

**TORONTO PICTURES**

*presents*

*an* **ADHARA PROPERTIES** *production*

# **PUNCTURED HOPE**

**A Story About Trokosi and  
Young Girls' Slavery in Today's West Africa**

**A BRUNO PISCHIUTTA FILM**

**STARRING**

Belinda Siamey

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**

Bruno Pischutta

Daria Trifu

**STORY AND SCREENPLAY BY**

Pastor Kingsley Sam Obed

Bruno Pischutta

**ORIGINAL MUSIC SCORE COMPOSED BY**

David Brandstatter

**PRODUCED BY**

Mustapha Adam

**DIRECTED BY**

Bruno Pischutta

## SYNOPSIS:

Punctured Hope is a revolutionary feature film that exposes the evil of the African continent's antique and tribal cultural believe that enslaves, mutilates and sexually abuses virgin girls (TROKOSI). The film is based on a real story. The heroin of the film was smuggled out of the shrine when impregnated by the fetish priest. The pregnancy was not aborted and the girl returned back to school. She completed her studies and now fights to liberate the other 25,000 women who are still locked up in this draconian traditional system.

Punctured Hope is a dramatic expose of the enslavement of young girls and women in West Africa. Punctured Hope not only reveals the startling ages-old tribal cultural practices that promote the continued enslavement, mutilation and sexual abuse of West Africa's young girls and women, it does so with an all-African cast, whose lead actress is, herself, a survivor of these culturally imbedded religious beliefs which have affected millions of African women over the past 300 years.

"Punctured Hope" dramatises the dehumanising and traumatising experience, both physical and psychological, that victims undergo and questioned the rational for using girls as sacrificial lambs for the sins of their relatives. 'Trokosi,' which is practised in parts of the Volta and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana, Togo and Benin, is a system where innocent virgin girls are confined to fetish shrines as reparation to deities for crimes committed by their relatives.

### **“PUNCTURED HOPE” - THE MOTION PICTURE:**

Status: Completed (2008)

Feature Film: Drama, 35 mm; 91 minutes

Budget: US \$5.8 Million

In August of 2005, Award Winning Director Bruno Pischiutta and Daria Trifu went to Ghana to produce one of today's most extraordinary feature film. Punctured Hope is an exemplary factual evidence of the best kind of political film and of “art breaking rules” in order to influence social change.

It is the first Hollywood standard, 35 mm feature film with an all-African cast produced in Ghana by a North American company. The cast consists of members of the Toronto Pictures Film Academy of Ghana and top, professional Ghanaian film actors. (NO graphic scenes and NO coarse language).

Punctured Hope is a story about TROKOSI, young girls' slavery and genital mutilation in today's West Africa. It is a film based on the true story of actress Belinda Siamey who plays herself in the role of “Edinam”. Siamey, now 24 years old, is presently living in Accra, Ghana and is leading the struggle for the liberation of the 25,000 women who remain enslaved through the practice of Trokosi. This dreadful practice, has affected millions of African women over the past 300 years.

The protagonist of the factual drama, Ms. Siamey, depicts the main character, Edinam. This valiant woman relived her traumatic captivity and the intensifying infliction of abuses, by summoning the strength of her unflinching moral fibre and her conviction, in her quest to bring this practice of glaring human abuses to a halt.

Entertaining, although dealing with a very sensitive subject, Punctured Hope portrays the real life of an African Village and the usual daily existence of its people: they laugh, they cry, they work and they love each other. Punctured Hope shows some scenes of black magic, that have never previously been seen in a feature film. For one hour and a half, the screen is filled with both very emotional and extraordinary visual content - the viewers will see some of the "real" Africa in all its beauty.

The filming took place in a typical village in the Amasaman District of Greater Accra region, in the rain forest and in the capital city of Ghana - Accra.

## **“PUNCTURED HOPE” - THE MOTION PICTURE**

Film Critique

Press Releases

Articles in the Press

By Sabrina Johnson

# PUNCTURED HOPE....



**breaking the rules**

**P**unctured Hope, the feature film based on the true story of Belinda Siamey, is presently in post-production and it will soon be presented to audiences worldwide. The plot consists of the enslavement of a young girl within the confines of a shrine, outside a small village in Ghana and her horrific ordeal through sexual abuse and genital mutilation. Her destiny is dictated by a tradition that is outlawed by the government, although not persecuted due to social and law-enforcing complexities. The film's screenwriters, Pastor Kingsley Sam Obed and Bruno Pischiutta, aim at divulging this brutal time-honored practice to international audiences, because the majority of them are distressingly unaware of it.

The protagonist of the factual drama, Belinda Siamey, depicts the main character, Edinam. This valiant woman relived her traumatic captivity and the intensifying infliction of abuses, by summoning the strength of her unflinching moral fiber and her conviction, in her quest to bring this practice of glaring human abuses to a halt.

In the course of the pre-production stage, Toronto Pictures came to the determination of partially designating a Ghanaian team to the project, in order to deliver the most vivid resemblance of present day African reality in Ghana. This proved to be a successful measure as is self-evidenced by the film. The Producer, Mustapha Adam and the Assistant Director, Tony White Meribe, worked tirelessly in order to ascertain that the film presents an unmistakable reproduction of the several elements portraying the lifestyle and the cultural attributes of the story.

The shrine consists of a set design that is identical to the original, as are the costumes worn by the slaves, the manner in which the members of the shrine move about and the portrayal of the fetish priest's demeanor. Other technical details such as the scenes depicting rituals of black magic, complement the film, initiating the ambiance that the plot evolves in.

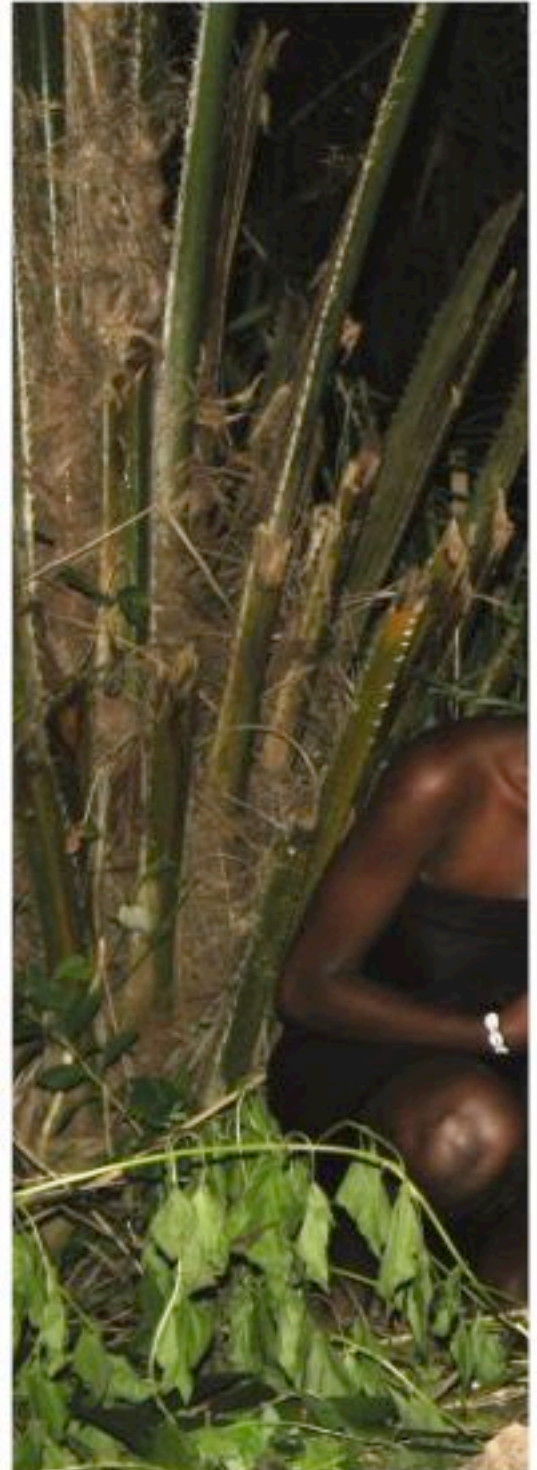
Members of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Vienna recorded the original musical score composed by David Brandstatter in Vienna. The music does not constitute a presentation of African folk musical content, as a matter of fact, it is defined by a modern classical nuance that enhances the environment and elevates the multitude of



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emotions experienced by the performers, as they are communicated to the audience.

The editing attains the flowing development of the story by diligently sequencing the events. The outcome captures the viewers' attention throughout the film.

Bruno Pischiutta, a brilliant director, is conceived to be someone with the capability of procuring the best possible performance from the actors he is directing, in an effort to communicate a distinct message to the spectators. Every film contains distinguished elements that inevitably reveal the intention of the director. His flair for accomplishing the actors' unequivocal comprehension of their characters' essence and sentiments required to communicate the intended message is a remarkable skill. He has partially acquired this skill thanks to a lifetime of experience, gained by way of conducting multiple productions but, above all, this skill primarily consists of the innate ability to inspire others.

The content of the film's message is intentionally directed to the American public and to all the women who are involved in the struggle for women's liberation in particular. It is a film that introduces the social context of African life (in this case particularly relative to West Africa), and it evolves into a political film with a clear objective.

This expansion, from the social to the political aspect, is delivered with a dramatically poignant effect in the conclusion, as the medium of film assumes the idiosyncrasies of television, thereby revolutionizing the rules of cinematography.

*Punctured Hope's* intent is to awaken the audience's consciousness. By effectively rendering the spectators emotionally susceptible and intellectually engaged at the same time, the film's message implies their accountability in making a choice. In the end, the eventuality of action or inaction on the spectator's part corresponds, in fact, to a choice taken. This is an exemplary factual evidence of the best kind of political film and of "art breaking rules" in order to influence social change. **D**

**DAVID BRANDSTATTER:**  
**Composer**

**“Punctured Hope” - Original Music Score**

Born in Austria, David Reinhard Brandstätter discovered an early talent for playing and writing classical music, being an exceptionally gifted piano player.

Growing up as a film music enthusiast in a musical family with his parents and sister Regina Brandstätter, a violinist and violin teacher, David attended piano lessons starting at the early age of six at the conservatory of Graz.

In 2001 David Brandstatter graduated at University Salzburg FH MultimediaArt focused on film music composition and audio production studying under composers, orchestrators and studio professionals Yoon K. Lee, Gianni Stiletto, Martin Löcker and Hannes M. Schalle, as well as music executive producer Gary English.

After three years of producing audio for New York based international games company Take2 as Composer and Sound Designer at Rockstar Games in Vienna, David co-founded a studio company named rebrand Music Productions GmbH which is located within one of the most historical film and audio production areas in Vienna, the "Filmstadt Wien".

*"David Brandstatter composed outstanding music for film and TV productions, as well as for a bunch of games, having an exceptional talent for musical storytelling. David's styles and ideas range from Hollywood's well known orchestral sound to modern genres, without breaking with dramaturgy and musical traditions. By now, Brandstätter has composed music using widely varying styles ranging from impressive orchestral scores, big sweeping themes, fast paced action cues to modern pop and jazz arrangements" - Bethany Reismann*

**PRODUCTIONS (partial)**

**“SCREW CREW”** – 3-D animated TV Series, Tradewind Pictures New York  
Executive Producer & Music Score Composition

**“PUNCTURED HOPE”** – Feature Film, Toronto Pictures, Canada/USA/Ghana  
Music Score Composition

**“DRESDEN”** - two part TV-Movie, ZDF/Teamworx  
Additional Music Score to Harald Kloser, Los Angeles

**“STURMFLUT”** – two part TV-Movie, RTL/Teamworx  
Additional Music Score to Harald Kloser, Los Angeles

**“VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA”**, conducted by Bobby McFerrin **“Concert for Europe”**  
Album Post Production - Editing / Mixing

**“THEME PLANET”**, 3-D Shortfilm (Producer: Michael Sormann)  
Music Score Composition

**“MESSAGE”** (Pop Production)  
Original Composition, Arrangement, Mixing, Mastering

**“AINOA”** (Feature Film)  
Teaser Music Score Composition

# RISING STAR

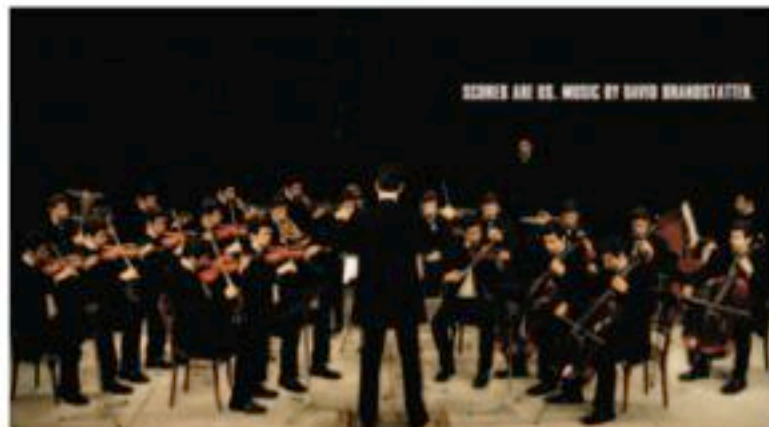
REBRAND  
PRODUCTIONS

by Deborah Gilels



## David Brandstatter

For him, the score has to embrace the movie from beginning to end, reflecting the development of the story, tailored as close to the plot as possible. "Actually film music is very similar in structure to opera – except that in modern films the actors rarely sing."



**T**his year, David Brandstatter will begin his collaboration with Toronto Pictures on their upcoming productions *Punctured Hope* and *Virtary – Stories of Lost Virginity*. Prior to the first film's commencement, he sits with Contributing Editor Deborah Gilels to discuss composing for film, his family background, the technological state of modern film composing and his plans for the future.

**DG: David, when did you first encounter your passion for film music?**

David: At the age of 6, my parents took me to the theatre to see *E.T.* I really loved the movie and the music even more. My parents bought me the soundtrack recording with John Williams' music. I listened to it so much that they decided to buy me another soundtrack. Since then I loved film music – I grew up with *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones* and many other wonderful scores from that era.

**DG: What is your musical background?**

David: First of all, my family was my musical background. My grandfather was a bandmaster in Budapest, my grandmother was a violinist, my aunts are opera singers, and I started to play the piano very early, at the age of four. Besides that, for many years I had to listen to my sister, Regina, practicing the violin, which was difficult for me. Now she is a successful soloist performing with the leading members of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and teaches at the University of Music in Graz. I started to compose when I started to play the piano. I only wanted to play my own compositions, which was not always appreciated by my teachers. Years later, I recorded my first orchestra film score when I was studying film music and audio production in Salzburg.

**DG: What was your largest, or most important project so far?**

David: Because there is always a difference in production size and tone, it's always the current project I'm working on that is the most important, and there are some great projects coming up for me – so I'm very excited about the future. I'm especially looking forward to my collaboration with Toronto Pictures this year.

**DG: What do you think about music in relation to a film?**

David: If you receive dailies from the set without sound or music, you get a picture of how vital the audio aspect of a movie is. Music and sound can ruin a film, but they can also create that certain "magic" which makes a movie a worldwide success. Could you imagine *Star Wars* without humming at least one of the famous themes?

**DG: How do you work once you start a new movie, how do you develop your ideas?**

David: First of all I read the script to get a picture of where and when the movie takes place and to find connections between the characters, their background and motivation. This procedure already creates the first musical drafts in my acoustic mind. I tend to lean on Wagner's "Leitmotif" technique, to establish "musical identifiers" through melodies or instruments, which are representing elements within the movie, like places, characters, or emotional states. Actually film music is very similar in structure to opera – except that in modern films the actors rarely sing.

**DG: When you are working, what equipment do you use?**

David: I'm excited about the astonishing developments of software in the past few years and I'm currently used to composing on several networked Gigastudio machines with Steinberg Nuendo as the sequencer, using my custom instrument library combined with instruments by East West, Vienna Symphonic Library and Sonic Implants. This is a great setup to compose MIDI Mock-ups before recording real orchestra over a time-locked sampler-score. If the budget fits for real musicians, we at *Rebrand Productions* have access to two huge recording stages. Our studios are also equipped with Pro Tools Systems for mixing, recording and audio postproduction.

**DG: What are your plans for the future?**

David: As the founder of *Rebrand Productions*, I'm looking forward to composing scores for new and interesting movies. Let's see what the future will bring.

**DG: A personal question – are you married, or still available?**

David: I spend most of my time on business and I am hardly ever home before 2a.m., so I don't think I'm an ideal partner. So better keep your hands off composers! **D**