



## RADIO UNNAMEABLE

A Documentary Film by  
Paul Lovelace and Jessica Wolfson

87 minutes / 2012 / USA / English  
HDCAM / 16:9 / Stereo LT/RT / Color and Black & White

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

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WORLD PREMIERE: Full Frame Documentary Film Festival  
SPECIAL JURY PRIZE FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY: Sarasota Film Festival  
US COMPETITION: AFI SilverDocs Documentary Festival  
OFFICIAL SELECTION: BAMCinemaFest

## SALES AGENT

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## PRESS CONTACT

Jessica Wolfson

917-514-4724  
[lostfootagefilms@gmail.com](mailto:lostfootagefilms@gmail.com)

Filmmakers and Bob Fass are available for interviews

## PRODUCTION CREDITS

DIRECTED AND PRODUCED  
CINEMATOGRAPHY  
EDITOR  
ORIGINAL MUSIC

Paul Lovelace and Jessica Wolfson  
John Pirozzi  
Gregory Wright  
Jeffrey Lewis

## INTERVIEWS INCLUDE

Margot Adler (*Radio Personality*)  
Steve Ben Israel (*Actor*)  
David Bromberg (*Musician*)  
Simeon Coxe (*musician – Silver Apples*)  
Robert Downey Sr. (*Filmmaker*)  
Ken Freedman (*WFMU Station Manager*)  
Danny Goldberg (*Record Producer*)  
Arlo Guthrie (*Musician*)  
Paul Krassner (*Comedian*)  
Julius Lester (*Musician/Author*)  
Ed Sanders (*Writer/Musician – The Fugs*)  
Vin Scelsa (*Radio Personality*)  
and many more...

David Amram (*Musician*)  
Joe Boyd (*Record Producer*)  
Len Chandler (*Musician*)  
Judy Collins (*Musician*)  
Marshall Efron (*Humorist*)  
Bob Fass  
Wavy Gravy (*Performer/Activist*)  
Larry Josephson (*Radio Personality*)  
Kenny Kramer (*Comedian*)  
Judith Malina (*Actor*)  
Steve Post (*Radio Personality*)  
Jerry Jeff Walker (*Musician*)

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## ARCHIVAL AUDIO AND VIDEO APPERANCES INCLUDE

Bob Dylan  
Jose Feliciano  
Allen Ginsberg  
Herbert Hunke  
Carly Simon  
Holly Woodlawn

Shirley Clarke  
Kinky Friedman  
Abbie Hoffman  
The Incredible String Band  
Dave Van Ronk  
Karen Dalton

## TAGLINE

Legendary New York disc jockey Bob Fass revolutionized late night FM radio by serving as a cultural hub for music, politics and audience participation for nearly 50 years. Long before today's innovations in social media, Fass utilized the airwaves for mobilization, encouraging luminaries and ordinary listeners to talk openly, taking the program in surprising directions.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Influential radio personality Bob Fass revolutionized the airwaves by developing a patchwork of music, politics, comedy and reports from the street, effectively creating free-form radio. For nearly 50 years, Fass has been heard at midnight on listener-sponsored WBAI-FM, broadcast out of New York. Long before today's innovations in social media, Fass utilized the airwaves for mobilization, encouraging luminaries and ordinary listeners to talk openly, taking the program in surprising directions. *Radio Unnameable* is a visual and aural collage that pulls from Bob Fass's immense archive of audio, film, photographs, and video that has been sitting dormant until now.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

In 1963, one man radically transformed the FM dial. RADIO UNNAMEABLE tells the story of the groundbreaking New York disc jockey Bob Fass and his innovative use of the airwaves to inform, entertain and encourage dialogue amongst listeners. His program is entirely free form, there's no telling what might happen next. It is a place to hear great music, conversations with artists and activists, audio experiments, and where the average listener can discuss local and international issues, from problems with landlords in the Bronx to the war in Afghanistan. Bob Fass is still on the air today on WBAI 99.5FM, approaching 50 years behind the microphone, and he remains as vital and current as ever.

The listeners of Radio Unnameable are active participants and the lifeblood of the program. Fass worked closely with them, utilizing the airwaves as an organizing tool. He provided a forum for luminaries and ordinary listeners to talk openly and mobilize. In 1967, Bob Fass organized the first "happenings" in New York City including "The Fly-In" a party at JFK Airport, "The Sweep-In" where

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listeners gathered to clean up a Lower East Side block during a garbage strike, and “The Yip-In” at Grand Central Station, the latter in which turned into a police riot. Radio Unnameable was the media hub for the Yippies, particularly Abbie Hoffman, and the protests surrounding the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention were planned on the air. Legendary satirist and frequent guest Paul Krassner places the show in the context of the present day: *‘It was sort of the central clearing house at that point... the precursor of the Twitter, YouTube, text messaging, all of that.’* On the air, Fass talked callers down from bad trips and even averted a suicide attempt. The listeners were “citizen reporters” and on Radio Unnameable, every voice is heard.

Since the early days of Radio Unnameable, leading cultural figures have dropped by the studio to perform, take calls and engage in the nightly on-air ritual. The list of luminaries who’ve appeared on the program is astounding: Bob Dylan, Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, Yoko Ono, Muddy Waters, Nam June Paik, Rubin “Hurricane” Carter, Joni Mitchell, just to name a few. Live music is a major component Radio Unnameable. It was a place for musicians to relax, play songs, talk to listeners and jam with whoever stopped by on a given night, often giving exposure to artists that commercial radio ignored. In 1967, Arlo Guthrie premiered “Alice’s Restaurant” on Radio Unnameable. Bob Fass played the song every night and helped turn it into a hit. He did the same with Jerry Jeff Walker’s “Mr. Bojangles”, just to name two examples.

As a station, WBAI is constantly riled with volatile internal politics. Fass often finds himself in the middle and as a result has been forced off the air numerous times. One such incident, in a fight to unionize the station, saw him being carried away in handcuffs. The station today is flirting with bankruptcy and many staff members are volunteers, including Fass, who’s been unpaid for years. His timeslot is never safe and support at WBAI is tenuous.

Radio has changed dramatically throughout Bob Fass’s tenure. When Fass started, the idea of using radio to empower the individual, while connecting with a larger community, was groundbreaking. As social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter change the way we engage with others, Radio Unnameable provides a compass for how we got there. Parallels can be drawn from Fass’s “happenings” to online events such as Critical Mass and Flash Mobs. His anti-Vietnam War protests can be linked to Occupy Wall Street and present day actions. The film will demonstrate how Fass’s innovative radio career has intermingled with our rapidly evolving cultural landscape and the limitless potential offered by free form radio.

## VISUAL STYLE

*Radio Unnameable* is a visual and aural collage that pulls from Bob Fass's immense archive of audio from his program, film, photographs, and video that has been sitting dormant until now. As radio is an aural medium, we have

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established a distinctive visual style that combines extensive archival materials and breathtaking nighttime images of New York City with the sounds and voices heard on Radio Unnameable. Sometimes these images will be directly related and other times their connection will be abstract and visceral. As the film spans almost 50 years, we have utilized different mediums to expand the palette: Super 8 and 16mm film, Hi-8 video, and HD, with both original and historical footage to help convey the changing landscape throughout the history of Fass's program.

## PRINCIPAL CREW BIOS

**PAUL LOVELACE** Director / Producer / Co-Editor

Paul Lovelace's documentary short **ROBERT CHRISTGAU: ROCK N' ROCK ANIMAL**, about the esteemed Village Voice music journalist, won acclaim at film festivals worldwide in 2000. In 2006, Paul produced, wrote and edited the PBS documentary **AMERICAN ROOTS MUSIC: CHICAGO**. Paul's first documentary feature **THE HOLY MODAL ROUNDERS...BOUND TO LOSE**, a portrait of the psychedelic folk duo The Holy Modal Rounders, was released theatrically in 2007 and on DVD in 2008. As an editor, Paul has worked on series for MTV, The Food Network, Travel Channel amongst others. He has edited commercials and promos for Rock Star Games, Blue Man Group and several music labels. Together with his partner Jessica Wolfson, he has directed and produced several short films that have played renowned international film festivals including the 2009 film **HUGO** which aired on PBS's Saturday night series **REEL 13**.

**JESSICA WOLFSON** Director / Producer

Jessica Wolfson has produced many critically acclaimed documentary films and series including **TRUST US THIS IS ALL MADE UP**, **CRAZY SEXY CANCER**, and award winning web series **GIRLTALK**. At IFC Original Programming, Jessica developed and produced documentaries including **THIS FILM IS NOT YET RATED** by Kirby Dick; **WANDERLUST** by Bob Pulcini & Shari Springer Berman; **THE BRIDGE** by Eric Steele and series **GREG THE BUNNY** and **DINNER FOR FIVE** (2005 Emmy nomination). Jessica has managed the grassroots theatrical campaigns for several documentary films. She has worked in marketing and distribution at companies such as **B-SIDE ENTERTAINMENT** and **TRIBECA FILM**. Jessica is currently in production on two feature length documentary films **A GIRL AND A GUN** and **REVENGE OF THE MEKONS**.

**JOHN PIROZZI** Cinematographer

John Pirozzi is an acclaimed cinematographer whose career has spanned over the past 15 years. He has shot many feature films and documentaries such as the 2007 Sundance darling **BROKEN ENGLISH** by filmmaker Zoë Cassavetes, **LEONARD COHEN: I'M YOUR MAN** by Lian Lunson, **Z CHANNEL: A MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION** the Cannes premiered documentary by Xan Cassavetes and **BLING: A PLANET ROCK** by Raquel Cepeda. Pirozzi has shot beautiful second unit photography on many films including **ALPHA DOG**, **BOYS DON'T CRY**, **CITY OF GHOSTS** and Jem Cohen's **INSTRUMENT**. Pirozzi

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recently directed and produced SLEEPWALKING THROUGH THE MEKONG a documentary film about the band Dengue Fever. He is currently in post-production on DON'T THINK I'VE FORGOTTEN: CAMBODIA'S LOST ROCK AND ROLL, a feature length documentary about the history of rock music in Cambodia.

## GREGORY WRIGHT Editor

Gregory Wright is a Brooklyn based, feature and short form documentary film editor. He's worked on projects that range from marathon trail-runners attempting to circumnavigate Mt. Rainer in a single sprint in THE WONDERLAND PROJECT, to a vivid portrait of the characters behind Compton's notorious low-rider car clubs in SUNDAY DRIVER. He's collaborated on several video art installations in New York and edited and co-produced pilots and TV series for a handful of networks including Bravo, Discovery Networks, MTV and PBS. He is currently cutting DON'T THINK I'VE FORGOTTEN: CAMBODIA'S LOST ROCK AND ROLL. Perennially a devotee to freeform, alternative radio, Greg has held DJ positions at stations WESU and WCNI.

## JEFFREY LEWIS Original Score / Illustrations

Born and raised Lower East Sider Jeffrey Lewis leads a double-life, as both a comic book writer/artist and a musician (or is that a triple-life?). His band Jeffrey Lewis & The Junkyard also has a schizophrenic existence, ranging between contemplative folk narratives and distortion-fueled garage rock. Live shows incorporate "low budget videos," Jeff's large illustrations displayed to accompany certain songs, such as Jeff's educational multi-part "History of Communism" or flights of fancy like "The Creeping Brain". In 2001, Jeffrey Lewis signed to Rough Trade Records (The Smiths, The Strokes, Belle & Sebastian, etc) and has since released five albums, in addition to touring the world and performing with Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks, Devendra Banhart, Black Dice, Thurston Moore, The Fall, The Vaselines, Beth Orton, Frank Black, The Fiery Furnaces, Daniel Johnston, Scout Niblett, The Mountain Goats, The Moldy Peaches, Cornershop, The Cribs, Dr. Dog, Kimya Dawson, Adam Green, Akron/Family, Roky Erickson, Au Revoir Simone, Peter Stampfel, and other luminaries.

## **TO WATCH THE FILM'S TRAILER PLEASE VISIT**

<http://www.radiounamablemovie.com>

## **TO LISTEN TO BOB FASS ON RADIO UNNAMABLE TUNE INTO 99.5FM THURSDAY NIGHTS FROM MIDNIGHT TO 3:00AM OR STREAM IT ON**

<http://www.wbai.org/>