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**TEENAGE**  
A film by Matt Wolf



2013 / U.S.A. / 78 Minutes / Unrated / Mixed Archival Formats: 16 mm, 8 mm / 1.78

**teenagefilm.com**

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# TEENAGE

## Short Synopsis

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Once, "Teenagers" didn't exist. But then, they were invented. As the cultural landscape around the world was thrown into turmoil during the industrial revolution, and with a chasm erupting between adults and youth, the concept of a new generation took shape. Whether in America, England, or Germany, whether party-crazed Flappers or hip Swing Kids, zealous Nazi Youth or frenzied Sub-Debs, it didn't matter - this was a new idea of how people come of age. They were all "Teenagers."

A hypnotic rumination on the genesis of youth culture from the end of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th, TEENAGE is a living collage of rare archival material, filmed portraits, and diary entries read by Jena Malone, Ben Whishaw, and others. Set to a shimmering contemporary score by Bradford Cox (Deerhunter / Atlas Sound), TEENAGE is a mesmerizing trip into the past and a riveting look at the very idea of "coming-of-age."

## Long Synopsis

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Before the 'Teenager' was invented, there was no second stage of life. You were either a child or you went to work as an adult. At the turn of the century, child labor was ending, 'adolescence' was emerging, and a struggle erupted between adults and youth. Would the young be controlled and regimented, or could they be free?

Inspired by punk author Jon Savage's book, *Teenage* gives voice to young people from the first half of the 20th century in America, England, and Germany—from party-crazed Flappers and hip Swing Kids to zealous Nazi Youth and frenzied Sub-Debs. By the end of World War II, they were all 'Teenagers': a new idea of youth.

Four young voices (Jena Malone, Ben Whishaw, Julia Hummer, Jessie Usher) bring to life rare archival material and filmed portraits of emblematic teenagers from history—Brenda Dean Paul, a self-destructive Bright Young Thing; Melita Maschmann, an idealistic Hitler Youth; Tommie Scheel, a rebellious German Swing Kid; and Warren Wall, a black Boy Scout. This living collage is punctuated by a contemporary score by Bradford Cox (Deerhunter, Atlas Sound).

*Teenage* is a story that ends with a beginning: a prelude to today's youth culture. In each generation, adults often mistake youthful unrest for an emotional right of passage. But history proves that rebelling teenagers aren't just claiming their independence, they're shaping the future.

## Director's Statement

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When I read Jon Savage's book *Teenage*, I was captivated by the intensity of his writing—biographies mixed with hidden histories about one of my obsessions: youth culture. Savage's *Teenage* isn't a chronicle of the familiar hippie, punk, or skater types that we all know. It is a fascinating pre-history of youth culture that tells the stories of Wandervogel, Boxcar Children, Jitterbugs, Victory Girls, and countless other forgotten youth movements from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. *Teenage* is about an idea of youth, and that idea finding a form.

At the beginning of this story, teenagers didn't even exist. You'd be a little kid, and then you'd go straight to work like an adult. But when child labor ended, and a new second stage of life emerged, adults and young people struggled to define it. During this formative period in history, youth endured

incredible oppression from their parents, governments, and the police. Music, fashion, and friends were their recourse, and adolescents fought to be treated like equals.

Jon Savage writes about this history from a punk rock perspective. As a young journalist in 1970s London, he witnessed teenage punks buying thrift clothes from the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. They used safety pins to reassemble relics from previous youth cultures into something startling and new. He called this impulse “living collage” in his now legendary and definitive book on punk, *England’s Dreaming*. Though *Teenage* is about an earlier chapter of youth culture, Jon’s writing is inspired by punk and I wanted my filmmaking to be too.

Living collage became a kind of creative philosophy for the making of *Teenage*. We reassembled fragments of youth culture from the past to make a contemporary work of creative non-fiction. Archival newsreels, amateur movies, feature film clips, and photographs are collaged with newly filmed portraits of exceptional youth from history. These home movie-style scenes provide an emotional interpretation of the story.

Jon and I chose to express ideas from the point of view of youth instead of explaining this cultural history. We composited quotes from hundreds of diaries and primary sources to create subjective narration that contrasts the authoritative voices of adults in newsreels and headlines. This narrative style mirrors the generational tension that drives the story, and I hope it helps viewers remember their own turbulent feelings of teenage rebellion.

In the late 1990s, I was a teenage activist, fighting for gay rights and visibility. When I started making *Teenage*, I thought it was about pop culture. But as I grappled with the material, I reconnected to the feelings of frustration and oppression that I felt in high school. Like the youth in *Teenage*, I remember feeling a responsibility to change the world, or at least my world, and in some small way I did.

*Teenage* is set in the past, but its stories and struggles are about the future. In any era, young people represent the future because they quite literally will live in it. It’s why adults project their hopes and fears onto youth, and it’s also why they attempt to control them. Just like youth living during the Great Depression, today’s teenagers are facing unprecedented unemployment. They force society to ask: *What kind of world are we going to live in? Is there anything we can do about it?*

At the end of World War II, teenagers emerged as a powerful consumer class. Their passions were commercialized and aggressively marketed back to them in a cycle that still endures. Youth who are searching for an identity are susceptible to popular trends and influences, and for some, conformity prevails. Not all young people are starting a band, publishing a blog, or getting involved in politics, but we should listen to the ones who are.

When I think about the future, I’m inspired by the teenagers who are pioneering new styles and ideas—the ones who are hardwired to confront authority. This film is about exceptional young people, and a golden age of youth when adolescents were bravely fighting for the most basic forms of recognition. *Teenage* is dedicated to the young people in every generation, who continue to re-imagine the future.

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## Production Notes

### A Punk Approach to History

"I think it’s safe to say that *Teenage* isn’t a normal historical documentary," says director and writer Matt Wolf, whose film unfolds as a living collage of footage, voices, images, and rhythms.

From the start, Matt envisioned his film as an artistic, theatrical experience – a feature-length “love song to adolescence” – unlike the multi-part, expert-led series one might expect from a film that spans three countries and five decades.

It all started with Jon Savage, a writer with an equally unconventional approach to historical storytelling. Matt first discovered the author in college when he read *England's Dreaming* (1991), Savage's chronicle of the punk movement. Matt has long been interested in subcultures that influence popular culture. He explains why punk, and Jon's book about it, made such an impression on him:

*To me punk is about amateur aesthetics, anti-authoritarian politics, independent and alternative forms of distribution. It changed the popular perception of what music and fashion could be... Jon Savage isn't an academic, who theorizes about punk, he's a participant-observer who can brilliantly tell the story of a cultural moment.*

In 2008 when Matt heard about Savage's latest work, *Teenage*, he ran to the bookstore. The book showed him an earlier, little-known chapter in the history of youth, and captured his imagination:

*The idea that teenagers were invented, that there was an unknown pre-history of youth culture was totally fascinating to me. And I loved how Jon's punk lens colored his unconventional treatment of history. I wanted to find a similar way to analyze culture with film. I wanted to treat history in a punk way.*

It would be extremely difficult to translate 500 pages of stories and ideas into one cohesive film, but the challenge piqued Matt's interest. It would be his second documentary feature, following his 2008 film, *Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell*.

Like *Wild Combination*, about an avant-garde cellist and disco producer, *Teenage* would feature rare archival material, immersive music, and unique recreations, but the similarities would end there. While *Wild Combination* was about one influential individual, *Teenage* would “analyze culture in a much broader way.”

*Teenage* was a new direction for Matt:

*I had never grappled with such a panoramic subject before: multiple decades of world history, unconventional voice over, or full-scale period recreations. It was an exciting challenge and made Teenage the perfect project for me.*

When a mutual friend in England connected Matt to Jon Savage over email, Matt was already thinking of Jon as a potential collaborator, not just source material. Jon, in addition to being a celebrated music and culture writer, had written a number of film and TV projects. He had just finished writing the documentary *Joy Division*, about the seminal band, and was primed for a new project. Jon had even tried a few times to get a film adaptation of *Teenage* started with TV producers in the UK, but to no avail. Jon says:

*I'd always thought that the book would be best served by being made in America, because it is at root an American story. I liked Wild Combination, and when Matt and I met we realized that we could work together, and so we did. Matt is around half my age so his energy and enthusiasm made the subject come alive for me again. I like making films: after sitting in a room writing, working with other people is a pleasure.*

Over Skype and email, a long-distance creative partnership formed: Matt in Brooklyn, New York and Jon in Anglesey, Wales. Jon continues:

*Teenage is very different from anything I've ever done before, but that's good. The previous two films I've made as a writer have both been music documentaries: "The Brian Epstein Story" for BBC Arena and "Joy Division." ...Teenage was different because we decided to have no interviewees but to make a film that sought to capture the emotional experiences of youth in history, which meant a different kind of scripting voice.*

## Development

Very early on, Matt told *Wild Combination* producers Kyle Martin and Ben Howe about his idea for *Teenage*, and they liked the sound of it. Matt says he values Kyle and Ben “not only for their experience at managing large-scale, long-term projects like *Teenage*, but also for their insightful creative ideas.” Both would go on to contribute to “countless creative decisions that appear in every scene of *Teenage*,” and Matt says, “they have both challenged and empowered me to become a better filmmaker.”

Kyle was already familiar with Jon Savage’s writing when he came on board and was intrigued that Matt wanted to adapt it. “I was very excited about the idea of a film that would be based in archival material but in an unconventional way,” says Kyle. “I could imagine Matt’s filmmaking style being applied to a historical story and really bringing it to life.”

Getting potential funders to envision what the filmmakers were so excited about was more of an uphill battle – perhaps because so much of what *Teenage* would look like would depend on archival material they had yet to discover.

Kyle speculates that because so many documentary funding sources are focused on films that directly address current social issues, a film that is an artistic interpretation of culture and society from the past didn’t fit that mold. “For a while there,” says Kyle, “we didn’t think the movie would ever get made.”

When Matt was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2010, permitting him to dedicate a full year and a half to developing *Teenage*, the scales began to tip in favor of the project. Matt now had the ability to start the massive research effort needed to discover what was possible.

Footage research would be key to learning how far back into history the film could go (Jon’s book starts in 1845) and which of the many relevant youth movements had even been documented on film. Matt was also wary of using anything that felt like “stock footage.” *Teenage* would be about hidden histories, not familiar ones. That meant absolutely no “flappers doing the Charleston in a speakeasy.”

Matt and Jon began with an expansive list of potential topics and then collaborated with Lead Archival Researcher Rosemary Rotondi to cast a wide net and dig up all the relevant material. Rosemary is a versatile photo and footage researcher with 27 years of experience. As she turned up material, her findings helped narrow the field of possible storylines. Then she could dig deeper into the promising threads and abandon the dead ends.

The most compelling material the team found spanned about 1904 – 1945, which became the film’s timeline. In the book, Jon had covered stories in America, France, Germany, Russia and the UK, but as archival research progressed, the strongest material was coming from America, England, and Germany. More importantly, the team had been realizing that the major themes of the film and the competing definitions of youth in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century played out most intensely in those three countries. It made sense to focus on those three regions.

Rosemary’s findings, many of which, she says, have likely never been seen in the US before, came in many forms and formats. She says:

*Matt set the bar high for his research team, and with that, as well as his consistent encouragement, I believe we all did our very best. My hope is the artistic achievement of Teenage will inspire more imaginatively and artistically done archival-based documentaries. I believe Matt will help audiences see the sheer beauty and haunting power of archival images, as opposed to perceiving them as 'incidental' or 'educational' imagery.*

All told, Rosemary would conduct eight major rounds of research, reaching out to as many as 100 different archives, historical societies, and university libraries in the US and overseas. Matt and Jon would screen more than 90 hours of footage and sift through over 4,000 archival images. The obsessive, methodological labor involved in navigating this sea of material was a big part the creative process, says Matt, providing the time and space to generate and percolate a wealth of ideas for how to craft the film.

"I've always thought of *Teenage* as a giant boulder," says Matt. "We took dynamite and exploded the subject into a million little pieces. It was my job to organize those fragments into a new form with a shape and style of its own."

One of the highlights of the footage research was when the archive house Framepool sent color home movies shot by German Swing Kids on a summer day. To Matt, this felt like striking gold. He had been determined to tell the story of the Hamburg Swings, through a combination of archival footage and recreations, but real footage was "hideously rare," and color footage even harder to find. Without one, he could not create the other. Matt elaborates on the significance of this find:

*My favorite type of archival footage is home movies, so this was the jackpot... It was the main reference in general for the shooting style and period color we used for a lot of the recreations.*

In 2011, Matt was granted a month-long residency at the MacDowell Colony. During that time, he poured over the footage and edited together something he describes as a "compilation mix" of the best clips set to a soundtrack of his favorite music (much of which was by Bradford Cox of Deerhunter and Atlas Sound, who would become the film's composer). The compilation had no narrator, contained a great deal of footage from storylines that never made the final cut, and was "generally in the wrong order," says Matt, but it helped him define the unique "living collage" filmmaking that would give *Teenage* such a singular storytelling style. It was also a crucial step towards mapping out a structure.

At this stage financial support started surfacing more readily – including development funding from Tribeca Film Institute, Jerome Foundation, LEF, Britdoc's Puma Creative Catalyst Award, and Cinereach (who would later come on as the film's production company). The team also traveled the globe seeking partnerships and funding opportunities at pitching forums including Copenhagen's DOX FORUM, IFP's Project Forum, Sheffield's Meet Market, and IDFA's Forum. Now Rosemary could conduct her research full-time and work in tandem with archivists in Germany, the UK, and at Washington D.C.'s National Archives.

Development support also permitted the team to shoot their first recreation as a proof of concept. They filmed three American teenagers in a scene set in 1945, in and around a school and park. Only a few shots of this material would end up in the final film, but it was critical to demonstrating how *Teenage* would mix its special blend of archival material and recreated portraits to breathe life into forgotten histories. It also helped Matt and Director of Photography Nick Bentgen start to figure out how they would shoot new footage to resemble archival footage, and gave them the courage to push even further with experimental techniques for the feature film.

Matt soon traveled to Wales, with terabytes of footage in hand. He and Jon spent days in front of Jon's computer sifting through Rosemary's findings. "It was exhausting but fun," says Matt, and it cemented a collaborative friendship for the two.

This visit was a highlight for Jon, too, getting to discover that “we had a film” and seeing the events he had written about coming to life. One of Jon’s favorite discoveries was footage from the Chicago Swing Jamboree of summer 1938, showing “over 100,000 kids in a stadium going crazy to swing music. The audience is integrated,” he says, “and the dancing is wild.”

The backbone of the *Teenage* story was emerging, charting the dramatic social, political, and economic events in the US and Europe through the feelings and behavior of young people. It would cover youth preparing for and fighting two world wars and picking up the pieces after attacks on home soil; thriving when their governments assigned them a purpose and rebelling when defeat or economic collapse made them feel betrayed; discovering music from subculture and nudging it towards the mainstream; poking holes in social barriers and challenging the leaders who enforce them; bringing sounds, styles and attitudes back and forth across the Atlantic, and carving out a permanent space for an ever-evolving youth culture.

### Footage Becomes Story

In parallel, Matt and Jon were sketching out a *Teenage* script. They knew they would use narration to tell the story and to motivate complex transitions through time and geography, but they did not yet know what it would sound like.

Matt and Jon booked a recording studio in the mountains of Wales, drafted some rough narration, and recorded Jon performing it. Matt also engaged Jon in a lengthy interview.

Back in New York, Matt edited the recordings with the archival footage to create an early “teaser” for the film, but as he started showing it around to friends and colleagues, he felt something wasn’t working:

*Jon is British, he’s an adult, and understandably he speaks with the authority of an expert. Something about that point of view felt too limited for this subject. Could one voice really tell this whole story?*

Jon suggested they try a teenage voice for the narration. Quotes from teenage diaries, journalistic sources, books, and other written testimony are a major aspect of Jon’s book, and Matt decided to try not just a teen voice, but a subjective, first-person one culled from these sources, to add emotion and immediacy to the storytelling.

Matt and Jon compiled a selection of subjective quotes, the majority of which came from the book. Then they began adapting the quotes to blend into the story, compositing them together with scripted narration that spoke in the same voice and tone.

Other sources were also used to craft the narration. Fred Grimm, a German author and journalist, got in touch with Matt and sent him a copy of his book *We Want Another World (Wir Wollen Eine Andere Welt)*, which Matt describes as “the story of Germany’s youth entirely with quotes and images.” Many of Fred’s quotes landed in the script and became a major part of the German story.

Some of Matt’s favorite lines in the script are lifted or paraphrased from first-person sources, like a “Victory Girl” interviewed in Studs Terkel’s *The Good War*:

*Before Pearl Harbor I was playing with paper dolls, after Pearl Harbor I never played with dolls again.*

And some are scripted to frame history from the perspective of youth, like this one in the voice of a ‘Sub-Deb’:

*We weren't debutantes at all, just regular old high school kids. But it sounded fancy, and we sure like fancy.*

Jena Malone (*The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*) was the first narrator to be cast. Matt explains:

*Jena had collaborated with a close friend of mine, M Blash, on his film The Wait, and he connected us. I had heard Jena's voiceover in Sean Penn's film Into the Wild, and I really liked her performance.*

Matt had Jena read a selection of quotes from the script, and he edited them together with some of the footage to make a teaser for the film for the web. This new voiceover established the style of storytelling for the film, but Matt was unsure if an American voice could carry the whole story. He also wondered if it would feel authentic for an American girl to explain the experiences of British and German youth.

Ultimately he landed on the idea of narration performed by four subjective voices, who would form a sort of teenage Greek chorus. Jena Malone was the American girl, and he would also cast actors to play a British boy, a German girl, and an African American boy. As the narrative jumped between different countries, the shifting voices could orient the viewer geographically, and when all four narrators lent their voices to the same sequence, they could embody a powerful, universal voice of youth.

Matt describes how the rest of the cast came together:

*Ben Whishaw [of Skyfall and Cloud Atlas] is one of my favorite actors, as well as a friend. When I heard him reading Keats poetry in the film Bright Star I knew he could bring any text to life in a beautiful way... A German actor friend recommended Julia Hummer to me, and I loved her work in Olivier Assayas' miniseries Carlos. Julia had never acted in English before, but I absolutely loved collaborating with her. She is also a singer and has an incredibly young, vivid quality to her voice.*

The team was also working with casting director Susan Shopmaker, who brought Jessie Usher (American Boy) to Matt's attention. "His performance was without a doubt the strongest we heard," says Matt.

## **The Teenage Soundscape**

With narration as dialogue, and visuals that are mostly silent archival footage and stills, sound design and music would be crucial to *Teenage*. The finished film is densely layered with sound design by Mark Phillips, which brings both realistic and abstract sound impressions to life. The music, which plays almost wall-to-wall, was in Matt's head from the beginning:

*I love using music in my films...For Teenage I actually think of the voiceover as lyrics to the film. You could definitely watch Teenage and not listen to the voiceover and have a satisfying experience. But the voiceover and the music, in combination, deepen the experience, and add meaning.*

Matt had connected with composer Bradford Cox when they were both in high school. Bradford was running an early online design publication called "The Sound of Print," of which Matt was both a fan and contributor. Years later, Matt recognized Bradford's name when he signed up for the mailing list for *Wild Combination*, and they reconnected. Matt heard, and loved, Bradford's music, and the two kept in touch from time to time.



When conceiving of *Teenage*, Bradford was the only person Matt wanted to work with on the score. "I'm a huge fan of the music [Bradford] makes with his band Deerhunter and in his solo project Atlas Sound," says Matt. "I'm drawn to the emotional intensity of his work, and I really connect with his art-punk aesthetic."

Bradford's previous film scoring experience included a contribution to Spike Jonze's *Where the Wild Things Are*, but *Teenage* is his first complete score.

## Production and Post

In early 2012, Cinereach upped its involvement in *Teenage*, from grant-maker to the official production company for the film, infusing the production and post-production budgets with not-for-profit funds. The Cinereach team would also provide infrastructure for the project, along with offering creative feedback.

"Once we had a partnership with Cinereach," says Producer Kyle Martin. "The film became a much more pointed endeavor."

Around the same time, Matt heard from Jason Schwartzman, whom he met while making a short film for the clothing store Opening Ceremony. Says Matt:

*Jason was a fan of Wild Combination, and when we met, I told him about Teenage. A year later, Jason called me and said he was starting to produce, and I had just finished the teaser. He was excited about the project, so he came on board as an Executive Producer. Jason really has been a cheerleader for the project, and he joined us in several meetings with potential partners. He'll continue to be involved in promoting the film.*

With the project in full swing, it also enabled *Teenage* Editor Joe Beshenkovsky, who had been giving input on the film since the scripting phase, to begin working regularly on *Teenage*.

The structure of the film was the most challenging aspect of it, says Matt, and Joe was an important partner in crafting it. Joe and Matt worked together in short, intensive bursts throughout the evolution of the project—assembling scenes, identifying more archival research goals, and conceiving script revisions. Then they'd break for a bit so that Matt could step away and work with Rosemary and Jon.

Matt elaborates:

*Most of the found footage has very short shots—it's rare to have camera originals with multiple takes. The challenge is making diverse material feel cohesive. Joe masterfully resolved this material into coherent scenes, and he developed sophisticated visual transitions.*

*For instance, in the transition between the 1939 World's Fair and a scene about the rise of Nazism in Germany, Joe cuts between shots of Jitterbugs waving their hands in the air and a shot of Hitler Youth girls with their hands in the air. It's revealed moments later that they're getting autographs from Hitler. It's a chilling revelation that shows the disparity between America and Europe.*

The *Teenage* team had been editing with low-resolution preview clips for years. When the real footage started coming in "there was lots of screaming in the edit room." Matt elaborates:

*You get low-quality stuff from the vendors, and you have to imagine what it will look like full resolution. Literally you couldn't see the faces of people in the preview versions, and then all of a*

*sudden you could see every face and article of clothing. As I'm now seeing the footage on big screens I'm discovering more and more details.*

All told, 135 photos and 272 footage excerpts made their way into the finished film. The complex archival research and licensing process would continue well after picture lock, including the work of locating unidentified rights holders and navigating the many different copyright laws, industry protocols, and language barriers involved when working with European archive houses.

## **Recreating Young Lives**

The team assembled a rough cut with specific holes in it, to make way for the unique recreations they would finally produce after months of visualization.

*There were many recreation ideas—some were just ‘types,’ like Victory Girls or Flappers. And as I was narrowing the scope I decided that the recreations should really be about telling the stories of individuals, otherwise that device wouldn't have a focus.*

The idea of recreating intimate portraits echoes the “mini-biographies” in Jon’s book, which are sometimes in depth, and sometimes less than a paragraph. They are often about well-known figures, such as Anne Frank or Judy Garland, but Matt’s favorite characters are the ones who are virtually unknown:

*The whole premise of this film is uncovering an unknown pre-history. There's something really satisfying about salvaging the story of a forgotten teenager who has become lost in obscurity.*

Matt needed his characters’ stories to fit into the larger structure of the film, and to strike a good balance of period, gender, race, class, and country. All the individuals chosen originated from the pages of Jon’s book, but the team went back to the original sources to find quotes and story details.

The team also tried hunting for archival material to tell these stories, though it proved very challenging to find images or footage of the specific characters. Sometimes a photo would surface, but in many cases, they found nothing. It became obvious to Matt that “creative filmmaking was the only way to bring these individuals to life.”

From Matt’s perspective, the filmed portraits would “allow the viewer a break from the march of history. The story of *Teenage* is intellectually demanding,” he says. “I wanted viewers to be able to switch gears, to be drawn into a specific story with a different, slower pace.” He wanted his portraits to appear regularly throughout the film, and to have a “harmonious balance with the archival storytelling.” This was part of Matt’s logic for selecting the characters.

Brenda Dean Paul emerged as an ideal subject early on. She was one of the Bright Young People, an elite party movement in 1920s England. Bright Young People had been extensively documented by the legendary photographer Cecil Beaton. Brenda’s own autobiography, *My First Life*, gave Matt an idea of her story, and Beaton’s images inspired the aesthetic of what her filmed portrait could look like.

*The notion of the Lost Generation—scarred by the war, and totally reckless—comes from this era, and Brenda is a perfect example. Brenda reminds me of Lindsay Lohan. She wanted to be famous, and she was, but for what? For her endurance at partying? For her public demise? Her value system seems very contemporary. But her crash seemed emblematic of her time as well—she was moving at such a fast pace it was unsustainable. It's a natural segue into the economic crash of the Great Depression...*

When it came to conceiving the German recreation characters, Matt was interested in humanizing the experience of Nazi youth. Most of the existing imagery of Hitler Youth focused on the masses and had

a hypnotic, disturbing allure. It made individual emotion and experience difficult to decipher. Matt felt it would be important to contrast those visions of the masses with intimate portraiture of an individual from among their ranks.

"I wanted people to understand why a young person would join the Hitler Youth," he says, "and the profound ways Hitler both empowered and destroyed young people." Melita Maschmann, a Hitler Youth leader in Germany, had written the book *Account Rendered* as an adult that explained why she joined Hitler's movement. All of the narration used to tell Melita's story in the film comes from this memoir.

Tommie Scheel was one of the rebellious Hamburg Swings, and he provides a counter-point to Melita's story. Jon and Matt discovered Tommie and his friends from Michael H. Kater's book *Different Drummers*, a cultural history of swing and jazz music in Nazi Germany. During World War II, "social dancing" and swing music of any kind was against the law. Matt was inspired to dig into the lives of the German swing kids who smuggled in American music and British fashion to subversively rebel against the Nazi regime.

Matt and Jon wanted to bring the African-American experience to life because racial tensions were boiling during the war. This would be hard to do because the official newsreel records of the period often omitted the stories and lives of people of color. Jon knew the story of Warren Wall, a black Boy Scout, from the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier's 1940 book called *Negro Youth at the Crossroads*. Frazier includes a lengthy interview with Warren, which is the most in-depth and truthful account of being young and black in America that the team found.

"The other characters in the film have outrageous fashion or radical politics," says Matt. "Warren is more of an everyday kid and a square. He's in the scouts and wants to advance in society, but he's hampered because of the color of his skin."

When it came to casting the recreations, Brenda was the only character who needed to resemble actual photos. Brenda's relative notoriety meant the film could use real newspaper articles with photos of the real Brenda. Casting Director Eleonore Hendricks knew Leah Hennessey, a musician, writer, actor, and artist, and Matt connected with her immediately.

*She had an intensity to her, an intellectual depth, and she looked very similar to Brenda. She was the first person I knew I wanted to cast for the recreations.*

For the German girl, Melita, Matt wanted to cast somebody who had the classic Aryan looks, but who didn't feel like a conventionally pretty actress or fashion model. Ivy Blackshire inspired him because she's not an actor, but a teenager going through her own rebellious phase, hanging out with friends in the East Village. "Ivy gave me a lot of insight into what it feels like to be a teenager today," says Matt. "I helped her translate those feelings to Melita's time and place."

Producer Ben Howe knew actor Ben Rosenfield (Tommie Scheel). He had a period look, a lot of professional acting and dancing experience, and a cool demeanor. For Tommie's friends, Matt chose "kids who looked European, and who seemed creative in real life like the Hamburg Swings." He based loose characters on the actual lives of the actors for the scenes. For example, he handed Peri Hofmann, a photographer, a camera so her character could photograph the others in the scene.

Malik Peters, who portrays Warren Wall, is a young New Orleans-based actor who has appeared on the TV series *Treme*, and came to the team's attention through a casting call.

## **Inventing an Archive**

When it came to the look and style of the recreations, Matt had a very clear vision for what he wanted:

*I've always been interested in blurring genre, and I think of my films as works of creative non-fiction. I like to shoot recreations in the appropriate formats of a given era, and I combine my original footage with actual archival clips... This way a viewer is not distracted or jarred by the device. They should just be in the story and not thinking about the filmmaking. My intention is not to "trick" the viewer into believing this material is real. However, I recognize that some will think it is. That's the line I walk in my work, which at times can be controversial.*

As he conceptualized the recreations for each of his four characters, Matt imagined their private worlds as they might have looked in home movies, or other contexts appropriate for their times and settings. Warren Wall and his friends wouldn't have had access to 16mm cameras, so Matt decided to shoot Warren's story to look like a newsreel—in black and white with a tripod, and very basic framing. Warren's story is intercut with rare footage the team found of Harlem from the National Archives.

Matt wanted Melita's story to look somewhere between a home movie and a newsreel, blurring that line to match the various forms of archival footage of Nazi Youth in the film. The team would need to be resourceful to create a believable German world for Melita in New York. Matt based her story largely in nature, as well as conceiving one intimate scene in Melita's bedroom, where detailed wardrobe and production design could set the scene.

The teenage bedrooms that Production Designer Inbal Weinberg built for the film were very inspiring for Matt, who said "Each set was meticulously constructed, and I could have filmed and photographed details in the bedrooms alone for days."

"I had incredible design collaborations with Inbal and the costume designer Tere Duncan," Matt adds. Both team members drew from extensive research to recreate the physical spaces and wardrobes of Brenda, Melita, Tommie, and Warren:

*A huge part of these characters' identities is their fashion, whether a decadent dress at a Bright Young Thing "freak party" or historically accurate Nazi Youth or Boy Scout uniforms. Tere was able to avoid the "costume-y" clichés of period wardrobe. There were no fringed flapper dresses, Dick Tracy suits, or lederhosen. Tere helped me understand the ways my characters would have dressed in their everyday lives. That naturalism was an important part of why our footage looks like vintage home movies.*

Warren's shoot was going to be among the trickiest because a lot of his scenes were based outdoors in an urban setting. The team would have to be careful to frame the shots in a way that would avoid signs of contemporary life on the streets when they filmed in Yonkers and Harlem. Matt felt this limitation was creatively justified, however, as a lot of Warren's footage emulated real newsreels, which, Matt says, were actually highly produced, too.

All the recreations were filmed in the summer of 2012, over a week-long shoot in and around upstate New York, Yonkers, Manhattan, and Long Island.

Matt worked from a shot list but no script. In the fully realized environments his creative team designed, he could set up situations and let the actors improvise with loose guidelines.

*My actors had free reign to do anything they wanted. I filmed them in the style of a home movie, so it was improvisational for all of us. I felt like one of their friends in a bedroom, at a party, or in a park making a home movie. There was just a large crew standing behind me.*

Cinematographer Nick Bentgen did extensive research before shooting the recreations to develop an approach that resulted in period-appropriate footage. He shot on a 16mm Bolex camera with old C-Mount lenses to avoid the level of sharpness and detail of more contemporary equipment. Sometimes, to replicate an even older period look, Nick would strip the coating off the lenses, resulting in erratic flaring and fogging.

Much of the work done to get the recreation footage looking authentic happened in post-production. Matt details:

*A lot of our actual archival material has heavy wear and tear or degradation. We degraded our recreation footage to match this by running our prints through a projector, adding dust and scratches, even rubbing bleach, salt water, and coffee on them. For a lot of our footage, we made 16mm prints, bleach bypass prints, and retransferred the footage for an older look. It reminded me of a very antiquated style of making VHS dubs.*

The tools and techniques Nick and Matt used presented many variables and unknowns and a high margin of error. Sometimes the footage would come back dark, overexposed, or a bit soft. But the team often embraced the imperfections because any amateur qualities enhanced the authentic feeling.

### **The Teenage Blog**

In parallel with production and post, for the past two years Matt has maintained a *Teenage* blog both as a companion to the film and as a stand-alone project. He conceives it as a sort of fanzine, but updated in the language of today's online youth culture. His bloggers post YouTube videos, MP3 mixes, and found vintage teen imagery from Flickr, Tumblr, and online archives.

Matt describes the inspiration behind the blog;

*I wanted to connect with my audience on a daily basis years before finishing the project. I conceived of the blog and then asked my friend Kelly Rakowski to collaborate with me on it. She has a blog called "Nothing is New," which is mostly vintage photos that she finds from online archives. I knew her visual style of research would be perfect for the project. And as Kelly became busy with other jobs and projects, I cultivated other blogging talent, including Claire Lucido, who is one of the Bright Young Things in the recreations. What I learned from the blog is that there's an incredibly strong interest in the topic of youth culture, and that people love to find obscure visual material related to teenagers online.*

By launching this blog, Matt was connecting with a future audience for the film. Over time, it began to feel like the blog was his contract with them to finish the ambitious film project he'd started. It has continued to post daily content in tandem with the evolution of the film, from development through completion and beyond.

### **Personalizing History**

*Teenage* is set in the past, but it is charged with contemporary energy and resonance, more like a visual work of art than a documentary film. The creative team hopes to show the film not only in theaters but in music venues, art museums, on television, and on the web. While the film is intellectually provocative, it is also artistic and emotional, an invitation to audiences to reconnect with their own rites of passage and the feelings of joy, fear, and possibility of adolescence.

*Teenage* also reminds adults not to dismiss adolescent rebellion, from any era of history, as a passing phase. "I hope viewers will think about the youth movement alongside other civil rights struggles," says Matt, "and that they will reexamine their attitudes about youth today."

### **About the Filmmakers / Crew Bios**

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**Matt Wolf (Director/Writer)** is a New York-based filmmaker. He was named one of the 25 New Faces of Independent Film by *Filmmaker Magazine* and he is a 2010 Guggenheim Fellow. His critically acclaimed and award-winning feature documentary *WILD COMBINATION*, about the avant-garde cellist and disco producer Arthur Russell, premiered at the Berlinale and was included on a

number of "Top 10" lists of 2008. The film was released theatrically in the US and UK, distributed worldwide by Plexifilm, and was broadcast on the Sundance Channel. Matt has produced and directed short documentaries for *The New York Times*, including the recent OpDoc collaboration with Jon Savage "The Role of Youth," the series "High Line Stories" for the Sundance Channel, and he co-directed documentary components of NY EXPORT: OPUS JAZZ, a feature length dance film in collaboration with New York City Ballet dancers and PBS. He recently completed I REMEMBER, a film about the artist and poet Joe Brainard, which is screening in festivals and museums worldwide.

**Jon Savage (Writer)** is an award-winning writer and broadcaster. He is the author of *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture 1875-1945* (2007), which was published and critically acclaimed in the UK, North America, and Germany. His film and television writing credits include the BAFTA winning BBC Arena documentary, THE BRIAN EPSTEIN STORY (1998), and most recently JOY DIVISION (2008), which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival, is distributed by the Weinstein Company and The Works, and was awarded the UK Film Council's Best Documentary Award at the 2008 Griersons. After graduating from Cambridge he published a fanzine called *London's Outrage*, and worked for *Sounds*, *Melody Maker*, and *The Face*. His first book, *The Kinks: The Official Biography* was followed by *England's Dreaming*, the award-winning history of the Sex Pistols, punk, and Britain in the late seventies. It was the basis for the BBC Arena documentary *Punk and Pistols* and is widely considered the definitive record of punk.

**Kyle Martin (Producer)** was recently named one of *Variety's* "Ten Producers to Watch." His two most recent films premiered in their respective competitions at this year's Tribeca Film Festival - Lance Edmonds's BLUEBIRD starring Amy Morton (Steppenwolf Theater Company) and John Slattery (MAD MEN), and Matt Wolf's TEENAGE. Kyle's previous film, TINY FURNITURE (IFC Films), written and directed by Lena Dunham, was nominated for the 2011 Independent Spirit Award Best Debut Feature and Best Cinematographer Spirit Awards, and an Independent Spirit Award for Best First Screenplay as well as Best Feature at the 2010 SXSW Film Festival. He's currently developing the Sundance Institute supported project CONFEDERACY (written by Jody Lee Lipes and Jeff Peixoto). His previous credits include the SXSW 2010 Audience Award winner NY EXPORT: OPUS JAZZ, produced in association with PBS and New York City Ballet Dancers (PBS, BBC, Factory 25), Matt Wolf's critically acclaimed and award winning WILD COMBINATION: A PORTRAIT OF ARTHUR RUSSELL (Sundance Channel, Plexifilm) and BROCK ENRIGHT: GOOD TIMES WILL NEVER BE THE SAME (Factory 25). He was named the 2010 Sundance Institute Mark Silverman Producing Fellow.

**Ben Howe (Producer)** is an independent producer based in New York. His films have won international awards, premiered at top film festivals including Cannes, Sundance, Berlin and Toronto, and secured international and domestic distribution. Feature credits include Matt Wolf's TEENAGE, Mo Ogrodnik's DEEP POWDER, Liza Johnson's RETURN, Patricia Benoit's STONES IN THE SUN, Bradley Rust Gray's THE EXPLODING GIRL, So Yong Kim's TREELESS MOUNTAIN, David Barker's DAYLIGHT, and Matt Wolf's WILD COMBINATION: A PORTRAIT OF ARTHUR RUSSELL. Upcoming projects include Lou Howe's GABRIEL, and Noah Pritzker's QUITTERS.

**Jacqui Edenbrow (Co-Producer)** has worked in music/arts television and feature documentary production with credits including the Grierson Best Cinema Documentary award-winning JOY DIVISION (Dir: Grant Gee) and THE POSTERS CAME FROM THE WALLS/OUR HOBBY IS DEPECHE MODE directed by Turner Prize-winning artist Jeremy Deller. Her films have gained worldwide distribution and exhibited at festivals and museums including Toronto International Film Festival, Sundance, BFI London Film Festival, Sheffield Doc/Fest, Palais de Tokyo, Paris and The Hayward Gallery, London. She has also worked in broadcast commissioning as Deputy Editor for Music at Channel 4 and set up a music committee for Amnesty International in 2002.

**Andrew Goldman (Co-Producer)** is the head of production at the non-profit film foundation Cinereach. Prior to Cinereach, Andrew worked alongside producer Paul Mezey at the independent

production company Journeyman Pictures. His recent producing credits include: Tom Gilroy's THE COLD LANDS which premiered at the 2013 Berlin Film Festival, Jeremy Kipp Walker and John Mitchell's THE HISTORY OF FUTURE FOLK and the Bill Callahan tour film APOCALYPSE. Other production credits include: Joshua Marston's THE FORGIVENESS OF BLOOD, David Riker's THE GIRL, Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden's SUGAR and Cory McAbee's STINGRAY SAM. He has also directed several short films, which have played at festivals across the country, including: SXSW and Rooftop Films.

**Philipp Engelhorn (Executive Producer)** founded Cinereach in 2006. A not-for-profit production company and film foundation, the organization seeks to support and produce vital stories, artfully told. In addition to developing and producing fiction and non-fiction films such as BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD, Cinereach has supported over 100 projects from around the world with over \$7m in grants. Philipp additionally serves as CEO of Cinereach Films, a private film financing and investment firm. The company's first film, David Riker's THE GIRL, was produced by Paul Mezey, stars Abbie Cornish and premiered at the 2012 Tribeca Film Festival. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Synergos, a non-profit dedicated to eliminating global poverty and social injustice by changing the systems that keep people in poverty. He also serves on the Founders Board of the Patrons of the Pinakothek in Munich, the board of directors of the Independent Filmmaker Project, and the board of Artists Public Domain. Originally from Germany, Philipp graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in 2006.

**Michael Raisler (Executive Producer)** co-founded Cinereach with Philipp Engelhorn in 2006 and serves as its Creative Director. He works closely with Philipp in defining the programmatic and philosophical foundation of the organization, particularly by shaping Cinereach's artistic direction across its continuum of programs. In addition to TEENAGE, Michael is an executive producer of Benh Zeitlin's BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD, which was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Picture. Originally from Wisconsin, Michael graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in 2006.

**Jason Schwartzman (Executive Producer)** made his motion picture acting debut for Wes Anderson, starring as Max Fischer in the acclaimed comedy RUSHMORE, opposite Bill Murray. His performance earned him a nomination for Most Promising Actor from the Chicago Film Critics Association, among other honors. He again starred for Mr. Anderson in THE DARJEELING LIMITED, which the two wrote with Roman Coppola; in the short film HOTEL CHEVALIER; and, in voiceover, on FANTASTIC MR. FOX. In 2012 Schwartzman was seen in A GLIMPSE INSIDE THE MIND OF CHARLES SWAN III, written and directed by Mr. Coppola. He was also seen in Wes Anderson's MOONRISE KINGDOM, opposite Bill Murray, Ed Norton, and Tilda Swinton. Schwartzman recently finished production on THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL with Edward Norton, Jude Law, Bill Murray and others and is slated for a 2014 release. His other movies include Judd Apatow's FUNNY PEOPLE, opposite Adam Sandler, Seth Rogen, and Jonah Hill; Edgar Wright's SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD; Sofia Coppola's MARIE ANTOINETTE, alongside Kirsten Dunst; David O. Russell's I HEART HUCKABEES; Roman Coppola's C.Q.; Jonas Åkerlund's SPUN; Andrew Niccol's SIMONE, with Al Pacino; and Anand Tucker's SHOPGIRL, adapted by Steve Martin from the latter's book of the same name, for which Mr. Schwartzman received a Satellite Award nomination. The Los Angeles native recently starred for three seasons as Jonathan Ames on HBO's Brooklyn-based acclaimed television series BORED TO DEATH, alongside Ted Danson and Zach Galifianakis. In the musical world, he was lead drummer for the Los Angeles-based band Phantom Planet. Their second studio album, *The Guest*, written in part by Mr. Schwartzman, was released by Epic Records in February 2002; shortly thereafter, the band embarked on a 14-month tour with Incubus. By 2006, he had embarked on a new endeavor as a one-man group, under the name Coconut Records. Coconut Records released its debut album, *Nighttiming*, in 2007, with contributions from Incubus and Kirsten Dunst. Mr. Schwartzman wrote all of the songs and performs the majority of the instruments. The song "West Coast" was heard in an episode of the television series *The O.C.* as well as in Matt Reeves' *Cloverfield*. Coconut Records' second album, *Davy*, was released in January 2009.

**Joe Beshenkovsky (Editor)** is an editor of numerous television programs and the occasional documentary film, including OBJECTIFIED for director GARY HUSTWIT. He edited "This American Life," for which he received an Emmy award. He is also partially responsible for other things of lesser quality which he would not like you to know about.

**Bradford Cox (Original Music)** is the lead singer of the world-renowned alternative bands Deerhunter and Atlas Sound. As Atlas Sound, Bradford has released three full albums. As the vocalist and guitarist in Deerhunter, Bradford has released five albums, with the most recent being Monomania in May 2013. *NME* have said, "Cox's creative output has proved him to be one of—if not the—most forward-thinking and inspiring musicians of our generation."

**Rosemary Rotondi (Lead Archivist)** has been an archival film, photo and network news researcher for over 27 years. In addition to Matt Wolf's documentary *TEENAGE*, her credits include *INSIDE JOB* by Charles Ferguson, winner of the 2011 Academy Award for Best Documentary; *BETTIE PAGE REVEALS ALL* by Mark Mori; *HERBLOCK-THE BLACK AND WHITE* by Michael Stevens and George Stevens, Jr.; *OUR NIXON* by Penny Lane and Brian Frye; *ADMIRAL RICKOVER: THE FATHER OF NUCLEAR POWER* by Michael Pack; *MAKING THE BOYS* by Crayton Robey; *BENEATH THE OLIVE TREE* by Orama Pictures and HBO's documentary *WE STAND ALONE TOGETHER* which accompanied its series *BAND OF BROTHERS*. Current projects include Albert Maysles' untitled documentary on Iris Apfel; *GENOMANIA* by Stephanie Welch and Paragon Media; Sam Green's documentary on The Guinness World Book of Records; Michael Levine's documentary on the Streits Matzo Factory among others.

**Nick Bentgen (Director of Photography)** is a Brooklyn-based director / cinematographer. He recently lensed Daniel Carbone's narrative feature *HIDE YOUR SMILING FACES* (Berlin 2013 / Tribeca 2013), and his own feature directorial debut, *NORTHERN LIGHT*, premiered at the 2013 True / False Film Festival. Nick, who was selected for IFP & Film Society of Lincoln Center's Emerging Visions Program at the 2011 New York Film Festival, has also directed commercials (New York City Ballet, Swarovski), music videos (Pitchfork's Juan's Basement), and contributed to installations (Matt Keegan, I [Apple] NY). He has photographed spots for Apple, Friends of the Highline, Google and American Express.

**Inbal Weinberg (Production Designer)** is a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She is an Israeli-born production designer who came to the attention of the American independent film scene with her work on Academy Award-nominated writer/director Courtney Hunt's *Frozen River*, starring Melissa Leo. Ms. Weinberg's work has since been on view in Derek Cianfrance's *BLUE VALENTINE*, starring Ryan Gosling and Academy Award nominee Michelle Williams; Max Winkler's *CEREMONY*, starring Michael Angarano and Uma Thurman; Stephen Chbosky's *THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER*, starring Logan Lerman, Emma Watson, and Ezra Miller; Jesse Peretz's *OUR IDIOT BROTHER*, starring Paul Rudd; Liza Johnson's *RETURN*, starring Linda Cardellini and Michael Shannon, which world-premiered at the 2011 Cannes International Film Festival; and, also for Focus Features, *PARIAH*, directed by Gotham Independent Film Award winner Dee Rees. She recently completed work on Phil Alden Robinson's *THE ANGRIEST MAN IN BROOKLYN*, starring Robin Williams and Mila Kunis, and *THE UNTITLED ELMORE LEONARD PROJECT* starring Jennifer Aniston and Tim Robbins.

**Tere Duncan (Costume Designer)** began her career in Texas on Wes Anderson's *BOTTLE ROCKET*. Soon after, she moved to NYC and started assisting other designers, including Janie Bryant (*MAD MEN*). She has designed several films including *FACTOTUM* (Bent Hamer), *CITY ISLAND* (Raymond DeFilitta) and *THIN ICE* (Jill Sprecher). In addition to *TEENAGE*, she designed *AT ANY PRICE* (Ramin Bahrani), also showing at this year's Tribeca Film Festival.



## About the Cast / Cast Bios

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**Julia Hummer (German Girl)** lives in Hamburg and has been working in television and film for over a decade. She has received multiple acting awards, including the 2001 Lilli Palmer Memorial Award for Most Promising Actress for her roles in the films CRAZY and THE STATE I AM IN, and the 2001 Günter Strack TV Award for Best Young Actress for her role in the TV series TATORT. Her role in THE STATE I AM IN also garnered her a 2001 nomination for a German Film Award for Best Actress. Other film credits include AT ELLEN'S AGE, CARLOS and STADT ALS BEUTE.

**Jena Malone's (American Girl)** film credits include Sean Penn's INTO THE WILD, Anthony Minghella's COLD MOUNTAIN, Joe Wright's PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, Zack Snyder's SUCKER PUNCH, Oren Moverman's THE MESSENGER, and Brian Dannelly's SAVED! She recently wrapped production on Mitchell Lichtenstein's period drama ANGELICA, THE HUNGER GAMES: CATCHING FIRE and THE WAIT (opposite Chloe Sevigny), and is attached to play Carson McCullers in the upcoming biopic LONELY HUNTER. As a young actress, Malone starred opposite Julia Roberts and Susan Sarandon in STEPMOM, and won an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Debut Performance in BASTARD OUT OF CAROLINA. Her recent TV work includes starring opposite Kevin Costner and Bill Paxton in the History Channel mini-series HATFIELDS & MCCOYS.

**Ben Whishaw (British Boy)** is an award-winning actor and graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art who has worked in television, film, and theater. His recent film credits include SKYFALL, CLOUD ATLAS, I'M NOT THERE, BRIGHT STAR and Terry Gilliam's upcoming ZERO THEOREM. He received a TV BAFTA Leading Actor award in 2013 for his portrayal of RICHARD II, and other TV credits include the BBC series THE HOUR and CRIMINAL JUSTICE, for which he won the 2009 International Emmy Award for Best Actor. His theater credits include "Peter and Alice," "Leaves of Grass" and "The Seagull." In 2005 he starred in the Old Vic production of "Hamlet" for which he won an Ian Charleson Award and was nominated for a Laurence Olivier Award for Best Actor, a South Bank Award for Breakthrough Artist, and an Evening Standard Award for Outstanding Newcomer. In 2013, he won the Regional Critics' Rising Star Award at the Richard Attenborough UK Regional Film Awards.

## About the Production Company

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**Cinereach Ltd.** is a not-for-profit film production company and foundation that champions vital stories, artfully told. Created and led by young philanthropists, entrepreneurs and filmmakers, Cinereach supports fiction and nonfiction filmmakers from all over the world through its Productions, Grants & Awards and Fellowships initiatives, and through partnerships with Sundance Institute's programs. Cinereach has supported close to 120 films in the US and internationally, including CIRCUMSTANCE, PARIAH, THE WORLD BEFORE HER, PLANET OF SNAIL, GIRL MODEL, CODE OF THE WEST and many more. Cinereach Production BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD was released in the US in 2012 by Fox Searchlight Pictures and received four Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture. (Cinereach.org)

## **Selected Praise for *Teenage***

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*A feat of both editing and blurring-of-the-edges nonfiction technique, Matt Wolf's mesmerizing, scrapbook-style "Teenage" conveys the transition in how the world perceived this emerging in-between stage...*

—Peter Debruge, *Variety*

*An entrancing collage that puts the voice of youth at the center of a narrative in which the broad strokes of history tend to overlook them.*

—Joel Arnold, *NPR*

*Passing before the screen like a dream, enhanced by the ambient swirl of Bradford Cox's original soundtrack, the film stitches together an astounding collection of archival materials, supplemented by period reenactments...*

—Steve Dollar, *The Wall Street Journal*

*[Teenage] presents a bounty of rare archival footage and beautifully shot reconstructions... It's a stylish, freewheeling and fun ride, buoyed by an astounding score from Deerhunter front-man Bradford Cox, but it also opens up the thought-provoking subject of the evolution of youth culture and where it's headed in contemporary times.*

—Mark Lukenbill, *IndieWire*

*As rebellious a film as the territory it covers... Matt Wolf's documentary eschews the talking heads and Chyroned dates that dominate the genre to immerse the moviegoer in a visually and aurally sumptuous history lesson.*

—Frank DiGiacomo, *Movieline*

*A dreamy child of both Adam Curtis and Ken Burns — as well as a deconstruction of both...a psychological portrait of adolescence itself.*

—Robert Green, *Hammer to Nail*

*[Teenage] is less interested in informing you than it is in evoking a feeling in you—not a book, but a song. It is experimental and freeing, exactly what a film about youth should be.*

—Michael Gaynor, *Washingtonian.com*

## **Selected Praise for Matt Wolf's previous feature documentary, *Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell***

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*Wild Combination, a tender, fascinating documentary will delight the Russell cult and instantly convert new members.*

—Nathan Lee, *The New York Times (Critics Pick)*

*Resourceful and refreshingly open-minded... a rich, complicated picture.*

—Margaret Wappler, *Los Angeles Times*

*Finely tuned... a remarkably affecting and informative portrait.*

—Amy Taubin, *Film Comment*

*Intimate and Infinite.*

—Andy Beta, *The Village Voice*

*A profoundly moving love story.*

—Kurt B. Reighley, *Time Out NY*

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## Credits

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Written & Directed by Matt Wolf  
Written by Jon Savage  
Based on the book *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture 1875 – 1945* by Jon Savage  
Produced by Ben Howe & Kyle Martin  
Executive Producers Philipp Engelhorn & Michael Raisler  
Executive Producer Jason Schwartzman  
Co-Producers Andrew Goldman  
Jacqui Edenbrow  
Original Music by Bradford Cox  
Edited by Joe Beshenkovsky  
Director of Photography Nick Bentgen  
Production Designer Inbal Weinberg  
Costume Designer Tere Duncan  
Sound Designer Mark Phillips  
Lead Researcher Rosemary Rotondi  
Archival Producers Sierra Pettengill  
Danielle Varga

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## Cast

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### Narrators

American Girl Jena Malone  
British Boy Ben Whishaw  
German Girl Julia Hummer  
American Boy Jessie Usher

### Featuring

Brenda Dean Paul Leah Hennessey  
Melita Maschmann Ivy Blackshire  
Melita Maschmann (Voice) Daniela Leder  
Tommie Scheel Ben Rosenfield  
Warren Wall Malik Peters