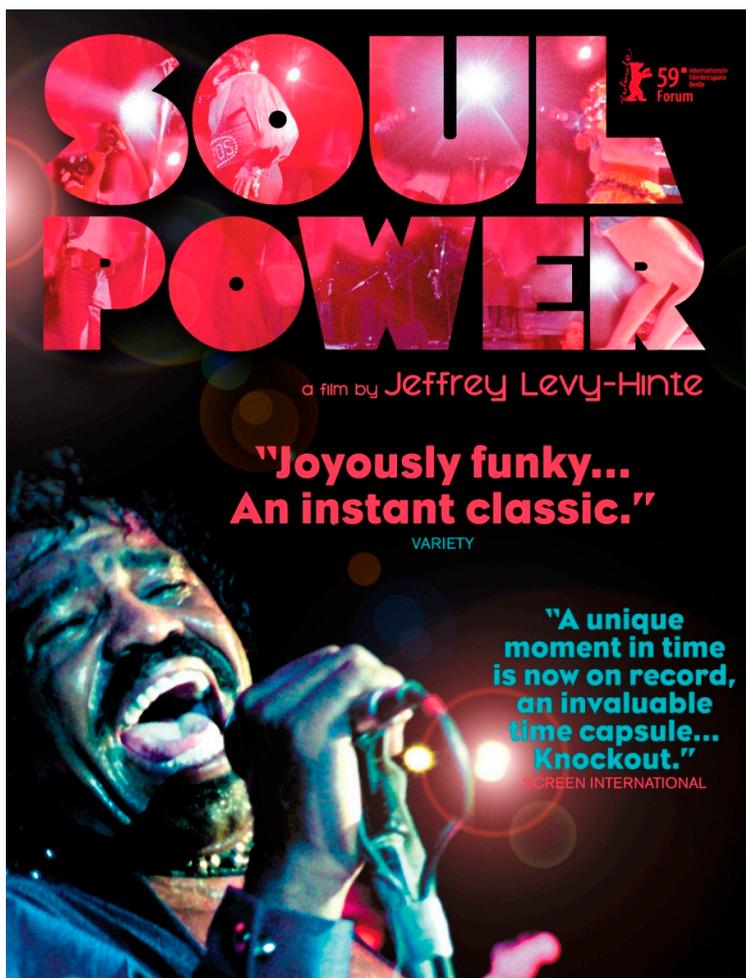


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Soul power- synopsis (NL)

In 1974 kwamen de meest succesvolle Amerikaanse R&B-artiesten van die tijd samen met de bekendste Zuid-Afrikaanse muziekgroepen voor een concert van twaalf uur, gespreid over drie nachten, in Kinshasa, Zaïre. De droom van Hugh Masekela en Stewart Levine werd werkelijkheid wanneer ze de bokspromotor Don King wisten te overtuigen om hun muziekconcert te combineren met “The Rumble in the Jungle”, het epische gevecht tussen Muhammad Ali en George Foreman, dat reeds in de met een Oscar bekroonde documentaire WHEN WE WERE KINGS in beeld werd gebracht.

SOUL POWER is een waarheidsgetrouwe documentaire over dit legendarisch muziekfestival (“Zaire ‘74” genaamd), en het brengt de ervaringen en de optredens van muziekhelden zoals James Brown, BB King, Bill Withers, Celia Cruz en vele anderen in beeld.

Op het hoogtepunt van hun carrière werden deze artiesten geïnspireerd door deze terugkeer naar hun Afrikaanse roots, alsook door het enthousiasme van het Zaïrese publiek om het beste van zichzelf te geven op het podium. Het concert verwierf de mythologische betekenis als hét Afrikaans-Amerikaans muziek-evenement van de 20ste eeuw.

SOUL POWER werd samengesteld uit het grote aantal “outtakes” dat overbleef na het maken van WHEN WE WERE KINGS, dat wel het gevecht in beeld bracht maar het muziekfestival een kleine, ondersteunende rol toebedeelde. De “outtakes” die overbleven, bleven onaangeroerd gedurende 34 jaar... tot nu. Na eerst door de vingers gegaan te zijn van de befaamde cinematografen Albert Maysles, Paul Goldsmith, Kevin Keating en Roderick Young, is SOUL POWER nu de gelegenheid voor het hedendaagse publiek om dit historisch muziek-evenement in al z’n magnifieke glorie te beleven.

Soul power

93 min. / 35mm / Kleur / Dolby Digital/ Engels gesproken / USA 2008

Nederlandse theatrale distributie: Cinemien
Belgische theatrale distributie: ABC Distribution
DVD uitbreng : Homescreen

Soul power - synopsis (FR)

Zaïre, 1974. A Kinshasa, en prélude du championnat du Monde "Ali - Foreman", se déroule un festival légendaire de Soul Music. Les artistes R&B américains les plus réussis de cette époque, ensembles avec des groupes de musique sud-africains sont venus à Kinshasa pour un concert de douze heures, étendu sur trois nuits. Le rêve de Hugh Masekela et Stewart Levine est devenu réalité quand ils ont réussi à convaincre le manager de boxe Don King de combiner leur concert avec "The Rumble in the Jungle", le combat épique entre Muhammad Ali et George Foreman, duquel on a déjà fait un documentaire : WHEN WE WERE KINGS (couronné d'un Oscar).

SOUL POWER est un hommage vibrant à tous les artistes qui ont donné leur âme à la Soul Music. Une musique qui est étroitement liée à Martin Luther King et son combat pour la lutte des droits civiques. Une musique sincère, libératrice, qui permettra grâce à sa puissance émotionnelle d'offrir l'espoir à tout un peuple. Cet espoir a été porté par tant d'artistes... Le film nous montre des concerts d'e.a. James Brown, BB King, Celia Cruz et Miriam Makeba et des images du manager de boxe de mauvaise réputation Don King.

SOUL POWER est composé du grand nombre de "outtakes" qui restaient après le montage du film WHEN WE WERE KINGS, qui esquissait une image du combat mais pas le festival, qui n'a reçu qu'un petit rôle dans le documentaire. Les "outtakes" restants avaient été laissés dans l'obscurité pendant 34 ans... jusqu'à maintenant. Après être vu par des cinématographes renommés comme Albert Maysles, Paul Goldsmith, Kevin Keating et Roderick Young, SOUL POWER offre maintenant l'occasion au grand public de vivre cet événement de musique historique dans toute sa splendeur.

Soul power

93 min. / 35mm / Couleur / Dolby Digital/ dialogues en anglais / USA 2008

Distribution théâtrale en Belgique et à Luxembourg: ABC Distribution
Sortie sur DVD : Homescreen

Soul power - director's statement

In 1995, I was brought on to do editorial work for WHEN WE WERE KINGS, a documentary chronicling the renowned fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman (aka “The Rumble in the Jungle) held in Kinshasa, Zaire in the Fall of 1974.

As that film neared completion, I became fixated on the notion that there was a tremendous wealth of material that was being sent back to the vault. This went beyond the typical situation where beloved scenes are left on the proverbial cutting room floor; rather, there was an entire aspect of the footage that was only superficially explored. The neglected footage was the extensive coverage of “Zaire ‘74”, the legendary threeday music festival featuring scintillating performances by, among others, James Brown, BB King, The Spinners, Miriam Makeba, Celia Cruz, and the most popular groups of Zaire. Besides the concert itself, there was extensive coverage of the efforts to organize the festival, prepare the stadium, and the experiences of the artists who made the life-changing journey to Africa. Knowledge of this footage created a burden: I felt that if I didn’t work to bring this material to the public that I would be complicit in obscuring these events, depriving people of the opportunity to “see” and “hear” what had transpired.

My original intention was to create a set of concert DVD’s. However, as I waded through the hundreds of camera rolls and sound recordings with my gifted editor, David Smith, I was struck by the awesome strength of the material: from the small moments of intense humor and insight to amazing set pieces, the material was even more vibrant and compelling than I had remembered it, and there were entire sections of material that I had never viewed because they were not relevant to the work on WHEN WE WERE KINGS. I soon concluded that a feature was warranted. However, given the success of KINGS, I was nervous that “another” documentary would be viewed as derivative and parasitic, and it would be judged harshly against its very accomplished elder sibling. Though still afflicted by this anxiety, I was convinced that I could make a film quite distinct – in terms of the focus, themes, style, and, most critically, the footage actually used – from KINGS.

I recalled that the greatest difficulty in making WHEN WE WERE KINGS was how to deal with the overabundance of worthwhile material. At bottom, the fight and the music festival was just too much for one film to contain. Ultimately, the decision was made to place the primary emphasis on the fight, and Muhammad Ali’s seemingly impossible quest to regain the title. Given that the definitive film about the fight had already been made, I was released from the burden of having to balance these elements, and I could focus my efforts exclusively on the music festival, the artists, their entourage, and the process of pulling off this extremely complex venture. With the support and encouragement from David Sosenberg and Leon Gast, the producer and director of WHEN WE WERE KINGS, I embarked on making SOUL POWER.

Viewing the material for SOUL POWER was an unmitigated joy – day after day a beautiful, vibrant world came alive before my eyes. However, actually working with the material was daunting – between the hundreds of hours of film and sound and the expectations of WHEN WE WERE KINGS fans, I was keenly aware the difficult path upon which I had chosen to travel. Additionally, I decided

that I would not include any retrospective interviews or archival materials; anything not part of the original film shoot was off limits. I wanted to make a film that would fully immerse the audience in all aspects of the music festival: the anticipation, frustration, joys, disappointment and, above all, the sheer pleasure of the musical performances. I wanted the filmed material – and the people and events it portrayed – to speak for itself.

We set about building scenes of everything and anything that that piqued our interest, without regard for how it would all hang together. Needless to say viewing the first assembly, which ran for several hours not including the concert, was a painful experience. That is when I printed out a graphic of trail leading to the summit of Mount Everest. I relabeled the graphic “Mount Zaire ‘74” and used a sticky note to trace our progress up the mountain. Knowing that the “summit” awaited us at the end of the long and arduous journey helped us persevere; it also reminded us to be prepared, careful, and not to be led astray by hubris, which is the surest path to failure for mountaineer and filmmaker alike.

After a few months of editing we felt happy with the shape of the film. That is until we screened it for an audience. Though there were many who appreciated what we were trying to achieve, the majority were perplexed, and urged us to provide more narrative signposts, to incorporate more information about the event, its meaning, context, and the consequence of the event. They suggested new interviews and archival materials to clarify the narrative. One audience member stated flatly that SOUL POWER was “not even a documentary!” Such responses were quite sobering. Instead of following these prescriptions, I sought to respond to the feelings behind them. Many people became lost in the ambiguities of the material, so I attempted to craft a tighter more connected structure; others wanted to hear people speak about the meaning of the experiences, so I mined the footage for moments of reflection; some demanded more information on the context of the festival, so I placed explanatory cards at the beginning of the film. On a slightly different tack, a large number of people encouraged me to deemphasize the behind the scenes machinations of organizing the festival and to get right into the music. This was the most difficult note to tackle hear as it ultimately entailed cutting a number of scenes that I found absolutely fascinating. Ultimately I am grateful for the passionate criticism that people all too freely heaped upon the film, as it undoubtedly helped me to make a better film than would have emerged if I worked in isolation. The diligent and perceptive on-the-ground direction of Leon Gast, and the phenomenal camera work of Paul Goldsmith, Kevin Keating, Albert Maysles, and Roderick Young, among a half dozen others, provided me the opportunity to make this film in the vérité tradition. Their camerawork was reliably patient, economical, insightful, and aesthetically sophisticated. Many of the camera rolls struck me as near-perfect short films, where each moment beautifully flowed into the next, while weaving in ample coverage so that scenes could be condensed at will. In a very literal sense, these cameramen are great filmmakers, and my approach to this film was wholly dependent upon their superlative ability to walk into situations and to dynamically convey what was going on.

Throughout the editorial process I was informed and guided by the masters of vérité cinema: Barbara Kopple, Albert Maysles, D.A. Pennebaker, and Frederick Wiseman. I was also emboldened

by the great concert films of the era: GIMME SHELTER, WOODSTOCK, MONTEREY POP, WATTSTAX, and SOUL TO SOUL. Ultimately I hope that SOUL POWER is worthy of this heritage, but of course this is something that can only be decided by the audience. Ironically, having completed SOUL POWER, there is still a tremendous amount of material that has been left out. Fortunately, with the advent of DVD extras and the Internet, I anticipate ample opportunity to give this material a public life separate from its inclusion in film. Most importantly, I plan to make the entire concert available, but that is another mountain.

Soul power - de filmmakers / les cinéastes

Jeffrey Levy-Hinte, Director

President of Antidote Films in New York, Jeffrey Levy-Hinte most recently produced ROMAN POLANSKI: WANTED AND DESIRED, the widely acclaimed documentary feature by director Marina Zenovich, which enjoyed premieres at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival and 2008 Cannes Film Festival. The film was broadcast on HBO in June 2008, and released in U.S. theaters by Think Film, with international release coming soon from The Weinstein Company.

Last year, Jeffrey produced THE LAST WINTER, an eco-horror thriller co-written and directed by Larry Fessenden. Nominated for best ensemble cast at the 2007 Gotham Awards, the film premiered at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival and was recently released by IFC Films in September 2007. Also in 2007, Jeffrey produced the documentary BOMB IT, a comprehensive investigation of graffiti, covering street art from all around the world. BOMB IT premiered at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival's World Documentary Competition. Selected as one of Variety's "Producers to Watch" in 2003, Jeffrey has also produced many other critically successful and award winning films, including Julian Goldberger's THE HAWK IS DYING, Gregg Araki's MYSTERIOUS SKIN, Catherine Hardwicke's THIRTEEN, and Lisa Cholodenko's LAUREL CANYON. Additionally, Jeffrey edited the 1996 Academy Award-winning documentary WHEN WE WERE KINGS, has served as a juror for the Independent Spirit Awards, and is a board member for Independent Features Project (IFP) of New York.

Born in Santa Monica, California, Jeffrey Levy-Hinte is a graduate of Cal State, Northridge and the University of Michigan, and is Board Chair for Independent Features Project in New York.

Leon Gast, Producer

Leon Gast is a director, producer, screenwriter, cinematographer and editor. He is known for making such seminal documentaries as HELL'S ANGELS FOREVER and the Oscar-winning chronicle of the 1974 landmark fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman, WHEN WE WERE KINGS. During the 1960s and 1970s, Gast became famous for his still photography and his work appeared in such magazines as Vogue, Esquire, and Harper's Bazaar. Other works include 1 LOVE, SALSA: THE FILM and CELIA CRUZ AND THE FANIA ALL-STARS IN AFRICA. OUR LATIN THING, which he directed and did cinematography for, won the Truer Than Fiction Award and WHEN WE WERE KINGS won the Independent Spirit Award. Gast is currently directing PAPAARAZZO: THE UNWELCOME ART OF RON GALELLA, produced by Adam Schlesinger and Linda Saffire, written by Roger Rosenblatt, photographed by Don Lenzer, and edited by Doug Abel.

David Sonenberg, Producer

A Harvard Law School graduate, David Sonenberg, began the music management label DAS communications. He has managed Meat Loaf, Jim Steinman, The Fugees, the Spin Doctors, Keke Palmer, Joan Osborne, John Legend, The Black Eyed Peas, Fergie and many other successful acts. Sonenberg has produced several films, most notably the 1996 Academy-Award winning documentary, WHEN WE WERE KINGS.

David Smith, Editor

In his 10 years in post-production, David has worked on many features, including THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE, ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND, VANITY FAIR, and THE NAMESAKE. He is currently working on Mira Nair's biopic of Amelia Earhart, featuring Hilary Swank. SOUL POWER is David's feature editorial debut.

Produced & Directed By

Jeffrey Levy-Hinte

Produced By

David Sonenberg

Leon Gast

Edited By

David Smith

Cinematographers

Paul Goldsmith

Kevin Keating

Albert Maysles

Roderick Young

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

“Godfather of Soul”

James Brown

J.B.’s Bandleader & Trombonist

Fred Wesley

J.B.’s Saxophonist

Maceo Parker

Festival / Fight Promoter

Don King

“The Greatest”

Muhammad Ali

Concert Lighting Director

Bill McManus

Festival Coordinator

Alan Pariser

Festival Promoter

Stewart Levine

Festival Promoter

Lloyd Price

Investor Representative

Keith Bradshaw

The Spinners

Henry Fambrough

Billy Henderson

Pervis Jackson

Bobbie Smith

Philippé Wynne

Musician

B.B. King

Singer

Bill Withers

Fania All-Stars Guitarist

Yomo Toro

Fania All-Stars Vocalist

Celia Cruz

Fania All-Stars Bandleader & Flautist

Johnny Pacheco

Trio Madjesi

Mario Matadidi Mabele

Loko Massengo "Djeskain"

Saak "Sinatra" Sakoul,

Festival Promoter

Hugh Masakela

Author & Editor

George Plimpton

Photographer

Lynn Goldsmith

Black Nationalist

Stokely Carmichael

a.k.a. "Kwame Ture"

Ali's Cornerman

Drew "Bundini" Brown

J.B.'s Singer and Bassist

"Sweet" Charles Sherrell

Saxophonist

Manu Dibango

Music Festival Emcee

Lukuku

OK Jazz Lead Singer

François "Franco" Luambo Makiadi

Singer

Miriam Makeba

Spinners and Sister Sledge Manager

Buddy Allen

Sister Sledge

Debbie Sledge

Joni Sledge

Kathy Sledge

Kim Sledge

The Crusaders

Kent Leon Brinkley

Larry Carlton

Wilton Felder

Wayne Henderson

Stix Hooper

Joe Sample

Fania All-Stars Conga Player

Ray Barretto

Fania All Stars Timbali Player

Nicky Marrero

Conga Musician

Danny "Big Black" Ray

Orchestre Afrisa International Lead Singer

Tabu Ley Rochereau

PRODUCTION CREW

Production Manager:

Barrie Singer

Production Coordinators

John Ginnes

Louise Marshall

Unit Managers

St. Claire Bourne

Ossie Brown

Additional Cinematographers:

Bob Fletcher

Joseph Galloway

Wardell Gaynor

Jack Harris

Roy Lewis

Roland Mitchell

Karma Stanley

Burleigh Wartes

Location Sound Recordists

Gene Defever

Peter Hliddel

Ed Lockman

Tony Miller

Mark Paturet

Randal Shepard

Richard Wells

Shane Zarrantash

Gaffers

Michael Barrow

Norman Leigh

Grips

Larry Kirsch

Bob Kragen

Music Sound Recording

Gary Kellgren

Alan Manger

Chris Stone

Location Sound Coordinators

Bill Daley

Bernard Fox

Camera Technician

Egon Stephan

Production Assistants

Jonathan Angier

Larry Bullard

Richard Edelen

Cynthia Henry

Bob Hewitt

Frank D'Angelo

Peter Lasoff

Rich Wardell

MUSIC

“Soul Power”

Performed by James Brown & the Mighty JB's

Written by James Brown

Published by Crited Music Inc.

Courtesy of Warner Chappell Music Inc.

“One of a Kind (Love Affair)”

Performed by The Spinners

Written by Joseph Banks Jefferson

Published by Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corporation

“Hope She’ll be Happier”

Performed by Bill Withers

Written by Bill Withers

Published by Interior Music Group

“The Click Song”

Performed by Miriam Makeba

Written by The Manhattan Brothers

Published by Makeba Music Company

“The Thrill is Gone”

Performed by B.B. King

Written by Rick Ravon Darnell and Roy Hawkins

Published by Universal Music Carreers

“Put it Where You Want It”

Performed by the Crusaders

Written by Joseph Leslie Sample

Published by Chrysais Songs

“Quimbara”

Performed by Celia Cruz and the Fania All Stars

Written by Cepeda Junior

Published by Fania Music

“Ponte Duro”

Performed by the Fania All Stars

Written by Johnny Pacheco

Published by Fania Music

“Seli-Ja”

Performed by Tabu Ley Rochereau & L’Afrisa International

Written by Tabu Ley Rochereau

Published by EMI Blackwood Music, Inc.

“Payback”

Performed by James Brown & the Mighty J.B.’s

Written by James Brown, John H. Starks, and Fred Wesley

Published by Dyatone Publishing Corporation

“Cold Sweat”

Performed by James Brown & the Mighty J.B.’s

Written by James Brown and Alfred James Ellis

Published by Dyatone Publishing Corporation

“I Can’t Stand Myself”

Performed by James Brown & the Mighty J.B.’s

Written by James Brown

Published by Dyatone Publishing Corporation

“Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud)”

Performed by James Brown & the Mighty J.B.’s

Written by James Brown and Alfred Ellis

Published by Dyatone Publishing Corporation

“Same Beat”

Performed by the J.B.’s

Written by James Brown

Published by Dyatone Publishing Corporation