

WE BEGAN TO SING

FAQs & User Guide

❑ What is WE BEGAN TO SING?

WE BEGAN TO SING is a new documentary that feels urgent and attuned to this moment. The film's protagonists, Annie Patterson and Peter Blood, spend their lives harnessing the power of community singing to achieve profound, positive change. In the footsteps of Pete Seeger, an early hero, the couple combines songleading with community activism. We learn how their songbook *Rise Up Singing* brought Seeger into their lives as a mentor and friend. In a moving scene, the couple sings with Seeger a year before his death. Others featured in the film are musicians Magpie, Reggie Harris, Charlie King, Emma's Revolution, and Sarah Pirtle, and communities of song in Hadley, Massachusetts, Burlington, Vermont, and Toronto, Ontario.

❑ How long is the film?

WE BEGAN TO SING runs 24 minutes.

❑ How can a group arrange to screen the film?

Organizations, institutions, communities and other groups can stream the film for a small fee (see chart below). Fees are on a sliding scale based on the number of people in the audience. To request a screening, write to info@songkeepers.ca telling us who you are, the timing of your event, the size of the audience you expect, and your contact information. We will get back to you within 48 hours. We request that users sign an online agreement. Once that is in hand, a link to the film and password will be provided two days prior to the event.

During COVID-19, the filmmakers will, upon request, arrange group screenings online using a cloud-based software platform, such as Zoom or YouTube. The client will select the date and time of the event and, when the booking is confirmed, send an invitation and private link to the intended participants.

❑ Can I purchase a copy of the film?

WE BEGAN TO SING is not available for purchase at this time. Discussions are currently underway with educational distributors which would allow groups to buy a download or DVD/BluRay.

❑ How much does it cost to rent the film?

A rental is for a single screening of the film during a two-day window (48 hours). The fee depends on the number of people expected at the screening. We accept both U.S. and Canadian currency.

❑ ≤ 25 people	\$25
❑ 26 - 50	\$50
❑ 51 - 74	\$75
❑ ≥ 76 people	\$100

❑ Are there restrictions on using the film?

The film may be shown as a single event in any group setting. It is forbidden to post the film to the Internet, to share the film with others beyond the event without express permission, or to sell the film. An agreement must be signed by the user affirming the terms of use. An individual representing a group (formal or informal) can rent the film, but only at the stated group rates.

How might I use the film for a special event, or to attract an audience?

WE BEGAN TO SING is about finding connection and reclaiming our individual and collective voices. Audience members describe the film as “inspiring,” “exhilarating,” and “hopeful.” WE BEGAN TO SING can be shown by groups and institutions of all kinds, as a program element or special event, as a fundraiser or in support of a cause (e.g. getting out the vote). The filmmakers are happy to offer guidance on how to organize a post-screening discussion, Q&A, or singalong, which can be very successful additions to any screening.

What equipment and people skills do I need for my screening?

To ensure success, allow plenty of time to organize and promote the event, and get the right personnel and equipment in place. Each event is unique, so requirements vary. Software and equipment are not included in the rental fee.

Physical and Technical Requirements Checklist

Online (virtual) Screening

- Zoom software
- High speed internet connection
- Proficiency using Zoom

Online Screening with a wraparound or post-screening discussion/Q&A

- Zoom software
- High speed internet connection
- Proficiency using Zoom
- Familiarity with hosting multi-participant online discussions or events
- Tech check to determine optimal viewing and audio settings
- Rehearsal of event rundown and transitions

On-site (non-virtual) Screening (up to 20 people):

- screening location
- high speed internet connection
- digital link to film (and password) for streaming, or digital file
- access to a monitor, digitally enhanced television, or computer-aided projector
- wall or screen
- speakers
- comfortable seating
- a tech check

On-site Screening Upgrades (for 20 to 50 people):

- digital projector with computer or other digital input
- screen with good sightlines
- good quality speakers
- microphone (for introductions, Q&A, etc.)

On-site Screening Upgrades (for 50 people or more):

- a theatre with a professional screen and comfortable seating
- digital projector
- high quality stereo sound system
- experienced technician to handle the projection and sound

Singing

Audiences are often eager to sing together after seeing the film. Event organizers may wish to plan for an informal singalong. This can be greatly aided by:

- a song leader
- an instrument or two (guitar, banjo, or piano)
- songs that are familiar to the audience, or easily taught
- lyric sheets

Note on singing during online (virtual) events:

Even online, people often want to sing together. With a few modifications, it is possible to do so. Lyrics can be shared, accessible songs chosen, and with a song leader any number of participants can sing together.

Human Resources for On-site (non-virtual) Events

Technical Supervisor

Each event needs a point person who will inspect the location, supervise the technical set-up, troubleshoot and do a “tech check” well before the actual event. This involves checking that the film projects well and that the sound is high quality. For a large screening, additional mics, music stands, and a soundboard may be helpful. Responsibilities may need to be divided between a technical supervisor and a host/master of ceremonies (described below) who manages the program and communicates with the audience.

Host/ Master of Ceremonies

Large events need a host or master of ceremonies to introduce the film and lay out the plan for the evening.

Volunteers

Behind every great event is a team of volunteers. They can help set up the room, greet people at the door, take tickets, direct guests to their seats or to restrooms, and hand out programs or lyrics.

Any suggested content for program notes?

We can provide information about the film for program notes, upon request. A press release, press kit, including film synopsis, credits, film bios and publicity images, are also available on our website songkeepers.ca under Media.

How can I learn more about communal singing?

A Guide to Songleading and Communal Singing, by Ben Kramarz, ©2016. [A Guide to Songleading & Communal Singing](#)

Rise Up Singing: The Group Singing Songbook, developed, created & edited by Annie Patterson & Peter Blood, Sing Out Publications, ©1988. <https://www.riseupandsing.org/songbooks/rise-up-singing>

Rise Again: A Group Singing Songbook, edited by Annie Patterson & Peter Blood, Hal Leonard, ©2015. <https://www.riseupandsing.org/songbooks/rise-up-singing>

WE BEGAN TO SING

Filmed in U.S. and Canada

Released Fall 2019

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Candida Paltiel & Polly Wells, Producers

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