

Frighteningly Funny

Triomf



The "Triomf" crew at the end of our first day of shoot - Photo by: Ryan Fortune - www.triomfmovie.blogspot.com

September marked the beginning of shooting for the much anticipated new local film, *Triomf*. The film, named after the impoverished Johannesburg suburb Triomf, is based on an Afrikaans novel by the same name, written by Marlene van Niekerk.

Although still relatively new to the literary industry, Marlene has already received much recognition for her written work, having won the C.L. Engelbrecht Prize for Literature for her 2004 novel *Agaat*, and the Hertzog Prize for Prose. *Triomf* sets a new standard for Afrikaans literature, and exposes Marlene as an Author of great international caliber.

Shooting for the film is set to take place from the 25th September to the 3rd November on location in the Johannesburg suburb of Brixton.

Director, Michael Raeburn, chose a modest home in Jan Hofmeyer Park as their main location, and the area certainly does make visible the images of poverty and despair painted by Marlene through her book.

Michael Raeburn; a Director, Script writer and Novelist; is perhaps best known for his 1991 feature film, *Jit*. The film was infact the first feature film ever made in Zimbabwe and helped to further the career of now international World Music artist, Oliver Mtukudzi.

Jit may not have resulted in a showering of award nominations, but it did make its way to the shelves of a number of prominent video hire stores in the United States.



Treppie (Lionel Newton) with great pearly-whites... Not! - www.triomfmovie.blogspot.com



A group of enthusiastic "Triomf" extras - www.triomfmovis.blogspot.com



Director Michael Raeburn and his small crew on location in Jan Hofmeyer Park near Brixton
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The Triomf story follows the daily antics of a typical poor white Afrikaans family living in the suburb of Triomf, supported by the remains of what was Sophiatown. The Benade family includes Uncle Treppie, to be portrayed by Lionel Newton; Pop, played by Paul Luckhoff; Mol, Vanessa Cooke; and Lambert, portrayed by Eduan van Jaarsveldt.

Set in 1994, on the dawn of the first Democratic Elections in South Africa, we are introduced to the Benade family and their concerns regarding the elections, their prospective black neighbours, and their raucous coloured neighbours, who become the cause of a dramatic feud.

The anxiety surrounding the unknown world that awaits them post-elections has become so ominous, that the Benade family has resorted to preparations for an escape from South Africa, should conditions become unbearable.

The pivotal characters of the story are probably Uncle Treppie, who represents the old and unwavering, and Lambert, who represents the young and innocent. The interaction between these two characters is very much symbolic of the overall situation portrayed in the book, of South Africa at the time.



The "Triomf" crew on location in Jan Hofmeyer Park, near Brixton, Johannesburg - Photo by: Kate D'Hotman - www.triomfmovie.blogspot.com



Treppie (Lionel Newton) waits for his call - Photo by: Ryan Fortune - www.triomfmovie.blogspot.com



"Triomf" director Michael Raeburn lining up a shot - www.triomfmovie.blogspot.com

Uncle Treppie, consumed by the desperation of his poverty stricken lifestyle and filled with the fear of losing his identity as a white Afrikaner, plots to remove Lambert from the equation by introducing him to a prospective girlfriend in the hopes that Lambert will then move out of the house.

This situation alone develops into a volatile climax within the story, which results in the revealing of a terrifying truth, bringing an even darker cloud to the already chilling circumstances.

Though undoubtedly dark, the story is extremely humorous at the same time. The family's nervous behavior and sheer narrow-mindedness, land them in some enormously amusing situations, such as their inadvertent participation in an organized march for peace.

Marlene van Niekerk has produced a stellar literary work that, with Michael Raeburn in the driving seat, should make for a rich and impacting visual journey which is sure to capture the attention of the international audience.