

The Manakia Brothers
A film by Eliza Zdru



Creative documentary / personal / biographical / historical
HD
52' / 80'

*"A personally-driven quest and subjective discovery of the story of
the first Balkan filmmakers – Milton and Ianaki Manakia"*

ABOUT THE FILM

Trying to find out the truth about an old photograph of my great-grandfather – Mita Zdru, taken in 1923 somewhere in the Balkans, I go on a trip in the region to recreate on film the troubled story of the two people who allegedly took this photo - **the Manakia brothers**.

These almost legendary characters were first photographers before becoming the first filmmakers in the region. They took thousands of photographs in villages and cities throughout the Balkans, portraying not only people from their community but also anyone who would want their picture taken, regardless of nationality, religion or political affiliation. They were present to almost all the important political events in the region and became the official photographers of the Romanian Royal Court, of the Ottoman Court and of the King of Serbia – Alexander Karagheorghevici. They bought their first film camera in 1905 and started to make documentary-style short films. They even opened a cinema in Bitola in 1921, creating a focal point for the development of cinema in the region. They were such an important element in the history of the Balkan cinema that there is a film festival in Bitola nowadays dedicated to their memory – The Manaki Brothers Film Festival. Oddly enough, their life story is not so well-known, so trying to recreate it is the main aim of this documentary.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eliza Zdru has a degree in Film and Television Studies and a degree in Communication and Public Relations Studies. She has been part of a few documentary film workshops such as Storydoc (Greece/Germany), BDC Discoveries (Bulgaria, Kosovo) and Aristoteles Workshop (Romania).

Eliza has just finished her first feature-length documentary – “**Songs for a Museum**” (<http://songsforamuseum.film-documentar.ro/>), a film about the journey of four 84-year-old Aromanian polyphonic singers and the disappearance of a musical tradition along with the singers' fading-out memory.

“**The Manakia Brothers**” will be her second feature-length documentary. The project won the award for Best Pitch at the second edition of the BDC Discoveries workshop held in Prizren, Kosovo (august 2013).

ABOUT THE PRODUCER AND SAGA FILM

Alexandru Teodorescu is Saga Film's director. Under his supervision, Saga Film co-produced the Palme d'Or winner "4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS and 2 DAYS", directed by Cristian Mungiu and produced by Mobra Films.

Alexandru Teodorescu's first produced feature was "OUTBOUND" (2010), made after an idea of Cristian Mungiu and Ioana Uricaru and directed by Bogdan George Apetri. The film received the FIPRESCI Award at Warsaw IFF and Viennale and The Golden Alexander for Best Film in Thessaloniki FF.

"THE UNSAVED", one of Alexandru Teodorescu's latest finished productions, is the debut feature of Igor Cobileanski, with a script by Romania's acclaimed director Corneliu Porumboiu. It premiered at Karlovy Vary IFF and was awarded The FIPRESCI Award at Cottbus IFF.

Saga Film is one of the biggest production companies in Romania. In 2007, it co-produced the Palme d'Or winner, "4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS and 2 DAYS", directed by Cristian Mungiu. In 2010, Saga Film produced the debut feature "OUTBOUND", directed by Bogdan

Apetri, after a story by Cristian Mungiu and Ioana Uricaru. The film premiered at Locarno IFF. In 2013, Saga Film produced "THE UNSAVED", directed by Igor Cobileanski, with a script by Corneliu Porumboiu. The film was nominated for 11 awards by the Romanian Film Industry in 2014.

