



Director Alexandria Bombach's documentary "On Her Shoulders" is the story of Nadia Murad, a Yazidi activist and survivor of ISIS atrocities who works to bring international attention to the plight of the Yazidi.

Documenting the Human Experience

OPINIONATED JUDGE

BY DARLEEN ORTEGA



I just finished my annual trip to the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival in Durham, N.C., where I saw 16 premiere feature-length documentaries in four days, in most cases followed by a discussion with the film's director and sometimes others involved in the production. This year I can enthusiastically recommend everything I saw. My reviews for the first two days of films appear below in my order of preference. I'll follow with reviews of the balance of the films next week.

Perhaps the most inspiring film I saw this festival was "On Her Shoulders," an examination of the experience and perspective of a survivor of ISIS atrocities who, out of equal parts reluctance and determination, became a human rights activist in 2014 at the age of 21. At 19, Nadia Murad's Northern Iraqi Yazidi community was targeted by ISIS; 18 members of her family were killed and others (including herself and girls much younger than she) were held captive as sexual slaves. The Yazidis are a Kurdish religious minority in Europe who were specifically targeted for genocide by ISIS. Ultimately, Murad escaped and fled and immediately began speaking out about her experiences, with the aim of bringing international attention to the plight of the Yazidi, many of whom still live in bondage.

Director Alexandria Bombach keeps her focus on Murad, but with an aim very different from the journalists who pepper her with intrusive questions that turn her into a sort of celebrity. The result is an exceedingly thoughtful examination of the ways we turn people like Nadia into icons, requiring them to relive their trauma and diverting the focus from the real urgency of their cause. Bombach takes the time to ask Nadia what she wishes people would ask her, and to show us the toll it takes for her to relive her trauma again and again, driven

by survivor guilt and the urgency of her concern for those left behind. And in this beautifully constructed examination, Bombach helps us to see, at least for brief moments, the absurdity of our relative comfort in the West and our attendant unwillingness to be moved to action on behalf of those who experience unspeakable suffering. The film will have a theatrical release and will also be available on PBS's POV and on Amazon.

Another of my favorites was "Three Identical Strangers," which explores the story of three identical triplets who accidentally discovered each other for the first time when they were 19 years old. Director Tim Wardle masterfully manages the shifts in tone necessary to tell this story well; it begins as a delightful human interest story of the joy the three young men experienced upon finding each other, but gradually turns darker as their parents (and eventually, the men themselves) inquire as to why they were not told about the fact that they were triplets at the time of adoption. The answers they find over time are incomplete and very troubling and, in the end, the story provides a worthy vantage point for a whole host of questions around adoption, psychological research, and the relative importance of nature and nurture in making us who we are.

"Hal" is an appropriately loving look at the life and work of Hal Ashby, who directed such iconic 1970s films as "Harold and Maude," "Being There," and "Coming Home." Director Amy Scott makes astute use of clips from his films to illustrate both Ashby's artistic vision and his personal life, and also to convey important things about the era in which Ashby produced his most successful work. Interviews with an array of actors, directors and other professional colleagues and friends fill out a balanced picture of a man whose unwillingness

to compromise his artistic vision brought him both success as an artist and failure at working within the studio system. Ashby's films pushed boundaries in so many ways, and seem ahead of their time even now. Indeed, they come across as more racially diverse and more awake to the problem of racism than do most films today. For all his failings, it is clear that he had a way of eliciting the best work from artists and collaborators.

"Hale County This Morning, This Evening" is an intimate look at life in a mostly black, rural community in Alabama. Director

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7th ANNUAL HEALING the HEALTHCARE BLUES

INNER CITY

Blues Festival

- Norman Sylvester Review w/Sarah Billings & Lenanne Sylvester-Miller
- I&I Band Reunion w/Newel Briggs & Obi Addy
- Ken DeRouchie Band
- King Louis Pain Quartet & LaRhonda Steele
- Kings of the Blues Guitar Tribute w/Peter Dammann
- Michael Osborne & Kenny Blue Ray
- Mad as Hell Doctors, Nurses & Interns
- Michael Crenshaw
- Bloco Alegria
- drum & dance procession
- Shohorn Sax-Tap man
- Steve Cheseborough
- Terry Robb
- Tevis Hodge Jr. & Bill Rhoades

ADVANCE TICKETS: \$20.00
At the door: \$25.00 (21 & OVER)

TICKET OUTLETS:
www.tickettomato.com
Music Millennium
Geneva's Shear Perfection
Musician's Union Hall, Local 99
Cascade Blues Assoc. (CBA) meetings
Peninsula Station

• SILENT AUCTION
• Dinners, dessert and drinks for sale
• Raffle prizes
• Community info tables
• Simulcast live on KBOO

DOORS OPEN at 5pm for dinner 5pm-12am Saturday
North Portland Eagle's Lodge FOE 3426
7611 N Exeter Ave • FREE PARKING April 21, 2018

A benefit for Health Care for All-Oregon | Co-Sponsored by Cascade Blues Association & KBOO Community Radio 90.7FM
facebook.com/healingthehealthcareblues | hcao.org | Poster Design: Barbara Quinn | Printing: Hollywood Impress

Opportunity Youth Job Fair

Friday, April 13 / 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

AT THE OREGON CONVENTION CENTER



RSVP: pdxopportunityfair.eventbrite.com

The Opportunity Youth Job Fair will offer immediate job opportunities with more than 40 Portland and SW Washington-based employers.

Take a step toward a more positive future. This Job Fair has opportunities for all interested young people—in particular those not working or attending school.

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