

# GREEN SCREEN

INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE FILMFESTIVAL ECKERNFÖRDE  
SEPTEMBER 04<sup>TH</sup> - 19<sup>TH</sup> 2021

## Laudatio

## Best Score

### „Wild Cuba“

**Director:** John Murray

**Cinematography:** Domenico Pontillo

**Score:** Badhands

**A Crossing the Line Production for ORF, BBC, RTÉ, WNET Thirteen, France Television, PBS**

Music can make or break the realisation of a producer or director's vision for a film, and finding the right musical language for the job sometimes can be a puzzle, but when applied just right, it can provide an emotional subtext which wasn't there on screen before and help propel the story forward and bring across the emotion and thus importance of the message to the audience that align with the filmmakers vision. It can change a great film to a fantastic one - and I think all of this year finalists did just that! These musicians all pulled off something truly special so I'd like to thank all three composers for your fantastic work, Oliver Heuss, Jorg Magnus Pfeil, and Dan Fitzpatrick (aka Bad Hands), and I'd love to, very briefly, share a few words from the Award Jury and myself on each of their scores, (in a random order) - their musical stories if you will - before announcing the winner. One story is about things we should remember again: A whole species we are all familiar with from the range, dressage, and racing, whose wild, rich and dynamic lives most of us have almost forgotten about. It's exactly that wild, dynamic and richness that is portrayed in Oliver's score. The music is packed with emotion that reaches straight to your heart, the themes are strong and elegant, and helps us emphasize with Dot and her family in a very effective way. The music brings us to tears and terrifies us when a young stallion had to be left behind for dead, it warms us up with nostalgia when spring arrives, it excites us when we see the young foals playing around. So no surprise that the award jury had to say about this (and I quote): Sound and composition alone deserve a 10. Another story is about a creature, very small, always on her toes, always

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on the lookout. Her world is huge and full of danger from all sides, but she faces it fiercely. We can see her figuring out, puzzling, and living a true adventurous lifestyle. The score takes us along on her heroic trip in a very playful, exciting and fun manner, and the jury was impressed by the amount of great musical moments. The music is really cleverly written, packed with little nuances, details, and clever spotting, structure and orchestration techniques combined with country influences which worked brilliantly and gave the film a true personality. Our last story is about a place. Maybe some of us have been lucky to have visited the place once.. But when you take your time, and look close.. real close, you can get a sense of how truly special this place really is. In this film, we really get taken along with Colin Stafford-Johnson who has always had a special connection with Cuba. There is so much enthusiasm, wonder, and amazement and clever storytelling in the film which is all reflected in Dan's music. The music breathes, immediately caught me from it's opening track, and kept me interested throughout the whole film. The score is full of contrasts and color, and the jury praised the carefully balanced local influences implemented in the score which are never too much nor too imposed, the light and airy atmosphere, the refreshing sound palette in the score, and how memorable and strong the musical moments are, yet the music always left space to let the rest of original atmospheric sounds breathe and shine through. All of the music helped brilliantly with achieving the goal of the filmmakers, which is made very clear from my final quote from the award jury: "The music drew me more into the film and ultimately created a deeper sympathy for Cuba." And for the above reasons, the jury would like to present Dan Fitzpatrick/Badhand's score for Wild Cuba as the award winner, a very big congratulations Dan! (John Murray collects awards on behalf)

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