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There's room for firsts in the 11th International Silent Film Festival

Published August 8, 2017 5:06pm

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A decade and one year later, the International Silent Film Festival remains a must-see for cinephiles as well as a gateway to a lifetime of love for movies for newbies.

This year, it shows no signs of slowing down as it presents nine exceptional films from nine different perspectives. The experience is enhanced by the live music provided by the country's finest performers, most of whom are joining the festival for the first time.



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The poster features a large orange trumpet graphic at the top, with a film reel and a film strip winding around it. In the center, a large orange circle contains the text "11th". Below this, the text "INTERNATIONAL SILENT FILM FESTIVAL" is written in a stylized font, with "MANILA" underneath. The phrase "Accompanied by Live Musical Performances" is written in a smaller font. The dates "31 AUG - 3 SEP 2017" and the location "Shang Cineplex, Shangri-la Plaza, Mandaluyong City" are prominently displayed. The poster is decorated with several circular images of classic silent film scenes, including a man and woman in a dramatic embrace, a man in a military uniform, a woman in a period dress, and a man in a suit.



Leading the charge this year is Instituto Cervantes, presenting the Spanish classic "El Golfo" by Jose de Togores. The action-comedy will be scored by world music band Talahib.

Speaking for Talahib at the launch of the festival on Tuesday, Jaime Fernandez said that providing the live musical score for a silent film is something new and "out of the box" for the bag.

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~~Despite working with traditional instruments, Fernandez said they're a "millennial" outfit and they're hoping that their fusion of old and modern sounds help them bring the audience to the edge of their seats.~~

The second day of the festival is marked by performances from local outfit Goodleaf, accompanying "Underground," the 1928 silent romance movie by Anthony Asquith; and French-Vietnamese harpist Heloise LaHarpe, who will be joined by pianist Ryan Villamor, percussionist Aldous Castro for the live musical accompaniment for "L'Inhumaine" (The New Enchantment).

Heloise, aside from charming the audience with her harp, will also be lending her voice to the lead female character in the film, the singer Claire Lescot, who is pursued by many men but remaining distant and almost heartless.

On the third day, Tom's Story will be scoring the Italian feature "Una Famiglia Perfetta" (The Perfect Family), directed by Ruben Maria Soriquez and released just this year.

Soriquez, who shot the film in pieces over six years by gathering footage without restricting himself to a linear narrative at first, found Tom's Story a perfect fit, as the post-rock sounds of the trio was similar to the music he played in his younger years.

The Japan Foundation, meanwhile, has flipped the script and chosen a more modern film and chose a traditional Filipino band to provide the score Yasujiro Ozu's gangster movie "Hijosen no Onna" (Dragnet Girl), which is set in 1933. It will be brought to life by The Celso Espejo Rondalla.



International Silent Film Festival Manila
about 5 months ago

A rare Philippine performance by Japanese benshi master Ichiro Kataoka, accompanying Yasujiro Ozu's silent gangster film Dragnet Girl will be held on Sep 2 at 5:30pm. Accompanying Mr. Kataoka and the film will be the internationally-acclaimed Celso Espejo Rondalla.

Presented by [The Japan Foundation, Manila](#)
[#FreeAdmission](#), first-come, first-served basis.




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Speaking for the rondalla outfit, Elaine Espejo Cajucom said that scoring a modern film with classical instruments presents a challenge, but she hopes it also shows the versatility of rondalla.

The third day closes with the "instrumental stoner metal" sound of Lourd de Veyra, Kaloy Olavides, Jay Gapasin, and Eric Melendez as the band Kapitan Kulam for the film "Taglish."

The movie explores the bastardization of language through the actual corruption of the only copy of the short, "Tagalog." The film was literally submerged in a flood and the damaged film, English, completes the narrative of infidelity and the twilight years of marriage.

Director Gym Lumbea ruminates on love and language and how we "betray and destroy" these two.

Closing the main festivals are Pinoy Rock heavy hitters, who are festival first-timers: Rivermaya, Sandwich, and Flippin Soul Stompers.

The Embassy of Austria has chosen a film that might intrigue even those who declare that they're allergic to arthouse. Gustav Ucicky's "Cafe Elektric" features a "love square" and according to Zolpha Bombais is not unlike the soap operas that hook the mass audience.

Rivermaya will be providing the soundtrack to the story of wealthy socialite Erni, who falls in love with street urchin Fredl, who is in love with a prostitute named Hansi. Architect Max enters the picture, in love with Erni first, then with Hansi. All in a day's twists.

The Goethe-Institut Philippinen and The US Embassy bring out the big guns for the finale, screening the Louise Brooks starrer "Pandora's Box" and the Buster Keaton epic comedy "The General" respectively.

Georg Wilhelm Pabst's "Pandora's Box" is considered one of silent film's greatest masterworks and is highly regarded for its progressive depiction of female sexuality in LuLu (Brooks).

Shadin Kitma from the Goethe-Institut believes that Sandwich is a perfect fit for the film.

Closing the festival in style is Flippin' Soul Stompers. The soul/funk band promises to match the energy in Buster Keaton's revered comedy "The General." The big sound of the horns section matches the grandiosity of the huge cast and the real life trains used by Keaton in the film.

Frontman Bing Austria promises to bring the party to the theater.

Perhaps the biggest first is the inclusion of a short silent film selection, hosted by Para Sa Sining in "Musika x Pelikula". On the last day of the festival, contemporary local shorts will be screened for the public, complete with live musical scoring.

In partnership with UP Cineaste, Para Sa Sining will be showing "Marianing" by Nikolo Salazar, with music by Alpas; "Orange Juice" by Ivan Arevalo, with music by BennyBunnyBand; "Mukha" by Noah del Rosario, with music by Fiona; and "Dreamweaver" by Jedd Rommel and Ron Genato, with music by Ja Quintana.

Check out the schedule below:

August 31, Thursday

- "El Golfo" (Spain), 8pm. Music by Talahib

September 1, Friday

- "Underground" (UK), 7:30pm. Music by Goodleaf
- "L'Inhumaine" (The New Enchantment) (France), 9:30pm. Music by Heloise LaHarpe

September 2, Saturday

- "Una Famiglia Perfetta" (A Perfect Family) (Italy), 3pm. Music by Tom's Story
- "Hijosen no Onna" (Dragnet Girl) (Japan), 5:30pm. Music by The Celso Espejo Rondalla
- "Taglish" (Philippines), 8pm. Music by Kapitan Kulam

September 3, Sunday

- "Cafe Elektric" (Austria), 3pm. Music by Rivermaya
- "Pandora's Box" (Germany), 5pm. Music by Sandwich
- "The General" (US), 8pm. Music by Flippin' Soul Stompers

The 11th International Silent Film Festival runs from August 31 to September 3 at the Shang Cineplex, Shangri-La Plaza, Mandaluyong City. Admission to the festival is free.

Visit the official International Silent Film Festival Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/InternationalSilentFilmFestivalManila/>) for more details. — AT/LA/KVD, GMA News

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