16 April 2024

#### **The International Music Documentary Competition DocFilmMusic at the 64th Krakow Film Festival**

##### 

**Eight titles from this year's international DocFilmMusic competition promise both musical and technological discoveries. Here is an extraordinary music festival in Sardinia, a composed conductor, a queer vocalist, a mysterious musician, the creator of the synthesizer, two unconventional duos, and a band that shouldn't exist. A jazz event and musicians of various genres, recorded on vinyl, tapes, film reels, and digitally on phones. Through audio-visual recordings, we can experience not only music but also get closer to unconventional personalities or uncover lesser-known facts from the history of popular culture.**

##### *Like every artist, a musician is subject to particular pressures. Every day, they face new challenges, grapple with creative decline, seek inspiration in drugs, crave the approval of their fans, but often escape from them. They may be forgotten and rediscovered, often only after death. Film leaves them with us forever, with their weaknesses and successes, with records of private moments and stories from industry insiders. We present to you another set of musical cinematic gems,”* comments **Krzysztof Gierat, director of the Krakow Film Festival.**

**Vinyls, Tapes, and Synthesizers**

It begins with a warning: “the deceased appear in the film ***Abebe – Butterfly Song***. Their spirits, along with director **Rosie Jones**, take us on a journey to Papua New Guinea, whose music scene has long been in the shadows. This is largely thanks to George Telek – an artist who sings in indigenous languages, blending Papuan and Western sounds. It's also the story of his creative, over 30-year-long friendship with Australian musician David Bridie, marked by tragic events in Telek's life and the island's history. Music enables an extraordinary intercultural meeting, in spite of the colonial past.

***Blues Run the Game: The Strange Life of Jackson C. Frank*** is a tale of a great revelation and a mysterious disappearance. In 1965, with the help of Paul Simon, musician Jackson C. Frank managed to record his only album, leaving a permanent mark on numerous American and British folk musicians. However, he wasn't able to overcome his demons, which had been haunting him since childhood. Directed by **Damien Aimé Dupont**, the film reconstructs the artist's emotional landscape, shaped by personal tragedies, physical disability, and mental illness. It searches for clues in his songs, places close to him, and memories of those who knew him.

America wasn't ready for such a revolution. In the 1970s, Don Lewis, electronic engineer and musician, built a synthesizer that generated and mixed sounds on an unprecedented scale. However, trade unions protested the invention, fearing it would take jobs away from musicians. Thus, a success story became the tragedy of a man fighting for recognition and battling racial prejudices. The documentary ***Don Lewis and The Live Electronic Orchestra* (dir. Ned Augustenborg)** does the inventor justice by showcasing his immense impact on the development of music – going far beyond just electronic music. Indirectly, it also voices the fears associated with the development of technology.

**VHS, Discs, and Concerts**

Hundreds of hours of archival footage (Omar had been documenting himself and his surroundings since childhood) were turned into an achingly honest depiction of years-long friendship, shared successes, transformations, and setbacks. The film ***Omar and Cedric: If This Ever Gets Weird* (dir. Nicolas Jack Davies)** has the dynamics of progressive rock, which over two decades ago became the domain of the iconic band The Mars Volta. The lives of the founders of the American group – Cedric Bixler and Omar Rodríguez-López – pulsated in similar rhythms. It was truly a wild ride, marked by ethnic distinctness, drugs, outrageus stunts on the stage, and a flirt with Scientology.

Concerts in the forest, in a church, on a cliffs, or a train stations – the Time in Jazz festival is organically connected to the place where it has been held since 1988. Namely, the town of Berchidda in Sardinia, where beautiful natural surroundings let one absorb a number of traditions: from jazz improvisations through world music to street performances of Nino Rota's compositions. The film ***Berchidda Live: A Journey Into Time In Jazz Archive* (dir. Gianfranco Cabiddu, Michele Mellara, Alessandro Rossi)** portrays this entrancing event through both contemporary and archival footage. It is primarily made up of people: artists, festivalgoers, organisers, and local residents.

A performer, provocateur, and a powerhouse of a woman – in the sixth decade of her life, Peaches shows no signs of slowing down. On the contrary, the tour marking the twentieth anniversary of the album *Teaches of Peaches* was an explosion of creativity. And for the filmmakers **Philipp Fussenegger** and **Judy Landkammer**, it was also an opportunity to get to know this subversive artist, an icon of feminism and queer culture, more closely. ***Teaches of Peaches*** is a documentary fuelled by punk energy, yet it's also the heroine's intimate portrait. The camera accompanies the vocalist not only at concerts but also in her Berlin apartment and among friends, while unique archival materials reveal her lesser-known past. Despite the passing years, Peaches' political message remains relevant.

**Smartphones, Streaming, and Stages**

“They're doing a good job for our mental health,” – says one fan. Indeed, the trio from Barcelona helped many survive the lockdown. The songs that Stay Homas recorded on their balcony, broadly addressing the pandemic, went viral. And the group itself gained popularity all over the world, collaborating with artists like Michael Bublé. But – finally – there came a moment when they ceased to be just an internet phenomenon. The documentary ***Stay Homas: The Band That Shouldn't Exist* (dir. Oriol Gispert, Nick Bolger, Ramon Balagué)** tracks the evolution of the band, which, in changing circumstances, starts being professional, search for a fresh tone, and establish a new connection with their audience.

Men in the music industry aren't asked how they balance their careers and parenthood often. The protagonist of ***Joana Mallwitz – Momentum*** responds that having a good team is crucial – both at home and at work. Especially when you're conducting the best European orchestras. In **Günter Atteln's** film, we follow Joana Mallwitz during two pivotal years – when she gives birth to her son and her career accelerates significantly. But whether she's at home, at rehearsals, or in the spotlight, the German conductor strives to prove that perfection at work is just as important as finding the right rhythm in life.

**Films featured in the International Music Documentary Competition**

* *Abebe-Butterfly Song*, dir. Rosie Jones, Australia, 98’, 2023
* *Berchidda Live - A Journey Into Time In Jazz Archive*, dir. Gianfranco Cabiddu, Michele Mellara, Alessandro Rossi, Italy, 93’, 2023
* *Don Lewis And The Live Electronic Orchestra,* dir. Ned Augustenborg, USA, 80’, 2023
* *Blues Run the Game: The Strange Life of Jackson C. Frank,* dir. Damien Aimé Dupont, France, 84’, 2023
* *Joana Mallwitz - Momentum,* dir.Günter Atteln, Germany, 88’, 2024
* *Omar and Cedric: If This Ever Gets Weird,* dir. Nicolas Jack Davies, Germany, 127’, 2023

### *Stay Homas. The Band That Shouldn't Exis*t, dir. Oriol Gispert, Nick Bolger, Ramon Balagué, Spain, 81’, 2024

* *Teaches of Peaches,* dir. Philipp Fussenegger, Judy Landkammer, Germany, 102’, 2024

Passes for the 64th Krakow Film Festival are [on sale now!](https://www.krakowfilmfestival.pl/en/64th-kff/tickets-and-passes-64th-kff/)

The Krakow Film Festival is on the exclusive list of qualifying events for the Oscars® in the categories of short film (live action, animated, documentary) and documentary feature, as well as a recommending event for [the European Film Awards](https://europeanfilmawards.eu/?p=1) in the same categories.

The Kraków Film Festival is organised with the financial support of the Municipality of Kraków, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the European Union's Creative Europe program, the Lesser Poland Province, the Polish Film Institute. The festival is co-organised by the Polish Filmmakers Association.

The 64th Krakow Film Festival will be held in cinemas from 26 May to 2 June and online across Poland on the KFF VOD platform from 31 May to 16 June 2024.