



VERMONT INTERNATIONAL FILM FOUNDATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Announcing Global Roots Film Festival: Music and Food

Burlington, VT: (January 31, 2017): The Vermont International Film Foundation is pleased to announce the 2017 Global Roots Film Festival: Music and Food. The festival will take place February 17-19, at Contois Auditorium in downtown Burlington.

Two filmmakers will be attending and introducing their films: Robert Mugge (*Black Wax*) and Daniel Cross (*I Am The Blues*). Both will be available for interviews before and during the festival.

Daily receptions sponsored by The New Northern restaurant and Zero Gravity Brewers. *The Chocolate Case* film is sponsored by Lake Champlain Chocolates.

Overview:

Global Roots was launched as a film series by VTIFF in 2013 as a means of bringing great films from the countries of many of the New American communities in Vermont, to foster a greater understanding of our diverse cultures. Part of VTIFF's mission is to work with and for the community, and the 16 films shown between 2013 & 2015 as part of Global Roots reflected the richness and diversity of the population. Since 2016, the Series was transformed into 3-day festivals that allow us to present a particular focus on theme, country or subject.

Schedule:

Friday, Feb 17

11:30 - Student Matinee: SONITA (w/ performance by Muslim Girls Making Change)

5:30 - Opening Reception, cash bar, meet filmmaker Robert Mugge

6:30 - Ella Brennan: Commanding the Table

8:30 - Mali Blues

Saturday, 2/18

11:30 - Score: A Film Music Documentary

1:30 - Black Wax - Intro by Robett Mugge

3:30 - I Am the Blues - Intro by Daniel Cross

5:15 - Panel with Mugge and Cross, moderated by St. Michael's College music professor William Ellis

6:00 - Reception, cash bar

7:00 - Yallah! Underground

Sunday, 2/19

11:30 - Seed: The Untold Story

1:00 - Chocolate reception with chocolates, and tea from David's Tea

1:30 - The Chocolate Case - followed by Q&A with Eric Lampman, President of Lake Champlain Chocolates

4:00 - Wonderful Kingdom of Papa Alaev

5:30 - Reception with cash bar

6:30 - Babette's Feast (special 30th anniversary presentation)

SONITA

Directed by Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghemi

Iran/Germany/Switzerland | Farsi/Dari/English w/ English subtitles | Documentary | 2015 | 90 min

Film Source: Women Make Movies

Grand Jury Prize & Audience Award for World Cinema Documentary – Sundance Film Festival

Recently nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary

Sonita is a teenage girl, a rapper, an Afghan refugee living in Iran, and, in her mind, a star. The young girls she meets find their voices through her music and are wowed by the power and confidence she exudes. Eventually even the film's director, Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami, finds herself drawn in as part of her subject's story, blurring the boundaries and making the audience question who is in control. Although the subject is timely, serious and heart wrenching — especially as Sonita's family threatens to sell her into marriage — the film always manages to be upbeat and inspirational, due to the magnetism of its subject. This movie won't likely be the last we see of Sonita.

Ella Brennan: Commanding the Table

Directed by Leslie Iwerks

USA | Documentary | 2016 | 96 min

Print Source: Cargo Film & Releasing

Ella Brennan is a household name in the restaurant industry. Known today as the inspirational matriarch of the rambling Brennan family of New Orleans and the force of nature behind first Brennan's and then Commander's Palace. Fired by her family at one point, she soldiered on. She was the creator of elaborate New Orleans breakfasts and jazz brunches and revolutionized creole cuisine. A pioneer of the modern American food movement, she pushed her chefs to the forefront helping to launch the celebrity chef phenomenon.

What many don't know is that when Ella Brennan was a teenager in 1940's New Orleans, the city's food and drink business was in its infant stage, generating less than a million dollars a year. Today, it has grown into a billion-dollar industry for the city, many crediting the Brennan family, guided by Ella for

pushing Creole wining and dining into the American mainstream and creating a lasting impact on how Americans eat and drink.

Interviews and verite footage with current and former chefs from Commander's Palace, restaurateurs, peers, family and friends will provide past and present glimpses into Ella's unique life and world. This is the intimate and triumphant story of a groundbreaking American woman.

Mali Blues

Directed by Lutz Gregor

Germany/Mali | French w/ English Subtitles | Documentary | 2016 | 95 min

Print source: Courtesy Icarus Films

Vermont Premiere

Mali Blues illustrates Mali's rich musical culture. Alongside [Fatoumata Diawara](#) – the young shooting star of the global pop scene – we travel through breath-taking landscapes and discover Mali's agitated heart from Bamako in the Southwest to the "Festival au Désert" in northern Timbuktu. Diawara symbolizes a young generation of African women: energetic, strong-minded, confident and politically engaged. She is dedicated to unify all artists spread throughout Mali who feel threatened by sharia and want to defend their right to music as a human right against religious militants.

Mali Blues also depicts the roots of Afro-American blues and jazz. Through the songs, we get to know the artists' hopes and dreams as well as their daily sorrows. Whoever tries to take the music from Mali rips out this country's heart.

Score

Directed by Matt Schrader

USA | Documentary | 2016 | 93 min

Print source: The Film Collaborative

Vermont Premiere

What makes a score unforgettable? This documentary brings Hollywood's premier composers together to give viewers a privileged look inside the musical challenges and creative secrecy of the world's most widely known music genre: the film score. *Score* follows the creative struggles of designing a modern soundtrack from scratch, featuring some of cinema's most recognized names in film music.

SCORE explores the power and influence of film scores in the modern world while revealing the evolution of sound and how composers assemble music the complements a picture to achieve powerful reactions from worldwide audiences.

Black Wax

Directed by Robert Mugge

USA | Documentary | 1982 | 79 min

Print source: filmmaker

Director Robert Mugge will be in attendance for the screening.

He and director David Cross will participate in a panel at 5:15pm on Saturday, moderated by Bill Ellis.

"It is doubtful that any musician has been better served by a film documentary. Brilliant. When Gil Scott-Heron sings he seems to be glowing with passion and sincerity."

– Ken Tucker, Philadelphia Inquirer

"Gil Scott-Heron's long-standing political commitment and protean influence on rap sing-speech are finally given their due in this Outstanding documentary."

– Michael Shore, Music Video Consumer's Guide

Black Wax captures the late, great Gil Scott-Heron in his prime, featuring the writer, musician, spoken-word artist and self-described 'bluesologist' as he performs in Washington, D.C. with his Midnight Band in 1982. Scenes of Scott-Heron delivering political musings and penetrating poetry on the streets of D.C. and around the national monuments are interspersed with live footage, creating an indelible portrait of the singular artist whose influence and relevance is still powerfully felt today.

This 35th Anniversary presentation is both a celebration of the iconic artist and an excellent example of

director Robert Mugge's impressive body of work. Mugge has spent decades chronicling American music, with documentaries about artists such as Robert Johnson, Sun-Ra, and Sonny Rollins as well as regional portraits of Zydeco music, Memphis blues, Juke Joint culture, Hawaiian dance traditions, and more. In the process, he has established himself as the country's foremost music documentarian, capturing (in the words of The Boston Phoenix) "the beating heart of great American roots music at its most soulful and authentic on film."

I Am the Blues

Directed by Daniel Cross

Canada/USA | Documentary | 2015 | 106 min

Print source: Eyesteel Films

Director Daniel Cross will be in attendance for the screening.

He and Robert Mugge will participate in a panel discussion on Saturday at 5:00pm, moderated by Bill Ellis.

I Am the Blues takes the audience on a musical journey through the swamps of the Louisiana Bayou, the juke joints of the Mississippi Delta and Moonshine soaked BBQs in the North Mississippi Hill Country. The film visits blues musicians rooted in the genre's heyday, many in their 80s, still living in the American deep south and touring the Chitlin' Circuit. Let Bobby Rush, Barbara Lynn, Henry Gray, Carol Fran, Little Freddie King, Lazy Lester, Bilbo Walker, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, RL Boyce, LC Ulmer, Lil' Buck Sinegal and their friends awaken the blues in all of us.

Yallah! Underground

Directed by Farid Eslam

Czech Republic/Germany/UK/Egypt/Canada/USA | English/Arabic w/ English subtitles | 2016 | 85 min

Print source: Stray Dogs

Yallah! Underground follows some of today's most influential and progressive artists in Arab underground culture from 2009 to 2013 and documents their work, dreams and fears in a time of great change for Arab societies.

In a region full of tension, young Arab artists in the Middle East have struggled for years to express themselves freely and to promote more liberal attitudes within their societies. During the Arab Spring, like many others of this new generation, local artists had high hopes for the future and took part in the protests. However, after years of turmoil and instability, young Arabs now have to challenge both old and new problems, being torn between feelings of disillusion and a vague hope for a better future.

Seed: The Untold Story

Directed by Jon Betz & Taggart Siegel

USA | English/Hindi/Spanish w/ English subtitles | Documentary | 2016 | 94 min

Print source: Cargo Film & Releasing

Few things on Earth are as miraculous and vital as seeds. Worshipped and treasured since the dawn of humankind. In the last century, 94% of our seed varieties have disappeared. *Seed: The Untold Story* follows passionate seed keepers protecting our 12,000 year-old food legacy. As biotech chemical companies control the majority of our seeds, farmers, scientists, lawyers, and indigenous seed keepers fight a David and Goliath battle to defend the future of our food. In a harrowing and heartening story, these heroes rekindle a lost connection to our most treasured resource and revive a culture connected to seeds. *Seed* features Vandana Shiva, Dr. Jane Goodall, Andrew Kimbrell, Winona Laduke and Raj Patel.

The Chocolate Case

Directed by Benthe Forrer

Netherlands | Dutch/French/English/German w/ English Subtitles | Documentary | 2016 | 90 min

Print source: Offbeat Cinema

Sponsor: [Lake Champlain Chocolates](#) | Come to the screening early and enjoy a taste of these fabulous chocolates! The screening will be followed by a Q&A with Eric Lampman, President of LCC who will talk about the chocolate industry.

The Chocolate Case follows the incredible journey of three Dutch journalists, who tried to persuade large corporations to end the use of child labor in the chocolate industry, but when rebuffed, decided to take matters into their own hands by creating the world's first slave-free chocolate bar. Their epic 10 year journey, resulting in the creation of Tony's Chocolonely, now one of Holland's leading brands, is beautifully pieced together using archive footage, combined with new material, resulting in an up-tempo, funny, sometimes moving, but overall inspiring film.

The Wonderful Kingdom of Papa Alaev

Directed by Tal Barda & Noam Pinchas
Israel | Hebrew w/ English subtitles | Documentary | 2016 | 74 min
Print source: Go2Films

A modern-day Shakespearean tale about a famous Tajik musical family, controlled by the charismatic, funny yet overbearing patriarch, Papa Alaev, who at the age of 80 begins to lose his grip on the 'family business,' sending them on a rigid and unsure transition from Monarchy to Democracy. As generations clash over new musical directions, competing personal interests and Papa's advancing age, the family show must go on, but who will lead the band? Set to a blazing tribal soundtrack, drama and drumbeats sing out from every entertaining exchange in this grand family affair.

Babette's Feast

Directed by Gabriel Axel
Denmark | Fiction | 1987 | 105 min | Danish/Swedish/French w/English subtitles
30th anniversary of the film's release.

The screening will be preceded by a reception & cash bar at 5:30
With so many ways to approach the subject of food and its impact on the world, we couldn't help but end this festival with a celebration of the pleasures of taste and smell. Babette, the wonderful Stéphane Audran, cooks up the most tantalizing feast for the Protestant villagers on Denmark's remote Jutland coast. Taking place in mid-19th Century Europe, the film is as much a paean to French *haute cuisine* as it is to the pleasures of the flesh, pitting puritan morals against Catholic sensuality. Beautifully paced, filmed and scripted, gentle and humorous, this film will perhaps make one yearn for a time when, with no qualms, one could just enjoy great food expertly and lovingly cooked.

The Vermont International Film Foundation (VTIFF) is a cultural non-profit organization whose mission is to enrich the community through film. VTIFF operates year-round and showcases community film screenings, supports programming like the Global Roots Series, the Burlington Film Society and VTIFF For Schools, as well as supporting Vermont filmmakers. VTIFF celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2015. The largest program of the Foundation is the annual Vermont International Film Festival, best known for featuring groundbreaking and independent films from around the world and Vermont. The festival also includes the Vermont Filmmakers' Showcase™, the largest juried selection of Vermont-made films. More information at www.vtiff.org.

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