

Sweet Stilte



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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If you are a fan of Afrikaans films and looking for an inspirational story about a superstar singer who finds spiritual healing in the arms of a handsome young small-town pastor, then *Stilte* should be on your to-see list.

There has been an explosion of Afrikaans films on the local film front in the last couple of years, covering a variety of genres, ranging from teenage rom-com *Bakgat*, poignant family dramas like *Die Ongelooflike Avonture van Hanna Hoekom* and *Roepman*, comic-book heroes in *Superhelde*, big-screen adaptations of popular television favourites like *Egoli* and *Getroud Met Rugby*, the human drama *Die Wonderwerker*, nostalgic musicals *Liefeling* and *Platteland*, romance in *Jakhalsdans* and *Semi-Soet*, the coming-of-age Cinderella story in *Susanna van Biljon*, the gay-themed *Skoonheid*, the inspirational *'n Saak van Geloof*, to the mystery *Wolwedans In Die Skemer*.

Now veteran filmmaker and Oscar-nominated director Darrell James Roodt (*Yesterday*) brings us *Stilte*, which is quite similar to his *Jakhalsdans*.





Two films for the price of one

As sweet as a plate of freshly baked koeksisters and as homely as melktert, *Stilte* is two films for the price of one; on the one hand it offers an emotional love story, and on the other it is an inspirational film about finding peace with your maker and the power of prayer.

Woven neatly into a spectacular fabric of the awesome Karoo landscape (beautifully captured by cinematographer Pierre Smith), with emotive songs emphasising the message of hope, *Stilte* is charming in its own, quiet way.

Angelique Pretorius (Stoute Boudjies, TV's *Kruispad*) bravely tackles the role of a talented young singer who is on the verge of realising her dreams, when both her parents are killed in a violent home invasion and she too, is left for dead. She survives the ordeal and relocates to a farm in Oudtshoorn to stay with her aunt and uncle. It is here where she meets a young pastor, featuring Andre Frauenstein, one of the leading electronic DJ/producers in South Africa who was last seen in the local vampire thriller *Eternity*.

A woman who has lost her faith

The main conflict of *Stilte* focuses on a woman who has lost her faith, in everything, including God, and a handsome young pastor who has to convince her that her life was spared for a reason. A full-blooded love story is senseless without a bully who wants to win the hand of the fair maiden, and Altus Theart (*Bakgat!*, TV's *Kruispad*) is ideally cast as the scorned villain.

Stilte is not a film that pretends to be what it is not.

Following in the footsteps of Faith Like Potatoes and Ordinary People, Stilte deals head-on with issues of faith and redemption, and shows the importance of confronting personal religious beliefs. It is also a relevant story that explores the result of crime and how it is always best to face a tragedy rather than try and ignore its dark sorrow. Although it deals with serious matters, Stilte offers light-hearted and tender escapism filled with human drama and soulful serenity. It has an innocence that is quaint and cute, particularly the blossoming relationship between the two lovebirds.

With hard core violence, mean-spirited and exploitative films that explore the dark side of human nature, meaningless absurdity, and rude comedies dominating big-screen entertainment, it is refreshing to find a wholesome family story that shines a light on hope and absolution.

It is sometimes easy to ignore films like Stilte, which deals with issues that we tend to shy away from, but it's equally important to open a window into a world that is removed from the rat race and shows how important it is to succumb to a calm and peaceful resolution.

Behind the scenes

South African film director Darrell James Roodt made an international name for himself with the debut feature A Place Of Weeping (1986), a passionate condemnation of apartheid. In 1990, he made his first film with American backing, Jobman, which opened The London Film Festival. One of Roodt's best known films is his adaptation of the anti-apartheid stage musical Sarafina! (1992). Darrell Roodt was nominated for an Oscar, for his film "Yesterday" in 2004. Anyone who sees the film will instantly understand why I chose to shoot in such an extraordinary location. The Red Stone Hills, nestled in the mighty Zwartberg are a unique feature and the characters literally glowed in these landscapes."

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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