



AMAZONAS, MAIOR RIO DO MUNDO

THE EXTRAORDINARY REDISCOVERY OF THE FIRST FEATURE-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY SHOT IN THE AMAZON HAS ITS WORLD PREMIERE AT THE PORDENONE SILENT FILM FESTIVAL

October 8, 2023 - Press release

Climate change is unquestionably one of the fundamental issues of our time, and much depends on the survival of certain ecosystems essential to our planet. Top of the list is the Amazon, stretching between Brazil, Peru and Colombia and home to the world's largest rainforest and numerous indigenous peoples.

On Tuesday October 10th, the **Pordenone Silent Film Festival** will be presenting the world premiere of the newly rediscovered ***Amazonas, maior rio do mundo***, the first feature-length documentary shot in the Amazon and an extraordinary document from 1918 that highlights the wealth of natural resources in this highly disputed territory.

The film's own history is a fascinating story on its own. Long considered the Holy Grail of lost Brazilian cinema, it was rediscovered earlier this year in the **Národní filmový archiv** of Prague: "I was sent a link by the curators shortly after I made an archive visit," says Giornate director **Jay Weissberg**, "who had it catalogued as a U.S.-produced film from 1925 called 'Wonders of the Amazon.' Within seconds I realized that it was much earlier and couldn't have been an American production. After a bit of research I had a hunch that it was **Silvino Santos'** legendary lost film."

Santos was a Portuguese director who moved to Brazil when young and began making films in 1913. Belém-based scholar Sávio Stoco wrote his dissertation on Santos and excitedly confirmed Weissberg's suspicion, also revealing its unsavory history. An associate of Santos stole the negative and took it to Europe, where he had it retitled while claiming he was the director. First released in 1921 and then distributed throughout the continent, the film was released in Czechoslovakia in 1925 but by 1931 all trace had been lost and Santos himself never knew that his associate had sold the film's rights abroad.

Now we have the opportunity to finally appreciate Santos' vision, with exceptional images of the Amazon, cities like Belém and Manaus, and indigenous peoples including the Huitito, recently in the news when four children from this group were lost in the jungle and survived for 40 days thanks to the knowledge about the rainforest learned from their elders.

Amazonas, maior rio do mundo will be screened later this month at the prestigious **Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival** in the Czech Republic, and then later in Brazil.

Info festival

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