



TERRA PESADA

Shot, edited and produced
by
Leslie S. Bornstein

Premier: Kugoma, Aug. 30, 2019, Cine Scala, Maputo, Mozambique

Documentary (123 min)

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LOGLINE

Meet Maputo's metalheads: After 500 years of Portuguese occupation, followed by 30 years of revolution and war, these tech-savvy urban African millennials are the first generation of Mozambicans to grow up in peace.



" . . . the film mesmerized me. . . . Leslie's feature documentary is a remarkable and powerful love letter to those young, smart, talented and beautiful folks in Maputo. She made all the right creative choices. . . . "

— László Sántha, filmmaker, professor at NYU Tisch School of the Arts

" . . . the characters are endearing. You love and care about them from the get-go." — Pamela Scott Arnold, A.C.E.

"There is no way you can watch "Terra Pesada" and not like it. The music is metal, but that's not the focal point. What's interesting is the blend of the music and our story."

— Stino Matola, vocalist of Mozambican metal band Damning Cloudiness

"Terra Pesada" has fiscal sponsorship from the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) and won a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA).

SYNOPSIS

"Terra Pesada" shows a different side of Africa. Like people everywhere, Africans travel to the cities in search of better jobs, better education, better opportunities. "Terra Pesada" is a story of life in Maputo, Mozambique's capital city, where almost everyone has access to electricity and the Internet, and even many of the poorest residents have mobile phones.

Meeting the musicians was pure serendipity. I had gone to Mozambique to stay with a friend after a long illness. When I saw a flyer for Evil Angels in metal's universal typeface, nothing could keep me away. The minute I walked into the club in a "zone" of Maputo, I knew I'd be happy to spend the rest of my life there.



"Terra Pesada" illustrates the power and impact of social media. The first thing you notice about these kids is they're just like kids everywhere. Facebook defined a generation. They want the same things, from the latest electronics to the right brand of sneakers. Only their circumstances are vastly different. What we can't give away in the U.S. is bought on the streets of Africa, from instruments and equipment to underwear and socks.

Like the musicians themselves, Mozambique is barely out of its teens. The problems that plague the country are reflected in the lives of its people: poverty, disease, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, one of the world's highest HIV/AIDS rates; corruption, crime, high unemployment, the disparity between rich and poor; inadequate access to water and electricity. "Terra Pesada" gives a face to what otherwise are just statistics. Yet "Terra Pesada" is a joyful film. The kids are delightful, and we cheer their successes as they confront the hardships of life in one of the world's poorest countries.

Most of Mozambique's metalheads discovered metal online. Yet nobody who hears them play or watches them mosh can say this isn't their music.

"Terra Pesada" features an original hardcore headbanging heavy metal soundtrack.

BACKGROUND

Mozambique has what is arguably the ugliest history in Africa: 500 years of Portuguese occupation followed by 30 years fighting for freedom. The revolution began in 1965, led by Eduardo Mondlane, one of the few educated Mozambicans at that time, his American-born wife, and the cadre of Tanzanian-based Mozambican exiles who together formed the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo). Gender and racial equality are written into their Constitution.



The picture is Maria Matola, Stino's grandmother, in a scene from "Terra Pesada" in which she tells him about the day her mother was shot in the head and killed by Renamo (the Mozambican National Resistance), the outside opposition force founded in 1975, after the revolution had ended. Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, was joined by then-apartheid South Africa, with financial help from the United States, because they couldn't countenance living next to an African-run socialist country. The fighting continued for another 18 years, until the negotiation of the peace accord in 1992.

Mozambique's metal musicians were all born within a few years of the signing of the peace agreement.

They were raised by revolutionaries.

THE TERRA PESADA FOUNDATION



THE TERRA PESADA FOUNDATION is a U.S.-based 501(c)3 charitable organization founded in January 2019 with the mission to pay for the continuing educations of the Mozambican metal musicians, whatever they choose to pursue; to give instruments and equipment to the music schools, rehearsal spaces and performance venues, as well as to the musicians themselves; to cover healthcare; and because this is Mozambique, which in 2019 suffered two of history's most devastating cyclones only six weeks apart, to contribute to disaster relief.

You may donate to the foundation through the CONTRIBUTE tab on <https://terrapesada.com>. There's an address to donate by mail and a button to donate directly by credit card.



Last Gasp Productions

presents



a film by

Leslie S. Bornstein



NYFA



Council on the Arts



ROCKFEST FILM FESTIVAL

Friday, December 11, 2020 | Los Angeles

www.terrapesada.com

BIOGRAPHY



Leslie S. Bornstein is a New York–based filmmaker. On her first trip to Africa, in 1972, she met soldiers with Frelimo, the Mozambique Liberation Front, at the Pan African Women's Conference in Tanzania, which sparked her interest in Mozambique and its terrible history. Later she began a long career in publishing and journalism, most of it at Time Inc. magazines. During Iran-Contra, Leslie was the SPORTS ILLUSTRATED Latin American correspondent, based in Managua, Nicaragua (“While War Rages, Baseball Remains the National Passion in Nicaragua”; “The Reluctant Author Tries Hang Gliding in Guatemala”), while stringing for NBC Radio.

She earned a certificate in film production in 2002 from NYU-SCPS. [Education: St. John’s College (the Great Books school), class of ’68; University of Massachusetts, graduate work in East African studies; NYU and City College of New York, Swahili and Swahili literature; working relationship with Portuguese, Spanish and French.] Since 2000 she has worked as on-camera talent in commercial and print advertising.