



## TRUBAČI: Trumpeters of Serbia

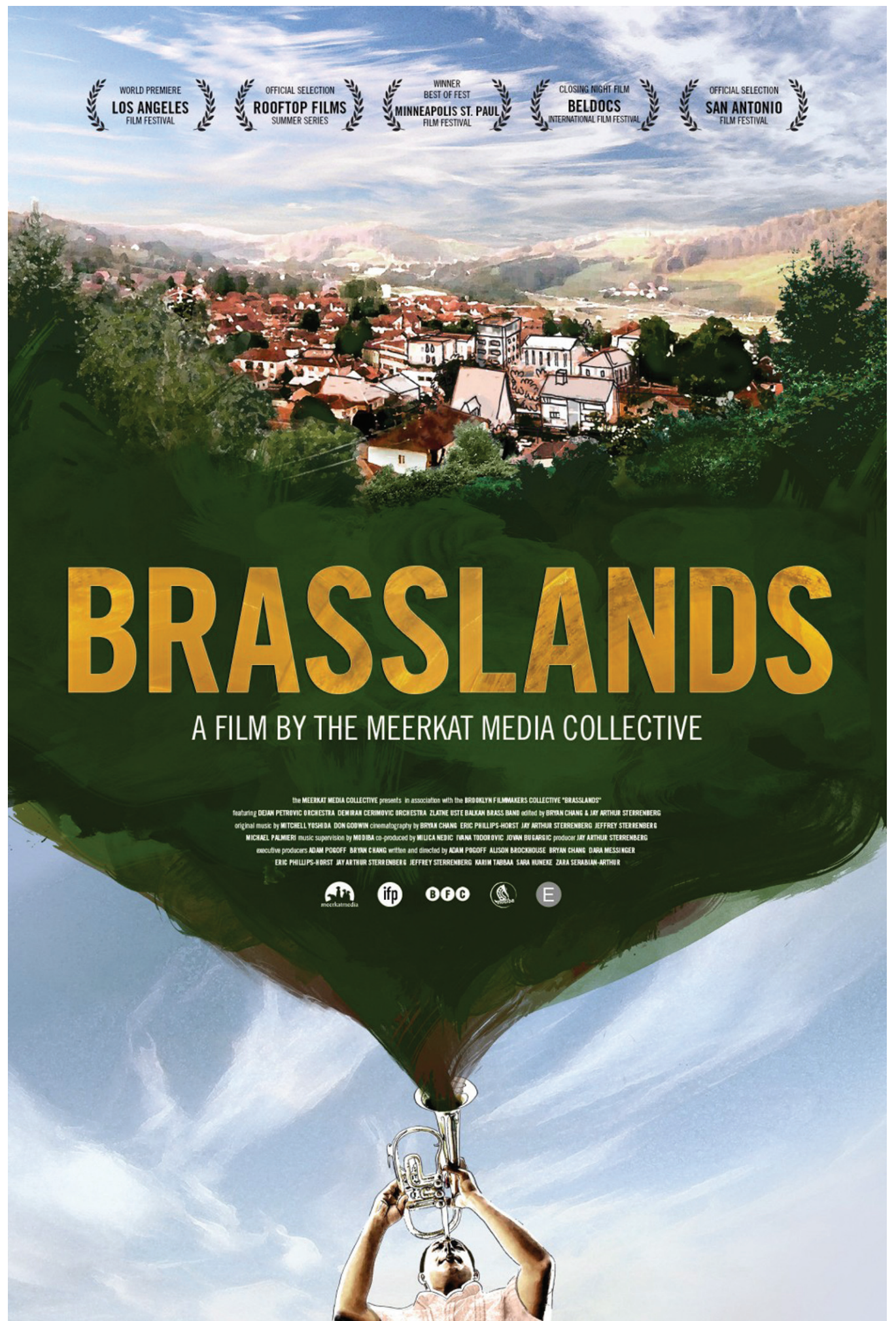
by Milos Rastovic

It isn't often a film about Serbian culture opens a film festival, but on November 8, 2013, the documentary "Brasslands" illustrated the 50th anniversary of the world's largest trumpet festival in Guca, a small town in Serbia. Every seat at the Melwood Screening Room in Pittsburgh was taken, and the overflow of festival-goers required an additional screen in an adjoining room.

The atmosphere was both infectious and lively, which mirrored the setting of the film. The melodies were driven by fast rhythms, which give a fuller inspiration to listeners and fans. The film portrays Serbian music and the spirit of the half-million people who enjoy this musical style and their attitude to the world in general. It is a well known fact that clocks stop in Guca, a town of only 2,200 people, every year in August at the beginning of the Festival.

"Brasslands" follows Golden Lips, ("Zlatne Uste") the first American brass group from Brooklyn, New York, who went to the Guca festival to compete with Serbian groups. Zlatne Uste practiced Balkan traditional music for more than 30 years in order to participate. The movie shows how Balkan traditional music can connect people with different views about the consequences of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990's and how Serbia continues to struggle to find its own identity in the contemporary world.

This documentary follows two kinds of brass trumpeters in Serbia: the western or "Sumadijski" and the southern or "Vranjski," which demonstrates a Roma influence. The most distinguished of the "Sumadijski" trumpeters is Dejan Petrovic, who defended his championship title in



Guca. He is the fourth generation of brass musicians in his family in Uzice in western Serbia. His father, Milovan "Mica" Petrovic, was a well-known brass musician who helped develop his son's musical skills. As a junior, he was awarded the "Best Orchestra" and "First Trumpet" in Guca and became a leader of his father's brass band, earning additional awards including "Trumpet Master." Dejan also arranges in other genres such as jazz, blues, and rock.

Demiran Cerimovic is a member of Pearls of Vranje, ("Vranjski Biseri") and is a renowned Roma brass musician of the southern or "Vranjski" brass trumpeters. Like Dejan, Demiran comes from a musical family in Vranjska Banja. Demiran's orchestra won high praise many times in Surdulica's and Guca's festivals. With enthusiastic spirit, he presents his brass music in Serbia and abroad. According to "Vranjski" tradition, Roma music is more virtuosic and organic than western

music which is more arranged.

Delighted and touched, the audience applauded and celebrated the frenetic energy of the music, and many stayed afterwards for a reception with the musicians, getting a chance to talk about the movie, dance, and enjoy food and drink. Once you hear the glorious sound of Serbian trumpets, you may want to book a trip to Guca to enjoy the annual festival. Films like this confirm how music can bring people together from both sides of the Atlantic and overcome cultural differences.

"Brasslands" was directed by 10 members of the Meerkat Media Collective, a self-organized community of artists who create through a collaborative process. "Brasslands" creators have also worked on Oscar-nominated documentaries which have premiered at Sundance and on major cable television stations.