



# Johnny Clegg, The white Zulu

52' DOCUMENTARY PROJECT



## Goyaves and Screenshot Productions

For 18 years, **Goyaves** has collaborated with leading French television companies in the production of documentaries, reports and short fiction films. Since its creation, Frédéric Malègue, producer, has always shown his will to open audiences to the realities of other countries and cultures. Beyond short films about Beirut or the Tunisian revolution, he has produced various documentaries in Vietnam, India, Palestine, Venezuela, Chile and the Dominican Republic.

At Goyaves we believe it is important to support people and organizations that have an impact on our society. Indeed, it is essential to make viewers aware of the realities and the struggles being waged to promote justice and equality. One of our latest productions broadcasted on ARTE "*Au cœur des négociations secrètes*" and which takes place in Vietnam could testify.

**Screenshot Productions** has an editorial line focused on the world and its major concerns: environment, economic development, human rights as well as its modern and successful heroes. Topics are approached through a positive prism, through the experience of individuals and/or personalities who fight for progress and/or the environment.



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Today we have the chance to tell the story of Johnny Clegg. Author, composer, hot-voice singer and barefoot dancer, 65-year-old Johnny Clegg, nicknamed the "White Zulu", interrupted last year his final tour entitled "Last Journey" for medical reasons. Our documentary is the portrait of an artist and citizen of the world who wishes to bid farewell to his fans and leave them a testimony of his career.

Thanks to our closeness to the artist and his manager, we have the opportunity to make a unique and exclusive documentary about and with Johnny Clegg (he has always refused to do so).







## 1. Johnny Clegg's childhood

Beyond the exceptional stage artist with his titles *Asimbonanga* or *Scatterlings of Africa* has made millions of people dance around the world, Johnny Clegg is a committed man and his fight against apartheid is proof of that.

Johnny Clegg is not only a complete artist but is also a renowned university professor and anthropologist. His work on Zulu mythology, for example, has impressed many researchers.

Finally, because man is a symbolic link between peoples, their cultures and their music, he is the first to have mixed English rock with African tribal songs, to have given in his concerts an important place to dance, and to have shown that an artist can participate politically in the awakening of the consciences.

White child in apartheid South Africa, Johnny, is raised in Afrikaner institutions. At that time, access to public institutions is forbidden to colored people. His mother raises him alone. She is pretty liberal and let him hang out with black children of his age. As a teenager, his mother remarried to an Afrikaner writer, Dan Pienaar, who will open up new horizons for young Johnny by sensitizing him, among other things, to the importance of the English and African literature, and more broadly to African culture. The new family leaves Johannesburg for Zambia, where Dan found a job.

For the first time in his life, Johnny goes to a multiracial school where white and black children can get to know each other. Dan also trains him to folk music and guitar. The young boy flies to Australia shortly after arriving in Zambia.

Back in South Africa with his mother, Johnny is lost, looking for an identity, and refuses to accept his own roots. Revolted, at 13 years old, Johnny refuses to make his bar mitzvah, considering the Jewish community is too passive against apartheid, and prefer to hang out with his Johannesburg Black friends. Shortly after, Johnny quits school and fugue in Zulu land with his friends.

There he learnt Zulu language and developed skills for guitar. He also discovers secret concerts of colored artists. Johnny is totally passionate about their music and begins to perform on stage. He is the only white man to give concerts.





## 2. Music and crossbreeding

Johnny has seduced and surprised an audience that wasn't expecting him. His style become more elaborate, he composes and mixes rock, folk and Zulu music.

Impregnated with his companions 'culture, Johnny, in search of identity, finds salvation with the music. The young man's life is reflected in his music.

In parallel, Johnny studies anthropology at the University of Witwatersrand and Natal, and, without surprise, devotes his research to the cultures of South Africa.

Johnny Clegg is known as one of the most important anthropologists of Zulu culture in the world.

At the beginning of the 70's, his reputation surpasses the back rooms and many spectators are attracted by the legend of the young white boy, singing and dancing on stage like an authentic Zulu. It is at one of those concerts that Johnny will meet Siphon Mchunu, a Durban guitarist. The two men become friends and quickly form a duo on stage, Johnny & Siphon. Then Juluka.

The association of a white and a black man on stage provokes an outcry: Boers, Afrikaners as well as radical blacks cried out scandal. It is the first time in South Africa that two men of different color share the same stage. Despite censorship of the tandem, their compositions are broadcasted across South Africa, and reach out to all audiences. Success has been achieved. While politics in South Africa are getting tougher, Juluka's popularity continues to grow. Clegg and Siphon's activists confront the country of apartheid through their music. Juluka is gradually becoming one of the main voice of the Anti-Apartheids in the country.

Johnny is also very active in the university where he teaches anthropology.

Racist ideas and prejudices are tenacious, even among his students; the struggle for freedom and against racial segregation becomes the guiding thread of Clegg's life. The group knows more and more successes, especially with the release of *Scatterlings of Africa* in 1982, a song with resolutely political lyrics.



### 3. Music and Activism

In 1985, Sipho and Johnny separate by mutual agreement. Johnny creates a new band, Savuka, which means "we got up", in the same musical line of Juluka. He dedicates himself to the music after giving up the teaching of Anthropology.

The success of Savuka has once again attracted the interest of a large audience to the situation in South Africa. Savuka opens the way for musical activism. Music becomes a genuine anti-apartheid political weapon.

Forbidden in South Africa, the concert takes place in London, is broadcast in nearly 70 countries and reaches more than 600 million people all over the World. Western youth is embracing Mandela's cause, and the public pressure is such that the leader of the ANC is released 20 months later.

Because Johnny is aware of the importance of ecology and wants to preserve the earth for the next generation, he also runs his own recycling business for plastic and electronic waste. Indeed, Clegg has done six months of research before creating *New Earth Waste Solutions* in 2008: "We offer a unique traceability software, which guarantees that waste will not end up in the waste stream unload". There are not enough clients yet, but Johnny believes he will have time to take care of it... when he is "much older and won't be able to leap so high."

Even if he is busy with his group, Clegg will never stop his fight and will produce young South African artists, politically involved in the development of his country.





## Production and direction intentions

It belongs to the history of South Africa. He is one of the pioneers of what has been called world music, and has become a global star. His name is Johnny Clegg. His nickname: the white Zulu.

This film recounts his adventure, the exceptional adventure of a committed musician, who embraced the Zulu culture, and whose art and career have embraced the political turmoil of South Africa. A fool of music and dance, who was one of the first white South African to break the rules of racial segregation by playing with black artists.

With his mix of African music and rock, and his lyrics about culture, Zulu tradition and politics Johnny Clegg has conquered the international scene. And he has reached the stars.

Johnny Clegg's career peaked in the 90s. Still humming today the first measures of the *Asimbonanga* chorus, and probably everyone between the ages of 30 and 60 will recognize what has been a global hit. And most probably will quote Nelson Mandela, in whose honor Johnny Clegg wrote this piece. Although Johnny Clegg's career continues, his image is indissolubly linked to the struggle against apartheid and the end of this racist regime that presided over the destiny of South Africa for nearly fifty years.

However, to sum up Johnny Clegg to the "singer of apartheid", would be unfair to the artist who was one of the forerunners of a musical style that was locked in the convenient appellation of world music, as well as for the man who was above all an advocate of freedom, equality and multiculturalism before being a political singer. Living legend in his country, Johnny Clegg is always an active, enthusiastic and committed man, and even if his artistic production is less important, he will release a new album at the end of 2018.



## Production and direction intentions

This is the story the movie will tell. A story full of adventures, colorful, joyful and dramatic at the same time. "Johnny Clegg, the white Zulu" tells us three intertwined stories, that of a man, that of a music and that of a country with troubled history, sometimes brutal. These are the testimonies of Johnny Clegg himself, and all those who made the music of Johnny Clegg, of those who lived the same events as him and of those who loved Johnny Clegg who will make the film.

Such a type of film involves juggling different sources of images: recording concerts, video clips, personal archives of Johnny Clegg, his relatives or musicians, historical archives, but also images of South Africa today.

This film "Johnny Clegg, the White Zulu » will show us the different facets of South Africa's white cities, black streets, wild bush, tribal territories, all that made the life of Johnny Clegg. It will highlight the extraordinary and decisive place of Johnny Clegg and his peaceful fight against Apartheid with the only weapons he has: music and dance.