

# Ira Glass

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Zellerbach Hall

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Ira Glass is the host and producer of the documentary radio program *This American Life*, which is heard each week by over 1.4 million listeners on over 400 public radio stations.

Under Glass' editorial direction, the program has won the highest honors for broadcasting and journalistic excellence: the Peabody and duPont-Columbia awards, as well as the Robert F. Kennedy Award. The American Journalism Review and Brill's Content have declared that the show is "at the vanguard of a journalistic revolution." It has attracted continuous national media attention in its years on the air, in *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and numerous other publications, as well as through television appearances on *Late Night with David Letterman*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. In 2001, *Time* magazine named Ira Glass "Best Radio Host in America."

*This American Life* combines documentary journalism with other types of storytelling: radio monologues, found tapes, short fiction, and interviews. Sidestepping sensationalism, Glass and his staff serve up narrative epics that pinpoint, in the tradition of Studs Terkel, the unusual and poetic in the everyday. The program had its premiere on Chicago's public radio station, WBEZ, in November 1995, and went national in June of 1996.

Glass began his career as an intern at National Public Radio's network headquarters in Washington, DC, in 1978, when he was 19 years old. After that, he worked on nearly every NPR network news program and did virtually every production job in NPR's Washington headquarters. He has been a tape cutter, newscast writer, desk assistant, editor, and producer. He has also filled in as host of *Talk of the Nation* and *Weekend All Things Considered*.

From 1989 until 1995, Glass was a reporter in National Public Radio's Chicago Bureau. For two of those years, he covered Chicago school reform for NPR's *All Things Considered*, producing two unusual series of reports: each followed one school for a full year. These stories, which combined emotional and humorous scenes with analysis about the successes and failures of school reform, first brought him to the attention of the public radio audience. During the 1992 presidential campaign, he travelled with the Clinton campaign, and in January 1993, he anchored NPR's live broadcast of the Clinton inauguration.

From 1990 until 1995, Glass co-hosted a weekly, local program on WBEZ called *The Wild Room*, a show that defies easy description.