

AIR GUITAR NATION

A FILM BY ALEXANDRA LIPSITZ

USA, 2006, 82 Minutes, Color, 1.85:1, Dolby SR, Rated R

WINNER
Audience Award
SXSW South By Southwest
Traverse City Film Festival

WINNER
Best Documentary
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ABOUT THE FILM

A battle of naked ambition played out on the national and, ultimately, world stage, AIR GUITAR NATION chronicles the birth of the U.S. Air Guitar Championships as legions of aspiring rock stars live out their dreams on a quest to become the world champion in a strange world where musical ability plays second fiddle to virtual virtuosity. As the film un-reels, two aspiring rock legends strum and strut their way towards glory and the coveted national title. C. Diddy (David Jung), a samurai warrior clad in a “Hello Kitty” breast plate and red kimono, emerges as an early favorite. But his arch nemesis from the Lower East Side, Björn Türoque (Dan Crane), is not far behind. While C. Diddy threatens to unleash his self-professed “Asian Fury” on his competitors, Björn vows to take Diddy down. As the film reaches its climax, the future of Air hangs in the balance; will Björn’s technical prowess, stage presence, and airness¹ be enough to take him to the top, or will C. Diddy conquer all to become America’s first supreme being of Air Guitar?

Full of triumph and disappointment, patriotic spirit and political tension—and, of course, invisible guitars—AIR GUITAR NATION and filmmaker Alexandra Lipsitz take audiences on an inspiring, exhilarating, and ultimately hilarious journey that delves deep to find out what it truly takes to become the best in the world and find the inner meaning of the chant, “Make Air, Not War.”

¹Airness is defined as the extent to which the air guitar performance exceeds the imitation of playing guitar and becomes an art form in and of itself.

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CREDITS

A Docurama Films Release in Association with Shadow Distribution of a Magical Elves Production

Producers

Dan Cutforth
Jane Lipsitz
Anna Barber

Director

Alexandra Lipsitz

Executive Producers

Kriston Rucker
Cedric Devitt

Editor

Conor O'Neill

Co-Editor

Clark Vogeler

Director of Photography

Anthony Sacco

Featuring

Dan "Björn Türoque" Crane
David "C-Diddy" Jung

Co-Producer

Tim Sullivan

Line Producer

Rich Buhrman

Associate Producer

Scott Shatsky

Assistant Editors

Bri Dellinger
Derek Mok
Douglas Ryan
Jose Guzman

Production Sound Supervisor

Keith Garcia

Post Production Sound Mixer

Douglas Carney

Music Wrangler

Lisa Bauman Wasiak

Original Music By

Dan Crane

Music Engineer

Jon Huck

Animated Graphics

SG ARTS

Colorist

Allen "The Flash" Kelly

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FEATURED MUSIC

Ace of Spades

Written by Ian Kilmister, Edward Clarke, and Philip Taylor

Performed by MOTORHEAD

Courtesy of Sanctuary Records Group Ltd.

Cherub Rock

Written by William Corgan

Performed by SMASHING PUMPKINS

Courtesy of Virgin Records America, Inc. under license from EMI Film & Television Music

Get Your Hands Off My Woman

Written by Edwin James Graham, Justin David Hawkins, Daniel Francis Hawkins, Francis Gilles Poullain-Patterson

Performed by THE DARKNESS

Courtesy of Atlantic Recording Corp.

By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

God Gave Rock 'N' Roll To You II

Written by Russell Ballard, Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Bob Esrin

Performed by KISS

Courtesy of The Island Def Jam Music Group under license from Universal Music Enterprises

I Want You To Want Me

Written by Rick Nielsen

Performed by CHEAP TRICK

Courtesy of Epic Records

By arrangement with Sony BMG Music Entertainment

Hate To Say I Told You So

Written by Randy Fitzsimmons

Performed by THE HIVES

Courtesy of Warner Bros. Records, Inc. / Burning Heart Records

By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

Heroes

Words by David Bowie, Music by David Bowie and Brian Eno

Performed by DAVID BOWIE

Courtesy of RZO Music, Inc.

The Mole

Written and Performed by THE BAGS

Courtesy of Heartworm Music

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FEATURED MUSIC (cont.)

More Than a Feeling

Written by Tom Scholz

Performed by BOSTON

Courtesy of Epic Records

By arrangement with Sony BMG Music Entertainment

Play With Me

Written by Nuno Bettencourt, Gary F. Cherone

Performed by EXTREME

Courtesy of A&M Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

Take It Off

Written by Brett Anderson, Torrance Castellano, Allison Robertson, Maya Ford

Performed by THE DONNAS

Courtesy of Atlantic Recording Corp.

By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

You've Got Another Thing Comin'

Words and Music by Rob Halford, K.K. Downing, Glenn Tipton

Performed by JUDAS PRIEST

Courtesy of Columbia Records

By arrangement with Sony BMG Music Entertainment

We Are The Champions

Written by Freddie Mercury

Performed by QUEEN

Courtesy of Hollywood Records / EMI Records Ltd.

Won't Get Fooled Again

Written by PETE TOWNSHEND

Performed by The Who

Courtesy of Geffen Records / Polydor Ltd. (U.K.) under license from Universal Music Enterprises

Yankee Rose

Written by David Lee Roth, Steve Vai

Performed by DAVID LEE ROTH

Courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc.

By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

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PRODUCERS' NOTES

The seduction of air guitar is always the same. It begins as a joke. You can't really believe it exists as a competitive sport, or art form, or whatever it is. But it does, and the more you explore it, the more it sucks you in. One of the criteria on which every air guitarist is judged is airness: the extent to which the performance transcends the medium and becomes a higher form of artistic expression. It's hard to describe it, but you know it when you see it. And we first saw it in June 2003 at the Roxy on LA's Sunset Strip. Once you have witnessed airness, air guitar has you and it doesn't let go.

In the late summer of 2002, Kriston Rucker and Cedric Devitt touched down in Helsinki, Finland and made their way by train to a small fishing village on the Baltic coast. Oulu, Finland has been the mecca of international air guitar since the World Air Guitar Championships began there in the early '90s. Kriston had read a story about the 2001 championships in the Wall Street Journal, and the two men set out to find out what it was all about.

Rucker and Devitt were welcomed into the community of air guitarists and invited to attend the high altitude training camp that takes place every year on a remote island, some 10 feet above sea level.

There, they learned the rules of competition and the secrets of air guitar from the past masters:

- Air guitarists usually perform under a stage name.
- Each performance is one minute in duration.
- Every competition consists of two rounds: the individual, in which the competitor performs to a song of their choice, and the compulsory, in which every competitor performs to one song chosen by the organizers and is only revealed on that night.
- Judges score the performances on the 4.0 - 6.0 scale that was used in international figure skating until the recent spate of judging scandals.

Kriston and Cedric were also intrigued by the unexpected motivation behind the international air guitar movement. The founders of the event hold the theory that air guitar can bring about world peace: if everyone picked up an air guitar, they would have to drop their weapons and thus war would cease and peace would reign.

Captivated by this heady message, and the inspirational words of reigning World Champ Zac Monro, Cedric entered the competition, moving from the qualifying event to the finals and eventually taking 4th place! Kriston and the 4th best air guitarist in the world returned to the U.S. determined to establish the first ever U.S. championships and to return to Oulu in 2003 with an American champion.

This is where we came in. We are Magical Elves. We have produced several Emmy® nominated television shows including BANDS ON THE RUN, PROJECT GREENLIGHT, PROJECT RUNWAY and LAST COMIC STANDING. At the time, we were already in development with Kriston, Cedric and Anna on another project and when Cedric and Kriston returned to tell us about their adventures, the five of us decided to join forces and bring the U.S. competition to television. We thought it would be hilarious and so did VH1. They bought the show, then chose not to move ahead with it. We had already paid the Oulu organizers for the rights to hold the U.S. competition so we decided to do it anyway. We held an East Coast heat

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PRODUCERS' NOTES (cont.)

in a small club above a strip joint in NY and a West Coast heat, to be immediately followed by the U.S. final, in Los Angeles at the Roxy. We persuaded all our friends to help us shoot the shows for free so that we could cut a sales tape from the footage. We were not prepared for what happened.

Anna took on the PR and was deluged with calls from television and print outlets. The NY event sold out. The Pussycat Lounge was packed with photographers and film crews from around the world. But more astonishingly, the event was rabidly supported by hundreds of screaming fans. Things got even crazier in Los Angeles when the normally blasé Los Angeles rock crowd went berserk for 20 individuals performing to one minute of very loud rock music with no instruments at the infamous Roxy on the Sunset Strip. It was a media frenzy and a sold out show. What really struck a chord for us was how serious the crowd was about their patriotic duty to send a worthy American champion to take the air guitar title at the World Championship.

No one who attended that event will ever forget it. And at that point we knew that what we had on tape was “airness.” It transcended the medium of TV—we had a movie. Alexandra Lipsitz helped produce and direct the New York and LA shoots, and it was decided that she had to follow the story on to Finland.

AIR GUITAR NATION has been a three-year labor of love for all of us, but particularly for our director Alexandra, who infiltrated the world of air guitar until she truly turned native and was completely claimed by it. We all feel that the universe we explore in the movie has important statements to make about what it means to be famous, to represent your country, to be the best in the world and ultimately to achieve “airness.” It is completely frivolous and completely serious. And it is about world peace.

— Dan Cutforth, Jane Lipsitz, and Anna Barber

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

One night in Oulu, Finland at about 3:45 am I found myself in a rock club called the 45 Special. There were some 20 people of all shapes and sizes, in different levels of consciousness and inebriation, all “air guitaring” their hearts out. I looked up and Cedric Devitt, the producer of the film, beckons me onto the floor and whispers “time to release your inner air guitar.” We rocked out and I was hooked.

There is something that happens to you when you air guitar. I am not sure if it is on a biological, mental or spiritual level. Maybe it happens on all three levels, but it involves checking your ego at the door to have fun and being able to let go of everything. The Finnish people believe it can bring about world peace simply because you cannot hold a gun in your hands and an air guitar at the same time.

All I know is I changed that night. I became a convert, maybe a groupie of groupies. AIR GUITAR NATION—the film,— is a product of many people working for free for many hours, all done for the love of air guitar and world peace. My hope is that the film inspires people to take themselves a little less seriously and enjoy life.

— Alexandra Lipsitz

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THE CAST

David “C-Diddy” Jung

David Jung, aka “C-Diddy” is an actor/writer originally from Brooklyn who now resides in Los Angeles. An accomplished sketch and improv performer, he has entertained audiences at the Just For Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal, NY Fringe Festival, The Improv, PSNBC, Joe’s Pub, Toyota Comedy Festival, and comedy clubs throughout New York and Los Angeles. David also holds an MFA in classical acting and used this crucial training to win the 2003 International Air Guitar Championships in Oulu, Finland, preceded by his crushing victories in the first U.S. Air Guitar Championships in New York and Los Angeles. As “C-Diddy,” he has made subsequent appearances on JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE, HOWARD STERN, and STEVE HARVEY’S BIG TIME.

A true rock god of our time, his credits include:

Film: MIND THE GAP; TAKEDOWN; and Tom Clancy’s NETFORCE

Television: THE SHIELD; LAW & ORDER: SVU; and LAW & ORDER.

Dan “Björn Türoque” Crane

Dan Crane was once a bored software producer. Then he discovered air guitar. A true testament to the liberating power of the invisible instrument, air guitar was the catalyst that allowed Crane to leave his day job behind and pursue his dream of being a writer. Since then, his writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Slate*, *Esquire*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. He also performs as Jean-Luc Retard in a faux French rock and roll band known as Nous Non Plus.

Björn Türoque (pronounced Bee-Yorn too-ROCK) has participated in numerous air guitar competitions throughout the world. Since joining the circuit, he and his air guitar have appeared on CNN, VH1, LATE NIGHT WITH CONAN O’BRIEN, LAST CALL WITH CARSON DALY, FOX & FRIENDS, in a BILL & TED’S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE special edition DVD, and in a Japanese girl band’s music video directed by Doug Aitken. He’s lectured on the subject at the Experience Music Project museum in Seattle, and is the founder of Aireoke: when air guitar meets karaoke.

Björn’s heroes are guitarist Jimmy Page, sculptor Richard Serra, and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Björn retired from official competition in 2005.

Both Dan and Björn look forward to rocking you in the near future.

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THE CREW

ALEXANDRA LIPSITZ *Director*

AIR GUITAR NATION is director Alexandra Lipsitz's first feature documentary. In the 1980s, she worked with Andrzej Kostenko and the BBC on documentaries in Poland. In addition to her film experience, she worked for several American circuses, and traveled the seas of South East Asia, working on a sailboat as a member of the crew. She later returned to film, assisting Ondi Timoner (DiG!) on two documentary projects. Alex also helped produce hours of fascinating television for the reality competition series PROJECT GREENLIGHT and PROJECT RUNWAY. Alex is from New York City.

DAN CUTFORTH *Producer*

Dan Cutforth founded Magical Elves Production along with fellow producer Jane Lipsitz in 2001. They have produced several Emmy® nominated television shows including BANDS ON THE RUN, PROJECT GREENLIGHT, PROJECT RUNWAY and LAST COMIC STANDING. Recent projects include NBC's TREASURE HUNTERS and Bravo's TOP CHEF.

Dan began his TV career in 1990 when he joined the BBC as a researcher. In 1992 he helped start up Channel 4's THE BIG BREAKFAST, and a year later left to take his first producer position with BARRY'S JOYPAD, a video game magazine show for Sky TV. In 1994 he moved to the U.S. working on a variety of projects including SURVIVE! (later becoming SURVIVOR), THE KEENAN IVORY WAYANS SHOW and WHO'S LINE IS IT ANYWAY? Eventually lured to VH1 for a development deal, Dan met his producing partner Jane Lipsitz and the rest is history.

JANE LIPSITZ *Producer*

Jane Lipsitz founded Magical Elves Production along with fellow producer Dan Cutforth in 2001. They have produced several Emmy® Nominated television shows including BANDS ON THE RUN, PROJECT GREENLIGHT, PROJECT RUNWAY and LAST COMIC STANDING. Recent projects include NBC's TREASURE HUNTERS and Bravo's TOP CHEF.

Jane's entrée into show business came in the early '90s when she made a name for herself as the worst assistant ever to grace the music division of ICM. From there, she took up a position at Polygram Diversified Entertainment where she developed and marketed television, concert and theatrical productions. The highlight of her tenure was four days spent mired in the mud of Woodstock '94, producing 44 hours of live television for pay per view. She survived the ordeal thanks to two weapons that would become her trademark: An appetite for hard work and enormous clumpy boots.

In 1995 Jane joined VH1's development team as a freelance producer. Over the next five years she would work her way through the ranks to the position of Senior Vice President of Development and Production. Jane developed and oversaw production of literally hundreds of shows, including MY GENERATION, ROCK & ROLL JEOPARDY (Jeff Probst owes her his career) and POP UP VIDEO.

Los Angeles beckoned, and in 1999 Jane took over West Coast Development and Production for VH1. There, she developed and Executive Produced shows including THE LIST, RANDOM PLAY, FAN CLUB, STRANGE FREQUENCY and BANDS ON THE RUN. As BANDS ON THE RUN was wrapping in the summer of 2001, Jane and Dan formed Magical Elves, and joined Michael Davies as series producers of THE RUNNER for ABC.

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THE CREW (cont.)

ANNA BARBER *Producer*

Anna Barber grew up in Chelsea, NYC, where she had the opportunity to play drums and bass guitar in a band at the age of twelve. She attended Yale and Yale Law School and has worked as a corporate lawyer, management consultant, internet executive, environmental policy analyst, talent manager and film producer.

When she is not busy producing the U.S. Air Guitar Championships, Anna is mom to two boys and stepmom to two girls and is starting a new retail business. In addition to AIR GUITAR NATION, she produced the comedy SEE THIS MOVIE.

Anna has abandoned her own dreams of air guitar stardom and is instead grooming her 2-year-old and six-month-old sons to take the stage sometime in the next two decades.

CONOR O'NEILL *Editor*

Conor O'Neill began his editing career with the documentary WORD WARS: TILES AND TRIBULATIONS ON THE SCRABBLE CIRCUIT in 2004. An official selection at the Sundance Film Festival, WORD WARS also won the Audience Award at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival and the Director's Choice Award at the Sedona Film Festival. He next went on to edit SEE THIS MOVIE, a comedy produced by Chris and Paul Weitz that was an official selection at the Aspen Comedy Arts Festival and Grand Jury Prize winner at the Malibu Film Festival. O'Neill's last project was co-editor of MURDERBALL, Winner of the Audience Award for Best Documentary and a Special Jury Prize for editing at the Sundance Film Festival. In addition, the film also won Best Documentary at the 2005 Gotham Awards.

Conor lives and works in Los Angeles.

CEDRIC DEVITT *Executive Producer*

Since he was in short trousers Cedric Devitt has been an avid air guitarist, reaching the pinnacle of his professional career in 2002 when he came in fourth in the World Air Guitar Championships in Oulu, Finland. He plays under the stage name "Aer Lingus" with a style that is influenced by Ireland's greatest rock band, Thin Lizzy.

In 2003, Aer Lingus retired from "professional competition" to start the U.S. Air Guitar Championships. It has been nothing but air ever since.

In his spare time Cedric is Creative Director at Tribal DDB, a global advertising agency based in New York. He is also a native of Dublin, (hence the Phil Lynott influence) who currently resides in New York.

KRISTON RUCKER *Executive Producer*

When his schedule as Co-Commissioner of U.S. Air Guitar permits, Kriston Rucker works as a branding consultant, coming up with names and brand ideas for companies and products. Kriston grew up in upstate New York and currently lives in New York City, where he met Cedric Devitt and they together founded the U.S. Air Guitar Championships.

Terrible at air guitar himself, Kriston's keen eye for upcoming talent helps keep the Team USA "pipeline" full. He takes our defeat in the 2006 Air Guitar World Championships as a personal affront. He has been cited as an expert in the rarefied world of air guitar by a wide variety of media, including *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Ready Made Magazine*, *NY Daily News*, *KTLA*, and *MSNBC*.

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ABOUT THE U.S. AIR GUITAR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Founded in 2003, the U.S. Air Guitar Championships have grown into a major national event that reaches more cities, fans and competitors every year.

U.S. Air Guitar is devoted to taking our nation's unofficial pastime out of the bedroom and putting it up on the world stage. U.S. Air Guitar has an alliance with the World Air Guitar Association and each year sends the official U.S. Air Guitar Champion to compete for the world title in Oulu, Finland.

For more information, visit U.S. Air Guitar on the web at www.usairguitar.com

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ABOUT DOCURAMA® FILMS

Founded in 1999 by parent company New Video Group Inc., Docurama Films is the only entertainment group dedicated exclusively to bringing critically acclaimed and cutting-edge documentary films to the *home entertainment marketplace*. AIR GUITAR NATION marks Docurama Films' first theatrical release in association with Shadow Distribution. Since its launch, Docurama has released over 150 award-winning and highly acclaimed films including D.A. Pennebaker's *Bob Dylan: Dont Look Back*, *Brother's Keeper* and *Paradise Lost* from acclaimed filmmaking partners Joe Berlinger & Bruce Sinofsky, *Southern Comfort*, *Lost in La Mancha*, *Lost Boys of Sudan*, *Andy Goldsworthy's Rivers and Tides* *Working With Time*, the 2005 theatrical sleeper hit *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*, *The Beauty Academy of Kabul* and the widely acclaimed Sundance Channel documentary series *The Staircase*. Among Docurama's collection of Academy Award® winners and nominees are *Murder on a Sunday Morning*, *The Weather Underground*, *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*, *Regret To Inform*, *Children Underground*, *Sister Rose's Passion*, and *Sound and Fury*.

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ABOUT PARENT COMPANY NEW VIDEO®

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As the exclusive marketer and distributor for A&E Home Video, New Video has released critically acclaimed literary adaptations such as *Pride and Prejudice*, classic cult television such as *The Avengers* and *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, notable programming from THE HISTORY CHANNEL®, and distinguished British programs from the Thames library. With the release of *Paul McCartney in Red Square*, New Video scored a huge hit in the music category. Most recently, New Video entered an exciting new partnership as the Official DVD distributor for Major League Baseball—delivering complete games and series with innovative packaging highlighted by SleeveStats™.

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New Video is based in New York City's Flatiron District. Visit our website at www.newvideo.com