

On the Rumba River

A film by Jacques Sarasin

Color, 82 Minutes, 2007
1:1.85, HD/35mm

In Lingala w/English Subtitles



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Synopsis

Travelling up and down the majestic river Congo river on a disheveled boat, the young orphan Antoine Kolosoy composed his first songs on a beat up old guitar. As he gained renown, the young “Wendo,” as he was now known, was persecuted by the church and his music banned by the Belgian colonial authorities, who feared his joyful rhythms would stir unrest. Wendo became a professional boxer for a time, but he never put down his guitar for long, and when his first album was released in 1948 he became the first superstar of Congolese Rumba.

In the 1960s, his songs expressed the hopes of a newly independent nation, when all dreams seemed like they could become reality. As the country suffered for nearly three decades under the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, his music remained as a manifestation of the joyous spirit of the Congolese people that could not be taken away. Rediscovered several years ago after having been reduced to beggarhood, Wendo made a comeback under the new regime in 1997.

Featuring stunning images and unforgettable music and interviews, “On the Rumba River” is a musical tribute to the Congolese people, who despite desperate poverty, a history of oppression and an ongoing civil war that has killed nearly 4 million people, continue to be sustained by music.

Jacques Sarasin

Jacques Sarasin is a world-class yachtsman who founded a yacht brokerage company, and has also co-founded an arts organization and a foundation dedicated to creating habitat in Africa and Latin America. After starting the production company Les Productions Faire Bleu in 1996, Sarasin produced a number of films before directing his first documentary feature in 2003, "I'll Sing For You", which was presented by Jonathan Demme and featured at more than 35 festivals worldwide. In 2006 he made a five-part series entitled “Where Is The World Going, Mr. Stiglitz?” featuring former chief economist of the World Bank and Nobel Prize laureate, Joseph Stiglitz. Both of these titles are distributed in the U.S. by First Run Features.

On the Rumba River

Original title: *Le Batelier de la Rumba*

runtime: 82 minutes

film negative format: 35mm

aspect ratio: 1.85

sound mix: DTS SR

year of production: 2006

filmed in the Republic Democratic of Congo

shooting dates: november/december 2004

director: Jacques Sarasin

camera: Remon Fromont

sound engineer: Philippe Lecocq

editor: Bernard Josse

sound mixer: Jean-Guy Véran

filmed in high definition HDCam,

recorded on Cantar,

language: Lingala, sub-titled in English

produced by: Les Productions Faire Bleu, 9 rue Leuck-Mathieu, 75020 Paris

With:

Wendo Kolosoy

Mbinga Kabata « Tejos », percussion

Antoine Moundanda, thumb piano

Joseph Munange « Maproko », saxophone

Mukubuele Nzoku « Bikunda », guitar

Aminata Panda, « Maman Avion », dancer

Alphonse Biolo Batilangandi « Biolo », trumpet

Michel Vula Diankatu « Missy », lead guitar

Willy Nzofu Makonzo, singer

Albert Emina, back singer

Nlandu Milandu, bass

Tonda Pembele, bass

Ekembe Mumpele, Andulu Mbula, Bolakofo Esio, Tshieba Mubanga, Bilowa

Tujibikile, Buanga Nzinga