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PRESENTS

# THE BLACK POWER MIXTAPE 1967-1975



A FEATURE DOCUMENTARY  
BY GÖRAN HUGO OLSSON  
93 MIN - 2011

***World Cinema Documentary Editing Award at the Sundance Film Festival 2011  
Berlin International Film Festival 2011 in the Panorama DOKUMENTE Section***

*"Racism is a much more clandestine, much more hidden kind of phenomenon, but at the same time it's perhaps far more terrible than it's ever been. Racism, in the first place, is a weapon used by the wealthy to increase the profits they bring in by paying Black workers less for their work.*

*To understand how any society functions you must understand the relationship between the men and the women. Well of course there's been a great deal of progress. We don't have laws that segregate black people within the society any longer."*

*Angela Davis*

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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

The Black Power Mixtape examines the evolution of the Black Power Movement in the black community and Diaspora from 1967 to 1975. The film combines music, startling 16mm footage (lying undiscovered in the cellar of Swedish Television for 30 years), and contemporary audio interviews from leading African American artists, activists, musicians and scholars.

## SYNOPSIS

The Black Power Mixtape is an archive- and music- driven documentary that examines the evolution of the Black Power Movement in the African-American community and Diaspora from 1967 to 1975. Combining startlingly fresh and meaningful 16mm footage that had been lying undiscovered in the cellar of Swedish Television for the past 30 years, with contemporary audio interviews from leading African-American artists, activists, musicians and scholars, Mixtape looks at the people, society culture and style that filched a change. Utilizing an innovative format that riffs on the popular 70s mixtape format, the Black Power Mixtape is a cinematic and musical journey into the ghettos of America.



At the end of the Sixties and into the early Seventies, Swedish interest in the US Civil Rights Movement and the US anti-war movement peaked. With a combination of commitment and naiveté, Swedish filmmakers traveled across the Atlantic to explore the Black Power Movement, which was being alternately ignored or portrayed in the US media as a violent, nascent terrorist movement. Despite the obstacles they were confronted with, both from the conservative white American power establishment and from radicalized Movement members themselves, the Swedish filmmakers did not cease their investigations and ultimately formed bonds with key figures in the BPM, based on their common objective of realizing equal rights for all.

Filmmaker Göran Hugo Olsson brings this newly discovered footage to light and introduces it to a new generation across the world in a penetrating examination - through the lens of Swedish filmmakers – of the Black Power Movement from 1967-1975, and its worldwide resonance.



Filmed interviews include such figures as Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver, Bobby Seale, and Angela Davis when she was in prison, as well as footage from Lars Ulvestam's televised film *Harlem*:

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*Voices, Faces.* (When that film aired in Sweden, the embarrassed US Ambassador to Sweden demanded and was granted airtime on Swedish Television to explain away the film's many flaws".)

Audio interviews with key contemporary figures complement the archival and create a formal mosaic that is uplifting and moving in its impact, introducing a new generation to a dynamic progressive movement for change.



At its heart, *The Black Power Mixtape* is a story about empowerment. It's a moving and inspirational vehicle that takes the audience on a journey through the specific time period of 1967-1975 and the pressing issues of concern then (the Vietnam war, failing public schools, drug addiction, record levels of incarceration, extreme poverty, lack of government accountability and the pervasiveness of structural racism) while at the same time organically provoking deep questions about where Americans find themselves and the country today.

With the clear objective of introducing a new generation to the Black Power Movement, the filmmaker worked with some of today's most talented artists (including Abmir "Questlove" Thompson, Om'Mas Keith, and The Roots) to create a soundtrack that complements and enhances the form and content of the film.

As the Movement went far beyond the purely political, the film also takes us on a cinematic journey into the styles, culture, fashion and more deeply - questions of identity that were critical to the empowerment and education of subsequent generations.

## **BIOGRAPHY- GORAN HUGO OLSSON**

Born 1965 in Lund, Sweden. Olsson was educated at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Stockholm after film studies at Stockholm University. He is a Documentary filmmaker, cinematographer and manufacturer of his own innovation - the A-cam, a Super- 16 film camera. He was editor, as well as founder of the short documentary television program "Ikon" (SVT). Prior to that, he worked on another series for SVT. "Elbyl."

Olsson is the Co-founder of the production company Story AB. He served as Commission Consultant at the Swedish Film institute during 2000-02 and has traveled the world making films, commercials, information films and music videos.

Olsson is a member of the Editorial board of Ikon South Africa - a platform for the creative documentary in South Africa. It is a joint project between Ikon/Sweden and Ikon/South Africa since 1999. The Swedish/South African Culture Partnership Programme, SABC, SFI and DAC support this alliance.

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## CREDITS

Written and Directed by: Göran Hugo Olsson

Produced by: Annika Rogell, Story AB

Co-Produced by: Joslyn Barnes & Danny Glover, Louverture Films

Music by: Ahmir Questlove Thompson, Om'Mas Keith

Executive Music Producer: Corey Smyth, Blacksmith Corp

Art Director: Stefania Malmsten

Edited by: Göran Hugo Olsson & Hanna Lejonqvist

Including appearances by:

Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), Eldridge Cleaver, Kathleen Cleaver, Bobby Seale, Huey P. Newton, Emile de Antonio, Angela Davis, William Kunstler

Including audio commentary by:

Erykah Badu, Harry Belafonte, Kathleen Cleaver, Angela Davis, John Forté, Robin Kelley, Talib Kweli, Abiodun Oyewole, Melvin Van Peebles, Sonia Sanchez, Bobby Seale, Ahmir Questlove Thompson

With support from the Swedish Film Institute/Lars G. Lindström, Sveriges Television/Axel Arnö, Nordisk Film & Tv Fond, Media Programme of the European Union, ZDF/ARTE, NRK, YLE, RTS and ERT.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

**Run time:** 93 min. | Sweden, U.S.A.

**Language:** English and Swedish with English subtitles | color & b/w

**Aspect ratio:** 16 :9

**Sound system:** Stereo

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