



presents

**WHO IS HARRY NILSSON
(And Why Is Everybody Talkin' About Him)?**

**STARRING
Harry Nilsson**

Featuring Special Appearances by

Micky Dolenz

Terry Gilliam

Mark Hudson

Danny Hutton

Eric Idle

Al Kooper

The Voice of John Lennon

Randy Newman

Members of the Nilsson family

Yoko Ono

May Pang

Van Dyke Parks

Richard Perry

The Smothers Brothers

Ringo Starr

Jimmy Webb

Paul Williams

Robin Williams

Brian Wilson

...AND MANY MORE...

THE FILMMAKERS

Writer/Director.....John Scheinfeld

Producers.....David Leaf & John Scheinfeld

Executive Producer.....Lee Blackman

Editor and Co-Producer.....Peter S. Lynch II

Soundtrack.....Nilsson

WHO IS HARRY NILSSON (And Why Is Everybody Talkin' About Him)?

Harry Nilsson was an enigma. And that's about the only thing you can say about him with any certainty.

The Beatles proclaimed him their favorite "group," but in a career spanning over 30 years, he was so much not a group that he never performed live in concert. He was considered by many music critics and some of his peers (including Randy Newman and Brian Wilson) to be one of the best songwriters of his time. He was also considered to be peer-less as a wild man, a legendary party animal who could drink John Lennon and Keith Moon under the table, yet was also a devoted husband and father.

A brilliantly gifted songwriter, his work has been covered by a wide range of artists (The Monkees to Harry Belafonte, Blood Sweat & Tears to Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, Three Dog Night to Bette Midler, Aimee Mann to Barbra Streisand). And yet, with an irony that was typical of his career, his greatest fame and success came as a singer of other people's songs. Blessed with a remarkable three and-a-half octave range, he won two Grammys and 17 Gold Records, yet never cut his music to fit mainstream fashion.

The people that knew and loved him talk about Harry as gregarious, shy, reclusive, wild, endlessly fun, a complete lunatic, a sonofabitch and a pussycat. In fact, he was all these things and much more. A millionaire before he was 30, Harry was courted by the elite of popular music, film, television and publishing, riding the crest of a remarkable wave of success. Yet, in just a few short years his glorious voice would be in tatters, his health in ruins and without a record contract.

Harry's music is as contradictory as the man himself. The general public may recall "Everybody's Talkin'" from the classic film, *Midnight Cowboy*...or as teenagers falling in love to "Without You"...or tapping their feet to the quirky and infectious, "Coconut" ("*Put de lime in de coconut...*")...or cranking up the speakers to the hair-raising rocker, "Jump Into The Fire"...or singing along to the whimsical "Me And My Arrow" from Harry's animated film, *The Point!* They may even bask in a warm nostalgic glow every time they hear "Best Friend", theme song from the beloved 60's TV comedy, *The Courtship of Eddie's Father*. But few ever imagined that one man was responsible for these wildly disparate recordings

WHO IS HARRY NILSSON (And Why Is Everybody Talkin' About Him?) is jam-packed with musical clips from his infrequent but truly inspired appearances on television and film. Amidst the incredibly rare footage are performances from two BBC specials, *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, *Playboy After Dark* and *Beat Club*, plus promo films, music videos and home movies. Also featured are clips from the Oscar-winning film, *Midnight Cowboy* and *Did Somebody Drop His Mouse?*, an unfinished documentary about the recording of the Harry's 1972 album *Son of Schmilsson*.

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All music in the film was recorded by Harry. The soundtrack features over 60 songs from throughout his career, including all of his best-known hits, unreleased tracks and rare recordings.

Ultimately, the tantalizing question...**WHO IS HARRY NILSSON (And Why Is Everybody Talkin' About Him?)**...will partially be answered by Harry himself. Excerpts from his recently discovered oral autobiography are seamlessly incorporated into the film, allowing Harry to help tell his remarkable story *in his own voice*.

This powerful documentary transcends mere biography. It is a quintessential rock and roll story, an inspired examination of a unique era in music history as witnessed by people who were there. As one observer noted, "Because of who is interviewed, we are thrust back into that time and place so that we understand precisely why Harry was so important then...and why he still matters today."

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

When you mention Harry Nilsson either people get it right away or they have no idea what you're talking about. The name may not ring a bell, but his music certainly touches the heart and sets the spirit soaring.

But how do you make a film about a man who purposefully stayed out of the public eye...a man whose determination to do things his way meant no concert performances and previous few appearances on television? How do you capture the essence of a musical genius who was as complex and maddening as he was entertaining and inspiring?

In **WHO IS HARRY NILSSON (And Why Is Everybody Talkin' About Him?)**, Writer/Director John Scheinfeld brings his strong story-telling skill to bear in creating a narrative with twists and turns every bit as dramatic as Harry's life. In so doing, this compelling film offers keen insight into the rock and roll experience -- the pressures and temptations that impact on a young man eager to express himself creatively; the roller coaster ride of fame, celebrity and personal excess that enveloped the man even as his art evolves and matures; the self-destructive forces that conspire to destroy everything he worked so hard to achieve; an exploration of the madness that almost always goes hand-in-hand with genius; and how, by the end of an explosive life, he finds personal redemption.

For years Scheinfeld and his producing partner, David Leaf, had tried without success to interest television networks in commissioning a documentary about Harry's extraordinary life. It was not until 2004 when Lee Blackman -- Harry's good friend, attorney and representative for his Estate -- secured private financing that production finally began. "In my view, Harry died far too young and was not fully recognized for his remarkable musical legacy," said Blackman. "Harry's widow, Una, and I wanted to change all that." Una agreed, saying "Even if no one else but my kids see this film, I want it made so they will know about their father."

Determined to gather testimony only from those who really knew Harry, who went on the "Harry Ride," as Micky Dolenz declared, LSL taped over 30 interviews at many locations in the United States and United Kingdom. It was a labor of love for all concerned.

As in all LSL Productions, there was a commitment to uncovering as much rare and unseen audio/visual material as possible. This task was made much harder by the fact that Harry rarely appeared and/or performed in public. In addition to scouring the world's archives and the holdings of private collectors, Scheinfeld and Leaf prevailed upon Harry's friends and extended family who freely and generously shared their photos, home movies, private recordings and personal memorabilia. "Do it for Harry" became the mantra for everyone associated with the making of this film.

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Unprecedented access to the Sony/BMG archive was granted to LSL during the making of this film resulting in a treasure trove of photos, promotional films, master recordings, unreleased recordings, remixes and film elements that help bring Harry's remarkable saga to life.

Scheinfeld chose to utilize only Harry's music in this film so, in effect, the soundtrack is by Nilsson. Jam-packed with over 60 songs, the film has wall-to-wall music featuring classic Harry, unreleased Harry and rare Harry, all creatively employed to propel the story line forward.

Most exciting, with the generous support of Sony/BMG, Harry's label, Scheinfeld went into the studio and remixed more than two dozen Nilsson tracks, stripping off the vocals. "Over the years," says Scheinfeld, "I was so focused on Harry's extraordinary vocals that I didn't fully appreciate the beauty and impeccable production value of the music that lay beneath. These exquisite recordings, produced by Rick Jarard, Richard Perry, John Lennon and Harry himself, reveal extraordinary beauty, poignancy, energy, pain and humor, all of which combine to create a powerful score for all aspects of Harry's life story as portrayed in the film."

Scheinfeld first heard Harry's music on the radio when he was growing up and became a fan (he even used one track in a radio play he directed in college). But he knew little about the man himself. During production he was able to immerse himself in all things Harry, learning the truth behind the Nilsson mystique and he brings that knowledge to the forefront in this film. The result is a powerful documentary that presents its subject warts and all.

FULL CAST LIST

The cast of friends, peers, musical colleagues, collaborators and family features:

Gerry Beckley
Lee Blackman
Perry Botkin, Jr.
Ray Cooper
Micky Dolenz
Stanley Dorfman
Terry Gilliam
Bruce Grakal
Doug Hofer
Mark Hudson
Dustin Hoffman
Danny Hutton
Eric Idle
Rick Jarrard
Al Kooper
Trevor Lawrence
John Lennon
The Monkees
Randy Newman
Annie Nilsson
Beau Nilsson
Diane Nilsson
Olivia Nilsson
Una Nilsson
Zach Nilsson
Yoko Ono
May Pang
Van Dyke Parks
Richard Perry
Dick Smothers
Tom Smothers
Ringo Starr
Joan Taylor
Three Dog Night
Jon Voight
Jimmy Webb
Paul Williams
Robin Williams
Brian Wilson
Fred Wolf
and
Harry Nilsson

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ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JOHN SCHEINFELD

Writer/Director

For the better part of a decade, John Scheinfeld has been a respected producer and writer of dramatic and documentary programming, bringing a broad spectrum of experiences and interests to a wide-range of projects.

Hot on the heels of a Grammy nomination for producing *Beautiful Dreamer: The Story of Brian Wilson and Smile*, Scheinfeld is currently co-writing/co-directing and co-producing a feature film documentary, *The US vs. John Lennon* for Lion's Gate Films, to be released in 2006.

Scheinfeld entered the documentary field in 1993 when, in partnership with David Leaf, he wrote, produced and directed the critically acclaimed production *The Unknown Marx Brothers*. On his own, he has written and produced such documentary programs as *With The President: 1961-63*, *Dinosaurs: Myths And Realities*, *One Small Step, We Are The World: A 10th Anniversary Tribute* and *Forever Wild*, a six-part series narrated by Ted Danson.

In 2004, he wrote, produced and directed *The Bette Midler Biography* for A&E (one of the year's highest-rated specials for the network)...and *No Fighting in the War Room... or... Dr. Strangelove and the Nuclear Threat* for Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment. That same year, with producing partner David Leaf, he wrote, produced and directed the 5-part miniseries for BRAVO, *The 100 Greatest Television Characters*.

In 2003, Scheinfeld produced and directed a special 2-hour installment of A&E's BIOGRAPHY series on Andy Williams, narrated by Kelsey Grammer. The same year, he wrote, produced and directed the acclaimed Easter primetime special for the National Geographic Channel, *In the Name of Heaven*. He also wrote, produced and directed the 2002 primetime Easter special for the Channel, *Tomb of Jesus*. In 2002, he wrote, produced and directed the MYSTERIES series for TLC (*Mysteries of The Sphinx*, *Mysteries Of Stonehenge*, *Mysteries Of Noah And The Flood* and *Mysteries Of Easter Island*).

Previously, Scheinfeld wrote produced and directed *Sinatra: Classic Duets*, *Vintage Sinatra*, *When I Fall in Love: The One & Only Nat King Cole*, *Jack Paar: Smart Television*, *Rosemary Clooney: Girl Singer* *The Unknown Peter Sellers*, *Dean Martin: That's Amore* and *The Bee Gees: This Is Where I Came In* (a special 2-hour installment of A&E's BIOGRAPHY series).

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Scheinfeld has also written dramatic scripts for prime time television. He created and wrote pilots for new drama series for ABC (*Staying Alive*), FBC (*In Security* and *Windy City*), NBC (*Zero To Hero*), UPN (*Babes in the Dust*) and First Run syndication. He was also Executive Producer of a two-hour MOW/pilot for CBS, *Intrigue*, shot entirely on location in Europe, starring Scott Glenn.

Originally from Milwaukee, Scheinfeld is a graduate of Oberlin College, and holds a graduate degree from Northwestern University.

DAVID LEAF
Producer

For over a decade, David Leaf has been an award-winning writer/ director/ producer best known for his work on acclaimed pop culture programs, music specials and retrospectives.

Most recently, he wrote and directed the acclaimed feature documentary, *Beautiful Dreamer: The Story of Brian Wilson & SMiLE* (Showtime) for which he has been nominated for a Grammy. Other recent productions include *The Songwriters Hall of Fame* (Bravo), *The Score* (a limited series for Trio) and the Emmy-nominated *Billy Joel: In His Own Words* (A&E).

Perhaps most notably, his credits include being one of the Emmy-nominated (and Peabody Award winning) writers on the landmark all-network telethon *America: A Tribute To Heroes*, five years as a profile producer/director for *Disney's Salute To The American Teacher* and writing and directing the filmed segments for *Christopher Reeve: A Celebration of Hope* (ABC), helping the program earn an Emmy-nomination for "Best Variety Special".

In addition to his work as a producer on LSL's *Who Is Harry Nilsson....*, he is currently co-writing/directing the Lion's Gate Films feature film documentary, *The U.S. Vs. John Lennon*, which is also an LSL Production. With LSL Productions his credits include writing and producing *The Bee Gees: This Is Where I Came In* (A&E), *The Unknown Marx Brothers* (The Disney Channel), *Jack Paar: Smart TV*, *When I Fall In Love: The One and Only Nat King Cole*, *Rosemary Clooney: Girl Singer*, *Sinatra: The Classic Duets*, *Vintage Sinatra* and *Dean Martin: That's Amore* (PBS).

For three years, Leaf was consulting producer for "A&E's Live By Request" series, and for two seasons was a staff writer on the sitcom, "The New Leave It To Beaver" (TBS Superstation). Other solo writing/producing/directing projects include *You Can't Do That: The Making Of 'A Hard Day's Night'*, *Martin & Lewis: Their Golden Age of Comedy* (The Disney Channel) and *Lassie: Unleashed* (ABC).

In the world of television variety, he wrote and produced *An-All Star Tribute To Brian Wilson* (TNT) and has written such network specials as *The Kennedy Center Honors* (CBS) for which he won a WGAW award, *Farm Aid* (CMT), *Carnegie Hall Salutes The Jazz Masters* (PBS), *Gilda Radner* (ABC), *The Billboard Awards* (nine years, FOX), *The Television Academy Hall Of Fame* (NBC), *The Creative Arts Emmy Awards* (Fox) and *Elvis: The Tribute* (ABC). Leaf was an historical consultant on Time-Life's *The History of Rock 'n' Roll* and for three years, he wrote and co-produced *The Salute To The American Songwriter* as well as the limited series, *The Spirit Of Rock 'n' Roll*.

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As an author, Leaf has written three biographies (including the best-selling authorized biography of the Bee Gees and the ground-breaking Brian Wilson biography, *The Beach Boys & The California Myth*). In association with the Directors Guild of America, he conducted dozens of interviews for a textbook called *Producing & Directing Live TV*. Leaf also edited a book-length history of A&M Records and wrote the Beatles and Beach Boys chapters for Capitol Record's 50th anniversary book.

Among his record industry credits are liner notes for the award-winning re-issues of "Pet Sounds" and the "Good Vibrations" box set, which he co-produced. He also wrote the books for and produced "The Pet Sounds Sessions" box set, for which he received a Grammy Award nomination for "Best Historical Recording." Leaf has won the "Q" Magazine Recorded Music Award (1990 & 1993) twice.

Of note, Leaf is a member of such nationally prestigious institutions as the Writers Guild, Authors Guild, Society of Professional Journalists, NARAS, ATAS, ASCAP and is a voter for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

LEE BLACKMAN
Executive Producer

Lee Blackman has been practicing law for over 30 years, representing a wide variety of writers, artists, directors, agents and managers, as well as many entertainment and other companies.

EDUCATION / ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS / BAR ADMISSIONS:

Lee attended Loyola University School of Law in Los Angeles. He received a Juris Doctor degree in 1972, and sat for and passed the California Bar Examination the same year.

Prior to attending law school, Lee received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration at California State University, Northridge, and attended the Graduate School of Business Administration MBA Program at the University of Southern California.

Lee is a member of the Beverly Hills and Los Angeles County Bar Associations, and the State Bar of California. He is admitted to practice law in all of the Courts of the State of California, the United States District Court for the Central District of California, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia (*pro hac vice*) and the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION:

In addition to numerous letters of commendation from judges and bar associations, Lee has received three Recognition of Experience Certificates from the California Trial Lawyers Association, acknowledging his experience as a Trial Lawyer. He is rated "AV" (the highest rating attainable) by the prestigious *Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory*. As stated in *Martindale-Hubbell*, "The AV rating indicates very high to preeminent legal ability and very high ethical standards as established by confidential opinions from members of the Bar."

MEDIA:

Lee has been seen and heard on national television and radio programs. He and his cases have been written about in several books, major newspapers including *The New York Times*, *London Observer*, *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Los Angeles Times* (to name but a few), and national magazines from *People* to *Vanity Fair*.

CREATIVE WORKS:

Some of Lee's creative works include "Rescue by Chance", a true story published in *Sea Magazine*; *TripMaster – The Complete Checklist for Carefree Travel* (Champion Publications); the introduction/biography to *The Nilsson Anthology* songbook (Warner Bros. Publications); and the editing of liner-note booklets for numerous major-label CDs. He assisted the author, took photographs used in and edited portions of *A Clean Breast – The Life and Loves of Russ Meyer* (The Hauck Publishing Company, Inc.). Glamour photographs taken by Lee have been published in best-selling magazines in Europe and Japan.

PETER S. LYNCH, II
Editor and Co-Producer

Peter S. Lynch, II has worked in the field of documentary television since 2000. He has edited numerous specials for PBS on such entertainers as Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope, Jack Paar, Rosemary Clooney, Nat King Cole, and Ricky Nelson. In 2002, he served as associate producer of *In The Name Of Heaven*, a one-hour Easter special, for The National Geographic Channel. Lynch edited two-hour installments of A&E's famed *Biography* series on both Bette Midler and Andy Williams. In 2004, he lent his talents to Bravo's critically acclaimed 5-part series, *The 100 Greatest TV Characters*. Most recently, Peter edited the feature documentary, *Beautiful Dreamer: Brian Wilson and The Story of SMiLE*, which has been nominated for a GRAMMY as part of the *Brian Wilson Presents SMiLE DVD*. He is currently at work on *The US vs. John Lennon* for Lion's Gate Films.

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HARRY NILSSON

“Original,” says the dictionary, means “capable of or given to thinking or acting in an independent, creative or individual manner.”

In life as in music, Harry Edward Nilsson III was a true original.

He was born in Brooklyn on June 15, 1941. His father and mother split when he was three years old. He once said that he spent half his early life in New York “going to school” and the other half in California “going to work.” At the age of 15 he hitchhiked back to Los Angeles after a series of adventures that included a wild death ride by truck through Juarez, Mexico.

Although he had no formal musical training, young Harry was determined to be a musician. He taught himself to play piano and began singing Everly Brothers-type tunes with his best friend. “We would harmonize and play the steering wheel and foot pedal. After I started singing, I just didn’t find enough songs that I liked, and I didn’t know the words to the rest, so I started writing my own.”

Harry paid the bills first as an usher at the Paramount Theater in downtown Los Angeles and, later, rose to the dizzying heights of Assistant Manager. Possessing a razor-sharp mind for figures, from 1960-67 he worked in the computer center at a bank in the San Fernando Valley, eventually rising to the position of Supervisor with 32 people working under him. In his spare time he continued to pursue his dream of making it in the music business by recording demos of other people’s songs, hawking his own compositions and singing on commercials. At one time he recorded a single for Mercury Records under the name Johnny Niles and then, in 1966, an LP under his own name for Tower Records.

Nilsson, whose grandparents were one of Europe’s best circus acts, finally received his big break in 1967 when The Monkees recorded his song, “Cuddly Toy.” Suddenly he was in demand, writing and recording his own material. A song on his first LP, a brilliant combination Beatles pastiche, caught the ear of the Beatles’ manager Brian Epstein who, before he died, tried to sign Nilsson as an artist. Nilsson opted to sign a long-term deal with RCA Records.

Although his first album and singles were not hits, he became a darling of the critics and acquired a reputation among the glitterati of the LA rock music scene as “a singer’s singer.” Demonstrating his unique versatility, Nilsson records always contained exciting and original music with imaginative arrangements that didn’t fit neatly into any one style.

One critic wrote, “His voice is incredible – a three-and-a-half octave range that cavorts through songs, subtly magnifying feelings with perfect intonation and unexpected musical shifts, often seeming more of an instrument than a voice.”

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Harry went on to compose songs for other artists, wrote jingles for radio and TV commercials and was selected by Otto Preminger to write the entire score for his 1968 film, "Skidoo. The following year he wrote and sang the beloved theme song for the TV series, *The Courtship of Eddie's Father* – "Best Friend."

A millionaire before he was Thirty, Harry's songs were recorded by The Monkees, The Yardbirds, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, Harry Belafonte, Barbra Streisand, The Turtles, Glen Campbell, Bette Midler, The Ronettes, Joe Cocker and other artists. In 1969, Three Dog night had a monster hit with Harry's composition, "One."

As popular and in-demand as he was, Harry refused to perform live and rarely appeared on television. The result was a performer whose songs and friends are far better known than he.

Harry released an album of his own every year from 1967 to 1977, but never allowed himself to be pigeon-holed. Just when you thought you had him figured out, he'd take a unique Harry career-turn and issue a new LP that was nothing like the one before it (e.g. "Nilsson Sings Newman," "The Point," "A Little Touch of Schmilsson in the Night," etc.).

His own recording of "Everybody's Talkin,'" written by Fred Neil, won him a Grammy in 1970 for "Best Contemporary Vocal Performance, Male," brought him fame, fortune and a much wider audience. The song, incidentally, has been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame and is also one of the "Songs of the Century" as compiled by the Recording Industry Association of America and the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 1969 he formed his own production company, Nilsson House, to produce himself and other artists. The following year Harry wrote and produced an animated musical film for television that included the Top 40 hit, "Me and My Arrow." *The Point* was incredibly successful and remains a timeless piece of entertainment for children of all ages.

The next year saw the coming of "Nilsson Schmilsson," his platinum-selling album that included the quirky hit, "Coconut" (recently used in a popular Coca-Cola commercial) and "Without You," another song he didn't write, went to Number One on the charts and brought him a second Grammy in 1973, this time for "Best Pop Vocal Performance, Male."

In 1974 RCA signed him to a new deal, reportedly with the biggest advance paid to a rock performer to date. He released 6 more albums before he stopped making records. Although he continued to dabble in music, most of his time in ensuing years was spent in other areas.

He wrote the score for the movie *Popeye*, starring Robin William, adapted *The Point* for the stage, became a fervent advocate of Gun Control, wrote motion picture scripts with the legendary Terry Southern and formed an entertainment company that went public.

He died of a heart attack on January 15th, 1994, survived by his wife Una and their six children, and a son from a previous marriage.