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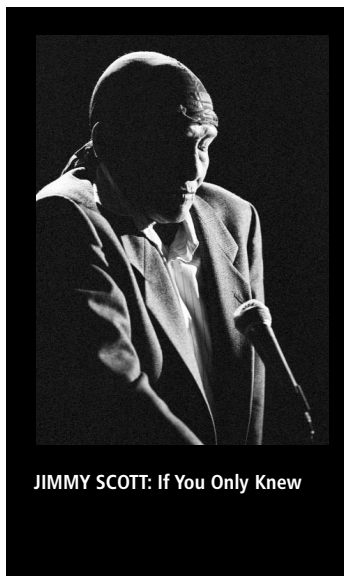
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*Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:*

*www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos*

*Program companion website: www.pbs.org/jimmyscott*



**INDEPENDENT LENS's "JIMMY SCOTT:  
IF YOU ONLY KNEW" IS A MESMERIZING  
PORTRAIT OF THE LEGENDARY JAZZ BALLADEER**

*—An Unforgettable, Inspiring Portrait of a Man who has  
Triumphed in The face of Countless Setbacks with Grace,  
Artistry, Faith and Love—*

***Shot and Directed by Matthew Buzzell***

***Produced by Brian Gerber***

***Premieres Nationally on "Independent Lens,"***

***ITVS's Acclaimed Series on PBS***

***February 24, 2004 at 10 P.M.***

***(check local listings)***

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(San Francisco, CA) — *The New York Times* has called enigmatic jazz legend Jimmy Scott "the most unjustly ignored American singer of the 20th century." Best known for his haunting, impossibly high singing voice, **JIMMY SCOTT: If You Only Knew** is an intimate and thoroughly engrossing portrait of Scott's amazing odyssey from heartbreak to redemption. **JIMMY SCOTT: If You Only Knew** airs nationally on the PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Don Cheadle, on Tuesday, February 24 at 10 P.M. (check local listings), as part of the series' Black History Month programming.

Born in Cleveland in 1925, one of 10 children, Scott's early years were, like many who grew up during the Depression, filled with devastating hardships. At age 12, he was diagnosed with Kallmann's Syndrome,

a rare hormonal condition that kept his body—and signature voice—from developing beyond boyhood. Seven months after the diagnosis, his beloved mother, and the children's sole guardian, was killed in a tragic accident and he and his nine siblings were separated and sent to foster homes.



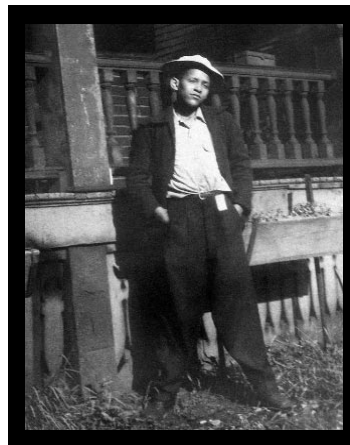
Scott, who had learned his love of music and singing from his mother, began working as a valet at some of Cleveland's Black theaters. His dream was to break into show business, earn enough to buy a house and reunite his family. He soon joined a vaudeville review headed by Estella Young (the famed

"Caladonia" of the Louie Jordan song) that featured contortionists, exotic dancers, comics, tap dancers and singers. It was there that he discovered a new family and reveled in the camaraderie of being on the road, with people who accepted him, the future bright ahead.

At the urging of his friend Redd Foxx, Scott went to New York and soon landed a job as one of the Lionel Hampton band's featured vocalists. In 1950, the band released a recording of him singing "Everybody's Somebody's Fool" and it became an immediate hit. He was heartbroken to discover that his name was not on the record. Recalls Scott, "It was all about Lionel Hampton and that's the way the package worked."

Scott's uniqueness may have worked against him as well. As his biographer, David Ritz, says, "In the macho world of jazz, there's not a lot of liberal thought about sexuality. Here comes Jimmy, who's straight, who has an affliction, whose physical manifestations are smallness and smoothness. Because he didn't go through the adolescent changes, his voice remains unnaturally high and he sings in women's keys. It's going against a lot of cultural conventions."

While some of the men in the jazz world may have had a problem with Scott, the women in the audience loved him. He soon fell in love and married but the relationship was doomed. Despite his continued romantic optimism, his three subsequent marriages failed as well.



History repeated itself when Scott recorded "Embraceable You" with his friend Charlie Parker. Once again, his name wasn't on the album. And, of course, no royalties were ever forthcoming. Many of the record companies who controlled jazz and rhythm and blues music in the '50s and '60s were notorious for exploiting their talent and he had the misfortune of signing with one of the worst—Herman Lubinsky of Savoy Records. Twice he looked destined to finally have a hit record—with the Ray Charles-produced "Falling in Love Is Wonderful" and later with the Joel Dorn-produced Atlantic Records album "The Source." Both times, Lubinsky invoked his contract and had the records recalled.

Bitterly disappointed, Scott packed up, returned to Cleveland and, for the next 20 years, lived in relative obscurity. He worked as a waiter at Bob's Big Boy and as a dishwasher, a nurse's aide, a clerk and a hotel elevator operator. He'd occasionally play a small gig in a local club but the jazz world had all but forgotten him.

But in 1984, Scott's luck began to change. The famed jazz station WBGO in Newark invited him on the air and the response was overwhelming. They quickly organized a three-night engagement for him. He was 60 years old. The word began to spread that he was not only still alive, but better than ever. His old friend Doc Pomus tried to interest some record labels but it wasn't until Pomus died, and he sang at his funeral, that the record brass actually saw Scott for themselves. Warner Brothers Records released his 1992 album *All the Way*, which received glowing reviews and was nominated for a Grammy. Since then, he has recorded eight critically acclaimed albums and, now at age 78, he tours Europe and Asia with great frequency.

Using exhilarating uncut concert footage from a recent tour of Japan, rare archival photos, and candid interviews with Scott, his family and his colleagues, **JIMMY SCOTT: If You Only Knew** is a moving testament to Scott's lifelong attempt to reunite his family and find solace through his art. It's a haunting, bittersweet story as unforgettable as the beautiful music Jimmy still makes after all these years.

Additional information and/or downloadable photographs from **JIMMY SCOTT: If You Only Knew** are available at [www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos](http://www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos).

The program's interactive companion website at <http://www.pbs.org/jimmyscott> features detailed information about the film, including an interview with the filmmakers, cast and crew bios, as well as links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a "talkback" section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

## JIMMY SCOTT: IF YOU ONLY KNEW Credits

SHOT AND DIRECTED BY  
PRODUCED BY

EDITED BY  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
PRODUCER  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

**Matthew Buzzell**  
**Brian Gerber**  
**Matthew Buzzell**  
**Jacob Bricca**  
**Gabrielle Vetter**  
**Sylvio Sharif Tabet**  
**Diedrich Bader**  
**Terry Mulroy**



## AWARDS

Winner of the Audience Award, Atlanta Film Festival

Winner of the Audience Award, DC Film Festival

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MATTHEW BUZZELL (Director)

Born in Frankfurt, Germany, Matthew Buzzell spent the bulk of his childhood as a U.S. Army brat in Kansas and Georgia. He graduated with honors, receiving his B.F.A. in drama from The North Carolina School of the Arts.

From 1990-1993, Matthew worked as an actor appearing in the feature films *Bix: Un'potesi Leggendaria* and *Fratelli E Sorelle* for noted Italian director Pupi Avati.


In 1996, Matthew commenced studies in the Directing program at the American Film Institute. During his first year at AFI, Matthew garnered The Director of the Year Award - The Holleigh Bernson Memorial Award. Matthew received his M.F.A. from AFI in May of 1999 and his second year Master's Thesis Film, *6 1/2*, was awarded The Martin Ritt Foundation Award. For this short, Matthew was also awarded the SACD Prize, the Prix des Auteurs, at the 1999 International Festival du Film Independent in Bruxelles.

2001 saw the release of two of Matthew's *Alone Together* documentary portraits, those of musicians Dean Wareham and Daniel Johnston, on the Warner Brothers distributed DVD Magazine *Circuit*.

Matthew's Heinz Foundation commissioned documentary *What A Girl Wants* was recently featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. The film's topical subject matter, the impact of media on the self-esteem of teenage girls, has led Matthew to a number of speaking engagements. The film is distributed through The Media Education Foundation.

The recent **JIMMY SCOTT: If You Only Knew** is an intimate portrait of one of Matthew's dear friends - 77 year-old jazz vocal legend Little Jimmy Scott. Ethan Hawke recently called the film "remarkable not only for its subject matter but for the sensitivity for which it was made. It is a beautiful film."

Montreal-based filmmaker Daniel Langlois recently purchased Matthew's screen adaptation of Pascal Brukner's novel *The Divine Child*. Matthew has also just completed a rewrite of *Tell Me What You See* for director Fina Torres. Matthew is currently shooting *Companeras*, a feature-length documentary portrait of America's first all-female Mariachi band.



BRIAN GERBER (Producer)

Gerber joined Tree Media Group in August of 2000. Since then, he has produced **JIMMY SCOTT: If You Only Knew** as well as Matthew Buzzell's acclaimed music shorts series *Alone Together*, available on Warner Brothers' *Circuit* DVD.

Gerber also produced the feature film *Bug* by Matt Manfredi and Phil Hay, winner of the Audience Choice Award at the 2002 Santa Barbara Film Festival, and Zev Berman's *Briar Patch*, for Tonic Films and Down Home Entertainment.

Before joining Tree Media Group, Gerber spent four years as director of development at Alphaville, a feature film production company at Paramount Pictures. Films released during that time include *The Mummy*, *A Simple Plan*, *Michael*, *The Jackal*, *Freedom Song*, *Down to Earth*, *Lucky Numbers*, *Rat Race*, *Attila*, *The Mummy Returns* and *The Gift*.

Gerber received his Masters of Fine Arts in Screenwriting from the American Film Institute in 1997. Prior to that, he received his ABJ from the Grady School of Journalism at the University of Georgia, where he served as a student judge for the George Foster Peabody Awards.

## ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

*Independent Lens* is a weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history, which prompted Nancy Franklin in *The New Yorker* to write "Watching Independent Lens ... is like going into an independent bookstore—you don't always find what you were looking for but you often find something you didn't even know you wanted." Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites, and national publicity and community outreach campaigns. Further information about the series is available at [www.pbs.org/independent\\_lens](http://www.pbs.org/independent_lens). *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting [www.itvs.org](http://www.itvs.org). ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.

## ABOUT PBS

PBS, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is a private, nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 349 public television stations. Serving nearly 90 million people each week, PBS enriches the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services on noncommercial television, the Internet and other media. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org), the leading dot-org Web site on the Internet.



ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.

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