

"The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting".

Czech writer Milan Kundera

Statement of Intent.

Join us on a journey through some of America's most exciting, turbulent and epochal years, with one of its most dynamic figures as your guide. Harry Bridges' life inspires people to come together in their communities, discover their own history and build a better future. We are excited to introduce you to our work.....

The Harry Bridges Project develops programs that fill an important void in the American public's understanding of their own history. The story of workers' struggles to build better lives for themselves and the struggles of the American labor movement to organize are often ignored or glossed over in our educational system and in our media. Many of the major events of the 20th Century are hardly touched on: the Depression, the New Deal, the rise of the labor movement, McCarthyism and the Cold War. These are events that directly affected the lives of all Americans then, and continue to affect us today in the form of globalization and global responsibilities, wars on terrorism, issues of surveillance and privacy, and the widening gap between rich and poor. Engaging in dialogue and debate about these issues can help us to move beyond the fears and limitations they create and take charge of our own lives.

The One-Man Play.

This multi-media one-act play, approximately one hour long, is a human portrayal of Bridges' passion, struggles and wicked sense of humor. It features many of his own words – from his rallying speeches of the 1930's to the high drama and comic absurdity of his trials – and covers his life from his childhood in Australia until near his retirement in the 1970's. It includes the 1934 General Strike in San Francisco, the hearings and trials, his marriages and divorces, the constant controversy of a union involved in social and political issues, and the groundbreaking Mechanization and Modernization agreement. It features rare labor songs and archival photographs and footage, and is an exciting and entertaining way to explore 50 years of American history. A performance includes the audio/ visuals, props, program notes and, if wanted, a pre-show talk about the issues involved. The simple stage design adapts to any situation and space.

A dialogue with Ian Ruskin about Harry Bridges, the Project and writing/performing the play can follow the performance.

"Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it".

Spanish Philosopher and Poet George Santayana

**WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT
THE HARRY BRIDGES PROJECT'S ONE-MAN PLAY
"FROM WHARF RATS TO LORDS OF DOCKS"**

*"Harry Bridges is one of the most important labor leaders of the 20th century.
Ian Ruskin has captured his persona and his ideas brilliantly"*

Howard Zinn
Historian, Playwright and Social Activist

"...his vibrant performance brought this slice of history alive."

Susan Goldstein, City Archivist
San Francisco Public Library

"...a wonderful example of performance as a powerful tool."

Elise Bryant, Senior Staff Associate
National Labor College, George Meany Center
Washington, D.C.

*"His dramatic effort...has moved to tears even some battle-scarred veterans of the great 1934
San Francisco General Strike"*

Carl T. Hall
San Francisco Chronicle

*"The audience of 1,000 people was spell bound and showed their enthusiasm
with a standing ovation."*

Diane Middleton, Founder
Diane Middleton Foundation
San Pedro, CA

"I sat mesmerized as Harry Bridges spoke to me across the decades of American history."

Leo DuBois, Patron
Kauai Community College Theater
Kapaa, Kauai

"... it was the highlight of our conference."

Peter Jones, Executive Director
Labor Heritage Foundation
Washington, D.C.

"He's incredible, you'd swear you were seeing and hearing Harry Bridges."

Grif Fariello

Harry Bridges.

Australian born Bridges was a labor leader and social campaigner whose impact on the fabric of American life during the 20th century was profound and far-reaching. From 1930 until the early 1970's he was a national and international figure. His work as a labor organizer in the forefront of change, his struggles to withstand 21 years of deportation trials (the longest in American history) and his campaigns for justice and equality made him a unique figure.

He fought to win basic rights and human dignity for workers and to build a sense of community that would include people of all racial, ethnic, religious and political backgrounds. The successful struggle of West Coast dock workers, "Wharf Rats" as they were known, to achieve decent working conditions and become the "Lords of the Docks", was one of the first important union victories following the enactment of the National Industrial Recovery Act and the Wagner Act in the 1930's. Their success inspired and encouraged groups of workers across America to organize.

The principles for which Bridges campaigned are as relevant today as they were during the harshness of the Great Depression. He campaigned against prejudice and discrimination and in support of justice for oppressed peoples around the world. These are issues directly linked to today's world of the multi-national corporation, the WTO, NAFTA and the increasing plight of much of the world's workforce. His union, the ILWU, continues as a vibrant, independent force in the labor movement.

Bridges personal life was as vivid and compelling as his public life. Two marriages ended in bitter divorces, but a third marriage to a Japanese-American changed the anti-miscegenation laws of western states. He had his "Hollywood era", with star-studded fund-raisers for his trials. He was always, in his own words, a "working stiff", but also a man who met with Presidents and toured Europe as a hero. He knew Charlie Chaplin, Paul Robeson, Billie Holiday, Pete Seeger and Orson Welles. When Nelson Mandela visited America, Bridges was the first man he thanked for his stands against Apartheid. A man with a Marxist philosophy who spent 21 years fighting to become an American citizen, he was a truly unique character, with a sharp sense of humor, a fearlessness in the face of controversy and a very individual view of the world.

Resume for Ian Ruskin

♦ Education –

The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London..... 1966-1970

♦ In England, Ian worked in repertory theater, London's West End (where roles included the title role in "Jack the Ripper") television (including the Laurence Olivier "King Lear") and film. In Los Angeles, his work has ranged from "Murder She Wrote" to the acclaimed one-man play "The Man Himself". He has also done extensive voice work in radio plays, commercials and in over one hundred films and television programs.

♦ Current Professional Positions

- Founder and Director of The Harry Bridges Project
- Honorary Board Member, The Harry Bridges Institute
- Independent Scholar

♦ Dramatic Performances/Presentations/Appearances as Bridges (written by Ian Ruskin)

- 1994- "Citizen! The Harry Bridges Story" as Bridges (written by Rob Sullivan)
 1996- "An Evening With Harry" for the Harry Bridges Institute, San Pedro, Ca
 1998- HBI Awards Dinner, Portland, Or
 1999- ILWU Local 4, Vancouver, Wa
 ILWU Local 40, Portland, Or
 HBI Awards Dinner, Portland, Or
 ILWU Pacific Coast Pensioners Convention, Vancouver, British Columbia
 The University of Washington Harry Bridges Chair Conference, Seattle, Wa
 2000- The ILWU Convention, Portland, Or
 Local 10 Bloody Thursday, San Francisco, Ca
 The Pacific Northwest Labor History Association Conference, Tacoma, Wa
 The ILWU Pensioners Convention, San Francisco, Ca
 HBI Awards Dinner, Longview, Wa
 The Diane Middleton Foundation Conference, San Pedro, Ca
 LaborFest 2000, San Francisco, Ca
 2001- The ILWU Pensioners Convention, Seattle, Wa
 Local 10 Bloody Thursday, San Francisco, Ca
 Laborfest at the Labor Temple Benefit, San Francisco
 Banning's Landing, Wilmington
 Los Angeles Maritime Museum
 San Francisco Main Library, Auditorium
 The Tall Ship Balclutha, San Francisco Bay
 Southern California Library for Social Studies & Ed.
 Citizens of Leisure World
 Federation of Retired Union Members, AFL-CIO
 University of Washington Summer Arts Festival, Seattle
 The Warner Grand Theatre, San Pedro as part of the 100th birthday celebrations
 Local 10 for the 100th birthday celebrations
 University of Hawai'i, East Manoa campus, Honolulu
 Tour of Hawai'i (Oahu, Maui, Kauai and Hawai'i) sponsored by the University of Hawai'i

- 2002 – Workman’s Circle, Los Angeles
 Hamilton High School, Los Angeles
 Oakland Museum of California
 UCLA, Los Angeles
 Pacific Unitarian Church, Torrance
 American Federation of Teachers, Los Angeles
 Cal Poly Pomona
 San Francisco Museum and Historical Society
 Historical Society of Long Beach
 Masters, Mates and Pilots Association, Baltimore
 University of Oregon, Eugene
 First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles
 California Federation of Labor Delegates, San Francisco
 ILWU Pensioners Convention, Wilmington, California
 The New Theater, Sydney, Australia
- 2003 – US Merchant Marine Academy, King’s Point, New York
 SEIU Local 49, Portland, Oregon
 SEIU Shop Stewards Conference, Eugene, Oregon
 ILWU Convention, San Francisco
 San Francisco Maritime Museum
 Western Labor Communications Association, Pasadena
 15 performances in Hawai’i (on four islands)
 Laborfest, San Francisco
 Warner Grand Theater, San Pedro, California (filming)
 United Teachers of Los Angeles, Palm Springs
 ILWU Local 21, Longview, WA
 ILWU Local 8, Portland, OR
 ILWU Pensioners Convention, Portland, OR
 Unitarian Church, Los Angeles
 Hawai’i Local 142 Convention, Honolulu
 Harry Bridges Institute Dinner, Wilmington
 ACT Theatre, Seattle
 University of Washington School of Drama, Seattle
 Washington State History Museum, Tacoma
 California Federation of Teachers, San Francisco
- 2004 – 27 high schools in San Mateo County and the Los Angeles/harbor area
 Project Censor – Sonoma State University
 ILWU Canada Convention, Vancouver, BC
 Masters Mates & Pilots Association, Baltimore
 May Day Labor Film Festival, Santa Cruz
 Laborfest Film Festival, San Francisco
 ILWU Longshore Conference, Palm Springs
 ILWU Pensioners Convention, Vancouver, Canada
 AFSCME Convention, Manhattan Beach
 3 performances at Massey Theater, Vancouver, Canada
- 2005 – Oxnard Public Library
 5 performances at ILWU Local 13, Wilmington
 SEIU Stewards Conference, Portland, Oregon
 San Diego Public Library
 8 high schools in San Mateo County
 6 high schools in the San Francisco/Oakland areas
 San Francisco Museum and Historical Society
 ILWU Local 8, Portland, Oregon
 California Teachers Association

ILWU Conference, Honolulu, Hawai'i
 Center for Labor Education and Research, University of Hawai'i
 ILWU Pensioners Convention, San Francisco
 Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Sonoma State University
 ILWU Leadership and Development Institute, Palm Springs, California
 Valley Cities Jewish Community Center, Sherman Oaks, California
 ILWU Canada, Vancouver, B.C.

2006 – California Teachers Association Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada
 IBEW Local 1245, Vacaville, California
 Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, University of Washington, Seattle
 University of Washington School of Drama, Seattle
 ILWU Locals 23 and 19 joint session, Tacoma, Washington
 Pacific Northwest Labor History Association Conference, Portland, Oregon
 4 high schools in the Los Angeles/harbor area
 California Teachers Association Summer Institute, UCLA
 Unitarian Universalist Church of Santa Monica
 Pacific Resident Theatre, Venice (4 performances)
 International Labor Communications Association, at the AFL-CIO Headquarters,
 Washington, DC
 California Federation of Teachers, Oakland

2007 – (confirmed)
 the Western Workers Labor Heritage Festival, Burlingame, California
 5 IBEW Locals in California
 Washington State History Museum, Tacoma, Washington
 Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington
 AFL-CIO Lawyers Coordinating Committee, Chicago, Illinois

♦ **Other Recent and Current Projects.**

Produced, wrote and narrated the radio documentary “From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks: the Life and Times of Harry Bridges”, distributed by PRI, Public Radio International, as a Labor Day 2000 Special
 Produced, wrote and narrated the radio documentary “From Piers to Plantations, a Union in Hawai'i”, premiered on Hawai'i Public Radio, Labor Day, 2001
 Developing two educational projects
 Plans for a major traveling museum exhibition
 Completed and now perform a new one-man play “From Piers to Plantations” about the ILWU in Hawai'i
 Completed “Harry and John”, a new two-man play about the relationship between Harry Bridges and John L. Lewis
 An oral history film about the life and work of Arbitrator Sam Kagel is in post production
 A short documentary about the Modernization and Mechanization Agreement between the ILWU and the PMA is complete.
 The film version of “From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks”, directed and shot by multi Academy Award winner Haskell Wexler, was shown at special coast-wide screenings on September 4th. It is now available on DVD and for distribution.