



THEY NEEDED A COVER STORY TO CROSS THE ISRAELI BORDER.  
SO THEY CREATED AN ALL-GIRL ROCK BAND.



# THE PROMISED BAND

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## THE PROMISED BAND

A documentary film by Jen Heck

**They needed a cover story to cross the Israeli border.  
So they created an all-girl rock band.**

THE PROMISED BAND is a nontraditional documentary film about an unlikely group of women from opposite sides of the Israeli/Palestinian border who are set on an unexpected path when an American friend makes them an offer they can't refuse: to meet. But in a region where sides are separated not by just a 26-foot physical separation wall but a social one, meeting is nearly impossible: most Palestinian citizens are barred from entering Israel, and Israeli citizens fear meeting violence upon entering the West Bank.



Afraid of being open about their intentions, the women decide that, despite their dubious musical talent, a rock band is their best cover story. Our unlikely musicians will have to cross the border, repeatedly and often illegally. They will have to get their instruments through checkpoints, secure permits to travel when possible, and find safe spaces to meet. All that, and they'll need to deal with an Orthodox rabbi who wants to be the lead singer. It's a stroke of luck that their cheerleader is a reality show producer in America, who is used to dealing with subterfuge and strong personalities.

Despite their initial distrust, the women connect. (A mutual love of hummus and the art of Middle Eastern cursing greases the wheels of friendship.) As each learns more about the other, they come to understand the stakes between their countries in a whole new way, and their lives change in ways none of them ever anticipated.

**Total Run Time: 89 minutes**

**Dialogue Languages: English, Arabic, Hebrew**

**Production Locations: Israel/Palestine, Nepal, USA**

**Aspect Ratio: 16x9 | 1.78:1**

**Exhibition Formats: DCP, Blu-ray**

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most enduring and most media-covered conflicts the world has ever known. Although the number of films that have been made about the region is vast, the films tend to be from either an Israeli or an Arab viewpoint. Audiences know this, and have an implicit question before watching: "Which side is the filmmaker on?"



So telling people that I'm making a film set in Israel and the West Bank is cause for immediate critique—from every angle. Are you Jewish? Muslim? Palestinian? No. I'm a Catholic school dropout from New England who never even had a falafel until my teenage years. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict always seemed utterly hopeless to me. And the real truth is that this isn't a story about the conflict, even if that's all anyone can see at first. It's a love story and a comedy, and it's about a community of women who decide that it's time that they take a look at life on the other side of the wall.



## SELECTED ARTICLES/REVIEWS

“What happens when a well-intentioned American TV producer wants her Israeli and Palestinian friends to bond?”

[AfterEllen.com](http://AfterEllen.com)

“Moving and surprisingly tender, a film that makes the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so much more human and comprehensible than news reports or other documentaries.”

[Nonfictionfilm.com](http://Nonfictionfilm.com)

“Anyone who’s ever tried to get a band together knows what a hassle it can be to get musicians to commit to a schedule. Now imagine if you also have the added obstacles of seven decades of violent ideological conflict between your singer and members’ homelands, military checkpoints on the way to practice, religious taboos around music and gender, and—oops—the fact that some of your members never really learned an instrument.”

[Bust Magazine](http://Bust Magazine)

“An enlightening look at the flawed nature of the current border system as well as the complex subtleties of female friendship.”

[Dazed](http://Dazed)

“The film does a really good job of presenting the reality. Presenting the risks that people take just to go back and forth, mostly forth to the West Bank.... Quite a moving film.”

[Worldview, WBEZ Chicago](http://Worldview, WBEZ Chicago)

“This new, feminist documentary views Israel and the West Bank through the eyes of Heck, the ‘clueless’ American, as she makes friends on both sides of the border and attempts to bring them together.”

[California Magazine](http://California Magazine)

“*The Promised Band* is a successful exploration of the effects of mutual isolation, as well as a wistful personal study of the women (and a man) who come and go from the band.”

[The Movie Gourmet](http://The Movie Gourmet)

“The results are funny and poignant, and the quest to just be able to play one song together (first, learn to sing and/or play an instrument; second, get everyone together in one place) becomes epic in its scale and importance. Great movie, and well deserving of Best Documentary of the festival.”

[Jason Watches Movies](http://Jason Watches Movies)

“Heck’s film is a noble-yet-necessary one [and] the genuine camaraderie among these six women is life-affirming.”

[Two Guys in the Dark](http://Two Guys in the Dark)

“Heck’s message is one of sameness, of common ground in humanity that disarms the call for segregation.”

[SRQ Backlot](http://SRQ Backlot)

## AWARDS



**Canon**



**2016 Recipient of the Canon-Atomos Filmmaker Award**

## SUPPORTED BY



**Recipient of Film Independent's  
2014 Documentary Lab Fellowship**



## FILMMAKERS



### **JEN HECK**, Director

Jen Heck completed her MFA at Columbia University's film program in 2009. She has had work at major film festivals including Sundance, the Hamptons, and Palm Springs, at museums including the Whitney (Biennial 2004) and MoMA, and on networks including MTV, Bravo, and VH1. She has won awards at festivals for her short narrative films *Airplanes* and *Salamander*, both photographed by Martina Radwan. She currently works as a documentary TV producer/director in New York.



### **MARIA DE LA O**, Producer

Maria De La O is a graduate of Columbia Journalism School and is a longtime writer and editor, having contributed to publications including the *Village Voice*, the *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Bay Guardian* and *Human Rights*. She has been an editor in chief and managing editor for numerous magazines, including *The Industry Standard*, *Alternative Medicine*, and *Jane and Jane*. De La O previously collaborated with Jen Heck on the shorts *Salamander* and *At the End of the World, Turn Left*.



### **IAN REINHARD**, Executive Producer

With more than 20 years experience in filmmaking, Ian Reinhard recently executive produced the Warner Brothers documentary *Batkid Begins* and the Film Independent Spirit Award-nominated *Test*. Named to Indies United's "Producers to Watch" list in 2015, he was also producer on *24 Hours on Craigslist*. Having worked in all different levels of film, his projects have won awards at Cinequest, Ashland, Omaha, Rincon, and Dallas film festivals.



### **CHRIS MARTIN**, Producer

Chris Martin is recently a Film Independent Spirit Awards nominee for *Test*, a feature written and directed by Chris Mason Johnson. Nominated for the John Cassavetes Award, it won the Grand Jury Award at LA Outfest and enjoyed official selection for the 2014 Berlinale, LGBT BFI Festival, Palm Springs and Seattle IFF. With more than 12 years of experience in studio and independent feature and documentary films, he is following up production on *The Promised Band* by producing Tom E. Brown's *Pushing Dead*, to be released in 2016.



### **MARTINA RADWAN**, Director of Photography

Martina Radwan has a well-established career as a cinematographer, including a collaboration with Ellen Kuras on *Personal Velocity*, which won the Cinematographer Award and the Grand Jury Prize at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival. She has also photographed all of Israeli filmmaker (and *Homeland* creator) Gideon Raff's feature films. In 2011–2012, she shot *Saving Face*, the Oscar- and Emmy-winning documentary short about women injured in acid attacks, and *Hot Coffee*, the award-winning film about the infamous McDonald's coffee lawsuit. More recently, *Watchers of the Sky*, which she collaborated on, received a Documentary Special Jury Award at Sundance 2014.

## **CREDITS**

**Directed by:** Jen Heck

**Cast:** Lina Qadri, Viki Auslender, Shlomit Ravid, Noa Bassel,  
Shimshon Nadel, Alhan Jeries, Jen Heck

**Executive Producer:** Ian Reinhard

**Producers:** Maria De La O, Chris Martin, Jen Heck

**Cinematographers:** Martina Radwan, Jen Heck

**Lead Editors:** John Dilley, Ben Frazer

Editors: Arturo Sosa, Rona Even Merrill, Jen Heck

Associate Producers: Joe Gerakines, Rona Even Merrill, Ben Frazer, Melissa Lane

All original music written and performed by Neil Benezra  
Smoking Pigeons Publishing, ASCAP

Camera Operators (Nepal): Jen Heck, Omar Sawalha  
Camera Operator (New York/Teen Mom): Kristen Schylinski

Additional camera by: Viki Auslender, Lina Qadri

Sound Recording: Matt Bruckenthal, Melissa Lane

Production Legal Team: Jose Martinez Jr., Esq., and Nikki Barbanell, Esq., Jones Walker LLP

Security: Matt Bruckenthal

Honorary Field Producer: Suzy Ravid

Story Consultants: Scott Rosann, Derek Lowe

Graphic Design and Animation: Chaim Bianco

Colorist: Andrew Esterly

Online Editor: Truckee Lynch

Sound designer, supervising sound editor, re-recording mixer: Neil Benezra

Sound Engineer (Ramallah): Hani Kashou

Transcription: Danielle Heck, Kagure Njagi Kabue

Translation: Rona Even Merrill, Ali Alshella

Subtitle translation review by World Translation Center

Stills provided by:

Lina Qadri

Mostafa Salameh

Viki Auslender

Alhan Jeries

Shimshon Nadel

Other materials used from:

MTV Networks/Teen Mom 2

JO Magazine

YouTube/Kanninchen Channel

YouTube/Afilmspalestine Channel

YouTube/Stephanie Freid Channel

Clearance Counsel: Chris Perez, Esq., Donaldson + Callif, LLP

Music Supervisors: Kelli Scarr, Jackie Lin Werner

"In a Big Country," Cover Version Produced and Arranged by Ohal Grietzer

Portions of "In a Big Country" recorded at Maestro Music Productions, Ramallah

Additional guitar by Sam Benezra

Licensed Music

"In A Big Country"

Written by Mark Brzezicki / Tony Butler / Bruce Watson / Stuart Adamson

Courtesy of BMG Platinum Songs (BMI)

Other Music Credits

"Nos Hala"

Performed by Asalah

Written by Assala Nasri

Rotana / Farasan / EMI

"Bent Echalabeyya"

Arranged by Ilham Al Madfai

Performed by Ilham Al Madfai

EMI Music Arabia

"Halo"

Performed by Beyoncé

Written by Beyoncé Knowles / Ryan Tedder / E. Kidd Bogart

Label: Columbia Records / Sony BMG Music Entertainment

Publishers: B Day Publishing (ASCAP) / EMI April Music Inc (ASCAP) / Write 2 Live (ASCAP) /

Heres Lookin At You Kidd Music (BMI) / Sony/ATV Songs LLC (BMI)



"Green Revolution"

Written by Bruno Cruz

Performed by Adi Krayem (WE7 Band); Maysaa Daw; Walaa Sbeit, Iqrith, Haifa; Terez Sliman, Haifa; Mahmood Jrere (Dam Band), Led; Maysaa Sbeit, Haifa; Ayed Fadel, Haifa; Hasan Nakhleh, Majdal Shams; Shadi Awidat, Majdal Shams; Rami Nakhleh, Majdal Shams; Samy Matar, Haifa.

Bruno Cruz, Haifa; Outro Vocal By: Mahmoud Darwish

(C) Bruno Cruz

"Inta Omri"

Lyrics Written by Ahmed Shafiq Kamel

Composed by Mohammed Abdel Wahab

"Adir Hu"

Lyrics from Passover Haggadah

Composed by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

"Born to Be Wild"

Written by Mars Bonfire

Produced by Gabriel Mekler

Label: Dunhill / RCA

Publisher: Songs of Universal Inc. (Universal Music Group)

"Bint El Shalabiya"

Performed by Fairouz and Jacques Kodjian

Written by Rahbani Brothers (Assi Rahbani / Mansour Rahbani)

"Charoso" ("Everything Will Be Fine")

Written by Andriy Danylko

Performed by Verka Serduchka

(C) Serdyuvhka Verka

"Tin Man"

Written by Dewey Bunnell

Performed by America

Label: Warner Bros. Records

Publisher: W B Music Corp (Warner Chappell Music Inc.)

"Irreplaceable"

Written by Shaffer Smith / Mikkel S. Eriksen / Tor Erik Hermansen / Espen Lind / Amund Bjørklund / Beyoncé Knowles

Produced by Ne-Yo / Stargate / Beyoncé Knowles

Label: Columbia Records / Sony BMG Music Entertainment

Publishers: B Day Publishing (ASCAP) / EMI April Music Inc (ASCAP) / EMI Music Publishing Ltd (ASCAP) / Sony/ATV Tunes LLC (ASCAP) / Stellar Songs Limited (BMI) / Super Sayin Publishing (BMI) Universal Music Z Songs (BMI)

"Happy Birthday"

Written by Patty Hill / Mildred J. Hill

Warner/Chappell Music

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