Press Release

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presents

“To Begin the World Over Again: the Life of Thomas Paine”

by Ian Ruskin

Congratulations on a moving, inspiring, and completely contemporary film…looking forward to this film launching many conversations about justice and democracy. Lisa Leeman, Documentary Filmmaker

The timing for such a presentation is spot on and the actor’s performance is wonderful and compelling. Lori Conway, Boston Film & Video

What comes through clearly is Paine’s passion and willingness to sacrifice for his beliefs. The arc of the story is near perfect.

Thomas E. Patterson, Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press, Harvard University

I’ve just watched your Thomas Paine film. I rejoiced in it. It is magnificent.

Lewis Lapham, editor of Lapham’s Quarterly and editor emeritus of Harper’s Magazine

This 59 – minute film of Ian Ruskin’s acclaimed one-man play has gathered praise from all who have attended preview screenings. It is that rare historical drama that addresses a multitude of contemporary issues that challenge us today. Paine’s story also inspires us to “always speak the truth as one sees it, no matter the consequences, no matter the consequences”.

The film was shot at the Lillian Theatre in Hollywood with an exemplary crew led by legendary Director of Cinematography Haskell Wexler. Ian Ruskin plays Thomas Paine and Elliott Gould voices the narration. Original music was composed by Joe Romano and Graham Moore’s “Tom Paine’s Bones” closes out the film.

The National Educational Telecommunications Association is distributing the film to public television stations nationwide this year, the Presidential election year. The Life of Thomas Paine Productions is organizing Screening Parties across America as part of a grassroots movement to take the story of Thomas Paine to as many Americans as possible.

The film also has an international appeal – Paine considered himself a “Citizen of the World” – and we are talking to distributors about the film airing in England, France, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, among other countries.

Paine literally changed the world through his pen but remains the most misunderstood man in American history, revered and quoted by all and every aspect of our political spectrum. He was one of the world’s greatest political writers and worst politicians, a very nearly deadly combination across the world! It is time to present this story, written with the oversight of five of America’s distinguished Paine scholars, to challenge these misconceptions.
Ian (Thomas Paine) is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. He founded The Harry Bridges Project in 2000 and has written, performed and produced many plays and radio and film documentaries, including From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks about labor leader Harry Bridges. He has performed the play over 250 times to approximately 50,000 people, including the Houses of Parliament and the Scottish Parliament. The film version, directed and shot by multi-Academy Award winner Haskell Wexler, aired nationwide on PBS for 4 years. His new play and film To Begin the World Over Again: the Life of Thomas Paine continues his mission to present the stories of forgotten and misunderstood heroes from American and European history.

Elliott Gould (the Narrator) is known for a iconic body of work which includes Mash, Bob & Ted & Carol & Alice, A Bridge Too Far, Capricorn One, The Lady Vanishes, The Long Goodbye, Ocean’s Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen and Contagion, among many others He appeared in ten seasons of Friends, has hosted Saturday Night Live six times and was on the cover of Time Magazine twice. This is his second collaboration with Ian, and both of them share a commitment to their union and the American labor movement.