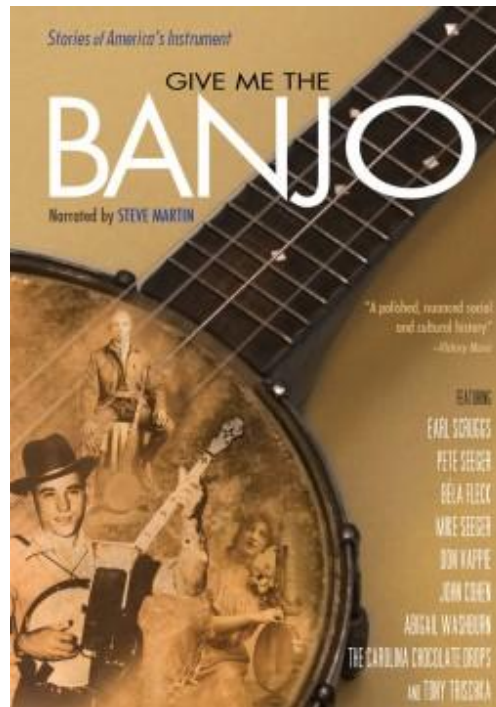


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**“GIVE ME THE BANJO,” A LIVELY HISTORY OF A CULTURAL ICON,
RELEASES JUNE 12 ON DIGITAL AND DVD**

**Feature-Length Documentary Features Interviews and
Performances by Earl Scruggs, Béla Fleck, Pete Seeger and Steve Martin**

“The banjo really has a complicated and checkered past. One of the dark secrets of the banjo is that it really is an emotional instrument.”

– Steve Martin, narrator

May 22, 2012 – New York, New York – *GIVE ME THE BANJO* is a musical odyssey through 200 years of American history and culture. Brought to the New World by enslaved Africans, the banjo has long struggled for musical respect despite its vital role in shaping many distinctive American forms: the minstrel show, ragtime, and early jazz, old-time folk and the folk revival, as well as blues, bluegrass, country, and new hybrids yet to be labeled.

Ten years in the making, ***GIVE ME THE BANJO*** is a celebration of “America’s quintessential instrument” by historians, instrument-makers, folklorists and players of all styles.

Narrated by comedian and banjo enthusiast **Steve Martin**, ***GIVE ME THE BANJO*** features rare archival film footage, recordings and new performances that uncover the instrument's colorful and contested history from its African origins to the present day. The program brings together a diverse array of modern banjoists who explore the innovations of past masters like Joel Walker Sweeney, Gus Cannon, Charlie Poole and the great Earl Scruggs.

GIVE ME THE BANJO also features performances and first-person insights from Grammy award winners **Béla Fleck**, **The Carolina Chocolate Drops** and **Pete Seeger**, who demonstrates techniques to his grandson **Tao**; **Earl Scruggs**, who popularized the three-finger style that defines bluegrass music; **Mike Seeger** and **John Cohen** as they perform Southern roots music from the 1920s and 30s; as well as **Abigail Washburn**, **Don Vappie**, **Bill Keith** and **Tony Trischka**.

"What we found compelling, and what drove this project from the inception, is the fact that you can really get a new perspective on the story of American popular music with the banjo as the vehicle," says Emmy-winning producer/director Marc Fields. "It truly cuts across all categories and boundaries of race, class, region or genre. The instrument is at the root of roots music and at the crossroads where folk tradition meets commercialism, yet it's still struggling for the respect and serious attention it deserves."

The film releases on standard digital platforms and DVD on June 12, following its broadcast premiere on PBS on November 4, 2011. The film was an official selection at this year's Nashville, Green Mountain and the Big Sky Film Festivals. The DVD includes 30 minutes of fascinating material not included in the broadcast: a profile of Uncle Dave Macon, an appreciation of the 4-string banjo in jazz and vaudeville, a visit with Dr. Ralph Stanley, and performances by Taj Mahal, Riley Baugus and Rhiannon Giddens.

GIVE ME THE BANJO is produced and directed by Marc Fields and its music director/co-producer is banjo virtuoso Tony Trischka; edited by Tim Raycroft; and the executive producers are Michael Kantor and Mark Vega.

Pricing:	\$29.95 US
Runtime:	83 mins. + extras
Rating:	NR
Catalog #:	NNVG268511
Language:	English
Color:	Color
Audio Format:	Dolby Digital 2.0 Surround
Genre:	Documentary

About Docurama Films

In 1999, **NEW VIDEO** launched **Docurama Films®** with the first feature documentary ever available on DVD: D.A. Pennebaker's *Bob Dylan: Dont Look Back*. Twelve years and 300 award-winning, highly-acclaimed titles later, Docurama continues to discover and release the greatest non-fiction films of our time while spreading the word about filmmakers who are taking the form to new heights. Docurama's catalog features the performing and visual arts, history, politics, the environment, ethnic and gender interests, and all-time favorites including *The Wild Parrots of*

Telegraph Hill, Andy Goldsworthy: Rivers and Tides and King Corn. Recent titles include the Oscar®-nominated films, *Gasland* and *Hell and Back Again*.

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About New Video

New Video is a leading entertainment distributor and the largest aggregator of independent digital content worldwide. Headquartered in New York City, with an international presence in 45 territories, the company delivers feature films, TV programs and web originals via digital download, streaming, video-on-demand, Blu-ray, DVD, and theatrical release. In 2011, New Video bowed Oscar®-nominated *Hell and Back Again* and South American blockbuster *Elite Squad: The Enemy Within* in US theaters. Through a new partnership with digital exhibitor Cinedigm Entertainment Group, New Video is poised to bring more independent films to theaters nationwide. New Video streamlines distribution and marketing for filmmakers and partners, bringing a wide variety of fresh content to new audiences. The company's library includes original TV series and movies from A+E® Home Entertainment, HISTORY™, and Lifetime®, unforgettable games and trophy sets from Major League Baseball®, storybook treasures from Scholastic®, award-winning documentaries from Docurama Films®, next-gen indies from Flatiron Film Company®, and acclaimed independent films and festival picks through partnerships with the Sundance Institute and Tribeca Film. New Video is proud to distribute many Oscar®-nominated documentaries including *Gasland*, *Waste Land*, *Paradise Lost 3: Purgatory* and *Hell and Back Again*.

www.newvideo.com.

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