

SYNOPSIS

Music is the beating heart of Malian culture. But when Islamic hardliners took control of northern Mali in 2012, they enforced one of the harshest interpretations of sharia law in history and, crucially for Mali, they banned all forms of music. Radio stations were destroyed, instruments burned and Mali's musicians faced torture, even death. Overnight, Mali's revered musicians were forced into hiding or exile where most remain even now. But rather than lay down their instruments, the musicians are fighting back, standing up for their cultural heritage and identity. Through everything, they have used music as their weapon against the on-going violence that has left Mali ravaged.

They Will Have To Kill Us First begins with musicians on the run, reveals rare footage of the jihadists, captures life at refugee camps, follows perilous journeys home to battle scarred cities, and witnesses our two female characters perform at the first public concert in Timbuktu since the music ban. The stories of these artists are told without gloss – they are sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes inspirational, and sometimes incredibly frustrating as we watch musicians make tough choices about their futures.

With a specially commissioned soundtrack from Mali's most exciting artists, a score written by the Yeah Yeah Yeah's Nick Zinner, They Will Have To Kill Us First leaps headfirst into a tale of courage in the face of conflict.

AWARDS & NOMINATIONS

BFI London Film Festival 2015	HotDocs 2015
15)WOMEX Film Selection	Frederick Film Festival 2015
SOUND+VISION 2015	Durban International Film Festival
Santa Fe Independent Film Festival 2015	CPH:DOX 2015
Oiff Official Selection 2015	CIMM:FEST 2015
indieBo 2015	RIDM 2015

RESOURCES

Documentary press kit & resources
 Guardian piece
 Music Film Web article

POST-SCREENING CONVERSATION QUESTIONS

1. How does the interweaving of different voices (narrator, news media presenters, musicians) enrich the storytelling form of this film and how does it impact our interpretation of such complex socio-political issues?
2. How does the film itself work as an advocacy tool?
3. What is the role of music as a form of resistance against the banning of music? How is this supported visually?
4. How is this documentary different to other traditional documentaries in terms of its tone and music video-inspired aesthetics? Why do you think that is?

Trailer: www.theywillhavetokillusfirst.com/trailer
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