

# Biography

## Gunnar Madsen

Gunnar Madsen is an award-winning composer, singer, pianist, writer, sound designer, filmmaker and actor. As the founder and songwriter for the acclaimed a capella group **The Bobs**, Madsen fractured and re-constructed rules for popular music. His solo efforts have yielded critically acclaimed albums across dramatically different genres.

Mr. Madsen has received commissions from Lincoln Center, the Los Angeles Theater Center, the Minnesota Opera, Oberlin Dance Collective, ISO Dance Theater, National Public Radio and many others. His music is featured in episodes of HBO's *Sex and the City*, and in the films *The Break Up*, *Just a Kiss*, *Breaking the Rules* and *A Special Providence*. He is a featured performer on the soundtrack of *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, in the National Geographic Special *Asteroids: Deadly Impact*, and is the emotionally charged voice of Sammy Davis, Jr. in the Emmy-award winning HBO film, *The Rat Pack*.

Madsen's musical career has constantly pushed the boundaries. After 10 years in the studio and on the road singing acapella (no instruments) with The Bobs, Madsen's first solo album, *Spinning World, 13 Ways of Looking at a Waltz* was a stunning collection of instrumental waltzes (no singing). The album has won over millions of listeners worldwide. Released concurrently with *Spinning World*, Madsen's second solo effort, *The Power of a Hat*, ("David Byrne-meets-Rinde Eckert art-pop" *SFBG*) charted on rock and college radio. Next, he turned his creative and versatile musical vision to work for children, releasing award-winning family CDs, *Old Mr. Mackle Hackle*, *Ants in My Pants!*, and *I'm Growing*. Inspired by his compositions for many hit video games, his recording, *Fall of Troy*, was a deliciously dark orchestral epic. Madsen went to world-renowned Skywalker Sound to record *Two Hands*, a gorgeous, emotional and cinematic album of solo piano (with guest violinist Irene Sazer, of Turtle Island String Quartet, on selected cuts).

**Filmmaker. Broadway composer. Children's Book Author.**

In the fall of 2000 Gunnar journeyed to Russia to write and direct a documentary on a remarkable farming community for disabled people. The film, finished in May 2001, was an official selection of the Ojai International Film Festival and enjoyed a week-long run at Berkeley's Fine Arts Cinema. Gunnar's stage musical *The Shaggs: Philosophy of the World* (with collaborator Joy Gregory) has played in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York to thunderous critical and popular acclaim. In 2011, in a historic co-production by Playwrights Horizons and The New York Theatre Workshop, it electrified Off-Broadway. According to **The New York Times**, it is "Unsettling, disturbing, challenging, even a little awe-inspiring." It won Best Original Score from Entertainment Today, the Ovation Award for Best World Premier Musical, and Musical of the Year and Best Score from both LA Weekly and Backstage West.

Madsen's colorful storybook adaptation of his song *Old Mr. Mackle Hackle* was published by Little, Brown in 2005.

Gunnar is the recipient of numerous music and theater awards, including a Grammy nomination, Izzy nomination, Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award and the ASCAP special award for 15 consecutive years. His family CDs have received hatfuls of prestigious awards, including Parents' Choice Gold Award, Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold, NAPPA Gold, Scholastic Teacher's Pick Award, and the CMW Best Recording for Older Children award.

Gunnar's albums with The Bobs remain in print on Rhino and Rounder Records. *Two Hands* is Madsen's thirteenth (13th) CD, and his combined album sales total more than 150,000. A Bay Area native, Gunnar Madsen currently resides in Berkeley, CA where he continues his many music, theater, film and writing projects.



Full Press Kit with downloadable hi-res photos at  
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