

MERGE presents,
in association with **WRECKING CREW:**

bouncethemovie.com

Documentary | 72 minutes | Directed by Jerome Thélia

BOUNCE

HOW THE BALL TAUGHT THE WORLD TO PLAY



Worldwide Distribution: Journeyman Pictures | Lucy Matthias | films@journeyman.tv

Inspired by the book,

“The Ball: Discovering the Object of the Game”

written by John Fox.
Available on amazon.com.

Download **clips** and **images** via Dropbox.



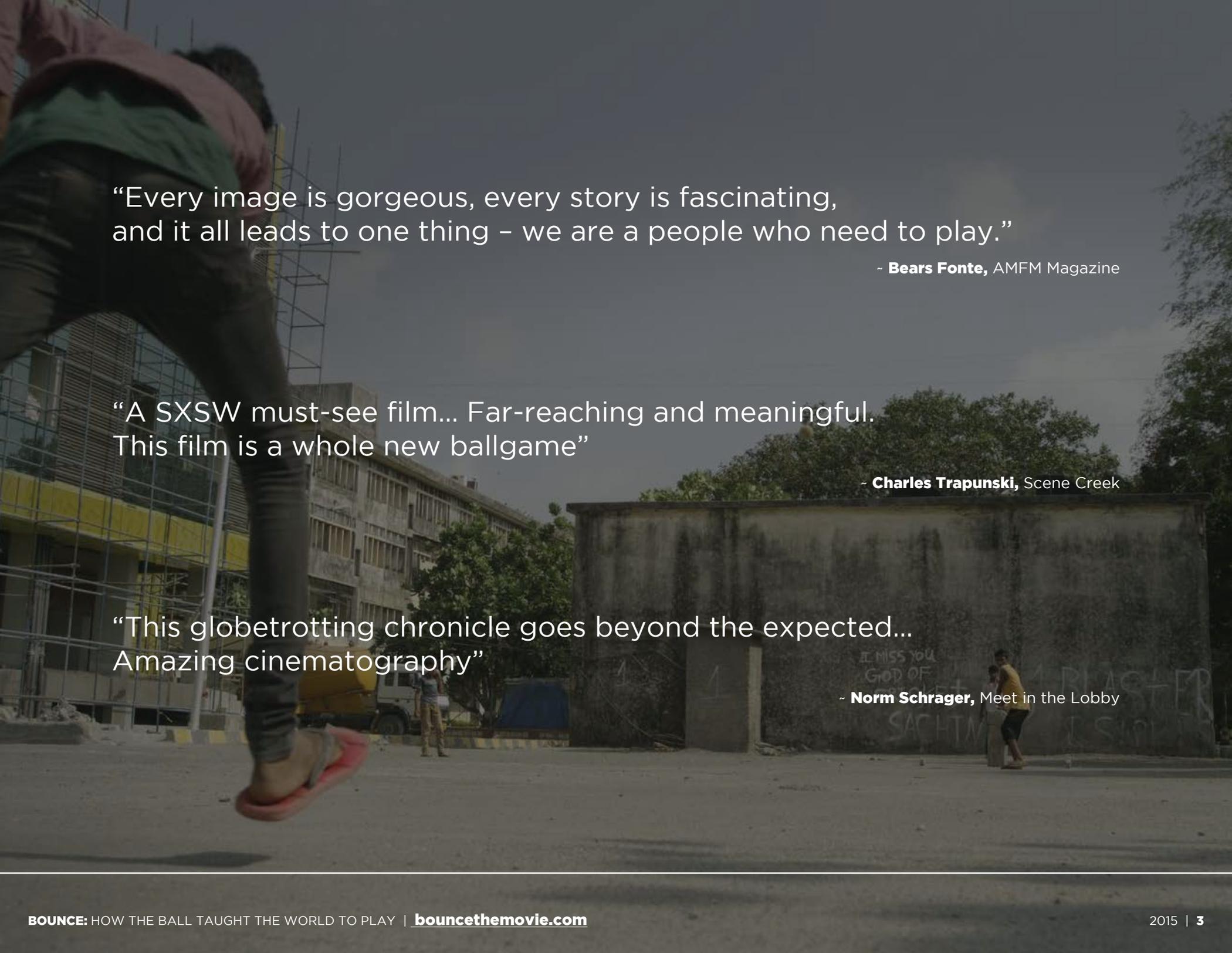
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“Every image is gorgeous, every story is fascinating,
and it all leads to one thing – we are a people who need to play.”

~ **Bears Fonte**, AMFM Magazine

“A SXSW must-see film... Far-reaching and meaningful.
This film is a whole new ballgame”

~ **Charles Trapunski**, Scene Creek

“This globetrotting chronicle goes beyond the expected...
Amazing cinematography”

~ **Norm Schrager**, Meet in the Lobby

SYNOPSIS

From Brazilian favelas to dusty Congolese villages, from neolithic Scottish isles to modern soccer pitches, BOUNCE explores the little-known origins of our favorite sports. The film crosses time, languages and continents to discover how the ball has staked its claim on our lives and fueled our passion to compete. Equal parts science, history and cultural essay, BOUNCE removes us from the scandals and commercialism of today's sports world to uncover the true reasons we play ball, helping us reclaim our universal connection to the games we love.



FILMMAKER STATEMENT

I remember that singular WTF moment viscerally. It was a frigid December 25th, 2011 in Kirkwall, Scotland on the island of Orkney—a speck of rock and moss in the North Sea that's closer to Iceland than London. It was our first shoot on what turned out to be a three-year global journey. I'd been wellbriefed by my old friend and colleague, John Fox, who had traveled here a few years earlier and written about the peculiar sporting ways of the Orcadians in his book, *The Ball: Discovering the Object of the Game* - the same book we had the audacity (OK, balls) to turn into a feature length documentary. But not even John's fluid prose and anthropological insight could have prepared us for witnessing this first-hand.

David McLain, cinematographer and long-time producing partner had the Steadicam strapped to his body, our brand new Red Epic camera humming away at 96 frames per second. David's a tall guy, in good shape, and with 40 pounds of camera gear lashed to his body strikes a reasonably imposing figure. But not here. Not in the thick of this medieval scrum of Nordic giants who will stop at nothing, truly nothing, to get to the ball.

The Kirkwall Ba', as this annual rite is called, is a game of 'no rules', played with total commitment by large men driven as much by killer instinct as by loyalty to ancient tradition. It's played in the narrow streets of this small town and can sprawl in any direction, at any time as it has no boundaries. It struck me in that moment that our dainty camera crew from the States wouldn't even show up in the rear view mirror after being flattened by the stampede. As the scrum lunged toward us, carrying with it a cubic ton of muscle, the ground shook under my feet and that famous line from JAWS popped into my head, "I think we're going to need a bigger boat." I looked over at Anne Carkeet, producer (and more importantly in this moment of primal terror, my wife). Despite having bigger metaphorical balls than the rest of us, she looked profoundly vulnerable, conscientiously dialing down the level on the shotgun mic, her only defense.



FILMMAKER STATEMENT continued

I was hooked. Hooked by the combination of absurdity and urgency that this ball game –and all ball games –somehow manage to hold in perfect, illogical balance.

It dawned on me then that if you were to follow the ball from this forgotten North Sea outpost, forward and backward in time, zig-zagging around the globe, you would hear the same melody played in an infinite number of keys, most of which you never knew existed. The urge to play ball bounces along an unbroken arc that stretches deep into our evolutionary past and far into the future. It connects our ape brothers and sisters to the first video game, Pong, to virtual reality games not yet invented, by way of

Mayan rituals, Egyptian pharaohs and the Super Bowl. It is absolutely universal and yet it confounds rationality at every turn.

The evolutionary biologists, anthropologists and historians who have studied play know that anything that universal has to be essential. And yet all attempts to reduce it to a set of common sense benefits fail utterly to explain or capture the reckless abandon, the poetry of body and mind, the labyrinth of stories, rules, games, metaphors, social customs - all that meaning thrust upon the simplest object in the world.

And so, embracing the same foolhardy spirit of the Orcadians who rush to the center of the pack when every normal instinct is yelling “flee!”, we decided to make a film to answer the unanswerable question: “why do we play ball?”



BIOGRAPHIES



Jerome Thélia
(Director)

Jerome Thélia has long been fascinated by the intersection of art and technology. He has worked as a director, editor, colorist and visual effects artist for feature films, documentaries and commercials for 25 years. Co-founder with David McLain of the production company Merge, Jerome has taught film production at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan since 2001. Some recent credits include THE CALLING (director); MAD AS HELL (executive producer); THE ENCLAVE (colorist and post-sup); THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY (VFX colorist); and Academy Award winner CURFEW (colorist and post-sup).



Anne Carkeet
(Producer)

Anne Carkeet produces nonfiction television and feature documentaries. She has worked extensively with Sundance Channel, as well as TLC, Biography, ESPN, Discovery, VH1 and PBS. Anne focuses on post-production and field producing, but she also directs and develops nonfiction television and feature projects. Anne was scrum-half for the Wesleyan Women's Rugby Club and the University of Sussex Women's Rugby Team.



Andrew Napier
(Producer/Editor)

Andrew Napier was born and raised in Wisconsin and attended the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Andrew was a producer of the 2013 Academy Award-winning short film CURFEW, and later edited its feature adaptation BEFORE I DISAPPEAR (SXSW 2014 Audience Award Winner). His screenplay for DOGTOOTH, a remake of the Academy Award-nominated Greek foreign film, is currently in development at Mandalay Pictures. Andrew directed the feature documentary MAD AS HELL (Hot Docs 2014 Conscious Media Award Winner), which follows Cenk Uygur, whose online news show "The Young Turks" has amassed over two billion views on YouTube. He also directed the narrative short GRANDMA'S NOT A TOASTER (Tribeca 2013) and the feature documentary MARY AND BILL (Wisconsin Film Festival 2011 Best Documentary). Andrew produced and edited the documentary THE PAST IS A GROTESQUE ANIMAL (2014), about the band "Of Montreal," released by Oscilloscope Laboratories.



BIOGRAPHIES continued



Philip Mershon
(Producer)

Philip Mershon is a documentary producer who has also worked on narrative features, network television shows, and a variety of video art projects. His production company, Omni Kino Media, is currently working on a French-American co-production of a feature length documentary entitled GAZZARA about the American film actor Ben Gazzara. In addition, Phil studied “play” at the École Philippe Gaulier in Paris.



John Fox
(Writer/Producer)

John Fox is a Harvard Ph.D. anthropologist and author of *The Ball: Discovering the Object of the Game* (Harper Perennial, 2012), the book that inspired the making of BOUNCE. Fox has excavated ancient ball courts in Central America, traced Marco Polo’s route across China, and bicycled Africa’s Rift Valley in search of human origins. He has contributed commentary on sports and culture to National Public Radio, has written for Smithsonian, Outside, and Salon, among other publications, and in 2010 was awarded a MacDowell Colony fellowship. He is also the author of *Around the World with a Million Kids: Adventures of an Online Explorer*, a collection of essays written while co-leading the groundbreaking Quest interactive educational expeditions. He lives in Boston.



BIOGRAPHIES continued



David McLain
(Cinematographer/
Producer)

David McLain is a world-renowned National Geographic photographer and co-founder of Merge. His work has appeared in editorial publications around the world including National Geographic, Smithsonian, Time, and Traveler. As a cinematographer David has broken new ground for clients including Sony, GE, National Geographic TV, Nau Clothing and Jockey.



Nathan Halpern
(Composer)

Nathan Halpern is a composer and songwriter based out of New York City. Recent film scores include RICH HILL (winner, Best Documentary, Sunday 2014) and MARINA ABRAMOVIC: THE ARTIST IS PRESENT (winner, Emmy Award and George Foster Peabody Award). Other film scores include KEHINDE WILEY: AN ECONOMY OF GRACE and ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN REVISITED. Halpern was recently commissioned to create '1913,' a music installation piece commemorating the 100-year anniversary of the first International Exhibition of Modern Art. Forthcoming film scores include Andrew Droz Palermo's ONE AND TWO and Ivy Meeropol's INDIAN POINT, which will premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival 2015.



Garth Neustadter
(Composer)

Garth Neustadter is an Emmy Award-winning composer and multi-instrumentalist. He has composed feature-length scores for Warner Bros., PBS, Turner Classic Movies, and China's CCTV, and his works have been heard in diverse venues ranging from Lincoln Center to the Nokia Theater. Neustadter has received multiple awards from ASCAP, was first prize winner of the TCM Film Composers Competition (selected by Hans Zimmer), and is a recipient of the prestigious Rappaport Prize for Music Composition. In 2011, he became one of the youngest composers to receive a Primetime Emmy Award for his score for the PBS documentary, JOHN MUIR IN THE NEW WORLD. More recently, he has collaborated with director James Franco (TAR), and his work will be performed in upcoming seasons by Grammy Award-winning violinist, Hilary Hahn, as part of the Encores Contest.

BIOGRAPHIES continued



Rodrigo de la Parra
(Designer/Visual Effects Artis):

Rodrigo de la Parra has designed titles and visual effects for feature films including “Perfect Stranger” and “The Nanny Diaries”. He co-founded vfx company Hopr, serving numerous commercial clients including Sony Entertainment, Kodak and Electronic Arts.



Bill Mershon
(Executive Producer)

Bill Mershon is a successful entrepreneur with over 30 years of experience consulting with clients as they manage their business risks. He is a cofounder and the managing partner for Hays Companies, the 16th largest insurance broker in the United States offering risk management, employee benefits and retirement planning globally for their diverse clients. His life philosophies are simple and were firmly established in the sixties, “eat when you get hungry, sleep when you get tired and live to have fun.” A self-described “sports junkie”, Bill is excited to work with partners who think like he does on projects such as BOUNCE.



PRODUCTION CREDITS

directed by

Jerome Thélia

produced by

Anne Carkeet

Phil Mershon

Andrew Napier

David McLain

Jerome Thélia

Greg Wright

John Fox

executive producer

William Mershon

written by

John Fox

Jerome Thélia

cinematography

David McLain

Trevor Tweeten

Daniel Katz

edited by

Greg Wright

Andrew Napier

music by

Nathan Halpern

Garth Neustadter

animation director

Rodrigo de la Parra

sound re-recording mixer

Gene Park



FESTIVALS

U.S.

SXSW
Independent Film Festival of Boston
Mountain Film Festival
Canadian Sport Film Festival
Destiny City Film Festival
Portland Film Festival
Docutah
Northeast Film Festival
Hell's Half Mile
Balinale
Tallgrass Film Festival
Flyway Film Festival
Savannah Film Festival
Napa Valley Film Festival

Europe & Asia

Balinale (Indonesia)
Berlin IFAB
Bergen International Film Festival (Norway)
Raindance Film Festival (UK)
Portsmouth International Film Festival (UK)
Marbella International Film Festival (Spain)
Spirit Film Festival (Israel)