



# JOURNEY TO JAH

## PRESSKIT



PORT-AU-PRINCE

## SYNOPSIS

The documentary film JOURNEY TO JAH is a tale of the seeking and finding of a spiritual home in a foreign culture, one that follows people who are connected by one thing: music.

The two directors Noël Dernesch and Moritz Springer, as well as cameraman Marcus Winterbauer ("Rhythm is it"), spent seven years shadowing two unique reggae artists – the German GENTLEMAN and Italian ALBOROSIE – on their search for authenticity away from western consumerist societies in the land of Rastafari and reggae: JAMAICA.

People they meet along the way include RICHIE STEPHENS, DAMIAN MARLEY and also NATTY – driver and friend of Gentleman, who offers them an uncluttered look into the daily struggle for survival, far removed from the picture-book image of the Caribbean island. Professor CAROLYN COOPER provides a contrasting intellectual insight into Jamaican politics and culture, while reggae stalwart JACK RADICS reveals some astonishing truths.

Finally, Dernesch and Springer run across upcoming Jamaican singer TERRY LYNN and follow her everyday life walking the streets of the ghettos of Kingston and also inside Berlin's club scene.

Together with the protagonists we delve into a world where music is used as an outlet to confront poverty, criminality and a lack of prospects, but also one that is characterized by a deep and uplifting spiritual bond. A world about which Alborosie says, "God lives here. But Satan too." Welcome aboard the JOURNEY TO JAH!

JOURNEY TO JAH is a German-Swiss co-production from PORT AU PRINCE FILM & KULTUR PRODUKTION and PIXIU FILMS in cooperation with Karol Martesko-Fenster of THOUGHT ENGINE.

## CAST & CREW

### CAST

Tilmann Otto aka Gentleman  
Alberto D'Ascola aka Alborosie  
Theresa Williams aka Terry Lynn  
Prof. Dr. Carolyn Cooper  
Devon Gayle as Natty  
Richard Stephenson aka Richie Stevens  
Balfour Constantin Bailey aka Jack Radics  
Damian Marley

### CREW

DIRECTORS	Noël Dernes, Moritz Springer
PRODUCERS	Renè Römert, Jan Krüger
CO-PRODUCER	Laurin Merz
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	Karol Martesko-Fenster
SCRIPT	Moritz Springer, Noël Dernes
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	Marcus Winterbauer
EDITORS	Michelle Barbin, Christoph Senn
MUSIC	Beat Solér
SOUND DESIGN	Patrick Böhler
PRODUCTION	Port au Prince Film Kultur Produktion / DL
CO-PRODUCTION	Pixiu Films / CH

## CAST

### Tilmann Otto aka GENTLEMAN



Tilmann, son of a protestant pastor, grows up in Cologne. Soon he quarrels with the creed of his parental home. In a friend's record store he gets in touch with reggae music for the very first time and starts to sing. With 16 he drops out of school and a year later he travels for the first time to Jamaica to live in a farmer's family in the remote mountains of the island. That's where he finds the spirituality he was longing for in vain back home. During this stay Jamaican music and culture become his spiritual backbone. His first musical success is with the German rap-group „Freundeskreis“. Again and again he travels to Jamaica where he soon gets accepted by the Jamaican music scene, talking and singing in patois –whollywithout accent. A few years later he becomes THE German reggae star under the name of Gentleman. His gold records are sold in millions. His album „Confidence“ (2004) directly reaches number one in the German charts. TwiceGENTLEMAN is awarded with the Echo, the most important German Music Award. His concerts all over the world attract up to 40 000 spectators, while in Jamaica he'spraised as one of the few European reggae musicians. At the present he lives with his family in Cologne.

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## Alberto D'Ascola aka ALBOROSIE



Alborosie is born in Sicily as a son of a police officer. Life in his native province town is hard, soon he drops out of school. Mafia is omnipresent in his everyday life and his brother is shot in broad daylight. Reggae music proves to be the only foothold in these times. At the age of 14 Alborosie gets his first record contract. With his Band „Reggae National Tickets“ he soon becomes the figurehead of the Italian Reggae Culture. On the height of his success Alborosie decides to leave Italy behind and try his fortune in Jamaica, the cradle of reggae culture. He sells all his belongings and with a mere of 1000 US Dollars in his pocket, he hits the road to Kingston where he starts again from scratch/bottom. For a hot meal he has to work as an assistant in the sound studios during the first months. But his irrepressible will power and persistence leads him to the top. His first Jamaican record (2008) reaches number one in a few days. Meanwhile his name features among the big names in the Jamaican Music Scene. Unlike Gentlemen, Alborosie lives exclusively in Jamaica, in a house with his own studio. He's being fully accepted by his Rasta community in the ghetto, sharing, like most fellow artists, his income with his friends. One of his favorite words are: „If Jamaica burns, me too, I'll burn with it.“

## Theresa Williams aka TERRY LYNN



Terry Lynn, singer and songwriter, is one of the spokeswomen of a new world music genre, growing up in the hitherto forgotten shanty towns of the so called third world. As the youngest of nine siblings, she grew up in Waterhouse, one of the most violent neighbourhoods in Kingston. Terry Lynn doesn't care much about conventions. She rather goes her own way, fighting for women's rights. Rastafarian Dogmatism is alien to her. In her songs she combines social criticism and sex. She's an emancipated trailblazer of the young female generation in Jamaica.

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## PROF. DR. CAROLYN COOPER



Carolyn Cooper is a Jamaican author, professor, and literary scholar. She currently heads the department of Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. There she teaches and researches West-Indian, African and Afro-American literature, focusing now for more than 20 years on the multiple cultural backgrounds of reggae music and its different forms and facets all over the world. She's also the coordinator of the International Reggae Studies Centre, an academic project, initiated by her in 1992. In 2007 Cooper hosted the first Global Reggae Conference, gathering intellectuals, musicians and reggae fans who discussed regional differences in the production and reception of reggae music. Her publications particularly stress the construction of gendered identities in the Dancehall Culture. To a wider public she's known for her weekly bilingual column (W)uman Tong(ue) published during the Nineties in Patois and English in the Jamaica Observer. Cooper doesn't limit herself to an academic environment. She's still publishing a periodic column in the Jamaica Gleaner and regularly hosts the show Big People Sup'm broadcasted by the Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica.

## Devon Gayle aka NATTY



Natty is a full-blood Rasta and lives in Sea View, one of the ghettos of Kingston. Natty, Tilmann's best friend, works as his driver on the Island. Through him we get to know Jamaican everyday life beyond tourism and the idyllic Caribbean island dream. Natty is in his late thirties (and like many Jamaicans he doesn't know his exact date of birth). He's living with two sisters and several kids in Sea View. It is here in the ghettos that Rastafari – the religious movement of Jamaica that gave birth to reggae music – has its origins. Natty struggles hard to earn his living and tries to show his family and the whole community through his unfaltering believe in Jah a way out of the shanty towns. It is his dream to build up a project for the ghetto youth and to show the kids a perspective beyond violence and drugs. Natty, who is the permanent companion of Tilmann on the island, knows both sides: the luxury of Gentleman and the poverty of his community. Other than most Jamaicans, Natty doesn't glorify the white man's world. His place is in the ghetto with his people.

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## Richard Stephenson aka RICHIE STEPHENS



Richard Stephenson, better known as Richie Stephens is easily recognized as the man with Jamaica's Golden Voice. A classic performer who has contributed much to the development of Reggae Music, Richie has a powerful sensuality that appeals to audience all over the world. He has been a household name in Jamaica for nearly two decades and that is an honour not afforded to every Jamaican Artist. Many Artistes, who gain notoriety internationally, yearn for success back home. Stephens accomplished this feat from his very first performance, at the age of 11 which left the crowd in awe. Whether appearing with Reggae greats like the late Dennis Brown or with the late R & B Legend Luther Vandross, he has Jamaican Audiences rocking and dancing in the aisles. In 2006, Stephens was rewarded the Jamaican Governor-General's Achievement Award for contributing to civic, social and recreational projects in and around the parish of Westmoreland.

## Balfour Constantin Bailey aka JACK RADICS



Jack Radics is one of the old school reggae singers - he is Gentleman's mentor. Born some time in the beginning of the 60's Radics strictly refuses to disclose his true age. Although his activity in the music business lasts for over 30 years by now, Radics never stopped using his music to denounce social injustices in Jamaica and to change his society. Radics has a critical and very individualistic relationship with Rastafari. He it is, who convinces Gentleman to question the dogmatics of Rastafari and to reflect it's teaching. Radics is significantly involved in Gentleman's albums „Confidence“ and „Another Intensity“.

# BIOGRAPHY | FILMOGRAPHY

## DIRECTORS & SCRIPT

### NOËL DERNESCH

Noël Dernesch works and lives in Berlin. He was formed by the “F&F Schule für Kunst und Mediendesign” in Zurich where he specialized in Film/Video. Since then he works as an independent movie director and video artist. He produced several commercials, including international productions, and realized a number of short and documentary movies. Much of his work received particular recognition and got awards such as the Swiss Art Award, Video-Film-Festival Hardau 2003, Young Talent 2005, Kiefer Hablitzl Preis.

2013 «Journey to Jah» Documentary - 87 min - Director & Script  
2012/13 various musicvideos  
2010 «Promised Land» Documentary - 40 min - Co-Director  
2008 «Biffy und Wutz» Theater Filminstallation - 40 min - Director & Concept  
2005 «Downtown Switzerland» Documentary - Dir: S. Haupt, C. David, K. Kasich, Fredi M. Murer - 2. Camera  
2004 «Stille» Shortfilm, 1 min - Director & Script  
Award: 1. Prize, OneMinuteFestival Hardau  
2004 «Breakfast in America» Documentary - 23min - Director - Award: Kiefer-Hablitzel-Preis, SwissArtAward,  
2004 «Menschen am Hang» Documentary - Dir: Simone Guy Fässler - 36 min - DOP  
2004 «Meyers» Shortfilm - Dir: Steven Haynes - Co-Director - Award: Goldener Leopard, Best Swiss Short, Locarno  
2003 «Die Kunst des Geigenbaus» Documentary - 45 min - Director

### MORITZ SPRINGER

Born in 1979 in Starnberg, Moritz Springer lives and works in Berlin and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. After first acting experiences (advertising and cinema), Moritz completed several internships and worked as an assistant director in Germany and the USA, among others for „Die Wilden Kerle 3“ (Joachim Masannek) and „Gozilla“ (Roland Emmerich) in the years from 1997 until 2005.

Back in Germany he started implementing his own documentaries. The first projects were self-financed or rather without any budget. Back than Moritz, who never went to a filmschool, acquired his own cinematic language.

2013 «Journey to Jah» Documentary - 87 min - Script & Director  
2009/10 «Freiheit pur?» Documentary - Director & Script  
2007/2010 «Deutsch oder Polnisch» Documentary - 90 min. - Co-Director & Co-Writer  
2006/2010 various shortfilms und musicvideos - Director & Script  
2005 „Wilde Kerle III“- Fiction - Dir: Joachim Masannek - 2. Assistent Director  
2007 «Alle anders – Alle gleich» Documentary/Image film - Director  
2002/3 «Dem Chaos entsprungen» Documentary - 45 min. - Director & Script  
2002 «Der Zauberhut» Shortfilm - 3 min. - Director & Script



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Reggae has had a strong presence in the European music scene for generations. It stands for One Love & Unity, which is at once a political statement and a spiritual promise of salvation, meaning reggae has had number one selling albums here in Europe. The message of reggae is in its origin radically political. It stands for freedom and the hope of a better world.

We all know that desire for freedom, rebellion and self-empowerment. That feeling of wanting to break free from your own world and to give in to the fascination and curiosity of discovering foreign worlds. Gentleman and Alborosie ultimately surrendered to the desire for freedom and spirituality. Both of them embody to varying degrees the elements that flow together in reggae – rebellion, music and spirituality.

The reality in Jamaica, however, is a different one. A system of values from the Old Testament and the problems of a third-world country collide with the liberal world views of the likes of Gentleman and Alborosie. It is the struggle with the deeper questions in life that gives us food for thought and the motivation to consider what is seemingly immutable. Rastafari is much more than a belief; it is a party, a spiritual path and dogmatic pitfall, a holiday flirtation and excuse for discriminatory, racist excesses, it is politics and commerce.

In JOURNEY TO JAH, we accompany the two European musicians on their search for a new home in a politically torn country. We take a look with them behind the façade of Jamaica as a dream holiday destination in the Caribbean and delve deep into a world full of magic and contradictions. In doing so, we were mainly interested in those universal questions that concern us all.

What is the meaning of freedom today in an ever more complex and closely monitored society? Where do we look for a sense of purpose and stability in life? What do we rebel against today? How do Europeans deal with the conflicts they encounter in Jamaican society? Are they ready, as foreigners, to work with Jamaicans towards changes that benefit society as a whole? What freedoms do they enjoy through being foreigners?

JOURNEY TO JAH isn't your average reggae feel-good movie, but rather one that doesn't shy away from looking at today's burning issues.

"Paradise perhaps isn't a place", Gentleman once said, "but rather an inner state of being." - Noël Drenesch & Moritz Springer 2013

# BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY

## PRODUCTION

### PRODUCER

#### JAN KRÜGER

Jan Krüger was born in Oldenburg in 1981. After studying economics in Hamburg for two years, he went on to study film production at HFF [Film and Television University] in Potsdam. At the same time, he was working as a freelance producer and has been producing various music films and short films with his company K'Summer Productions since 2003. His graduate film LEROY, which he worked on in 2007 as Associate Producer at the Berlin house Dreamer Joint Venture, won the German Academy Award in 2008 for "Best Children's and Young Adults' Film." The subsequent production SALAMI ALEIKUM, directed by Ali Samadi Ahadi, was the surprise cinema hit of 2009. Once again, Jan Krüger represented Dreamer Joint Venture in his role as producer. In 2010, together with the same director, he produced the documentary film THE GREEN WAVE (IRAN ELECTIONS 2009), for which he was distinguished with the Adolf-Grimme Prize in 2011 for his work as producer. Since 2010, Jan Krüger has been a partner at Port-au-Prince and manages the company with René Römert.

2013 «Jack» Fiction - DIR: Edward Berger – Producer  
2013 «Journey to Jah» Documentary - DIR: Noël Dernesch/  
Moritz Springer) – Producer  
2013 «Freiheit Pur!?» - Documentary - DIR: Moritz Springer –  
Produzent  
2012 «Bunny Heaven» - Shortfilm - DIR: Oliver Rihs –  
Producer  
2012 «Dating Lanzelot» - Fiction - DIR: Oliver Rihs –  
Producer  
2011 «The Green Wave (Iran Elections 2009)» -  
Documentary, DIR: Ali Samadi Ahadi - Producer  
AWARDS: Deutscher Menschenrechtspreis,  
Adolf-Grimme-Preis „Information & Kultur“ 2011  
2009 «Salami Aleikum» - Fiction - DIR: Ali Samadi Ahadi -  
Producer  
AWARDS (e.g.): Filmfest Emden: Bernhard-Wicki-Preis  
(2.Platz) & NDR-Nachwuchspreis, Preis der deutschen  
Filmkritik „Bester Debütfilm 2009“  
2007 «Leroy» - Fiction - DIR: Armin Völckers - Associate  
Producer  
AWARDS (e.g.): Deutscher Filmpreis 2008 „Bester Kinder-  
und Jugendfilm“ und „Beste Filmmusik“, Tokyo Int.  
Filmfestival 2007 Publikumspreis  
2005 - 2003 «Nichts geht mehr» - Shortfilm - DIR: Andreas  
Schaap - Producer / «Leroy räumt auf» - Shortfilm - DIR:  
Armin Völckers - Producer / «Verfreundet» - Shortfilm - DIR:  
Andreas Schaap - Producer

### PRODUCER

#### RENÉ RÖMERT

René Römert was born in 1964, in Langen, near Frankfurt. After his studies at HFG Offenbach [University of Art and Design], he founded Fritz Deutschland GmbH in 1988, with headquarters in Frankfurt a.M. He was charged with planning and implementing interior design, including for "DAS WERK," "FX Factory," and "Messe Frankfurt." In 1992, he was a founding member of the international cultural project "MS STUBNITZ," and remained a manager until 1994. Until 2005, he worked as a freelance designer and cultural manager in a range of formats and on various projects. In 1998, his professional focus migrated to film, where he worked as a production designer and production manager. In 2008, together with Oliver Rihs, he founded Port-au-Prince Film and Culture Productions, headquartered in Berlin, where he has since worked as a producer and manager.

2013 «Freiheit Pur!?» - Documentary - DIR: Moritz Springer –  
Producer  
2013 «Journey to Jah» Documentary - DIR: Noël Dernesch/  
Moritz Springer) – Producer  
2012 «Bunny Heaven» - Shortfilm - DIR: Oliver Rihs – Producer  
2012 «Dating Lanzelot» - Fiction - DIR: Oliver Rihs – Producer  
2010 «Dating Lanzelot» - Webisode - DIR: Oliver Rihs –  
Producer  
2009 «Flieg oder Stirb» - Shortfilm - DIR: Melanie Rohde -  
Producer  
2009 «Yuri Lennon's landing on Alpha46» - Shortfilm - DIR:  
Anthony Vouardoux – Producer  
AWARDS: Luzern, Bundesamt für Kultur, Swiss Film Prize  
Quartz "Best Short Film" 2011 / Locarno, Festival del film  
Locarno, Pardino d'argento, Kodak Preis 2010 / Locarno,  
Festival del film Locarno, Prix «Cinema e Gioventù» 2010 / u.v.a  
2005/06 «Black Sheep» Fiction - DIR: Oliver Rihs - Producer &  
Production Design  
AWARDS: Förderpreis deutscher Film (Beste Ausstattung &  
Kostüm) / Produktionspreis Studio Babelsberg  
2004 «Klytämnestra Pocket» - Shortfilm - DIR: Florian  
Schönherr - Production Design  
2003 «Sommer Hunde Söhne» Fiction - DIR: Cyril Tuschi –  
Production Design  
1998 - 2003 various musicvideos e.g. Blackmail und Rosenstolz  
Production Design

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

KAROL MARTESKO-FENSTER

Karol is an Austrian-born American entrepreneur. His career in the motion picture, broadcasting, publishing and Internet business spans over two decades and includes leadership in the American independent film industry.

Managing Partner of CINELAN, he is currently the President of Film & Media for S2BN Entertainment, and was previously SVP of Film at Babel Networks, Head of Film at Chris Blackwell's Palm Pictures, President of RES Media Group and President/Publisher of Silicon Alley Reporter.

Most recently Karol collaborated with Michael Cohl on Harry Belafonte's SING YOUR SONG and Emmett Malloy's BIG EASY EXPRESS, and he is an executive producer on Havana Marking's SMASH & GRAB, Daniel McCabe's THIS IS CONGO, Phil Cox's THE LOVE HOTEL and THE BENGALI DETECTIVE, James Allen Smith's FLOORED and Danfung Dennis' 2012 Academy Award Nominee HELL AND BACK AGAIN.

Karol co-founded FILMMAKER Magazine and RES Magazine, and the media content enterprises indieWIRE.com, conditionone.com, Thought Engine | Media Group and CINELAN.

- 2013 «Journey to Jah» Dokumentarfilm - R: Noël Dernes, Moritz Springer
- 2013 «The Love Hotel» Dokumentarfilm - R: Phil Cox
- 2013 «Smash & Grab» Dokumentarfilm - R: Havana Marking
- 2013 «This Is Congo» Dokumentarfilm - R: Daniel McCabe
- 2011 «Hell and Back Again» Dokumentarfilm - R: Danfung Dennis - 2012 Nominiert für Academy Awards
- 2011 «The Bengali Detective» Dokumentarfilm - R: Phil Cox
- 2009 «Floored» Dokumentarfilm - R: James Allen Smith

CO-PRODUCER

LAURIN MERZ

Laurin Merz was born 1975 in Aarau Switzerland. He is a Co-founder and owner of production company PiXiU FILMS GmbH in Zurich.

1996 – 1999 he studied Cinematic sciences/Journalism at the University Bern/Zurich. Afterwards he completed his study at Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst in Lucerne (HGKL) in Video class.

During his studies he worked as an Editor at Swiss Radio. Since 2004 he works as a Freelancing director, producer for film, tv, commercial and as a teacher for filmclasses. Between 1999 – 2004 he worked as a culture editor at Swiss National Television

- 2013 «Journey to Jah» Documentary - Dir: Noël Dernes & Moritz Springer - Co-Producer
- 2012 «Erwin Wurm – The artist who swallowed the world» Documentary - 52' - Director
- 2011 «The visual language of Herbert Matter» Documentary - 80' - Dir: Reto Caduff - Producer
- 2011 «Mürners Universum» Documentary - 80' - Dir: Jonas Meier - Production management
- 2009 «Charlie Haden - Rambling Boy» Documentary - 80' - Dir: Reto Caduff - Producer
- 2008 «1968 - Illusion oder Revolution» Documentary - 50' - Script & Director
- 2008 «Der Klimakämpfer - Thomas Stocker» Documentary 20' - Script & Director
- 2007 «Josephsohn Sculptor» Documentary - 80' - Script & Director
- 2006 «Pionierfamilie Piccard» Documentary - 50' - Script & Director
- 2005 «Taiwan Jetlag» Documentary - 55' - Dir: Reto Caduff - Co-Script & Camera

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

COUNTRY   YEAR	Germany / Switzerland 2013
LOCATIONS	Jamaica, Switzerland, Germany
LANGUAGES	English / German / german./engl. Subtitles
LENGHT	92'
FORMAT	Full HD
SOUND	5.1
SCREENING COPY	DCP, Bluray

## PRESS CONTACT

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