

DEEP LISTENING: THE STORY OF PAULINE OLIVEROS

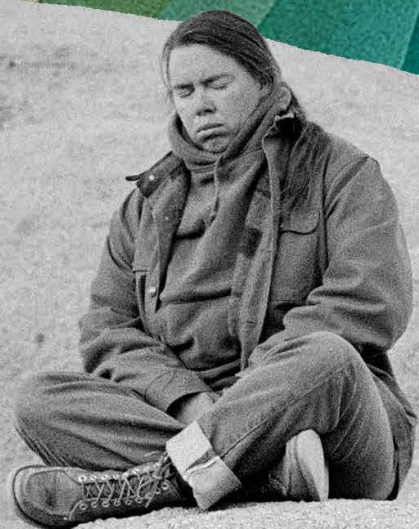
A FILM BY DANIEL WEINTRAUB

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: THE MINISTRY OF MAÁT, INC, LFTF MANDALA, IONE

"Weintraub's documentary is packed with joy, humanity and wisdom."

- The Wire

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ALVIN
LUCIER

MORTON
SUBOTNIK

TONY
MARTIN

SYNOPSIS

FULL SYNOPSIS

"Deep Listening: The Story of Pauline Oliveros" tells the story of the iconic composer, performer, teacher, philosopher, technological innovator and humanitarian, Pauline Oliveros. She was one of the world's original electronic musicians, one of the only females amongst notable post-war American composers, a master accordion player, a teacher and mentor to musicians, a gateway to music and sound for non-musicians and a technical innovator who helped develop everything from tools that allow musicians to play together while in different countries to software that enables those with severe disabilities to create beautiful music. On the vanguard of contemporary American music for six decades, her story illuminates the pathway to how we got where we are and where the future will take us in the worlds of music, the philosophy of sound, and the art of listening.

Produced in collaboration with executive producer Ione, Oliveros' partner in life and work, and the Ministry of Maât, Inc., the film combines rare archival footage, live performances, and unreleased music with appearances by Terry Riley, Anna Halprin, Ione, Linda Montano, Laurie Anderson, Thurston Moore, Alvin Lucier, Claire Chase, Miya Masaoka, Morton Subotnick, Tony Martin, Ramon Sender and many more ground-breaking artists.

LOGLINE

A film about Pauline Oliveros, the iconic composer, performer, teacher, philosopher, innovator and humanitarian.



"Weintraub's film, which largely allows Oliveros herself to tell her story and explain her discoveries and ideas through recorded interviews that are peppered with commentary from her peers (Riley, Morton Subotnick) and disciples (Thurston Moore), is never at odds with the central tenets of the Deep Listening ethos. In fact, it leaves the viewer not only wanting to explore her music further, but to pay more attention to the sounds around them—something the composer no doubt would have appreciated."

— Peter Aaron, Chronogram

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Pauline and I shared the feeling that her story was made for me to tell. I looked for many years for a subject about which to do my first feature length documentary. When my neighbor in upstate New York introduced me to Pauline, I knew I had met a person who would inspire me throughout the inevitably lengthy process of making a film. I also felt an instant obligation to share the story of this incomparable sonic icon. In the process of making this film, Pauline and I became close friends. Through Pauline, I found a language to explain and express thoughts I had entertained my whole life around the importance of listening and how that can impact and expand community.

I also had the good fortune to follow Pauline for nearly three years, filming rehearsals, workshops, performances, recording sessions, and various community activities. I saw how she inspired an expansive creativity within her community in Kingston, NY and with the world class musicians she regularly created work with. In addition, I filmed over thirty interviews. With Pauline's guidance and her warm reputation, I was able to record interviews with artists whose cultural impact is comparable to Pauline's. In Pauline's absence, her creative partner and spouse IONE, trustees and community, all offered their continued support and guidance to tell Pauline's story the best way I could posthumously.

Now that Pauline has left this plane, I feel an even greater obligation to tell her story. I can think of few other people of the last century whose message of healing, unity and unbridled creative expression is more deeply needed at this time in history. I am so honored to have been in conversation with her and have the experience and ability to capture some essence of Pauline, that can be shared in the world now through this independent film.

I dedicated my life to music and filmmaking from an early age. In all those years, I never met a subject like Pauline Oliveros, whose compelling story and life's work provided me with such a perfect opportunity to align both my passions. I felt it crucial, when making this film about Pauline, to whom listening is the center of her private and artistic world, that I as the filmmaker contribute my knowledge of music and sound recording, and to be an editor who listens. I believe Pauline chose to work with me on this documentary film because of my experience as a recording engineer, and the way I present sound in my films. Soon after we met, Pauline invited me to mix a recording of her with friend and collaborator Miya Masaoka, and to record and mix a trio with Nels Cline and Thollem McDonas, which turned out to be Pauline's final recording.

As Pauline herself said "I never tried to build a career, I only tried to build a community". As an artist coming of age in the 1950's as a woman who identified as queer, Pauline had to overcome many obstacles placed in front of her by society. She did this largely by always being committed to the idea that, through their art, artists have a responsibility to bring people together. During her life, Pauline built an incredible world-wide community. "Deep Listening: The Story of Pauline Oliveros" is not only a film about a crucial piece of American cultural evolution, but a vehicle through which we can continue to expand Pauline's community and its commitment to listening and understanding.



Photo by: Angela C. Villa

Weintraub recording Pauline Oliveros

FILMMAKERS



Daniel Weintraub (Producer, Director, Editor)

Deep Listening: the Story of Pauline Oliveros, has been Daniel's primary focus since a conversation with Oliveros started them down this path. During the process, Daniel created documentary shorts on the work of Oliveros; *Don't Call Them Lady Composers*, *Montage for Improvisors* which were shown in museums and festivals in CA, NY, UK, Spain and Switzerland. Additionally, Daniel acted as video consultant on the exhibition of Pauline's work at El Centro de Creacion Contemporanea de Andalucia, Cordoba, Spain. Daniel has written and directed several narrative short films that have featured at festivals around the world. Seasoned in film and television, Daniel has worked on commercials, music videos, TV shows, and feature films across a career spanning 25 years. Most recently, he edited the award-winning post-Katrina documentary feature *Forced Change*, 2022. Daniel is passionate about youth arts education, both as an educator and as director of Forge Media, an apprentice-based production company offering film students professional experience working on videos for local organizations focused on supporting and building community. Daniel is a musician, producer, and recording engineer, mixing sound for picture, and music recordings of artists including Lionel Loueke, The Felice Brothers, Karen Ann, and the record *Molecular Affinity*, a trio with Pauline Oliveros, Thollem McDonas, and Nels Cline.

IONE (Executive Producer)

IONE is an author, playwright, director, and text-sound artist in her own right. IONE taught and performed around the world with Pauline Oliveros, her spouse and creative partner. Together, they created contemporary music theater narrative works, including *Njinga the Queen King: The Return of a Warrior*; *BAM, Io and Her and the Trouble with Him*; and *The Lunar Opera: Deep Listening For_ Tunes*, Lincoln Center Damrosch Park. IONE's film, *Dreams of the Jungfrau*, was shown in the US, Spain, and Ireland. *The Nubian Word for Flowers, a Phantom Opera*, the apex of her collaboration with Pauline Oliveros, premiered at Roulette Intermedium, and *The Nubian Word for Flowers: Pocket Edition* in which IONE is solo performer with a team of media artists, premiered at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. IONE's significant memoir, *Pride of Family; Four Generations of American Women of Color*, was named a Notable Book by *The New York Times*. Artistic director of the Deep Listening Institute for 15 years, IONE is currently a consultant at the Center for Deep Listening® in Troy, New York. As founding director of *The Ministry of Maât*, IONE presents workshops and retreats, encouraging a vibrant international community of artists, and seeding the work of Pauline Oliveros and others in collective community. A recent work is *Touch for Irish National Opera*, with Irish composer Karen Power. IONE is a member of the Distinguished Mentors Council of Composers Now.



PAULINE OLIVEROS

Pauline Oliveros 1932-2016 composer, performer, humanitarian, was an important pioneer in American Music. Acclaimed internationally, for six decades she explored sound—forging new ground for herself and others. Through improvisation, electronic music, ritual, teaching and meditation she created a body of work with such a breadth of vision that it profoundly effects those who experience it and eludes many who try to write about it. Oliveros was honored with many awards, including four honorary doctorates, grants and concerts internationally.



Whether performing at the John F. Kennedy Centre in Washington DC, in an underground Cistern, or in the studios of a West German radio station, Oliveros' commitment to interaction with the moment was unchanged. She could make the sound of a sweeping siren into another instrument of the ensemble. Through Deep Listening Pieces and earlier Sonic Meditations, Oliveros introduced the concept of incorporating all environmental sounds into musical performance. To make a pleasurable experience of this requires focused concentration, skilled musicianship, and strong improvisational skills, which are hallmarks of Oliveros' form. She built a loyal following through her concerts, recordings, publications, and musical compositions that she wrote for soloists and ensembles in music dance, theater, and inter-arts companies. She also provided leadership within the music community by acting in an advisory capacity for organizations such as The National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council for the Arts, and many private foundations. She served as Distinguished Research Professor of Music at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Darius Milhaud Composer in Residence at Mills College. Oliveros was vocal about representing the needs of individual artists, about the need for diversity and experimentation in the arts and promoting cooperation and good will among people. She founded the Deep Listening Institute, formerly Pauline Oliveros Foundation, and now Center for Deep Listening at Rensselaer.



MORE ON PAULINE

*New York Times
The New Yorker
The Wire*

On Screen

Films & DVDs

Deep Listening: The Story Of Pauline Oliveros Daniel Weintraub (Director)

IONE/The Ministry Of Maât/LFTF Mandala 2023, 117 mins

Daniel Weintraub's documentary celebrating the life and work of pioneering American composer, teacher and Deep Listening founder Pauline Oliveros is packed with joy, humanity and wisdom. The project had commenced production prior to the composer's passing in 2016, and it uses new and archived interview footage to let Oliveros narrate her own story, covering not only her background and the remarkable progressions of her career, but also her lifelong quest for creative freedom, enhanced awareness and deeper connections with other people and the shared environment through the power of listening.

Weintraub makes use of an archive of

rare photographs, home movies, hand-drawn scores and signal flow diagrams, excerpts of unheard music, and rare footage from live performances, to assemble an impression of Oliveros that is charmingly funny, wise and profoundly real but without disturbing her essential mystery. We catch glimpses of her in different, playful guises: she's a prizewinning composer of new music, a blackbelt martial artist, spiritual guru, tinkering technologist, mustachioed accordionist in a klezmer band, philosopher, activist, playing with drag and gender, a beautifully complex creator oscillating between extravagant theatrics and quiet introspection.

To add context, there are interviews from her peers and fellow luminaries of the postwar American interdisciplinary experimental scene: Terry Riley, Alvin Lucier, Morton Subotnick, Ramon Sender, Tony Martin, Anna Halprin, Stuart Dempster, Linda Montano and

many more. Oliveros's spouse and longtime collaborator IONE contributes both on camera and off, listed as executive producer alongside the Ministry of Maât, the holistic non-profit organisation that continues to facilitate Deep Listening retreats and associated group practices.

Childhood days in Houston, Texas are recounted almost entirely in terms of sonic memory. Her mother and grandmother both taught piano, her mother also worked as répétiteur for ballet and occasionally composed; In the film, Oliveros describes her matriarchs as "the breadwinners... surviving through something that was one of the few professions that were open to women". Queerness emerges as an early theme, not only with early self-realisation of her lesbian identity, but also in her way of perceiving the world, her deep empathy with outsiders, the value of difference and the ideas and sound that don't fit in.

Oliveros describes being denied access to compositional training and being routinely condescended to by male teachers and peers at the start of her career. In pictures and footage from the San Francisco Tape Music Center period, it's hard to ignore the fact that Oliveros is often the only woman in the room. Her importance and visibility as a queer woman in those male-dominated spaces is a dimension of Oliveros's story that I wish Weintraub had been able to devote more time and space to. Nevertheless, the documentary portrays the boundary-smashing exuberance of the SFTMC era with a sense of anarchic humour. She says, "Play is the greatest research tool that humanity has," and the egoless, collaborative spirit of her pioneering work in the 1960s carries forward as her music becomes even more open and indefinite with her *Sonic Meditations* at the start of the 70s.

From this point, the film shows Oliveros's composing practice increasingly engaging with political and spiritual ideas, tracing prolific decades spent both in and outside academia, working with a vast spectrum of musicians of all levels of ability, researching and developing technologies to assist collaboration and improve access to music making for everyone.

What emerges is a clear image of a deeply integrated, profoundly humane creative practice based on attentiveness and inclusion. The film concludes with stunning footage of Oliveros's *Sensational Sounds For Hearing And Non-Hearing Performers*, led by deaf, first-time conductor Robert Demeter, performed in Bergen, Norway in August 2016, just three months before the composer's death. Deeply moved by the performance, Oliveros told her partner IONE that the moment was "most important in [her] life... because now I think I know what Deep Listening is".

Leah Kardos

Pauline Oliveros



SCREENINGS

Deep Listening: The Story of Pauline Oliveros is screening all over the world. Thanks to the incredible community Pauline built throughout her long career, and growing reputation of the film, the filmmakers have been able to schedule a wide range of screenings without any help from a distributor. Many of these screenings have incorporated music performances and workshops as well. "Arctic Air" was performed after the screening in Stockholm, and "Six for A New Time" in Oakland. More plans for multidisciplinary events are in the works from Mexico City to The UK.

FILM FESTIVALS

Cine Paris - Best Director Feature Length Documentary
Something Wicked Doc Fest - Best Director Feature Length Documentary
Unerhört! Music Film Festival
Doc N' Roll
In-Edit Barcelona
Sonika Ekranu- Closing Night Film
South Sound Film Festival
Rockumentari

MUSIC FESTIVALS

Nonagon Festival
Non-Event
Suoni Per i Popolo
Poesía en Vox Alta
Festival Vindöga
Venus Fest
Sonic Vigil XI
Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival
MaerzMusic Festival



US SCREENINGS

New York (NYC, Rosendale, Troy, New Paltz, Delhi), Massachusetts (Boston, Berkshires), Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Harrisburg), California (Oakland, San Francisco, Sonoma, Claremont), Maine, New Mexico, Washington, Ohio, Illinois, Texas (Austin, Dallas, Houston), North Carolina, Connecticut

INTERNATIONAL SCREENINGS

Mexico (Mexico City, Moterrey), Germany, (Berlin, Hamburg) UK, (London, Leeds, Cardiff, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Durham, Bristol), Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Canada (Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver), France (Paris, Nantes), Iceland, Norway, Argentina

MANY ADDITIONAL SCREENINGS BEING PLANNED

LINKS

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TRAILER

[Deep Listening Trailer](#)

WEBSITES

[Deep Listening: The Story of Pauline Oliveros
Ministry of Maat](#)

INSTAGRAM

[@thestoryofpaulineoliverosfilm](#)

PRESS

[Chronogram](#)
[Ravelin Magazine](#)
[Musical U](#)
[Centre d'Art Contemporain Geneve](#)
[Remezcla](#)
[NTS Radio](#)

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TECH SPECS

ORIGINAL TITLE

*"Deep Listening: The Story
of Pauline Oliveros"*

COUNTY OF ORGIN

USA

YEAR OF COMPLETION

2022

RUNNING TIME

1 hour and 57 minutes

FILMED IN

high definition video, color

APSECT RATIO

16X9

AUDIO

5.1 & stereo available

FILE TYPE

ProRes QT, MP4, DCP