



**Magnolia Pictures, The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and Mead Street  
Film Productions**

**Present**

# **JOAN BAEZ I AM A NOISE**

**Directed by Karen O'Connor, Miri Navasky & Maeve O'Boyle**  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Greg Sarris, Patti Smith, Josh Braun, Ben Braun,  
Terry Press**

2023 | U.S. | 113 minutes

## **Official Selection**

2023 Berlin Film Festival – World Premiere, Panorama Section  
2023 CPH: DOX  
2023 SXSW  
2023 Hot Docs  
2023 SFFILM

## **FINAL PRESS NOTES**

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## **LOGLINE**

Facing the end of a 60-year musical career, legendary singer and activist Joan Baez takes an honest look back and a deep look inward as she tries to make sense of her large history-making life and reveals, for the first time, personal struggles she's kept private, until now.

## **SYNOPSIS**

Neither a conventional biopic nor a traditional concert film, JOAN BAEZ I AM A NOISE is a raw and intimate portrait of the legendary folk singer and activist that shifts back and forth through time as it follows Joan on her final tour and delves into her extraordinary archive, including newly discovered home movies, diaries, artwork, therapy tapes, and audio recordings. Baez is remarkably revealing about her life on and off stage - from her lifelong emotional struggles to her civil rights work with MLK and a heartbreaking romance with a young Bob Dylan. A searingly honest look at a living legend, this film is a compelling and deeply personal exploration of an iconic artist who has never told the full truth of her life, as she experienced it, until now.

## **DIRECTORS' STATEMENT**

For over twenty years, co-directors Miri Navasky, Maeve O'Boyle, and I have made character-driven documentary films that explore complex social issues, from transgender kids and mentally ill prisoners to global warming and abortion rights. Tackling a biography for the first time, as we did with *I Am A Noise*, was a daunting but exciting filmmaking challenge, especially with a legend like Joan Baez.

Documentaries about well-known people are inherently tricky. Typically, much is already known and a presented narrative is often carefully curated and controlled. But Baez, who has been a good friend of mine since 1989, was ready as never before to take an unflinching look at her own life--free of hagiography and dewy-eyed nostalgia. Although Joan understood, from the beginning, that she wouldn't have any control over the film, there was never a time when she held back or hesitated from digging into the harder, darker truths of her life, which gave us a rare opportunity to make a film about Joan Baez that could be as honest, complicated, funny and layered as the woman herself.

Famous at 18, on the cover of *Time* magazine by age 21, dubbed the "Queen of Folk," Joan Baez was far bigger than folk singers had ever gotten. She was a phenomenon. The otherworldly soprano, the ethereal beauty: no one had seen or heard anyone like her. Men fell in love with her and women wanted to be like her. She became the icon of a new generation of musicians, from Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen to Joni Mitchell and Patti Smith. But it was her political passion as much as her prodigious talent that made her a legend. Long before "celebrity activism" was cool, Joan used her influence and commitment to nonviolence to relieve suffering and fight injustice. For Baez, the personal is always political.

The outlines of Baez's large, history-making life are widely known, but with this film we wanted Joan's past to come alive. Not with gimmicks or "talking heads," but with the trove of original source material from Joan and her family that we unearthed: newly discovered home movies; Joan's amazing artwork and drawings; journals and diaries, photographs, therapy tapes, and a gold mine of audiotaped letters that Baez sent home--all capturing what she was experiencing in real time, rather than recollected from a distant remove. At every turn, we wanted the film to feel immersive and immediate--more like time travel than biography.

Because of my history with Joan, our team was able to embed with her on tour and at home and that extraordinary access enabled us to create an intensely intimate film filled with unexpected insights, heartbreak and humor. A biographical strand captures Joan's early years and meteoric rise to fame, a darker psychological thread delves into her inner "demons" and a contemporary strand tracks Joan facing the end of a 60-year music career. Although we knew Baez's final tour would anchor her contemporary story, we weren't ever trying to make a concert film.

To maintain the immediacy of Joan's story, we also decided to limit our interviews. While many famous people were ready to speak about Joan's influence, we didn't want to make a biopic with celebrities talking about other celebrities so we included only those from Joan's inner circle whose recollections and insights would feel as intimate and authentic as the rest of the film. We also worked closely with our cinematographers to develop an informal, "verité" shooting style that worked for both the contemporary and archival strands. All our interviews were done with only natural light and the concert and tour sequences were all shot behind-the-scenes to match the look and feel of the rest of the film. All the creative elements in the film—picture and sound, graphics and animation, music and score come together to sharpen and deepen Baez's remarkable story.

Joan's willingness to explore the uncomfortable and painful places in her life gives this film its emotional power. And by going there, Joan may be opening a door for somebody else to go there too. And others may find themselves in the ideas raised in the film--about fame and identity, creativity and mental illness, aging and grief, and memory and forgiveness—all deeply human and universal themes that reach far beyond the particulars of Joan Baez's story. Throughout the film, there is a real gravitas in following such a fiercely creative and committed artist as she reckons with her past and pushes toward a newly imagined future. – Karen O'Connor

## **ABOUT JOAN BAEZ**

Joan Baez is a musical force of nature whose commitment to social activism has never wavered. Starting with her early 1960s recordings, her performances of traditional ballads exerted a powerful attraction on a generation and songs like “House of the Rising Sun” and “Babe I’m Gonna Leave You” found their way into the rock vernacular. She was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2017 and honored by the Kennedy Center in 2021 among countless other accolades.

At the same time, Baez’s role in the human rights and anti-war movements around the world has earned her place in history, alongside friends and allies, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, the Irish Peace People, Nelson Mandela, Vaclav Havel, and others.

Since retiring from active performing in 2019, Baez has focused her formidable talents on painting and drawing. Today, the life and times of Joan Baez are reflected in her “Mischief Makers” series of paintings that immortalize risk-taking visionaries, ranging from Dr. King and Bob Dylan to the Dalai Lama and Patti Smith. Additionally, her book of drawings, *AM I PRETTY WHEN I FLY? An Album of Upside Down Drawings*, was recently published on Godine. Released to critical acclaim, *Kirkus* praises in a recent starred review, “The pages come alive, taking readers on a pictorial trip through Baez’s life...by gracefully walking a fine line between blunt-force honesty and flights of fancy, the book is satisfying, enjoyable, and rewarding...fans and newcomers alike will appreciate this intimate look into Baez’s unique artistry.”

The highly anticipated documentary of her life, *Joan Baez: I am A Noise*, will be released this fall by Magnolia Pictures.

## **ABOUT THE TEAM**

### **KAREN O’CONNOR – Co-Director**

Karen O’Connor is an award-winning filmmaker. Her films, produced, written, and directed with Miri Navasky, include *The Killer at Thurston High*, an investigation of a school shooting that won a Banff Award; *The Suicide Plan*, an Emmy-nominated film that delves into the hidden world of assisted suicide; the Emmy-nominated *The New Asylums*, a wrenching portrait of mentally ill prisoners, which won the Robert F. Kennedy Grand Prize Journalism Award; the Emmy award-winning *The Undertaking*, a moving exploration of mortality and grief told through the perspective of renowned poet-undertaker Thomas Lynch; and the Emmy-nominated *Growing Up Trans*, a powerful and personal exploration of the struggles and choices facing transgender children, and their parents, which was shortlisted for a Peabody Award and won a DuPont Columbia Award.

### **MIRI NAVASKY – Co-Director**

Miri Navasky is an award-winning filmmaker who co-founded Mead Street Films with Karen O’Connor more than two decades ago. Her films include, *The Killer at Thurston High*, an investigation of a school shooting that won a Banff Award; the Emmy-nominated *The New Asylums*, a wrenching portrait of mentally ill prisoners that won the Robert F. Kennedy Grand Prize Journalism Award; *The Undertaking*, an Emmy award-winning film that follows poet-undertaker Thomas Lynch as he explores mortality and grief in a small Michigan town; *The Suicide Plan*, an Emmy-nominated film that delves into the hidden world of assisted suicide; and *Growing Up Trans*, an intimate exploration of the struggles and choices facing transgender children and their parents that was nominated for an Emmy, short-listed for a Peabody, and won a DuPont Columbia award.

### **MAEVE O’BOYLE – Co-Director**

Maeve O’Boyle is an Emmy-award winning filmmaker. She edited *The Education of Mohammad Hussein*, (HBO) which was shortlisted for an Academy Award. She co-produced and edited the Emmy-award-winning and 2014 IRE Award winning, *Firestone and the Warlord* (PBS). She also edited and co-produced *Growing Up Trans* (PBS) with O’Connor and Navasky, which won a duPont Columbia award. She co-wrote and edited *112 Weddings* for Doug Block, which premiered at Full Frame, Hot Docs and Sheffield Doc/Fest and aired on HBO and BBC Storyville, and *Do I Sound Gay?* for David Thorpe, which had its world premiere at TIFF and was awarded the runner up for People’s Choice Award. Other work includes *Left of the Dial* (HBO), *Heat* (PBS), *Carrier* (PBS) and *The Kids Grow Up* (HBO), which premiered at IDFA and Full Frame and was awarded a special Jury prize at AFI Docs. In 2020, she directed, produced and edited *The 8th* which was critically acclaimed in the UK and Ireland and nominated for an IFTA for Best Documentary. She is currently editing a feature documentary *The Animated Mind of Oliver Sacks*.

## **CREDITS**

The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Present

A Mead Street Films Production

Executive Producer Greg Sarris

Executive Producer Patti Smith

Executive Producers  
Josh Braun  
Ben Braun  
Terry Press

A Film By  
Miri Navasky  
Maeve O'Boyle  
Karen O'Connor

**END CREDITS**

Directed & Produced by  
Miri Navasky  
Karen O'Connor

Directed & Edited by  
Maeve O'Boyle

Cinematography by  
Wolfgang Held  
Ben McCoy  
Tim Grucza

Original Score by  
Sarah Lynch

Graphic Design by  
Conor O'Boyle

Animation by  
Eat the Danger

Animation Producer  
Julie Murnaghan

Original Artwork by  
Joan Baez

Additional Cinematography by  
John Baynard  
Daniel Carter  
Laura McGann

Sound by  
Dean Murray  
Jason Pawlak

Steve Roseboom  
Mark Roy

Coordinating Producer	Courtney Hayes
Archival Producer	Helen Ryan Dobrowski
Music Supervisor	Chris Robertson
Associate Editor	Charles Farrell
Additional Camera	Zachary Fink Aidan Maguire Chris Dapkins Michael McCoy Rachel Beth Anderson Bryan Donnell
Additional Sound	Adrian Bravo Mark Mandler Gabriel Monts Simon Murphy Rueben Pacheco Theresa Radka
Voiceover Young Joan	Hanna Shykind
Consulting Producer	Doug Block
Consulting Writer	David Mizner
Archivist, Europe	Margrit Olsen
Additional Archival Research	Briana Bierman Hillary Dann Rosemary Rotondi
Additional Graphic Design	David Gibbons Anthony O'Flynn
Assembly Editor	Jordan Montminy
Additional Assistant Editor	Arnaud Rigaud Caroline Berler Crystal De Boulet Ben Howard



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Post Production Facility	Goldcrest Post NY
Colorist	Ken Sirulnick, CSI
DI Assist	Jordan Thompson-DeSon
Head Of Production	Wade Rudolph
Post Production Sound	C5 Inc.
Sound Design and Re-recording Mixer	Ron Bochar
Dialogue Sound Editing	Alexa Zimmerman
Sound Effects Editing	Kate Bilinski
Assistant Sound Editor	Sarah Streit
Interns	Lara Afrazmanech Cristina O'Boyle Adam Osman Krinsky Tasheyia Thomas
Score recorded by Ciaran Byrne at	Camden Studios, Dublin, Ireland
Assistant Engineer	Lisa Capelle
Score Mixed by	Ciaran Byrne at CB Sounds
Additional Orchestration and Music Copying by	Caterina Schembri
1st Violin	Kenneth Rice
2nd Violin	Orlaith Ni Bhraoin
Viola	Adele Johnson

Cello

Martin Johnson

Additional Drum  
Programming

Néstor Romero Clemente

## **SONGS**

“There But For Fortune”

Written by Phil Ochs

Published by Almo Music Corp. on behalf of

Barricade Music, Inc.

Performed by Joan Baez

“Earth Angel (Will You Be Mine)”

Written by Jesse Belvin

Published by Embassy Music Corp

Performed by The Penguins

Courtesy of Music Sales Corporation

“Noah”

Written by Harry Belafonte and William Attaway

Published by Clara Music Publishing Corp.

Administered by Next Decade Entertainment, Inc.

Performed by Joan Baez

“Man Piaba”

Written by Harry Belafonte and Walter Rollins

Published by Clara Music Publishing Corp.

Administered by Next Decade Entertainment, Inc.

Performed by Joan Baez

“Why Do Fools Fall in Love”

Written by Frankie Lymon and Morris Levy

Published by Sony Music on behalf of EMI Full

Keel Music/EMI Longitude Music

Performed by Joan Baez and Mimi Baez

“Ten Thousand Miles”

Written by David Gude  
Published by Sanga Music Inc.  
Performed by Joan Baez

“House Un-American Blues Activity Dream”  
Written by Richard Farina  
Published by WC Music Corp  
Performed by Richard & Mimi Farina

“Ate Amanha”  
Arranged and performed by Joan Baez  
Published by Chandos Music Company

“Silver Dagger”  
Traditional, arranged and performed by Joan Baez  
Published by Chandos Music Company

“One Too Many Mornings”  
Written by Bob Dylan  
Published by Universal Tunes  
Performed by Joan Baez

“When The Ship Comes In”  
Written by Bob Dylan  
Published by Universal Tunes  
Performed by Joan Baez and Bob Dylan

“It Ain't Me, Babe”  
Written by Bob Dylan  
Published by Universal Tunes  
Performed by Joan Baez and Bob Dylan

“Only a Pawn in Their Game”  
Written by Bob Dylan  
Published by Universal Tunes  
Performed by Bob Dylan

“Mary Hamilton”  
Traditional, arranged and performed by Joan Baez  
Published by Chandos Music Company

“Don't Think Twice, It's All Right”  
Written and performed by Bob Dylan  
Published by Universal Tunes

“J'arrive”

Written by Jacques Brel and Gerard Jouannest  
Published by Warner Chappell Music Spain SA,  
Les Editions Jacques Brel  
Performed by Jacques Brel  
Courtesy of Universal Music Division Barclay under license from Universal Music  
Enterprises

“The Things That We Are Made Of”  
Written by Mary Chapin Carpenter  
Published by Sentric Music Publishing Limited  
Performed by Joan Baez

“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”  
Traditional, arranged and performed by Joan Baez  
Published by Chandos Music Company

“A Song For David”  
Written and performed by Joan Baez  
Published by Chandos Music Company

“Til Life Do Us Part”  
Written by Dirk Powell  
Published by Crying Bayou Music, BMI  
Performed by Dirk Powell

“Love Is Just A Four-Letter Word”  
Written by Bob Dylan  
Published by Universal Tunes  
Performed by Joan Baez

“It Ain't Me, Babe”  
Written by Bob Dylan  
Published by Universal Tunes  
Performed by Joan Baez

“Diamonds and Rust”  
Written and performed by Joan Baez  
Published by Chandos Music Company

“Hurricane”  
Written and performed by Bob Dylan  
Published by Universal Tunes, Songs of Universal, Inc.  
Courtesy of Columbia Records  
By arrangement with Sony Music Entertainment

“Dream Song”  
Written by Joan Baez and Ron Davies

Published by songs of Universal and Gabriel Earl Music  
Performed by Joan Baez

**TRADITIONAL**

“Oh, Freedom”  
“Darlin’ Corey”  
“I Never Will Marry”  
“Te Ador”  
“O What A Beautiful City”  
“I Once Loved A Boy”  
“Go With Me To That Land”  
“We Shall Overcome”  
“Amazing Grace”  
“Fare Thee Well” (Dink’s Song)

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL BY**

“Shout”  
Composed by Ian Stanley and Roland Orzabal  
Performed by Joan Baez and the Neville Brothers  
Amnesty International, 1986 Conspiracy of Hope Tour

“I Have A Dream”  
March on Washington, 1963,  
Estate of Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”  
Written by Robert Frost, 1923

“Untitled” 1940’s piano composition by Albert Baez

Time Magazine, 1963  
San Francisco Sunday Chronicle, 1961  
New York Times, 1961  
WHRB, Balladeers, 1959  
Radio Interview with Mimi, 1973  
Timbao Performing Arts Steel Band, Paris

Joan Baez, Vanguard, 1960  
Joan Baez in Concert, Live Album, Vanguard, 1962  
Joan Baez, Vol.2, Vanguard, 1961  
Joan Baez, Hits/Greatest & Others, Vanguard, 1973  
Joan Baez, Farewell Angelina, Vanguard, 1965  
Joan Baez, From Every Stage, A&M Records, 1976  
Joan Baez, Blowin’ Away, Portrait Records, 1977

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“Don't Look Back” and “Don't Look Back Outtakes” by DA Pennebaker, Courtesy of Pennebaker Hegedus Films, Inc. and Bob Dylan  
“Joan Baez Wedding” by DA Pennebaker © 2022 Pennebaker Hegedus Films, Inc., Courtesy of Pennebaker Hegedus Films, Inc.  
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Claudia Tomassini + Associates

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Emma Vasseur  
Derek Williams  
Blair Woods  
And



Nancy Lutzow & Mark Spector

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Melissa Elgin  
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The Beacon Theatre, NY  
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The Fox Theater, Oakland, CA  
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The Walton Theater, Selma, AL  
Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, Dublin  
Jemison Concert Hall, Birmingham, AL  
Lyric Theatre, Belfast  
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Ryan Freeland  
Monique Evelyn

**JOAN BAEZ ALSO WISHES TO THANK**

Pam and Harry Belafonte  
Denis de Kergorlay  
Steve Earle  
Emmett Miller  
Mary Chapin Carpenter  
Pearl Bryan  
Nicholas Marden  
Jasmine Harris  
The Saffings-Tavake Family  
Skipper Henderson  
Peter Kingsley

Gail Zermeno  
Marilyn Youngbird  
Alan Abrahams  
Jeanne Triolo Murphy  
Sarah Schneider  
Tom Smith  
Zeynep Oral  
Paul Liberatore  
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Lorraine Marinelli  
Greg Menzel  
The Counsellor  
Frank

**LOGOS:**

Goldcrest, Endcrawl, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria,  
Submarine Deluxe, Mead Street Films, C5

Filmed on location in the USA, Ireland, France, UK, Turkey.

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