

DOM SALVADOR AND ABOLITION

A FILM BY
LILKA HARA AND
ARTUR RATTON



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SYNOPSIS

DOM SALVADOR AND ABOLITION IS A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT JAZZ PIANIST AND COMPOSER DOM SALVADOR, WHO HAVE BEEN PLAYING FOR 42 YEARS AT THE RIVER CAFÉ IN BROOKLYN. ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF BOSSA NOVA IN BRAZIL AND A BUSY STUDIO SESSION MUSICIAN AND ARRANGER, DURING THE 60'S, SALVADOR PLAYED WITH THE COUNTRY'S BEST. THE MAN WHO IS CREDITED TO BE THE PIONEER OF MANY MUSICAL STYLES, A NAME IN MORE THAN A THOUSAND RECORDS AND THE LEADER OF THE SEMINAL BAND ABOLITION. AFTER RECORDING ONLY ONE ALBUM, SALVADOR ABANDONS A PROMISING AND SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY WITH THE BAND TO PURSUE HIS PASSION FOR JAZZ, MOVING TO NEW YORK IN THE EARLY 70'S.

SALVADOR IS ALSO A CASE STUDY IN ARTISTRY THAT'S NEARLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH MAINSTREAM SUCCESS, ADORED AND TREASURED BY FELLOW MUSICIANS AND CRITICS, SALVADOR CARVED A SWEET SPOT FOR A WORKING MUSICIAN AT THE FANCY RESTAURANT. A JOB THAT BOTH FUELED HIS ABILITY TO COMPOSE AND DISTRIBUTE ON HIS OWN TERMS BUT HAS ALSO FERMENTED A HERMETICALLY CLOSED ARTIST, THAT HAS YET TO HARMONIZE COMMERCIAL INSERTION AND ARTISTIC OUTPUT.

MEMBERS OF THE BAND TALK ABOUT THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS ORCHESTRATED BY SALVADOR, WHY THEY ENDED SO ABRUPTLY AND ITS UNLIVED GREATNESS. UNDER THE RACIAL AND CREATIVE PERSECUTION INSTALLED BY THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, SALVADOR SAW A WAY OUT INTO THE US, IMMIGRATING WITH HIS FAMILY AND SETTING HOME IN A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD OF LONG ISLAND.

WHILE HIS LIFELONG PARTNER, THE SINGER MARIA HAS BEEN SUFFERING FROM DEMENTIA FOR MORE THAN 14 YEARS, THE FILM KEEPS UP WITH THE BUSY LIFE OF THE RELENTLESS ARTIST. A SELF PROMOTED CONCERT AT THE PRESTIGIOUS CARNEGIE HALL IS FILLED WITH ANTICIPATION, WAIT AND ERRORS. A LIVE SHOW ALBUM THAT SHOWS BEST THE FREEDOM AND THE PAINS OF THE UNRESTRAINED MAESTRO.

HIS UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT TO MUSIC CREATES TENSION BETWEEN FAMILY AND OTHER ARTISTS. INTERVIEWS WITH BELAFONTE, DICK OATTS, ED MOTTA, FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAST A LIGHT ON OUR HEADSTRONG CHARACTER.

THE FILM EXAMINES THE FRAGILITY OF THE MAN WHO'S ALWAYS IN CONTROL, IT DEMANDS THAT WE ENGAGE WITH SALVADOR THE PERSON AND SALVADOR THE MUSICIAN TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TRULY INDEPENDENT SOUL.



STATEMENT

DOM SALVADOR PLAYED A MAJOR PART IN KEY MOMENTS OF THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF BRAZILIAN POPULAR MUSIC FROM THE EARLY SIXTIES UNTIL 1973 WHEN HE MIGRATED TO NEW YORK FOLLOWING HIS PASSION FOR JAZZ AND LOVE FOR NEW YORK CITY.

ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF BOSSA NOVA AND A MASTER OF FUSION WHO HELPED PIONEER THE GENRES OF SAMBA ROCK AND SAMBA JAZZ, SALVADOR'S GROUP ABOLIÇÃO (ABOLITION) PLAYED A SEMINAL PART IN LAUNCHING THE BRAZILIAN BLACK MUSIC MOVEMENT WHILE ATTRACTING THE WINDS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT TOWARDS BRAZIL DURING THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP YEARS (1964 - 1985)

IN THE UNITED STATES SALVADOR PERFORMED, RECORDED, COMPOSED AND COLLABORATED WITH A WIDE RANGE OF ARTISTS INCLUDING HENRY BELLAFONTE AND CHARLIE ROUSE WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY MAINTAINING A FULL TIME JOB AS A RESTAURANT PIANIST AT THE RIVER CAFE. HE LIVES IN PORT WASHINGTON, NY WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN AND HAS COMMUTED DAILY TO WORK IN BROOKLYN TO PLAY SIX DAYS A WEEK AT THE SCENIC RESTAURANT WHERE HE IS SEEN AS INSEPARABLE FROM ITS IDENTITY.

BOTH AN ARTICLE IN A SMALL MUSIC MAGAZINE AND THE ABOLIÇÃO ALBUM SANGUE, SUOR E RAÇA (BLOOD, SWEAT AND RACE) SPARKED OUR INTEREST IN GETTING TO KNOW SALVADOR PERSONALLY AS WE IDENTIFIED WITH HIM AS BRAZILIAN IMMIGRANT ARTISTS. A KIND PERSONALITY AND AN OPENNESS TO SHARE HIS MANY STORIES AND PERSONAL ARCHIVES HELPED US QUICKLY DEVELOP AN ARTISTIC COLLABORATION AND A FRIENDSHIP WHICH GAVE US ACCESS TO THE MANY LAYERS OF HIS CHARACTER; THE SKILLED MUSICIAN, THE FRONT LINE RESTAURANT WORKER, THE IMMIGRANT FATHER AND HUSBAND, A SOMEHOW TRAGIC FAMILY STORY AND A MYTHOLOGICAL PERSONA THAT HAS GROWN INTO AN ICON AMONG BRAZILIANS, SPECIFICALLY AFRO-DESCENDANTS.

WE BEGAN RECORDING A FIRST PERSON TESTIMONY OF HIS ORIGINS, A SMALL TOWN BLACK KID WHOSE FATHER WAS BORN ON THE DAY OF BRAZIL'S ABOLITION (MAY 13, 1888). WE THEN FOLLOW UP ON HOW HE BECAME THE ONLY PERSON IN HIS FAMILY TO RECEIVE ANY FORMAL EDUCATION, HOW HE MET HIS WIFE MARIÁ, HOW HE BECAME A MASTER ARRANGER FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, AND HOW HE ENDED UP IMMIGRATING TO THE US AT THE PEAK OF HIS CAREER, RESULTING IN THE BREAK UP OF ABOLIÇÃO AND SEEKING NEW MUSICAL ADVENTURES.

WITH THE FIRST TESTIMONIAL WE CUT A SHORT DOCUMENTARY THAT SHOWED US THE ONLY WAY TO TELL SUCH AN EPIC JOURNEY OF AN ARTIST AND HUMAN BEING SHOULD BE IN TAKING AN HOLISTIC APPROACH WHILE SHOWING THE MANY ANGLES OF THE STORY. OUR CHOICE TO MAKE A FILM FOR A GLOBAL AUDIENCE TOOK US TO BRAZIL WHERE WE FOUND MEMBERS FROM ABOLIÇÃO AND YOUNGER AFRO -BRAZILIAN MUSICIANS INSPIRED BY SALVADOR. IN NEW YORK WE ENTER THE UNIVERSE OF SALVADOR'S FAMILY AS HE TAKES CARE OF MARIÁ WHO WAS SUFFERING FROM DEMENTIA AND MEMORY LOSS.

USING DIFFERENT FORMATS LIKE VHS, K7 TAPES AND PHOTOGRAPHY WE TRACE HIS FAMILY AND PERSONAL STORY MIXING IT WITH CINEMA VARIETY STYLE FOOTAGE OF SALVADOR PREPARING FOR A SELF PRODUCED CONCERT AT CARNEGIE HALL, WHILE BRINGING THE LANGUAGE OF MUSIC AS A POWERFUL AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVE TOOL, FOLLOWING HIM ON MANY NEW YORK JAZZ CLUB PERFORMANCES AND AT HIS JOB AT THE RIVER CAFÉ. WE DECIDED TO SCULPT AND EDIT THE STORY USING NEW YORK CITY'S ENDLESS MAGICAL ELEMENTS, ITS LIGHTS, HUSTLE AND THE RAWNESS OF AN ARTIST'S LIFE AS THE BACKGROUND FOR THE OCTOGENARIAN ARTIST'S PORTRAIT. OTHER MUSICIANS LIKE HARRY BELAFONTE AND DICK OATTT'S (JAZZ VANGUARD MUSIC DIRECTOR) ALONG WITH BRAZILIAN MUSIC LEGENDS MARCOS VALLE, TONY TORNADO AND ELZA SOARES TO HELP THE AUDIENCE UNDERSTAND THE SCOPE AND CALIBER OF SALVADOR'S MUSICIANSHIP AND TO CONNECT THE DOTS OF HIS UNTOLD STORY.

THE POLITICAL MOMENT OF SALVADOR'S DEPARTURE FROM BRAZIL AND THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP WHICH RESONATES WITH THE PRESENT MOMENT IS BROUGHT UP BY SALVADOR AND HIS OLD BAND MATES WHO NOW REALIZE THE PIONEERING ASPECT OF FORMING A BAND CALLED ABOLICÃO IN BRAZIL, A COUNTRY WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF AFRO-DESCENDENTS OUTSIDE OF AFRICA AND WHO CONTINUE STRUGGLING WITH RACISM AND SOCIAL APARTHEID. SIMILAR TO JAZZ MUSIC WE WANTED TO UTILIZE IMPROVISATION AND EXPERIMENTALISM TO SHAPE AND TELL A UNIQUE STORY AS AN ARTISTIC AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL FILM.





CAST

ED MOTTA

IS A BRAZILIAN MPB, ROCK, SOUL, FUNK AND JAZZ MUSICIAN. HE IS THE NEPHEW OF LATE SINGER-SONGWRITER TIM MAIA.

HARRY BELAFONTE

IS A JAMAICAN-AMERICAN SINGER, SONGWRITER, ACTIVIST, AND ACTOR. BELAFONTE WAS AN EARLY SUPPORTER OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE 1950S AND 1960S AND WAS A CONFIDANT OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

RUBENS SABINO (RUBÃO)

MUSICIAN, EX ABOLITION AND BASS PLAYER FOR MANY BRAZILIAN MUSIC LEGENDS SUCH AS GILBERTO GIL AND TIM MAIA.

ZÉ CARLOS

MUSICIAN, EX ABOLITION AND GUITAR PLAYER FOR BRAZILIAN ICON ROBERTO CARLOS.

DICK OATTS

IS AN AMERICAN JAZZ SAXOPHONIST, MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST, COMPOSER, AND EDUCATOR.

TONI TORNADO

IS A BRAZILIAN ACTOR AND SINGER.

MARCOS VALLE

IS A BRAZILIAN SINGER, SONGWRITER, AND RECORD PRODUCER. HE HAS PRODUCED WORKS IN MANY MUSICAL STYLES, INCLUDING BOSSA NOVA, SAMBA, AND FUSIONS OF ROCK, SOUL, JAZZ, AND DANCE MUSIC WITH BRAZILIAN STYLES.

IS A BRAZILIAN SAMBA SINGER. IN 1999, SHE WAS NAMED SINGER OF THE MILLENNIUM ALONG WITH TINA TURNER BY BBC RADIO.

GREG CAZ

IS THE PREMIER DJ BRINGING THE SOUNDS OF BRAZILIAN SAMBA TO DANCEFLOORS IN THE WORLD.

ALLEN THAYER

IS ONE OF THE PREEMINENT BRAZILIAN MUSIC SCHOLARS/JOURNALISTS IN THE U.S. AS AN AUTHOR, MUSIC JOURNALIST, RADIO SHOW HOST, AND DJ, HE'S DEVOTED OVER 20 YEARS TO EXPLORING THE DEPTHS OF BRAZILIAN MUSIC.

MARIÁ

SALVADOR'S WIFE AND SINGER
(1950-2020)



DIRECTOR'S BIO

LILKA HARA IS A FILMMAKER AND PRODUCER, HER WORK INCLUDES DOCUMENTARIES, MUSIC VIDEOS, COMMERCIALS AND ANIMATIONS. SHE CURRENTLY WORK AS A DIRECTOR, POST SUPERVISOR, EDITOR AND VFX COMPOSITOR FOR ADVERTISING AGENCIES, POST PRODUCTION COMPANIES AND TV NETWORKS SUCH AS PSYOP, BRAND NEW SCHOOL, THE MILL, HORNET INC, BBDO, GREYAD, JWT, MTV, E!, FUSE AND HBO. **DOM SALVADOR AND ABOLITION** IS HER FIRST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY AS A DIRECTOR.

ARTUR RATTON IS AN AWARD WINNING FILMMAKER AND VIDEO ARTIST HAILING FROM BRAZIL AND BASED IN NYC FOR THE LAST 14 YEARS. HIS FILMS HAVE SCREENED AT LINCOLN CENTER, THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN NEW YORK CITY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AND OVER FIFTY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS. AS A FILMMAKER ARTUR KEEPS A PRESENCE IN THE THE NEW YORK MUSIC COMMUNITY PRODUCING VIDEO WORK FOR SUMMER STAGE AND SEVERAL LOCAL ARTISTS AND VENUES. ARTUR'S ART VIDEO WORK IS A COMBINATION OF DOCUMENTARY, SOUND ART AND EXPERIMENTAL NARRATIVE FILM AS IN HIS ON GOING PROJECT "BRAZILIAN GUITAR FUZZ BANANAS" A COLLECTION OF FILMS, INSTALLATIONS AND PHOTOGRAPHY EXPLORING PSYCHEDELIC MUSIC AND BRAZILIAN PSYCHEDELIA. DOM SALVADOR AND ABOLITION IS ORIGINATED FROM THE SHORT DOC ENDLESS SOUL. ARTUR LIVES AND KEEPS HIS STUDIO IN NORTH BROOKLYN, BUSHWICK.

CREW

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POST COORDINATOR

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PRESS

"DOM SALVADOR & ABOLITION" IS A MOVING DOCUMENTARY THAT TELLS THE STORY OF ONE OF THE GREATEST BRAZILIAN MUSICIANS OF ALL TIME, DOM SALVADOR. AMONG THE COUNTLESS CHILLS THAT THE FILM - WINNER OF THE NATIONAL COMPETITION OF THE MUSICAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL IN-EDIT BRASIL - GAVE ME IS THE SEQUENCE OF SPEECHES BY THE MUSICIANS OF THEIR LEGENDARY GROUP "DOM SALVADOR E ABOLIÇÃO".

- EPOCA MAGAZINE

THE SEQUENCE IN WHICH HE SEARCHES, IN A NEW YORK STORE, FOR HIS VERY RARE ALBUM IS FANTASTIC. THERE ARE ALSO CONTAGIOUS PASSAGES DEDICATED TO THE MUSICIAN WHEN HE JOINED THE WAVE OF BLACK MUSIC THAT SWEEPED THE SUBURBS OF BRAZIL. ...A MANDATORY FILM.

- REVISTA DE CINEMA

ESPECIALLY MOVING ARE THE SCENES OF SALVADOR WITH THE SINGER MARIÁ, MUSICAL AND LIFE PARTNER, WITH WHOM HE MARRIED, IN 1965, AND HAD TWO CHILDREN. SINCE 2004, WHEN SHE STARTED SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF DEMENTIA, UNTIL THE LAST MONTHS OF HER BELOVED'S LIFE (WHO DIED IN APRIL THIS YEAR), SALVADOR INSISTED ON TAKING CARE OF HER ALONE.

- CARLOS CALLADO, EDITOR & WRITER

ACCORDING TO THE JURY, "THE DOCUMENTARY IS A POWERFUL NARRATIVE, WHICH PULSES WITH THE SAME FORCE BOTH IN THE HISTORICAL RECORD AND IN THE PRESENT MOMENT. IT IS AN ESSENTIAL FILM, MADE OF RIGOR AND EMOTION, EQUAL TO THE TALENT, GRANDEUR AND IMPORTANCE OF THE CHARACTER PORTRAYED".

- CINEMA MAGAZINE

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