

REVIEWS

REVIEW – ‘HÉLÈNE GRIMAUD: BETWEEN THE NOTES’ DIRECTED BY DAVID SERERO

Directed and produced by David Serero in a partnership with the Deutsche Grammophon label, ‘Hélène Grimaud: Between the Notes’ is a 2023 documentary feature about Hélène Grimaud, one of the greatest pianists of all time.

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Directed and produced by David Serero in a partnership with the Deutsche Grammophon label, ‘Hélène Grimaud: Between the Notes’ is a 2023 documentary feature about Hélène Grimaud, one of the greatest pianists of all time. The recipient of National Order of Merit and Legion of Honour, Hélène Grimaud is a living legend, performing to sold out audiences across the world as this maestro of the piano continuously mesmerises both audiences and critics with her unparalleled skills.

However, audiences have always longed to know the

person behind this famous face. Often known for being rebellious and free spirited, Grimaud has been described as a wunderkind; a truly gifted individual who knows what she is doing. Thus, David Serero takes us on a captivating journey through Grimaud's personal and professional life, revealing the key moments that shaped her exceptional career and the monumental challenges she faced in all facets of life to get where she is today.

Following an industry standard format of interspersing interview footage of the artist with her performing at several of her shows, the documentary doesn't waste any time to get going. Grimaud seems thrilled to talk about herself and as part of the audience, one can clearly see the passion that she has for the art. For the documentary, director David Serero includes interviews with important figures from the world of classical music. These include conductor Yannick Nezet-Seguin (who has worked with Grimaud), baritone Bryn Terfel, pianist Jacques Rouvier (who was Grimaud's teacher), TV host Alain Duault and a few significant others. Everyone agrees that there is no other like Grimaud and witnessing top industry professionals shower accolades on the artist is a wonderful thing to see.

Equally impressive is the cinematography that mixes stylized footage of Grimaud performing and rehearsing with real moments of her just being herself. This provides an interesting point of view; although we see artists as towering and monumental figures at the pinnacle of their respective fields, at the end of the day we are all humans; and we all experience pain and joy the same way. The camera work is fantastic and the title cards that divide the documentary into rough segments are a cherry on top.

Although the documentary is around 75 minutes, the time whizzes by in a flash. The pacing is perfect and so is the narrative cohesion, ensuring the audience never wavers in its attention. Equally impressive is the razor-sharp editing that expertly slices Grimaud speaking one instant with her performance the next. One instance of Grimaud passionately talking about her work would be sliced up with her focused in the middle of her performance, making for an exceptional moment that conveys so much in that instant. The resolve and passion that Grimaud puts into her performances is visible in her face and Serero does well to capture such moments multiple times.

Between The Notes portrays Grimaud as someone who is both funny, positive, and extremely passionate about the work she does. She talks about her passion with such conviction (that radiates through her eyes) that one can listen to her talk for hours about the thought process behind her performances and how she is inspired to do what she does. Artists are mostly reserved and shy away from the public eye but not Grimaud; she comes across as someone who genuinely wants people to know how much she loves what she does as she seeks to inspire others across the world.

It is only fitting that Grimaud is also a passionate human rights advocate and a supporter of endangered species. The documentary also sheds some light on her charitable endeavours, particularly her founding of the Wolf Conservation Center in South Salem. Having been inspired by a chance contact with a wolf, Grimaud was profoundly moved by the majestic beast.

Between The Notes is therefore a fascinating documentary, one that exudes passion and love for the creative arts. David Serero does a fantastic job at painting a portrait of one of the most foremost pianists alive today and he does so with the poise such an artist deserves. Visually arresting and thematically resonant, the documentary is an all-around delight.



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BETWEEN THE NOTES
THE DOCUMENTARY FILM

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