

## **Noseland is a funny mockumentary with sex symbols and a Jolie-Pitt couple of classical music.**

*Written by Andreea Tarau for CinemaRX.ro  
Translated from Romanian by Anca Baci*

A talented and sexy violinist. A weird obsession with noses. A lot of musicians approached with much too forward questions. Outrageous offenses. John Malkovich, Roger Moore and one of the most important music festivals in the world.

*Noseland* is a different kind of documentary - In it, film enthusiast and violinist Aleksey Igudesman literally exploited all his friends and acquaintances present in Croatia at the classical music festival organized by his best friend Julian Rachlin. If anyone was offended or not during the filming, we will never know. It is certain though that the public laughed out loud as all the interviewed musicians were being offended with ridiculous, much too bold and inappropriate questions and remarks.

Present at the film's world premiere, which took place on Friday June 8, at Victoria Cinema, the director revealed, *Noseland* was not based on any script, being mostly a improvisation project. The music and sections especially composed by Aleksey for the project were the factor, which determined the scene order in *Noseland*. Of course, the offenses brought to the musicians and the trendy topics were chosen specifically, but they were established before shooting the scenes, when the team were coming up with new ideas and choosing the best and funniest one. Igudesman's spontaneity and his very expressive face brought about interviews such as you have never seen before.

*Noseland* has its own Jolie-Pitt couple, formed of talented musicians, it has a sex symbol in Julian Rachlin, and it manages – through this and many other elements – to present the music world from another perspective. The pianists, the violinists and the cellists are shown as people with a sense of humor; people who play live music with intensity when on stage but who are very funny backstage. In certain situations, it is possible however that the director – who interviews everyone – goes too far, and in some cases the humor appears overreaching, but on the whole, the project is a success. To be noted: all people appearing in the film are real musicians, and the bad review quotes are as real as they can be.

Although it had a modest beginning, with a 10,000 Euro budget required for the filming equipment, the documentary, which is considered more of a mockumentary, turned out extremely well and thus another 40,000 Euros have been invested in the postproduction. Although it received an invitation to have the world premiere at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival, an event which hosts many world premieres, Aleksey chose Transylvania as the first public for his ambitious and very funny project. The film will be presented in the Czech Republic at the beginning of July.

In the end, Aleksey Igudesman agreed to tell us another joke resembling those in his documentary: “What is the similarity between a music critic and a gynecologist? They both look for problems where others look for pleasure.”

## **Short Review of Slicker.ro by Iarisa Purdea**

The Mockumentary *Noseland* is a very funny movie about Julian Rachlin and his musician-friends. Trying to destroy the serious image of classical music and its protagonists, Aleksey Igudesman shows his friend and fellow Julian Rachlin in unusual situations and addresses some of the most stupid questions (yes, sometimes his jokes are like Sacha Baron Cohen).

## **Watch, read! Musicians seen differently in “Noseland”!**

*Written by Ovidiu Cornea for Ziu de Cluj  
Translated from Romanian by Anca Baci*

*Noseland*, a mockumentary (a highly comical and satirical documentary), which had its world premiere yesterday at TIFF, reveals with great humor the personalities of internationally renowned musicians beyond their stage image. Actors John Malkovich and Sir Roger Moore also appear in the film.

“Music and humor are the antidote to a situation of crisis. I try to present musicians not only as they are perceived but also as they are in everyday life. In this documentary, the classical musician who walks up on stage and plays superbly is revealed as a regular person who likes to touch other people’s noses, for instance. Such things make them more human and more lovable” says Aleksey Igudesman, director of *Noseland*, along with DP Sebastian Leitner. The film presents internationally renowned musicians differently than they appear on stage and it had its world premiere yesterday afternoon at Victoria Cinema, at TIFF.

Actors John Malkovich and Sir Roger Moore also appear in the film. In one scene, John Malkovich reads fragments from a bad review written about him, with a musical background composed by director Aleksey Igudesman, who is also a violinist, composer and conductor. *Noseland* is centered on violinist Julian Rachlin, organizer of a classical music festival in Dubrovnik, Croatia, where many other musicians gather annually. The musician also has an eccentric hobby, touching other people’s noses. In the film, this element is meant to underline the humanness of celebrities in the world of classical music. Igudesman specified that he intended to make a feature film in which musicians would play themselves. “Musicians have amazing stage presence and I think they also have a very good potential for acting”, said the film’s co-director Sebastian Leitner.

**Writer-director Aleksey Igudesman's haphazard, improv-heavy film is a classical music mock-documentary, with prominently-billed John Malkovich and Roger Moore both gamely 'playing' themselves.**

*Neil Young for Hollywoodreporter.com*

CLUJ, ROMANIA - While it hits some droll comic notes, classical-music mock-doc Noseland's humor plays in too minor a key to justify a feature-length running-time. Its ideal audience comprises those discerning aficionados who recognize real-life virtuosos such as Julian Rachlin, Mischa Maisky, Nicola Benedetti and Pavel Vernikov, and can thus appreciate the stream of gamely self-mocking in-jokes which comprise the bulk of writer-director Aleksey Igudesman's haphazard, improv-heavy script.

But such talents aren't exactly hardly household names among the wider public, for whom the main selling-point will be the presence of the prominently-billed John Malkovich and Roger Moore - both gamely 'playing' themselves, the ex-007 in a small handful of fleeting appearances. Low-level festival play may follow from the Cluj world-premiere, though upscale TV arts-channels will likely prove more receptive to what's essentially an overstretched DVD extra.

The conceit is that prominent violinist Rachlin - his youth, blond locks and buff physique making him something of a pin-up in a sphere more usually dominated by dowdier types - has asked his (secretly jealous) "oldest friend," aspiring filmmaker and fellow violinist Igudesman, to profile both himself and his annual music-festival in Croatia's coastal jewel Dubrovnik. The resulting footage is viewed in a studio by the pair, who we see from time to time - Rachlin voicing increasing concern about Igudesman's boorish tactics, seemingly learned from Sacha Baron Cohen's faux-naif alter egos, which quickly stretch the smiling courtesy of his interviewees.

These include Rachlin's celebrity chum Malkovich, whom we glimpse in extracts from 'The Malkovich Torment' - a deliciously over-the-top piece written by Igudesman himself. On a stone-walled stage illuminated in hellish red, the thespian declaims aloud a review in a Turkish publication - eviscerating one of his theatrical performances - to jagged accompaniment from Igudesman, Rachlin and company. "These people should not be let into Istanbul!" he bellows, resplendent in what looks very much like a flamboyantly frilly shirt from his own Mr Mudd line.

Though second-billed - his name sloppily mis-spelled 'Malkovic' in the closing credits - Malkovich effectively exits the scene at the 27-minute mark, and JM completists should note that the entirety of his magnificent 'Torment' is already available for free via YouTube. The remaining hour of Noseland - the title a typically daft reference to Rachlin's supposed fondness for tweaking his pals' proboscises -

is unfortunately a long diminuendo in terms of gag hit-rate, as Igudesman obtains dwindling returns from repeated displays of his own supposed ineptitude and gaucherie.

The nadir is an especially silly 'rap video' spoof - featuring a frantically mugging Igudesman - that any TV producer would have rejected as laughably dated more than 20 years ago. Many of the skits peter out anemically, suggesting the need for a stronger editing hand from Sebastian Leitner - who also serves as cinematographer, and whose company "SLfilm" is responsible for what's officially an Austrian production. The entirety of the filming appears to have been filmed entirely in sun-dappled Croatia, however, with many sequences looking like travelogue footage of or slick advertisements for the charms of historic Dubrovnik.

Rachlin's festivals are evidently jovial, collegiate affairs in which world-class performers unwind in beautiful surroundings and end up having just as much fun as their adoring public. But this excitement is only intermittently transmitted to Noseland's viewers, and though Igudesman and company's evidently hoped to froth up a freewheeling Spinal Tap for the Victor Borge crowd, this inside-baseball lark won't elicit too many calls of 'bravi!'

*Bottom line: Uneven spoof-documentary on the foibles of classical musicians occasionally orchestrates mirth.*

## **Short Review of MEDIABIZ by Gabi Schultz**

"Do you like classical music? It does not matter! After this crazy ode to classical music you probably will! The concentration of gags is so high, that breathing gets hard. Fantastic! "

"Classical Music, a dusty world of elitist circles? This stereotype is successfully removed by "Noseland" through wit, irony and a Rap that not only works as a theme song but also as a possible super hit."

## **Short Review from KVIFF.com**

Have you ever thought of dying as a career move?" Since 2001 violin virtuoso Julian Rachlin has organized a festival of classical music in Dubrovnik where, in addition to renowned musicians such as cellist Mischa Maisky, John Malkovich and regular guest Roger Moore have also appeared. Although the festival does unquestionably exist, and famous personalities do turn up in this portrait, the statements they make may sound rather doubtful. Despite its stylization as a documentary, the movie quite clearly distances itself from any kind of stilted seriousness as it asks

subversive and politically incorrect questions. And if the artists aren't afraid to make fools of themselves, it's a good sign they'll happily lay into others as well. Like the work of Sacha Baron Cohen, the movie is not afraid to be rude, to amp up the humor when we're expecting a little let-up, nor does it hesitate to push the boundaries of the ridiculous. The work draws strength from its creative inversion of the documentary format as it cleverly takes aim at things we are completely familiar with.

## **Noseland: A Review from Screendaily.com**

*Written by By Dan Fainaru*

*This irreverent mockumentary, poking fun at music festivals and their star-studded casts, should easily appeal to music lovers everywhere, as long as they do not mind taking their favorite pastime with a pinch of salt and some pepper too.*

*This documentary is ultimately not only enjoyable on its own but also a great piece of advertising for the "Julian Rachlin and Friends" Music Festival in Dubrovnik.*

Shot at an event organised by violinist Julian Rachlin in Dubrovnik on the Adriatic coast, once a pirate refuge and now a picturesque Croat tourist attraction, the idea was devised by Rachlin's friend Aleksey Igudesman, and produced by both of them, with full cooperation of all their "victims". The film screened at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival.

Director Igudesman lacks any real filmmaking background, but has a knack for serving up music in mischievous packages, for instance his "A Little Nightmare Music", a show he presents with Korean pianist Joo Hyung-ki (featured in the film as well).

For this particular prank he is assisted by Austrian filmmaker Sebastian Leitner (credited for camera and editing). The two of them were let loose on the 2010 edition of the festival, where Igudesman quickly managed to step on all the wrong toes, insulting the participants at the worst possible moments, to the point that most of them got up and left their interviews in the middle.

However, this being a mockumentary, and since Igudesman himself actively contributed to the programme of this festival, it is safe to assume that before talking out of turn he had warned all the concerned parties, who may pretend to be offended on camera, but don't make much of a fuss about it all, carrying on as if short, stocky, impish director and his film crew are just a minor disturbance.

The tone is established from the very beginning. Igudesman shows Rachlin the final cut of the film, to get his approval. They sit next to each other in a sound studio, and once the film starts rolling you see John Malkovich addressing the audience at the festival and informing them that the talent they will be listening to in the following days has not been chosen for its musical talent but simply because they are Jews and as everybody knows, the music world is ruled by the Jewish mafia.

A few minutes later, Igudesman sits down next to Sir Roger Moore, who later in the festival will read, with a musical accompaniment, Beethoven's Heiligenstadt Testament. When Igudesman enquires about the qualities of one of the musicians, ex-James Bond actor drily informs him the man was selected only because "he is my wife's lover".

Later in the film, Igudesman rolls off in front of Moore the list his favorite Bonds, starting with Sean Connery and going through all the rest, without ever mentioning the man sitting next to him, at which point Moore stands up and walks away. Just like Scottish violinist Nicola Benedetti and her boyfriend, cellist Leonard Eischenbroich, after Igudesman suggests they have been invited to the festival only because of their good looks.

One of the most hilarious sequences, devised for the festival by Igudesman and presented by Malkovich, is a collection of particularly spiteful writings of composers about other composers, like Tchaikovsky and Hugo Wolff venting their rage against Brahms' music. The climax of the sequence comes when Malkovich starts reading the vitriolic pieces by an unnamed Turkish critic written about Malkovich himself, demanding the actor should be stopped at the customs and sent back home before entering the country.

Rachlin, pretending to be shocked at all this footage and uneasy at his nose obsession being prominently featured, protests time and again that this is not the film he had in mind. But no need to worry, he is a full-fledged partner to the party and admits that much before it's over. Making best use of the lovely Dubrovnik scenery and generously sprinkled with chamber music warhorses such as one of Brahms String Sextets and Schubert's String Quintet, this documentary is ultimately not only enjoyable on its own but also a great piece of advertising for the "Julian Rachlin and Friends" Music Festival in Dubrovnik.

## **Noseland: A Review from Huffingtonpost.com**

*Written by Ayano Hodouchi*

Many people today consider classical music as a formal and stuffy genre full of dead, great composers and equally dead, great performers -- so director Aleksey Igudesman in his film asks a prominent musician, "Have you ever thought of dying as a career move?"

Last Friday, the third NYC Independent Film Festival screened a rare documentary about classical music, in which violinist and composer Aleksey Igudesman goes around taking unsuccessful interviews with famous classical musicians and a couple of Hollywood actors. With characteristic naiveté, he offends almost everyone in the film he talks to, from Sir Roger Moore, John Malkovich and cellist Misha Maisky to Julian Rachlin, the violinist, violist and conductor, whom the film is ostensibly about.

There is no plot as such -- only a flimsy excuse, that Igudesman is making a documentary about Rachlin and his 10 year-old music festival in Dubrovnik, Croatia. For Igudesman, that is just an opportunity to explore and drag into the glaring spotlight inappropriate questions such as "Do you have to sleep around with people in order to win a competition?" or "Do you have to be a Jew to have a career in classical music?" or "Do you have to be gay to succeed?" He brings up simple questions, such as what does an orchestra need a conductor for anyway, and goes into the repertoire of old viola jokes. (In classical music, viola players are supposedly the stupidest people in the orchestra.) The movie's title *Noseland* refers to Rachlin's (not very convincing) fetish for touching people's noses, but Igudesman does not seem to care too much about the title or the subject of his film; his aim is to show classical music in ways most people have never seen.

Almost all of Igudesman's interviewees walk away visibly upset after being asked ignorant and rude questions or after he goes too far with his jokes. (To American conductor Ryan McAdams, he said, "What do a conductor and a condom have in common? It's OK with, but better without.") There's plenty of slapstick in the film; an offended young violinist, Fumiaki Miura, pours water on Igudesman's head, while double bass player Stacey Watton slaps him in the face on camera.

The humor is not particularly new, the absurd is just absurd and questions are left without convincing answers, but the film is essentially held together by one thing -- Igudesman's persona. Fans of Igudesman and Joo, the duo in which the director tours the world throughout the year, will easily recognize the naïve inappropriateness and clumsiness of Igudesman that contrasts so well with pianist Hyung-Ki Joo's brash stage persona. Here too, Igudesman stumbles into awkward situations and gets abused. Artlessly tactless, slightly pudgy and expressive, he is a

loveable character throughout. We even love it when he suddenly bursts into a rap song that seemingly has little to do with the rest of the film.

The movie is primarily located in picturesque Dubrovnik at the 2010 Julian Rachlin and Friends Music Festival. Scenic shots reminiscent of a travel program appear frequently, but the predictably pretty shots are saved from becoming too cliché by the music. Taken from performances at the festival, the music is given such prominence that it is as much a narrator and attraction as Igudesman is. The film was edited to the music and not the other way around; "more of musician's way of working on a movie," as he says. Despite being stitched together from dozens of interviews and various bits and pieces of (sometimes rather shaky) backstage footage by the "wannabe" filmmaker, (this is his first feature-length film) Noseland does not feel like a chopped and tossed salad of the outrageous and the absurd. Held together by powerful music and Igudesman's charm, it proves his point that a film can be as abstract as a piece of music; something "to be enjoyed for the mere beauty of it."