



OFFICIAL SELECTION

2010

SUNDANCE

FILM FESTIVAL



**BETTER ANGEL FILMS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
INDIEPIX FILMS
PRESENT**

A NEW FEATURE FILM BY

TIM RUTILI

FEATURING ORIGINAL MUSIC BY

CALIFONE

**ALL
MY
FRIENDS
ARE
FUNERAL
SINGERS**

www.funeralsingersfilm.com

SHORT

Zel is a fortune teller and shares her home with a group of ghosts who help her remove clients' aches and pains, advise gamblers, and channel cranky spirits to check on their loved ones. When a mysterious light appears in the woods and the ghosts realize that they are trapped, Zel is forced to come to terms with the origins of these spirits and let go of the only family she has ever known.

LONG

Zel is a fortune teller. For as long as she can remember she has shared her home with a group of ghosts -- a priest, a bride, a mute child, some washed up vaudevillians and a noisy, sight-impaired group of musicians. Zel works with her ethereal roommates to help her clients. Although it is supernatural work, it is also a job as she removes clients' aches and pains, advises gamblers, and channels cranky spirits to check on their loved ones.

When a mysterious light appears in the woods the ghosts realize that they are trapped and forge a rebellion. Zel is forced to come to terms with the origins of these spirits, and letting go of the only family she has ever known. Superstition, sound and the confines of Zel's claustrophobic house feed the film's construction, allowing the story to unfold like music.

Zel's unique existence is a lesson in hope, habit, and folklore. The atmosphere is utterly enchanting, mixed with an odd realism filled with as much humor as wonder. Angela Bettis, respected cult actress who is known for her roles in */May/* and */Girl Interrupted/* delivered an extraordinary performance as Zel.

Writer/director Tim Rutili is also a member of the band Califone whose members act in the film and provide the lush original soundtrack.

DIRECTOR BIO

Tim Rutili is a musician, filmmaker and visual artist. Founder of bands Red Red Meat and Califone, he serves as principal songwriter, lyricist and vocalist. Also a member of Ugly Casanova and Boxhead Ensemble, Rutili has contributed to albums by Modest Mouse, Sage Francis and many others. He has composed music for television, documentary and feature films, as well as directed short films and music videos.

Recent film work includes “Key to the Highway”, a film and video installation commissioned by Chris Doyle for the “50,000 Beds” exhibition at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum. His film “Three Legged Animals” was screened at the Getty Museum as part of Distributed Memory: Projected Images and Live Music. He also contributed photographs, collage and paintings to “Series 2 & 3” at Brooklyn Fireproof. Rutili’s installation “500 Polaroids” was part of “You are My Sunshine/You is My Sunshine” at Canada Gallery in New York.

He has performed worldwide and provided a musical score to numerous films and curated programs including: live score performance to “Early Abstractions” by Harry Smith at Images Film Festival in Toronto, as a member of Boxhead Ensemble at Doclands Film Festival in Dublin, “Stories, Maps and Notes from the Half-Light” live score performance to short films by Gem Cohen, Laura Moya, Braden King, Grant Gee, Paula Froehle, Gustav Deutch and Barbara Meter, and “God Builds Like Frank Lloyd Wright: Califone and the Animated Films of Brent Green” at Sundance Film Festival.

Together with Glen Sherman he founded Better Angel Films, which produced his feature directorial debut ALL MY FRIENDS ARE FUNERAL SINGERS, premiering at Sundance 2010 and distributed by IndiePix. ALL MY FRIENDS ARE FUNERAL SINGERS is also the companion piece to Califone’s ninth album of the same name. The screenplay for the film and many of the songs were written in tandem and incorporate many of the same images and characters. The album was released in October 2009 (Dead Oceans).

Currently, Rutili and Califone are creating the original soundtrack for “The Calling”, the Kindling Group’s four hour PBS series exploring faith and religion.

CALIFONE

JOE ADAMIK *Drums*
JIM BECKER *Banjo, Violin*
BEN MASSARELLA *Percussion*
TIM RUTILI *Vocals, Guitar, Keyboards*

DISCOGRAPHY

- **CALIFONE**
(FLYDADDY RECORDS, 1998)
- **CALIFONE**
(ROAD CONE RECORDS, 2000)
- **ROOMSOUND**
(PERISHABLE RECORDS, 2001)
- **SOMETIMES GOOD WEATHER FOLLOWS BAD PEOPLE**
(PERISHABLE RECORDS 2002)
- **DECELERATION ONE**
(PERISHABLE RECORDS, 2002)
- **QUICKSAND / CRADLESNAKES**
(THRILL JOCKEY, 2003)
- **DECELERATION TWO**
(PERISHABLE RECORDS, 2003)
- **HERON KING BLUES**
(THRILL JOCKEY, 2004)
- **EVERYBODY'S MOTHER VOL. 1**
(ROOTS CROWN ARTS, 2005)
- **ROOTS & CROWNS**
(THRILL JOCKEY, OCTOBER 10, 2006)
- **ALL MY FRIENDS ARE FUNERAL SINGERS**
(DEAD OCEANS, OCTOBER 6, 2009)

THE ALBUM

In an underground music landscape where 140 characters equals “journalism” and lone MP3s propel bands to momentary internet stardom, bands are here today and gone tomorrow. Califone is a band that defies this blueprint. Their albums are full of layers and textures, offering endless depth, entire universes to lose yourself in – and beyond the thick spectrum of sound, they do something even more important: They write great songs. Califone is a band that will stand the test of time.

The band is at the peak of its powers on *All My Friends Are Funeral Singers*, its sixth song based album. The long-awaited follow-up to 2006’s acclaimed *Roots and Crowns*, the album is the strongest collection of songs in a career with no shortage of strength. The subtlety and detail of Califone’s previous work is present here – the atmospheres are carefully nuanced, the percussion is both rattling and melodic, the melodies are rich and soulful, interspersed throughout softly strummed folk and electrified blues. *All My Friends Are Funeral Singers* is a dense collage of sounds, expertly formed into fully realized pop songs.

Roots and Crowns brought a newfound immediacy in Califone, most notably on their cover of Psychic TV’s “The Orchids.” They had never recorded a song that would function as an obvious single before this, and the results were spectacular. *ALL MY FRIENDS ARE FUNERAL SINGERS* expands upon these explorations – the hook on “Funeral Singers” is urgent and undeniable; the melody in “Polish Girls” is pop perfection. “Buñuel” is as epic as it is catchy, while “Evidence” and “Krill” are both absolute studies in beauty.

This pop exploration runs through the album, but it’s not at the expense of Califone’s vast musical vocabulary. The band’s multi-instrumentalists (Joe Adamik, Jim Becker, Ben Massarella, Tim Rutili) and several notable guests utilize an orchestra’s worth of instruments on the album, from the more typical (guitar, bass, piano), to the unusual (optigan, prepared piano, stylophone). Throw in more strings (fiddle, mandolin, banjo, baritone ukulele, cello), percussion (mbira, marimba, steel drum, thumb piano), some horns (bass clarinet, clarinet, French horn) and a whole mess of other oddities (ring modulators, loops, “effects,” synth bass, electronics) and the careful production and mixing of longtime collaborator Brian Deck, and you’ve got the perfect ingredients for Califone’s finest and most ambitious album to date.

Califone’s music has often been described as cinematic, and the band has been known to contribute live improvised soundtracks to silent films. Many of these performances have been released on Califone albums *Deceleration One* and *Deceleration Two*. Primary songwriter and vocalist Tim Rutili’s artistic endeavors stretch beyond music, and include the creation of surreal short documentaries, music videos and experimental films.

THE ALBUM CONTINUED

From the same font of inspiration--and on the same theme--as the songs on *All My Friends Are Funeral Singers* comes Rutili's first feature-length film. Also titled ALL MY FRIENDS ARE FUNERAL SINGERS. The screenplay for the film and many of the songs were written at the same time and incorporate many of the same images and characters.

The movie was shot in an old, rickety house in Indiana in the spring of 2009 and stars the respected cult actress Angela Bettis (*Girl, Interrupted*, *May*, *Carrie*). The band will be performing a live, interactive soundtrack to the movie for many of their performances supporting the album, adding a new element to the band's live show. It will be a truly special and ambitious event, and unlike anything Califone has done to date. A stand alone edit of the movie will premiere at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival.

All My Friends Are Funeral Singers is the record that the great Roots and Crowns hinted at. The songwriting is fleshed out, the musical vision is boiling over, the sonic experimentation is indulgent and dense, yet there's a great cohesion, a sense of purpose and a newfound focus to this Califone effort. Never has the band felt so vibrant, so alive on one of their albums. *All My Friends Are Funeral Singers* is built for the long haul. Make space on your record shelf, because this one is here to stay.

TRACKLIST

1. Giving Away the Bride
2. Polish Girls
3. 1928
4. Funeral Singers
5. Snakes Tooth = Protection Against Fever And Luck in Gambling
6. Buñuel
7. Ape-like
8. A Wish Made While Burning Onions Will Come True
9. Evidence
10. Alice Marble Gray
11. Salt
12. Krill
13. Seven, Fourteen or Twenty-One Knots
14. Better Angels

CALIFONE FRONTMAN TIM RUTILI GETS AN ON-SET LESSON IN FILMMAKING

Los Angeles Times Margaret Wappler, December 9, 2009

Tim Rutili, the frontman of the earthy, experimental folk act Califone, has several superstitions regarding making music and playing it live. Some he won't divulge but others he tells with a wry sense of amusement. "If the sound check is really good, it's going to be a crappy show so sometimes I try to sabotage sound check," he said in an interview last week from Seattle, the first stop on the band's West Coast tour.

He also can't eat before a show and during the making of any big endeavor, including the band's nine albums, he loses something important, like a notebook or computer files.

His most recent undertaking proved the exception: For the making of the film "All My Friends Are Funeral Singers," a companion piece to Califone's album by the same name, Rutili didn't lose anything.

Screening tonight at the Hammer Museum with the band performing a live score, "All My Friends Are Funeral Singers" is the story of Zel (Angela Bettis), a psychic living in a country house occupied by ghosts. The project, which is Rutili's first feature as a writer-director, also is set to screen next month at the Sundance Film Festival.

The music for "Funeral Singers" came to Rutili as he was filming friends and family, asking them about their superstitions -- his grandfather throws salt on the ground after an unwanted visitor leaves. Inspired by images mentioned in the interviews, he began writing song fragments and then a short story developed.

Rutili had shot many Califone music videos and short films and had worked on soundtracks. He saw this as his opportunity to try features. In September 2008, he started a screenplay based on what he initially described as a "weird little children's story," splitting his days between screenwriting and writing the album. "I'd send demos of songs and little bits of the screenplay to the band," said Rutili, who divides his time between family in L.A. and Tempe, Ariz., and his quartet in Chicago.

"When things clicked, it was great, but it was aggravating sometimes because I wasn't sure how it was going to come about," Rutili said.

The tale grew darker as the pieces came together. After Rutili joined bandmates Jim Becker, Joe Adamik and Ben Massarella in Chicago, more songs and characters for the album and the film grew out of the recording session with longtime producer Brian Deck.

Rutili had the screenplay completed by December but continued to tinker with it until production began at a friend's Indiana house in April. Working with a \$30,000 budget on an 11-day shoot, Rutili didn't let his relative inexperience worry him too much, but he did have a rough first day.

"It was a group scene and I thought, 'Oh, no.' I didn't really know what I was doing," he said. "Someone would ask me a question and I'd say, 'I don't know.' From that day on, I woke up an hour early so I could figure out what needed to be done."

Drawing on the 1970s Spanish drama "The Spirit of the Beehive" for ideas about mood, Rutili imparted a dream quality to "All My Friends Are Funeral Singers." The house was packed with colorful knickknacks that he, production designer Joe Bristol and friends acquired from thrift stores.

Despite the heavy themes of the afterlife and death, Rutili's ghosts -- including his own band, often seen making a ruckus in a spare bedroom -- are good-humored, chattering about sex and vaudeville.

"All My Friends Are Funeral Singers," both the album and film, share a preoccupation with cinema: songs like "Bunuel" offer a rustic take on the famous Surrealist with backing vocals from Iron & Wine's Sam Beam.

Rutili relies on his primitive resourcefulness to create purposeful magic. "If a room is filled with junk," he said, "we'll find a way to get a certain quality out of it."

TIM RUTILI MAKES THE INDIE ROCK TO INDIE FILM LEAP

IFC com *Brandon Kim, December 10, 2009*

Tim Rutili's band, Califone, may be at the peak of its powers on its recent album "All My Friends Are Funeral Singers" and, song after song, show no signs of waning. What's more, Rutili, as a director, has leveraged Califone's songcraft into a feature film of the same name that will premiere this January in a little town called Park City. It's the product of Rutili's decidedly cinematic songwriting process and love for surrealist films and the likes of Luis Buñuel.

In the movie, a fortune teller played by Angela Bettis ("May") lives in an old house crowded with ghosts. When a light appears in the woods outside, the ghosts realize they are trapped, and insanity ensues, all to a score and soundtrack by, of course, Califone. I caught Rutili on the phone before we had the good news about Sundance. He was driving cross country in a remarkably quiet car, headed toward the Southwest, already doing research for his next film -- a "road movie," of which he gave me a little hint.

It had a real David Lynch feel for me. Not just the insanity, but specifically the ear tunnel transition shot -- I've seen him make similar moves. Is that something you drew upon?

I love David Lynch. The only thing that came from him out of this is the idea that things don't have to make sense, and you don't have to really explain yourself [laughs]. That scene is a perfect example of that.

There's also the song "Buñuel" on the record, about the surrealist filmmaker. Have you been studying him?

I was watching his movies a lot, and I wrote that song in front of one of his films. We have a character in the film named Bunuel, too. He doesn't play a Spanish filmmaker, just a guy named Bunuel with a Super 8 camera. We ended up putting film in the camera and using a lot of what he shot. So there was a camera within the scene.

There were some things I wanted to feel like [Buñuel] -- "Exterminating Angel," his film where people are trapped in this dinner party. As it goes on, the people cannot get out of the house. There's nothing keeping them there, they just can't leave. What happens when you get a bunch of rich people at a dinner party that can't leave for days on end? It's weird as fuck, and there are these things that happen that are so beautiful. In one scene, out of nowhere, a bear crosses in the background. A woman opens her purse and she's looking through it and pulls out a dead bird. You don't know why, but its happening and there's no reason, but it's beautiful.

So you wrote "Buñuel" in front of a Buñuel film. How else does film influence your music, do you think about them while you're making music?

Yeah, a lot of it is visual cues. There's a Spanish film called "Spirit of the Beehive," I think I watched it 50 times. A lot of these songs are referencing films, and I wrote them while watching films, trying to figure out things I wanted to do with the movie. So it gets in there.

How did you arrange the album, are the tracks ordered in relation to how the film plays out, or was there some other method behind it?

We tried to do it in sequence with the film, but it wasn't working out, wasn't a good listen. So we temporarily forgot about the movie and sequenced it as an album that we thought flowed nicely.

Having just made one, what do you think about albums in a world dominated by mp3 singles and people listening to their music on their fucking telephones?

I don't know, I have to ignore it in a certain way. I like the idea of singles, and I like the idea of albums that are objects, 'cause that's how I grew up. And it does feel like that's changing too fast for me to really get a handle on. We made this record as a record -- it's meant to be a vinyl record broken into sides, which I guess doesn't work well for the mp3 age, but that's the way we did it.

What film would you like to live inside of, if you could?

[Long pause] Just about every film would get insane after a while. The first thing that came to my mind was "The Wizard of Oz." But what do they eat in "Wizard of Oz?" I get hungry, I really like eating. They ate poppies right? And freaked out -- at least Dorothy and the Lion did, and the other guy was a robot. He wasn't a robot [laughter]. If you live in a musical, you're gonna get annoyed. If you live in a Western, you're gonna get shot. If you live in a comedy, things are gonna stop being funny after a while.

[Laughter] Well let me ask this, what film you would like to have done the soundtrack or score for?

When I read that they were making "Blood Meridian," the Cormac McCarthy book, into a film, I thought man, I would love to do the music for this weird violent Western. Really fun to do with Califone, that would be great. Another movie, I think my favorite soundtrack, is "The Hired Hand" a Peter Fonda movie. It's just a beautiful, slow Western.

Are we going to see more films from Tim Rutili?

Yeah, I'm writing one now. I don't know when I'm going to be able to do it, have to raise money.

A Western?

No, it's a road movie. I don't want to say too much, but I had a bunch of people telling me at one point, "Man, I wish I could just leave. Go someplace where no one knows me."

And that's what it's about.

CAST

Zel ANGELA BETTIS

Karen EMILY CANDINI

Ted REID COKER

Henry KEVIN FORD

Margaret MEGAN HOVDE-WILKINS

Camille KAROL KENT

Julius GEORGE MCAULIFFE

Bunuel MICHAEL MCGINLEY

Alice SIERRA MAGDALENA MITCHELL

Alan ALAN SCALPONE

Nyla MOLLY WADE

Moe WESLEY WALKER

Musicians JOE ADAMIK

JIM BECKER

BEN MASSARELLA

TIM RUTILI

Grandma's voice SUZANNE SOLE

Answering machine voices TAYLOR PATTERSON

ROSEANN RUTILI

CREW

Written and directed by TIM RUTILI
Executive Producer GLEN SHERMAN
Supervising Producer ZACH ROBBINS
Associate Producer JASON TYRRELL

Director of Photography DARRYL MILLER

Production Designer/
1st Assistant Director JOSEPH BRISTOL

Unit Production Manager/
Assistant Director HOLLI HOPKINS

Editor KEVIN FORD

Sound Mixer BLAIR SCHELLER

Art Director SCOTT MILLER

On Set Dresser JOHN DONAHUE

Prop Master DEAN DEMATTEIS

Set Dresser KEITH KOLECKI

F/X Coordinator PATRICK MCGEE

Set Construction JAY NEANDER

Set Construction IRA AMYX

1st Assistant Camera BRIAN WELLS

1st Assistant Camera JULE FONTANA

2nd Assistant Camera ERIC HINGST

2nd Assistant Camera PHILLIP WALTER

Data Manager SARA PLANO

Costume Designer GILLIAN LISEE

Seamstress JANET ECKLEBARGER

Key Makeup Artist TANIA BOWERS

Boom Operator ERIC ANTHONY
Script Supervisor KRISTIN OWINGS
Additional Script Supervisor ANNIE HIRSCHMANN
Gaffer KARINA TEISMAN
Gaffer DAVID TOMITA
Electrician KEVIN PITTMAN
Electrician RONALD DRAGOSH
Grip MARK BARRY
Grip NATHAN WUNN
Grip MIKE CHILDRESS
Grip RON RUANPHAE
Grip JERRY TREML

Assistant Director JOHN ADAMS
Key Production Assistant NATHAN SWANGO
Set Production Assistant MARC "Q" QUANDT

Editor/ Post Production Consultant AMY CARGILL
Colorist GRAHAM HUTCHINS
Animations CHRISTOPHER COLVARD

Post Production Consultant KENT LAMBERT

Sound design/Sound Mix JACOB ROSS

Recorded at EXPERIMENTAL SOUND STUDIO
CHICAGO, IL

Assistant to Mr. Ross MATT KORDONOWY

Music Written and Performed by CALIFONE
COURTESY OF DEAD OCEANS RECORDS

Music Recorded at CLAVA/4 DEUCES -CHICAGO, IL

Music Recorded by BRIAN DECK
JIM MCGRANAHAN

Additional Musicians **FRED LONBERG-HOLM**
BRIAN REITZELL
TIMOTHY YOUNG

Additional Engineering **ERIC E.T. THORNGREN**
COLIN SIPOS

Grandma's Book Artwork **SIERRA MAGDALENA MITCHELL**
SCOTT MILLER
KATHERINE DUPREE
INGA WALKER
ALANA BAILEY

Knitting **SHEILA SACHS**

Super8 and Cloud Photography **MICHAEL MCGINLEY**
TIM RUTILI
ELLIS RUTILI

Additional Camera **CHRISTOPHER MORSE**

Live Sound Mix for Performance **RYAN HEMBREY**

Live Projectionist **ARAM SHUMAVON**

Still Photographer **BRIAN BANKSTON**

Caterer **THIRD COAST SPICE CAFE**

Transportation **TIM RUTILI SR.**

Props provided by Propabilities, Chicago IL

Camera package provided by Visions of Light, Inc. Chicago IL

Lighting package provided by Northern Lighting & Power, Schiller Park IL

Generator provided by Sam Bartone, Chicago IL

SPECIAL THANKS

Jim McGranahan and Eve Kaiser
Erika Campbell
Laura, Andy, Zoey, Holden and Tibult Verheaghe
Mary Patston
Ava & Isabella Massarella
Suzanne Lee Lettrick
Laura Stangl
Luke Eriksen
Adam Vida
Lou Malozzi
Hugh Musick
Michael Krassner
Braden King
Julie Paavola
Jared Varava
Beverly Robin Green
Robert Edwards CPA
Brent Green
Fred Lonberg-Holm
Brian Reitzell
Allan Mason
Melissa Alderton
Marty Williams
Taylor Patterson
Candida Megia
Chris Sivertson
Shira Piven
Paula Killen
Zion Bazzell
Mark Smutek
Phil Waldorf
Chris Swanson
Kimiko Ostrozovich
Gina Kelly
Paul Sommerstein
Martin Kamenski
Tim Loftus
Susan Messing
Bill & Marilyn Hopkins
The Robbins Family
The Van Acker Family
The Rutili Family
Water Street Coffee Joint, Kalamazoo MI

CONTACT

PRESS CONTACT:

RENE RIDINGER

o: 323.933.3398, ext. 4271

c: 323.217.5995

rridinger@mprm.com

SCREENING/DISTRIBUTION CONTACT:

JASON TYRRELL

212.684.2333 x314

jason@indiepix.net

FILM SPECS

16:9/HD/COLOR/ENGLISH/STEREO/83 MINUTES

Copyright © 2009 by Better Angel Films, LLC.

All Rights Reserved

The events, characters and firms depicted in this photoplay are fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events or firms is purely coincidental.

Ownership of this motion picture is protected by copyright and other applicable laws, and any unauthorized duplication, distribution or exhibition of this motion picture could result in criminal prosecution as well as civil liability.