



present



"A blast from start to finish"
(Variety)

"Finally! An African feature film that merges the pleasures of Nollywood with sleek camerawork, satisfying genre thrills and a rare look inside the very heart of the continent. „Viva Riva!“ is unprecedented"
(indieWire)

CAST

Riva	Patsha Bay Mukuna
Nora	Manie Malone
Cesar	Hoji Fortuna
Commandante	Marlene Longage
J.M.	Alex Herabo
Azor	Diplome Amekindra
Malou	Angelique Mbumba
Mere Edo	Nzita Tumba
Anto	Jordan N'Tunga

CREW

Produced by Formosa Productions, MG Productions and Suka Productions

Produced by	Boris Van Gils Michael Goldberg
Producer	Djo Tunda wa Munga
Coproducer	Steven Markovitz
Screenplay	Djo Tunda wa Munga
Cinematography	Antoine Roch afc
Sound	Marianne Roussy
Production Designer	Philippe Van Herwijnen
Music	Louis Vyncke & Congopunq
Editor	Yves Langlois

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Length: 98 min

35mm - Color – 1:1:85 – Dolby Digital

CONTACT WORLD SALES

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SYNOPSIS

Kinshasa is a city of silky smooth and pulsating nightlife, always ready to go on forever. The happy few who have it all live the high life, never looking back on those who have nothing and live in envy, dreaming of their turn as kings and queens of the night.

Riva is one of those dreamers who had nothing, until he returned from ten years away, his pockets full of cash and determined to have the time of his life. With his old pal, J.M., he sets out for a night of drink, dance and debauchery.

Queen of the night, mysterious, distant beauty, Nora's dance transfixes Riva. No matter that she belongs to a local gangster, Riva must have her. Could this be something real?

The money Riva is spending belongs to his old boss in Angola, who, in hot pursuit, wreaks bloody havoc every step of his way through town to find Riva.

The dream becomes a nightmare, as Riva suffers the cold light of day – and his glory time runs out in a sordid pit on the edge of town.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In making "Viva Riva!", I wanted to find a new way to talk about life in Kinshasa today - to describe how my hometown works and how it doesn't work. I also felt the time was right to depict aspects of life in the capital that everyone knows exist but no one has ever talked about publicly.

Riva returns home after a ten-year absence with pockets full of cash to do what every young Kinshasan man dreams of. He is king for a rollicking good night - and keeps that night going on and on, scoffing at the plain truth that in the light of day he is nobody. Where can he be headed? The devil may care.

Over the past twenty years, Kinshasans have lived in bedlam, through every kind of spirit-crushing experience imaginable – war, crime, corruption, food and energy shortages, poverty and the breakup of the family structure - yet their clocks still keep on ticking, and life goes on.

As word got out that a film was being made, people all around us in the community began to reach out and help us in ways large and small – any way they could. Shooting the film as we did, we were constantly on our toes, ready to shift the scene, take off or improvise solutions at a moment's notice. We sometimes let people know we were making the film and wanted to use their home, place of business or car. And almost all the time, the answer was "yes, please do." In how many other cities, I wonder, could we have found such cooperation?

There are no acting schools in the Congo, so we made a first round of casting in the very small circuit of local theater companies, then a second round by casting a very wide net over the streets of the capital. We wanted to find Kinshasan actors who could bring something personal to the film – add some spry and sprightly energy to a film that was otherwise anchored in documentary realism.

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Twenty candidates were selected to participate in a workshop that stressed screen acting skills and included tai-chi, dance and other exercises to put the players in touch with the way their bodies moved. The work we accomplished led us to sharpen our casting of certain roles and invite some participants into a second workshop where, over two months, we went further into defining characters, without working on specific dialogue, lines for which came later. Dialogue in the final film was entirely scripted – none of it was improvised.

All things were lining up so well on the production that we realized we had been offered a golden opportunity. It was time for us to envision a new world and to take a big step forward as storytellers. The actors, especially, took on the self-assured confidence of pioneers. One of the most challenging aspects of the production was the depiction of frank sexuality in a culture where nude scenes remain taboo and are never even implied. However, once we all resolved that, first and foremost, we wanted to portray the city and its club life in a very real way, as it is today, nothing could stop us. The cast and crew gave it their all every step of the way and took the film over the top with flying colors. For that, I am more than grateful.

One of the most challenging aspects of the production was that I had scripted nude scenes to be depicted in a culture where such scenes are taboo and never even implied. Our first thought was to bring in European or American actors; but then my second assistant, a young Congolese documentarian, pressed me to ask a number of local girls to consider playing the part. I explained to them that I wanted to properly portray the city and its club life, where we all know what is going on behind the walls. I wanted the film to be real.

Our work on "Viva Riva" was resolutely modern. The film dives into its depiction of tough situations so forthrightly that we hope it will help sweep away some of the old school perceptions of Africa and African art. Our aim was simply to work without fear or shame of who we are and the issues we face today.

I hope, especially for young people coming up, that this film will be a convincing argument that we can make it as a society – and that Cinema can be part of our lives. Under the dictatorship, we were not allowed to even think about making films and several decades of Congolese filmmakers went into self-imposed exile.

A young artist I met eight years ago dismissed me as mad when I told him I wanted to make films in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Then he visited the shoot of "Viva Riva," to experience the energy of the cast and crew hard at work; and is now a believer. Our future can be different if we really want it to be.

Djo Tunda Wa Munga

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ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Djo Tunda Wa Munga was born and raised in the Congo. He studied filmmaking at INSAS in Belgium, where he took inspiration from European and American films before returning to his homeland. Today, he puts his knowledge to the service of building up a new Congolese Cinema, where everything has yet to be invented.

Filmography

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| 2010 | "Viva Riva!", Feature, 110 min. |
| 2009 | "State of Mind" Documentary. 52 min. |
| 2007 | "PAPY". Television Drama. HD. 53 mins. 1st Episode of a series on AIDS.
Based on true stories of living with AIDS. |
| 2006 | "The Approach (L'approche)"
Documentary. Video. 26 mins. |
| 2005 | "Horizon in Transition", Video Report. 52 mins.
About political transition in the Congo. |

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION COMPANIES

The partnership of Boris Van Gils of Formosa and Michael Goldberg of MG Productions is anchored in their mutual passion for film that mixes genres. Based in Paris and Brussels, respectively, the terrain of their work ranges over Europe and Africa. Both are dedicated to fine craftsmanship, even as their highest goal is always to delight audiences.

"Viva Riva!" is the realization of their ideals, as it blends bravura storytelling style with the realism of contemporary African society. The two producers are already at work on Stephan Streker's "Montana," with Olivier Gourmet, Vincent Rottiers and Reta Keteb, for release in 2011, and Benoit Mariage's next project, to star François Damiens.

Suka! Productions was founded in Kinshasa and Cape Town by Djo Tunda wa Munga and Steven Markovitz. Together, they have extensive experience in feature films, shorts and documentaries that have played at key festivals including Toronto, Cannes, Berlin, Sundance and Tribeca. They have produced films in every part of Africa, including the critically acclaimed television feature "Papy," the recently produced documentary omnibus "Congo in Four Acts" (Berlin, Hotdocs, IDFA) and the documentary "State of Mind." They are presently developing a Pan-African project, ImagiNations, a series of six feature films based on contemporary African literature.

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ABOUT BETA CINEMA (world sales agent)

Beta Cinema is the theatrical division of Beta Film. Launched in 2001, Beta Cinema has established itself as a "boutique operation" for independent feature films with strong potential for theatrical distribution. Beta Cinema's philosophy is to limit its selective acquisition policy of 10 to 15 titles per year in order to fully develop the theatrical potential of each title according to its individual character. Beta Cinema's portfolio includes outstanding productions like JOHN RABE, which won four German Film Awards 2009, Cannes 2008 Jury Prize-winning IL DIVO, Academy Award 2008-winning THE COUNTERFEITERS, Academy Award 2008 nominated MONGOL, Academy Award 2007-winning THE LIVES OF OTHERS and the Academy Award 2005-nominated DOWNFALL.

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