

VOICES OF EL ALTO

StoryTent presents a Documentary film Directed by Benjamin Oroza.

A VIDEOKUU PRODUCTION IN CO-OPERATION WITH STEPS INTERNATIONAL



Table of contents

1. Contacts
2. Director, Benjamin Oroza
3. Synopsis
4. Technical details & Main credits
5. More on Film, motivation and background
6. Director's Notes
7. Festival & awards
8. Director filmography
9. Producer's bio
10. Co-producer

1. Contacts

Distribution Contacts Jan Rofekamp Films Transit International Inc. 252 Gouin Boulevard East Montreal. Quebec. Canada H3L 1A8, jan@filmstransit.com	Screening Copy & Sales & Press & Festival Contacts Producer, Jussi Oroza Videokuu Oy Laivalahdenkaari 5 A 29, 00810 Helsinki, Finland jussi@videokuu.com TEL: +358 44 0884016	Co-production Contacts Don Edkins, Brian Tilley Steps International executive producers don@steps.co.za brian@steps.co.za +27 21 4655805
---	--	--

2. Director, Benjamin Oroza



Benjamin Oroza was born in 1959 in Finland. Benjamin has directed several documentaries and radio features for the Finnish Broadcasting company. He has also directed several music videos and factual, educational, industrial programs for various institutions. Benjamin often composes music for his films, among them "The Mine", which won in 1991 the first prize in Tokyo International Film Festival for Cinema Students, documentary category.

Since 2008 Benjamin has been the film director of the StoryTent cross media project. Recently he has finished a documentary film based on stories collected in Bolivia, Voices of El Alto. Currently he is sharing the StoryTent cross media concept and

techniques with African filmmakers. In October 2013, as a result of a 3 week StoryTent workshop, more than 70 stories were collected in Nairobi, Kenya. As part of the workshop, Benjamin also directed a music video of "Ghetto"

4. Short synopsis

Bolivia, El Alto. In a city over 4000 meters above sea level, a Storytent is set up in a marketplace to collect stories from random by-passers without any thematic limitations imposed by the film makers. Thus something unexpected happened: the tent became an intimate confession room and a magic stage where stories, songs and poems of love and anger became a Story within a story, of a rebellious city, Voices of El Alto.



Longer synopsis

A tent is pitched on the market square of El Alto, the Bolivian city perched 4,000 meters above sea level. The filmmakers ask random passersby to tell a personal story for the camera. The film opens with a young girl half giggling, half crying as she describes a very unpleasant experience. It seems that the impersonal camera has become the first confidant she has had for a long time. It's a confronting first scene, but at its core it's representative of what is to follow. The Finnish-Bolivian director Benjamin Oroza explains that this "story tent" - which he has been taking all over the world since 2009 - is a way of "making films with them, not about them. I want my films to convey a sense of us - while I remain silent and invisible." Oroza's sympathetic presence combined with the generosity of the passersby in sharing their personal experiences have resulted in a sensitive collage of stories, a poignant and intimate insight into personal joy and sorrow. There's everything from an optimistic anecdote about a first kiss to a loudly declaimed mini-play about the native population's struggle for independence, along with accounts of runaway spouses, violent fathers, and the pain of being cast out by your own family.

3. Technical details & Main credits

English Title

Voices of El Alto

Subtitle

StoryTent presents

Month/year of completion

June 2013

Country of production

Finland, South Africa

Film categories

All / Art / Culture, Human Interest / Social Issues, Politics / Society

Production company name

Videokuu Oy / Jussi Oroza

Co-production

Steps International

Steps International executive producers: Don Edkins, Brian Tilley

Email: don@steps.co.za

Format

Preview copy, DVD final version, eng.subtitles, 49min / vimeo.com link on demand

Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/70274175>

Original language

Spanish

Subtitles

English

Screening format

DCP / Digital Cinema 2k 1.85 / 25 frames per second

Original format

Proress422, 1920/1080 25P

Frames per second

25 frames per second

Sound format

5.1 surround sound / Aspect Ratio 16/9

Involved TV channel

YLE Finland

Main credits

director

Benjamin Oroza

producer

Jussi Oroza / Videokuu Oy

creative producer

Iikka Vehkalahti

executive producers / Steps International

Don Edkins and Brian Tilley

stills and director of photography

Meeri Koutaniemi

editor

Menno Boerema

music

themesong Soy Rebelde	by Alvarez Beigreder Perez, Manuel, Manuel Casas (purification)
interpreted by	Franka Oroza – singer and 3. charango
Antti Nordin	guitar and arrangements
Boris Nordin	cajón and 2. charango
Mauri Saarikoski	violin
Benjamin Oroza	charango

Charango instrumental themes composed and interpreted by

Benjamin Oroza

music and soundtrack mixer

Asko Ahonen / Revolver studios

Trailer, color grading and graphics

Jussi Oroza

Other credits

Marlene Mercado	local promotor
Genaro Sivila Garcia	additional cinematography
Ruddy Tapia Gutierrez	on location assistant
Delia Yura Chura	additional interviewer
Boris Mariaca Lima	additional interviewer
Severo Chura	transport
Terttu Oroza	transcriptions of stories
Jonathan Hutchings	translations to english

5. More on Film

The film *Voices of El Alto* has been created using the StoryTent concept, which is based on a simple idea: take a portable green screen studio, which is built inside a tent, and collect stories told directly to camera with as little intervention as possible by the film makers. StoryTent is like a stage where stories can freely evolve without thematic limitations. Thus, the unexpected might happen.

Background

Story tent was created five years ago by dir. Benjamin Oroza and further developed together with Iikka Vehkalahti and Jussi Oroza. In Finland it became a popular Sunday primetime 68-episode short documentary series commissioned by YLE Dokumenttiprojekti. Soon after the initial success, StoryTent expanded into a cross-media project. From over 400 stories collected in Finland, were also made a 8-episode one-hour radio feature series and an interactive web platform was established for viewing most of the stories. The simple idea to collect 20-30 stories in a day grabbed international attention at INPUT in Budapest, Sunny Side at La Rochelle, France and at Sheffield Doc/Fest MeetMarket. StoryTent has also received a development grant from the Finnish Film Foundation for a feature length documentary based on the material collected in Finland. The StoryTent and 1000 stories open source cross-media project presented by StoryTent producer, Jussi Oroza was also awarded with Open Source Development grant from Nordisk Film & TV fond at the Nordisk Panorama Documentary Film Festival in Reykjavik.

2012, Benjamin Oroza and Jussi Oroza were invited to South Africa by STEPS (Don Edkins and Brian Tilley) with the StoryTent. The short films shot in Tembisa Township were shown for International audiences in C3 Towards Carnegie III. In Congo Kinshasa, StoryTent collaborated with dir. Djo Mumba. A two week workshop with his film students was held. More than 130 stories were collected and the best were presented on a local TV channel. Later this year Djo Mumba and his students presented StoryTent in a festival in Kinshasa.

7. Director's note

The diversity of stories might unmask that poverty has as many faces as storytellers. It might also emphasize that poor and rich people have much in common: dignity, persistence,

imagination, will power, humour, intelligence, courage, humility, nobility, empathy, love and passion... hope and faith.

But there is a hidden weakness. If we do not recognize that poverty is also pain, daily humiliations beyond imagination and lack of power, the Story Tent might enforce a romantic vision of the "poor but happy". Without consciously opening grounds for all emotions, including love, and the voices of anger, the Story Tent would be telling only the other side of the story of poverty.

Instead of evoking feelings of guilt and pity, the documentary film will present stories, which might even amuse the general viewer. But that is only the apparently innocent beginning. What we are really searching for, and hoping to bring out of the stories, is self respect and dignity. In this particular case, there will be no first person point of view represented by a film director who "painfully matures" during the process. Instead, the emotional structure of the documentary follows the emotions of the viewer, provoked by storytellers. Some of the stories will challenge the viewer to feel and see for the first time the anger of being poor. And perhaps, thanks to the all-pervading mainstream media, we, the rich and privileged, are more prepared to see images of misery, hopelessness and violence, than to have listen to some poor stranger daring to suggest us that we might be a bit hypocrite.

The main reason to look at the film will be the emotional tension of the whole film. We believe, that the strongest emotions come out of anger and love exposing also the inner hidden feelings and thoughts of the people. As a whole, the film challenges the well-meaning viewer to feel more than just compassion, guilt and pity. "How dare you!"

Justifiable anger dignifies. Not only because it dares to threat the well-known and silently accepted codes of behaviour of "the miserable poor", but because anger is the fuel for social change. Ghandi was angry. Martin Luther King was angry. There are still lots of angry poor people out there.

And at the same time love and compassion were the strength of Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

Benjamin Oroza,

8. Festivals & Awards

IDFA Mid-Length Competition 2013, world premiere, Netherlands

DocPoint 2014, Finland premiere, Finland

Cinemuse (South Africa 2014)

Tampere Film Festival 2014, Competition, Finland

Thessaloniki 2014, Greece

Planete + Doc Film Festival 2014 Competition: **Honorable Mention** 

International Film Festival Signes de Nuit Berlin 2014. **Honorary Mention** 

International Film Festival Signes de Nuit Paris 2014. **MAIN AWARD FOR**

DOCUMENTARIES

Human Rights Film Festival, Sucre 2014. **MAIN AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL**

DOCUMENTARIES

International Film Festival Della Lessinia 2014, Competition. Italia

Documentary Film Festival "FLAHERTIANA-2014, Competition, Russia

9. Director's filmography

A. Mayor non-commercial documentary films by Benjamin Oroza

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1991 | "MINE" 55 min / S16mm.
<i>A poetic documentary from the Huanuni tin mine in Bolivia, of mine workers in a space between life and death in a labyrinthine world filled at once with comfort and fear.</i> Directed, written and music composed by Benjamin Oroza. Camera by Pekka Uotila. Editing by Heikki Ahola.
1991 State Quality Grant
1991 KESKO OY "PIRKKA AWARD"
1991 University of Industrial Art, student grant
1991 FIRST PRIZE Tokyo International Film Festival for Cinema Students, Documentary Category |
| 1992 | ZERO NINE "PRETTY BABY" 3 min, 16 mm,
Music video. Direction and editing. Production NETRUM OY. |
| 1993 | "COCAINE" 56 min/ S16mm. |
| 1994 | <i>A profoundly personal documentary about prisoners serving life sentences, convicted under the Coca and Cocaine Law.</i>
Written, directed and edited by Benjamin Oroza. |
| 1999 | "Camargo Amargo" 59 min/ S16mm. |

The "One Hundred Years of Solitude" of the documentary film.

Written, directed and edited by Benjamin Oroza.

- 2002 "Kiss of fire" 26 min/DVCam.
Documentary about the life of tango master Oscar Prada. Written and directed by Benjamin Oroza. Production Basaari/YLE.
- 2004 "Aale Lindgrén – an aria for the oboe".
Documentary about the greatest oboe player of Finland. Written, directed and edited by Benjamin Oroza.

B. Mayor commissioned works

During 2000 – 2007 Benjamin Oroza wrote, directed and edited several factual, educational and industrial programs for various institutions such as the Red Cross of Finland. He has also edited various similar programs not mentioned in this list.

- 2007 Drugs and traffic, 15 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- Help – Accident, 16 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- Weight control ABC, 20 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- Correct eating, 20 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- 2006 First Aid!, 16 + 4 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- 2005 Smoking, 21 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- The Land, 11 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- 2004 First Aid 2, 25 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.

- 2003 Alcohol, 25 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- Too much, 25 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- Anything Goes, 20 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- 2002 Cloud Castles, 21 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- A Pig in the Sack, 19 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- Amphetamine, 18 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- The Other side of Light, 22 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- Coming Out from darkness, 25 min
Written, directed, edited, animated and music composed by Benjamin Oroza.
- 1989 First Aid at the workplace, 20 min
Written and edited by Benjamin Oroza.

9. Producer's biodata



Jaime Juhani (**Jussi**) **Oroza** Ahonen was born 1966 in La Paz, Bolivia. In Finland he started to study cultural anthropology of developing countries and Screenwriting and finally graduated from Sheffield Hallam University in documentary film production 1996. After his MA-studies he lived in Bolivia as a farmer, father, development activist and current affairs film producer for next 5 years. After moving back to Finland in 2001 he has been working as a cameraman,

director and editor with over 200 educational and industrial films, within some TV-documentaries. Jussi Oroza has been also an actor in major TV-serie and in valued documentary film “Camargo Amargo”. From 2008 he has been producing the StoryTent cross-media project of which he was also awarded with Open Source Development grant from Nordisk Film & TV fond at the Nordisk Panorama Documentary Film Festival in Reykjavik. Within StoryTent project, he produced a 49min StoryTent documentary film “Voices of El Alto” to be distributed internationally.

10. Co-producer / Executive producer STEPS International



Don Edkins / STEPS International

Co-Producer and executive producer, born in 1953 in Cape Town, South Africa

Don Edkins is a South African documentary filmmaker and producer based in Cape Town. With an academic background in Development Studies and African Languages, he has extensive work experience in the field of media and social change, and in Lesotho founded a mobile cinema in 1993 that distributes and screens films at a community level. His films include “GOLDWIDOWS” (1990), “THE COLOUR OF GOLD” (1992), and “THE BROKEN STRING” (1996). He produced the Southern African series on truth and reconciliation “LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY” (1998), and the multi-awarded documentary project “STEPS FOR THE FUTURE” (2001/04) – a collection of 38 films about Southern Africa in the time of HIV and AIDS (www.stepsforthefuture.co.za). He is Executive Producer of the Steps International global documentary project “WHY DEMOCRACY?” (www.whyledemocracy.net) 10 long and 17 short films screened by 48 broadcasters in 180 countries, using cross-media platforms to engage people in discussing and understanding contemporary democracy. He has co-authored a book on documentary filmmaking – “STEPS BY STEPS”, and is currently developing a new Steps International global documentary project about poverty and inequality, “WHY POVERTY?”

