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Film

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AFI Fest: A to W

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Published on October 29, 2008 at 8:19pm

GO GOGOL BORDELLO NON-STOP (USA) At one point in this giddily entertaining documentary on New York-based “Gypsy-punk” band Gogol Bordello, a talking head remarks, “You have to invent freedom.” Director Margarita Jimeno spends five years following the sprawling band and its charismatic front man, Eugene Hutz (who’s acted in *Everything Is Illuminated* and *Filth and Wisdom*), while they do just that. As the camera traverses the globe, tilting from Hutz’ biography (including home movies from his native Kiev) to rehearsal footage, raucous live performances and interviews with various members of the Gogol collective, the film becomes a heady, inspiring discussion of art, politics and personal identity, and the points at which they all intersect. (*ArcLight Hollywood, Sat., Nov. 1, 7:10 p.m.; Wed., Nov. 5, 12:30 p.m.*) (Ernest Hardy)

CRITIC’S PICK GOMORRAH (Italy) Matteo Garrone’s dramatic portrait of the notorious Italian Mafia organization Neapolitan Camorra focuses on the ancillary figures who, willingly or not, prop up the mob’s activities. The five interwoven narratives in this visceral but disciplined and beautifully acted movie show to devastating effect how ordinary men and women — and especially vulnerable boys desperate for masculine role models — get caught up in the seductive violence and are ruthlessly destroyed by the network’s hardened henchmen. It’s hard to tell whether the movie exaggerates the Mafia’s reach deep into and pollution of the infrastructure of everyday life, laying the groundwork for guerrilla-style civil war. Given *Gomorra*’s arch referencing of the brutality in Coppola’s *Godfather* trilogy, I could

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SPECIAL TO THE OBSERVER: AFI FESTIVAL 2008 MUST SEE FESTIVAL FILMS

by debbie lynn elias

Movies. They have served many a purpose over the past century, affecting each of us in a different way; drawing us to the celluloid images with individualized magic. During WWI and WWII, movies promoted the sale of bonds, gave a glimpse to those at home of their loved ones and the news abroad. Movies served and still do serve as a tether between families, friends and strangers, instant "Crazy Glue" if you will, bringing people together that wouldn't normally gravitate towards each other. During the Great Depression, at the direction of the President of the United States, movies were to be upbeat and happy, serving as a respite for the American people during harsh economic times. It was during that time period that a little girl named Shirley sang and danced her way into the hearts of millions, bringing smiles to the faces of everyone's heart she touched. They say history has a way of repeating itself. Take a look at the world today. Many believe we are in as dire a strait as we were in 1929. But what's interesting, is that no matter how tough the times, how tight the wallet, we all still manage to scrape together that \$10.00 to escape to the movies, just like that nickel in the 20's and 30's. Just look at today's box office.

Many of those that have entertained, informed or educated us, made us laugh or cry are long gone. But Hollywood and moviemaking goes on and thanks to organizations like AFI, not only is the magic of our movie history preserved, through its education, filmmaking workshops and yes, The AFI Film Festival, fresh new faces and talent are promoted and encouraged to continue - and even surpass - those of days gone by. And one of the first places to look for those that will continue in the traditions and excellence that came before them is at the AFI Film Festival.

Marking its 22nd year, on October 30, 2008, AFI Film Festival lifts the curtain on a spectacular, diverse and eclectic array of films spanning the globe. In addition to competitions of features, documentaries and shorts from emerging filmmakers, AFI plans to wow us this year starting with an opening night gala debut of DOUBT, directed and adapted by John Patrick Shanley from his Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play starring Meryl Streep and Philip Seymour Hoffman and ending on November 9, with Edward Zwick's epic DEFIANCE starring Daniel Craig and Liev Schreiber. Chock-full of goodies in between, you'll find 151 films from 38 countries with everything from a tribute to one of my all time favorite directors (and a heckuva nice guy), Danny Boyle, and the world premiere of his latest work SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE, as well as a tribute to Oscar winner Tilda Swinton, to Mickey Rourke's re-emergence in THE WRESTLER, a film that stopped the festival cold at Cannes, to Stephen Soderbergh's 4hour epic CHE (Intermission has returned to the theatre, folks. Get ready for the dancing popcorn "Let's all go to the lobby" songs again!)

As the curtain gets ready to rise, let's take a look at what has become a tradition for myself and all of you, some of my AFI

2008 MUST SEE FESTIVAL FILMS.

One of the early frontrunners to make its mark is NOT QUITE HOLLYWOOD: THE WILD, UNTOLD STORY OF 'OZPLOITATION.' A blast from the past with uproarious and irreverent thunder from down under - thunderous laughter that is - NOT QUITE HOLLYWOOD celebrates the genesis of Australian film from the 50's and 60's right up to the 90's but with heavy concentration the Australian film genre of the 70's and 80's complete with nudity, free love, lots of sex and slasher-hacker blood soaked terror. And that's AFTER the introduction of the R-certificate, Australia's brand of censorship in 1971. "Narrated" by Quentin Tarantino (who let's face it, is an annoying but knowledgeable distraction to the film), director Mark Hartley has put together one of the most entertaining historical chronologies I've ever seen and exposes the world to such classics as "Picnic At Hanging Rock", "My Brilliant Career", "The Man From Hong Kong" and of course, the quintessential film of this era that gave the world a man named Mel, "Mad Max."

Outrageous and riotously funny, Hartley infuses interest and education through anecdotal commentary opening discussion on High Art versus Low Brow 70's Culture Wars, Nudity in the Australian Cinema (Down boys, down! Wait for the film!), Stunt and Special Effects work (which gives new meaning to death wish) and Car Culture and Drivelines. Jam packed with interviews of the filmmakers and actors of the genre including Dennis Hopper, Jamie Lee Curtis, Stacy Keach, Russell Boyd, writer Everett de Roche, director Richard Franklin, George Lazenby, cinematographer John Seale and renowned stuntman Grant Page, Hartley weaves a web of fascinating filmmaking full of factoids, fun and oh yes, naked breasts.

The editing of Jamie Blanks, Sara Edwards and Mark Hartley is reason enough to see NOT QUITE HOLLYWOOD. It is killer!!!! Just wait until you see those Aussie slasher hacker montages. An absolute riot. That work called for the precision of a Ginzu knife! Pacing, but for a brief segment on the 90's, is right on the money. But the real star of this film is the soundtrack. Absolutely fantastic. Some real tongue in cheek musical selections paired with film footage are better than food and wine in the finest 5 star restaurant. The real key, however, is the fact the soundtrack is continual, non-stop, propelling the film and keeping the energy level as revved up as Grant Page during an outrageous high speed chase.

And speaking of non-stop, hold on to your hats as Eugene Hutz and the gypsy punk band Gogol Bordello explode onto the screen in the documentary GOGOL BORDELLO: NON-STOP. Talk about living the American Dream!! Hutz certainly has. The heart and soul of Gogol Bordello, this is essentially his story, chronicled by director Margarita Jimeno who picks up his tale in 2001 when she discovers the band bringing down the

house at the Bulgarian Bar Mehanata in Chinatown, New York. An eclectic blend of concert footage, rare home movies of teenage Hutz in Kiev and interviews with band members, friends, fans and Hutz himself, are interwoven into a high octane tapestried and textured presentation that will have you dancing in the aisles!

Poignant and heartfelt, we are privy to a 1988 family New Year's Eve gathering where his uncle's fondest wish for Eugene is that he leave Kiev and join the U.S. Army. Little did his uncle know, the Army was the furthest thing from Eugene's mind. One of the last 100 people left in Russia with refugee status, Eugene and his family ultimately made it out of Kiev. Allowed only \$400.00 dollars per family and limited personal items, Eugene brought 20 records with him, 2 guitars and bag a Russian watches as he thought tourists would want to buy them. Unequipped for life outside Russia, the family was stripped of all documents, having to give up citizenship in order to get refugee status. Initially taken to Austria, life was tough for Hutz and his family. With no holds barred honesty, he talks about facing one disappointment after another "until there are no more expectations." Yet, despite all that he has lost, there is no bitterness. There is only joy, celebration, peace and freedom. Freedom to make music; to embrace life and all to has to offer. Freedom to belt out lyrics laden with blatant socio-political and religious commentary such as "Immigrant Punk" and "Legalize Me." All is exquisitely captured on film by Jimeno in G o g o l Bordello's mind blowing concerts - both big and small.

Eventually making his way to the US, what started as a birthday party for Hutz at a Bulgarian bar turned into a weekly gig for a what would soon become an international phenomenon - Gogol Bordello. Hand picking his band members, Hutz' expounds on his criteria - character first, followed by a musician's willingness to be an ensemble and his core belief of "playing for the joy of playing music." As time passed, Hutz put together a motley

crew of some extremely talented fellow immigrants including Yuri Lemeshev on accordion, Sergey

Ryabtsev on violin, Oren Kaplan on guitar, and Eliot Ferguson on drums, as well as dancer-percussionists Pamela Racine and Elizabeth Sun. The interviews with these individuals showcase the true love and admiration each has for Hutz and his frenetic, kineticism and creativity.

Known for his outrageous storming of the stage, individualized hand sewn costumes that reflect the lyrics of each song, through the band's performances and thanks to superlative editing by Jenny Golden and Jimeno that pulsates to the beat of Gogol Bordello, the gypsy punk experience is captured in its most glorious as we see Hutz' go full throttle with his "possibly perverse" non-stop on stage dynamic presence (often performing in clubs for 6 hours at a stretch). As much as the clubbers and concertgoers come to be a part of the live show and embrace an atmosphere of enjoyment that "throws away the hierarchy of society" so will you with this kaleidoscopic, heart-pounding, introspective into one of the hottest groups on the international music scene. GOGOL BORDELLO: NON-STOP is non-stop entertainment and one of my top two MUST SEE FESTIVAL FILMS of the entire Festival. (And the fact that Hutz stars in and the band is featured in Madonna's directorial debut "Filtr & Wisdom" opening on October 31st, is an added reason to check out this film).

Hankering for another


weaves an intricate tale of intrigue in this fictionalized tale of Tom Flynn, a left-leaning bookstore owner who just happened to have published an expose on 9/11. Enter the sultry and mysterious femme fatale, Kasia, herself on the run from a 9/11 cover-up as she allegedly has ties to Mohamed Atta thanks to Able Danger, a hard drive that contains the identities and plots of the real architects of 9/11. Crossing paths in true film noir stylings reminiscent of "The Maltese Falcon", it doesn't take long after meeting this Eastern European beauty for Flynn to become implicated in the murder of a friend, be on the run from every government agency known to mankind and be forced to look beneath the surface at who and what Kasia really is.

Krik goes for the jugular and pushes the panic button in each of us with this too-close-for-comfort telling of a tragedy that changed the world as we know it forever. The title itself, ABLE DANGER, is derived from the actual top-secret classified intelligence project allegedly initiated by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1999 as a means to combat terrorism in general and particularly, al-Qaeda. The project was allegedly disbanded in 2005 after the public learned of its existence.


Rumored among conspiracy theorists, Able Danger contained every bit of data on the true 9/11 architects. The stark

AFI - Continued On Page 13


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taste of Eastern Europe, how about the thriller ABLE DANGER? Writer-director Paul Krik

GOGOL BORDELLO NON STOP



by Mark Bell

(2008-11-05)

2008, Un-rated, 87 minutes

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I'm not going to lie; I went into "Gogol Bordello Non Stop" with a pre-existing respect and love for the band's music. I can't remember exactly where or when I first heard it (perhaps after seeing interviews with band leader Eugene Hütz in the documentary "Kill Your Idols"), but I know that once I did, I was hooked. This is both a good thing and a bad thing for Margarita Jimeno's documentary.

On the good side, "Gogol Bordello" showcases the gypsy-punk band at their craziest, covering the 5 year ascent of a band from a hodge-podge of Hütz-picked musicians playing weekly parties in New York City to rock festival mainstays, touring the world. Not only do you get to see how much fun everyone seems to be having all the time, you also get insight into how Hütz came to be the madman he is today, and how each band member found their way into the band and, once in, how they helped shape the overall evolution of the sound (which is helpful because, if you've ever seen a Gogol show, there are often moments of "who the fuck is he or she?" and "what's going on here?" and... that's okay).

On the bad side, if you enter the film with knowledge of the band's music, their style and even enough background info then this documentary is little more than a snapshot of a bunch of people having fun on and off-stage. Sure, an occasional political ideology is expressed, but then it's back to the fun and, while I think those new to Gogol Bordello will find the band a [musical](#) revelation (if not revolution), I don't know what it has to offer those looking for even more insight into the band. Then again, what more does one expect? I guess even I have been having trouble managing exactly what my expectations for the film were.

At best, "Gogol Bordello Non Stop" is a portrait of an evolving band, enjoying what they do and inviting you to enjoy along with them. At worst, nothing much happens but you get to hang out with the band, and that's not bad. If you've never heard of the band, this film is worth it for the possibility of broadening your musical horizons and tastes. If you already love the band, it's like hanging out with friends. Either way, it's worth seeing "Gogol Bordello Non Stop."

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Gogol Bordello Non-Stop Director Margarita Jimeno: The Media Diet



By [Brandon Harris](#) posted November 3, 2008

Gypsy punk band [Gogol Bordello](#) have drawn an increasingly large following as the decade as worn on, but this year their cinematic profile has raised dramatically. In Berlin this year Madonna unveiled her *Filth and Wisdom*, starring frontman Eugene Hutz, and now comes a full blown tour documentary filmmaker Margarita Jimeno, *Gogol Bordello Non-Stop*. The film made its North American bow at AFI over the weekend and screens again this Wednesday at the Arclight. The Bogota, Columbia born, Williamsburg based Jimeno, who has made shorts and worked in the art and editorial departments of NYC indies for a decade, caught up with us to discuss her fascination with *There Will Be Blood*, her desire to adapt *Que Viva La Musica!* and where to catch Sid Vicious on YouTube.

What films or television shows have you seen recently?

One film I finally watched recently was *There Will Be Blood*, I thought I'd fall asleep to be honest, but I stayed up until 2AM+ watching with wide open eyes, ears, and sometimes mouth too. I was blown away, it is a contemporary classic! I recently saw *The Pleasure of Being Robbed*, *Patti Smith: Dream of Life*, and *La Rabia*. I watch YouTube these days (no actual TV for me), so recently I found [this amazing clip](#) with Nancy Spungen and Sid Vicious on a NY cable show days before they died, quite a time capsule.

Which ones stuck with you and why?

There Will be Blood is a classic piece of cinema. Great acting and music, beautiful sets, and gut-wrenching drama at its center.

Does your interest in them have anything to do with your own work as a filmmaker? How do the films that you think of as "influences" affect your own style and preoccupations as a filmmaker?

In some cases it's not so much a specific film's influence, but more the point of view of a particular filmmaker or a group of people that has influenced my work. Like Werner Herzog, or Dogma 95. It has been more valuable to my filmmaking process to read interviews with people such as Jean-Luc Godard, Werner Herzog, Lars Von Trier, or Mike Leigh than to make mental notes about their films.

How often do you read fiction? Do you wish you read more?

I've never spent more than 2 months without reading fiction in the last 15 years, but this year I have been reading academic books and essays, by Zizek, and Daniel Pinchebeck. Actually I've read two stories from Jonathan Lethem's *Amnesia* anthology. Yes, I want to read more fiction and I already have a few books in my shelf waiting.

What would be your ideal literary adaptation and why?

My first option is a novel by Colombian writer Andres Caicedo, *Que Viva La Musica!* It's one of those stories that's close to me...a classic teenage coming of age tale about a girl in the 70's that lives for music and partying, yet it has a very insightful social commentary; it ponders universal dilemmas. The way the writer wrote about music is fantastic, and for this reason the film would need a big budget because the music ranges from Rolling Stones to Richie Ray. Another obstacle is dealing with a cult classic novel, you don't want to get a lot of hate mail if you mess it up! It would need some real thought (and money) to do this one right. Perhaps the road to go is to do something inspired by the book, the best film adaptations are the ones where something unique is brought to the story yet the novel shines though, like *Blade Runner*, or *The Dead*.

How, if at all, has reading informed your filmmaking?

It has very much, especially when writing characters. I think here's where I'm influenced the most. Because you are usually reading into the character's mind, it has been very helpful when I'm directing actors too. I think human understanding would take at least 3 lifetimes, but thanks to literature you can spend a couple of years and you have a very broad understanding. Of course I'm talking about classic literature, like Bronte, Dostoevsky, Austen, Conrad, Orwell, Steinbeck, Voltaire, etc etc etc.

What are you listening to recently?

So much I'll just list in no specific order: Nico Muhly, Sigur Ros, The Doors, *There Will Be Blood* soundtrack, Devendra Banhart, Megapuss, Virus (80's Argentinian rock), Reverend Beat Man, Arvo Part, Yann Tiersen, Apocalyptica, Doveman, Likke Li, Entrance, and local bands like Pink Noise, Sea Sick, and Dorit Chrysler.

If you could collaborate with one musician on a film, who would it be and why?

Well, I actually have a couple of people who I already contacted for two projects I have. So it is hard to choose only one, but each has a musical and performance quality which I'm interested in capturing on film. For example going back to influences I'm taking Tony Gatlif's approach to musicians in his films, to make my own films. It's not a secret about the musicians I have contacted, they are: Devendra Banhart, Eugene Hutz, Dorit Chrysler, the Kolpakov Trio, Maria Benjumeda (Flamenco singer), and Martin Vejarano (Colombian percussionist).

What would be the ideal pairing of filmmaker and musician for a concert film?

Hmm.....what about Werner Herzog and Gogol Bordello (The Circus Tamer) or Harmony Korine and Sigur Ros (Subnatural Powers) or Madonna and Jean Luc Godard (The Odd Couple) or Lars Von Trier and Justice (House Metal Gut Punch..Ahh! So many options...

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"Gogol Bordello has so many layers of interest", Margarita Jimeno

Bijan Tehrani

Tue, 21 Oct 2008 09:13:00

From New York City's sensational Russo-disco scene to a non-stop touring marathon with his band Gogol Bordello, Eugene Hütz takes us deep into his artistic life and influences. The story unfolds over five years, beginning in 2001, and follows **Eugene** and **Gogol Bordello's** progress from underground legend to international phenomenon.

Ranging in age from 25 to 50 years old, and hailing from five different countries, Gogol Bordello's members share their tales of immigration, of how they became part of the band, and how they quit their day jobs to go on tour. Taking pride in his Roma (or Gypsy) background, Hütz not only sings in Romany, he collaborates with and supports New York City's Roma musicians, such as Yuri Yunakov, and Piroska Racz. And after five years on the road, the band has coalesced into a solid artistic collective, a family.

Through music, the film delivers messages of social and political commentary, and captures Gogol Bordello in the act of performing, whether as headliner or as the spark of incendiary jams with such acts as Manu Chao (a French/Spanish rocker). And with an international tribe of "multi-culti" fan-friend supporters, Gogol Bordello keeps "instigating creative hell and attacking people's passivity" (Hütz). "*Gogol Bordello Non-Stop*" goes beyond music, beyond the political, opening hearts and ears to an artistic revolution in a globalized era.

Margarita Jimeno is an emerging director and writer, who brings her unique creative and visual style to all projects ranging from documentaries, short films, music videos and feature films. Jimeno has two fiction scripts right now in revision, "*Feminine Technical Difficulties*" a tragic comedy set in New York and "*Guerrero*" an epic drama set in 1980's Colombia. Born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia, Jimeno moved to New York in 1997 where she continues to live and work.

Began Tehrani: What motivated you to make "*Gogol Bordello Non-Stop*"? When did you first decide to make this film? Was there any particular reason?

Margarita Jimeno: No, none really. I didn't really start thinking that I was going to make a film, and I didn't really plan anything at the beginning. In 2001 I was just out of film school. I was already a regular at the

Bulgarian bar so I wanted to do a short video about the party, and Dj Hütz (aka Eugene). So I asked Eugene if I could follow him with my camera, and he said 'of course, but you know Margarita you have to check my band'. Finally one day I went to see Gogol Bordello, and it was amazing. I started filming more after that, and I didn't really have an idea





of what I was doing, I didn't have an agenda. It was just natural to be there following Eugene and the band. After years went by I think he didn't realize also what he was getting into. I was just basically filming things that I thought could be interesting. So I pretty much treated this not as a video film that you go and film 500 hours of footage and then think about what story you have. Once I saw the story I knew what I wanted to film. And of course when I was doing that something amazing and spontaneous would happen. Like when Eugene goes to the shoemaker store I wasn't understanding much or any of the conversation to be honest, yet I knew something very spontaneous was taking place, so I was patient and filmed it all. I didn't just hang around month after month. I was very specific about what I was shooting.

BT: Am I correct that making this film took almost seven years?

MJ: Yea. Filming started in 2001, at the Bulgarian bar, that summer Gogol Bordello played with Manu Chao at Central Park. And the after party was at the Bulgarian Bar, that's the first jam I captured with Manu Chao jamming on the street with Eugene in New York. Even the format of the camera there is completely different than what most of the film is done with. I was filming literally until January 2007, which was the last interview I shot. I have been editing on and off since 2006, but the core was done this past year. So, yea, seven years.

BT: The flow of the music, which always takes you to unexpected moments, did that influence the visual style of your film?

MJ: I didn't really sit down and analyze the music and how I would edit the film. But there is definitely something in the way I edited and the way I

wanted to present the story that may be similar to what Gogol Bordello does. Eugene is a very creative person and I like that kind of creativity, so it might be similar because of that. But I didn't really sit down and analyze the songs. It is more of an artistic similarity. If you like a certain style of film or music, I think that what you produce will be influenced by these things.

BT: What is also interesting is that this band is an international band. You have origins in another country as well. Was that one of the reasons that made you interested in this band?

MJ: Gogol Bordello has so many layers of interest. For that reason it is easy and accessible for anyone, because it has a social-political view, it has a party atmosphere, a surrealist theatrical show, each person has different music backgrounds, and training, also the generation gap is interesting. In the beginning the live shows had these crazy dance moves and a very theatrical approach, which I was very much into this kind of performance. It can be very surrealist sometimes, like when Pam takes her drum in the crowd. It has many layers that are interesting. That is why I got interested. It is a little bit of hyperactivity in a way, and I guess I am a little bit like that. They have so much stuff going on it is hard to get bored with it, even if you tried. There will always be one thing you will identify with.

BT: We always associate artists from Columbia with magical story telling. I see that in the style of your film. It is like a fairy tale and a documentary. And in a way you find that in the subject as well, which has a magical touch to it.

MJ: Yea, completely. Growing up in Colombia there was a daily live of magic realism. Once you move from Colombia you understand the beauty of the daily stories, and how magical they are. I have an interest in seeing those moments. Even though I say I want to film something specific, once I am there, I'm very open and watching for a beautiful moment, is a sort of subtext, but I take these moments as radical true moments. One of my favorite moments is when Sergei is feeding the pigeons. I thought it was amazing. It just happened and I turned the camera. Those are the moments we should be watching out for.



BT: How do you differ their kind of music from the popular music that is in the U.S. right now? Personally I find that a lot of popular music now only presents certain expectations. There are few new ideas in popular music, especially compared to the kind of music that Eugene and his band present; with them you can see new ideas and freshness.



MJ: Yea. I see what you say. I live in a cave I guess in regards to mainstream media in general. I really don't pay too much attention, but if I happen to come across some mainstream bombardment I usually turn it off, because I find it has no soul. It feels like it is not sincere, like the music industry might be going through a hard time and they just need to present repetition so they are "safe". At the same time things that are not safe, if they are amazing, usually make their way out. It just takes longer, Like Gogol Bordello. It took them years to come out.

BT: I see that you are planning for two feature films. One of them is "*Feminine Technical Difficulties*". Where are you with these projects?

MJ: "*Feminine Technical Difficulties*" is a project I started last year. I am still going over the script. Most of my work has to do with music, and this one has a lot of emphasis on the music. It is a fun story, a sort of tragic comedy / thriller musical. The other one, "*Guerrero*", I have been working on for years. It is set in Colombia 1980's. It has a historical background, so over the years I have had to stop and spend some time reading to get the background atmosphere, this story is more epic, but because of its political background, and the process Colombia is going through right now it has been difficult to convince Colombian people about it. Yet I've had great response from international producers. We'll see what kicks in first.

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"Gogol Bordello Non-Stop" Wins Audience Award at MOFFOM

Mon, 20 Oct 2008 15:01:00



Music on Film, Film on Music (MOFFOM) in Prague, Czech Republic announced the award winners of 2008. The festival jury evaluated the best of the competition section entries; here are the authors and films who received the awards at the closing ceremony at Lucerna: the main prize was given to Maciej Pisarek's SOLO. This Polish movie gives a true picture of the MOFFOM festival vision Music on Film-Film on Music. Two directors received honorable mentions: Jim Heneghan for Kiss Loves You and Ben Herson for African Underground: Democracy

in Dakar.

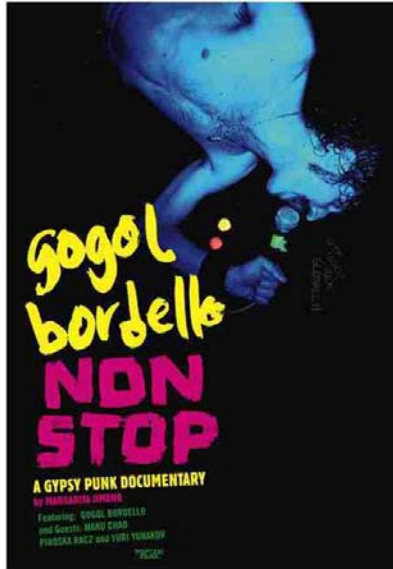
Margarita Jimeno's *Gogol Bordello Non-Stop* won the Audience Award at Music on Film, Film on Music (MOFFOM) in Prague, Czech Republic. A good reason for this film to win the audience award was the sold out screening of it in Sv tozor cinema, where people were getting up from their seats dancing and the cinema almost turned out into one of the clubs appearing in the film.

Gogol Bordello Non-Stop Rocks AFI Fest 2008

Written by Kent Victor Schuelke

TUESDAY, 04 NOVEMBER 2008

Gogol Bordello Non-Stop screens at *AFI Fest 2008*. The movie screens at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday at the ArCLight Cinemas. [Click here to buy tickets.](#)



Gogol Bordello Non-Stop is a highly entertaining documentary about Gogol Bordello, a high-energy gypsy punk band that filled a Bulgarian bar in New York City weekly for years with sweat-drenched pogo-dancing enthusiasts under the musical and charismatic spell of outrageous front-man Eugene Hutz and his diverse cast of musicians.

"It was kind of like an adventure. A lot of people who went there saw it as an adventure," said Margarita Jimeno, who first experienced the band while a student at New York's School of Visual Arts. "It's like a wave of excitement that doesn't really stop."

Jimeno was a student from Colombia living in New York City in 2001. She was looking for a place where she could dance to rock 'n' roll music. A Russian friend turned her on to The Mehanata Bulgarian Bar in Chinatown where jester Hutz and his outrageous band of merry musicians were holding court.

"He was someone I immediately wanted to film," Jimeno said. "There's the energy and the party. And the performance was so theatrical. They had weird costumes. It was just very surreal. It was kind of like a ritual. And the music was amazing."



Jimeno asked Hutz if she could film some of the band's performances during a summer break from her classes. That initial interest evolved, as Jimeno became hooked on the music and the personal stories of Hutz and his diverse band-mates, into five years of filming Gogol Bordello performances.

The result of Jimeno's efforts is the documentary film, **Gogol Bordello Non-Stop**, an energetic documentary that inspires audience members to wish that they could climb onscreen and join the festive party.



Margarita Jimeno

In the film, we learn the story of how Hutz left Eastern Europe as a young man for new horizons in New York City.

"He's a very compelling story," Jimeno said. "He could have done wrong. He could have been very bitter. But instead he took that energy and did something creative."



Eugene Hutz

The Bulgarian Bar attracted a diverse crowd - many Eastern Europeans certainly, but also people from other cultures looking to find their personal places in the big city, particularly after September 11, 2001. The band's shows, and the Bulgarian Bar itself, provided a place where New Yorkers could blow off steam dancing and make friends with people from cultures different from their own.

"There was something very exotic about it to me," Jimeno said. "When I went to the Bulgarian Bar I started to see Latin People, and Eastern European people, and we felt connected. And we each thought the other was exotic, but we felt connected."

"They (the band) put you in this mode where nothing else matters except that you're in this room and have this shared experience. You can drop all of your thinking," Jimeno continued. "Everyone is there doing the same thing and everyone is very conscious of what's happening in the moment."



Gogol Bordello

Hutz's band is very diverse in terms of the ages and national origins of its members.

"I love the variety of the people who are on-stage. It's almost like you're seeing some sort of history on-stage, because you have this diverse group on-stage, and they all bring different backgrounds on-stage with them," Jimeno said.

Jimeno was her own crew most of the time. It was her, a Sony PD150 video camera sporting a shotgun boom microphone, and hundreds of sweating, jumping and dancing music fans. As the project grew more serious, she used a three to four camera team to tape three concerts.

In 2003, Jimeno decided to develop all her raw footage into a feature film. **Gogol Bordello Non-Stop** appeared at 2008 festivals in Gothenburg and Munich, and it won the Audience Award at the *Music On Film-Film On Music Film Festival* (MOFFOM) in Prague. The film enjoyed its North American premiere at *AFI Fest 2008*, and has a second and final screening at the festival Wednesday. For his part, Hutz and the band are currently touring in Europe.

The Bulgarian Bar occupied the second floor of a 10-story building in Chinatown, at the intersection of Canal Street and Broadway. The party did stop for several months after 9/11 while rescue and cleanup crews worked the South Manhattan area.

In 2003, the bar was given its walking papers by its landlord and the club has now relocated to a space in Manhattan's East Village. Jimeno reports that the former location of the Bulgarian Bar, the spot that witnessed so much joie de vivre, is undergoing a physical renovation.

"I think it's going to be a Marriott or some kind of chain hotel," Jimeno said.



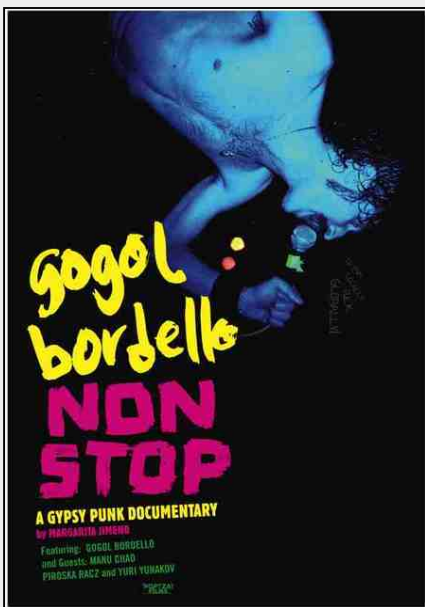
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KAREN BARDLEY

Gogol Bordello Non Stop - Movie Review

October 26th, 2008 by Racket Magazine



Gogol Bordello Non Stop
Hoptza! Films
9/10

Gogol Bordello Non Stop follows everyone's favorite (*cough* only *cough*) gypsy punk band's progression from Eugene Hütz' journey to America, to shirtless parties at the Bulgarian Bar at Broadway & Canal in New York, to touring the world playing at festivals in front of crowds of thousands. The image portrayed by Hütz and the rest of GB is not just a hollow and fake aesthetic, it's a lifestyle, a fact I got to find out first hand during a meeting with Hütz at Warped Tour a few years back. (Dude smells like concentrated body odor. True story.)

Seeing the film made me regret not hitting on one of the dancers when I had my chance to meet the band. Holy crap, she is SO much hotter without make up! Oh, the regrets... what we could have shared. Is it better to have loved and lost or to never have loved at all? OH THE REGRETS!!!

I knew some Gogol fun-facts going into the flick, such as their multi-nationality (the band is composed of Russian, Ukrainian, Israeli and American musicians, and the dancers are Thai-American and Chinese-Scottish) and, until recently, its distinctive lack of a bass player, but I hadn't fully realized how outrageous a past the band really had. Stories that couldn't be made up if you tried, like having to replace a drummer who got deported or the guitarist who became a schizophrenic. It was also particularly interesting to hear the members of the band tell the saga of how they joined up.

The film contains quite a bit of comedy, like a hapless tour manager SideOneDummy provided for them helplessly trying to corral the band into the bus, as the band continually yells "PARTY!" in thick accents.

There's plenty of documentaries about various sects within the punk scene (*American Hardcore*, *This Is Punk*), but it's nice to see one focusing on a specific band. If you're interested in trying to get your immigrant grandmother into the scene, here's your chance. Gogol Bordello will have your Nana up and dancing around in no time to the wonderful sounds of The Motherland. *Gogol Bordello Non Stop* premieres at the [AFI Film Festival](#) in LA on November 1st.

-Jonathan Yost

Posted in Sights.

One Response

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Still in Motion

"Come to the edge," he said. They said, "We are afraid." "Come to the edge," he said. They came. He pushed them. . . And they flew. --Guillaume Apollinaire

[« American Documentary Filmmaker Imprisoned in Iran | Main | Interview: Astra Taylor, Director EXAMINED LIFE »](#)

October 30, 2008

Los Angeles Has Pomegranates! and Gogol Bordello



Massoud Bakhshi's wonderful nonfiction film, **Tehran Has No More Pomegranates!**, is having a limited theatrical engagement in Los Angeles, a rare opportunity to see this remarkable, beautifully realized and engaging history of Tehran shot on 35mm. Written, directed and produced by Bakhshi, the film was made over the course of five years. We follow its director and his crew on their ambitious mission to make a film about the unwieldy, chaotic city they call home.

With much humor and sarcasm, they find frustration, at every turn, in getting their film made and they explain to their overseers at the Documentary Film Center why this project cannot, ultimately, be completed. They decide amongst themselves to explore the city's past in order to give the Tehran of the present day better context. What ensues is a comedic narrative about the city's transformation from a small, but sophisticated, village into a place of increasing urban decay, pollution (having just returned from there, I can vouch for the horrific air quality), inadequate housing, stratification of a once-homogeneous society and, of course, the fatal destiny of the city's poetic symbol of the pomegranate fruit. (According to the Koran, they grow in the gardens of paradise and the prophet, Mohammed, is said to have encouraged his followers to eat pomegranates to ward off envy and hatred.)

For 68 minutes, one is flooded with rare and beautiful archival footage from the past 150 years,

unconventional photography, mock interviews that are really hilarious, and a wondrous and cacophonous soundtrack, most of it incredibly nostalgic for Tehranis. *Variety* says that it is "an imaginative and engaging history of Tehran that uses a petulant barbed humor to deliver a steady stream of irony about this drastically transformed society." I think the huge population of Iranian Americans in Los Angeles (both those born there and here) will appreciate and adore this film. You can click [here](#) to watch the opening sequence of the film narrated by [Nosrat Karimi](#) and featuring music by [Mohsen Namjoo](#). You can also read my in-depth interview with the film's director [here](#).

The four screenings will be on November 5 and 6 (next Wednesday and Thursday) at 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. each evening at The Landmark Theater in Westwood Village. Click [here](#) for more info or to purchase tickets online.

Another film which I had a chance to view recently, and really liked, is having its North American debut, also in LA, at the AFI International Film Festival this week, playing there on the 1st and 5th of November. The star subject of **Gogol Bordello Non-Stop**, Eugene Hütz, is very much in the spotlight right now, currently starring in Madonna's new flick, [Filth and Wisdom](#), now playing at New York City's IFC Center. Margarita Jimeno, **Non-Stop**'s director, editor and shooter, gives us an up-close-and-personal experience of the genesis and growth of this now world-famous band of gypsy punks: musicians and performance artists ranging in age from 25 to 50, its members hailing from many diverse places and cultures. Following Hütz over the course of several years starting in 2001, she captures the popular groundswell of the raucous party atmosphere that the band serves up wherever it plays, from its early days in the Russian disco scene of lower Manhattan to the tireless global tours on which it embarks, truly going non-stop, "instigating creative hell and attacking people's passivity," in the words of its dynamic founder. Go to [the AFI fest site's film guide](#) for more details on the screenings.



Posted at 03:38 PM in [Cinema Verite in Tehran](#), [Distribution](#), [Festivals](#), [Film](#), [HotDocs](#), [Markets](#) | [Permalink](#)

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Gogol Bordello Documentary's North American Premiere

10/27/08 5:09pm

by Kate Harper (CHARTattack)

If you think **Gogol Bordello** are worthy film subjects, you'll be pleased to know that *Gogol Bordello Non-Stop*, a feature documentary about the gypsy punk band, will have its North American premiere on Nov. 1.

The film will be screened at 7:10 p.m. at Los Angeles' ArcLight Hollywood theatre during the American Film Institute Film Festival. There will be a repeat screening at 12:30 p.m. on Nov. 5 at the same theatre.

"I'm thrilled we are going straight to Hollywood to have the North American premiere," director Margarita Jimeno says. "Who would have thought gypsy punks are so loved on the west coast. What a great way to enter a town for the first time."

Gogol Bordello Non-Stop was selected for the 2008 Munich, Goteberg and Ghent international film festivals. Jimeno began filming Gogol Bordello main man **Eugene Hutz** and his theatrical troupe of performers in 2000 while he was a DJ at New York City's Bulgarian Bar. *Gogol Bordello Non-Stop* features interviews with Hutz about his days as a DJ, Gogol Bordello's early days and the band's subsequent world tours. You can watch a trailer [here](#).

Hutz made his acting debut in 2006's *Everything Is Illuminated*, and he can currently be seen in theatres in Madonna's directorial debut, *Filth And Wisdom*. The film features Hutz starring as a Ukrainian immigrant who aspires to rock stardom by adopting a cross-dressing dominatrix stage persona. Gogol Bordello also appear as a gypsy punk band in the film. Let's hope it's more like *Everything Is Illuminated* and nothing like any other movie Madge has been involved with.