

AS OLD AS MY TONGUE

the myth and life of Bi Kidude



"impressive and engrossing"

Charlie Gillett

"A remarkable documentary unveiling a genuine legend of world music"

Simon Broughton, Songlines Magazine

a documentary film
by ScreenStation Productions
with Busara Promotions

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AS OLD AS MY TONGUE: the myth and life of Bi Kidude. A documentary film
Andy Jones tel: +44 7960 393785 info@screenstation.net

synopsis

An intimate portrait of living legend Bi Kidude, probably the oldest performer on the world stage today.

Bi Kidude wins friends wherever she travels but at home in Zanzibar she continually courts controversy, her behaviour challenging perceptions of the role of women in a Muslim society.

As Old As My Tongue reveals the dramatic contrasts in the life of this iconic musician and features a classic soundtrack comprising one hundred years of Swahili music.

news

The **MOFFOM** (Music on Film, Film on Music) Festival in Prague brings together all kinds of films about all kinds of music. This year it also hosted the first screening of **AS OLD AS MY TONGUE: the myth and life of Bi Kidude** and the brand new 66 minute cut from south London independent film makers ScreenStation and Zanzibar's Busara Promotions picked up 3rd prize in the festival audience award.

Speaking at the festival, director and producer **Andy Jones** said "it's always fantastic to see the reaction of a new audience to Bi Kidude when she plays live. To get a similar reaction to the film shows just how compelling a character she is. After four years in production we're delighted with the positive response to the film's first public outing. The audience award gives us great confidence to take forward to the screenings at WOMEX this week and then on to our European previews with Bi Kidude's tour next month. To be honest, I'm a bit stunned. We only finished the film on Thursday, so to be here 2 days later and being voted third favourite film in an amazing festival is just incredible."

AS OLD AS MY TONGUE

SWAHILI WORLD PREMIERE

SAUTI ZA BUSARA FESTIVAL, STONE TOWN, www.busaramusic.com

ZANZIBAR, FEBRUARY 9th 2007

We are delighted to announce that the first African screening of As Old As My Tongue will take place in the open air cinema at the old fort in Stone Town as part of the friendliest festival on the planet. With Bi Kidude in attendance and musicians from all over the world in town this is one screening not to be missed. For international travel and accommodation information, press accreditation and more, please visit www.busaramusic.com

long synopsis

Bi Kidude is a living legend. What a woman: Musician, leader, Muslim, rebel.

As Old As My Tongue is a remarkable story with an amazing central character. The face of Bi Kidude (pronounced Bee Key-Do-Day) tells it's own story of almost one hundred years of hard living on the African island of Zanzibar. Add a tongue, and the stories that emerge are full of life, humour, musical legend and social history.

Bi Kidude challenges our perception of age, of stardom, and of the role of women in Islam. She'd never call herself a rebel but neither has she ever conformed to stereotypical perceptions of a Muslim woman. She's been breaking the rules since she was ten years old and ran away from Koran school to the Stone town docks.

To see a ninety-three year old woman drum, dance, drink, smoke and flirt, is a unique experience. To witness the transformation as she reverses the ageing process and changes from a wrinkled granny into a vital shining star is nothing short of a revelation. To meet the patrons, pimps and personalities who surround her is a unique trip to a hidden side of a paradise island.

Over the last three years we have filmed with Bi Kidude and her extended entourage. From her humble home in a township on the edge of historic Stone Town to the grandeur of the Theatre de la Ville in Paris we have captured moments of love, jealousy, protection and exploitation of a witty, humble human.

Musical moments combined with highly personal observation form the trunk of our story. The music is extraordinary. From the seemingly poetic but really biting satire of the grand Taarab orchestras to the telling rhythms of primal sexuality expressed in her x-rated Unyago the film is punctuated with sensational live footage.

In a world where the old are seen as useless and dependent, Bi Kidude gives us a counter point. When she has money, which she often does after a concert tour or a recording session, she is surrounded by hangers on looking for a handout. Those responsible for her success bemoan her generous nature while she herself draws strength from her ability to care for those around her, however tenuous their family connection.

These characters and their stories populate our film. Their opposing agendas and personal spats bring humour, jealousy and mystery to the Bi Kidude story.

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soundtrack to the film

Afkari (thoughts)

performed by Ikhwani Safaa Musical club

Alalminadura

Bi Kidude, Mohamed Issa Matona, Abeid Muhsein & Mohamed Outhman

Unyago

performed by Bi Kidude Msondo group

Tamaa We Tamaa

performed by Siti bint Saad

Kijiti

Nadi Ikhwan Safaa & Afro Arab Groove

Jipeleleze(try to find out yourself)

performed by Culture Musical club

Suhuba Ya Dai

Sahib el Arry feat. Bi Kidude

Arebaba Pakistani

performed by DCMA

Beru

performed by Grande Orchestre de Taarab/Culture

Kidumbak

performed by Grande Orchestre de Taarab/Culture

Beru interview mix

performed by Bi Kidude with Mohamed issa Matona

Shada La Maua

performed by Seif Salim & Abdullah Mussa

MAPENZI KIAPO - do not gossip

performed by Ghazzy Musical Club feat. Amina Yakub

Machozi Yananimwaika (tears are falling)

performed by Ikhwani Safaa Musical Club

Ya Laiti

performed by Bi Kidude Group

Muhogo Wa Jang'Ombe

performed by Ikhwani Safaa

Done Changed My Way of Living

performed by Taj Mahal with Culture Musical Club feat. Bi Kidude

music licencses courtesy of:

Ace Records Ltd, Globestyle, Heartbeat Records, Jahazi Media, Kultur & Spetakkel 2006, National sound Archive, Tradition et Moderne

credits

Director/Producer: Andy Jones

Andy is an independent film-maker from Wolverhampton living in South London. In 2000 he and Suzy Gillett set up the ScreenStation collective, now expanded to include ScreenStation Productions. His films to date have included work with refugees in the UK, an award winning introduction to responsible tourism for teenage travellers and most recently a moving documentary about children's experiences of the conflict in Sudan. As Old As My Tongue is ScreenStation's first independently produced hour-long documentary. (bio p6)

Camera: Aubrey Fagon

One of the leading black British photographers of his generation, Aubrey has travelled behind the lens in studios and on location around the world. He has the ability to melt into the background of any situation, putting people immediately at ease and producing intimate and beautifully composed images.

Edit: Lisa Cazzato

Over the last four years, Lisa has worked with both video and film, editing acclaimed experimental and broadcast documentary films. Born in Lecce, Southern Italy, she moved to London to study and work in photography. In 2003 she has completed an MA in Fine Arts at St. Martins College of Arts and her photographic work, supported by grants from the Arts Council and awards, has been shown in London galleries as well as internationally.

Associate Producer: Yusuf Mahmoud (Zanzibar)

Yusuf left the UK for Zanzibar for a 6 month contract in 1998. He has yet to return...He spent 5 years working as a director of music and performance at the Zanzibar International Festival and has since set up Busara Promotions, a non political cultural organisation promoting Zanzibari music. This film could not have been made without him.

Associate Producers UK: Rita Ray & Griff Fender

Rita & Griff have spent the last 30 years working in the music industry as performers, managers, producers and in Rita's case as a DJ and radio presenter. This is their first foray into film production and they have worked tirelessly both on and off location. This film could have been made without them, but without them we'd probably still be talking about it.

Andy Jones: Director's biography



Nationality: British

Date of birth: March 1970

an independent film-maker and co-founder of ScreenStation.

Married with two young children,

Lives in South London, UK

Selected Filmography

Just Peace: 2005: Sudan/UK: Documentary: 24 mins. Director/Producer

Landmark documentary featuring the voices of children in Sudan and their experience of the longest running civil war in Africa. Screened internationally on Al Jazeera, Channel Four, M-NET and via Film Aid International.

Reel Lives: 2005: Sierra Leone/UK: Documentary: 24 mins: Director/Producer

Life in Sierra Leone through the eyes of two children from different backgrounds and DVD sections on food, crafts, games and music introduced by Usifu Jalloh. Released on DVD by Music for Change

A Safe Place: 2004: UK: Documentary: 20 mins: Director/Producer

Thierry Henry, Sven Goran Eriksson and other top football stars join teenage asylum seekers in busting myths surrounding asylum in the UK in a hard hitting documentary.

Protect Yourself: 2002: Ghana/UK 6 mins: Producer

The World's first sign language rap video. A collaboration between VSO and Deaf film makers Remark!, HIV/AIDS awareness in song, dance and sign. Distributed by TV3 in Ghana.

Your Place or Mine: 2001: UK/Nepal/Vietnam/Brazil: Documentary: 12 mins: Producer

Award winning (Toura D'Or, best educational concept, 2003) campaign film with ethical travel advice for first time visitors to developing countries. Screened in-flight internationally and by Tourism Concern.

Adu Ivumun (When I Heard): 2000: Maldives: Short Feature: 15 mins: Producer

Double isolation on a paradise island as a young deaf boy enters a world of sound for the first time. Screened at film festivals worldwide and throughout Asia on TV.