

AS
TIME
GOES
BY
IN SHANGHAI

a film by Uli Gaulke

Press Kit

@

hotdocs

Wed, May 1
Thu, May 2

4:15 PM
9:30 PM

Bloor Hot Docs Cinema
Royal Cinema

Table of Contents

Synopsis	3
Director's Statement	4
Director's CV	6
Jasmine Chen	7
The Peace Hotel	8
North Sea Jazz Festival	9
Production Profile	10
Technical Info / Crew	11
Contacts	12

Synopsis

The oldest band in the world has been playing every evening at the Peace Hotel in Shanghai for more than thirty years. Most band members are now over 80 years old. AS TIME GOES BY IN SHANGHAI accompanies these elderly gentlemen on their greatest adventure yet: a trip to Rotterdam to perform at the North Sea Jazz Festival – the most important festival of its kind. During the final weeks before their appearance, the film immerses itself in a world of unparalleled change. Jazz stands for improvisation, individualism, freedom and creativity. Against the backdrop of great swing and big band hymns, the film charts the fascinating life stories of these six exceptional musicians: from the Japanese occupation to the Cultural Revolution to today's turbo planned economy. With humor, wisdom and a wealth of anecdotes, these men in black suits take us on a tour of their everyday lives in one of the world's most modern cities, and show us how music has given them the strength to weather the storms of time.

Director's Statement

As an eight-year-old boy growing up in East Germany, I was stuffed into a uniform and handed a trumpet. From that point on, I blared just about everything the state-mandated musical repertoire had to offer in the hopes of injecting some merriment into the gray socialist reality. That is until the day the notes of a classic American jazz song landed on my music stand. It was a magical moment when I suddenly felt a whiff of the big wide world blow into my little life.

Then the Berlin Wall came down and everything became possible. I traded in my trumpet for a camera and began making films. Two years ago, I read a magazine story about a band in the booming metropolis Shanghai, which had been stoically playing American jazz every day for the past thirty years. In a city that is continually striving to erase its past, these elderly gentlemen seemed like rocks in the waves, concealing a treasure trove of fantastic stories. What had they experienced during all the tumultuous times in China since catching the jazz bug during their early youth – this very music that cries out for freedom and individuality? With the PEACE OLD JAZZ BAND, I had found a focus for exploring a culture which was completely foreign to me. Having experienced the sweeping political changes in Germany myself, I am interested in how people in other cultures adapt to change, how they re-align their lives and pursue their dreams and longings. There is always some kind of personal link. In this case, it was my own past as a trumpet player and my experiences living in a socialist world. These opened up a small door to the people I wanted to portray.

Even though our musicians could tell wonderful stories, I initially felt little empathy for them. They were always in a hurry to tell their tales and let them quickly vanish behind a brash smile. This was the greatest challenge while making the film: pulling the brakes and finding the time and space where they could have the peace of mind to let their memories re-surface. After much trial and error, I discovered that these moments came during and after meals. Now our real work could begin.

The trip to Holland was the litmus test for getting things moving. We had to create tension to release emotions and feelings. This took the form of the rehearsals and the encounters with the young female singer. I wanted our heroes to reflect upon their lives one last time shortly before embarking upon their great journey. What I didn't want is for them to play a role for me. Without a doubt, they are professional in how they present themselves. But what did they really think and feel? Where were the shady sides in their lives?

It was important for me to look beyond their smiling faces. I wanted to feel the power it takes to revive their memories and feelings on camera. At the same time, I wanted the film to be an ode to the power of jazz music, which always gave meaning to these Chinese musicians' lives regardless of whatever storm they were weathering. Yet they played very badly and came across as tired and weary. How could we develop empathy for them, especially considering their heyday as musicians was part of the distant past? Only their honesty and openness about their feelings could make them convincing, but exactly this was contrary to their nature. So in a way, the film shoot became a battle of cultures between our search for their souls and the musicians' endeavors to hide their innermost beings.

In the end, I chose to focus on Mr. Sun and Mr. Bao – two men whose amiability and dry humor were infectious, and who enjoyed being in front of the camera. In moments such as the flirting scene with the female singer, I can really feel the people I'm portraying and experience a moment of great truth.

My films always show only extracts from life. Looking out from these islands, I try to explain the world to myself, because I believe that much lies hidden here that can help us understand the big picture. I wander through this foreign world with no intentions. I'm more interested in taking on the perspective of those living there. Only then can I understand why they live the way they do and what they think and feel. This is what my film is about.

Uli Gaulke

Director's CV

born 1968 in Schwerin, (East Germany)

- from 1977-1994 Musician (trumpet) in various bands
- 1989 – 1995 Studies of physics, IT and film and theatre studies at the Free University in Berlin
- 1992 – 1995 worked in the legendary Kellerkino Kreuzberg (Berlin)
- 1992 – 1999 worked as a projectionist at the Berlin cinemas INTERNATIONAL, ARSENAL, FILMTHEATER FRIEDRICHSHAIN, etc.
- 1994 Studies at Kaskeline Film Academy Berlin
- 1994 co-founder of the BALASZ Cinema Berlin
- 1995 - 2003 Studies at the Film and Television University "Konrad Wolf"
- since 1999 Director, writer und DoP for film und television
- 1999 Founding of post production house KLONG FILM Berlin
(with projects by directors Castorf, Schlingensief, Griesebach, etc.)
- 2001 German Film Award 'LOLA' for Best Documentary for HAVANNA MI AMOR
- since 2007 Member of the German Film Academy
- Juni 2010 Participant in European Film Academy master class 3D Filmmaking and Storytelling

Theatrical documentaries

Pink Taxi (2009)

80', co-produced by ZDF/Arte, Premiere: Sheffield International Film Festival

Comrades in Dreams (2006)

105', co-produced by Arte/ZDF, Premiere: Official Selection Berlinale 2007, Sundance World Cinema Competition, Hot Docs 2007

Heirate Mich – Casate Conmigo (Marry Me) (2003)

93' co-produced by Arte/ZDF, Premiere: Berlin International Film Festival – Forum.

Havana Mi Amor (2000)

82', co-produced by RBB and HFF "Konrad Wolf", Premiere: Berlin International Film Festival – Forum (Opening Film), German Film Award 'Lola' for Best Documentary 2001

Jasmine Chen

Raised in northeastern China, Jasmine hails from a musical family. Both her mother and father are professional folk dancers and actors. Jasmine began taking piano lessons at age four and went on to study piano performance, contemporary composition and jazz vocal performance at Leeds College of Music in England. During her studies, she took singing lessons with British vocalists Louise Gibbs and Tiona May. After receiving her BA, she moved to Shanghai to work as a vocalist and songwriter. She has performed in Shanghai's main jazz events and venues, including the Shanghai Jazz Festival, JZ Club and The House of Blues and Jazz.

Though Jasmine has developed her own unique jazz voice, she remains true to her Chinese roots. "I love Chinese music, but people don't listen to Chinese folk songs much anymore. I would like to bring these songs back but in a modern way", says Jasmine. As she continues to fuse traditional folk tunes with contemporary jazz styling, Jasmine paves the way for a new generation of Chinese musicians in the international jazz scene.

Her 2008 debut album, "The Color of Love", is a collaboration with Steve Sweeting, and features jazz standards with original Chinese lyrics and reinterpretations of old Chinese folk songs.

The Peace Hotel

The Peace Hotel

The legendary Peace Hotel is one of the most famous hotels in China. Located on the legendary Bund promenade in Shanghai overlooking the Huangpu River, this luxurious Art Deco masterpiece once served as a glamorous playground for the elite.

The Peace Hotel is truly a fusion of ancient and modern, Eastern and Western. Built in the Gothic style of the Chicago School, it first opened as the Cathay Hotel in 1929. The first owner was Victor Sasson. The hotel accommodated guests from all over the world, including politicians, financiers, entrepreneurs, Chinese officials and celebrities such as Charlie Chaplin and George Bernard Shaw.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the municipal government took over the building in 1952, and reopened it four years later under the name "Peace Hotel".

From 2007-2010, the hotel was restored to its original grandeur thanks to an extensive refurbishment program by the Canadian Fairmont Group. The hotel interiors and exteriors were given a dramatic overhaul, and detailed structural studies were conducted to determine the hotel's original floor plan and design.

Old Jazz Bar

One of the six restaurants and lounges of the Peace Hotel, the Jazz Bar is Shanghai's premier destination for jazz and a Shanghai institution since the 1930s. From 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. everyday, the Old Jazz Bar becomes a popular place for Shanghai's expatriate community. The English countryside style bar instantly transports guests back to the private clubs of the 20's and 30's. In 1996, Newsweek magazine declared the Old Jazz Bar the world's best bar. Founded in 1980, the Peace Hotel Old Jazz Band is a Shanghai institution.

North Sea Jazz Festival

The North Sea Jazz Festival is an annual jazz festival held every July in the Netherlands. The first edition of the North Sea Jazz Festival took place in 1976 in the Netherlands Congressgebouw in The Hague. In 2006 the festival relocated to Rotterdam. Founder Paul Acjket, a businessman and jazz lover, wanted to offer audiences a great diversity of jazz music ranging from American jazz to European avant-garde. The first festival featured internationally renowned jazz legends such as Sarah Vaughan, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie and Stan Getz. The festival was an immediate success: six stages, thirty hours of music and 300 performances drew over 9000 visitors.

Since then, the festival has grown to fifteen stages and approximately 25,000 visitors per day. The North Sea Jazz Festival is known worldwide for the many music styles it presents, from traditional new Orleans jazz to swing, bebop, fusion, blues, gospel, funk, soul and drum n bass. It is widely acknowledged as the 'biggest jazz festival in the world'.

Production Company Profile

Flying Moon Filmproduktion GmbH was founded in 1999 by Helge Albers and Roshanak Behesht Nedjad. The company develops and produces audience-oriented feature films and documentaries with an edge, and has a strong focus on international co-productions.

Films produced by Flying Moon have screened successfully at film festivals and been sold around the world. These include award-winning projects such as HAVANNA MI AMOR – Golden Lola (German Oscar) for Best Documentary in 2001, and KHAMOSH PANI – SILENT WATERS – Golden Leopard for Best Fiction Film and Best Actress at the International Film Festival in Locarno in 2003. WAITING FOR THE CLOUDS received the Sundance International Filmmaker's Award for Best European Script in 2003. FULL METAL VILLAGE by Sung-Hyung Cho won the Max Ophüls Award in 2007 and Hessian Film Award in 2006 and became the highest grossing documentary in German cinemas in 2007. PAZAR – THE MARKET by Ben Hopkins received the Best Turkish Film and Best Script awards at the Antalya Film Festival in 2008 and THE LONELIEST PLANET by Julia Loktev the Golden Tulip Award in Istanbul in 2012.

Producer - Helge Albers

Helge Albers studied film production at the Academy of Film and Television “Konrad Wolf” (HFF) in Berlin-Babelsberg. In 1999 he co-founded Flying Moon Filmproduktion GmbH with Roshanak Behesht Nedjad.

Helge Albers is an EAVE graduate and member of the ACE Producer's Network, the German Film Academy and the European Film Academy. He is also active in various funding committees (particularly as the representative of the Documentary Filmmaker's Association at the German Federal Film Fund FFA), in film festival juries, and in the pre-selection committee for the German Film Award – documentary section.

Technical Data / Crew

90 Min, color, DCP, 1:1,85, Dolby 5.1

A Flying Moon production in co-production with CTM Lev Pictures, Amsterdam and WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk) in association with Tree House Productions, Beijing.

Protagonists:

Jibin Sun - sax, clarinet

Zhengzhen Bao - drums, oboe

Jingyu Zhang - piano

Mingkang Li - bass

Honglin Gao - tenor sax

Mengqiang Lu - trumpet

Yin "Jasmine" Chen - singer

Xiao Xueqiang - band manager

Quinty Wu - guide Rotterdam

Crew:

Camera: Axel Schneppat, Jörg Jeshel

Editing: Uli Gaulke

Sound: Raimund von Scheibner

Original Music: Ari Benjamin Meyers

Line Producer China: Jan Kern

Production Manager: Sabine Glaeßner

Producer: Helge Albers

Director: Uli Gaulke

Commissioning Editor WDR: Jutta Krug

Co-Producer CTM Lev Pictures: Sander Verdonk

Funded by:

Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (MBB)

Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA)

Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF)

Development supported by:

MEDIA Programm of the European Union

Contacts:

World Sales:

Autlook Filmsales GmbH
Spittelberggasse 3/14, 1070 Vienna, Austria

phone: +43 720 34 69 34

welcome@autlookfilms.com
www.autlookfilms.com

Production:

Flying Moon Filmproduktion GmbH
Seestr. 96, D-13353 Berlin, Germany

phone: +49 30 322 97 180

info@flyingmoon.com
www.flyingmoon.com

in Toronto:
+49 177 306 18 25 (mobile + text)
helge@flyingmoon.com