

Universal Movies

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Liberation Day - review

Morten Traavik and Ulfis Olte's movie opened the third edition of the Seeyousound International Music Film Festival, and also competes in the selection "Into the Groove".

The movie follows the first rock band ever to hold a concert in North Korea, a Slovenian band called Laibach that has stirred up controversy over the years for their brazen use of a Nazi-fascist aesthetic. Under the diplomatic and directorial guidance of Morten Traavik, an old fan, the band unleashes their music on a completely rock-starved public that knows nothing of its power.

This very well-directed and entertaining movie is interesting from many points of view. First of all, it shows us a slice of everyday life in North Korea, a fascinating and disturbing place that remains inaccessible to moviemakers.

Another interesting element is the clash of expectations between the various groups involved, with the band attempting to impose its program, its point of view, its ideological and musical manifesto without succeeding in full. The North Korean authorities find themselves handling a powerful, unexploded bomb,

having somewhat naively invited such a controversial band to the country, and end up limiting or blocking all of the band's initiatives in the attempt to impose their own vision on them – also without succeeding in full.

At the end of these negotiations, both factions emerge partly defeated, partly victorious, and wholly unsatisfied. The winner is the audience, that gets drawn in to an interesting, intelligent movie whose director knows how to portion out the various elements of the documentary, interspersing it with clips taken from other TV programmes, thus making it easier to understand the cultural context and the other side of the coin.

Laibach makes quite an impression, and one is left with a desire to get to know them better and listen to their music – perhaps to understand whether they're playing games or being played. Whichever the case, there is no doubt that this is a good movie that deserves to be viewed more than once.