



# Echotone

## Press Kit

September 2010

<http://www.EchotoneFilm.com>

**"...clear-eyed, atmospherically rich." - Michael Phillips, *The Chicago Tribune***

**"the film glides along weightlessly, a timely valentine with purpose." - *The AV Club***

**"A symphony of civic discord and sublime visuals." - *The Chicago Sun-Times***

**"Go see it! It's beautifully shot. It's loud. It's terrific." - Robert Wilonsky, *The Dallas Observer***

**"Echotone will captivate starving artists everywhere." - Hollywood Chicago**

# Tour Itinerary

## **Echotone Sneak Preview Tour Schedule and Line Ups**

Oct. 4

SEATTLE, WA: *Echotone* Screening & Q&A @ SIFF CINEMA - 7:30 PM

Tickets \$10, \$7 w/ RSVP @ EchotoneFilm.com

The Rumble: Seattle @ Havana Social Club 9:00 PM - FREE

With Performances by SUNSET, The White White Lights, Dana Falconberry

Oct. 5

Portland, OR: *Echotone* Screening & Q&A @ Someday Lounge - 7:30 PM

Tickets \$10, \$7 w/ RSVP @ EchotoneFilm.com

The Rumble: Portland @ Someday Lounge 10:00 PM - FREE-

With Performances by SUNSET, The White White Lights, Dana Falconberry

Oct. 6

San Francisco, CA: *Echotone* Screening & Q&A @ Café Du Nord 7:00 PM

Tickets \$10, \$7 w/ RSVP @ EchotoneFilm.com

*Echotone* and the Recording Academy San Francisco Chapter presents a live streaming panel @ Café Du Nord 8:45PM

Tune in at <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/echotonefilm>

The Rumble: San Francisco, CA Café Du Nord 9:30 PM – FREE

With Performances by SUNSET, The White White Lights, Dana Falconberry

Oct. 7

The Rumble: Los Angeles @ 3 Clubs 9:00 PM – FREE

With Performances by SUNSET, The White White Lights, Dead Trees

Oct. 8

Los Angeles CA: *Echotone* Screening & Q&A @ Downtown Independent 7:30 PM

Tickets \$12, w/ RSVP \$10

Oct. 9

The Rumble: San Diego @ Bar Pink – 9:00 PM – FREE

With Performances by SUNSET, The White White Lights, Chairs Missing

Oct. 10

The Rumble: Las Vegas @ The Bunkhouse, 9:00 PM - FREE

With Performances by SUNSET, The White White Lights

# Production Notes

## About the Film

### 100 Word Synopsis

Internationally known as 'The Live Music Capital of the World,' Austin's music culture has led it to become one of the world's most sought-after destinations. As nearly two dozen high-rises pop up throughout the city amidst an economic downfall, how does the working musician get along? This lyrical documentary provides a telescopic view in the lives of Austin's vibrant young musicians as they grapple with questions of artistic integrity, commercialism, experimentation, and the future of their beloved city. *Echotone* is a cultural portrait of the modern American city examined through the lyrics and lens of its creative class.

### Extended Synopsis

Internationally known as 'The Live Music Capital of the World,' Austin's music culture has led it to become one of the world's most sought-after destinations. As nearly two dozen high-rises pop up throughout the city amidst economic downfall, how does the working musician get along? This lyrical documentary provides a telescopic view in the lives of Austin's vibrant young musicians as they grapple with questions of artistic integrity, commercialism, experimentation, and the future of their beloved city. *Echotone* is a cultural portrait of the modern American city examined through the lyrics and lens of its creative class.

There is rising star soul revivalist Black Joe Lewis selling out concert halls by night and delivering fish by day. There's Cari Palazzolo of synth pop sensation Belaire, poised for commercial success, but conflicted over the thought of her music turning into a commodity. Then there is experimental troubadour Bill Baird, whose band Sound Team enjoyed a major label deal with Capitol Records and were subsequently dropped after one album. The tales of these young artists forms a mosaic illustrating the universal struggle many contemporary fringe cultures are experiencing.

A modern parable on integrity, *Echotone* is a feature documentary that explores the world of Austin's vibrant music culture as it struggles to balance notions of personal ethics and sustainability amidst an economic, cultural, and political paradigm shift.

## About the Production

*Echotone* commenced principal photography at the Integrated Media Community's first ever ATX CONVERGE featuring the stellar line up of White Denim, Black Joe Lewis and the Honeybears, Belaire, and Sunset, September 19, 2008, in Austin, Texas. From September 2008 to January 2010 Director Nathan Christ and Cinematographer Robert Garza photographed the Red River District's creatively charged indie music scene - climbing cranes, traveling across Texas to follow musicians on tour, pulling all nighters filming 'til two, logging 'til eight AM, and cutting until having to go back out and catch another killer performance from Austin's prolific music community; and when budget limitations prevented traveling further, they dispersed Flip Video cameras to the bands themselves to document their escapades in New York, Los Angeles, and India.

### **Featured Musical Performances:**

Sunset - <http://www.autobusrecs.com/sunset-bill-baird/>

Belaire - <http://www.indirect.com/artists/belaire/>

Black Joe Lewis & The Honeybears - <http://www.blackjoelewis.com/>

Ghostland Observatory - [www.ghostlandobservatory.com](http://www.ghostlandobservatory.com)

Machine -

The Black Angels - <http://www.theblackangels.com/>

The Octopus Project - <http://www.theoctopusproject.com/>

The White White Lights - <http://www.thewhitewhitelights.com>

Dana Falconberry - <http://www.danafalconberry.com/>

# Filmmaker Biographies

## **Nathan Christ - Director, Editor, Producer**

<http://www.NathanChrist.com>

Nathan's creative life is defined by the breadth of his interests and obsessions. His most prominent work casts his lens on the struggles for expression and freedom among independent cultures. Whether his subjects are exonerated death row inmates, independent working musicians, or young, broke American travelers adrift in the Muslim world, Nathan thrives on the fringe.

His work as director, photographer, and writer has taken him throughout the United States and Mexico. One of his current projects is a large creative endeavor featuring a novel-length memoir called Migrations and an accompanying film. Both of these endeavors are based on his bohemian travels from Holland to West Africa in a Volkswagen van. The project has generated much interest among New York-based literary agencies and is awaiting the next stage of editing.

*Echotone* is Nathan's first feature film.

## **Robert Garza - Cinematographer, Editor, Colorist**

Robert graduated from the film school at UT Austin in cinematography. He's had the opportunity to shoot in many exotic locations, including the ruined Mexican village of Guerrero Viejo, a town originally founded in 1750. Months after Hurricane Katrina he ventured into New Orleans as part of a small crew to help document the destruction, the fumbling reconstruction efforts, and the part music was playing in rebuilding and rejuvenating the spirit of the city. He currently freelances in various capacities, primarily as a cinematographer and camera focus puller. This is Mr. Garza's first feature.

# Director's Statement

Austin, Texas, is known worldwide as the "Live Music Capital of the World." But what exactly does this mean?

*Echotone* documents Austin, Texas, over the course of a turbulent year, in which the city's vibrant music culture was being put into question by everyone from the mayor to the working musician playing her first show. We picked up our cameras a few days after the recession hit and just months after the city council organized the Live Music Task Force to 'deal with' what they called the "live music crisis."

Unlike many music documentaries that place the main characters in the context of success or failure, *Echotone* re-defines the very question of success and artistic integrity. We follow bands as large as Ghostland Observatory, who have made a living solely off of their music without the help of a major label. On the opposite side of the spectrum are ATX cult icons Belaire who, despite their infectiously catchy sounds, refuse to make a dime off their music if they don't have a direct hand in every aspect of production. Then there's Black Joe Lewis, who we captured right as he signed to a major label. By day he is a wage slave, delivering fish, and by night he is a soul revivalist, inciting young fans to throw themselves on stage.

The hero's journey of the film is Bill Baird's, whose popular band Sound Team was signed to Capitol Records and then dropped when the record industry changed in 2007. Bill starts on the bottom, throughout the film, re-discovers his muse, and forms a new band, Sunset, on his own terms.

In 1979, UCLA graduate Penelope Spheeris and a film crew took their 16mm cameras into the ruinous streets of the so-called L.A. punk scene. In her documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization*, Spheeris depicts a world in a state of near-anarchy, as groups like X, Black Flag, and the Germs blur the lines between rage, politics, poverty, and music. The beauty of her particular form of documentary lies in its confrontation with a particular moment in history, when the future seemed unwritten. Unlike later documentaries about the same period like *American Hardcore*, *Western Civilization* is not looking back on an era with rosy-colored glasses. It is made by a fan wanting to dig deeper not only into the music itself, but the surrounding sociological factors, the press, and the upheaval of the American identity proper. It feels unsafe, volatile, alive. The film acts as a primary influence for ours.

*Echotone* gathers rare interviews with the city's developers, press, fans, managers, skeptics, and independent record company owners to form a tapestry, a collective protagonist. Because the story of the changing city mirrors the internal growth of the musicians we follow, the film tells not only a fascinating story about the way of the modern artist, but reveals a street-level POV of the kaleidoscopic world of Austin, the Live Music Capital of the World.

# Q&A with Director Nathan Christ

## **What first drew you to this documentary topic?**

I've been a servant to music my entire life. It's been the initial spark that's inspired all of my writing, travel, and, many times, friendships. I didn't realize there was a story binding the bands we were beginning to film until I started becoming aware of the Live Music Task Force, which was set up by the Mayor to address what he called "The Live Music Crisis." The more I researched into the topic, the more I realized that many people consider Austin's creative future to be hanging in the balance, at the mercy of noise ordinances, skyrocketing property values, and rapid influx of high-end downtown condos. I immediately hazarded to guess that this political storm could act as a backdrop for the musicians in the film. It could provide tremendous weight to the crossroads each musician found themselves in, whether it be soul revivalist Black Joe Lewis signing to a major label, rising as a rock star by night and delivering fish by day, or Cari Palazzolo from Belaire who, despite her incredibly catchy music, slowly realizes throughout the course of the film that she'd rather maintain her devoted Austin cult following than blow up on the mainstream indie circuit.

Then the recession hit and the story immediately made sense in the context of the greater American story. The connections started to make sense and I knew we'd only know for sure if we held our breaths and jumped in.

## **What did you find out that surprised you?**

Certain musicians were receptive to us and certain weren't. Sometimes my expectations of certain people were turned on their heads. Bill Baird's story is perhaps the most intense of the lot. There's a lot of pain and transition within. I thought he might shy away from a camera at first.

It was just the opposite. He made his decision to let us in and committed to it, speaking wisely and directly about the experience of being signed to a major label (Capitol) with his old band Sound Team and then essentially having his dreams dashed when it didn't work out. We were very lucky to chronicle the music he's making present day with his band Sunset. For me, Bill's story is emblematic of the soul struggle involved with living a creative life, the ups and downs, the hopes and failures, and the daily fight to be born again and again.

## **Does the film cover the history of Austin's music scene?**

Nope. It was a conscious decision from the gate. What an impossible task that would be! There are certain film genres and aesthetics dedicated to films like that. I'm sure there are 10 being made in Austin right now. For once, I wanted a music film to deal with the present moment, a moment in time, and I wanted it to deal with young people like me. I didn't want it to have a single strain of nostalgia. It's a love letter to Austin, for sure, but it doesn't yearn for the past. It embraces the breakneck change.

Austin has quite a past. Space cowboy. Psychedelic. Townes. Tons of incredible stuff. But that wasn't our job with *Echotone*.

**Austin is home to internationally recognized music acts, why did you pick emerging artists to document instead of famous ones?**

Well, Ghostland Observatory, The Black Angels, and The Octopus Project are in *Echotone*, and they're definitely known internationally. It's true, though. Our primary three groups (Black Joe Lewis and the Honeybears, Belaire, and Sunset) are definitely under-the-radar or are just starting to blow up throughout the course of the narrative. We didn't make a conscious effort not to follow larger bands like Spoon or Okkervil River. It was just an organic process that led us to some very interesting stories from fascinating artists, "famous" or not.

The music of the main three artists was also the music that compelled me the most.

**What does 'indie' mean to you?**

Having carte blanche on the final vision. When I say carte blanche, I don't mean rejecting constructive criticism from your team. I mean that there are no executives five times removed from your street-level POV dictating what you should cut or replace because Trojan Condoms are telling them they don't like a scene.

That's hyperbolic and silly, of course. But, really, I wouldn't be nearly as proud of this film if we had to leave out the "acid trip" scene. Or the blatant fact that's brought up within the narrative that most musicians in the Live Music Capital of the World can't make a living wage. Or that SXSW can look like a monkey house. I'm just saying that politics fly around at all times and we are very fortunate that they didn't have any effect on the creative outcome of the final cut.

"Indie" also means being broke as a joke, inevitably. Nothing romantic about that. So, in some ways, I hate the word "indie."

**It seems that the independent film industry is in the same place the music industry was several years ago, have you learned anything that applies to the emerging independent film model through your collaboration with Austin's indie music industry through the making of *Echotone*?**

Well, the outlets have obviously diversified. It's difficult for me to say that Austin has an industry. At least not when you put it in the context of other music cities like Nashville or Seattle. Forget comparing it to L.A. or New York. There's a largely unsupported culture in Austin. A lot of people are hustling and pulling together some incredible endeavors, but it's not widespread.

So, to answer in the context of the question, what I've learned from Austin's indie music industry is that no one's going to give you anything. You've got to hustle for everything with limited resources and learn to collaborate.

**What was the biggest challenge you experienced in the making of *Echotone*?**

I think we were actually more fortunate than most documentarians in that the story kept presenting itself to us. It's like lightning was hitting every day and we had our antennas up high enough to catch it. So finding the story was very straight-forward. We actually turned the film around in an unbelievably short amount of time.

The biggest challenge was the money. Our team was piecing together investments every month, sometimes going months without anything. It was very, very tough. Money is like kinetic energy and, when you run out, it begins to affect morale.

But, like I said before, no one should ever think that they've fully paid their dues. They'll be in for a rude awakening. You're either living this film thing or you're not. If you don't have the passion, then you'll fail. When all is said and done, I think *Echotone* is strong enough that it'll present future opportunities for our team.



# Full Credits

Director - Nathan Christ

Director of Photography – Robert L. Garza

Editors - Nathan Christ & Robert L. Garza

Producers – Nathan Christ, Justin Gilley, Nicholas Jayanty, Victor Moyers, Daniel Perlaky,

Executive Producers – Josh Parker, Rich Ragsdale, Kevin Ragsdale

## **FEATURING**

Black Joe Lewis, Black Joe Lewis and The Honeybears

Cari Palazzolo, Belaire

Bill Baird, Sunset

## **PRODUCTION**

Camera Operators - Robert L. Garza & Nathan Christ

Location Sound -David Hixon

Line Producer - Julia Gazdag

Associate Producer - Nate Ferrone, Cecilia Norman

Steadicam Operator - Michael Dietch

Still Photography - Daniel Perlaky, Linda Earley

Sound Team Archival Footage - Elizabeth Abrams, Peter Simonite, Bill Baird

Additional Photography - Daniel Perlaky, Ellie Fenton, Julia Gazdag, Cari Palazzolo, Alex Navaro

Production Assistants - James F. Gilley Jr., Adam Godfrey, Myles Roen

## **POST PRODUCTION**

Edited by - Nathan Christ, Robert L. Garza

Post-Production Supervisor - Nate Ferrone

Visual Effects Artists - Tray Duncan, Chad Hoffle, Alexis Escarfullery, Nate Ferrone

Post Production Facilities - Super!Alright! Inc.

Motion Tracking - Luther Himes IV, Teddy Vuogn, Jenny Alvarado, Chloe Palmer

Text Graphics - Teddy Vuogn, Luther Himes IV, Chloe Palmer

Assistant Editor - Nate Ferrone

Audio Post-Production Supervisor - Dave Kelly

Sound Design and Mixing by Voodoo Highway Music and Post, Inc.

5.1 Facilities - Gigantic Studios

Re-recording Mixer - Tom Paul

Dialogue Editor - Brian Adams, Perry Levy

## **APPEARANCES BY**

### **The Apeshits**

Dean Beadles - Guitar / Voice

Cody Boone - Bass / Voice

Johnny V. - Drums

### **Belaire**

Cari Palazzolo - Vocals / Synth / Guitar

Jason Chronis - Vocals / Synth / Bass

Christa Palazzolo - Vocals / Synth

Matt Simon - Drums

Danny Reisch - Drums

Christine Aprile - Vocals / Synths

Eli Welbourne - Auxiliary guitar, Synth

### **The Black Angels**

Christian Bland - Guitar / Drone Machine / Organ

Alex Maas - Vocals / Percussion

Stephanie Bailey - Drums / Percussion

Nate Ryan - Bass / Guitar

Kyle Hunt - Keyboards / Bass / Guitar / Percussion

### **Dana Falconberry**

Dana Falconberry - Songwriter / Vocals / Guitar

Gina Dvorak - Vocals / Percussion / Xylophone

Lauren McMurray - Vocals / Percussion

### **The Octopus Project**

Josh Lambert - Guitar / Bass / Keyboards

Toto Miranda - Drums / Guitar / Bass

Yvonne Lambert - Samplers / Keyboards /  
Theremin / Glockenspiel / Guitar

Ryan Figg - Guitar / Bass / Keyboards

### **The Pity Party**

Heisenfleier - Drums / Keys / Vocals

M - Guitar / Vocals

### **Sound Team**

Bill Baird - Bass, Guitar / Vocals

Matt Oliver - Guitar, Piano / Vocals

Jordan R. Johns - Drums / Percussion

Sam Sanford - Guitar

Michael Baird - Synthesizer / Tapes

Gabe Pearlman - Organ

Will Patterson - Synthesizer/Tapes

### **Sunset**

Bill Baird - Voice/Guitar/Piano

Sam Sanford - Guitar

Will Patterson - Electric Piano

Willis McClung - Bass

John Kolar - Drums

Lucien Kibodeaux - Moog

### **Ume**

Lauren Langner Larson - Guitar / Voice

Eric Larson - Bass

Jeff Barrera - Drums

### **The White White Lights**

Jenny Gacy: Vocals / Keys / Etc.

Deluxe Peroux: Guitars / Vocals / Keys / Harmonica

Davy Hamrick: Drums / Percussion

Daxter McGarnigle: Bass / Guitar

# Story Angles

## **Feature Stories**

*Echotone* - The Rumble Tour - Oct. 4 - Oct. 9

*Echotone* – a sociological perspective

Austin Texas' creative class

Austin Texas' music history to date

The DIY Revolution

The Emerging American Creative Class

Trials and Tribulations of the American Independent Artist

## **Film**

Director Profile/Interview - Nathan Christ

Cinematographer Profile/Interview - Robert Garza

DIY Distribution & Marketing - The New World of Strategic Partnerships

Digital Technology's role in *Echotone* Marketing

50,000 fans in the world at the Same Time –Building and managing a direct-to-fan campaign

## **Music**

*Echotone* Artist Interviews

Joe Lewis

Cari Palazzolo

Bill Baird

Daniel Perlaky

DIY Distribution and Indie Rock

The Indirect Story

## **Business**

DIY Distribution Models

Entrepreneurship & the Emerging Creative Class

Selling Out or Buying In – how being indie translates to application in business

# Contact

For more information,  
please contact:

## ***Echotone Online and Social Media***

### **Official Film Site**

<http://www.echotonefilm.com>

### **Official Facebook**

<http://www.facebook.com/echotonefilm>

### **Official Twitter**

<http://www.twitter.com/echotonefilm>

## **OFFICIAL PRESS CONTACT**

**Nicholas Jayanty**

**CMO, Reversal Films**

**512.801.9832**

[njayanty@reversalfilms.com](mailto:njayanty@reversalfilms.com)