

Melbar Entertainment Group Presents

# OSCAR PETERSON: BLACK + WHITE



A FILM BY BARRY AVRICH, THE DIRECTOR OF  
*HOWIE MANDEL: BUT, ENOUGH ABOUT ME*  
*MADE YOU LOOK: A TRUE STORY ABOUT FAKE ART*  
*DAVID FOSTER: OFF THE RECORD*  
*PROSECUTING EVIL: THE EXTRAORDINARY WORLD OF BEN FERENCZ*  
*THE RECKONING: HOLLYWOOD'S WORST KEPT SECRET*  
*BLURRED LINES: INSIDE THE ART WORLD*  
AND *THE LAST MOGUL*

Official Selection

**tiff**

Toronto International  
Film Festival 2021

# Oscar Peterson: Black + White

**Production Year:** 2021

**Production Country:** Canada

**Production Company:** Melbar Entertainment Group

**Running time:** 81 minutes

**High-res photos available on request**

**Instagram:** @barryavrigh22

**Melbar Entertainment Group:** [www.melbarentertainmentgroup.com](http://www.melbarentertainmentgroup.com)

# SYNOPSIS

**Oscar Peterson: Black + White** is a ground-breaking “docu-concert” that deeply explores the life and legacy of jazz icon and composer, Oscar Peterson: his sound, stardom, and cult of virtuoso. Oscar Peterson is the one jazz figure who had, and still has, the larger-than-life quality of jazz royalty. Other jazz artists from Ella Fitzgerald and Nat King Cole to Duke Ellington and John Coltrane became legends but Oscar, like Picasso or Mozart, had an undeniable style rooted not just in his genius but in his relentless performances and personality. The documentary delves into the seven-decade career of the musical genius: from his days as a child prodigy to the development of his signature sound on recordings with his trio, from his collaborations with huge stars to his shifts to brilliant solo performances around the world – as well as his tenacious experiences confronting racism and segregation while touring in the United States which culminated in his epic composition of Hymn to Freedom.

## ABOUT THE FILM

Acclaimed documentary filmmaker Barry Avrich (***Made You Look, The Reckoning, David Foster: Off the Record***) presents a vast archive of rare performances and extraordinary interviews that powerfully illustrate his passion and admiration of the form and style that cultivates a moment of discovery. The film also illustrates Oscar’s career via conversations with surviving musicians that played with him, his family, music legends, and a series of new live performances with an exceptional array of artists playing Oscar’s music, including Billy Joel, Jon Batiste, Quincy Jones, Ramsey Lewis, Herbie Hancock, Branford Marsalis, Dave Young (a seminal part of Oscar’s legendary trio for many years), Larnell Lewis, Jackie Richardson, Reg Schwager, Joe Sealy, Stu Harrison, Measha Brueggergosman, Denzal Sinclair, Daniel Clarke Bouchard, and Robi Botos, a Peterson protégé.

# OSCAR PETERSON

Very few musical artists have enjoyed reverential, lauded careers for over six decades while remaining top of mind in their field. Jazz legend Oscar Peterson, or "O.P." to friends, is considered one of the most prolific and greatest pianists of all time, with thousands of worldwide concerts played, and hundreds of protégés mentored.

Peterson was a jazz virtuoso, a music genius whose piano technique was meticulous, ornate, and even overwhelming. His gifts lay within the boundaries of the genre, using moderation and reliability to dazzle his devoted audiences whether he played solo, in a trio, or accompanying some of the most famous names in jazz.

Peterson won nearly every accolade and honour in the jazz world, including eight Grammy Awards. He played alongside giants like Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Roy Eldridge, Nat King Cole, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, and Ella Fitzgerald, among others.

Duke Ellington referred to Peterson as the "Maharaja of the keyboard." Count Basie said, "Oscar Peterson plays the best ivory box I've ever heard." Conductor and pianist Andre Previn called him "the best" among jazz pianists. The New York Times' Stephen Holding wrote that "Mr. Peterson's rock-solid sense of swing, grounded in Count Basie, makes his extended run seem to almost disappear into the sky."

Set against a backdrop of civil rights and racial discrimination, this "docu-concert" will examine an extraordinary life journey, from prodigy to legend.

There was only one Oscar Peterson. As the man himself prophesied, "Ain't but a few of us left."

# MUSIC

## **NEW PERFORMANCES**

### **PLACE ST. HENRI**

Robi Botos: piano  
Dave Young: bass  
Larnell Lewis: drums

### **C-JAM BLUES**

Joe Sealy: piano  
Dave Young: bass  
Larnell Lewis: drums

### **ORANGE COLORED SKY**

Denzal Sinclair: vocals, piano  
Dave Young: bass  
Reg Schwager: guitar

### **HYMN TO FREEDOM**

Jackie Richardson: vocals  
Robi Botos: piano  
Dave Young: bass  
Larnell Lewis: drums

### **LOVE BALLADE**

Measha Brueggergosman: vocals  
Daniel Clarke Bouchard: piano

### **I GOT RHYTHM**

Stu Harrison: piano

## **ARCHIVAL PERFORMANCES**

(all performances by Oscar Peterson or the Oscar Peterson Trio,  
unless otherwise noted)

### **HALLELUJAH TIME**

### **BLUES FOR BIG SCOTIA**

from the album "Bursting Out with the All Star Big Band!"

**PLACE ST. HENRI**

**JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS**

Performed by Ella Fitzgerald

**GEE BABY, AIN'T I GOOD TO YOU**

Featuring vocals by Oscar Peterson

**IN THE WEE SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING**

from the album "The Trio: Live From Chicago"

**CAKEWALK**

**SWEET LORRAINE**

Performed by Nat King Cole

**SWEET LORRAINE**

Featuring vocals by Oscar Peterson

**HYMN TO FREEDOM**

**LAND OF THE MISTY GIANTS**

from the album "Canadiana Suite"

**SWEET LADY**

**REQUIEM**

Performed by Oscar Peterson, Ulf Wakenius,  
Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, and Martin Drew

**A LOVELY WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING**

Featuring vocals by Oscar Peterson

**EMMANUEL**

Written and performed by Robi Botos

**BLUES FOR BIG SCOTIA**

from the album "Something Warm"

# CAST

Jon Batiste  
Herbie Hancock  
Billy Joel  
Quincy Jones  
Ramsey Lewis  
Branford Marsalis  
Kelly Peterson  
Joel Michaels  
Giovanni Russonello  
Rosemary Sadlier  
Dr. Kitty Oliver  
Randy Lennox  
Bill King

# PERFORMERS

Jackie Richardson  
Measha Brueggergosman  
Joe Sealy  
Denzal Sinclair  
Larnell Lewis  
Reg Schwager  
Dave Young  
Robi Botos  
Stu Harrison  
Daniel Clarke Bouchard

# CREDITS

A Crave Original Documentary

Melbar Entertainment Group Presents

A Barry Avrich Film

## **Executive Producers**

Randy Lennox  
Barry Avrich  
Jeffrey Latimer

## **Director of Photography**

Ken Ng

**Editor**

Nicolas Kleiman

**Art Director**

Nick Sewell

**Consulting Producer**

Kelly Peterson

**Music Supervisor**

Michael A. Perlmutter

**Produced by**

Mark Selby  
Randy Lennox  
Barry Avrich

**Directed by**

Barry Avrich



# FILMMAKER



Acclaimed documentary filmmaker, Barry Avrich is responsible for over 50 documentaries and best known for provocative exposes of Hollywood power brokers such as Lew Wasserman (***The Last Mogul***), Harvey Weinstein (***The Reckoning***), ***Blurred Lines: Inside the Art World***, ***David Foster: Off the Record*** and the critically acclaimed film ***Prosecuting Evil***. Avrich has also produced the Scotiabank Giller Prize and Canadian Screen Awards broadcasts. In 2007, Avrich built the world's first state-of-the-art movie theatre in a hospital at Toronto's SickKids. Barry Avrich also directs and produces the prestigious Stratford Festival 'Stage to Screen' films.

In 2016, Avrich released his best-selling memoir, ***Moguls, Monsters and Madmen***.

# **PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Established in 1997 by producer/director Barry Avrich, Melbar Entertainment Group is an acclaimed film and television production company responsible for over 40 documentaries, 25 award winning stage to screen adaptations of theatrical productions including The Tempest with Oscar winning actor Christopher Plummer and many live television productions such as the Canadian Screen Awards, the Sports Hall of Fame Awards, and the Scotiabank Giller Prize.