

VJESH / CANTO

(Vjesh/singing)

a documentary by Rossella Schillaci

ALBASUITE - 9 Docs on Arbereshe Culture

a series by Salvo Cuccia, Eleonora Cordaro

(Italy, Digibeta, 57 mins)

SYNOPSIS

With sharp voices, the women of St. Costantino and St. Paul Albanese sing the most heart-rending songs. These are the ancient *vjeshet*, handed down from mother to daughter. They tell of the Albanian escape to seek shelter in southern Italy, five centuries ago. But they are also the creative expression of women who, to make light of their work in the fields, "threw" songs from one hill to another, to be "picked up" by the other women. These songs tell the stories of brave and ironic women, stories of emigrations and returns. They are performed throughout the summer at simple daily meetings between the women, giving expression to the memories, the joys and the bitterness that mark the life of each of them. As long ago as 1954, the anthropologist Ernesto De Martino organized an expedition to these two villages and recorded the *vjeshet*. But now, more than 40 years after that expedition, as they themselves relate, with irony, it is the women themselves who make the wider world aware of their songs by giving concerts throughout Italy, and even as far as Albania and France.

Festival and awards:

- ~ **International prize for mediterranean documentary & reportage**, JUNE 2008
- ~ **First prize Jean Rouch International Film Festival**, Paris, 2008
- ~ **First prize Royal Anthropological Institute International Ethnographic Film Festival** "Music & Performance" section, Manchester 2007
- ~ **Best film realized in Mediterranean Countries** - Sardinia International Ethnographic Film Festival, 2008
- ~ **Prize "Cinema del Reale"**, Festa del cinema del reale, 2008
- ~ 25° Torino Film Festival - ITALIANA.DOC
- ~ 12th Mostra Internacional do Filme Etnográfico, Rio de Janeiro, 2007
- ~ XVI International festival of ethnological film, Belgrade, 2007
- ~ Worldfilm Tartu Festival of Visual Culture, Estonia, 2008
- ~ Festival Cinematografico Internazionale dell'Uruguay, Montevideo, 2008
- ~ Sguardi Altrove Film Festival, Milano, 2008
- ~ Moscow International Visual Anthropology Festival, 2008
- ~ Muzyka i Swiat (Musica e Mondo) Documentary Film Festival, Cracovia, 2008
- ~ Beeld voor Beeld, Amsterdam, 2008

BIOGRAPHY

Filmmaker and researcher, Rossella Schillaci attended a MA in Visual Anthropology in the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology in Manchester. Her student film, *Ascuntami* (*Listen to me*), has been selected in several Italian film festivals (Torino Film Festival, Biennale Giovani Artisti, Invideo).

She worked for Laranja Azul, a Portuguese production company, working also as cameraman for *O linho è um sonho* (Best audiovisual work in ICOM - UNESCO's International Council of Museums. Best museum video in the International Festival of Museology in Taipei, Taiwan 2004).

In 2001 she made a documentary for the Danish television, *Euro Blows over Stromboli*; then she participated to the *EU-India Documentary Initiative*, shooting in India *Living beyond borders*, a documentary for the TV serial "The space of life" produced by The Thomson Foundation, broadcasted in Indian national TV.

At present, she work besides as assistant director for TV and as researcher in the University of Milan and in a Archive of Ethnographic.

Her last documentary, *Pratica e Maestria* (*Practice and mastery*, 2005) has been selected and awarded by several international film festival (Prix Bartok - Bilan du Film Ethnographique Paris 2006, UCLA, Ethnographic Archive, Los Angeles, 2006, Beeld voor Beeld Festival, Amsterdam, 2006).

Filmography: « Ascuntami » (*Listen to me*, 2000), « Euro blows over Stromboli » (2001), « Living beyond borders » (2004), « Pratica e maestria » (*Practice and mastery*, 2005), « Vjesh/Canto » (*Vjesh/Singing*, 2007).

CREDITS

Format: DigitalBeta

Length: 57 min

Year: 2007

Written and directed: Rossella Schillaci

Cinematography: Sonia Antonini, Rossella Schillaci

Sound: Roberto Remorino

Assistant Director: Federica Gruppioni

Edited: Marta Zen

Ethnomusicological research: Nicola Scaldaferrì

Sound Editor: Mirko Guerra

Music: Ladies from San Costantino and San Paolo Albanese

Production: Palomar Endemol - Comune di Piana degli Albanesi

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