

«sounds and silence»

A film by Peter Guyer and Norbert Wiedmer

An extraordinary journey through soundscapes and biographies to important locations with Manfred Eicher, the outstanding producer of contemporary music. We are stopping at recording studios, at concerts, in back rooms, at waysides and we are meeting great musicians like Arvo Pärt, Dino Saluzzi, Jan Garbarek, Eleni Karaindrou, Anouar Brahem, Gian Luigi Trovesi, Kim Kashkashian, Nik Bärtsch, Marilyn Mazur and many others.

«sounds and silence» is a musical road movie about the passionate career of a man obsessed with music.

On the way through a world of sounds and noise – with Manfred Eicher, the outstanding discoverer and mediator of contemporary music and founder of the music label ECM. On this journey we are meeting musicians and composers, but also people and places which are connected with him and with each other. We are encountering stories, landscapes, cities, disputes and hugs, tranquillity, hectic pace, work, self-doubt, joy, passion.

A search for clues at concerts, in recording studios, in back rooms, at waysides with the musicians Arvo Pärt, Eleni Karaindrou, Dino Saluzzi, Anouar Brahem, Gianluigi Trovesi, Marilyn Mazur, Nik Bärtsch, Kim Kashkashian, Jan Garbarek and many others. A sensual, impressive, meditative road movie which accomplishes the extraordinary: to catch the magic of music.

The film directors Peter Guyer and Norbert Wiedmer about their film:

We met Manfred Eicher for the first time while filming. He and Bruno Ganz at the radio studio in Zurich doing voice recordings of T. S. Eliot's „The Waste Land“: voice, music, the absolute silence. A concentration which filled the room. A whispered discussion about the correct length of the pauses, then another try...

It was fascinating to observe the two hearing and listening. The concentration and the passion written on their faces. Here a frown, there some eyes lightning up, a cough and a quick glance. And then silence again...

The second time we met Manfred Eicher was at the headquarters of ECM. A concrete castle next to the autobahn Munich–Lindau. Exit Gräfelfing. The search took a long time. Then we finally found it. Next to an all dominant doorway of a HiFi discounter the unimposing sign of « Edition of Contemporary Music / ECM ». On the upper floor something like a warehouse door. Behind it six rooms, decorated in an unemotional way, animated only by the wooden shelves filled with thousands of CDs. Outside the windows a few small fir trees in fiber cement tanks. The outlook on the loop of the autobahn exit. Here we met him again, the founder, the soul, the motor of ECM. He was sitting behind his desk, holding his head in his hands and listening to a sample of music coming from some outdated studio monitors. A light female voice was outshining the foggy atmosphere of a day in late fall. In the film, Eleni Karaindrou, the Greek composer, makes some remarkable comments about Manfred Eicher: Wherever Manfred works his commitment is one hundred percent. This is the nature of passion. He devotes himself to the very moment and he completely supports the present artist ».

It is the passion, the concentration, the merging with the work which produce this rare and timeless moment. It is the fascination of our film work to capture this state and to pass it on. „Köln Concert“ by Keith Jarrett, „Officium“ by Jan Garbarek and the Hilliard Ensemble, „Tabula Rasa“ by Arvo Pärt ... Most of us have listened to music by ECM. We may know individual works or artists but hardly the network they belong to, hardly the person who has formed and maintained this network. ECM is the most influential label for contemporary music and Manfred Eicher is the most significant producer in this domain. Throughout the world.

But it's not a film about quantity and superlatives. It's about artistic substance and musical quality and about the very special conditions of the creation. In spite of the size and diversity of the output which by now compasses more than a thousand publications and in spite of the commercial success ECM doesn't produce mainstream. The Edition of Contemporary Music is no music factory. Within the musical realm it is comparable to Hans-Magnus Enzensberger's „Andere Bibliothek“ published by Eichborn: a guarantee for the intelligent special. Manfred Eicher stands for music which shouldn't be only consumed. He stands for artists and their life stories, convictions and their supreme musical mastery. It's this world we want to present to you, to your eyes and ears. In times of artificial TV music stars, overproduction of video clips, soundtrack spam, commercial claim to omnipresence we want to treat music differently in a cinematic way. We want to create visual worlds instead of randomly assembling short sequences, we want to trace the notes instead of reproducing sounds – and we want also give room to silence. Not to present the finished product but to go along with the creation of music, to explore its conditions and to feel out its significance : to get to know people, to follow up atmospheres, to find explanations, to catch sounds – and to round up the single moment to a whole, to a concerted journey through soundscapes. Tracking music.

Cast & Crew

A film by	Peter Guyer and Norbert Wiedmer
With	Manfred Eicher
and the musicians	Arvo Pärt Anouar Brahem Eleni Karaindrou Dino Saluzzi Anja Lechner Gianluigi Trovesi Nik Bärtsch Marilyn Mazur Jan Garbarek Kim Kashkashian Camerata Orchestra Athen, Alexandros Myrat Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, Tõnu Kaljuste Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir Filarmonica Mousiké, Savino Acquaviva
Cinematography	Peter Guyer und Norbert Wiedmer
Editing	Stefan Kälin
Sound Sounddesign, mixing	Balthasar Jucker
Mastering	SDS, Ostermundigen, Hans Kuenzi
Color correction	RecTv Bern, Christoph Walther
Production	Recycled TV AG, Biograph Film
Coproduction partners	SRG SSR idée suisse Thomas Beck, Urs Augstburger Pacte de l'audiovisuel, Alberto Chollet ZDF/ 3sat Inge Classen, Nicole Baum YLE Outi Saarikoski

Festivals

Melbourne International Film Festival
Friday 23 July to Sunday 8 August 2010

Solothurner Filmtage 2010
January 21 to 28, 2010

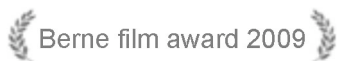
Pimedate Ööde Filmifestival (PÖFF) 2009
Tallinn, Estonia
www.poff.ee

VIENNALE 2009
October 22 to November 4, 2009
www.viennale.at

43. Internationale Hofer Filmtage 2009
October 27 to November 1, 2009
www.hofer-filmtage.de

33. Duisburger Filmwoche
November 2 to 4, 2009
www.duisburger-filmwoche.de/festival09/index.html

Film Festival Locarno
August 8, 2009
Piazza Grande
World premiere
www.pardo.ch



Production

Recycled TV AG
Sandrainstrasse 3
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Biograph Film
Aareweg 15
3270 Aarberg
Phone +41 (0)32 393 79 79

Coproduction partners

SRG SSR idée suisse
Thomas Beck, Urs Augstburger
Pacte de l'audiovisuel, Alberto Chollet

ZDF/ 3sat
Inge Classen, Nicole Baum

YLE
Outi Saarikoski

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