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Chants encounter: Lucie Palacios and Dietmar Post have made a movie about 1960's band the Monks. Picture: DARRYL GREGORY

the new monks habit

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REWIND to the early '90s, a pre-iPod age when groovy young things made tapes of their favourite music for their Walkmans.

Between classes at New York University, Spanish-born student Lucie Palacios was hearing a strange new beat thumping through her headphones. It was from a tape made by DJ friend Dietmar Post after the two had attended a party together.

"I didn't pay much attention to the music at the time but I'd danced like crazy at the party," says Palacios, a 35-year-old filmmaker.

"I asked Dietmar what it was and he said it was the Monks, a '60s band from Germany that didn't sound at all like a '60s band."

Twenty years on, Palacios and Post's fascination with the Monks' music has continued, and they have co-directed, produced and written a documentary about the band.

Monks — The Transatlantic Feedback is screening in Melbourne during the Festival of German Films.

The Monks split in 1967 and returned to the US, where Palacios and Post interviewed them about their adventures 30 years ago.

They began in 1964 as a surf band of American GIs called the 5 Torquays. Discharged from the army, they linked with two German managers in 1966, who helped create a bizarre new image for them.

And so the Monks were born, an eccentric band that banished melody in favour of loud beats, repetitive

rhythms and clashing harmonics. Their only album was *Black Monk Time*, re-released in 1997 in the US by record producer Rick Rubin.

Post, 45, who grew up in Germany, remembers hearing it for the first time at a party when he was 20.

"It was during the punk days and it was not uncommon to go to a party and listen to the Clash, Sex Pistols and the Monks," he says.

"The Monks were out of place, they were too early and people were not ready for that kind of music."

"Hopefully now they are ready, 40 years later."

Monks — The Transatlantic Feedback screens as part of the Festival of German Films, tonight, 7pm at Palace Brighton Bay, and Sat 4.15pm at Palace Como. \$13.50/\$16. www.goethe.de/oz/filmfest