

FEEL THE BEAT

LIVINGLOUD

A film by Carin van der Donk & Sarah Teale



TRAILER

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FILM STILLS

POSTER

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LIVINGLOUD

Running Time: 39:52

Directed and Produced by
Sarah Teale & Carin van der Donk

An Eighteenth Street Production

Director of Photography
Isabel Vega

Edited by
Angela Gandini

Music by
Jaime Lawrence



LOGLINE

A short documentary about joy, unity, and empowerment through drumming



FILM SYNOPSIS

LIVING LOUD is a timely film about the collaboration between two very different drumming groups with a lot in common, following them as they build community and empowerment through samba reggae.

In 2016, Stacy Kovacs formed Fogo Azul with just fifteen members. By 2020, they were 110 people strong and quickly becoming the heartbeat of NYC marches and protests, including the Dyke March, the Women's March, the Pride March, the Halloween Parade, and the Coney Island Mermaid Parade. The band brought together drummers of every age, race, income bracket, sexuality, and gender identity. United in their shared values, being a part of Fogo Azul meant belonging to a supportive and empowering community, one where they could learn and grow together.

In February, 2020, Stacy took 40 members of Fogo Azul to Salvador, the historical center of the Afro-Brazilian community and the birthplace of samba reggae. There, they lived with and learned from Banda Didà, the first all-woman, all-Black samba reggae drum line, run by world-renowned drummer Adriana Portela.

LIVING LOUD follows the main characters of Stacy, Adriana, and drummers Selma, Sara, Bia, Velma, and Gaby as the trip to Brazil transforms their lives and brings new meaning to their work. Adriana then travels to New York to continue working with the women of Fogo Azul and to lead them in the Mermaid Parade.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In 2020, members of Fogo Azul, an all-woman and non-binary, samba reggae drumming group traveled to Brazil to learn from Banda Didá, the first female samba reggae drumming troupe. Then Adriana Portela, the leader of Didá, came to New York to drum with Fogo Azul. **LIVING LOUD** follows the joyous results.



LONG SYNOPSIS

LIVING LOUD is a timely film about the collaboration between two very different drumming groups with a lot in common, following them as they build community and empowerment through samba reggae.

In 2016, Stacy Kovacs formed Fogo Azul with just fifteen members. By 2020, they were 110 people strong and quickly becoming the heartbeat of NYC marches and protests, including the Dyke March, the Women's March, the Pride March, the Halloween Parade, and the Coney Island Mermaid Parade. The band brought together drummers of every age, race, income bracket, sexuality, and gender identity. United in their shared values, being a part of Fogo Azul meant belonging to a supportive and empowering community, one where they could learn and grow together.

LIVING LOUD begins in February 2020 when Stacy took 40 members of Fogo Azul to Salvador, Brazil - the historical center of the Afro-Brazilian community and the birthplace of samba reggae. There, they lived with and learned from Banda Didá, the first all-woman, all-Black samba reggae drum line, run by world-renowned drummer Adriana Portela. And at the culmination of the trip, Fogo Azul joined with Banda Didá to drum in Carnival.

The Brazilian Black community were originally not allowed to drum in Carnival - and women were not allowed to drum at all - but Adriana became the first woman to conduct a samba-reggae band in Brazil, and since then Didá has played with national and international music celebrities, and in music festivals around the world.

Adriana has always seen music as the driving force for social change and as a tool capable of crossing boundaries and enabling the knowledge of diverse cultures. Didá is not just a drumming group. Their headquarters in Salvador functions as a center for women's drumming and as a meeting place for classes for members and after school programs for children.

LIVING LOUD follows the main characters of Stacy, Adriana, and drummers Selma, Sara, Gaby, Velma, and Bia as the trip to Brazil transforms their lives and brings new meaning to their work. Then in 2022 Adriana traveled to New York to rehearse with the drummers of Fogo Azul and to lead them in the Mermaid Parade in Coney Island. As Adriana entered the rehearsal room, over 100 drummers welcomed her with an exuberant drum roll. The excitement and energy were palpable, and Adriana later admitted that she was overwhelmed by the response. She also reflected on the difference between the drummers of Fogo Azul, who are not afraid to live their true selves or to speak out politically, to the drummers of Didá whose lives are more constrained by the limitations of racism, traditional gender norms, and poverty in Brazil. She is working on changing that.

On the day of the Mermaid Parade the weather was cool, the crowds were huge and over 3,000 people, dressed as mermaids, took part in the parade along the roads and boardwalk of Coney Island. And then just as the parade was getting towards the end, Stacy suddenly led her members straight towards the beach, and the entire band drummed in the waves - led by maestra Adriana Portela. The crowd followed, cheering.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES



SARAH TEALE (director/producer) is the Producer/Director of **Kill Chain: The Cyber War on America's Elections** (aired: HBO March 26th, 2020. Emmy nominated for Outstanding Investigative Documentary 2021). Producer/Director on the HBO series **The Weight of the Nation**, nominated for a Prime Time Emmy. Other HBO films she produced and directed include **Dealing Dogs**, (Emmy nomination Outstanding Investigative Documentary); **Hacking Democracy**, (Emmy nomination Outstanding Investigative Documentary); **Death on a Factory Farm**; **Bellevue: Inside Out**, a year inside the locked psychiatric wards at Bellevue Hospital; and **Mumia Abu Jamal: A Case For Reasonable Doubt?**, HBO Cable Ace Award nomination. She has also produced and directed documentaries for the BBC, A&E and Discovery. Teale also produced and directed the feature documentaries **Grazers: A Cooperative Story** with Lisa F. Jackson distributed by Collective Eye and Passion River and **Patrimonio**, which premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival and Full Frame and is distributed by First Run Features.



CARIN VAN DER DONK (director/producer) is a Dutch photographer and camerawoman, based in NYC. At 15 she became an international fashion model, working with photographers like Richard Scavullo, Kurt Markus, and Jean Loup Sieff. After settling in New York City, she became an assistant-producer for Art + Commerce, working with photographers Ellen von Unwerth, Frank W. Ockenfels III, and Mary Ellen Mark, followed by becoming an agent and producer at Julian Meijer et Associates. Her photographs are used by political organizations, including Sister District, Future Now, Housing Justice for All, NoIDC, and Councilmember Carlina Rivera. She contributed stills to the HBO documentaries **The Sentence** (2018), and **Kill Chain: The Cyber War on America's Elections** (2020). A solo exhibition of her photography was held at the St. George Church, NYC in 2018. Her portraits of Vincent D'Onofrio appear in **Mutha**, a book of the actor's poetry (Cameron Books 2021). She co-produced the short documentary **Living Loud** about Fogo Azul, an all women, transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming Samba Reggae drum line (she is a band member herself). She is a 2021 graduate of the International Center of Photography program in Documentary Practice and Visual Journalism.



ISABEL VEGA (co-director /director of photography) is an award-winning filmmaker with a solid background as director/producer/shooter and storyteller. Isabel has worked on film and TV projects for HBO, Bravo, Lifetime, Own, Oxygen, TLC and FX. Her film, **La Corona**, is a documentary about a beauty pageant in a high security female prison in Bogotá, Colombia. The film was nominated for an Academy Award (2008), received an Honorable mention at Sundance (2008), won the IDA Award for best short film (2008) and was acquired by HBO. Vega co-produced two episodes of Morgan Spurlock's series, **30 Days** (FX) and was an associate producer on **Thin**, (which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2006). In 2005 she worked with Maryann De Leo on her documentary about domestic violence, **Terror At Home**. Vega's latest film (currently in production) is about a local election in Jackson, MS.



ANGELA GANDINI (editor) is a film editor living and working in the Hudson Valley. A graduate of Columbia University with a degree in film studies, she has edited numerous films and television shows for HBO Documentaries, Discovery, PBS and others. Most recently, she edited the critically acclaimed documentary **Adrienne**, which the New York Times called one of its "2021 Streaming Gems" and **Breslin and Hamill: Deadline Artists** (both HBO Documentary Films) which won the Emmy for Outstanding Historical Documentary in 2020. She began a successful career with HBO Documentary films in 2013 and has worked on countless projects since, some of which include the Emmy nominated films **San Francisco 2.0** and **Everything is Copy**.



CREDITS

Directed and Produced by

SARAH TEALE
CARIN VAN DER DONK

Director of Photography

ISABEL VEGA

Edited by

ANGELA GANDINI

Additional Camera

CARIN VAN DER DONK
FERNANDA FAYA
MARILIA GURGEL
AMERICA MOLDONADO
JUAN IGNACIO NUEVO
ARIEL SANCHEZ
DANAE TJIONAS (RS FILM CO)

Production Sound Mixer

FIONA MCBAIN

Assistant Editor

ANITA H.M. YU

Original Music Composed by

JAMIE LAWRENCE

Associate Producer

AMANDA TILLER

Production Accounting

JUDY TUCKER
ERIC BONGARTZ

Production Assistance

FIJI CHAMBERET
KOEN VAN MARREWIJK
COBI VAN DE LAAR

Drone Operator

BROOKLYN DRONES NYC
ROGER KAPSALIS

Additional Sound

DIMITRI TISSEYRE

Featuring
BANDA DIDÁ with MAESTRINA ADRIANA PORTELA
FOGO AZUL with DIRECTOR STACY KOVACS

(alphabetically)
SARA ALLEN
BIA BONFIM
GABY EVANS
VELMA MCKENZIE
SUSO PINZOLO
SELMA RAVEN
and
OYA RRRRIOTSAMBA

Post Production Facility
GOLDCREST POST NY

Colorist
KEN SIRULNICK, CSA

DI Assist
JORDAN THOMSON-DeSON

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Re-Recording Mixer
KEN HAHN, C.A.S

Sound Supervisor
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Special Thanks
DANIELA BITTAR
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MARY T. ROGERS
NEQUINHO DO SAMBA
PHILIP SCHOPPER
SEED&SPARK

ERIKA SILVA
KATE TEALE & DAVID HENDERSON

Archival Materials Provided by
"THEY DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT US (BRAZIL VERSION)"
WRITTEN BY MICHAEL JACKSON
PERFORMED BY MICHAEL JACKSON
DIRECTED BY SPIKE LEE
COURTESY OF SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

"QUE BLOCO E ESSE?"
WRITTEN BY KLEBER CAVALCANTE GOMES, PAULO VITOR BACELAR
PERFORMED BY ILÊ AIYÊ

Additional Music
NEQUINHO DO SAMBA

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