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GUIDE

Rivermaya, Sandwich, Lourd de Veyra join 11th Silent Film Festival

by **Sharline Barena** posted on **August 29, 2017**



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Rivermaya (left) and Sandwich will take part in the 2017 Silent Film Festival that fuses silent movies with live music by a selection of Filipino bands. It will take place at the Shang Cineplex from August 31 to September 3.

Pinoy bands and international artists team up with nine silent films for a unique fusion of live music and cinema's most classical form in this year's International Silent Film Festival at the Shangri-la Plaza Cineplex from **August 31 to September 3, 2017**.

This year, Rivermaya and Sandwich join the festival for the first time as they score music for silent films from the 1920s.

On **September 3**, Rivermaya will provide live accompaniment for Austria's *Café Elektric* (1927), a film about a "love square" of characters who frequent Café Elektric, a somewhat liberal cafe set in the backdrop of conservative Vienna in the 1920s.

"We chose Rivermaya because the band understands what the film wants to convey, and we wanted a band who knows exactly what Filipinos want to listen to and know what they are looking for when they go to a concert. We want the music to bridge the gap between a silent film and a modern audience," said Zelpha Bombais of the Austrian Embassy at the press conference for the festival.

Meanwhile, Sandwich is set to score the classic melodrama *Pandora's Box* (1929) from Germany also on **September 3**. Based on two plays by Frank Wedekind, this film by Georg Wilhelm Pabst is notable for its lesbian subplot and Louise Brooke's portrayal of a seductive woman from the 1920s, which turned her into a star.

Shadin Kitma from the Goethe Institute tapped Sandwich to work on a silent film for the first time. "Seeing Lulu dance reminded me of how Raimund [Marasigan of Sandwich] would sometimes perform," he said.

Spain's opening act at 8:00 PM on **August 31** with *El Golfo* (1918), an elaborate action comedy film that spans two decades, also features new music by festival first-timer Talahib, a world-music rock band that pays homage to homegrown music using indigenous instruments.

From the United Kingdom comes *Underground* (1928), a drama that evokes the life of the ordinary Londoner with its scenes of the bustling Underground as its backdrop. This glimpse of life in 1920s London will be accompanied by the music of dub band Goodleaf on September 1 at 7:30 PM.

Also on **September 1** at 9:30 PM, France presents a love triangle between a famous singer, a maharaja, and a scientist with *L'Inhumaine (The New Enchantment)* (1923), which will be complemented by a trio consisting of French-Vietnamese harpist and singer HeloiseLaHarpe, jazz pianist Ryan Villamor, and percussionist Aldous Castro. Martin Macalintal, audio visual attache of the French Embassy, stressed the importance of creating new music for this silent film, whose original score has been lost.

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In this year's festival, HeloiseLaHarpe will also bring life to singer Claire Lescot, played by Jaque Catelain.

"It's about bringing onstage somebody who can portray the actress in the movie and be herself, and provide music for this movie," said Macalintal.

"For this movie, I will be singing mostly in French, and playing the electronic harp, which is like the expression of femininity because it looks delicate but requires strength to play," she said.

This year's festival also sees the premiere of ***Una famiglia perfetta (A Perfect Family)***, a new silent film made of footage of a real family over the course of a decade and completed this year by Italian-Filipino director Ruben Maria Soriquez. The family drama, which also has a touch of crime and tragedy, will be accompanied by instrumental rock trio Tom's Story on **September 2** at 3 PM.

Japan's gangster drama ***Dragnet Girl*** (1933), meanwhile, introduces the combination of a live interpretation of a *katsudo benshi*, who acts as a narrator, actor, and storyteller, and musical scoring by a live band. The addition of a live narrator is new for the festival, but not in Japan, where *benshi*, who followed the tradition of narration also heard in kabuki and bunraku, were stars in their own right. Ichiro Kataoka, one of the best-known professional benshi in Japan today, will be narrating the film along with traditional Filipino music provided by the Celso Espejo Rondalla (CER) on **September 2** at 5:30 PM.

The Philippines also offers something new with Gym Lumbera's ***Taglish*** (2012), a drama about the infidelity that comes between a husband and wife in their twilight years. Lourde De Veyra returns to the festival with his new band Kapitan Kulam, an instrumental stoner-metal quartet featuring members of Pastilan Dong and Radioactive Sago Project, to score this meditation on love and language on **September 2** at 8 PM.

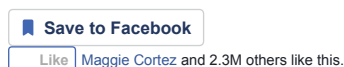
Buster Keaton represents the United States with ***The General*** (1926), his most ambitious work as a director and one of the most revered comedies of the silent era. This action/comedy, which features the most expensive stunt involving a train in those times, will be accompanied by soul band Flippin Soul Stompers on **September 3** at 8 PM.

"We'll try to sound like a soul band from the 1920s and end the festival with a party," said Bing Austria of Flippin Soul Stompers.

This year's festival will also feature an exhibit at the Atrium of Shangri-La Plaza by Para sa Sining, a community of creative collaborators who will also present contemporary films of the silent film genre. The group will present ***Musika x Pelikula***, featuring short films that will be scored by live musical performances from young and upcoming artists at the Atrium on **September 3** at 2 PM, 7:15 PM, and 9:30 PM.

Admission for the nine full-length silent films is free.

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