



FORBIDDEN MUSIC

The documentary **Forbidden Music** explores the extraordinary lives of **Kwakwaka'wakw Chief Mungo Martin** and **Jewish ethno-musicologist Ida Halpern**. Their combined efforts nearly 75 years ago led to preventing hundreds of **First Nations songs** from being **lost forever**. They not only shared a deep dedication to preserving the **embedded cultural knowledge** that these songs held, they had also experienced the heart-wrenching effects of **cultural genocide** on their people. The Nazis annexed Austria in 1938, which led to the deaths of more than 60,000 Jewish citizens, including Dr. Halpern's parents. In Canada, between **1884 and 1951**, the Canadian government's **Indian Act** made it illegal for Indigenous people to take part in traditional ceremonies, such as the **Potlatch** and **Sun Dance**. In tandem with **church-run Indian residential schools**, which resulted in thousands of children's deaths, the Potlatch Ban caused an unprecedented loss of **traditional knowledge** and **language transmission**, making it difficult for Elders to pass down their knowledge to the younger generation. It was during this time of **cultural disruption** that Dr. Halpern immigrated to Canada from Vienna. Her dream was to record and study the **traditional songs** of Indigenous people. Ignoring the laws of the day that banned First Nations people from performing their songs, she packed her **recording machine** and travelled to First Nations villages on **Vancouver Island**. She slowly gained the trust and friendship of **Kwakwaka'wakw, Haida, Nuu-chah-nulth** and **Coast Salish** singers. In 1951 in **Vancouver**, Dr. Halpern met Chief Martin, a hereditary chief and knowledge keeper from **Fort Rupert**. Together they recorded 124 songs, with the intention of **preserving** his vast repertoire of songs from his own and other Nations. In **Forbidden Music**, director **Barbara Todd Hager** follows the path that these recordings have taken, from their origins in **Fort Rupert**, to recording sessions in **Vancouver**, to their release by **New York-based Folkways Records**, and finally into **archival collections** at the **Royal British Columbia** and **Smithsonian museums**. The documentary will return to Chief Martin's community of Fort Rupert to find out how his **musical legacy** has contributed to the revitalization of **Kwak'wala songs** and **language** today. *Acimow Media acknowledges hereditary Chief David Knox, great grandson of Chief Mungo Martin, for his support of this documentary.*

Barbara Todd Hager is a Métis and Cree documentary producer, writer and director based in Vancouver, Canada. Barbara has produced four documentary series and five feature documentaries for APTN, CHUM, CBC, CTV, TELUS, Knowledge and ZDFE. Her eight-part docu-drama series, *1491: The Untold Story of the Americas Before Columbus*, covers 20,000 years of history from the perspective of Indigenous people. The series won Canadian Leo Awards for Best Documentary Series, Music Composer and Screenwriter. She was the Aboriginal Liaison at the Royal British Columbia Museum for five years, and served as the Acting Director of the museum's Indigenous Collections and Repatriation department in 2022. Documentaries by directed by Barbara include:

1491: The Untold Story of the Americas Before Columbus APTN, ZDFE (2017)
Truth Dance & Reconciliation CBC, APTN (2018)
All Our Relations II APTN (2022)
Down2Earth APTN (2009-2012)
New Canoe CHUM, CTV (2002-2009)

Acimow Media acknowledges the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish Nations whose traditional territory the company is located.

Knowledge Network:



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