

Film on Naga music invited to international fests



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“Songs of the Blue Hills”, a feature-length documentary film on contemporary Naga folk music directed by National Award-winning film critic and filmmaker Utpal Borpujari, has created a splash by getting selected to five international film festivals at one go.

The 96-minute film, that features a number of veteran Naga folk music exponents as well as younger practitioners, has been invited to the Doc Outlook International Market of the Visions du Reel Film Festival (Nyon, Switzerland), Gothenburg Independent Film Festival (Sweden), New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF), Eyes & Lenses Ethnographic Film Festival (Warsaw, Poland) and the World Music & Independent Film Festival (Washington).

Produced by Girish Joshi for the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), Union Ministry of Culture, the film is in the competition sections of the festivals at Gothenburg and Washington.

The film features some fascinating music as well as dialogue with musicians like veteran Ao folk singers Sademmeren Longkumer and A. Bendangyanger Tsuwar Jamir, Chakhesang folk veteran Zachunu Keyho, classical pianist Nise Meruno, and groups like the Tetseo Sisters, the Nagaland Singing Ambassadors, the Chancel Choir, Ru'a, Üsou's Instrumental, Abiogenesis, Nagagenous, Baptist Youth Choir Poilwa Village and Purple Fusion.

In addition, experts such as Dr A Lanunugsang, Lipokmar Tzudir, Gugs Chishi, Theja Meru, Vivee Peseye, Som Kamei, Zubeno Mozhui and Dr Abraham Lotha have shared their views on the changing face of Naga music in recent times.

Shot extensively across Nagaland, the film's crew comprised Biswajeet Changmai (cinematography), Debajit Gayan (sound), Umesh Kumar (Editor), Atanu Phukan (research & coordination), Aiyushman Dutta (research & art direction).

“The selections mean that the rich tapestry of the various Naga tribes would get showcased through the film in across several countries. I feel this is just the beginning of the journey for this film, and I am sure it would act as a tool to attract tourists to Nagaland apart from introducing the world to a wide variety of Naga music,” said Borpujari.

“Songs of the Blue Hills” comes after Borpujari’s previous documentary “Mayong: Myth/Reality” got screened at several international film festivals and a nationwide DVD release through Jungle Home Video label.

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