ELELWANI

Technical Information
South Africa, 2012; Drama; DCP/HDCAM SR; 103 minutes; aspect ratio 1:2.35; 6 channel mix; original language Tshivenda with English subtitles

INTERNATIONAL SALES:
EAST WEST FILM DISTRIBUTION

Head Office
Schottenfeldgasse 14
1070 Vienna, Austria
Tel: +43 1 524 93 10 - 34
office@eastwest-distribution.com

London Office
49 Goodge Street
London W1T 1TE, UK
Tel: +44 20 7580 6553
sales@eastwest-distribution.com
www.eastwest-distribution.com

PRODUCER CONTACT:
FLORIAN SCHATTAUER
Shadowy Meadows Productions
PO Box 819
2116 Northlands, Johanensburg
floschatt@yahoo.com

SYNOPSIS:
It all begins with a car journey: for Elelwani and Vele, it feels like they’re setting out on the summer holiday of their lives. Elelwani has just completed her studies and is in love with Vele, who is sitting right next to her. They drive through the ever greener countryside into Elelwani’s home village, where they intend to tell her parents of their plans to marry and spend their future together. They are greeted with a dramatic dance in honour of the first woman from the village to have gained a degree, or at least that’s what Elelwani thinks. Yet she’s wrong: her parents reveal shortly afterwards that she’s been promised to the tribal king, the dance being the prelude to the celebrations for the planned wedding. Although the young woman initially rebels, she finally consents. What happens next is a cinematic initiation into the culture of the Venda: an ethnographic thriller with incredibly beautiful images and a disturbing plot. With this film, Ntshavheni Wa Luruli, himself a Venda, offers insights into an exotic culture without exoticizing it, all a result of his consistent refusal to explain its secrets.

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT:
For many years I have longed and desired to celebrate black South African authors who have written and published their stories in indigenous languages which had not been recognized under apartheid. One of these unsung artistic heroes is Venda author T.N. Maumela who has written and published over 20 novels, short stories, folklories and essays in the Venda language. *Elelwani* - a romantic dark comedy adapted from the novel of the same title offers important insight into Venda culture reflecting the myths, legends and taboos of not just the cultural beliefs but the challenge of incorporating contemporary South African aspirations with deep-rooted ritualistic practices.

When T. N. Maumela first wrote the novel, he was adamant that he wanted to show how education was an important vehicle to change the treatment of women in the Venda community. The making of this film in contemporary South Africa could not have a stronger historical relevance than now, since issues of women’s rights and their relation to cultural practices remains one of the most debated issues not just in South Africa but across the continent. As a Venda I have an intimate, insider’s position on the culture and the community in which the narrative unfolds. There is no danger that the Venda culture will be exotized and this unique position allows me to offer commentary on the culture while being critical (through the narrative and characters). Such a film challenges not only local audiences but offers foreign audiences insight into a culture very rarely, if ever seen, since so little is known about the sacred and ritualistic practices of this community. My intentions are not a romantic obsession with the African past. I am attracted to this story because of its timeless social themes and their cultural and political relevance to contemporary experiences in South African life.

Most importantly, my intention is not to offer a didactic film but one which portrays the experiences of women in a community through characters that are engaging in a moving story which reassess cultural-gender frameworks.

**FESTIVALS**

33<sup>rd</sup> DURBAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2012 – OPENING NIGHT FILM – COMPETITION
63<sup>rd</sup> BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2013 – OFFICIAL SELECTION
FESPACO 2013 – OFFICIAL SELECTION
2<sup>nd</sup> LUXOR INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL – COMPETITION

**BIOS:**

**Director & Writer**

Ntshavheni Wa Luruli

After completing a BA in Dramatic Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, Ntshavheni went on to study a master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting and Directing at Columbia University under the tutorship of Milos Forman. Winning the Paramount Picture Writing Award in 1989 with Rambani, Ntshavheni then worked as assistant director to Spike Lee on features including MALCOLM X, and Jungle Fever. Ntshavheni wrote THE RAINBOW CALLABASH, a feature -length film for SABC in 1994 and was Head Writer for 26 episodes drama series SUCCESS/KGATELOEPE, for SABC in 1996. He directed Chikin Biznis in 1999 for M-Net. Ntshavheni is also a lecturer at the Department of Journalism, Film and Television at the
University of Johannesburg. In 2004, his film THE WOODEN CAMERA won the Crystal Bear at the Berlinale for Best Youth film.

Selective Filmography
FEATURE FILMS
2003 The Wooden Camera
1999 Chikin Biznis: The Whole Story!
TV SERIES
1994 Soul City

Florence Masebe (Elelwani)
Florence Masebe is a South African actress and television presenter best known for her role as Humbulani in the SABC2 soapie Muvhango, from 2004-2009. Florence was born in Limpopo. From humble beginnings she chose her path through the UCT Drama School and started acting professionally in 1993.
“I started off by doing kiddies programmes and cameo roles which was important for my growth”.
Her launch into the Bigtime was through a youth programme called Electric Workshop with Urban Brew. From then on it was a steady rise.
Cast as a member of the original cast of Generations she followed up her success on the show by landing one role after another including co-hosting Fokus with Freek Robinson and continuity presenting for SABC2.
Florence was the host of SABC2’s cutting edge adult education programme It’s For Life. She also appeared on the soapie Muvhango, until October 2009.
Florence feels that she has grown to understand young people because working with the youth is not her usual role. “I got to watch these three young people from totally different backgrounds unfold during the whole process - by the last few days I was Aunt Flo.”
“It was reality all the way, there was no script and I really enjoyed that.” Florence felt that It’s for Life was an interesting concept that had already gone through the teething stages and further more she wanted to watch 3 individuals realize their full potential.
On 21 August, 2009 she joined the cast of the SABC2 soapie 7de Laan in the role of Refiloe Morapedi, the mother of Alice.
In 2011 she played the lead role of Sis Noni in the eleventh season of the SABC1 AIDS drama series Soul City. Elelwani is her first leading role in a feature film.

Vusi Kunene (Thovhele)
Vusi Kunene is a South African actor best known for his role as villain Jack Mabaso in the SABC1 soapie Generations. Vusi was born in Meadowlands, north of Soweto in Johannesburg, on April 12th 1966. He was actually born on Friday the 13th, but one of the nurses thought this was bad luck and changed it to the 12th. Vusi discovered his acting abilities at the Shell Road to Fame School of the Arts, which was set up to assist contestants in preparation for the auditions. In 1991 Vusi decided to pursue acting as a career and registered at the Wits School of Drama, for a Degree in Dramatic Art. There he got the opportunity to perform in numerous student stage dramas, including The Hill, where he was spotted by his future agent Moonyeenn Lee. During his student career at Wits School of Drama he was cast in three television films: Drumbeats, directed by Jurgen Shaderburg; The Line, directed by Brian Tilley for Channel Four; and the mini-series Rhodes, directed by David Drury for the BBC. He was also cast in three feature films including the role of Reverend Msimango in Cry the Beloved Country, directed by Darryl Roodt. He was awarded an M-Net All Africa Film Award for Best Supporting Actor and a Zimbabwe-Southern African Film Festival award for Best Performance for his role as Reverend Msimango. After graduating he landed a role in The Coloured Museum directed by Itumeleng Motsikoe for
the Market Theatre. His television career also developed. In 1996 he was cast in Homelands directed by Neal Sundstrom and in 1997 he appeared in Deafening Silence directed by Ettienne De Villiers, both for SABC Television. In 1998 he was cast in the drama series Justice for All directed by Peter Goldsmid, for which he won an Avanti award for Best Actor. He was nominated for an NTVA award for Best Actor for his role of Daniel Mofokeng in Homelands, and was nominated for the same award three years in a row (2002-2004) for his role as Jack Mabaso in Generations. In 1996 he was cast in two feature films: Fools directed by Ramadan Suleman, and Kini and Adams (in which he played the lead role of Kini), directed by Idrissa Ouedraogo for Framework, Zimbabwe.

In 1998 he was cast in A Reasonable Man directed by Gavin Hood and then The King is Alive, a Dogma production which was directed by Kristian Levring and filmed in Namibia in 1999.

Later film roles included Final Solution (2001) and the made-for-TV movie/mini-series Diamond Hunters, also in 2001. He made a guest appearance in an episode of the sci-fi television series Charlie Jade in the 2005 episode entitled “Dirty Laundry” (Season 1, Episode 6).

He also had a lead role in the second season of the SABC1 youth drama series Yizo Yizo.

In 2008 he played the role of Doctor Gulubane in the pilot episode of The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, directed by the late Anthony Minghella.

He has a starring role in the 10th season of the SABC1 drama series Soul City, in 2010.

Ashifashabba Muleya (Vele)
Ashifashabba Muleya is better known as popular comedian and radio DJ Ashifashabba. He has his own language called “Shabba Lingo” and is passionate about his African roots, telling some of the most hilarious jokes in his native tongue. As a radio DJ, Ashifashabba is entrenched in urban youth culture of which dance is a major part. Vele is his first leading role in a feature film.

PRESS:

"A dedicated lead turn by local TV star Florence Masebe, as an urban career woman blindsided when her parents sell her into marriage”
Guy Lodge - Variety

"Elelwani, is a look into a culture that many of us really don't know much about [...] The issues of gender inequality and cultural significance in the modern world are incredibly relevant to this country at this time. Although this is one of those films that deals with “issues” and will probably go down as an important film in South African film history [...]"
Durban is Yours - durbanisyours.co.za

"A decade of work and passion had gone into making something that will become an important milestone in South African cinema history. [...] This film is a window into Venda culture. [...] As much as it is a cultural expose, it really is a brilliantly told story, beautifully shot, with solid performances from the key characters. A couple of unexpected plot developments and one or two rather well conceived twists make the film a joy to sit through."
Vandals Took The Handle (Blog)

"[...] Beautifully shot by Cinematographer Lance Gewer one gets a different viewpoint of the cultures and traditions of the Venda people. There is some wonderful music in this movie and the soundtrack is brilliant. It really does add another dimension. You almost find yourself in a surreal landscape. Almost as if David Lynch went to Africa."
Fred Felton - Umhlanga Life
"Ntshaveni wa Luruli’s film Elelwani is a textured cinematic benchmark that comes in the wake of years of steadily building momentum. From the onset the film operates on a premise that is both shaky and interesting. It is the first feature film in Tshivenda which means already-at least socially the film bares the responsibility of taking the battle to legitimize this language into the South African mainstream-to the next level. […] This however is not a film that is part of what I often call voucher cinema - aiming to tick all the right boxes on route to box office returns without making a dent in the cultural landscape. Refreshingly it is also not a manifesto for liberal values taking place in a rural setting; rather it is a comparative study about how two eras of a culture are at loggerheads as they battle for relevance in the contemporary. […] Elelwani is a film that South Africans deserve. A mastered film that is relevant without feeling too self-consciously and quintessentially South African."

**Sihle Mthembu - The Witness**

"A film that will [...] hold its own in the decades to come."

**Charl Blignaut - City Press**

"[...] Director Ntshavheni wa Luruli, a humble and unassuming personality, has not only made history, he’s made a beautiful film. If you’re a film lover, it’s difficult not to feel euphoric when you have a great cinematic experience."

**Joanna Sterkowicz - Screen Africa**

**CREDITS:**

**ELELWANI**

**BASED ON THE NOVEL BY DR. TITUS MAUMELA**

**NATIONAL LOTTERIES DISTRIBUTION TRUST FUND**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**NATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FOUNDATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE**

**WITH SUPPORT OF THE HUBERT BALS FUND OF THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM**

**SHADOWY MEADOWS PRODUCTIONS**

**BLACKBOARD TRUST**

**WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY NTSHAVHENI WA LURULI**

**PRODUCED BY FLORIAN SCHATTAUER**

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**

KETSO GORDHAN FLORENCE MASEBE

**COPRODUCER**

JYOTI MISTRY
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  LANCE GEWER
EDITOR  ARYAN KAGANOF
ADDITIONAL EDITING  MELISSA PARRY S.A.G.E.
ASSOCIATE EDITOR  LAURA VAN DER MERWE
ORIGINAL MUSIC  CHRISTOPHER LETCHER
ORIGINAL SONG “MORATIWA”  JUDITH SEPHUMA
SOUND DESIGN  WILBERT SCHUBEL
PRODUCTION DESIGN  ROBERT VAN DE COOLWIJK

CAST
ELELWANI  FLORENCE MASEBE
VELE  ASHIFASHABBA MULEYA
MUTSHEKWA  TOVHOWANI NELUVHALANI
RENDANI  PRUDENCE MSIPHA
FATHER  SAMSON RAMABULANA
MOTHER  SALOME MUTSHINYA
MADZWARA  SAMMY MOETI
EMISSARY 1  MASHUDU RUBSON DIMA
EMISSARY 2  JOHANNES RALINALA
ROYAL ADVISOR  MUSANDIWA SUSAN MADZIUHANDILA
1ST WIFE  REGINA NESENGANI
2ND WIFE  TSHIANEO CYNTHIA NDOU
MAKHADZI  ELSIE RASALANAVHO
KING RATSHIHULE  MUTODI NESHEHE
THOVHELE  VUSI KUNENE

THSHIKONA PERFORMED BY THE MUDACAHOPHE REMBULUWANI DANCE GROUP

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER  NTSHAVHENI WA LURULI
LINE PRODUCER  EDWIN ANGLESS
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR  APHELELE NQOLOBA
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  TONY MIYAMBO

PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANTS  ROBERT BENJAMIN
                          DERRILEEN MARAIS

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  ANDREW MAHLANGU
2ND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  ZOALANI PHAKADE
3RD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  THAMBA MASINDI

VENDA CULTURAL ADVISOR  AIFHELI TSHIVASE

ADDITIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHY  NIC HOFMEYR
FOCUS PULLERS  NICHOLAS TURVEY
       LUNGA XABA
CAMERA ASSISTANT: RAMS MPFUMBA
DIT: CHRISTOPHER GRANT HARVEY
GAFFERS: WILLY TSHEPAPE
SPARKS: CLINT STONE
JOHANNES MOGALE
STEVEN NDLOVU
KEY GRIPS: LUCKY MZINYANE
ASSISTANT GRIP: ALPHEUS MANAKA
ROSS "CHIEF" TAMBA
GENNY OPERATOR: BEN NGOMA
LIGHTING TRUCK DRIVER: CHAMP TWALA
SOUND RECORDISTS: GREG ALBERT
ANDRE FELDMAN
CONTINUITY: SALAMINA MOKOME
PROPS MASTER: NKHULU NTSHUDISANE
STANDBY PROPS: DAVID GUWAZA
PROSTHETICS: THE CREATURESHOP
JACO SNYMAN
SET BUILDERS: EDWARD LIEBENBERG
FRANCO MEYER
SET DRESSER: ANITA BEASLEY
COSTUME DESIGNER: NATALIE LUNDON
WARDROBE MISTRESS: NANAFI RAKAKU
WARDROBE ASSISTANTS: OSSIS MNDAWENI
SHIRLY RASALANAHO
WARDROBE SEAMSTRESS: THIFHELI MUKHATI
HAIR & MAKE-UP: MPHO MAUDA
JULENE PATON
HAIR & MAKE-UP ASSISTANT: DAVID RIKHOTSO
LION WRANGLER: RODNEY NOMBEKANA
UNIT MANAGER: DOUGLAS RODRIGUES
PRODUCTION RUNNERS: NAKI TSHIVASE
ELSON NELUONDE
ENOCK RAVHURA
THANGA NAMANASHE
TIMOTHY TSHIVASE
IDA NENWELI
CAROLINE MPHEPHU
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MINI BUS DRIVER</td>
<td>FHUTUWANI TAKALANI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENDANI’S CHAPERONES</td>
<td>MATSELISO SELAPYANE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PINKY MAKHUBELE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATERING</td>
<td>MUNAKISI DEACORATORS &amp; TRADING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NDIBUDZA NDIVHUDZANNYI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDITIONAL CATERING</td>
<td>HASNA WA LURULI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCRIPT TRANSLATION</td>
<td>NDIVHUHO MUTSILA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSISTANT EDITOR</td>
<td>LAYLA SWART</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIGHTING EQUIPMENT</td>
<td>NATES AUDIO VISUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NATE NEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMERA &amp; LENSES</td>
<td>PANAVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ROBERT RUSSELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOUNTING &amp; PAYROLL</td>
<td>MONEYPENNY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SHAMILA PHILLIPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOUGIEDA ALBERTYN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTI AUDIT</td>
<td>FAITZ CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARSHAD TAYOB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION INSURANCE</td>
<td>CGM INSURANCE BROKERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HANLIE CARSTENS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MONEYPENNY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SHAMILA PHILLIPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOUGIEDA ALBERTYN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE &amp; POSTER DESIGN</td>
<td>MAT BLACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACKBOARD TRUST TRUSTEES</td>
<td>RIASON NAIDOO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ZUREIDA GARDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST SUPERVISOR</td>
<td>LAUREN VAN RENSBURG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLORIST</td>
<td>ALEX MAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL MIX</td>
<td>PETER CORNELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED AND ARRANGED BY CHRISTOPHER LETCHER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOICE</td>
<td>JUDITH SEPHUMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLARINET</td>
<td>LUKE NEWBY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIOLA</td>
<td>VIOLETA MILJKOBIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIOLIN &amp; BOWED SAW</td>
<td>KATHERINE MANN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DIRGE appears courtesy of Sheer Sound [and the estate of Zim Ngqawana] and Ingoma Music [admin: Sheer Publishing]; original track version from the album: Zim Ngqawana “Vadzimu” (SSCD 096).

SPECIAL THANKS

KHOSI VHO-KENNEDY MIDIYAVHATHU TSHIVHASE
VHAMUSANDA VHO-NETSHIENDEULU
AFRICAN IVORY ROUTE
VHO-SARAH LUKHWARENJI
MUKUMBANI COMMUNITY
TSHIENDEULU COMMUNITY

THANK YOUS

University of Venda
Jannie Zaaiman
Godfrey Dedere

Thohoyandou Botanical Gardens
Erik Netshingani

Wits Television, University of the Witwatersrand
Damon Heatlie

Khoroni Hotel
Kevin Lancaster

Thohoyandou Cluster Command
MajGen Nyiketani Jacky Baloyi
Col Mafela Tshuma

Heather Sonn
Devia & Chotoo Mistry
Akin Omotoso
Ken Kaplan
Maryana Iskander
Melissa Parry
Andrew Worsdale
Eran Tahor

Serengeti Golf Estate

Boat & Lifestyle
Gareth Westerdale

The Lion Kingdom
Mandy Richardson
Department of Trade and Industry
Mandi van Rensburg

National Film and Video Foundation
Zama Nkosi
Karen Son

National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund
Kgomotso Feroza Po
Sershan Naidoo

Department of Arts and Culture
Mimie Mathabathe

The Refinery
Lauren van Rensburg