



FIFF opening ceremony gets the 35th edition off to a rousing start

The Fribourg International Film Festival (FIFF) had announced that its 35th edition would open with a musical surprise. It did not disappoint. The opening ceremony set the tone for the rest of the 2021 Festival, offering the audience a collective, in-person experience full of twists and turns. This hybrid live and audiovisual extravaganza was interspersed with several remarkable artistic collaborations featuring, among others, local filmmakers Julien Chavallaz and Mark Olexa, the Nouvel Opéra de Fribourg, the Landwehr, and multimedia artist Cee-Roo. The end result was a ceremony that fused visuals, live music and official speeches in a fresh, new way. Federal Councillor Alain Berset offered an at times lighthearted take on the FIFF 2021 programme, noting that *Pink Floyd: The Wall* serves as a reminder of the importance of keeping our defences up against COVID-19. FIFF artistic director Thierry Jobin officially opened the Festival with a song instead of a traditional speech. All in all, the audience can proudly declare, "I was there!" Tickets and full programme at fiff.ch.

During his address, Federal Councillor **Alain Berset** recalled the '34½' edition last year and expressed his joy that the Festival can finally take place in person, in full, and on song, both literally and metaphorically. **Thierry Steiert**, the Mayor of the City of Fribourg, and **Jean-François Steiert**, President of the cantonal government, also hailed the in-person return of the Festival under such favourable circumstances. The president of the FIFF association **Mathieu Fleury** declared that the FIFF21 "will be brimming with sound and light. The sound will break the overlong silence in our cultural life and the light will brighten the reunion with our audience after our forced and painful separation." He added that "innovation for FIFF meant recentring, reorganising and leveraging our creativity to reclaim our authenticity."

The idea for an opening ceremony like no other was born out of the lockdown and the shuttering of performance venues last year. Fribourg filmmakers **Julien Chavallaz** (*Ersatzopera*, in collaboration with the **Nouvel Opéra de Fribourg**) and **Mark Olexa** (*Espace recomposé*, with the Landwehr) presented their short music-driven films that echo the protracted shutdown of the cultural and creative sectors. They were followed by an electrifying video montage by **Cee-Roo** set to a soundtrack, which was also specially created by the multimedia artist from Biel/Bienne. The ceremony rose to a crescendo with a live performance by several singers and a group of musicians from the **Landwehr**.

To give full voice to the euphoria elicited by the much-awaited return of cultural life and in keeping with the musical theme of the 35th edition, **Thierry Jobin**, FIFF's artistic director, decided that it would be more fitting for him to sing rather than speak. He drew inspiration from legendary French singer Joe Dassin, adapting his song of unrequited love *Siffler sur la colline*. FIFF hopes to woo the public, not with a bunch of wild roses like Dassin but with a lovely bouquet of films screened between 16th and 25th July in Fribourg.



Festival International de Films de Fribourg

SAVE THE DATES

Ciné-concert

Sunday 18.07.2021 | Cosmic collaboration with Les Georges: Ropoporse meets John Carpenter's *Dark Star*
fiff.ch/en/cine-concert-dark-star

FIFForum 2021 (free entrance, mandatory booking) fiff.ch/en/fifforum-2021

Sunday 18.07.2021 | Roundtable | New territory: Rwanda

Sunday 18.07.2021 | Masterclass **Guillermo del Toro**, videoconference

Monday 19.07.2021 | Fribourg Films presents an A to Z of casting

Wednesday 21.07.2021 | Conference: Classical music and film

Thursday 22.07.2021 | Encounters Diaspora: **La Gale (Karine Guignard)**, Lebanon and Palestine

Saturday 24.07.2021 | Masterclass **Étienne Daho**

Press release

Friday 24.07.2021 (evening embargo) | Closing press release and 2021 Awards

PRESSKIT FIFF 2021 | Download PDF on fiff.ch/en/press-2021

PRESS OFFICE

The FIFF Press office team will be glad to assist you. We are located at the Festival center (Esplanade de l'Ancienne-Gare 3, 1700 Fribourg), from 16th to 24th July 2021, from 9:30 am to 7:30 pm.

- **Interviews:** List of guests updated on fiff.ch/en/press-2021
Please contact the Press Office
- **Previous FIFF press releases images:** fiff.ch/en/press-2021
- **Film links or video library on site:** Upon request / by reservation
- **Press accreditations:** On site at the Press Office
- **35th FIFF:** from 16th to 25th July 2021 in Fribourg, on site

More films online: from 26th July to 15th August 2021, about 15 films on Festival Scope (CHF 10/viewing)

- **FAQ FIFF 2021 and Covid-19:** fiff.ch/en/faq-covid-and-fiff21