



Protesta Productions in Association with Jed Riffe Films
Presents



USA / 2023 / 108 minutes

PRESS NOTES

CONTACT

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SYNOPSIS

Who is Barbara Dane? If you don't know, you're in for a ride! In this exuberant riot of a documentary, by veteran filmmakers Maureen Gosling (*Burden of Dreams*) and Jed Riffe (*Ishi, the Last Yahi*), American counterculture history gets a high-energy shakeup in the story of a powerhouse blues/jazz/folk singer, activist, feminist, record producer, and committed troublemaker. Dane's nine-decade journey shreds existing narratives around 1940s communism, 1950s white femininity, the joy and politics of the 1960s folk scene, the 1970s GI Anti-War movement, and the 1980s Iran-Contra affair. Her unbending principles guide her through notoriety, obscurity, and finally, music legend.

TRAILER LINK

<https://vimeo.com/815467705>

For a LINK and PASSWORD to the FILM contact:
Jed Riffe, jedriffe@gmail.com or 510 593-6945



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Barbara Dane is a kindred spirit. Directing a film about her coalesces my passions for music, peace, and social justice, and amplifying the voices of women. This new film combines musical performance, history, politics, and an unheralded woman's story, all in one. *THE 9 LIVES OF BARBARA DANE* called on me to reach into my own vast experiences in life and filmmaking. For over 50 years, I have directed and/or edited films on a wide array of musical traditions, most notably with filmmaker Les Blank (*IN HEAVEN THERE IS NO BEER?*, *SPROUT WINGS AND FLY*) and with American Roots music producer, Chris Strachwitz (*DEL MERO CORAZÓN*, *I WENT TO THE DANCE*). I directed and edited *BLOSSOMS OF FIRE* (World Premiere SF International FF 2000), on the Zapotec matriarchy of Juchitán, Oaxaca, Mexico. I Co-Directed and Edited, with Chris Simon, *THIS AIN'T NO MOUSE MUSIC!* (World Premiere SXSW 2013) *THE STORY OF CHRIS STRACHWITZ AND ARHOOLIE RECORDS*. With producer Jed Riffe, I've edited nine social justice films over the last 16 years (*THE LONG SHADOW*, *CALIFORNIA'S "LOST" TRIBES*, *A DANGEROUS IDEA*).

In my filmmaking, I was greatly influenced by the poetic, non-traditional style of my late film partner, Les Blank, in the many music and cultural films we made together. Music as feeling and song lyrics are part of the storytelling, as well as Dane's young and elder voices speaking back and forth across the decades. It was a daring, creative choice to shoot a film, going on the road with an 89-year-old woman, who has limited mobility. It means challenging stereotypes of age-related disability - we don't dwell on it, and we don't ignore it, nor does she. Barbara's focus is on what is happening now, always drawing from what she has experienced and gleaned from her past and what it teaches this generation.

Recent political events have energized millions of people to take to the streets, in support of women's rights, Black Lives Matter, the climate crisis. Many first-timers may not know they stand on the shoulders of people like Barbara Dane, who has long been singing truth to power. I believe Barbara's example will inspire people to let go of fears and doubts, find community, and get involved in social change. My goal for the film is to increase public awareness of her contributions and magnify her impact as a role model for women, musicians, social activists, and young people. I want the public to know Barbara Dane, that they may feel inspired to take action by her example, in their own way, with the lessons she garnered: That change can take time, but it is worth it. And you just keep at it.



WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

"Did you get that chick? She's a gasser!" — Louis Armstrong

"Bessie Smith in stereo" — Leonard Feather, Jazz Critic

"A true unsung hero of American music." — *Boston Globe*

"With stubborn determination, enthusiasm and a basic love for the underdog..." — *Ebony Magazine*

"...People like Barbara Dane... they are the heroes if such a word has to be used here...people that can't go against their conscience no matter what they might gain and I've come to think that that might be the most important thing in the whole wide world..." — Bob Dylan

"Dane is a powerful, radical citizen-artist." — Danny Glover

IN HER OWN WORDS

"Because I have chosen to live my life against the grain, loving our still imperfect Constitution too much to believe in the tropes of professional patriots; because I reject the idea that any nation is 'number one'; because I admit to either all gods or none; because my idea of being a woman does not include big hair and plastic tits, tight dresses and dangerous shoes; because I can't bend low enough to kiss asses; because of all this and more, I've arrived at my old age with a clean conscience." — Barbara Dane



THE STORY OF “THE 9 LIVES OF BARBARA DANE”

Do you know this woman? The jazz singer who performed and recorded with Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, and Jack Teagarden, a “hero” to Bob Dylan, the first to stand on the police car and lead thousands in song for the Free Speech Movement before the cameras showed up? The one with the record label *and a 5*” FBI file? Who called out no-good lovers along with racism and capitalism with her bone-deep, dusky alto? That powerhouse with an effortless cool who propelled countless social justice movements, still speaking truth to power and calling out BS into her mid-90s? *The 9 Lives of Barbara Dane* is an underground history of an intersectional singer-agitator overlooked by many storytellers of American history (though certainly not J. Edgar Hoover). Overlooked, that is, until now.

In this exuberant riot of a film by veteran filmmakers Maureen Gosling (*Burden of Dreams, This Ain't No Mouse Music!*) and Jed Riffe (*Ishi, the Last Yahi, Waiting to Inhale*), familiar movements in the 20th century get a high-energy shakeup, driven by dynamite blues, folk, and jazz performances and compelling archival footage spanning decades. Dane’s story bucks narrative after narrative, shredding preconceptions around 1940s communism, 1950s white femininity, the joy and politics of the 1960s folk scene, the 1970s GI Anti-War movement, and the 1980s Iran-Contra affair. For the dynamic activist artists of today, Dane and her co-conspirators provide a warm, familiar link to the past and a sense of continuity. The story of this singer, activist, feminist, record producer, and committed troublemaker features Bonnie Raitt, Jane Fonda, Gary Giddins, James Early and many more along with Dane’s performances with the Chambers Brothers, Tammy Hall, Pablo Menéndez and Louis Armstrong.

Come along with Dane as she joins (then gets kicked out of) the Communist Party in 1950, sings with a who’s who of legendary jazz and blues performers, opens her own wildly popular North Beach blues club featuring Big Mama Thornton and T-Bone Walker, sings at Freedom Schools in Mississippi, shares the stage with Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and Phil Ochs, and collaborates with activist/actress Jane Fonda in the anti-Vietnam War GI Coffee House Movement. Travel with Dane as she becomes the first American performer to break the post-revolution U.S. embargo with Cuba at the *Encuentro del Canto Popular* (Protest Song Gathering) organized by Cuban musicians, an experience that prompted her to found Paredon Records. Through this label, she amplified the struggles and celebrated the triumphs of artists and activists worldwide.

Throughout her long career, Dane grapples with the twin pulls of art and family responsibility, finding her own heartfelt way through and seeing her children and grandchildren share their voices onstage. Through the lens of a recent concert tour, we examine an outspoken and tireless artist whose devotion to music and social justice showcases the vigor and spirit at the heart of American dissent.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MAUREEN GOSLING (Director/Editor) is a filmmaker who has directed, produced, edited, sound recorded and distributed documentaries for 50 years. Highlights include:

- *Burden of Dreams* (Co-filmmaker, Editor, Sound Recordist) British Academy Award winner – Best Documentary, 1982.
- *This Ain't No Mouse Music!* (Producer/Director/Editor with Chris Simon) Premiered SXSW.
- *Blossoms of Fire* (Producer/Director/Editor) Premiered San Francisco International Film Festival; broadcast on HBO Latino.
- *Pleistocene Park* (Co-producer/Editor) VICE TV, 2023.
- *California's "Lost" Tribes* (Editor/Co-Writer) Premiered nationwide on PBS.
- *A Dangerous Idea: Eugenics, Genetics and the American Dream*, (Editor) Internationally broadcast in 21 countries.
- *The Long Shadow* (Co-Creator/Editor) Premiered nationwide on PBS.
- *Smokin' Fish* (Editor) Premiered nationwide on PBS+.

Gosling is best known for her 20-year collaboration with the late Les Blank on over twenty films, and she is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture, Arts and Sciences. This will Gosling's ninth successful collaboration with producer Jed Riffe in 20 years.

JED RIFFE (Producer) is a film, TV and digital producer with 45 years of expertise in creating award-winning motion picture, TV and interactive programming for national and international broadcast, limited theatrical exhibition, streaming and VOD. Highlights include:

- *Ishi, the Last Yahi* (Director, Producer) Emmy-Nomination – Outstanding Historical Program, 1994, *The American Experience*.
- *Who Owns the Past?* (Director, Producer) *Independent Lens*, 2001.
- *Waiting to Inhale: Marijuana, Medicine and the Law* (Director/Producer) *Independent Lens* 2006.
- *California's "Lost" Tribes* (Director/Producer) Premiered nationwide on PBS 2006.
- *Ripe for Change* (Producer) Premiered nationwide on PBS 2006.
- *A Dangerous Idea: Eugenics, Genetics and the American Dream*, (Producer) Internationally broadcast in 21 countries.
- *The Long Shadow*, (Producer) PBS, 2020.
- *Pleistocene Park*, (Producer) VICE TV, 2023.

Riffe produced the four-part, independently produced, nationally-broadcast PBS series *California and the American Dream* and the award-winning interactive program *Public Broadcasting in Public Places*. He is a member of FWD-Doc, a Sundance Documentary Film Program Fellow/Alumni and a Gerbode Fellow for Excellence in Non-Profit Management.

NINA MENÉNDEZ, PhD. (Executive Producer) is the Artistic Director of the Bay Area Flamenco Festival with a life-long passion for world music & dance, particularly from Cuba and Andalusia. She also produced the film, *Tropicola*. Daughter of Barbara Dane, she is currently spearheading the Barbara Dane Legacy Project, which includes establishing Dane's multimedia collection, digitizing, and cataloging over 150 unreleased audio tapes, releasing a box set of Dane's recordings on the Smithsonian label, recently publishing Dane's memoir, *This Bell Still Rings: My Life of Defiance and Song* (Heyday Books), and now this film.

DANNY GLOVER (Executive Producer) In addition to being one of the most acclaimed actors of our time, with a career spanning 35 years and including film classics like *Places in the Heart*, *The Color Purple*, the *Lethal Weapon* series and the acclaimed *To Sleep with Anger*, Danny Glover has executive produced numerous projects for film, television and theatre. Among these are *Good Fences*, *Freedom Song*, *Get on the Bus*, *Buffalo Soldiers*, and *Mooladé*, as well as the series *Courage and America's Dream*. Since co-founding Louverture Films, Glover has been involved with producing, among others, *Bamako*; *Africa Unite*; *Trouble the Water*; *Soundtrack for a Revolution*; *The Black Power Mixtape*; *Concerning Violence*; *This Changes Everything*; *Strong Island*; *Hale County This Morning*, and *This Evening*.

ASHLEY JAMES (Cinematographer) is an accomplished cinematographer and co-founder of Searchlight Films. Former newspaper journalist at *The Hartford Times* (Gannett News Service) in Hartford, CT, James was also instructor of graduate studies in Department of Cinema at San Francisco State University and station manager of KTOP/Channel 10, Oakland, California, which won 32 national awards for excellence in television programming during his 12-year tenure. He was a past governor at the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Northern California chapter. Film highlights include:

- *John Santos: Skin to Skin* (Producer/Cinematographer) Premiered at SXSW, 2022.
- *Gordon Parks, the Man and His Music* (Producer/Director) Television special.
- *Bomba: Dancing the Drum* (Director/Cinematographer) Premiered on Latino Public Broadcasting.
- *Agents of Change* (DP/Cinematographer) Premiered at Pan African Film Festival.
- *Barbara Lee: Truth to Power* (DP/Cinematographer) SF Film Festival.
- *Kitka and Davka in Concert – Old and New World Jewish Music* (Director) PBS.
- *Blacks & Jews* (DP/Cinematographer) Premiered at Sundance.

SIANEY MONTES DE LA OCA (GRAPICS & ANIMATION) Montes de Oca, originally from Mexico City and currently based in L.A, specializes in broadcast and film communication design. She has managed projects from conceptual development to production for organizations such as R/GA, Brand New School, Imaginary Forces, Taylor James, Edisen, mOcean and The Wall Street Journal. She was the Title Designer and Animator for the documentary film COLETTE, an Academy Award Winner for Best Documentary Short Subject directed by Anthony Giacchino.



LINKS

“Barbara Dane’s Life of Defiance and Song” — *New York Times*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/10/arts/music/barbara-dane-pardon-records.html>

“Maureen Gosling’s new film explores the life and revolutionary times of jazz and blues vocalist Barbara Dane” — *Oaklandside*. <https://oaklandside.org/2022/04/20/maureen-gosling-new-film-jazz-blues-vocalist-barbara-dane/>

“This Bell Still Rings: My Life of Defiance and Song” — Barbara’s Autobiography, published by Heyday Books

<https://www.heydaybooks.com/catalog/this-bell-still-rings/>

The Barbara Dane Legacy Project

<https://www.barbaradane.net>



CREDITS

Director/Producer	MAUREEN GOSLING
Producer	JED RIFFE
Executive Producers	NINA MENÉNDEZ JONATHAN LOGAN DANNY GLOVER CAROLYN MUGAR NANCY BLACHMAN
Cinematographer	ASHLEY JAMES
Graphics/Animation	SIANEY MONTES DE OCA
Associate Producer	VICTORIA DMITRIEVA
Featuring	BONNIE RAITT JANE FONDA THE CHAMBERS BROTHERS GARY GIDDINS JESSE CAHN PABLO MENÉNDEZ NINA MENÉNDEZ OSAMU MENÉNDEZ LOUIS ARMSTRONG ESTELA BRAVO JUAN DEL GASTOR GINO FRANCESCONI JEREMY SCAHILL
Musicians	
Vocals	BARBARA DANE
Piano	TAMMY HALL
Bass	RUTH DAVIES
Drums	DARIA JOHNSON
Guitar/ Vocals/ Harmonica	PABLO MENÉNDEZ

Protesta

PRODUCTIONS

Guest Artists
Guitar/Vocals OSAMU MENÉNDEZ Cuba, LA & NYC
Vocals YORI GOMEZ Cuba, LA & NYC
WILLIE, JOE & GEORGE CHAMBERS LA & San Francisco
YUKO FONG Cuba
Bass DANIEL FABRICANT LA
JOSE HERMIDA Cuba
Drums BILL MCGINNIS Oakland
RUY LOPEZ-NUSSA Cuba

Oakland – Yoshi’s Jazz Club
Cameras CHRISTOPHER BEAVER
LEONARD LEVY
JED RIFFE
MAUREEN GOSLING
Concert Sound OSCAR AUTIE

Los Angeles - UCLA Royce Hall
Cameras JOAN CHURCHILL
BATTISTE FENWICK
Concert Sound OSCAR AUTIE

Berkeley - Freight and Salvage Coffeehouse
Sound DAVID SILBERBERG
Second Camera JED RIFFE
Concert Sound OSCAR AUTIE

San Francisco –
SF Jazz
Concert Sound OSCAR AUTIE
Assistant/Sound ANNIKA HELMER

Brava Theater for the Arts
Video ART CERVANTES
Concert Sound OSCAR AUTIE

New York – Joe’s Pub
Sound LUIS GRANADOS
Second Camera JED RIFFE

Camera Assistants WILLIAM McNEIL
RYAN C. HARRIS



Cuba -	
Camera	ROBERTO CHILE
Sound	DANIEL CHILE
Location Producer	MARIANELA MARRERO
Casa de las Americas	
Cameras	JOSE MANUEL GARCIA SUAREZ PEDRO ANTONIO FERNANDEZ MARTINEZ JOSE MANUEL GARCIA CASADO MAUREEN GOSLING
Recording	PABLO SERRANO
Sound Mix	CARLOS OBAYA
Producer	AUDIOVISUALS "LA BRÚJULA" VLADIMIR BERMELO
Lights	RUEDA PRODUCTIONS BRIAN AVILA ROBERTO HERNANDEZ
Technical Assistant	DANIEL CHILE
Post-Production & Archival Supervisor	JED RIFFE
Associate Producer & Archival Research	VICTORIA DMITRIEVA
Archival Research	ELANA FISKE NED POLLOCK EDGARDO CERVANO-SOTO
Archival Artist	AVA WHIST
Archival Consultant	KENN RABIN
Colorist	IBON OLASKOAGA/ON-MEDIA POST
Music Clearance	THE RIGHTS WORKSHOP, INC.
Music Rights Consultant	FRED SILBER
Post-Production Sound	IMRSV Sound
Rerecording Mixer	ISAAC OLSEN



Sound Designer
& Sound Effects Editor WILLIAM SAMMONS

Supervising Sound Editor JACOB BLOOMFIELD-MISRACH, MPSE

Dialogue Editors GREG FRANCIS, ANTHONY DI MARCO
 WILLIAM SAMMONS

Audio Post Supervisor MICHEL HOLBROOK, CAS

Music

"This Is So Nice, It Must Be Illegal"

Written by Thomas "Fats" Waller & George Marion, Jr.

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Why Don't You Do Right?"

Written by Joseph McCoy

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Oh, Freedom"

Lyrics J. Baird / PD Traditional

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Brother, Can You Spare a Dime"

Written by Yip Harburg

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Bye, Bye, Blackbird"

Written by Dixon & Henderson / PD

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Working People's Blues"

Written by Kenny Whitson

Performed by Barbara Dane

"We're Gonna Roll the Union On"

Performed by The Almanac Singers & Pete Seeger

Written by Woody Guthrie

"Solidarity Forever"

Performed by Pete Seeger & Barbara Dane

Traditional

"The Danville Girl"

Written by Woody Guthrie

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Misery Blues"

Written by Gertrude "Ma" Rainey

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Old Fashioned Love"

Written by Cecil Mack & Jimmy Johnson / PD

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Trouble in Mind"

Written by Richard M. Jones / PD

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Livin' with the Blues"

Written by Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Ain't Nobody Got the Blues Like Me"

Written by Dick Oxtot

Performed by Barbara Dane

"St. Louis Blues"

Written by W. C. Handy/ PD

"See See Rider"

Written by Gertrude "Ma" Rainey & Lena Arant

Additional Lyrics by Barbara Dane / PD

"Greensleeves"

Traditional

"Throw It Away"

Written by Abby Lincoln

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Working Class Woman"

Written by Peter Boyd, Jane Felczer & Barbara Dane

Performed by Barbara Dane

"In My Life"

Written by John Lennon & Paul McCartney

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Down on San Francisco Bay"

Written & Performed by Jesse Fuller

& Jesse Cahn

"People Get Ready"

Written by Curtis Mayfield

Performed by Willie & Joseph Chambers

"Travelin' Shoes"

Written Clara Ward/PD

"Ain't Gonna Study War No More"

Traditional

"Sugar Hill"

Written by Barbara Dane

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Down to the Delta"

Written by Mama Yancey

"Mama Yancey's Advice"

Written by Barbara Dane

Performed by Barbara Dane

"I'm On My Way"

Arranged & Adapted by Barbara Dane

Additional Lyrics by Barbara Dane

Performed by Barbara Dane

"This Little Light of Mine"

Arranged & Adapted by Barbara Dane / PD

Performed by Barbara Dane

"Go Tell It On the Mountain"

Traditional

"Together We Can Move Mountains"

Written by Beverly Grant 1976 ASCAP

New Lyrics by Barbara Dane

"It Isn't Nice"
Written by Malvina Reynolds
Arranged by Barbara Dane
Performed by Barbara Dane

"We Shall Not Be Moved"
Traditional
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Sometimes I Believe She Loves Me"
Written by Sam Lightnin' Hopkins
Tradition Music (BMG Music)

"All Too Soon"
Music by Duke Ellington
Lyrics by Carl Sigman
Additional Lyrics by Barbara Dane
Performed by Barbara Dane

"The Ones Who've Gone Before"
Written by Dorie Ellzey Blesoff
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Masters of War"
Written by Bob Dylan
Performed by Barbara Dane

"I've Got to Know"
Written by Woody Guthrie
Performed by Barbara Dane

"I'll See You in C-U-B-A"
Written by Irving Berlin/PD
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Su nombre es pueblo"
Written by Eduardo Ramos

"Me gustan los estudiantes"
Written by Violeta Parra
Performed by Angel Parra

"Song to a Child"
Written by Chris Iijima
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Tomorrow's Another Day"
Written by King Pleasure
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Join the GI Movement"
Written by Barbara Dane
(Based on "Join the NMU"
by Aunt Molly Jackson)
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Insubordination"
Written by Michael Janusch
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Song of the Coats"
Written by Xuan Hong
English Lyrics by Barbara Dane
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Gippergate Blues"
Written by Barbara Dane
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Good Morning, Blues"
Written by Huddy Ledbetter
Additional Lyrics by Barbara Dane
Arranged by Osamu Menéndez / PD

"Ain't Nobody Gonna Turn Me Around"
Traditional

"American Tune"
Lyrics by Paul Simon
Music based on JS Bach Chorale
Performed by Barbara Dane

"Good Night Blues" at Sugar Hill
Written by Barbara Dane
Performed by Barbara Dane

"I'm On My Way"
Additional Lyrics by Barbara Dane
Arranged by Lee Hazelwood
Performed by Barbara Dane

COURTESY OF SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS
"Mize, La (Misery)"
Written by Pierre Marcel Augustin
Performed by Atis Independan

"Mendiola Street"
Philippines: Bangon! Arise!

"Despierta, Boricua (Wake Up, Puerto Rican)"
Written by Andrés Jiménez

"Jaffra"
Poem Izzidine Al Munassrah
Music by Marcel Khalife
Performed by Marcel Khalife

"The Wind Begat the Night"
Written by Mikos Theodorakis

"We Are the Children"
Written by Chris Kando Iijima, Joanne Nobuko
Miyamoto, "Charlie" Chin
Performed by Yellow Pearl

"I Hate the Capitalist System"
Written by Sarah Gunning
Performed by Barbara Dane



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