

Award-winning "Viva Riva!" opens in Southern Africa

The award-winning gangster thriller feature film "Viva Riva!", directed by Congolese Djo Tunda wa Munga, is set to open in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland on 7 October 2011.



The film has won several awards, including the inaugural 2011 MTV Movie Award for Best African Film, six African Movie Academy Awards and best feature from the 2011 Pan African Film Festival in Los Angeles. The international co-production also screened at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival.

Gangster thriller

Shot on location in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in both French and Lingala, "Viva Riva!" is a thriller about a small-time thug, Riva, who returns to his energy-starved hometown of Kinshasa after stealing a truckload of fuel from an Angolan crime lord named Cesar.

His bounty is worth a fortune in the city which has run out of petrol. Not only is the sharply dressed Cesar hot on his trail, but Riva also runs into trouble with the tough mob boss Azor, husband of the beautiful Nora, a woman he meets in a nightclub.

"This is a high-definition portrait of urban Africa that is rarely seen on the big screen," says co-producer Steven Markovitz of Cape Town based Big World Cinema. "Rich with colour and movement, Munga's film takes audiences on a journey through crowded city streets and steamy nightclubs. He captures an atmosphere evocative of the DRC as it is today."

Behind the scenes

Congo-born R&B singer Patsha Bay Mukuna stars as Riva. Making her screen debut as the beautiful night club denizen Nora, is Paris-based actress Manie Malone. Cesar is played by Hoji Fortuna, an Angolan born actor who lives in New York. Diplome Amekindra takes on the role of Azor.

The film's runaway success is a coup for Djo Tunda wa Munga who spent his childhood in Kinshasa and completed his schooling in Belgium, where he later studied film. He has directed several short films and documentaries. He also wrote Viva Riva! his first feature film, and secured finance for the film from France's Canal Plus. It's the first film shot in the Congo in 25 years after the industry was shut down by former president Mobutu Sese Seko.

"What's really exciting is that we're witnessing the arrival of an electrifying new filmmaker," says Helen Kuun, CEO of Indigenous Film Distribution. "This is crime drama as it's never been seen before. It's an accomplished piece of filmmaking that has rightly been recognised as something new and special. We're really happy to be able to show it to South African audiences."

Viva Riva is to be distributed by Indigenous Film Distribution and set to be released in Kenya and Uganda on 1 October 2011, followed by Mozambique, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe and the DRC. The film releases in Nigeria and Ghana on 1 December 2011.

For more, go to www.vivarivamovie.com

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