

CAIRO JAZZMAN - THE GROOVE OF A MEGACITY

LOGLINE

The engaging story of the Cairo Jazz Festival and a portrait of its founder Amr Salah. Dedicated to the Egyptian civil society.

OUTLINE

Passionate Amr Salah is an Egyptian jazz composer and musician trying to organise the Cairo Jazz Festival; a risky undertaking, not only because of his limited experience, but mainly also due to the increasingly intolerant social climate. This political music documentary simultaneously paints an atmospheric portrait of the Egyptian capital.

SYNOPSIS

“Jazz is more than just a style of music”, says Amr Salah. “It’s about freedom.” Salah, a jazz pianist, is an enthusiastic promoter of the genre. Every year he organises the Cairo Jazz Festival, but doesn’t view himself as a festival director: He is first and foremost a musician and fan. In this music documentary, people close to Salah such as his fellow musicians and proud parents discuss his passion. In Egypt, jazz attracts a conspicuously young audience, emphasising the chasm between them and the older generation who rule the country. The authorities therefore provide almost no support to Salah’s jazz festival. The film follows him during the run-up to the festival and various major and minor problems crop up. “Egypt is full of surprises”, he observes when one of the locations suddenly becomes unavailable mere days before the festival. Luckily, as a jazz musician he is good at improvising.

TECH SPECS

Year of Production : 2017

Production Companies : IckeKreuzberg, SLfilm

Length : 82 mins

Format : DCP IOP 2K Flat Surround

Genre : Music Documentary

Trailer : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEJuhNu2GIs>

Website : www.cairojazzman.com

Facebook : facebook.com/cairojazzman

Instagram/Twitter : #cairojazzman

INOFFICIAL SOUNDTRACK

Spotify : <https://open.spotify.com/user/celestevee/playlist/50ULP5vXEG8kFvWzBe9ixR>

Soundcloud : <https://soundcloud.com/erix/sets/cairo-jazzman-unofficial>

CAIRO JAZZMAN - THE GROOVE OF A MEGACITY

BIOGRAPHIES

Atef Ben Bouzid (Producer/Director):

German journalist, director, and producer from Berlin, worked for national and international media outlets and specialized in the fields of sports, music, and society. Speaking five languages, he spent lengthy periods of time in Cairo, Tokyo, and New York City, and is especially interested in the many aspects of human interaction and communication across cultures and countries. Most recently Atef Ben Bouzid directed and produced the feature documentary "Cairo Jazzman."

Website: www.ickekreuzberg.de

Sebastian Leitner (Co-Producer/Editor):

Freelance filmmaker, producer and editor specialised in "music & comedy" and international projects. Vienna-born, he has found a new home in the vibrant city of Berlin. His feature-length debut "Noseland", a classical music "mockumentary" with John Malkovich and Roger Moore, was part of many festivals worldwide and also awarded "Most Entertaining Documentary" in the US 2012. It was later on brought to German movie theaters by missingFILMs. Sebastian was nominated for "Best Editing" at the Madrid International Film Festival in 2012 for his work on "Noseland".

Website : www.sebastianleitner.com

CAIRO JAZZMAN - THE GROOVE OF A MEGACITY

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Music is the universal language, the element connecting human beings, regardless where they are from. It's the perfect tool to provide a new perspective, to broaden our horizons. That's the goal of "Cairo Jazzman." I arrived in Cairo for the first time in 2002. I was almost overwhelmed by this city, its energy, vibrancy, and its chaos. I was spellbound by this unique metropolis and the amazing and decent people who live there. Cairo is not an easy place. It is challenging, special, unique.

In our globalized world the pace of our lives is accelerating and we are in danger of drowning in the onslaught of mass and social media. There seems to be no time anymore for thoughtful considerations, for asking the right questions and looking for reasoned answers. This is why we are thirsting for stories about individuals who stop us in our tracks, who are remarkable because of who they are and what they do, who make a difference and who overcome obstacles against all odds. It was in Cairo, that I found such an individual.

So it was an easy decision to document the courageous project of a passionate Egyptian determined to make Jazz accessible, to pass it to the next generation. Despite lacking any funding this was a story that needed to be told. Officials have tight control over filming in public so despite persisting it was still a great surprise to receive an exceedingly rare permission to do so, especially for a non-Egyptian. This documentary is an example of what's possible if we are only passionate enough to do what we believe in.

A filmmaker is nothing without his or her subject and the team. I was fortunate to have met the right people to realize the dream of making this documentary.

Amr Salah: "Cairo is a crazy city. To put it in jazz terms, this is avant-garde. This is modern, weird. It's hard to get inspired by a surrounding like this. But in the end, Cairo has the groove."