

3

Bill Pohlad

Producer & Director

After a more than 20-year hiatus, Bill Pohlad, who normally sits in the producer's chair, returned to the directing chair for the film *Love & Mercy*. The film centers on Brian Wilson, the mercurial singer, songwriter and leader of The Beach Boys. The film has opened to rave reviews and is considered among the top films of 2015 thus far. Pohlad is no stranger to success. He has been involved with the creation of some of the most significant films of the past decade including Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* and Steve McQueen's *Twelve Years a Slave*, both of which have received multiple Academy Awards. As founder and CEO of River Road Entertainment, Pohlad seeks out compelling material and is unafraid to take creative risks. He is most proud of continuing his family's legacy of giving back to the community through the Pohlad Foundation, focusing on rehabilitating communities and providing assistance to underprivileged youth.

Photograph Courtesy of Lionsgate Home Entertainment



What is your greatest professional accomplishment? Directing my last film, *Love & Mercy*. It was my first time directing in many years, and it has always been my lifelong ambition, so getting back to it was a huge deal. **What cause do you most identify with?** Kids and underprivileged families are what my family and I are most interested in. We try to figure out ways to help people get every opportunity they can and get them where they want to go. **Who is the person you most admire, and why?** It's the guy who doesn't have a lot, but gets up every morning goes at it, and tries to make the best of everyday. I admire people like that - the people out there who are dealing with everyday stuff. **When was the last time you were truly afraid?** It was just before I started directing *Love & Mercy*. I had a bit of a health scare, and it turned out to be nothing. At the time, I thought I was dying though, but it was just part of the stress related to directing a movie. In the end, I channeled that energy into *Love & Mercy*. **If you could change one law, what would it be?** This is a tough one, and it is political. I would like to address the issue of gun violence. How to do that and satisfy everyone is another story, but I would try to reduce the violence in both our country and the world. How that relates to individual law gets a lot more complicated. **Advice for an aspiring producer or director?** It starts by believing in yourself and following your passion. I know it might sound corny,

but you really have to focus on your passion to drive yourself forward and keep your point of view. The business is a tough one, and you may be forced to work on projects you're not proud of or passionate about. Or you might lose confidence in yourself and drift in other directions. At the end of the day, we are all artists, and it's a matter of channeling your personality into the things you do, sticking with the work, and being true to your perspective and passions. **Favorite... Character from fiction:** Pip, from *Great Expectations*. **Flavor:** Coffee. **Curse word:** I don't curse. **Stress reliever:** Listening to music. **Recent invention:** Fire. **Least favorite... Trend:** The move away from communal experiences. **Word:** I can't say it. **Food:** Mushrooms. **Feeling:** Anger. **Sound:** Crying. **In your opinion, what is the greatest threat currently facing humanity?** Our inability to relate to one another and try to see things from another point of view. It affects the way we handle situations and interactions, both personally and globally. I fear we are losing our ability to sympathize or empathize with each other. **How do you define love?** The desire to connect with somebody, care for them, trust them and believe in them — and to stay with them even when you don't feel like doing all those things.