



U2
DO IT
YOURSELF

A MARIA ARENA MOVIE

SYNOPSIS



Making music out of passion, without compromises or commercial ambitions, and yet – or perhaps, because of this unique sincerity - achieving international notoriety and appreciation.

This is the story of Uzeda, an Italian noise act who, back in 1991, sent a demo tape to the legendary and much in demand Chicago sound engineer Steve Albini. What seemed like a longshot turned out to be the beginning of an artistic partnership and then of a friendship that lasted until Albini's recent and sudden demise. Sensing the spark that gives life to the band's music, he replies 'alright, let us work together' and flies to Catania to record Uzeda's album 'Waters'.

The band's life is turned around: their sound finds its focus with the help of their new coconspirator and friend, Uzeda record two BBC Peel Sessions, are signed by historic US label Touch and Go and, with each new record, their notoriety increases. Regularly asked to play around the world, after each tour they return to their hometown Catania, underneath the Aetna mountain. To their mundane activities, waiting for music to once again spark the magic.

THE FILM

Shot between 2016 and 2020, “Uzeda – Do it yourself” is a tale of dreams, sacrifice, and resilience. It is the story of sicilian band Uzeda, through the different steps in their artistic adventure, narrating the personal lives of its members, their dedication to the cause, their life paths so deeply conditioned by the need to give up money and time to bring their passion forward.

A history that was written in their very name: Uzeda, like the baroque gateway into town, leading to Catania’s Piazza Duomo. A choice that reveals the inextricable tie to their hometown and land, Sicily, always a crossroad of mediterranean cultures, but one you wouldn’t expect to bring out such rough, dissonating and dark sound. Having grown in the shade of Mount Aetna, Uzeda have shaped their music as a coarse matter that by an unexplicable team alchemy turns into a lucid and articulate flow. The whole supported by an attitude that does not give way to commercial pressures, conformism, or the search of an easy consensus.

A creative process documented in this film through archive material, scenes where the band members are portrayed while attending to their ordinary tasks, the story of their releases, and footage from their shows, with the highlight of their 30th anniversary concert held on may 25 and 26 at Catania’s Afrobar, where Uzeda have performed alongside acts they have shared their entire career with: Shellac, Black Heart Procession, The Ex, Three Second Kiss, and June of 44, who have regrouped for the occasion.





Past and present, joy and sorrow, hiatuses and new departures take turns in the narration, with the presence of sound engineer Steve Albini calling the shots of the band's whole career: a free spirit sharing Uzeda's passion driven approach to music, a mentor and a friend, he has helped the project move along every time it needed regenerating, year after year and album after album, until 2018's 'Quocumque Jeceris Stabit', whose three days recording session in Verona is documented in the film.

The film alternates interviews with the band members and testimonies of the different individuals who have acknowledged Uzeda's unique status within the independent rock scene, to the point where they became the subject of the dissertation of an UCLA student, who has decided to spend time in Catania for his doctorate research on the band's history, and ended up sharing with them the colors, the taste, the space and the visions of their lives and their land: through his gaze, we are led deeper and deeper into the secrets and peculiarities of this extraordinary tale.



UZEDA

The band was formed in Catania in 1987, with the meeting of guitarists Agostino Tilotta and Giovanni Nicosia (who then left the band in 1995), bassist Raffaele Gulisano, drummer Davide Oliveri and singer Giovanna Cacciola.

They all love music and grow up listening to the sounds that come from across the Atlantic, that they discover through Dante Maiorana who imported records for local radio station CTA; they play in garages, in unlikely joints across Italy, they travel across the Messina canal on a precarious red van. These are the years of their formation and of adventures that record label AVarts bravely supports by releasing in 1991 their first album "Out Of Colors", a mix of post punk, 90's indie-rock and psychedelia.

Everything changes a year later with the arrival of Steve Albini, the celebrated US musician and sound engineer, who produces their second album "Waters" and immediately tunes in with their sound, capturing and exalting all its uniqueness, to the point that legendary UK dj John Peel notices the band and in 1994 invites them twice to held his prestigious BBC Peel Sessions: almost a first for an italian band as only PFM had had this privilege before.

With a renewed and full understanding of its powers, Uzeda's compositions grow more and more peculiar and complex, until historic Chicago independent label Touch and Go release their EP "4" in 1995 and then in 1998 "Different Section Wires", the album by which they achieve their ultimate recognition

After three albums and countless shows all over the world, the band take a hiatus in 2001, with the four members deciding to try separate artistic experiences, but in 2004 they regroup to take part to the All Tomorrow's Parties festival. Following this, in 2006 they release a new album on Touch and Go, "Stella", and they take part to the label's 25th anniversary event, where they are the only european act other than dutch outfit The Ex; across the three days of the event they share the stage with the absolute gotha of their scene: Calexico, Big Black, Girls Against Boys, Shellac, Black Heart Procession, Shipping News.

A new break will ensue, with the band leaving room for its creative fire to continue burning underneath the surface, in search of new energies; until its latest eruption to date, 2019's album "Quocumque Jeceris Stabit", latin for "*wherever you throw it, it will stand*". Just like the tryskelion, symbol of the island they hail from; and just like their artistic venture that has now lasted over thirty years, inevitably regenerating time after time.



THE DIRECTOR

MARIA ARENA

Born in Catania, she lives in Milan where she graduated in Philosophy and earned a diploma in Direction at Scuola Civica di Cinema. She is the mother of two children aged 23 and 21.

She has directed short features, documentaries, videoclips, video installations and theatrical productions.

She teaches languages and audiovisual techniques and coordinates the Cinema course at Catania's Academy of Fine Arts.

She has written the book 'Falso movimento, laboratorio audiovisivo tra analogico e digitale', for Bonanno in 2011.

Uzeda - Do it yourself is her third independent film following 'Gesù è morto per i peccati degli altri' (2014), shot in Catania, and 'Il terribile inganno' (2021), shot in Milan, both of them selected for several Italian festivals, distributed in the independent circuit and available on streaming on 1895 cloud and Infinity.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES



"The best plan is 'the no plan'": I have heard this a lot from Agostino Tilotta, Uzeda's guitarist and founder. We have a similar saying in southern Italy, "virennu facennu", we'll see along the way, an invitation to go through life without too much planning, adapting to things as they happen. This is how I have approached this project, without a schedule, following the desire to capture a part of Uzeda's career and life, wanting to leave an audiovisual testimony of what this independent act have chosen to be across more than 30 years.

A film eager to find out how one can live putting music before anything else, along with research, experimentation, self discovery; an economy without a currency. Money, like vocals, guitar, bass and drums are nothing but a tool; the sound is something else than the sum of its parts, it explodes with a bang. A radical, uncompromised approach to life, it has been to me an antidote to the catastrophic and self destructive paradigm our society imposes on us all.

PRODUCERS AND SPONSORS

Point Nemo is an independent film production started in 2017.

It has produced several short films and documentaries that have achieved awards and appreciation both in Italy and abroad.

It is interested in projects that talk about the complexity of our contemporary world, be it through fiction or documentary.

It produces autonomously as well as in partnership with other Italian or European companies, and also supports the strategic development of film and TV projects.

It distributes its works through both traditional and new media, and provides logistic and technical aid in cinema and television.

“Point Nemo have decided to support Maria Arena’s new film. The reality of independent music is very close to our heart and we see it as a reflection of our own approach. Staying independent is a costly choice that transcends the professional level and so often permeates the lives of those who make it. This film that Maria Arena has realized with such determination is not only a journey through Uzeda’s music, but also through the life choices of those who put their artistic freedom before anything else.

Being an independent often leads to dedicating your whole life to it and refusing everything that can compromise the sincere development of your passion.

This is why ‘Uzeda Do it yourself’ reflects so perfectly our direction as a company, and we believe that the director’s unique sensitivity that she has so evidently displayed in her previous work will give this film the original perspective that can bring out the true essence of an independent artist.”

DNA audiovisivi was started within its better known counterpart DNA concerti, active in the live music area since 1998, as a division aiming to develop audio visual content, not necessarily musically themed: videoclips, formats, documentaries, short and long features.

DNA concerti is responsible for promoting and touring more than a thousand artists for over five thousand shows, and has worked with both Italian and international acts (Nina Simone, Blur, Bjork, Kraftwerk, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Sonic Youth; Verdena, Calcutta, Cosmo, I Cani, Colapesce).

In its first year of existence DNA audiovisivi has produced videoclips and live sessions, and has various short features and documentaries in the stage of development.

«‘Uzeda – Do it yourself’ is a film about music and independence, the two pillars of our activity in the live music industry for over twentyfive years. It is also about one of the first bands that DNA concerti have ever partnered with at the beginning of its history, so it seemed like the most natural project to begin our adventure in the world of movies. It sounds like both the closing and the reopening of a circle..»

**POINT
NEMO**

DNATM
AUDIOVISIVI

CREDITS

Written and directed by **Maria Arena**

Produced by **Maria Arena, Point Nemo, DNA audiovisivi**

Sponsored by **Accademia di Belle Arti di Catania**

In collaboration with **Jump Cut, Sergio F. Distefano - Eternal Joy Movies,**

Maurizio Nardi, Puntocapao srl, Sdrina Sandra Virlinzi

With support by **ZO Centro Culture Contemporanee, Ame Associazione Musicale Etnea, Piero Toscano - Rock 86**

Executive Producer **Maria Arena**

Executive Producer for Point Nemo **Fabrizio Urso**

Executive Producer for DNA audiovisivi **Pietro Fuccio**

Director of Production **Bruno Urso**

Cinematographer **Sebastiano Luca Insinga**

Editor **Antonio Lizzio**

Sound design and mix **Michele Musarra**

Camera operators **Maria Arena, Giuseppe Consales, Sebastiano Luca Insinga**

Cinematographer second unit **Giuseppe Consales**

Director of post-production **Antonio Lizzio**

Colorist **Walter Cavato**

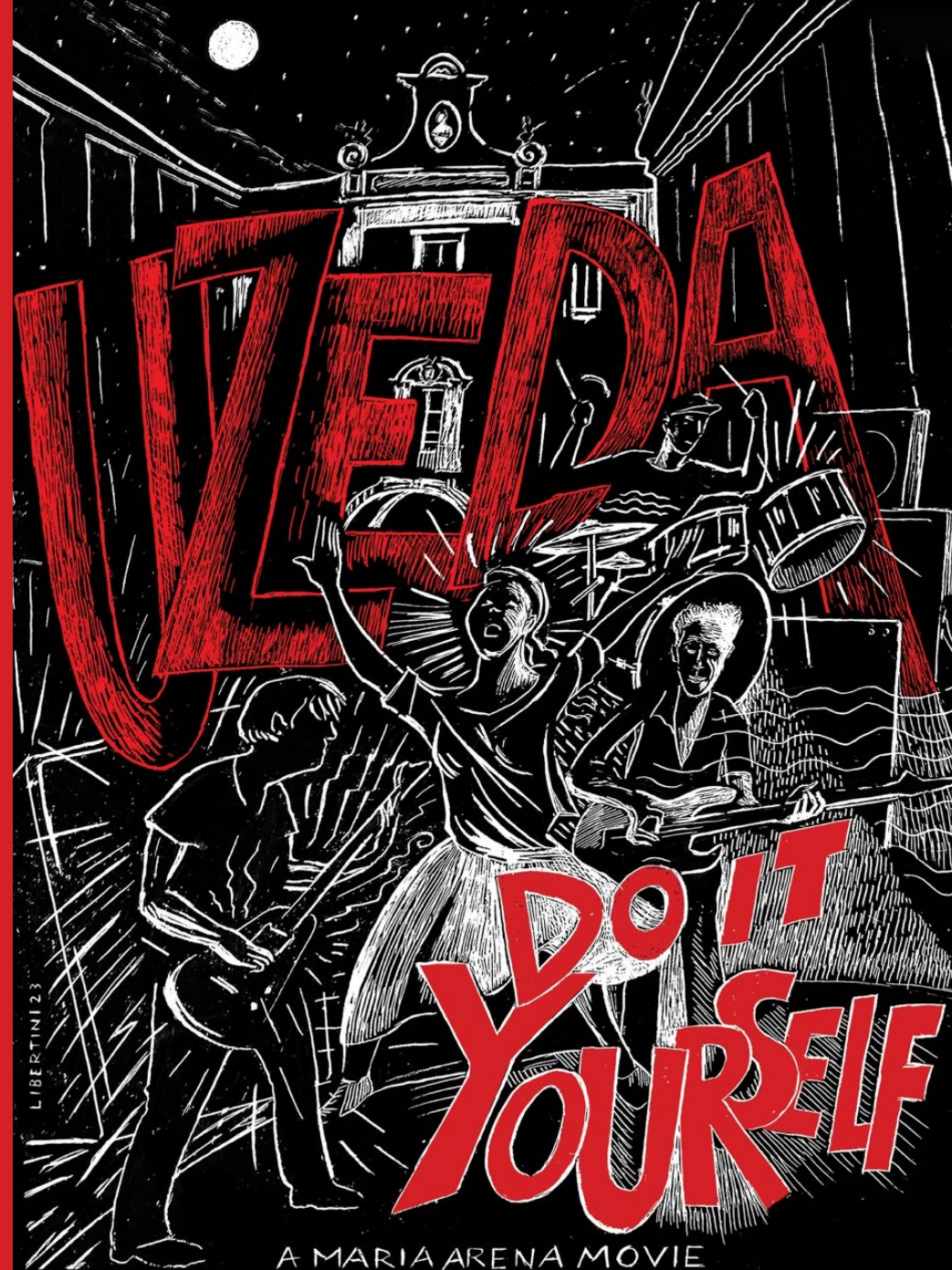
Motion Graphics **Laura d'Agate - Uta Dag**

Graphics and titles **Gabriel Ardini**

Suond recording **Gabriele Borghi, Luca Carrera, Daniele Sciacca**

Live sound engineer and mix for Uzeda **Sacha Tilotta**

Traductions and subtitles **Sebiano Cuscito**



LINK

[Instagram](#)

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[Trailer](#)

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