

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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For downloadable images, visit [pbs.org/pressroom/](http://pbs.org/pressroom/)

For the program companion website, visit [pbs.org/independentlens/for-once-in-my-life](http://pbs.org/independentlens/for-once-in-my-life)

**JIM BIGHAM'S INSPIRING *FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE* TO PREMIERE  
ON THE PBS SERIES *INDEPENDENT LENS* ON  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2011 AT 10 PM**

*Film Showcases a Unique Band of Singers and Musicians, and their Journey to Show the World the Greatness—and Killer Soundtrack—Within Each of Them*

(San Francisco, CA) *For Once in My Life* is an infectious, expectation-defying look at the inspiring Spirit of Goodwill band, a unique assembly of singers and musicians, all with a wide range of mental and physical challenges, who share an uncanny gift for music, joy, and friendship. The film follows the band, made up of workers at the Goodwill Industries center in Miami, as their determination, talent, and dedication takes them from the rehearsal room to the concert stage. *For Once in My Life* will premiere on the Emmy and Peabody Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by America Ferrera, on Tuesday, February 1, 2011 at 10 PM (check local listings).

The 29 talented members of the Spirit of Goodwill Band are all living with varying degrees of physical and mental challenges, but you'd never know it by listening to them. The pianist, Christian, is blind and autistic; lead singer Terry never fully recovered from being dropped by his father when he was 14 months old; and drummer Sam's development was stunted by his mother's efforts to hide her pregnancy. With the enthusiastic encouragement of Dennis Pastrana, president and CEO of Goodwill South Florida, and their dedicated music director, Javier Peña, the members of the Goodwill Band have grown from one piano into an orchestra with voice, percussion, keyboards, and a brass section. They work tirelessly and their musical success has transformed and enriched all aspects of their lives.



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*For Once in My Life* follows the band as they progress from concerts at nursing homes to larger public performances, and we get to know the members, meet their families, and visit their homes. They are “discovered” by Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and music impresario Emilio Estefan, and the band is invited to play the concert of a lifetime — the U.S. Mayor’s Convention being held that year in Miami.

It’s a dream gig for the Spirit of Goodwill, with an audience of over 1000 people, made up of mayors from 440 American cities, their families, and special guests. The film follows the band as they prepare for this great honor, an arduous process that becomes a test of patience, compassion, and faith. The film concludes with a performance that leaves the audience cheering. Winner of the Audience Award at the SXSW Film Festival and the Audience Choice Award in the Sarasota & Nashville Film Festivals, *For Once in My Life* is an eye-opening look at the tremendous potential of people with disabilities and the power of music to transform lives.

To learn more about the film, visit the *For Once in My Life* interactive companion website ([pbs.org/for-once-in-my-life](http://pbs.org/for-once-in-my-life)), which features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film’s subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section, where viewers can share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

### **About the Filmmakers**

#### **Jim Bigham (Director/Producer)**

Jim Bigham's feature film credits include producer of the feature film *SweetLand*, for which he received the 2007 Independent Spirit Award for best feature. Other credits include feature films such as *Great Expectations*, *Jeepers Creepers*, *Bad Boys*, and *Body Heat*, as well as the hit TV series *Saturday Night Live*, and more. Some of his documentary credits include the Grammy-nominated *Chasing the Dream*, produced for Turner Network, several documentaries produced for the Hallmark Channel, and three documentaries running permanently in the New World of Coca-Cola Museum. Bigham’s made-for-TV films include several music videos and the first live rock concert behind the Iron Curtain in the late 1980s. Bigham is a graduate of the London Film School and is currently based in South Florida. He has produced hundreds of TV commercials and has been recognized for his work with several Clio awards.

#### **Mark Moormann (Director/Cinematographer)**

Mark Moorman is a South Florida-based filmmaker with extensive directing and director of photography credits on documentaries, commercials, music videos, and branded content. His documentary work includes the Grammy-nominated *Tom Dowd & the Language of Music*, *Once Upon a Time on South Beach*, *Hidden Rivers of the Maya*, and *Blindsided*. Moormann's wide-ranging body of work with recording artists and music producers includes studio shoots with Aerosmith, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Michael Jackson; interviews with Ray Charles, Eric Clapton, Les Paul, Ahmet Ertegun, and Phil Ramone; and live performance shoots featuring Amy Winehouse, the Fratellis, the Bee Gees, Shinedown, and Shakira. Moormann’s films have screened theatrically, at major film festivals (Sundance, Toronto), museums (Experience Music Project, Skirball Cultural Center) and large-scale events (George Lucas’s Skywalker Ranch for the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences).

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**Javier Peña (Music Director/Creative Director)**

Javier Peña has been the music director of the Spirit of Goodwill Band since 1996. He studied music theory and piano at the Yamaha School of Music in Caracas, Venezuela. Looking for better opportunities to enhance his career, Javier moved with his family to the United States in 1995 and one year later began working for Goodwill Industries of South Florida. Javier is also an award-winning television producer and editor of feature stories, documentaries, and spots and segments airing nationally on ABC, FOX, and NBC.

**About *Independent Lens***

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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