



SONGBIRDSOS PRODUCTIONS + FILMS À CINQ PRESENT

THE MESSENGER

Imagine a world without birdsong



A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY SU RYNARD MUSIC PHIL STRONG EDITOR EAMONN O'CONNOR CINEMATOGRAPHY DANIEL GRANT | AMAR AHRAB VISUAL EFFECTS MARK ALBERTS
PRODUCERS JOANNE P. JACKSON | SALLY BLAKE | MARTIN DE LA FOUCHARDIÈRE | DIANE WOODS | SU RYNARD WRITERS SALLY BLAKE & SU RYNARD DIRECTOR SU RYNARD

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2015 - CANADA/FRANCE
Feature Documentary
90 minutes
English language,
with subtitles (French,
German, Dutch)

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Can you
imagine
a world
without
birdsong?

The image is a vertical photograph that serves as a background for the text. It shows three people walking away from the camera across a field of harvested crops, likely corn, which are now stalks. The sky is filled with large, grey, dramatic clouds, suggesting an overcast or stormy day. The people are silhouetted against the lighter sky. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

SYNOPSIS

SHORT SYNOPSIS *THE MESSENGER*, a new documentary by award-winning filmmaker Su Rynard (Dream Machine, Kardia) chronicles the struggle of songbirds worldwide to survive in turbulent environmental conditions brought about by humans and argues that their demise could signify the crash of the ecosystems globally, akin to the disappearance of honey bees and the melting of the glaciers.

SYNOPSIS Su Rynard's wide-ranging and contemplative documentary *THE MESSENGER* explores our deep-seated connection to birds and warns that the uncertain fate of songbirds might mirror our own.

Moving from the northern reaches of the Boreal Forest to the base of Mount Ararat to the urban streets of New York, *THE MESSENGER* brings us face-to-face with a remarkable variety of human-made perils that have devastated thrushes, warblers, orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks and many other airborne music-makers. These include hunting, light pollution, high-rise collisions, pipelines, pesticides and loss of migratory habitats.

On one level, *THE MESSENGER* is the artful story about the mass depletion of songbirds on multiple continents, and those who are working to turn the tide. On another level, *THE MESSENGER* is a visually stunning emotional journey, one that mixes its elegiac message with hopeful notes and unique glances into the influence of songbirds on our own expressions of the soul. For example, a German composer, DJ and bird-watching enthusiast, Dominik Eulberg incorporates bird-sounds seamlessly into techno music and introduces us to the use of birdsongs in Wagnerian opera.

THE MESSENGER extends our "bird's-eye view," with a fresh glimpse into their migratory journeys. As Dr. Martin Wikelski shares the wonders of new satellite technology that tracks individual birds over thousands of miles, and data visualizations elegantly create a glimpse into the otherwise unknown and unseen movements of birds.

We see culture clashes, as in France, where activists run up against hunters of the Ortolan Bunting, an endangered bird that is considered a traditional culinary delicacy. In the vast prairie lands of Saskatchewan, Dr. Christy Morrissey works to unravel the mystery behind the sharp drop in the numbers of farmland birds. She discovers that the smoking gun is likely the same pesticide that is killing honeybees.

We meet passionate and highly motivated people like Michael Measure, founder of the Fatal Light Awareness Program, who has spearheaded the retro-fit of skyscraper glass with markers, significantly reducing the number of birds that die by colliding with buildings. And there is hope for a

sustainable future, as Costa Rican coffee farmers learn from ornithologist Alejandra Martinez-Salinas about the benefits of pesticide-free shade-grown coffee. The diversity of shade trees provide a natural habitat for migratory songbirds and the birds' appetite for destructive pests provides an alternative to agro-chemicals.

Ultimately, *THE MESSENGER* is about what the birds have to tell us about the state of our planet and our shared future. In the words of Boreal biologist Erin Bayne, "Could we live without birds? We don't really know for sure... That's one of the fundamental concerns when you play with nature, pull one piece out, and maybe that's a pivotal piece, we just don't know."

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT Birds are humankind's "early warning system," and this was one of the inspirations behind the film. Since ancient times we have looked to birds to foretell the future. Changes in the flights or songs of birds can signal the coming of storms, the change of season, or the dawn of a new day. A decline in the numbers or health of birds points to changes in the environment. Now is a critical time for the world's climate and ecosystems. Birds have something to tell us, and I wanted to amplify their message.

The Messenger takes viewers on a journey that chronicles the struggle of songbirds worldwide. The stakes are high, yet how do you unravel the story of the mass decline of birds without overwhelming people and making them feel helpless? How do you distill complex science into a story that is accessible and impactful?

To achieve this we explore the deep human bond we humans have with birds. We share the awe, the music, the poetry, the beauty and the wonder. We connect with how amazing these creatures are. We reflect upon our complex modern human relationship to the natural world, examining how it is that we humans depend on birds and the work that they do. We come to understand how the fate of the songbird is inextricably linked to our own. The result is a deeply nuanced film. A film that will make you laugh and cry. A film that may change you.

— SU RYNARD

SONGBIRDSOS PRODUCTIONS INC. SongbirdSOS Productions Inc. is a Toronto based independent production company created by Joanne Jackson, Diane Woods and Su Rynard. We share a passion for storytelling, a commitment to excellence, and individual expertise to our work, which aims to challenge the way we view songbirds, their relationship to us, and their role in our ecosystem. songbirdsos.com

FILMS A CINQ Paris based Films à Cinq is internationally renowned for its documentary films about science, cinema, art and history. From the Emmy nominated “Four Wings and a Prayer” to the Cannes Film Festival premiere of “Two In the Wave.” Films à Cinq films are remarkable for both their cinematic style and original storytelling. Recent productions include “License to Krill” (ARTE, Nova), a scientific adventure under the Antarctic ice on the hunt for disappearing krill, “Haiti: my Mother’s Land” (France Television), a feature documentary following Haitian-French playwright Jean-Réné Lemoine returning to Haiti after the assassination of his mother, and “Un Regard Neuf sur Olympia 52” (Ciné +, Histoire), a feature documentary about Chris Marker’s first, and long forgotten cinematic work. Upcoming productions include “Beauty and Ruin” (ARTE and Superchannel), following the dramatic battle over Detroit’s art collection during its spectacular bankruptcy, and “Magnum Cinema” (ARTE), an exclusive film on the world’s most prestigious photo agency. filmsacinq.com

SU RYNARD - DIRECTOR Su Rynard is a filmmaker who has won numerous accolades and awards for her films and media art. Her work is often inspired by science, and most recently ecology. Her dramatic feature film “Kardia” (2006), a meditation on the human heart, was awarded the prestigious **Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize** (USA). Her feature documentary “Dream Machine” (2000) was produced by The National Film Board of Canada. Rynard’s films have screened at film festivals such as The Toronto International Film Festival, the Rotterdam International Film Festival, and the Fajr International Film Festival.

Rynard was one of 10 filmmakers selected from across Canada to be a resident at the Canadian Film Centre in 1996. She was also selected as one of four filmmakers to participate in the innovative 2011 CFC/NFB Documentary Development Program. She attended York University’s Faculty of Fine Arts and is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art. Rynard’s work has been exhibited in galleries including the MOMA in New York and the National Gallery of Canada. Su Rynard lives and works in Toronto, Canada. The MESSENGER is her third feature film. surynard.com

**SONGBIRDSOS
PRODUCTIONS INC.**

PRODUCER **JOANNE JACKSON** is an award-winning documentary and television producer who has been the driving force behind many compelling, thought-provoking programs over the last twenty years. She has also worked as an in-house producer and as a production executive for three networks (YTV, WTN and Discovery). She has garnered eight Gemini nominations for her productions. Independent films: "The Big Wait" (2010), a poignant documentary about the doctor shortage in Canada. Winner: Gold- Houston Worldfest/ Best Medical or Health Program and "Long Haul Big Hearts" (2007), the story of a long haul truck driver's rescue mission for Hurricane Katrina victims. Awards: Crystal Heart Award, Hearts and Minds Film Festival. Silver, ReelHeart Film Festival. Nominated: 2008 Gemini 'Best Adventure/Science/Technology Documentary.

FILMS A CINQ PRODUCER **SALLY BLAKE** is an award-winning producer/director/editor whose work has been shown around the world. Sally cut her filmmaking teeth in the bizarre world of professional wrestling, co-producing the Gemini award winning documentary feature, "Hitman Hart," wrestling with shadows (TVO, BBC, ARTE, A&E). From pink tights to evangelical pop stars, to machine guns, to Leonardo Da Vinci's mules, Sally continues to look for important stories in unusual places. Her recent films include: "Cat Ladies" (TVO, Canal D), about loneliness and social acceptance as experienced through four women and their cats; "Peep Culture" (CBC, Canal D, Gemini Award), a jarring tale of lives transformed into broadcast entertainment and "Beauty and Ruin" (ARTE and Superchannel), following the dramatic battle over Detroit's important art collection during its spectacular bankruptcy. Prior to moving to France, Sally worked in Toronto where she headed up Chocolate Box Entertainment.

FILMS A CINQ PRODUCER **MARTIN DE LA FOURCHARDIERE** has been making documentary films for the past eight years, starting off as the production manager of the Emmy nominated "Four Wings and a Prayer," the Cannes Film Festival feature doc "Two in the Wave" and the docu-drama "Charles Darwin's Grand Voyage." He has produced numerous international co-productions, notably the feature length docu-drama "Hitler's Museum" which sold to over 20 countries worldwide, "Mister Wong" and "The Emperor's Lost Harbour." Martin de la Fouchardière is fluent in English, French and German and is a musician with a love of Flamenco!

DIANE WOODS Diane has a passion for great stories, a love of nature and years of film industry experience. Her independent documentaries "Smoke from his Fire" and "Ancient Sea Gardens" were broadcast on National Geographic Canada, Discovery Channel, APTN and Knowledge Network. Diane is recognized as a leader in 3D film technology in her role as General Manager for David J. Woods Productions in Toronto. She is an ardent bird lover.



**MICHAEL MESURE - FOUNDER
FLAP (FATAL LIGHT AWARENESS PROGRAM)**

Michael Measure has tracked building collision-caused bird deaths in Toronto for over 20 years. As the co-founder of FLAP, he has rallied volunteers and inspired similar organizations across North America. Michael initiated successful campaigns like “Lights out Toronto” and his steadfast dedication has affected changes to LEED building codes, inspired new research developments for ‘bird friendly glass,’ and contributed to the writing of new laws to protect birds. *Filmed in Toronto, Canada*

**DR. PETER MARRA - DIRECTOR
SMITHSONIAN MIGRATORY BIRD CENTER**

One of a few ornithologists studying urban ecology in North America, Pete Marra’s area of expertise involves isolating the factors that control population abundance in migratory and resident birds. Pete has a special interest in the American Redstart. Pete has founded several large research and communication initiatives including Neighborhood Nestwatch, The Migratory Connectivity Project and the Animal Mortality and Monitoring Program. *Filmed just outside Washington DC*

DOMINIK EULBERG - COMPOSER & DJ

Described as “a raving ornithologist from the Westerwald,” Dominik Eulberg is a composer and popular German DJ who has reconciled his love of birds with his talent in techno music, using birdsong as a dominant element in his compositions. Internationally known for his work, he has released numerous singles and full-length albums and was nominated for the German Dance-Music Award in the categories “Best Remix” and “Best Newcomer.” *Filmed in the Westerwald Germany*

**FRÉDÉRIC JIGUET- PROFESSOR,
MUSÉUM NATIONAL D’HISTOIRE NATURELLE**

Frédéric Jiguet is a professor of Ornithology at the French Museum of Natural History in Paris and Director of the French ringing center (CRBPO). He works on the national breeding survey of France and Europe and develops conservation tools, estimates potential impacts of global change on bird ranges, and develops biodiversity scenarios. He is currently heading a three-year study on the population and migration of the Bruant Ortolan. *Filmed in Paris, France*

**ANDREA RUTIGLIANO - INVESTIGATIONS OFFICER, CABS -
COMMITTEE AGAINST BIRD SLAUGHTER**

At the age of 14, Rutigliano received his first pair of binoculars as a birthday present and discovered the world of the birds. But believing that “enjoying nature without doing anything to protect it, it is like feeling a false love,” he started volunteering for the movement against bird trapping in Italy. Rutigliano is currently leading CABS anti-poaching camps in the Mediterranean. *Filmed in Les Landes, France*

**ALEJANDRA MARTINEZ-SALINAS - ECOLOGIST / ORNITHOLOGIST,
CATIE TROPICAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER**

Alejandra Martinez-Salinas is an ecologist dedicated to bird conservation in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. She co-founded and remains the coordinator of CATIE's long-term Bird Monitoring Program (BMP) and is a PhD candidate within the CATIE and the University of Idaho Joint Doctoral Program. Her current work looks at the effects of human intervention in the conservation of bird populations and at identifying the role of birds in the control of the coffee berry borer, one of the most harmful insects known to affect coffee production. *Filmed at the CATIE Farm in Costa Rica*

**DR. CHRISTY MORRISSEY - AVIAN ECO-TOXICOLOGIST,
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Dr. Christy Morrissey has developed independent research programs in the areas of freshwater ecology and pollution, ecology and conservation of birds, and ecotoxicology and health effects in avian wildlife. She is currently researching the effects of the newer neonicotinoid insecticides on farmland and wetland birds in Prairie Canada and studying contaminant effects on migration ecology and physiology. She has expertise in the dispersal and migration of songbirds which are considered a key indicator species for the health of ecosystems. *Filmed near and around Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*

DR. ERIN BAYNE - BIOLOGIST, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Erin Bayne's research seeks to understand the cumulative effects of human activities on biodiversity. He uses a wide variety of species to identify critical issues and test theoretical concepts in wildlife conservation. The goal is to find a balance between resource development and environmental sustainability. His research is used by academics as well as public and private organizations to make decisions about current and future land-use practices across Canada. In the past Dr. Bayne has worked for the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada. *Filmed in the Boreal Forest near Lesser Slave Lake and Calling Lake, Alberta*

**DR. ÇAGAN HAKKI SEKERCIOGLU - ECOLOGIST/ORNITHOLOGIST,
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH**

Çagan Sekercioglu is an ecologist, ornithologist, and Turkey's first tropical biologist. His ultimate goal is to prevent extinctions and consequent collapses of critical ecosystem processes while making sure that human communities benefit from conservation as much as the wildlife they help conserve. He is currently a professor of conservation ecology and ornithology at the University of Utah, Department of Biology and the president of the non-governmental environmental organization Kuzeydogu in Kars, Turkey. Recently he became the first biologist to win the TÜBİTAK Special Science Award. *Filmed in the Aras River Wetlands in South East Turkey*



DR. BRIDGET STUTCHBURY, BIOLOGIST, YORK UNIVERSITY

Bridget Stutchbury's 2007 book "Silence of the Songbirds" was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award for Nonfiction and won the "Globe and Mail" Book of the Year award and the Toronto Star Best Science Book of the Year. A former fellow and research associate at the Smithsonian Institute, Bridget is currently a Professor of Biology at York University and is affiliated with more than a dozen organizations that seek to preserve bird habitats. She is the author of notable books including "The Bird Detective." *Filmed in Erie, PA and rural Ontario, Canada*

BILL EVANS, AVIAN MIGRATION RESEARCHER

Bill Evans is Director of Old Bird Inc., a nonprofit focused on nocturnal bird migration research and education. He has studied nocturnal bird migration in eastern U.S. for over 25 years and co-authored "Flight Calls of Migratory Birds" with Michael O'Brien in 2002. Bill is also involved in efforts to mitigate avian fatalities at communications towers and wind turbines. oldbird.org/pubs.htm His research has been featured on PBS, BBC, NPR and in Science, "The New York Times" and numerous other science-news periodicals. *Filmed at and near the Cornell Night Sky Observatory, Ithaca, NY*

DR. ANDREW FARNSWORTH - RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY

Once a childhood championship birder, Andrew Farnsworth is now a Research Associate in the Conservation Science Program at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. His research currently focuses on the study of bird migration, including vocal communication in migrating birds, remote sensing technologies for quantifying and characterizing migratory movements, and conservation science for improving our abilities to monitor declining populations of migrant species. In addition, Andrew works closely with a number of wildlife conservation organizations. *Filmed in New York City*

DR. MARTIN WIKELSKI, BEHAVIOURAL ECOLOGIST, THE MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR ORNITHOLOGY, ICARUS INITIATIVE

Wikelski, a former Associate Professor at Princeton University, is one of the principals behind the ICARUS (International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space) project, a global undertaking with more than 100 laboratories across 17 countries who agree that tracking small animals globally will provide one of the key scientific breakthroughs in the 21st century. *Filmed at and near the Max Planck Institute of Ornithology, Radolfzell, Germany*



“What we’re seeing with these songbird declines is 40 or 50 years in a row of the populations getting lower and lower. So we have only half the birds we did back in the 1960’s.”

— DR. BRIDGET STUTCHBURY

What motivated you to make this film? My family has a humble cottage about three hours north east of Toronto, and I have spent time there each year since I was born. When we were growing up Barn Swallows swooped over the water, Cedar Wax-wings foraged in the choke cherry tree, Grosbeaks visited the bird feeder, and I fell asleep to the call of the Whip-poor-will. Note the past tense.

If it weren't for the scribbles my mom penciled in our field guide every year, we would have no evidence these birds ever lived in our corner of the world. For my part, as I grew up my life became busier and I rationalized their disappearance as my own problem - I was somehow missing them. Only recently I realized what I was experiencing was part of a much bigger problem. My fate is that I am a filmmaker. And so this journey began.

How serious is this current situation for songbirds around the world? There are over 5000 different species of songbirds world wide - and every bird has a different story to tell. In North America, the Breeding Bird Survey indicates massive declines since the annual bird counts started in 1966. Bobolink 64%; Canada Warbler 66%; and the Wood Thrush 62%. This is just a small fraction of similarly disturbing statistical data.

We also know that this same situation is happening all over the world. The 2012 European Bird Census Council shows that farmland birds have declined over 50% since 1980. The Eurasian Skylark has declined 51% since 1980. The State of the UK's Birds 2012 reported a loss averaging 50 House Sparrows per hour, and 835 Winter Wrens each day. So in a nutshell, I would say the situation is dire.

How do their decreasing numbers relate to the environment? Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring" was published in 1962. She discovered that birds are indicator species telling us about the environment. Her work led to a nationwide ban on DDT for agricultural uses, and inspired the environmental movement. Today, songbirds, in their very decline, are telling us about the health of the planet. If the planet cannot sustain life for them, it cannot sustain life for us. In this way, the fate of the songbird is inextricably linked to our own.

What were some of the creative challenges you faced making this film? It was a challenge to distill complex science into a story that is accessible and impactful, while at the same time, articulate the beauty, poetry and epic narrative that is central to many of the scientific questions. I was also interested in looking at our cultural relationship with the natural world, and portraying this tension in images, not words. When I go to the cinema I want to be moved, inspired and engaged, I look for reflection and meaning in the



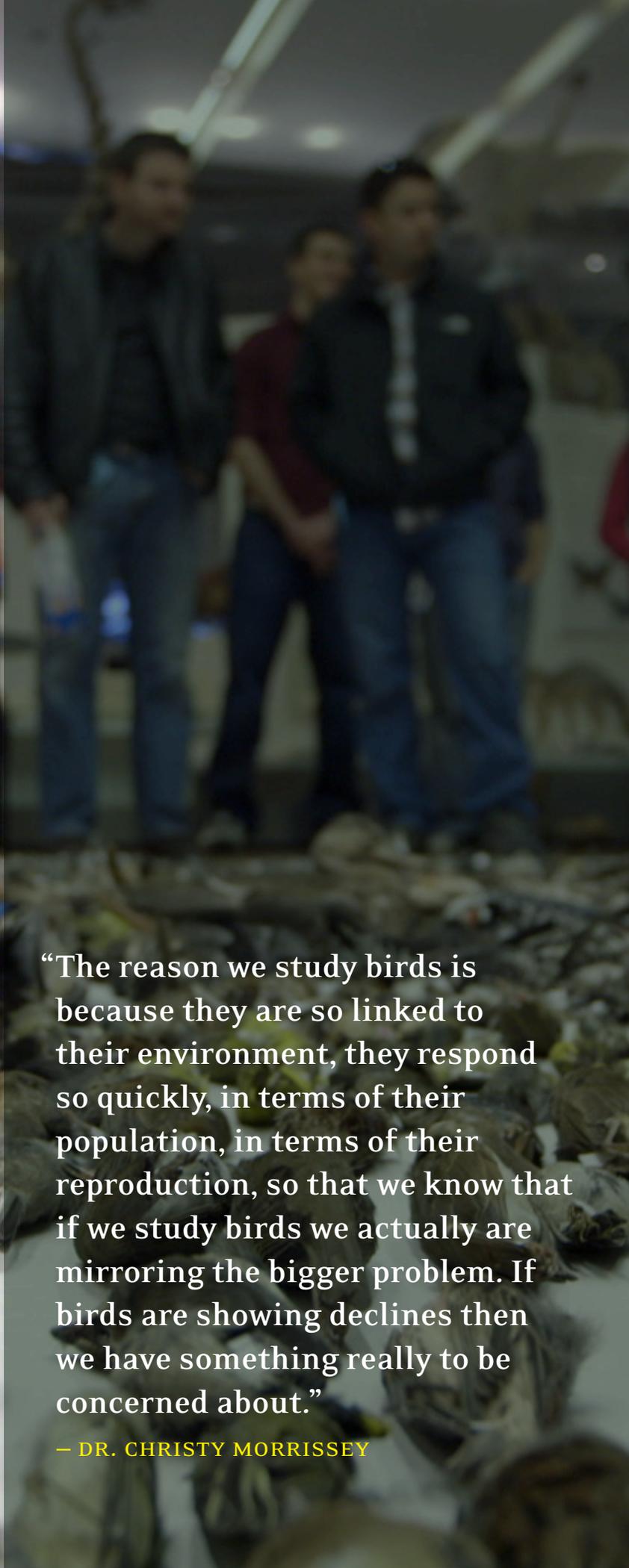
films I seek out. I wanted nothing less for THE MESSENGER audience. To this end, we have successfully created a beautiful, contemplative film – it's an epic journey and an emotional experience.

What process did you use to capture such stunning visuals of these birds in flight? We approached scientists at the Western University's Advanced Facility for Avian Research AFAR, where they have a wind tunnel used to study birds in flight. In Canada one needs permits to film wildlife and ensure their proper handling and care, so the entire process took about three years. Permissions in hand, migrating birds were captured and housed in an aviary. Scientists at AFAR habituated them to flying in the wind tunnel. With a small crew and a Phantom camera we set up for two days of filming. The birds were flying in real time, which is very fast, yet the camera recorded them at 800 fps, rendering a super slow motion image. As these birds fly at night we were filming in near darkness, which resulted in a depth of field of just a few centimeters. It was very challenging, as we didn't know if what we were trying to do could even be done – but the results were spectacular.

Was there anything that amazed you when working with the scientists in The Messenger? An amazing moment was when Bridget Stutchbury re-captured a Purple Martin she had tagged with a geo-location device the year before. It seemed almost miraculous that the bird would return to the same spot the following year, but it did. Stutchbury also documented several "repeat" birds – birds that had returned to the same spot several years in a row. It boggles the mind that this little creature can navigate through our modern world, which is the equivalent of a war zone to a songbird, fly to South America and back, and survive.

What are you hoping people will take away from The Messenger? All life on earth including our own relies on a healthy functioning ecosystem. Birds play an essential role in our environment. If we want to survive, we need to conserve birds and all biodiversity. We can't take birds out of the eco-system and expect it to keep working.

With this film we aim to connect people who care with ways they can help. I believe people are compassionate, intelligent, and capable of change. Real change occurs when people begin to positively care, and you can feel this in the film.



“The reason we study birds is because they are so linked to their environment, they respond so quickly, in terms of their population, in terms of their reproduction, so that we know that if we study birds we actually are mirroring the bigger problem. If birds are showing declines then we have something really to be concerned about.”

— DR. CHRISTY MORRISSEY

**DANIEL GRANT**

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Daniel Grant's award-winning cinematography has screened everywhere from TIFF to Berlinale to Sundance. Raised in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Daniel developed his interest in image-making through still photography. Since graduating from Ryerson University's Film Studies program, Daniel has acted as cinematographer on over fifty short films, documentaries, and feature films, including Canada's first live-action 3D feature, "Dead Before Dawn." Other Awards: The 2013 CSC award for "The Real Inglorious Bastards," a 2011 nomination for "Hangnail" and a 2011 Gemini Award nomination for the documentary "Love at the Twilight Motel."

JOSHUA SEE

WILDLIFE CINEMATOGRAPHY
A Toronto based cinematographer, filmmaker and biologist with a background in environmental visual journalism and ecological fieldwork, Josh has a unique advantage in filming wildlife and telling stories of the natural world. Josh has worked in remote locations in Africa, Central and South America, South Asia, and beyond with many organizations including The Royal Ontario Museum, WWF, The Globe and Mail, TVO, CBC, PBS, and ARTE. www.joshuasee.ca

AMAR ARHAB

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Amar Arhab has had a long and distinguished career as a Director of Photography and cameraman working in feature documentary, film and television. His credits include: "Bir Hakeim" 1942 (2012), "Ravi Shankar, l'extraordinaire leçon" (2011), "Le grand voyage" (2003), "Circus Baobab" (2000), "Notes interdites" (1996), "Les enfants du voyage" (1995), "Au Sud du Sud" (1991), "Djembéfola" (1990), and "Il Florilégio" (1998).

LAURENT CHARBONNIER

WILDLIFE CINEMATOGRAPHER
A well-known wildlife cinematographer and filmmaker, Charbonnier was called to this vocation over 30 years ago as a natural evolution of his teenage passion for wildlife. Winning numerous awards as a Producer, Director and DOP, Laurent has made more than sixty wildlife documentaries and participated in the shooting of feature films such as: "Les Enfants Du Marais" by Jean Becker, "Le Dernier Trappeur," "Loup" and "Belle et Sebastien" by Nicolas Vanier, "Winged Migration," "Ocean" by Jacques Perrin, and "La Cle Des Champs" by Marie Perenou and Claude Nuridsani. He was nominated for a César for his film "Les Animaux Amoureux."

EAMONN O'CONNOR

PICTURE EDITOR

Eamonn O'Connor is an award-winning filmmaker and documentary editor. A graduate of Queen's University and the Advanced Film and Television program at Sheridan College, Eamonn's credits include Bruce McDonald's award-winning film "Music From The Big House," Rob Stewart's award-winning film "Revolution," and Alan Zweig's "15 Reason's To Live," both Hotdocs official selections. In 2012 Eamonn co-directed the award winning short film "Crowd The School house." In 2015 he edited Darby Wheeler's "Hip Hop Evolution" with Banger Films.

PHIL STRONGMUSIC COMPOSER AND
SOUND DESIGNER

An award-winning composer and sound designer, Phil Strong is distinguished by the variety of genres in which he works: film, dance, theatre, music performance and art installation. Phil has also produced acclaimed albums including Cape Breton singer Mary Jane Lamond's CD, Landuil, which won the 2006 East Coast Music Award's "Album of the Year," the Golden Sheath award-winning soundtrack to Ali Kazimi's "Continuous Journey," and the Gemini-winning music in "Cat Ladies." Phil has collaborated with Director Su Rynard for more than twenty years. phil-strong.com

MARK ALBERTSVISUAL EFFECTS -
ELECTRIC SQUARE

Mark Albert's career has touched on motion capture direction, graphic design for corporate identity, and VFX creative direction for many broadcast television projects. He has contributed to the TV series "The Nature of Things," "Things That Move," "Canadian Made," "What's In A Name," and "The Polar Sea." He designed the visual effects and animation for "When Dreams Take Flight," "Wakening," "Nocturne," and the 2009 Hot Docs Special Jury Prize winner, "Waterlife." He currently resides in Toronto. electricsquare.net

SPECIAL MENTIONFOR THE SONGBIRDS
AND TEAM AT AFAR

The super slow motion images of songbirds in flight, including the Indigo bunting, Baltimore Oriole, Swainson's Thrush, Woodthrush, Robin, Catbird and Warblers were filmed over three days in London Ontario at AFAR, the Advanced Facility for Avian Research. The birds were filmed in a wind-tunnel under the supervision of Dr. Christopher Guglielmo, ecologist, biologist and Associate Professor at Western University. Guglielmo and his team cared for the birds during filming and all the birds were successfully released back into the wild. [Read related Directors Blog here.](#)



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FILMS A CINQ

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THE MESSENGER

Canada/France co-production.

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Add your voice

The filmmakers have partnered with conservation organizations to launch an impact campaign. Bird Studies Canada is our Canadian National Outreach Partner. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is our American Outreach Partner.

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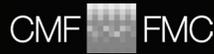
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AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Best Conservation Film, Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival, USA 2015
Top Ten Audience Award, Hot Docs Film Festival, Canada 2015
Prix Buffon, Paris Science, Le Festival International du Film Scientifique, France 2016
Whistleblower Award Cinema Verde Environmental Film & Arts Festival, USA 2016
Favorite Documentary Feature, North Bay Film Festival, Canada 2016
Special Jury Award, Visions of Nature/Voices of Nature Environmental Film Festival, USA 2016
Carl Nunn Media and Conservation Award presented by Ontario Nature, 2015
Special Mention for Best Documentary, CinemAmbiente, Italy 2015
Best Environmental Film Prize, Festival de l'Oiseau et de la Nature, France 2016
Best of Fest, International Wildlife Film Festival Missoula, Montana USA 2016
Best Theatrical Feature, International Wildlife Film Festival Missoula, USA 2016
Nominated for Best Cinematography in a Feature Documentary, Canadian Screen Awards 2016
Nominated for Best Editing in Feature Documentary, Canadian Cinema Editors Award 2016
Nominated for Dutch Intl. Science Film Festival NTR Audience & Youth Jury Award, 2016

