



GOTTHARD – ONE LIFE, ONE SOUL

by Kevin Merz

Switzerland, 95 minutes

An Amka Films production
in coproduction with RSI Radiotelevisione svizzera & Bunkerville

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Publicity D-CH & F-CH:

Kaja Eggenschwiler, Filmcoopi Zürich, ke@filmcoopi.ch, cell. +4178 620 64 31

Publicity I-CH:

Tina Boillat, Tina Boillat Communications, tina@videonet.ch, cell. +4179 423 78 44

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

In the early 1990s, two young rockers – Steve Lee and Leo Leoni – founded one of the most successful Swiss bands of all time: Gotthard. Twenty-five years later, Leo, Hena, Marc and Freddy, together with Nic, the new singer, still play gigs all over the world with the same passion. Between concerts, recording studios and with the help of very rich archives, they tell us their turbulent story.

LONG SYNOPSIS

In the early 1990s, two young rockers – Steve Lee and Leo Leoni – founded one of the most successful Swiss bands of all time: Gotthard. Steve, timid and insecure, wasn't convinced he had what it took to go all the way as a rock singer, but inside he had the same burning desire as Leo: a life out of the ordinary and the crazy dream of becoming a rock star. The two young men embarked on an adventure that would change their lives forever.

Twenty-five years later, Gotthard still play gigs all over the world. Between concerts, recording studios and with the help of very rich archives, they tell us their turbulent story. After overcoming many serious obstacles, the band was finally enjoying the pinnacle of success when, during a road trip on the M15 Highway in Nevada, Steve was killed in a tragic accident.

Beyond unbearable sadness and despair, the very survival of Gotthard was put to its toughest test. But the band's spirit proved able to rise even from this deep abyss: Leo, Hena, Marc and Freddy faced the new challenge by bringing out their true character and, with the support of the new singer Nic Maeder, the band returned to the world's stages with renewed fervor.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The story of the Swiss rock band "Gotthard" fascinates me: apparently ordinary young men coming out of nowhere who, thanks to great ambition, talent, hard work and the courage to dream the impossible were able to achieve their dream: to play their music around the world.

The more I discussed the project with the production company Amka Films, the more I had the feeling that it was a story touching my own sensibilities.

When I began to prepare the documentary, I started to discover many connections between the story of the band and my own. First of all, I grew up in the same village as Steve Lee, in Porza, a small village of Ticino. To live as a young man in the conservative Ticino of the 1990's meant to have people call you homosexual just because you had long hair or for the way you dressed. So I know what it means to grow up and try to develop your own creative identity in such a hostile setting.

Further more, the continuous conflict that Gotthard had between their own artistic vision and the requests of the market is a type of experience that matches with themes and reflections very close to my heart, as a person and as a director.

Friendship is also a sensitive subject to me. In my last documentary "Terra", I confronted this theme reflecting on one's own roots in connection with the death of a dear friend, another experience that I unfortunately share with Gotthard. The biggest challenge for the band arrived in fact with Steve Lee's death at age 49 on a road in Nevada during a moto trip. This was the biggest blow, as Steve was with Leo the founder of the band, its soul, its voice.

This common ground gave me the urge to fully embark in this rock odyssey called „Gotthard – One Life, One Soul“.

The strength of this band to overcome all the obstacles over the years and stick together to live the life they chose was very inspiring to me and a very important message I want to share.

CREW

Director	Kevin Merz
1st camera	Kevin Merz
Additional Camera	Patrick Botticchio, Dario Lotti, Alain Pasquali, Samir Samperisi
Sound Engineer Additional Sound	Rico Andriolo Nicolò Mariani
Editing	Samir Samperisi & Nicolò Tettamanti
Editing Consultant	Volker Schaner
Sound premix	Riccardo Studer
Final Mix	SDS, Felix Bussmann & Riccardo Studer
Motion Graphics	Dario Lotti
Colorist	Patrick Lindenmeier
Music	GOTTHARD
Production for Amka Films	Tiziana Soudani
Production for RSI	Silvana Bezzola Rigolini
Coproduction	Bunkerville
Production manager	Tina Boillat

TECHNICAL DATA

Length	95 min.
Country & year of production	Switzerland 2017
Format	Digital, 1:1.85
Sound	Digital 5.1
Version	OV German-Swiss, German, English, Italian it/engl/german subtitles

The film has been supported by The Federal Bureau of Culture, The Repubblica e Cantone Ticino, FilmPlus della Svizzera italiana, Ernst Göhner Foundation, Stiftung Phonoproduzierende, Fondazione culturale Suissimage, Succès Passage Antenne SSR SRG, Ticino Film Commission and Gotthard.

GOTTHARD – THE BAND

Quarter of a century ago, GOTTHARD set out from the Swiss canton Tessin to conquer the world with pure, straightforward rock and gigantic ballads. In 2016, we can undoubtedly certify that they've pulled off the trick: With 15 No.1 albums and various multi platinum awards GOTTHARD are not only the most successful Swiss band but are also a staple in the global spotlight. The hard rockers from Lugano played a lot more than 2000 concerts on three continents with the likes of Deep Purple, Bryan Adams, Bon Jovi and AC/DC, performed celebrated headliner tours all over Europe, and sold over three million records to date. For 25 years, GOTTHARD have been a regular in the charts and represent Swiss rock at it's best!

There never was a slow warm-up for GOTTHARD. Their first album went platinum after four months and rocket launched with a sound that was pure and hard rather than mainstream. After a headliner tour in Switzerland, as well as tours in Germany and all over Europe more superlatives followed: GOTTHARD played with Bryan Adams, performed at the Foundations Forum in L.A., and were flown to Japan. With their debut, mind you. "Dial Hard" was released in 1994 and became GOTTHARD's first #1 album in Switzerland. A success to be shared by all following albums. After "D-Frosted", which announced Swiss double platinum only three months after its release in 1997, "Homerun" delivered the first German Top 15 entry, triple platinum in Switzerland, and with "Heaven" the first No.1 single in 2001. GOTTHARD had built a brand with first class songwriting and fantastic live shows, providing them not only with a slot at the legendary Jazz Festival in Montreux, but also – apart from multiple Swiss Awards – with the "International Music Award" and the nomination for a "World Music Award". All following albums achieved No.1 entries, and at least double platinum sales in Switzerland, as well as Top Ten charts in Germany, while offering the opportunity for breathtaking concerts in Russia, South America, Japan and Korea.

In 2010, Steve Lee was killed in a traffic accident in the U.S. – a forced, tragic break that lasted one and a half years. In 2011 "Homegrown – Alive in Lugano" not only marked the beginning of a new calendar, but also was a tribute to the undying legend of the former singer. After careful consideration, GOTTHARD eventually dared the step into a new chapter with "Firebirth" and their new singer Nic Maeder. With respect, blood, sweat and tears, the exceptional singer managed to prevail against an array of top-class candidates from all over the world. In the current line-up consisting of Leo Leoni (guitar), Freddy Scherer (guitar), Marc Lynn (bass), Hena Habegger (drums), and Nic Maeder (vocals) "Firebirth" proved to be an homage to rock 'n' roll, emphasizing the band's reincarnated joy of making music. As if given a new pair of wings, GOTTHARD, who rank at no.6 of the Swiss all-time album chart history, kicked off their world tour across 22 countries, playing to more than 300,000 people. With a Swiss #1 entry, and once again gaining platinum sales, "Firebirth" turned out to be a sensational comeback, which nobody could have taken for granted.

In 2014, GOTTHARD's "Bang!" attested to the new energy, and apart from a #1 in Switzerland, achieved the Top Ten position in Germany. In addition to the chart successes, "Bang!" delivered the music for the band's 2014 Latin American tour, a massive open air season in Italy, the Czech Republic, Belgium, and France, as well as for the subsequent UK headliner shows. After winning the Swiss Music Award as "Best Album" in 2015, the stage is prepared for GOTTHARD's 25th anniversary and the brand-new album "SILVER", which appropriately celebrates the exceptional story of this Swiss rock phenomenon.

DISCOGRAPHY

Gotthard, 1992
Dial Hard, 1994
G., 1996
Defrosted (Acoustic Live), 1997
Open, 1999
Homerun, 2001
One Life, One Soul, 2002
Human Zoo, 2003
One Team, One Spirit (The very Best), 2004
Lipservice, 2005
Made in Switzerland (Live in Zurich), 2006
Domino Effect, 2007
Domino Effect (Tour Edition), 2007
Need to Believe, 2009
Heaven (Best of Ballads Part 2), 2010
Homegrown – Alive in Lugano, 2011
Firebirth, 2012
Bang!, 2014
Silver, 2017

GOTTHARD ONLINE:

www.gotthard.com
www.facebook.com/Gotthard
www.twitter.com/Gotthard

THE MEMBERS OF THE BAND

Leo Leoni

6 April 1966

Guitar

Steve Lee

R.I.P.

5 August 1963 – 5 October 2010

Singer

Nic Maeder

11 August 1971

Singer

Hena Habegger

15 August 1967

Drums

Marc Lynn

7 April 1964

Bass

Freddy Scherer

21 October 1966

Guitar

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR KEVIN MERZ

Kevin Merz was born in Switzerland in 1978 and is of Swiss, German and Ghanaian origins. He studied at the Italian Institute of Photography in Milan but has always been fascinated also by moving images. In the year 2000 he was assistant to director Wolfgang Lindroos in Zurich. This experience has deeply marked his way of doing cinema and his life. An apprenticeship by a shaman on the edge of reality, a trip on the brink of madness. A year later, in 2001, he was assistant to cult director Peter Fleischmann in the Babelsberger studios in Berlin, a further, enriching experience that brought him nearer to the German tradition of independent films.

In 2003 and 2004 his first two shorts were shown at the Locarno Festival, an important step that gave him confidence in his work and the envy to go on with his own projects.

In 2006 Kevin Merz worked as camera assistant for the cinematographer Ueli Steiger on the Hollywood blockbuster "10.000 B.C." by Roland Emmerich, a further, meaningful experience that enabled him to have a close look into the world of big-budget movies. He understood then that his heart belonged to independent documentary films. In 2007 he worked as free-lance on research works, cultural reportages and in the development of screenplays. In 2007 he realized his first documentary for cinema, "Glorious Exit", that marked the beginning of his career as an author. His documentaries have since won many awards and were selected in many international festivals.

In 2010 Kevin co-directed the documentary film "An African Election", selected for the World Cinema Documentary section of the Sundance Film Festival, thus celebrating a ten-year artistic collaboration with his brother Jarreth Merz, who co-directed the film with him.

In order to show the documentary in their country of origin, Ghana, and to sustain the implementation of free elections there, the two brothers undertook a "political safari" by travelling around the country with a mobile screen in order to show the film to people interested in it.

Since then Kevin Merz has taken care of various photo and video exhibitions, concerts and film screenings and is active on the cultural and underground scene of his city, Lugano. Since 2015 he has been working on the documentary "Gotthard" on the Swiss cult rockband of the same name that in August 2017 will premiere at the closing night on the Piazza Grande in Locarno – a meaningful venue both for the career of the band as well as for the director.

FILMOGRAPHY

2017

Gotthard - One Life, One Soul, documentary, 90min, Credit: Director

2016

Vision of Paradise, fairy tale documentary, 90min, Credit: Camera/ Creative Advisor

2015

Foodies, children series, 3 episodes, Credit: Director of photography

Human Nature, video installation, 3 clips, Credit: Director

La Natura, video clip, Credit: Director

2014

Cernunnos, screenplay in development, Credit: Writer/Director

2013

The Commissioner, documentary, 50min, Credit: Director of Photography

2012

A Political Safari (2012-2016 - ongoing project), mobile cinema outreach campaign to promote peaceful elections in Africa, Credit: Co-Creator and Promoter

Junior Revolution, screenplay, Credit: Writer

Terra, documentary, 50min, Credit: Director

Festivals: Solothurner Filmtage 2012, Kaunas International Film Festival 2013

2011

An African Election, documentary, Credit: Co-Director/Camera

Festivals: participated in more than 30 festivals among which IDFA 2010, Panorama: Reflecting Images, Sundance 2011, World Cinema Documentary Competition

Awards and nominations: RIFF (Rome Independent Film Festival) 2011: New Vision Award; Vision du réel 2011: Audience Award; Atlanta Film Festival 2011: Grand Jury Award; Nominee Film Independent Spirit Awards 2012; Winner of the "Nafca" (African Oscars)

2009

USA - MEX, screenplay for cinema documentary, Credit: Writer

2008

Glorious Exit, documentary, Credit: Director/Camera

Festivals: participated in more than 20 festivals, Cinema du réel 2008, Competition Leipzig Documentary Film Festival 2008, Fortnight documentary MOMA 2009, Hof International Film Festival 2008

Awards: OUFF 2008, 13th Festival de Ourense; Best Documentary Award Real life documentary festival 2008, Walter Mosley Prize for Best Documentary; Astra Film Festival 2009, Special Jury Prize for Best Cinema Narrative

Short documentaries

Ghanaba (2005), short documentary, Credit: Director and Camera

Festivals: Pan African Film Festival Los Angeles 2005; Pan African Film Festival Denver 2005

Sankofa (2004), short-experimental-film, Credit: Director

Festivals: Film Festival Locarno, 2004, Cineasti del presente video

Rekrutenschule Schweiz (2003), short-documentary, Credit: Director

Festivals: Film Festival Locarno, 2003, Cineasti del presente video

Amka Films Productions SA

Amka Films Productions SA was founded in 1987 by Tiziana and Mohammed Soudani. The company is active in theatrical and TV production of long feature fiction and documentary films. (www.amka.ch). It became a public limited company in 1988.

Tiziana Soudani is a member of:

- **ACE, Atelier Cinéma Européen**
- **Swiss Film Academy**
- **EFA, European Film Academy**
- **Board of Directors of the Swiss Films Foundation**
- **Board of Directors of the Swiss Films Academy**
- **Fiction / Documentary College of the Federal Office of Culture**
- **Experts of Film Fund & Commission de IDM/BLS - Business Location Südtirol/AltoAdige (2011-2016)**

Awards:

- **Award for the production by Los Angeles La Femme Film Festival, 2007**
- **UK-Italy Awards Creative Industries Award for Best Innovative Budget to Producers Carlo Cresto-Dina and Tiziana Soudani at the 69th Venice International Festival, 2012**
- **Award Ciak d'Oro 2013 best producers for "L'intervallo" by Leonardo Di Costanzo**
- **Best producer prize Repubblica e Cantone Ticino - Locarno International Film Festival, 2013**
- **Honorary Prize 2017 for contributions to Swiss cinema, Solothurner Filmtage**

Tiziana Soudani has been member:

- **Official Jury - Festival FrontDoc Aosta 2016**
- **Official Jury - Festival Cinéma Tous Ecrans Geneva 2015**
- **Official Jury - Festival du Noir, Courmayeur 2010**
- **Official Jury - Festival dei Popoli Firenze 2010**
- **Official Jury - Mannheim-Heidelberg International Filmfestival, 2004**
- **Jury Swiss Film Prize, 2002**
- **Jury Section "Pardi di domani", Locarno Festival 2001**

IN POST-PRODUCTION:

- **"Gotthard – One Life, One Soul" documentary by Kevin Merz**
- **"Se ti fai pecora, u lupu ti mangia" documentary by Antonio Prata**
- **"Greetings from nowhere" documentary by André Julikà Tavares and Gianluca Monnier**
- **"Barbara adesso" feature tv-movie by Alessandra Müller**

IN PRE-PRODUCTION:

Daniel Schweizer's documentary "Amazonian Cosmos" a Swiss / Italian co-production
Feature film "Lazzaro Felice" by Alice Rohrwacher, a Swiss / Italy / France co-production

IN DEVELOPMENT:

Feature film "The Dreamer of Dreams" by Alessandra Müller (SSA Fiction 2013)
Feature film "Cernunnos" by Kevin Merz
Feature film "Moshe Hassen" by Mohammed Soudani
Feature film "Il demolitore di camper" by Luca Saltini and Tina Boillat, with Lara Fremder, directed by Robert Ralston
Feature film "Capostazione Molinari" by Dimitri and Lara Fremder, directed by Mohammed Soudani
Feature film "Love me tender" by Klaudia Reynicke

RECENT FICTIONS :

- 2017** **L'intrusa (The Intruder)** by Leonardo Di Costanzo
95', (a co-prod. Italy/Switzerland/France)
QUINZAINE DES REALISATEURS, Cannes 2017
Distribution in Switzerland: Filmcoopi ZH – International sales. The Match Factory
- 2016** **Il nido (The Nest)** by Klaudia Reynicke
75', (a co-prod. Switzerland/Italy)

In competition at LOCARNO FILM FESTIVAL 2016, Cinéastes du Présent - 30th Braunschweig International Film Festival 2016 – Ventana Sur 2016, Market - Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival 2016 - 32th Santa Barbara International Film Festival 2017 (Nominated for ADL Stand Up Award) Journées cinématographiques de Soleure 2017 - 34. Festival Cinematografico International del Uruguay Swiss Cinema in Venice 2017 - Sguardi Altrove Milan International Women Film Festival 2017 – Bolzano Film Festival Bozen 2017
avec Ondina Quadri, Fabrizio Rongione, Sonia Gessner, Diego Ribon, Giovanni Franzoni, Luigi Diberti, Giosia Gilardi
Distribution in Switzerland: Filmcoopi ZH – International sales. The Open Reel

- 2016** **Le ultime cose** by Irene Dionisio
90', (a co-prod. Italy/Switzerland/France)
with Christina Rosamilia, Fabrizio Falco, Roberto De Francesco, Alfonso Santagata, Salvatore Cantalupo, Anna Ferruzzo
VENICE FILM FESTIVAL 2016, Semaine de la critique
ASTI FILM FESTIVAL 2016: Award Best Actress to Christina Rosamilia and Award Best Director to Irene Dionisio – MittelCinemaFestival 2016 – Festival du Film italien de Villerupt 2016 (Awards of Jury Amilcar) – Solothurner Film Tage, 2017 – Göteborg Film Festival 2017 International sales: Ad
- 2015** **Sangue del mio sangue** by Marco Bellocchio
100', a co-production Italy/France/Switzerland, with Roberto Herlitzka, Pier Giorgio Bellocchio, Lidiya Liberman, Fausto Russo Alesi, Alba Rohrwacher, Federica Fracassi, Alberto Cracco, Bruno Cariello, Toni Bertorelli, Filippo Timi, Elena Bellocchio, Ivan Franek
International sales Match Factory
Distribution in Switzerland: Filmcoopi ZH
In competition : VENICE FILM FESTIVAL 2015, Award FIPRESCI – TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL 2015
- 2014** **Le meraviglie (When You Were Born)** by Alice Rohrwacher, 111', Italy/Swiss/German coproduction, with Sam Louwick, Sabine Timoteo, Alba Rohrwacher, Monica Bellucci, Maria Alexandra Lungu
Swiss Distribution: Filmcoopi ZH
Festivals:
- CANNES 2014 OFFICIAL SELECTION, GRAND JURY AWARD
- Filmfest München 2014 - Cinevision Award
- Zürich Film Festival 2014 - Gala Premieres
- New Horizons Abu Dhabi Film Festival 2014, Black Pearl Award
- Seville European Film Festival 2014, Special Jury Award
- Mar del Plata International Film Festival 2014, Best Screenplay Award
- Nastri d'argento (Silver Ribbon) 2014 – Special Ribbon to Alice Rohrwacher for the international success of the film ; Special Mention of the Guglielmo Biraghi Award for actress debut to Maria Alexandra Lungu
- 2014** **Oro verde** by Mohammed Soudani, comedy, 90', with Fausto Sciarappa, Giorgia Würth, Carlos Leal, Leonardo Nigro, Ignazio Oliva, Simona Bernasconi, Gaia Parisi
Swiss Distribution : Praesens Film
VoD Distribution: EuroVoD et LeKino.ch
- 49th Solothurn Film Festival (2014) – In competition for the Audience Award
SWISSPERFORM Award to Leonardo Nigro for best supporting role
- Overlook Cinemavvenire Film Festival, Rome (2014) - Official Competition
- Ariano International Film Festival, Italy
- International Features Film Festival, New York
- Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, Florida
- 2012** **L'intervallo** by Leonardo Di Costanzo, 90', (a Italy/Swiss production)
- 69. Venice Film Festival, Section "Orizzonti":
FIPRESCI Award
Francesco Pasinetti Award
Fedic Award
Lanterna Magica Award CICT-Unesco Enrico Fulchignoni
Aif-Forfilmfest Award
UK-Italy Creative industries Award for the Best Innovative Budget to producers Carlo Cresto-Dina and Tiziana Soudani
De Sica Award
- Estoril Film Festival (Portugal):
Award for Best Film
- 25. International Festival Cinema giovane Castellinaria (competition 16-20)
Award for Best Film
Artistic award to Swiss producer by the SSR SRG Swiss Television, Soleure 2013
27. Bozner Filmtage 2013, Award for Best Film

Ciak d'oro 2013 for Best Directorial Debut
 Ciak d'oro 2013, for Best Producers to Tiziana Soudani and Carlo Cresto-Dina
 Davide di Donatello 2013 for Best Directorial Debut
 - TIFF - Toronto International Film Festival 2012 - Discovery
 - RIFF Reykjavik International Film Festival 2012 - New Visions
 - 14th Rio de Janeiro International Film Festival - Panorama
 - Prix FICE to Leonardo Di Costanzo for Best Directorial Debut
 - 56th BFI London Film Festival - Journey
 - 3rd Festival International du Film La Roche sur Yon – International Competition
 - 14° Mumbai International Film Festival
 - Festival du Film Italien de Villerupt 2012 - Competition
 - Viennale 2012 - Features
 - Prix De Sica Young Talents to Alessio Gallo and Francesca Riso
 - Lisbon & Estoril Film Festival 2012
 Best Film Award
 - SIFF Cinema Italian Style, Seattle

2011 **Corpo Celeste** by Alice Rohrwacher, 90', (Italy/France/Switzerland) – Quinzaine des Réalisateurs Cannes 2011, Sundance 2012, Karlovy Vary, London, Dubai and many others festivals and different Awards - 2 Nominations David di Donatello 2012
 Swiss Distributor : Filmcoopi – International Sales: RAI Trade

2010 **Lionel**, by Mohammed Soudani, 94', HD>35mm (Amka Films, Switzerland/Nikadys Production, Ivory Coast) – with Fabrizio Rongione, Fatou Kine Boye, Max Tardioli, Lorenzo Tanzi, Mona Petri and the lion TZAR - Italian and German Version - Invited in different Children International Film Festivals
 Swiss distributor: Amka Films Distribution - International Sales: Adriana Chiesa Enterprises
www.film-lionel.ch

RECENT DOCUMENTAIRES FOR THEATRICAL RELEASE:

2017 **Non ho l'età**, by Olmo Cerri (a co-production Switzerland/Italy), 93'
 Festival International Vision du Réel 2017, Compétition Helvétique

2017 **The sense of beauty**, by Valerio Jalongo (a co-production Switzerland/Italy), 75'
 Festival International Vision du Réel 2017, Compétition Helvétique

2017 **Last ride**, by Andrea Pellerani, 75'
 Festival Internazionale del Cinema Documentario, primavera 2017, Taranto (Official Selection)

2013 **Heritage**, by Philippe Aractingi 90', Liban/France/Switzerland

2011 **Unbelgiocare**, by Mohammed Soudani, 90', Swiss Distributor Amka Films Distribution / Compagnia Finzi Pasca
 (More than 5.000 dvd sold)