

# MWANSA The Great

a shortfilm by Rungano Nyoni



## Mwansa The Great

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2011, Zambia / UK, fiction, 23:09 mins, HD, 16:9, Stereo, Colour

[www.runganonyoni.com](http://www.runganonyoni.com)

### Supported by:



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### **Synopsis:**

Mwansa The Great tells the story of an eight-year-old boy who aspires to be a hero and embarks upon a journey to prove his greatness - with unexpected consequences. The film gives a moving insight into childhood where fantasy jostles with reality as a young boy's imagination transforms and empowers everyday life.

### **Directors Statement:**

I wanted the film to reflect the bitter sweetness of growing up in Zambia, surrounded by immensely devastating things but in contrast living a pretty normal and fulfilled childhood. Mwansa the Great deals with death through the children's point of view. Mwansa, Shula and Lackie have recently lost their father. Unknowingly they try and carry on his legacy through their imagination. Shula, the big sister, does this by playing Princess Shula, a nickname given to her by her father. Mwansa plays Mwansa The Great, also something his father used to call him. Lackie, plays with a doll their father made for her. I wanted to capture the importance of dreaming big despite adverse circumstances. Mwansa dreams of being reunited with his Dad again, through his imagination he does so and at the end of the film he gets what he wants.

### **Biography Rungano Nyoni:**

2010: Awarded funding from Focus Features Africa First Programme and UK Film Council for 'Mwansa The Great'.

2010: Winner of BAFTA Cymru for Best Short Film, for a film she wrote, directed and produced – 'The List'.

2009: Winner of IBW Film Festival for Best UK Short for '20 Questions'.

2009: Winner of Best Film at It's My Shout Awards for '20 Questions'.

2009: Awarded a place on BBC Wales and It's my shout scheme for new directors. Directed '20 Questions'.

2009: Established Production Company, icreatefilms Ltd.

2009: Graduated at Masters in Screen at Central St Martins College of the Arts London.

### **Filmography Rungano Nyoni:**

2011: Mwansa The Great, fiction, HD, 23 mins, Zambia / UK

2009: The List, fiction, HD, 19 mins, UK

2009: 20 Questions, fiction, HD, 10 mins, UK

2006: Yande, fiction, 8mm, 7 mins, UK

## Mwansa The Great in Festivals ( 2011)

- \* **Special Jury Mention** - Curtocircuito Int Film Festival 2011
- \* **Audience Award** - Vienna Independent Shorts 2011
- \* **Griot Best Short Film** - Tarifa African Film Festival 2011
- \* **RTVA Award** - Tarifa African Film Festival 2011

1. Cineposible International Festival (Madrid, Spain)	30 March - 3 April
2. Corto Helvetico al Femminile (Locarno, Switzerland)	1 - 4 April
3. New York African Film Festival (New York, USA)	6 - 12 April
4. CMS Int Childrens Film Festival (Lucknow, India)	5 - 11 April
5. Sehnsuchte Film Festival (Postdam, Germany)	2 - 8 May
6. KAN Film Festival (Wroclaw, Poland)	5 - 8 May
7. Curtocircuito Int Film Festival* (Galicia, Spain)	6 - 15 May
8. VIS Vienna Independent Shorts* (Vienna, Austria)	26 May - 1 June
9. Hamburg Int. Short Film Festival (Hamburg, Germany)	7 - 13 June
10. Tarifa African Film Festival* (Tarifa, Spain)	11 - 19 June
11. SHQIP Film Festival (Peja, Kosovo)	25 - 30 June
12. Durban Int. Film Festival (Durban, South Africa)	21 - 31 July
13. DokuFest Film Festival (Prizre, Kosovo)	23 - 31 July
14. Na Rúa Festival (Ourense, Spain)	19 - August
15. Opuzen International Film Festival (Croatia)	20 - 27 August
16. BUSTER Int. Children and Youth Festival (Copenhagen)	15 - 25 Sept
17. Naoussa International Film Festival (Greece)	29 Sept - 2 Oct
18. Ourense International Film Festival (Ourense, Spain)	14 - 23 Oct

**CAST**

<i>Mwansa</i>	Samuel Mwale
<i>Shula</i>	Anna Mithi
<i>Mwansa the Great</i>	Owas Ray Mwape
<i>Princess Shula</i>	Mwansa Bwalya
<i>Lackie</i>	Lackie Phiri
<i>Mother</i>	Becky Ngoma

**CREW**

<i>Director</i>	Rungano Nyoni
<i>Writer</i>	Rungano Nyoni Gabriel Gauchet
<i>Producer</i>	Rungano Nyoni Gabriel Gauchet
<i>Dialogues</i>	Samuel Mwale Anna Mithi Owas Ray Mwape Mwansa Bwalya Becky Ngoma
<i>Cinematographer</i>	Andrzej Krol
<i>Camera Assistant</i>	Leonard Charles Phiri
<i>Sound Recordist</i>	Lilia Dornhof
<i>Boom</i>	Funti K Banda
<i>Sound Designer</i>	Tilman Hahn
<i>Production Designer</i>	Ricardo Hernandez
<i>Art Department Assistant</i>	Thomas Nyoni Snr Mishek 'Happy face' Ng'uni
<i>Wardrobe Mistress</i>	Becky Ngoma
<i>Costume Assistant</i>	Clement Mwela

<i>Editor</i>	Gabriel Gauchet Rungano Nyoni
<i>Compositor</i>	Frank Schumacher Adam Arnot Drummond
<i>Title Credits</i>	Jens Black
<i>Colour Grader</i>	Frank Schumacher
<i>French Translator</i>	Romain Hemeray
<i>Catering</i>	Mitengo Women's Project
<i>Driver</i>	Ba Bwalya
<i>Dog Handler</i>	Mwalimu
<i>Executive Producer</i>	Mutale Merrill Travers Merrill
<i>Publicity</i>	Nancy Matambo Rita Auta (PRServices UK)

STILLS





## PRESS & PUBLICITY



*'Director Rungano Nyoni has made, with Mwansa the Great a wonderfully hopeful film about mourning. Small Mwansa lives with his sister and his mother in Zambia. His father died recently and to process this stroke of fate, the two children fall into their fantasy worlds. With ease and plenty of humour, Nyoni ventured into the tricky topic and finds a narrative approach that works beautifully. She repeatedly makes the dream worlds of the*

*siblings a reality; from the little boy who in his cape transforms to become grown warrior, a toy car is his SUV, which all the children climb in to search for magic mud. It is this game of realities, Mwansa the Great (in the truest sense of the word) can be alive - how naturally the adverse circumstances to mix with the fantasies of children. Desires are visualized here unsentimentally and grief is acted out in escapism in a very special way.'*

**Sehsuchte Film Festival, (1/5/2011)**

# Shadow and Act

**indieWIRE**

*Mwansa The Great, made by Zambian Rungano Nyoni, centres on 8-year old Mwansa, who, in an attempt to prove he is a hero just like his father who passed away, goes on a quest to find the “magical” substance necessary to fix his sister’s broken doll, and finally prove that he is in fact destined for greatness. A touching tribute to childhood innocence, and dreams, also with a nod to struggles between tradition and modernity; on the other side of Mwansa’s small village, sits an industrial plant mining the earth for minerals – the “magical” substance Mwansa seeks to rebuild his sister’s doll. It was a lot of fun to watch this, notably the sequences in which we are presented with filmic visualizations of each child’s imagination and perception of themselves.*

**Shadow and Act, indieWIRE, (27/3/2011)**