
SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN

a film by Malik Bendjelloul

Nominee, Best Documentary

85th Academy Awards

Washington DC Area Film Critics Association

Los Angeles Film Critics Association

Winner, Best Documentary

BAFTA Awards 2013

National Board of Review

Winner, Best Feature

IDA Awards



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Rodriguez was the greatest '70s US rock icon who never was. Momentarily hailed as the finest recording artist of his generation, he disappeared into oblivion – rising again like Lazarus in a completely different context a continent away. Unbeknownst to Rodriguez, he enjoyed a parallel life, full of acclaim and success, a world away.

SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN is a film about hope, inspiration and the resonating power of music.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In the late '60s, two celebrated producers, who were struck by his soulful melodies and prophetic lyrics, discovered a musician in a Detroit bar. They recorded an album that they believed was going to secure his reputation as one of the greatest recording artists of his generation. In fact, the album bombed and the singer disappeared into obscurity amid rumors of a gruesome on-stage suicide. But a bootleg recording found its way into apartheid South Africa and, over the next two decades, it became a phenomenon. Two South African fans then set out to find out what really happened to their hero. Their investigation led them to a story more extraordinary than any of the existing myths about the artist known as Rodriguez. **SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN** is a film about hope, inspiration and the resonating power of music.

SYNOPSIS

In 1968, two producers went to a downtown Detroit bar to see an unknown recording artist – a charismatic Mexican-American singer/songwriter named Rodriguez, who had attracted a local following with his mysterious presence, soulful melodies and prophetic lyrics. They were immediately bewitched by the singer, and thought they had found a musical folk hero in the purest sense – an artist who reminded them of a Chicano Bob Dylan, perhaps even greater. They had worked with the likes of Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder, but they believed the album they subsequently produced with Rodriguez – *Cold Fact* – was the masterpiece of their producing careers.

Despite good reviews, *Cold Fact* was a commercial disaster and marked the end of Rodriguez's recording career before it had even started. Rodriguez sank back into obscurity. All that trailed him were stories of his escalating depression, and eventually he fell so far off the music industry's radar that when it was rumored he had committed suicide, there was no conclusive report of exactly how and why. Of all the stories that circulated about his death, the most

sensational – and the most widely accepted – was that Rodriguez had set himself ablaze on stage having delivered these final lyrics: “But thanks for your time, then you can thank me for mine and after that’s said, forget it.” The album’s sales never revived, the label folded and Rodriguez’s music seemed destined for oblivion.

This was not the end of Rodriguez’s story. A bootleg recording of *Cold Fact* somehow found its way to South Africa in the early 1970s, a time when South Africa was becoming increasingly isolated as the Apartheid regime tightened its grip. Rodriguez’s anti-establishment lyrics and observations as an outsider in urban America felt particularly resonant for a whole generation of disaffected Afrikaners. The album quickly developed an avid following through word-of-mouth among the white liberal youth, with local pressings made. In typical response, the reactionary government banned the record, ensuring no radio play, which only served to further fuel its cult status. The mystery surrounding the artist’s death helped secure Rodriguez’s place in rock legend and *Cold Fact* quickly became the anthem of the white resistance in Apartheid-era South Africa. Over the next two decades Rodriguez became a household name in the country and *Cold Fact* went platinum.

THE BEGINNING

It was, in fact, Rodriguez's compelling and amazing story that appealed to filmmaker Malik Bendjelloul – even before he'd heard a note of Rodriguez's music.

“In 2006, after five years making TV documentaries in Sweden, I spent six months travelling around Africa and South America looking for good stories. In Cape Town I met Stephen ‘Sugar’ Segerman, who told me about Rodriguez and his involvement in Rodriguez's rediscovery. I visited 16 countries in that trip; in each country I searched after good stories by reading newspapers and books and asking fellow travelers. This was by far the best. I was completely speechless – I hadn't heard a better story in my life. I had never heard Rodriguez's music when Stephen Segerman first told me about him. I fell so totally in love with his story that I was almost afraid to listen to his work – I thought the chances were very slim that the music would be as good as the story; that I'd be disappointed and lose momentum. I started to listen to it when I came back to Europe, and I couldn't believe my ears – literally. I thought my feelings for the story might have influenced my judgment, and I needed to play it to other people to see if they agreed. Their reactions convinced me – these really were songs on a level equal to the best work of Bob Dylan, even the Beatles,” Bendjelloul says.

Rodriguez's record label, Light in the Attic, describes his debut album, *Cold Fact*, as “... one of the lost classics of the 60s, a psychedelic masterpiece drenched in color and inspired by life, love, poverty and rebellion.” Unbeknownst to him, those themes, reflections of his life in Detroit, also spoke powerfully to a generation a continent away in South Africa, during the reviled Apartheid era. The iron rule of Apartheid, essentially institutionalized racism, became the law of the land in South Africa in 1948. In 1950, the Population Registration Act required all South Africans to be classified as white, black (African) or colored (mixed descent). Categorization depended on appearance, social acceptance and lineage – in other words, it was highly subjective and the white Afrikaans minority made the rules. Their laws became increasingly more discriminative and punitive towards the black majority. By the time Rodriguez's music was accidentally smuggled in, South Africa was a police state. The revolutionary anthems of the 1960s had not breached the country – until Rodriguez's tunes, laced with the poetry of defiance and

counterculture, found their way into the hands, ears and minds of young people. In a strange way, the South African youth was prepared to embrace Rodriguez in a way that even his countrymen were not.

“Apartheid was something that was constantly in the news when I was a young, but it seems like ever since Mandela gained power there hasn't been too much talk about that era. It's strange that for almost fifty years – all the way into the mid-nineties – there was a country in the world that was a surviving ideological sibling to Hitler's Third Reich. Mandela implemented a policy of reconciliation, which I think is a very wise philosophy, but I think we still need to know and learn about these times more than we do. The Apartheid regime was very racist, but the liberal whites were probably more anti-racist than liberal whites in America at that same time. For the South African liberals it was absolutely no problem that a singer had a Hispanic name and Hispanic looks. In America in that era, if your name was Rodriguez you were supposed to play Mariachi music. Rodriguez was a serious challenge to the white rock scene – the Lou Reeds and the Bob Dylans of this world – which was still very much an exclusive members club in Europe and America at this time,” says Bendjelloul.

Rodriguez and his music went on to achieve cult-like success in South Africa, while his musical career in the United States fizzled. In retrospect, however, Rodriguez understands why his music, influenced by his life in Detroit, where he was dubbed an “inner city poet,” resonated with South Africans.

“I describe myself as ‘musico-politico.’ I was born and bred in Detroit, four blocks from the city center. Back then, I was influenced by the urban sounds that were going on around me all the time. Music is art and art is a cultural force. As far as my work from Detroit comparing to the South African Apartheid, the similarities echo. The placards of the 1970s in the United States read things like: ‘We Want Jobs’ and ‘Stop the War’ – I was looking at the music from a working class perspective that was relevant, as it turns out, to the kids in South Africa,” Rodriguez notes.

He adds that his brand of musical activism is not a mere relic and that current times are not so

dissimilar from the upheavals in the 1960s and 1970s.

“Today a fruit vendor in Tunisia is bringing down a dictator. In Syria, the government is caught shooting civilians not unlike at Kent State in Ohio. Picasso's Guernica could be displayed in reference to Darfur or the My Lai Massacre. The issue is wars being conducted against civilian populations as opposed to military forces in combat. Political injustice and social activism continue in the world,” he points out.

So while in hindsight, it makes sense to Rodriguez that the kind of music he made – and continues to explore – reverberated across the world, it certainly amazed him initially to find out how beloved he was in a country he had never seen. In that vein, it surprised him to find out that his story so captivated Bendjelloul that the filmmaker had decided to document it. Like everything else connected with Rodriguez, his life and career are evolving astonishments.

“The climax in the film takes place in 1998, but for me it is still going. I didn't meet Malik until 2008 and the film was already in progress. I have been touring since that time and the story continues for me,” Rodriguez says.

FROM STORY TO SCREEN

Rodriguez's continuing story is not just documented in the film, but, it could be argued, the movie became an integral part of his own saga – it would go on to play at film festivals, introducing his music and his life story to entirely new audiences. But first, Bendjelloul had to interest “the right people to believe in the project.”

“That was the hardest thing. I thought it was evident that the story was good – had it been conceived by a screenwriter you would have thought that it was too much, too unbelievable to make sense. I thought that the fact that this really happened – and the way it happened – would be enough to attract investors. But in the end the story attracted everyone except the investors. Maybe it was because I was a new director. I was so passionate about it that I didn't receive a salary for three years, I just worked on the movie, but there was a point where I had to find a proper job and I thought I would have to give up,” Bendjelloul recalls.

Fortunately, this was just a fleeting moment of despair. In fact, Bendjelloul had been directing documentaries focusing on filmmakers for years and as a director and creative producer for Swedish Television's international cultural weekly show *Kobra*, where he made several short documentaries. One of those became the basis of *MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS*, starring George Clooney, and another served as the inspiration for the movie *THE TERMINAL*. Bendjelloul had ample reserves of personal creative resources, if not financial ones.

“I decided to see what I could do on my own. I had fallen completely in love with the story and couldn't stop working on it. I started to paint the animation myself. For one month I was sitting painting with chalk by my kitchen table. I had never painted before in my life, but I thought my efforts might be good enough as sketches, and would reduce the work for a real animator later. And then I tried the same with the music. I used \$500 midi software and composed a dummy for the original score. And I edited the film as well as I could on Final Cut. After the first six months I had 80% of the film done,” he says.

THE LOOK OF SEARCHING FOR SUGARMAN

While the total time shooting was only about three months, the entire film took approximately four years to complete. Unlike most documentaries, **SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN** is not just a collection of talking heads but rather a pastiche of sweeping cityscapes, voice over and intimate interviews. In particular, Bendjelloul made ingenious use of his iPhone and strategic reliance on the two places that would come to define Rodriguez: Detroit and South Africa.

“I worked closely together with very talented Swedish cinematographer Camilla Skagerström, using a Sony EX1 camera. Camilla has this great eye and is also very good with people. I knew I wanted to juxtapose Detroit and Cape Town as much as possible. In Detroit it is winter and night, in Cape Town it is summer and day. We didn't have much money so we tried to make quite big shots, shots overlooking cities etc. Not the most expensive staged setting in the world can compete with a real city. There is this poetry in every city and it is all there, free to use for everyone. We used a Super 8 camera to get the beautiful colors and gritty look of film on quite a few shots. When we ran out of money I started to use the Super 8-app of my iPhone - the result was almost as good as the real stuff, quite amazing... we did use a crane but we used it very economically, only one single day with two shots. It's all about where you place those two shots that hopefully gives the film a sense of scope,” Bendjelloul says.

The film's singular animation sequences were not just whimsical affectations but sort of the film's connective tissue.

“Since there was nothing filmed of Rodriguez's life up to when he came to South Africa in 1998 I thought that the animations were necessary to portray his existence up to that point,” Bendjelloul points out. Because they stand in for actual imagery of Rodriguez, the animation also helps add to the mystery of Rodriguez, forestalling the moment when audiences actually see him in frame.

FINALLY THE FILM

Bendjelloul's perseverance paid off when he finally met likeminded producers Simon Chinn and John Battsek.

“They loved the film. They helped me a great deal and had loads of useful and creative ideas. When I asked them who should complete the editing, the animation and the music, they surprised me by saying they thought all those elements were already all there. Suddenly, without me knowing how it happened, the film was complete. It was finally done,” Bendjelloul recalls.

Of course, the ultimate test would be Rodriguez and his family's reaction. At this point in the journey, Bendjelloul had gained their trust of course, as Rodriguez's daughter Regan Rodriguez recalls.

“We had been approached by various filmmakers interested in Rodriguez's story. Malik came to meet us with the cinematographer Camilla and that is how we got to know them and became convinced that they had not simply good intentions but also the talent and commitment to bring this project to fruition. There is a cosmic order to things that we have no control over and this time and it worked out. I think it can be referred to as serendipity,” she says.

Once they had entrusted the Rodriguez story to Bendjelloul, they participated and aided him but did not offer advice or critiques along the way. Instead they waited patiently to see the final outcome.

“We were aware of the editing process, but Malik is the director and it is his film and his work of art. Rodriguez is an artist and respects other artists - I feel that our whole Rodriguez family believes in human rights up to and including creative freedom and intellectual property,” Regan Rodriguez points out.

Fortunately, Rodriguez and his clan were truly pleased with the result.

“SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN is a testament to my father's unbelievable story. My whole life, I watched my dad defend himself and try to stake his ground as a musician. Finally, I get to see him up there. The authentic artist, as opposed to a carefully crafted commercial character, makes it! That is so satisfying - I can't even explain how good it feels. I could not be more thankful that this all came together and worked out so well. The whole thing is a real rock-n-roll dream come true,” Regan Rodriguez says.

“Not in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine anything like this would happen,” Rodriguez adds. “It is an indescribable feeling of triumph and I am so honored by the care Malik took in telling the story.”

PRAISE FOR RODRIGUEZ'S MUSIC

***Rolling Stone*, “Reissues of the Year”**

“This remarkable artifact of Michigan hippie soul by singer-songwriter Sixto Diaz Rodriguez – a lost classic originally issued in 1970 – is what Bob Dylan’s mid-Sixties electric record might have sounded like if he’d made them in Detroit at the dawn of funk. Rodriguez’s strident acoustic strumming and period-argument lyrics...are coated in brittle-fuzz guitars while Rodriguez vocally recalls a young Cat Stevens – atop the afro-acid strut of early Funkadelic. Ironically, some years after it bombed in the United States, *Cold Fact* became a hit – in South Africa. Now it finally gets another chance here.”

Time Out New York

“Sixto Diaz Rodriguez – born in Detroit to Mexican immigrants in 1942 – made his debut album, *Cold Fact*, in 1969; issued the following year, the disc’s mix of topical lyrics and druggy avant-garde arrangements was positively prescient, but the artist’s idiosyncrasies put a quick end to his performing career. Naturally, the album has become a cult classic...”

***Filter*, “Good Music Guide”**

“After floating around the ether for nearly 40 years, the much-beloved debut by Detroit’s answer to earthen soul and crunchy psych rock, Rodriguez twitches through Sam Cooke-esque “Sugar Man” and stomps through the folk-soul weirdness of “Gomorrah (A Nursery Rhyme).” Though it proffers much du jour anti-establishment rhetoric, this gem offers one truth: a lo-fi all-star you’ve never hear of created a timeless artifact.

***Spin* - *** 1/2**

Sixto Rodriguez is a Mexican American from Detroit whose lysergic gutter poetry dispassionately cataloged the social conditions that got Nixon elected – junkies, prostitutes, dealers, and acidheads rubbing elbows in Gomorrah. Recorded during the time of the Manson murders, *Cold Fact* is a psych-folk time capsule from a dark era of dreams destroyed. The 1970 album flopped but oddly blew up in South Africa, where it still sells briskly and Rodriguez has filled stadiums in Cape Town.”

***Entertainment Weekly*, “The Must List”**

“*Cold Fact*, the 1970 vinyl is all genius (flaws and all) to those in the know. Now a tidier CD reissue finally makes its way Stateside ...”

Pitchfork

“How did this (success in South Africa) happen? Well, the reasons are all audible on the record – for one, there’s the ... uniqueness of its sound. The album is a patchwork of folk, psychedelic rock and pop production, built around a workman-like voice and simple melodies ... The more direct reason his music spread so widely in South Africa, though, was the lyrics which played as unbelievably subversive to young (predominantly white) South Africans living under a cultural system that was so repressed it considered the entire medium of television to be too corrupting to be allowed in the country. In a police state like that, songs with lines like, “I wonder how many times you’ve had sex/And I wonder do you know who’ll be next” – never mind the drug-dealing references and anti-establishment messages -- had automatic currency, the kind that cause listeners to circulate it amongst their friends ... Listening to this excellently remastered reissue of *Cold Fact*, it’s not difficult to hear why so many South Africans placed it on the shelf next to Black Sabbath and The Beatles and figured that’s what the rest of the world was doing too. It is one of those rare lost albums that turns out to be a genuine classic.”

***Ventvox*, by Ryan Gies**

“(*Cold Fact*) ... (has) got elements of garage/psych, produced orchestration, and lots of insightful folk. There’s something for everyone on this album and after you hear it you’ll see why South Africa and Australia hold Rodriguez in such high regard.”

The Sound on Sound

“Simply known to most as Rodriguez, in 1971’s *Coming from Reality*, his second and final studio album, he continues his ruminations on the situation of the disaffected urban everyman. It shows that during that time the cloud of Vietnam hung over America’s head and the idea of rock n’ roll still held water as a rebellious act. Mixed among the heavy protest and the meandering poetry though is a genuinely romantic soul with a keen sense for creative delicate and uplifting love songs.”

The Austin Chronicle, Doug Freeman

“This 1970 gem of a debut from Detroit singer-songwriter Sixto Rodriguez (*Cold Fact*), who only cut two LPs, was largely ignored stateside and became a mysterious underground sensation in apartheid South Africa, striking a contemporary chord with its street-tough lyricism and psychedelic folk arrangements. “Hate Street Dialogue,” “Jane S. Piddy” and particularly “This is Not a Song, It’s an Outburst: Or, the Establishment Blues” mirror Dylan’s vintage spite, poetic but more concretely grounded in the struggles of Motor City. Rodriguez’s voice floats easily between Cat Stevens (“Forget It”) and Ian Anderson (“Only Good for Conversation,” with touches of Arthur Lee, while Dennis Coffey and Mike Theodore’s production and arrangements balance bursts of bruising distortion and effects, horns, and the smooth pop of “I Wonder” and “Like Janis.” Opener “Sugar Man” alone should have canonized Rodriguez, the junkie’s lament issued through morphine strings atop an acoustic strum. A revelation of what could have been.”

UGO.com

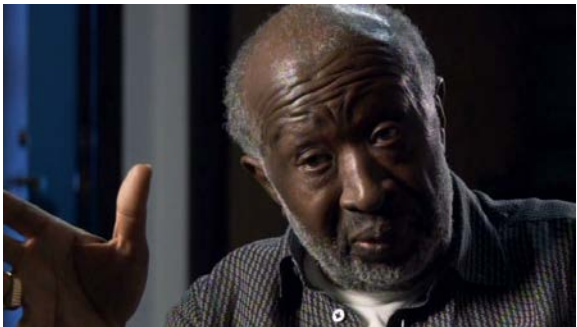
“Born to Mexican immigrant parents and hailing from Detroit, Rodriguez released his debut album in 1970 – *Cold Fact*. An impressively varied album that switched gears between Bob Dylan-esque “message folk,” Donovan-esque psychedelic folk and fuzzy garage rockers, the album sunk like a stone upon its release. After just one more album, Rodriguez turned his back on music completely. Over the years, *Cold Fact* became immensely popular in Australia, New Zealand and especially South Africa, where the album had supposedly gone multi-platinum – completely unbeknownst to Rodriguez ...

For the first time ever, *Cold Fact* is available in the U.S. on CD, by the fine folks at Light in the Attic ... Here’s a prediction – *Cold Fact* will soon match the “hipster cool factor” of the similarly discovered-by-the-masses-years-after-the-fact classic inspiration information by Shuggie Otis. While it may be too much of a stretch to call *Cold Fact* a classic on par with other landmark rock albums released at the time, it does hold up quite nicely, especially on the druggie album opener, “Sugar Man,” the ragged and rockin’ “Only Good for Conversation” and the bassy-bouncy “I Wonder.” If he hadn’t fallen off the face of the earth in the early ‘70s (and had continued releasing albums), it’s quite possible that Rodriguez could have followed other singer-songwriters of the era – namely Cat Stevens and Neil Young – up the charts. And that’s a *Cold Fact*.”

ABOUT THE CAST



ILSE ASSMANN | Ilse Assmann is the manager of Media Libraries at the SABC in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has been with SABC for over twenty years, starting in SABC's Radio Archive in 1986. *(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul)*



CLARENCE AVANT | Clarence Avant is an American music executive, entrepreneur, and film producer. Known by some as the “Godfather of Black Music,” Avant began in the music business during the 1950s, working as a manager of Teddy P’s Lounge in Newark, New Jersey. During the 1960’s he managed artists like Little Willie John, jazz singer Sarah Vaughan and rock and roll pioneer Tom Wilson, among others. Throughout his entire career, Avant has worked with musicians such as Bill Withers, Miles Davis, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Quincy Jones, Janet Jackson and Dionne Warwick.

In 1967, Avant began working for Venture Records Inc, where he successfully engineered the first joint venture between an African American artist and a major record company. In August 1969, Avant became the associate producer, along with Al Bell, of Douglas Turner Ward's *The Reckoning* (a surreal Southern Fable), presented in co-operation with The Negro Ensemble Company at St. Mark's Playhouse in New York. *The Reckoning* started the Off-Broadway season and starred Jeannette DuBois, later Ja'net Dubois of *Good Times* fame.

After Venture Records Inc. folded, Avant remained in Beverly Hills and founded Sussex Records in Hollywood on December 18, 1969. The company went out of business in June 1975, with the IRS seizing and auctioning off all assets because of \$48,000 in federal tax liens.

Since his time at Sussex Records, Avant has gone on to buy the first African-American owned FM radio station in metropolitan Los Angeles on March 3, 1973 from Trans America Broadcasting Corp, buying the license of KTYM-FM in Inglewood, C.A., including actual facilities and FCC licensing fees, renaming it KAGB-FM. He also served as an executive producer on the 1973 Paramount Pictures film SAVE THE CHILDREN. Filmed at the Operation PUSH Black Expo in Chicago, the production mixed performances of top black entertainers with footage depicting blacks, especially children, in various conditions, including war-ravaged and malnourished refugees. The film premiered at the Apollo Theater in Harlem.

In 1976, he founded Tabu Productions, Inc. /Tabu Records where he signed acts like Alexander O'Neal, Kool & the Gang and Cherrelle. In the early 1990s, Avant became involved as a mentor to Jheryl Busby, president and chief executive officer of Motown Record Co. LP, as the company sought to implement a new business plan during the spring of 1993. In August of that year, as part of Polygram Holdings Inc.'s acquisition of Motown, Avant was named Chairman of the Board of Motown Records. Four years later, in December 1997, he became the first African-American to serve on the International Management Board for Polygram. In June 1994, Avant and a group of other notable African American investors created a \$20 million investment partnership in South Africa called New Age Beverages. New Age soon teamed with PepsiCo to build a bottling plant in South Africa. PepsiCo owned 25% of a joint venture bottling company called New Age Beverages, with the other 75% in the hands of Egoli Beverages, L.P., a U.S.-based partnership that included Avant.

After Motown, Avant became associated with Urban Box Office Network, Inc., serving as its chairman. A web-based new media company consisting of series of websites aimed at minorities, UBO was founded by George Jackson, Hollywood producer and record company executive, Adam Kidron, longtime British music industry producer, and Frank Cooper, former vice president of business affairs at Def Jam Recordings. The trio raised \$5.5 million in first round financing, with Avant helping to raise \$16 million in second round private equity financing from Flatiron Partners, Chase Capital Partners, the New York City Investment Fund, and an investor group on January 20, 2000.

In November 1999, Avant joined the newly established music advisory board of Mjuice.com, the Web's largest secure digital music retailer. Founded in 1998, the San Francisco-based Mjuice.com provided music fans with a dynamic Web music experience through its digital retail music site, Mjuice.com, and its network of affiliate partners.

Today Avant is president of his own publishing companies, Avant Garde Enterprises, Inc., Avant Garde Music Publishing, Inc., Clarama Music, Inc., and Interior Music Corp. In May 2004, Universal Music Publishing Group announced that it would administer Clarence Avant's music publishing catalogs, including representation worldwide for synchronization licensing for Motion Picture, TV, Advertising and other mediums. Clarence Avant has also served as a member of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Pepsi-Cola African-American Advisory Board.

Avant was recently awarded with an honorary doctorate from Morehouse College on February 13, 2003 at the Founder's Day Convocation. Avant was featured prominently on the cover of the February 11, 2006 issue of *Billboard* magazine. Around 2006, Avant became a key advisor to Network Foundation Technologies, LLC (NFT), a leading developer of Internet streaming technologies.

On February 10, 2008, the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences awarded him the Trustees Award. *(Adapted from and courtesy of Wikipedia)*



CRAIG BARTHOLOMEW-STRYDOM |

Craig Bartholomew-Strydom lives and works as a writer in Baltimore, Maryland. His work has appeared in the *Mail & Guardian*, the *Sunday Independent*, and *Creative Nonfiction* and was a finalist for the Arts & Letters/Susan Atefat Prize for *Creative Nonfiction*. His original article on the search for Rodriguez called “Looking for Rodriguez” appeared in the October 1997 issue of *Directions* magazine. *(Courtesy of Craig Bartholomew-Strydom)*



DENNIS COFFEY | Dennis Coffey co-produced Rodriguez's first album *Cold Fact* (1970). Throughout his career he has worked with artists such as Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, The Temptations, The Supremes, Gladys Knight, Ringo Starr, The Four Tops and Wilson Pickett,

among others.

Dennis Coffey is an American original. Only in America (and specifically, only in Detroit) could one man play guitar with a group of legends as diverse as Del Shannon, The Temptations, and George Clinton and Funkadelic. However, the list of iconic artists, producers and writers Dennis has worked with the world over only scratches the surface of what the man has done and the contributions he's made to the canon of popular music.

Dennis Coffey first began to make his mark as a member of The Royaltones, a group which had hits in the late 1950s and early 1960s and who performed sessions with other artists, including Del Shannon. From there, Coffey moved on to a distinguished run as a session guitarist for various labels operating at the peak of Detroit's influence as a hub of musical innovation and commercial success. He's perhaps best known for his work as a member of the legendary Funk Brothers, backing a veritable trunk load of hits for Motown, specifically The Temptations' classics "Cloud Nine," "Ball of Confusion," and "Just My Imagination." It is in those works that his introduction of the wah-wah guitar sound to Motown (and soul / R&B in general) first reared its head, and the resulting influence on all kinds of popular music continues to reverberate to this day. His work with The Temptations is just the tip of the iceberg, though... he's on songs like "War" by Edwin Starr and "Band of Gold" by Freda Payne, among others.

In the early 1970s, Coffey struck out on his own as an artist, film scorer and producer. He scored the cult classic film *BLACK BELT JONES*. He recorded "Scorpio" in 1971 as part of his second solo record and first for Sussex ("Evolution"). "Scorpio" was a million selling single and was a key foundational track in the history and development of hip-hop, totally apart from its status as a funk classic. Dennis has recorded several other solo records, and he has co-produced a million-seller in Gallery's *Nice to Be with You* as well as cult record *Cold Fact* by Rodriguez, a release

that has gained increasing notoriety over the decades since it initially appeared, and which is now regarded as a rediscovered gem. He also continued session guitar work through the 1970's, appearing on such disco classics as “Boogie Fever” by the Sylvers.

Coffey is also featured in the 2002 film *STANDING IN THE SHADOWS OF MOWTOWN*, further cementing his legacy as a key contributor to the development of some of the most cherished and important popular music of the 20th century.

Coffey continues to write and perform music. *(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul & DennisCoffey.com)*



DAN DiMAGGIO | Dan DiMaggio is a bartender at the Motor City Brewing Works in Detroit, Michigan. *(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul)*



RICK EMMERSON | Rick Emmerson is a construction worker and a member of Detroit rock band Chairman Wow. *(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul)*



JERONE FERRETTI | Jerome Ferretti is a brick layer and local Detroit artist. His painting and sculptures have been displayed in New York, Chicago, San Diego, Omaha and throughout the state of Michigan. <http://www.jeromium.com/> *(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul & Jeromium.com)*



STEVE M. HARRIS | Steve M. Harris is the marketing director of Universal Music in South Africa. He previously was the marketing director for the now defunct South African record company Teal Trutone (a joint venture between Polygram and Gallo Records) which released

Rodriguez's two records, *Cold Fact* and *Coming from Reality* on CD in the early 1990s.

(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul)



RIAN MALAN | Rian Malan is a South African author, journalist and songwriter of Afrikaner descent.

As a teenager, Malan associated with “township” [i.e. black] artists. To avoid the draft, he moved to the USA, where he wrote about violence in contemporary society. Returning to South Africa in the 1980s, he wrote *My Traitor's Heart*, his memoir of growing up in Apartheid-era South Africa in which he explores race relations through prominent murder cases. In addition, he reflects on the history of his family, a prominent Afrikaner clan that migrated to the Cape in the 17th century and included Daniel François Malan, the South African Prime Minister, who was a principal ideological force behind Apartheid doctrine.

In 2000, he wrote a widely-disseminated piece in *Rolling Stone* about the origin of the song *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*, tracing its history from its first recording by Solomon Linda, a penniless Zulu singer, through its adoption by The Weavers, The Tokens, many of the folksingers of the 1960s, and its appropriation by The Walt Disney Company in the movie *THE LION KING*.

Malan has generated controversy by repeatedly denying the seriousness and scope of AIDS in Africa. In articles in the *Rolling Stone*, *The Spectator* and *Nosweek*, a controversial South African monthly, Malan proposed that AIDS statistics are greatly exaggerated by researchers and health professionals who are trying to obtain more funding. His hypothesis was roundly

criticized by national and international AIDS organizations, and Malan was accused of endangering lives in Africa. Responding to the controversy, Malan stated, “I get a kick out of it...it's like sport.” (Courtesy of Rian Malan/Facebook)



ROBBIE MANN | Robbie Mann previously worked at RPM Records, who released Rodriguez’s albums in South Africa in the 1970s. His father, Matt Mann, was the managing director of RPM. (Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul)



WILLEM MÖLLER | Willem Möller is a renowned South African guitarist who is mostly famous as a member of the rock band Big Sky. In '96, Big Sky won the FNB Music Award for “Best South African Rock Act” for the album *Horizon*. One of South African rock's most talented and unassuming singer-songwriters, Steve Louw, first hit the spotlight with his mid-‘80s band, All Night Radio. Albums like *The Killing Floor* evoked much interest and laid the foundations for Big Sky, which Steve formed in 1990.

The first Big Sky album, *Waiting for the Dawn*, introduced the band’s new, big rock sound and spawned three Top 10 hits. For their second album, 1995’s *Horizon*, Louw flew to Los Angeles to work with the esteemed producer Shelley Yakus (U2, Tom Petty) and some of L.A.’s best session musicians. This album set a new standard for SA rock albums and sold over 10,000 copies as well as grabbing the above-mentioned award.

In '97, Big Sky released *Going Down with Mr. Green* and once again big sales and radio play followed. In 1998, Möller, Louw, Russel Taylor (keyboard), Reuben Samuels (drums), Graham Currie (bass) and Tonia Selley (percussion) had the pleasure of being the supporting slot on

Rodriguez's 1998 South Africa tour. Performing behind Rodriguez, Big Sky drew nation-wide attention to the solid and stimulating music produced by the band over the decade.

Late in 2002 Louw began to put together a new band for a series of benefit shows at Kirstenbosch. Möller came on as guitarist and Schalk Joubert, ex-member of the Afrikaans rock band Valiant Swart joined as the bassist. Peter Cohen, who'd played with 90's bands like Bright Blue and Mango Groove and who currently plays in Freshly Ground, joined on drums, and Simon Orange from The Blues Broers came in on piano and organ. It was this band that began to tour South Africa 2003 through 2008, with concerts at many of the national music festivals and live venues. *(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul)*



EVA RODRIGUEZ | Eva Rodriguez is Rodriguez's eldest daughter. *(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul)*



REGAN RODRIGUEZ | Regan Rodriguez is primarily an artist, born and raised in Detroit. She is a community activist and an avid volunteer for organizations that positively impact people, especially children. Regan enjoys working as a Coordinator for the Wayne State University Library System. Sometimes working on international concert tours with her father, Regan enjoys organizing in unique situations and continues to appreciate and share the beauty and wonders of our world. Regan is Rodriguez's youngest daughter. *(Courtesy of Regan Rodriguez)*



SANDRA RODRIGUEZ-KENNEDY | Sandra Rodriguez-Kennedy is Rodriguez's middle daughter. (Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul)



STEVE ROWLAND | Steve Rowland produced Rodriguez's sophomore album *Coming from Reality* (1971). Throughout his career, he has worked with artists like Jerry Lee Lewis, The Cure, Peter Frampton, Gloria Gaynor, Boney M and The Pretty Things, among others.

Steve Rowland is singer, columnist, record producer and actor. He grew up in Beverly Hills. During the 1950s and 1960s his father, Roy Rowland had been one of Hollywood's most respected directors since the late '30s. His mother Ruth was a writer and Louis B. Mayer was her uncle. This put the teenage Steve in a kind of maelstrom of magnificence, where stars witnessed at close hand quickly lost their shine. Wanting to be part of the world his parents created for him, he became an actor, a columnist and a singer. He cruised through the Sunset Strip like Candide in leather jacket and jeans (as worn by his friend James Dean) in search of some elusive, unholy Hollywood grail that contained fame, fortune and fun. Like the rest of the world, Steve looked to Hollywood for his values. And despite repeated betrayals, like the rest of us, he held on to the dream even when it became a nightmare.

His star-studded lifestyle inspired his five monthly columns in various fan magazines, "The View From Rowland's Head" being the most famous. Excerpts from these columns appear in these pages exactly as they were originally printed. In addition, his monthly record reviews tied in with his weekly radio broadcast on Hollywood station KGIL which included music, reviews and interviews.

During the 1950's, Rowland went on to act in 35 TV shows like *Bonanza*, *Wanted Dead Or Alive* and a two year role in *The Legend of Wyatt Earp*. Film appearances included co-starring roles in THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE with Henry Fonda; GUN GLORY with Stuart Granger; CRIME IN THE STREETS with John Cassavetes and Sal Mineo; and the original THE THIN RED LINE with Kier Dullea and Jack Warden.

During the making of five films in Spain, Rowland enjoyed Spanish chart success with the tastefully named group, Los Flaps. The lure of the exciting British music scene of the 1960s brought him to London where he produced 13 Top 5 hits for Dave Dee Dozy Beaky Mick & Titch. Among those worldwide hits were "Hold Tight", "Zabadak", "Bend It" and "The Legend of Xanadu" (a million selling British Number One).

Rowland also discovered Peter Frampton and the Herd, and with "Way of Life" had a #2 British hit with his own group The Family Dogg (named after his obsessive love of animals). He produced hits for other 1960s icons including P.J. Proby and The Pretty Things. In the 1970s he won a gold album and ASCAP award for producing "Jerry Lee Lewis (the London Sessions)". In the late 1970s, Rowland acted as Creative Manager /A &R for Hansa/Ariola where he discovered and signed The Cure and The Thompson Twins, and handled Boney M and Japan.

In 1985 he produced "The Lost Opera" with Kimera and THE L.S.O. which remained in the Top 5 of the French charts for 20 weeks selling 1.5 million albums. In 1986 he discovered, demoed, and developed MEL & KIM, and signed them to Supreme Records.

In 1988, Rowland ran his own dance label Dr. BEAT, and later became Creative Director of Wham Records. Steve has also written, produced and collated music for the TWI TV series *Hi Five* broadcast in 38 countries. At the end of 1993 Steve became a director of Pavillion Studios forming a production company working with a number of young D.J.s, Producers, Artistes and Programmers. During this time he auditioned and tried to sign the then-unknown Spice girl Geri Halliwell. In 1995, Steve became Managing Director of Media Bank U.K. a Hong Kong based international production company. *(Courtesy of Malik Bendjelloul & SteveRowland-Action.com)*



MIKE THEODORE | Mike Theodore co-produced Rodriguez's first album *Cold Fact* (1970).

Mike Theodore's musical resume originates in Detroit, Michigan in the 1960s, where he and fellow producer Dennis Coffey began writing and producing local acts in the Motor City. It wasn't too long before the two had been given office space in the renowned Tera Shirma studios and landed a contract with Sussex Records.

While under contract to Sussex Records Theodore and Coffey had five hit albums under the moniker of *Dennis Coffey & The Detroit Guitar Band*. They had a Top Ten smash with "Scorpio" in 1971 and followed it with another Top Twenty hit "Taurus" in 1972. While Coffey was renowned for his guitar work with an occasional producer credit, Mike's main credits were for producer and engineer with an occasional arranger/mixer credit thrown in.

By the mid-1970's disco was in full swing, a movement that was heavily driven as a producer's medium. Mike's first disco success came in 1977 with the C.J. & Co. album *Devil's Gun*. The album was a gritty and funky yet sophisticated blend of disco and Detroit soul. The three-man, two-woman vocal quintet scored a major club hit with the title track. The second 12" single from the album was "We Got Our Own Thing."

The album was on Westbound Records which was distributed by Atlantic Records. Having severed ties with Sussex Records earlier, the duo (Coffey-Theodore) had no label affiliation until Westbound Records. Westbound would play a key role in both their lives. Towards the end of 1977 Mike released his first solo effort *Cosmic Wind*. The album became an immediate hit topping the club charts and has since become an enduring classic. The 12" single of "The Bull" is considered a collector's item and very rare. The next year, the duo could be heard on the Errisson album that spawned the hit "Manhattan Love Song," the Detroit Emeralds album with "Turn on Lady" and the Caesar Frazier album with "Child of the Wind."

In 1979, the hits just kept coming. The second Mike Theodore Orchestra album was released. The four-track masterpiece featured the mega-hits “High on Mad Mountain” and “Disco People.”

The outside work continued for the duo with Fantastic Four’s “Bring Your Own Funk” and Carlis Munro’s “Boogie Up, Rock Down” both on Westbound Records. But the duo had their biggest hit in 1979 with the creation of Tempest Trio. The tracks were leased to T.K. Records and spawned the hit, and one of my favorites, “Love Machine.” The track is available on the T.K. compilation *The Best of T.K. Disco Singles*.

After 1979 the disco market collapsed, Westbound Records folded and the music business took a radical turn. Theodore had one more club success with Unlimited Touch in 1980. Coffey and Theodore went back to their original roots: session work.

In 1988, Mike appeared as the engineer for the club smash “No Use to Borrow” by Blue Moderne. Mike’s most recent projects include work as engineer/producer for such varied artists as Amish, Copernicus, Danny Madden, Bill Evans, Nelson, Johnathon Round and Voyeur. *(Adapted from and courtesy of www.DiscoMuseum.net)*



STEPHEN ‘SUGAR’ SEGERMAN | Stephen ‘Sugar’ Segerman is a baby boomer born in Johannesburg, South Africa around the time when Elvis first entered Sun Studios. An ex-jeweller, with a law degree, he now runs Mabu Vinyl, the well-known Cape Town record shop. He was involved in the rediscovery of Rodriguez and his subsequent re-emergence, and co-runs Sugarman.org, the official Rodriguez website. *(Courtesy of Stephen ‘Sugar’ Segerman)*

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MALIK BENDJELLOUL (Director/Producer/Editor)

Based in Stockholm, Malik Bendjelloul has been directing documentaries for twelve years, primarily based on musicians. In 2001, Bendjelloul directed the first ever documentary about German electronic pioneers Kraftwerk. He has also made a documentary series about the history of heavy metal as well as some single documentaries, collaborating with such iconic artists as Björk, Sting, Elton John, Rod Stewart, Madonna, Mariah Carey, U2 and Kylie Minogue.

Bendjelloul has also worked as director and creative producer for Swedish Television's international cultural weekly show *Kobra*, where he made short documentaries covering a wide range of stories. He has made stories about the controversial British pop band The KLF burning a million pounds and a film exploring the rumours surrounding Paul McCartney's death.

Bendjelloul has also designed and directed title sequences for several high-profile Swedish TV shows and has directed music videos and commercials.

SIMON CHINN (Producer)

Simon Chinn is an Oscar-winning producer whose most recently released film, *PROJECT NIM*, directed by James Marsh, won the 2011 World Cinema Documentary Directing award at Sundance, has been nominated for a Producers Guild of America award and is on the shortlist for the 2012 Academy Awards. It was acquired in the US by HBO, was theatrically released in the US by Roadside Attractions, and has been acquired for theatrical distribution in more than 17 other territories worldwide.

Chinn's previous film, *MAN ON WIRE*, also directed by James Marsh, went on to win over 30 international awards, including the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, the BAFTA for Outstanding British Film, the Sundance Grand Jury and Audience awards, the Independent

Spirit Award, the Producers Guild of America award and audience awards at the Edinburgh and Los Angeles Film Festivals. MAN ON WIRE was released in 2008/9 in more than 25 territories worldwide and became one of the highest-grossing documentaries of recent years. The London Observer named it one of the best British films of the last 25 years and it became Rotten Tomatoes' best-reviewed film of all time.

In 2005, Chinn established his production company, Red Box Films, to produce MAN ON WIRE (taking inspiration from Philippe Petit, who kept his ideas for future projects, including his high wire walk between the Twin Towers, in a red box under his bed) and it currently has a slate of projects – including feature documentaries, feature films and television dramas – at various stages of production and development. In 2008, Red Box Films formed a producing alliance with Passion Pictures to collaborate on a range of feature documentaries, the first of which was PROJECT NIM, which Chinn conceived and produced. Red Box and Passion have two feature documentaries premiering in competition at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival: THE IMPOSTER, directed by Bart Layton, and SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN, directed by Malik Bendjelloul, which is the opening night film in the World Cinema Documentary competition.

Prior to founding Red Box Films, Chinn co-produced Peter Kosminsky's multi-BAFTA winning Channel 4 drama, THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR, and produced and co-wrote the BBC's feature-length dramatized documentary, SMALLPOX 2002. Other documentaries include: AMERICA BEYOND THE COLOUR LINE, CORRESPONDENT: THE PROMISED LAND, WAR IN EUROPE, INVADING IRAQ, SMITH MUGABE AND THE UNION JACK, and THE REAL ALAN CLARK.

JOHN BATTSEK (Executive Producer, Passion Pictures)

John Battsek runs Passion Pictures' film department and is one of the most successful and prolific feature documentary producers in the UK. In 1999, Battsek conceived and produced the

Academy Award-winning ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER. He has since been responsible for a variety of high-profile feature documentaries, many of which have achieved international distribution. These include IN THE SHADOW OF THE MOON (Audience Award Winner, 2007 Sundance Film Festival World Documentary Competition); MY KID COULD PAINT THAT; LIVE FOREVER; SERGIO (Academy Award shortlist, 2010); STONES IN EXILE; Oscar nominated RESTREPO; FIRE IN BABYLON (Grierson Trust Winner, Best Historical Documentary); THE TILLMAN STORY (Academy Award Shortlist, 2011); BETTER THIS WORLD (Gotham Awards, winner Best Feature Documentary 2011); KORAN BY HEART; BOB AND THE MONSTER; and PROJECT NIM (Academy Award Shortlist, 2012).

Two new films executive produced by Battsek will launch at Sundance Film Festival 2012: THE IMPOSTER, Bart Layton's first feature documentary based on the extraordinary story of serial imposter Frederic Bourdin, and Malik Bendjelloul's directorial debut SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN, which will premiere as the opening night feature documentary at the festival. Battsek is currently working on several new feature film projects, including: Greg Barker's MANHUNT for HBO; Nadav Schirman's THE GREEN PRINCE, based on the New York Times Bestselling memoir; THE SON OF HAMAS by Mosab Hassan Yousef; and a feature adaptation of Meg Rosoff's award-winning dystopian novel HOW I LIVE NOW, shooting spring 2012 for FilmFour with Kevin MacDonald.

CAMILLA SKAGERSTROM (Director of Photography)

Camilla Skagerström FSF is a Swedish cinematographer who has been working on feature documentaries since 1994, shooting around the world in countries such as Ethiopia, Cuba, Brazil, Jordan, South Africa and the US. Previous films include BLOOD CALLS YOU (Honorable Mention, Tempo International Film Festival, Stockholm 2010) and BEAUTY REFUGEE (Official Selection, IDFA 2009). Skagerström self-financed her short documentary BATHING MICKY, which premiered in the Official Selection at the Cannes Film Festival 2010 and went on to win the prestigious Jury Prize. Another short documentary, WHILE YOU WERE GONE, played in Official Selection, London Film Festival 2011 and Official Selection, Mill Valley Film

Festival 2011.

**a Red Box Films & Passion Pictures Production
in association with Canfield Pictures & The Documentary Company**

a film by Malik Bendjelloul

Written, Directed and Edited by
Malik Bendjelloul

Produced by
Simon Chinn
Malik Bendjelloul

Executive Producer
John Battsek

Director of Photography
Camilla Skagerström, FSF

Co-Producers
PASSION PICTURES
George Chignell
Nicole Stott

HYSTERIA FILM
Malla Grapengiesser

SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN

FEATURING
(in order of appearance)

Stephen "Sugar" Segerman
Dennis Coffey
Mike Theodore
Dan DiMaggio
Jerome Ferretti
Steve Rowland
Willem Möller
Craig Bartholomew-Strydom
Ilse Assmann
Steve M. Harris
Robbie Mann
Clarence Avant
Eva Rodriguez

Sixto Rodriguez
Regan Rodriguez
Sandra Rodriguez-Kennedy
Rick Emmerson
Rian Malan

ORIGINAL SONGS

SUGAR MAN
(Sixto Rodriguez)

CRUCIFY YOUR MIND
(Sixto Rodriguez)

CAUSE
(Sixto Rodriguez)

I WONDER
(Sixto Rodriguez)

JANE S. PIDDY
(Sixto Rodriguez)

THIS IS NOT A SONG, IT'S AN OUTBURST:
OR, THE ESTABLISHMENT BLUES
(Sixto Rodriguez)

CAN'T GET AWAY
(Sixto Rodriguez)

I THINK OF YOU
(Sixto Rodriguez)

INNER CITY BLUES
(Sixto Rodriguez)

LIFESTYLES – SANDRE VAN LULLABY
(Sixto Rodriguez)

STREET BOY
(Sixto Rodriguez)

A MOST DISGUSTING SONG
(Sixto Rodriguez)

I'LL SLIP AWAY
(Sixto Rodriguez)

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EVA RODRIGUEZ'S HOME VIDEO RECORDING
from the South African tour, 1998

DEAD MEN DON'T TOUR
Directed by Tonia Selley

VOËLVRY THE MOVIE
Directed by Lloyd Ross

STILLS ARCHIVE

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Stephen Segerman
Eva Rodriguez
Sixto Rodriguez

McKenzie's
Hal Wilson
Obed Zilwa
Steven Hilton-Barber

Africa Media Online
Sunday Times Cape Metro
Cape Argus
The Sunday Independent
Sunday Argus

ARTICLES

‘Sugar And The Sugar Man’
By Stephen “Sugar” Segerman

‘Looking For Jesus’
By Craig Bartholomew-Strydom

ADDITIONAL MUSIC SOURCES

Time Lapse Variations
(Per Störby)
Performed by New Tango Orquesta

Sit Dit Af
(Johannes Kerkorrel)
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Malik Bendjelloul

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