**Marimbas From Hell/Las marimbas del infierno.**
Julio Hernández Cordón, 2011.

It's hard to resist a film with a title like *Marimbas from Hell*. Boldly exploring the boundaries of fiction and documentary, emerging Guatemalan filmmaker Julio Hernández Cordón original and entertaining second feature follows three unlikely characters from Guatemala City as they attempt to fuse improbable musical styles. The result is a skillfully constructed narrative that reflects on important issues in contemporary Guatemalan culture. Don Alfonso plays the marimba (xylophone) for a living but as his traditional music is seen as increasingly old-fashioned, he finds himself without a job. When his glue-sniffing godson introduces him to Blacko, an old heavy-metal legend of the Guatemalan underground, they decide to do something radical and fuse the sounds of the marimba with heavy metal. This innovative —some might say bizarre— idea sparks the beginning of an unexpected collaboration. Filled with laugh-aloud moments, *Marimbas from Hell* is brilliantly farcical, but with a sharp strain of melancholy. Following the success of his exceptional debut, *Gasolina*, Hernández Cordón continues his work with non-professional actors, creating an incredibly fresh and unique story that conveys a moving and authentic sense of Guatemalan life.

**The Man Next Door/ El hombre de al lado.**
Mariano Cohn and Gastón Duprat, 2010.

In *El hombre de al lado*, Mariano Cohn and Gastón Duprat look at what happens when two neighbors from opposite worlds and are forced to confront one another's existence. In this black comedy, Leonardo (Rafael Spregelburd) is a prestigious designer who lives with his family in a famous house designed by Le Corbusier. Life is seemingly ideal for Leonardo until one day his neighbor Victor (Daniel Aráoz), a boorish used-car salesman, breaks through a common wall to make a window in order to “catch a few rays of sun.” Unfortunately, Victor's new window looks directly into Leonardo’s living space. As the tension mounts between Leonardo and Victor, the film explores the complex relationships between class differences, social barriers, and right and wrong. Viewers are kept wondering who will prevail in the continuous conflict and the film finishes with an unexpected ending. Enamored of architecture, the film is meticulously designed. Mariano Cohn and Gastón Duprat give it a carefully crafted weirdness as well as a figurative quality. The multiple award-winning film was shot entirely at Casa Curutchet (La Plata, Argentina), an architectural masterpiece and the only house in the Americas designed by Le Corbusier.
Oscar-winning director Fernando Trueba (*The Age of Beauty*) and famous Barcelona designer and artist Javier Mariscal, have teamed up (along with Mariscal’s brother Tono Errando who supervised the animation) to make *Chico & Rita*, an animated love story starring the music, culture and people of Cuba. Chico is a dashing piano player and Rita is an enchanting and beautiful Havana nightclub singer. When they meet, the sparks fly and they fall madly in love. An epic romance unfolds as the pair travels the glamorous stages of the 1940s/1950s Havana, New York City, Las Vegas, Hollywood and Paris. To accompany them is an amazing soundtrack featuring the music of jazz legends Thelonious Monk, Cole Porter, Dizzy Gillespie and Freddy Cole (brother of Nat King Cole), performed by a range of contemporary singers including Idania Valdés, Carlos Sarduy, Horacio Hernández, Rolando Luna, Germán Velazco and Jorge Reyes. In addition, the story of Chano Pozo, one of the first Latin percussionists to grace a major American jazz band, is fluidly interwoven within the narrative. In *Chico & Rita*, Trueba and Mariscal pay tribute to a vibrant and colorful time in the history of both Cuba and jazz.

**From the Land to Your Table / ¿Qué culpa tiene el tomate?**

*Alejo Hoijman, Josué Mendez, Carolina Navas, Paola Vieira, Alejandra Szeplaki, Jorge Coira, 2011.*

What do you do when you take seven directors from seven different countries with seven different cultures and points of view? *From the Land to Your Table* is the first documentary of its kind in that it shows the perspectives of seven majorly talented filmmakers and directors from all over Latin America as they capture the conditions and cultural diversity of popular produce markets in their individual countries. Each segment in this brilliantly executed documentary smorgasbord retains its own unique style and tone as it leads the viewer through the fascinating stories of the foods that eventually wind up on our tables. “The tomato goes from the plant to our table”. This was the starting point and from there every participating country tells its own story. In the meantime, a whole new world starts to reveal itself in every chosen character, in every image, in every search and in every intention, leading the viewer through diverse economic conditions and the fascinating life stories of both the foods that we eat, as well as the people who sell and produce them.

**La Yuma.**

*Florence Jaugey, 2011.*

Nicaragua’s first full-length feature in 20 years, *La Yuma* tells the story of a young woman who dreams of transcending her bleak life in the slums of Managua by becoming a boxer. Looking beyond the meager possibilities that seem available to her (and ignoring the advice of her gang-member friends), she finds solace and hope in her training and falls in love with a middle-class journalism student. In Jaugey’s words, “the strength, the astuteness and determination of the main character, reflect the feelings of a population that faces up adversity and inequality.” With an extraordinary performance by Alma Blanco as Yuma, Jaugey’s film allows us the rare opportunity to get a glimpse of everyday life in this Central American country. Pre-selection for the Oscars Academy Awards 2011 for Best Foreign Film.