

## INSIGHTS > The Sound Of The Drummer

BY KERRINE GOH  
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# The Sound Of The Drummer

A German Hong Kong production is having its World Premiere this month at the Locarno International Film festival on August the 9<sup>th</sup> 2007. The “*DRUMMER*” is from Kenneth Bi – Best New Director at the Hong Kong Film 2006 Awards. After “*RICE RHAPSODY*” Bi signs here his second feature film in a work inspired by the performances of the Chinese Zen Drummers and the U-Theatre artists. The drummers are using different techniques that include Tai-chi, martial arts, drumming and mostly meditation to maintain an inner peace, which they believe they can communicate to the audience during performance. The drummers on tour in Hong Kong have apparently changed the view of life of some of the U-Theatre audience. This was the case of Bi who begun a deep and long journey that is now materialized in a film on the power of the primordial sound. Right from the start, questions came on how to make a movie out of a performance, which the French newspaper Liberation described as “*an art that bridges Chinese Opera and its sober splendor, with the modern theatre of Grotowski, and its emphasis on rigorous performer training*”?



This is for the story coherent psychological introduction to Sid's new home where the performers are breaking the tranquillity of the scenery with the profound sounds of their drums. It is admitted that the first sound that a foetus hears in the mother's womb is actually the drum-like sound of the mother heartbeat. Little children can also fall asleep comfortably with sounds of drums.

Together with this psychological analogy, the script offers the many other elements that are necessary to ensure an entertainment for the younger audience - the main of these elements being probably the film star Jackie Chan's son Jaycee Chan whose debut in the Drummer has been followed since by four other Asian feature films!

On the soundtrack side, similar cautious, yet smart solutions have been found to translate in music what Liberation calls the art of bridging two theatre styles. It is the flair of Kenbiroli producer Rosa Li that entered in action. To create an atmosphere where sounds and rhythms are interweaving in a truly Euro-Asian composition, the production turned to Germany and selected Andre Matthias to compose the music for the film. It was also the suggestion of Rosa Li that the Hong Kong cello soloist Trey Lee, winner of the 2004 International Antonio Janigro Cello Competition and, one of the most compelling young artists of our time, would play the main instrument on Matthias composition.

Being completed now, the producers have started placing some elements that allow us making our own journey in the universe of the Drummer on the film official website. The "DRUMMER" blog offers the readers a rich insight into the German contribution to the music composition. Among others, Andre Matthias explains why it is unusual that a music demo remains the main theme on a completed film music soundtrack? He also provides with information on the methodology that he followed; instead of picturing a particular scene of the movie, which was already at an advance stage of the shooting, he concentrated on the contrast between the main character, Sid's rebellious nature and the steady, serene life of the drummers.

More information shall soon be available on the others German interventions on the film (the World Sales will be handle by the German Match Factory distribution), but is it is already interesting to mention that the Medienbord Berlin-Brandenburg gave for the "DRUMMER its first

financial support to a Chinese movie. This was made through a support to the Berlin based co-producer Thanassis Karathanos (Twenty Twenty Vision GmbH), already remarked with the Czech movie "STESTI" San Sebastian 2005 Golden Shell award.

Coincidence with some of the latest events in the Cannes 2007 programme, the music composed by Andre Matthias comes as a confirmation of the special attention that Germany is giving to its film music sector. A GERMAN FILM MUSIC day highlighted the works of world famous German composers, orchestras, consultants, publishers, and film music events from Germany.

Good luck Kenbiroli!

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## Related

“DRUMMER” Official Website: <http://www.kenbiroli.com/drummer/>

U- Theatre Official Website: <http://www.utheatre.org.tw//index.htm>

Andre Matthias Official Website:  
[http://www.andrematthias.com/html\\_eng/framenew.htm](http://www.andrematthias.com/html_eng/framenew.htm)

Trey Lee Official Website: <http://www.trey-lee.com/web/index.php>

[A music video featuring cello soloist](#) [high res], Trey Lee, and original score by Andre Matthias.

[Another video](#)

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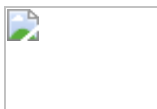
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