films Educational Foundation and distributed by MacGillivray Freeman Films. Executive Produced by Audubon Nature Institute with major funding from the State of Louisiana. Presented by The Weather Channel.*

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

**Contact:** Lori Rick  
MacGillivray Freeman Films  
(949) 494-1055 x218  
[lrick@macfreefilms.com](mailto:lrick@macfreefilms.com)

MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN'S  
**HURRICANE**  
ON THE **BAYOU**

*Production Story*

*"When the storm of life is raging, stand by me."*  
-- "Stand By Me," Charles A. Tindley

MacGillivray Freeman Films is known for taking IMAX® cameras into unexpected places, bringing audiences along on their often daring and always educational adventures to many of the world's most beautiful, remote, endangered and perilous zones in films like *Everest*, *The Living Sea*, *Coral Reef Adventure*, and *Mystery of the Nile*. But never has the company made a movie as emotional and urgently relevant as **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU**, which is produced and directed by two-time Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker Greg MacGillivray. Initially conceived of as an eye-opening journey into Louisiana's disappearing wetlands and the dire consequences of a hypothetical hurricane, the production was in the process of simulating a catastrophic Category 5 hurricane in New Orleans when the Gulf Coast was struck with an all-too-real storm: Hurricane Katrina, which would become the most devastating and costly natural disaster in U.S. history. Moved by what they saw unfolding, the filmmakers forged on, turning their film into an impassioned, music-driven clarion call to rebuild the city that many call the soul of America and restore the wetlands that inspire and protect her from harm.

It all begins on the Cajun Coast of Louisiana, in a magical place unlike any other in the entire United States. The locals call it "bayou country," and these spectacular wetlands are bursting with a fantastic array of life – home to fish, birds, alligators and a diverse human community that has woven together a rich, joyous, musical culture unique in the world. The wetlands stretch out for 300 miles of verdant green along the Gulf of Mexico, forming the heart of the Mississippi Delta, and feeding, fueling and stirring up the creative and industrial juices of New Orleans.

But this same coast has been heading for years towards calamity: altered by human engineering, the fragile land of the bayou has been eroding into the open sea at the alarming speed of one acre – a land area the size of a football field – every half an hour (source: National Wetlands Research Center). On a blustery day in August 2005, the brewing crisis came to a head and nature struck back with a vengeance. That's when Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf with its fierce winds, whipping up a massive storm surge estimated to reach as high as 30 feet, that would find little resistance from the ravaged barrier islands and marshes of the coast, and that ultimately breached the

levees in New Orleans. As the water poured in, Americans watched in disbelief and despair as 80% of the city was submerged and its desperate citizens clamored into boats and onto rooftops hoping to escape. There had never been a national nightmare quite like it. Yet true to the resilient spirit of New Orleans, the city is now in the throes of healing and recovery – and looking towards a future that must involve humans working together in harmony with nature if it is to succeed.

This is the story that *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* tells. Through the eyes of four Louisiana musicians – the illustrious Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Famer and New Orleans diplomat Allen Toussaint; the heartfelt blues-master and wetlands activist Tab Benoit; Louisiana’s own teenaged pop sensation, Amanda Shaw; and third generation Zydeco innovator Chubby Carrier – unfolds a tale that explores the beauty and fragility of the wetlands, the staggering effects of Katrina, and the inspirational efforts being made against the odds to bring back both the city and the bayou to build a viable new future.

Says MacGillivray: “I hope this film will be a chance for people to take a fresh look at these events that we’ve been talking about and thinking about for so many months now – with the deeply felt emotions that only an IMAX theatre film can convey because you can see and feel what happened with so much immediacy. Whether it’s an intimate close-up of a bayou alligator mother or a house under 12 feet of water, seeing these visceral images gives the audience a chance to personally experience what New Orleans and Louisiana went through, what makes these places so special and important, and what it would mean to lose this essential part of America.”

### **The Calm Before The Storm: Production Begins In The Funky Swamps of Louisiana**

In the beginning, *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* was supposed to be a rollicking adventure into the wild wetlands of Louisiana – and a resounding warning that if the wetlands continued to vanish, New Orleans could be destroyed by one of the hurricanes that comes near to the city once every 3 to 4 years. Greg MacGillivray had long watched the deteriorating state of the wetlands with concern. He knew that land areas the size of Manhattan were eroding into the sea each and every year – and that the loss was accelerating, threatening wildlife, human communities and ultimately, one of the most economically and culturally vital areas of the United States.

“The Louisiana wetlands are a natural treasure of America,” says MacGillivray. “It’s a fantastic wilderness area and a valuable place for commerce, and these same wetlands have long acted as a vital speed bump during hurricane season. Without the wetlands to protect it, New Orleans

– which I think is probably the single most unique city in America – is all too vulnerable. We really wanted to let audiences know about this wonderful place and dangerous situation.”

It was this same concern that originally motivated Louisiana’s Audubon Nature Institute, the film’s executive producer, and the State of Louisiana to help fund a large-format film about the wonders of the wetlands and the potential disaster facing them. “At that time, we felt the disappearance of the wetlands was one of the most urgent crises facing Louisiana,” comments Karyn Noles Bewley, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas at Audubon Nature Institute. “And we knew that a film would have the potential to reach not only our visitors but people of all ages across the world in a powerful and compelling way. So we set out on a quest to find the right partner and it was Greg MacGillivray’s incredible passion for and commitment to the environment, as well as his company’s track record, that led us to realize they would be the perfect collaborators.”

MacGillivray brought in screenwriter and acclaimed Louisiana filmmaker Glen Pitre – who has been dubbed “the father of the Cajun film”– to forge the script. Pitre had himself been grief-stricken by watching the very same magical prairies he played on as a child recede into the sea, and was worried for the future. “We’re used to thinking big changes in the earth take eons,” says Pitre. “Well, in Louisiana it isn’t taking eons, it’s happening right in front of our eyes. The maps from just a short time ago are pockmarked with holes that represent wonderful places of which only memories remain.”

Long before Katrina hit, Pitre knew there was a lot of drama to be found in the bayou and its struggle for survival. “The Delta area we talk about in the film is where the Mississippi meets the sea and it’s where so many strands of American life come together,” he explains. “Here, you get many of the greatest strengths of America and some of the weaknesses all in one place. In this fantastic, fragile landscape, everything seems to get kicked up a notch.”

That’s just what happened in the summer of 2005. Early that season, the MacGillivray Freeman crew headed into the cypress-lined tributaries of bayou country to begin shooting a film that was then tentatively titled *Hurricane Warning*. The filmmakers were astonished by what they found.

“The swamplands were such a surprise to us,” explains the film’s director of photography, Brad Ohlund. “We all started out with this stereotypical image of swamps as dark, slimy, primordial, forbidding places you see in horror movies, but then you get there and you’re blown away by the astounding beauty and peacefulness of them. We were shooting just an hour south of New Orleans but it felt like another world – and a pretty fantastic world at that. We’ve been to a lot of amazing places, but I honestly don’t think we’ve ever met so many delightful, fascinating people anywhere else we’ve made a movie.”

He continues: “The spirit of camaraderie there was really astounding, and I think it’s part of what the film is about – how this land helped forge such a wonderful, warm and engaging culture. Hopefully, we captured some of what makes it so special. If only we could also let the audience taste the food with that same IMAX theatre realism!”

To take audiences on their own visceral tour of the wetlands, the filmmakers used the favorite local means of transport – water-skimming airboats that can fly through the narrow canals – as well as helicopters to capture the shifting contours of the wetlands with all the grand perspective of aerial views. They also shot close-up footage of some of Louisiana’s most colorful, not to mention dangerous, characters: Louisiana’s state reptile, the alligator.

“Alligators are a big part of the bayou’s ecosystem so one of the things we wanted to do in this film is to make these usually rather unsympathetic creatures come alive in a way that is much more sympathetic,” notes Ohlund. “By shooting an alligator family you get a sense of how they care for one another like any other family and how they’re such a natural and beautiful part of the swamplands.”

Wildlife experts estimate that there are more than one million alligators in the swamps of Louisiana, but finding them isn’t so easy, as they frequently hide in the thick mud banks to avoid the heat. Underwater photography expert Bob Cranston, who previously worked with MacGillivray Freeman Films on *The Living Sea* and *Coral Reef Adventure*, helped to capture some of the up-close-and-personal shots of an alligator momma with her newborn babies.

Those shots later helped to frame one of Greg MacGillivray’s favorite sequences in the film. “One of my favorite moments comes when you see Tab Benoit and Amanda Shaw writing a song about the alligators – I love that quiet, intimate process of these two artists creating something new and the respect you can see that they have for each other and the bayou,” he remarks. “Then that leads into the alligators hatching out of their eggs and encountering mom and their surrounding world for the first time. It’s such a playful, emotional and educational image that really takes you into the life of the bayou. After Katrina, the alligator family also becomes a very important symbol of hope in the film. I’ve always felt that the more people understand the natural world, the more they will feel compelled to protect it – so the alligator family helps to bring that emotional connection with the land.”

Moving on from the bayous, the filmmakers next began an unusual, and as it turned out unusually prophetic, task: simulating a Category 5 hurricane and the resultant flooding in New Orleans. Using wind machines, rain generators, water pumps and a variety of Hollywood-style smoke-and-mirror techniques, the filmmakers tried to give some semblance of what New Orleans would be like if the “big flood” hit. They even shot fake rescue scenes on New Orleans rooftops.

But soon, these scenes would be permanently left on the cutting room floor, because out in the ocean the storm was brewing that would change the fate of Louisiana and the lives of millions of Americans forever.

## **Eye of the Storm:** **Shooting the Aftermath of Katrina**

In late August of 2005, when the National Weather Service began to warn that a monster storm forming in the Bahamas could hit the Gulf Coast and even New Orleans, it seemed surreal to the filmmakers. After all, that was the same scenario they had just been filming from their script. Yet as the warnings turned to demands for evacuation and the skies opened up with rain, it soon became clear that what the film had hoped would just be cautionary fiction was turning into raw reality.

It was August 29<sup>th</sup> when Katrina made landfall in the U.S., hitting Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama with brutal force. But it was New Orleans, as so many had feared, that would suffer the worst blow. When the levees that separate Lake Ponchartrain from the city's neighborhoods on the north and Lake Borgne on the east were breeched, and surge water over-topped levees along the Industrial Canal, the majority of the city was inundated with high water from which there was no easy escape. Homes and dreams were instantly shattered. Families were divided. Across Louisiana an estimated 1, 577 people died, while many thousands more required rescue and the city's fate literally hung in the balance as the populace evacuated *en masse*.

As Hurricane Katrina became a global news story, Greg MacGillivray felt a responsibility to get his crew back into the city to capture this devastating turn in the story. "This was big decision-making time," recalls MacGillivray. "Did I send more crew to New Orleans during all the uncertainty or not? It wasn't easy, but within a short time, we were able to get water, fuel, boats and helicopters there, and we realized we had a chance to get IMAX theatre footage nobody else was getting and tell stories nobody else was telling."

Overseen by Production Coordinator Kathy Almon, a rag-tag, last-minute operation swung into high gear. "It took a lot of chutzpah to gain access to what was really a disaster zone," says Brad Ohlund. Adds Pitre: "At the last minute, we were literally knocking on doors to put together a crew from whoever was left in the area."

Meanwhile, a truck filled with IMAX theatre camera equipment was quickly dispatched from Los Angeles in the hopes of making it into the cut-off city. At the Baton Rouge airport, Spacecam inventor and operator Ron Goodman arrived ready to use his gyroscopic camera system to shoot unprecedented aerials of the water- and fire-ravaged city. Desperate for a nearby helicopter on which

to mount the IMAX theatre camera, the production was finally able to borrow one from the *Miami Vice* set in Florida. That helicopter provided the additional advantage of being emblazoned with authentic-looking police logos, allowing the filmmakers unprecedented access into off-limit areas.

Meanwhile, the newly arrived crew had nowhere to go. Many hotels were closed and others were filled beyond capacity with refugees. With no electricity to be had anywhere in the city, much of the production camped, in the dark, at writer Glen Pitre's house. Pitre's parents, who escaped rising waters in their own home, were recruited as chefs, while the production assistants were sent out on daily reconnaissance missions to try to round up groceries and the most crucial supplies.

Despite all the adrenaline, the mood soon shifted to somber as the crew began moving through the city, painfully witnessing both death and destruction on a scale they never imagined seeing in America. "It was as if we had suddenly become war journalists," says Pitre. "There were times when we could barely shoot because there were tears streaming down our faces."

On several occasions, the filmmakers turned into rescuers, jumping in to assist wherever they could. They offered food, beverages and radios to those in need – and even freed trapped dogs. They also operated as messengers, delivering reports about the status of homes and neighbors.

Says Karyn Noles-Bewley of Audubon Nature Institute: "I really credit the filmmaking team for being extremely creative and very aggressive in getting into the city and making things happen. There was a great responsibility here to do this with real humanity and also to represent people's stories in a meaningful and hopeful way – and they lived up to that."

There were plenty of logistical challenges as the crew had to engage in a constant search for very scarce fuel – and compete with teeming armies of news helicopters for space in the sky. In those wildly unpredictable days right after Katrina, danger was everywhere, with bullets flying and rumors raging throughout the city. "Every shot we got was a scramble," recalls cinematographer Jack Tankard. "We were fighting helicopter traffic, dodging fires, worrying about where our next can of fuel would come from. There were no clear procedures or rules anymore, and we had to try to make the best of the chaos."

Yet there was also an unwavering sense among the team that they were capturing a period in time that no one in America would ever, or should ever, forget. After 9 days of shooting in and over the inundated 9<sup>th</sup> Ward and Lakeview areas, a ghostly French Quarter and across a brand new landscape of makeshift shelters and rescue operations, the crew brought back images they could scarcely believe.

"It's hard to even put into words the incredible emotional impact of seeing this footage," MacGillivray comments. "What happened in New Orleans is something you can't explain rationally – so you have to see it for yourself. I hope we were able to recreate some of that experience in an

honest and respectful way – and at the same time put a very positive emphasis on how people rose to the challenge and helped one another as fellow human beings.”

### **After the Storm: Revisiting The Script**

Once Katrina hit, Greg MacGillivray knew that everything had changed. The entire nation was still reeling in shock from all the confusing, frightening news, while New Orleans faced a long, hard road of recovery ahead if it was to ever rise again as a great American city. Yet, the film seemed more important than ever. If New Orleans was to have a credible future it would depend on a lot of things – but one of the keys would have to be replenishing the depleted wetlands that could save it from storms to come. And there was now an even more vital story to tell about how New Orleans, the wetlands and the Mississippi Delta are so essential to American life and so in need of the nation rallying around them in this time of dire need.

“Katrina literally re-wrote our script,” MacGillivray comments. “Now we felt compelled to create something that would bring out not only the importance of the wetlands but the emotions, tenacity and amazing survival stories we had just witnessed. Our original story about the wetlands also had a new poignancy, because you realize that what seemed like just a far-off warning was completely right.”

The director continues: “I’m used to continually rewriting my scripts – always trying to make them more emotional, more human, more compelling but in this case everything had changed and we had to find ways to communicate this much bigger, more urgent story to our audience.”

The narrative began to follow a new arc: starting in the endangered but magical wetlands; then moving with great peals of thunder into the fury of Katrina; then easing into a heart-rending collage of larger-format images from the aftermath; and then continuing as the city’s citizens, and its many musical icons, begin to return with courage and hope to make a new start.

Continues MacGillivray: “We looked for the right way to blend together these three very different stories, and the link naturally became music because musicians have always been the heroes of Louisiana. So the story now followed several musicians who suffered at the hand of Katrina, revealing what they learned along the way.”

As the script went through several more rounds of changes post-Katrina, MacGillivray also wanted to make sure it would offer something different, and more intimate, than the overwhelming news and media coverage of the hurricane. “I’m sure there are going to be a number of very hard-hitting, in-depth documentaries that will come out and deal with the political controversies and the



organizational problems, but I wanted to stay away from all that because we have a different story to tell,” he comments. “Our story is about the wetlands and the bayou and the personal experiences of musicians. We take advantage of all that IMAX theatre format photography can bring to telling this important part of the tale.”

The musicians at the heart of the newly conceived *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* each represented a different way of looking at Katrina, the wetlands and New Orleans. “As an energetic teenager, Amanda Shaw serves as the eyes of the audience, someone who’s enthusiastically learning along with them about the beauty and importance of the wetlands,” explains editor Jim Foster. “Tab Benoit is kind of the local guru – he knows the bayou and all its issues so well and he’s got a lot to teach about it. And Allen Toussaint represents the city. He’s an authentic living legend – the real deal – and he brings a real gravitas to the film.”

Tab, Amanda and Allen each share their own stories of surviving Katrina. Tab reveals how his beloved songwriting cabin was blown to pieces by high winds. Allen Toussaint shares how, in his undying devotion to the city, he stayed in his flooded house through the storm, then was forced to evacuate for lack of food and water. In some of the film’s most tense moments, Amanda Shaw speaks openly about the fears she had for the beloved grandparents she could not reach.

Says MacGillivray: “Watching these characters, ranging from a teenager experiencing the biggest disaster she’s ever seen to a legendary musician who is an undeniable part of New Orleans, as they each go through such a life-altering event, brought even more human emotion to the story.”

Although musicians can have the reputation of being incorrigible rebels, the filmmakers found that they had the opposite experience in New Orleans, where musicians were uniting around a city in crisis. “Everyone there had so much civility and respect for one another,” says Ohlund. “It’s even in the way people talk. People called me Mr. Brad and I called them Miss Amanda or Mr. Chubby – it was a really cool environment to work in.”

Imbuing the film with this kind of truly local perspective was very important to Karyn Noles-Bewley of Audubon Nature Institute. She notes: “I think the film really gets across that those of us from Louisiana have an emotional connection to this place. It’s something that is almost impossible to express in words, but images and music can do it so powerfully.”

Adding further resonance to the project, the filmmakers were thrilled to have one of the nation’s most lauded leading screen actresses, Meryl Streep, join the film as the narrator. Says MacGillivray: “Her ability to connect with audiences and bring so much depth to everything she does made her the perfect narrator for a film that goes through so many moods and is intended to not only educate and entertain, but inspire.”

## **Recreating the Storm:** **The Visual Effects**

The filmmakers of *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* now had extensive footage from before and after Katrina to utilize in the complex editing of the film – but they still needed a way to capture some of the most intense moments in the middle of the storm when no cameras were shooting. For these dramatic sequences, they turned to Santa Monica-based special effects house Sassoon Film Design, who have extensive experience in the tricky art of designing digital effects specifically for large-format films.

Sassoon was recruited to provide a number of powerful images, including simulating the approach of the Hurricane Katrina into New Orleans; the near-instant destruction of the water tower in Buras, Louisiana by 200 MPH winds; water cresting the New Orleans levees during the storm; and the roof blowing off of the famous Superdome sports stadium.

Before they could even begin, the digital wizards at Sassoon had to become amateur experts in hurricane science themselves. “We researched the effect of fluid airstreams on millions of rain drops, the physical dynamics of how structures are torn by wind, and also how light bounces around during night-time storms,” explains Digital Supervisor Johnathan Banta. “Basically our task was to recapture certain moments in time during Katrina’s havoc, and to bring to bear some of the emotional turmoil that happened with it in the designs. We did this by carefully controlling light, shadow and detailed visual elements.”

Says director of photography Brad Ohlund of Sassoon Film Design’s work: “I think audiences will be really impressed by how these effects demonstrate the sheer power of hurricanes. They add another layer to the film’s theme of how the people, the culture and the environment are all so intimately connected.”

One of the biggest challenges for Sassoon was making the most everyday sights seem realistic under hurricane conditions. “The rain and the cloud formations were the most difficult to simulate,” Banta explains. “We are all very attuned to how those natural elements are supposed to appear in real life, but when you get to a hurricane a lot of the simple techniques of recreating them go out the window.”

Another intriguing mission for Sassoon Film Design was digitally lighting the Superdome in the dawn hours. “We were originally provided daylight shots, so we spent a lot of time un-lighting them!” says Banta. “This gave us a lot more leeway in terms of actually sculpting the light in a digitally modeled environment to give the effect Greg was looking for. With the Superdome, we

were able to bring a beam of light momentarily into the foreground. It's one of the film's emotional moments, as that ray of light comes in like a metaphorical glimmer of hope in the wake of the storm."

### **Beats of the Heart:** **About the Film's Soundtrack**

When the lights go down in IMAX theatres exhibiting *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU*, the music will come up. As the rollicking rhythm and chanting melody of the Louisiana classic "Iko, Iko" (as performed by contemporary Southern Louisiana singer-songwriter Zachary Richards) kicks in, it soon becomes clear that this film is not just a visual journey into New Orleans and its surrounding wetlands but an audio journey as well – one that leaves an indelible reminder that the foot-stomping, soul-stirring music that makes New Orleans so special to the nation and the world emerged from the very bayous that are today so endangered.

From the start, director Greg MacGillivray knew he wanted Louisiana's irresistible music to be at the heart of his film. "There are few other places in America where the relationship between the beauty of the land and the culture are so clearly intertwined," he notes. "Louisiana is a place that is so brimming with music, it's hard to get out of the range of where music is being played."

In the wake of Katrina, the soul of the film became even more about music – following three leading musical artists on their own personal journeys through Katrina and into impassioned support for rebuilding both the city and its protective wetlands. As rock legend Allen Toussaint, blues-master Tab Benoit and teenaged pop prodigy Amanda Shaw each share their tales, they are accompanied by their own music as well as a rousing mix of tunes that reflect that vast history and magic of Louisiana's musical heritage. Coinciding with the release of the film, the Audubon Nature Institute will release the *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* soundtrack album, the proceeds of which will go towards the organization's extensive programs to preserve the wetlands.

Bringing together all the many musical strands of *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* is the film's composer Steve Wood, who has scored more than a dozen large-format films for MFF, winning four Best Soundtrack Awards for the Oscar®-nominated *Everest* with George Harrison. Wood knew from the start that this film would take him exciting new places musically. "Music is at the heart of what makes New Orleans and Louisiana so special. The minute you hear Jazz or Dixieland or Zydeco, you travel in your mind to the Delta," he muses. "Unlike other large-format features I've scored, music is also at the center of what this film is about -- it's a part of the story and at the heart of each character. So with the score, I set out to weave together elements of all this great

American music and provide a kind of mood-setting over-view that takes you deeper inside the images.”

Wood began by immersing himself in all the threads that make up Louisiana’s musical tapestry – heading to New Orleans and the storied clubs and studios of the still vibrant music scene there. “What an inspiring experience for a musician,” he says. “Music is like food in Louisiana – it’s essential to survival. You get a real cross-section of every single musical style there and it seems everyone you meet loves music -- not just one kind of music but *all* music.”

Wood might have started as an outsider to the tight-knit local music scene, but that brought him a unique advantage. “What was great is that I was able to bring together a group of musicians on this score who might not usually play with one another,” he explains. “I hired Dixieland players and Cajun players and Ragtime players and the results were electrifying. They were all so gifted and gave killer performances.”

In addition to the score, Wood wrote two original songs for the film: “God’s Good Hand,” a rousing Gospel number which is performed by Allen Toussaint, Marva Wright and the Greater Antioch Choir in the stunning St. Louis Cathedral; and “This is My Home,” which is sung by legendary New Orleans vocalist John Boutte. Says Wood of the songs: “‘God’s Good Hand’ is very much about faith in the process of rebuilding, and is written in a Gospel style, which is one of my favorite forms of music. ‘This is My Home’ hearkens back to Southern Plantation music and is about the deep connection you have to the place where all your fondest memories and the people you care about are. I felt really lucky to have John Boutte sing that song.”

Wood sums up: “Throughout the idea was to combine the authentic music of the region with music and songs that reflect the film’s powerful story.”

Meanwhile, to help compile a fun, funky and emotional soundtrack of Louisiana classics to join Wood’s stirring score, the filmmakers also turned to Steve Dorand, Vice President of the Audubon Theatre in Louisiana, a passionate historian of the local music scene and himself a working musician and composer. Dorand was thrilled to have a chance to introduce audiences to sounds of Louisiana they might not have heard before. While New Orleans is renowned for inventing Jazz, putting the laid-back roll into Rock music and adding a whole lot of Rhythm to their Blues, Dorand notes that there’s even more than meets the eye to Louisiana’s incredible musical treasures.

“Most people have a very narrow view of what music in the bayou is like, so we wanted to give this film a truly diverse and representative soundscape that takes you into city and the coastal wetlands,” he explains. “So much amazing music has come out of the Louisiana marshes – from Zydeco to Funk to Swamp Pop. I hope this is a soundtrack that will speak to audiences, and, at the end of the day, will also be completely authentic to the peoples and culture of the region.”

One thing Dorand hopes people will take away is just how deeply interwoven music is into life in Louisiana. He explains: “When you grow up in a place where you can walk down the street and see Dr. John, it’s something that you just can’t get out of your soul. And yet, I don’t think you can pigeon-hole Louisiana music in any way. There are so many different immigrant influences. And then you have certain people like the Neville’s, who have taken the culture all around them and turned it into a magical, amazing sound all its own.”

Dorand also notes that Louisiana has a long history of using the inspiration of music to get through hard times and to fuel recovery. “It seems that every hundred years or so some major calamity hits Louisiana and brings change – and every time we’ve come out it with a new cultural renaissance,” he remarks.

Already, Dorand sees that music is proving to be a uniting force after Katrina. “One of the unique things that comes out in this film is that musicians were some of the first people to come back right away after Katrina,” he observes. “Musicians are responding once again to a time of need and what’s beautiful is that it feels like all the divisions are gone and creativity is at a new height.”

As the film begins, the score and soundtrack are upbeat and joyful but as the story descends into the maelstrom of Katrina, the mood shifts – and Dorand chose songs that could stand up to the starkly emotions. “When Mavis Staples sings the traditional spiritual ‘Stand By Me’ it gives you goose bumps,” he says.

The soundtrack also includes songs from such musicians as the Rebirth Brass Band, whose signature brand of heavy funk has made them one of the most popular brass bands in the world; rock and roll pioneer Fats Domino; smooth blues piano legend Charles Brown; innovative Cajun band Zydeco Force; four-time Grammy winner Aaron Neville, whose sweet, plaintive voice has long been associated with New Orleans; and the beloved boogie woogie pianist Dr. John.

Dorand found himself especially moved by the enthusiastic response of so many legendary musicians who agreed to contribute songs. “We were getting yeses even before Katrina because people saw that this would be a great film for Louisiana,” he says. “But after Katrina, there’s an even larger feeling among musicians that this is their city and their story – and that this film might give others a chance to really experience the rhythm and pulse of the area. Then, once they learned Allen Toussaint was in the film they were like ‘oh, Mr. Toussaint’ is doing it? That really inspired people.”

In turn, both Wood and Dorand hope the movie’s music will inspire audiences even beyond their time in the theatre. “We hope people leave the theatre with the Louisiana beat in their heads,” sums up Dorand. “We hope this is the kind of soundtrack that, long after you’ve seen the film, you can pop the CD in and those same incredible images of New Orleans and the Louisiana wetlands will come right into her mind and take you back there again.”

## **Recovering From the Storm: Returning to Louisiana With New Hope**

Six months after Katrina, with the city still reeling, the filmmakers of *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* returned for another round of shooting, right in time for one of the most meaningful and joyous Mardi Gras celebrations in history. This time they focused their cameras on New Orleans' hardest hit neighborhoods, highlighting stories of resilience and recovery as the city begins to build anew.

They also shot what would become the film's moving climax – a stirring, live musical performance in the historic St. Louis Cathedral, the oldest church in Louisiana (founded in 1720) and a marvel of Gothic architecture. Here, Allen Toussaint, Amanda Shaw and Chubby Carrier were joined by “Gospel Queen” Marva Wright and a 20-person choir to perform a Gospel ode to New Orleans written for the film by long time MacGillivray Freeman collaborator Steve Wood.

“I wrote a song of hope and faith called ‘In God’s Hands,’” explains Wood, “and these remarkable musicians gave it a truly rousing rendition.” For Brad Ohlund, capturing the song on film was in itself emotional. “Filming in that spectacular place with all these incredible musicians was a bit daunting,” he admits. “We’re used to doing all these outdoor shots and wild aerials and now we had to light this huge interior space on a very tight budget, which was a whole new challenge. Luckily, our crew did an incredible job, and the focus is on the power of Steve Wood’s music and the passion of the musicians.”

After all the darkness and despair the film crew had witnessed, the scene was like coming through to the other side of the storm. “It was an emotional highpoint,” MacGillivray says. “We were blocks away from total devastation, where nothing is left standing, and yet we were filled with awe listening to this beautiful, spiritual hymn. There was a sense of both contemplation and hope.”

That hope is a key part of what *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* hopes to impart – both for New Orleans and for the wetlands. “Although parts of New Orleans and the Louisiana coast are still quite grim, I think the city and the people here have proven themselves to be incredibly resilient,” says Glen Pitre. “People love this place beyond all reason – there’s just something so special about it, we know you can’t just let it slip away without a serious fight.”

Adds Karyn Noles Bewley: “We’re very hopeful because everywhere we go people around the country express their support. We’re hopeful that because of that support, local, state and federal officials will keep the priority on rebuilding the wetlands and New Orleans. If people want to help, then they should come to our city, come to Mardi Gras, come to Jazz Fest, come eat in our restaurants and dance in our streets. People who come here usually fall in love with it.”

Soon a year will have passed since Katrina hit and Greg MacGillivray also hopes *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* will serve as an entertaining reminder that Louisiana still needs lots of help from the rest of the United States. “By now, a lot of people have stopped thinking about New Orleans because the problems can seem so complicated,” he comments. “That’s why we hope that by telling these emotional, human stories people will be drawn in once more and will take another look and understand it from a new perspective. If the story affects the heart, it’s going to have long-term consequences.”

From those who operated cameras over the city in its darkest hours to the musicians who told their poignant stories to the behind-the-scenes talent – the link between every single person who participated in *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* seems to be absolute passion about the importance of the film. As Noles Bewley sums up: “I think the final film has come to be about something more than just the treasure that is New Orleans and more than just the urgency of solving the wetlands crisis. It’s really about the human spirit – about our ability to overcome tragedy in our lives and to commit to saving the things that are truly worth saving.”

###

## **Why Louisiana's Wetlands Mean So Much To America: And Why Their Restoration Is Critical**

*HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* brings to the fore a silent catastrophe that started long before Hurricane Katrina, contributed to the hurricane's relentless damage to the city of New Orleans, and continues to pose a serious threat to the nation. That catastrophe is wetlands loss, which is currently causing the state of Louisiana to lose an incredible 16,000 acres of land each and every year.

Just imagine a chunk of land the size of a tennis court being submerged into the open water every 13 seconds (source: National Wetlands Research Center) and you get a picture of how quickly the coast of Louisiana is disappearing. It is this same marshy land – land that teems with widely varied wildlife, fertile agriculture, major industry and one-of-a-kind culture – that in the past served as a vital “speed bump” that helped to slow hurricane damage and protect Louisiana from the tragic flooding of storm surges. Scientific studies by the Army Corps of Engineers suggest that every 2.7 miles of wetlands can reduce deadly storm surges by a foot (source: America's Wetland). Without wetlands restoration, recovery efforts in New Orleans may all be for naught because it is only a matter of time before another monster storm comes the city's way.

*HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* director/producer Greg MacGillivray had long been worried about wetlands loss in the Gulf States and, by the summer of 2005, he knew it had reached perilous proportions. That's why he originally set out to make a film about what might happen if a Category 5 hurricane approached the ravaged coastal areas surrounding New Orleans, only to witness Mother Nature prove in a devastating way just how well-founded that concern was. “We always wanted to tell the story of how important the wetlands are, but when Katrina hit it became much more poignant than we ever could have imagined,” says MacGillivray. “It really hit home that one of the most important cities and cultures in the United States was almost lost – and it demonstrated with a very raw power how vital it is that we protect our natural world.”

The film *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* thus serves not only as a celebration of New Orleans and the beautiful bayous but as a call to action to save the wetlands upon whose survival the fate of Louisiana rests. To find out more about the wetlands, the filmmakers consulted with the film's executive producer, Audubon Nature Institute, as well as one of Louisiana's most respected coastal geologists, Dr. Shea Penland, director of the Ponchartrain Institute for Environmental Studies, who has been studying wetlands loss for most of his career and considers it to be one of the most serious geological problems facing North America.

They in turn helped to explain that Louisiana's unique geography – placed as it is where the grand Mississippi River meets the sea – means that it contains some 40% (according to the National Wetlands Research Center) of the wetlands in the entire United States. The richness of this area has



been an economic boon to Louisiana and made it a major strand in the web of the U.S. economy. The Mississippi River Delta is enormously profitable to the nation, featuring a bustling shipping port through which nearly 20% of U.S. exports and imports pass, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, and an off-shore oil industry through which 80% of the nation's off shore oil travels (source: America's Wetland) not to mention supplying a quarter of the country's natural gas (source: Louisiana Sierra Club). The fisheries off Louisiana's coast provide a whopping 26% of the nation's seafood catch (U.S. Department of Commerce figure), with a sumptuous mix of shrimp, crabs, crayfish and oysters. Renowned for its beauty and cultural allure, the entire Mississippi River area also traditionally rakes in tourism dollars worth over \$15 billion dollars a year (source: American Rivers.)

Yet the wealth of the wetlands goes well beyond money. They are also home to an incredible, irreplaceable array of life with some 400 different species, many of them endangered, represented there. The coast boasts nearly as many fish as Alaska, while 40% of the U.S.'s migratory bird population relies on the area to spend the winter. On the human side, the delta has long fed the roots of one of America's most vibrant cultures where a rich stew of ethnic communities, including Cajun, Native American, African American and Europeans of all types, have created an exuberant, story-telling, musical way of life that could never be recreated.

But like all the world's most beautiful things, the Mississippi Delta has also proved fragile. Its deterioration began over a century ago when ambitious engineers first began to tinker with altering the Mississippi's flow, constructing levees and jetties that stopped crucial sediments from feeding the deltas. Without those nutrient-filled deposits, the land began to sink away. As development further progressed in the area, other assaults continued on the marshes. Swamps were drained to make way for housing and farms; and channels were dug into the wetlands, allowing salt-water to invade fresh-water marshes in doses deadly enough to kill off life-sustaining trees and grasses, while further increasing erosion. Meanwhile, the more vulnerable the coast of Louisiana has become to hurricanes, the more damage they have wreaked. Indeed, Katrina along with Hurricane Rita further destroyed more than 100 square miles of coastal wetlands and barrier islands according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In the last few years land loss off the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts has accelerated beyond the worst fears of scientists and locals. Fifty years ago, Louisiana was losing about ten square miles of land per year: now that number is up to 25 square miles (source: National Wetlands Research Center), and little hamlets, peaceful citrus groves and unknown corners of the bayou have been excised right off the maps.

For *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* writer and Louisiana native Glen Pitre, the incalculable costs of these losses are more than just economic and environmental – they are human as well. Pitre

laments the fact that whole worlds, rife with stories that will never be shared again, have also disappeared into the deep waters. “There are places my grandparents told me about that no longer exist, there are prairies I walked as a kid that are gone, there are orange groves where no trees will grow,” says Pitre. “It’s very hard to watch that happen to a place you love.”

Experts predict that, without any action, the Gulf of Mexico will have moved 30 miles inland by the year 2050 and that the millions of people who make the area their home will be completely vulnerable to any storms that might hit. The list of what needs to be done is lengthy but includes barrier island restoration; the establishment and preservation of grassbeds; re-evaluation of levees; redirecting the Mississippi River’s silt to replenish the wetlands; the creation of potential diversion plans; experimentation with new dredge materials; and educating a new batch of young scientists whose life work will be to restore and preserve these vital areas of the U.S. coast.

So what can the average American concerned for the coastal wetlands of Louisiana do? Director Greg MacGillivray emphasizes that a problem of this magnitude needs to be addressed at the highest levels of the U.S. government – and hopes that Congressional leadership, under pressure from ordinary citizens, will help fund the projects that desperately need to be put under way in short order.

Says MacGillivray: “It’s going to require a lot of money, a lot of dedication and a lot of volunteers. Already, school kids are starting to go out and plant mangroves, but it’s a big problem and it’s not an easy fix. There are dozens of different programs that are going to be needed and there needs to be a coordinated effort in order to have success.”

It won’t be easy, but there is little doubt that if nothing is done, the costs to the world will be unbearable – and the city that care forgot could itself be lost to the folly of humankind.

## **A Call To Action**

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE WETLANDS CRISIS OR TO TAKE ACTION YOU CAN VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

America’s Wetlands: Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana ([www.Americaswetland.com](http://www.Americaswetland.com))

Voice of the Wetlands (Tab Benoit’s organization) – [www.voiceofthewetlands.com](http://www.voiceofthewetlands.com))

Audubon Nature Institute ([www.auduboninstitute.org](http://www.auduboninstitute.org))

USGS National Wetlands Research Center (<http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov/>)

Louisiana Wetland Education Coalition (<http://www.lacoast.gov/education/index.htm>)

Restore or Retreat (<http://www.restoreorretreat.org>)

Coalition To Restore Coastal Louisiana ([www.ccr1.org](http://www.ccr1.org))

Gulf Restoration Network ([www.healthygulf.org](http://www.healthygulf.org))

## **Profile Of A Hurricane: How and Why Hurricanes Wreak Havoc**

Behind *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU*'s music-fueled tale about the triumph of the spirit lies one of nature's most fearsome and powerful phenomena: the extreme tropical storms known as hurricanes. With their roof-ripping winds, torrential rains and crashing surf, hurricanes pose a major threat to millions of Americans every summer. This reality was driven home in August 2005 when Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast with her 140 MPH gusts, causing the seas to rise with record-shattering storm surges and the levees to burst in New Orleans. The result was the most costly and perhaps the most spiritually overwhelming natural disaster in American history. A currently estimated 1,836 lives were lost across the Gulf. Millions were uprooted. And the damages will run upwards of a staggering \$115 billion dollars. Amidst the human tragedy, Katrina was also wake-up call, a reminder of just how vulnerable even the greatest cities can be to weather's ruthless forces.

For as devastating as Katrina was to the United States, it was neither the strongest hurricane nor the deadliest to hit the nation. In 1900, a Category Four storm shattered Galveston, Texas. Without any media forewarning, few people evacuated and 8,000 died. Fortunately, today's meteorological advances allow the National Weather Service to track the paths and intensities of big storms, often saving lives. Yet even with sophisticated satellite technology, the ever-shifting nature of hurricanes makes it nearly impossible to predict exactly when, where and how hard they'll hit.

Will a storm of the future create another major disaster? As "hurricane season" rolls around again this year, the nation waits anxiously, hoping for a reprieve. But the possibility of another massive hurricane eventually hitting the Gulf region – whether 2 or 20 years from now – is all too real. It is this continuing menace that inspired director Greg MacGillivray to focus the story of *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* around musicians' heartfelt calls to rebuild America's life-preserving coastal wetlands, which can hold back a hurricane's killer storm surges. Says MacGillivray: "Nature has provided us with a vital first line of defense against hurricanes, but unless we start rebuilding the lost wetlands, New Orleans and other American cities will remain in peril."

The power of hurricanes has long plagued and fascinated humanity. The word *hurricane* originally derived from the Mayan God of winds and storms, Hurakan, who, perhaps not surprisingly, in turn became the Carib god of evil, Hurican. Today, the term is used to refer only to the most severe storms that form in the North Atlantic Ocean. Similar storms that arise in the West Pacific are called typhoons, while those in the Indian Ocean are known as tropical cyclones.

Hurricanes require very special conditions to form. They spring into existence far from where they cause so much damage, in the open ocean, when warm water (at least 80 degrees Fahrenheit),

soaring humidity and converging winds all collide. Under these circumstances, a group of smaller rainstorms can be blown together into a single, swirling mass. As this new “monster storm” starts to rotate, it stirs the seas into raging waves, pulling even more water into the air as vapor and further feeding the wind’s spinning fury. If the storm grows in intensity it first becomes a “tropical depression,” then a “tropical storm,” and is declared a hurricane when the winds reach 74 MPH.

As soon as a hurricane is spotted in the ocean, meteorologists jump into action, hoping to avert disaster wherever it is heading. Using satellites, hurricanes are easy to find, especially because they can be as big as 400 miles wide and last as long as two weeks over open waters.

Once discovered, a hurricane is named in order to keep better track of it. People have been naming hurricanes for centuries— a tradition that started in the West Indies, where storms were first identified with Saint’s Days. When the National Weather Service began naming hurricanes in 1953, they initially used only female names (the first official hurricane name was “Alice”), but that was changed in 1979. Today, hurricanes are named from a list issued by the World Meteorological Organization, which rotates names over and over. However when a hurricane is especially catastrophic, such as Katrina, the name is retired, like a sports player’s jersey, never to be used again.

Each hurricane is rated according to the Saffir-Simpson Scale, which predicts how hazardous a hurricane might be upon landfall. Although hurricane winds can demolish homes and overturn cars, the most lethal element of a hurricane is usually the “storm surge” – a sudden rise in sea level that can flood low-lying areas, or even breach levees in a city such as New Orleans.

The hurricane rating scale starts at Category One, which is defined as a storm producing 74-95 MPH winds and eight-foot storm surges but likely to cause little structural damage. The scale climbs to Category Five, the most brutal of storms, with cataclysmic winds over 155 MPH, storm surges of more than 18 feet, and expected to result in razed buildings and widespread flooding. At its peak, Katrina was rated Category Five (with 175 MPH winds) but by the time she hit Louisiana, the storm had weakened to a Category Three. Though the winds were fierce, it was Katrina’s storm surge – estimated to range from 8 to 30 feet – that proved too much for New Orleans’ ailing levees, leading to the flood that submerged 80% of the city and changed so many lives.

Many factors account for the high toll Katrina took, but there is little doubt among scientists that the decay of the crucial “buffer zone” once provided by coastal wetlands left New Orleans wide open to Gulf waters. So now, even as New Orleans’ citizens come together to rebuild the city, they are watching the skies for clouds – and hoping there is enough time to replenish the wetlands and refurbish the levees before another storm forms far away in the ocean only to wreak havoc on land.

## **Katrina, The Wetlands & New Orleans — A Fact Sheet**

- New Orleans was founded in 1718 by Jean Baptiste La Moyné who arrived in the dry fall season and established what at first was little more than a trading camp on the banks of the Mississippi River.
- Because the city sprung up following the curves of the “crookedest river in the world,” it became known as “The Crescent City.” It was also labeled “The Big Easy” – an answer to New York’s nickname “The Big Apple”-- and reflective of the city’s distinctive, laid-back way of life.
- The river and gulf region provided Louisiana and New Orleans with incredible riches – financially, culturally and environmentally – that helped to fuel the growth and expansion of the area.
- As early as 1859, Mark Twain wrote to a friend: “I think that I may say that an American has not seen the United States until he has seen Mardi Gras in New Orleans.”
- In 1910, a fusion between African American and Creole music created the sounds of New Orleans Jazz. It soon took over the nation and the Jazz Age was born.
- The low-lying city has a sea level of six feet at its highest point and has more canals than Venice, Italy.
- There are more than 40,000 buildings in New Orleans on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Due to its Gulf location, New Orleans is affected by a hurricane approximately every 3.75 years.
- Concern about the effects of wetlands loss on New Orleans came to the fore in the 1990s, when a Federal Task Force began to formulate a plan for restoring the wetlands, but the projects were stalled.
- Scientific evidence reveals that every 2.7 miles of wetlands that exists between New Orleans and the Gulf could reduce deadly storm surge by a foot. (Source: America’s Wetland)
- Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana and the entire Gulf region on August 29, 2005. The storm was measured at Category 5 at sea but was downgraded to a Category 3 when it hit New Orleans.
- The storm surge from Katrina ranged from 4 feet to a terrifying 32 feet across Louisiana. By August 31, 2005, 80% of New Orleans was under water.
- 1,293 citizens of New Orleans lost their lives during the subsequent flooding, among 1,836 died who perished in seven states from the Hurricane. Estimates of how many people were displaced during the storm range from 750,000 to 1.3 million.
- 204,700 housing units, 19,000 businesses and 40 public schools were completely destroyed.
- The population of New Orleans has climbed back to about 200,000 people – down from about 484,000 prior to Katrina. Businesses are returning with about 42,000 now fully open.
- Even as New Orleans begins to recover, wetlands loss continues. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita together destroyed an additional 100 square miles of vital coastal wetlands. (Source: U.S. Geological Survey)
- Since 1930, 1,900 square miles of land have been lost off the Louisiana coast, meaning that enough land to form the island of Manhattan is lost every year. (Source: National Wetlands Research Center)
- The projected loss of wetlands over the next 50 years, unless restoration efforts are increased, is projected to be approximately 500 square miles, potentially turning parts of Louisiana into an Atlantis. (Source: America’s Wetland)

## **Q&A With Music Legend Allen Toussaint**

*One of the most charismatic characters at the heart of **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU** is also one of New Orleans' most beloved musical legends: Allen Toussaint, the Louisiana native who has been making hit records for 40 years. Renowned as a singer, pianist, arranger and producer whose work spans Rock, Rhythm & Blues, Pop, Country and Jazz, Toussaint was inducted into the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame in 1998, taking his place in the pantheon of American culture. His most famous songs include the classic "Working in a Coal Mine" and the Dr. John hit "Right Place, Wrong Time." After losing his home and recording studio to Katrina, Toussaint moved temporarily to New York, but from there he has been a tireless ambassador for the rebuilding of New Orleans. Toussaint most recently teamed with Elvis Costello on the album "The River in Reverse," recorded in New Orleans.*

**Q: With so many important things going on in your life right now, what made you decide to take the time to tell your story in *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU*?**

Right now I feel anything that helps bring attention to New Orleans is worth doing and when my presence was requested, I was thrilled. When I heard about the film's story, I was interested because it seems to cover a lot of territory -- from music to the wetlands to the rebuilding of the city. It's also a chance for people to get a closer look at what happened in New Orleans and to see what we've been up against. It would be great if everyone in the country could come down and take a tour but that's impossible so this is a way of bringing people closer to it. It's one thing to see it in magazines and newspapers -- but it's a whole other thing to experience it in action.

**Q: You've lived in New Orleans all your life. What do you think makes it such a magical place and so vital to the USA?**

A: It's home for me of course and that alone makes it so very, very important. But I think part of what makes it so special is this mix between Old World charm and the excitement of the new. It's a place that operates at its own pace -- and I love that about it. Of course, it is also the Cradle of Jazz, and there's always great music to be found.

**Q: One of themes of *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* is the importance of restoring Louisiana's wetlands. Is that something you've been aware of living in the city?**

A: The preservation of the wetlands and the problems of coastal erosion are something that we've talked about for a long time in New Orleans. But now, it has all really been magnified because after Katrina we know how bad things really are. Now that we've seen what can happen, we need to at least prepare for what we know is possible in the future. There should be a process of living and learning after what we've been through.

**Q: Can you share a little bit about your personal experience during Katrina?**

It was catastrophic, I must say. I stayed until the very last possible minute. I mean I've been through so many hurricanes, I'm used to them, and even when I evacuated, I thought I would be returning shortly to remove the boards off the windows. But then I realized it wasn't going to be that way this time. By the time I arrived in New York, I had already resolved that all of the important things in my house might be gone forever, and sure enough, when I came back, most of the meaningful stuff was gone. Yet, I was also so glad that I was safe and that I had a place to be.

**Q: Do you think Katrina will have an influence on the music of New Orleans?**

For all seasons there are songs, whether it's the seasons of the weather, the seasons of holiday or the seasons of war and peace. Music accompanies everything that happens around us but it also rides on after these events disappear. The one thing Katrina has really influenced is that there are all kinds of benefits and recordings going on now. But in the long run, the music will still be what it is and transcend all of that.

**Q: How important is the environment of Louisiana to the culture of New Orleans?**

The environment has influenced the music of New Orleans in both obvious ways and not so obvious ways. Even without anything about it being in the lyrics of a song, there's just a feeling to living in this area that's reflected in how the music goes. There are so many things you see everyday in New Orleans that have an influence: the sound of the boats on the river, the birds in the sky, the pace of life. Even if you don't know it's there when you're writing, it's deep in our spines.

**Q: You've become such an outgoing ambassador for your home city. Do you believe people will come together to rebuild a safer, but still vibrant New Orleans?**

Yes I do. I think the city will be fine. I think it will take quite a bit of time, but one day soon we will be as good as or even better than before. That being said, there's definitely a lot that needs to be done by the powers that be. I just hope we've really learned that we need to do our best to fix some of these situations now that we know how bad things can get. Right now, I'm really looking forward to the Jazz Festival, because it will be another great chance to show that we are on the way back.

## **Q&A With Blues Master Tab Benoit**

*Perhaps the most outspoken and charming voices in **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU** belongs to Cajun musician Tab Benoit, an acclaimed singer and guitarist whose love of Louisiana has driven him to become a devoted environmental activist. Long a fervent advocate for the wetlands, Tab watched in despair as the nightmare scenario he had most feared came true during Katrina's flooding. Now, he is more motivated than ever to get the word out about the vital need to preserve the coastline. Born in Baton Rouge, Tab was raised in the oil and fishing town of Houma, where he first began digging deep roots in Louisiana music and playing his own brand of bayou-spiced Blues. He then ventured into New Orleans where he was soon compared to the greatest Bluesmen and guitarists of all time – and signed his first multi-album deal. In 2003, Tab founded the non-profit organization Voice of the Wetlands. His most recent releases include "Fever of the Bayou" and the collection "Voice of the Wetlands," recorded in January 2005 with an all-star cast of Louisiana musicians.*

**Q: You were a big part of *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* even before Katrina hit. What compelled you to get involved?**

I've been on a mission for a long while to get out there and tell this story that hasn't been told about the wetlands and I was very happy that the filmmakers wanted to do that too. In the beginning, I really wanted to promote the fact that we've been losing our swamps, losing our coastline and losing our only line of defense against hurricanes. I saw that Louisiana was being washed into the sea.

I live in a beautiful area that's wide open and vulnerable so I had been digging into this for a while. I've watched marshes float away and die. I've seen forests right in front of my house disappearing and I knew I had to do everything I could to prevent this. I'd been trying to use our culture and our music to get the word out to the rest of the country, so when I heard about this film, it was just perfect timing. Of course, everyone was taken by surprise when everything we'd been warning about occurred right in the middle of filming. Now, **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU** is not just about saving the wetlands, it's about protecting a beautiful way of life.

**Q: What is it about Louisiana that makes it so special and so important to the United States?**

You can break it down into just about every aspect you can think of. Economically, a lot of money comes up out of the ground in Louisiana. We produce 45% of the country's natural gas. We also run the biggest oil port in the country. Everyone single person in America, whether you're a farmer exporting your crops or a chef who cooks with natural gas or a person who drives in a car every day, relies on what we do in Louisiana.

And then, look at the culture – there's no other culture more American. Without New Orleans' Blues and Jazz, there would have been no rock and roll. Then, you have the wetlands with all their beauty and unique species. There's an enormous amount of history here. Some of it has to do with greed, power and corruption and some of it is inspirational. In the end, I really believe this is a place where we have a unique chance to balance economics and Mother Nature because we have to do it.



**Q: How vital is the surrounding environment of New Orleans to the music and culture?**

There's a special feeling here in Louisiana that creates the music and it's something you can't find anywhere else in the world. For me, it's always been important. I write out in the swamps, I get my inspiration there, I get my sounds and feelings from there – so from my point of view, there is a deep connection between the land and the music and that's something you get to see in the film. The Louisiana Delta is one of the richest resources on our planet – and it's at the very root of New Orleans culture. If we lose the root, the tree is going to die.

**Q: What kind of emotions did you personally go through when Katrina hit?**

For years we've been saying, "it's gonna happen," "it's gonna happen," and now here it was. Four days before the storm arrived, I already had the feeling this was going to be "the one," and I was worried because I knew people wouldn't be able to get out. I live in a place that has regular flooding so we know what to do, we know where to go, and I was able to evacuate with all my vintage guitars. But I knew that people in the city were going to be trapped because they didn't know enough about what could happen. When the city started flooding, it broke my heart.

It really killed me to see people trying to help being turned away. This is something they didn't show on the national news, but there were hundreds of people showing up in their boats to try to help and the officials would not let them. If we'd been allowed, we could have got a lot more people out of there in the first day, and that was just tragic. It's also scary to realize that the truth is Katrina was just a glancing blow. What's going to happen if a hurricane comes right up the middle of the city?

**Q: What kind of hope do you have for Louisiana's future?**

There's only one thing that can fix these problems and that's the American people. This land belongs to us and some things need to be changed so we had better change them. Nature is what made us so rich in the first place – it's what led to the bayou, to the culture, the food, the music and the whole city of New Orleans. It all started with the natural resources. So getting our natural world running right again is going to be a big part of things.

**Q: What was the most exciting part of making this film?**

I'm excited that there will be a lot of images in this movie that people didn't see on the news – and that audiences will get an understanding not just of *what* happened in New Orleans but *why* it happened. Since Katrina, I've traveled all over this country and talked to all kinds of people and I think the one thing a lot of folks share is this feeling that they'd like to help but they don't know what to do. Hopefully, ***HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU*** will show them more. Another thing about Louisiana is that we've always mixed our hard work with big fun. That's why music has been so much of our culture – because no matter how tough your work is, it's always easier if you're singing and carrying on. So I think this film is in that tradition. It's a lot of fun but maybe people will learn something in the process.

## **Q&A With Fiddle Prodigy Amanda Shaw**

*One of New Orleans' most exciting young musical talents, rising teen prodigy Amanda Shaw reveals her own personal tale of surviving Katrina and finding hope in the restoration of Louisiana's wetlands in **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU**. Amanda has been a fiddling virtuoso since age seven, when she became the youngest person ever to play with the Baton Rouge Symphony as a soloist. Making the transition from Classical to Cajun, Amanda soon brought her own innovative crossover sound to the fore, gaining international fans. She and her band, The Cute Guys, have received raves on the festival circuit, Rollingstone.com called her "a fiddling wizard" and she recently opened for Cher at the VHI Divas/Cher Farewell Tour. In January, Amanda was able to return to her heavily damaged school in New Orleans and will soon begin recording her first major album.*

### **Q: What inspired you to become a part of **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU**?**

I got involved in the very beginning, before Katrina, mainly because the filmmakers were looking for someone from Louisiana who could connect with the younger IMAX theatre audience. The story I was told is that the filmmakers were eating breakfast in New Orleans, talking about how they were going to find a young musician to be in their movie and suddenly they saw my picture in the paper and said "well, let's call Amanda Shaw!" When they asked me, I was really excited. I didn't know all that much about the wetlands back then – and I really wanted to learn.

### **Q: What did you learn about the wetlands?**

I didn't realize before how important they are in keeping us safe from the power of hurricanes. Now I understand that by saving the wetlands we can also save people. The bottom line is that no matter where you live in Louisiana, you can't ever be 100% safe from storms, because they are always going to happen, but a lot more of us could be protected if we start rebuilding the marshes.

### **Q: What was your personal experience during Katrina like?**

We were very lucky because we don't live in the worst flood zone. But I was also in the middle of a tour, and after the storm, we couldn't get back to Louisiana so I had to go to a gig in freezing Minnesota with suitcases full of only tank tops and shorts! At the same time, everyone was so incredibly helpful and supportive. We even started getting letters addressed to "Amanda Shaw and Family" with offers of help from people all over the country. We didn't even hear anything about how our house was doing until the **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU** crew drove by it – and then they called and asked us if they could film the damage! That was kind of worrying, but it turned out to not be as bad as they thought. As for how I feel now, I think we are all still very much in the middle of it. It'll be interesting to see how people feel in five years, because right now, I think we're all just focused on getting our lives back.

### **Q: For almost a year, your school was closed. What was that like?**

A: It was really hard. My school is at one of the lowest points in New Orleans so it was severely flooded. At first they thought they might have to knock it down. I just couldn't imagine that happening. It was such a beautiful day when it re-opened in January. We were all hugging and kissing and telling our stories. The amazing thing is that they only expected about 500 people to come back but about 1100 students out of 1200 showed up! It is kind of eerie, though. The school is an area where it's one of the only places that has electricity or water. So just driving to school can be

a scary experience because everything looks abandoned and you feel kind of like you're in a lost world. But they pulled everything together just the way it was before Katrina. They wanted the students to feel like they never skipped a beat, so that was a good feeling.

**Q: What makes New Orleans so special to you?**

Sometimes people think New Orleans is just about Jazz but there's so much more to it. This city truly has a bit of everything – not just Jazz, but also Rock, Pop, Blues, Country, Cajun, Zydeco, you name it, it's all here. And then there are so many different kinds of areas; there's the exciting French Quarter but there's also the beautiful wetlands. We're lucky to have all this variety – it's what gives New Orleans its interesting taste!

**Q: How was it being followed around by a film crew during such an intense time?**

The filmmaking team really did a lot to make it fun for me right from the beginning and they were so nice to us after Katrina. It was such a small, tight crew that I got to know everyone personally and made a lot of great friends. There was a lot of laughing and making jokes but I also was constantly learning, so it was actually an amazing experience.

**Q: Did you enjoy working with all the other famous musicians who are part of the film?**

Oh yeah, that was fantastic. I already knew Chubby Carrier from way back because he produced my first album and I also had opened for Tab Benoit and knew Marva Wright. But I had never had the pleasure to meet Mr. Allen Toussaint and that was so exciting for me because he is truly a legend and he turned out to be so cool and inspiring.

**Q: What are your hopes and fears for New Orleans now?**

We're almost to the next hurricane season so that's kind of scary. It's definitely going to take awhile for things to get fixed and for people to understand more about what is happening. But I think right now we just need to spread the word that New Orleans is an amazing place that deserves to be saved. It's a place where there's still so much love to go around.

**Q: As a teenager, how do you think kids will react to *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU*?**

I really hope that seeing New Orleans and the wetlands and the music and the devastation of Katrina in IMAX theatres will make something click with the audience. Kids are the future. We're the ones who are going to be running the country one day so fixing a lot of these problems is going to be up to us.

## **Q&A With Zydeco Star Chubby Carrier**

*Dubbed Louisiana's "premiere Zydeco showman," Chubby Carrier is known for bringing his infectious, high-energy brand of dance music to clubs around the United States. Born into music, Chubby is the third generation of a family of artists considered to be legends in Zydeco history. He began playing drums at the age of 12, was playing accordion by age 17 and formed his own band in 1989. Since then, Chubby Carrier and the Swamp Band have recorded 5 CDs and toured the world many times over. Chubby is also the owner of Swampadelic Records and has long-standing relationships with other musicians featured in **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU** as well. He has been friends with and played music with Tab Benoit since he was in his 20s and he produced Amanda Shaw's debut album, "Little Black Dog," helping to bring her to notoriety. This summer he'll be on tour, as he says, "helping to spread the Zydeco gospel."*

### **Q: How did you become involved in *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU*?**

Well, it was Tab Benoit, who I've known and been good friends with throughout my musical career, who first told me that there was going to be an IMAX theatre film about hurricanes and New Orleans and that they might need an accordion player, so I simply said "that's me." When I heard Amanda Shaw was going to be such a big part of it, I was truly excited. I first saw Amanda playing in Walker, Minnesota – she was this beautiful little ten year-old girl playing fiddle with so much natural talent you couldn't believe it and I knew she was going to be a huge star. I went on to produce her first album, and we've become like true family.

I'm real pleased to be a part of this film because when I travel the world, people always want to know first and foremost what's really going on here in Louisiana – and now here it is in IMAX theatres for everyone to see for themselves. To me, the most important message of this film is that we don't want this amazing place to die – we don't want it be completely all gone before we realize what has happened. We have to bring that message to the world every way we can.

### **Q: What do you think it is about the Louisiana bayou that made it such a great place for music?**

You had a lot of hard-working families here from all over the world and when night fell they pulled out their instruments and started singing. They didn't need psychiatrists because they sang about their troubles, and that was such a big relief right there. And the music was passed down from generation to generation as a tradition. The Carrier family has a long history of Creole music – we first recorded records back in 1955. I'm the third generation carrying on that tradition and that's the way it has always been. Now, it just blows my heart away that so much of that tradition might be disappearing because of Katrina. We don't want to lose that.

### **Q: What was your personal experience during Katrina?**

We've been talking about this kind of hurricane for 50 years, but oh my God, we weren't ready for what actually happened. For me and my family, we were lucky because we are in Lafayette, two hours from New Orleans. We didn't get the full effect. I felt blessed because I was in a place where I could help others – and so many of my friends and family members lost a lot. Meanwhile, since I was about to get on the road to perform some shows, and since all the computers and phones were

down, no one could get in touch with me and they were panicking, wondering if I was dead or alive. When I finally got to my gigs, people were so kind and so generous. They wanted to give, to give money, food, whatever was needed – some even wanted to give musical instruments, and I had people offer me entire drumsets! It was a heartbreaking time and yet it was also a good moment to see so many fellow human beings come forward and step in to help.

**Q: What was your favorite part of filming *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU*?**

I had so much fun getting together with Tab and Amanda, playing traditional Zydeco music on the porch, the way people always have in Louisiana. I think it was a chance to show the world just how we used to do it, how my daddy did it and his daddy before him, just playing music together as a natural part of life.

But what really got me most was playing in the St. Louis Cathedral with Amanda, Marva Wright and Allen Toussaint. What an experience, one I would not change it for all the world! I was so moved that I nearly forgot to play some of my notes. I can't express how much it touched my heart and soul.

## **Q&A with Gospel Queen Marva Wright**

*For Marva Wright – whose soulful performances have earned her the title “The Gospel Queen of New Orleans” – the chance to appear in **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU** was also a welcome opportunity to return home to New Orleans after her own house was completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Marva, who was born and raised in New Orleans, is known for mixing together Blues, R&B, Jazz and Gospel into her own sultry, upbeat sound that has become beloved by audiences around the world. She has released seven solo CDs since she began her recording career in 1987, including “Marvalous” and “Heartbreakin Woman.” In 1999, she also made her motion picture debut in “Crazy in Alabama” with Antonio Banderas. Marva most recently set out on a tour that took her not only back to New Orleans for the Jazz Festival but to Australia, Paris, Germany and across the United States.*

**Q: What made you decide to return to New Orleans after Katrina destroyed your house to join the production of **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU**?**

New Orleans is my home and will always be my home, and being a part of this movie felt like one way of helping to rebuild it. It is my hope that **HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU** will be educational to a lot of people and that it will especially help children to better understand how dangerous hurricanes are and all that we can do to protect the ones we love.

**Q: What was your personal experience during Hurricane Katrina?**

A: I was never one to run from a hurricane, but with Katrina, I feel very lucky and blessed that we were able to get out quickly before it hit. We heard from family members that this one was gonna be bad, worse than any other, so my whole family piled into my Navigator, looking like the Beverly Hillbillies, and we got out of Dodge. We left everything behind, and after the hurricane went through, we lost it all.

**Q: That sounds just devastating. What kind of emotions did you go through?**

I was like a zombie. You know, I just could not believe what was happening around us and it seemed like a nightmare. We ended up in Panama City, Florida during the storm, but watching it on TV and seeing what was happening in the city and at the Superdome was almost worse. We just could not imagine this was all really happening.

The hardest thing of all for me, the thing that hurt me the most was knowing that my son, who is a policeman, was still in the city. We couldn't get through on the phone lines and I was just destroyed not knowing what had happened to him. I was so happy when I finally heard his voice, I didn't know what to do. We also later learned that he helped to rescue his sister and brother-in-law from an attic filled with six feet of water. He's just over six feet himself and he went in there and got them out, carrying the dog over his shoulder. He lost his house, too, but he still lives there, first on a cruise ship and now in a trailer, and I'm real proud of him.

**Q: You've been so much a part of New Orleans' musical culture in the last decade. What do you think it is that makes this city so special?**

I think it is the people. People are just simply nice in New Orleans. They are hospitable and caring and really want to help each other – and that is a wonderful thing. Of course, the music is the best in the world and then there's the delicious food. I lost a lot of weight after leaving New Orleans and it was only during the shoot for *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU* that I gained back 20 pounds!

**Q: What was the experience singing in the St. Louis Cathedral with Allen Toussaint, Amanda Shaw and Tab Benoit like for you?**

When I walked in and saw all these people who I haven't seen since Katrina, I just started crying. It was beautiful and it felt so good to see everyone. I love all these people – Allen Toussaint is marvelous, Amanda Shaw is so sweet and talented and I just adore Tab Benoit because he's a beautiful person. It was also hard, because just driving to the locations, you could see so much destruction, see so many homes and businesses destroyed, that you can't help but be heartbroken thinking "this is my home town." But I felt like we all had our hearts in the rebuilding effort.

**Q: What was your favorite part of shooting *HURRICANE ON THE BAYOU*?**

Again, for me it's always about the people. There were so many wonderful people involved. And then there was the food. There was delicious fried shrimp and buttered bread just across from the Cathedral. One of the drummer's wives cooked up some gumbo and at the Hilton they had the best crawfish pie. As I said I gained 20 pounds and I kept telling the filmmakers that I was worried because IMAX theatre films are supposed to make everything look bigger, but I didn't want to look bigger too!

**Q: Now that Katrina is over, what are your biggest hopes and fears for the city?**

I will always want to go home. I miss my people and I miss my grandchildren. Right now there is nothing to come back to for me – still I think, as the song says, time is on my side. Coming together is what New Orleans is all about and I believe we can.

###

## About The Narrator—Meryl Streep

**Meryl Streep** (Narrator) has portrayed an astonishing array of characters in a career that has cut its own unique path from the theater through television and film. A two-time Academy Award® winner and a recipient of a record-breaking 13 Oscar® nominations, Streep had never acted in a drama before her Sophomore year at Vassar College, when she won the title role in Strindberg's "Miss Julie." After graduating cum laude from Vassar, she won a scholarship to the Yale School of Drama where she received an M.F.A. degree and the Carol Dye Acting Award.

After a Tony nomination for Tennessee William's "27 Wagons Full of Cotton" and an Emmy for Best Actress for her portrayal of a devastated German wife in the miniseries "Holocaust," Streep began her feature film career as Jane Fonda's society friend in *Julia*. She then starred opposite Robert De Niro and Christopher Walken in *The Deer Hunter*, receiving her first Oscar® nomination. She went on to *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*, with Alan Alda, *Manhattan* for Woody Allen and *Kramer vs. Kramer* with Dustin Hoffman, garnering her first Academy Award® for Best Supporting Actress. She won her third Oscar® nomination and the British Academy Award for *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The following year, she won the Academy Award® for Best Actress for her extraordinary performance in the title role of *Sophie's Choice*. She was nominated again the next year, for her portrayal of Karen Silkwood, the heroine of Mike Nichols' *Silkwood*. Reuniting with Robert De Niro in her next film, *Falling in Love*, she won the David Award, the Italian equivalent of the Oscar®.

Streep's films also include Fred Schepisi's *Plenty*; Sydney Pollack's *Out of Africa*, for which she received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Actress; Mike Nichols' *Heartburn*; and *Ironweed*, directed by Hector Babenco, for which she received her seventh Oscar® nomination. For Schepisi's *A Cry in the Dark*, in which she played the infamous, unfairly maligned Lindy Chamberlain, Streep won the Best Actress Award at the Cannes Film Festival, The New York Film Critics Circle, the AFI Award and another Oscar® nomination. She won Golden Globe nominations for her work in *She-Devil* and *Postcards From the Edge*; starred with Albert Brooks in *Defending Your Life* and with Goldie Hawn in *Death Becomes Her*; filmed Bille August's *The House of the Spirits*, from Isabel Allende's novel; and tackled an action movie with *The River Wild*, directed by Curtis Hanson, co-starring Kevin Bacon.

Her work in Clint Eastwood's *The Bridges of Madison County* won widespread acclaim and Screen Actor's Guild, Golden Globe and Oscar® nominations. The following year she was seen opposite Liam Neeson in Barbet Schroeder's *Before and After*, and opposite Diane Keaton and Leonardo DiCaprio in *Marvin's Room*, for which she received another Golden Globe nomination. Returning to television, she won an Emmy for the real-life drama "First Do No Harm," then teamed with Renee Zellweger in *One True Thing*, winning SAG, Golden Globe and Oscar® nominations. In 1999, Streep learned to play the violin for Wes Craven's *Music of the Heart*, earning her 12th Academy Award® nomination.

Streep's recent work includes *The Hours*, which won her Best Actress at the Berlin Film Festival, along with her co-stars Nicole Kidman and Julianne Moore, as well as SAG and Golden Globe nominations; Spike Jonze's *Adaptation* which was recognized with a Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actress and BAFTA and Oscar® nominations; and the HBO epic "Angels in America." Playing four characters, she won the Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Best Actress Awards for this work.

She was recently seen in *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events* and *Prime*. This summer she was seen in *A Prairie Home Companion* and *The Devil Wears Prada*. Her upcoming projects include providing the voice of the Queen Ant in *The Ant Bully*. Also forthcoming are *Dark Matter* directed by Chen Shi-Zheng and the New York Public Theatre production of "Mother Courage" in an adaptation by Tony Kushner, directed by George C. Wolfe.



## About The Filmmakers

**Greg MacGillivray's** (Director, Producer) film career spans more than 40 years. As a cinematographer, he has shot more 70mm film than anyone in cinema history – more than two million feet. His company MacGillivray Freeman Films has been dedicated to the large screen motion picture format since the production of their first IMAX theatre film, *To Fly!*, which he co-produced and directed with his partner, the late Jim Freeman in 1976. MacGillivray also worked in Hollywood, directing and photographing for Stanley Kubrick, and filming for the Academy Award-nominated *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and the Oscar-winning *Sentinels of Silence*. MacGillivray is also well-known in the industry for his artistic and technical innovations for the giant film format. He has initiated the development of three cameras for the IMAX theatre format: the high-speed (slow-motion) camera, the industry's first lightweight camera, and the "all-weather" camera used during filming on Mount Everest.

MacGillivray and his company have received numerous international film awards and industry accolades. MacGillivray was first nominated for an Academy Award in 1995 for *The Living Sea* (Best Documentary Short Subject), and was nominated in the same category again for *Dolphins* in 2000. In 1998, the company's dramatic film about climbing the world's tallest peak, *Everest*, became the first large-format film ever to reach *Variety's* top 10 box office chart. In 1996, the company's first IMAX theatre classic, *To Fly!*, was selected by the Library of Congress for inclusion in America's film archives. The first large format film to receive this honor, *To Fly!* joined such cinema greats as *Gone With the Wind*, *Star Wars* and *Citizen Kane* as one of the most important films in filmmaking history. In 2001, *To Fly!* was inducted into the IMAX Hall of Fame. In September 2002, the Giant Screen Theatre Association honored MacGillivray as one of five most important contributors to the success of the large format industry over the last twenty-five years. Two months later, MacGillivray accepted the Bradford Washburn Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Museum of Science, Boston, for his contribution to science education. He joins an illustrious group of previous honorees that includes Jacques Cousteau, Walter Cronkite, Sylvia Earle, Jane Goodall and Carl Sagan. MacGillivray most recently directed *Greece: Secrets of the Past*.

**Audubon Nature Institute** (Executive Producer) operates a family of museums and parks based in New Orleans and dedicated to celebrating the wonders of nature. Through innovative live animal exhibits, education programs, and scientific discovery, Audubon makes a meaningful contribution to preserving wildlife for the future. Audubon Nature Institute's flagships include Audubon Park, Audubon Zoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, Entergy IMAX Theatre, Audubon Louisiana Nature Center, Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, Woldenberg Riverfront Park and Audubon Wilderness Park. The Institute's mission includes preserving native Louisiana habitats, exhibiting the diversity of wildlife, educating a diverse audience about the natural world and enhancing the care and survival of wildlife through research and conservation. Audubon Nature Institute is also focused on using quality entertainment to further enhance their mission.

**Glen Pitre** (Writer, Co-Director) is a native of Cut Off, Louisiana and worked his way through Harvard by fishing shrimp each summer. At age 25, *American Film* magazine dubbed him "father of the Cajun film" as his local dialect "gumbo westerns" broke house records in bayou country cinemas. With the help of the Sundance Institute, his internationally lauded 1986 film *Belizaire the Cajun* became his first English-language production. Since then, Pitre's movies, books, and museum design, frequently in collaboration with wife Michelle Benoit, often about life in his native Louisiana wetlands, have earned him numerous awards, including an honorary doctorate and a knighthood from

France. In 2003, *Chicago Sun-Times* film critic Roger Ebert acclaimed Pitre “a legendary American regional director.” He previously wrote the MacGillivray Freeman film *Top Speed*.

**Jim Foster** (Editor) has worked in the film industry for over 30 years as a successful editor and writer of feature and special venue films, including the large-format films *Adventures in Wild California*, *To Be An Astronaut* and *Flower Planet*, the first large-format animated film. Other projects include his work as editor and co-writer of *The Firing Room*, a reenactment of the launch of Apollo 8 produced for Kennedy Space Center. A talented editor of feature movie trailers, music videos, and multi-media presentations, Foster has contributed his talents to films produced by The Walt Disney Studios, Universal Studios, and BRC Imagination Arts. *Hurricane on the Bayou* marks the fourth IMAX theatre film he has worked on with MacGillivray Freeman Films.

**Neguine Sanani** (Editor) was born in Tehran, Iran and raised in Buffalo, New York. At the age of nine, Neguine’s family moved to Los Angeles, where her increasing exposure to the film industry enhanced her passion for film and visual communication. She was accepted at USC’s prestigious School of Cinema-Television and, after graduation, was one of a select group of filmmakers chosen as a graduate fellow in directing at the American Film Institute. At AFI, she honed her distinctive visual style, creating a series of evocative, moody films. After receiving her MFA, Neguine served as producer’s assistant and apprentice editor on the 1998 film *The Joyriders* starring Martin Landau and Shawn Hatosy.

In 1998, Neguine edited her first short film, *Mrs. Sobel*. She went on to edit a documentary segment on women and suicide entitled *Dark Visions*, which was awarded the Los Angeles Roy Dean Video Grant. She then cut *Father X-Mas*, was awarded Best Short Film at the First Glance Film Festival in Los Angeles. Neguine edited her first feature film, *The Healer’s Son*, in 2000. She won additional praise for editing the dramatic feature *The Grey*, awarded the American Perspectives Jury Prize at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in 2003. Since 2001, Neguine has maintained a working relationship with Lionsgate Films, working as an additional editor on films including: *Romasanta* starring Julian Sands and *Eulogy* with Debra Winger and Ray Romano. She recently finished the feature *Flip the Script* starring Robin Givens and Miguel Nunez. Currently, Neguine is editing *Love And Other 4 Letter Words* starring Tangi Miller and Flex Alexander for Olivia Entertainment. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband Carl and dog (and editing companion), Luna.

**Brad Ohlund** (Director of Photography) has worked in the large format industry for 25 years and his films with MacGillivray Freeman include *Dolphins*, *Adventures in Wild California*, *Journey Into Amazing Caves*, *Coral Reef Adventure*, *Mystery of the Nile* and *Greece: Secrets of the Past*. After attending Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, California, Ohlund began his career with the classic film *To Fly!* Since then, his broad and varied assignments have included filming underwater reefs in the South Pacific and primitive tribes in New Guinea and Borneo. He has filmed from a plane through the eye of a hurricane and captured on IMAX film the fury of an approaching tornado.

In 1996 Ohlund was a key member of the MacGillivray Freeman Films Everest expedition. During that three-month expedition, he served as the Photographic and Technical Consultant to the climbing camera team. He was also responsible for filming numerous scenes including the exciting and dramatic avalanche and blizzard sequences – and was directly involved in the rescue efforts during those tragic and historic days in May.

**Steve Wood** (Music By) has been scoring films with Greg MacGillivray since Greg’s surfing cult classic *Five Summer Stories* in 1975. Since then, he has worked on over a dozen IMAX theatre films

including *The Living Sea*, *Discoverers*, *To Fly!*, *The Magic of Flight*, *Everest*, *Dolphins*, *Adventures in Wild California* and most recently, *Greece: Secrets of the Past*. Steve worked with Sting on both *The Living Sea* and *Dolphins* and worked with George Harrison on *Everest*.

Wood was Kenny Loggins' musical director for 9 years and has written many songs with Loggins including "If You Believe." He composed the instrumental interludes for Loggins' "Return to Pooh Corner." He has played with artists such as The Pointer Sisters, Michael McDonald, David Crosby, and Graham Nash. Woods' music has also appeared in other films such as *Why Me?* starring Christopher Lloyd, *Boiling Point* starring Wesley Snipes and Dennis Hopper, and *Greedy* starring Kirk Douglas. He also worked with Stevie Wonder on a Clio-award winning television spot for Hansen's Soda.

Scoring giant screen films has allowed Wood to develop his interest in and knowledge of diverse ethnic music including Indonesian, Caribbean, Chinese, Tibetan, and Irish styles. He has also recorded folk music in Fijian locations. He recently completed production of a CD for Mario Frangoulis on Sony Classical and is currently working on a CD featuring Salvatore Licitra and Marcelo Alvarez.

**Sassoon Film Design** (VFX) is a Santa Monica-based graphic design company specializing in visual effects for feature films, television, 2D and 3D IMAX theatre films, as well as special venue projects. The company recently completed visual effects work on MacGillivray Freeman's *Greece: Secrets of the Past*. Other Sassoon Film Design credits include *Magnificent Desolation: Walking on the Moon 3D IMAX*, *Spartan*, *DeLovely*, *Roar Lions of the Kalahari IMAX*, *Forces of Nature IMAX*, *Sesame Street 4D* (for Universal Studios Osaka), Discovery Channel *Unsolved Histories*, *Back to the Future: The Ride*, and *The West Wing*. Among the company's clients are Disney, Paramount, IMAX Corporation and Dreamworks SKG.

**Alan Markowitz** (VFX) has more than 29 years of film production experience and has spent nearly 16 years specializing in large format cinema. As a Producer for his company, Visceral Image Productions, Alan specializes in visual effects, titles, graphics, and animation for a wide variety of special venues. Alan's previous works can be seen in over 300 large format film projects on IMAX theatre screens, destination cinemas, in theme parks, and special venues around the world. Alan has contributed to over a dozen MacGillivray Freeman Films titles over the past 12 years. His most recent credits include producing computer animated title sequences for MacGillivray Freeman's *Greece: Secrets of the Past* and *Mystery of the Nile*. Other credits include *Magnificent Desolation: Walking on the Moon 3D* for IMAX, Walt Disney Pictures' *Roving Mars*, *Wired to Win: Surviving the Tour de France*, *Roar: Lions of the Kalihari*, *Forces of Nature*, *Bugs! 3D*, and *Mystic India*. Theme-park ride films include *Spiderman 3D*, *T2-3D*, and *Back to the Future: The Ride* for Universal Studios.