

## Film Archive

### Sounds of Silents, The (Willy Sommerfeld - Der Stummfilmpianist)



Willy Sommerfeld (photo © CV Films/Berlin)

He's treated like a rock star by audiences young and old, adored by film lovers and housewives alike, venerated by scholars and punks: Willy Sommerfeld, born in 1904, is a silent movie pianist—the last of his kind, a living legend with a musical memory reaching back more than a century.

He first performed in the Roaring Twenties. Today, at age 100, he is still going strong – still accompanying film live on piano and spontaneously composing the “soundtrack” to movies.

**The Sounds of Silents** takes us on an unforgettable journey through the life and music of Willy Sommerfeld and into the world of movies as it was when cinema was born.

**Ilona Ziok** was born in Gliwice/Poland and emigrated to England in 1968. She studied in New York, Moscow and Frankfurt from 1975-1982. Also active as a writer and producer, her films include the documentaries: **Der zweite Sieg des Jurij Vlasov** (1989), **Du mein Kazimierz, Shalom** (1990), **Wo ist die Strasse, wo ist das Haus** (1993), **Die Reise nach Tunesien: Psychisch Kranke machen Urlaub** (1993), **Kurt Gerrons Karussell** (1999), **The Count and the Comrade (Der Junker und der Kommunist**, 2003-2005), and **The Sounds of Silents (Willy Sommerfeld - Der Stummfilmpianist**, 2005).

**Genre** History, Love Story, Music

**Category** Documentary Cinema

**Year of Production** 2005

**Director** Ilona Ziok

**Screenplay** Ilona Ziok

**Directors of Photography** Sergey Jurisditskiy, Wojciech Szepel, Erik Krambeck, Peter Domsch

**Editors** Dietmar Kraus, Ludmilla Korb-Mann, Peter Domsch

**Music by** Willy Sommerfeld

**Producers** Manuel Goettsching, Ilona Ziok

**Production Company** CV Films/Berlin, in co-production with Vera Vista/Prag, Matti Film/Suefeld

**Principal Cast** Willy Sommerfeld, Doris Sommerfeld, Sebastian Sommerfeld

**Length** 78 min

**Format** color, b&w, BetaCam

**Blowup** 35 mm, Color, b&w, 1:1.85

**Original Version** German

**Subtitled Versions** English, French

**Sound Technology** Dolby SR

**Festival Screenings** Tallinn 2005

**With backing from** FilmFoerderung Hamburg, Media, Stiftung Kulturfonds, MSH, NDR, Lower Saxony Cultural Film Fund, Eurimags

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