



Silent Music
Press Kit

Director/Producer/Writer: Melissa A Gomez
Producers: Jay Prychidny & Lianna Walden

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Silent Music follows Melissa, a hearing daughter of deaf parents, as she investigates the silence and communication breakdown that are at the heart of her family's dysfunction.

Synopsis

Every family has its secrets, but most people live their whole lives without ever getting to the heart of what they are. *Silent Music* is the story of one daughter's attempt to do just that.

From the outside, everything seems perfect in the Gomez family. They are beautiful and successful and live in the Caribbean paradise of Antigua. Kenneth and Teresa are profoundly deaf and have been married for almost forty years, blessed with three loving hearing children. Appearances, however, are deceiving. Kenneth and Teresa's deafness isolates them not only from the small island society in which they live, but also from their own family. There is also a silent understanding that difficult things are not to be spoken about. This communication breakdown prevents everyone in the family from having genuine relationships with each other. Kenneth is distant and suspiciously secretive about his life outside of the family. Teresa is incredibly lonely; yet she pretends that everything is perfect. Virtually everyone in the family hides from the truth.

It is Melissa, the youngest of Kenneth and Teresa's children, who decides that she can no longer accept the silence that is the root of her family's dysfunction. Now in her twenties, she is desperate for a more meaningful relationship with her family. The only way Melissa knows how to achieve this is by turning the camera on herself and investigating her family. She carefully digs a path through a maze of difficult subjects about which her family has never before spoken. In outright battle-mode, Melissa's difficult questioning of her father leads to uncomfortable confrontations. While desperate to know the truth, she becomes increasingly afraid of what she might uncover.

Frustrated by a lack of answers, Melissa travels to Missouri to a school for the deaf, where her parents first met and fell in love. Here, she digs into her parents' past, hoping to shed some light on her family's present-day dysfunction. The dark secret that Melissa ultimately discovers unravels everything she thought she knew about her father, causing her to question the very reason that she embarked on this investigation in the first place.

Ultimately, Melissa is forced to answer a difficult question for herself: 'Are some secrets best left hidden?'

Filmmaker's Statement & Bio



Director's Statement

Ever since I have known myself I have felt compelled to tell the story that has become *Silent Music*. It took me a little while to realize that the power of my deaf family's story lay not in how different my parents' deafness makes us, but rather in how similar we are to everyone else. We too have communication issues and stories of personal sacrifice that have never been discussed. But there is also a huge amount of love that holds us together. In *Silent Music*, I aim to gain a deeper understanding of who my family is beyond their deafness and the resulting film is something that has both surprised and moved me. I hope that in sharing this very personal story – one that I feel very blessed to be able to tell - others will be encouraged to seek more openness and honesty within their own families. Chances are, you will be inspired by what you find!

- Melissa A. Gomez, Writer, Producer & Director of *Silent Music*

Director's Bio

Originally from the island of Antigua in the West Indies, Melissa's perspective as a documentary filmmaker has been greatly shaped by her experience of being a hearing child of deaf parents. Her parents' deafness meant that she grew up in a world where visuals had much more value than words. It is no surprise then, that *Silent Music*, her first feature-length documentary, has become her labor of love.

Melissa's professional background includes working for three years as a Producer and Production Manager with Cinqué Productions, her own independent production company in Antigua. During this time, she wrote and produced two seasons of *EcoZone* - a twelve-episode, forty-five-minute reality television series aimed at educating the public about pertinent environmental issues affecting the Caribbean region. Both seasons were broadcast throughout the Caribbean in 2005 and 2007 respectively. In 2009, Melissa was commissioned by Artscape (Canada) to produce and direct a short documentary entitled *Changing Course* for its Creative Spaces and Places Video Spotlight Series. More recently, Melissa has worked as a researcher with award-winning director Emily James at Dartmouth Films in London, England, and as an Archival Researcher at Jigsaw Productions in New York. Here she worked with Oscar award-winning director Alex Gibney on his most recent documentary feature, *Client 9: The Rise and Fall of Eliot Spitzer*, which screened at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival to much critical acclaim. Melissa's first documentary short, *Share and Share Alike*, has been shown in film festivals across North America, the Caribbean and Europe. It recently won the award for **Best Film / Video Documentary Production** at the 2010 Berlin International Black Cinema Festival in Germany, and was also nominated for **Best Short Documentary** at the 2010 Pan African Film Festival in Culver City, California

For more information about the director, please visit her portfolio website at: www.melissaannegomez.com



Filmography

2009 *Changing Course* – Documentary Short, HD

Director, Producer & Camera Operator

Commissioned by Artscape Canada for it's Creative Spaces & Places Video Spotlight Series

2008 *Share & Share Alike* – Medium-Length Documentary, HDV

Director, Producer & Camera Operator

2010 International Black Cinema Berlin Festival (Germany) – **Winner Best Film / Video Documentary Production**

2010 Pan African Film Festival (USA) – **Nominated For Best Short Documentary**

2010 San Diego Black Film Festival (USA)

2010 Best Of Caribbean Tales Film Festival (Barbados)

2009 Caribbean Tales Film Festival (Toronto)

2009 Bridgetown Film Festival (Barbados)

2002 *Coincidence* – Short Fiction Film, DV

Director, Camera Operator & Editor

2002 The National Student Shorts Film Festival (Toronto)

2001 *2 Dollar Picture* – Short Animated Film

Director, Writer & Animator

2003 The Barbados Festival Of African & Caribbean Film (Barbados)

2000 *Deaf not Dumb* – Short Fiction Film, 16mm

Director, Camera Operator & Editor

2001 The National Student Shorts Film Festival (Toronto)





Production Team

Writer, Producer & Editor: Jay Prychidny

Jay Prychidny has edited dozens of projects ranging from shorts and music videos to feature-length films and episodic television. His films have played at film festivals in Canada, America and Europe. He edited the latest seasons of the hit reality series Canada's Next Top Model and The Week the Women Went, which were both seen by over one million Canadian viewers. He also worked as an editor and director on both seasons of the critically acclaimed Bravo! Documentary series Literature Alive. The episode he directed won the "Best Film/Video Documentary Production" at the Berlin Black International Cinema Festival. In 2003, he won the Best Editing award from Aspirations Film Festival for the documentary On Stage at the Rex. In addition to his freelance projects, he has worked on staff at the CBC, editing for Newsworld and CountryCanada, as well as CTVglobemedia and Citytv. He edited three seasons of the award-winning, internationally syndicated series SexTV, which ran for 10 years. The segment he edited about HIV resistant prostitutes in Africa was nominated for Best Lifestyle/Practical Information Segment at the 2007 Gemini Awards.

Producer: Lianna Walden

An explorer of life and all it has to offer, Lianna has been involved in film and television production for over 25 years. Having worked on numerous international and local projects as a Line-Producer, Production Manager and Location Manager, she has extensive knowledge in the field of research and production. To her own credit she has produced two short film projects, one which she wrote and directed and which premiered at the Vancouver International Film Festival. Her passions also extend to the world of theatre, where for two years she produced The Vancouver International Fringe Festival. In 2008, Lianna with her husband and two children, travelled around the world for 11 months to 18 different countries. As a result of this amazing adventure, she is also presently working on a multi-media presentation. After previewing *Silent Music*, Lianna felt immediately drawn to Melissa's story. Soon after, they joined forces to begin the launch of *Silent Music* out to the world.



Additional Camera & Assistant Editor: Christopher Hodge

Originally from Antigua, Christopher has over 10 years of production experience working throughout the Caribbean, USA and the UK. He began his film production career with Tropical Studios, an Antiguan company that co-produced commercials for numerous international clients. In 2005, Christopher co-founded Cinqué Productions, an independent production company, where he directed over 30 commercials, short films, music videos, and two series of the environmental television series, EcoZone. During this time, Christopher also worked as a freelance 1st / 2nd Assistant Director for Caribbean Crews on many of their USA and UK commercial campaigns. Currently based in New York as a freelance editor / cameraman, Christopher is completing post-production on Dinner, a short film he directed that is based on the poem by published Antiguan author, Tameka Jarvis.

For more information about Christopher, visit his portfolio website at: www.christopherhodge.com

Music Composer: Andrea Caro

Andrea Caro has worked in the music industry for over 15 years, having trained as a classical pianist and flautist at an early age. Since then, she has scored dozens of film and documentary projects, ranging from hard-hitting drama and documentary to stop-motion animation and advertising campaigns. It is in documentary however, that she specializes, with a particular enthusiasm for writing sensitive, imaginative scores which retain respect for their subject material, whilst being musically diverse and highly original. Her credits include Kubrick (2008) directed by Armen Antranikian for Channel 4, 'The Pro' (2008) for Arcane Pictures and Family Vilakati, an award-winning documentary which won 'Best Foreign Short Documentary' at the Hollywood International Family Film Festival. Silent Music is Andrea's second time working with director Melissa Gomez.

For more information about the composer, please visit her portfolio website at: www.andreacaro.com

Post Audio, Sound Design & Mix: Quaison Nangle

Quaison Nangle has been working with sounds and music in one way or another for all of his life. Intensely exploring music as a child hobby evolved into remixing and songwriting for fun and eventually into a professional career as a sound engineer and musician. In recent years Quaison has been involved contributing to many international independent film projects, commercial video ventures and music collaborations. Currently his focuses are as an audio engineer with MTV Canada as well as working as the music and post production supervisor for an Olympic based series on snowboarders airing February 2010 on MTV.



Reviews

"In her film, *Silent Music*, Gomez ventures into the depths of the unspoken in her family's history, asking the tough questions most of us never do. As the hearing daughter of two deaf parents, the filmmaker embarks on a quest for greater communication among the members of her family, a process which takes her into the dark corners of their shared experience. With a mixture of humor and compassion, Gomez uncovers something universal about the intricate and profound nature of long term relationships. How what is said (and what is left unsaid) and what sacrifices we choose to make (or not to make), define our families and our lives."

- Plummy Tucker, A.C.E. film editor



"The shots, the music and the editing are all really wonderful. I... found myself totally enchanted by this beautiful family."

- Cynthia Loyst, Supervising Producer at CTV Entertainment Group (Canada)

"I was so moved by Gomez' journey and had a tear in my eye at the end... Her story is a common one. Most people desire to have more communication and understanding of family members... A great study... A very worthwhile piece!"

- Wendy Hallam Martin, Gemini-winning C.C.E. film editor

"*Silent Music* is an honest and compelling journey into the heart of a family - told with assurance and courage"

- Jerry Rothwell, Award Winning Documentary Filmmaker

"Characterised by a disarming balance of the coy and a commitment to honesty and openness, *Silent Music*, seemingly effortlessly, but with great determination and compassion, walks a well judged line between the universal and the particular, the ordinary and the extraordinary, the filmmaker's own life and that of her subjects."

- Christopher Laird, CEO of Gayelle: The Channel

"*Silent Music* is a moving and remarkable story about a young woman's search for the truth behind her family history. Set in the beautiful Caribbean Island of Antigua this film is an unforgettable personal journey."

- Maiken Baird, Independent Producer

"*Silent Music* is a delightful and sensitive film in which the director explores her relationships with her parents and their lives with each other. They are both deaf and live on the Caribbean island of Antigua, but although hearing disability provides one strong theme in the film, at its heart it is about a daughter's determined struggle to understand her own emotional and family background."

- Tony Downunt, MA Screen Documentary Course Convenor, Goldsmiths College, University of London

PRODUCTION INFO

Title: Silent Music
Director, Producer, Writer: Melissa A. Gomez
Editor, Producer, Writer: Jay Prychidny
Producer: Lianna Walden
Production Company: Perspective Pictures LLC
Runtime: 70 mins
Genre: Documentary Feature
Original Shooting Format: DV, NTSC, 4:3, Stereo
Countries of Origin / Production: Antigua / USA
Completion Date: August 2010
Language: English



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Silent Music is Melissa's first Documentary Feature.

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a documentary film by Melissa A. Gomez

... every family has its secrets

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PERSPECTIVE PICTURES LLC PRESENTS A FILM BY MELISSA A. GOMEZ "SILENT MUSIC"

WRITTEN, PRODUCED, DIRECTED AND FILMED BY MELISSA A. GOMEZ

WRITTEN, PRODUCED AND EDITED BY JAY PRYCHIDNY PRODUCED BY LIANNA WALDEN

MUSIC BY ANDREA CARO SOUND DESIGN AND MIX BY QUAISSON NANGLE

WEBSITE WWW.SILENTMUSICTHEFILM.COM