

Who will master the King of Instruments to win the big prize?

# Pipe Dreams

OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**hotdocs**  
2019 OUTSPÖKEN, OUTSTANDING



A film by Stacey Tenenbaum

Co-created by Stacey TENENBAUM & Van ROKYO - Produced by Stacey TENENBAUM - Director and Writer Stacey TENENBAUM  
Director of Photography Pierre-Etienne BORDELEAU - Editor Howard GOLDBERG - Sound Design Michel GAUVIN - Original Music by Tim RIDEOUT

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PRODUCTIONS

**Pipe Dreams**  
Documentary Feature

TRT: 78 Mins

Country: Canada

[www.pipedreamsdoc.ca](http://www.pipedreamsdoc.ca)

#PipeDreams



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Pipe Dreams - Documentary

## CONTACTS

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

"Pipe Dreams" is produced by STACEY TENENBAUM. The film was written & directed by STACEY TENENBAUM. Co-Directors CHRISTINA CLARK & VAN ROYKO. PIERRE-ETIENNE BORDELEAU is the director of photography and HOWARD GOLDBERG is the editor. Original music for the film was created by TIM RIDEOUT. The production sound design was done by MICHEL GAUVIN.

"Pipe Dreams" is a *documentary* Channel original production.

## LOG LINE

Pipe Dreams follows 5 young organists as they compete in the prestigious Canadian International Organ Competition. Who will master the 'King of Instruments' to take home the top prize?

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Pipe Dreams follows five young organists as they compete in Canada's prestigious International Organ Competition (CIOC). Who will master the 'king of instruments' and come out victorious in Montreal? Pipe Dreams gives you an inside look into the wonderful world of competitive organ playing. From the quietest tinkling of a bell to the rumble of a locomotive... ***this is organ playing like you have never heard it before!***

## THE ORGANISTS



For **Yuan Shen**, the daughter of China's most famous organist, coming in second place is not an option. She is determined to win the CIOC to prove to her father that she is also a great musician. As a petite, female organist Yuan doesn't have the strength or stamina of the male players which is why she believes that in order to win against the boys her will must be twice as strong.

New Zealand's **Thomas Gaynor** is hoping to be the first organist to win three major organ competitions in one summer. The CIOC is his last competition of the three - will he be super prepared or will his grueling travel and performance schedule wear him down by the time he gets to Montreal?



Thomas's main fear is **Alcee Chriss III**, a young organist from Texas who has beaten him the two previous times they competed. Can Alcee win again at the CIOC? Alcee plans to draw on his gospel and jazz roots to come out triumphant in Montreal. He's unsure how the judges will react to Jazz played on the organ but it is a risk he's willing to take in order to set him apart.

Alcee's friend and classmate **Nick Cappozoli**, an organist from Pittsburgh renowned for his reliability and perfect technique, is also willing to take big risks to get noticed. He's playing an obscure programme of modern music, including a rarely performed piece by John Cage, which he hopes will wow the judges.



New on the competition scene is 19 year old **Sebastian Heindl**. He's the youngest person to ever compete in the CIOC. Sebastian taught himself to play the organ at the age of 11. He is a child prodigy who hails from the same town as his idol and namesake Johann Sebastian Bach. Sebastian has never competed in an international competition and is eager to see where his playing stacks up against the best organists in the world.

Will he surprise everybody by taking the win?

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The first time I saw the pipe organ being played was at the very first edition of the Canadian International Organ Competition (C.I.O.C) in 2008. An organist, and old family friend, had given me free tickets to the event. I was honestly dreading the evening as I had little interest in the organ and even less interest in sitting on a hard church bench for 2 hours listening to classical music. I was to be proven wrong on both fronts.

The first thing which struck me was that the organist wasn't hidden from view as they typically are in church. Instead she was being filmed as she played, her image projected on a massive screen in front of the packed audience. I watched in awe as this young woman performed the immensely challenging task of playing three keyboards and a pedal board – using four carefully choreographed limbs to evoke a symphony. It was a mesmerizing performance.

Then there was the music itself. It was like nothing I had ever heard. The repertoire covered everything from Bach to modern composers - some of whom I was surprised to learn came from my home town of Montreal. I was also surprised by the variety of sounds being produced. From fine whistle pipes to the thunderous grumbling of bass notes, the power and range of this incredible instrument was undeniable. I was instantly hooked!

I quickly forgot about the hard church bench as I continued to listen - my mind reeling with questions: How could anybody possibly master this fiendishly difficult instrument - especially considering they cannot practice at home as one might on a violin or guitar? How did these young, seemingly hip, people come to be interested in such an arcane instrument? And why have organists been hidden away in church lofts where nobody can witness this incredible musical feat? It was obvious to me that this amazing instrument must be seen being played to be truly appreciated.

While I became a fan of organ music in 2008, the idea of doing a documentary film about the competition didn't emerge until 2015 when I was filming my first documentary film *Shiners*. One night over beers, after a shoot in Hong Kong, my cameraman Van Royko said he would like to do a film about the C.I.O.C. I told him that I knew the Artistic Director of the competition and we were off to the races. The C.I.O.C welcomed us with open arms; giving full access to the competition and their musicians.

Young organists are redefining what it means to be cool as they battle it out on stage, practicing, performing, and competing on what most people perceive to be a dying instrument. *Pipe Dreams* follows them in pursuit of their dream, finding the humour, drama, and passion behind this most intriguing subculture of professional musicians.

## CREATIVE TEAM

### Producer / Director / Writer



**Stacey Tenenbaum** is a creative producer and director. In 2014 she founded H2L Productions, a boutique documentary film production company specializing in crafting character driven stories which are shot internationally. H2L Production's award-winning documentary feature *Shiners*, was sold to TV5 Quebec-Canada, Documentary Channel Canada, and Independent Lens / PBS. Stacey also produced *The Beat (OLN)*, a documentary series she co-created. In 2012 Stacey was nominated for an International Emmy for *In Real Life III*.

### Co-Creator / Co-Director

**Van Royko, CSC.**, is an award-winning cinematographer from Montreal. Van has learned from celebrated directors including: Nettie Wild, Yung Chang, Sturla Gunnarson and Denys Arcand. He co-directed and shot Eye Steel Film's feature documentary, *Let There Be Light*, which had its premiere at SXSW, and was broadcast on documentary Channel in 2018. Van also shot and directed a short film on Myanmar's election and democratic reform for the online platform Field of Vision which premiered at the NYFF.



### Co-Director



**Christina Clark** is a writer, director and producer from Montreal. She has worked in documentary film and television since graduating from Concordia's Communications program in 2012. Her work has appeared on CBC, Knowledge Network, TV5, Discovery and Viceland. She is engaged in stories that drive the human spirit – stories about people and places that help us to enrich our understanding of who we are, and what makes us human.

## Director of Photography



**Pierre-Etienne Bordeleau** holds a BA in cinematography at Université du Québec à Montréal. He was selected to attend the 2009 Budapest Cinematography Masterclass, taught by Vilmos Zsigmond, A.S.C. and Elemér Ragalyi, H.S.C. For the last decade, he has been working as a cinematographer on numerous documentary projects, filming in more than 20 countries around the world. His documentary cinematography can be seen on several TV networks including, CBC Radio-Canada, Tele-Quebec, TV5, RDS, and Canal D.

## Editor



**Howard Goldberg** is an award winning editor who has been working in the industry for over 30 years. He has used his keen sense of storytelling to find hidden layers of meaning in over 30 film projects, including: *Shiners* (documentary Channel, PBS / Independent Lens), *I am Not a Rockstar*, (winner CSA Best Editing in a Documentary), *The Oka Legacy* (CBC), *Being Dorothy* (nominated Best Documentary Feature IDFA 2004),

*Lost Rivers* (Gemeaux, Meilleur Montage), *Undying Love* (Gemini Best History Documentary) and more. Howard is known for having a compassionate eye, and a style that pushes the boundaries of conventional filmmaking.

## REVIEWS

"...you'll enjoy the bright cinematography, the earnest nature of these talented people and the triumph at the competition itself." - **Cinema Axis**

"The film's competition provides nail-biting tension ... And it goes without saying that there's some beautiful music." - 4 stars - **Now Toronto**

"Pipe Dreams' Is a Gripping Look at an International Music Competition." -**Exclaim.ca**

"*Pipe Dreams* is as compelling as any sports movie." 3.5 / 4 stars - **One Movie. Our Reviews**

"It's beautifully shot, rich with music, artistry and personality ..." - **Classical FM**

## INTERVIEWS WITH DIRECTOR

POV Magazine:

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/pipe-dreams-stacey-tenenbaum-interview>

Classical FM:

<https://classicalfm.ca/station-blog/2019/05/03/audio-pipe-dreams-organ-competition-documentary-director-stacey-tenenbaum-organist-nick-cappozoli-oasis/>

Royal Canadian Movie Podcast:

<http://www.rcmpodcast.com/rcmp/2019/4/24/140>

We Really Like Her!

<https://poddtoppen.se/podcast/1393872370/we-really-like-her/hot-docs-19-stacey-tenenbaum-on-pipe-dreams>

CTV News:

[https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1657942&binId=1.1808883&playlistPageNum=1&fbclid=IwAR11FmlETbf-vDfj92H9WiCpNg9Mg6C1i\\_Ftgw6V-F6r2PTeQwcl-L7daYs](https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1657942&binId=1.1808883&playlistPageNum=1&fbclid=IwAR11FmlETbf-vDfj92H9WiCpNg9Mg6C1i_Ftgw6V-F6r2PTeQwcl-L7daYs)

## **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

**Hot Docs Artscapes** - International Premiere

**Nevertheless Film Festival** - World Premiere

**Fort Worth Indie Film Showcase** - Winner Best International Documentary

**Documenta International Film Festival, Mexico** - South American Premiere

**Heartland International Film Festival**

**WLG-X Film Festival**