

WESTBOUND

THE JOURNEY
OF A LIFETIME.

PRESS KIT

305344



ARKETYPE ENTERTAINMENT
PRESENTS

WESTBOUND

Running Time: 77 min
Aspect: Ratio 4:30 letterbox
Sound: Dolby Digital

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www.catchwestbound.com

WESTBOUND

WESTBOUND. THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME.

A candid portrait of 96-year-old Adolph Vandertie, Grand Duke of the Hobos, and his final confessions of a life filled with joy, heartache, and addiction. Sweeping through the Great Depression, *Westbound* chronicles America's downfall and return to being the strongest nation in the world. An iconic tale, Adolph struggles to achieve personal redemption by creating an astonishing collection of 4,000 hobo whimsies and tramp art carvings. This simple act of whittling found objects becomes a beacon of hope for one man while capturing the true spirit of America.

"*Westbound* is atmospheric. It sweeps through a man's lifetime of want, wandering, woes and reluctantly accepted worth...a compelling documentary film."

– Warren Gerds, Critic at Large, Gannett

"*Westbound* is rife with fascinating details about obscure folk art forms... (Adolph) Vandertie's story and his body of work are compelling."

– Noel Murray, The Onion A.V. Club



SYNOPSIS

WESTBOUND. The Journey of a Lifetime.

As a child during the Depression, Adolph was captivated by a desire for travel. Visiting the hobo jungles, he was part of a world where men told stories of adventure and measured time by whittling. Adolph once watched an old hobo whittle a ball-in-cage – the quintessential design among whittlers. From that moment a lifelong fascination to master a dying art took hold. Each cut into the soft wood fueled the memory of freedom of riding the rails.

Tramp art and hobo whimsies were uniquely born of an independent spirit. Hobos whittle. Tramps carve. Both craft amazing objects from discarded cigar boxes and found materials. One man, Adolph Vandertie – Grand Duke of the Hobos – created over 4,000 rare and beautiful pieces of this distinctive folk art form. Using the trash of an economy that became too arrogant to care, Vandertie transforms the refuse.

Westbound is a candid portrait of 96-year-old Adolph Vandertie and his final confessions of a life filled with joy, heartache, and addiction. Sweeping through the Great Depression, the film chronicles America's downfall and return to being the strongest nation in the world. It's an iconic tale that explores Adolph's journey to achieve personal redemption by creating an astonishing collection – beautiful in their minute details and the cleverness of their design. This simple act of whittling found objects becomes a beacon of hope for one man while capturing the true spirit of America.



CREW

Directed By Jim Rivett

Produced By Shelly Young

Written By Shelly Young, Jim Rivett

Executive Producer Jim Rivett

Associate Producers Paul Meinke, Irene Kress, Sharon Resch,
Lynn & Rick Vandertie, Adolph Vandertie,
Colleen & Ron Weyers, Bobbie Fredericks,
Shari Kangas

Edited By Jason Davis, Rick Kump, DeGaul Vang

Music Supervisor Ashley Throw

JIM RIVETT

A native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, USA, Rivett is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin—Whitewater where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in painting and drawing and a minor in television and film production. He then studied at the New York School of Visual Arts under Milton Glaser.

Rivett has forged a broadly successful career in advertising, graphic design and fine art, leveraging his talents in illustration, design, art direction, and photo direction. Today he is president and creative director of Arketype Inc, a 30-person advertising and design agency based in Green Bay (www.arketypeinc.com).

In 2007, at the invitation of Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton, Rivett was asked to serve on the newly formed Wisconsin Task Force on Arts and Creativity in Education. The group's mission is to ensure that a creative workforce and entrepreneurial talent is cultivated throughout the state to compete in a 21st century global economy (www.creative.wisconsin.gov).

All along with his passion for painting, drawing, and graphic design was a love of film and the goal to create dynamic, compelling work in animation, live action, and documentary film. In 2005 he began work on fulfilling this passion by forming Arketype Entertainment – a division of Arketype Inc – and bringing together an ensemble of video producers, animators, editors, and musicians. The full-length feature documentary film project WESTBOUND began in 2006 and is the culmination of the team's work (www.catchwestbound.com).

In a very recent development and almost simultaneous to the completion of WESTBOUND, Arketype was selected to The BCA Ten – 2009, an exclusive group of ten companies selected by the Business Committee for the Arts (BCA) which recognizes businesses for exceptional involvement with the arts (www.bcainc.org). The BCA, founded in 1967 by David Rockefeller, is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure that the arts flourish in America by encouraging, inspiring and stimulating businesses to support the arts in the workplace, in education, and in the community.

SHELLY YOUNG

After growing up in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Shelly Young attended Suomi College and Michigan Tech University, majoring in Fine Arts with an emphasis in the Arts and Performance. She has a true passion for film and video and brings more than 18 years experience in television and video production to Arketype's clients.

Prior to joining Arketype full-time, Young had worked independently, partnering with Arketype to produce several award-winning video projects for both clients of industry and not-for-profit organizations. She also served as a producer with Wisconsin Public Television – PBS from 1992 until 2002.

Another of Young's passions is writing. She co-wrote a screenplay based on the true story of the Wyandot Tribe of Kansas, currently under contract with Sir Ben Kingsley and SBK Pictures. Their project is scheduled to begin principle production in 2010.

Recognized with over 30 national and international awards including the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (EMMY®), Young has produced a wide range of broadcast programs including children's series, social issue documentaries, performance specials, live television, public service announcements, and television advertising.

SOUNDTRACK

A rail-riding, stick-whittling, freedom-loving soundtrack has been created for the documentary *Westbound*.

Hobo art, culture, and a uniquely American story are featured in the full-length documentary, produced by Arketype, Green Bay, Wisconsin. For its soundtrack, the company enlisted a wide range of musical talents including Sam & Ruby, melaniejane, pat mAcDonald, Jill Sobule, Victoria Vox, Adam Mackintosh, Ethel, Mary Patterson, and Kenny Wilson. The artists performed selected songs for the soundtrack, as well as composed original music for the film.

Musical soul mates **Sam & Ruby** create music that transcends genres and stays in the heart of the listener. The Associated Press rated their album *The Here and the Now* as #1 in 2009. Two Sam & Ruby songs are featured on the *Westbound* soundtrack.



melaniejane has performed throughout the U.S. and has appeared with or opened for such artists as Sam Llamas (The BoDeans), Victor DeLorenzo (Violent Femmes), The Silos (Bloodshot Records), Sigmund Snopek and Dick Parry (saxophonist from Pink Floyd) to name a few. Currently, she has two solo recordings — “Flower” and “Billets Doux,” which showcase her talents as a singer, songwriter, instrumentalist, and arranger.

pat mAcDonald is a veteran songwriter and former Timbuk3 front man who’s followed a staunchly independent path since the T3 breakup in 1995. Ubiquitous in mAcDonald’s dark and cynical sound are a dirty, low-tuned guitar, blues-driven harmonica, and amplified boot stomp.

mAcDonald teamed up with melaniejane to create dark, sexy, hypnotic low-end grooves on his latest CD release *Purgatory Hill*, featuring an amplified Lowebow cigar-box guitar. The Shepherd Express hails the record as “...nothing less than a shocking reinvention of blues and rock music...”



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Jill Sobule belongs to a rare breed of artists whose work is at once deeply personal and socially conscious, seriously funny and derisively tragic. Over five albums and a decade of recording, the Denver-born songwriter/guitarist/singer has tackled such topics as the death penalty, anorexia, shoplifting, reproduction, the French resistance movement, adolescence, and the Christian right.

After playing in a variety of funk and rock bands in Colorado, Sobule eventually made her first Todd Rundgren-produced album for MCA, *Things Here Are Different*. Three years later, Atlantic Records released her MTV staple and national top-20 hit “I Kissed A Girl,” jumpstarting her live music career. Her song “Supermodel” was also included on the *Clueless* soundtrack. In 2009, she released her current CD, *California Years*.

Singer/songwriter **Victoria Vox** may not have had much of an audience as a 10-year-old, but that didn't stop her from writing and recording her first songs in her small-town Wisconsin bedroom. After graduating from the Berklee College of Music with a songwriting degree, Vox set out for, and then struck out in Nashville. She persevered, however, creating four albums, most recently the 2010 ukulele-featured *Spare Change*, which has received rave reviews both in the mainland and on the uke-rooted islands of Hawaii.



Adam Mackintosh is a unique American songwriter born and raised in Fremont, CA. After six European tours, five years in New Orleans, six years in Portland and three years in Wisconsin writing with some of the nation's best writers, Adam has shared stages and recordings with Storm Large, Anna Sacks, Jackson Browne, pat mAcDonald, and a multitude of highly talented industry professionals. His style of music has been compared to modern music such as Delta Spirit, Cold War Kids, and Radiohead.

Acclaimed as America's premier postclassical string quartet, **Ethel**, along with Jill Sobule, wrote music and words for the original *Westbound* song “Hobo Soup.” The quartet's inspiring performance of the song with Jill can be heard on the soundtrack.

Mary Patterson has honed her skills on the piano and guitar for more than 30 years. As a singer/songwriter, she performs at coffeehouses around Minneapolis, drawing inspiration from her intimate fan base, including Adolph. She wrote “Westbound Train” the night he passed away.

From Kenny's House of Sound, **Kenny Wilson** has been in music as a fulltime professional for over 30 years and is a member of NARAS—a Grammy organization. His instruments include guitar, pedal steel guitar and resonator “dobro” guitar and is fluent on all of them. He's performed and/or recorded numerous top industry talents including Pop Wagner, Paulette Carlson (Warner Bros.), Kenny Holmen Trio, The Platters, The Coasters, The Drifters, Lizzy Rain, Collective Unconsciousness, the legendary Bo Diddley, and most recently Becky Schlegel's release of “Red Leaf.”

WESTBOUND

SONGS ON WESTBOUND: THE SOUNDTRACK
Produced by Arketype Entertainment

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Out on the Rails | Victoria Vox & pat mAcDonald |
| 2. Just Boxes, Ya Know | pat mAcDonald & melaniejane |
| 3. Amazing Grace | Kenny Wilson |
| 4. trampArt | pat mAcDonald & melaniejane |
| 5. My Sweet Adeline | melaniejane |
| 6. What Do I Do Now | Sam & Ruby |
| 7. Cigar-diddy | pat mAcDonald |
| 8. Steamtrain | Adam Mackintosh |
| 9. hobo harp | pat mAcDonald |
| 10. Rambling Westbound | pat mAcDonald |
| 11. Westbound Train | Mary Patterson |
| 12. Goodnight & Goodbye | melaniejane |
| 13. Heaven's My Home | Sam & Ruby |
| 14. Hobo Soup | Jill Sobule and Ethel |



PRODUCTION NOTES

Comments on the film production by Director Jim Rivett

I had been told by a number of people for 15 or more years that I needed to meet this man named Adolph Vandertie who had all these amazing carvings. He lived about a mile away and yet he and I had never crossed paths.

Just at the time Arketype had made a deliberate move toward, animation, motion design, and film for a number of years so it was time to search out bigger possibilities. I heard about Adolph and his work again, but this time from his granddaughter. She told some amazing stories and my first thought was how wonderful it would be to see his work and perhaps document it on film if it proved worthy of such a thing. We were hungry for something that the company could work on that was relevant and interestingly tied in to creativity and self-expression. I have had a fascination with self-taught artists ever since attending the Art Brut Museum in Lusanne, Switzerland, many, many years ago.

This was a natural segue to my interest—an interest shared by Shelly Young. When we learned that Adolph was 94 we knew we had to get over to meet him and explore the possibilities. We found him to be a perfect subject and everything progressed organically and without much difficulty. Adolph was ready to tell his story.

There was also the challenge that attracted me—could a design firm could execute a documentary film of this scope while simultaneously doing the rest of our client work? Whether it be after hours, weekends, or through the nights, this opportunity was fertile ground for many people to stretch personally and professionally. We were into it on a deep level. Fundraising was a critical component to managing the cost of the project, in order to minimize the impact on the business.

The film was coming to fruition right in the midst of the economic meltdown. I don't know if it was life imitating art or art imitating life, but it was interesting to be working on a film that explored the Great Depression when, ironically, we were in the midst of a similar financial catastrophe by the end of the project.

We had people sleeping on foam mats overnight and working over weekends as we edited the project to tell a compelling story that illustrated many of the fears we were currently living through—and yet if the economy had been booming, it might have not allowed us the time to complete the film when we did. The pressure of keeping up with our day jobs could be quite oppressive at times. The workload was full, so balance was elevated to an art at this point. Fatigue was something we all dealt with, just as you would expect.


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The fact that this film was made by an entity that works in design and marketing on a daily basis, yet was willing to push beyond, is a story of personal triumph in itself. Every employee in a 30-person firm touched some aspect of the project, making it a truly collaborative effort.

The art itself relates on a green or recycled level, way ahead of its time. Tramp art was “green” a long time ago. Cigar boxes were re-appropriated into beautiful works of art. Salvage made beautiful and functional.

Amazingly enough, we chronicled 138 footage hours of a man’s confessions near the end of his life. Adolph had a body of work that illustrated his journey toward self-redemption and making sense of his life. He achieved a state of tranquility and centeredness through this art and his fascination with wood and whittling. Adolph was the last of a breed and we were capturing his honest and sometimes painful recollections of a life well-lived. His voice was going to disappear if we did not devote the time and energy toward preserving his story. The work was already in the museum, but without the words and the stories it would have remained less dimensional.

The volume of work Adolph created and the extent of his creative drive to somehow redefine his self-image of a man of poverty and no means is at the core of this film. Adolph related to the strata of American History that was provocatively iconic and romantic. Adolph carved an identity for himself just as much as the body of carvings and whittled ball-in-cage pieces he amassed. His art was a form of deliverance from what could have been a life of hell and pain. His story is a story of triumph, and now that he is gone nobody can tell his story like he did.



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www.catchwestbound.com

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