



WHAT IF FOOD WASTE
COULD FEED THE HUNGRY?

THEATER OF LIFE

Theater of Life

Peter Svatek

2016 | 94 min

A National Film Board of Canada – Triplex Films International co-production

Quotes

"The fundamental question is: What does the theme 'to feed the planet' mean?"

– Chef Massimo Bottura

"It's a simple gesture that belongs to everybody: the responsibility to take care of people in dire straits."

– Chef René Redzepi

"The real issue is, there are 1 billion people overeating and 1 billion people that don't have access to food. So it's a matter of balance—wherever you are in the world."

– Chef Alain Ducasse

"When you have a limited choice of things to work with, then you can do great things."

– Chef Andoni Luis Aduriz

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In an extraordinary soup kitchen in Milan, two vastly different worlds have been brought together by a unique social experiment. Theater of Life captures the remarkable relationship forged between the finest haute cuisine chefs in the world and the city's most disadvantaged groups: refugees, recovering drug addicts, former sex workers, and a host of others with no place else to go.

For Expo Milano 2015, renowned chef Massimo Bottura, whose Osteria Francescana was named world's best restaurant in 2016, invited 60 of his international confrères to join him in transforming food destined for the dumpster into delicious and nutritious meals for Italy's hungriest residents. But the documentary delves far deeper than this important food story: it captures the moving encounters of guests at the soup kitchen who have found a welcoming community there, showing us glimpses of their heart and soul in the process.

A visual feast in itself, Theater of Life puts a human face on its powerful message of social justice while raising awareness about the enormous environmental impact of food waste.

LONG SYNOPSIS

In an extraordinary soup kitchen in Milan, two vastly different worlds have been brought together by a unique social experiment. Theater of Life captures the remarkable relationship forged between the finest haute cuisine chefs in the world and the city's most disadvantaged groups: refugees, recovering drug addicts, former sex workers, and a host of others with no place else to go.

Renowned chef Massimo Bottura, whose Osteria Francescana was named world's best restaurant in 2016, asked 60 international chefs to join him in transforming food destined for the dumpster into delicious and nutritious meals for Italy's hungriest residents. But Theater of Life goes far deeper than just detailing this important food story. It captures the moving encounters of guests at the soup kitchen who have found a welcoming community there, showing us glimpses of their heart and soul.

When Bottura was invited to create gourmet meals for the elite during the 2015 world's fair, Expo Milano, he said no. He wanted to do something far more meaningful: to prove that the tons of food that go to waste every day could be put to good use instead, and that haute cuisine chefs aren't just purveyors of elite fare for posh clientele. They care about the hungry and understand our collective responsibility to help others.

Among the top chefs lending Bottura a hand are Canadians Jeremy Charles of St. John's, Newfoundland, John Winter Russell from Montreal, and John Higgins and Dario Tomaselli from Toronto, alongside international stars like Ferran Adrià, René Redzepi and Alain Ducasse. They've all become engaged in Bottura's vision for sustainable cooking, relishing the experience of gathering around a table with their hungry guests to share a meal in the beautiful Refettorio Ambrosiano. Decorated by Italy's finest artists and artisans, this 21st-century refectory is now a place in which to nourish the less fortunate in dignity.

and generosity, to feed the spirit as much as the stomach. As Bottura says, “This is not charity. It is culture.”

We get to know several of the Refettorio’s guests, including a homeless Italian couple squatting in a small train station near Milan; a young Nigerian refugee who escaped a prostitution ring; a Jordanian migrant battling to survive on the streets; a disabled Senegalese woman trying to begin a new life; and a recovered junkie attempting to keep others from falling into the same trap. We follow them in and away from the Refettorio, which has become an emotional meeting ground for the guests and chefs—a place where everyone’s story is heard and respected.

A visual feast in itself, Theater of Life puts a human face on its powerful message of social justice while raising awareness about the enormous environmental impact of food waste. Made in association with Phi Films, the film is produced by the NFB and Triplex Films, presented by the NFB and Seville International, and directed by Montreal filmmaker Peter Svatek.

In documenting life in and around the Refettorio, Svatek, producer Josette Gauthier of Triplex, NFB producer Annette Clarke and their crew have served up, as Bottura describes the experience, “a dish from the heart.”

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

From the outset, what fascinated me was the meeting of two worlds that don’t seem to fit together at all: the world of haute cuisine—the best chefs in the world, with Massimo Bottura leading the way—and the world of the poor and hungry of Milan. That said, there is a movement among the very best chefs to make their cooking more relevant to real-world issues like poverty and food waste. Massimo says in the film that chefs can no longer cook just for the elite while ignoring ethical issues about how the rest of the planet is fed.

The Refettorio fed some of Milan’s many homeless, as well as refugees from Africa and the Middle East—part of Europe’s current migrant crisis. Most who ate at the Refettorio had never heard of any of the famous chefs. Would they care? Would it mean anything more than any free soup-kitchen meal?

But the philosophy of the Refettorio was different from that of most soup kitchens. There were no lineups. Food was served restaurant-style by volunteers. The place was beautiful, decorated by Italy’s finest artists and artisans. It became a homelike environment. The same guests returned every day. Relationships were formed. So the question arises: What is “home” for a homeless person or a political refugee?

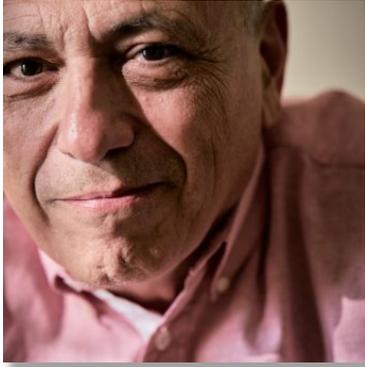
These are the questions the film tackles.

I also wanted to go deeper to humanize the story. To get to know the people the Refettorio fed, as well as the chefs. To see the ethical questions through their eyes as much as the chefs’.

I love the title *Theater of Life*. The Refettorio was built in an abandoned theatre. Where actors once portrayed real life, real life took over. The film is, I hope, a moving, human, compassionate look at the Refettorio and what happened there.

- **Peter Svatek**

DIRECTOR BIO



Peter Svatek

Born in Prague, Montreal-based Peter Svatek is a visionary director who has written and directed many award-winning documentary and fiction films, including the acclaimed *Call of the Wild*. He began his career with the National Film Board in the 1970s. He is the co-founder (with Josette Gauthier) of Triplex Films, a successful documentary production company. Prior to *Theater of Life*, Peter's most recent documentary feature was *Takedown: The DNA of GSP*, the story of UFC welterweight champion Georges St-Pierre, nominated for several 2015 Canadian Screen Awards. Other recent documentaries include *Stolen Babies*, *Stolen Lives* (writer/director), highlighting the grown children of women who disappeared during Argentina's Dirty War, and *Targets: Reporters in Iraq* (writer/producer). Recent fictional works include the two-part U.S. miniseries *Everything She Ever Wanted* (director) and *The Christmas Choir* (director), based on the true story of a man who volunteers at a homeless shelter and forms a choir made up of its residents.

PRODUCER, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BIO



Josette Gauthier

Josette Gauthier is president of Triplex Films, which specializes in socially minded documentary films. After working for many years in all aspects of the film industry, it was her passion for photography that brought her to documentary filmmaking. The power of images, the stories they tell, and the social issues that drive them are what inspire the documentaries Josette has produced, which have touched audiences around the world. Among them: *Human Nature*, an acclaimed four-hour series on human emotion; *Targets: Reporters in Iraq*, the harrowing tale of journalists kidnapped by Al Qaeda, directed by acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Maziar Bahari and filmed during the war; *Stolen Babies*, *Stolen Lives*, the wrenching story of babies stolen during Argentina's Dirty War; and *Takedown: The DNA of GSP*, the stunning feature-length documentary about UFC world

champion Georges St-Pierre, released theatrically in Canada in 2014. “I love the process of delving deeply into the lives of our subjects—taking the time that requires, developing the relationships and trust that is needed—to make films that have the power to move us and illuminate the social issues they raise.”

PRODUCER



Annette Clarke

Annette Clarke is an accomplished producer whose award-winning films challenge stereotypes and bring diverse voices to the forefront. For the past 25 years, she has collaborated with both emerging and established talent to tell powerful, transformative stories. As Executive Producer for NFB’s Quebec-Atlantic studio, Annette has met cattle rustlers in Kenya, foreign workers in Labrador, the endangered bluefin tuna, rock-star chefs decrying food waste, and an animated young girl who copes with her mom’s mental illness by losing herself in the imaginary world of books. Annette’s recent producer credits include *Vive la rose* (2009, TIFF and Sundance), *The Chocolate Farmer* (2010, Hot Docs, RIDM), *Flawed* (2010, Hot Docs, Silverdocs, double honours at PSIFF, Emmy nomination), *The Boxing Girls of Kabul* (2011, IDFA and CSA for best documentary short), *Hard Light* (2012, FIFA Jury Award), *Buying Sex* (2013, Hot Docs), *Danny* (2014, Hot Docs Big Ideas series), *54 Hours* (2014, Yorkton Founder’s Award), *Gunrunners* (2015, Hot Docs) and *Hand. Line. Cod.* (2016, TIFF)

MASSIMO BOTTURA BIOGRAPHY

Massimo Bottura was born in 1962 in Modena, a small city in Emilia-Romagna, in the Po River Valley. In a country of the richest culinary tradition, Emilia is arguably its finest region—the home of Parmigiano-Reggiano, the best prosciutto and culatello, Lambrusco wine, and of course the best balsamic vinegar in the world.

Bottura grew up in a well-to-do family. His mother, Luisa, loved to cook for her daughter and four sons. Massimo was the youngest and from an early age was drawn to the kitchen. He began to cook in high school for his friends.

After high school he studied law, but ended up working for his father in the fuel business. Yet Massimo’s heart was elsewhere. One of his brothers told him about a cheap trattoria for sale just outside Modena. He scraped together the bit of money he needed and bought the place. The trattoria, called Campazzo,

was a trucker hangout. Business was bad, but Massimo began experimenting. That drove the truckers away, but his friends came and the crowd got younger.

He absorbed a lot about local cooking from a woman he hired to help cook, Lidia Cristoni. Under her influence, Massimo cooked traditional Modena meals. He also learned French cooking from a chef who opened a restaurant nearby. With Campazzo gaining a reputation, Massimo opened a club in town for his friends, where he would cook in the evenings. It became *the* cool place in Modena.

The restless, ambitious Massimo decided it was time to grow again. In his early thirties, he went to New York and found work at an Italian restaurant while living the life in New York City. He met his wife to be, Lara Gilmore, at the restaurant.

Back in Modena, while Massimo was trying to close Campazzo in order to open a new restaurant, famed French chef Alain Ducasse arrived for lunch one day and was so impressed, he invited Massimo to work at the Hôtel de Paris in Monaco. Ducasse became his third mentor.

When he returned to Italy, Lara followed, and in 1994, in Modena, they began to look for his next restaurant together. On a small side street of old Modena, not far from where he grew up, the Osteria Francescana was born.

Francescana began to garner a reputation. In 1999, Ferran Adrià arrived for dinner one night. He was already the world's foremost culinary innovator, with his renowned elBulli restaurant in Girona, Spain. Adrià became Massimo's last mentor. Massimo spent the summer of 2000 at elBulli. There, he met another young chef working for Adrià, René Redzepi, the chef and founder of Copenhagen's Noma restaurant and now also one of the world's leading chefs. They became and have remained close friends.

Massimo credits Adrià with teaching him freedom. Freedom from the tyranny of French cooking that had dominated haute cuisine for a century. Freedom to look locally at **his own terroir and its great** tradition. But mainly, freedom to listen to his own voice.

CHEFS INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT

Gaston Acurio

Astrid y Gastón, Lima, Peru

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/gaston-acurio

Ferran Adrià

eBullifoundation, Roses, Girona, Spain

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/ferran-adria

Andoni Luis Aduriz

Mugaritz, Errenteria, Spain

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/andoni-luis

Alex Atala

D.O.M., São Paulo, Brazil

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/alex-atala

Mario Batali

Babbo, Eataly NYC, New York City

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/mario-batali

Jeremy Charles

Raymonds, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/jeremy-charles

Mauro Colagreco

Mirazur, Menton, France

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/mauro-colagreco

ALAIN DUCASSE

Alain Ducasse au Plaza Athénée, Paris

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/alain-ducasse

Luca Fantin

Ristorante Luca Fantin, Tokyo

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/luca-fantin

David Hertz

Gastromotiva, São Paulo, Brazil

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/david-hertz

Daniel Humm

Eleven Madison Park, New York City

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/daniel-humm

Virgilio Martínez

Central Restaurante, Lima, Peru

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/virgilio-martinez

Yoshihiro Narisawa

Narisawa, Tokyo

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/yoshihiro-narisawa

René Redzepi

Noma, Copenhagen

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/rene-redzepi

Joan Roca

El Celler de Can Roca, Girona, Spain

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/joan-roca

Ana Ros

Hisa Franko, Kobarid, Slovenia

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/ana-ros

John Winter Russell

Candide Restaurant, Montreal, Canada

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/john-winter-russell

Website: restaurantcandide.com

The Santini Family

Del Pescatore, Mantova, Italy

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/the-santini-family

Viviana Varese

Ristorante Alice, Milan

theateroflifemovie.com/en/characters#the-chefs/viviana-varese

PATRICK WATSON AND THE BARR BROTHERS – Performing “Like a Rolling Stone”

Patrick Watson (born 1979) is a [Canadian singer-songwriter](#) from [Montreal, Quebec](#). Patrick Watson is also the name of the eponymous band formed by Watson, whose blend of [cabaret pop](#) and [classical music](#) influences with [indie rock](#) has been compared to the work of [Rufus Wainwright](#), [Andrew Bird](#), [Nick Drake](#), [Jeff Buckley](#) and [Pink Floyd](#) for its experimental musicianship. Patrick Watson’s album [Close to Paradise](#) was awarded the [Polaris Music Prize](#) in 2007.

The Barr Brothers is a [folk](#) quartet founded in [Montreal, Quebec](#), consisting of [Andrew](#) and [Brad Barr](#) (of [The Slip](#)), Sarah Page and Andres Vial.

Andrew and Brad Barr began their music careers in Boston, Massachusetts, as part of the improv-based trio [The Slip](#). At the conclusion of a show in Montreal in 2003 at Le Swimming, a fire broke out in the sound booth, setting off alarms the moment the encore ended, causing the whole bar to be evacuated. When everyone was forced out onto the street, Andrew met a native Montrealer after offering her his coat. That chance encounter led to a relationship that created a bond between the brothers and the city.

One year later, Andrew and Brad Barr relocated to Montreal and became neighbours with harpist Sarah Page. Along with Andres Vial, they formed the Barr Brothers. Their debut, self-titled LP was released on September 27, 2011, via [Secret City Records](#). In anticipation of the album release, lead single “Beggar in the Morning” debuted on [Paste Magazine](#). The band was invited to play the Osheaga Festival 2011 and toured North America throughout the fall promoting their debut record.

THE REFETTORIO AMBROSIANO PROJECT

For Expo Milano 2015, chef Massimo Bottura had the idea of opening a very special soup kitchen that would feed the poor and homeless of Milan with meals prepared using waste food from the Expo. Davide Rampello, the curator of the Expo's main theme pavilion—Pavilion Zero—soon joined the project. Together they turned to the Vatican for help.

Cardinal Angelo Scola of Milan was immediately enthusiastic and asked Caritas Ambrosiana, the Church's charitable arm in Milan, to run the soup kitchen. Wanting the Refettorio Ambrosiano to help a neglected area of Milan, a site was selected in Greco, a modest working neighbourhood. Don Giuliano, the parish priest of Greco, suggested an abandoned theatre next to his church. The Refettorio Ambrosiano was born.

theateroflifemovie.com/en/refettorio-ambrosiano

Massimo Bottura and his wife, Lara Gilmore, created the Food for Soul Foundation to open more refettorios around the world. The first is in Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Summer Olympics.

foodforsoul.it

Credits

THEATER OF LIFE

Written and Directed by
Peter Svatek

Edited by
Eric Robichon

Director of Photography
Nicolas Venne

Camera
Giancarlo Migliore
Nicola Baraglia

Photographed by
Giancarlo Migliore
Nicolas Venne
Nicola Baraglia

Produced by
Josette Gauthier
Annette Clarke
Peter Svatek

Featuring
Massimo Bottura
and
(in alphabetical order)
Gastón Acurio

Ferran Adrià
Andoni Luis Aduriz
Alex Atala
Mario Batali
Jeremy Charles
Mauro Colagreco
Alain Ducasse
Luca Fantin
David Hertz
Daniel Humm
Virgilio Martínez
Yoshihiro Narasawa
René Redzepi
Ana Ros
John Winter Russell
The Santini Family
Viviana Varese
Christiana Acha
Stefania Bassania
Fatou Dieng
Fawaz Naser
Giorgio Papetti
Marco Rossi
Salvatore Salici
Eligio Sbarufatti
Emanuele Colombo
Lidia Cristoni
Fabrizia Ferrari
Lara Gilmore
Davide Rampello
Cristina Reni
Don Giuliano Savina

Original Music
Antoine Binette Mercier

“Like a Rolling Stone”
Performed by
Patrick Watson
and
The Barr Brothers

Sound Design and Sound Editing
Mélanie Gauthier

Research and Fixer
Elena Dal Pra

Additional Photography
Matteo Urbinati
Carlotta Marrucci
Marco Caddeo

Sound Recording
Nicola Baraglia
Marco Caddeo
Riccardo Baldoni
Riccardo Napoli

Assistant Director
Giuseppe Carrieri

Production Coordinator
Carlotta Marrucci

Production Assistants
Riccardo Napoli
Barbara Vivino

Still Photography
Alberto Bobbera
Ellie Yonova

Music and Graphics Consultant
Kris Manchester

Translation
Italian – **Silvia Accardi, Elena dal Pra, Marija Zivkovic**
Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan – **Nicolas Gulino**
French – **Josette Gauthier, Elric Robichon**
Japanese – **Setsumi Katagiri**

Transcription
Daniel Svatek
Marija Zivkovic

LIAISONS

Refettorio Ambrosiano
Cristina Reni
Fabrizia Ferrari

Caritas
Luciano Gualzetti
Marzia Molteni

Osteria Francescana
Lara Gilmore
Enrico Vignoli

Davide Rampello
Tania di Bernardi

Song Credits
"Like a Rolling Stone"
(Italian cover)

Written by
Bob Dylan

Performed by
Misstress Barbara

Used with permission by
Special Rider Music

"Like a Rolling Stone"
(Italian cover)

Written by
Bob Dylan

Performed by
Marco Rossi

Used with permission by
Special Rider Music

“Like a Rolling Stone”

Written by
Bob Dylan

Performed by
Patrick Watson
and
The Barr Brothers

Used with permission by
Special Rider Music

Musicians

String Quartet – Mommies on the Run

Mélanie Bélair, violin

Mélanie Vaugeois, violin

Ligia Paquin, viola

Annie Gadbois, cello

Claude Lamothe, additional cello

Antoine Binette Mercier, steel drums and percussion

Robbie Kuster, drums and percussion

Patrick Watson, piano/vocals

Brad Barr, guitar/vocals

Andrew Barr, percussion

Music Score Mix

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Post-Production Assistant

Mylène Augustin

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Lian Benoit

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Alberto Bobbera

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Lian Benoit
Mélanie Bouchard

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Serge Boivin

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Dominique Aubry
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John Chretien

Fiscal and Auditing Services
Hecht, Heft, Lamoureux

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Globalex

Interim Financing
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Associate Producer for Phi Films
Emmanuelle Héroux

Executive Producers
Josette Gauthier
Annette Clarke

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Produced in Association with



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TRIPLEXFILMS



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About the NFB

The NFB is Canada's public producer of award-winning creative documentaries, auteur animation, and groundbreaking interactive stories, installations and participatory experiences. NFB producers are deeply embedded in communities across the country, working with talented artists and creators in production studios from St. John's to Vancouver, on projects that stand out for their excellence in storytelling, their innovation, and their social resonance. NFB productions have won over 5,000 awards, including 15 Canadian Screen Awards, 17 Webbys, 12 Oscars and more than 90 Genies. To access many of these works, visit NFB.ca or download the NFB's apps for mobile devices and connected TV.

About Triplex Films

Triplex Films is a documentary production house based in Montreal. Founded by producer Josette Gauthier and award-winning writer/director Peter Svatek, it specializes in powerful documentary films about people and important social issues. "We make very few films, because we only make films we're passionate about, and they take a long time," says Gauthier. Recent Triplex films include *Stolen Babies*, *Stolen Lives*; *Targets: Reporters in Iraq*; and *Takedown: The DNA of GSP*.